ITU-ALECSO Smart Learning Forum

Final Report

Introduction:

The ITU-ALECSO Smart Learning Forum was organized by International Telecommunication Union/Arab Regional Office in partnership with the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) in Dubai-UAE from 14 to 16 December 2015, kindly hosted by the Government of the United Arab Emirates represented by the Ministry of Education and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) and Mohammed Bin Rashid Smart Learning Program in collaboration with Intel and Millennium@EDU.

The purpose of this forum was to bring all stakeholders from the education and ICT sectors on the same table to create a common vision for smart learning in the Arab region. Participants of the forum were officials from the Ministries of Education and Ministries of Information and Communication Technologies. In addition to a variety of stakeholders relevant to smart learning representing private sector companies, international and regional organizations, and academia.

This forum was held in implementation of the Arab Regional Initiative on Smart Learning adopted by the ITU World Telecommunication Development Conference in Dubai, 2014[1]. Moreover, this resolve has seen further support in the form of United Nations' Millennium Development Goals adopted in 2015 in particular the 4th Objective related with Education Quality, also the vision of ANSHION and the Qingdao Declarations regarding the Post-2015 Education.

The Forum was comprised of themed sessions on various issues and prospects of smart learning in the Arab region. The topics of the sessions covered the following areas:
- The role of industry in smart learning
- National Strategies of Smart Learning in the Arab Region
- e-Content for Smart Learning

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[1] http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Conferences/WTDC/WTDC14/Pages/default.aspx

- The Role of SMEs, Entrepreneurs and Innovators in Smart Learning
- Smart Teachers
- H.H. Mohammed Bin Rashed Smart Learning National Initiative

Furthermore, the forum included a session on promoting Academia membership in ITU. Moreover, the forum included an exhibition that stakeholders utilized to showcase some of their innovations in the field of smart learning. Finally, a field trip to one of the schools implementing smart learning in the UAE was organized by the host to demonstrate the UAE's best practice in Smart Learning.

Throughout the sessions of the forum the participants echoed the following recommendations to be considered by policy makers in the Arab region to promote Smart Learning:

- Set a regional vision and road map within the framework of the League of Arab States between stakeholders to adopt a regional plan to transform the educational sectors in the Arab region by implementing Smart Learning with the goal of achieving the goals and targets set by the Sustainable Development Goals and the ITU Arab Regional Initiative on Smart Learning.
- Welcome the invitation of ITU and ALECSO to hold a high level conference for Smart Learning during the second quarter of 2017 which aims to adopt a regional vision and action plan for Smart Learning with the participation of the concerned stakeholders including the Ministers of Education, Telecommunication and Information Technology in the Arab Region.
- Encourage countries in the Arab region to adopt national strategies in Smart Learning in line with the Guidelines on Formulating National Strategies on Smart Learning that will be published by the ITU, ALECSO, in cooperation with Intel and Millinium@edu, which was published its draft on the website of the Forum for receiving the comments of the stakeholders before 15 February 2016, in order to adopt and translate into Arabic during the first half of 2016.
- To take into consideration the study on the deployment of various computing devices in schools to create smart classroom infrastructure that will be published by the ITU and Intel.
- Launching a specialized study on Capacity Building for Teacher Educators in Arab Educational Institutes to enrich the Education process through the Smart Learning.
- Launching specialized study on the development of Smart educational apps targeted for Arab region and to support the ALECSO initiative related to Arab mobile applications platform: www.alecsoapps.com
- Welcome the initial agreement between the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) of UAE and Mohammed Bin Rashed Smart Learning Program and ITU to establish a regional center for Smart Learning aims to support the Arab countries efforts in the transform to Smart Transform in various fields including the capacity building and exchange of experiences in the field of Smart Learning in the Arab Region.
- Work towards holding this forum on a regular basis under the leadership of ALECSO.

All the details related to the forum including the draft of Guidelines for national strategies for Smart Learning as well as the presentations of the speakers of the forum are available on the forum website:

http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/ArabStates/Pages/Events/2015/SL/default.aspx