

"CONNECT A SCHOOL, CONNECT A COMMUNITY"

Connecting Rural Schools in Southern Sri Lanka



"CONNECT ALL PRIMARY, SECONDARY, AND TERTIARY SCHOOLS TO ICTs by 2015"

(WSIS, 2003)

'Connect a School, Connect a Community' is a public-private partnership launched by ITU to promote broadband school connectivity to serve as community ICT centers for people in rural, marginal urban and isolated areas.



AKURESSA PROJECT

In May 2011, computers and mobile broadband connectivity have been provided to 25 schools in Akuressa, the Southern province of Sri Lanka. Under the framework of a Public-Private-People's Partnership (4P) model, ITU created a dynamic partnership between ITU, TRC, Dialog & Mobitel, Intel Teach, NGOs, school teachers, and community members and ITU TELECOM Youth Alumni.

ITU also took a holistic approach, addressing not only low-cost devices and connectivity, but also a long-term, sustainable

utilization of ICTs via training programs, awareness sessions, and local repair and maintenance funds.



PROJECT IMPACT

The project has been a successful catalyst to generate additional commitments from partners such as Minister of Education for southern province for enhancing school connectivity and bring about considerable positive changes to rural schools, as well as enhancing awareness amongst communities and local government in Sri Lanka.

- **Changing Schools:** Over 80% of the students saw computers for the first time in their life through the ITU initiative. ICT class has been created in most schools, and curious students are eager to learn how to use computers and Internet.
- **Enhancing awareness:** The ITU project has increased awareness of the importance of ICTs in schools. After the project, the Ministry of Education in Sri Lanka announced to quadruple its investment in connecting schools.
- **Fostering Future Partnerships:** Based on successful implementation of 4P collaboration model that was demonstrated by this pilot project, ITU and TRC jointly call for partners/ donor agencies who would could contribute to replicate the success on larger scale in other provinces of Sri Lanka for realising knowledge and creative society.

