

Connecting Global Literacy Experts through Technology

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How technology is helping support the development of an expert community of literacy stakeholders through UNESCO's Knowledge and Innovations Network for Literacy

Literacy remains one of the most pressing global challenges. The literacy challenge is broad and encompasses both childhood and adult education with an estimated 796 million illiterate adults and 67,4 million children out of school. UNESCO is the UN agency mandated to support governments in promoting universal literacy around the world and is leading the UN Literacy Decade, launched in 2003 to increase literacy levels and to empower all people everywhere. Halving the global adult illiteracy rate by 2015 (Education for All Goal 4) requires considerable work from all education stakeholders to achieve.

Microsoft and UNESCO share the vision that literacy, and education more broadly, is the cornerstone

to personal, social and economic development, and essential for lasting peace. Working together in a public-private partnership since November 2004, UNESCO and Microsoft are helping support the creation of a global online network to bring together literacy researchers, experts and other stakeholders. The Knowledge and Innovations Network for Literacy (KINL) portal aims to generate knowledge and innovation within the community to help build the capacity of literacy experts and educators.

The portal is supported with funding from the Verizon Foundation. Microsoft and Infusion are supporting the creation of the network's portal platform, built on Microsoft's SharePoint technology.

The goals of the Knowledge and Innovations Network for Literacy (KINL) portal include:

- Creating and disseminating knowledge on literacy among relevant stakeholders worldwide;
- Facilitating knowledge exchange;
 - Identifying critical issues for and gaps in literacy research and innovation
 - Fostering collaboration and partnerships in literacy knowledge creation and research and their application
 - Advocating for literacy, in particular by facilitating the presentation of knowledge and research evidence to policy-makers
 - Making new knowledge and research outputs available to support innovation and capacity building for literacy practitioners (trainers, facilitators, implementers, etc)

The online portal will provide information management and collaboration features including a directory of members and their profiles, a broad repository of information in English, French and Spanish on proven literacy programs, research and policy guidance, online discussions with literacy experts and an event calendar. The portal will help literacy experts and implementers make connections within their global community and share research and information they otherwise would not be introduced to.

UNESCO-Microsoft Partnership

Since 2004, UNESCO and Microsoft have partnered on several programmes to support the use of technology to transform education, reduce poverty and help address the digital divide. These programmes demonstrate how technology is not only a platform to teach basic literacy skills, but also a pathway to digital literacy and an enabler for participation in the global information society:

- UNESCO, Microsoft and other technology industry partners developed the **UNESCO ICT Competency Framework for Teachers**, a resource providing guidance on quality teacher training and how to best use ICT in the classroom.
- UNESCO and Microsoft are working together to bring the **Innovative Teachers program (ITP)** and its online community, the **Innovative Teachers Network (ITN)**, to the Asia-Pacific region, Middle-East and Europe.
- Microsoft is supporting UNESCO's **Community Multimedia Centers (CMCs)** in Senegal, Mali and Mozambique by upgrading the community radio facilities through the provision of computers, training and multimedia curricula.



About UNESCO

UNESCO - the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) - is the UN agency responsible for the promotion of international cooperation in the fields of education, science, culture and communication. UNESCO functions as a laboratory of ideas and standard setter to forge universal agreements on emerging development and ethical issues. It also serves as a clearinghouse for the dissemination and sharing of information and knowledge, while helping member states to build their human and institutional capacities. www.unesco.org

About Microsoft

Founded in 1975, Microsoft (Nasdaq "MSFT") is the worldwide leader in software, services and solutions that help people and businesses realize their full potential. www.microsoft.com

Through its Unlimited Potential initiative, Microsoft is committed to making technology more affordable, relevant and accessible to help transform education, foster innovation and enable better jobs and opportunities. By working with governments, intergovernmental organizations, nongovernmental organizations and industry partners, Microsoft hopes to extend the benefits of technology to the next 1 billion people by 2015. www.microsoft.com/unlimitedpotential