3rd International Conference on ICT for Development, Education and Training
An Annual Event for Developing eLearning Capacities in Africa

3ème Conférence Internationale Consacrée aux TIC Appliquées à l’Enseignement, à la Formation et au Développement
Un événement annuel consacré au développement de compétences eLearning en Afrique

Post Conference Report
AICC, Accra, Ghana
May 28 – 30, 2008
www.elearning-africa.com
THE EVENT

Building on the outcomes of the eLearning Africa conferences held in Ethiopia in 2006 and Kenya in 2007, eLearning Africa 2008 was an important milestone for everyone concerned with how technology can be used to support and improve both the accessibility and quality of education and training in Africa. 1502 eLearning users, newcomers, providers and experts from 83 countries gathered during the three conference days at the Accra International Conference Centre in Accra, Ghana. Eighty percent of the participants came from African countries.

This year’s conference brought together a diverse group of practitioners, experts, donors, suppliers and others interested in using the tools of the information revolution to improve the educational and training opportunities available to the peoples of Africa.

eLearning Africa 2008 once again served as the continental hub to both major international and African corporations as well as to development organisations, who used the event to hold their own meetings before or after the gathering in Accra.

Last but not least, the success of the conference was also due to the excellent cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, Ghana. The local eLA08 Committee, with its several working groups, provided the organisers with tremendous support, especially in situations where on-site support was essential. The Ministry’s commitment draws attention to the Ghanaian government’s view of ICTs as a cross-sectoral accelerator for development in education.

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

The conference agenda mixed presentations, expert sessions, networking opportunities and discussion sessions. It provided ample opportunities for everyone who took part to gain knowledge, exchange experience and generally build their network of eLearning professionals from Africa as well as other parts of the globe.

Set in the open and friendly atmosphere of Accra, this was really a conversation where opinions were expressed, information was exchanged and plans were put in place for future co-operation.

The main conference agenda, formulated with the support of the conference’s Advisory and Review Committees as well as with the input of the local Organising Committee in Ghana, featured 315 speakers and chairpersons from 54 countries and offered an abundance of opportunities for participants to learn, share and network with colleagues from all over the world. With 4 plenary sessions, 66 sessions in 11 parallel conference strands, 48 demonstrations and best practice examples, 15 NNnooa networking sessions, 14 pre-conference events and a number of exciting new features, eLearning Africa 2008 made a considerable contribution towards the building of an African capacity in ICT-enhanced education and training.

COMMENTS

"Let me express a vote of thanks for enabling me attend the 3rd eLearning Africa conference in Accra, Ghana on the centre of the world. The conference was an eye opener to me. There were a number of technologies which were new to me, such as: serving seven PCs with one CPU, Toon Boom Animation and open learning universities just to mention a few. On presentations, I was privileged to share Malawi’s experiences in ICT and also learnt experiences of other countries in Africa and beyond. The conference drew participants from all walks of life and varied experiences in ICT which indeed helped to achieve the objective of the conference of learning, sharing and networking the continent’s many and varied educational technology initiatives and projects."

Aubrey Diverson Matemba, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Malawi
eLearning Africa was officially opened on Thursday, May 29th by His Excellency Alhaji Aliu Mahama, the Vice President of the Republic of Ghana who spoke about the urgent need for Africa to embrace ICT in order to educate the continent to compete in the knowledge age.

Speakers in the Opening Plenary included The Hon Prof Dominic K. Fobih, Minister for Education, Science and Sports, Ghana and Prof Osei Darkwa, Ghana Telecom University College, Ghana, who both spoke about e-learning and new educational paradigms and the need for Africa not to be left behind. George Siemens, from the University of Manitoba Learning Technologies Centre in Canada, one of today’s most innovative thinkers in the field of eLearning, presented his ideas during his presentation entitled A Narrative of Learning for a World Without Boundaries. Aida Opoku-Mensah, Director ICT, Science and Technology Division with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa in Ethiopia, described UN-led practical strategies and programmes that will help lead Africa towards the realisation of digital inclusion. Finally Kuno Jung, CEO of the Swiss eLearning technology provider Eduvision, outlined the educational vision of his company in his presentation entitled The Lost Footage of Back to the Future Part II: The Classrooms in 2015.

A highly provocative panel discussion on Thursday evening chaired by Prof Tim Unwin of the Partnerships for Education Programme, World Economic Forum/UNESCO provided an opportunity to discuss whether ICT-supported learning in Africa was slowing down or not. Tim was joined by Dorothy K. Gordon, Director General, Ghana-India Kofi Annan Centre of Excellence in ICT, Michael Trucano, infoDev The World Bank, USA and Denise Clarke, Programme Facilitator, GeSCI, Ghana for this discussion which attracted a considerable level of audience participation. Several questions posed by the audience focused on how links with existing initiatives can be strengthened in order to avoid duplication and improve levels of sustainability and on the relationship between donors and national governments and agencies in specific countries. Issues related to the difficulties in introducing change to traditional teaching methodologies also emerged as well as recommendations related to specific approaches like open source and tools like mobile phones.

The plenary session that took place on Friday, May 30th was entitled Developing eLearning Capacities in Africa and brought several thought leaders together to share their ideas on the role played by ICT. Annie Chéneau-Loquay, from CEAN (UMR CNRS-IEP) in France, spoke about global access to ICT in Africa while Mike Lloyd, Education Solutions Director with Microsoft discussed the important role of innovation in 21st Century Learning. Maria Eugenia Arreola, Programme Officer with the United Nations Environment Programme in Kenya spoke about the UNEP programme to mainstream environmental education with the support of ICT and William A. Swope, Vice President, Intel Corporation, USA, highlighted Intel’s vision and strategy for the take-up of ICT in Africa.

During the closing plenary session on Friday evening, the Hon Elizabeth Ohene, Minister of State at the Ministry for Education, Science and Sports in Ghana brought the conference to a close with the input of Chukwuma Okpaka, from HP Nigeria Ltd.

**COMMENTS**

“I wanted to thank you for the phenomenal job you did with helping us to coordinate the Microsoft Pan African ITF. I have no idea how you managed to attend to all of our requests so efficiently and patiently while also assisting in organising the eLearning Africa conference. We could not have done this without your and the ICWE team’s assistance. Please pass on my thanks to the entire team who helped with this. Once again a BIG thank you and I look forward to seeing you at next year’s eLearning Africa conference.”

Angela Schaerer, Microsoft, South Africa

“Thanks so much to you and the team for another excellent conference. I heard so many good things from participants about how well it was organised. What seemed to impress people most was the way in which you had created an atmosphere in which there was transparent and frank discussion about key issues of importance in this field. This was certainly my own experience, and it is great to see the conference going from strength to strength as the years pass by. Thanks again for everything.”

Tim Unwin, The Royal Holloway, University of London, UK

“Thank you for organising such an interesting and inspiring conference. There was also a really good balance of research and commercial initiatives. This is my first eLearning Africa conference and I will definitely be back next year. I don’t think any other conference on the continent gives one such an overall sense of what is happening in eLearning in Africa.”

Steven Edwin Vosloo, Shuttleworth Foundation, South Africa
PARALLEL SESSIONS

The main conference agenda was organised around the themes of the conference and included discussion as well as presentation sessions along with a rich variety of other sessions aimed at promoting real networking amongst the participants. These themes were:

- Unleashing the Capabilities of Universities Through Information and Communication Technologies
- Corporate eLearning in Africa and Beyond
- Introducing eLearning into the School System
- Designing and Delivering eLearning
- Building the Infrastructure for Education in the 21st Century
- Open Source and Open Content
- eLearning in Medical Education and the Fight Against HIV and AIDS
- Advanced Technology Developments
- eLearning Supported by Development Partners
- Empowering Women Through ICT and eLearning
- Improving the Quality and Outreach of Technical and Vocational Education
- Libraries as Access Providers to Resources and Expertise
- Quality Development and Quality Assurance
- Achieving Inclusivity Through eLearning
- eLearning for the Public Sector
- Policy Issues and Large-Scale Take-Up of eLearning

PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS

As well as the events held outside Accra, the conference agenda included a full programme of optional pre-conference events that took place in Accra in the days leading up to eLearning Africa. This extensive programme included eleven full- and half-day workshops alongside the UNECA-GeSCI Joint Ministerial Meeting on ICT in Education. These events were a mix of practical hands-on workshops, seminars dedicated to building and enhancing existing networks, and summits which brought together expertise on a specific topic or subject.

This year’s pre-conference events were:

- UNECA – GeSCI Joint Ministerial Meeting on ICT in Education
- 2nd UNESCO-UNEVOC TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) Summit on Access to and Inclusion in TVET in Africa Through New ICT-Based Solutions
- First Pan-African Forum on Open Education
- Planning Workshop on Capacity-Building for ICT in Education in Africa
- Mainstreaming eLearning for Environment
- eLearning Partnerships for Sustainable Development: How Can My University Develop Graduate Degree Programmes Collaboratively With Carnegie Mellon University’s Robotics Institute?
- Teacher Training by End-to-End e-learning™ - In the Global Village
- Effective Evaluation of ICT for Education in Africa
- Intercultural Collaborative eLearning in Africa: Reflections on Practical Experiences and the Perspective
- Forum for Education in West Africa (FEWA)/ Forum de l’Éducation pour l’Afrique de l’Ouest (FEAO)
- Crafting Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships for Education full
- Using Microsoft eLearning to Transform Skills Education
- Pan-African Innovative Teachers Forum (Microsoft)

COMMENTS

“The many strands offered opportunity for people with similar interests to meet and network. The social evenings also enhanced inclusiveness. The conference was stimulating and an excellent forum for networking.”

Siminyu Samuel Ndeda, Makerere University, Uganda

“Very worthwhile. Lots of meaningful interaction, learned about lots of areas of work I did not know about. Is essential for widespread eLearning. Another excellent event!”

Daniel Stern, UConnect, Uganda
The eLearning Africa agenda including a variety of Special Focus Sessions led by leading organisations in the field of African education and training including UNESCO who highlighted several of their initiatives in this area, Cisco who discussed progress of the NEPAD consortium in implementing end-to-end solutions for African schools, International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD) in The Netherlands who brought together practitioners and policymakers to discuss the creation of education content for Africa and the TESSA initiative which is building open educational resources for teacher education in Africa.

Sessions featuring the take-up of ICT in African schools proved to be very popular with presentations by leading experts in this field like Mercy Emmanuel Sila, Tanzania Education Authority and Dr Mamadou Dian Gongoré Diallo from the Institut Supérieur de Formation à Distance (ISFAD) in Guinea. Sessions in the schools track were complemented by a highly interactive and participative set of sessions organised by Paolo Brunello, Eliada Gudza and Chiara Pozzi where practitioners like Alphonse Uworwabayeho from the Kigali Institute of Education, Rwanda, Susan Jepkoech Kipkeny from Moi Girls High School Eldoret in Kenya and Kwesi Smith from the Kofi Annan Centre of Excellence in ICT, Ghana shared their concerns and expectations regarding the take-up of ICT in African schools.

Taking time to consider what might be the topics and themes for eLearning Africa 2020 provided a good opportunity for participants to really review their major concerns and to identify priorities and scenarios in respect to eLearning in Africa today. This session was led by Han Fraeters of the World Bank Institute and Michael Trucano from infoDev, The World Bank. Here participants used an electronic voting system to express their views which was not only very entertaining, but also truly fascinating in terms of showing what participants really thought about factors affecting the take-up of eLearning now and in the future.

Small expert sessions dedicated to single topics were a new addition to eLearning Africa 2008 and they certainly attracted quite some interest from conference participants. These included a session on Digital Education, Innovation and Copyright Regulation led by Gideon Emcee Christian from the Information Society Project at Yale Law School in the USA. Another popular one was on eWaste Recycling and Management and was led by Bernard Nyakundi from Tracom College in Kenya. Olajumoke Ajayi from BusyInternet in Ghana chaired another one of these on integrating eLearning into Corporate Organisations in Africa.

The creation and sharing of Open Education Resources (OER) proved to be a very popular topic with presentations from Dr Mark Horner of the Shuttleworth Foundation in South Africa, Dr Siro Masinde from Aluka in Kenya, Dr Petr Kosina, from the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center in Mexico and Gideon Emcee Christian from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in Canada all offering different viewpoints and experiences on the creation and maintenance of OER. These sessions were complemented by a special focus session on the same subject led by Dr Moustapha Diack, Southern University - Baton Rouge, USA on the MAN/MERLOT initiative on Open Education and Virtual Learning Environments.

Continuing in the same vein, Ousseni Zongo from IICD chaired a very popular session on open source which continues to be a very important topic for eLearning Africa participants. This session, which included presentations by Stephen Agyepong from Kwanme Nkrumah University of Science and Technology/Sabonay Technologies in Ghana and Kwaku Boadu, Arrow Network Systems Ltd. in Ghana and Dr Cheri MacLeod, from the College of the North Atlantic, Qatar attracted a large number of participants and generated considerable dialogue both during the session and in the discussions that took place afterwards.

Creating and designing successful eLearning environments can be challenging and so sessions bringing those with a lot of experience in this area were a welcome addition. All of these sessions featured examples and cases of successful eLearning design and showed the work of experienced practitioners like Henry Mensah from the Institute of Distance Learning in Ghana, Themios Patrikios, from the OTE Academy in Greece, Vivian Attah from GIMPAL DLC in Ghana and Dennis J. Mazali from the Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences in Tanzania.
Universities continue to play an important role both in terms of the research they carry out into improving systems and services for African learners as well as through their experience in implementing institution-wide ICT-supported learning services. Universities represented at eLearning Africa this year included the African Virtual University, Makerere University in Uganda, Moi University in Kenya, Université Badji Mokhtar Annaba in Algeria, Université de Lomé in Togo, University of Jos in Nigeria, University of Ghana in Ghana and many, many others from all corners of the continent.

For the first time this year, the eLearning Africa agenda contained several sessions where academic research outcomes related to the use and take-up of technology in developing countries were highlighted. These sessions were complemented by the session organised by Prof Thierry Karsenti from the University of Montreal, Canada in the context of the IDRC’s Panafriican Research Agenda on the Pedagogical Integration of Information and Communications Technologies. This session included presentations by Moses Mbangwana, ROCARÉ, Mali, Dr Christopher Gakuu from the University of Nairobi, Kenya, Prof Mohamed Maiga from ISFRA, Mali, Jean M’Boliguipa from the École Normale Superieur Bangui, République Centrafricaine and Samuel Mawete, École Normale Supérieur Brazzaville, République du Congo.

Special Nnoboaa sessions, named after the Twi word which means ‘working together for the common good’, were scheduled throughout the conference agenda. These networking sessions covered topics as diverse and far-ranging as the One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) programme, Partnerships between Public, Commercial and Non Profit Organisations and Google Cloud Computing and facilitated small group discussions on lots of different topics of mutual interest.

The conference agenda also included the eLearning Africa Demonstration and Best Practice Area where prototypes and working examples of tools and applications as well as excellent examples of eLearning aimed at African learners were on show. This area was strategically placed in the highly popular eLearning exhibition area which featured the products and services provide by a range of major vendors and service providers.

The conference benefited from the presence and input of several Ministers and high-level education administrators. They included:

- The Hon Prof Karifa Bayo, Ministre Charge de l’Enseignement Secondaire, Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique, Burkina Faso
- The Hon Elizabeth Akua Ohene, Minister of State, Ghana
- The Hon Prof Dominic Kwaku Fobih, Minister for Education, Science and Sports, Ghana
- The Hon Sally Jepng’etich Kosgei, Minister for Higher Education, Science and Technology, Kenya
- Caston Bob Harris, Permanent Secretary, Liberia
- The Hon Amadou Touré, Minister for Secondary and Higher Education and Research, Mali
- The Hon Jumanne A. Maghembe, Minister for Education and Vocational Training, Tanzania
- The Hon Geraldine Namirembe Bitamazire, Minister of Education and Sports, Uganda
- The Hon Geoffrey Lungwangwa, Minister for Education, Zambia

**COMMENTS**

*“It has been a pleasure for me to attend the eLearning Africa Conference 2008 as a speaker. It has been very useful for me. I learned a lot. The conference was a success. Congratulations! I note it in my agenda for next years as possible.”*
Timothée Coulibaly, Solidarité pour l’Autopromotion à la Base (SABA), Mali

*eLearning Africa is a world class conference to us in WEMOREC. It has resulted to one year pilot project between WEMOREC & Newbrunswick Community colleges concentrated on elearning. Personally it has increased my capacities for better programme implementation. Bravo to the organisers!*
Doris Anusi, WEMOREC, Nigeria

*“Thank you for organising what proved to be a very worthwhile conference that yielded value for most if not all the participants. I enjoyed the opportunity to be part of your panel discussion as well as facilitating the session with a focus on gender.”*
Dorothy K. Gordon, Advanced Information Technology Institute (AITI), Ghana

*“All in all, a superb event! It was framed with the right mix of academic content and industry experience, in a backdrop of a rich and varied cultural engagement.”*
Mirero Martin, Advanced SW Global Limited, Ghana
eLearning Africa enjoyed the support of the following sponsors:

Platinum Sponsor:

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eLearning Africa 2008 was accompanied by a parallel exhibition that established itself as a central meeting and networking point within the conference and an opportunity to find out about the latest services and products. Expressive appreciation of the display and presentations was articulated by representatives and attendees alike.

List of Exhibitors 2008

- Accra Institute of Technology
- Agence de Médecine Préventive (AMP)
- Aluka
- Association of African Distance Learning Centres
- Avallain - Enhancing Education
- BT Education Service Limited
- Cisco
- EarthWalk
- Eduvision Ltd.
- Emerald Group Publishing Limited
- ePals, Inc
- e-Toys & More Ltd.
- Experiential Technologies
- Fronter
- Gatlin International (International) Ltd.
- GCFLearnFree.org
- Ghana Information Network for Knowledge Sharing (GINKS)
- Ghana Society for the Blind
- Google UK Ltd.
- HP Nigeria
- Huawei
- ICDL Africa (represented in Ghana by Skills Matrix Ltd.)
- icouldbe.org
- Intel Corporation
- Interwrite Learning™, an eInstruction Company
- IPMC
- London Centre for Education
- Macmillan Education
- Microsoft
- Mindset Network
- Ministry of Education, Science and Sports - Ghana
- Ncomputing UK Ltd.
- Novosoft Corporation
- Omatek Computers (GH) Ltd.
- Oracle
- Panasonic
- PEARSON-LONGMAN SEDCO
- Promethean
- RDI Ltd.
- SMART Technologies
- SMSWEB
- SPIDER - the Swedish Programme for ICT in Developing Regions
- Tanzania Education Authority
- The International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD)
- The Open University
- Toon Boom Animation
- UK Trade & Investment
- United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
- WAeUP Germany GbR
- Young Digital Planet
- Zinox Technologies Limited
"The conference was a great eye opener on the various technologies out there that can be used to foster development in the communities we serve as well as a learning forum for me on models that have been tested and found to work elsewhere."

Rogers Kyalolo Mutie, African Network for Health Knowledge Management and Communication (AfriAfya), Kenya

"I want to indicate that, I really learnt a lot from taking part in the eLearning Africa conference. It was a fantastic experience I gained from being part of a great team. On behalf of my colleagues and the entire team at the Ashesi Career Center, I would like to say a big thank you to ICWE and to the entire eLearning Africa conference team for the opportunity to be part of this great event. It is my hope that the experience acquired from the conference would propel every student that took part in the event to achieve higher laurels in their future endeavours."
Boaten Nana Sarkodie, Student helper at eLA 2008, Ashesi University College, Ghana

"You may be pleased to know that in addition to all the payoffs of your tireless efforts I was accorded a leverage to my first ‘international conference’ presentation experience and a diary filled with new friends, whom though divided by professions and locations we remain united through eLearning and the Accra Conversation. To all Nigerians, the conference offered a beautiful pedestal to initiating the eLA Alumni Association, Nigerian Chapter.

Joseph Azi, Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Nigeria

"Thank you for the team's effort in making the Conference a success. For me the event was very interesting and interactive."

John Stephen Oluoch, Coastal Oceans Research and Development Indian Ocean (Cordio East Africa), Kenya

"I really enjoyed the conference. I have also learned quite a lot and have made several new friends. eLearning Africa is getting momentum and is also improving every year. I have told my friends at the Nigerian Library Association conference about the Accra conference and they promised to attend eLearning Africa 2009. Well done and thank you too!"

Ghaji Abubakar Badawi, Bayero University, Nigeria

"I am grateful to you for making me part of eLearning Africa 2008. It has been a great learning experience for me. I hope to participate in future conferences, God willing. I have recommended to my management to ensure that the ICT department participates in the conference in the future. It would be so good for our ICT Policy, which will soon commence. It would always be a pleasure to participate in future conference, should my services be needed. I wish you all success in your endeavours. Congratulations for a successful conference!"

Dinah Ama Serwaa Amankwah, Wa Polytechnic, Ghana

"Our group was very impressed with the organisation of the conference. They learnt very much from the various activities and expressed the anxiety to attend next time."

Prof Moses Atezah Mbangwana, PanAfrican Research Agenda, Mali

"I was enriched in the subject and I feel obliged to share the info with our project participants and colleagues. To me and also to many others it was an eye opener to the field of ICTs. I guess the conference’s worth is in the participants’ implementation of acquired knowledge and skills."

Ndlovu Nokulunga Sihlabile, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa