Post-Conference Report

Mulungushi International Conference Centre
Lusaka, Zambia, May 26 – 28, 2010

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eLearning Africa 2010 marked the fifth anniversary of the largest conference on technology-enhanced education and training on the African continent. It was held from May 26th – 28th, 2010 in Lusaka, Zambia.

After the highly successful meetings in Ethiopia (2006), Kenya (2007), Ghana (2008) and Senegal (2009), this year’s conference saw a record number of participants: A total of 1778 education and training professionals from 78 countries took part in the sessions, workshops and best practice demonstrations at Lusaka’s Mulungushi International Conference Centre.

The conference, under the patronage of the Zambian Minister of Education, Hon. Dora Siliya, MP, was officially opened by Zambia’s Vice President, Hon. George Kunda, who gave the speech on behalf of His Excellency Rupiah Bwezani Banda, President of the Republic of Zambia.

The meeting once again brought together high-level decision-makers from governmental agencies, experts and practitioners from universities and schools, human resources managers from companies, as well as private training organisations, development cooperation projects and investors.

eLearning Africa 2010 in a nutshell
- 1778 participants from 78 countries, 86% from Africa
- 323 speakers and chairpersons from 51 countries, 65% from Africa
- 16 ministers and one head of state from 9 countries (Angola, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe)
- 52 journalists from 5 countries (Germany, Kenya, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe)
- 52 exhibitors from 16 countries

“An excellent learning experience as a whole. We enjoyed several inspiring speeches as well as innovative presentations and discussions during our conference days, spiced up with cross-cultural insights, a feeling of togetherness, a sense of humour and sharing. Thank you very much!”

Ilmo Anttila, Central Ostrobothnia University of Applied Sciences, Finland
PLENARY SESSIONS

On Thursday morning, eLearning Africa 2010 officially kicked off with the opening plenary, chaired by the Zambian Minister of Education, Hon. Dora Siliya, MP. The first speaker was Rt Rev Dr S. Tilewa Johnson, Anglican Bishop of Gambia, who delivered a rousing address on the online social education of young African people. “The Internet flattens any hierarchies, bridges social gaps, brings me closer to you and, paradoxically, makes all our serious connections more authentic. I witness how this helps young people to learn values and how it helps in the planning of positive community actions,” Johnson stated in his keynote speech. He encouraged the audience to explore how digital technologies can stay in touch with the traditions of Africa, and he called upon older generations to respect the changing needs of African youth.

The “Twittering Bishop” set the tone for eLearning Africa this year. With many participants twittering the latest news, the conference demonstrated first hand how social networking is taking off in Africa.

In the same session, Shafi ka Isaacs, an independent ICT4D consultant from South Africa, reflected on the transformation of the educational systems in Africa. NComputing CEO Stephen Dukker spoke about how desktop virtualisation is facilitating learning in schools in Africa.

The opening plenary was concluded with a speech by Zambia’s Vice President, Hon. George Kunda, MP, who welcomed the participants on behalf of His Excellency Rupiah Bwezani Banda, President of the Republic of Zambia.

The plenary session on Thursday evening, chaired by Hon. Dr Kapembwa Simbao, MP, Minister of Health, Zambia, highlighted the importance of technology and communication for social change as well as the opportunities that ICTs bring to education in Africa.

This session was opened by Hon. Prof Geoffrey Lungwangwa, MP, Minister of Communication and Transport, Zambia, who spoke on the importance of ICTs for social and economic development in Africa. Tarkan Maner, Wyse Technology, USA, talked about the impact of IT and communication trends on education and social change, while Astrid Dufborg, SPIDER, Sweden, showcased a nationwide eHealth system with an in-built eLearning approach. Shelly M. Esque, Intel Corporation, USA, reflected on Intel’s experience with the successful implementation of eLearning programmes and policies.

Friday morning’s plenary session, chaired by Hon. Brig. Gen. Dr Brian Chituwo, MP, Zambia’s Minister of Science, Technology and Vocational Training, highlighted how technology empowers the educational system, linking universities, teachers and students. In his keynote address, Hon. Prof Jumanne A. Maghembe, MP, Minister of Education and Vocational Training, Tanzania, referred to the continued importance of learning technologies for the continent: “Students cannot succeed in tomorrow’s world if we equip them with yesterday’s skills,” he said.

Further keynote speeches were delivered by Brian McKay Epp, Pearson eCollege, USA, who focused on Web 2.0 and Educational Gaming, and Prof Gilly Salmon, University of Leicester, UK, who gave an inspiring speech on learning innovation. Zeid Shubailat, Microsoft Middle East and Africa, Jordan, spoke about shaping the future for collaboration in education.

COMMENTS

“The exhibitions, fantastic. The conviviality, splendid. But the Opening Plenary was electric, we could not have started on a better footing!”

The Rt Rev Dr S. Tilewa Johnson, Anglican Bishop of Gambia, Gambia

“Sometimes you think you are doing great in whatever you’re involved with. Attend this conference; you’ll be amazed by what others are doing as well. It’s just such a marvellous conference, I would never want to miss it.”

Charles Fodya, Chancellor College, Malawi

“Networking with conference delegates was great. I look forward to attending next year’s conference if I can. The conference is very useful for policymakers, educators and trainers as well as learners.”

Gabriel S. Konayuma, Ministry of Science, Technology & Vocational Training, Zambia
One key element of the eLearning Africa agenda began the day before the main programme: On Wednesday, May 26th, a wide range of optional pre-conference events took place. In twenty full-day and half-day seminars and workshops – most of which were fully booked – participants had the opportunity to deepen and extend their practical knowledge in different aspects of ICT for education and development.


**Pan-African eLearning for the Environment Network**

**The African Virtual University: Increasing Access to Quality Education and Training Beyond Technological, Language and Cultural Barriers**

**Training of Trainers for Use of ICT in Higher Education**

**A Participatory Design Workshop on Mobile Learning for Development**

**Hands-On Video and Computer Graphics Lab**

**Using ICT to Avail Continuity of Patient Care in Resource-Limited Settings**

**NEPAD e-Schools Initiative**

**Developing Business Strategy Models for Multi-Stakeholder eLearning Implementation in Africa**

**Education and Learning in Africa: Innovative OERs**

**Creating Policies for Successful eLearning Programmes**

**Sharing Awareness – Lifelong Well-Being for Communities: Improving Health and Creating Change at the Community Level Using ICT**

**Envisioning Our Global Learning Future**

**OER Collaborative Content Development Training Using Wiki Platforms**

**Duplicability of Grassroots Concept to Inspire Educators to Use ICT in Education**

**Developing Strategies for Involving African Teachers in eLearning Practices**

**Learner Devices – From Policy and Principles to Practice**

**GeSCI-PanAf Joint Workshop on Research in ICT Education & Development**

**Incorporating Open Source Software Tools into Your Course**

**Distance Learning Education and Telemedicine Initiatives Using Cutting-Edge Technologies**

**eLEARNING AFRICA DEBATE**

The annual eLearning Africa Debate was chaired this year by former British parliamentarian Dr Harold Elletson of the New Security Foundation, UK, and Dr Katherine Getao from NEPAD.

“Despite the global financial crisis, Africa must continue to invest in ICTs for education, and 1:1 computing provides the most affordable, educationally rich computing solution,” was the topic under discussion this time.

Questions were raised as to the most appropriate systems, providing best value for money. After a long and heated discussion in which all parties had the opportunity to make their point and which saw active participation from the audience, Alex Twinsonghisha (GeSCI) and Anthony Bloome (USAID) were declared winners of the debate for the opposition, arguing that 1:1 computing was not an affordable educational investment in African systems.

The main conclusion to be drawn was that priority should be given to teacher training before making any significant investment in the infrastructure.

**PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS**

“One again our participation in eLearning Africa was enriching and fruitful. Our Pre-Conference Workshop turned out to be a great success, with all participants actively contributing to the creation of a checklist for developing eLearning strategies for their respective organisations and institutions. Our exhibition booth was highly successful, too. We managed to attract great interest for our products and services, and our optimum location significantly contributed to that.”

Jens Schneider, Namibia eLearning Centre (NeLC), Namibia
The first eLearning Africa Teachers’ Forum, jointly organised by IICD, the eBrain Forum and ICWE, was met with considerable interest: More than one hundred teachers from all parts of Zambia attended the event at Lusaka’s Mulungushi International Conference Centre on Wednesday, May 26th. Tailored to the specific needs of African teachers, its programme encompassed inspiring presentations, audience debates and a ‘market place’ to demonstrate the use of ICTs in schools.

Christine Mulenga, who teaches biology and chemistry at Munali Girls High School in Lusaka, identified strongly with the challenges outlined in John Stephen Agbenyo’s presentation about the status of ICT in schools in Ghana: huge classes, Internet problems, electricity shortages and a high staff turnover. Yet despite these challenges, the teachers attending the Forum were highly motivated and intent on finding workable solutions. As one teacher put it: “When we go back to our schools we have to tell our young students that this is not about computers, it’s about a revolution.”

This year’s Ministerial Round Table titled “Leadership for Creating Inclusive Education Systems: The Role of ICTs”, involved ministers, senior policy advisors and other relevant stakeholders from twenty-one countries, including Angola, Belgium, Botswana, Ethiopia, Ireland, Finland, Jordan, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Sweden, Tanzania, The Netherlands, USA, Zimbabwe and Zambia. It was opened by Zambia’s Minister of Education, Hon. Dora Siliya, and organised jointly by GeSCI, ICWE and IICD.

The political decision-makers who were joined by representatives from major development agencies also discussed how the private sector and development partners can support national educational reform programmes, focusing on the implementation of advanced education technologies.

Following the discussion, the ministers passed a directive on the use of ICTs for education. They expressed a desire to strengthen ICT competencies among teachers, which accounts for only ten percent of most countries’ ICT budgets, whereas spending on costly hardware, which accounts for ninety percent, should be reduced.

This year’s most popular topics were mobile learning, open source and teacher development.

The South African Shuttleworth Foundation showcased its “m4Lit” project, an mLearning campaign to encourage reading and writing among schoolchildren and young adults. A mystery story in English and Xhosa is available on a mobi site and a mobile instant messaging platform. Given that almost ninety percent of all South African teenagers in urban areas have access to mobile phones (but not to books), the participation rate is very high.

A number of experts demonstrated inventive mobile solutions for health development. Kwabena N. Obiri-Mainoo, MKFC/eCAP Ghana Foundation, Derrick Mwiinga Hamavhwa, Zambia Forum for Health Research, Momodou Gassama, World Health Organization from Gambia and Julie Schurgers, University of Zambia, illustrated how mobile phones can boost health awareness and health education in resource-poor and remote communities.
The conference also showcased a range of best practices of alternative energy sources such as solar energy, biofuels and biogas. Prof Tony Rest of Southampton University, UK, and Keith Wilkinson, a teacher at the International School at Lusaka, presented their inventive low-power-low-cost solar energy generating system: Solar panels are linked to a Dell M109S projector which is used as a multimedia resource for teaching sciences. The solar panels can be mounted in the remotest areas – even on the back of a camel.

As for the production of biofuels, the Biofuels Association of Zambia showcased the jatropha seed and its products. Prof Thomson Sinkala pointed out that to improve the standard of living, a switch has to be made from low-quality energy sources such as firewood and charcoal to better quality energy sources such as biofuels and biogas. These products could also be used to supply electricity to power computers or laptops in schools and community centres.

Christoph Schwaiger from IBM presented within the framework of “Education for a Smarter Planet”, which is being applied to transform educational systems in Africa. From cloud computing, one of the focal points of IBM, to small-scale power generation and governmental rural electrification programmes, the sustainability of eLearning in Sub-Saharan Africa is increasingly dependent on alternative energy solutions.

eInclusion was also a major theme this year, with inspiring examples from all over Africa and beyond, such as “Echoes from Ajegunle” presented by Ugochukwu Samson Nwosu from Paradigm Initiative Nigeria.

A promising example of the successful inclusion of marginalised people through ICTs came from Kenya: Students and teachers of various ethnic groups in the North Rift Region who were affected by the post-election mayhem have been brought together through the eLearning project “Good School Neighbours”. To accelerate conflict resolution, a number of education manuals, teacher training materials and learning technologies on peace and conflict resolution have been made available online.

**COMMENTS**

“The conference was excellent. It was a perfect opportunity to learn best practices from professionals and experts from various institutions all over the world. It gave me an opportunity to make comparisons between what I can and cannot do, inspired me to learn more so as to fill the gap in my knowledge and apply the same to support teaching and learning in Africa.”

Charles Omondi Lwande, University of Nairobi, Kenya

“Well done. I really enjoyed the conference and especially meeting with a lot of new people from different African institutions and from around the world.”

Igor Lesko, OpenCourseWare Consortium, USA

“I networked with many valuable future collaborators and gained fruitful insights. The conference was a hugely beneficial event for us and I believe many also enjoyed hearing and sharing what we have developed in the field of QR Codes. In total excellent!”

Gregory George Smith, NiMBLE, South Africa

“Another wonderful and fantastic eLA, we feel at home every year and we really appreciate all the help, effort and support we receive from you in person and from your entire team. Once again it was worth it for us.”

Maggy Beukes-Amisser, Namibia eLearning Centre (NeLC), Namibia
Practitioners and researchers provided vital insights into gender and inclusion issues. Alice Nankya Ndidde of Makarere University presented her work on the use of ICTs by female and male educators and learners in Uganda, noting that while institutional policies largely supported equity of access to computers, current ‘use’ data showed that for both educators and learners, males have an advantage. Her results were echoed in the pan-African study by Prof Thierry Karsenti of the Université de Montréal, which looked at ICT integration in teacher training.

With FIFA World Cup fever hitting South Africa and the rest of the world, eLearning Africa 2010 combined its two most popular topics: football and eLearning. Adam Salkeld from Tinopolis Interactive, UK, explained how football can break down cultural barriers, showing a film on the Zanzibar Beach Boys – a group of teenagers who “eLearn” English because of their passion for British football teams.

The work of the Zambian EduSport Foundation was presented by Patrick Mweshi. Frederico Carvalho from Intel Corporation, South Africa, showcased Skool™ Football, an initiative which encompasses a range of exciting and engaging activities geared towards improving maths and science skills.

The conference featured several sessions on the use of open source software and how quality research can be encouraged within African universities. Experts from the Kenyan Moi University, the National Open University of Nigeria, the Open University of Tanzania as well as from African Journals OnLine (AJOL), South Africa, discussed the use of open tools and content and how these can be successfully adapted to suit a sustainable learning environment in Africa. Sheila Jagannathan from The World Bank Institute, USA, chaired the session on practical experiences with open source solutions. It became clear that although a great deal of support exists for open source software and tools in Africa, online access can be difficult.

In addition to open source, the topic of proprietary content also attracted a lot of attention. The Global Teenager Project from Lebanon, chaired by Eliane Metni, focused on the value of student-generated digital learning materials, adding an extra dimension to the content theme.
Dr Stijn van der Krogt from IICD hosted a panel discussion on **local versus externally generated content**. Panellists Bart Cornille from VVOB, Zambia, Dr Alexander Edwards, University of Education Ghana, Keiko Chiemy Ignacio Campero from AMC EDUCATIC Bolivia, Jürgen Riester from APCOB, Bolivia, and Victor Mensah, OER Foundation Zambia, joined by over eighty participants, took part in a great and challenging debate. While recognising that local content development is a priority for Africa, some participants remarked that due to the lack of infrastructure and teachers’ skills there is still only a little African content available. The panellists argued that given the current eLearning facilities, any dedicated teacher could publish his or her own content, and also take advantage of the rich cultural heritage of the continent.

A range of **Special Focus Sessions** further enriched the conference, with Pixel Corps showing how eSkills can quickly make a worldwide online market available to trained individuals. The session on African Digital Diaries presented portraits of new informal ad hoc eLearning on the continent, with speakers ranging from the Bishop of Gambia to straightforward practitioners from Zambia and Zimbabwe. National stakeholders from Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and the USA shared their experiences about USAID activities in the region. Gerard Cunningham from UNEP presented a Special Focus Session on the application of ICT in addressing the major environmental challenges facing the planet.

**Insaka Sessions**
A variety of specially designed, highly interactive Insaka sessions provided useful networking opportunities for people sharing specific interests. The term “Insaka” is a Bemba word meaning “place to gather”. The sessions addressed topics such as mobile learning, content generation and Green IT.

**Demonstrations and Best Practice Showcases**
As part of eLearning Africa 2010, the Demonstration and Best Practice Showcase Area displayed a variety of tools and services developed for African learners as well as course samples and learning materials for the African market. These included open source learning environments, tools for supporting online collaborative learning, content and technology services.
eLearning Africa enjoyed the support of the following sponsors:

Platinum Sponsor:

Gold Sponsors: AfriConnect
Cardinal Technology Pvt Ltd
Comesa
Computers 4 Kids / e-Learner
Connect Africa
CoZa Cares Project
Crescent Future Kids
Critical Links
Designmate (I) Pvt. Ltd.
eBrain Forum of Zambia
Edukite
eInstruction
ELECTRONIC TEST COMPANY
Emerald Group Publishing Limited
Find a Job in Africa
Frontier
Gatlin International
GCFLearnFree.org
ICDL Africa
Intel Corporation
International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD)
InWEnt (Capacity Building International)
JSTOR
KeLC (Kenya eLearning Centre)
Kenya Literature Bureau
Laragh Skills (Pty) Ltd
Learnthings Africa
Mantra Lingua Ltd
Microsoft
Ministry of Education, Zambia
Mustek East Africa
MyVoIP Communications CC / TheSchoolDiary
NComputing
NeLC (Namibia eLearning Centre)
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Televic Education (TSLG Africa/Nairobi)
The African Virtual University
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
Vectes Europe bvba
Wyse Technology
Zain
Zambia Tourism Board
Zamtel

EXHIBITORS

eLearning Africa 2010 was accompanied by a parallel exhibition that established itself as a central meeting and networking point within the conference and provided participants with the opportunity to find out about the latest services and products available. Expressive appreciation of the display and presentations was articulated by representatives and attendees alike.

List of Exhibitors 2010

- AfriConnect
- Cardinal Technology Pvt Ltd
- Comesa
- Computers 4 Kids / e-Learner
- Connect Africa
- CoZa Cares Project
- Crescent Future Kids
- Critical Links
- Designmate (I) Pvt. Ltd.
- eBrain Forum of Zambia
- Edukite
- eInstruction
- ELECTRONIC TEST COMPANY
- Emerald Group Publishing Limited
- Find a Job in Africa
- Frontier
- Gatlin International
- GCFLearnFree.org
- ICDL Africa
- Intel Corporation
- International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD)
- InWEnt (Capacity Building International)
- JSTOR
- KeLC (Kenya eLearning Centre)
- Kenya Literature Bureau
- Laragh Skills (Pty) Ltd
- Learnthings Africa
- Mantra Lingua Ltd
- Microsoft
- Ministry of Education, Zambia
- Mustek East Africa
- MyVoIP Communications CC / TheSchoolDiary
- NComputing
- NeLC (Namibia eLearning Centre)
- ORACLE
- Panasonic Corporation
- Pearson
- PhotoNote
- RM
- SAP Africa (Pty) Ltd
- Sherston Sheshani
- SMART Technologies
- SmartLabs
- Tanzania
- Televic Education (TSLG Africa/Nairobi)
- The African Virtual University
- University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
- Vectes Europe bvba
- Wyse Technology
- Zain
- Zambia Tourism Board
- Zamtel

COMMENT

“Thank you so much for a superbly organised event! We saw people who are genuinely interested in our products, which means good leads. The conference was pitched just right. Thank you all for your efficient, friendly and polite service at all times.”

Charmaine Friel, Sherston-Sheshani, South Africa
“The conference was well organised, relevant, inspiring and enlightening.“
Catherine Mwenya, Munali Boys High School, Zambia

“A fabulous experience overall. Thanks so much.”
Fiona Wallace, UniForum SA, South Africa

“I took away more than I expected and hope to attend eLA 2011. Good content delivered by good speakers in a well organised event.”
Hamadu Hassan, National Health Insurance Authority, Ghana

“Simply an eye opener and a very worthwhile event. Looking forward to another one.”
Pascal Edwin Ngosa, The Technical and Vocational Teachers’ College (TVTC), Zambia

“Excellent - thanks to the organisers.”
Dr J.P. Bosman, Stellenbosch University, South Africa

“Congratulations on a great event.”
Sheila Jagannathan, The World Bank Institute, USA

“Very well organised. Please keep up the work for Africa’s development.”
Darlington Kahilu, Ministry of Agriculture & Cooperatives, Zambia

“I learned many things from my friends from all walks of life and we hope to implement the same things here in Zambia.”
Milda Salamu Hanengeta, Zambia National Union of Teachers (ZNUT), Zambia

“J’ai été ravi de vous rencontrer et d’être témoin que la manifestation que vous avez organisé cette année à Lusaka a été une sommité, je ne sais pas de ma mémoire de conférencier averti si une manifestation déjà organisée en Afrique tout secteur confondu a eu plus de monde. Félicitations.”
Diadié Toure, Union Internationale des Télécommunications (UIT), Senegal

**eLEARNING AFRICA 2011**

“Learners will only succeed in tomorrow’s world if we equip them with tomorrow’s skills.” This dictum by Hon. Prof Jumanne A. Maghembe, MP, Minister of Education and Vocational Training, Tanzania, has already set the tone for the next conference to be hosted by Maghembe’s home country. **eLearning Africa 2011** will take place from May 25th – 27th, 2011, in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.