

## Digital Citizenship and Accessibility for Inclusive Knowledge Societies

### Description of content and relevance of the workshop:

Digital citizenship and accessibility are the cornerstones for the development of inclusive Knowledge Societies. Contemporary societies are increasingly based on information and knowledge, and the ubiquity of technologies. Consequently, societies need to put in place mechanisms to:

- build workforces that have information and communications technology (ICT) skills and are reflective, creative and adept at problem-solving in order to generate knowledge;
- enable people to be knowledgeable and resourceful so they are able to make informed choices, manage their lives effectively and realize their potential;
- encourage all members of society – irrespective of gender, language, age, background, location and differing abilities – to participate fully in society and influence the decisions that affect their lives; and
- foster cross-cultural understanding, tolerance and the peaceful resolution of conflict.

The attainment of these social and economic goals is a key focus of education systems worldwide. Teachers need to be equipped with the digital skills necessary to guide the next generation to embrace and be able to achieve these goals.

National policy makers are currently working to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and particularly Goal 4, 'Inclusive Lifelong Education'. SDG 4 aims to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all', while SDG Target 16.10 pledges to 'ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements'.

The World Health Organisation reported in 2011 that over one billion people – approximately 15 per cent of the world's population<sup>2</sup> – live with some form of disability, and the figure is accelerating in line with population increase, growing poverty, natural disasters, ongoing conflicts, and in some countries an ageing population. Many persons with disabilities face a wide range of barriers to accessing education. While technology may provide more information to students in a greater variety of ways, it does not necessarily allow all users to access learning environments and information equally.

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<sup>1</sup> For more on the transformative role of education, see United Nations. (2017). *Sustainable Development Goals: Education*, at: <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/>

<sup>2</sup> See WHO. (2011). *World Disability Report*, at [http://www.who.int/disabilities/world\\_report/2011/en/](http://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/en/)

Current technology can erect a range of barriers; by the same token, it can provide innovative solutions for persons with disabilities. Curriculum designers and teachers need to be aware that students with disabilities must have access to all components of the learning process (including registration, administrative matters, course work and others) that would be available to students without a disability, and teachers should have positive attitudes and use appropriate pedagogy.<sup>3</sup> Assistive technologies when harnessed effectively provide an opportunity for persons with disabilities in educational settings to access information and participate fully.

Technology has a significant role to play in the achievement of the SDGs. UNESCO, in partnership with industry leaders and global subject experts, has created an international benchmark that sets out the competencies required to teach effectively with ICT: the UNESCO ICT Competency Framework for Teachers (ICT CFT).

The ICT CFT Version 3 incorporates in its structure a number of cross-cutting principles or overarching considerations: knowledge societies, Universal Design for Learning, and inclusive education which apply specifically to supporting the development of inclusive Knowledge Societies. This session is thus proposed to examine the implementation of these above-mentioned over-arching principles in teacher training programmes.

### **Outline and Interventions:**

The discussion will be very interactive and aims to trigger debates and reflections on best practices for teacher training in the area of digital inclusion and accessibility with a view to building inclusive knowledge societies and achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. The discussion will be structured around the areas below:

- How can the aspects of inclusive education: Universal Design for Learning (UDL), principles of non-discrimination, information accessibility, gender equality be incorporated into teacher training programmes for the use of ICTs?
- What opportunities and challenges does teacher training for digital inclusion raise to advance human Rights and Freedoms?
- What are examples of good practice that can be incorporated in an overarching manner for digital inclusion and accessibility in the area of teacher training for the use of ICTs ?

### **Speakers description:**

We have carefully selected speakers based on the diversity in terms of stakeholder group, regional representation, gender and youth, as well as expertise in teacher training for ICTs and accessibility.

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<sup>3</sup> See UNESCO. (2016). *Learning for All: Guidelines on the Inclusion of Learners with Disabilities in Open and Distance Learning*, at: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002443/244355e.pdf>

**Moderator:** representative of UNESCO

**Tentative Speakers proposed:**

- Robert Okinda, Head of Department - Open Distance & e-learning, KTTC. Rwanda
- Houssein Djama, President, University of Djibouti, Djibouti
- Dr Ferdinand Blancaflor Pitagan , Director, Academic Support for Instructional Services and Technology , De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines
- Dr Adel Ben Taziri, Coordinator, Université Virtuelle de Tunis, Tunisia
- Ms Petra Brodigini, Consultant, World Bank, Indonesia

**Rapporteur : representative of UNESCO**

**Remote moderator: representative of UNESCO**

**Links to previous workshops and events at IGF 2017**

IGF 2017 WS #53 Multi-stakeholder consultation on defining Internet Universality indicators

<http://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/igf-2017-ws-53-multi-stakeholder-consultation-on-defining-internet-universality-indicators>

UNESCO consults with participants of the Internet Governance Forum 2017 on the Internet Universality indicators

<https://en.unesco.org/news/unesco-advocates-human-rights-based-approach-big-data-and-artificial-intelligence-internet>

UNESCO advocates for a human rights-based approach on big data and artificial intelligence at the Internet Governance Forum 2017

<https://en.unesco.org/news/unesco-consults-participants-internet-governance-forum-2017-internet-universality-indicators>

What if we all governed the Internet? UNESCO launches new study at Internet Governance Forum 2017

<https://en.unesco.org/news/what-if-we-all-governed-internet-unesco-launches-new-study-internet-governance-forum-2017>

Resources and links

ICT CFT Version 3 (link to be available in June 2018)

ICT CFT Version 2

UNESCO project of defining Internet Universality:

<https://en.unesco.org/internetuniversality>

Link to UNESCO Internet Study “Keystones to foster inclusive Knowledge Societies”:

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/internetstudy/>

UNESCO Series on Internet Freedom:

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/resources/publications-and-communication-materials/publications/publications-by-series/unesco-series-on-internet-freedom/>

Link to UNESCO Concept note on Internet Universality:

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/crosscutting-priorities/unesco-internet-study/internet-universality/>

Link to CONNECTing the Dots Outcome document of UNESCO:

[http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/outcome\\_document.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/outcome_document.pdf)