

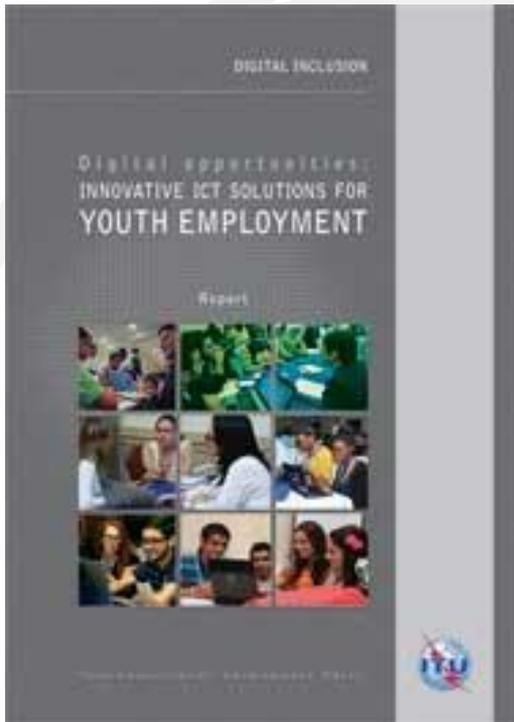
# *Digital Literacy*

Expert Consultation on ICTs and  
Violence against Children

*Costa Rica*

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## Digital opportunities: Innovative ICT solutions for youth employment

## Digital literacy

Most of today's attention around ICT skills is focused on the concept of digital literacy. Being digitally literate refers to the ability to effectively and critically navigate, evaluate and create information using a range of digital technologies. The Institute for Prospective Technological Studies (IPTS), a research centre of the European Commission, has undertaken extensive work around digital literacy. In its 2013 report they propose a comprehensive framework that exemplifies the types of competencies many experts note are required to be digitally literate.

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Figure 10: Digital competence framework

Dimension 1 Competence areas	Dimension 2 Competences
1. Information	1.1 Browsing, searching and filtering information 1.2 Evaluating information 1.3 Storing and retrieving information
2. Communication	2.1 Interacting through technologies 2.2 Sharing information and content 2.3 Engaging in online citizenship 2.4 Collaborating through digital channels 2.5 Netiquette 2.6 Managing digital identity
3. Content creation	3.1 Developing content 3.2 Integrating and re-elaborating 3.3 Copyright and licences 3.4 Programming
4. Safety	4.1 Protecting devices 4.2 Protecting personal data 4.3 Protecting health 4.4 Protecting the environment
5. Problem solving	5.1 Solving technical problems 5.2 Identifying needs and technological responses 5.3 Innovating and creatively using technology 5.4 Identifying digital competence gaps

“Today’s youth face enormous challenges finding a job and earning a decent income. Around the world, youth are far more likely than adults to find themselves unemployed or in low paying, informal sector jobs. When youth struggle at the beginning of their careers the repercussions can last a lifetime. That’s why it’s imperative that we take concrete steps to ensure youth have meaningful work opportunities and can lead productive and fulfilling lives.”

*Brahima Sanou*

*Director*

*Telecommunication Development Bureau*

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Connect a School, Connect a Community

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Connecting all primary, secondary and post-secondary schools to ICTs by 2015 was one of the targets set by world leaders at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS).

Connect a School, Connect a Community is a public-private partnership launched by ITU to promote broadband Internet connectivity for schools in developing countries around the world. Why focus on schools? Because connected schools can serve as community ICT centres for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, including women and girls.

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The objective is that children and youth attending these connected schools will have improved access to the latest information and communication technologies (ICTs).

These centres will leverage ICTs to improve the economic and social development of their communities by providing ICT-based training on basic life skills (language literacy, numeracy and basic ICT literacy) along with training that develops business and ICT-specialized skills.

The goal of this online platform is to promote understanding and awareness among government decision makers, donors and partners on the need for coordinated policies, regulations and practices that promote school connectivity and community benefits.

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Through the Connect a School, Connect a Community initiative, ITU and its partners have created:

- 1.The Toolkit of Best Practices and Policy Advice that identifies and compiles best practices that can be used by policy makers and regulators to connect schools to broadband Internet networks;
  - 2.A repository of Training Materials Applications and Tools that can be used by connected schools and their community ICT centres.
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We won't be stopping there; next steps include:

1. Further development and expansion of related online content;
  2. Raising global political awareness among education and communication policy makers and regulators in the development of national policies and strategies to connect schools as community ICT centres;
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3. Assisting ITU Member States in developing national school ICT connectivity plans and implementing targeted assistance projects; and,

4. Providing capacity building through regional training on using connected schools as community centres.

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## Key Challenges

Promoting connectivity to enable schools to serve as community broadband ICT centres involves a series of critical issues which must be addressed holistically. These include understanding and implementing technology; related policy and regulation; cost analysis; access to end-user equipment such as low cost computing devices; and basic ICT training for teachers. It also includes engaging with members of the local community; providing a safe online and physical environment for children; providing assistive technologies and an accessible environment for persons with disabilities; and developing and accessing content for education.

While some players have developed best practices related to one or more of these inter-related issues, for example, teacher training and cost studies for connecting schools, there is no comprehensive, “one stop shop” bringing together all best practices systematically and addressing all of the inter-related layers of the school connectivity ecosystem. Moreover, some earlier school connectivity initiatives were designed to promote dial-up or low-speed Internet access rather than broadband Internet access and many countries have yet to develop any school connectivity programmes at all.

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For all of these reasons, it is timely to develop a comprehensive online Toolkit identifying best practices related to all layers of the school connectivity ecosystem that will serve to inform education and ICT government leaders as well as international/regional organizations, development agencies, NGOs and the private sector seeking to connect schools as community ICT centres.

## How the Toolkit is Organized

The Toolkit of Best Practices and Policy Advice has been designed to share best practices on school connectivity with government decision-makers including national Ministries of Communication, National ICT Regulatory Authorities, Ministries of Education and School Administrators.

Currently, the Toolkit contains two modules, one on policies and regulations to promote school connectivity and the second is on designing low cost computing device programmes.

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## Nicaragua's National School Connectivity Plan Offering far-away school children access to the digital world



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In less than six months, an ITU pioneering project in Nicaragua has provided children at five remote schools with computers, electricity and Internet access. It has also put social and economic development tools in the hands of the communities in which the schools are located. Just to reach these isolated schools proved to be a logistic challenge. In some locations, the project team had to use a helicopter, four-wheel drive vehicles and even carts pulled by oxen to carry materials.

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Based on this analysis and on the situation of the telecommunications sector in Nicaragua, it was recommended that a national school connectivity plan should be implemented in stages. Potential policy approaches that could be adopted at the highest government level might include steps to:

- eliminate value-added tax for Internet service for schools;
  - set preferential rates for the educational sector;
  - impose conditions on companies before granting or renewing concessions for the use of frequencies, requiring companies to provide Internet service to schools at no cost or at preferential rates;
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- promote the reduction of prices for international connectivity for Nicaraguan operators, to be reflected in lower prices for customers;
  - auction spectrum that is not in use, on the condition that the licensee provides connectivity to schools at no cost, for the duration of the licence;
  - use the proceeds of the Telecommunications Investment Fund (FITEL) to provide Internet services to schools and to finance the purchase of equipment needed to serve this purpose.
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## The impact of the Nicaragua's Project

By the end of the project, people were already using ICT confidently and successfully. Access to the Internet will certainly contribute to their economic and social development, and will enhance their quality of life. Students are now comfortable using e-mail, chat and videoconferencing, searching for and using information on school subjects (mathematics, languages, science, social studies, art and so on), creating their own blogs, and publishing their own experiences.

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COP Pilot Program: 25'000 children trained in Ethiopia, in partnership with Facebook and ACOPEA.

COP Challenge: This programme seeks to address the issue of educating children by presenting an interactive platform where children, parents and educators can engage in fun activities to learn more about the risks the children face on the Internet and how these risks can be averted. It is a one day exercise whose activities are age specific to raise awareness. The basis of these activities is on Internet best practices that can be easily remembered and used by children as they go about their daily online activities.

Video campaign on digital literacy and citizenship launched with UNICEF on the occasion of the BYND 2015: Global Youth Summit in Costa Rica.

A large, faint, light gray globe is centered in the background of the slide, behind the main text.

# Thank you

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