

WITFOR 2005 Education Commission Project to enhance ICT competence of teachers in developing countries

Background

World Information Technology Forum WITFOR 2005 will be held in Botswana in 2005. The forum is organized now for the second time by International Federation for Information Processing (IFIP), which is a world-wide non-governmental organisation established in 1960 under the auspices of UNESCO for national societies working in the field of information processing. The purpose of the WITFOR Conferences is to help implement information development strategies and projects in developing countries. The conference is a partnership between the hosting government and IFIP. An important outcome is an agenda to bridge the digital divide between the developed and developing nations and empowerment of citizens with the help of ICT.

WITFOR will be organized every second year in co-operation with the member societies and local governments in developing countries. The first WITFOR took place in Lithuania in 2003 <http://www.witfor.lt/>. The second WITFOR will take place in Gaborone, Botswana from 31st August to 2nd September 2005.

The work of WITFOR 2005 is organised mainly through eight commissions, one of them being Commission for Education. It is proposing, that in addition to organising a successful education session, the Education commission will aim at launching a more sustainable and tangible developmental input as the outcome of the WITFOR Gaborone process.

Rationale

The rationale for the WITFOR Education commission work, in addition to organising the WITFOR Education Commission's component for the conference programme, is to mobilise *avant garde* SADC region teachers and teacher educators to become change agents in improving the professional competence of the teacher communities, the quality of teaching and the learning environments of their students and themselves through a SADC-wide professional development project. The project aims at establishing a SADC-wide teacher support network and enhancing professional development of secondary school teachers and teacher educators through the network of so-called change laboratories.

Action plan

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Outlining the pre-project work packages (PPWP)

PPWP 1 Preparing the project proposal and getting funding for the pilot phase

This work package is the responsibility of the co-chairs of the WITFOR Education Commission. Getting approval and support for it from Botswana is also responsibility of the presidium. Support will be sought, Ministry of Science, Technology and Communication, Ministry of Education and the Faculty of Education of University of Botswana. The team will also seek financial support from the Finnish Embassy in Pretoria. IFIP will also give financial support to participants from developing countries, which are IFIP members. The pre-work package #1 will be completed by May 5 2005.

The first task is to draft a project plan to be shared prior to WITFOR 2005 through the website to all interested education policy makers and teaching professionals, particularly in the SADC region. The plan is tentatively based on the following outline:

- The project is based on the idea of networking local teacher groups set up to serve as so-called change laboratories for developing the professional competence of teachers to utilise ICT in their profession.
- The project will start with a pilot group of Botswana teachers and teacher educators prior to the WITFOR conference in May 2005.
- WITFOR conference Education commission will highlight the theoretical basis of the most effective models of professional development of teachers' ICT competence and demonstrate best practise case studies both aiming at boosting and scaling up the project to other teacher developer groups from other SADC countries to join in.
- The post WITFOR workshop is arranged to facilitate planning similar change laboratories to be set up and linked with each other into a teacher support network with Virtual Centre for Innovative Learning Technologies (VCILT) as a support hub in the University of Mauritius.
- The sustainability of the activity and further scaling up to a larger scale will be achieved through low-cost maintenance of the network and the support centre until similar structures will be set up nationally and networked with other existing networks of practitioners, researchers and e-content providers.

PPWP 2

Finding funding for the actual project from donors and other countries

This pre-project work package will be carried out by the co-chairs acting as a project team by the end of June 2005.

Seed funding and support has been and will be sought from

- Government of Botswana to enable a pilot group to be set up and mentored.
- Embassy of Finland to SADC to enable setting up similar teams in other interested (SADC) countries.
- Government of Mauritius to continue funding for University of Mauritius to maintain VCILT to be able to host the support network

- Government of Finland to support the network set-up
- Helsinki University of Technology to support the project planning and kick-off.

Funding for realising the project will be sought from

- EU through SADC and through Helsinki University of Technology
- Able governments of countries with participating teams (which already have school and teacher education ICT strategies pipelined or in place)
- Private and public donors.

The funding plan for the pre-project phase is as follows:

1. **Government of Botswana** is requested to cover the following costs:
 - To University of Botswana for hosting the pre-workshops in May and August and the first project workshop in December 2005; and
 - To the participating Botswana teachers for attending the workshops in May and in September.
2. **Embassy of Finland** in Pretoria is requested to cover the following costs totalling €30 000:
 - To University of Botswana for setting up the pilot group €4.000
 - To University of Mauritius Virtual Centre for Innovative Learning Technologies for setting up and maintaining the support website at least until the end of 2005 €4.000
 - To support participants from SADC countries to WITFOR 2005 and the workshop attached €10.000
 - To the project team for running the pre-workshops €3.000
 - To the project team for drafting the project plan and submitting project proposals to EU and SADC €3.000
 - To the first meeting of the actual project in Botswana before the proper funding is in place in Dec. €5.000

The actual project funding will be sought from European Union directly by Helsinki University of Technology and indirectly through SADC by requesting SADC to become a partner in the actual project when it will be expanded to the SADC region towards the end of the year 2005.

The actual project should be running for two years and the costs could roughly be estimated like this:

- One change agent network per participating country x 12 countries x 2 years x €3.000 € 72.000
- Project leader / researcher for 2 years x €40.000 € 80.000
- Maintaining and developing the support network € 70.000
- Regional workshops 2 x €15.000 € 30.000
- Travel costs € 10.000
- Consumables € 5.000
- Totalling €267.000

PPWP 3 Preparing and running the WITFOR session and the pre- and post-conference workshops

The WITFOR conference offers the Education Commission a platform for

- presenting the project plan;
- supporting it with an applicable case study of successful professional development in Mauritius; and
- introducing the background and summary of the cutting edge R&D on which the project will be based.

This approach will mean from the point of view of intended Education Commission audience at WITFOR, that this approach will attract to WITFOR primarily education policy makers, professionals and teachers who are potential participants in the project.

There will be a pre-conference workshop in May (1 day) to prepare for the Botswana pilot project, to motivate and mobilise potential participants and to organise the pilot. Another pre-project workshop will be in September in connection with WITFOR (2 days). That will serve three purposes: 1) to model up the Botswana pilot; 2) to give a model for organising similar project groups in other countries and 3) to sow the seeds for the network. This pre-project work package will be planned by the co-chairs and accomplished by the team supported by 1-2 other experts funded partially through the WITFOR budget partially through support from Finland and Botswana.

Partners

- IFIP WITFOR
- Mauritius: University of Mauritius and its VCILT
- Botswana
 - o UB and its network
 - o MoE and
 - o MScT&C
- Finland
 - o Embassy in Pretoria
 - o HUT Dipoli and its network

Outlining the work packages for the main project

The work packages for the main project will be outlined and substantiated in the pre-project work package #1. It will be comprising most likely of following work packages or components:

- WP1 Successfully running pre-packages
- WP2 Running the Botswana pilot project
- WP3_{1...n} Launching and running other national projects
- WP4 Setting up the virtual support centre and the network
- WP5 Ongoing researching, reporting and disseminating the model

About the professional development model of the project

The model is based on the following components:

- Developing collaboratively the local and virtual knowledge and innovation communities of teachers by blending work of teachers, learning of students and teachers with innovations (called change or competence labs of change agents, comprising of ca 15 members in each); and
- Networking these communities with other similar teacher communities
 - Supported by mentors from national teacher education institutions
 - Networked also with a virtual resource support centre.

Funding plan