ICT IN EDUCATION CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION

CONCEPT NOTE

**Event Dates:** October 5th to 9th 2015.

**Venue:** Julius Nyerere International Convention Center

**City:** Dar es Salaam

**Country:** Tanzania

**Organizer:** Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MOEVT)

**Partner:** Global Partnership for Education (GPE)

1. **Background**

Tanzania cannot escape from the fact that the world is becoming an increasingly digital world, where only those who will participate early in this development will benefit early. It is no longer the question of whether or not to prioritize for the use of digital opportunities rather on how the country will utilize available opportunities for the use of digitized information in enabling acquisition of knowledge.

As technology continued to evolve and grow over the past decades, Tanzania continued to explore choices for enabling the country to move forward with the use of ICT for socio-economic development.

In education, while there have been issues around whether or not to allow children easy access and play with electronics, the country is now urgently capitalizing on children’s attraction to electronics as a venue for promoting e-learning and fast tracking the attainment of basic literacy and numeracy skills.

Tanzania has also had to deal with the multiplicity of offered technological solutions, struggling between how to best decide on what solution would fit what purpose the best and analyzing sustainable issues mostly brought about by the lack of conducive environment and cost efficiency.

In Tanzania, as in any other country, ICT enabling environment is a critical factor in successful implementation of any e-learning programme. The piloting of various e-learning initiatives in schools has been challenged by inadequate financial resources
to equip schools with ICT facilities and inadequate availability of electricity and internet connectivity with most schools not connected to any national grids.

Effective utilization of e-learning in schools has further been hindered by readiness of teachers to incorporate e-learning methodology into the traditional methodology. Use of e-learning requires teachers to not only have basic user knowledge but also change their attitudes to accept that their traditional routine can be enhanced by the incorporation of e-learning in their schemes of work. In addition to being able to confidently engage with availed electronics and possess the required competency to operate the electronics, teachers’ pre-requisite knowledge of the subject matter remains to be the most crucial issue.

In Tanzania several providers continue to try best solutions for the provision of e-learning to schools. Various organizations have contributed to trying out of equipment, e-content, internet connectivity and improving the general environment at which e-learning could take place. What has not been achieved however is large scale rollout of e-learning in schools with all that is evidenced are solutions that have been tried out at pilot level.

Relevant e-content that aligns with the curricular for different education cycles is also a major challenge. While the World Wide Web provides free open source e-learning content that’s mostly in the English language, customization is required to deliver content in Kiswahili and one that aligns with the Tanzanian Primary Education curricular. Further to the challenge of customizing free e-content, there is need to develop content locally so as to grow the expertise around e-content development and broaden the base of e-learning experts in general.

To organize an ICT in education exhibition is essential in providing for a venue at which some of the solutions that have been tried out so far in Tanzania and elsewhere can be showcased and evaluated in the hope that some of those would eventually be implemented in schools.

2. **Objectives**

The MOEVT is organizing the ICT in Education Exhibition in order to explore solutions for e-learning in Primary Schools that will help fast track attainment of Early Grade Reading and Math skills. The MOEVT believes that organizations and companies already providing solutions in this area are best placed to provide support on successful implementation of e-learning in schools.

The exhibition is, therefore, a venue for exhibitors to showcase practical solutions and ideas on how to best introduce and use information and communication technologies in and outside the classroom. Based on evaluations that will be carried out by a technical committee, selected solutions will be piloted during the URT Fiscal Year 2015/16 for roll out in FY2016/17.
3. What is expected at the Event
During the exhibition it is anticipated that different solutions, broadly targeting e-learning in Primary Education will be presented on how to best provide e-learning to schools to enable them to expand the methodologies used in assisting the teaching and learning in and outside the classroom.

Preferable solutions are those that suggest delivery models which do not undermine the importance of the presence of the teacher/guardian but suggest how e-learning will be blended with the traditional teaching and learning methodologies to enrich classroom interaction. Solutions to be exhibited are expected to range from:

- Affordable e-content for use in Primary Schools;
- Affordable internet connectivity to Primary schools;
- Solutions for affordable power/electricity to Primary schools;
- Affordable Software and hardware which consider the uptake of e-content in different formats; to
- Programmatic solutions for enabling teachers and pupils to engage with e-learning.

4. What Exhibitors are expected to do
Exhibiting organizations/companies are expected to present some of the solutions for e-learning in Primary Education currently being implemented and those that are being developed.

 Organizations implementing projects in this area will present how the design of the projects and implementation at school level have increased teaching and learning interaction; how schools responded to the use of e-learning as a means to facilitate teaching and learning; and the successes and challenges faced in implementation of e-learning solutions.

Since the Exhibition is open to solutions being implemented at the entire Primary Education level, Exhibitors will be required to explain whether or not the exhibited solution could be customized for implementation at any Primary Education Cycle. i.e. Pre Primary, Std I&II Cycle, Std III&IV Cycle and Std V&VI Cycle.

Since the ultimate aim is to ensure that solutions to be introduced in schools will directly contribute to attainment of learning achievements, Exhibitors will be required to present Impact Evaluation reports as evidence of the impact that the showcased solutions have caused at the level of learning achievements.

Likewise, it is hoped that specific solutions targeting the provision of e-content for early grade teaching and learning, that can be adapted to the newly developed Pre Primary, Standard I&II Curriculum will be showcased.

5. Evaluation of Exhibited solutions.
The MOEVT has formulated a Technical Committee chaired by the Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH) to carry out evaluations of exhibited solutions.
Selection criteria has been set by the Technical Committee to allow for equal participation of each exhibited solution and it is expected that a variety of issues to arrive at selection of the best solution(s) will be considered, including but not limited to:

- Whether the solution is fully developed, has been implemented, assessed and proven fit for implementation in environment similar to that in Tanzania;
- Whether there is evidence from Impact evaluation reports that show that this solution has worked where it was implemented; and
- Whether there is evidence that the solution is cost effective and sustainable.
- Whether there is evidence that the solution contributed to attainment of learning achievement to participating students.

6. What will happen after the evaluation

Once the evaluation is completed, the Technical Committee will present its report to the MOEVT upon which all Exhibitors will be informed of the results.

The MOEVT, working in collaboration with the selected organizations will then proceed with developing an action plan to enable piloting of the solution in selected Schools.

The initial step of the pilot will be to conduct Baseline Survey of participating schools focusing on learning achievements. This will be followed by customization of the selected solutions; e.g. aligning e-content with the revised Pre Primary, Std I&II Curriculum.

The Pilot will be concluded by conducting an Endline survey to determine whether the solution successfully impacted on learning achievements. Upon evidence that the solution impacted on learning achievement and that it is cost effective and sustainable, the e-learning solution will be scaled up to more schools.

Note that more than one organization might be involved depending on whether there is need to work with, for instance, an organization that works solely on e-content and another that provides cost effective delivery model for the e-content.

7. How Implementation of selected solutions will be supported

Implementation of selected solutions will be supported by the Global Partnership for Education through a programme called Literacy and Numeracy Education Support (LANES) coordinated by the MOEVT and implemented by over 20 Government Departments and Agencies.

The LANES programme calls for improved Basic Literacy and Numeracy Skills for children in and out of schools. The MOEVT has set targets that will ensure that children acquire required literacy and numeracy skills since they
are the foundation for attainment of required basic education knowledge. In this regard, expanding the methodologies that will help realise the targets is a key priority in implementation of the LANES programme.

8. The ICT in Education Conference
The conference will be held along the Joint Education Sector Review (JESR) Technical Working Sessions to be held at the same venue.

Conference discussions will provide participants with conceptual and practical aspects of implementation of e-learning in schools that will help shed light on why solutions that may seem highly attractive to the user, may not necessarily provide for what is hoped for.

Conference Topics
1. Conceptual issues around introducing E-Learning in Schools and in the curriculum
   - Exploring the value and impact of E-learning on education and on what effect has e-learning had on teacher practices and student learning
   - E-learning as a new form of social interaction’ vs. just another pedagogic experience
   - Are e-learning solutions overcome by their challenges?
2. Introducing E-Learning in Schools in Developing countries- E-Learning Mobile Stations-Case Study-Uganda.
   - What it takes
   - Equipment that’s fit for harsh environments
   - Making e-learning mobile to serve a wide range of learners
   - Success and Challenges faced in Piloting UNICEF’s Mobistation Innovation in Uganda
3. E-Learning Enabling Environment-The situation in Tanzania
   - Availability of relevant e-content
   - Availability of internet connectivity- Availability will allow for the use of cloud computing, central servers-capitalizing on what ISPs can offer at affordable or no cost at all through their CSR packages.
   - Reaching Schools through the National ICT Broadband Backbone
   - Availability of electricity-How many schools are connected to the National Grid? What’s the solution for use of solar power? Solar powered equipment
   - Policy on use of electronics in schools
4. Readiness of Schools in using and managing e-learning resources
   - Schools’ readiness to utilize e-learning when availed
   - Pre-requisite knowledge of the Teacher/Facilitator: E-Learning does not replace teacher’s knowledge of the subject matter
   - Changing Beliefs and attitudes/creating confidence
     o Teacher attitude: Fighting against technology or fear to expose one’s lack of basic ICT knowledge
o Teachers beliefs about the role of ICT as a teaching tool
o The value of ICT for student learning outcomes
o Teachers own personal confidence and competency
o Management of e-learning at school level
  - Willingness to incorporate in schemes of work and not to see e-learning as additional task
  - Security and control
  - Replenishment-of equipment/adopting new developments
  - Acquiring new content - How to make teachers and students participate in creating, publishing and sharing content rather than simply being passive consumers.