
CONNECT TO LEARN SCALES ACCESS TO EDUCATION, WITH FOCUS ON GIRLS

Connect To Learn was conceived to address some of the challenges relating to secondary education access and quality. A global education initiative launched in 2010 by the Earth Institute of Columbia University, Millennium Promise and Ericsson, the aim is to scale up access to quality secondary education, in particular for girls, by providing scholarships and bringing ICT to schools in remote, resource-poor parts of the world, over mobile broadband. According to UNESCO, there are 34 million female adolescents out of school, missing out on the chance to learn vital skills for work.

To date the initiative is launched in 21 countries and benefiting some 50,000 students (see map).

Connect To Learn goals are being achieved by:

- improving the quality of education and connecting school children globally through the power of ICT
- increasing access to secondary schooling, especially for girls, through scholarships
- making use of private/public partnerships to advocate for policies that support universal secondary education.

FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHT

Access to education is a fundamental human right. Ericsson's view is that ICT is a transformative force in responding to key development challenges such as access to education and achieving the UN Millennium Development Goals.

Initiatives such as Connect To Learn can play a key role in helping achieve future Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that will frame the development agenda over the next 15 years. Proposed SDG 4 (4.1) sets out that "by 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes." Ericsson is taking an active role promoting access to ICT and broadband in the SDG process, as a member of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network and the Broadband Commission on Digital Development.

Connect to Learn is particularly focused on girls' education, given that young women make up 58% of those not completing primary school, according to UNESCO. Almost a quarter of young women aged 15-24 today (116 million) in developing countries have never completed primary school and so lack skills for work.

Ericsson is developing new business models for ICT-enabled educational services. Ericsson's standpoint is that the educational opportunities afforded by modern broadband technology should be inclusive.

TACKLING CHALLENGES

There are considerable challenges in introducing modern broadband technology to schools in developing countries, among them: logistical difficulties of bringing connectivity to rural areas; access to electricity; security; low levels of IT knowledge among teachers; and the lack of a strong business model to ensure efforts are sustainable. Connect To Learn is helping to meet many of these challenges by demonstrating the business opportunities to operators and convincing governments to include ICT in national education policies and budgets.

To address these challenges, Ericsson is deploying a cloud-based ICT solution in schools that lowers both initial costs and total cost of ownership for schools, and significantly reduces the complexity of technology solutions for teachers and students alike. By using cloud technology, it aims to remove ICT support tasks from teachers and provides them with technology that is simpler to manage, so they can focus on improving the quality of education. The solution is provided as a service, and is designed for users with little or no IT competence. Improved access, energy efficiency and reduced costs are made possible because users do not have to worry about virus protection, software updates, content-control capabilities for safe internet browsing, application installation or maintenance – all tasks that are managed in the cloud. The solution also promotes the role of the network operator as a provider of both bandwidth and applications for educational purposes.

Technology improves educational opportunities by enabling personalized study, while enhancing the potential for learning through community-based education and access to educational resources, even in remote rural schools.

EDUCATING GIRLS IN MYANMAR

Ericsson and the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and partners have joined forces as part of DFID's Girls' Education Challenge to support girls' education in Myanmar (also known as Burma). It aims to improve access to the internet, delivering teacher training and enabling students to experience a 21st century education. The collaboration with the UK government and DFID is Ericsson's first co-funded public-private partnership with a government. Through the unique constellation of partners, Ericsson sees the initiative as a meaningful way to bring scale and impact to Connect To Learn.

In Myanmar, only 54% of secondary school-aged children are enrolled in secondary school, according to the World Bank. As the population of Myanmar begins to enjoy the benefits of mobile communications, the intention is that students will not be left behind.

Leveraging Connect To Learn, the initiative will allow more than 30 secondary schools to be connected to the internet through mobile broadband, with deployment to the schools set for 2015. Professional development programs for teachers, educational content for students, and child-friendly computing solutions to improve literacy and numeracy among females are among the aims.

PRESS BACKGROUNDER

APRIL, 2015



Ericsson is working with UNESCO, the Earth Institute at Columbia University, Finja Five, Qualcomm Incorporated, through its Qualcomm© Wireless Reach™ initiative, and the external evaluator EduEval to deliver the program.

Up to 600 scholarships will also be provided to marginalized girls. The deployments are supported by mobile operator Myanmar Posts and Telecommunications and will benefit 11,000 girls in the first two years.

IN BHUTAN, REACHING REMOTE AREAS

Ericsson partnered in 2014 with the Government of Bhutan ([video](#)), the Ministry of Education and Bhutan Telecom to roll out a pilot e-learning project “iSchool.” ([video](#))

Based on Connect To Learn, the project aims to provide access to quality education to 250 grade nine students at six schools in remote areas of Bhutan. Ericsson is deploying videoconference and communications technology; Bhutan Telecom will provide high-speed mobile broadband. If successful, the initiative is planned to extend to some 200 schools.

LAUNCH IN NORTHERN GHANA

In Ghana, Connect To Learn is being launched in the Millennium Village in the Northern Ghana SADA region with mobile operator Tigo, which will benefit over 7,000 students, in four secondary schools. This will build upon Connect To Learn’s girls’ scholarship program, which was launched in SADA in 2013. The launch of Connect To Learn follows Ericsson’s deployment of a 3G network to eight sites in the SADA region, in cooperation with Tigo.

Today over 500,000 people in 12 countries in sub-Saharan Africa are benefiting from connectivity in engagement with the Millennium Villages Project (MVP). This connectivity has made it possible to introduce Connect To Learn as well as other services that benefit villagers, for example within health and small businesses development, which is improving livelihoods.

RURAL EDUCATION IN SRI LANKA

In Sri Lanka, a partnership between Ericsson, Mobitel and Open University of Sri Lanka brings ICT and computer literacy education to teenage girls in farming communities.

NEW MODEL FOR EDUCATION

Ericsson and the Earth Institute shared the results of a collaborative, year-long research study of four Connect to Learn schools in Uganda and Kenya to understand the challenges faced by rural, marginalized communities, and develop potential models for measuring the impact of ICT on education.

The [ICT in Education report](#) highlighted a number of challenges and benefits as well as recommendations for implementing ICT into schools. ([video](#))

The initiative has already made an impact on the lives of hundreds of young people, mainly girls in the secondary schools in the Millennium Villages in Ghana and Tanzania. They are the first students to start the comprehensive four-year scholarship program that has been developed over the past year by experts at the Earth Institute and Millennium Promise. The first wave of students graduated in 2013. It includes a rigorous selection process requiring the explicit buy-in of the students themselves, their families, the school and the local education authorities.

IN RECOGNITION

Ericsson won the telecoms.com 2014 industry award for connecting the unconnected, in recognition for providing connectivity to address basic human needs in the Millennium Villages Project and through the Connect To Learn initiative.

[Hear from one of the first graduates of the Connect To Learn program in Ghana.](#)



More photos can be found [here](#)

ADDITIONAL READING

ICT in Education study: <http://www.ericsson.com/res/docs/2013/ict-in-education-study-spread.pdf>

The Earth Institute: www.earth.columbia.edu

Millennium Promise: www.millenniumvillages.org/millenniumpromise

Millennium Development Goals: www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/mdgoverview.html

Telecoms.com 2014 Connecting the unconnected award:

<http://www.ericsson.com/news/1764403>

Sustainable Development Goals:

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/sustainabledevelopmentgoals>

UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network: <http://unsdsn.org/>

The Broadband Commission on Digital Development:

<http://www.broadbandcommission.org/Pages/default.aspx>

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Fact sheets on girls' education, UNESCO:

<http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/ED/GMR/images/2011/girls-factsheet-en.pdf>

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/resources/in-focus-articles/International-Day-Girl-Child/>

NOTES TO EDITORS

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Ericsson is the driving force behind the Networked Society – a world leader in communications technology and services. Our long-term relationships with every major telecom operator in the world allow people, business and society to fulfill their potential and create a more sustainable future.

Our services, software and infrastructure – especially in mobility, broadband and the cloud – are enabling the telecom industry and other sectors to do better business, increase efficiency, improve the user experience and capture new opportunities.

With approximately 115,000 professionals and customers in 180 countries, we combine global scale with technology and services leadership. We support networks that connect more than 2.5 billion subscribers. Forty percent of the world's mobile traffic is carried over Ericsson networks. And our investments in research and development ensure that our solutions – and our customers – stay in front.

Founded in 1876, Ericsson has its headquarters in Stockholm, Sweden. Net sales in 2014 were SEK 228.0 billion (USD 33.1 billion). Ericsson is listed on NASDAQ OMX stock exchange in Stockholm and the NASDAQ in New York.

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