

Forum: Special Conference: Focus on Global Education
Issue: The issue of global e-schools and communities' initiative
Student Officer: Ourania Markaki
Position: Deputy President

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear delegates,

My name is Ourania Markaki. I am 17 years old and I attend the IB2 at Moraitis School. I am very pleased to have the opportunity to participate at the 8th Platon School Model United Nations as the Deputy President in the Special Conference Committee, focusing on global education. This conference will be my 9th overall MUN experience. Each MUN offers new life changing experiences and thus I look forward to creating those memorable memories with all of you dear delegates.

In this year's agenda, Special Conference committee will focus upon global education. Several issues will be brought into consideration and thoroughly discussed in order to agree upon measures and resolutions. This years SPECON will debate upon the following issues as to effectively combat them: the implementation and improvement of domestic education laws, global e-schools and communities' initiative, financing global education: opportunities for multilateral action, and primary education in less developed countries. This study guide will provide you with information about the issue of global e-schools and communities' initiative; however, this cannot be the only source of which you will base your research. As your deputy president I will help you with any questions that you may come across. You can contact me here: ran.mark@hotmail.com.

Looking forward to meeting you all in the 8th PSMUN,

Best Regards,

Ourania Markaki

INTRODUCING TOPIC

It is undeniable that in our times there are still school-aged children that lack education due to marginalization and poverty, financial deficit of developing countries, living in war zones, discrimination between the two sexes, child marriage, natural disasters, child laborers, but most importantly of all because in some cases schools do not exist and teachers are few and uneducated as well.



Figure 1: School education in Malawi, Africa.

Education, though, is a cornerstone for countries to socio- economically develop and prosper. Thus education is vital for long-term, sustainable development. Without education people cannot safeguard peace, protect human rights, and improve their lives. Even though we live in the 21st century, there are still 370 million school-aged children who are unable to attend school and 800 million illiterate adults worldwide. “The challenge is great and the stakes are high,” says Stephen Nolan, Executive Director, GeSCI.

The Global e-Schools and Communities Initiative (GeSCI) is an international non-profit organization, which was established on the recommendation of United Nations Task Force on Information Communication Technology (UN ICT) and the governments of Sweden, Switzerland, Canada, and Ireland. GeSCI’S project is responsible for education, science & technology, innovation, and vocational training in the LEDC’s.

GESCI provides technical assistance, implementation assistance, and strategic advice in order to advance education and development objectives in developing countries.

GESCI nowadays help the following countries: Bolivia, Botswana, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia.

GeSCI aims to achieve the UN Millennium Development Goals with its headquarters based in Ireland in two ways. Firstly, GeSCI works with the local Ministries of Education and ICT in developing countries to facilitate and support ICT4E initiatives. It provides knowledge and experience to developing countries concerning the drafting of national plans so that ownership of a strategic and attainable plan can be taken from each country. Secondly, GeSCI cooperates with global partners that can successfully match the needs of resources, donor, provide expertise, technical, physical, and financial support.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

ICT: According to UNESCO “the term “information and communication technologies” (ICT) refers to forms of technology that are used to transmit, process, store, create, display, share or exchange information by electronic means. This broad definition of ICT includes such technologies as radio, television, video, DVD, telephone (both fixed line and mobile phones), satellite systems, and computer and network hardware and software, as well as the equipment and services associated with these technologies, such as videoconferencing, e-mail and blogs.” ICT has 6 main goals that wants to achieve which are the following: Education policy, Teacher education, Teaching and learning, Non-formal education, Monitoring and measuring change, Research and knowledge sharing.

E- learning: E- learning is “a learning system based on formalised teaching but with the help of electronic resources. While teaching can be based in or out of the classrooms, the use of computers and the Internet forms are the major components of E-learning. E- learning can also be termed as a network enabled transfer of skills and knowledge, and the delivery of education is made to a large number of recipients at the same or different times. Earlier, it was not accepted wholeheartedly as it was assumed that this system lacked the human element required in learning. However, with the rapid progress in technology and the advancement in learning systems, it is now embraced by the masses. The introduction of computers was the basis of this revolution and with the passage of time, as we get hooked to smartphones, tablets, etc, these devices now have an importance place in the classrooms for learning. Books are gradually getting replaced by electronic educational materials like optical discs or pen drives.”

Development: According to economics “Development is a multidimensional qualitative concept that refers to an improvement in living standards in an economy encompassing material consumption, education and health, as well as environmental concerns. Development involves poverty reduction, increased employment opportunities for the individual and a more equitable distribution of income. Development focuses attention on the individual and on the three dimensions of well-being, which are:

Health: the ability to live a long and healthy life

Education: the ability to read, write and acquire knowledge

Income: command over the income needed for a decent life.”

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Global e- Schools and Communities Initiative

GeSCI is an organization founded in 2003. Initially the headquarters were in Dublin, Ireland and in 2011 were moved to Nairobi, Kenya. GeSCI initially focused its work on four priority countries: Namibia, Ghana, Bolivia and the state of Andhra Pradesh in India. Work is progressing in each partner country with each working towards its own ICT4E strategy. In addition to these countries, it is also working with the Jordanian Education Initiative on a codification, analytical and problem-solving exercise in Jordan and with SchoolNet Africa’s One Million PCs campaign.

Global e- Schools and Communities initiative builds competencies in ICT and effectively plans for society development and for key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



Figure 2: Honor graduates from ICT Programmes

GESCI along with African Union Commission (AUC) and other partners established the African Leadership in ICT (ALICT) capacity building programme. This programme graduated 497 participants across 16 African countries and from the AUC. Among the ALICT graduates, 160 are women leaders, which is the 33%. The ALICT course is a multi-stakeholder approach responsible for building capacity and raising awareness of African leaders on the issues of the Knowledge Society, ICT, Education, Science & Technology and Innovation in support of the AUC Action Plan.

ALICT alumni form the core membership of the “Leadership Network for Sustainable Development” (LN4SD), a growing Community of Practice (CoP) that brings together public-sector leaders and stakeholders working in knowledge society related sectors to harness the power of knowledge, skills, technologies and innovation to drive African social and economic transformation and achieve inclusive growth and sustainable development. The network connects public policy and decision makers, researchers and key actors, and is expected to facilitate and stimulate the collective leadership capacities for sustainable development of African and other developing regions through knowledge exchange, sharing learning, experiences and discussions on how to address common challenges to inform policy and decision making processes, support relevant research and empower potential leaders as to how to leverage knowledge society sectors (education, ICT and STI) for sustainable development, while addressing critical areas such as the environment and climate change, gender, youth skills and entrepreneurship, and social responsibility and accountability.

The LN4SD’s online platform was launched in Abidjan, June 8-9, 2016 in order to urge networking, knowledge sharing and learning as well as the rise of innovative perspectives in adopting knowledge sectors-related policy debate through blogs and discussions.

GESCI is currently searching for 5 acknowledged experts, who will have to do the following for period of five months: (1) write well-informed research blogs and respond to comments following the publication of the blog on the Leadership Network for Sustainable Development’s online platform, and, (2) facilitate live webinars to be attended by members of the LN4SD.

COUNTRIES INVOLVED IN THE ISSUE

USA

USAID partners with Vodafone Ghana in 201, Ministry of Education/Ghana Education Service (MOE/GES) and the Global e-Schools Community Initiative (GeSCI) to provide internet access for 400 senior high schools to support ICT education and contribute towards wider community development. That was during 2012 until 2013.

Africa

Of all regions, sub-Saharan Africa has the highest rates of education exclusion. Over one-fifth of children between the ages of about 6 and 11 are out of school, followed by one-third of youth between the ages of about 12 and 14. According to UIS data, almost 60% of youth between the ages of about 15 and 17 are not in school.

Sweden, Ireland, Canada and Switzerland

They deeply support GESCI and its work. They were the ones that helped establishing it in the beginning. They believe that ICT is one of the key areas of education and social development and benefits of new technologies should be available to all, as stated in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), Kenya Education Network (KENET) vision, Directorate of e-Government: on a national level; New Partnership for African Development, Asia-Pacific Development Information Programme – on a regional level; World Bank Education for All Fast Track Initiative (EFA), Dakar Declaration, World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and the follow-up Internet Governance Forum, and the Millenium Development Goals (MDG) – at a global level.

Kenya

Kenya is one of the countries that the headquarters have been established on 2011 and acknowledges the fact that more attention needs to be drawn to the challenge of providing education to the majority of the population, especially in developing and less-developed countries (LDCs). Bearing in mind that universities in certain regions of the world, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, including Kenya, suffer from low numbers of trained faculty, practically non-existent levels of research, outmoded programs, poor quality of educational materials, and lack of connectivity and network infrastructure. Kenya supports the wide use of Internet technology in teaching, research, and sharing of other information resources to the general population. Kenya also encourage the public-private partnerships to mobilize resources in order to support e-learning initiatives, develop integrated e-learning curriculum to support ICTs for education and community growth.

India

Here the GeSCI supported the Ministry as it mobilised "the influence and resource base of the governments at the state and national level, as well as companies and NGOs working in India, to plan for and implement large scale e-schools initiatives". This involves a partnership with the Ministry of Human Resources and Development (MHRD), with which it implemented the Rajasthan Education Initiative (REI) to develop a baseline study of ICT in education initiatives and a monitoring and evaluation framework to measure the impact of the REI as it develops.

TIMELINE OF EVETS

Event date:	Event:
12th December 2003	The UN and ICT Force establishes GESCI
1 st June 2004	EASSy Submarine Cable MoU meeting held in Nairobi Kenya
7 th June 2005	GESCI signs MoU with Namibia
23 rd January 2006	GESCI signs MoU with Bolivia
1 st March 2006	GESCI signs MoU with Ghana
28 th March 2006	The Global Alliance for Information and Communication Technologies(GAID) is approved
24 th May 2006	First e- Learning Africa Conference held in Addis Ababa
1 st September 2006	Namibia launches Tech/Na! with GESCI; support
20 th March 2007	GESCI signs MoU with Rwanda
1 st April 2007	GESCI partners with India
25 th March 2008	GESCI signs MoU with CSDMS
1 ST January 2009	GESCI assists Ghana MoE to create its first ever curriculum Framework
1 st June 2010	GESCI assista Rwandan MINEDUC to undertake a capacity audit of the NCDC'S
15 th October 2010	The African Union Commision, Finland and GESCI sign momentous partnership agreement for ICT and Leadership in Africa
25 th September 2011	GESCI becomes an International Organisation

	hosted by the Kenyan Government
1 st June 2013	Kenya announces Laptop for Schools programme. The plan is to deliver 1.3 million laptops to schoolchildren.
19 th June 2013	The MasterCard Foundation and GESCI launch strengthening Innovation and Practice in Secondary Education (SISPE) project.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

The United Nations has already agreed upon resolutions in order to ensure that less economically developed countries get the proper education, meaning that children are also involved with technology that can meet the standards of more developed countries, so that equality can be established and children be more willing to learn in more interesting and creative ways. One such resolution is the General Assembly resolution A/RES/60/252.

One solution would be for the Governments as well as all relevant United Nations bodies, in particular the Information and Communication Technologies Task Force, and other intergovernmental organizations, including international and regional institutions, non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector to contribute to, and actively participate in, the intergovernmental preparatory process of the Summit and the Summit itself.

Furthermore contributions (funds) should be made by any means such as, but not limited to, from every NGO or any organization as USAID that comes from any developed country.

Last but not least, in the case of e-schools, access to technology means access to education. All States and large-scale firms could be invited to provide free technological devices to countries in need, and more money both stemming domestically or internationally should be directed to funding the creation of telephone and internet networks and improvement of electricity access, to enable more children participate in online education.

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MULTIMEDIA RESOURCES

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