

Dear Friends,

We hope that this Newsflash! is helpful and informative. We recommend visiting the AMREF website to find lots of resources, courses, and valuable information for organizations dealing with vulnerable families and communities. As always, please respond with any questions or recommendations.

Sincerely,
The Firelight Team

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Study Criticises Laptops for Children Scheme

This article looks at the findings of recent research conducted on the "One Laptop per Child" (OLPC) scheme, which has sent over a million US\$100 laptops to children in the developing world, evaluating the OLPC initiative in Ethiopia...

Summary

This article, published on the SciDev Net website, looks at the findings of recent research conducted on the "One Laptop per Child" (OLPC) scheme, which has sent over a million US\$100 laptops to children in the developing world. David Hollow of the United Kingdom-based ICT4D Collective at Royal Holloway, University of London. His team evaluated the OLPC initiative in Ethiopia.

According to their findings, unless the laptops are introduced with care, they become little more than distracting toys in the classroom. The Ethiopian experience also revealed that students wanted more content on the laptops and teachers were not adequately trained on how to make use of them.

Researchers told Africa Gathering, an information and communication technology (ICT) and social networking conference organised by the London International Development Centre in April 2009, that students tended to play with the machines, largely for taking pictures with the built-in digital camera. Teachers also became frustrated because the students were better at using the laptops and played on them during lessons instead of listening.

The ICT4D team worked with Swiss educational software provider BlankPage to

develop Akili, a textbook reader that was used to download books and increase the educational content on the laptops. "We felt that Akili was something of a bridge because it enabled the children to explore and engage with their own learning but, at the same time, they were still based within the national curriculum and the teacher's authority was not undermined."

In the article, Hollow suggests that in Ethiopia many children only attend school for a year or two. Therefore, the priority is to give them good basic literacy and numeracy skills, meaning that introducing laptops in secondary schools would be more appropriate.

However, Matt Keller, OLPC's director of Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, rejected the criticisms. He says that when children take the laptops home, they extend the school day. He disputes Hollow's recommendation to focus on secondary schools, arguing that "What technology can do is pique a child's curiosity and engage them at an interest level that's far greater than what a bricks and mortar school can do."

Hollow told the meeting that, for ICT4D projects to work, it is essential to take a long-term view and assess the impact of the project afterwards. This should involve talking to beneficiaries to discover their perceived needs.

Article here: www.comminit.com/en/node/296886/307

Headline from CGD HIV/AIDS Monitor, episode March 11, 2010

Virtual elimination of mother-to-child HIV transmission by 2015 is now within reach if current rates of progress by [Global Fund](#)-supported programs and other efforts are maintained, according to the [Global Fund's 2010 Results Report](#). The Fund's programs have already provided 790,000 HIV-positive pregnant women with treatment to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV, as well as 4.5 million basic care and support services to orphans and other children made vulnerable by AIDS. The report was released in advance of an initial meeting on the Fund's third replenishment round, to be held in The Hague, Netherlands, on March 24-25. See related reporting in the [Washington Post](#).

CGD and HIV/AIDS Monitor
information: www.cgdev.org/section/initiatives/active/hivmonitor

Call for nominations: John Humphrey Award 2010
Do you know someone who campaigns for human rights and whose activities deserve recognition? The International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic

Development will confer the John Humphrey Award on an individual or an organization to highlight their contribution to the promotion of human rights and democratic development. Deadline: April 30th.

More at www.dd-rd.ca/site/humphrey_award/index.php.

Nominations invited for World of Children Awards Program

The World of Children Awards program was created "to recognize and elevate those selfless individuals who make a difference in the lives of children here in the U.S.A. and across the globe." Awards are made in three categories. The Humanitarian Award, which includes a grant of up to \$50,000, recognizes an individual who has made a significant contribution to children in the areas of social services, education, or humanitarian services. The Health Award, which includes a grant of up to \$50,000, recognizes an individual who has made a significant contribution to children in the fields of health, medicine, or the sciences. The Founder's Youth Award, which includes a grant of up to \$25,000, recognizes youth who are making extraordinary contributions to the lives of other children. Deadline: May 1st.

More at www.worldofchildren.org/index.php/awards.

Chichewa Dictionary Project

To: Friends of the Chichewa Dictionary Project

From: Foundation Heart for Malawi

The Chichewa Dictionary Project provides a unique tool for communication and education in Chichewa/ Chinyanja speaking Africa. The combined Chichewa/ English - English/ Chichewa Dictionary (CE-EC) was published May 2009. Thousands of books have reached the general public, especially pupils and teachers. For interesting new developments and wider perspectives, e.g., see our website: www.chichewadictionary.org Do not forget to look at the pictures that illustrate our free distribution to schools. Copies of the first edition are still available. Single copies are sold at retail price in the bookshops of Malawi and Zambia, for example:

African Habitat
Anglia Book Distributors

Blantyre and Lilongwe
Blantyre and Lilongwe

grabifem@hotmail.com
angliabooks@africa.com

Bethel Bookshop
Central Africana
Central Bookshop
CLAIM
Kachere
Mandala House
Maxson's Bookshop

Zomba
Blantyre, Lilongwe and Cape Town
Blantyre
Blantyre, Lilongwe, Mzuzu, etc.
Zomba, etc.
Blantyre
Limbe

bethel@goodnews.mw
centralafricana@af-sacranie@africa-on
kachere@globemw.org
info@societyofmalawi.org
njmaxson@gmail.com

If you want to buy larger quantities, Foundation Heart for Malawi are ready to deliver them at a very low price, of course depending on the number of books you need. Buying dictionaries for your relations is an attractive way of helping the Project. For every book you buy we can finance a free book for a Malawian or Zambian pupil, who cannot afford to buy the book himself/ herself. Please contact us: info@chichewadictionary.org

Stepping Stones: website now in English, French and Spanish

This website is for people who want to find out more about Stepping Stones and how it works, including the issues it deals with, where it has been used and which people can benefit.

The site provides information on how to obtain the original Stepping Stones Training Manual and accompanying video, about different adaptations and translations of the Manual and how to get hold of them.

It includes testimonies from individuals, practitioners, policy-makers and others on the impact that Stepping Stones has had on their lives and the valuable contribution it has made to the global effort to address the problems linked to HIV and AIDS in the world today.

It also provides access to a wide range of resources, including books, articles, workshop reports, impact evaluations, practical training guides, DVDs, videos, etc and provides details of individuals and organisations able to provide training on Stepping Stones.

Information and resources from Stepping Stones: www.stepsstonesfeedback.org/?page_id=2

African Medical and Research Foundation (AMREF) 2010 Short Courses

If you work in health care, a development organisation or in the caring industry at any level, then AMREF has the course for you. AMREF's mission is to create vibrant networks of informed communities that work with empowered health workers in stronger health systems, in order to ensure that every African has access to the good health which is theirs by right. This mission is reflected in the training courses that we run, and our determination to build the capacity of the African people to take charge of their own health care.

More information and full listing of courses here: www.amref.org/info-centre/amref-courses--training-programmes/short-courses-for-2010/

Below are examples of 3 courses being offered in the near future:

Sexual and Reproductive Health

Fees: US\$600

Course Dates: 10 May - 21 May 2010

Overall Objective

To give participant orientation to a holistic approach on Sexual and Reproductive Health as part of the general health of people and development

Details and application here: www.amref.org/info-centre/sexual-and-reproductive-health/

Management & Sustainability of Programmes Course

Fees: US\$600

Course Dates: 3 May – 14 May 2010

This course is designed to contribute to the improvement and build the capacity of programme/project managers and programme staff in management, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes/projects. The course provides in depth theory and practical management and sustainability skills.

Target Group

This course will benefit programme/project managers and programme officers.

Details and application here: www.amref.org/info-centre/management--sustainability-of-programmes-course/

Health Services Organisation and Management course for district health managers

Fees: US\$900

Course Dates: 26 April – 14 May 2010

By the end of the course, participants would have:

- Gained concise understanding of the principles and main functions of management as applied in the health sector
- Acquired appropriate knowledge and skills in:
 - Organising, planning and managing health services at district (county) level
 - Organisational assessment
 - Proposal writing and resource mobilisation
 - Monitoring and evaluation
 - Resource management at district level (county)
 - Financial management
 - Designing and conducting health systems research

Details and application here: www.amref.org/info-centre/health-services-organisation-and-management-course-for-district-health-managers/

As part of the Firelight Foundation's Capacity Building Program, Firelight provides "Newsflashes" to share relevant resources and information with our active grantee-partners via weekly emails and via post on a monthly basis. We hope that by facilitating access to information for grassroots, community-focused organizations, programming for children and families, as well as organizational development, is enhanced. Past editions of the Firelight Newsflash can be found on our website: <http://www.firelightfoundation.org/newsflash.php>.

We welcome your comments, feedback and ideas for upcoming Newsflashes at newsletter@firelightfoundation.org.