

Shanghai TV University and Egyptian Ministry to receive 2008 UNESCO King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa Prize for the Use of ICTs in Education

News

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The Director-General of UNESCO, Koïchiro Matsuura, has named the laureates of the 2008 UNESCO King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa Prize for the Use of Information and Communication Technologies in Education. They were selected on the recommendation of an international jury whose meeting this year was held in Bahrain for the first time.

China's Shanghai TV University is rewarded for its project Turning the Digital Divide into Digital Opportunity: The Project for Building the Digital Lifelong Learning System in Shanghai. The project reaches 230 community learning centres in the Shanghai area and addresses the needs for digital literacy of students, lifelong learners, working adults, senior residents and members of the general public from diversified backgrounds.

The project is exemplary both because of its quality and scale. Through satellite and network systems, high-quality digital educational resources are made available to remote and underdeveloped regions in China including: training teachers in rural areas and providing information technology services and teaching resources to rural schools. It also provides lifelong learning support to four million Shanghai residents and to an equal number of migrant workers. There are plans to use the programme to assist African and Asian countries in developing lifelong learning systems.

Dr. Hoda Baraka, of the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology of Egypt, was also chosen to receive the Prize for her leadership in the implementation of several national ICT projects in education. These include the ICT-In-Education Programme: Toward Ubiquitous Reachability to All Learners, an initiative consisting of an array of exemplary programmes designed to provide digital opportunities to Egypt's citizens; and the Egyptian Education Initiative, which covers 2,000 schools, 17 public universities and 1,000 information technology clubs. The initiative has provided training to over 64,000 teachers and trains a further 45,000 teachers and administrators in digital literacy. The national projects aim to promote the use of ICTs to enhance the quality of education, to fight illiteracy, and to provide quality and equitable education to remote areas, while addressing the needs of gender education.

The Director-General of UNESCO will present the Prize - a diploma and US\$25,000 - to each of the two laureates in a ceremony at the Organization's Headquarters on 14 January 2009. The laureates were chosen from among 67 projects from 47 [*] Member States or observers. The Prize was created in 2005 and is placed under the patronage of HM King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Honourable Mentions will also be given to the Schools Online Curriculum Services (SOCS) of Western Australia's Department of Education and Training and to the One Laptop Per Child

Programme of the Ministry of Education of Peru.

The Schools Online Curriculum Services (SOCS) has developed an Online Teaching Learning System that enables teachers to link learning activities to the required outcomes described in the Western Australia Curriculum Framework. It enables them to monitor, assess, and provide feedback on student activities and to develop online communities of practice. The programme also provides facilities for teachers to take existing materials, customize and share them with colleagues or save them into a central repository for retrieval or reuse.

The One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) is a nationwide programme established to provide teachers and students in rural elementary schools with XO laptop computers. Over 3,000 schools were equipped with more than 25,000 computers and 115,000 teachers have been trained to meet the needs of 2,705,000 students. In its next phase, the project will reach 200,000 more students and 9,000 teachers. The initiative creates a digital teaching environment which increases learning hours, integrates families into education, develops lifelong education, enables the development of creative and critical thinking skills, problem solving and decision-making.

* Australia; Bahamas; Bangladesh; Bolivia; Chile; China; Colombia; Costa Rica; Cuba; Czech Republic; Democratic Republic of the Congo; Dominican Republic; Ecuador; Egypt; Ethiopia; France; Georgia; Greece; Guatemala; Honduras; Hungary; India; Iran; Jordan; Kuwait; Latvia; Lebanon; The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; Malaysia; Mexico; Morocco; Nepal; New Zealand; Pakistan; Palestinian Territories; Paraguay; Peru; Qatar; Russian Federation; Rwanda; Saudi Arabia; Slovakia; South Africa; Thailand; United States of America; Uzbekistan and Venezuela.