

# AED/LearnLink

## ICT Applications for Development

*AED/LearnLink uses information and communication technologies (ICTs) to support development. Activities range from public access telecenters to teacher training, professional development, organizational networking, e-commerce, e-government, and institution capacity building. Lessons from field experiences are shared to contribute to the body of knowledge on using ICTs for development.*



*Keyword Identifiers:* teacher training, professional development, educational technology, IT

**Purpose:** To improve educational quality by incorporating technology into teacher training, increasing educator access to information and communication technologies (ICTs), and promoting ICT use in education.

**Description:** Since October 1999, the Computer Assisted Teacher Training (CATT- PILOTE) project has worked with the Ministry of National Education (MNE) to implement a national master plan for ICT training and professional development that sets a course for bringing computers into Moroccan classrooms by 2005.

The CATT-PILOTE program is producing educational technology training materials, educating a core group of teacher trainers and student teachers, and providing opportunities for networking among

teachers and administrators at

Centres de formation des instituteurs (CFIs) or teacher training institutes. CFI training begins initially in Essaouira, Al Hoceima, Sidi Kacem, and Ouarzazate, followed later in Tiznit and Taroudant. These locations were selected, in part, because they are areas where girls' retention and enrollment rates lag behind the national average.

Teachers will learn at an individualized pace and in stages, moving from basic computer training to skill development in communication and networking and, eventually, to instruction, research, and instructional design. The approach is experiential, participatory, and student-centered. To track skill acquisition, an online competency test administered at the beginning and end of training focuses on familiarity with ICTs, ability to train others, and proficiency in applying ICTs in the primary grades.



*Members of the Moroccan regional government and education sector at the inauguration of connectivity at Sidi Kacem, from left to right Governor El Hadmi, CFI Director Bounaamani, and Delegee (Superintendent of schools in Sidi Kacem) Mr. Benayad*

After connectivity is established at the CFIs, IT-trained educators will have an opportunity to network with counterparts at other CFIs and around the world. In addition, the web site at [ibtikar.ac.ma](http://ibtikar.ac.ma) offers teachers and administrators a vehicle for multiple “innovations”—the English translation of the Arabic word “*ibtikar*” and overarching project concept.

**Scope of Work:** AED/LearnLink and the MNE are spearheading the process of materials and web site development and teacher learning. Six training modules are being produced, offering instruction in how to use multiple computer software applications at varying levels of sophistication.

While connectivity was being established at the Sidi Kacem CFI, AED/LearnLink trained in a Rabat cyber café the first core group of 24 teachers, who were nominated by CFI faculty from the selected provinces. When telecommunications links and multimedia centers are in place at all sites, training will be decentralized, with individual CFIs determining use policies and training schedules.



Student teacher training at Sidi Kacem CFI

**Expected Outcomes:** As the educational community gradually becomes connected to the Internet, opportunities arise for news messaging, collaboration among educators within Morocco and around the world, and a nationwide discussion about educational quality. The multimedia centers at the CFIs will institutionalize support for educational technology in the provinces and will help provide greater ICT access for girls.

With their technology skills, the core group assumes the role of Master Information Teachers to educate others, champion educational technology in the schools, and help retain teachers experienced with educational technology, comfortable with computers, and capable of using ICTs for meeting needs in instruction and research. Although the target was set for 50 CFI faculty and 300 student teachers in the first two years of training, many more than that are expected to be trained eventually. For example, the first training session, which focused only on Basic Computer Skills, drew 262 participants in Sidi Kacem alone.

The computer-mediated training, which includes a face-to-face component, is expected to increase interactions among teachers and administrators, enhance pedagogy and curriculum reform, enrich existing educational resources, and help Morocco achieve the educational improvements it considers essential for its future.

The web site developed through the project serves as a portal for CFIs, resources, and bibliographies. It also will house CATT-PILOTE project items such as the self-competency tools, learning modules, collaborative software, a bulletin board for messages, and a help line. All project information will be made available on CD-ROM as well. Collaborations are anticipated with USAID's Morocco Education for Girls (MEG) and Girls' Education Activity (GEA) projects.

**Impact:** Already, the MNE curriculum Department has approved the first training module teaching basic software application skills. Regional education officials are expanding operating times of CFIs so that many student teachers may have access to training in ICTs. All first and second year student teachers in Sidi Kacem will receive training.

**Challenges:** With such a small group of technology-trained faculty, the demands for technical support among the provinces and pre- and in-service teachers are enormous. Within a low technology environment and with limited access to computers, a small group of people trained in educational technology must retain their skill levels and be able to innovate in this adoptive phase of integrating computers into teaching and learning.

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