



Rural schools connected to ICT in southern Sri Lanka

ITU forges partnerships to connect schools and communities





3rd May 2011

International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the Telecom Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka (TRCSL) have inaugurated a project to connect 25 schools in Akuressa, Southern Province of Sri Lanka on 3rd May 2011. Under the “*Connect a School, Connect a Community*” initiative, ICT tools such as computers and printers as well as Internet connectivity will be provided.

Within the framework of a public-private-people’s partnership (4Ps) model, telecommunication operators and NGOs have joined the project as partners to assist in providing access to education through ICTs in the rural schools of Sri Lanka, some of which are located in remote communities. This project aims to transform these schools into connected community ICT centres. Their long-term sustainability would provide a vital link to marginalized and vulnerable groups including children, women, indigenous people, persons with disabilities and those living in rural, remote and underserved areas of Sri Lanka.

In addition, Intel plans to offer training for 62 teachers at 31 schools through the Intel Teach programme, which helps teachers to be more effective educators. The programme entails training teachers to integrate technology into their lessons and to promote problem solving, critical thinking and collaboration skills among their students.

Appreciating the partnership and assistance extended by ITU, TRCSL, Intel and ADB, which funded a project to promote ICT education in rural areas of the island, the Secretary in the Ministry for Education of Sri Lanka, Mr H.M. Gunasekara said, “This initiative provided our school system with much needed ICT equipment, know-how and teacher empowerment to reach our national ICT goals.”

ITU Secretary-General Hamadoun Touré noted in his statement: “This is an important initiative that sets a milestone in driving ICT access to rural and remote areas of Sri Lanka. It benefits not only teachers and students but also marginalized and underprivileged communities in the country. Such public-private-people’s partnerships – or 4Ps – promoting school-based community ICT centres are an attractive, affordable, and sustainable step forward in providing digital opportunities for Sri Lanka.” The message was delivered on behalf of the Secretary-General by the Regional Director of the ITU Regional Office for Asia-Pacific, Ms Eun-ju Kim.

The Director General of TRCSL, Mr Anusha Palpita stated, “This school and rural community-oriented ICT project will be beneficial to the rural sector particularly its schools which in the future can be expected to play a key role in the penetration of ICT knowledge into the rural and remote areas of the country.”

Promoting connectivity to enable schools to serve as community broadband ICT centres involves a series of critical issues, which must be addressed holistically, such as understanding and implementing technology, related policy and regulatory frameworks, cost analyses, and access to end-user equipment. These include low cost computing devices and basic ICT training for teachers and members of local communities as well as providing a safe online and physical environment for children, assistive technologies and an accessible environment for persons with disabilities, and developing and accessing content for education, among many others.



**“Connect a School , Connect a Community”
ITU /TRC Assistance Project 2011**

Project Background:

Mr. S.H.S. Maduranga, of University of Sri Jayawardenapura was a recipient of an ITU Youth Forum Fellowship to attend the ITU Telecom Asia Youth Forum 2008 held in Bangkok, Thailand. ITU usually helps their Youth Forum Alumini to undertake small project in their home countries by providing assistance chanelled through the respective administrations.

Mr. S.H.S. Maduranga, submitted a project proposal to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) through Telecommunications regulatory commission of Sri Lanka (TRCSL).

Assistance was provided by the ITU with 25 Nos of PCs, Printers and UPSs to the value of Rs. 2,700,000/=. These were provided to 25 schools located in the Akuressa Education Zone, Matara District. Computer Tables and Chairs were donated by the S L S Sunil Development Foundation and the Kamburupitiya Kodithuwakku Development Foundation. Two Licensed operators, Mobitel (Pvt) Ltd and Dialog Axiata have undertaken to supply Internet facilities for the schools at concessionary rates.

With the assistance of the Ministry of Education and Intel EM Limited Sri Lanka, an ICT Teachers “Intel Teach” training programme was conducted to provide ICT teaching skills. The “Intel Teach” Program is intended to help teachers to become more effective by training them to develop skills relating to the integration of technology into their lessons, promotion of problem solving, critical thinking and collaboration between students.

The following schools were selected under this “Connect a School, Connect a Community” project programme at the Akuressa Education Zone in Southern province.

01. Matara / Bobagoda, Sugeeswara Maha Vidyalaya
02. Matara / Nimalawa Kanitu Vidyalaya
03. Matara / Diyalape Kanitu Vidyalaya
04. Matara / Dediyaigala Kanitu Vidyalaya
05. Matara / Ihala Maliduwa Kanitu Vidyalaya
06. Matara / Dolamawatha Kanitu Vidyalaya
07. Matara / Kohogoda Kanitu Vidyalaya
08. Matara / Ganhela Kanitu Vidyalaya
09. Matara Kanahelagama Kanitu Vidyalaya
10. Matara /Thalahagama Kanitu Vidyalaya
11. Matara /Maliduwa Kanitu Vidyalaya
12. Matara /Maramba Kanitu Vidyalaya
13. Matara /Thalahagama Primary School
14. Matara /Bopagoda Kanitu Vidyalaya
15. Matara /Akurugoda Senani Kanitu Vidyalaya
16. Matara /Weliketiya Kanitu Vidyalaya
17. Matara /Denipitiya Model Kanitu Vidyalaya
18. Matara /Dampella Kanitu Vidyalaya
19. Matara /Sulthanagoda Kanitu Vidyalaya
20. Matara /Sulthanagoda Maha Vidyalaya
21. Matara /Horagoda Alhudha Kanitu Vidyalaya
22. Matara /Penetiyana Saddhatissa Kanitu Vidyalaya

23. Matara /Makuluwalahena Kanitu Vidyalaya
 24. Matara /Galpamuna Kanitu Vidyalaya
 25. Matara /Yahamulla Kanitu Vidyalaya
 26. Matara/Hulandawa Tamil Vidyalaya
 27. Matara/ Poraba Kanitu Vidyalaya
 28. Matara /Godapitiya Sadath Maha Vidyalaya
 29. Matara /Porathota Sri Medankara Maha Vidyalaya
 30. Matara /Paraduwa Adarsha Kanitu Vidyalaya
 31. Matara/ Lenama Kanitu Vidyalaya
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