

Imfundo: Partnership for IT in Education

DFID, 1 Palace Street, London, SW1E 5HE

www.imfundo.org

Newsletter 31 - November 2003

November has been another month of staff changes for the Imfundo team. Yasin Haroon and Jo Nicholls having completed their temporary assignments with us have now moved on to new work. We are particularly grateful for their contributions. Yasin, as our Programme Assistant, played a very significant role in helping to ensure the smooth running of our office, and Jo has, amongst other tasks, completely revised and developed our database of ICT for education activities in Africa (see below for more details). We have now been joined by two new members of staff. Jimin Patel, having completed a Masters degree in multimedia information systems science at Brunel University, is working with us as our temporary Programme Officer, with a particular remit to revitalise and update our web-site, and Femi Iloyi joins from the West Africa Department in DFID as our new Programme Assistant [for full details of the team, past and present, see <http://imfundo.digitalbrain.com/imfundo/web/imfundo/teamcontent/>].

Tim Unwin

6th November 2003

Cisco Systems Partnership

Cisco (www.cisco.com) were one of the founding private sector companies responsible for shaping Imfundo's origins, particularly through the secondment of Michelle Selinger to the inception team. Cisco have continued to provide considerable support to Imfundo, and we are delighted that they have now signed a formal Memorandum of Understanding to serve as the basis for our future work together. One immediate result of this is that they have agreed to provide hardware and infrastructure in support of IFORUM, Imfundo's programme of support for children at risk of living and working on the streets in Ethiopia.

ICT for Special Educational Needs in Africa

The potential for ICT to contribute to the needs of the visually and hearing impaired, as well as those with varying physical and mental abilities is all too often ignored. Imfundo is committed to finding the best ways in which ICT can contribute to *Education for All* in Africa. In this context, we particularly see one of our roles as being to search out the optimal ways in which the needs of some of the most marginalised and forgotten communities in Africa can be addressed through the use of appropriate technologies. Hence, we have been especially committed to working in support of Ethiopia's street children to identify ways in which appropriate technologies can best be used to serve



those with Special Educational Needs. We are therefore delighted to announce the publication of our latest KnowledgeBank report by Leslie Casely-Hayford and Paul Lynch, entitled *A review of good practice in ICT and Special Educational Needs for Africa*. This is now available at <http://imfundo.digitalbrain.com/imfundo/web/papers/sen/?verb=view>.

Imfundo database on ICT for education initiatives in Africa

Regular readers of this newsletter will recall that in 2001 Imfundo created an online database of ICT for education activities of relevance to officials and educators in Africa. Jo Nicholls has completely revised and updated this, so that it now contains information on some 342 such activities (see <http://imfundo.digitalbrain.com/imfundo/frontpage/linkresources/?verb=view>).



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Imfundo's Output to Purpose Review - soon to report

A big thank you to all those who have in various ways contributed to the ongoing review of Imfundo's work being led by Myra Harrison (former Chief Education Adviser in DFID). The Imfundo team has already learnt a great deal from this review process, and we eagerly anticipate the final report due later this month. As part of our lesson-learning and information sharing strategy, we hope to make available summary conclusions from the review, as well as the ways in which we will be responding to it, early in 2004.

British Council conference in Tashkent

Imfundo is delighted to have been able to contribute to the Sixth International Conference on Language and Development held in Tashkent from 15th-17th October, co-hosted by the British Council (one of Imfundo's ResourceBank partners) and the Ministry of Education of Uzbekistan. Caroline Pontefract, Imfundo's Education Adviser, and John Clegg (The English Place) presented a paper entitled *Evaluating digital materials for English language development in African primary classrooms* and Imfundo also contributed to the production of a series of British Council posters on the role of language in development.

Kenya update

Caroline Pontefract returned to Kenya on 25th October to provide continued support to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) in the realisation of the capacity building component of the World Bank's Free Primary Education Support Programme (FRESP). Imfundo will help MoEST particularly in the area of strengthening management capacity at school level. Caroline also initiated a meeting between local ResourceBank partner, Mediae (Kenya), CFBT and the aforementioned MoEST to ensure coherence and complementarity in their support to Free Primary Education in

Kenya. Whilst in Kenya, Caroline participated in the Commonwealth of Learning/SchoolNet Africa conference on "Teacher training to use ICT's in the classroom in East Africa", which was held in Nairobi on 4th-6th November 2003.

Progress in The Gambia

Bas Kotterink is in the Gambia during the first week of November, contributing to discussions over the development of DFID's programme of support to the Ministry of Education, and identifying how Imfundo's partners can best use ICTs to add value to this.

Useful information from our partners

Useful information recently received from Imfundo's partners and others includes:

- A new comparative study on internet prices in Africa which has recently been added to www.africt.org.
- October was a particularly active month in the field of Open Access, with numerous new international initiatives being announced. For more information, do see the SPARC Open Access newsletter at www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/newsletter/11-02-03.htm.
- Intermediate Technology Consultants have recently completed a DFID funded project entitled *ICTs and the growth of peri-urban informal sector enterprises*. Copies of the CD providing information about this work are available from Imfundo (s-ramsay@dfid.gov.uk) or online at www.itcltd.com/icts.
- COL Knowledge Series call for authors: The Commonwealth of Learning invites proposals from potential authors in six fields including *Producing gender sensitive learning materials*, *Managing student records/progress in distance learning*, and *Practical applications for mobile learning (m-learning) in developing countries*. The deadline is 20th November 2003. For more information see www.col.org/knowledge.

