



GESCI and Côte d'Ivoire launch program to integrate ICT and improve the teaching of science, technology and mathematics

GESCI, Nairobi, February 5, 2016. The Global E-Schools and Communities Initiative (GESCI) and the Ministry of National Education of Côte d'Ivoire agreed last week to launch and implement a program aimed at transforming secondary schools into digital schools of excellence through integrating ICT in schools and improving the teaching of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and the professionalization of teachers in general.

The African Digital Schools Initiative (ADSI) program is designed to use ICTs to improve the quality of STEM teaching and learning, to respond to the short supply of teachers in this field and to address the gap for robust models of ICT integration in secondary education nationally, regionally and internationally. This ground-breaking programme will run in Kenya, Tanzania and Côte d'Ivoire over the next 5 years and is funded by The Mastercard Foundation.

ADSI will reach 20 schools, 200 STEM teachers and 400 teachers in other subjects, 30,000 students and 20 school boards and parent associations in Côte d'Ivoire.

The preparatory work for implementation will start in 2017, in close collaboration and consultation with the Ministry of National Education of Côte D'Ivoire.

The program will scale up and adapt to Côte d'Ivoire its innovative model for ICT integration in the teaching and learning of STEM developed by GESCI, which has been tested and validated in its project pilot SIPSE (*Strengthening Innovative Practice in Secondary Education*) deployed in 20 secondary schools in Kenya and in Tanzania between 2013 and 2015.

Its overall goal is to contribute to the scaling up of ICT use in teacher development and ICT enabling conditions in secondary schools that will lead to improved student 21st century learner skills development and learning outcomes, and readiness for the workplace and the knowledge economy.

Africa's rapidly growing youth population is potentially an extraordinary opportunity for the continent's development. Expanded access to, and improved quality of secondary education – an important priority in the new 2030 agenda for sustainable development – is a key ingredient to capitalize on this opportunity and to develop the STEM, higher order thinking and entrepreneurial skills needed for Africa's social and economic development.

According to the *2015 Global Monitoring Report on Education* published by UNESCO, the gross enrolment rate in lower secondary schools in 2012 was above 95% in most regions but was only 50% in sub-Saharan Africa. The same report states that at upper secondary level, the gross enrolment rate was approximately 100% in North America, Western Europe and Central Asia, but only 32% in sub-Saharan Africa.

ICTs offer considerable potential to increase access to, and to improve the quality of secondary education in Africa, especially in the face of the continent's galloping population growth.

About GESCI

The Global e-Schools and Communities initiative (GESCI) is an international non-profit organisation based in Nairobi, Kenya. GESCI was founded in 2003 by the UN on the recommendation of the United Nation's Task Force on ICTs. GESCI's mission is to assist governments in their efforts to promote socio-economic development, through the successful and widespread integration of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) for the development of knowledge societies. For more information visit: www.gesci.org

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