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Why research the pedagogical integration of ICTs?

At the second World Summit on the Information Society (Tunis, November 2005), Kofi Annan reminded us that we are living in a world of rapid change where technologies play a multitude of roles. We cannot remain indifferent to this societal metamorphosis. As researchers and educators, we have a responsibility to embrace and shape the processes of change that ICTs bring to teaching, life, learning, work, and livelihoods.



Information and communication technologies are not a panacea or magic formula, ... but they can improve the lives of everyone on the planet. Kofi Annan, 2005

ICTs are increasingly present in African societies, and have been introduced to varying degrees at all education levels from preschool to university, in both the formal and informal sectors. It is also used to offer distance education to teachers and other adult learners. However, in various education systems across Africa, ICTs are increasingly being taught as a completely separate discipline, while ICT integration into pedagogical practices to improve the quality of teaching and learning remains in the exploratory stage. Outside of South Africa, little African research is being conducted on the efficient use of ICTs in education, though an IDRC-funded study in 2004-2005 in West and Central Africa has demonstrated the potential of ICT use to help transform pedagogical practices.

The objective of the **Panafrican Research Agenda on the Pedagogical Integration of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs)** is to better understand how the pedagogical integration of ICTs can improve the quality of teaching and learning in Africa. During the initial two-year phase, researchers based for the most part at African universities will gather and analyse quantitative and qualita-

tive baseline data and publish findings. An online Observatory and the project Web site will make the data and findings available for researchers and practitioners. Observatory data and project findings will be available to inform policy development initiatives and teacher training programs.

The Observatory indicators were developed through a highly participatory process involving researchers – male and female – from universities in 11 countries across Africa, and a workshop held in Dakar in September 2006. The more than 100 indicators monitor policy, access, teacher training, ICT use, learning, school administration and gender. ERNWACA and University of Montreal are responsible for project management and met in Bamako in July 2007 to draft the research methodology guide and prepare the methodology workshops to be held in September 2007.

ERNWACA has signed collaboration agreements with 11 universities on the continent. The project is open to partnership with other institutions, to contribute data to the Observatory and/or help promote it.