



International Institute for

Strengthening Africa's educational institutions

Context

Educational, technical and professional needs in Africa are acute and massive, and countries urgently need to strengthen the capacities of their educational institutions to meet their needs. However, if capacity-building is to have a real impact, it needs to be targeted at both individuals and institutions, and happen at all levels – national, provincial and local. It is when knowledge and skills reach the local level, particularly the school level, that capacity-building makes a difference.

Mission

Established in 1999, IICBA aims to strengthen educational institutions in Africa by applying recent research in educational management, curriculum development, teacher training, programme delivery modes (distance education, virtual classroom, radio, video, etc.) and new technologies to educational needs in the region. The Institute also builds networks of programmes and institutions throughout Africa to share knowledge, resources, facilities and experience.

In addition to its headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, IICBA runs two regional centres: one is located within the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Dakar, Senegal, and the other within the University of Pretoria in South Africa. Through these centres, IICBA provides services to some twenty African countries, mostly in sub-Saharan Africa.



The teacher is key to improving education in Africa

Capacity-Building in Africa

Activities

Besides keeping teachers up to date with recent developments in their field through information dissemination, technical assistance, research and institutional networking, IICBA addresses specific issues such as providing education to nomads, linking education and economic development, and assessing the impact of HIV/AIDS. The Institute's work focuses on the following:

■ *Multigrade Programme*

This Programme, initiated in Ethiopia in 1999, develops models for providing education in small village schools, where a single teacher teaches several grades within the same classroom. The Programme builds classrooms using locally available materials, and relies on the help of the local community and on local decision-making. IICBA has developed a teachers' and students' manual, and trained education personnel on the multigrade approach to education. IICBA is also organizing multigrade textbook-writing workshops.

■ *Teacher Education Network*

This Network is an Internet-based platform for improving the academic and professional skills and methods of teachers, and for facilitating the exchange of resources and information. It also seeks to strengthen links between teacher-training institutions and universities, and to support teacher-training programmes for para-professionals and community-recruited teachers. An electronic library provides a selection of key texts, teaching methods and lesson plans for various subjects, including mathematics, biology, HIV/AIDS prevention, politics, economics, languages and civics.

■ *Distance education*

IICBA is working with several universities to develop the capacity of teacher-education institutions through distance education. It has set up a programme with the Indira Gandhi National Open University for learning how to plan, initiate, implement and evaluate distance learning programmes for training teachers. This

postgraduate programme is currently being offered to some 230 students in Ethiopia, Ghana, Liberia and Madagascar. IICBA has also started a one-year postgraduate course with the University of Montreal on the integration of ICTs into education, with a special focus on distance education.

■ *Information and communication technologies*

As computers, television and videos are becoming cheaper, IICBA is looking at how ICTs can be used effectively, widely and cheaply in education. For example, IICBA:

- holds workshops on how to make educational videos, CD-ROMs and websites (in Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Senegal, Sudan and Uganda);
- promotes the use of virtual reality technology for secondary school science teaching; and
- supports programmes using radio for teaching local languages in Senegal, and for teaching English as a second language in South Africa.

■ *HIV/AIDS*

To increase HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention, an IICBA/USAID training programme has developed learning materials in Amharic, including an HIV/AIDS preventive education manual for Ethiopian teachers. IICBA also plans to produce and use videos on HIV/AIDS for children and adults throughout Africa, and for teacher-training colleges to better prepare teachers for teaching about HIV/AIDS.



The Institute employs 24 people

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