

East Asia and Pacific Regional UNGEI

Gender Equality in Education and Information & Communication Technologies

*Using Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to
empower, reach out and achieve education for all...*



Harnessing the power of ICT

It is without a doubt that our lives have changed with so many different technological advances. Gradually we have seen improvements and empowerment of young girls and boys who are able to open their minds and have access to more opportunities as they connect to friends and ideas from the other side of the world.

This newsletter is dedicated to highlighting the many benefits of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and its contributions in working towards achieving gender equality in education.

The speech of a young woman from International Women's Day 2011 talks about how she has gone against preconceived notions that ICT is a field just for men. Gender barriers are also broken in India through a training conducted by Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC) and Hewlett Packard teaching aspiring entrepreneurs to use ICT. The EFAInfo database shows us how technology can be used to gather data on gender in education and identify where gaps exist and where efforts must be directed. Lastly, ICTs can be a tool to encourage young people to explore beyond their boundaries; however, all this must be done with caution, as highlighted in the article by Plan International.

Highlights

A young woman's inspirational speech on ICT from International Women's Day 2011

ICT education breaks through gender barriers in India

Using EFAInfo to support gender equality in education

Cyber Crime Prevention by CPP-IIRCD and Plan Thailand

UNGEI and Global Action Week: Reporting back

A young woman's inspirational speech from International Women's Day

"I am very proud to be working in a field that is considered male-dominated..."

On 8 March 2011, a young Thai woman named Chayaporn Keawpromman gave a speech in honor of International Women's Day 100th anniversary at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok about how the new age of technology has empowered and inspired her to dream of a better future for herself and women around the world. Her speech has been translated from Thai and found in its entirety below:

In the next 100 years, it is without a doubt that science and technology will immensely change beyond our imagination. We may see robots that can think on their own or cars that can fly just like in the movies. All communications will take place real time and we'll be able to see and maybe even touch each others' faces - we are already seeing some of these capabilities now!

I am a 22 year old woman working in the Information Technology field. I am very proud to be working in an area that is considered male-dominated, especially in my country, Thailand. At first, I wanted to be a computer programmer because I saw that people in this field had the ability to interact with both the programme itself and the people using it. However, as I gained more exposure, I realized that I liked working with computer networks more, especially because a computer programmer works on the computer all day long, while those working on computer networks have the ability to work with both the hardware and software. I decided to change my path and pursue a career in computer networking.

When I finished my studies in computer networking and began working, I realized that I actually enjoyed the work of a presales engineer. It gave me the opportunity to meet and talk to so many people including customers and suppliers. Many of them

however thought I was just a sales 'representative' as opposed to a sales 'engineer' because there are very few engineers who are women. I have encountered many problems as a woman engineer though. Lots of people often think that woman engineers are probably not as good and as talented as their male counterparts and often people ignore what we have to say. One of my female coworkers was harassed by a customer before too.

There are times when woman engineers like myself have to work harder to prove that we have the knowledge and skills. There is the need to break the preconceived notion that women working in the field of computer technology are only able to be sales representatives and can actually do more.

Since my work is in an ever-changing field of technology, I constantly have to learn new things all the time and keep up with all the changes so



Above: Chayaporn Keawpromman at the IWD event.



Above: Chayaporn giving her speech at the United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok, Thailand.

The East Asia and Pacific Regional UNGEI released a joint statement to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of International Women's Day. It can be accessed [here](#).

that I am able to answer questions from the customer. I have to make sure I keep up with my male and female counterparts.

Nevertheless, there are some positive sides of being a woman working in the IT field. It is sometimes easier for me as a woman to approach customers and talk to them, whereas my male colleagues are sometimes too shy to approach customers.

It seems that there are still a lot of positions within the IT field that are male-dominated. This makes it difficult for women and we often see that when there are vacancies - companies are usually looking for men.

One of the managers of my company is a woman and she is very talented. She knows her work and the IT field very well. She is always eager to learn and find new knowledge all the time. Having in-depth knowledge is important, it is especially helpful when its time to write up proposals asking for more funds for our project!

Other than this, I also had the opportunity to watch an interview with Ms. Supajee Suthamphan who is the manager of Global Technology Services for IBM Asia. She is one of the leading woman managers in the field of IT. She said that no matter where you are or what position you are in, we have to respect our colleagues and they will respect us as well.

In the next 100 years, I would like to see more women working in what seems to be perceived as male-dominated fields such as IT. I would like to see a world where women and men are seen and treated equally.

We must work to remove these gender barriers – so that people will see our work and worth rather than our gender.

ICT education breaks through gender barriers in India

By: Education Development Center, Health and Human Development Division, Asia

Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC), in partnership with Hewlett Packard, manages an information and communication technology (ICT) training program known as the HP Learning Initiative for Entrepreneurs (HP LIFE), which trains aspiring entrepreneurs to use ICT.

As one of the HP LIFE program's local non-profit training organizations, the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) has trained 5,000 women workers from rural areas of India in core computer skills to find jobs, become self-reliant, and overcome traditional gender-associated constraints. SEWA's ICT trainings have benefited the lives of many women and girls, including Varshaben Luva, who hails from the rural village of Kalol, India.

Luva is one of a growing number of women in India breaking through traditional gender roles by starting her own business. After attending an HP LIFE ICT training session at SEWA, Luva was able to combine her new technology skills with her background in agriculture to start her own text messaging business for farmers. Luva goes to SEWA on a daily basis to do online research of market analyses and prices of commodities. Farmers then pay her 50 Rupee (or just over U.S. \$1) a month to receive daily text messages from her about current market prices.

Because of Luva's new text messaging business, farmers can now decide whether it's worth transporting their crops—mostly cotton and corn—to the market that day. With 88 clients in the Mehsana District of Gujarat State to date, Luva's business continues to thrive. ICT education can make a significant impact on rural women and girls like Luva, who can use their new ICT skills to not only make a living for themselves, but also make a wider difference in their communities. 'Luva's business model can be replicated by other women to benefit farmers all over India,' says EDC's Yupaporn Boontid.

HP LIFE is a global program that helps train students, aspiring entrepreneurs and small business owners to harness the power of ICT in an effort to establish and grow their businesses, create economic opportunity and improve the lives of their communities.



This article is a synopsis of the full article published on the HP LIFE Asia Pacific website at <http://www.lifeasia.org/viewfullnews.php?nid=Njg>.

About EDC: Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC) is an international nonprofit organization applying research and education strategies to address global challenges in health, education, and employment (www.edc.org). As part of Health and Human Development Programs (HHD), a major EDC division, EDC HHD Asia utilizes innovative strategies and techniques to address issues of sustainable development and poverty alleviation. Learn more about EDC HHD Asia at <http://www.hhd.org/where/asia>.

Top image: A SEWA trainer (first row middle, in pink) teaches female students how to use the computer for the first time, at SEWA's Dhangadra Community Learning Center in rural Gujarat, India.

Bottom image: EDC's Yupaporn Boontid demonstrates basic computer skills during the first session of an ICT training for girls held at SEWA's Dhangadra Community Learning Center.

EFAInfo: Using Technology to Support Gender Equality in Education

By: DevInfo

This article discusses the use of the EFAInfo database for identifying and presenting gender disparities in education in the Asia-Pacific region.

When 10-year-old Mai and her brother Eu completed the second grade in their small community of Ban Xai, XiengKhuang province, Lao PDR, they weren't sure if further study would be possible. The nearest school offering Grade 3 was eight kilometers away, across hilly and muddy trails that would require at least an hour of travel.

Fortunately for Mai and Eu, their parents heard that a new thatched-roof dormitory had been constructed next to the school, offering safe accommodation during the week for both boys and girls. To the delight of the children, their parents agreed to let them live there during the week so they could attend school. "I never thought we would be able to study in such a beautiful place!" says Mai, who comes from an ethnic Hmong family.

Across the East Asia and Pacific region, concerted efforts to keep children like Mai and Eu in school are bearing fruit: educational enrolments have increased across the region, translating into greater access to education and gender parity. While the region as a whole is making significant progress towards gender equality in education, each country – and different areas within each country – has experienced varying degrees of success towards this end. This underscores the importance of having access to reliable, disaggregated data to track progress towards gender equality and equity in education in the region, which can serve as a basis for exploring underlying causes contributing to persisting disparities.

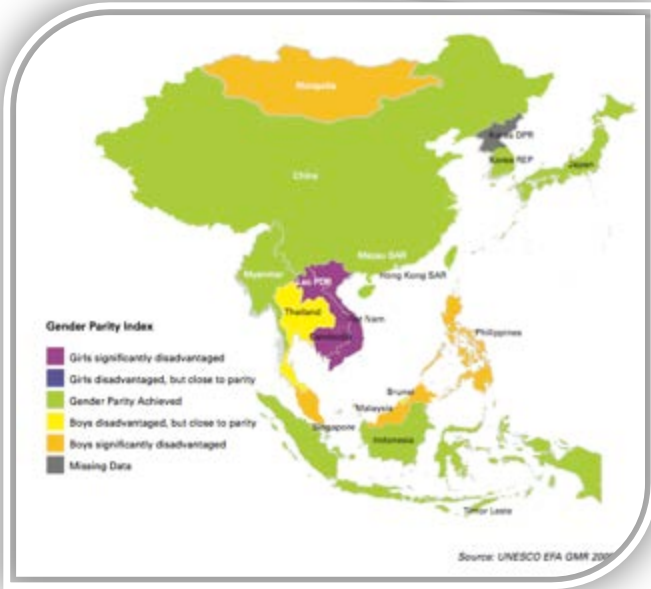
These persisting gender disparities among and within countries in the region were the focus of an eye-



opening report published in 2009 titled "[Gender Equality in Education: East Asia and Pacific – Progress Note](#)." The report was prepared by UNICEF's East Asia & Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO) in collaboration with the East Asia and Pacific Regional United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI). The Progress Note and its related [Snapshot](#) aimed to present analysis of progress and gaps towards achieving the Education For All (EFA) goals in the region.

The data undergirding both gender-in-education reports came directly from the Asia and Pacific EFAInfo database, a customized adaptation of the UN-endorsed DevInfo database system containing national and sub-national education-related data disaggregated by sex, ethnicity, wealth quintile, and various other socio-economic dimensions. The database provides a picture of gender parity indices based on core indicators such as: adult literacy, gross enrolment ratio (GER) for early childhood care and education (ECCE), GER for primary/secondary education, net enrolment ratio in primary/secondary education, survival rate to grade 5, and transition rate to secondary education.

Available both as a desktop database as well as on the web at www.devinfo.info/efainfo, the DevInfo



Above: Gender parity in gross enrolment ratio in secondary education, East Asia. Source: [Gender Equality in Education, East Asia and Pacific Snapshot](#).

both girls and boys – who continue to fall through the cracks of education systems. These disadvantaged groups include ethnic minorities, migrant communities, displaced populations, poor families, disabled children, and people living in remote areas. The analysis provides an excellent resource for decision-makers requiring evidence to move forward with more equitable policies at all government levels.

The data points to progress across the region as well as persisting pockets of disparities among and within countries, supporting the Progress Note report’s assertion that regional gender issues are complex and that parity does not necessarily mean equality. Nonetheless, there is also a need to ensure that complementary qualitative understandings of the numbers that emerge are available to provide a holistic view of each country’s situation.

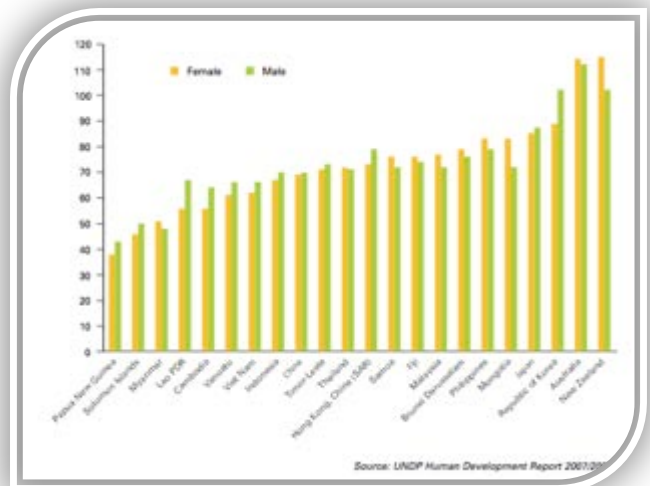
EFAInfo is a resource that supports evidence-based advocacy efforts towards gender equality in education, ensuring quality education for all children in the East Asia and Pacific region.

platform was selected by the Regional Thematic Working Group on EFA (which included UNICEF EAPRO, UNESCO and other partners) with the intention of compiling, organizing and disseminating the volumes of data required to undertake a thorough analysis of the gender equity issues involved.

The resulting product – Asia and Pacific EFAInfo – contains data from wide ranging sources, including national and sub-national administrative data, survey data on and related to education, internationally comparable data to enable cross-country comparisons, and datasets from special studies. The wealth of gender-disaggregated indicators in the database renders it highly useful for gender-related educational initiatives in the region.

According to Cliff Meyers, Regional Advisor for Education, UNICEF EAPRO, “At no other time has there been a compilation of regional educational data as focused and deep as EFAInfo.”

Of particular relevance to policymakers in the region is the data documenting specific groups of children –



Above: Combined gross enrolment ratio for primary, secondary, tertiary education, selected countries. Source: [Gender Equality in Education, East Asia and Pacific Snapshot](#).

Cyber Crime Prevention by CPP-IICRD and Plan Thailand

By: Plan International Thailand

“As children and young adults spend more time in the cyberspace for education and entertainment, it is the duty of responsible adults to protect our future generations from online sexual predators. It is time for civic groups, law enforcement and development agencies to get our act together in a fight against these shameless offenders.” - Plan Thailand Country Director Maja Cubarrubia.

In response to the fight against cyber-crime, the Child Protection Partnership Program (CPP) under the International Institute for Child Rights and Development (IICRD) with Plan Thailand has launched various activities in Thailand to support schools and communities to better protect children sexual exploitation enabled through ICT enabled child sexual exploitation by working in partnership with 36 multi-sector partners including law enforcement, NGOs, universities, communities, children and government agencies.

The project focuses on the risk areas in both Chiang Rai and Chonburi Province where the use of ICT for child exploitation and human trafficking is prevalent. While the Internet opens a world of possibilities for children - expanding their horizons and exposing them to different cultures and ways of life, they can also be exposed to dangers rampant on the information highway. There are individuals who attempt to sexually exploit children through the use of online services and the Internet. While online chatting and social networks are increasing and expanding all over the world, young people using them without caution can expose themselves to the dangers of cyber crime. Cyber stalking for instance, refers to harassment or unwanted communications via these kinds of communication services.

The CPP Program collaborated with teachers and students on ICT prevention and how to creatively use ICT and the media. More than 300 children and teachers took part in this training from the two areas in one year. The ICT curriculum taught

to students, teachers and communities focused on increasing their understanding of the dangers of cyberspace based on several case studies on ICT-based child exploitations. The activity aimed to encourage young people in particular to be aware of the various forms of ICT harm and know how to prevent and protect themselves. The case studies created a space for group analysis and recommendations of how to stay safe.

Participants also had the chance to learn about how to design ICT and Child Protection awareness raising activities in classrooms using the samples introduced in the workshop. The participants enjoyed sharing how ICT was being used in their schools to promote activities such as using ICT for preparing school brochures, creating school blogs and exhibition displays.

“I was glad to join this activity; I used to always chat with my friends and sometimes with strangers without thinking about the dangers and threats of ICT. After the training, I better understood how to protect myself from these kinds of people and became more aware about the other side of the cyber world,” said a young 15 girl from Banglamung Wittayakom School, Chonburi Province.

“Plan Thailand, whose top priority is always on child development, is proud to coordinate with other like-minded agencies to implement this workshop.” said Maja.



EAP UNGEI and Global Action Week: Reporting back

By: East Asia and Pacific Regional UNGEI

This year, EAP UNGEI celebrated Global Action Week (2-8 May 2011) with over 100 other countries all over the world. Millions of children and adults participated in the Big Story, to listen to inspiring stories of remarkable women and girls who have made it through school, some of them, despite many odds stacked against them.

The Big Story Lesson was on the importance of women and girls having an education. Despite much progress over the last decade, many women and girls continue to lack the basic skills of reading and writing, and denied their fundamental right to education. Once enrolled in school, girls face more challenges to stay and some would drop out because of financial or socio-cultural factors. Since 2000, national leaders have been promising that they will create conditions that make it possible for women and girls to go to school, stay and complete education, and we hope that this promise will be accelerated in 2011

The lesson plan experience was shared with UNGEI partners across the region – particularly through the drawing activity at the end of the lesson. The Global Action Week lesson plan and drawing contest packet were translated into various regional languages with help from EAP UNGEI members.

Partners such as Right To Play, the Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) and UNESCO reported back that dissemination and implementation reached local communities in India, Lao PDR, the Philippines, and Thailand. The plan was well received and schools/teachers/counselors are highly encouraged to continue implementing the [lesson plan](#) even after Global Action Week has ended!

The complementary drawing activity has been very popular with entries coming from countries such as Bangladesh, China, Fiji, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Mongolia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Viet Nam. The contest ends 30 September 2011. The winning entries will be announced in November as well as featured in the EAP UNGEI 2012 calendar. More details can be found [here](#).



Above: drawing submission from Le Thi Thu, 10 years old, Viet Nam.

Related links

[GAW lesson plan](#)

[2011 UNGEI drawing contest](#)

[UNGEI past calendars](#)

Events

UNESCO launches the Open Community on “Gender Equality in Free and Open Source Software (FOSS)” within the framework of the follow-up of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). There will be an online discussion which strives to bring together relevant FOSS advocacy groups, associations, networks, developers and researchers from around the world to exchange information and ideas, formulate recommendations and suggestions to promote women’s access to FOSS and address gender gaps in FOSS. For more details, [click here](#).

Regional Conference on Community Learning Centres (CLCs) 31 August – 3 September 2011 / Bangkok, Thailand

The purpose of CLCs is to promote human development by providing opportunities for lifelong learning to all people in local communities. To date, they have been in operation in more than 24 countries throughout Asia and the Pacific, and their number is estimated to be more than 170,000. This conference is organized by UNESCO and aims to increase knowledge for efficient implementation of literacy programmes and exchange experiences and ideas on key issues, such as those related to the use of ICT in non-formal education settings, as well as gender. [Click here](#) for more details.

UNGEI Drawing Contest 2011 / 2012 Calendar

This year you are welcome to submit drawings that will illustrate your thoughts on how girls’ and boys’ equality in education can help us all. The 13 winning drawings will be featured in the UNGEI (EAP and SA) “Gender in Education Calendar 2012,” which will be distributed widely throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

The deadline for submission has been extended until *30 September 2011* and open to all nationals and residents of the Asia-Pacific region, 18 years and under. [Click here](#) for more information.

Regional Conference on Women and Literacy 17-19 October 2011 / Chiang Mai, Thailand

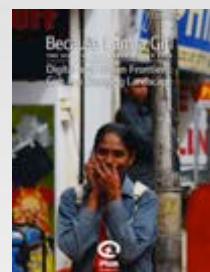
Organized by the Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE), this conference aims to build capacity of non-state actors towards influencing policies and budgets related to female literacy. For more information, please contact [Cecilia Soriano](#).

Resources



[ICTs and Empowerment of Indian Rural Women: What can we learn from on-going initiatives?](#)

By: Rasheed Sulaiman V, N.J. Kalaivani, Nimisha Mittal & P. Ramasundaram, Centre for Research and Innovation and Science Policy (CRISP)



[Because I am a Girl: Digital and Urban Frontiers 2010](#)

By: Plan International

EAP UNGEI Editorial Board

The EAP UNGEI Secretariat would like to thank everyone who has made this Newsletter possible. All content of the EAP UNGEI Newsletters are based solely on the contributions from UNGEI members and partners. Submissions have been reviewed by the EAP UNGEI editorial board: Adrien Boucher, David Braun, Maki Hayashikawa, Karishma Kripalani, Goy Phumtim, Malisa Santigul, Cyrene Siriwardhana, and Chemba Raghavan.