ECDL FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS EDITION

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WELCOME TO THE JUNE 2014 ISSUE OF THE ECDL FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER.

ECDL / ICDL IN ACTION AROUND THE WORLD

2014 ECDL FOUNDATION BEST PRACTICE AWARDS WINNERS

The winners of this year's ECDL Foundation Best Practice Awards were announced at the 2014 ECDL Foundation Forum held in Bucharest, Romania on 22-23 May. The Best Practice Awards acknowledge initiatives and projects that are considered to be exceptional examples of implementing ECDL Foundation programmes to raise levels of digital literacy, and promote ECDL / ICDL in local markets.

ICDL Libya won the government/public category, ICDL Africa came first in the corporate/private category, ECDL Austria won the social inclusion category, while ICDL Korea was awarded for the digital marketing category.

QAFQAZ UNIVERSITY BECOMES ECDL OPERATOR IN AZERBAIJAN

At the ECDL Foundation Forum in Bucharest, an agreement was signed between ECDL Foundation and Qafqaz University. As a result Qafqaz University has become an ECDL National Operator in Azerbaijan. Qafqaz University has been leading a consortium of ten Azeri third level educational institutions committed to adopting the European digital literacy standard.

This project is funded through the EU TEMPUS Programme and is one of the actions envisaged by the 2014-2020 National Strategy on the Development of the Information Society in Azerbaijan. Qafqaz University will coordinate the implementation of ECDL in Azerbaijan as a National Operator while the remaining partner organisations will become ECDL Test Centres.

DIGITAL SKILLS AND EMPLOYABILITY IN THE UK

A recent survey by BCS, the Chartered Institute for IT, has highlighted the link between digital skills and employability. The survey of 178 HR professionals and employers in the UK indicated that 81% of employers require their workforce to have digital skills, but that only 52% of employers believe that their workforce has the digital skills to meet their future challenges. In addition, BCS, the Chartered Institute for IT, has launched a campaign working with IT qualification providers and trainers across the UK to help people gain the skills they need.

NEW ICDL LAUNCHED IN IRAN

The fifth annual ICDL Iran Forum was held on 18 February in order to launch the new ICDL programme, along with the ICDL Profile and its benefits. ICDL Iran Test Centre's managers and authorities of the Ministry of Education attended the event. Damien O'Sullivan opened the event and two vice presidents from the Education Ministry (cultural and research) along with a number of university professors spoke at the Forum.

KOREA PRODUCTIVITY CENTRE TO CERTIFY 30,000 BY 2020

ICDL Asia has renewed its partnership with Korea Productivity Centre (KPC). With this renewal, KPC will continue its efforts as the National Operator in Korea, promoting and delivering the ICDL programme. This new agreement, which runs until 31 Dec 2019, is expected to deliver the ICDL programme to around 30,000 candidates each year particularly in the education sector.

Set up in 1957, KPC plays a pivotal role in increasing productivity of the industries to promote the rapid growth of the Korean economy. KPC has been the National Operator of Korea since 2008 and has so far delivered the ICDL programme to more than 80,000 candidates.

FOR DISCUSSION

NIGERIA: AFRICA'S NEW ICT HUB?

Did you know that there are more internet users in Nigeria than the total population of Kenya? Here are some more facts you might not have known about Africa's most populated country: Nigeria has just overtaken South Africa to become the biggest economy in Africa. It has a budget deficit of just 1% of its GDP, and its GDP is higher than Israel's. As The Economist noted as it organised the Nigeria Summit: "Nigeria's economic growth has been startling."

ICT and economic growth

The ICT sector is a big part of this growth. In fact, it is growing at a staggering rate of 24%, contributing to 8% of GDP.

Nigeria's mobile sector has seen triple digit growth five years in a row. Third and fourth generation (3G/4G) mobile and WiMAX wireless broadband services are being rolled out at a rapid pace, backed by national and international fibre links. The World Bank recently expressed interest in investing $2 million in the country's ICT and entertainment industries.

Nigeria's Minister of Communication Technology Omobola Johnson, a key speaker at the Nigeria Summit in March, remarked that:

"*The 26 sub-sectors that make up the ICT sector are positioned for high to medium growth, and in turn have high to medium capacity to create jobs and wealth.*"

The Nigerian Government is well aware that a strong ICT sector can play a key role in overall economic growth.

ICT training in Nigeria

Minister Johnson is a "*very proactive and positive voice*" for the ICT sector in Nigeria, says Marie-Claire Walsh of ICDL Africa.

Minister Johnson has long been an advocate for ICT training, especially for young women. She instigated the Smart Woman Nigeria initiative: 1,000 girls in ICT Training programme and the ICT Girls Clubs, geared at educating,

empowering, developing and making women and girls in Nigeria ICT savvy and self reliant. She said that her mandate is to leverage information and communication technology *"for socio-economic development of Nigeria"*.

Educating Nigerian government employees in ICT has been a priority for a while. The National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) was set up in April 2001 to ensure the implementation of the National Information Technology Policy. The mission statement of the policy is to use ICT for education, creation of wealth, eradication of poverty, job creation and global competitiveness.

ICDL Africa worked with the NITDA on one of their projects to better equip public service staff with IT skills for their day-to-day work.

ICDL in Nigeria

In September 2004, the ICDL syllabus became the minimum proficiency standard for IT certification in the public sector. In the past decade various projects have used ICDL to equip government workers with the digital skills to perform their jobs better.

In 2008, for example, a project in the Federal Ministry of Science and Technology facilitated ICDL training and certification for 1,157 public sector staff, from secretaries to directors.

The Nigerian Director General of NITDA, Professor C.O. Angaye said at the time:

"Never before has a skills development project of this magnitude been implemented since the advent of the new reforms in our country. To empower all senior civil servants with a standardized IT skills programme of this nature virtually transcends anything strategic."

ICDL and the Federal Road Safety Corps

The most recent success for ICDL has been with the Federal Road Safety Corps, which Marie-Claire Walsh describes as *"a cornerstone of the recent growth of the ICDL programme in Nigeria"*.

Through that project 450 staff have taken over 3000 ICDL exams. Marie-Claire explains:

"Our Accredited Test Centre 'E-Tech Complete Solutions' based in Abuja has worked hard to make this project a success. At the recent eLearning Africa conference held in Kampala, many Nigerian delegates who visited the ICDL Africa stand had heard about the FRSC project. The work of Accredited Test Centres, such as E-Tech, in making the programme accessible to a greater number of people means that the future of ICDL in Nigeria is very positive."
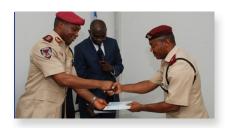
ICDL training is a vital chapter in the narrative of Nigeria, and it reflects both the long-term and recent work the country has done to get to where it is today.

Nigeria's ICT Future

A combination of public and private investment is shaping up to a very positive outlook for Nigeria's ICT sector.

Country Manager for Intel Nigeria, Mr. Olubunmi Ekundare said in an interview that numerous tech multinationals are committing to Nigeria:

"Intel has been in Nigeria for some time now, and we just moved into a new office, which is an indication of growth and expansion in Nigeria. Technology

companies from China, like Huawei, as well as companies from other developed countries are in Nigeria, and they are contributing immensely to the growth of the country's technology ecosystem."

Of course such investment and expansion can't exist without the basics – education and ICT infrastructure. The government's commitment to improving its broadband and communications, while also equipping workers with digital skills through ICDL bodes well.

Nigeria's story of economic prosperity has only just begun.

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH AND REPORTS

DIGITAL AGENDA SCOREBOARD 2014: UP TO 50% CITIZENS ARE DIGITALLY ILLITERATE IN SOME EU COUNTRIES

Half of EU citizens still have no or low computer skills and almost 50% have insufficient digital skills for the workplace. The situation is even worse for disadvantaged people (aged 55-74, low educated, or unemployed, retired or inactive): 67% have an insufficient level of digital skills, and 38% have no digital skills. And despite an increasing share of EU citizens going online, 20% of the EU population has still never used the internet. These are some of the key figures from the Digital Agenda Scoreboard 2014 recently published by the European Commission. Country profiles are also available for 31 European countries with key indicators including on ICT skills and ICT in education.

PROVIDING DIGITAL LITERACY TRAINING FOR WORKERS OVER 35 IS KEY TO BOOST BUSINESS SERVICES

Business services play an important role for the European economy: they employ 21 million people in the EU in more than 4 million enterprises. Given the increasingly pervasiveness of ICT, the acquisition of e-skills among workers in this sector has been identified as a fundamental step to drive further innovation and productivity gains in business services. This is one of the key takeaway from a report published by the High Level Group of Business Services setup by the European Commission. In particular, the group recommends the acquisition of ICT skills through the use of existing resources such as the ECDL programme. It also calls for the provision of digital literacy training for people in the workforce over the age of 35.

ONE E-INCLUSION ORGANISATION FOR EVERY 2,000 PEOPLE IN THE EU, SAYS NEW REPORT

There are around 250,000 e-inclusion organisations in the EU, that s about one for every 2,000 inhabitants. However, the majority are small organisations with less than 10 staff members and an operating budget under 100,000.

Most e-inclusion actors have been active for more than 10 years in this field, and 46% for more than 15 years. These are the finding of a European Commission research that mapped the diverse set of actors involved in the implementation of e-inclusion policies in the EU. This report also highlights the important role played by these actors in achieving the goals of the Digital Agenda for Europe,

in particular enhancing digital literacy, skills and inclusion.

DEVELOPING TEACHERS' DIGITAL SKILLS MUST BE PART OF EDUCATION REFORM

Countries around the globe are reforming their educational systems to keep up with the digital economy and society. The integration of ICT-enabled learning innovations in the classroom is an important dimension of these reforms. A new report by the European Commission, based on a wide-scale consultation, highlights the professional development of school staff as a priority area with this regard given that teachers are key agents for change. Therefore supporting and motivating teachers to develop and update their digital competence and ICT skills is one of the 60 recommendations for actions included in the report.