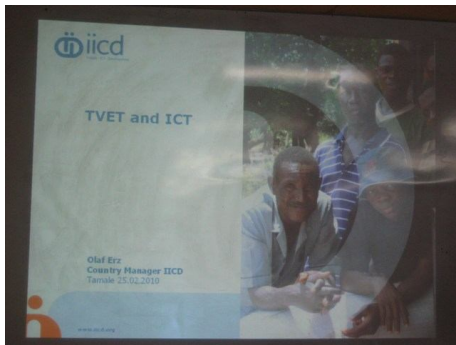


REPORT ON ICT4D SERIES – FEBRUARY 2010
ICTs, TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN GHANA

“While we are good at working with tangible resources, we have been very poor at handling the intangible resource such as information. Without good quality information, bad decisions are made and learning does not occur”. These were the words of the Ghana Country Manager of the International Institute for Communication and Development, IICD, Mr. Olaf Erz.

Mr. Erz was speaking at the February session of the Northern ICT4D series in



Tamale at the institute for Local Government Studies on the topic “ICTs in Technical and Vocational Training in Ghana”.

He stated that our whole world, including organisations run on four tangible resources; money, people, materials and technology and one intangible resource; information. He opined that the trouble is, while we are good at working with the tangible resources, we have been very poor at handling the intangible resource, information. He mentioned that this results in a problem because information is critical to two activities; decision making and learning

On how information poverty affects Technical Vocational and Education Training, Mr. Erz mentioned that directors fail to make decisions or make the wrong decisions, directors fail to learn or learn the wrong things, and directors waste money, waste time, lose out on income and, often, go out of business. He however stated that if directors are able to access better quality information that is more complete and/or more accurate, relevant, timely, and appropriately presented then costs can go down and the output is better.

He declared that to improve competence of Technical and Vocational Training using ICT, emphasis should be placed on ICT awareness, basic ICT skills, application of training modules (e.g. food processing) and exposure to Internet use.

Mr. Erz quoted a Uganda Baseline Study in 2003 on career guidance for young people. The study mentioned that when career decisions are made, the opinions and values of family and friends are often a more determining factor than young people's own individual interests, capabilities and skills.



He advised that guidance and counseling should be looked at critically as guidance assists young people to integrate successfully into the labor market by helping them to identify and explore their strengths and talents, develop appropriate educational and vocational training plans, achieve and complete their plans in the world of work. Mr. Erz added that guidance is important for an effective education and training system because it helps to promote a wide range of occupations and careers and ensures that young people make the best use of given market opportunities

He spoke of JoBoYo, an IT career guidance tool based on field studies and test results in Uganda. JoBoYo contains information on occupational profiles, micro scale business start-ups, vocational education and training options. It is primarily targeted at young people in Uganda, especially primary school leavers, graduates who will not find a placement within the post primary education and training system as well as those currently seeking employment.

Mr. Erz gave a practical demonstration of the interactive structure of the JoBoYo software that enables students to assess personal career development options against the background of existing educational, training and business opportunities.



When he took his turn to speak, Mr. Baba Salifu, a tutor at the Dabokpa Vocational Training Institute in Tamale, spoke on the state of ICTs in Vocational and Technical Training in Ghana. He explained that vocational learning is quite different from taking up a normal college degree. He said in vocational training, a student is taught a specific skill in addition to academic theory which is totally related to a specific trade. He mentioned that the student directly picks up expertise in a particular technique or technology for application to the challenges he/she is confronted with.

Mr. Salifu emphasized that vocational training emphasizes the provision of specific skills to a trade or industry and that training concentrates on both theory and practical experience so that the student secures employment in that field.



He opined that vocational education in the Ghana has come a long way to be recognized and that the future of vocational education is quite good. He disclosed that about 90% of technical and vocational training institutions now have computer laboratories. He said Intel is supporting the technical schools to integrate ICT into effective teaching and learning known as Intel teach program

On the challenges facing the sector, Mr. Salifu mentioned public negative perception about technical/vocational training in Ghana, obsolete ICT tools in our vocational/technical institutions, unattractive conditions of service to attract and retain qualified personnel and lack of internet connectivity.