

## **ICT for Development International School (ICT4DEVIS): bridging technology and development, preparing the future experts in ICT as a means for international development**

*An IGI webinar hosted by Fondazione Rosselli Americas, in cooperation with the University of Insubria, Como, Italy, and the University of Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo, Brazil*

In the last years of the present Knowledge Society, we are experiencing a renewed interest in academic institutions around the world to incorporate the subject of ICT in their academic programs. However, program concentration as well as later job-placement for students coming out of these schools varies widely, with strong representation of subjects related to technology industry and technology trade. Yet, studies show the promise of ICT as an instrument to accelerate the pace and widen the reach of international development efforts, but the cradle of ICT4DEV practitioners is still limited. Furthermore, students coming out of current ICT university courses who want to devote themselves to international development find themselves faced with three major hurdles:

**ICT is, by definition, a multiple-sector endeavor, but schools concentrate in a smaller range of knowledge in order to provide specialized training.** As a result, most ICT academic programs tend to emphasize one aspect over others: science & technology; economics; or social applications –education, public services; etc. Yet, when time comes to apply ICT to a development objective, students find their education lacking in one or more areas needed to make an appropriate choice of technology and achieve a successful end-result;

**Application of ICT as a development tool requires the involvement of the public and private sectors, whose purposes, institutional mind-frames and level of knowledge tend to be quite different.** The development practitioner seeking to devise an ICT-based solution to a given problem finds that he/she must have a good understanding of these two very different mind-sets, and the ability to propose a solution that would satisfy both;

**Information access, as well as communication channels and protocols, vary greatly from one cultural setting to another.** Students are rarely trained to fine-tune their outputs to these strong cultural



components, with the result that ICT4DEV project inception and deployment face the risk of suffering setbacks or even fail to achieve its goals.

Given the above, it seemed apparent that formal academic education in this field would benefit from supplementary training aimed at rounding up a student's education with practical, job-related, additional capacity-building, for the purpose of improving their effectiveness in a development context.

This is the rationale of the ICT4DEV international school (ICT4DEVIS), conceived as a hands-on, practice oriented, cross-cultural summer school, intended for students , professionals and practitioners who want to pursue a professional career in deploying ICT as a means for international development. ICT4DEVIS is shaped by contributions from a hand-picked cluster of high-level academic institutions around the world, fueled by a will to excel in their respective academic contexts, and willing to engage in an innovative process that will use all the benefits of existing technology to develop what could be a new model for academic design and implementation.

The webinar, presented by Dr. Danilo Piaggese, Managing Director of FRA, **USA** in cooperation with Professor Edson Luis Riccio, School of Economics, Business and Accountancy, FEA, University of Sao Paulo, USP, **Brazil** and Professor Walter Castelnovo, Department of Informatics and Communication, University of Insubria, Como, **Italy**, will focus on the conceptualization of ICT4DEVIS, its transition from vision to action , the results of its first 2012 edition organized by the University of Insubria and will conclude with the shaping of the second 2013 edition that will be organized by the University of Sao Paulo.

I strongly believe that ICT4DEVIS will make a valid contribution to changing the present international cooperation for development paradigm, in the context of today's Knowledge Society.

Danilo Piaggese, Managing Director of FRA