

ICT in Education in Equatorial Guinea

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Source: *World Fact Book*¹

Please note:

This short *Country Report*, a result of a larger *infoDev*-supported *Survey of ICT in Education in Africa*, provides a general overview of current activities and issues related to ICT use in education in the country. The data presented here should be regarded as illustrative rather than exhaustive. ICT use in education is at a particularly dynamic stage in Africa; new developments and announcements happening on a daily basis somewhere on the continent. Therefore, these reports should be seen as “snapshots” that were current at the time they were taken; it is expected that certain facts and figures presented may become dated very quickly.

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It is expected that individual *Country Reports* from the *Survey of ICT and Education in Africa* will be updated in an iterative process over time based on additional research and feedback received through the *infoDev* web site. For more information, and to suggest modifications to individual *Country Reports*, please see www.infodev.org/ict4edu-Africa.

Overview

In Equatorial Guinea, there is no specific policy concerning ICT, although attempts to improve management in the Ministry of Telecommunications are being made. This could help facilitate the adoption of such a policy in the near future.

The efforts to strengthen the presence of ICT in communities and in schools are primarily made by non-governmental organisations, universities, and other actors. They collaborate on projects that make computer equipment, training, and management available and accessible to students, educators, and members of the community. These initiatives take the form of computer labs in schools or media centres in the community.

Country Profile

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea is a mainland enclave between Cameroon and Gabon and two islands in the Atlantic Ocean. This fragmented country covers a surface area of 28,051 square kilometres with a population of over 540,000, of which 67% live in rural areas. Most of the 90,000 islanders live in Malabo, the capital city. A former Spanish colony, it gained its independence in October 1968, and it remains to date the only country in Africa with Spanish as an official language.

The discovery and exploitation of large oil reserves have contributed to dramatic economic growth in recent years. Forestry, farming, and fishing are also major components of the GDP. Subsistence farming predominates. Although Equatorial Guinea depended on cocoa production for hard currency earnings prior to independence, the neglect of the rural economy under successive regimes has diminished potential for agriculture-led growth. However, the government has stated its intention to reinvest some oil revenue into agriculture.

Table 1 provides some selected socio-economic indicators for the country.²

Table 1: Socio-economic Indicators: Equatorial Guinea

Indicator	
Area	28,051 km ²
Natural resources	petroleum, natural gas, timber, gold, bauxite, diamonds, tantalum, sand and gravel, clay
Population	540,109 (July 2006 est.)
Age structure:	
0-14 years	41.7% (male 113,083; female 111,989)
15-64 years	54.5% (male 141,914; female 152,645)
65 years and over	3.8% (male 8,886; female 11,592) (2006 est.)
Population growth rate	2.05% (2006 est.)

The Education System

The education system is organised into cycles and degrees. The levels of education are pre-school, primary, secondary, and higher education. The degrees are the baccalaureate and advanced degrees in higher education. The institutional structure of the school system is as follows:

- The pre-school cycle, for children under six years, is divided into two parts: nursery school and kindergarten. Pre-school education consists of games, creative activities, etc.
- The primary cycle consists of five years of study at two levels. The first level is for children aged six to 10, and the second for children aged 10 to 12.
- The secondary cycle is devoted to preparing for the baccalaureate and to professional training. The baccalaureate is obtained after two cycles of four and three years of study.
- The advanced cycle exists at three levels: the first is three years; the second, devoted to specialised study, is two years; and the third is three years, devoted to research.

Distance education is a means of education that offers opportunities to pursue and continue academic study, in any circumstances.³

Tables 2, 3, and 4 summarise some relevant education-related statistics.⁴

Table 2: Literacy Rates in Equatorial Guinea

Literacy rate		1990	2000-2004
Adults (age 15+)	Total	73.3%	87.0%
	Male	85.8%	93.4%
	Female	61.1%	80.5%
Young adults (age 15-24)	Total	92.7%	94.9%
	Male	96.6%	94.8%
	Female	88.8%	94.9%

Table 3: Enrolment in Primary School

Primary		1991	1999	2002
Gross schooling rate	Total	163%	132%	127%
	Male	166%	148%	133%
	Female	159%	116%	121%
Net schooling rate	Total	91%	83%	85%
	Male	92%	93%	92%
	Female	89%	73%	78%

Table 4: Enrolment in Secondary School

Secondary		1999	2002
Gross schooling rate	Total	31%	30%
	Male	45%	38%
	Female	17%	22%

ICT Policies

In Equatorial Guinea, there is no specific ICT policy. However, the government has a Ministry of Technology, Posts, and Telecommunications, and an Office of Telecommunication Regulation (ORTEL) is set up and is preparing two documents on interconnection and numbering. At the sub-regional level there is a harmonising project that is akin to the OHADA (Organisation pour l'Harmonisation en Afrique du Droit des Affaires), an organisation for the harmonisation of business law in Africa. Created in 1993 in Port Louis (Mauritius), the organisation is made up of 16 African countries, and the telecommunications project is well accepted by Equatorial Guinea. As well, basic regional modern principles of regulation of telecommunications have been implemented as defined by the International Telecommunications Union.

While replicating the OHADA model, countries may apply its broad regulation principles in terms of market opportunities, accessibility, and communication safety. The stated objectives are to bring about changes for modernisation and to harmonise a telecommunication regulation framework to give foreign multilateral and bilateral investors a favourable telecom environment.⁵

Infrastructure

According to the International Telecommunications Union, in 2003 there were 9,600 fixed telephone lines in the country, and 1.77 lines per 1,000 people. Table 5 provides a summary of the mobile telephone line service.⁶

Table 5: Mobile telephone lines in Equatorial Guinea

Indicator	
Service provider	GETESA
Number of subscribers to GETESA	55,000
Cellular telephone density	10.95%
Telephones: main lines in use	10,000 (2005)
Telephones: mobile cellular	96,900 (2005)
Internet hosts	19 (2006)
Internet users	5,000 (2005)

ICTs in Education

In Equatorial Guinea, education and distance training is regulated by the Law of Education, section 6, article 46, which states: "Distance education is one of the educational tools that makes it possible to pursue and/or continue educational studies in any circumstance."

Current ICT Initiatives and Projects

Prépalý

A recent initiative was enacted on a platform called Prépalý (interactive multimedia training for PREParing high school students (LYcéens) in advanced scientific and technological studies). Its main objectives are to:

- Respond to the needs of young people in terms of information in science and technology

- Give them basic training in computers and multimedia that will be their key to a successful academic career, and which will help prepare them for the world outside of school
- Reinforce the ties between secondary and higher education establishments in the north with those in the south, as well as to reinforce the ties between schools and academic institutions in different areas of the south
- Facilitate the creation of multimedia content for teaching in francophone Africa

This plan is clearly based on the organisation, production, and diffusion of knowledge and know-how from higher education towards secondary education, through ICT in education.

The French Cooperation

The French Cooperation supports the National University of Equatorial Guinea (UNGE) in their approaches by using ICT to develop centres for teaching and accessing digital teaching resources.

The Malabo Centre, open since 2002, runs a computer lab of seven computer stations, all connected to high-speed Internet. It is located in the UNGE Board of Education. The Bata Centre, open since October 2005, runs a computer lab of five computer stations, which will soon be connected to high-speed Internet. It is located on the campus of the Teacher Training Academy.

Resafad-ICTE

Resafad-ICTE is funded by the Cultural Cooperation and Action Service (SCAC) and has been operating in Equatorial Guinea since July 2002. The initiative has created some multimedia centres that host several servers, a training room equipped with a dozen work stations, and a room to produce educational resources. The centre functions through a network, with branches located in the country linked with centres in other countries. Resafad-ICTE currently possesses two multimedia centres hosted by the National University of Equatorial Guinea. One is in the Board of Education of Malabo and the second is in the Teacher Training Academy in Bata.

Implementing ICT in Education: What Helps and What Hinders?

In Equatorial Guinea, the population has abruptly shifted from the agricultural era to the age of computer and Internet and has not had time to integrate audiovisual technologies. This might explain the deficiency of this technology in other countries' contributions.

The country's geographic configuration (part island and part continental) as well as its demographic configuration (low population) will sooner or later oblige the population to resort to ICT and distance training.

Table 6 provides a summary of the current stage of ICT development in Equatorial Guinea in terms of enabling or constraining features in the education system.

Table 6: Factors Influencing ICT Adoption

Factors	Enabling Features	Constraining Features
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<i>Policy framework and implementation</i>	The law commits to distance education being one of the educational tools that makes it possible to pursue and/or continue educational studies in any circumstance.	No ICT in education policy or strategy in place.
<i>Advocacy leadership</i>		No time to integrate audiovisual technologies.
<i>Gender equity</i>		Low school rate of girls in secondary schools.
<i>Infrastructure and access</i>		Access is generally poor and is compounded by the country's geographic configuration (part island and part continental) as well as by its small population.
<i>Learning resources</i>	Distance education is a means of education that offers opportunities to pursue and continue academic study.	

General References

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Notes

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