



PyleaMUN 2026

Committee: **UNESCO**

Topic: **Bridging the Digital Divide in Education**

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1. Personal Introductions

Hello my name is Stella Polymeri and I will be your Vice-Chair for this year's PYLEAMUN. I am 18 years old and I am a first year university student in the Economics and Tourism department in University of Aegean. I have been doing MUN since I was in the first year of high school and I have been to lots of conferences both as a delegate and a chair. I have also participated in European Youth Parliament conferences that are very similar to MUNS. I look forward to our collaboration and making this conference a truly exceptional experience for everyone in this committee. I expect everyone to work hard, be respectful to your fellow delegates and above all have fun in the next few days!

Dear delegates,

My name is Sofia, I am 17 years old and will be your co-chair for the upcoming conference. The truth is that it's going to be my first time chairing, but since it's the first PyleaMUN as well, we are all about to experience something entirely new together. Speaking of experiences, I have participated twice as a delegate in MUN and in the European Youth Parliament, both nationally and internationally. Were you to ask me about the things that I love doing, I would most probably say running, playing the guitar and spending time with my crazy little sister. But we will have the chance to get to know each other better there and I am so looking forward to meeting all of you.

Just so you know, I am not going to tell you that you all must be extremely well-informed or overly competitive, because that is definitely not the case. What's important to me is for you to feel safe enough to share with us your work and confident to raise your voice. Just remember that no one is here to judge anyone, simply because no one has the right to do so. If you just let honesty, empathy,

kindness and respect guide you through this journey, and of course in life, I am pretty sure you'll all be perfect the way you are.

Now, if anything comes up and you want help with something or have questions about the study guide, please feel safe to contact me at literally any time via the following email:

sofyangelaki@gmail.com

Dear Delegates,

My name is Nikoleta Stoltidou and I have the pleasure to welcome you to the first session of PyleaMUN as the Chair of the UNESCO Committee. I first stepped into the MUN world about three years ago at the 6th DSTMUN and while it was a wonderful and highly stimulating experience I couldn't help but feel overwhelmed by the intensity of an MUN conference.

Over time however, I came to the realization that the initial feeling of uncertainty turned into a genuine passion for MUN and the values it represents, among which are diplomacy, collaboration, mutual respect and innovativeness.

I am completely confident that by the end of this conference each and every one of you will have not only adopted the key-principles of MUN but also grown as an individual, gaining a deeper understanding of pressing global issues, strengthened public speaking skills and confidence. This study guide will provide you with both useful as well as reliable information on our committee's topic, which is "Bridging the Digital Divide in Education". Nonetheless you are highly encouraged to conduct independent research, so that you will eventually come up with original and effective solutions on the matter at hand aligned with your assigned countries' policies, thus ensuring a fruitful and engaging debate.

Should any questions regarding the study guide or the topic come up, do not hesitate to contact me at nicolestoltidou@gmail.com. I can't wait to meet you all soon at PyleaMUN, see you there!

Sincerely,
Nikoleta Stoltidou

2. Topic Introduction

Digital divide in education is the unequal access to Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), such as computers or tablets, and resources, such as internet connectivity, leading to differential educational and academic opportunities for students.

An entrepreneur, named Jim Savier, once tried to depict how digital divide in education actually works through the following great example:

Assuming that a train represents the digital world and students, standing on the platform, are getting ready to step over the gap and allegedly get access to digitalization, one can observe that walking over the gap is not feasible for all. Certain students and usually the ones who live in underserved urban or rural areas, where communities face inequitable digital access, may lack the necessary tools, the needed and proper teacher guidance or the economic ability to do so. Such students are “stuck on the platform” and automatically deprived of e-learning¹, meaning any education and training delivered through digital resources, handling all learning materials, assignments and communications in a digital form. Therefore, bridging the digital divide in education is of high importance and if analysed as a phenomenon, this goal could be achieved through three interconnected components, the so called “levers”: Availability, Accessibility, and Usability.

The availability of a stable internet connection is crucial, as without money (the needed funding) and the infrastructure (e.g. building towers, sourcing energy) there would be no signal in underserved areas, leading to local students being prevented from e-learning.

The next is whether an internet connection is accessible to underserved areas. If the internet subscription, with which people can access the internet, can afford to install in all schools, which means that there is equal accessibility.

The third and last component is usability and it refers to whether the underserved communities are digitally literate or not, in order for them to use the Internet safely and responsibly. This concerns not only teachers, who may be unfamiliar and lack the necessary skills for the device’s use, but also the students, who may not have received proper guidance.

3. Definition of Key Terms

“Digital Literacy”²: it is an individual’s digital skills that are necessary for using digital media platforms and it combines all cognitive and technical abilities needed to use Information and Communication technologies (ICTs) in order to create, find, evaluate and share information.

¹ “What Is E Learning Definition | What Is Elearning in Education.” *Www.elearningcollege.com*, www.elearningcollege.com/elearning-blog/what-is-e-learning-definition. Accessed 26. Nov. 2025.

² “Digital Literacy.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 20 May 2019,

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_literacy. Accessed 20 Nov. 2025.

“Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)”³: includes all technologies used for accessing information and enabling communication between people.

“Underserved Urban Area”⁴: it refers to a developed environment, in which however residents tend to struggle with common everyday issues, such as overcrowding, unemployment/ low-wage.

“Developing Area”⁵: it refers to the least developed areas that have a lower average standard of living, compared to other areas or countries.

“Rural area”⁶: Includes all geographically isolated and remote regions, often in the countryside (farms, villages etc.), where locals face serious problems, such as poor transportation, slow connection or no access to Internet at all.

“Sparse settlement pattern (also known as dispersed settlement)”⁷: it is where isolated buildings are spread out, separated by a hundred meters with no central focus, resulting in no or limited technological services. This usually occurs in remote, mountainous or predominantly agricultural regions and in areas with limited employment opportunities.

“Internet Subscription”⁸: The service that people pay in order to have access to the internet and all its associated extensions and related domains.

“Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)”⁹: constitutes an international organization with the ultimate purpose of global socioeconomic growth.

³ “Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) | AIMS.” *Aims.fao.org*, aims.fao.org/information-and-communication-technologies-ict. Accessed 20 Nov. 2025.

⁴ “Underserved Communities -Vocab, Definition, Explanations | Fiveable.” *Fiveable.me*, 2025, fiveable.me/key-terms/introduction-public-health/underserved-communities. Accessed 26 Nov. 2025.

⁵ Kulik, Rebecca M. “Developing Country | Definition, Economy, & Origin Definition | Britannica Money.” *Www.britannica.com*, Britannica, 26 Feb. 2024, www.britannica.com/money/developing-country. Accessed 20 Nov. 2025.

⁶ “Rural Area.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 8 Mar. 2019, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rural_area. Accessed 20 Nov. 2025

⁷ “Patterns of Settlement.” *Internet Geography*, 12 May 2022, www.internetgeography.net/topics/patterns-of-settlement/#google_vignette. Accessed. Nov. 2025.

⁸ Law Insider. “Internet Subscription Service Definition | Law Insider.” *Law Insider*, 2025, www.lawinsider.com/dictionary/internet-subscription-service. Accessed 26 Nov. 2025.

⁹ OECD. “OECD.org - OECD.” *Oecd.org*, 2023, www.oecd.org/. Accessed 26 Nov. 2025.

“Virtual Classroom”¹⁰: it is the opposite of a physical, traditional classroom, standing as an online educational meeting with teachers and students that interact via corresponding platforms, such as Zoom or WebEx.

“Broadband Internet”¹¹: it is a high-speed internet access and characterised by many as the “road” towards digital interaction, communication via technology, online education etc.

“Technophobia”¹²: it is defined as a level of fear or anxiety that certain individuals experience, in response to emerging technologies and can lead to disinclination, dissatisfaction and hesitance to adopt these innovations.

4. Historical Background

The emergence of digital divide in education

It is undeniable that the digital divide in education is at its peak right now, especially after it was highlighted a few years ago during the Covid-19 pandemic that forced students worldwide to seek new ways and methods of education in order to fulfil their academic needs. However, the term “digital divide” actually dates back to the mid-1990s, when personal computers were widely popularized but not affordable or accessible to everyone. This specific term for acknowledging the issue that had emerged first appeared in 1995 by the USA National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) during their report titled “Falling Through the Net: A Survey of the “Have Nots” in Rural and Urban America», which analysed the growing problem.¹³ Not long after that, in January 1996 the term was used in an article published by the “New York Times” focusing on the difference between students at a wealthy school with access to advanced computers and those at a poorer school with inadequate older technology.¹⁴

¹⁰ Cambridge Dictionary. “Virtual Classroom.” @CambridgeWords, 17 Sept. 2025, dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/virtual-classroom. Accessed 26 Nov. 2025.

¹¹ Wikipedia Contributors. “Broadband.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 26 June 2019, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Broadband. Accessed 26 Nov. 2025.

¹² Nayla Farouki. *Biotechnologies: The Ideal Victim?* 1 Jan. 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1016/bs.abr.2017.11.008>. Accessed 20 Nov. 2025.

¹³ “Digital Divide.” *New America*, 2019, www.newamerica.org/education-policy/topics/school-funding-and-resources/broadband-education/digital-divide/. Accessed 16 Nov. 2025.

¹⁴ Poole, Gary Andrew. “A New Gulf in American Education, the Digital Divide.” *The New York Times*, 29 Jan. 1996, www.nytimes.com/1996/01/29/business/a-new-gulf-in-american-education-the-digital-divide.html. Accessed 16 Nov. 2025.

From then on, the issue of digital divide in education circulated around the globe with a growing number of people acknowledging the problem and being affected by it, leading to the present, where the issue at hand is a major concern of educational systems and fosters uncertainty about the current teaching strategies.

Causes for the digital divide in education

The existence of technological inequality in education originates from a combination of numerous socioeconomic and geographic factors, which continue to aggravate the urgent issue of technological divide:

- Socioeconomic inequality¹⁵

Uneven and unequal distribution of privileges within a society impacts to large extent diverse aspects of life, such as education, healthcare and wealth. Variations and disparities in incomes, wealth, and housing have an immediate impact on education. While some people enjoy ideal living conditions, with numerous job opportunities and high chances of academic success, low-income families struggle to make ends meet, dealing simultaneously with the problem of limited professional opportunities due to racial and classism.

- Language Barrier

English and other global languages tend to dominate in main designed platforms and technological resources, which challenge individuals from diverse linguistic backgrounds to understand the content, engage in designated online class activities, complete assignments based on online material etc.

- Teacher's skills

Despite a school being equipped with ICTs, many teachers (due to old age, technophobia, indifference to becoming digitally literate etc.) lack the necessary skills and digital literacy in order to effectively deliver an online activity, lesson and/or virtual classroom. This factor automatically makes the problem of digital divide pedagogical, apart from its technological dimension. So, ICTs in schools are meaningful, only when educators are capable of using them correctly and effectively.

- Unequal Infrastructure

Many remote (e.g. rural communities), developing or underserved urban areas suffer from continuous infrastructure barriers¹⁶. These include poor transportation systems,

¹⁵ Sustainability Directory. "SocioEconomic Inequality → Term." *ESG → Sustainability*

Directory, 6 Feb. 2025, esg.sustainability-directory.com/term/socioeconomic-inequality/.

Accessed 16 Nov. 2025.

insufficient educational facilities, unreliable and unstable energy sources and weak internet connection. Referring specifically to remote areas, such as households in the countryside, their geographic isolation from the city centre is what further undermines efforts to ensure equitable digital access in education.

- Sparse settlement patterns

Through the ages, earlier inhabitants have settled down in areas, where houses were built far apart with no clear organization. This phenomenon¹⁷, called sparse settlement pattern or else dispersed pattern, exists mostly in rural areas and hinders the proper, coordinated operation of a technological network and consequently leads to an inefficient, unorganized technological functioning. This unorganized technological functioning creates an unequal, inequitable distribution of educational advantages and privileges for students, leading to the prevalence of educational digital divide.

This inequality exists, both within and between nations, that continues to impact the younger generation and its digital future

- Limited financial resources

Underserved urban or rural areas tend to be marginalised by the rest of the social community, as they are given fewer opportunities and resources to access better life conditions. On the one hand, schools that are well-funded by the government or Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) usually supply students with a full range of digital resources, useful and in many cases necessary for educational matters. While, on the other side, underfunded institutions face difficulties in their attempt to follow the technological trends and ensure equitable digital access for each student.

Types of Digital Divide

Due to the complexity of Digital Divide and the different causes of it in each case, Szilard Molnár, a sociologist and information society researcher, who worked at the BME- UNESCO Information Society Research Institute, decided that another refined analytical framework would be more practical and accurate. This consists of three types of digital divide, each based on an ICT adoption stage.

1st Type of Digital Divide: The first type of Digital Divide is the one regarding accessibility to the required technology, including electronic devices and internet connectivity. Ever since digital divide emerged, it has been largely viewed and

¹⁶ Michael, Ilesanmi. "Infrastructure Barriers in Remote Rural Areas.", 10 June 2025, www.researchgate.net/publication/392557813_Infrastructure_Barriers_in_Remote_Rural_Areas. Accessed 16 Nov. 2025.

¹⁷ Internet Geography. "Patterns of Settlement." *Internet Geography*, 2025, www.internetgeography.net/topics/patterns-of-settlement/.

handled as a socio-economic issue, seeing that even the “Organization for Cooperation and Development” (OECD) defines it as a “gap between individuals, households, businesses and geographic areas at different socio- economic levels with regard both to their opportunities to access to Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and to their use of the Internet for a wide variety of activities. “¹⁸This remains relevant to this day, as newer, more advanced and therefore more expensive and less affordable ICTs are developed daily.

2nd Type of Digital Divide: Something commonly appearing with the elderly is not being able to use technology effectively solely due to lack of experience in that specific department. This inability to work efficiently with modern and up to date technology also applies to students in rural areas who often do not have access to ICTs and therefore are not familiar with how to use it to their advantage in everyday life and mainly for educational purposes. Consequently, it is clear that the second level digital divide appears as an outcome of the first level one. To sum up, this type of digital divide stems from the difference between the skills and knowledge to use modern technology of students of rural and urban backgrounds.

3rd Type of Digital Divide: The third level of digital divide to be acknowledged is the one that focuses on the quality of the use of technology. This showcases how effectively people use ICT and thereby to what extent they benefit from it. The ability of users and more specifically students to conduct thorough research online or to view the material allocated to them by their teacher without unnecessary confusion is directly linked to lack of training on the most beneficial use of the Internet or the Web.

Digital Divide during the Covid- 19 Pandemic

The Covid-19 Pandemic highlighted education’s current dependence on technology and the immense difference between students with adequate access to electronic devices and the skills required to use them correctly. Other than that, the ability of the teachers to conduct online real-time lessons and distribute the given material to the students played a significant role, as it directly affected how students are expected to work independently on their studies as well as their academic evolution and opportunities.

Throughout the pandemic, various efforts were made to provide students with all the material they would be provided with in class, for instance projects requiring schools to implement ICT. The rapid change in everyone's life circumstances pushed education and technology to their limits and required active involvement from the teachers, the students and their families, as they are the ones who unfortunately in many cases did not have adequate or any access to the technology needed.

¹⁸ Conti, Chris. “The Digital Divide in Education: Bridging the Gap for Equal Learning Opportunities.” *Outreach International*, 6 Sept. 2024, outreach-international.org/blog/digital-divide-in-education/ . Accessed 16 Nov. 2025.

Moreover, surveys¹⁹²⁰ showed that students from schools with a higher concentration of students from low-income households are less likely to expect teachers to do the same amount of work remotely using technology as regularly in class. This includes those providing real-time lessons, tracking students' attendances or grading their assignments. This resulted in inadequate engagement from both the students' and teachers' side.

Lastly, due to the significance of the pandemic and the urgent need to act accordingly and modify the school curriculum, the educational needs of students of families with a lower income and those living in underserved areas were overlooked. This did not only negatively affect the students' grades and academic performance, but most importantly, their approach to learning.

Consequences that emerge

Access to the internet used to be seen as a luxury, and disparities in digital access were seen in largely the same terms. However, there is now widespread consensus that technological discrimination is a form of social exclusion because it deprives certain citizens of essential resources for wealth development.

In the U.S. nearly half of all jobs (in STEM science, technology, engineering, and math) are in computing. Lack of access to learning these skills is a barrier to these jobs and the income that comes with them.

They don't have to aspire to a career in tech to be affected by the digital divide. The impacts of the phenomenon reach many people, in several important ways:

- **Isolation**: The COVID-19 pandemic brought into sharp focus the isolation that people without internet access or skills can experience. This can have serious concomitant effects—from not being able to secure appointments for vaccinations to limiting individuals' job prospects and affecting their mental health.
- **Barriers to Education**: As education is increasingly delivered online, those without the resources to access the internet, including schoolchildren limited to remote learning during the pandemic, can be cut off from opportunities to develop their skills. As a result, children may have educational gaps, and adults may miss out on job opportunities or be unable to gain the basic skills necessary to contribute to their community.
- **Worsening Gender Discrimination**: As noted above, the digital divide exacerbates many existing forms of discrimination. One of the most

¹⁹ “84% of Schools with the Poorest Children Lack Devices to Ensure Their Pupils can Study at Home If Self-Isolating | Teach First.” www.teachfirst.org.uk, 23 Nov. 2020, www.teachfirst.org.uk/press-release/digital-divide . Accessed Nov. 2025.

²⁰ Sutton Trust. “Remote Learning: The Digital Divide.” *Sutton Trust*, 11 Jan. 2021, www.suttontrust.com/our-research/remote-learning-the-digital-divide/ . Accessed Nov. 2025.

widespread is gender discrimination. Some women who lack equal access to the internet are unable to gain an education and/or access crucial information.

As the world becomes increasingly dependent on digital technologies, these consequences are likely to become more serious and widespread in the global scene.

5. Timeline of Key Events

<p>High-Performance Computing Act of 1991</p>	<p>Passed on December 9, 1991 that mass internet access in the United States became a possibility. Aimed at bolstering the economy of the coming millennia, this bill proposed the creation of a high speed fibre optic network or what was called the National Information Infrastructure (NII). The bill's effect on internet access was enormous. In the Fall of 1990 there were approximately 313,000 computers online throughout the United States, and by 1996 that number exploded to 10 million (Campbell-Kelly and Aspray 1996). Coupled with the introduction of the Mosaic web browser and the user-friendly Windows Operating System, fascination and wonder in the internet began to take off in American culture.</p>
<p>The digital divide metaphor</p>	<p>It became popular in the mid-1990s, when the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) of the U.S. Department of Commerce published "Falling Through the Net: A Survey of the 'Have Nots' in Rural and Urban America" (1995), a research report on Internet diffusion among Americans. The report revealed widespread inequalities in national ICT access, with migrant or ethnic minority groups and older, less-affluent people living in rural areas with low educational attainments being especially excluded from Internet services. That pattern was confirmed by follow-up surveys by the NTIA, which also indicated an initial gender gap in favour of men.</p>

6. Current Situation

In recent years, programs have been launched that aim to combat particular aspects of the digital divide. Many of these are being coordinated at the highest level, including within the U.N.'s Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 9, which allows individual countries to coordinate their activities toward ending digital discrimination regarding economic classes, gender and racial differences.

Within the developed countries, some analysts point to the successful 20th-century programs that lifted millions of people out of poverty. One example is the “Rural Electrification Act” during the “Great Depression”, which showed how the government can help provide technology to underserved areas that private companies don't deem profitable enough to include in their networks. By enforcing federal laws for the installation of electrical distribution systems to serve isolated rural areas of the United States.

In addition, two programs have been launched in the past few years to address other aspects (For example provision of high speed internet access to all areas of the world and affordable prices for everyone) of the digital divide:

- **“The Alliance for Affordable Internet”** (A4AI) aims to reduce the cost of broadband internet in certain areas in the world.
- **“Starlink”** provides high-speed internet and global coverage at affordable prices via satellites it has launched into space.

Many countries now also run digital literacy programs (Leave No One behind UN agenda by 2030) aimed at teaching (Part of the UN Agenda until 2030 urging the members to follow the solutions regarding the Digital Divide Principle 2 “Leave NO one Behind) adults and children the skills necessary to combat the digital divide.

7. Major Parties Involved

1. Singapore

The city-state’s government has one of the world’s best ranges of online services and e-participation tools and ranks behind only the United Arab Emirates for the impact of information technology on government efficiency. Singapore offers the most conducive business and innovation environment worldwide and the second most digital-ready workforce (2nd, behind Finland.) With such fertile ground, it is not surprising that digital usage is so widespread: Singapore boasts the highest penetration of mobile broadband subscriptions per capita. Yet Internet uptake is surprisingly low: only three-quarters of the population use the Internet on a regular basis, far lower than leaders Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. This relatively low uptake does not prevent more than half the population being employed in knowledge-intensive jobs, the second highest after Luxembourg.

2. Finland

After two years at the top, Finland slips to second place but ranks best in the world on skills and has an excellent political/business environment and infrastructure. Together

with affordable access, these factors have driven widespread use among citizens and businesses. Although it has not yet found ways to fully restructure its large information technology industry, Finland has overtaken Japan as the country with the highest number of patents per capita. The government is re-thinking ways to promote the digital industry and these efforts are expected to stem the deterioration of government online service delivery and e-participation that have lost the country the top spot.

3. Sweden

Sweden's political and business environment remains one of the best in the world despite a slight decline. Excellent infrastructure, affordable access, and a highly skilled population mean information technology usage is widespread among businesses and the population at large (in 2013, 95 percent of individuals used the Internet regularly.) This activity is reflected in big impacts on the economy and society. Swedish companies are highly innovative in creating new products and services, leaders in patenting ICT-related technology, and almost half of the Swedish workforce is now employed in knowledge-intensive jobs.

4. The Netherlands

The Netherlands scores very well on political and regulatory frameworks, the business and innovation environment, and for infrastructure and skills. However, one challenge remains affordability, where the country ranks 72nd in the world. That has led to low mobile and mobile broadband subscriptions. But individual usage is otherwise broad: the country ranks third for access to personal computers and broadband. The Netherlands has some of the highest levels of business-to-business and business-to-consumer Internet usage and the government remains a leader in granting access to government services online, making Dutch e-participation the world's best.

5. Norway

Third among the Nordics, Norway has the best digital infrastructure in the world and Norwegians are second only to Icelanders for access to the Internet (95 %.) Norway also scores highly on measures of the impact, with adaptability of the work environment and use of digital in education both ranked third in the world. Almost half of workers are employed in knowledge-intensive jobs, and Norway ranks sixth for the effective use of digital to improve access to basic services...

6. Switzerland

Switzerland ranks best for business usage with Swiss companies, including those in flagship industries such as machinery equipment, electronics, pharmaceuticals, watch manufacturing, and banking, using information technology to stay at the top of the value chain. Switzerland possesses the highest number of fixed broadband Internet subscriptions per capita in the world, which has helped the country to become one of the world's most prolific innovation powerhouses with more than 50 percent of its population employed in knowledge-intensive jobs (3rd, behind Luxembourg and

Singapore). In stark contrast, the Swiss government is not adopting digital as fervently and ranks at the bottom of advanced economies for government online services.

7. The United States

The United States scores well on almost all counts apart from affordability, where it is 53rd, and in the general skills of the population (33rd.) Digital infrastructure remains among the best in the world (4th) and usage is high among all stakeholders. All of which translates into big impacts on the economy and society. Across industries and sectors, American companies leverage digital to create new businesses and opportunities and the United States remains one of the best examples of a large, advanced economy investing to leverage the promise of information technology.

8. United Kingdom

The country boasts one of the most conducive environments in the world for information technology development (4th). Top-level infrastructure, good affordability, and a high degree of preparedness among the population are further positives. Individual usage has improved in recent years, and is now fourth in the world. The United Kingdom displays some of the world's highest penetration rates of fixed and mobile broadband Internet access and UK companies are showing the way in both business-to-business (third) and business-to-consumer use (1st.) Almost half of the workforce is employed in knowledge-intensive jobs and information technology has a large impact on society at large, notably in terms of e-participation where the country ranks fourth in the world.

8. Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

UN-World Summit on the Information Society- WSIS (11th December 2003, Geneva)

During the UN World Summit on the Information Society (UN WSIS), which took place in Geneva on the 11th of December 2003, the at the time Secretary General referred to the obvious social, economic and other disparities and obstacles that prevented countries from taking full advantage of digital opportunities. Moreover, at the first phase of the Summit, the President of the Swiss Confederation urged the other members to come up with specific measures so as to: “bridge the gaps between the haves and the have-nots”²¹.

This was one of the very first ways the issue got highlighted and pushed governments to extend ICT access. However, this did not affect the situation that much, as there was weak funding and uneven follow-through by many parties.

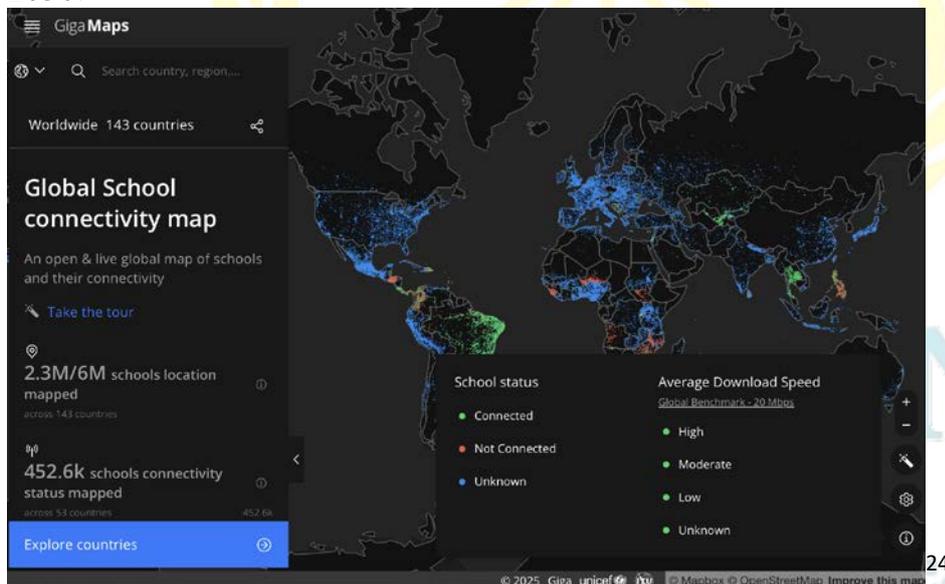
²¹ “WSIS OPENING MEETING DISCUSSES HOW DIGITAL DIVIDE IS PREVENTING EQUAL SHARING of OPPORTUNITIES CONCERNING ICTS | UN Press.” *Press.un.org*, 12 Nov. 2003, press.un.org/en/2003/pi1541.doc.htm . Accessed 20 Nov. 2025.

UNESCO's ICT Competency Framework for Teachers (ICT - CFT) (initially 2011)

This project led by UNESCO originates back to 2011 and aims at eventually successfully implementing ICTs in many aspects of our lives, while it primarily focuses on education. This Framework was updated in 2018, which stresses how rapidly technology evolves. In its updated version, the framework recognizes 18 ICT competences, which teachers should master.²²In conclusion, it aims at the teachers' understanding of ICT and its crucial role in education, as this will later on allow them to use it both correctly and to its full potential. Although this project did in some cases improve teachers ICT competence, its limited resources and uneven implementation slowed down the process significantly.

UN GIGA Initiative

In 2019, the UN-GIGA strategy was adopted by the UN under collaboration of two UN agencies, mainly UNICEF and ITU. The purpose of this joint initiative, that is operating to this day, is to achieve universal school connectivity by the year 2030. The project at hand practically consists of a map, on which the schools worldwide are divided based on their connection to the Internet and equality of their connectivity infrastructures.²³ Up to this point, some progress has been made thanks to this initiative; however, since it is relatively new, the real impact won't be visible until 2030.



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²² UNESCO. “UNESCO’s ICT Competency Framework for Teachers | UNESCO.” *Www.unesco.org*, 2018, www.unesco.org/en/digital-competencies-skills/ict-cft . Accessed 24 Nov. 2025. Last update: 18th October 2023.

²³ “How We Work | Mapping School Connectivity | Giga.” *Giga.global*, 16 June 2025, giga.global/what-we-do/how-we-work/mapping/. Accessed 24 Nov. 2025.

²⁴ “How We Work | Mapping School Connectivity | Giga.” *Giga.global*, 16 June 2025, giga.global/what-we-do/how-we-work/mapping/. Accessed 24 Nov. 2025.

9. Possible Solutions

Raising awareness within the community

Acknowledging the problem at hand and informing the citizens about it is the first step of eventually tackling it. This could happen in various ways, such as but not limited to community centred and led campaigns and programs. These could include workshops as well, aiming at educating students, teachers and other members of the community on ICT. Moreover they could be taught or led by volunteers specialised in ICT or with wide knowledge of technology.

Raising funds

It is self-evident that one of the biggest obstacles of following through with initiatives combating digital divide are the limited funds. Therefore it is of immense significance to address this and raise as many funds as possible through campaigns and other kinds of events. These funds could then be useful to the community, providing students from low-income households with the devices and equipment needed for adequate education.

Adjustments to the school curriculum

The school curriculum could be adjusted according to the current needs of the students by adding more computers based classes, so that the students become familiar with technology and evolve the way they use the Internet in education. Moreover, this would include employing teaching faculty with extended IT knowledge, thus being capable of assisting the students at any point.

National Digital Education Strategies

Member states could set national digital education strategies not only to address current situations where it is needed, but also to prevent chaos in unexpected crises that might come up, for instance a pandemic such as the one of Covid-19. These education strategies could include among others, a mandatory workshop for teachers focused on ICT and their skills play a major part in ensuring the teachers can support their students and adjust their regular lesson plans to online lesson plans, without leaving anything important out.

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