Tuvalu

Population: 11,000
Schools: 13 schools
ICT Access: Low

Background
Tuvalu, a smaller Pacific nation, is supportive of educational ICT and aims to strengthen skills and access to ICT to provide opportunities for students to participate in the digital economy. Aside from extending ICT skills within the Ministry of Education itself, emphasis has been on the implementation of ICT in school administration, and on the strategic allocation of funding because of the high costs involved, the small, distributed population, and the difficulties in the provision of hardware and reliable infrastructure.

The development of an administrative database for the Tuvalu primary school system began in 2002. Prior to the installation of the database, pilot questionnaires were sent out to all primary schools in Tuvalu for completion, and returned to the Education Department for analysis. The inputting of responses was hindered by the unreliable transport links and the distances to the outer islands.

Policy
The long-term objective of the Ministry of Education is to develop ICT as a curriculum course to be taught in classes at both primary and secondary level. Implementation depends on the ease with which funds can be raised from government and donor partners such as ADB, NZAid and AUSAid.

In consultation with stakeholders, experts and teachers the Ministry has begun developing an ICT curriculum with a 5-10 year timeline. The policy would encourage the development of access and skills by enhancing students’ capability to explore, develop, communicate and present their ideas; providing a range of information sources to support their development knowledge; providing tools, equipment and components for designing, such as modeling; and encouraging design awareness using technology.

The Education for Life program has been another important policy initiative, focusing also on lifelong learning.
Challenges

- Small population, widely dispersed
- Inadequate infrastructure
- High costs, Lack of expertise

Recommendations

- Increase training and skill development opportunities
- Provide skilled experts to encourage development on the ground
- Reduce costs of access
- Raise awareness and participation at community level