CARDET

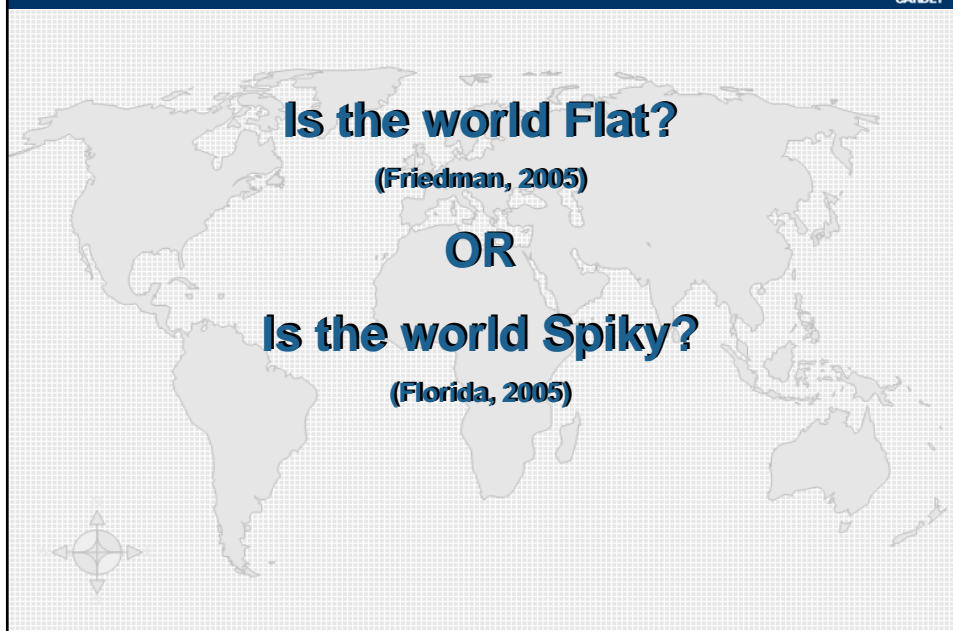## CENTRE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT IN EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

Social Networking for Social Justice: Challenges and Possibilities

Networked Learning 2008

Charalambos Vrasidas
CARDET – University of Nicosia
www.cardet.org – www.unic.ac.cy

The world is Flat! ...or ... is it?

CARDET

Is the world Flat?
(Friedman, 2005)

OR

Is the world Spiky?
(Florida, 2005)

- **"Economic disadvantage impedes equal participation in the making of culture, in public spheres and in everyday life" (Fraser, 1997).**

- **Recognition and redistribution are co-fundamental dimensions of justice (Fraser, 1997, 2003; Zembylas, 2008)**

Inequalities and injustice are evident all around the world, in all forms and shapes including the developing and developed world, urban and rural regions, in areas such as economy, access to food, goods, education, health, and services.

Social Justice education are those pedagogies
and policies that improve
the learning and life opportunities of
typically **underserved students**
Cochran-Smith (2004)

In 2004, almost **1 billion people** lived below the international
poverty line, earning less than $1 per day

840 million people in the world are malnourished
— 799 million of them live in the developing world

153 million of the world's malnourished people
are children under the age of 5

Source: UNESCO

Every day, 16,000 children die from hunger-related causes
One child every five seconds

6 million children under the age of 5 die
every year as a result of hunger

In 2005, about 10.1 million children died before
they reached their 5th birthday.
Most of these deaths occurred in developing countries

Source: UNESCO

**Eliminating poverty is not an act of kindness;
it's an act of justice**
-Nelson Mandela

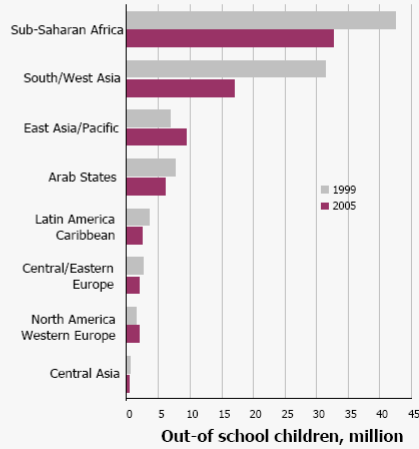# Out-of-school children declining
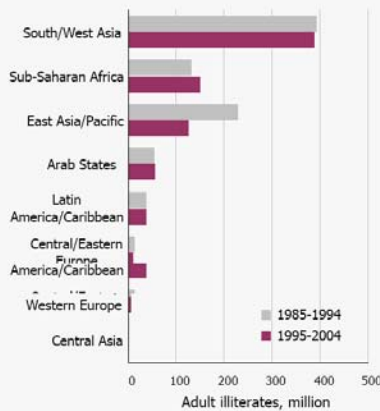
1999: **96** million

2005: **72** million

60% girls in Arab States

66% in South and West Asia

Sub-Saharan Africa
South/West Asia
East Asia/Pacific
Arab States
Latin America Caribbean
Central/Eastern Europe
North America Western Europe
Central Asia

1999
2005

0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45
Out-of school children, million

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www.efareport.unesco.org

Minimal attention to adult literacy

774 million adult illiterates

South/West Asia
Sub-Saharan Africa
East Asia/Pacific
Arab States
Latin America/Caribbean
Central/Eastern Europe America/Caribbean
Western Europe
Central Asia

1985-1994
1995-2004

0 100 200 300 400 500
Adult illiterates, million

- Number of illiterate adults increased in sub-Saharan Africa and Arab States

- **75%** adult illiterates live in 15 countries

- **64%** are women

- **64%** are women skills suggest even greater challenge

Breaking out of the Poverty Cycle

NO EDUCATION

NO JOBS

POVERTY

NO BASIC NEEDS

NO MONEY

… 5 years of education can help break the cycle of poverty …

DFID (2006) reports that in low-income countries:

- **with each additional year of education, average earnings rise 11%**

- **with each additional year of a girls education, her eventual wages rise 10-20%**

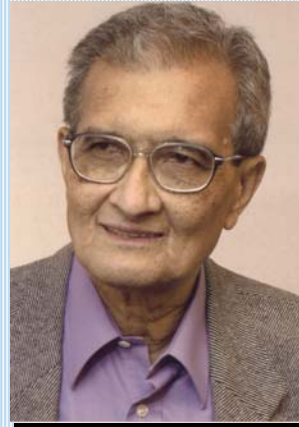- **with each additional year of a girls education, the death rate of her children under 5 years falls by 8%**
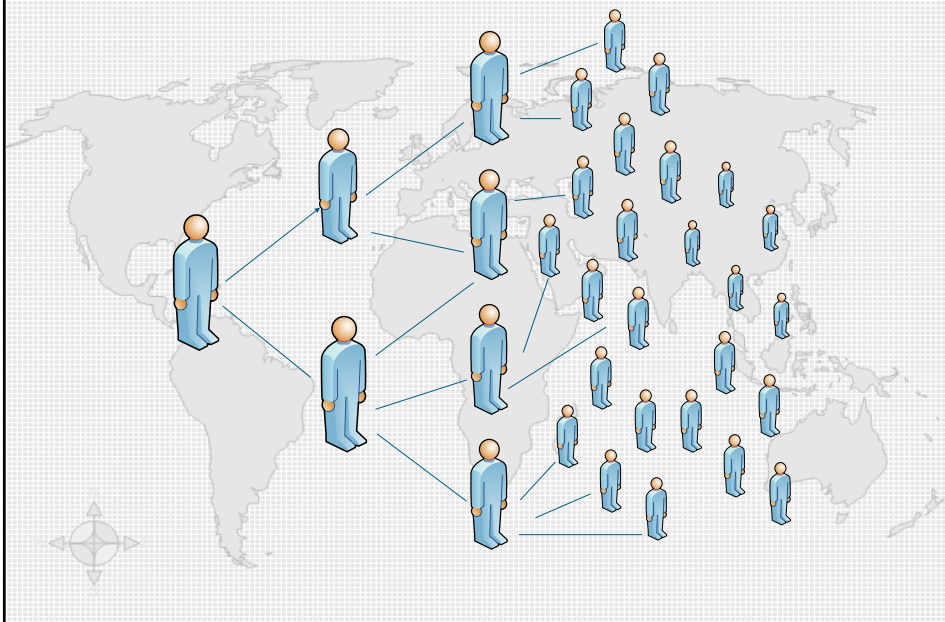
    -(Power et al. 2008)

Development as Freedom

"**Expansion of Freedom is viewed … both as a primary end and as the principal means of development. Development consists of the removal of various types of unfreedoms that leave [people with little choice and little opportunity of exercising their reasoned agency. The removal of substantial unfreedoms, it is argued here, is constitutive of development."**
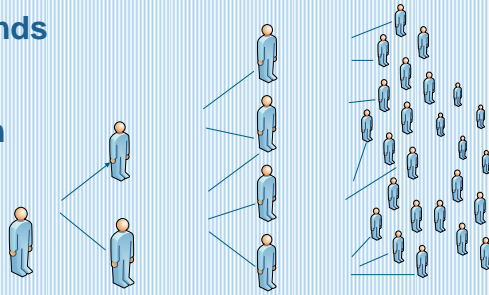
- *Amartya Sen (1999)*

Social Networking …

Social Networking Characteristics

- **Connect with friends**
- **Find new friends**
- **Share information**
- **Get updates**
- **Import content**
- **Join groups**
- **Instant messaging**
- **Ask & answer questions**

Online Activism

- **Use the internet for online campaigns**

- **Amnesty International: Your signature counts**

How social networking can promote peace and reconciliation when you have challenges like:

- **Language**
- **History**
- **Conflict**
- **Religion**
- **Politics**
- **Infrastructure**

Open for Whom? In what **LANGUAGE?**
With what **infrastructure?**
Where are the **TEACHERS?**

Digital Divide ...

- **Physical access to technology is not the only condition.**

- **What really matters is people ability and context for use**
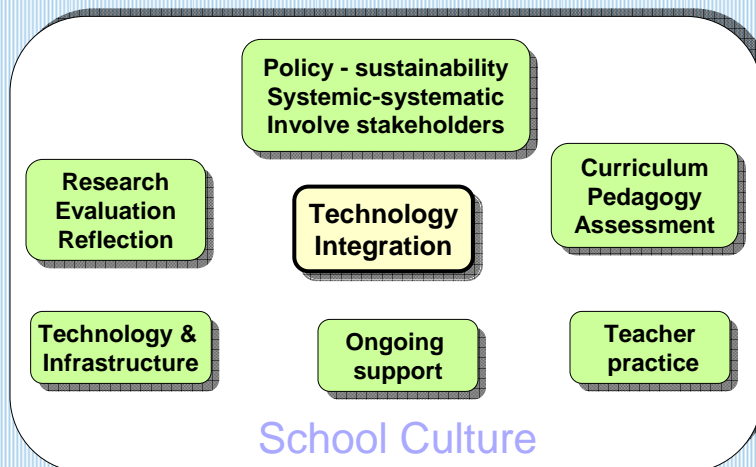 - **Warschauser (2003)**

Need for teachers

- **Sub-Saharan Africa will need to expand its teaching force by 68%.**
- **Ethiopia must double the number of its teachers**
- **Chad will need almost four times as many, from 16,000 to 61,000 (UNESCO, 2006).**
- **It is calculated that 18 million teachers are still needed if the Millennium Development Goals are to be met (Global Campaign For Education, 2006).**
- **Commission for Africa Report (2005) identifies teacher training and development as a key priority area for reducing poverty.**
    - **Power et al. 2008**

Technology Integration Framework

Policy - sustainability Systemic-systematic Involve stakeholders

Research Evaluation Reflection

Technology Integration

Curriculum Pedagogy Assessment

Technology & Infrastructure

Ongoing support

Teacher practice

School Culture

Virtual University Small States Commonwealth

- The VUSSC is a consortium of institutions that aims to address education needs in small states of the Commonwealth

Singapore Statement (Courses)

- **Teacher Education**
- **Information and Communications Technology**
- **Information Systems**
- **Tourism and Hospitality**
- **Nursing and Health Care**
- **TechVoc Edn & Trg and Life Skills**
- **Management & Public Administration**
- **Agriculture and Fisheries**

Mauritius Bootcamp: Aug 2006

- **Orientation: concept of online collaboration and project planning**

- **Introduction to technologies, free open source software, Wikis, ePortfolios, etc.**

- **Production of course frameworks and creation of initial content**

- **Rapid learning of technology skills to enable participants to provide buddy-training**

COL's role in the VUSSC

- **Coordinate the initiative & Facilitate creation of networks**

- **Share expertise in educational technology: radio, TV, print, multi-media, internet, wikis, eLearning**

- **Support local capacity enhancement & Share resources**

- **Not a degree awarding body**

- **Not a funding agency**

The role of Ministries & Institutions

Role of Ministries

- Develop policy
- Liaise with other ministries
- Allocate people and responsibilities
- Support implementation
- Monitor implementation

Role of Institutions

- Take responsibility for program development and delivery
- Adapt course materials to local contexts
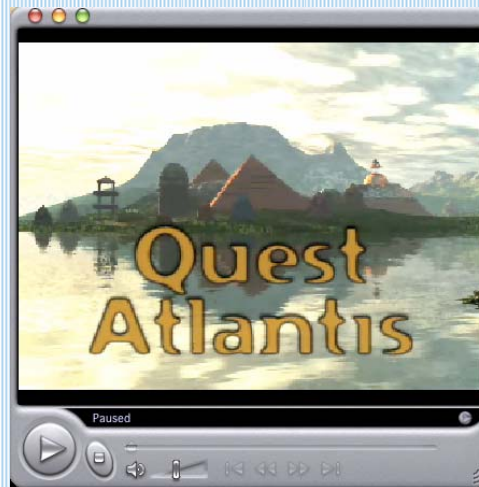- Grant awards earned by students

Successful Distance Education initiatives

- **Systemic Approach**
- **Participatory – Collective**
- **Quality good course materials**
- **Tutorial and regional support networks**
- **Rich media mix – usually low tech in the developing world**
- **Appropriate staff numbers**
- **Vibrant research activity**
- **A culture that goes with a sense of academic community.**

          -John Daniel

Games with a Social Dimension – Indiana University

- **Designing to support social commitment and real-world action.**
- **QA is an immersive context with over 20,000 registered members worldwide.**
- **Engage children ages 9–14 in a form of dramatic play comprising both online and off-line learning activities, with a storyline inspiring a disposition towards social action.**

Quest Atlantis — http://atlantis.crlt.indiana.edu/

•**Creative Expression**
•**Diversity Affirmation**
•**Personal Agency**
•**Social Responsibility**
•**Environmental Awareness**
•**Healthy Communities**
•**Compassionate Wisdom**

FOOD FORCE   www.food-force.com

Challenges in Integrating Games in Education

- Students play video games, most teachers do not
- Anti-authoritarian values, challenge traditional conceptions of education and schooling
- Games allow exploration, personal meaning-making, playful experimentation, and individual expression (something that contracts some of the core ideals valued in schools)
- Teachers do not have time
- Not a lot of games in appropriate language
- Integrate games to match the curriculum
- Life is NOT a game!

Potential of ICT for Education for Social Justice

- Time to un-learn and learn
- Communities (online-F2F, formal–informal)
- Public-private partnerships
- ICT integration, curricula & policies
- Infrastructure and access to ICT
- Digital content

Develop projects which encourage teachers and students

to ask **critical questions**

about justice and injustice,

engage in action, and move beyond

'seeing the world' as virtual tourists

from the safety of their home

Common metaphors such as the **global village** may not always work when applied to experiences of **marginalized people** in online environments and thus, regardless of physical access, the online environment can be **exclusionary**

ICT for Education Development and Social Justice

empower

inspire

innovate