



Gender and Mobiles SIG Newsletter

Note from the Editor

Thank you so much for all of the support that has been given to the Gender and Mobiles Special Interest Group (SIG) Newsletter since its launch in December 2012! We have had interest from around the world, so please continue to share this free, bi-monthly aggregation of news, research, and events related to the ways that gender, mobiles and mobile learning intertwine. If interested in making a contribution to the newsletter, please feel free to be in touch. —Ronda Zelezny-Green (rondazg3@gmail.com)

Apps to Empower—Gender and Mobile Learning Design Competition

The Apps to Empower competition, seeks “... to discover and showcase innovative tablet applications that help young women and girls become leaders, resolve conflicts, be mentored, find work, become entrepreneurs and realize their full potential through education.”

The competition, which accepts entries until Tuesday April 20th, is sponsored in part by The United Nations Office for Partnerships and Datawind, the company that produces the Aakash tablet for the government of India. Winning designs will be based on the Android 2.2 platform. To learn more and to enter, please visit: <http://appstoempower.org/>.



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Plan International on the Digital Gender Divide

This is an excerpt from a blog post on the Plan International website written by Sarah Johns. The link to read the full blog post can be accessed [here](#).

There are two shining lights on [the] horizon though. The first is the mobile (cell) phone. The ability to have relatively cheap, personal, portable access to digital information and communication is not as revolutionary as some say, but it's a technological evolution that has great potential to benefit girls and women.

If computers are male, telephones are female, traditionally used for family gossip and chatting with friends or listening to the radio. Women, on the whole, are already in control of this technology, which makes it a hugely powerful tool for change.

Butterfly Works towards gender and mobile learning in Afghanistan

Butterfly Works has developed a model for mobile distance learning based on our experience in Afghanistan, with the pilot phase of GREAT Idea.

Great Idea is a distance and mobile learning project in Afghanistan that improves the quality and accessibility of education for all students, especially girls, within the framework of the Ministry of Education of Afghanistan.

Three decades of war, civil unrest, poverty and repressive governments have destroyed most of Afghanistan's formal education system.

The rates of school enrollment are increasing, but still unacceptably low, especially in rural areas: 44% for boys and 27% for girls.



Generations have missed a proper education through 27 years of war, resulting in a massive lack of qualified teachers with thorough,

content-based knowledge and effective teaching methods and a lack of safe, student-centred learning spaces.

The co-created solution addresses subjects in math, chemistry, physics and biology at secondary level. Video lessons from a master trainer are broadcasted in classrooms, where they provide quality teaching contents to teachers and students. A mobile phone consultation line allows teachers and students to pose their questions to the master trainer during the telecast lesson and a competition tests students on their knowledge and piques interest in the telecasts.

The use of mobile technologies has been an important tool within Great Idea:

- To increase the participation of teachers and students.
- To spread the lessons to more schools, especially in rural areas and even beyond the school system.

To learn more about the project, please visit:

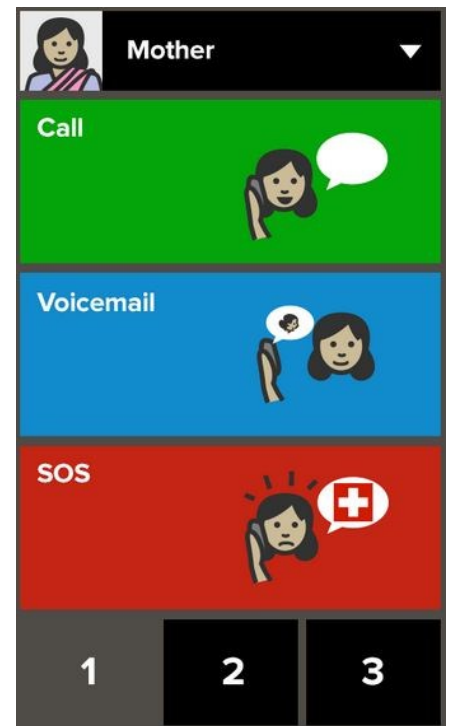
www.afghanlearning.wordpress.com

and to learn more about Butterfly Works, please visit:

www.butterflyworks.org. *Photo provided by Butterfly Works*

GSMA mWomen Design Challenge—winners to be announced Tuesday February 26th

In order for a person to take advantage of tools such as mobile phones, they must have a level of technical literacy to use the phone, as well as awareness of the activities that mobiles can make possible apart from just voice calls and text messaging. Enter the GSMA mWomen Design Challenge. After a global call for entries, [10 finalists](#) have been selected based on the mobile phone user experiences they have imagined will best serve women in developing countries. The winner of the challenge will be announced at Mobile World Congress, the largest mobile industry event in the world, and receive \$20,000. For more information about the challenge and the entries, please visit: <https://designchallenge.mwomen.org/>. *Photo from Roger Wong Design*



“Contributing to the problem of low literacy is the lack of access to quality education and reading materials...”

UNESCO launches mobile-based training program for female teachers in Pakistan

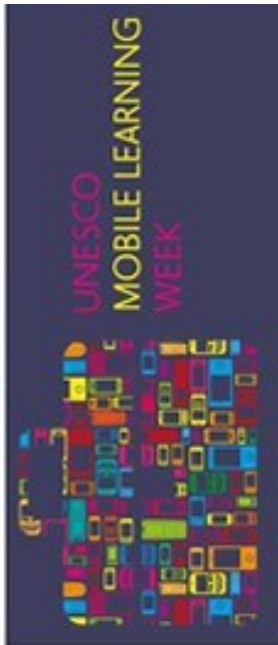
Following on the encouraging findings from the Mobile Based Post Literacy Project first started in 2009, UNESCO launched a six-month pilot project in December 2012 that will leverage mobile phones to train female teachers in non-formal basic education (NFBE) and literacy methodologies.

The need for this project arose from the alarmingly low literacy rates among Pakistanis, a situation that is particularly concerning for women and girls: “The literacy rate for males over 15 years is 67% while for females it is 42%.” Contributing to the

problem of low literacy is the lack of access to quality education and reading materials in any language.

In collaboration with the Punjab Department of Literacy & NFBE, during the course of the project 750+ text messages will be shared on subjects ranging from languages to numeracy, in addition to teacher training materials. The project will be evaluated externally at the conclusion. More information on these projects can be found by visiting the [UNESCO Bangkok website](#). *Photo from BUNYAD*





UNESCO's Second Mobile Learning Week

From Monday February 18th to Friday February 22nd the [Second UNESCO Mobile Learning Week](#) will be held in Paris, France. This year's events include a two-day Symposium filled with 48 presentations and panels on the themes of using mobile phones to improve adult and youth literacy, quality of education, and gender parity and equality in education.

IAmLearn members [Mohamed Ally](#), [Isabelle Duston](#), [Inge Ignatia de Waard](#), [Geoff Stead](#), [Merel van der Woude](#), and [Ronda Zelezny-Green](#) will all give presentations during the Symposium. Merel and Ronda's presentations will both focus on the theme of gender parity and equality in education and mobile learning. IAmLearn President [Agnes Kukulska-Hulme](#) will provide a keynote speech on the topic of informal mobile learning and female immigrants. Member [Jill Attewell](#) will participate on a panel about the cost, scale and sustainability of mobile learning.

On Thursday February 21st, Diane Boulay of UNESCO will [host a free webinar](#) on mobile learning for women's and girls' empowerment. Registration is limited to 250 people, so do not delay if interested in attending!

Technovation opens girls' global mobile apps challenge

Technovation has recently kicked off a [global mobile apps challenge](#) whereby girls of secondary school age (13-18) work in teams with teachers and technology mentors to create a mobile app that addresses a problem in their communities. This challenge is related to two linked initiatives created by the ITU, the [Girls in ICT](#) project and the [Tech Needs Girls](#) campaign.

[Women in Technology in Nigeria](#) (WITIN) will be organizing technology mentors in the country to lead teams of girls who wish to enter this challenge. Girls will create a business plan to accompany their mobile app design. Winners of the challenge will be announced on May 1st in San Francisco.

Relevant Gender & Mobiles Organizations

- Women Technology Organizations in Africa <https://womentechafrica.crowdmap.com/>
- FEM, Inc. <http://www.fem-inc.com/vision>
- Girl Develop It (GDI) <http://girldevelopit.com/about>
- Women Innovate Mobile <http://womeninnovatemobile.com/>