

Promoting social inclusion through a nation-wide ICT-in- education endeavor: the case of *Macedonia Connects*

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Macedonia Connects

- ◆ Macedonia became world's 1st wireless country by connecting every school in the country
- ◆ Public-Private Partnership
 - USAID
 - AED (Academy for Educational Development—US-based NGO)
 - On.Net (Macedonian ISP start-up)
 - Ministry of Education



Timeline

◆ 2002

- Macedonia's President visits China, returns with donation of 6000 computers for schools.

◆ 2003

- President contacts USAID to assist with program. USAID already has another program, LMI, which promoted competition in the Telecom Industry.

◆ 2004

- USAID offers bid for project contract, On.Net selected (Legislature outlaws telco monopoly)

◆ 2005

- Teachers trained in basic IT skills & incorporation of IT into curriculum (USAID)



Timeline

- ◆ 2005
 - May-August: project rollout
- ◆ 2005-2008
 - Pilot Stage: On.Net must become profitable
- ◆ 2007
 - Project handed over to Macedonia's Education Ministry
- ◆ 2008
 - On.Net bought by Telekom Slovenia
- ◆ 2008
 - Government announces expansion of program to One-Computer-Per-Child. Runs for re-election on computers-in-schools program, is re-elected. Establishes Ministry for IT.



Success Factors

- ◆ Recognition of Long-Term Nature of Project
 - Set Long-term goals
 - ◆ Training new generation in ICT skills
 - ◆ Become regional technology hub
- ◆ Partnership that leveraged expertise
- ◆ Government & schools providing long-term support
- ◆ Training Teachers before deployment



Social Inclusion

- ◆ Ethnic tensions mainly between Ethnic Macedonians & Ethnic Albanians
- ◆ Providing computers & training on an equal basis across the country is a good start
- ◆ Will they be able to promote cross-cultural communication with the new technologies?

