

# PANEL DISCUSSION

**Learning with Mobile Phones: The Implications for  
National Policy**

## **Latin America & the Caribbean**

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# Latin America & the Caribbean

- Highly heterogeneous and unequal continent
- Democracies have settled and economic growth is slow but steady
- Still maintains high levels of poverty and social inequality increases

## ***The educational context:***

- Expansion of coverage
- Education finance laws
- Compulsory secondary school

# Pending debts

- Repetition, attrition (expulsion) and low levels of discharge
- Literacy
- Educational quality
- Preschool and early education
- Teacher training
- Multicultural Education

Manifested mainly in low-income urban populations, rural and non-hegemonic cultures (indigenous or afroamerican people).

# Three gaps and a shift

## **1. The access gap:**

Income levels affect access to technology.

## **2. The appropriation and necessary cultural capital gap**

Not enough to be surrounded by digital technology to be. Uses.

## **3. The expectations gap**

Among the needs of young people and what the school offers.

# Telecommunications

- Strong growth in telecommunications in the last 20 years.
- Mobile technology is the fastest growing: nearly 100% of average penetration.
- Growing number of Internet users: 36% in 2010
- The penetration of broadband, although growing, remains low: 6.8% in 2010 (between 24% and 30% in developed countries)
- Still major infrastructure needs.
- Internet access remains expensive and scarce.

# ICT&ED policies in LA&C

- Diverse outlook: different models and times
- Increasing presence of ICT in education in the public policy agenda
- At least 17 countries implement 1:1 models
- Investment in equipment and connectivity infrastructure.
- High development of educational portals

# Identified m-learning initiatives

- Initiatives are scarce and incipient
- Driven mostly from the private sector and the academia
- Targeting specific groups in relation to specific issues or needs
- Five main cores:
  - At the university level: institutional initiatives for the use and delivery of mobiles (Argentina and Mexico)
  - For children and adolescents in vulnerable populations: initiatives undertaken by private companies (Nokia, Pearson - Chile and Colombia) and Stanford University (various countries)
  - For youths and adults: use of cell phones for literacy (Colombia)
  - For educational management: Mobile phones for supervisors (Mendoza, Argentina)

# Main findings

- Saturation of the ICT&ED agenda by the netbook programs (1:1 and mobile laboratories) -> the use of mobile phones as replacement or supplement is not yet being considered.
- Inhibition rules of mobile phone use in schools is widely disseminated, issued either from the education authorities or the institutions.
- Little or no presence of m-learning in the region.

# Key factors

## *Opportunities*

- Strong presence of ICT themes in the region's educational policy agenda.
- Giving attention to the pending educational debts of the region: literacy, coverage, multiculturalism and graduation
- Opportunity to review the institutional arrangements in relation to the prescription of cell phone use.
- Private sector developments

# Key factors

## *Warning signs*

- Identifying the 'meaning' of m-learning policies in Latin America: justice and quality
- Attention to maintenance and repair costs.
- Provide for appropriate waste disposal technology.
- Professional development and initial teacher training
- Evaluation & monitoring

**Thank you!**