OCCE 2020
Open Conference on Computers in Education
Empowering Teaching for Digital Equity and Agency

CONFERENCE REPORT
Centre for Education Innovation and Action Research at Tata Institute of Social Sciences hosted the Open Conference on Computers in Education (OCCE 2020) from 6th to 8th January, 2020. It was in collaboration with the International Federation for Information Processing (IFIP), Laxenburg, Austria and co-partnered by India Didactics Association (IDA). The title of the conference was “Empowering teaching for digital equity and agency.”

This conference brought together international contributors, speakers and researchers to consider concerns and approaches for empowering teaching, training and professional development with ICT.

The conference began on 5th January with a Pre-Conference Workshop for education practitioners. The workshops aimed to provide opportunities to experience contemporary educational concepts and practices with ICT. Members of the IFIP facilitated four workshops on Computational Thinking, ICT Tools – How to choose them and When to use them, Platform game making and Digital Badges. The facilitators were Prof Don Passey from Lancaster University, Prof Therese Keane and Jayanti Nayak from Swinburne University, and Mick Chesterman, Louise Hayes & Ellie Overland from Manchester Metropolitan University.

69 participants from across India benefited from these new-age concepts. Post-Workshop Feedback was very heartening. Educators found the concepts highly applicable and useful to their classroom teaching practices.

The conference was spread over two and half days and was held at the two campuses within TISS. The conference was helmed by Conference chairs, Prof Don Passey and Asst Prof Therese Keane, and LOC chair Prof Amina Charania. Three keynote addresses from prominent practitioners in the field of Education and Technology were the highlights of this conference.

The first day began with Prof Amina Charania introducing members of the IFIP and inviting Prof Shalini Bharat, Director-TISS for inaugurating the conference. The short speech by the Director was followed with an address by the conference chairs and TC3 Chair, Sindre Rosvik. Prof Passey then introduced the theme of the conference.

On the opening day, Davide Storti, Programme Specialist, Coordinator of Youth Mobile Initiative, UNESCO delivered the Keynote on Youth Education Projects in Computer Science and making mobile apps: a worldwide perspective. He spoke about the Youth Mobile Initiative and the development of ICT Competency Framework for Teachers by UNESCO. He also elaborated on Open Data, Ethics in ICT pertaining to data usage and Open Educational Resources for capacity building, policy development and fostering creativity.

This was followed by Full and Short paper presentations, Symposia, Industry & System Foresights presentations, and Learning & Teaching presentations.

The day ended with a panel discussion on Role of ICT in bridging learning and opportunity gaps: Issues of Quality, Scale and Sustainability. The plenary was moderated by Mr. Satyajit Salian, Head Education, Tata Trusts. Participants from Government and Foundations were as following:

- Mr. Shailendra Sharma - Principal advisor to Directorate of Education, Government of Delhi
- Mr. Manmohan Singh - Co-founder and Director, Kaivalya Education Foundation
- Mr. Abid Hossain - Director of Madrasah Education, Govt. of West Bengal and Joint Secretary of Dept. of Minority Affairs and Madrasah Education
- Mr. Francis Joseph - Co-founder of School Leaders Network Foundation and SLN Global Network
- Mr. Dipankar Bhowmik - Asst. Prof.
SCERT, Chattisgarh Raipur, Dr. Deepa Balasubramanian - Education Lead (Deepening Learning), Tata Trusts, and Mr. Rajashekhar Kaliki - Kaivalya Education Foundation.

The plenary began with a short introduction on ‘Authentic Learning for all’ by Mr. Salian. Presentations by Mr. Sharma, Dr. Deepa and Mr. Kaliki followed. The panel then discussed on National Education Policy, Madrasah education, and Strengthening at scale amongst other topics.

A splendid High Tea followed where TC3 Chair, Mr. Sindre Rosvik made a small speech on the proceedings of the day.

The second day began with parallel sessions of Working Group meetings and was succeeded by the Keynote address of Dr. Aaditeshwar Seth, Associate Professor at the Dept. of CS and Engineering at IIT Delhi and co-founder of Gram Vaani, a community media platform for empowering rural population. He spoke on - Participatory media, rural communities and lifelong learning. He started by explaining the underlying theory behind Gram Vaani, and then went on how participatory media can be used for development and learning. His views were that media created by people increases awareness of social issues, helps in community building, ensures representativeness of all classes leading to empowerment and increase in social accountability.

After two sessions of Full paper and Symposium presentations, IFIP members moved on for parallel sessions of Working Group meetings. The evening was marked by a tour of Mumbai, hosted by students of TISS and gala dinner at Khyber, a landmark restaurant in the city. Participants of the tour were regaled with anecdotes about the city and it was well received.

The concluding day had Prof Padma Sarangapani, Chairperson of the CEI&AR at TISS deliver the keynote on Continuous Professional Development for Teachers: What Works, Why and What is worth doing with ICT. She highlighted aspects like professional identity of teachers, Nature of initial teacher preparation, Political economy of professionalising teaching and Fundamental shift in the character of education.

The closing ceremony of the conference was preceded by two sessions of Full paper presentations. The Closing session began with LOC Chair, Prof Amina Charania thanking the Principal organiser, IFIP for their support. It was followed with a Vote of thanks from TC3 Chair, Mr. Sindre Rosvik, Announcements of next events by the conference editor, Dr. Torsten Brinda and a Thank You note from the Conference Chairs. All student volunteers from TISS campus were handed over Certificate of Volunteering by the TC3 chair. The session was moderated by Prof Don Passey.

Post Lunch sessions included an Editorial Meeting and the TC3 AGM. The TC3 AGM continued on the next day until lunch.

The Conference was deemed a success by participant teachers, students, presenters, and visiting international faculty. It was well received by academics with regards to the content presented in the conference. In all, 48 presentations were made. The conference saw participation of more than 100 delegates from 13 countries in all.

Local Organising Committee
Ramaa Muthukumaran
Vijay Jathore
Raoson Singh (Technical Coordinator)
Ashmeet Nanda

Other Organising Committee Members:
Faizan Mithani
Sumegh Paltiwale
Ishmeet Kaur
Sohini Sen
Durba Sarkar

Special thanks for their contributions to:
Anusha Ramanathan
Deepa Bhalerao
Dr. Garima Singh Gomber
Mahendra Singh & Facility services
Munaf Merchant & Project Management Team
Pravin Shinde
Ramesh Khade
Satej Shende & Tech team
Sayan Bhattacharjee
Shibu Albert
Shiva Thorat
Srabanti Basak
Computer Center, TISS

Student Volunteers
Abhishek Gupta
Ameer Ali
Anjali Barak
Arushi Bansal
Ashish Shinde
Dhipthi Dona J
Diksha Rehal
Gopal Barik
Munu Rana
Nikita Dhokale
Pratima Roy Choudhury
Sarvapriya Nautiyal
Shalini Soni
Shivani Sondhi
Shweta
Soham Bhattacharya
Uchita Bakshani
Utkarsha Chaudhary