

Expert Insights

Social Infrastructure and ICT Development for e-Government

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Graduated with Bachelor of Computer Science (B.C.Sc) degree at University of Computer Studies, Yangon (UCSY) in 1994, and gained a Master of Computer Science degree from the same institute in 1997. Gained her Ph.D. from Japan Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (JAIST), Japan in 2008, majoring in Software Engineering.

Graduating, in 1997, worked at the University of Computer Studies, Yangon (UCSY). After finishing her Ph.D. at JAIST, continued working as a professor at UCSY teaching undergraduate and post-graduate students, and supervising Master's and Ph.D. candidates.

Appointed Deputy Director General of the Department of Advanced Science and Technology in May 2012, and took up her current position as Rector of the University of Information Technology, Yangon, Myanmar in May 2015.

In addition to attending as JAIST a Ph.D. candidate, other international experience includes positions as conference organizing committee member of the International Conference on Computer Applications (ICCA), International Conference on Energy, Environment and Human Engineering (ICEEHE). Her research interests are in Software Engineering, especially Software Development Models, Software Process, and Software Development Environments for Distributed Cooperative Work; and Database Management Systems.

Myanmar started an e-government project as a part of ASEAN's (ASEAN: Association of Southeast Asian Nations) 1999-2004 action plan focused on services to help businesses connect online in the public sector, and to promote electronic government, or e-government. Through the collaboration of Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), Korea Information Society Development Institute (KISDI) and the e-National Task force (Myanmar), the "Myanmar ICT development Master Plan" was launched in 2005, but it was not endorsed by the government.

On the occasion of the Republic of Union Myanmar's 65th Anniversary of the Union Day, 12 February 2012, President Thein Sein stated that his government is focusing on clean government and good governance in building the nation. To build a successful establishment of a modern developed and democratic new nation, the government called for the combination of democracy with good governance. In order to enable joint cooperation to boost the modernization of the nation and the socio-economic improvement of the Myanmar people, information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure is especially important and a driving force to reduce the digital divide, and a prerequisite for e-Government, e-Commerce, e-Education and other fields. The potential for the ICT sector will greatly support the development of other sectors as well. In the 2014-2015 fiscal year, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) has a plan to do a project on "Creating an e-Government Master Plan for the government" funded by Asian Development Bank (ADB). There is no proper structure for ICT departments in governance to support the Chief Information Officer (CIO). As a result, reforming the organization of ICT departments in every government agency and capacity building for human resources is currently critical.

One of the key political priorities of the Myanmar government under the Framework for Economic and Social Reforms is to focus on people-centered development, particularly in the areas of improving education and health, and year by year, the government has increased expenditures on education and health. For ICT education in Myanmar, Computer Universities mainly produce human resources for the ICT sector. Until 1998, there had been only two universities, University of Computer Studies, Yangon (UCSY) and University

of Computer Studies, Mandalay (UCSM). There were 25 computer universities across the country in 2003. This rapid growth caused the sharing of faculty members among those universities, recruiting many faculty members without a strict screening process, and insufficient budget, which are vital problems for human resource development in the ICT sector.

To nurture qualified IT engineers, in 2012, the government promoted UCSY and UCSM as COEs (Centers of Excellence) with the aims of recruiting outstanding students and giving them a better learning environment. UCSY (Bahan Campus) has been opened as a COE in Bahan Township, Yangon and starting from 1 April 2015, UCSY (Bahan Campus) was renamed as University of Information Technology (UIT). The Myanmar Institute of Information Technology (MIIT) has also been established in Mandalay as a 5-year collaboration project agreement between India and the Myanmar government. There are now 27 ICT specialized Universities in 2015.

The objectives of the two COEs, UIT and UCSM, are to generate highly qualified ICT graduates, to conduct research in the ICT sector by promoting international collaboration. UIT has a strong collaboration with local and foreign industries and universities. For the Human Resource Development program, UIT also conducts a diploma program in order to nurture IT knowledge for the staff members who are working in the public and private IT sectors. Besides this, a Training the Trainer program is needed at the Universities to become skillful faculties. The “Hitachi COE 2-week Scholarship program” has been offered by Hitachi, Ltd. since 2013. This program supports the five COE faculties to study Hitachi ICT work, ICT policies, management and advanced technologies of Japan, and to visit and study at Japanese universities and software companies. The program helps the faculties with capacity building to meet the objectives of the COEs.

As a latecomer, I hope Myanmar can leap forth over other countries in development by learning from other developed countries. By establishing such kind of HRD program for the ICT sector, successful e-government initiatives in all sectors can have a demonstrable and tangible impact on improving citizen participation and quality of life for the socio-economic development of Myanmar.