TxT as a Vehicle for Service Learning

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Tecnologia per a Tothom http://txt.upc.es

TxT (Technology for Everybody): a NGO whose members are students, teachers and administrative staff of Computer Science and Telecommunication schools at UPC

Technology for Everybody

Technology for everybody is an association of people from the computer science and telecommunication schools at UPC. The main goal is to share our knowledge in Information and Communication Technology to communities that may benefit.

TXT seeks to reinvigorate the civic mission of higher education and instill in students a sense of social responsibility and civic awareness through the development of teaching and learning opportunities.

Service Learning

Service-learning is a method of teaching, learning and reflecting that combines academic classroom curriculum with meaningful service throughout the community. As a teaching methodology, it falls under the philosophy of experiential education.

More specifically, it integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, encourage lifelong civic engagement, and strengthen communities for the common good.

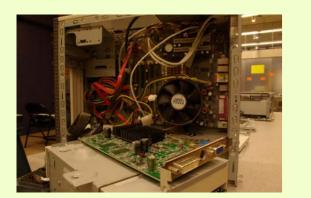# Two activities

The Reuse Workshop

It consists in repairing and fixing broken and old-fashioned Pcs and installing free software adapted to the final users' requirements.

Two subjects share the lab to carry out the reuse workshop:
- PCA (PC architecture). The main goal is to provide students with knowledge about the past, present and future of personal computers and their components.
- FS (Free Software). The main goal is to present Linux and free software as a further possibility as opposed to traditional and close software.

With this workshop, we recycle and reuse some of the many Pcs that our University discards and which otherwise would be thrown away. Students analyze the computers, reapiring them whenever possible, or removing the parts that still work (for repairing other computers) and separating the broken parts, that will be sent to recycling plants. Then, they install free software adapted to the final recipient.

The final users are projects in solidarity. At the beginning of the lab, the students are informed about the final destination of these computers, and at at the end, local NGOs or people in charge of the projects come to the lab to pick up the computers, so students can interact with these organizations.

One of the broken computers.
Members of a recipient NGO.
People at the reuse workshop

Some Results:

➢More than 1200 PCs repaired
➢Used in 102 solidarity projects
➢Most of the repaired computers to schools and social organizations in Spain, however, people from 17 foreign countries have received about 450 computers (Angola, Algeria, Bolivia, Burkina-Faso, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, Guatemala, Morocco, Mozambique, Paraguay, Peru, Senegal, Togo and Haiti)

International projects on Cooperation

The association is involved in other projects. For the purpose of sustainable development most of the projects have an educational component. TXT organizes and teaches basic courses in informatics, such as word processing, data bases, web page design among others. The association's activities include also network and software design and providing technical support to non-profit organizations for any other kind of development project.

Below we outline the most recent projects TxT has been involved in:

➢Improvement of facilities and technologies of the Casa Guatemala Orphanage. Guatemala. 2007-2008.
➢Installation of a network of computers for training at the University Hospital "Royal Victoria" Gambia. 2007-08.
➢Study of viability and development of tools to support for conservation of Indian languages in Guatemala. Guatemala. 2007-08.
➢Computer rooms in Senegal. Senegal. 2007-08.
➢Improved access to ICT in rural communities of Tinejdad and Ait Ourir Marrakech. Morocco. 2007-08.
➢Implementation of software tools to aid in the education of college Pasos Adelante. 2007-08.
➢Facilitate the introduction of ICT in schools in Sucre and the rural community of Mendoza, Bolivia. 2008
➢ICT for the coordination of farmers in Peru. Perú. 2007-08
➢Education for new opportunities: effective use of ICT in the Educational System. Bolivia. 2006-07.
➢ICT Literacy in the center of disabled Pasos Adelante Educational Services in Lima. Peru. 2006-07.
➢Research and training resources for the development of ICT in primary school. Colombia. 2006-07.
➢Many others

Conclusions

The Service Learning Activities at TxT could be a starting point to build some sort of partnership between the University and the civil society.

Students benefit because they imbricate themselves into the fabric of the university, they establish contacts with teachers beyond the treatment of the subjects, they feel part of a group that is establishing mechanisms to make more sustainable society, they do experienced research focused on Sustainable Human Development, they are able to perform high-quality volunteer to the Third Sector and Environment and they expand the number of acquaintances in college and in the third sector.

At its turn, teachers introduce the component of education for sustainability into their courses, they do research on the education for sustainability, they contribute to the Corporate social responsibility of the college, they improve the efficiency of teaching (ie: the reuse workshop can afford one computer for each student) and last but not least they improve students motivation.

Education for new opportunities at Bolivia

Conservation of k'iche' at Guatemala

Computer rooms at Senegal

Casa Guatemala Orphanage