

EU-AFRICAN R&D PROPOSAL IDEA**Personal Details**

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Proposal**Title**

Introducing Interactivity in Distance Education offered through Nationwide Television and Mobile Phones without the Use of Internet

The title of your Proposal: please provide a maximum of 15 words that accurately reflect what your proposal is about.

Proposal idea (max 500 words): Providing education through nationwide television is not a new idea. Such distance tuition suffers from the lack of interactivity and thereby host of related problems. Live lectures on television can be turned interactive through the use of both text messaging and follow up conversation through mobile phones. Immediate feedback on learning can be provided both to the teacher and the student. This idea has been tested at BRAC University and lab results show that learning is as at least as effective as in a face-to-face classroom. Pilot field trials are underway with support from SPIDER, an affiliate of SIDA, with collaboration from Örebro and Umeå Universities in Sweden under the project, "Bangladesh – Virtual Classroom". The field trial will consist of turning a particular distance education course offered by Bangladesh Open University interactive and evaluating the outcome.

The proposal is that a few public health programs be converted 'live and interactive' in Ethiopia and field tested for the outcome. In addition, one regular education program can be created and tested to see whether general education can be delivered in this manner without the use of Internet.

Short Description of Institution

A short description of the institution (between 200 and 300 words) to include the most recent relevant experience related to the proposal idea.

BRAC University (www.bracuniversity.ac.bd) established in 2001, is one of the latest additions to the BRAC (www.brac.net) family, one of the largest NGOs in the world. The Computer Science and Engineering (CSE) Department is one of the current six departments of the university. The James P. Grant School of Public Health runs a Masters in Public Health where participants from twelve different countries all over the world are currently attending.

One of the areas of research of the CSE department is ICT for Development. The main person spearheading this research is Yousuf M Islam who holds a PhD from Strathclyde University, UK. The key areas of research include low-cost interactive distance education, low cost data collection from remote regions, low cost order and distribution management, language development using mobiles and secure voting through mobile phones. Many Bachelor degree students do work on ICT for Development issues. Some are continuing their work after graduation and trying to turn their research into commercial ventures. One such example is access to Agriculture Market Prices through mobile phones.