



JOSÉ CARLOS CARVAJAL

Computer Buses Offer ICT Training and Certiport IC³ to Hundreds of Thousands of Underserved Peruvians

By eliminating traditional training costs, MuniNet program participants obtain digital skills critical to economic change

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José Carlos Carvajal is driving a message of hope into communities in Lima, Peru—literally.

Carvajal's innovative MuniNet program bridges the Digital Divide for thousands of Peruvians. Using a fleet of 25 buses, MuniNet travels into Lima's most underserved areas with state-of-the-art computer equipment and high-speed Internet access. Instructors from local technical community colleges donate their time to teach often-impooverished locals computing and Internet skills that will offer improved business opportunities and positive economic change.

Representing more than 30 percent of the national population of Peru, the city of Lima has plenty of areas lacking information and communications technology (ICT) training. Underemployment is widespread, and seven percent of the population of metropolitan Lima is unemployed. Throughout the country, approximately 45 percent of Peruvians live below the poverty line¹. "The people in these areas lose work opportunities, generating social exclusion," Carvajal said. "The best way to resolve this problem was to come up with an innovative program like MuniNet. It reduces the gap in digital skills."

Carvajal said the main reason people in these areas lack ICT training is because of the high costs associated with transportation and food when they travel to faraway training centers. "It's important to get directly into the communities," he said. "When we actually take the classes to the people, we eliminate these costs."

Carvajal predicts the skills delivered through the MuniNet program will improve the quality of life for every person who participates. "With this kind of program, individuals can improve their work situations, have better access to information and interact with other citizens in the exchange of information," he said. "Certification ensures every person has developed skills. It is the best way for individuals who don't have a lot of economic opportunities to demonstrate they have been trained, and they have the skills they really need."

Since 2005, more than 500,000 youth and thousands more adults have participated in MuniNet computing skills training. More recently, Certiport® Internet and Computing Core Certification (IC³®) was built into the program to provide both a curricular foundation and an international certification





to validate student skills. This summer, Carvajal estimates 60,000 individuals will both complete the training and earn IC³ credentials.

After individuals commit to participate in the program, they are required to attend two-hour training courses three times each week for about four months. Each month, they are taught the three IC³ exam components—Computing Fundamentals, Key Applications and Living Online. The mobile classrooms are open from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. every day so individuals can attend courses and practice their skills when it is most convenient.

"These individuals are going to have opportunities to increase their incomes and access better jobs," Carvajal said.

One such participant grew up in unfortunate circumstances, which led to a life of crime and several prison sentences. He was unable to find employment because he had only completed his primary education. "We designed a special program to help him learn a word-processing application," Carvajal said. "Now he and three friends work as editors for a private corporation. He earns more than minimum wage, has settled his life and is even studying graphic design to further improve his future income."

As individuals complete the MuniNet program, they are able to utilize Lima's more than 15,000 cyber cafés and community centers, which have computer and Internet access.

In the future, Carvajal hopes to see more schools implement programs like MuniNet and to build an even more extensive network of training workshops available at low prices to the public. "The main objective is to reach out to those who lack digital skills," he said. "We don't intend to compete with private training institutions or schools."

In the meantime, Carvajal enjoys sharing the successes of MuniNet participants. "Thousands of people have demonstrated they actually have a place in society," he said. "Their accomplishments generate a message of hope to others."



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ⁱ The World Factbook, Central Intelligence Agency, 19 June 2008.