

Hungary 2008



Country Profile

Information Society Indicators

- Percentage of households having internet access to the Internet at home, 2006: 32%, 2007: 38%
- Percentage of households with a broadband connection, 2006: 22%, 2007: 33%
- Percentage of individuals (55-74 years old) having used the Internet in the last 3 months, 2006: 16%, 2007: 20%
- Percentage of individuals (55-74 years old) having ordered/bought goods and services for private use over the Internet in the last 3 months, 2006: 8%, 2007: 11%
- Percentage of individuals (55-74 years old) who used Internet, in the last 3 months for obtaining information from public authorities web sites, 2006: 32.5%, 2007: 48%; downloading official forms 2006: 29%, 2007: 42.6%; sending filled forms 2006: 16.7%, 2007: 32%

Source: Eurostat

e-Inclusion History

The first official government strategy that explicitly discussed electronic inclusion as a priority is the **Hungarian Information Society Strategy**. It was launched in November 2003.

It formulated a clear and forward-heading strategy, however institutional changes in related competences between 2003-2006 had encumbered the realisation of policies.

The **Equal Treatment Authority** was established by Act CXXV of 2003 with the objective of **promoting the enforcement of equal opportunities and equal rights**.

The Authority started its activity on the 1st of February 2005. It is an independent organization, which was set up by the Hungarian Government to receive and deal with individual and public complaints about unequal treatment as well as to implement the principles of equality and non-discrimination. It reviews the complaints it receives to see if the principle of equal treatment has been violated on grounds of – amongst others – national or ethnic origin, disability, age and social issues.

Act XXVI of 1998 on the rights and the promoting of equal opportunities of people with disabilities and the attached Government Resolution 1015/2005 on the „Government provisions for the creation of barrier-free environment for all” encompass the government’s measures until 2010. The Act refers to the assurance of conditions for the mutual exchange of information concerning drawing on public services.

The legal documents state that opportunities provided by the information society should enhance equal rights for people with disabilities and that they have the right to enjoy equal opportunities concerning services provided by information society.

In the period 2005-2007 dynamic development of the broadband infrastructure has taken place in Hungary and vivid competition featured the price of Internet access. As a consequence it appeared that it was no longer the lack of infrastructure and unaffordable prices that inhibited the further development of information society; emphasis shifted to motivation and attitude towards computers and the Internet and relevant content.

e-Inclusion Strategy

Important policies in place

▪ **The Hungarian Information Society Strategy (2003)**

The Hungarian Information Society Strategy was adopted in November 2003 by the former Ministry of Informatics and Communications with the substantive focus on presenting a strategy by which ICT tools and services help to reduce traditional social exclusion. It also aimed to realize a much wider social integration and create equal opportunities.

The strategy focuses on areas where disadvantages mainly concern the access and use of ICT tools.

The spread of modern information and communications technology, the improving modes and extent of access to

and methods of use of info-communication devices has a **cumulative effect** on the generation of social disadvantages. Otherwise the employment of available online contents and services may further increase social differences.

Digital inequality (often referred to as the “digital divide”) is not a new phenomenon in the sense that circumstances that led to it had also existed prior to the spread of ICT tools.

Digital divide that indicates the scarce access to and use of computers and the internet is primarily due to differences in professional activity, age, education, size of income, type of locality and ethnic affiliation. Only a small proportion of localities in Hungary have access to reliable, high-speed Internet. In the vast majority of national regional and local governments there is no possibility for such access yet, and neither is there for the majority of citizens using the services of local governments or the organizations rendering various public services.

Alongside the enforcement of the “**horizontal principle**” of equal opportunities strategy HISS intends to pursue the practice of former strategies based on the principle of **positive discrimination**.

The European Union considers social and economic cohesion as one of its main values. eEurope 2005 was considered not only in the spirit of the idea: “an information society for all”. The Action Plan stated that every member state should formulate its own strategy as to how disadvantaged groups could be integrated into the information society.

Accordingly, HISS reckons the guaranteeing of equal opportunities as a top priority. HISS concentrates on the fields where social disadvantages stem from living conditions or arise for regional or linguistic reasons. The strategy states that digital divide can be reduced by the provision of equal opportunities in the **access** to and the **use** of info-communication tools.

The strategic key area of **equal opportunities** distinguishes **three target areas**:

- Social equal opportunities
- Regional equal opportunities
- Inter-regional equal opportunities

Within the scope of the above-mentioned areas, the target groups are: old people, people with disabilities, the gypsies and those suffering of other types of disadvantages in consideration of digital divide.

The aim of the Strategy was to reduce the digital divide that is to draw the “Internet usage index” to the national average.

The **focus areas** are:

1. The propagation of **digital literacy** for people having disadvantages
2. The assurance of target-group-specific quality **content**
3. Broadening the **distance work** system in view of people with disadvantages
4. The setting-up and operation of a special **mentor-network**
5. The build-out of a preferably normative **financing system**

The strategy intended to support processes, where market mechanisms are not appropriately functioning and therefore the state must interfere in order to ensure equal social opportunities drawing on the civil sphere.

The strategy has set the maintenance of **equal opportunities** in the field of **social** affairs as one of its main goals. ICT tools help to simplify services in every area of life and enable everyone to access certain contents. However – according to the strategy – the use of info-communication tools is based on the already existing social inequalities; thereby it may deepen the division within society.

The main **lines** of digital divide in Hungary lie along the dimensions of qualified/unqualified labour force, high/low income, young/old, town/village, healthy/ living with disabilities, man/woman and ethnic affiliation. The task of **equal social opportunities** target area is to reduce traditional social exclusion through the promotion of access to and use of ICT tools and online services, and to achieve a much wider social participation relying on their promotion.

In the target area of **equal opportunities in the field of regional affairs**, strategy intends to reduce the inequalities existing within the country, among certain regions (sub-regions, counties, groups of counties) and settlements. Tasks refer to the quantity and quality of the available infocommunication infrastructure as much as to the differences traced in the further layers of the infrastructure and the attached services.

Providing inter-regional equal opportunities refers to the creation of similar conditions for the Hungarians living across Hungary's borders and for the national and ethnic minorities living in Hungary.

▪ **National Broadband Strategy (2005)**

The primary focus area of the National Broadband Strategy is the provision of broadband access. However, alongside increasing broadband Internet usage and offering more relevant content, providing the preconditions of **equal opportunities (e-inclusion)** for disadvantaged group has also been stated as a priority. The Strategy covers the period **2005–2013**.

Social integration and cohesion are indispensable aspects of the implementation of development programs aimed at improving competitiveness as a result of the use of electronic broadband communications.

In case the issue of equal opportunities is not handled as a priority, the spreading of broadband electronic communications may deepen the digital divide among groups to be left behind others. It may further deteriorate the opportunities and life quality of traditionally disadvantaged groups and may weaken the integrity and development of the whole of society.

The following **specific objectives** have been designated to ensure equal opportunities for the disadvantaged groups:

- 90 percent residential broadband coverage by the end of 2008 and full coverage by the end of 2010.
- „Digital illiteracy” (i.e. the proportion of those with no Internet or computer usage experience) should drop below 50 percent by 2008 and below 33% by 2013.

Aiming at the reduction of the digital division, the experience of the following Ministry programmes were targeted to be taken into consideration:

- IT equipment for the visually impaired
- support of the procurement of IT equipment for the education of people with disabilities
- support of the procurement of equipment for minority local governments
- “eGeneráció” tender for the promotion of the Internet among children
- tender for the creation of e-working jobs

Horizontal issues - eInclusion

The National Broadband Strategy highlights, that in Hungary, the following social groups are jeopardised by exclusion from the use of info-communication equipment:

- people with disabilities,
- the elderly people,
- the poor and
- the Roma.

However, if the digital gap is considered in a broader sense, the following groups also belong here:

- women,
- those with low levels of education,
- the unskilled and the unemployed,
- those living in poorly developed regions/municipalities.

Therefore the NBBS considers eInclusion as an important horizontal issue to be considered by policy making and implementation.

▪ **National Development Plan 2004-2006**

In the former financial period, under the 1st National Development Plan contained the following eInclusion related documents and priorities:

The **Human Resource Development Operational Programme's (HRDOP)** priorities were:

1. Supporting active labour market policies,
2. Fighting social exclusion by promoting access to the labour market,
3. Supporting education, and training within the framework of the lifelong learning policy

4. Improving adaptability and entrepreneurial skills
5. Developing infrastructure supporting education, social inclusion and healthcare

Information technology related developments were included under priority 3. and 5:

- Under priority 3: *This priority measure has been initiated for the application of information and communication technologies in the entire education system.*
- Under priority 5: *Under this priority beside IT-developments in education, relating to the infrastructural development in the health care institutions measures have been initiated for the development of information technology tools and the establishment of communication connections for registering and transferring the results of examinations conducted with modern digital instruments.*

The **Economic Competitiveness Operation Programme (ECOP)** under the priority “Development of information society and economy” contained a specific action on the development of broadband infrastructure.

EQUAL

The objective of EQUAL Community Initiative of the EU is the elaboration and dissemination of innovative approaches and methods that contribute to the abolition of discrepancies and discrimination concerning the labour market. Initiatives supported by EQUAL comply with the vocational framework defined by the European employment strategy and the community strategies of fight against social exclusion.

It supports priorities and thematic areas fitted to domestic labour force market situation.

The Hungarian EQUAL program supports pilot initiatives that promote the education, training and the attainment of work and employment of people with disadvantages originating from their ethnic origin, gender, age, disability, low level of education or the lack of inclusive work places.

In Hungary the initiative started operation in 2004 that was co-financed in the National Development Plan 2004-2006 by the European Social Fund and the rest by the central budget between 2004-2006.

eInclusion related pilot initiatives in Hungary:

IT-mentor – information sector as supplier of work

Within the thematic area of EQUAL “Promotion of **people entering or re-entering the labour force market with disadvantages** with a view to labour market” a digital literacy training programme was executed that intended to help people with disadvantages to enter the labour market: unemployed at the time or inactive, partially disabled and people over 45 years. The project was based on an innovative, integrated educational construction with work experience to obtain, as well: the application of the “IT-mentor” method in the information sector. The programme amongst its objectives included the elimination of discrimination and discrepancy attached to labour market by constructing and spreading of innovative approaches and methods and building international cooperation.

The project was implemented between July 2005 – June 2007 by consortia of civil organisations. As a result of the project 42 persons were trained to become information society mentors in order to become capable of teaching digital literacy to other people unable to independently do so because of their disadvantages. Mentors demonstrate good practices as they obtained reasonable information society knowledge as adults, above 45 years.

As an additional result, IT-mentor trainer became an accredited independent profession.

In the period 2004-2006, under the EQUAL Community Initiative, all the 39 Hungarian development partnerships established international partnership relations. Experience shows that international cooperation makes it possible to share and exchange experience in the field of employment and social integration through delivering new ideas and know-how.

The experience gained from the implementation of the projects within the frame of the EQUAL Programme completed in 2008, are intended to be integrated in the calls for proposals of the period between 2007-2013, laying special emphasis on the principles of internationality, partnership, gender equality and innovation.

▪ **New National Disability Programme (2006)**

The Programme was adopted by the Parliament and emphasizes the importance of creating accessible buildings and accessible communication facilities for all aiming at accessible public services via equal opportunity in

access. The Programme highlights the significant role of modern technology in the process of creating equal opportunities. The document takes the different communication needs of various groups of people with disabilities into account: people with visual disabilities using the Braille form - by making the Ministry home page more accessible for blind and short-sighted people; persons with hearing disabilities in a video-file form with sign language interpretation; with mental disabilities and people living with autism using an easy-to-understand language.

The principle of **subsidiary** stipulates that people with disabilities have access to services they need at their places of residence or as close as possible to their place and that decisions and measures related to people with disabilities may be made and implemented locally.

The principle of **integration** assumes that people with disabilities can make and maintain contacts with other people and with the widest range of social and economic institutions in their everyday lives. Providing the opportunities for contact by means of the necessary communication devices and technology (e.g. accessible web pages for people with visual impairment, sign language interpretation, easy-to-understand language and pictograms). Besides traditional, personal type of contacts, the principle of integration can be attained via modern technology (Internet access, e-mail, mobile/cellular telephones), and also modern methods (tele-work, tele-education).

Adaptive technologies are effective instruments for people using alternative communication channels and communication-promoting devices (e.g. in case of people with hearing disabilities, mobile telephones capable of sending text messages, fax machines; in case of people with visual disabilities computers)

The Disability Programme suggests that the possibility of establishing a central fund for creating equal conditions through access to education, work and public services (including infocommunication accessible to people with disabilities) as well as making communication accessible are to be investigated, and educational institutions, employers and local governments could apply for grants from such fund.

▪ **The New Hungary Development Plan (2007-2013)**

The Hungarian National Strategic Reference Framework – which is called New Hungarian Development Plan (NHDP) – is the successor of the First National Development Plan for utilizing the sources of the Structural Funds of the EU.

There are elements of eInclusion in these concepts, as the NDPC states, that the fundamental condition for a knowledge-based, renewing society as well as the establishment of a competitive economy is the building up of an IT society. In order to exploit opportunities found in the Hungarian information society, economic competitiveness and technologic development need to be strengthened. A precondition for strengthening an IT society is the establishment of **digital equal opportunities** and **involving the population into taking advantage of the opportunities offered by an IT society**. Modern functioning of society is supported by the spread of **electronic public and private services** as well as the establishment of **e-democracy**. In addition to the advantage of possible benefits attention needs to be paid to the prevention and managing risks caused by the information revolution.

In order for ICT to spread, access barriers imposed on companies and individuals need to be abolished. At the same time ICT skills necessary to participate in the “new economy” and society have to be acquired. The spread of new, dynamic on-line contents and services have to be promoted. The state can only provide effective services and contribute to development if it becomes the main driving force of information society instead of merely relying on the new type of communication solutions. Public services have to be on the cutting edge of effective information exchange, of building up electronic public services and applying new solutions.

The NRDC reiterates the same goals in regional segments as well.

Social Renewal Operational Programme (SROP)

Social Renewal is one of the priorities of The New Hungary Development Plan.

The ESF financed Operational Programme (OP) contributes to the achievement of the expansion of employment and the promotion of permanent growth primarily through the development of human resources and by measures aimed at the supply side of the labour market.

The strategy of the OP aims to support the structural reforms in the field of education, health care and the integrated labour and social welfare system.

It stipulates that particular attention should be paid to the promotion of active social participation and granting equal access to the barrier-free environment and facilitating communication. The significance of ensuring access to information is as well laid down in the document.

Specific objective of the OP amongst others are:

1. Improving alignment of labour market demand and supply
2. Reducing the regional differences in activity
3. Promoting adaptability to changes
4. Promoting lifelong learning
5. Improving the state of health and ability to work
6. Strengthening social inclusion, promoting equal opportunities

Social Infrastructure Operational Programme (SIOP)

The ERDF financed Social Infrastructure Operational Programme (SIOP) will enhance sustained growth and the expansion of employment through the development of the **physical infrastructural background** of human public services. Accordingly, it involves developing the infrastructure of

- education and training,
- the health care system,
- the labour market and social services.

The OP seeks to create the physical infrastructural background required for the successful implementation of the interventions of the Social Renewal OP and for a comprehensive reform of the institutional system of the above sectors, thus ensuring equal access to quality services.

The SIOP contributes to the programmes financed from the SROP-TÁMOP in a number of areas. eInclusion is not spelt out, but it relates to the following elements:

- The education infrastructure development (IT developments of the public education infrastructure), *IT development in the school education – the “Intelligent School”*.
- Establishment of the standard IT infrastructure necessary for content developments of the SROP. Creation of the infrastructure and IT facilities of an integrated employment,
- IT developments in the health care system

Integration of the relevant information society aspects into the Second National Development Plan as a **horizontal priority** was based on the experience of currently ongoing EU subsidy programs and international examples. In the majority of cases, the spreading use of info-communication equipment is not sector-specific and usually becomes justified in a specific development project.

Highlighting the relevance of information society requires careful preparation and necessitates the expression of these information society aspects not only in an ex post manner (i.e. in the course of evaluation) but already during the planning phase (when aspects for decision-making are designed).

It is specified in The New Hungary Development Plan that “a basic condition for the social participation of people living with disabilities is the elimination of the physical and infocommunication obstacles”.

The aim of e-inclusion in the government Development Plan is the support of access to and the use of info-communication equipments and online services in order to reduce traditional social exclusion and to establish social inclusion on a much broader ground – to reduce social disadvantages as a result of digital division.

In info-communication e-inclusion programs

- equal opportunities have to be established in physical access to equipments and electronic access to useful contents on the one hand and
- equal opportunities must be established in literacy via the extension of education coverage.

In Hungary, the following social groups are jeopardised by this type of exclusion:

- people with disabilities
- the old
- the poor
- the Roma

However, if the digital gap is given a broader meaning, the following groups also belong here:

- women
- those with low levels of education
- the unskilled and the unemployed
- those living in poorly developed regions/municipalities.

In numerous Operational Programmes of The New Hungary Development Plan info-communication as a means of providing equal opportunities is stipulated.

The planned Social Infrastructure Operational Programme 2007-2013 states that “info-communication accessibility may increase the social and labour market participation of people with disabilities even more extensively than physical accessibility, and guarantees development activities that observe the requirements and potentials of information society”.

▪ **Broadband Action Plan (2007)**

The Hungarian government – in line with the EU’s i2010 strategy – proposed to ensure broadband internet access and infrastructure at reasonable prices by latest 2010 in all settlements of the country.

In line with the above, the New Hungary Development Plan includes the development of necessary means for improvement of ICT technologies and broadband physical infrastructure in disadvantaged small settlements under the Economy Development Operational Program’s priority 3. (EDOP 3.1.1).

With the intention of complementing the above actions, the Digital Economy Action Plan has been elaborated that focuses on the enhancement on digital economy content.

▪ **Digital Literacy Action Plan (2007)**

In Hungary 56% of the adult population in 2006 were considered digitally illiterate not using either the internet, or computers (or both) on a regular basis. Despite of constant growth in the number of computer and internet users in the last few years, the dynamics of growth did not exceed that of other EU Member States’; therefore Hungary’s relative position did not improve.

According to the World Internet Project (WIP) the proportion of adult population who do not regularly use either computer, or Internet on a regular basis still exceeded 50% in 2007.

In the first semester of 2008 a three year (2008-2010) Action Plan was elaborated that set the aim of reducing the currently 50% digital illiteracy of adult population – that is approximately 4.000.000 persons – to 40% by 2010, in line with the EU objectives.

The Action Plan targets at the increase of motivation for use and digital skills of digital illiterate groups.

The Digital Literacy Action Plan coincides with the relevant objectives of the **European i2010 initiative on e-Inclusion** and the **European Commission’s Communication** of September 2007 on “**E-skills for the 21st century, fostering Competitiveness, Growth and Jobs (E-skills strategy)**”.

e-Inclusion Legal Framework

Law in practice

- Constitution of the Republic of Hungary, 54. § (human dignity), 70/A. § (prohibition of detrimental discrimination)
- Decision 90/B/1990/ of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Hungary on positive discrimination
- Act 1997. LXXVIII. on the creation and the protection of the constructed environment
- Act 1998. XXVI. on the rights and the assurance of equal opportunities of people with disabilities and the attached Government Resolution 1015/2005. (II. 25.) on the „Government provisions for the creation of a barrier-free environment for all” comprises the government’s measures until 2010
- Act 2003 CXXV. on the promotion of equal treatment and equal rights
- Act 2004. XXVIII. on legal regulation of distance work
- Act 2005. XC. on the Freedom of Electronic information
- Decree of the Parliament 10/2006. (II. 16.) on the New National Programme of Disability Affairs

Research in Practice

Tender for R&D on content development

The former Ministry of Informatics and Communications (currently part of the Ministry of Economy and Transport) with the Ministry of Education jointly supported the development of applications and tools for

persons with the hearing disability, the visually impaired and the wheel chair users. Such projects included technology development for the creation of accessible portals for the blind and visually impaired, the development of Java-based mobile client and software frame system for off- and online services for the blind and visually impaired.

Education initiatives

Similar to the Digital Secondary School Programme (see page 8) a Roma Education IT Project is taking place that intends to create education opportunities in primary schools in villages. The core concept of the programme is that the presence of infocommunication technologies in the education with the continuous assistance of the teachers and the development of school infrastructure may effectively improve substantive skills of students. The project intends to answer the question if it is possible to reach massive advancement within the cumulated disadvantaged environment of lagging regions. The impact assessment of the project clearly demonstrated positive effects of skills development due to the use of IT.

e-Inclusion Actors

- Prime Minister's Office
- Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour
- Ministry of Education

e-Inclusion Who is Who

- **e-Inclusion sub group contact:** :
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e.Inclusion Progress by Riga Areas

ICT & Ageing

- **Status in ICT & Ageing**

- **Actions to support ICT& Ageing**

In order to foster the use of Internet among elderly people several programmes and initiatives have been launched.

Retirement clubs have joined the e-Hungary Network (see page 7). According to the figures of HISS (2003) on average 50-60 persons are served by an e-Hungary point, which means that in total approx. 10000 elderly persons have the opportunities to use the opportunities offered by the information society.

“Click on it Grandma!”

In order to facilitate the Internet use of the elderly people the Budapest Community Centre (BCC) launched a programme in 2002: “Click Grandma!”. In 2003 1028 grandmother and grandfather aged persons graduated in computer studies. The main organizers of these trainings were libraries and tele-houses. Another initiative, the Grandma-net Program has similar objectives.

In 2006 UPC Hungary extended the Centre's computer learning programme for senior citizens by developing and sponsoring the ‘Click on it Grandma’ programme, which helps senior citizens and retired people overcome the main obstacles for computer and Internet usage. Issues include unfamiliarity, lack of knowledge, motivation and cost. With the help of UPC, BCC's practical courses for senior citizens are now run nationwide in community centres. ‘Click on it Grandma’ courses are offered at a symbolic price (EUR 4). Between 2002 and 2006 1 000 senior citizens, in 2007 another 1 000 people joined the courses, thus the number of digitally skilled seniors educated by this programme increased up to 2 000. In 2008 the project will double this number, as it admits 2 000 senior learners in 20 education place countrywide plus one in Romania and one in the Slovak Republic.

URL: www.nagyi.bmknet.hu

Grandchildren-Grandparents IT Contest

The IT contest is being organised on an annual basis (or more times a year) throughout the country. The programme promotes the participation of old people in the Information Society by taking part in the event together with their grandchildren. The contest includes tasks (questions) in both generations' fields of interest and easy-to-solve PC tasks.

The subsequent contests proved to be very popular; In the beginning participants were mainly from the capital, by now the proportion has equilibrated.

URL: <http://www.inforum.org.hu/unoka-nagyszulo-versenyek/>

Geographic digital divide

• Status of Common access to electronic content and services

In present day Hungary, life in rural areas is increasingly becoming a source of manifold disadvantages, which appear among other things in levels of employment and income as well as the availability and accessibility of services and specifically secondary level educational services. Disadvantages create a vicious circle for rural populations: the chances for adults in poor rural households to participate in secondary education at regional centres are indeed extremely diminished.

Thus, even if state-financed, free of charge secondary adult education is made available in some Hungarian cities and towns, these may not be practically available to those populations who are most in need of them. Not only are they often difficult to access, but they also provide evening classes, which makes them practically unavailable for people with irregularities and time compromises in their employment.

• Actions to support Common access to electronic content and services

The aim of the programmes launched under this priority is the reduction of regional disparities among different regions.

Bridging the regional digital gap included two focus areas: **access** as a prerequisite of the information society and **knowledge** and **education**, as the main mobility factor.

Economic Development Operational Programme (EDOP)

In line with the Broadband Action Plan, the New Hungary Development Plan has set the objective of supporting the building out of telecommunication infrastructure and the launch of services in disadvantaged areas of Hungary that are less attractive to business to invest.

The strategy includes the development of necessary means for improvement of ICT technologies and broadband physical infrastructure in disadvantaged small settlements under EDOP Action 3.1.1.

There have been 279 settlements participating in the programme up to November 2008 representing 46.846 households and 128.824 residents.

eOpportunity

The development programme focuses on settlements with low population with an extra focus on people in disadvantaged situations. The programme supported the establishment of community internet access points. Local governments, libraries, community houses and non-profit organisations could apply. As a result, 250 such institutions – of which the majority operates in settlements with population less than 5000 people – have obtained computers, internet access and assurance of the functioning of community access points.

PublicNetwork

The purpose of the PublicNetwork programme is the provision of Internet access points in all villages of Hungary. Internet access points are being located in public institutions, municipalities and other institutions providing public service and civil organisations that are not linked to the central Government Backbone.

The programme has specific sub-programmes to different target groups.

Until the end of September 2006, 7200 access points were set up. As a result of the programme, digital divide has been reduced by building out Internet access points in villages, where service providers would not have built them up.

They are the educational institutions among public institutions that mostly benefited from the programme; by the end of 2005 all 2450 villages with basic and/or secondary schools have obtained Internet access points. Many access points have been built up in public community centres, local governments and tele-houses.

eHungary Programme

The eHungary Programme was launched in November 2003 and has set the aim of establishing and operating community access points for the digital close-up of disadvantaged groups.

“eHungary points” are public (or partly public) computer and Internet access points satisfying special requirements including the presence of qualified personnel and standard service quality. An eHungary point may operate on a business basis (post office, Internet café), on a non-profit basis (tele-cottage) and on a community basis (local government, public library). According to figures 83% of access points have been established in public institutions.

Within the framework of the programme there are approximately 1500 eHungary community internet access points in operation.

In 2007 the programme has been adopted to changing needs. The new, integrated eHungary 2.0 programme has set the objective of improving the competitiveness of less developed regions by reducing the digital divide and developing the services of the eCounsellor personalized (online and personal) assistance.

The programme mainly focuses on small settlements, on disadvantaged regions economically lagging behind and socially disadvantaged groups.

It is the aim of the programme to create a secondary impact by improving the quality of life of local population and thereby retaining labour force by establishing new and keeping already existing jobs.

URL: www.emagyarorszag.hu

The Digital Secondary School

The Digital Secondary School Program has been in place as a government supported local initiative since 2003. Its aim is to provide state-financed secondary education to adults making use of the digital network. The project started off from the notion that making secondary adult education available is important because the challenge of a knowledge-based economy implies a higher general qualification of the workforce, and a growing proportion of vocational qualifications are based on the completion of secondary school. However, in Hungary, secondary education shows very explicit structural inequalities, according, among other things, to place of residence and belonging to the Roma minority.

Secondary education has been taking place for four years within the framework of the Borsod-Abaúj Zemplén county’s pilot programme in the form of e-learning and postal distance network training. There have been 11 education centres with 525 students of whom 263 have been newly registered 9th grade.

The Digital Secondary School has implemented a blended version of networked distance education, with online and offline study opportunities, and a mixture of individual and teacher-supported learning.

Studying in the Digital Secondary School takes place in the following places:

- the virtual school (educational portal) available over the Internet
- local centres for consultation and examination
- local community centres for access
- local points of access

The Digital Secondary School is implemented as a network of educational institutions, dispersed regionally. The networked institutional model allows for accomplishing one of the institution’s strategic goals to bring secondary education to those far-fetched areas where it has practically not been available before.

Conclusions:

1. Four years of regular operation have proved that the digital network can be used to provide secondary education to adults. The network can be used to provide access to learning resources as well as to connect learners and teachers.

2. The high and growing number of applications and a slow but steady decrease in drop out rates have proved that in rural areas there is a vast but previously unmet need for secondary adult education.

3. It seems probable that strong local study communities as well as personally available mentoring figures have a positive impact on student drop out rates but this should be corroborated by systematic analysis of empirical evidence.

The evaluation of the program has demonstrated that as a result the isolation of the Roma communities has decreased and the project has contributed to the improvement of positive self-identity perception of participants.

The education is planned to be extended to professional trainings, too.

URL: http://www.digitaliskozezpiskola.hu/dk/index_en.html

WIFI village

The programme that was launched in 2007 has set its objective to provide cheap PC, free Wifi access to households (mainly Romani families) living in deep poverty in the most distant rural areas of North Hungary. Young people - that represent a vast part of the target group - consider the Internet as a unique opportunity to change their life, to learn, to obtain work.

The PPP programme operates by means of providing microloans to the beneficent with the involvement of local authorities that enables the project to be self-financing.

There have been swift results achieved: more than 100 settlements with 1600 households were connected to the internet.

Brunszkvik Teréz Kindergarten Computer Programme

Within the programme nearly 270 kindergartens and 52 schools in disadvantaged settlements have received computers and other ICT tools.

e-Accessibility

• Status of e-Accessibility

• Actions towards e-Accessibility

Social Infrastructure Operational Programme (SIOP)

SIOP will enhance sustained growth and the expansion of employment through the development of the physical infrastructural background of human public services. Accordingly, it involves developing the infrastructure of education and training, the health care system and the labour market and social services.

The OP seeks to create the physical infrastructural background required for the successful implementation of the interventions of the Social Renewal OP and for a comprehensive reform of the institutional system of the above sectors, thus ensuring equal access to quality services.

Action 3.3.1 contains eAccessibility as enabling ICT for disabled users in parallel to the creation of physical environment.

Special education centre for blind people

The Budapest Technical College has established a special computer studio designed for blind people. The Department of Informatics launches complex courses on Windows in every semester. The education programme provides an opportunity for participants to obtain the internationally qualified ECDL Start digital literacy certificate.

Official employment centres as well organise courses on basic computer applications for visually impaired people.

Tenders for e-work

In order to integrate people with disabilities into the labour market, the ex Ministry of Informatics and Communication have jointly launched distance work tenders with the ex Ministry of Employment and Labour.

Tenders promoting the integrated education of students with disabilities

Within these actions hardware, software and special complementary equipments were provided to numerous educational institutions.

Special programmes supporting people with disabilities

- Financial support for ICT tools and softwares for visually impaired people
- Support for the integrated education of students with disabilities
- Distance work for people with disabilities
- Support for content development for people with disabilities
- Support for improving digital literacy for people with disabilities

The Hungarian Disabled Portal has been launched in December 2005 (www.fogyatekosugy.hu). The main aim of the website is to provide useful information and online services for disabled citizens.

Digital Literacy and Competences

• Status on Digital Literacy and Competences

In Hungary 56% of the adult population (4 million inhabitants of 18 years and above) in 2006 were considered digitally illiterate.

The proportion of adult population who do not regularly use either computer or Internet on a regular basis still

exceeded 50% in 2007

The objective is to decrease the number to 40 % by 2010.

• **Actions towards stimulating Digital Literacy and Competences**

Social Renewal Operational Programme (SROP)

The ESF financed SROP contributes to the achievement of the expansion of employment and the promotion of permanent growth primarily through the development of human resources and by measures aimed at the supply side of the labour market.

1) “One step ahead“

The priority axes of “Improving employability, promoting entry to the labour market” contains Action on the “**Development of key competences**” (SROP 2.1.2) that promotes the development of digital skills and competencies

The objective of the action is to enable the adult population to enrich their knowledge and develop their competencies that are of significant importance as regards labour market apart from professional knowledge. Projects within this action contribute to trained labour force by developing competences necessary for learning.

Accredited and registered public education institutions receive differentiated financial support based on participants - the final beneficiaries’ – age, qualification, employment conditions.

Amongst basic modules “World wide web” is of outstanding importance: the obtaining of informatics knowledge on user level, primarily the skills necessary to use of the internet.

The 33 least developed small settlements are especially urged to participate.

2) “First Step”

The programmes are to support people with low employment chances to obtain skills and to live an independent life (SROP 5.3.1)

The essential objective of the Action is to dismantle social barriers to obtain and to remain in employment for people with low chances. The target group primarily includes people with low qualification and live in the most disadvantaged areas of the country.

Concerning low qualification social groups that are most affected include the Roma population, the partially disabled or disabled, psychologically sick people and young persons with no work experience with disadvantaged background.

Integrated and individual assistance is necessary in the above cases to provide effective motivation programmes and supportive services. Supported activities include programmes promoting key competencies and skills, including ICT skills to live an independent life, trainings, formations. The aim of the programme is to involve minimum 3000 persons into the projects.

“Ready for the net” Programme

The multi-annual PPP umbrella programme was launched in October 2007 and includes numerous stakeholders (governmental, industry and voluntary) as actors of implementation. The basic concept of involving different sectors in the realisation of the programme was the possible higher effectiveness of the initiative:

- creation of market for the ICT sector
- reduction of digital illiteracy
- increasing competitiveness
- fits in other governmental (e-governmental) programmes

The programme is based on the perception that it is the lack of motivation as main inhibitor of the further development of information society. The PPP based motivational programme has a set of harmonised governmental and industry aspects. Its objectives are twofold:

- 1) to relieve negative attitudes and raise public openness towards the Internet via public campaign and other 2) to increase wide-scale awareness on advantages stemming from use via initiatives, clubs and events.

The main target group of the programme is the digitally illiterate adult population of age 35-60.

IS mentor

The Information Society Mentor (IS Mentor) programme was launched in 2003 and has set the objective of ensuring trained personal assistance to those disadvantaged members of the society, who – due to their position – can not live with the advantages of digital information.

The IS Mentor program covers all the layers of society and supports the advancement and progress of the disadvantaged by creating equal digital opportunities. By ensuring these circumstances for the disadvantaged and

by organizing and enabling the communication between the government and the future mentors, the Program enhances the development, modernization, and adaptation of Hungarian society.

These mentors/counselors are being trained into professionals who perform community and social work in the form of digital literacy training and consultation. Their mission is to offer personal assistance and training for demanding citizens in the ever extending field of e-knowledge – from the basic digital literacy to the advantages of eGovernment services and to the addressing of different life situations with the help of the Internet. Assistance may be necessary due to lack of knowledge or skills or some kind of disability.

The modules of the IS Mentor program all serve the purpose of eliminating the digital divide and thus contribute to the development of Hungarian society. IS mentors are qualified personnel primarily working on community computers and Internet access points (see also eHungary Point) with the primary objective of assisting people who otherwise would be unable to use the services of the information society.

They simultaneously perform the job of a social worker and a system administrator acting at the same time as the “social educator” and propagator of information society.

The job of an „IT mentor” has been accredited in Hungary in 2006 and is currently being educated in 20 places throughout the country.

There are approximately 5000 IT mentors currently working in Hungary.

URL: <http://en.itmentor.hu/>

The TITAN “Training Framework Programme for Increased Adaptability in the Information Society”

The idea of the TITAN programme originates from the pressing shortfall of people with adequate IT skills in Central and Eastern Europe. Despite large numbers of educated young people enter the work force, the region faces a potential crisis as the demand for workers with strong IT skills begins to exceed the supply. TITAN is a public-private partnership programme that combines the knowledge of local communities that government agencies provide with the technical and business expertise that the private sector offers that is thereby intended to reach more people with greater speed.

The Framework Programme apart from developing the IT sector by training employees for the future as well serves to provide solutions to digital literacy.

TITAN is a five-year “Training Framework Programme for Increased Adaptability in the Information Society” to provide top-of-the-range ICT trainings to 10.000 IT professionals, entrepreneurial focused IT trainings to 25.000 SME managers and digital literacy and user level ICT trainings to 200,000 basic users per year.

e-Inclusion and Cultural Diversity

• Status on e-Inclusion and Cultural Diversity

• Actions towards e-Inclusion and Cultural Diversity

Inclusive eGovernment

• Status on inclusive eGovernment

It is stated in The New Hungary Development Plan that is under preparation that “*the use of information and communication technology in services of public administration is not sufficient. There is a scanty supply of proper content and services. Services are static, slightly interactive, and not user-friendly. As regards electronic public administration services and public services, it is a particularly grave problem that there is a modest supply of bilateral services at interaction and transaction levels. Related background processes and back office systems are lagging behind; interoperability is missing. User skills, professional knowledge and information are often deficient both in terms of the population and the institutions. In backward areas, it is difficult for residents to access ICT services*”.

The Electronic Administration Operational Programme of the New Hungary Development Plan stipulates that „*in order to provide for the fast spread of services and equal opportunities, special attention must be paid to the accessibility of services for special social groups (disadvantaged, elderly, women, low-income people and people living with disabilities), and the services they actually use*”.

• Actions towards inclusive eGovernment

eHungary and Ready for the Net Programmes (see above)

Challenges

- The unemployment rate of people with disabilities is still above 80 percent.
- The proportion of the digitally illiterate adult population is still large, above 50%.

- The public websites of the EU states qualifying the W3C accessibility standard is 3 percent; Hungary is no exception.
- Instead of ensuring equal opportunities by passive means (allowances and other financial benefits), integration of target groups should be realized by improving physical and communication accessibility and by rehabilitation.

