
Panwapa, which means “here on this earth” in the Tshiluba language, is an online venture that aims to foster the foundation for global citizenship and community participation in young children ages 5 to 8. Produced by Sesame Workshop (the creators of Sesame Street worldwide), in partnership with the Merrill Lynch Foundation, Panwapa was conceived from a global perspective with the input of advisors and creative talent from around the world in order to maximize the global sensibility of the site and minimize the cultural barriers to the site.

Produced in five languages--Arabic, English, Japanese, Mandarin and Spanish--Panwapa is designed for both formal and informal educational settings. The goals of the project are as follows:

- Awareness of a wider world
- Appreciating similarities and differences
- Community participation and willingness to take action
- Understanding of and responsiveness to economic disparity.

Creatively, Panwapa is build around four basic interactive, gaming tenets:

- Social networking
- Card collecting
- Creative designing
- Game playing

However, the overall user-orientation is balanced out by the presence of six new muppet characters whose narrative is also represented on the site.

Panwapa is partnering with a full range of educational and outreach partners to bring this curriculum into the classroom and after-school settings. Those partners include Oxfam in the UK, the Apple Learning Interchange and PBS Kids Sprout in the US, the Girl Guides in Japan, the British Council in Hong Kong and Conaculta, Unete and Conafe in Mexico.

The primary objectives of this session are to 1) focus on the ways that the creative, engaging elements of Panwapa deliver the curriculum; 2) present the ways in which we are relying on our partners in education to innovate on our design; and 3) present the results of a summative evaluation that is currently being conducted in four countries, including over 1,800 kids and adults.
Panwapa believes that if we can instill a ‘global mindset’ into children at an early age, then we can nurture their appreciations of and respect for other cultures, as well as engage their attention in the challenges facing the world today.