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INITIATIVES OF THE WIPO ACADEMY IN RAISING AWARENESS OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

There is an increased demand by WIPO Member States for intellectual property (IP) education tools for the young that go beyond awareness. The WIPO Academy is the core entity in WIPO for training and human capacity-building activities, particularly for developing countries, least developed countries (LDCs) and countries in transition. Some countries are developing activities and awareness programs in particular in the area of information and communication technologies (ICTs) addressing creativity and innovation of the young. Globally, there are indications that IP knowledge of the young in such countries would require assistance through education tools and curricula development. In order to respond to the various needs and address the challenges, the WIPO Academy will continue its development and design of its IP4Kids Tool Kit for teachers optimizing the existing resources.

I. THE WIPO ACADEMY

1. The WIPO Academy is the core entity in WIPO for training and human capacity-building activities, particularly for developing countries, least developed countries (LDCs) and countries in transition. The Academy acts as an in-house center of excellence on training, including professional training; a catalyst for networks and partnerships to expand the range and impact of training opportunities at the national level; an open-access on-line clearing house of information on all WIPO training activities, tools and services; a unique and multi-lingual

provider of online distance learning and training; and a hub or virtual network of partners, experts and teachers in development-oriented intellectual property (IP) training.

2. In working to attain its objectives, the Academy draws on its experience and comparative advantages. These include its neutrality, credibility and brand name; its prior investments in training and teaching materials and tools, including its distance learning platform; its large international network of experts, teachers and tutors; its long-standing cooperation and partnership with national and regional institutions; its diverse linguistic content; its experience in identifying and catering to the training priorities and needs of Member States and other stakeholders; and its non-profit status.

II. DEMAND FOR IP EDUCATION FOR THE YOUNG

A. IP EDUCATION FOR THE YOUNG

3. In the last few years, there has been an increasing demand from WIPO Member States, in particular from developing countries, LDCs and countries in transition to assist them with instructionally-designed IP educational resources for their younger generations (ages 5 to 18) that go beyond awareness. The objective is to provide knowledge on “how to use” the IP system for innovation and creativity.

B. THE OPPORTUNITIES

4. The various activities in Member States and the increase in requests in recent years reflect the fact that there is a focus on IP curricula development for the younger generation. The synthesis of these efforts to raise an IP-aware younger generation illustrate four common areas of opportunity, namely:

- the younger generation has become an important consumer of IP-based products (at a much younger age than before);
- that generation, however, is not equipped with IP knowledge or has certain misconceptions about IP;
- the age at which the young have access to information and communication technologies (ICTs) is perceived as the starting point of the need for IP education; and
- the young have become a promising source of innovation and entrepreneurship.

C. THE CHALLENGES

5. The known challenges vary significantly from country to country. The difficulty or the slow pace of introducing IP curricula for the young, the lack of awareness nationally and/or regionally, the absence of suitably-informed teachers, and the lack of access to age appropriate educational material are among the most-cited challenges.

6. These challenges are not limited to developing countries, LDCs and countries in transition. In March 2016, the European Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) organized a meeting of IP Offices and educators, in which WIPO participated, to discuss a study¹ on the state of IP education in school curricula. The study was critical of the absence of IP education from the formative stage of European Union (EU) citizens. Among the challenges cited were the difficulties of introducing new curricula (such as IP) in schools at the national level and the negative attitude of the young toward IP. The EUIPO presented various survey results illustrating the erroneous and eroding perception that EU citizens hold about IP, in particular in the area of copyright and trademarks, such as, “50% of the young (aged 15 to 24) agree that buying counterfeits is an act of protest”. It indicated further that the absence of IP knowledge among the young would affect negatively the EU’s economic performance, *i.e.*, GDP growth, employment, and downstream innovation capacity of IP intensive industries.

D. REQUESTS FOR IP EDUCATION FOR THE YOUNG AND DEMOGRAPHICS

7. The recent backdrop of economic and population studies by the United Nations² and other international organizations such as the World Bank predict that in the next 20 to 30 years, the populations of developing nations will be the youngest in the world, in addition to having a significant population growth as compared to developed nations. Employment in the knowledge-based economy will be heavily influenced by the current and near-future investments made, in particular, in education in developing countries both to support local economies and capture opportunities to participate in developed markets with aging populations needing skilled labor.

8. With rapid transformations occurring in scientific and communication technologies, the young in developing nations have already become, or will soon become, an important consumer group for IP intensive products not only in the entertainment sector but also in other areas of daily life.

E. EFFORTS TO ENGAGE THE YOUNG IN INNOVATIVE AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

9. Signaling the fast demographic changes and transformations in ICTs and technological fields, it is encouraging to see an increase in initiatives by some Ministries of Education in developing countries, LDCs and countries in transition, focusing on the innovative capacity of the young in particular in the area of information and communication technologies (ICTs). Awareness programs such as “ICTs Education for the Young”, “IP Awareness for the Young” and “Innovation Hubs for Kids”³ are helping to facilitate IP awareness, even if these are not

¹ Office of Harmonization in the Internal Market (OHIM) (now EUIPO), “Intellectual Property and Education in Europe – A Study on IP Education in School Curricula in the EU Member States with Additional International Comparisons”, September 2015, available at: <https://euiipo.europa.eu/ohimportal/documents/11370/80606/IP+and+Education+final+report+September+2015>.

² According to the 2015 Report of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations, “World Population Prospects 2015”, pp. 2-3, the world population reached 7.3 billion as of mid-2015. It is projected to increase by more than one billion people within the next 15 years, reaching 8.5 billion in 2030, and to increase further to 9.7 billion in 2050. More than half of global population growth between 2015 and 2050 is expected to occur in Africa. Africa has the highest rate of population growth at a pace of 2.55 per cent annually in 2010-2015. Consequently, of the additional 2.4 billion people projected to be added to the global population between 2015 and 2050, 1.3 billion will be added in Africa. Asia is projected to be the second largest contributor to future global population growth, adding 0.9 billion people between 2015 and 2050, followed by Northern America, Latin America and the Caribbean and Oceania. Europe is projected to have a smaller population in 2050 than in 2015.

³ A non-exhaustive list of recent and past reports offer examples of the various projects through which Governments in developing countries, LDCs, and countries in transition are cultivating the innovative capacity of their young generations with public and private funding (e.g., the UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, “Integrating ICT into Education in six Asian Countries”, 2004; World Bank Development Report, “How Tech Hubs are Helping to Drive Economic Growth in Africa”, 2016; the McKinsey Center Report for Government, “Unleashing Youth in Asia”, 2016; and the International Telecommunication Union Report “Coding Bootcamps Worldwide: A strategy for Youth Employment”, 2016).

full-fledged IP education programs. There are several examples of IP Offices which have reported on their specific IP awareness and respect for IP programs focusing on the young, including translation and customization of WIPO comics, World IP Day campaigns, cartoons, awards, celebrity good-will ambassadors, booklets and multi-media products to address the young at different levels. However, the majority of schools and educational systems in developing countries, LDCs and countries in transition do not have tailored IP education tools or formal curricula for their local target audience.

III. A RESPONSE FROM THE WIPO ACADEMY – FOCUSING ON TEACHERS IN SCHOOLS: THE WIPO ACADEMY IP4KIDS TEACHER’S TOOL KIT

A. THE OBJECTIVES

10. In response to the increasing demands by WIPO Member States and the synergy of opportunities presented by the recent efforts to introduce IP education at a younger age, the WIPO Academy started the design and development of an IP Education Tool Kit (DL-007) in early 2010 and will complete this work in 2017. The objectives of the Academy are threefold with a view to optimizing existing resources: a) to offer teachers an opportunity to teach young audiences about patents, copyright and trademarks through interesting and interactive stories, with learn-as-you-play games and age-relevant exercises; b) to utilize its current networks of teachers and partners as possible entry points to disseminating IP teaching for the young; c) to compile and make available through the Academy’s existing multilingual eLearning platform the educational resources that some WIPO Member States have developed for the use and benefit of teachers worldwide.

B. THE TARGET AUDIENCE

11. The IP4Kids Teaching tool is designed primarily for teachers to guide their elementary and junior high school target audiences.

C. THE LEARNING OUTCOMES

12. The WIPO Academy learning outcomes include the following age-relevant active and passive competencies: a) become familiar with the rationale of IP; b) associate oneself through practice with one or several of the IP domains; c) understand how IP works, its role as a stimulus for innovation and creativity and its potential to generate income; and d) appreciate the respect required for other people’s IP.



13. The themes contained within IP4Kids focus on ideas, inventions, innovations and creative works which have made important contributions to our quality of life in the past and will continue to do so in the future. Using the widely recognized, flagship course of the Academy, “General Course on IP (DL-101)”, on the rationale of IP, it is planned that teachers would have the opportunity to emphasize that IP is mainly about innovation, creativity and enjoying ones intellectual output by solving problems and expressing ones imagination in new and original ways.

a) Methodology

14. The learn-as-you-play games that are contained within IP4Kids are designed to be guided by teachers who will be provided with accompanying lesson plans. The lesson plans will be adapted to different ages. Teachers will be encouraged to bring local examples of copyright, trademarks, and patents contextualizing the experiences of children in their everyday life activities. The content will be flexible, so as to allow teachers to customize it for their cultural, religious and language contexts. By applying different age-relevant lesson plans, teachers will have the opportunity to create team-playing and creativity experiences directly focused on copyright, trademarks, and patents. The vantage point of a creator, inventor, innovator and producer is expected to lead the learners to appreciate and put a premium on the benefits of these rights.



b) Customization and Languages

15. In addition to the need to accommodate linguistic differences, countries will be able to incorporate different local examples based on their legal systems, cultures and heritage. The WIPO Academy IP4Kids tool will be designed with both language and other customization flexibilities for teachers in their lesson plans and case studies. The initial version will be piloted in English.

D. COMMUNITIES OF INTEREST

16. The Academy welcomes Member States to contact it, if they would like to share their experiences. By leveraging its current communities of teachers, partner institutions, IP experts, and IP Offices, it is expected that a community of interest will facilitate regular updates, and share experiences in an effort to benefit countries with similar interests in developing IP curricula and teaching tools for children.

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