

“ASREN is a non-profit company with limited liability (GmbH) and is officially registered in Germany, under the umbrella of the League of Arab States. The main goal is to connect Arab institutions among themselves and to the globe through high-speed data-communications networks. Such networks will enable sharing and access to a variety of R&E services and applications in addition to utilization of highly sophisticated and technologically advanced computing resources available only at very few institutions in the world.”

In this issue

- ASREN and AfricaConnect3 Kicked Off #WomeninSTEM Campaign 1
- United Arab Emirates’ NREN Ankabut Establishes Direct Link to GÉANT in Support of Transnational Education 2
- RENU Powers Surgical Operations in Uganda 4

ASREN and AfricaConnect3 Kicked Off #WomeninSTEM Campaign



In celebration of women and girls in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), ASREN and AfricaConnect3 kicked off the #WomeninSTEM campaign on February 11th 2021, on the occasion of the International Day of Women & Girls in Science.

The #WomeninSTEM campaign kicked off with an interview with Dr. Magreth Mushi, Chief Executive Officer of the Tanzania Education and Research Network (TERNET), who shared her experiences on being a woman in a male dominated field.

The campaign will run until March 8th, with more awe-inspiring stories of our female colleagues working around the clock in STEM across ASREN and the African research and education community. ASREN and AC3 are committed to achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls.

Read the whole story on [AfricaConnect3 website](#).

United Arab Emirates' NREN Ankabut Establishes Direct Link to GÉANT in Support of Transnational Education



Ankabut, the United Arab Emirates' (UAE) National Research and Education Network (NREN) has recently established its first direct interconnection with the GÉANT network in Europe. This successful operation will provide direct, secure and high-quality connectivity primarily between the many European International Branch Campuses (IBCs) present in the UAE and their home institutions.

The 1G dedicated circuit is now connected at the GÉANT Open service facilities in London and it will be entirely funded by Ankabut for the first 12 months.

This achievement is the result of joint efforts between GÉANT, Ankabut, ASREN and Jisc, the UK agency for digital and data for the education and research sector, and representative NREN for

eight UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) with a branch campus in the UAE. Furthermore, the new connection is set to benefit remote campuses of other European universities, out of over 30 international institutions currently established across the UAE, concentrated around Dubai, which make the country the second largest host of international campuses in the world.[1]

Traffic to European countries, previously transiting through the Internet2 network in the US, will now follow a direct route to European NRENs through the GÉANT network, resulting in lower latency, greater capacity and reduced costs for both existing IBCs and those which may be established in the future.

Mr. Fahem Al Nuaimi, Ankabut CEO, comments: “We are very pleased to join forces with GÉANT and GÉANT members in support of transnational education (TNE). The new Ankabut connection to the GÉANT network will create new opportunities for our research and education community, greatly benefit researchers, educators and students, support our growing programs and foster innovation and collaborations between our regions. Furthermore, Ankabut will continue to expand its partnership with the global research community to provide state of the art e- infrastructure for UAE research and education community. This partnership will create a great opportunity for the UAE to be a global hub of research and education in the region.”

Dr Esther Wilkinson, Head of international at Jisc adds: “Jisc has been working closely with GÉANT and Ankabut to establish a reliable and robust connection between the UK, Europe and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to support research and education. The work of our partnership and the timing of this improved connection couldn’t be more critical. Our UK higher education institutions with campuses and partnerships across UAE, as well as students and researchers unable to travel, are all reliant on such infrastructure and will offer support more broadly to European universities in the same way. We welcome the generosity and drive of Ankabut in this partnership, including funding the link for its initial year. We will continue to work in partnership to encourage and optimise the use of this enhanced connection and establish this route as a sustainable solution.”

Erik Huizer, GÉANT CEO says: “I congratulate ASREN and Ankabut on this important achievement and thank them for their support and efforts. Their connection to the GÉANT network marks the first step towards a more cohesive regional approach across the Gulf in support of R&E collaborations between Europe and the Gulf, which will ensure longer-term sustainability by optimising capacity sharing and utilisation.”

Source: <https://connect.geant.org/2021/02/09/united-arab-emirates-nren-ankabut-establishes-direct-link-to-geant-in-support-of-transnational-education>

RENU Powers Surgical Operations in Uganda



When Dr. Michael Marin, a vascular surgeon and Chief of Surgery for the Mount Sinai Health System in New York, USA, thought of extending Mount Sinai’s surgical knowledge and care to other parts of the world, he did not expect the beneficiary facility would enjoy reliable high-speed internet connectivity to facilitate the transfer of such knowledge in Uganda.

Thanks to the Internet connectivity provided by the Research and Education Network of Uganda (RENU), Mount Sinai can offer remote surgical services assistance to the Kyabirwa Surgical Facility Centre in the East African Nation.

Dr. Marin heralded the establishment of the surgical facility, as one way of extending surgical services to millions of people around the world that are in dire need of surgical services.

“The initiative is focused on sharing surgery knowledge from one part of the world to another efficiently. Currently, over 5 billion people around the world do not have access to safe and affordable surgery. After considerations, we opted to build a surgical center in Kyabirwa, Uganda due to the stability of the country and the presence of many NGOs working in healthcare in the area”, says Dr. Marin.

According to Dr. Marin, building the surgical center involved heavy participation of the community, which the surgeon says helped instill a sense of ownership of the facility in the local people.

“Building and development were very much based on the community. Some people did not have skills, but they were taught. Everything was built by hand, even the bricks were made locally. The design is unique and has already won the 2020 AIA healthcare design award – a very prestigious

architectural award. The idea was to have a facility that the community would take pride in, and that would fit in the rural landscape of the village.”

Since the surgical centre opened in November 2019, the facility has performed close to 450 surgeries with remote assistance from Mount Sinai in New York and attended to over 1000 patients in need of surgical services.

RENU Network

To be able to share the knowledge and skills between Mount Sinai in New York and Kyabirwa in Uganda, there needed robust and high-speed internet connectivity and the hunt for a reliable Internet provider commenced.

“During the planning phase, one of our colleagues brought on the program a Ugandan IT expert to help set up the cloud-based infrastructure. Looking into ISPs, RENU’s name came up, and RENU has been a game-changer in providing the internet connectivity as well as the network contacts to make the program come true”, adds Dr. Marin.

Connection to the RENU network is enabling Kyabirwa to conduct live surgical operations in partnership with surgeons from the Mount Sinai, a feat Dr. Marin agrees would not be feasible in the absence of such a strong internet provision.

“Having US surgeons coming down to Uganda for 2-3 weeks and then going back to the US could not provide a stable service. We needed Ugandan surgeons to take care of Ugandan patients. With access to a high-speed internet, there is no need to bring down skilled surgeons and support personnel to Uganda from NY, which is very expensive and not always done timely. Our Internet connection allows teaching and tutorials online, physicians from NY can host online training for Ugandan doctors (as long as the doctor’s hands are visible on the screen, this is enough for knowledge share, but it won’t work if there is a delay) – hence the need for high-speed internet.”

Dr. Joseph Okello, a resident surgeon at Kyabwira Surgical Centre agrees that RENU’s Internet connectivity has made operations at the facility smoother and easier.

“Our internet has been our most important asset here at Kyabwira; luckily we have reliable internet connectivity from RENU that allows for many important transactions, including live surgical operations. We can send live feeds from here to our colleagues at Mount Sinai who are very experienced and have a lot of knowledge crucial for our operations. The internet connection we have hardly drops and is always available. So far we are also able to carry out live endoscopy operations with our colleagues from New York.”

Source: <https://africconnect3.net/renu-powers-surgical-operations-in-uganda/>

Arab States Research and Education Network

TAGUCI Building

104 Mecca Street, Um-Uthaina, Amman, Jordan

P.O. Box: 921100 Amman 11192, Jordan

Email: info@asrenorg.net |  ASREN |  ASREN

asrenorg.net



This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union

The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of ASREN and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union.