



## Issue 10, October 2003

<b>Introducing this issue:</b>			
The Building Digital Opportunities programme commissioned consultants to perform a Learning Study on the effectiveness of BDO partners' activities on poverty reduction. This issue of iConnect offline looks at the results of that Learning Study (LS); is the BDO programme on the right track?			
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### ICTs and poverty reduction: delivering the evidence

**It has been claimed that information and communications technologies (ICTs) can help reduce poverty. At the same time, the poorest parts of the world are those with the least access to such technologies. Africa in particular has less than 0.6 per cent of Internet users. Only one in every 200 people in least developed countries has access to a telephone. So can this claim be true? This issue of iConnect looks at the Learning Study (LS) that has been delivered inside the framework of the Building Digital Opportunities (BDO) programme.**

The study has mapped BDO implementing partners' experience with ICTs and poverty reduction. There has been an emphasis on qualitative information, with key findings exemplified by illustrative short case studies.

This Learning Study has a broad scope, covering three African countries plus a regional and global perspective. Focused countries are Mali, Uganda and Tanzania. From a thematic angle, LS has learned from experiences on the ground in terms of livelihood opportunities, health and governance.

The LS started in April and finished in June 2003, and has been jointly elaborated by a group of local consultants and Gerster Consulting. The study uses examples from a unique collaborative programme to show that ICTs can, indeed, make a difference to the lives of the poorest and most marginalized.

#### The Building Digital Opportunities (BDO) programme

Recognizing the crucial role of ICTs in addressing poverty, donors came together in 2001 with some international non-governmental organizations: the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC), the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organization (CTO), the International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD), OneWorld International (OWI) and Panos, to form the "Building Digital Opportunities" programme, a global programme that aims to use ICTs to:

- Empower and strengthen the ability of poor people to shape decisions that affect their lives and remove discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, and social status;
- Expand opportunities for poor people by stimulating economic growth, making markets work better for poor people, and working for their inclusion, particularly by building up their assets, such as land and education;
- Enhance security of the poor by reducing their vulnerability to sickness, economic shocks, crop failure, unemployment, natural disasters, and violence, and helping them cope when such misfortunes occur.

**Defining ICTs**

**Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) facilitate the creation, storage, management and dissemination of information by electronic means. Such an understanding includes radio, television, fixed-net and mobile telephony, fax, computer and the internet. Four characteristics describe these ICTs:**

- 1 **Interactivity** - ICTs are effective two-way communication technologies;
- 2 **Permanent availability** - the new ICTs are available 24 hours a day;
- 3 **Global reach**- geographic distances hardly matter any more;
- 4 **Reduced costs for many** - relative costs of communication have shrunk to a fraction of previous values.

## Building Digital Opportunities: ICTs and the poverty framework

In September 2000, at the end of the UN Millennium Summit, 189 countries signed the final declaration and by doing so committed themselves to a specific agenda for reducing global poverty by half by 2015. In doing so, they created a vision that offers the opportunity to focus development outcomes and to coordinate efforts among stakeholders.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have become a frame of reference for just about all organisations working in development. They represent an agreement in the community to achieve measurable improvement in people's lives.

The Learning Study (LS) has demonstrated that ICTs can be important tools for achieving all these, and in meeting the MDGs. The table below lays out the relationship between the LS focus areas and MDGs.

BDO partners, as shown during the LS, share a concern for reducing social and regional disparities and eliminating poverty. Given the location of many of the projects, their clientele and thematic focus, the BDO programme clearly targets vulnerable and marginalized people. Here are few examples:

- In **Uganda**, the BDO-supported community radio Apac is located in one of the remotest and most secluded districts in Northern Uganda;
- Similarly, in **Zambia** the Development through Radio (DTR) programme was reported to be used by the poor and marginalized, especially women, as a vehicle for their voice;
- In **Mali**, IICD facilitates the establishment of telecentres in rural areas and three projects in the medical sector. Panos and AMARC are involved with community radios in a poor urban environment of Bamako and in rural Mali.

### Zambia's e-Brain: influencing the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) agenda

e-Brain is a national think-tank and an information-sharing platform of more than 100 members. It places the discussion of ICT on the national development agenda and aims to develop a common understanding of the role of ICT in the development process. As a result of lobbying by the Communications Authority of Zambia, e-Brain, Panos, OneWorld Africa (OWA) and Zambian Independent Media Association (ZIMA), the government has recently formed a National Technical Committee with several technical sub-committees, specifically to develop a policy for ICT. OWA is facilitating a process of civil society involvement in the policy discussion, ZIMA is concerned with involving the media and e-Brain facilitates monthly discussions on policy issues. e-Brain began as an IICD partner.

More information: [www.ebrain.org.zm](http://www.ebrain.org.zm)

### Sectoral issues: livelihoods, health and education

The Learning Study demonstrates that ICTs can give substantial contribution to poverty reduction in livelihoods, health and governance areas.

The BDO programme experience demonstrates that ICTs can promote opportunities for livelihoods. In that spirit, it stimulates economic growth, makes markets work better for poor people and builds up their assets. A sustainable livelihood strategy includes adaptation to new circumstances. An essential part of the way to this adaptation is identifying essential information. If ICTs are not set apart as a minor part of any development activity, they can be a more effective tool to help create an informed livelihoods strategy.

Millennium Development Goals	Health	Livelihood	Governance	Capacity Development
1. <i>Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger</i>	X	X		
2. <i>Achieve universal primary education</i>		X		X
3. <i>Promote gender equality and empower women</i>		X	X	X
4. <i>Reduce child mortality</i>	X			
5. <i>Improve maternal health</i>	X			
6. <i>Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases</i>	X			
7. <i>Ensure environmental sustainability</i>	(X)	X		
8. <i>Develop a global partnership for development</i>		X	X	

Table 1: Relationship of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the identified key issues of the Learning Study

Further, the programme demonstrates that ICTs can be powerful tools for promoting good **governance** and **empowerment**.

ICTs are important for increasing knowledge on human and constitutional rights, laws and regulations. Tools such as radio and the internet have also been used for monitoring government programmes, thus making the powerful more accountable and giving the poor a voice.

The decentralisation process can be enhanced by ICTs. Also, in terms of service delivery, ICTs can enhance government efficiency in service provision that is directly relevant for the poor.

#### **Champion of effectiveness: community radio**

Community radio can be an answer to many pressing problems local communities are facing. Radio Apac in Uganda has enhanced communication and dissemination of information with the following results:

1. benefits in agricultural production
2. increased turnout for immunisation
3. higher voter attendance at elections
4. strongly reduced corruption
5. improved security

One broadcaster from Apac said: "Apac radio is like a god here. Communities take radio news as gospel truth." However, these impressive results are negatively affected by two main issues: inadequate infrastructure (the transmission capacity of 300kw only covers 35 kilometres, regular power failures) and insufficient staff skills. The two are also closely related – staff training is most efficient if it happens in relation to the available infrastructure.

More information:  
[www.interconnection.org/radioapac/home.htm](http://www.interconnection.org/radioapac/home.htm)

Finally, the LS programme demonstrates that ICTs can be relevant for health interventions and in the fight against **HIV/AIDS**. They can be a strong information dissemination tool for consistent management of the risk of the spread of HIV/AIDS.

In Zambia, stigma is imaginatively addressed, the role of ARV drugs is better understood and youth have improved access to information, which has impacted on the Awareness, Behaviour and Change – the ABC of HIV/AIDS.

Apart from transmission of information on diseases such as HIV/AIDS, the potential of ICTs in the healthcare sector is that they can be used for consultation to give advice to rural health workers or directly to isolated patients.

They are also useful in data collection and analysis and record keeping, training for health care workers and the education of targeted populations, including pregnant mothers, mothers of young children, special groups susceptible to contagious diseases and the like.

#### **Keneya Blown – global and local telemedicine linkages**

The Keneya Blown project links five hospitals in Mali and one in Switzerland. Apart from providing an internet platform, which provides information to students and professionals in the health sector, the link to the North is used for long distance consultations (x-rays are sent to the North, where they are interpreted by specialists and the diagnosis is sent back) as well as the transmission of lectures. In a later phase it is planned to also have regional health staff linking up to courses provided by teachers in Bamako. Apart from the educational opportunities this project supports, it is also a valuable source of medical information for people in the North (the knowledge base of Mali in leprosy has been well appreciated by universities in the North), showing that there are specific information needs in the North that can be met by the South. Keneya Blown, catalysed by IICD, has received Africa-wide recognition and is mentioned in a recent report by the Economic Commission for Africa of the UN.

More information: [www.keneya.net](http://www.keneya.net)

## **Capacity Building**

The Learning Study's terms of reference define capacity building as a cross-cutting issue. A high percentage of activities relating to capacity building seem to be concentrated on the handling of ICTs. However, capacity building should not be targeting exclusively technical aspects, but also human, as well as institutional capacities, both of which are milestones on the road to empowerment.

Capacity building efforts should be strengthened and targeted, e.g. including general marketing and management skills. Also, capacity building needs to be tailored-made and ideally delivered by local consultants.

#### **Face to face: the human factor**

In spite of the technologically enhanced information exchange, face-to-face contacts across national boundaries cannot be replaced. This fact is confirmed in training and workshops, which also present great opportunities for networking. Many issues surrounding ICTs have a regional or global dimension (interconnection, technical standards etc.) and an exchange on best practices and experiences during a workshop is often more efficient than an anonymous database. However, capacity building does not only happen on the level of the participating institutions, it can also be a key for individuals: "I am now regarded as a potential resource person and my level of articulation on these issues has improved." (participant from a regional workshop). CTO and AMARC in particular support regional trainings.

More information: [www.ictdevagenda.org](http://www.ictdevagenda.org)

### Information with a human face gives the poor a voice

In partnership with the World Bank (WB), journalists from Malawi, Tanzania, Nigeria, Uganda and Zambia have been trained in how to report stories on HIV/AIDS. The 6-month training course was facilitated by the WB and Panos SA using video conferencing. Journalists met in Distance Learning Centres (usually the local World Bank offices) for presentations, discussions, questions and answers. The journalists then undertook 3-month assignments. The learning process continues with WB support through the Media AIDS Communication Network, which coordinates project activities. The journalists write stories on HIV/AIDS as inserts to the national papers every month. The stories give a human face to HIV/AIDS and make the poor listened to.

More information:

[www.panos.org.uk/global/Rprojectdetails.asp?ProjectID=1039&ID=1001&RProjectID=1047](http://www.panos.org.uk/global/Rprojectdetails.asp?ProjectID=1039&ID=1001&RProjectID=1047)

### National dimension

An important outcome of the programme is the creation of new networks at national level (Réseau IN in Mali, I-Network in Uganda, e-Brain forum in Zambia), and strengthening existing partnerships which are clearly focused on the ICT sector. These networks provide a starting block to streamline ICTs into national poverty plans. In Uganda, although the draft ICT policy makes reference to the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), it does not exactly spell out how ICTs can be utilised as tools for poverty reduction to better achieve the PRSP objectives.

### Regional dimension

The creation of regional strategies enables countries to prevent a duplication of efforts and waste of resources, to build economies of scale for developing infrastructure, and to strengthen local content creation. Regional contacts, coordination and cooperation are key to the success of ICTs in development.

### Global dimension

BDO was set up as a project with a global reach – therefore two of the most practical products of BDO collaboration - Dgroups ([www.dgroups.org](http://www.dgroups.org)) and iTrainOnline ([www.itrainonline.org](http://www.itrainonline.org)) are also located at the global level.

However, the programme has offered platforms for a global exchange of experience, including an intense South – South communication. OWI, for example, operates the Digital Opportunity Channel, which is running a discussion forum, “Information Society: Voices from the South”, in partnership with Bytes for All, a South Asian online volunteer network, and in coordination with Sri Lanka-based ‘Mandate the Future’.

BDO activities have also created an information flow up from the Southern grassroots to the global audience. In such a way, ICTs have contributed to a better informed public, including decision makers, which again may lead to better informed decisions on development. In Zambia, OWI has used stories, which were published in bulletins locally by Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR), and uploaded them onto their website.

### LS methodology

As a preparatory step and an input to the Learning Study, a *desk research* has been done to briefly review the experience of ICTs and poverty reduction, and to relate it to the relevant activities of BDO partners.

The *empirical part* of the Learning Study will be based on the three case study countries (Mali, Uganda and Zambia) and on a few selected themes (HIV/AIDS, Livelihoods, Governance, Capacity Development). Regional and global aspects have also been taken into account.

In order to ensure a common understanding of the underlying concepts and to facilitate the detailed planning for the three case studies, a kick-off meeting for the entire team was held in Pretoria (South Africa). After this meeting, the individual case studies were conducted simultaneously.

At the same time, surveys on the regional and global level took place. Another team meeting was held in Pretoria, after all case studies had been carried out, in order to discuss the results. This allowed for an in-depth exchange of information. Based on this discussion and the written case studies, the synthesised report was drafted.

The case study foci can be summarised in the form of a thematic matrix:

	Mali	Uganda	Zambia	Regional level: Southern Africa	Global level
<b>Themes</b> (of equal priority)	Health-HIV/AIDS Governance	Governance Livelihoods HIV/AIDS	Livelihoods Governance HIV/AIDS	HIV/AIDS Governance Livelihoods	HIV/AIDS Governance Livelihoods
<b>Cross-cutting</b>	Capacity development				
<b>BDO partners present</b> (Institutions in brackets refer to weak presence)	IICD (OWI) (AMARC) Panos	CTO IICD OWI (AMARC) Panos	(CTO) IICD OWI Panos	CTO (IICD) OWI AMARC (Panos)	CTO (IICD) OWI AMARC (Panos)

BDO has entrusted the Learning Study to Gerster Consulting, Switzerland, whose work has a strong focus on poverty reduction strategies as well as some experience in ICTs. For each of the three case studies, Gerster Consulting selected national consultants. There was a deliberate, and fruitful decision to involve experts with different professional experiences; one national consultant was an ICT specialist, the other two approached the assessment with a social/poverty-oriented background. The **team** involved in elaborating the Learning Study consisted of the following members:

- Richard Gerster (Switzerland), economist, Director of Gerster Consulting, team leader;
- Clare Barkworth (Zambia/United Kingdom), M.Sc. Agricultural Economics, Managing Director of Whydah Consulting Ltd, consultant for Zambia;
- Lucy Daxbacher (Uganda/Austria), MA Social Sector Planning & Management (candidate), consultant for Uganda;
- Abdoulaye Ndiaye (Senegal), economist, ICT consultant, consultant for Mali;
- Sonja Zimmermann (Switzerland), secondary school teacher, Project Manager of Gerster Consulting.

### Some comments on the Learning Study from BDO implementing agencies

#### Panos, Kitty Warnock

The LS gave us, first of all, external assessment (positive!) of some of our projects, including the important "Development Through Radio" approach, and valuable lessons from other organisations' projects.

Broadly, the LS helps consolidate the knowledge base, which is still patchy, on effective approaches to communication for poverty reduction. It also contributes to the dossier of "evidence" of how communication works for development and poverty reduction – which is also patchy and often based on conviction rather than experience.

Panos will be sharing the LS and the country case studies among programme staff in Panos London and the southern Panos Institutes, highlighting relevant information, lessons and new ideas and encouraging networking; and using the LS as a resource in the constant learning process to understand how communication really works for development.

#### OneWorld International, Maartje op de Coul

Probably the main benefit for OneWorld of the Learning Study is the external view to both our own offices in London and Zambia and to the work our partners are doing. Outsiders always have refreshing ideas concerning the work one is doing. The poverty analysis underlying the study is a very interesting and useful starting point that OneWorld has also taken up to analyse its work.

Finally, the conclusion that "the BDO related achievements highlight that ICTs can contribute significantly to poverty reduction" is of course of immeasurable importance to an organisation like OneWorld that mainly uses new technologies to achieve its aims.

OneWorld will follow-up on those recommendations that apply to our work. We will put extra effort into tailored capacity building and ICT awareness raising among our partners. With other BDO partners we will also put more effort in cooperating and networking on the country, regional and global levels. Lastly, OneWorld will continue its activities that combine different technologies like mobile telephony, radio, online community building tools and internet portals, in order to maximize access and participation.

#### IICD, Ingrid Hagen

Accountability is an obvious result of the Learning Study. Equally, if not more important, is making sure that harvested learning is replanted in the operations of our local partners in the countries. Local discussions are already being set-up by IICD's national information and networking partners. These discussions target the LS conclusions and throw them into an arena for open dialogue among IICD and wider ICT4D national practitioners -- including of course the local networks of other BDO partners. Here they will address some of the stronger points emerging from the Learning Study; like the still unrealised full potential of merged technologies.

At the IICD level, the LS has furnished important points. Some on which to reflect and others, to smile about ... like our combined role with local partners to catalyse national policy-making discussions and ICT supported SWAps.

Unanswered questions still remain. The complexities of local ownership and ICT choices, and how this fits with sustainability. But such points are general to development practitioners in any sector -- ICT supported or not. Of course, one will need to read the LS oneself to be able to grasp the ICT4D lessons emerging from the work of developing country practitioners and the BDO programme partnership.

#### Consultants' angle

**Clare Barkworth, national consultant for the Zambian part of the LS. These are her impressions of the study:**

##### **- What has been the biggest challenge in LS work?**

The study was extremely challenging as the scope of work was very broad. It was involving many different partners and players, with very different objectives and focus. Also, linkages between ICT and poverty reduction are not so obvious, and need some sensitisation.

##### **- What have you learned from LS experience?**

Potential for ICTs in poverty reduction is indeed huge, but unlikely to be realised without improved understanding of issues involved, coordination of activities and local leadership. Two elements are particularly important in my view: regulatory framework and adequate mix of technologies. Lack of adequate regulatory environment is a constraint to access, while combination of technologies is important to reach to poorest and provide voice to the marginalized. On a bit of the negative side, it seems that major ICT programmes are still Northern and centrally driven – we are yet faced with the challenge to get a real local, "home-grown" ICT programme.

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# NEWS FROM BDO PARTNERS

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The Building Digital Opportunities (BDO) programme is a package of cross-sectoral initiatives to address key barriers and opportunities for ICTs in achieving development targets. Funded by the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department for International Development Cooperation (DGIS), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the programme has been put together as a partnership with a number of key organisations – the Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC), the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO), the International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD), OneWorld International, and the Panos Institute. BDO started in March 2001 and runs to March 2004 -- although Panos and AMARC have delivered all their activities by March 2003.

BDO's five key areas of activity are:

- Strengthening local capacity in developing countries to address policy and regulatory environments.
  - Support for a programme of demand led pilot projects, implemented as part of an ongoing series of stakeholder ICT roundtable processes in selected developing countries.
  - Support for information inclusion for the poor through activities on community media and linking old and new ICTs.
  - A strategic partnership with a global 'development' Internet partner.
  - Knowledge and research activities in key areas to support the above programme.
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## NEWS FROM CTO

### CTO/APC training pack on 'ICT Policy for Civil Society'

The Association for Progressive Communications (APC) and the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO) are proud to announce the release of the "ICT Policy for Civil Society" training pack. The pack includes a curriculum and accompanying materials to build the capacity of civil society organisations to understand and engage policy and regulation related to information and communication technologies (ICTs).

Few citizens are aware of the policy developments taking place at the global, regional and national levels that can impact on their ability and/or potential to use ICTs as a tool, let alone own or control the production and application of these technologies locally. The goal of this course is to build and strengthen civil society organisations' awareness of, and confidence to engage in, internet policy processes.

The training pack includes a curriculum and training modules and materials that can be used for either a five-day course or as stand-alone sessions combined to meet specific training needs.

The curriculum and materials are freely available for any person to download from the internet and use. APC and our partners will be adding more modules on different themes over time and customising the curriculum to suit different geographic locations and audiences such as journalists. We'll also be providing versions in Spanish and French before the end of 2003.

**More information:**

[www.apc.org/english/capacity/policy/curriculum.shtml](http://www.apc.org/english/capacity/policy/curriculum.shtml)

Contact: Claire Sibthorpe, [apc-policy@apc.org](mailto:apc-policy@apc.org)

## NEWS FROM IICD

### The 2003 ICT Stories Competition - Tony Zeitoun Awards winners

The competition – an initiative of infoDev and IICD, this year joined by GKP - again yielded a fantastic collection of ICT4D stories, covering a wide range of issues, sectors and countries.

An international panel of expert judges on ICTs for Development selected the winning stories. And they are:

- El Correo del Agricultor - The farmer's mail (Bolivia)
- Self help groups show the way (India)
- THAMEL: reducing the social, cultural and economic cost of immigration through the power of ICT (Nepal)

The winning stories will be presented on several occasions at the ICT4D Platform, a parallel event of the World Summit on the Information Society taking place in Geneva in December 2003.

**More information** and the overview of all stories submitted can be found on: [www.iicd.org/stories](http://www.iicd.org/stories)

Contact: [stories@iicd.org](mailto:stories@iicd.org)

### FEBDEV's action-oriented learning for entrepreneurs

What is the best way to train South Africa's next generation of entrepreneurs? How can we reach the poorest of the poor, and give them the skills to start their own businesses and empower the communities from which they come? Certainly South Africa's Further Education and Training (FETs) technical colleges hoped they could provide the answer to these questions. Although they taught valuable trade and educational skills, a few years ago their entrepreneurship courses were rated the most boring and least useful by students all across the country.

The problem was that entrepreneurship courses were too theoretical and formulaic to hold the attention of the students or the lecturers. The Foundation of Economic and Business Development (FEBDEV) decided it may have the answer: the action-learning methodology. After all, how can you lecture entrepreneurship when it is much more about practice than theory?

FEBDEV cooperated with technical colleges to change their teaching method from lecture-based to interactive learn-by-doing. They developed the Hands-On Enterprise initiative, to bring its vision to the schools by teaching teachers, facilitating entrepreneurship competitions, and inspiring schools and students to participate.

This case study differs from others in the bridges.org/IICD Case Study Series on ICT-Enabled Development in that FEBDEV does not work specifically in the area of ICT development, although it does use ICTs in delivering its services. FEBDEV's efforts to support grassroots entrepreneurship provide the groundwork for a micro business community capable of realising the benefits of ICT use. Further, their success can serve as a model for ICT training efforts and community initiatives in general.

To view the full case study online, please visit:  
[www.bridges.org/iicd\\_casestudies/case\\_studies.html](http://www.bridges.org/iicd_casestudies/case_studies.html)  
Contact: Liam Smit, [casestudy@bridges.org](mailto:casestudy@bridges.org)

### Global Teenager Learning Circles take off for the 10<sup>th</sup> time

In October, over 200 secondary school classes from 26 countries worldwide started communicating via e-mail and internet in English and French Learning Circles. The Global Teenagers discuss different Basic and Advanced themes such as Music, Technology, Human Rights and World Peace.

The overall vision of the Global Teenager project is to use new teaching methods facilitated by ICTs to promote intercultural exchange. This will lead to a better understanding and respect of differences in cultures and societies.

The Learning Circles can be followed through the Virtual Campus website under the Classroom section. Although guest visitors are not allowed to enter comments, they are able to view all the exchanged emails by clicking on a certain theme.

Please visit the Virtual Campus at: [www.iicd.org/virtualcampus/](http://www.iicd.org/virtualcampus/)  
Contact: Neeltje Blommestein, [nblommestein@iicd.org](mailto:nblommestein@iicd.org)

## NEWS FROM ONEWORLD

### STAYING ALIVE COMPETITION 2003

On 1 October 2003, MTV and OneWorld launched a global competition in the run up to World AIDS Day, on 1 December 2003. The competition will enable young people from around the world to produce and submit original audio or video public service announcements (PSA) that convey the messages of MTV's award winning HIV/AIDS awareness campaign, Staying Alive ([www.staying-alive.org](http://www.staying-alive.org)). MTV and OneWorld share a commitment to the global fight against HIV/AIDS and this unique collaboration aims to reach an audience at a

global and local level. Entrants will be able to unleash their creativity to develop a public service announcement aiming to create awareness, fight stigma and discrimination, and empower youth to protect themselves. The winning PSA will be streamed on the Staying Alive site - and will be made available to all 26 local MTV web sites - and will be featured on the OneWorld Radio and TV websites. The winner will also receive the Staying Alive 2003 Award, a newly created honour given to an individual each year who makes an important contribution to HIV/AIDS awareness.

#### More information:

<http://aidsradio.oneworld.net/index.php?fuseaction=cms.fullContent&id=2045> Or <http://tv.oneworld.net/tapestry?article=33>  
Contact: Jo Hill, [jo.hill@oneworld.net](mailto:jo.hill@oneworld.net)

### Indian state school teachers trained to contextualise ItrainOnline training material

English is used for all official work in India, but the language is neither the medium of instruction (except in a small minority of elitist schools) nor the medium of communication. Since knowledge of English (or lack of it) underlies the socio-economic divide in the country, the global problem of digital divide is accentuated by the local problem of language divide. It is therefore obvious that any effort to popularise ICT amongst Indian masses must rely on local languages and not on English. As part of the BDO support centre, OneWorld has developed a sustainable answer to this problem by working within ItrainOnline to ensure there is a pool of high quality open source materials which can be translated.

Over the last 8 months OneWorld worked with the women of a Delhi community centre to translate some of these materials. The real test now begins as we field-test the translated materials in 5 workshops with teachers in non-English medium schools. These 5 workshops are essential if the translated material is to reach the lower income sector, as they will ensure the translations are user-friendly rather than scholarly.

A simple illustration may clarify this not-so-simple ground reality. When Hindi was adopted as the national language after Independence, considerable effort was made to encourage its widespread use. This was done through mass media like the radio and later TV. But the very scholarly Hindi employed for the purpose proved counter productive. On the other hand, the Hindi movies hit the nail on the head by using the so-called Hinglish which is a curious mixture that purists neither like nor approve but whose acceptance by the masses cannot, and should not, be ignored.

While the long term impact of ITO, BDO and other ICTs projects may be difficult to measure, the group of teachers in government run schools who are to receive ICT training and the women in the community centre who have been able to use their recently acquired ICT skills to earn an income, make this project - which at times is in the ICT stratosphere - touch the ground.

To view the translated materials:

<http://southasia.oneworld.net/article/view/64342/1/>

To learn more about the community centre that translated the materials: [http://www.cityshelter.org/08\\_itc/ex/06\\_itc\\_ex.htm](http://www.cityshelter.org/08_itc/ex/06_itc_ex.htm)

Contact: Dale Chadwick, [dale.chadwick@oneworld.net](mailto:dale.chadwick@oneworld.net)

## DFID's ICT Knowledge and Research Projects

Each year, DFID's Infrastructure and Urban Development Department issues a call for Knowledge and Research (KaR) project proposals. It is intended that ICT KaR projects lead to a better understanding of the realistic potentials of ICTs and of how such technologies can contribute towards a more suitable pro-poor ICT policy framework. This time we highlight a SME project from ITDG in Kenya and in Bangladesh.

Studies have shown that access to information is a major constraint to small enterprises' growth in many developing countries. Market signals on business opportunities, customer trends and methods of organisation are not communicating themselves effectively to SMEs (Small & Medium-sized Enterprises), who perform better in information-rich environments. Advances in communication technologies have made internet, fax and telephone facilities available in a growing number of towns in developing countries. These modern forms of communication are rarely used as business tools by small enterprises, yet they have the potential to significantly improve poor people's access to business information. Evidence also exists to suggest that SMEs are willing to pay significant sums for relevant information where available. Intermediate Technology Consultants (ITC) developed and implemented a DFID funded KaR project to address these issues in two developing countries.

In Kenya, the existing network of public email/internet access points (Bureaux) led the team work with the existing infrastructure. The main aim of the work by the Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG) East Africa in Kenya is to develop easily accessible and relevant content available on the internet and provide information channels to deliver this information to those who lack it. After systematic gathering of information needs from small enterprises in peri-urban areas in Kenya, a website has been developed for SMEs called Oasis ([www.oasis-info.org](http://www.oasis-info.org)). It was launched this year and includes a wide variety of information on different subjects. Information is continually being collected, formatted and added to the website, by a dedicated website development manager situated in Nairobi.

Although the information is accessible from the website, it is acknowledged that small enterprises do

not visit such places. Interest in the activities at several pilot sites has succeeded in identifying several intermediaries who will be able to access the site and print off pages of interest. They will then sell this to small enterprises for a small charge to cover internet access charges, printing costs, and the intermediaries profit. One of the most innovative aspects of the project is that the information is provided not just in English. The complete site is available in Kiswahili, the most common local language, and there are also audio files that can be downloaded and copied to cassette for those unable to read.

In Bangladesh there is no such widespread coverage of private email/internet businesses. There are however many national and local NGOs who have existing programs throughout the country and a wide membership within the rural populations. Using partnerships already established by ITDG Bangladesh with two of these NGOs we have set up 2 telecentres in peri-urban areas. They are providing email, internet and computer centre services to local NGOs, rural populations and government institutions.

The ability to access the internet and email gives ITDG Bangladesh an easier way in which to distribute and keep up to date its wide variety of income generating activity brochures with these remote centres. Email communication instead of international telephone calls to family members overseas should enable a considerable cost saving for those who often receive money from these sources. Other products such as audio programmes for illiterate entrepreneurs are also being rolled out as the centres become more established in the communities.

For more details please contact Oliver Wakelin ([oliverw@itdg.org.uk](mailto:oliverw@itdg.org.uk)) at ITC, or view the project website at [www.itcltd.com/icts](http://www.itcltd.com/icts)

### About iConnect

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