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**Introducing this issue**

One of the biggest challenges to digital divide 'bridge-builders' is to build and mobilise the capacities that people need to participate effectively in so-called information societies. This has been recognised by the G8's DOT Force in its action point 3 to "enhance human capacity development, knowledge creation and sharing." Here, we focus on capacity issues, highlighting efforts by BDO and other partners in this area.

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**Spending ICT aid resources wisely**

**How do we spend donor money on ICTs wisely? This is a complicated issue that currently generates much international debate and is the subject of dozens of conferences. Michiel Hegener talks to Joan Boer of DGIS.**

It is so complicated, says Joan Boer, second in command at DGIS (the Directorate General for International Development Cooperation at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs), that DGIS prefers a multilateral approach whenever possible. And, he adds, DGIS is not aware of any projects that can't be financed through multilateral channels, through the World Bank, InfoDev and the Global Gateway in particular.

"Minister Herfkens is quite convinced of the importance of ICT", Boer says, "but she is wondering what the added value of bilateral projects can be. ICT isn't a good backdrop for waving national flags."

Boer firmly believes in the use of ICT to provide interactive access to government services, and to enhance education in the broadest sense. A decade or two ago, he saw projects falter because the scattered members of the target group just didn't have the thirty dollars a month needed to subscribe to the magazines through which essential information was being disseminated. "Courtesy of ICT, that hurdle has been crossed", says Boer. "But look at Dutch educational facilities for people from developing countries: By and large, that's still an old fashioned system of courses in buildings."

ICTs clearly offer an alternative - as they do for the equally outdated ways in which DGIS people themselves get and disseminate information. "Congregating and having lengthy meetings is still a widely accepted method", Boer confesses. "Just compare that to all the

electronic networking of the opposition against the last G8 meeting in Genoa. We sure can learn from them."

In the meantime, a new problem is looming. As Boer puts it: "How do we control the quality of the information being made available through the Global Gateway and other portals?"

For DGIS, this is an additional, and a very specific reason to join multilateral projects. The case for multilateral cooperation seems even stronger for hardware and connectivity. Boer doesn't remember favourably the days when twelve donor countries provided villages in one country with twelve different kinds of diesel water pumps. For maintenance and compatibility it's best to channel any telecommunications funding through international bodies. Not even ITU-D - the development branch of the ITU - is sufficiently international, according to Boer. "They could well be party to such efforts, as long as The World Bank acts as the cashier and orchestrates the whole project."

For the time being, the amounts being spent by the Dutch government on ICT via multilateral channels are still modest. According to Boer: "We haven't received any demands for substantial amounts." One project that DGIS is seriously considering however is to "buy a part of the Global Gateway for Africa. We'd also be quite interested in a global trust fund for ICT, managed by the UNDP or The World Bank."

*Joan Boer was interviewed by Michiel Hegener ([mh@nrc.nl](mailto:mh@nrc.nl))*

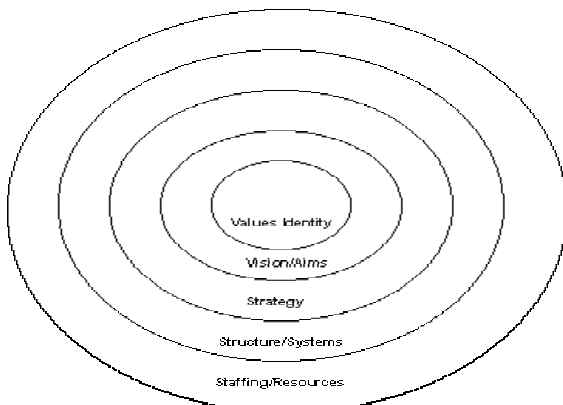
## ICT capacity development issues

There are well known rules of engagement when working with communities. If ICT champions wish to see sustainable programmes and projects, Simon Batchelor suggests that they would do well to consider standard capacity building guidelines.

Building the capacity of a community or local organisation is much more than ensuring it has resources and inputs. 'Capacity Building' has become almost a specialisation in its own right and there is now a recognisable process to capacity building. Much of the literature relevant to capacity building of communities suggests that projects should start the planning process by discussing the values and aims (goal) of the community, not with an inventory of existing and proposed resources.

### Planning with an 'onion'

Defining these values and aims involves participation of the main stakeholders in the planning process. From this, the community can determine a strategy to achieve a medium term objective that contributes to the overall aim. From this strategy flows a structure to get things done, and to this structure can be added resources. This is illustrated by the diagramme below (see also: [www.gamos.demon.co.uk/sustainable/tfoa2/tfoa2.htm](http://www.gamos.demon.co.uk/sustainable/tfoa2/tfoa2.htm)).



It has now been recognised that working from the outside towards the centre is a recipe for unsustainable programmes. Programmes that consider local capacity start at the centre and plan outwards.

Yet it seems that many ICT programmes and projects start at the outer edge of the 'onion', and with an acknowledged general need for information and communication, outside agencies put in significant resources. After a few months or years, the structure and strategy are reassessed and either the initiative makes major changes, another external set of resources are added to keep it going, or its gradual demise is accepted.

How then can we build local capacity for development? It is not a question of applying information – but applying knowledge to development.

### ICTs and the 'onion'

Consider the first, central, question on values. Any community has its own set of values. Commonality is often built around language (audio, written and visual). This brings us to the first common issue of capacity building. Some of the most successful developments of

local content and capacity building surround local radio. Why? – because it is relatively easy to develop material in local language, and it is not solely the written word.

The second set of questions surrounds the aims of the community. Surprisingly few projects actually start by asking the community what their hopes and aspirations are. Those involved with ICTs would do well to learn from other sectors such as water and agriculture. Initially these activities were treated as isolated sectors. But some years ago, development actors promoted integrated rural development.

However integrated, rural development was still mainly concerned with the physical resources of people. It neglected the human and social assets of communities, and the latest incarnation of development theory is the sustainable livelihoods framework – which encourages planning to take into account the 'vulnerability context' of a community. The onion diagramme also accepts that the community is part of a context that will influence the possible strategies.

Space does not permit detailed discussion of all the capacity building issues surrounding structure, but let me mention a few:

- Community members who have their personal skills developed by the project often then find lucrative jobs in nearby cities. A big issue for building the capacity of a community is how to keep its human resources in the community.
- Women often have informal and voluntary community management roles in a community and it is often difficult to get women involved formally in what is initially perceived as a technical project.
- The social capital of the community may be enhanced or disturbed by an ICT project. Programmes need to consider if they are reinforcing existing power structures or empowering people.
- There is a big difference between information and knowledge. For information to become useful, ICT projects need to have environments that encourage adult learning – e.g. peer group learning and accessibility.
- Poor communities do not have many financial assets, so a community ICT project needs to be a workable livelihood strategy including opportunities to draw finance into the community.

By starting from the centre of the model, with the values and aims of the community, ICT components can be targeted and focussed. The development of local capacity will vary depending on the resulting strategy and structure. As we move to the outer rim, the identification of required resources (including training and skill upgrading needs) will be a more natural part of the planning process.

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More: [www.capacity.org/ict/](http://www.capacity.org/ict/)

## ICTs help to empower women in poor areas

**Overcoming poverty means giving women confidence to speak out and be heard. Maggie Foster reports on a DFID-funded research project in which ITDG asked women in Kenya, Zimbabwe and Peru how they thought they could get their views across to policy makers, and what it was that they had to say.**

Women more than men have to balance the complexities of survival in extreme poverty. Yet these women are excluded from discussions because they are often illiterate, lack confidence and lack mobility. So it is vital that poor women speak out and overcome the cultural and gender barriers to their use of technology.

### **Video stories from Kenya**

This case focuses on two women's groups from the huge slums that surround Nairobi. Communities in both areas are threatened by frustrated landowners anxious to claim land. Water, sanitation, drainage and electricity are scarce. Violent crime, drugs, alcohol, HIV/AIDS and unemployment seriously afflict the areas.

The women in the Redeemed Village group are mostly over 60, the younger group is from the Mathare 3B community. In the project, the women used old, borrowed, Betamax cameras to tell their stories. For four days they learnt scripting, shooting and editing.

The two Kenyan groups both agree that tenure insecurity is their overwhelming concern, followed by the appalling infrastructure they live with and the health related risks. HIV/AIDS, the number of orphans and the plight of elderly grandparents was discussed and the scarcity of

men within their communities. Young men and boys are most affected by alcohol, drugs and crime.

The women were very proud of their videos, which were shown on national TV, they were featured on current affairs programmes and in the national press. Their families and neighbours admire their new skills and now respect their views.

The groups organised and hosted a grand 'launch' of their videos. The invited audience included government ministers, the director of housing, MPs, donors, NGOs, academic and women's groups from other parts of Kenya. Using their video achievement to bolster confidence, the women talked directly to the policy makers in a moving presentation.

The empowerment of the individual women within the groups has built the community's capacity to develop. It is the women's access to important information, their social contacts, family authority and their wealth of relevant knowledge which is the foundation stone for family and community empowerment.

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## Crossing ICT capacity gaps

**Poverty is characterised by the 'lack of empowerment' of poor people and a 'lack of voice' by which they can highlight their needs, rights and injustices. Clare O'Farrell calls for a more holistic approach to community capacity development.**

Through 'non-connection' to appropriate information channels, the poor remain unheard and unable to shift the barriers that keep them poor. These barriers are not just about access to relevant and timely information. The poor also often lack the capacities and negotiation skills to engage with formal institutions and to make use of effective media channels.

### **Understanding existing information flows**

The assumption underpinning the research is that we need to have a clearer understanding of the existing information and communication systems within rural communities before intervening with new systems. Further, it was expected that projects would benefit from a more inclusive and participatory approach to planning and implementing ICTs related projects with communities. The research concluded that: "the capacity to seek out, call upon and negotiate with support organisations is as much a part of accessing new information as the introduction of technologies."

The internal information flow between people and community based organisations (CBOs) tends to be strong within the community but the capacity for these CBOs to communicate and obtain accurate information from external sources of information can generally be described as 'weak'. They suffer from capacity 'gaps':

- Community based organisations have limited knowledge of, and means to call upon, external supporting organisations.
- Communities lack capacities to negotiate and set the agenda for training programmes and interventions with support organisations.
- Supporting organisations also face capability gaps.

### **Bridging capacity gaps**

Starting with the communities themselves we can learn from existing community self-help groups. They have usually overcome the issue of trust within their membership and have leaders who can mediate between the group and external organisations. We could strengthen these local organisations. More engagement with local support organisations in neutral settings may be required. Holding multi-stakeholder workshops may be one way to kickstart these relationships. For external agents, support is needed to develop skilled local information providers and producers of appropriate content.

It is essential that as much attention is paid to the relationships between communities and support organisations as is given to the ICTs themselves.

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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 DFID and DGIS, 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. Its 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 ONEWORLD

### OneWorld to launch Internet TV initiative

OneWorld International is developing its use of video on the Internet - in the belief that it represents a powerful and largely unrealized tool to raise the impact of organisations working on human rights and sustainable development.

#### *Open documentaries*

People are increasingly turning to the web for news. Interactive audio and video elements are proving more and more popular. 550 Million people have downloaded free media player software such as Real Player, Quicktime and Windows Media. The key to increased demand for video on the web is broadband. It is predicted that, by 2004, broadband users will exceed 80 million worldwide.

#### *Open Documentary: The idea*

A departure from traditional TV programmes, Open Documentary will deconstruct stories into 30-second clips of raw footage. Each fragment will be a piece of evidence, a testimony, an opinion. These clips will be linked together in simple storyline sequences. At the end of each clip, a series of questions will be presented to the viewer. By choosing a path of enquiry, the viewer can navigate through the clips, choosing which storylines to follow, engaging in an interactive exploration through a matrix of interwoven narratives.

#### *The stories*

The stories will cluster around core themes such as climate change, conflict, debt, AIDS, community, human rights etc. The first releases of Open Documentary stories will include:

- Israeli and Palestinian video diaries
- Climate Change - collecting evidence
- AIDS - a global perspective
- Indigenous Communities - challenging stereotypes
- Youth Forum - a global exchange
- Earth Summit 2002 - a collaborative documentary

#### *A global community*

The interactive nature of Open Documentary will enable the creation of a web video community both producing and watching the stories. The technical capacity needed to access video online largely restricts the audience to Northern countries. To counter balance this digital divide, Open Documentary will be a place for Southern voices to articulate their own stories, agendas and perspectives to audiences that they would not otherwise reach.

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### Using audio to change our world

OneWorld International will launch OneWorld Radio in early 2002 to harness the power of both old and new media to promote sustainable development and human rights. OneWorld Radio will be a new portal offering services and features for broadcasters and NGOs with a focus of promoting the free exchange of programmes with development-related content between radio stations across the globe.

OneWorld is encouraging broadcasters to join this community now and to begin supplying programmes and information for a critical mass of content to be available online for the public launch.

The core of the new portal is an audio exchange database to which broadcasters can upload their programmes and audio clips. These will be available for online listening and for other OneWorld Radio members to download and use for re-broadcast.

OneWorld Radio will also be a gateway to a wide range of other radio databases, providing links to broadcaster networks and to other radio exchange projects.

Community building is a central aspect of OneWorld Radio. It will provide audio providers, from journalists and producers to NGOs and radio stations, with a place to meet together online to share information and to network with one another.

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## NEWS FROM IICD

### **Social entrepreneurship at CGE&Y: e-business in developing countries**

Cap Gemini Ernst & Young (CGE&Y) recently illustrated its partnership with IICD on the company's intranet 'Oxygen'.

"In the past few weeks we have noticed that many colleagues enjoy a change of scenery. Instead of sitting in an office in The Hague, they are more than willing to share their knowledge in a totally different environment; in a developing country. In a recent announcement on CGE&Y's intranet, consultants were asked to assist in a couple of e-business projects in Jamaica, Ghana and Burkina Faso. The results were astonishing: We received more than a hundred CV's!

Almost a year ago CGE&Y signed a Memorandum of Understanding with IICD in which agreements were made to partner in several areas. IICD is an independent not-for-profit organisation established and co-financed by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, DGIS. Resulting from the partnership, three CGE&Y colleagues travelled to Jamaica, Ghana and Burkina Faso to assist a number of local e-business project partners.

#### **The projects**

Resulting from the MoU and under the guidance of our colleague Andre de Meulder, CGE&Y organised a workshop for five project groups from Jamaica, Ghana, Tanzania and Burkina Faso in February 2001. The main goal of the workshop was to enable the projects to move forward on the basis of a concrete plan of action. This resulted in four projects handing in a plan of action. We are going to assist them to start and implement these plans.

#### **Jamaica**

The first project is the most swinging one. It deals with further developing an e-commerce website for the marketing and sale of Caribbean music. Caribbeat produces and sells Caribbean music. The site has to be improved, and in the back office several functions have to be developed. Furthermore, marketing and media activities need to be developed.

The second project in Jamaica – Central and Satellite Agricultural Information Centre – deals with the provision of production and marketing information to farmers. We are advising on the possibilities to improve the gathering, production and dissemination of information through e-business.

#### **Burkina Faso**

The Federation of Agro-Industrial Enterprises in Burkina Faso is an organisation that is engaged in agricultural and industrial products. We will assist this organisation on developing a website to support this process.

#### **Ghana**

In Ghana we are going to assist the Ministry of Agriculture develop a website for the production and sales of non-traditional export products. Dissemination of adequate and timely information among local farmers is essential, in addition to offering a sales channel to farmers."

## NEWS FROM CTO

### **Strengthening local ICT regulatory capacities**

Capacity building is one of the most effective ways in which partners in the BDO programme can work with developing country partners to enhance the delivery of ICTs and the development benefits derived from them. David Souter introduces CTO work in this area.

#### **The CTO approach**

First aim in capacity building is to enhance the capability of local institutions to fulfil their objectives effectively. Capacity building initiatives therefore have a number of different components, including partnership in:

- the development and support of local or regional training institutions and their staff;
- the design and delivery of in-country training programmes;
- the organisation of specialist workshops, seminars and conferences focused on generic skills or on specific issues of importance in individual countries or regions;
- the upgrading of specialist skills in (for example) regulatory or technical aspects of ICT development and delivery;
- the sharing of experience and expertise between different regions and different countries, particularly on issues such as effective ways of enabling access to ICTs by the poor and disadvantaged and the exploitation of ICTs to achieve development goals in areas such as health and education;
- the provision of specialist consultancy expertise;
- and access, where necessary, to specialist training out of country.

The CTO leads BDO work on building capacity in policymaking and regulation for ICTs. Its BDO work over the next three years is focused in six main areas:

- capacity building for new regulatory institutions and regional regulatory partnerships;
- organisation of workshops for key policy-makers;
- support for the development of effective strategies for e-commerce and e-governance;
- support for the development of national and regional ICT strategies;
- capacity building for institutions, such as consumer bodies, which support access to ICTs;
- sharing of experience between developing countries.

The aim is to promote access to ICTs for the poor and disadvantaged within LDCs and other low-income countries.

The CTO's capacity building work for BDO builds on fifteen years of experience in capacity building work in ICTs. The CTO's Programme for Development and Training delivers between 150 and 200 bilateral capacity building projects each year, in some 30 developing countries, covering the whole range of telecommunications and ICT issues from technology to regulation, access development to consumer relations.

Contact: [info@cto.int](mailto:info@cto.int) or [www.cto.int](http://www.cto.int)



## CTO Business Guide to ICTs on CD-ROM

Produced by the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO), this handy CD-ROM is a useful place to begin your search for information on the digital divide. Related content is also available on the web at [www.cto-ict.org](http://www.cto-ict.org).

To request a free copy, send an email to: [info@cto-ict.org](mailto:info@cto-ict.org)  
Or write to: Isabel Stewart at CTO, 26-27 Oxenden Street, London SW1Y 4EL, United Kingdom.

### NEWS FROM DFID

#### Imfundo launches ICTs for education database

Find out who's doing what with ICTs in education in Africa. A new database from the DFID-funded Imfundo project lists ICT activities and organisations.

As part of its aim to establish the scope for the use of ICTs in improving education in developing countries, Imfundo supports various knowledge sharing activities.

As well as the database of activities, several analytical papers are available to download, discussion is facilitated, and evaluative summaries are disseminated.

#### Imfundo database:

<http://www.imfundo.org/kb/kbhome.asp>

#### Imfundo knowledgeBank:

<http://www.imfundo.org/knowledge/articles.htm>

### NEWS FROM PANOS

#### ICTs in Southern Africa

Panos Southern Africa asks whether new media technology can revolutionise the sub-region's development process.

#### *Into or out of the Digital Divide?*

In a collection of analytical articles and cases from Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia, Zanzibar and Zimbabwe, the authors examine the state of the art and set out issues that still need to be addressed.

#### More information:

<http://www.panos.org.zm/Into%20the%20Void.htm>

### In the Pipeline

#### National IT policy summit held in Ghana

On the 11th and 12th of September, a National IT Policy Summit was held in Accra, Ghana. The government of Ghana is developing a comprehensive IT policy for the country, a process supported by IICD as part of its Ghana Country Programme.

Although Information Technology can be used to enhance government operations in Ghana and boost the economy, several factors have hindered the effective utilisation of this new technology.

In order to adopt ICT in the operation of government machinery to improve productivity, and assist government officials in decision-making, there is the need for a national IT Policy to coordinate, promote and supervise the implementation and use of ICT in Government organisations.

#### *IT Policy Framework*

During the Summit, participants agreed to a macro-level National Information Technology Policy Framework document as a basis for moving forward with IT for Ghana's development. The vision described in the document is to move Ghana into a middle level income country by the year 2010, with a minimum 8% GDP. The mission is to use Information Technology optimally to maximise national efforts, and increase efficiency.

A special committee has been instituted, which is engaged in the following activities:

1. The publication and dissemination of the policy document.
2. The creation of public awareness on the functionalities of IT and its uses in national development and to support sustainable educational programmes on IT on TV, radio, Internet and the print media.
3. The advocacy and publicising of new e-services like tele-medicine, e-commerce, distance learning etc.
4. The creation and development of a Model Technology Village. This village will form the nucleus of an Information Technology industry to include:
  - a) serviced manufacturing facilities with Free Zone status
  - b) training centres for engineering, telecom and IT-related course
  - c) West African regional centre of excellence for IT
5. The development of linkages services that will enable the general public to access e-services and facilities through tele-centres and community-based service points.
6. The organisation of special IT outreach programmes.

Since this process is closely linked to many of the local projects that IICD has supported in Ghana since 1998, IICD was pleased to also support this process, through its local partner Mr. Addo Dankwa from the Ghana Ministry of Food and Agriculture.

**More information:**

<http://govt.ghana.gov.gh/story.asp?ID=68>

## **Digital Partnership to support e-learning in South Africa**

In 2002, the Digital Partnership will launch a pilot Internet and ICT support programme to support schools and communities in South Africa. The partnership will be implemented through the establishment of 'E-Learning Centres' with Internet links, software and content, and ICT instructional support to schools, teacher training centres and social enterprise projects.

### ***The South Africa pilot***

The South Africa pilot project will be delivered in two stages. A pre-pilot in January 2002 will establish some 20 E-Learning Centres in schools and enterprise settings, providing 1,000 refurbished PCs, and training 60-80 'master facilitators' as well as 20-24 network assistants. The pre-pilot will set up and test the requirements for a full scale pilot. The Digital Partnership South Africa pilot initiative will have the following components:

Major global corporations will donate 3-4 year old and data wiped Pentium grade PCs. The stock will be consolidated and shipped in containers, with land and shipping rates negotiated to near zero, using surplus route capacity to Cape Town. Refurbishment, software loading and packing will be undertaken by a national PC technology supply agent in Cape Town, using subsidised job-training labour under and an existing license with the South African Government to import pre-used PCs.

E-Learning Centres will be established in target schools and colleges. Each centre will have around 30 PCs deployed with secure storage, power, and phone, Internet links and a CD writer/storage unit. Negotiations are being undertaken to reduce the costs of phone and Internet connections. A 'Basic ICT Skills Passport' certification programme will be offered.

Educators will be trained as ICT Master Facilitators through a Digital Partnership Resource and Learning Centre for ICT use and curriculum integration.

Developed with Intel, Vodacom, and national educational authorities, the aim is to train 200 'Master Facilitators' in 'sentinel' schools and colleges and community centres, who in turn can train several thousand e-facilitators and principals over 2 years. Unqualified high potential youth 'ICT Assistants' will be trained for each school, college or community centre.

Additional technical mentoring will be mobilised through a national corporate volunteer 'Digital Partnership Tech Corps'.

Finally, support will be provided to enable the E-Learning Centres to be used for open community access. This will generate a modest revenue stream to help finance phone lines and IT replacement.

The Digital Partnership is an initiative of The Prince of Wales International Business Leaders Forum (IBLF), a UK based international charity. The national Managing Agent for the Digital Partnership South Africa Pilot is the National Business Initiative (NBI), a well established South African non-profit organisation supported by leading South African companies and the Government.

**More information:** [info@digitalpartnership.org](mailto:info@digitalpartnership.org) or [www.iblf.org/digitalpartnership](http://www.iblf.org/digitalpartnership)

## **Building national information portals**

Building local information gateways requires effective partnerships as well as sustainable business models. Lessons from projects to build national 'country gateways' have been melded into best practices.

### ***Experience so far***

As part of a 'Development Gateway,' independent country gateways in up to 50 countries are being set up. They share a commitment to exchange knowledge within the structure of the Development Gateway, and to use information technologies for development objectives.

A recent 'handbook' draws on the experience so far, presenting lessons and best practices on partnership building, governance, business planning, prototype development and project management.

### ***Some lessons***

Country gateway projects are most successful when partnership-building activities embrace all the sectors of economy and society and target the widest audiences. The support of the government is particularly important to the success of the project.

Content partnerships can be developed through workshops and individual meetings using the already developed technology solutions.

The discrepancies in the level of technological development and understanding of e-development of various organisations make it difficult to establish content and technology partnerships.

Profitability becomes the major motivation for parties participating in a partnership arrangement and this often hinders the establishing of new and innovative partnerships. Competition becomes an obstacle as organisations might be involved in similar work and might have similar aims and overlapping activities.

It is necessary to develop a partnership strategy for each specific partner group and to learn in great detail the needs of each community and try to satisfy these needs for successful partnership relations.

**More:** [www.developmentgateway.org/CountryGateways](http://www.developmentgateway.org/CountryGateways)

**On the Research agenda**

**Exploring the demand for telecom services**

One of the key issues in promoting access to telephony and the Internet in Africa is the need for information about how new services are likely to be used by consumers - both citizens and small businesses. A Gamos/CTO research project seeks to explore market demand in three African countries.

**The research**

Regulators, telecoms operating companies and ISPs all need to predict how quickly and extensively services are likely to develop if they are to establish viable access targets and network or service delivery schedules. Very little research has been done to date in Africa on this key issue of market demand for telecommunications services. That is changing, with the start of a research project to be undertaken by Gamos, in conjunction with the CTO, under DFID's Knowledge and Research (KaR) programme.

Gamos and the CTO have been commissioned to study the use made of telecoms access, telephony and Internet in newly-served areas in three African countries: Botswana, Ghana and Uganda. The study, which will include extensive field research, is being undertaken in partnership with the telecoms regulators and with research institutes in all three countries. The research work will be focused in 2002, and will culminate in reports for each participating country and a series of stakeholder seminars at which the research findings will be disseminated and discussed.

**More information:**

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**ICTs in vocational and educational training**

Big World and Gamos are working with NGOs in East Africa to investigate how they can use ICTs to support vocational training programmes in areas like carpentry, tailoring, metal working, and handicrafts. A central theme is to enhance existing curricula.

**The research**

One area where modern ICTs offer most potential in development is in networking. Independent vocational training centres are just one of many types of organisations that stand to benefit from the ability to share information and experiences cheaply and quickly. DFID has recently commissioned Big World and Gamos to work with NGOs in East Africa to investigate how ICTs can be used to support their existing vocational training programmes.

The project will look at the needs, resources, and operation of different vocational training centres. Networking will help strengthen institutions in both their core activities and management. Centres will be able to share locally generated content, including ideas on products and teaching methods. Managers will benefit from improved information and from the sharing of ideas and experiences.

The project collaborators include a well established technical training centre in a capital city, a small centre providing basic skills to orphan children in a rural town, and a women's training centre. By working with these different NGOs the project will gain a broad understanding of the issues involved, and look for ways in which ICTs can help them achieve their goals.

**More information:**

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**About *iConnect***

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