



Issue 9, July 2003

Introducing this issue:

The Building Digital Opportunities programme has moved in to its third year of existence. In this issue of iConnect offline we highlight the activities of the BDO partner activities and the results achieved to date. And BDO has found a new partner in CIDA, which joins the programme as the 4th bilateral development agency. CATIA is a new multi-stakeholder initiative to improve access to the full range of ICTs in Africa. Read all about it in this issue of iConnect.

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CIDA joins the Building Digital Opportunities (BDO) programme

By joining the BDO programme, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the other bilateral development agencies - DGIS, DFID and SDC - strengthen their effort to coordinate donor resources in support of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for development. One of the reasons for CIDA's interest in joining the programme is the BDO Learning Study that takes place this summer. The study has the objective to review the impact on poverty of the activities undertaken by the BDO implementing agencies in three African countries.

As a BDO stakeholder, CIDA takes part in the sharing of ICT enabled development results and knowledge within the partnership. Along these lines, CIDA will co-finance the BDO Learning Study taking place this summer. This study will map BDO implementing partners' experience with ICTs and poverty reduction. The emphasis will be on qualitative information, with key findings exemplified by illustrative short stories. The information gathered will improve the understanding of the role of ICTs in poverty reduction and will be used to adapt operations accordingly.

The study is significant in the field of ICTs for development and the results will be extensively disseminated at WSIS and among local DFID, DGIS, SDC and CIDA desks in countries. It is worthwhile noting that a poverty expert will be overseeing the study and the framework, while African consultants will be approached for national reviews.

For CIDA the emphasis is not on the learning alone, but learning grounded in grassroots development through ICTs. As such, CIDA will be supporting the International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD) in their Burkina Faso Country Programme, by supporting a Roundtable workshop in rural development.

This process is to lay the groundwork for local stakeholders to identify development projects making use of Information and Communication Technologies.

These locally-owned and operated projects shall help set the stage for impact and learning as the full IICD Roundtable process unfolds.

CIDA and IICD crossed paths quite some time ago in the context of the Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) Executive Committee (ExCom). Over the years, the dialogue between the two organisations has strengthened in intensity. The fruit of these talks has now been harvested in this formal agreement to work together at a strategic level.

The 'Building Digital Opportunities' agreement between DFID, DGIS and SDC has played a strong role in bringing this dialogue to a real collaboration in clearly identified programmes. By joining the BDO partnership - through this agreement with IICD - CIDA and the other bilateral development agencies strengthen their effort to coordinate donor resources in support of ICTs for development.

Not only will the implementing partners be able to achieve more activities on the ground, but equally important will be the improved ability for all BDO stakeholders to learn and share learning among a broader set of policymakers and stakeholders.

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AMARC on the move: from BDO to CATIA

After 2 years of being part of the Building Digital Opportunities Programme (BDO) the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) joins the CATIA - Catalysing access to ICTs in Africa - programme. In this article AMARC looks back at the achievements made within the BDO programme, and looks forward on how this will be taken further in CATIA.

AMARC Africa is part of an international community radio movement which promotes popular communication through the development of community radio in Africa as a tool for social change.

Roles and Objectives

With the goal of bridging the digital divide, AMARC Africa's strategic contribution within the BDO programme is to accelerate the adaptation of the community radio sector to the new digital technologies and to develop community radio as a means by which the poorest communities can influence, engage with and benefit from the changes being brought about by these new technologies.

To reach these objectives AMARC Africa undertakes a range of activities: awareness raising seminars and workshops, providing examples of best practices of digital technologies in CR, training of CR practitioners, research and advocacy for legislative reform, development and distribution of a digital radio toolkit, development of a central radio exchange internet site for CR, establishment of a thematic text/audio service, supplying equipment and technical support, increasing networking and information dissemination for CR stations across Africa and training for content production.

Major Outputs

The activities undertaken have resulted in different forms of output in several areas.

Training

Seven training sessions were conducted on the basic use of ICTs. An ICTs curriculum was developed and is available on line at the manuals section under www.africa.amarc.org/training. Three sessions on content production were delivered on Food Security and Human Rights. In total 45 broadcasters were trained on information gathering and thematic production.

Radio Campaigns

On March 21st, an United Nations anti-racism day, AMARC produced its third global anti-discrimination broadcast. The main theme for this year's broadcast was "Promote Peace ... Combat Racism", focusing on the threat of war against Iraq and post-war scenarios around the world as they relate to racism and discrimination.

Additionally, the Africa region decided to focus on the sub-theme "Information Now!" which dealt with the Information Society and information rights. These programmes were collected and broadcast by community radio broadcasters who attended the World Summit on the Information Society prep-com in Geneva in February.

The broadcast was produced in English, French and Portuguese, broadcast through the internet and on Channel Africa, a continent-wide shortwave broadcaster.

AMARC Africa has a tradition of conducting radio campaigns for information dissemination and networking among members. The previous broadcast during the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) brought together 30 community radio broadcasters to produce a broadcast on the proceedings. The project gave community radio listeners around the world access to accurate and people-focused information on the issues and events at the WSSD. The broadcast was distributed by 35 community radio stations in Africa, one station in Australia and Austria and by the Latin America news service ALER.

Some of the audiences had not been aware that in the previous World Summit in Rio, ten years earlier, their governments had made commitments that local government would consult with communities to draw up a plan for the sustainable development of the community. Information dissemination on these issues has thus brought about a process of accountability and enabled communities to make informed contributions about their development.

The next broadcast will be on World Food Day, 16 October 2003, and the theme is "Campaign Against Hunger".

Advocacy for Legislative Reform

AMARC Africa has established an advocacy platform in collaboration with the Media Institute for Southern Africa (MISA), Article 19 and Southern Africa Communication for Development (SACOD). The partnership put together a blueprint for broadcasting policy framework in Africa called the "African Charter on Broadcasting". The charter was launched in May 2002.

Furthermore AMARC Africa has participated in several awareness-raising and lobbying fora:

- Meeting held in Johannesburg for RIAC, the Africa regulatory bodies network, to represent about the Africa Charter on Broadcasting. Some of the countries represented are those in which AMARC members are having difficulty obtaining licenses for setting up community radio stations. As a result of this lobbying, AMARC Africa has been invited by the Benin communications regulator to work on a proposal to revise the statutes concerning state-owned rural and local radio. The proposal will advise on how to integrate these radio stations into the existing media policy.
- As part of the Swaziland Advocacy on the licensing process, AMARC Africa works with the only community radio station in that country to secure a special broadcasting license.
- AMARC Africa successfully lobbies Senegalese government to allocate eight frequencies to community radio stations.
- An awareness workshop was held in Ethiopia about community radio in the Horn of Africa.

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Panos and radio in the BDO

On average, every household in Africa has a radio. No wonder development organisations have a big interest in the potential of this medium. But figures on radio possession do not show the changes taking place with regard to poor people's access to information and to having a voice in society. When the BDO was first developed, Panos built its strategy for achieving change through radio.

In the studios of TransWorld Radio in Nairobi, Maria Wanza is producing her magazine show, *Challenge Africa*. We listen in as she edits on the computer, and it's obvious the programme will be a lively fast-paced blend of music, news and features. *Challenge Africa* is aimed at farmers in Kenya, but the news review begins with an item about rural communities in Nepal. Maria tells us she's always on the internet looking for stories that are relevant to her audience.

In neighbouring Uganda, Angelo Izama is a senior producer at Monitor FM, and in charge of one of Uganda's most controversial programmes, *Andrew Mwenda Live*. He describes an on-air incident that highlights radio's role, not just in disseminating information, but also in generating dialogue and change. "The largest coffee investment company in the country say they're not getting enough coffee plantlets to plant. They petition the Agriculture Ministry to allow them to get a tissue culture of plantlets from France. The idea was to clone our coffee, take that gene to France and reproduce it en masse for our farms. There was a huge fight over it, and right at the radio station we had the Minister of Finance and his resource people, the Ugandan stakeholders and a gentleman from Koweri, negotiating on air."

Commercial radio for public interest

Monitor FM is an example of how, at its best, commercial radio can play a vital public interest role. Angelo says that audiences want this. They also want stories from outside Uganda, of the sort that InterWorld Radio provides. At the moment there are often connectivity problems, but this is changing: "I don't think the multitude of radio stations that need alternative programming have taken advantage of resources on the internet – and that time is coming. There's a lull in time between when they make that realisation and actually when they have access and can get these bits in to their programming."

TWR and Monitor FM are two of a growing number of radio stations in Africa using new technologies. TWR's production offices are better equipped than many other stations. But it still only has access to the internet via one 56k modem and has to ship its programmes on CD to Swaziland, from where they are broadcast over SW, MW and FM. Producers at TWR use Cool Edit software to digitally edit programmes on their own PCs, and Maria has a good quality portable minidisk recorder.

TWR is one of 350 radio stations worldwide that have become members of InterWorld Radio, an internet-based news and features service that syndicates short documentary programmes commissioned from journalists in developing countries. The features, no more than five minutes long, can be downloaded and re-broadcast, alone or as part of the stations' own programmes – they are designed to be adaptable and to generate debate and dialogue. They cover internationally relevant issues, with content shaped by

the member stations themselves. The commissioning process is designed to build journalists' capacity.

InterWorld Radio, launched in 2001, is one element of Panos' radio strategy, which has been substantially facilitated by the BDO programme.

Achieving change through radio

On average, every household in Africa has a radio. This striking statistic explains much of the current interest among development organisations in the potential of radio in development. But the statistic masks a complex, rapidly changing picture of shifting access by poor people both to information and to having a voice in society. When the BDO was first developed, Panos built its strategy for achieving change through radio around three key arguments:

First, any discussion of communication technologies and development must be rooted in an analysis of the information needs and capacities of the poor, and should focus on the potential of technologies to provide people with a voice in society, as well as information. In the poorest countries and societies, radio has a compelling comparative advantage in many instances.

Second, radio was undergoing a revolution to which any strategy for achieving change through radio must respond: widespread liberalisation of radio, an upsurge of commercial (mainly FM) stations, a revival of community radio, and a concomitant decline of state-run and shortwave radio. Liberalisation was having contradictory consequences for the public service role of radio. A new profit- and consumer-oriented radio culture was emerging, particularly within the newly dominant FM radio sector. Characterised by fresh vibrancy and interactivity and offering new fora for debate, it was also decreasingly interested in issues of poverty. Because FM stations are mainly aimed at urban audiences, they are also strengthening divisions between rural and urban, poor and rich, in terms of access to radio.

Third, interactions between new and old technologies – for instance, combining the power and interactivity of the internet with the reach of radio, and using telephones for phone-in discussion programmes – created new opportunities for increasing pro-poor radio programming, and for transforming radio from a vertical one-to-many medium into a more interactive, horizontal one.

The Strategy

Panos' strategy reflects these trends. It has five main elements:

- To work in partnership with the emerging FM radio sector in developing countries, using our editorial expertise and creating mechanisms to help this essentially commercial sector to carry pro-poor programmes and generate public debate. Our solution, developed with Oneworld, was *InterWorld Radio*.

- To ensure poor people's voices are heard on radio. For example, in southern Africa, women in rural Radio Clubs work with a producer to make their own radio programmes. They record their discussions on issues that most concern them, the producer then interviews a relevant government official or service provider to respond to their concerns, and the programme is broadcast in their own language on state radio.
- To support public interest radio more generally, including support to community radio organisations, networks of radio stations, and public broadcasters in different countries.
- To engage in policy debate - by working with government, media and civil society partners - to foster awareness of the development potential of pro-poor radio. And by doing so, stimulate policy environments that will encourage pro-poor radio in the challenging context of the liberalisation revolution.
- To develop alliances with other organisations working in this field, particularly AMARC and Oneworld. Panos' involvement in the BDO programme, and now in CATIA, have been crucial in this respect.

Lessons learned

What lessons have we learned about the role of radio in development?

InterWorld Radio is an evolving programme, but some clear lessons have already been drawn by gathering

feedback from member stations and monitoring patterns of downloading:

Stations want stories from their own region – but they also download stories from other countries and continents. Even the most locally-focused FM station wants to be connected to the rest of the world.

Although the barriers to connectivity and technology remain high, especially in parts of Africa, the motivation to get over these problems is higher still.

From the Radio Clubs and similar community-level programme-making initiatives, we have learned that ordinary people can make compelling radio programmes, and the experience generates a high level of debate and action about issues in their communities.

In the area of policy debate, we have learned that organisations like Panos and other BDO partners can play a valuable role in researching broadcasting trends, hosting policy debates and supporting in-country advocacy organisations, to help governments respond effectively to the changing broadcast scene.

Alliances with other BDO partners, and now through CATIA, are important in sharing experience, building coherence, and multiplying impact.

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Thematic Text Audio Service- News Agency

AMARC Africa is preparing for the launch of *Simbani Africa News Agency* in what is a major coup for the grassroots communications sector. Personnel have been recruited for the Agency's central broadcast studio located at AMARC Africa's Johannesburg office. They will be responsible for coordinating all newsgathering and dissemination within the field of community radio in the continent.

The Agency will provide a text-based news service with local content from and for community radios. Fifty-two member radio stations will act as collection centres for news. Thirty-one correspondents have - in preparation for the service - received training on newsgathering, content development and on the use of new technologies. AMARC Africa will continue to provide equipment and technical support to the selected member stations.

The news agency will concentrate on key themes of HIV-AIDS, Food Security, the Environment, Human Rights (focusing on elections and conflict resolution) and Gender and will also use traditional distribution methods via fax and mailing. In cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) a Food Security Information Service will be set up.

Lessons Learned and the Way Forward

Community Radio is beginning to be recognized as an important tool for promoting development and social change.

However, there still remain major impediments to the maturing of this sector; restrictive media policies, access to technology and poor communications infrastructures.

Major lesson learned during this programme is that telecommunication infrastructure is a key barrier to the success of any ICT project meant to support development and poverty reduction in rural Africa.

Training of community radio broadcasters should be a continuous process. On the other hand, it is important to ensure that stations are putting in place mechanisms towards sustainability in order to retain the trained broadcasters for better quality programming.

Awareness raising about the role of community radio should be targeted in all lobbying processes in order to sensitise policy makers for a better recognition of the sector and its social agenda. AMARC Africa should continue to work with partner organisations and governments to create more conducive and enabling media policies and to ensure access to ICTs.

Catalysing access to ICTs in Africa (CATIA) is the way forward to build on the progress made in ensuring the use of ICTs in the community radio sector by investing mainly in infrastructure development and access at a larger scale. CATIA will also look at the policy environment for better recognition of the sector as part of the media pluralism agenda linked to the democratisation process.

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NEWS FROM BDO PARTNERS

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 DFID, DGIS, SDC and 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. 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 AMARC

Publications

In August 2003, AMARC Africa will publish two booklets:

- (i) A Handbook on Community Radio Licensing Procedures in Africa; providing country-by-country guidelines on licensing procedures for Community Radio in all sub-Saharan countries. In addition the handbook gives an overview of the broadcasting environment, the existing ICT infrastructure and useful contact details in these countries.
- (ii) Best Practices in the Use of ICTs in Community Radio (CR); highlighting best and exemplary uses of ICTs in the community radio sector in five CR radio stations Africa. It focuses on issues such as digital production, internet use for research & programme production, telecentres, gender & ICTs as well as the special adaptation (if any) of ICTs to benefit the community.

Training

In preparation for the Community Radio News Agency, Simbani Africa, two courses for the English-speaking countries were implemented at the AMARC Africa training facilities. A third course was implemented by CIERRO in Burkina Faso for the French-speaking countries. All three courses were on content production.

In May, AMARC Africa conducted an in-house training on technical maintenance with Qwa Qwa community radio station in South Africa. The course included trouble-shooting, diagnosis of malfunctions, routine maintenance and implementing studio and technical operations policies.

Radio Campaigns

To commemorate International Press Freedom day on May 3, AMARC Africa distributed an electronic bulletin giving an overview of media freedom as it relates to community radio in several African countries. The report highlighted media violations against community radio broadcasters.

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NEWS FROM CTO

Launch of ICT Development Digital Library

As part of the global celebrations of World Telecommunications Day on 17 May 2003, the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO) launched the ICT Development Digital Library (ICT Dev Library). The library is freely accessible on the Internet at www.ictdevlibrary.org and we would warmly welcome any feedback that you might have as a user.

ICT Dev Library provides access to a unique "one-click" collection of documents related to international Information and Communication Technology policy and regulatory issues. The aim of ICT Dev Library is to give users a simple way of gaining direct and immediate access to relevant documents. It does so by addressing several key factors restricting the ability of stakeholders in developing countries from accessing material important to their participation in ICT decision-making processes.

At its launch, the library contains documents published by over 30 leading organisations. We continue to add documents to the library, and welcome requests from partner organisations wishing to make their documents available through the ICT Dev Library as a supplementary distribution channel for reports, papers and other documents.

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Louder Voices: Summary & Report of the CTO/Panos Study

International decisions about information and communications technologies (ICTs) have far-reaching implications for developing countries. Yet developing countries are poorly represented when agendas are set and decisions made.

At its Genoa Summit in 2001, the G8 asked its Digital Opportunities Task Force (DOT Force) to draw up proposals to promote more effective universal participation in international ICT decision-making.

The results and recommendations of this study (Executive Summary, Full Report and Case Studies) can be found on www.cto.int

Further information can be obtained from the CTO on +44 (0)20 7839 1381 or at info@cto.int

NEWS FROM IICD

Winners announced for GenARDIS Small Grants Fund

GenARDIS small grants fund was initiated by CTA, IICD and IDRC, to support work on gender issues in ICTs in ACP agricultural and rural development. The fund supporters are pleased to announce that the selection of GenARDIS grant winners has been completed. The overwhelming response of more than 360 submissions provides a clear indication that there is a real need for support in the field of Gender and Agriculture in the Information Society.

The fund provides an opportunity for organisations in ACP countries to strengthen gender-related work on ICTs in agriculture and rural development. The programme was developed in recognition of the constraints and challenges encountered by rural women in ACP countries with respect to ICTs.

The challenges include limited time availability to participate in training and use of ICTs, minimal access to technology such as radios, mobile telephones or computers, and inadequate availability of information in local languages that is relevant to local contexts.

Submissions consisted of research programmes, small projects, publications, broadcasts, theatre productions, promotion materials, etc. – whatever need could be addressed by the means available to the many creative applicants for the grant. All projects focused on innovative use of ICTs by or for rural women to improve the well-being of their families and communities.

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Read the full article: <http://www.icconnect-online.org/>

The ICT Stories 2003 Competition - Tony Zeitoun Awards has started!

In 1998, *infoDev* and IICD acknowledged how important experiences and lessons learned are in the field of ICTs for development and they partnered to support the ICT Stories Project. To kick-off ICT Stories and to motivate story owners to share their knowledge, *infoDev* and IICD launched an annual competition.

Knowledge is generated throughout the entire course of a project. The ICT Stories objective is to capture the learning process that accompanies the introduction and implementation of ICTs in a project in exemplary stories. These stories describe good practices and lessons learned from contributors' experiences. The collected stories are stored in a database on a joint website (www.iicd.org/stories) and available to anybody interested in projects with ICT components.

GKP

This year the Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) joins *infoDev* and IICD to support ICT Stories. The added value brought in by the GKP will be to:

- Expand the input and dissemination channels through bringing their network to the project;
- Realise a publication on ICT Stories;
- Introduce a significant financial prize for the winner of the Tony Zeitoun Awards; an award for a project most contributing to poverty alleviation.

Tony Zeitoun Awards

As a tribute to the late Tony Zeitoun from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the awards for the ICT Stories competition will become known as the 'Tony Zeitoun Awards'. Mr. Zeitoun passed away on May 5, 2003. Tony Zeitoun was a tireless and effective advocate of the role of ICTs as tools for the development process and he strongly supported the ICT Stories Competition.

Please visit our website for more information and the submit form to enter the competition. The deadline to submit your story is September 26, 2003.

Contact: stories@iicd.org

More information: www.iicd.org/stories/

ICTs in African Schools workshop, Botswana, summary report

For the first time, African schoolnet practitioners involved in the grassroots application of ICTs in schools, engaged with policymaker counterparts from several Ministries of Education.

Together with partners, IICD supported and co-organised a workshop on ICTs in African Schools in Gaborone, Botswana from 27 April to 2 May. Participants discussed experiences, shared ideas, and explored policy implications. This event represents a milestone in the history of school networking in Africa. Read more about the workshop in the summary report that can be downloaded from: www.icconnect-online.org/

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Keeping watch on prison conditions

The latest in a series of ICT case studies by IICD and Bridges.org examines the use of an online system to support independent monitoring of prison conditions in South Africa. In 1998 the South African Government established a Judicial Inspectorate of Prisons (JIP) to inspect and report on the treatment of prisoners and conditions in prisons. JIP developed a password protected, online system that enables the JIP office, its dispersed prison visitors, and prison managers to remotely upload information onto a central database and exchange messages with each other.

This case study is part of a series developed by IICD and Bridges.org to help in the search for innovative and effective uses of ICTs at ground level and to disseminate objective information about them in a comparable and user-friendly format.

Read the case:

www.bridges.org/iicd_casestudies/prison_reporting/

NEWS FROM ONEWORLD

Southern-based online volunteers edit guides for OneWorld portal

As part a strategy to increase the proportion of content sourced from the developing world in its mainstream portal www.oneworld.net, OneWorld has introduced a range of Country Guides edited by local online volunteers. The Guides aim to provide a broad introduction to human rights and sustainable development issues in each country, constructed by a unique combination of appropriate content from the OneWorld global partner community and selection by a local volunteer editor.

The initial range of 7 English language Country Guides can be accessed from the In Depth section of the portal at www.oneworld.net/article/frontpage/7/301 or a specific example of the Colombia Guide is at www.oneworld.net/article/frontpage/229/3906. A limited number of Specialist Topic Guides will also be produced, the initial examples being Water and Sanitation, and Capacity Building.

Editors of Country Guides are expected to demonstrate knowledge of country affairs from the OneWorld development perspective, but they do not necessarily work in the NGO sector. The occupational profile is so far mixed; there is a lawyer in the Philippines, a doctor in Pakistan, one or two civil servants, new graduates, IT workers, and a handful who work for NGO's.

Editorial assistance is provided by a team of Regional Coordinators based in OneWorld's offices in India, Zambia, and Costa Rica. Countries already represented in the editorial team include Vietnam and Indonesia, Pakistan and Bangladesh, Kenya and Uganda, Colombia and Mexico.

The total number of Guides scheduled for launch over the next 9 months is 40-50 and 25 volunteer editors had been recruited by the end of June. Recruitment administration is facilitated by the NetAid online tool managed by UN Volunteers at www.netaid.org/ov.

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BDO: Collaboration in the Spotlight

Few would disagree that collaboration and cooperation are fundamental to successful development practice – and the Building Digital Opportunities programme (BDO) builds on this principle. In working together towards common goals, implementing agencies and their partners are able to combine knowledge and other resources to greater effect. Donors in particular have an interest in seeing the synergies that arise from joint programming.

The collaboration among partners has been very successful and positive, and has certainly exceeded the expectations: implementing agencies have launched several important new initiatives -- Dgroups (www.dgroups.org), itrainonline (www.itrainonline.org), Louder Voices, as well as certain streams of the CATIA programme -- and additional donors have joined the programme.

However, the programme started with *low expectations* for collaboration. The main challenges for collaboration were the differing agendas/views on priorities for the application of ICTs and lack of strong pre-existing relationship among some of the implementing agencies. Therefore, there was a risk of perceiving collaboration as a donor or IICD-driven priority.

What were then the reasons for partners to be so open, exchange resources and share knowledge?

- One of the most important elements was the *flexibility of the BDO framework*: partners were able to change their projects quickly if necessary, being therefore able to respond to changing circumstances – essential element in fast-changing ICT environment. This flexibility to adapt gave partners possibility to “experiment” with different technologies/approaches and to choose the best solutions.
- The fact that collaboration was never given for granted proved beneficial: this topic was constantly kept high on the agenda, and partners were regularly invited to look for new ways of working together. In addition, it implied that many crucial programme elements -- e.g. evaluation, reporting structure and learning processes -

- were established through honest and open debate, creating a strong sense of *ownership*.

- *NGO-donor collaboration* is another key success factor of the programme. The relationship was a real partner relationship, with donors and NGOs bringing to the table different but complementary resources -- and willingness to have a transparent dialogue. This has created a climate of respect and mutual learning.
- BDO has created a strong *brand*, well recognised in development arena. Its crosscutting approach to ICTs – ranging from regulatory issues to community radio pilot projects, assured programme credibility and legitimacy at all levels. During the programme, a basic skeleton of coherent and joint *strategic focus* has been built, leading to joint dissemination strategy, advocacy and evaluation.
- Although the programme initially struggled to find the balance between administrative reporting and learning -- resulting in some less dynamic meetings -- the group steered the process towards *mutual exchange of experiences* and lessons learned.
- Partners entered the programme with a *clear division of roles and responsibilities*. In that respect, IICD's role of “leading facilitator” proved to be crucial: the Dutch institution does not only “chase” partners for their administrative duties, but proposes and coordinates a series of joint Knowledge Sharing efforts.

Today, BDO is entering its third year, when the main focus of collaborative efforts will be joint dissemination and investigation of poverty impact of BDO activities.

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CATIA programme: a practical response to the demands from Africa and the G8 DOT Force recommendations

CATIA – Catalysing Access To ICTs in Africa – is a three-year programme with package of 9 small-scale yet strategic activities that seek to improve access to the full range of ICTs in Africa, from the Internet to community radio.

The Catalysing Access to ICTs in Africa (CATIA) programme aims to enable poor people in Africa to gain maximum benefit from the opportunities offered by Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and to act as a strong catalyst for reform. It will support a package of strategic activities to improve affordable access to the full range of ICTs, from internet to community radio.

This programme is focussed on addressing the need for ICTs to address social and economic development issues. It will be working to help build capacity across Africa to achieve sustainable change.

CATIA is a three year programme of the Department for International Development (DFID) in close collaboration with other donors and players (e.g. Sida, IDRC, CIDA, USAID and Cisco).

The programme is an initiative by donors to co-ordinate and work together (UK, Sweden, Canada & US), but it is also a partnership with the private sector (Cisco, African ISPs, VSATs, etc).

It will be implemented in close coordination with the Canadian government's Connectivity Africa initiative. The programme is being managed by Atos KPMG Consulting (AKC) Consortium that comprises leading research and policy institutions, ICT technology and development consultancies, non-governmental organisations, individual experts, and ICT networks, from a programme office in Johannesburg, South Africa.

The CATIA programme consists of nine distinct component projects:

- Low-cost satellite Internet access widely available across Africa
- Robust African Internet backbone with exchange points at the core and strong African ISP Associations
- Well-informed, lively and inclusive policy debates across Africa, shaping the local policy environment
- Positive policy environments for radio broadcasting across Africa (led by Panos Institute)
- An African-led network of institutions, actively strengthening the African expertise involved in setting ICT related policy
- Increased capacity for African developing countries to participate in international ICT decision making
- Low-cost computers and open source software being developed and tailored to the African market
- Stronger network of community radio, FM and public service radio stations across Africa, offering good pro-poor radio programmes (led by Amarc)
- A thriving African-based Open Knowledge Network, catalysing the creation and exchange of local content (led by OneWorld)

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About iConnect

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