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Advancing the policy and practice of
capacity development in international cooperation

Embedding ICT in development

How can Information and Communication Technology (ICT) support development efforts? ICT cuts across sectors and affects all layers of society; it is used by both micro-projects and large institutions. And it runs through non-profit, private and government organisations, which in an ideal situation communicate through a set of commonly agreed principles, standards and procedures. A virtual mission impossible for low-capacity countries, one would think, looking at the breadth of issues and the number of actors involved.

ICT has a major bearing on a multitude of support activities performed as part of international development cooperation. Ideally, these should enhance ongoing processes and dynamics, but many initiatives start from scratch. A key concern then is, how and where to set boundaries for the development of ICT. Should we start small-scale and work bottom-up through a myriad of self-contained projects? Or should we work top-down from a policy-making level? Or should we perhaps use a mix of the two? Another challenge is how to avoid regarding ICT merely as a technical input, without recognising its complementary potential for enhancing other development efforts. Hence the need to embed ICT within its environment, to create linkages with policy-making, and to ensure that different actors are included in decisions about strategy and the use of technology.

Various international organisations have taken up this challenge, among them the International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD), which presents its operational approach as well as some past experiences in this issue of *Capacity.org*. Building on its considerable experience, IICD works through a framework combining practical work on the

ground with policy work at sector level. Although this is not an easy task, as is highlighted by people working in the field, the experiences confirm that the combined and integrated application of both aspects is indispensable for successful capacity development. IICD's Head of Partnership, Ingrid Hagen, presents the framework.

The second article, written by Ousmane Ly and François Laureys, looks at the start of an ICT health project in Mali that builds on a local initiative to overcome large distances and a shortage of qualified staff. The third article is about the agricultural sector in Bolivia. The authors, Sandra Marca, Javier Choquevilca and Stijn van der Krogt, share lessons from implementing an ICT strategy under ministerial coordination. The fourth article, by Constantine Bitwayiki and Arjan de Jager, presents insights from the implementation of an ICT support programme among Ugandan district administrations.

There is also an extensive list of further reading containing links to a wealth of ICT case studies and good practice material, as well as a series of policy and issue papers published by various organisations.

Going beyond a project approach: embedding ICT support in a wider development context

This article presents the framework which the International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD) has recently started to use for supporting ICT-related initiatives in development contexts. The framework has emerged from the IICD's strategy based on the notion of 'ICT-enabled development' introduced in the July 2003 issue of Capacity.org. The framework builds on several years of experience with ICT support and shows that combining practical work on the ground with policy work at a higher level is the most promising way of achieving added value and impact.

Embedding ICT in development

Information and communication technology (ICT) has begun to make its mark as a viable tool that can have a positive impact on national development. End users and beneficiaries of ICT projects, such as health officers, farmers, teachers and students, have benefited from situations in which ICT is used as a supplementary, but fully incorporated tool.

Although individual projects that make use of ICT as a tool for supporting sector development can set a good example, they should not stand on their own as they do not result in sustainable changes in the development landscape. Lessons learned from individual experiences need to be transferred to a wider organisational setting, to the sector as a whole and - ideally - to a wider national context.

This translation of individual experiences to higher-level activities is what we at IICD have set out to undertake more systematically. This 'embedding' includes the expansion and replication of individual experiences to an entire organisation or a wider sector. Although the national level is recognised as an important higher stage of involvement, it is not part of our current support activities.

Towards a future approach to embedding

Embedding ICT for development at project, organisational and sector levels calls for a strategy which can be used flexibly at

multiple levels and which involves a range of actors. Embedding is in essence the broadening of the ownership base of ICT and its use for social change and long-term economic development. It is a process that involves significant investment in human resources, in terms of both awareness-raising and technical skills. While this process needs to come from within, we - as outsiders - act as a catalyst by working with a small number of local partners who are the 'ripples in a puddle'.

While it's relatively easy to work with different actors at a project level, it becomes rather complex at higher levels. A wider range of actors needs to be included so as to ensure that:

- activities involving ICT are used as tools to achieve clear objectives in terms of alleviating poverty;
- ICT contributes to core activities that are owned and operated by organisations rather than select individuals;
- activities at sector level are fully integrated, based on clear ICT policies that assist in creating a wider enabling environment.

The move from theory to practice has proven to be most challenging for ourselves and our partners. We have tested several approaches as we have moved towards a programmatic way of working and have invested more and more in the institutional capacity development of our Southern partners.

In June 2004, our annual International Advisory Board workshop brought together stakeholders from the organisation and our partners in the South to exchange views and plan ahead. The key questions were 'What to embed?' and 'How to embed?' The following summarises the debate and lists some specific lessons which will inform our future work at project, organisational and sector levels.

Embedding ICT-related activities at a project level

At this level, local ownership is the key to the sustainability of activities geared towards ICT development. The majority of our project

partners are active in sectors such as agriculture. They are not technical specialists, but farmers and other sector actors. Articulating and identifying ways in which ICT can help them is a challenge - given their lack of exposure to and experience with any form of ICT, whether old or new. Integrating ICT into sector projects and programmes requires these actors to undergo a change process - a process in which awareness, opportunities and shortcomings are realistically examined in an open dialogue.

Local ownership of integrated ICT use by project and programme partners involves a good understanding of the potential offered by ICT; ways of exploiting this potential; and the abilities required to make consistent use of ICT.

Although project partners form expectations based on the answers to these points, a project's momentum can only be maintained if these expectations are met. This is something we understood from the outset, which is why we made sure that the following was part of our approach:

- Round-table discussions are initiated to ensure that local partners articulate their own sector needs and to work out how to use ICT to meet these needs. The process includes a multiple-day workshop and project assistance for as long as two years. Awareness and a realistic understanding of ICT is core to the workshop, while the assistance is designed to help project partners get a grip on the business and technical implications of what they want to achieve.
- We invest a great deal of time and resources in local training partners, so as to build their capacity to raise awareness, train and mentor other project partners in turn. This 'internalisation' has proven to be an attractive alternative to subcontracting ICT development activities to external organisations.
- We advise our project partners on technological options that are workable, available and financially feasible, and for which there are good support mecha-

nisms in-country. A poorly selected option or mix of technologies can quickly disillusion project partners, bringing a project to a halt. The most advanced technology available is not always the right solution. Rather, it is a combination of traditional and modern options that makes a difference.

Embedding ICT-related activities at an organisational level

A project can have an impact only if it has a broader ownership base within the organisation in question. This challenge became clear once many of our project partners had reached one or two years of operations, and wanted to expand and integrate their activities into the wider organisation. A project remains a project - inherently short-term by nature - until it has been integrated into a more stable base and becomes an organisational priority.

At a project level, we initially worked with 'movers and shakers', i.e. people who create the momentum and energy needed to delve into the innovations offered by ICT. At some point, however, a stronger foundation is needed to overcome the project stage and integrate experiences into the organisation. This move to more broad-based ownership, however, can be very political and difficult. Intense ownership is felt by initiators and implementers who have built up long-term stakes in 'their' project, while other members of the same organisation have often not had an opportunity to develop an affiliation with it.

This experience led us to realise that wider organisational change processes, supported by decision-makers, need to be initiated at the same time as ICT-related activities are introduced. We had not envisaged this type of assistance at the start of our activities, and this engendered a process of strategic reflection about our own role and mandate, the capacities and expertise that are needed to provide the type of assistance required, and the reallocation of operational resources. The outcome of this discussion was the formulation of an approach which aims to:

- ensure that there is more broad-based organisational participation at the start of a round-table process;
- raise ICT skills among a larger number of

an organisation's staff (i.e. beyond the limits of the project team) who are prepared to invest time and resources in ICT skills;

- train project initiators and other project team members in wider operational capabilities, such as project management and marketing;
- advise project partners on more strategic issues, such as long-term planning and integrating project activities into organisational strategy;
- twin project partners with private-sector expertise in cases where a project needs extra support to move ahead.

Embedding ICT-related activities at a sector level

To increase opportunities for a wider development impact, ICT activities need to be embedded in an enabling environment. Here, the wider aim is to impact on the formulation and implementation of ICT-friendly policies at a sector level. The experiences to date stem from a bottom-up approach to change, based on testing and learning about ICT in a development context and then expanding such activities more widely. These experiences include the creation of a critical mass of NGO activities which will have an impact on a sector; the stimulation of policy dialogue between project implementers and the government; and pilot projects in the government sector itself. Experience has also shown that informing people about practical examples is imperative for alerting stakeholders and embedding ICT activities more widely.

Again, this attention to the sector level has required changes in our approach - both strategically and operationally. Today, we are working with partners in four countries on a variety of sector-reform programmes that

include ICT. This experience has highlighted the following needs:

- the need to shift away from a project approach to a programme approach. A programme focuses on a variety of activities within a country and embraces the linking of a series of activities, which - in turn - will complement and reinforce individual project activities;
- the importance of designing and undertaking complementary activities to target policy-makers, both local and those of donor agencies located in-country. These activities have a catalytic nature and include monitoring and evaluation, as well as information and networking;
- the need to work more systematically with the local offices of bilateral agencies that play a significant role in sector-reform processes. The aim is to bring them into contact with local ICT policy-makers and to link these to sector reform;
- the need to involve local policy-makers from the very start of the process in the formulation of country programmes, e.g. by ensuring that they are invited to participate in round tables from the very start.

This article has discussed the lessons learnt by IICD and our partners, and the subsequent changes we have made to our strategies. The following articles provide more insights into the use of this new strategy and the complexities of introducing ICT for development at project, organisational and sector levels. Jointly written by local stakeholders and their IICD project partners, the articles discuss the opportunities and challenges arising from projects in Mali, Bolivia and Uganda.

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Previous ICT-related issues produced in cooperation with IICD:

- *Issue no. 18, July 2003 - Developing capacities for ICT-enabled development*
- *Issue no. 10, July 2001 - Approaches to ICT capacity development*
- *Issue no. 7, October 2000 - Information and capacity-building (all available from the Capacity.org archive)*

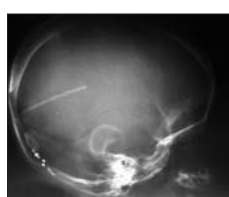
Putting ICT on the Malinean health agenda

Public health in Mali

The public health sector in Mali is in bad shape. Lack of funds, corruption, mismanagement, a shortage of trained personnel, and low wages have severely undermined the system over the past twenty years. The problems of geography combined with widespread poverty have added to the challenges of providing accessible health services to the population. One well-equipped and well-staffed national hospital in Bamako is complemented by four capital hospitals, five rather well-equipped but understaffed (in terms of specialists) provincial hospitals and 50 poorly equipped and poorly staffed regional health centres in smaller towns. Additionally, there are a couple of hundred 'CS-coms' (Centres de Santé Communautaire) in villages and rural areas, with the highest level of available expertise being a doctor, nurse or mid-wife. Highly educated health professionals and specialists tend to stay in Bamako or to move abroad where the career prospects are more lucrative.

The Keneya Blow'n project

A project known as the Keneya Blow'n ('health portal' in Bambara) project was conceived in September 2000 in order to address some of these challenges.¹ The project was intended to demonstrate that relaying the main hospitals in Mali through an Internet-based network need not necessarily be a costly exercise, and that the gradual introduction of applications like medical distance learning, medical information services, and mail services for health workers would help to convince the sector of the benefits of ICT. During the pilot phase, a network between two regional hospitals and the capital hospitals was established and a website (www.keneya.net) with medical information was developed. The second phase of the project started in 2003 and was aimed at further improving the services offered, extending the number of health workers reached by the project, offering medical training on-line, developing local skills to produce local medical information, and training health workers in the use of ICT.



A young girl from Bamako during a live video transmission. Malinean doctors ask their colleagues in Geneva for a second opinion on their initial diagnosis. The scan that was sent.

Photo's: François Laureys, IICD

Embedding

Though not originally termed as such, the process of embedding had to start at the very outset of the project. One principal strategy was to establish and maintain multiple alliances at technical, enabling, content and political levels. This generated a number of strategic partners, including:

- The Hôpitaux de Genève, providing a technical platform for on-line medical training, content (on-line demonstrations), and technical and institutional advice;
- The IICD, who provided pilot financing, institutional advice, capacity development, thematic networking and, if required, political backing; and
- SOTELMA, a national telecom utility that supplied technical connectivity infrastructure at a reduced price.

Other key partners were the national and provincial hospitals, various French teaching hospitals, the health faculty of the University of Bamako, and INASP, for bibliographic database development.

Capacity development proved an integral part of the strategy and included *awareness-raising* (i.e. organising seminars and making use

of local and national media), *institutionalisation* (for instance, by creating an advisory structure which was representative of the sector), and *embedding* within the Ministry of Health. In-situ ICT training workshops, held at the provincial hospitals rather than in the capital Bamako, helped to create awareness and involvement, and provide an opening to regional political decision-makers.

Future strategies

Despite the successes to date, embedding is seen as a necessary strategy for the further grounding of the project. Together with the IICD, a number of activities have been planned to support this process. These include:

- a meeting of people working on IICD-supported health projects to discuss the potential strengthening of synergies;
- seminars and conferences, including a national conference on telemedicine in Bamako. This is being organised with a local information network called Togunet, and will present the actual results of the projects to date. It will also be an opportunity to further tie-in the Ministry of Health, raise awareness amongst decision-makers, and attract media publicity;
- specific telemedicine training workshops for senior civil servants at the Ministry of Health;
- the drafting of a chapter on telemedicine as part of the current (ICT) health policy; and
- extending the training programme to the 50 regional hospitals in order to gain further recognition and visibility across the country.

¹ The project was developed by one of the authors, Dr Ousmane Ly, who was then a medical student at Bamako University.

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Embedding ICT at sector level: the case of agriculture in Bolivia

Why is an ICT strategy needed for the agricultural sector?

As in many developing countries, the agricultural sector in Bolivia employs a large proportion of the active workforce (45%). Bolivia's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper claims that poverty is due largely to low productivity and low prices. NGOs and producer organisations suggest that improvements in these areas are severely hampered by the inadequacy of the infrastructure, inefficient distribution methods and a lack of information. Although small farmers lack access to information, they are not isolated from markets and are highly vulnerable to fluctuations in prices and production volumes, as well as to diseases that affect production. Access to information on prices, market trends and production methods is essential for the survival of these groups.

A number of organisations have therefore initiated programmes for improving access to information in rural areas with the aid of ICT. Such initiatives include the regional development foundations set up by the government and the TiCBolivia programme implemented by NGOs and grass-root organisations (www.ticbolivia.net) in collaboration with the IICD. The projects operate in different content areas and regions of Bolivia and provide small farmers with information on production and marketing. For their part, producers can reach out to potential buyers in local, national and international markets. The information reaches farmers in remote areas through a combination of rural radio, voice radio, satellite and land-line based Internet access.

Despite the projects' relative success in supplying producers with information, the stakeholders nonetheless identified the following problem areas:

- a lack of standards, methods and regulations for supporting the exchange of information;
- a lack of coordination among organisations gathering, analysing and disseminating information;

- a lack of capacity for using ICT and information management.

These problems complicate the exchange of information. For example, in most parts of Bolivia, producers and intermediaries use different units of measurement ('quintales', equivalent to about 100 product units and 'arroba', for around 25 units). With prices quoted in kilos, these differences do not help farmers to calculate their best selling prices. This example explains why the Ministry of Agriculture was asked to coordinate the exchange of information in the sector. As a result, a clear effort was made to link up ICT projects undertaken by civil society and the private sector with sector-level government policies.

What does the ICT strategy entail?

The Ministry of Agriculture has developed an ICT strategy for the agricultural sector with the following objective: *'To coordinate and promote the introduction, access, uses and application of ICT in order to improve rural development in a more sustainable and participative way, with particular attention to impoverished sectors'*.

The strategy consists of three components, the first of which is the development of an ICT policy. This was achieved in 2003 with the support of the IICD. The policy indicates how ICT can help the government achieve the objectives it has formulated both for the agricultural sector and for national policy, describes the key objectives and priority areas addressed by ICT, sets out the organisational structure and proposes a plan of action for the next five years.

Secondly, the strategy involves an implementation programme (costing USD 100,000 and supported by the Department for International Development, UK) to enhance the Ministry's internal ICT capacity. The key elements of this component are creating awareness and training Ministry staff in information management and basic ICT, and enhancing the storage, analysis and coordination of information at the Ministry. ICT facilities are also to be strengthened, *inter alia* by setting up a computer network and

providing Intranet and Internet access. Finally, an agriculture portal is to be launched. This will operate as an entry point to agricultural information from both the government and the private sector (www.agrobolivia.gov.bo). One of the important features of the portal is the overview it contains of assistance programmes run by the government and the private sector. Obvious though this may seem, for the first time policy-makers and producer organisations can now obtain information on all the various programmes offered in the sector.

In the next stage, starting in 2005 with the support of the government of Bolivia and USAID (worth a total of USD 800,000), the Ministry will provide access to ICT and train the staff of the Ministry's regional branches. The branches will set up regional information networks which will be responsible for awareness-raising, coordination and the exchange of information among producer organisations, NGOs and the private sector at a regional level. The networks will be governed by a coordination committee on which all stakeholder groups will be represented.

Lesson learned from the experiences in Bolivia

Many relevant lessons - both for Bolivia and other countries - have been learned since the ICT strategy was launched in 2002.

- *Participation at sector level.*
The government does not operate in isolation. Particularly in agriculture, NGOs and grass-roots organisations are highly active in supplying producers with information. A range of organisations helped to identify ICT problem areas and priorities, and participated in information exchange in the sector. To ensure that they played a focused and constructive role, a committee was set up to coordinate organisations with experience in ICT. These included partner organisations of the TiCBolivia programme, other information programmes initiated by the govern-

ment and the linked ministries of Economic Affairs and Communications. The committee developed a draft strategy paper which was discussed at a series of validation workshops at national and regional levels. In this way, the Ministry increased ownership and support for the ICT strategy in the sector.

- *Ownership within the Ministry.* The Ministry's awareness of and skills in information management ICT was very limited. To allow the Ministry to take on a coordinating role, an extensive capacity development programme was required, involving training of directors and information officers at the Ministry.

extensive network of contacts at the Ministry. These advisors have played a vital role in continuously guiding the policy process and raising awareness among decision-makers and technical staff at the Ministry. To create ownership at the Ministry, the advisors are to be based permanently at the Ministry for a period of at least 9-12 months. A foreign organisation such as IICD also has a key role to play, in terms of strategic advice on both process (i.e. facilitation) and content (i.e. technical advice). To ensure that the Ministry takes the foreign organisation on board as a strategic partner, it is essential that it possesses

- *Coordination versus implementation.* Governments generally aspire to centralise information using complex databases and information systems. As a result, the focus is often on the development of software and large-scale systems rather than on understanding information processes at the Ministry and in the sector as a whole. In many cases, basic ICT can be very effective, too. It has taken a long time to persuade Ministry staff to coordinate information that has already been collected, analysed and disseminated by experienced government-related institutions, producer organisations and NGOs.



Photo: Stijn van der Krogt, IICD.

Validation workshop for agricultural policy.

This training programme centred on information analysis and management rather than on technical skills. Although this has taken time, two years later there is now both widespread interest in and a clear understanding of the role the Ministry is to play in relation to information and ICT in the agricultural sector.

- *External support.* The strategy formulation and implementation process requires long-term support from advisors from outside the Ministry. To secure acceptance at the Ministry, it has been important to work with local Bolivian consultants who possess knowledge of the sector and an

expertise in both processes and content and is clearly aware of the priorities set by both the Ministry and the sector.

- *A development-oriented ICT strategy.* ICT strategies often have a built-in lean towards relatively complex information that is particularly relevant to big business. The direct link made with overall sector policy and the participation of organisations working directly with small farmers has enabled the Ministry to pursue a strategy that identifies small farmers as the key target group. This group has a clear need for basic agricultural information, including information on markets and production.

- *Sustainability.* The focus on coordinating existing information sources and the exploitation of existing communication channels in the sector is conducive to the implementation of a viable and cost-effective ICT strategy at sector level. Collaboration with civil society and the private sector ensures that the government will reach producers effectively, as all parties have a direct interest in maintaining information flows. Collaboration also allows for the costs of ICT to be shared among the various stakeholders in the sector.

- *Example for other sectors.* The successful strategy for agriculture serves as an example for other sectors such as education, for which a similar process was launched in 2004. It also provides important input for a national ICT for development strategy, also launched this year. Yet, although the case of the agricultural sector has inspired policy-makers in other sectors, the experience in education suggests that each sector requires its own, tailor-made processes and approaches to ICT policy development.

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The District Net Uganda Programme: a case for good governance and ICT

After the 1980s, a large number of governments worldwide, including in Uganda, moved to decentralise policy-making and raise public participation in their quest for good governance. The District Net programme, started in February 2003, provides an example of how ICT can assist in the implementation of such processes. Emerging from the 'ICT for Rural Development' round-table conference held in 2001, the project identified the following challenges at district level:

- a lack of fitting modes of communication between district and lower local governments, and
- time-consuming electronic data processing in relation to financial management, data communication, data storage and analysis.

Piloted in four districts, the programme is now being run independently by local District Administration offices with support from the Ministry of Local Governance. Over the past 18 months, equipment and infrastructure as well as a customised capacity development programme have been put in place to support the project. Having completed the initial pilot, efforts are now being concentrated on expanding to other districts and to embedding the programme in the Ministry's core activities.

Lessons learned

Following the installation of equipment and infrastructure, a capacity development programme was implemented. Staff of all ranks were trained in basic ICT applications, project management, financial management and information management, while senior officials attended ICT awareness seminars. The following key lessons emerged from this process:

- **Identify possible gains for public sector programmes**

As seen in the case of the District Net Uganda project, ICT can bring five benefits to the decentralisation process. These are:

- (a) More cost-effective processes - producing the same at a lower cost. This has been seen especially in the improvements in collecting, storing and disseminating information, both in districts and between districts and headquarters.
- (b) Increased outputs - producing more at the

same total cost. Automated systems have made it easier to make better use of collected and stored data to inform local and central government decision-making processes as well as the public in general.

- (c) Time-efficient processes and outputs - producing the same (or more) at the same total cost in less time.
- (d) Improved quality and standard of information services and products - producing the same at the same total cost in the same time, but to a higher quality standard.
- (e) Innovation - producing new outputs based on government requirements.

The first four points may be seen as components of successful embedding in local government, as they increase both the effectiveness and the efficiency of the system. The fifth innovation creates opportunities to successfully embed at sector level, especially when programmes can be expanded to other local governments under the leadership of the ministry.

Embedding also requires interventions at different levels to 'prove' value:

- At the operational (district) level, staff were convinced of the value of the programme only after following several training courses. For example, they were able to appreciate that a procedure normally taking three days could now be done in two minutes.
- At the sub-county level, commissioners were convinced of the value of the programme after a financial analysis of the first six months showed that it reduced costs, such as those relating to paper and document transport.
- At HQ level, an information analysis demonstrated smoother and more efficient information flows between headquarters and district and sub-county levels, thus revealing the value of the programme to decision-makers.
- **Human resource capacity is crucial to the process of embedding**

Good governance projects require capacities (i.e. skills and knowledge) to manage, guarantee and maintain the quality of data. Apart from

basic ICT applications, programme staff were also trained in project and financial management. Training staff to tackle more strategic issues, such as how to use data, and how to transform it into useful information and knowledge, was also crucial. A tool kit for information officers at higher local government levels was also developed. Users at district level were trained in using the services offered. Awareness-raising seminars and public launch events allowed users to voice their needs, to learn about available public services, and to pressure policy-makers into being responsive to their interests and demands.



Addressing social needs through e-governance project

- **Organisational embedding requires sensitisation interventions**

In many public-sector organisations, a major hindrance to reforms using ICT is a lack of awareness and skills on the part of senior officials. This makes them reluctant to support, or even to discuss, reforms that involve information technology. To combat this, public-sector programmes that are designed with organisational embedding in mind should incorporate training and awareness programmes for senior officials.

The District Net Uganda programme is just one example of an e-governance project proving that ICT can help a decentralisation process. Not only can it improve information flows and communication services to enable government and organisations serve the poor in a more efficient, transparent and accountable way, it can also help to encourage users to learn more about public services and their rights.

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Further Reading:

Policy and issue papers

Integrating information and communication technologies in development programmes: Best practices in ICT for development programmes

Short policy brief on best practices in ICT for development programmes. Focuses on the role played by ICT in combating poverty and promoting development.

<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/2/57/20611917.pdf>

Information technologies and education for the poor in Africa (ITEPA): recommendations for a pro-poor ICT4D* non-formal education policy

Examines the ways in which ICT can improve the skills of Africa's young people and adults who do not have basic literacy skills and/or have not completed primary or secondary school.

<http://imfundo.digitalbrain.com/imfundo/web/papers/itepa/ITEPA.pdf>

Financing ICT4D* Projects: A way forward - An issues paper

This paper looks at how to finance ICT4D* and the roles the various stakeholders could play. It recommends that financing models for ICT projects should be based on entrepreneurs' initiatives, real demand, standard best practices, business management and basic finance processes for start-ups.

http://www.deza.ch/ressources/deza_product_e_686.pdf

ICTs and (MDGs) Millennium Development Goals: A World Bank Perspective

This report looks at the growing evidence of ICT as a powerful tool when used appropriately as a part of an overall development strategy.

http://info.worldbank.org/ict/assets/docs/mdg_Complete.pdf

Case studies and learning

OneWorld/BDO ICT for Development case studies: synthesis report

A synthesis report on 20 ICT case studies in South Asia, Southern Africa and Central America. The studies focus on the impact of ICT in terms of opportunity, empowerment and security, financial sustainability and human resources. The report includes a comparison between the three regions studied.

http://www.bellanet.org/leap/docs/BDO_synthesis.pdf?OutsideInServer=no

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and poverty reduction in sub-Saharan Africa: a learning study (synthesis). Removing barriers to poverty focused ICT for development: the experience of the Building Digital Opportunities programme.

This study is based on the Building Digital Opportunities programme (BDO), which aims to identify and help remove some of the key barriers to poverty-focused ICT for development initiatives.

http://www.gersterconsulting.ch/docs/Synthesis_report.pdf

UNDP best practices and know-how in ICT for Development

Contains a collection of knowledge-based best practices accumulated by UNDP in Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Its main purpose is to identify and share UNDP's know-how in this rapidly emerging area, by showing how ICT can promote socio-economic development and good governance.

http://www.ecissurf.org/files/bookstore/89/how_to_build_information_society.zip

ICT for Development Success Stories

This publication by the Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) highlights initiatives that are using ICT to make a real difference in communities around the world, no matter how disadvantaged or isolated they may be. Chapters on youth, poverty and gender provide snapshots of the learning process accompanying the introduction and implementation of ICT in community development projects.

http://www.globalknowledge.org/gkps_portal/index.cfm?menuid=201&parentid=179

Information and Communication Technologies for Development in Africa: Vol. 1, 2 & 3 Opportunity and Challenges for Community Development

In 1997, Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) launched its Acacia initiative in an effort to empower sub-Saharan African communities to use new information and communication technologies in their own social and economic development. Now, six years later, the Acacia initiative presents this unique and ground-breaking three-volume collection of original research.

http://web.idrc.ca/en/ev-32997-201-1_DO_TOPIC.html

* ICT4D: Information and Communication Technology for Development

More can be found at www.capacity.org/ict

The European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) launched Capacity.org as a tool for development researchers, practitioners and decision-makers. As a website and a newsletter, Capacity.org combines information on capacity development policy and practice within international development cooperation with debate on policy issues and practical experiences. It acts as a platform for dialogue by providing a channel for informed review and synthesis of the complex issues faced by development practitioners and policy-makers.

Focusing on both the 'why' and the 'how' of capacity development, Capacity.org seeks to unravel the complexity of ideas and practices underpinning the term 'capacity development'. To achieve this, the editors particularly encourage the exchange of perspectives and experiences from the South, so as to ensure that discussions are rooted in reality.

Our aim is to make Capacity.org a joint effort, mobilising and sharing a range of capacities and expertise. Interested individuals and organisations can help make Capacity.org an effective communication tool for people seeking to alleviate poverty through capacity development by contributing information, lessons, ideas, opinions and feedback. Any offers of co-finance or for linking up with related initiatives are very welcome.

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