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News and Events

The Global Knowledge Activity Information Management System (GK-AIMS), hosted by Bellanet, is a set of online tools which facilitates information sharing on 'who is doing what' and allows for greater collaboration among project planners. With information provided on projects, participating partners and an extensive calendar of events (<http://gkaims.globalknowledge.org/index.cfm>) it acts as a central information resource for all those interested in building the information, communications and knowledge resources of developing countries.

From November 12 - 16, 2001, the 5th International Telecommunication Union's fifth Summit for the Africa region, 'Africa 2001: Bridging the Digital Divide', will take place in Johannesburg/South Africa. It will encompass a Policy & Development Summit, an Infrastructure & Applications Summit and a Telecom Development Symposium, and will also include a Youth Forum: www.itu.int/AFRICA2001/

(More info on www.capacity.org)

Advancing the policy and practice of capacity building in international development cooperation

Approaches to ICT Capacity Development

One cannot but argue that human capital, skills and expertise are essential in putting ICT to good use. The question now is one of where those capacities should reside, and the importance of ensuring that they are sustainable. The traditional approaches to capacity development, it can be argued, have resulted in 'capacities' moving down the traditional North to South route. The problem is that most of these capacities do not necessarily reside or remain in the South after the projects or activities in question have ended. The challenges offered by ICT dictate that this flow be re-designed and that, if countries from the South are to enjoy meaningful development as a result of the benefits offered by ICT, the route must be one directed at building and sustaining the requisite local capacities.

Deciding on appropriate strategies and mechanisms for building and mobilising the requisite capacities is the primary responsibility of the local actors in developing countries that actually implement 'development'. Their international partners and allies also have important contributions to make - as brokers, facilitators, catalysts and as capacity-builders. Given the complexity of the issues and the wide scope for action, one of the pressing challenges posed to ICT-development organisations is how the various capacities should be developed and what roles the various actors should play in the process.

The theme of this issue of Capacity.org, which has been produced in collaboration with the International Institute of Communication and Development (IICD), draws three cases and illustrates some of the challenges involved in building the local capacities that are needed to manage and use ICT in a sustainable manner, and discuss how these challenges can be addressed, from the design of an overall approach to the application of the concept at national and project level.

The first paper, by Arjan de Jager and Denise Clarke, looks at the methods currently employed by the IICD for building a local expertise base by means of productive learning. The contribution from Marcel Werner and Johnson Nkuuhe discusses the formulation of local priorities and the ownership of local projects in relation to the IICD round-table process. The third paper, written by Avrill Crawford, examines methods which local partners have used to build their own capacities, and suggests how international organisations can support this process. Alongside these articles, this issue contains a list of additional resources for new and practical approaches to building ICT capacities in the South.

We are always grateful for any comments and views on Capacity.org; you are invited to e-mail them to cb@ecdpm.org

In cooperation with:

Issue 10

July 2001

Building Local and Sustainable Capacities for ICT Development

The term 'capacity development' has become a popular catch phrase within the international donor community, embracing a wide range of programmes and strategies that are used for strengthening Southern institutions. The traditional approaches to capacity development have seen a number of variations along this theme, usually with 'capacities' flowing along a traditional North to South route, but not necessarily residing or remaining in the countries of the South after the projects have ended. The challenges offered by ICT dictate that this flow be re-designed and directed to building and sustaining local capacities.

This paper introduces the capacity development approach adopted by the International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD). It focuses in particular on the development of local capacities for organising and delivering training in ICT skills and knowledge. Two principles guide this approach:

Working with a national training partner: This involves developing capacities in local institutions as well as individuals to offer the types of ICT training needed; and

Employing productive learning, in which every training activity results in a defined ICT product or prototype. This methodology is crucial as user satisfaction with training is often high, whilst the corresponding impact is low.

Two levels of capacity development are addressed within our eight focal countries. First, a focus on individual capacities, which is taken to mean skills and knowledge, usually acquired through technical (ICT skills) and non-technical training workshops. The acquisition of these skills is regarded as being a necessary, but not sufficient condition for building locally sustainable capacities. Second, a focus on building organisational capacities, which is understood as referring to internal structures, procedures, the collective capabilities of the staff, and external factors in the wider institutional context, such as the policy framework, as well as other political, social and economic factors.

To reflect these two dimensions, the IICD's capacity development activities have two main objectives:

To enable IICD project partners to develop ICT prototypes while learning ICT applications;

To enable IICD's national training partners to perform fully autonomous capacity development operations in as short a time as possible.

IICD uses train-the-trainer programmes; workshops, including a focus on 'soft' skills such as project management; seminars and conferences and consultancies to achieve these objectives.

Building local support: types of capacity development activities

To an increasing extent, capacity development is regarded as a primary activity in all the IICD's projects. There has been a discernible shift in the IICD's capacity development activities over the past three years. The year 1999 saw a strong focus on developing individual skills. In 2000, the train-the-trainer dimension was further strengthened and in 2001, there has been an increased emphasis on the institutional development of national training partners. In defining its capacity development indicators and strategy, the IICD uses the '3 Ps' approach, which revolves around:

Product, i.e. the actual capacities that need to be improved or achieved;

Performance, i.e. substantive/defined programme outcomes;

Permanence, i.e. the sustainability of the product.

While not replacing conventional approaches, the '3 Ps' approach provides a simple framework through which both parties can examine and think through the capacity development needs of our projects. This approach also enables the local partners to play an active role in determining needs, setting priorities and defining the level(s) of their participation.

National Training Partners

We have recognised that, in order for our projects to be successful, and also to maintain momentum after the initial stages of project formulation and project implementation, our project partners need to have a local avenue for training and development. Rather than trying to do this from a distance, the IICD works with local National Training Partners (NTP) in each focal country in which it is active (currently Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Jamaica, Mali, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia).

Our experience in selecting NTPs has been that institutions for whom training is one of their core activities make the best candidates. While some ICT institutions may be competent in technology, it is just as important (and in some cases even more important) to have an excellent understanding of teaching and learning processes. Building the capacity to teach critical, current and locally relevant ICT-related skills and knowledge is essential.

Relations between IICD and the National Training Partner are set out in a formal agreement that outlines the roles and responsibilities on both sides. Over a period of up to five years, the IICD provides varied forms of support to the NTP - training of trainers, hardware, software, human and institutional building - the ultimate aim being that the NTP should evolve into an autonomous

institution that is capable of continued capacity development activities after the envisaged end of the ICT-related projects supported by the IICD.

The 'train-the-trainer' concept

One of the key investments in the partnership involves upgrading the skills of the local trainers themselves. This is addressed through various 'train-the-trainer' (TTT) activities. As part of the agreement, each National Training Partner assigns at least two trainers to work on IICD-related capacity development activities. To date, 27 trainers from our six English-speaking and Spanish-speaking countries have been trained. Additionally, the first French-speaking train-the-trainer workshop was held in 2001, targeting another eight trainers.

Local trainers participate in annual train-the-trainer workshops that focus on key issues related to building ICT skills in their national environments. The results suggest that this approach is effective in helping the NTPs to support the capacity needs of our project partners.

As part of their training, the trainers gain proficiency in:

- the methodologies, concepts and tools of self-directed and lifelong instruction and learning;
- the scheduling, design and logistics of a training activity, including the assessment of training needs, testing procedures, the distribution of invitations, and certification procedures;
- facilitation skills and methodologies;
- planning and preparing future training activities;
- producing model training programmes that can be adapted to specific projects or training programmes in their local contexts;
- exchanging knowledge and information with other IICD partners, leading to greater cooperation;
- new ICT skills (hardware and software), as determined each year on the basis of project needs.

After undergoing the courses, trainers are able to provide ICT skills and knowledge training that is based on locally assessed individual and project needs. Their trainees are also able to enrol for various locally run courses, such as:

- ICT lifelong learning skills, aimed at increasing familiarity with ICT, as well as building ICT prototypes;
- Technical update seminars: One-day or two-day meetings that are designed to familiarise participants with particular trends, software and hardware. Such seminars have been held on topics including web development and telecommunications;
- Short-term and long-term training, spanning several days and addressing specific skills;
- On-the-job training, where people are 'tutored' in the development of ICT-related skills and knowledge within their work environments.

The ripple effect of this approach speaks for itself. Since 1999, there has been a constant increase in the number of people receiving training in critical ICT-related skills and knowledge at a local level. In 1999, some 60 people received training. This number increased to 250 in 2000. The situation this year is that 380 people have already been trained in the first half of 2001. It is highly unlikely that this volume could have been reached if the IICD had decided to deliver the training itself.

Trainer development does not end with the TTT workshops. A number of other facilities have also been put in place to support their further development, especially in relation to ICT skills. The exchange of expertise programme is one such avenue, offering our trainers the opportunity to share their technical expertise in other countries. Trainers can also benefit from an ICT expertise development programme that helps them to pursue short-term internationally recognised and certified training options that lead to a discrete set of technical ICT skills.

Lessons learned

Although we are still learning from our experiences, we can draw a number of initial conclusions:

The identification and selection of a specific local institution is a must. Capacity-building is more likely to be sustained if just one or two partners are selected than if too many relationships are developed. This fosters a commitment on both sides and a clarity of purpose that makes it easier to move towards targeted capacity development activities.

There is greater commitment among local project partners if a recognised local institution is responsible for assessing local training needs and building the requisite capacities. It provides a firm indication of reliability, commitment and a long-term seriousness of approach that is sometimes either vague or just assumed in traditional capacity development approaches.

Developing a body of local expertise (i.e. the trainers) in ICT skills can, if structured correctly, generate high user satisfaction and impact. A core of people who are constantly updated, trained, supported by the donor institution and operating through a local organisation (the NTP) will have a greater ripple effect in the national economy than the temporary importation of skills and expertise.

There needs to be definition and agreement on both sides - local and donor - as to the indicators that can be used to measure the effects of the capacity-building and development activities.

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Formulating Local Priorities, owning Local Projects: the IICD Round-Table Process

The IICD intervenes in developing countries with a strategy that is geared towards catalysing programmes in information and communication technology (ICT) that have an impact (either direct or indirect) on development.

Currently, the IICD has Country Programmes in eight countries: Bolivia, Jamaica, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. This paper describes how the Country Programmes take shape and in so doing develop local capacities to deal with the information revolution. In order to make the Country Programmes as focused as possible, they are rooted in existing development strategies and concentrate on specific sectors. These sectors are:

- good governance;
- the environment;
- health care;
- education;
- livelihood opportunities.

Technology Partnership Programme

Essentially, the IICD's intervention materialises through a long-term technology partnership programme with a hosting or championing organisation within a particular sector. Such an organisation may be a government line ministry, an industry association, or an NGO or group of NGOs. Multiple technology partnership programmes are the building blocks for a Country Programme. Within a technology partnership programme, there are individual partnerships with project partners or training partners (see the paper by de Jager and Clarke). More often than not, agreements are based on a period of between two and five years. A technology partnership programme may last up to five years and comprises the following four elements:

- an **ICT Pilot Projects** Programme, which involves local stakeholders identifying demand and builds on the existing local context;
- Capacity Development Programmes** focusing on local institutional, technical and advisory skills development;
- knowledge sharing** by disseminating information, advice, best practices and lessons learned;
- monitoring and evaluation.**

At the same time, partnering with public, private and not-for-profit sectors and players is evolving in support of the Country Programme and its individual projects.

The Country Programme seeks to strike a balance between developing an ICT policy and undertaking ICT (pilot) projects.

The Programme offers opportunities for cooperation among local actors and for coordination between donors. The lessons learned help to mainstream ICT in sector programmes. All along, natural interest groups create communities of learning.

ICT Pilot Projects: One of the key instruments here is the ICT 'round-table' process. These are multi-stakeholder decision-making events held under the auspices of the hosting or championing organisation of a Technology Partnership Programme. The round tables follow a scenario that guarantees local ownership of the resulting 'ICT for development' action programme. Strategic decision-making is built on development scenarios created and compared by participants, prior to identifying programme elements and ICT priority projects. The ICT round table results in the production of a coherent ICT Pilot Programme. The round table is intended to generate ICT project ideas that are novel within the owners' environment and to pave the way for pilot projects that must prove that they can work and offer meaningful development contributions.

Following a round-table workshop, an action plan is implemented by local stakeholders and players, with continued facilitation by the IICD. Such facilitation includes project formulation assistance and capacity development. Project formulation assistance means supporting the ICT programme or project owner in design work, there-by paying attention to (a) development relevance; (b) the project's long-term financial viability, including maintenance; and (c) the allocation of adequate human resources incorporated to planning and design. Project formulation also includes partnering and support in funding negotiations. After a project has been through the pilot stage, it must find a home within its owner's organisation.

Capacity Development Programmes: these are training programmes most of whose components are based on building ICT knowledge and experience. These programmes run in parallel with the ICT pilot projects. They help project team members match needs and opportunities with technology and add value to pilot design and pilot implementation. The Capacity Development Programmes are carried out by local IICD training partners. Essentially, the IICD trains the trainers, using productive ICT training methodologies.

Knowledge Sharing: this activity is currently undergoing expansion within the IICD community. The effective sharing of lessons learned and best practices adds value to the IICD's partners and their projects. Each partner and programme or project generates experience which the IICD seeks to capture for the benefit of its wider network.

Monitoring and Evaluation: the long-term impact of ICT on development is ultimately the fundamental answer to a fundamental question. The year 2001 is the first year in which a monitoring and evaluation tool kit will be tried in the Country Programmes.

The way forward

The objective of the IICD's forward strategy is to create dynamic communities of interest for ICT in development. The IICD will therefore further strengthen the Country Programmes through two action lines:

Facilitating local initiatives by institutional capacity-building. Local IICD partners will be assisted in finding ways and means of generating more ICT programmes in their countries. This means making the management of the Country Programmes more autonomous, thereby freeing up IICD resources for other activities or countries.

Strengthening local capacity by supporting the creation of local networks with the IICD's partners and their local counterparts and stakeholders is a line of activities flowing from the above, strengthening local autonomy.

Example: The Uganda Country Programme

The first technology partnership in Uganda was between the IICD and the Ministry of Education and Sports (MES). This resulted in July 2000 in the launch of an ICT programme at MES and a number of its implementing agencies, containing the following elements:

ICT policy;
maintenance facilities;
basic training in ICT at a pre-service teacher polytechnic;
educational content (i.e. teaching materials) development;
workflow management in financial administration (MES headquarters).

An IICD/Uganda Ministry of Education and Sports (MES) round-table workshop was held in Jinja, Uganda, from 10-12 July 2000, with 'the role of ICT in education in Uganda' as its theme. It was targeted primarily at the national education sector. A number of projects were formulated, two of which were *ICT Basic Training (IBaT)* for lecturers and students, and the *Production of ICT-Based Education Content (PIBEC)*, to enable lecturers and new teachers to produce teaching materials, of which there is a serious shortage in Uganda. These two projects will be based at the Institute of Teacher Education Kyambogo (ITEK), and are due to start in August 2001. The ITEK is a parastatal that has been tasked with building teacher capacity for the public education sector.

Capacity development is in full swing at the ITEK, which has in fact already become the IICD's training partner in support of the entire Country Programme.

In order to keep up the momentum and to respond to local demand, a second round-table cycle was started in March 2001, entitled 'ICT for Rural Development'. The focus was on local government in four districts (i.e. Kanyunga, Lira, Mbale and Mbarara), and agriculture and agribusiness. The vocational education sub-sector also showed interest in the cycle. At the moment, this second programme is in the early stages of local partnering to ensure strong rooting of the identified priority projects within national stakeholders. Capacity development has started, which will in turn help to further focus project definition. The following pilot ICT projects should hopefully be ready to take off by September 2001:

administration networking in four districts and their sub-counties;
agribusiness development for small-scale producers;
Internet points-of-presence in four districts, a business development scheme drawing on launching customers;
educational materials for vocational training.

It has become apparent from the outset that the success of this second programme cycle depends vitally on networking and community building among the players and stakeholders. Measures are being developed to support this networking without delay.

Among of the advantages of this approach are the participatory nature of the way in which an ICT programme takes shape: it is the beneficiaries who identify the priorities and define the projects. As a second point, the approach gives value for money, in the sense that any programme starts with pilot activities and strong local ownership, thus reducing the risk of failure in the long term. In turn, this gives donors a great deal of leverage for their development dollar. Finally, the emphasis on financial viability is another risk-reducing element.

The way forward will be to build on the results of the pilot projects and to mainstream these projects within their environments. This will encourage the Ugandan government to commit more resources and hopefully expand into other sectors. In less than one year, the Uganda Country Programme has produced a realistic agenda with scope for safe investment in national development.

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Building Sustainable ICT Capacities in Jamaica

This paper relates the experiences of the Jamaica Computer Society Education Foundation (JCSEF) in utilising the benefits offered by ICT in Jamaican primary, secondary and tertiary public schools. It highlights the strategies used to create and sustain the requisite human and institutional capacities. Particular emphasis is placed on the strategies used to ensure the integrity of the intervention and to secure the participation of all the stakeholders, i.e. the government, the schools, the school community, the business community and international donor agencies. The paper also discusses the efforts that have been made to decentralise the management and administration of the programme and create sustainable pockets of excellence in technology leadership throughout the country.

The JCSEF, its role and function

The Jamaica Computer Society Education Foundation is a non-profit private-sector organisation established in 1990 by the Jamaica Computer Society (JCS), the professional body for information technology (IT) practitioners in Jamaica. The JCS was concerned that secondary and tertiary students should be suitably equipped to perform well in the workplace or to gain entry to pursue further studies.

The situation to date

In 1991, the JCSEF launched the Jamaica 2000 programme, aimed at placing a 15-station laboratory in every secondary and tertiary school by the year 2000, and at training IT teachers. By 1995, laboratories had been installed at over 70 schools and over 350 teachers had received training.

A survey at the end of 1996 revealed, however, that many of the laboratories were being under-utilised, either due to hardware breakdowns or the fact that the equipment had become outdated or because trained teachers had used their

new skills to find more lucrative employment. Perhaps the most telling fact was that the evaluators could not ascribe any success on the part of students sitting examinations to the presence of a computer laboratory at the school in question.

This served as a wake-up call, and the Board of the JCSEF used the year 1997 to carry out an extensive strategic review of its operations. As a result, it changed its focus to one that would facilitate a more meaningful impact of the technology on the school and school community, as well as produce school-leavers who were more suited to the world of work required by this information age. The organisation's mission was thus changed and now encompasses:

- improving the quality of education in computer science;
- facilitating the provision of IT-based tools;
- assisting in the development of a curriculum that includes the use of technology;
- promoting the use of IT in teacher training experiences and methodologies;
- influencing government policy on the use of IT in education.

Useful Link

Advisory Network for the African Information Society (ANAIS) was established to facilitate social use of information technology by Africans following the Geneva Conference on Africa and new information technologies (October 1996). It aims at facilitating the appropriation of information technology and communication (ITC) by Africans. Its members in Africa and Europe, are gearing up to make available resource documentaries and work through focal points all over Africa. Its network comprises organizations and individuals who put together their knowledge, expertise and efforts in order to make it easy to master information technology and communication for development. <http://www.anais.org>

Strategies and approaches

The JCSEF has learned over the years that the cost-effective implementation of relevant and appropriate technology in schools requires the involvement of all the stakeholders. Building the local human capacities requires creative but stringent implementation strategies. Some of the strategies presently employed include:

Strategic partnerships with the schools and the school community, private and public sector entities, donor agencies, which share the cost of the funding and are involved in programme development.

Evaluating/ pilot testing projects to inform governmental policy and other decisions regarding the effective use of ICT within the educational system, e.g. literacy and numeracy, alternative instructional models, the feasibility of ICT-based programmes and instructional packages aimed specifically at teachers, etc.

Training in-service teachers to use productivity tools, special software and Internet resources in facilitating instruction and in managing the technological environment in which they now operate, while ensuring pedagogical integrity and sound teaching methodology.

Training in-service teacher trainers, thereby using the multiplier effect to reach the 20,000 teachers in Jamaica's school system.

Training pre-service teachers in the use of the technology in instructional delivery, targeting some 1,500 graduate teachers each year. This includes training in the delivery of on-line learning. Lecturers are taught how to moderate discussion groups and to develop and deliver on-line courses. Importantly, the programme will

create a national corpus of expertise among college lecturers.

A Student Technology Leadership Programme to enable senior students to manage the computer laboratory, carry out minor maintenance work and assist teachers in guiding other students in research and other learning techniques.

Setting standards for procurement of hardware, courseware and consultancy services. The JCSEF has developed comprehensive and transparent procedures for identifying, evaluating, selecting and purchasing goods and services, encompassing international procurement standards.

Setting technical standards for the various instructional models, including purchasing the latest state-of-the-art computer models as a hedge against obsolescence, as schools are not in a position to replace computers within a five-year period.

Employing a continuous survey mechanism that identifies current status, needs, and trends. Survey and evaluation instruments are completed by teachers, laboratory technicians, principals, school technology leaders, and subsequently collected, ensuring relevant and accurate data are available to inform planning on a timely basis.

Providing technical support to the schools in the development and implementation of technology plans that utilise the technology for administrative and instructional purposes.

Providing for community access and integration where schools and school communities are encouraged to develop partnerships that result in community and business involvement in the building of the laboratories, using the laboratories as Adult Learning Centres as well as Internet access points and providing mentorship, curriculum guidance with

respect to the requirements of the economic activities in the area, facilitating work study projects and summer employment.

Using a cluster approach, which sees schools in close geographical proximity working with each other, sharing and collaborating, thereby accelerating the process. Centres of excellence are being developed even in deep rural communities.

Challenges that still need to be addressed

Despite the successes in the approaches and strategies used, there are still a number of challenges that need to be addressed if we are to fully integrate and utilise ICT and build the requisite capacities. These issues can be seen as pointers that both local and international actors could well bear in mind.

Affordable telecommunication technology: While access is now being opened up through the liberalisation of the telecommunication industry, cost remains a major issue for schools.

Funding to provide more meaningful and sustainable access to information technology: If developing countries are serious about being competitive, radical and far-reaching decisions need to be taken in terms of providing funding to ensure that school-leavers are able to function effectively in the new economy

Curriculum reform that integrates the technology is of vital importance and is urgently needed.

Technology-enhanced instructional delivery is still a new phenomenon even in developed countries. Certain practices have, however, been tried and proven, and access to these could prevent schools and teacher trainers from reinventing the wheel.

Accelerate the training of teachers and teacher trainers. Numerous studies have

shown that teachers and indeed lecturers in teachers colleges are lagging behind in expertise in the use of the technology.

Technology in education policy and strategic planning. All 'technology in education' initiatives should fit into an overall national strategic plan.

Development of indigenous educational software. Educational software and courseware is extremely expensive and suffers from cultural differences inherent to the fact that the countries in which it is used are not necessarily the same as those from which the developers hail.

Conclusion

The importance of a local actor playing an active role in building local and sustainable human capacities to benefit from the advantages offered by ICT cannot be overemphasised. In the case of the JCSEF, this can be achieved through the cooperation of local partners, including the private sector and the government, and may even lead to policy formation and implementation. The role of international donor organisations in contributing to this process should not be overlooked either. It provides an avenue for building on the resources (human and institutional) that already exist in the country, and also benefits from the local ownership and commitment already existing at various levels. There is a need, however, to ensure that all national efforts are coordinated, with a clear delineation of responsibilities to prevent any duplication of effort and the reinvention of the wheel, taking account of the skills, expertise and know-how which already exist within each of the contending institutions. This, after all, is the ultimate partnership arrangement, and will redound to the benefit of the nation in the long run.

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Further Reading

Butcher, N. 1998. *The possibilities and pitfalls of harnessing ICTs to accelerate social development: a South African perspective.* Johannesburg: SAIDE. (<http://www.saide.org.za/butcher1/unrisd.htm>)

Noting that South Africa is in a very different position from other African countries with regard to the use of ICT, this paper aims to help build up a successful practice in using the significant potential of ICT for developmental purposes. Butcher draws together a range of information sources in an effort to explore the potential and pitfalls of harnessing ICT to accelerate social development. The paper gives an overview of key ICT projects in South Africa and analyses some of the trends that have emerged from them.

Ogbu, O., and P. Mihyo. 2000. *African youth on the information highway: participation and leadership in community development.* Ottawa: IDRC.

http://www.idrc.ca/acb/showdetl.cfm?&DID=6&Product_ID=580&CATID=15.html

A series of new strategies for bridging the digital divide between North and South have been designed and tested by international development agencies and their partners from the South. These strategies seek to build on ongoing information-related innovations and to use ICT as a catalyst for the advancement of developing nations. This book is a contribution to this process and describes a new initiative to

promote the involvement of young people in Africa's new information economy.

Rathgeber, E. M., and E. Ofwona Adera (eds). 2000. *Gender and the information revolution in Africa.* Ottawa: IDRC.

http://www.idrc.ca/acb/showdetl.cfm?&DID=6&Product_ID=471&CATID=15)

This book examines the current and potential impact of the ICT explosion in Africa on gender issues. The authors underscore the need for information to be made directly relevant to the needs of rural women, whether in the areas of agriculture, health, micro-enterprise, or education. They argue that women must also be decisionmakers and actors in the process of using the new ICTs to accelerate African economic, social, and political development

Whyte, A. 2000. *Assessing community telecentres: guidelines for researchers.* Ottawa: IDRC.

http://www.idrc.ca/acb/showdetl.cfm?&User_ID=127634&St=5004&St2=-103051093&St3=651339715&DS_ID=2&Product_ID=576&DID=6

This guidebook will assist researchers as they assess and evaluate the role and impact of community telecentres. It provides an introduction to some of the key research issues, a framework for telecentre evaluation, and an impetus for research teams to share ideas, instruments, and methods.

Duncombe, R., and R. Heeks. 1999. *Information, ICTs and small enterprise lessons from Botswana.* Manchester: IDPM

http://idpm.man.ac.uk/idpm/di_wp7.htm

The potential contribution of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to small enterprise development can only be assessed by first understanding current information practices and needs in such enterprises. This paper reports findings from a questionnaire and interview survey of formal sector enterprises in Botswana based on this approach. It concludes by offering an information-related categorisation of enterprise types with different information systems and different intervention requirements.

Firoze M., M. Jaffer, and E. Njuguna. 1998. *Enhancing the capacity of human rights and advocacy organizations in Southern Africa.* Ottawa: IDRC/Acaci.

<http://www.idrc.ca/acacia/o4053/index.html>

A survey undertaken of 103 human rights and advocacy organisations in Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe, assessing the feasibility of a programme for enhancing programmatic and organisational capacity through the development and provision of computer- and internet-based learning materials.

Capacity.org was set up by the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) as a tool for development researchers, practitioners and decision-makers. As both a web site and a newsletter, *Capacity.org* brings together information, ideas, and viewpoints on capacity building policy and practice within international development cooperation. It acts as a platform for dialogue and provides 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 building - debating policy questions and learning from practical experiences - *Capacity.org* seeks to 'unbundle' the complex of ideas and practices that we call capacity building. In doing this, the editors particularly encourage the exchange of perspectives and experiences from the South, to ensure that the discussions are rooted in reality.

Developed by ECDPM, it is our aim to make *Capacity.org* a joint effort in which all of our various capacities and expertise are mobilised and shared. Interested individuals and organisations can help make *Capacity.org* an effective communication tool for people who seek to alleviate poverty through capacity building. Join us by contributing information, lessons, ideas and opinions, and feedback. Offers to co-finance parts of the initiative or to link related initiatives are very welcome.

<http://www.capacity.org>

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