

Strategic Framework 2002-2007

Deepening Local Ownership through Partnerships

Following the positive recommendations of an external evaluation in early 2001, IICD's new strategy 'Deepening Local Ownership through Partnerships' builds on the work of the past years. In the upcoming five years, IICD will work with its partners in up to 9 developing countries, helping local stakeholders to assess the potential uses of information and communication technologies (ICTs) for development. It will also strengthen the capacities of local partners to formulate and implement locally owned ICT-enabled development activities.

The new strategy is based around increased efforts to build and strengthen 'ICT for development' networks in each of the countries we work. Here, local partners take full ownership of a range of activities executed through Country Programmes, making sure they respond to local demands. Further, knowledge sharing networks involving partners from several countries will focus on knowledge creation and exchange on the applications of ICTs in development sectors, such as e-business, education, agriculture, or health.

Our philosophy is that ICTs are tools that can contribute to sustainable development and poverty alleviation. However, this only applies when ICTs are supporting existing development activities. When wisely applied, ICTs offer enormous opportunities to narrow social and economic inequalities and support sustainable local wealth creation, and thus help to achieve development goals. When ICT applications are introduced in the health and education sectors, this can help us achieve sectoral goals, like improving the quality of teacher training or keeping remote health workers abreast of new developments. The introduction of e-commerce into the agricultural sector increases efficiency, avoids 'middlemen' and opens up new markets.



Deepening Local Ownership through Partnerships

Mission and goals

IICD's mission is to assist developing countries to realise locally owned sustainable development by harnessing the potential of information and communication technologies. It does this through a strategy with the following goals:

- to empower local organisations and stakeholders to make effective use of ICTs on their own terms; and,
- to catalyse lessons learning and knowledge sharing on ICTs by local organisations and the international community.

Six guiding principles

To ensure that the results are sustainable and address local development needs, six guiding principles are applied to all activities:

- **Ownership**, whereby IICD's local partners are ultimately responsible (and willing to be responsible) for the results of IICD-supported activities. This takes place on a national level where local organisations take responsibility for the overall Country Programmes. At the project and policy level, individual implementing organisations already 'own' the projects they have developed. In both cases, the owners also need to make sure that *their* partners or beneficiaries take ownership of the plans and results.
- **Demand responsiveness**. 'Pro-poor' activities must respond to local demands and offer location-specific solutions. By involving the 'consumers' - doctors, teachers, policy makers or poor people - IICD ensures that the ICT activity is kept close to the 'market' and therefore relevant and demand responsive.
- **Multi-stakeholder involvement**. Public, private and non-profit actors are actively involved in the identification, formulation and implementation of activities. IICD strives to maintain a balance among its participating

partners and pushes for approaches that safeguard open and full participation to avoid situations where stronger partners dominate or manipulate the process.

- **Capacity development.** When necessary, IICD helps its local partners to acquire the institutional capacities and individual skills required to make effective use of ICTs for development purposes.
- **Partnerships.** Joining with other organisations is the only feasible way for IICD to fulfill its mission. Consequently, IICD works with various kinds of *local partners*, the change agents that work with and for poor people. Responding to real local demands, they devise and implement suitable development and poverty-reducing interventions, including any uses of ICTs. They are the owners of the activities that IICD supports. IICD strengthens the ability of these partners to understand and apply ICTs for development. Beyond and behind these partners, various *enabling partners* from the private, public or non-profit sector, share expertise and contribute financial resources to help ensure that local activities are sustainable.
- **Learning by doing.** This is an area with a growing demand for concrete lessons and tools that can be borrowed, adapted if necessary, and applied. On a practical level, this means strengthening the monitoring and evaluation capabilities of local IICD partners. It also means generating and disseminating knowledge and lessons learned for the wider benefit of IICD's partner organisations in particular, as well as for national policy makers and the international community in general.

Approach

Two strategic approaches are used to achieve IICD's mission and goals. First, Country Programmes bring local organisations together and strengthen local institutional capacities to formulate



and execute ICT supported development policies and projects. Second, Thematic Networks link local and international partners working in similar areas, connecting local knowledge with global knowledge, thereby promoting South-South and South-North exchanges.



Country Programmes

The purpose of a Country Programme is to enhance the institutional capacity of the local partners to identify and develop ICT sector policy plans, implement pilot projects, and to further develop their own capacities. Each Country Programme has several components - development of networks, policies, projects and capacities, and knowledge sharing.

In the past, the cycle normally began with a Roundtable workshop. Today, the starting point is to identify and work with a small network of committed local organisations. The Roundtable workshop is often one of the first joint activities to be developed. Once established, the network's role is to determine priorities, share responsibilities and tasks, act as a platform for the exchange of ideas among participants, seek areas of collaboration, mobilise resources, and monitor planned results.

A key component in a Country Programme is the Roundtable process which links ICT plans and investments with existing development strategies in key development sectors. Roundtable workshops enable local stakeholders to analyse the potential of ICTs in development and set priorities for future actions. Consequently, after each workshop, project partners formulate policy plans and project proposals. Capacity development also plays a key role in the Country Programmes and cuts across all activities. The primary vehicle for this is a series of collaboration

agreements with national training partners. Two levels of capacity development are addressed: individual capacities, meaning skills and knowledge, usually acquired through technical (ICT skills) and non-technical training workshops; and, building organisational capacities, such as internal structures, procedures, and the collective capacities of the staff.

There are currently plenty of opportunities for sharing knowledge at the international level, but few to share knowledge locally. Local partners therefore alerted IICD to the need for a mechanism to redress this imbalance. Learning

Yam farmers in Ghana strengthened through use of ICTs

After years of concerted efforts to improve livelihood opportunities for local farmers, Edward Addo Dankwa from the Ghanaian Ministry of Food and Agriculture set up an e-commerce project with support from IICD. The project set out to improve the farmers' competitiveness and market position by providing them with cheaper, faster and more reliable communication channels in the form of e-mail and internet access. Within a short period of time a massive order came in from Accra in the southern part of Ghana for a large quantity of yams - too large an order for any of the farmers to supply individually. However, because the order was processed through the Project Cooperative, the farmers were able to organise themselves and supply the quantity required through a united effort. This experience increased the beliefs of individual farmers, market peoples, exporters and intermediaries that everybody should come together and help to achieve what they wanted the most: to produce and sell. In addition, they were affirmed in their conviction that ICT could help them to work together more effectively and market their products more efficiently.



from efforts like the Tanzania E-Think tank, IICD is therefore supporting local initiatives to share knowledge and experiences with ICT-enabled development.

Country Programmes are long-term investments covering a 5-7 year period. However, the nature and intensity of IICD's support changes over time as local partners become more self-reliant. Today, IICD has Country Programmes in 8 countries: Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Jamaica, Mali, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

Thematic Networks

Thematic Networks are designed to meet rising requests from our local partners on the uses of ICTs in specific sectors. As we reach a critical mass of projects in the Country Programmes, the need to share experiences across countries has grown. Next to requests by local partners, other parties increasingly turn to IICD for assistance in deepening their specific knowledge on development sectors. Involving partners in several countries, these networks are tools to share ideas and information on specific sectors and issues, such as health, education or training. When fully developed, each network will be a meeting space for people with a shared interest in a sectoral application of ICTs. They will link people and organisations with each other and with specialised expertise that can help answer questions. The thematic networks also act as a dissemination platform for research, lessons learned and storytelling. Associated with the thematic networks, IICD manages a small research support activity, targeted to learning about ICTs in developing countries and drawing on local expertise.

The Thematic Networks have four objectives:

- to meet the demands of local partners through knowledge 'products' and communication services;
- to develop and exchange relevant South-South content via local and cross-country networks;
- to enable local organisations to tap into international sources of expertise; and,
- to integrate the knowledge generated by IICD and its local partners into global knowledge and policy making networks

A popular component of the 'evaluation' thematic network is the ICT Stories project that IICD runs jointly with *infoDev*. It has proved to be an effective way to encourage people working on the ground to

share their own lessons and experiences. Another thematic networking initiative is the Global Teenager Project. This project works with networks of secondary school teachers and students in 18 countries, using ICTs to both promote cross-cultural exchanges of ideas as well as more effective ways to learn.



These efforts are supported by various information and communication activities; provided by IICD and / or by our partners. In each country, the local networks hold meetings, produce newsletters and run websites. IICD also publishes a newsletter – iConnect Offline – and a website – iConnect Online – reporting on developments in this area. To support person-to-person exchanges, a public discussion platform, D-groups, is developed.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

One challenge is to make sure that IICD and its partners continuously learn from the experiences they gain. This means learning on many different levels, including the policy and project levels, the Country Programme level, and of course inside IICD. Several tools for planning, progress monitoring and evaluation will be used in the next five years to capture the results and overall impact of activities. A survey tool has already been developed to monitor and evaluate IICD's role, the level of user satisfaction and the development impact of the programmes and projects. In addition, in each country, an independent local partner organisation monitors and evaluates the local Programme.

IICD in January 2002

Some of IICD's results from the last five years include:

- **Country Programmes in 8 countries;** built around partnership agreements on training, monitoring and evaluation, information and networking, and local process facilitation.
- **ICT and training skills** provided by 15 national training partners and IICD to 1230 people from 48 local partner organisations.
- **The Global Teenager Project** in which approximately 2500 students from 18 countries worldwide currently participate.
- **14 Roundtable workshops** generating 74 policy and project ideas and 48 proposals, of which 30 are currently in implementation.
- **ICT Stories Project** which has so far mobilised 250 local contributions of lessons learned, of which a subset has been analysed through the Learning by Doing Project.
- **The IICD corporate website** averaging 150,000 page views per year.
- **25 Research and advisory activities** that address issues raised by partners.
- **Enabling partnerships** signed with Cap Gemini Ernst & Young, the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and Hivos. IICD was also elected as a member of the Executive Committee of the Global Knowledge Partnership.

Multi-actor network

The extension of our mandate to 2007 by Minister Herfkens enables IICD to continue the forward momentum and to effectively support our local partners in realising sustainable development. By the end of this period, IICD envisages a transition from a mainly Dutch-based institute to a multi-actor North-South network, in which local partnerships and empowerment are crucial.

Juffrouw Idastraat 11
P.O. Box 11586
2502 AN The Hague
The Netherlands

T +31 (0)70 - 311 73 11
F +31 (0)70 - 311 73 22
E information@iicd.org
I www.iicd.org

iicd

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR
COMMUNICATION AND DEVELOPMENT