

## ICT for rural economic development: five years of learning

March 2012





## Introduction

Rural economic development has been a priority within IICD’s strategy since IICD was first established 15 years ago. During the past five years, 35 projects have been supported in nine countries as part of IICD’s overarching programme to promote socio-economic development through increased ICT access and use.

As the majority of the people we want to reach are engaged in subsistence agriculture, most of our projects focus on promoting food security and agricultural economic development. And because most rural farming families supplement their income through small-scale businesses, IICD also supports local entrepreneurship and youth employment.

Farmers, workers and entrepreneurs can use ICT to:

- **Access market information**

In a series of IICD projects, producers receive market price information and topical information about market demand for certain crops via radio, mobile services and the internet. To ensure that they can make optimal use of the information they receive, this is combined with training sessions to enable them to use mobile services and the internet. These skills help them to interpret price information more accurately, thereby enhancing their decision-making ability on when and where to buy products and what to produce.

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## Farmers, workers and entrepreneurs can use ICT to access market information, improve quality and productivity and strengthen business skills and employment opportunities.

- **Improve quality and productivity**

A number of IICD projects help farmers to increase productivity by preparing multimedia materials (photos and short videos) to describe their best practices. In other cases, extension officers or producer organisations make use of the internet to gather relevant information on inputs and production methods which they use to better advise the producers during their field visits. In addition, ICT is used to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of certification of products, enabling producers to get a better price and enter new local or international markets. These projects make use of hand-held devices and databases to simplify the collection of field information.

- **Strengthen business skills and employment opportunities**

More recently, IICD has been supporting partners by helping them develop their basic ICT skills (calculation, word processing, planning, etc) in order to improve the business skills of producers and Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs). The same basic ICT applications are also used to enhance the quality and relevance of vocational training courses for young people, with a view to helping them improve their chances on the labour market.

All projects flow out of strategic collaboration between IICD and partner organisations in the countries, including farmer associations and producers' cooperatives. For the past five years, IICD has been working closely with partners

to design, implement, monitor and evaluate projects .

While each project is jointly developed with local partners and tailored to the local needs, there has been a continued effort to share experiences among the projects both within and across countries. This facilitates mutual learning and collaboration.

This publication summarises the main lessons about the use of ICT to boost (rural) economic development that IICD and its partners learned between 2006 and 2010. It builds on an IICD publication entitled 'ICTs for agricultural livelihoods' which provides an in-depth analysis of our lessons up to 2006. Special attention is given to the upscaling of projects, which began in 2006. Some lessons are sector-specific, but most can also be applied to other sectors like education and health. We summarise the lessons that stand out, confident that the experiences and aspirations of our partners, as well as those of IICD, will guide us in the next period to come.<sup>1</sup>

Individuals, families, communities, organisations and sectors can all benefit from accessing relevant information and communication tools. The experiences of our partners demonstrate that the multiplicity of effects and lessons can be better grasped when they are looked at from the individual, organisational and sector level.

<sup>1</sup> These lessons were also used by IICD in a set of recommendations about using ICT for sustainable development, written for the UN conference on sustainable development in 2012. For more info, see: <http://www.iicd.org/about/publications/recommendations-for-rio-20>



Mark Farahani, member of the Tanzania Telecentre Network | Tanzania

## Empowering and connecting individuals

IICD differentiates between users and beneficiaries. Users are people who are trained in the use of ICT and who directly contribute to or use the ICT and related agricultural information services provided by the project; for example, researchers and extension workers. Beneficiaries are those who receive information from the projects, via radio and TV programmes, text-messaging services, internet and (multimedia) training material.

### Perceived economic impact growth over the years

Throughout the years, IICD has measured economic impact as perceived by users and beneficiaries. Questionnaires are collected on a yearly basis, and show a significant increase (see table 1). In 2010, 67% of the respondents perceived an economic impact from participating in an economic development project, compared to only 30% in 2006.

2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
30%	51%	63%	53%	67%

Table 1. Percentage of respondents reporting economic impact from livelihoods projects between 2006 and 2010.

The growing economic impact over the years could imply that it takes a while before an ICT project results in economic gains for its beneficiaries. It supports IICD's commitment to long-term partnerships and projects.

Besides evidence for perceived economic impact, there are a few projects that also documented 'hard' economic impact on an organisational level. For example, the Malian women producer organisation Coprokazan quadrupled its

shea butter sales through its website from EURO 24,000 in 2006 to EURO 95,000 in 2010.

In IICD's current programme with the Connect for Change alliance, the turnover of producer organisations will be structurally measured, as well as the level at which ICT service costs are recovered from membership and service fees.

### The power of being connected: inspiring self-confidence and leadership

Being connected to the world strengthens the self-confidence and social inclusion of the staff of partner organisations and their members, which in turn helps to strengthen leadership. This is a form of impact that is often not explicitly anticipated in project proposals. Nevertheless, it is measured in IICD's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) questionnaires and repeatedly noted by IICD staff. Empowerment and personal growth among partner organisations' staff and the direct users of projects is high, especially after a few years of project implementation when they have learned how to access the information and networks that interest them. The importance of empowered, self-confident and entrepreneurial staff for creating development impact at the levels of farmers cannot be underestimated.



The Zambia Agriculture Research Institute (ZARI) | Zambia

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Particularly in remote rural areas, an internet connection can make an enormous difference for the staff of IICD's partner organisations. Mark Farahani runs a rural services centre in Kilosa, Tanzania and is a member of the **Tanzania Telecentre Network**. His centre provides market price information services, as well as agricultural products such as seeds, fertilizer and insecticide in small quantities to fit the wallet of individual farmers.

In the past, Farahani was prepared to make long journeys to access his email. "Before getting internet in Kilosa, I had to travel for four hours to Morogoro to get connected, sometimes only to discover that I had no new messages. I had to spend the night there as it was not easy to come back the same day because of the unreliable transport and rough road. It cost me a lot of time and money."

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#### From organisational needs and those of the general public to farmers' needs

It has been observed that partner organisations sometimes face difficulties in ensuring trickle-down effects and creating development impact at the level of the beneficiaries, especially the illiterate farmers.

Projects are not always designed directly from the perspective of the farmer. Often the focus of projects is firstly to increase internal information and communication flows, conform the direct needs of the staff of an organisation. Can this be put in a clear visual model, participatory IICD process approach?

IICD learned to take a process approach, encouraging a gradual uptake of ICT by the partner organisation. This means that it is important to include organisational objectives in the project design, especially at the beginning when they help to strengthen and connect the organisation and correspond to direct staff needs and interests. After the internal information and communication needs of an

organisation have been met, and the ICT competences of staff have been strengthened, the organisation will then be in a better position to assess the options and identify how ICT could best serve its interests and the interests of its beneficiaries. Although development objectives demonstrating how farmers benefit from ICT have already been formulated in the beginning of the process, these objectives are often reformulated and sharpened after the ICT competences of the staff have been strengthened.

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**The Zambia Agriculture Research Institute (ZARI)** focused in its project on enabling agricultural researchers to publish scientific information for farmers. Researchers accessed computers and were trained to develop all kinds of information products. It was assumed that the researchers would automatically customise their scientific reports into a format that extension workers and farmers would understand. During the implementation of the project, it turned out that linkages between researchers, extension workers and farmers were not institutionalised. Researchers embraced ICT for their own scientific work, but not as a tool to reach more farmers with simplified information products. Most of them were not accustomed to working directly with extension workers.

A few researchers tested their information products in the field: they trained extension workers as trainers using the digital presentations and publications they had produced. The extension workers were able to translate these into the local languages. The examples of ad hoc, tight links between researchers and extension workers have shown that this improved the quality of the information and the access of farmers to relevant information.

Meetings between researchers and extension workers were set up to raise more awareness among the researchers about the type of information products that extension workers need.



Nian Zwe in Burkina Faso trains farmers in innovative techniques of food production and processing | Burkina Faso

**During the course of the project, ZARI realised that it needed an agricultural information and communication strategy to institutionalise information flows between researchers, extension workers and farmers. It would help ZARI to deal quickly with requests from the field and to create demand-driven information products.**

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CEPROBOL, the Bolivian Export Promotion Centre, focused initially on providing information services (through a large-scale database on export markets, a website and an e-commerce platform). These services were exclusively for large-scale exporters and agro-processing industries. As a result of their participation in a Round Table workshop, CEPROBOL decided to open its services to NGOs and grass-root organisations serving small-scale farmers. Needs assessments are now routinely conducted to stay informed about the actual needs of the small-scale producer groups.

In several other projects, agricultural information centres equipped with computers and the internet are directly targeted at farmers, but in practice tend to be used mainly by members of the general public and students for personal, educational, business and entertainment purposes. In these projects there is a risk of increasing inequality by reaching mostly the privileged members of society. However, these information centres sometimes use fees from casual visitors to subsidise services for farmers.

#### **Local, relevant content creation: data-visualisation and local languages**

The importance of locally produced content that is tailored to user needs cannot be overemphasised. Farmers, especially illiterate farmers, understand and memorise new production and food processing techniques better if the information is visualised and provided in their own

language or dialect. IICD works with local training partners who help project partners to build their multimedia skills and enable them to create or repackage information in the desired format.

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**Nian Zwe (formerly FEPPASI) in Burkina Faso** trains farmers in innovative techniques of food production and processing, sales techniques, organic fertilizer production, as well as in techniques for the sustainable management of natural resources, by using videos, photos and other digital media. “Formerly, people used to fall asleep during our training sessions,” says Korotimi Douamba, former Nian Zwe assessor, who has followed the project from the beginning to the end of the first phase. “With the camera, we can show pictures of the evolution of test plots. In our brainstorming meetings with producers, we compare visual images. We project the pictures and discuss the reasons for the failure or success of each plot. Agricultural techniques are filmed and we present these videos during the training sessions.” Douamba adds that in the past it was difficult to convince producers by merely telling them that the yield per hectare was better in the next village. Today, they can see the improvement with their own eyes, thanks to the pictures. The visual approach also helps overcome problems relating to the comprehension of certain topics in a province where nearly 80% of producers cannot read or write.

According to Mahamoudou Korogho, one of the trainers, digital media has become an essential component of his work. “I do not feel comfortable if I do not have a computer to carry out my training sessions,” he said. “When I show pictures of exemplary farms, the participants applaud.”

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## Farmers indicate that they feel more at ease when they make use of an information source provided by people or organisations they know and trust.

In Mali, M&E results showed that users with a high level of education were more satisfied with the different projects than users with low levels of formal education. In a Focus Group meeting, participants discussed what could be done to raise the level of satisfaction of people with low levels of formal education. Some of the suggestions made were: provide computer keyboards and training materials in the local language Bamanan, adapt training to their practical level, and make materials based on testimonials and images. The suggestions were taken into account at Sene Kunafoni Bulon and Coprokazan, where the Bamanan keyboards were introduced. Most training sessions are now being conducted in Bamanan and French.

Coprokazan reaches its women shea butter producers directly by showing them photo presentations on how to improve the quality of their work. Photos are taken of good and bad production practices. As the photos come from their own region, the women can easily identify with the practices shown. These visual representations have positively influenced the uptake of good practices and have resulted in a direct improvement in production methods.

### Working with information sources that farmers know and trust

Farmers indicate that they feel more at ease when they make use of an information source provided by people or organisations they know and trust. For this reason, the integration of information centres in farmer organisations, as in the case of the Jèkafo Gèlèkan project in Mali, has been more successful than trying to attract farmers to a commercial telecentre or a community-based telecentre.

This does not mean that innovative ICT solutions coming from outside cannot be successful. The international market information system known as Esoko (formerly TradeNet), was taken up by farmers in Ghana through a local intermediary organisation; IICD's partner organisation, the Send Foundation. Send is in direct contact with farmers and is trusted by them. It also provides additional services like credit and warehouses. Indeed, it is this holistic approach that makes the project successful.

### Lessons on gender

The percentage of female project users and beneficiaries filling in our M&E questionnaires increased from 36% in 2006 to 43% in 2010. This might indicate a positive shift in the gender balance in our projects. However, gender remains a point of attention. Although equal gender participation is generally pursued from the project formulation phase onwards, it is not always realised. The gender balance is continuously monitored from the start and discussed during Focus Group meetings. This helps to create awareness and to take actions to improve the gender balance in a project.



**The SEND Foundation in Ghana** provides price information on mobile phones through text messages, in collaboration with Esoko. Send organised an information needs assessment with farmer cooperative leaders, who were mostly men, to decide on which crops price information would be collected. After evaluating the first phase of the project, female participation turned out to be very low because 'women's' crops such as okra and dried pepper had not been included in the price information services. After these crops were added, female participation increased. After this experience, SEND began making a conscious effort to include women in its activities. Initially, computer skills training was targeted at community leaders only (mostly men). After the evaluation, other cooperative members were included, particularly women. In all capacity building workshops, SEND now requests every man to be accompanied by a woman.

The NGO network ACDEP in Ghana appointed focal point women at each project site to stimulate ICT use by women. Additionally, positive stories are shared and women are actively encouraged to participate. In the Youth Resource Centre project in Zambia, the project team found out that, especially in rural areas, women regarded ICT as a very difficult field which could only be understood by men. Others were scared for unknown reasons to sit in front of the computer. The project staff convinced the women that they could take ICT training without having high literacy levels. They also reduced the use of technical words during training.



Women brainstorming at end-user focus group | Sikasso, Mali

## Strengthening and connecting organisations

Without strong local organisations, development impact is hard to achieve and will not sustain. Therefore IICD builds strong relations with partner organisations in the South, empowering their staff to assist farmers in accessing information, improving production techniques and marketing skills, and increasing revenue.

### **New partnerships and business opportunities as unexpected impact**

By integrating ICT, organisations professionalise their work and increase visibility vis-à-vis clients, government and donor agencies. Many partner organisations repeatedly mention that by using ICTs they were able to connect to multiple networks resulting in new business opportunities and partnerships. They are also increasingly recognised by local and national governments. These are results that partner organisations had not anticipated in their projects. These spin-off effects are highly important; they often create more development impact than the initial ICT project, and they make a significant contribution to the sustainability of the organisation and its activities.

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Through their website [www.coprokazan.org](http://www.coprokazan.org), the **Malian women producer organisation Coprokazan** is selling shea butter to clients all over the world, quadrupling its sales from EURO 24,000 in 2006 to EURO 95,000 in 2010. The **Zambian Agriculture Research Institute (ZARI)** obtained grants from the **Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation**. ZARI's manager explains the advantage of ICT: "We can now have quick inputs from our research stations on project proposals with tight deadlines. For example with the **Bill and Melinda**

**Gates Foundation** we needed input within a couple of hours. Without ICT this was impossible. We now have three grants of \$1.5 million for more research."

The **Chawama Youth Project (CYP)** in Zambia received an order for furniture from a German organisation for over EURO 4,000 via email.

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Coprokazan's project catered for many other unpredicted positive spin-offs for the community. People are willing to travel long distances, sometimes more than 30 km, to make use of the information centre. The training room and computers are also used for all kinds of training sessions carried out by different organisations. Whereas in the evening pupils come to do their homework in the vicinity of the building, as this is one of the very few places in the village that has electric light.

### **Challenges of technology use in rural areas**

Installing ICT equipment in rural areas often requires additional protection and prevention measures like power protection and lightning protection, and improved security of buildings. Dust and viruses very often damage the electronic equipment. If solar energy is used to power the computers, the batteries often prove to be the weak link.



Chawama Youth Project | Zambia

## Staff members with ICT skills have a tendency to move to greener pastures, which makes continuous training a must in the organisation

They need to be charged and discharged fully to last. Laptops are often damaged during transport, especially if the project partners use motorcycles or bikes for transport.

Maintenance from service providers is difficult to obtain in rural areas, and training local technicians is not always a sustainable solution either, often due to the brain drain to urban areas.

### **Diversify and never stop capacity building**

Most partner organisations face large staff turnover as a result of ICT training. Staff members with ICT skills have a tendency to move to greener pastures, which makes continuous training a must in the organisation. IICD regularly organises Training of Trainers (ToT) for staff members of partner organisations. It turns out that this does not automatically result in more people being trained, especially if the partner organisation does not have a direct interest or priority to do so, or perceives ICT capacity building as a side activity. IICD learned that it is important to encourage partner organisations to develop a training strategy, ensuring that newly acquired skills are spread on a wider scale and do not only benefit a few individuals.

ICT projects require skills in ICT maintenance and basic troubleshooting. Farmer organisations usually do not have these skills and are not always able to hire a technician. IICD has learned to identify and train potential ICT champions among the existing employees; someone who wants to learn more than basic computer skills and feels ownership for the ICT equipment.

When a partner organisation does not have the capacity to hire and supervise an ICT technician and articulate its technology needs, IICD often accompanies the acquisition process, creating trust and understanding between the management of the organisation and the technician.

IICD learned that building partnerships between project partners and technical service providers is key for sustainable ICT projects. Successful partnerships are more than a simple buyer-seller relationship driven by a business opportunity. They are built on trust and common interests and generally require exposure from the service providers to the reality of the project on the ground, for example through field visits.

Instead of starting with standard basic ICT training, it turned out more effective to start directly with tailor-made training modules: for example, spreadsheets for mango sellers.

When internet connectivity is limited (often in rural areas), it is important to train internet users in low bandwidth use: limitation of video streaming, offline use of email, local storage of online information, text-only downloads etc.

The use of ICT in organisations brings along institutional changes. It is important to involve various segments of the organisation and cater for training in soft skills such as information management, project management and change management. Throughout the years, IICD has increasingly supported partner organisations with the development of a sustainability strategy, training strategy, and ICT maintenance strategy.



Farmer shows his strawberries | Vallegrande, Bolivia

### From ICT project to the sustainable integration of ICT in the organisation

IICD usually works with partners on a project basis, but aims at the sustainable integration of ICT in the partner organisation. Although long-term sustainability is taken into account from the start of the project, it is not always clear from the start where the resources to maintain ICT activities should come from after the project has ended. Several innovative financial models have been found or are still being tested.

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**In Tanzania, Sengerema Telecentre set up a cost-sharing model for its internet connection. The centre shares its satellite connection via a wireless mesh network with twelve local organisations, among which the district office and two schools.**

By helping farmers to move from subsistence farming to commercial farming, **Nian Zwe in Burkina Faso** has been able to start requesting fees. Progressively, as farmers start to benefit from access to ICT, they are more able and willing to pay fees for their trainings, partially responding to the sustainability problem.

**In Sikasso, Mali, the Jèkafo Gèlèkan information centres** are selling useful materials, and solutions like taxing on overall sales are being studied. Developing services that have a direct influence on revenue increase, such as linking farmers to markets, may in the long term be a more viable option for economic sustainability.

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For many partner organisations, project-based funding is their major source of income. Few have other sources of income to cover core costs like ICT. In some cases we have seen that an ICT application generates sufficient income to sustain an activity. This is the case at Pag La Yiri in Burkina Faso, for example, where the community radio generates around 9000 euro per year through broadcasting announcements, commercials and radio programmes sponsored by local organisations.

### Building an information & communication strategy

Apart from financial integration, ICT also needs to be integrated institutionally. Often this does not need specific attention as the work flow adapts automatically to the new ICT applications. In other cases, employees are more reluctant to the changes that come with the use of ICT.

At Nian Zwe in Burkina Faso, extension workers create multimedia content tailored to local conditions and based on local research. Not all educational materials are stored in a central system: the extension workers are reluctant to share their material with colleagues or to put it online. Similarly at ZARI in Zambia, researchers are not too keen on publishing information products without getting recognition.

In such cases, IICD learned that towards the end of a project it needs to assist partner organisations in the development of an information and communication strategy to encourage and guide researchers and extension workers in the processing and sharing of content.

**It is important to involve various segments of the organisation and cater for training in soft skills such as information management, project management and change management.**



Malian producer organisation Coprokazan now sells shea butter to clients all over the world via internet

## Strengthening and linking sectors

ICT interventions of our project partners have contributed to the performance of agricultural sectors by improving knowledge flows and the policy environment. Since 2006, IICD has also helped successful pilot projects to upscale and create development impact at sector level. Lessons are being picked up on the go.

### **Strengthening partnerships between civil society, the public and private sector**

By supporting multi-stakeholder ICT4D networks, IICD supports strengthening linkages between civil society, the public and private sector.

Very often we have seen that locally or regionally operating civil society and farmer organisations that have strengthened themselves through ICT are increasingly seen as a development partner by regional and even national governments. In Ghana for example, the NGO network ACDEP increased its public image among its development partners including the District Assembly. Similarly, the Malian women organisation Coprokazan received an award from the Ministry for the Advancement of Women for its achievements in shea butter production and for the use of ICT to market its produce. In Zambia, the Ministry of Sports, Youth and Child Development (MSYCD), requested two of our project partners to build the ICT capacity of 16 Youth Resource Centres (YRC) all over the country. This experience will be explored in more detail below.

While IICD focused primarily on the inclusion of national government, it worked increasingly with governments at regional and local level. By involving national as well as local governments in the formulation phase of a project, ownership and awareness are created from the start. Also, presenting and building on local pilot project experiences allows governments to better

understand the practical usefulness of ICT for economic development. This can create opportunities for replicating or leveraging a successful pilot on a regional or national scale.

### **Assisting ICT policy development**

In Bolivia, Ghana and Mali, IICD supported the development of national ICT policies for the agricultural sector. In Bolivia and Ghana, the policies have been adopted and are being implemented. In Mali, the policy has unfortunately not been finished due to shifting priorities within the Ministry. Still, capacities and insight has been developed among ministerial staff that can hopefully be used at a later stage.

It is important to co-design the process with the local project holder (in Mali, this was the Ministry of Communication), in order to build in room for multi-stakeholder participation and feedback. The project holder should be free to deal with internal sensibilities and potential frictions (hierarchical relations, boundaries between ministries, etc.) Particular attention has to be given to strong information and communication flows towards all stakeholders.

The choice of the core group of authors is crucial. Within this group, a combination of extensive sector knowledge, legal expertise and ICT sector experience should be combined. Experts can often be found within the IICD-supported ICT4D networks or within project partners'

networks. The core group should be well-facilitated (compensated, trained, coached) to deliver a high quality document.

Once completed and validated by the stakeholders, an ICT policy should also be endorsed by a Ministerial Board. This follow-up process should not be overlooked. With frequent changes in government, policy endorsement can be a challenge.

### Upscaling successful pilots

As partner organisations run successful pilots and strengthen themselves by having access to ICT, some of them get strong enough to strengthen other organisations and create a waterfall effect. Between 2006 and 2010, IICD supported upscaling programmes in Bolivia, Zambia and Uganda. Small, successful pilots from NGOs inspired regional or national bodies and governments to roll them out on a larger scale.

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**In Bolivia, the Departmental Government of Santa Cruz facilitates the exchange of market prices, supply and demand of agricultural products to empower farmers in their negotiation skills with intermediaries. In addition, it assists in the transfer of technologies to and between farmers to increase efficiency and productivity, thereby strengthening food security and revenues of small farmers. The information system builds on a pilot from an NGO called Instituto de Capacitacion del Oriente (ICO) that started in 2002 in one province. The information is now disseminated daily through radio shows and internet in 15 provinces. The daily shows reach at least 300,000 farmers in Bolivia. The system is integrated in the government's long-term planning and is managed and implemented by eight technical staff of the Secretariat of Rural Development. It is supported by technical advisors from IICD.**

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Upscaling processes take a long time to start due to complex and time-consuming political and administrative processes, including signing of agreements, allocation of funding to annual budget lines and strict regulations on the acquisition of equipment. Therefore, the long-term support of key decision-makers is essential to the success of a leveraging program.

The partner organisation needs to believe in its capacity to steer an upscaling programme. Its view needs to go beyond its own organisation and there has to be a drive to assist other organisations so that they can have similar experiences. Although the effect is difficult to measure, IICD believes it contributes to partners' self-confidence by providing opportunities to compare achievements within the country and region through knowledge sharing events.

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**In Zambia, two of IICD's project partners, the Chawama Youth Project and Ndola Resource Centre, are using experience of their pilot projects to build the ICT capacity of 16 Youth Resource Centres (YRC) all over the country at the request of the Ministry of Sports, Youth and Child Development (MSYCD). The Ministry is responsible for the development of out-of-school youth and manages Youth Resource Centres, which offer non-formal skills training and entrepreneurship skills to out-of-school youth. The ICT education is targeted at youths to increase their employment opportunities, to promote youth accessibility to ICT equipment and material, and to promote the operation of internet connectivity as a potential area for entrepreneurship development. So far, 1140 youngsters, 64 trainers and 64 administrative staff have been trained.**

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Finally, a strong relationship between the project partner and the strategic partner (often government) helps to build a strong partnership for upscaling. In Zambia, the Chawama Youth Project already had connections with champions within the government who had the belief that this kind of partnership would work. Here too IICD plays a role as it fosters linkages between civil society and government right from the start of a programme.

With the right tools, people in developing countries can considerably improve their livelihoods and quality of life. Better access to information and communication technology (ICT) is particularly vital in enabling them to achieve their goals. This is why the International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD) creates practical and sustainable solutions that connect people and enable them to benefit from ICT. As an independent not-for-profit foundation, we put knowledge, innovation and finance to work with partners from the public, private and not-for profit sectors. Together, we can make a world of difference.

#### International Institute for Communication and Development

Visitor's address: Raamweg 5 | 2596 HL The Hague | The Netherlands

P.O. Box 11586 | 2502 AN The Hague | The Netherlands

Phone: +31 (0)70 311 7311 | Fax: +31 (0)70 311 7322 | E-mail: [information@iicd.org](mailto:information@iicd.org) | [www.iicd.org](http://www.iicd.org)

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