telecentre.org External Program Review

Final Report

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telecentre.org
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Acronyms
ECA - Economic Commission for Africa
ECE - United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
ECLAC - United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ESCAP - United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESCWA - United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
GEM - Gender Evaluation Methodology
IDRC – International Development Research Centre
NGOs – Non Governmental Organisations
OKN – Open Knowledge Network
PBDD – Partnership and Business Development Division
SWG – Steering Working Group
TLF – Telecentres Leaders Forum
UNDP – United Nations Development Program
UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
1 Executive Summary
telecentre.org is a program to develop and strengthen a global community of people and organizations committed to increasing the social and economic impact of grassroots telecentres. The review provides an opportunity to distil salient lessons from the current telecentre.org program and to use the findings of this review for: a) informing future program direction; b) improving operational and management strategies of telecentre.org in the future (following the transfer of the program to the new telecentre.org Foundation in the Philippines); and c) developing a set of recommendations for IDRC that can be used in future management of a large multi-donor partnership program, and particularly one that involves a private sector partner.

telecentre.org contributed to creating a consensus around an umbrella concept – the telecentre – under which most of the people and institutions working on public access to ICTs were comfortable. This helped in gathering a community (the Telecentre community) and creating a momentum by making a movement converge on similar goals and by sharing efforts. The perceived need to work in these areas, and the fact that telecentre.org addressed them in a very straightforward way has contributed to the view held by many covered by the review that the project has been a success.

The methodology for the Review included, documentation, interviews with key stakeholders, analysis of online presence and a network analysis of stakeholders attending events and engaging online. A keyword guiding the review has been contribution not attribution – telecentre.org intended to contribute to the strengthening of the Telecentre Movement.

The original business plan was structured around four themes which sought to support the telecentre ecosystem. At approximately midpoint in the programme, the structure was changed to be based around 5 pillars. The report details the pillars, their main activities and the outcomes.

- **Networking**:- “Networks connect telecentres; facilitate learning, access to innovative services and products and promote telecentre interests to public-private sector dialogues.” There is considerable evidence that networks supported by telecentre.org contributions have been formed and that the telecentre movement has been strengthened by such action.

- **Academy**:- “Telecentre.org academy today comprises of a number of building blocks that facilitate learning among telecentre workers, administered by organizations that are acknowledged in the telecentre field.” The academy pillar was a “late starter” not explicitly named in the original business plan. It brings considerable potential added value to the movement. The professionalisation of telecentre managers is spoken highly of in many interviews.

- **Content and Sustainability** - “Pillar objectives were always to support the development of content and services for telecentres that could potentially generate revenue to support the financial and social sustainability of telecentres and telecentre networks.” While studies such as the Drishtee study on social entrepreneurship were made available through the programme there is little evidence of the impact on these tools on the community.

- **Research**:- “With the creation of the Research Pillar, there was a greater awareness for planning a more focused research activities in the program......The financial resources for the Research Pillar is estimated at CAD$8.1 million with the bulk of it going to the large project - Global Impact Study of Public Access to ICT - that is co-funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.” The early reports from this study (which focus on literature overviews) seem to be well received by many of the interviewees, and future reports are waited for with great anticipation.
• **Knowledge Sharing**: “The 'business strategy' of telecentre.org was the first to prioritize 'knowledge sharing' as one of the four main investment areas.” Knowledge Sharing has not had the easiest of journeys. Online presence on the internet has evolved dramatically during the lifetime of the programme. Early investments in managing a community website went hampered both by inappropriate software and by the management of the processes. The end result though is a current online community presence with a wide ranging participation across the Telecentre movement.

For each of these pillars there was considerable expenditure on convening face to face events. There is a mantra within telecentre.org (staff, close associates, IDRC) that investment in face to face events was key to forming networks and engaging the telecentre movement globally. The review analyses stakeholders engagements with face to face events, and with the online presence. That section concludes:

- The analysis provides some evidence (with limitations) that events were important for engaging a wide range of people involved in the telecentre movement in order to identify the key players.
- telecentre.org engaged predominantly with NGOs at face to face events; other mechanisms were used to engage with government representatives and the private sector.
- Events contribute to national networks — however, while the idea of networking may spread through events, the presence of networks seems more strongly influenced by the presence of Champions and external factors.
- Online presence can be established and strengthened through face to face events.
- Some targeted work on gender following the GEM guidelines could be appropriate across the online presence.

Three key social investors were part of the programme — IDRC, Microsoft and Swiss Development Cooperation. An analysis of the partnership through interviews with both internal and external stakeholders confirmed what had already been documented by the PDBB in case study on partnerships. While more details are available in the report we reiterate the case study conclusions:

“Bilateral agencies and private sector partners operate under a set of pressures different than those experienced at IDRC. Communication for public relations purposes is more onerous; IDRC should anticipate and plan for communication strategies that take into account co-funders’ needs in order to optimize partnership effectiveness.

*Team IDRC works well at initiation, planning and signing stage and contributes to partnership effectiveness. Upon implementation, internal communication posed some challenges.*

*IDRC may wish to adopt more dynamic and flexible internal processes, especially when partnering with private sector foundations. Effective communication between IDRC’s Resources Branch and program initiatives is important if realistic targets and timelines are to be set and achieved."

The report includes three detailed case studies of Mali, Bangladesh and Colombia, which confirm that telecentre.org has made contributions to the telecentre ecosystem. An analysis of telecentre contributions as a whole, and of boundary stakeholder views in particular, suggests that the programme has succeeded in creating a buzz within the telecentre movement and getting its message across that for survival telecentres will have to come together to form networks.

There are questions raised by a study on event details that suggest events could have been improved to make them more effective, and there is a need to learn the lessons from that study. Regarding content, while the programme has made contributions to content within the telecentre movement, the main
hope of those interviewed lies in the academy thread, which only recently has been able to put key components in place.

The overall perception of success is not so clear when considering outcomes as changes in behaviours of actors involved in the telecentre movement.

In general terms, outcomes associated with the pillars can be grouped in two main categories:

• Areas where there were some major outcomes: networking and knowledge sharing
• Areas where it is expected that there will be major outcomes, but they will take place in the future as, for different reasons, they lagged behind in the overall performance of the programme: content and services for sustainability, the Academy and Research.

As one senior interviewee stated “telecentre.org sought out the middle ground, adding new layers of value not necessarily creating new units of value”

While there was an absence of a rigorous Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy for the programme, there were a considerable number of learning mechanisms included in the programme (eg Project Appraisal Documents, Project Completion Reports, reports for the SWG and team meetings to reflect on the progress of the programme). These reflections and the guidance of the telecentre.org management enabled the programme to lesson learn and change the way it worked over time. However, without a systematised set of the procedures to rationalize, replicate and measure these outcomes the Telecentre Movement as a whole may have missed out on some lesson learning during the time of the programme. An exception to this is the Network Guide which attempts to systemise the learning of the Pillar although it is only recently published and even long time members of telecentre.org seem unaware of most methodologies and outputs. Content and services for sustainability did have some outputs although there seems to be very little evidence on usage or impact, either in the telecentre community at large nor on the end users. Research came late to the overall telecentre.org programme and will not be ready in time to inform its second phase. There is a strong need to monitor, to evaluate, to assess impact in order to provide policy makers with an evidence base that shows how telecentres assist their citizens, and in the longer term the research pillar promises to deliver this. The Academy is similar to the research pillar in its perspectives: new focus, promising outcome and impact, etc. The difference – and quite a big one – is the inner structure: while the research is mostly about a single project, led by a coordinated team, with indisputable leadership, and with a very compact approach, the Academy is about collecting many sensibilities, reaching consensus, creating heterogeneous output while keeping some degree of standardization and coherence. It also faces greater difficulty in assessing outcomes.

Besides what has already been said about planning, monitoring and evaluation in general, we would like to stress these issues in the management of the programme itself. Despite the evident fact that most pillars overlapped in many points, collaboration between pillars has been scarce, with some exceptions in the TLFs and other events by the Networking and Knowledge Sharing pillars. Regarding the Brand - “Isolation” has also diminished the building of a brand – the telecentre.org brand – and contributed to a community based on a sense of partnership rather than a sense of collegueness. Interviewees tend to see telecentre.org as a partner and as an external entity. They see it as a very important partner, and one that they would be proud of working with.

While the partnership of the social investors has at times had its stresses and strains, the three core social investors have been able to steer a programme of work that has contributed to its original vision:- that telecentre.org program would invest in efforts that strengthen the entire telecentre ecosystem.
The cost benefit of the programme is not clear cut. In a most peoples view funding was sufficient. The apparent lack of money constraints may have helped in the creation of short-term momentum however there might have been a trade-off with stronger relationships based on trust and joint effort.

Regarding the future:- The telecentre community and, specifically, the telecentre.org community faces two opposing forces: a centripetal one, working towards convergence, homogeneity and a genuine sense of sharing and working together – arguably the most successful outcome of the programme – and a centrifugale one, where differences in perceptions and goals work towards the atomization or, at least, the regrouping in smaller units of the global telecentre movement. Strong leadership by the telecentre.org promoters and the funding made the centripetal force much stronger than the centrifugale one. Change of hands of the initiative and progressive decrease in funds are likely to put severe stress on its continuity.

The report makes 20 recommendations for implementing details of telecentre.org Foundation, and for IDRC, the private sector and other donors regarding similar partnerships.
2 Introduction

telecentre.org is a program to develop and strengthen a global community of people and organizations committed to increasing the social and economic impact of grassroots telecentres. The “community” (also branded as telecentre.org) is a combination of formal and self-identified institutions and individuals that include:

- National and regional telecentre networks and organizations, the core of the telecentre.org community.
- “Social Investors” (funding partners), that fund the telecentre.org social investment program, and provide strategic guidance: IDRC, Microsoft, and SDC.
- A team of Community Facilitators, who engage, connect, and assist community members in knowledge sharing.
- A support team (hosted at IDRC) that manages day-to-day activities, builds the community, and implements the telecentre.org program vision.

The focus of this program review was on the work carried out by the telecentre.org support team at IDRC since its inception, particularly in building and sustaining the telecentre.org community; in strengthening institutions and efforts of other organizations that make up the community; in facilitating the sharing and delivery of pertinent content, knowledge, and training opportunities; and in the management of the overall vision and mission of telecentre.org program.

The primary purpose of this review exercise is to better understand the extent to which telecentre.org has achieved its program objectives. However, it is also an opportunity to distil salient lessons from the current telecentre.org program and to use the findings of this review for: a) informing future program direction; b) improving operational and management strategies of telecentre.org in the future (following the transfer of the program to the new telecentre.org Foundation in the Philippines); and c) developing a set of recommendations for IDRC that can be used in future management of a large multi-donor partnership program, and particularly one that involves a private sector partner.

3 Terms of reference

The objectives of this review are:

- To evaluate the extent to which the program has met its objectives as set out in the Business Plan, and how the program identifies and manages risk to the achievement of those objectives.
- To offer reflections on the strengths and weaknesses of the overall and specific program approach, particularly how any changes or evolution have contributed to meeting and transforming the program objectives.
- To assess the significance of the program results (i.e. outputs, reach, outcomes, and recognition) and analyze how the program results have or have not contributed to the changes in policy or capacity of its key partners.
- To review the benefits and challenges of telecentre.org partnership model, including the management of the program at IDRC.

The complete terms of reference are given as an annex (Annex 1).
4 Methodology

4.1 Activities

The methodology included:

- A review of program and project documentations, as well as reports that indicate the program’s measure of success:
  - The support team provided summary reports on their own area of responsibility (Pillar reports). These were structured according to the guidelines issued by the review coordinator. These reports were intended to collate key information and reduce the need for extensive review of program and project documents.
  - In order to verify and triangulate this information, a purposive sample of approximately 30 documents were issued by the review coordinator to the reviewers. Some other documents were accessed via the internet or given by interviewees. The document reference list is given in Annex 2.

- Interviews with program team members, managers, telecentre.org community leaders, and other telecentre.org partners (including the funding partners).

- Interviews with a sample of telecentre.org project leaders and other key individuals among the telecentre.org network (which were identified by telecentre.org team).
  - The interview regime was greatly enhanced by the timing of eAsia. The conference eAsia in Colombo Sri Lanka was preceeded by telecentre.org Advisory Council meeting, the first official meeting of the Advisory Council of the telecentre.org Foundation which aimed to consolidate a body of champions for the telecentre movement that will provide the foundation with high level, strategic thinking and advice. eAsia was also preceeded by a training session on financial sustainability for Telecentres. eAsia also included a thematic thread of sessions on Telecentres. Attendance at the talks provided a view of the telecentre movement.
  - 26 face to face interviews occurred at eAsia and its surrounding events (Annex 3).
  - 32 phone and e-mail interviews were carried out in December 2009 (Annex 3).

- Email discussion was initiated with a random sample of 120 extracted from the listing of 1200 people who had attended a telecentre.org event (see next point below). 16 people (14%) responded and engaged in discussion (Annex 8 presents the Findings).

- Monitoring of the Online Consultations on the Future of telecentre.org

A network analysis was undertaken on individuals attending events. Recent literature notes that telecentre.org has funded more than 100 face to face events. A sample of 23 international events, predominantly those organised and managed by telecentre.org was taken, and analysed. Participant lists are used to track attendance, and fed into social network software. This enables visualisation of their connectedness and measures of centrality and (potential) bridging. The analysis is about opportunity – it assumes that attendees at a single event have the potential to connect – it does not assume that they did actually meet and discuss something of importance.

Website statistics were examined for its use and growth. In the telecentre.org Network Guide it states: “…..network geometries are based more on collaboration than strictly on nodal identity: it is more important what do you do than who you are.” Given this prompt and the role of the telecentre.org as a social network leading to collaboration, the membership of the English part of telecentre.org was examined for its presence and interaction – for what it did on the site. This included documenting
contributions of each of the members to the website. Merging of the event and telecentre.org website membership (English site only), enabled a view on the links between online presence and face to face meetings.

The portfolio of approved projects was also analysed for expenditure. Other wider literature on ICT4D was also examined to keep the telecentre.org programme in context of the ICT4D sector.

4.2 Contribution not attribution

In monitoring and evaluation of development and aid activities, there is considerable debate about “contribution” not “attribution”. Indeed, IDRC has been one of the leading proponents in this discussion, particularly as it applies to larger donor led initiatives that influence policy.

telecentre.org is a multidonor programme, and we shall see that one of the findings of the review has been that the differences in expectations and organisational culture of the different donors have sometimes created strain within the programme. This section lays out the approach the review has taken and in particular briefly discusses why a “contribution” approach has been taken.

Although not explicit in the business plan, implicitly telecentre.org is a programme of work that seeks to influence policy, and that talks about strengthening the telecentre movement. Working to a business plan, although an M&E strategy was created, competing priorities meant that the programme did not create a clear and coherent M&E system, and the timescale for specific deliverables were not set out at the start of the programme. Instead, it described stakeholders and their basic needs, and the programme of work adapted to opportunities as and when they arose, sometimes creating new opportunities, but on the whole contributing to the key objective of “strengthening the telecentre movement”. A strong telecentre movement cannot be attributed to telecentre.org, but as we shall see we can say that telecentre.org has contributed to strengthening the telecentre movement.

As one senior interviewee stated “telecentre.org sought out the middle ground, adding new layers of value not necessarily creating new units of value”.

Interestingly, although IDRC is one of the leading proponents of the contribution debate, bringing to the M&E table its work on outcome mapping, telecentre.org did not identify and use the outcome mapping tools. Some elements of outcome mapping have been used as a thread throughout the review, although by no means has outcome mapping as laid out in manuals been applied.

There is another factor which we have taken into consideration when assessing contribution. There is a saying that goes around the development community regarding participation and social mobilisation, attributed to the Lao Tzu, Father of Taoism, that “A leader is best when people barely know he exists, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say: we did it ourselves.”. Some interviewees were very much of the persuasion that Networks were a result of stakeholder interest in their own country and that telecentre.org played a minor role in their formation. Given that interviews with telecentre.org team sometimes suggest a greater role, it is difficult to know whether the telecentre ecosystem would have evolved anyway or whether telecentre.org was able to be a good Lao Tzu leader. We keep this in mind when analysing contributions.

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5 History of a programme and brand

Having introduced the review, this section presents an overview of the program.

Beyond the definition of Telecentres that prefaces most telecentre.org literature is a statement found on page three of key publication “From the Ground Up” by IDRC. It states that “No matter what they are called......they share a common commitment: to help communities enter the information age and embrace the knowledge economy on their own terms.”

Written five years ago, it seems to be effectively one of the core statements of the programme’s theory of change. The Telecentre movement is said to be important because it enables citizens to “enter” and “embrace”.

At the start of the programme this statement remained untested and unvalidated. Yet it was the enthusiasm and the belief of the proponents, including personnel in Microsoft and IDRC, that enabled the programme to move forward. Acknowledging this passion is important because it was not only there at the start of the programme but remains within the support team and the key network players after 5 years. The belief that Telecentres enable communities to enter the information age inform the programme design, and the strategy employed. It is this belief that focuses the business plan on strengthening the telecentre movement by trusting its organic growth in networks and trusting that it will evolve as the world changes.

5.1 Business Plan
telecentre.org has focused on supporting the Telecentre movement – its core opening statement was “The telecentre.org program invests in efforts that strengthen the entire telecentre ecosystem”. Making the assumption that telecentres in all their forms enable “entry” and “embrace”, the programme has primarily addressed the question how can the Telecentre movement be strengthened.

The initial strategy was established in the business plan, and there were a number of streams of work. These included:–

1. **Building networks**: creating or strengthening networks that provide training, technical assistance and other services to improve telecentre sustainability.
2. **Creating content and services**: investing in services and content that can be easily offered at the local level, helping telecentres attract users, generate revenue and increase community impact.
3. **Sharing knowledge**: facilitating materials-sharing to help people working in telecentres learn new skills, adopt innovative social enterprise models and deliver better services.
4. **Connecting people**: convening workshops where telecentre leaders establish new relationships, share innovative new ideas and build practical partnerships.

From the business plan it was said that “telecentre.org achieves these objectives through partnership, with partners working individually and together to deliver concrete services to telecentres......Partnerships include direct, one-on-one investment relationships as well as loose functional alliances, or 'constellations'.

“The telecentre.org program was officially launched in November 2005 at the World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis. A great deal had already been accomplished prior to the official launch.”

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telecentre.org and its partners had: convened 12 workshops attended by over 700 grassroots telecentre leaders; developed a business planning and social enterprise support program for networks; and released a beta online community for telecentres.

For the telecentre.org business plan the ecosystem looked like this:-

Illustration 1: Business Plan - social investment

5.2 Initial Structure
The initial structure of the support team focused along geographical lines – each officer having responsibility for activities in their region. The team experienced some considerable disruption when the founding manager decided to move on (December 2006). The transition was not smooth. There was a period where the manager continued to act as a member of the team but based outside IDRC offices. One of the officers based at IDRC and responsible for the LAC region was designated as interim manager. In March 2008, Florencio Ceballos was confirmed into post as manager. It was during this period that the working structure changed to focus on five Pillars. In his report to the Steering Working Group (SWG) Florencio suggested a rationalisation of the structure. The streams of work were rationalised and became the five pillars:- Networking, Academy, Research, Content and Services, underpinned by Knowledge Sharing.

It was noted by high level interviewees that there was a considerable debate over the pillars, and concern.

Illustration 2: Business Plan - Telecentre ecosystem

Illustration 3: Illustrating the Pillars
that they overlapped which would lead to confusion. In practice the working personalities of the support team have mainly been able to handle this potential confusion and implement their pillars without clashes with colleagues or confusion with clients.

5.3 Introduction of Pillars

Networking

The Network Pillar report notes:

"Networks play a central role in strengthening and supporting the day-to-day work of telecentres. Networks connect telecentres; facilitate learning, access to innovative services and products and promote telecentre interests to public-private sector dialogues. From inception, telecentre.org had an assumption; that if telecentres can access quality support services they will be sustainable. As such, the goal of the network strategy was to increase the capacity of telecentre networks to provide quality support services by making investments in developing networks and growing the telecentre eco-system"

There is considerable evidence that networks have been formed and that the telecentre movement has been strengthened by such action. In the findings the report demonstrates how networks have been able to come together and lobby for policy changes, to learn from each other and to discuss telecentre responses to an ever changing world.

Academy

The Academy Pillar report notes:

"The need for providing training and support systems for continuous learning among telecentre operators is long felt. The last decade witnessed various attempts that aimed to impart management skills to telecentre operators, mostly with varied success, especially in Latin American countries. With the advent of second wave of telecentres, many of which are indeed scale-up programs, the need for more systematic approach to develop skills among telecentre operators is expressed by many of the networks telecentre.org has been engaged with since December 2005.....telecentre.org academy today comprises of a number of building blocks that facilitate learning among telecentre workers, administered by organizations that are acknowledged in the telecentre field.”

The academy pillar was a “late starter”. It was not explicitly named in the original business plan, although it was implicit in some of the content discussion. It brings considerable potential added value to the movement. The professionalisation of telecentre managers is spoken highly of in most interviews. The exception were a number of people questioning its relevance to Europe – both from a need point of view (career paths are not so critical), and the challenge of getting accreditation across bureaucratic Europe.

Content and services sustainability

The Content and Sustainability report notes:

“Pillar objectives were always to support the development of content and services for telecentres that could potentially generate revenue to support the financial and social sustainability of telecentres and telecentre networks”

The focus has been on content for telecentre managers. After many discussions with the Open Knowledge Network (OKN) that focused on content for the user of telecentres, and the closure of the OKN programme, telecentre.org has focused on its mission to support the movement by facilitating tools
for management of centres. While studies such as the Drishtee study on social entrepreneurship were available through the programme there is little evidence of the impact on these tools on the community.

**Research**
The Research Pillar has been dominated by a study on impact funded jointly with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF). The report notes:-

“Prior to the inception of the Research ‘Pillar,’ research activities of telecentre.org mainly concentrated on small-scale scoping studies and granting awards to researchers who had a special interest for conducting research on specific telecentre-related issues (e.g., sustainability of telecentres, gender and telecentre)…..With the creation of the Research Pillar, there was a greater awareness for planning a more focused research activities in the program, and it enabled the ownership of these activities to be managed and consolidated under a clear line of authority and responsibility.....The financial resources for the Research Pillar is estimated at CAD$8.1 million with the bulk of it going to the large project - Global Impact Study of Public Access to ICT - that is co-funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.”

The early reports from this study (which focus on literature overviews) seem to be well received by many of the interviewees, and read with great anticipation for more definitive outcomes.

**Knowledge sharing**
The Knowledge Sharing report notes:-

“The 'business strategy' of telecentre.org was the first to prioritize 'knowledge sharing' as one of the four main investment areas. It said: Sharing knowledge: facilitating materials-sharing to help people working in telecentres learn new skills, adopt innovative social enterprise models and deliver better services. So it identified the following process and means through which it wanted to do the knowledge sharing work: Use leaders' forums, online communities and other social processes to share knowledge and document new ideas.”

Knowledge Sharing has not had the easiest of journeys. Globally, online presence on the internet has evolved dramatically during the lifetime of the programme. Static webpages gave way to dynamic databases that were easily updated and this has led on to social networks and Web 2.0. Early investments in managing a community website went hampered both by inappropriate software and by the management of the processes. The team notes that engaging with activists to systematically manage a programme of work was one of the root causes of the failure of the first year’s work on online communities. The current website hosted by Ning was established relatively recently, and has built up an online community.

Having had an overview of the programme pillars, the following section deals with them in more depth and presents findings from the interviews and data analysis.

6 Findings by the pillars
The following findings are informed by the interviews. Annex 4 presents a breakdown of the coded responses. The findings are also informed by the online survey details of which are given in Annex 8.

6.1 Networking
The Network pillar is, probably, one of the more strategically consistent pillars in the lifetime of the programme, both in terms of activities within the project and as understood by most stakeholders. In
interviews, 82% mentioned networking as a key element of the telecentre.org storyline, and of these 77% spoke positively and while 34% made some negative points\textsuperscript{iii}.

The figure shows the proportion of positive and negative comments for each of the pillars.

Returning to the network pillar specifically; There seems to be a consensus amongst the telecentre community at large – telecentre operators, network administrators, policy makers, all kind of facilitators and telecentre champions, researchers, donors, etc. – that telecentres cannot last long isolated, and that only networks of telecentres can achieve success and be socially and financially sustainable.

Reasons given are many, but they can be grouped in (a) reaching a critical mass to lobby for (political) recognition and funds, (b) gathering intelligence about the trends of the “market” (trends on the demand side about usage, on technology, on policies...) and (c) exchange of knowledge and solutions to improve efficiency and efficacy in telecentre management.

Networking has been in the DNA of telecentre.org from its conception and has remained so along the whole project’s life.

The main activities of the pillar were:

- Creation of the telecentre.org brand and building of the community, including raising awareness about the telecentre movement in international fora like ECLAC, ESCAP, ESCWA, ECA, ECE or UNDP\textsuperscript{iv};
- Institutional strengthening of networks, including supporting the creation and strengthening of telecentre networks (with advice, funds, technology) and endorsement of new and existing ones (lobbying with national governments, international organizations and donors);
- Inter-networks support for knowledge sharing amongst network members;
- Telecentre Leaders Fora (TLF), including international, regional and national TLFs, in which network administrators and members would meet to exchange knowledge and engage in network to network support activities
- Thematic meetings around specific projects (e.g. Gender Evaluation Methodology – GEM)

Some of the outcomes of the pillar were:

- International recognition of the role of telecentres and of telecentre.org as a major actor in the telecentre community;
- An active international movement acting under the same “umbrella”, the concept of telecentre, sharing similar goals and sustained will to engage and share at all levels; a movement present in more than 70 countries and made up by more than 45 telecentre networks representing more than 200 organizations;
• Skilled network administrators that engage and promote networking activities and events with a specific methodology aimed at participation;
• Networks of telecentres newly created or networks that have achieved consolidated business models that lead towards sustainability;
• The Guidebook for Managing Telecentre Networks, a publication gathering some of the lessons learned by the telecentre.org community on network management
• The creation of the Red de redes de telecentros de América Latina y El Caribe (Telecentre network of networks of Latin America and the Caribbean), constituted by 22 networks

There is general agreement amongst interviewees and the documentation consulted that networking activities help in building trust, valued relationships, intention to collaborate and a momentum much needed for the generic success of the telecentre community. Indeed, many synergies have been identified between networking and knowledge sharing, each one helping the other one in achieving their goals.

Despite the agreement on the appropriateness of the pillar and its overall success, there are comments on how its functioning could have been improved, and lack of evidence on other aspects, some of them already gathered in previous reports.

TLF and other events were initially triggered by contacting the leaders with which IDRC had already been working before in the previous 10 years. telecentre.org officers would be identifying the regional and national leaders and invite them to networking events to begin the creation of a community. These events were facilitated during two years by Allen Gunn and Aspiration and using specific methodology to encourage participation - similar to Open Space Technology. A new facilitation team of telecentre.org network members was trained in order to be able to replicate the events at regional and national levels.

While this modus operandi might be a good way to start things up, it is not clear from the documents provided how events were designed and organized in the following years. In 2007 telecentre.org commissioned an important study of their face to face events. The report titled “Convening events – style content and format” states:

“This study tracked the processes and impacts of convening activities developed by telecentre.org during the last three years from the perspective of telecentre.org team members, partners, and stakeholders. Eight events were studied (held in: Colombia, Peru, Brazil, Uruguay, Chile, Malaysia, Benin and the Philippines) and analyzed in six categories: pre-event planning processes, facilitation methodology, tools, documentation, and outcomes. Findings showed telecentre.org team members value the convening as an integral part of the networking and capacity building work they perform and recognized how much they have learned during the past years, but were quite critical about all the different themes studied, specially facilitation methodology, documentation and outcomes. In general participants expressed enthusiasm and positive insights of the events as a whole but when questioned about the specificities they identified certain problems in each of the categories’ studied, with particular emphasis in documentation and outcomes.” Lessons Learned from telecentre.org Convening 2006-2008 M Rethen (2007)

Most importantly it concludes: “Outcomes as a theme showed to be the one that required immediate more action. The lack of specific and concrete actions after telecentre.org organized events was almost
unanimously identified as a problem and connected to the “open space” methodology used. Therefore it would be necessary coordinate the expected outcomes of each event to the methodology and methodology related decisions in order to synchronize expectations and actual results.

To meet participants and partners expectations concerning telecentre.org supported events it would also be helpful to incorporate the resources to support to sustain follow up activities for longer periods as an integral part of the convening.” As above

The review found some evidence of this incorporation of resources to sustain and follow up activities. In the latter moments of the programme PBDD worked with telecentre.org to develop their resource mobilisation, and in Thailand there was a followup on resource mobilisation of a May 2008 workshop. From the comments made in the above report and the interviews, there are strong recommendations for follow up in the final sections of this report to continue with these focused efforts.

There remains an impression that there is a lack of project/event management in the organization of networking events. Despite the positively valued work of community facilitators in gathering and diffusing information about and after the events, interviewees and documentation show that information diffusion was not, in general terms, accompanied by knowledge management. Thus, there seemed to be weak gathering of knowledge and outcomes from events, and poor follow-up with the attendants.

This does not mean that nothing happened at these events: respondents to our questions would always be positive about their attendance at events. Network managers highly valued being taught how to be independent (e.g. raise their own funds, lobby the governments on their own, etc.) rather than depend on a central power that coordinates the network.

Most of the assessment of the network pillar is based on testimonials that provide positive, soft data; there is an absence of hard data that objectively measures the impact of networking activities. In an interviewee’s own words, there is a need to “implement systematic ways to document and track outcomes, tracing impact and re-purposing experiences, lessons and connections in overall planning activities, [to] develop a log frame for the network pillar and demand a theory of change for all activities supported”. In this sense, the Guidebook for Managing Telecentre Networks is a good example of what could generally have been the knowledge management of the pillar.

It appears that telecentre.org was successful in bringing people together, but then was weak in building something together on what was shared. While all the respondents would be happy with the work done by telecentre.org and be of a mind to work for the diffusion and reputation of the “brand”, most of them identify themselves as partnering with telecentre.org, and not as colleagues of it. In other words, they consider it more an institution rather than a community. This is something to take into account in the next phase of the project if cohesion of networks is kept as being one of the most important intentional outcomes of telecentre.org 2.0.

If we retrieve the potential benefits of networking as listed in the Guidebook for Managing Telecentre Networks, there is evidence that:

- Networks were able to pool financial and technological resources both at the national and at the international level: there are many examples where networks could lobby and partner with governments or international organizations that were out of reach before;
• Access to knowledge and information has been increased, but only at a very informal level. There is agreement that now everyone knows who is doing what and where, but evidence of reuse and application of the knowledge shared is very scarce; systematization of explicit knowledge is almost non-existent;

• There has been a wider distribution channels for content and services, namely increased number of websites and events, but as previously said, these are channels that encourage informal sharing and very rarely formal sharing and storage;

• Enhanced collaboration has continuously been taking place in the form of joint projects; it is nevertheless unclear whether these joint projects took place due to networking and/or knowledge sharing activities, or they heavily relied on the personal leadership and direction of specific telecentre.org members and other telecentre champions;

• Decentralized orientation did not seem to take place: collective decisions were still taken at the network administration level, not through coordinated actions at the local level;

• Mutual support and risk reduction, support for smaller players or increased flexibility, neither seem to happen: telecentres kept on acting as independent cells as did national networks in relationship to the global telecentre community; in general, networking affected networks (the network of networks) and not lower levels of the general structure;

• Many network administrators stated more effective representation stemming from a stronger capacity to interact with higher order entities, like governments, and which quite often ended up in new joint projects or strengthened policies towards telecentres.

To illustrate the contribution of telecentre.org in the context of other players:

“UgaBYTES has grown from a simple knowledge sharing network to becoming an African world player and actor in the telecentre movement. During the period (2000 – 2003), it largely focused on linking up telecentre practitioners, sharing with them opportunities, useful linkages, content gathering and skills trainings. In (2003 – 2005), it consolidated her work into programs, which included the knowledge management, Technical, Capacity building, community integration and lobby and advocacy. These were constituted into departments in the strategic plan of 2006/9 (with Administration and Finance as an additional department) – the process was supported by IDRC, telecentre.org and NESsT. The segment of time also saw UgaBYTES improve on her management and administrative systems. UgaBYTES also benefited from the collaborative relationships it has developed with telecentre networks and support organizations around the world in the previous three years. These included: IDRC’s telecentre.org - Canada, Afrilinks - Mali, CAICC - Mozambique, Sarvodaya – Sri Lanka, D.Net – Bangladesh, APC – International, University of Washington - USA, NESsT – Chile, Intel – USA, Hivos – Netherlands, OKN – UK, GDCO – Sudan, CDMS – India, SATNET – Zambia, UDS – Uganda, Wougnet – Uganda, CEEWA – Uganda among others”

UgaBYTES Strategic Plan 2010-12.

The Eastern African telecentre leaders forum, started and supported by UgaBYTES in 2006, has since gathered over 448 telecentre people from Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Mozambique, Zambia, Egypt, Sudan, Eritrea, Somalia, US, UK, India and Canada. So far six events have been held and hosted in Sudan, Kenya and Uganda on a rotational basis. It is a biannual forum that brings telecentre practitioners to chat and chart their problems, find solutions and exchange progress.

The Guidebook for Managing Telecentre Networks also features the case of the Philippine Community eCenter Network.
6.2 Knowledge Sharing

We believe that, in general terms, the Knowledge Sharing pillar shares most of the successes and weaknesses of the Networking pillar, both in form – where they actually shared and crossed activities – and in depth.

The Knowledge Sharing pillar, as partly with the Networking pillar, was created to build community, a community that shared doubts, problems, insights, solutions, content... knowledge. Thus, this community was intended to be drawn from many stakeholders involved in telecentre ecosystems: telecentre network administrators, telecentre operators, content and services providers, and even users of telecentres.

With a consistent and long-term strategy, the Knowledge Sharing pillar has nevertheless gone through several trial-and-error initiatives and projects that have undoubtedly mined the resources available but which have also contributed to lack of achieving the cruiser-speed needed for an organic exponential growth to take place.

The main activities of the pillar were:

- Community Facilitators Project, a network of facilitators that would dynamize and energize the virtual communities, diffuse knowledge amongst members and networks, and act as a bridge between pillars, especially with the Networking pillar
- Knowledge sharing events, normally workshops made jointly with the Networking pillar
- The Helpdesk, in four languages (English, Spanish, French and Portuguese) to provide advice to the telecentre.org community on technical issues
- Hundreds of discussions in the several websites and parallel discussion lists (see Table 1) dealing on key issues challenging telecentres (such as wireless networking, community outreach, e-waste management, social entrepreneurship, services for people with disabilities etc) and looking for possible solutions, which sometimes came\textsuperscript{vi}

It is difficult to identify direct outcomes for the pillar but some of the outputs of the pillar were:

- Telecentre Times\textsuperscript{vii}, L’Heure des Télécentres\textsuperscript{viii} and Voces de Telecentros\textsuperscript{x}, three publications aimed to inform the telecentre community at large;
- Telecentre Magazine, a journal with a more strategic and policy-focused point of view;
- Online presence based on the telecentre.org websites\textsuperscript{v}, in four languages (English, Spanish, French, Arabic), and the constellation of national/network sites, inspired in the official one\textsuperscript{xi};
- The Library, a collection of materials, managed along time with several platforms and now tied to the Academy;
- The aforementioned Helpdesk
- TechTools, a collection of technology tools for telecentres
- Making the connection\textsuperscript{xii}, a book about telecentres, management and sustainability
- The Guidebook for Managing Telecentre Networks\textsuperscript{xiii}
- Telecentre Partners Map\textsuperscript{xiv}, a geolocalization of telecentre.org partners
Table 1: Activity in the Ning website (December 2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Website</th>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Photos</th>
<th>Videos</th>
<th>Discussions</th>
<th>Events</th>
<th>Blog Posts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>English</td>
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<td>4331</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>542</td>
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<td>608</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>727</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>3745</td>
<td>8144</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>969</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>2312</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Over 800 discussion topics have been discussed on the UgaBYTES list by telecentre practitioners in Africa, Asia, Europe and America on key issues challenging telecentres (such as wireless networking, community outreach, e-waste management, social entrepreneurship, services for people with disabilities etc) for possible solutions – this inspired the creation of e-mpower, kentel and TTN mailing lists in the region. UgaBYTES Strategic Plan 2010-12.

The activity at the Knowledge Sharing pillar has undoubtedly been frenetic. There have been many proposals, initiatives and projects over the years – both successful and failed. The community has thrown itself into this endeavor of sharing and participation. Both interviews and documents analysed indicate that there has been an informal exchange of information. 50% of interviewees made positive comments of the pillar while 31% made negative comments.

But this state was reached after not a few trials and failed projects. One of the main problems the pillar faced was design and implementation of tools, attributed by many to IDRC being not a project implementing agent itself, but a research supporting one. This, added to the strategic decision to partner with activists – not professionals – to create complications that led many projects to be abandoned or have their design changed several times.

In this sense, the creation of the website began with Rain City and Allex Semual's team to develop a first website based on a Drupal platform/content management system which was presented at the WSIS in Tunis (2005). The management was then committed to TakingITGlobal, then to ACORN and lastly with RedClay. These changes were, among others, due to unclear specifications of the features of the website (by ignoring the needs of the users), partnering with activists rather than IT professionals. The results were a lot of time and money lost, and the project of a virtual community lagged some years. To avoid reinventing the wheel and the cost of developing a brand new platform, Ning was adopted and customized by ForumOne, which still give some support while the website is managed by telecentre.org and their community facilitators.

Besides resources and time, the main loss of the first years of trial-and-error has been, precisely, knowledge, as the discontinued or redefined initiatives show: the Telecentre Knowledge Network (TKN); the helpdesk; the Tech Tools initiative and model for empowering institutions; the ITU Global Telecentres Map or the different embodiments of the website and the library. The Library has been through many stages including an agreement with the Development Gateway, which was unsuccessful due to many issues; the Library was later developed within Ning, but had to go through a major revision to merge its contents with UNESCO's Open Training Platform, the telecentre.org Academy's choice to host their own materials; last, Zunia, the new Development Gateway initiative, is still used to store and share some content.
These problems have had their negative impact in establishing formal and solid structures of knowledge sharing. While informal diffusion of knowledge is acknowledged to have a measure of success – mainly driven by the community facilitators embedded in the territory, attending events and channelling knowledge between platforms – we believe that evidence shows that more work should be done in formal ways of knowledge sharing, especially those that would make knowledge finding, retrieving and reusing more easily. Though there are some formal structures – the magazines or the library – the lack is mainly in the area of converting tacit into explicit knowledge, as the book and the guide did (albeit to different degrees of satisfaction).

In this sense, it would be expected there would be a greater coordination between the Academy and the Knowledge Sharing pillar, especially in sharing and reusing the same sources of information and knowledge for their respective strategic goals, and specifically in using the same content repositories for their daily activities. This should be extended to facilitating a conversation between the two pillars, where the Academy could gather intelligence (e.g. to design its syllabuses) from the virtual communities, and the community facilitators could rely on the formal content for their knowledge sharing activities.

This convergence of core tools would be likely to bring together one of the major hits of the pillar: the virtual communities. The social networking sites succeeded in providing participation tools to different ranges of individuals. While the international ones would be mainly used by network operators and coordinators, national ones would be much more populated with telecentre operators. Community facilitators would in general bridge these two different layers of the telecentre community in the front end; in the back end, common content should do alike, so to avoid a content divide that would depend on the commitment of the leaders or the ability of grassroots members to participate in “higher level” discussions and fora. It will be, indeed, rich and structured content the one that is likely to attract end users (i.e. telecentre users) into the website, which now are almost absent from it although being a claimed target as stated by many interviewees.

Now that the project is entering a new phase, critical decisions have to be made. The community works and, in general terms and according to the interviews and evidence, it works well. But on these same grounds, the community has yet to prove what its real added value is if it has to enter a phase of organic growth. It is the concern of many that the virtual community is time consuming: despite supportive testimonials, impact assessment should be methodologically and systematically performed to distinguish signal from noise, there should be a structure suitable for searching/finding/retrieving/reusing beyond just sharing, find specific areas and services that add more value to the user, etc.

In general, a better organization and management of knowledge should be a prerequisite so that quality assessment is made possible and, through it, embed the shared knowledge within the activity of other pillars, namely the Academy, Content and Services or Networking.

6.3 Content and Services for Sustainability
Most people consulted – including researchers and scholars, network coordinators and telecentre operators – agreed that sustainability is based on an up-to-date portfolio of content and services. The Content and Services for Sustainability pillar invested in the development of such content and services to help telecentres and telecentre networks in their daily operation and their future sustainability. Only
34% of interviewees made positive comments of the pillar while 42% made negative comments, 20% of which were about the timing of deliverables.

It may be interesting to note the breakdown by type of the comments. We note that telecentre.org partners in the field are relatively complementary.

As an interviewee stated, content and services have both a pull and a push factor: a pull factor to redefine telecentres beyond browsing rooms, to embed them in the socioeconomic context of the community; a push factor to change from pilot to an established project, to reach sustainability. 23% said that for telecentres to serve their communities they must engage in services connected with the peoples livelihoods.

The pillar was originally, and also as the project evolved, caught between the intersection of other pillars like Knowledge Sharing, the Academy or Research, never finding its own role in collaborating with them or in acting as a bridge between them, as the different documentation about the pillar and on the overall project (e.g. budgets) indicates.

The main activities of the pillar were:

- Funding of research projects related with content and services and sustainability through the R&D Fund
- Direct support to product development, aimed at obtaining practical outcomes that could be applied in the terrain and for the end user of the telecentre, like the Rural Innovation Fund (that funded 8 social enterprises)
- Social enterprise capacity building projects, so to capacitate telecentre managers themselves with the capability to develop content and services

Some of the outcomes of the pillar were:

- Knowledge on the possibilities of business process outsourcing (BPO) in telecentres and research paper Rural BPO Through Telecenters (Drishtee, 2007)
- Knowledge on the factors that affect telecentre sustainability and (unpublished) research paper Sustainability First. In search of telecentre sustainability (Liyanage, expected 2010)
- Development Alternatives Group’s Tara Akshar adult literacy programme
- NESsT Social Enterprise Toolkit
- Increase in the capacity of Brazil, Chile and Colombia networks through the Content and Services Channel developed by Compumentor/TechSoup and NESsT

Of the above the Development Alternatives Group’s Tara Akshar adult literacy programme reports significant impact on users. It claims that by June 2009, over 54,000 rural women have been made literate through its TARA Akshar centres in six states (2 years).

http://www.devalt.org/newsletter/sep09/lead.htm
By these outcomes alone, it is difficult to tell whether the pillar had a direct impact in telecentre sustainability and in what measure. In fact, it is even difficult to tell whether the pillar reached its own initial goals. Both documentation and interviews indicate that the pillar itself has suffered from several drawbacks associated with changes of strategic leadership, a certain degree of disarticulation of the projects, and a difficulty to monitor and assess both the activities and outcomes of these.

The creation of the Academic and the Research pillars did not help the Content and Services for Sustainability pillar but, on the contrary, overlapped considerably with its own goals, subduing many of them.

As a rough indicator, it can be stated that the pillar was almost nonexistent in the minds of most interviewees. While having a clear idea about Networking or Knowledge Sharing (as a pillar or in general terms as a concept - fully understood and shared), there was very low awareness about Content and Services with the exception of some specific cases, normally by those that were directly involved in pilots or funding. Nevertheless, even amongst those, it was difficult to track the implementation of content and services at the telecentre level and to assess the impact towards the end user.

In the pillar report it is stated that the “pillar failed to develop a cohort of networks and service providers who felt united in purpose in some way”. A programme officer commented “it was lack of focused commitment in this pillar that led to this result due to changes in leadership, low resources both financial and human." She further added that, "the hope is that tc.org Foundation can use this regional cohort of networks and expand from there, using the tools developed and the leadership organiztions being groomed by the project (Toolkit, TechSoup, ATN)” This is quite the contrary to what happened in other pillars, where the network usually came first, and it might well be a lesson learnt for further initiatives of this kind.

Special mention deserves the Content and Services Channel Project run by TechSoup and NESsT, whose goal is “to help telecentre.org affiliated networks distribute products and services that member telecentres can use to generate revenue and deliver value”. If the project had been finished it would have provided valuable evidence on whether networks are a good channel to deliver content and services to telecentres – as the project assumes – and whether these content and services provide a good basis for social and financial sustainability – as it is assumed in the overall project and as it is stated by managers and researchers in our interviews.

So far, the state of the project only brings information that some – not all – networks are prepared to act as content and services coordinators and deliverers, but that they need certain amounts of training and capacity building. In general, all of them need stronger organizational and managerial infrastructures, especially in aspects related with economic sustainability and planning; these needs are somehow gathered by the Academy pillar but, seemingly, only at the telecentre level and not the network level.

As per the impacts, the project managers themselves describe how the impact has only reached network managers but still not telecentres – not to speak about the end users. It is expected that once the project...
is finished, a major impact would happen, being the outcome an increase in the quality and/or quantity of services that would both help telecentre sustainability as better covering the needs of the end users.

So far, though, the project is still at a very early stage – networks assessment – so to speak about outcomes (despite the side-effects of the assessment itself on capacity) or impact is premature.

In conclusion, given the state of the pillar, it is very uncertain that there are any major outcomes besides the aforementioned documents and some training sessions. Changes in behaviour have not been reported by the project or have not been found by our interviews which, in general, state ignorance on the evolution of this pillar.

6.4 Capacity Building / Academy

Not initially included in the original telecentre.org business plan as a pillar, training and capacity building was raised as a major need by many in the early steps of the project. Competent and capable telecentre operators – i.e. professionalization of the telecentre work – were considered an important issue in the context of sustainability. Or, put differently, economic and social sustainability depends on appropriate content and services that can only be provided by capable operators and by networked telecentres; and only networked telecentres and capable operators can come up with new or customized content and services that adapt to changing demand.

Thus, training, that was featured as a goal of the Building Networks area in the original plan, came to be a pillar on its own in mid 2007 to both foster and formalize capacity building in the telecentre community, especially to provide operators with specific skills to run their own their telecentres.

It also provided yet another answer to a strategic goal, training and empowering telecentre operators so they could leave the telecentres and enter the job market as IT specialists, businessmen, etc.

Last, but not least, it would also address a major need of telecentre users, and one that was driving them towards telecentres: training in ICT skills, business skills, language skills, etc.

People spoke highly of the Academy pillar. 70% said something positive about the pillar, and only 20% made negative comments – often about the timing – 15% noted it was very late starter.

The main activity of the pillar during the last three years has mainly been the creation of the telecentre.org Academy and its ecosystem of national academies. This ecosystem is coordinated by a central global steering committee and supported nationally by local universities and telecentre networks.

The main outcomes of the pillar so far are:

- Global steering committee of the telecentre.org Academy – and soon to be global secretariat – and established or soon to be national academies of Colombia, Brazil, Chile, Egypt, India, the Philippines, Peru, Sri Lanka, Uganda and Malaysia;
- Content management system to hold the curriculum commons initiative and learning management system where to run the courses;
- 12 training modules localized in about 10 languages;
Global awareness and support, within the telecentre and the telecentre.org community, of the importance of training in general and of the telecentre Academy specifically.

Definition of a capacity building programme, a global certification plan and an associated consortium of universities

These outcomes represent both a major achievement, as the Academy is a huge enterprise, and the promise of a big potential, as “the Academy is yet to pilot its course at the global level”, quoting the Academy pillar report.

The latter implies greater difficulties in the real launching of the Academy, as potential donors would like to see some training experiences, which will not come without funding. Nevertheless, the major concern of most interviewees was not (only) funding, but coordination and coping with a certain degree of standardization needed to make synergies possible and the project efficient. The heterogeneity of target users - citizens of several dozen countries – poses particular challenges.

This is, by large, the most challenging point in the whole Academy project, as a general curriculum and common training contents – even if localized – by definition diverge from national curricula and local (not localized) content. This point can be extended to certification, though a similar credit schema is already being worked with.

The heterogeneity has brought up the need to partner with local universities and, quite often, with governments to design certificates compliant with national educational systems. This has made the Academy by far the most politicized project, raising tensions within the network that telecentre.org definitely needs to address in its next phase. Though not all the interviewees agree on the degree of these tensions, it is common ground that leadership will have to be stronger in the future and especially in this area.

This leadership will also have to prove strong across pillars. Evidence and some commentators point to the poor use of research results and outcomes from other pillars (i.e. Networking or Knowledge Sharing) when creating syllabuses and educational material. This issue has been somewhat readdressed in the last months by making the warehouse and the Library run under the same platform, thus creating a unique point of entry to content, which we believe to be a good decision not only in operational, but also in strategic terms.

The reviewers were surprised to see that Brainhoney – a proprietary solution – was selected as the Academy’s LMS, while the University of Colombo, that will administrate it, has expertise using Moodle. Reviews of Brainhoney describe it as a very easy to use LMS, especially addressed to K-12 students, which might be a good choice to establish the lowest learning curves for non-skilled users (e.g. BOP telecentre users). Notwithstanding, the manifest lack of openness of the platform might create havoc in the long-run on the project, in both financial and structural ways.

As a general comment, it could be added how late the pillar was created in relationship with the overall programme, especially when it was seen by many as the keystone of the overall project. Nevertheless, there are also comments on the Academy necessarily relying on a strong and broadly established network as a precondition to its design and implementation, hence the need to wait for other pillars to create the appropriate context.
6.5 Research
telecentre.org was started under the assumption that public access to ICTs was necessary and that it had an impact in people’s lives. Most of the research done in the previous years had been focused on telecentre needs and the state of the telecentre movement: investment needs, support on content and online service, and networking and coordinating structures. The results of this research were most appropriately used to define the project and its main investment lines. The Research Pillar focused initially on the gender aspects of the statement, investigating whether telecentres enabled ‘entry’ and ‘embrace’ equally between men and women. The research discovered that telecentres did not “automatically” overcome gender bias, and telecentre.org has contributed to producing guidelines and capacity building tools to redress the imbalances. Nevertheless, the question – whether telecentres themselves had any impact – remained unaddressed though the need to assess impact was already present in foundational documents.

The creation of the Research pillar in 2008 directly filled this void.

More substantial research has been focused on the core of the statement but only within the last 2 years. Research cofunded by Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, is working on a longer term study of how (and if) telecentres help communities enter the information age and embrace the knowledge economy on their own terms. By widening the research to include other forms of public access to ICT (eg Libraries), the answer can be set in the context of a changing world of access. As F Tulus, the programme officer responsible for the research has said “This study is actually going further than looking at the issue of access (i.e. whether telecentre provide a way for people to enter and embrace the info economy). It will attempt to find evidence that points to whether or not telecentres can facilitate social and economic changes in a community or a particular segment of a society (i.e., if people do embrace the info economy because of access provided by telecentres, what impact does it have in terms of their social and economic well being?)”

Interviewees spoke positively of the research, 54% made positive comments, while only 15% made any form of negative comment about the pillar.

The main activity of the research pillar has been co-funding – along with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation – the Global Impact Study of Public Access to Information & Communication Technologiesxx, though other parallel activities have taken place like the module for telecentres of the Gender Evaluation Methodology II or the Amy Mahan Research Fellowship Program.

As it is too soon for the main research project to have published major results**, the most important outcome of the Research pillar has been awareness raising on the importance of impact assessment, both at the macro level – what is the impact of public access to ICTs on the economy and society at large – and the micro level – what is the impact of a specific telecentre on its community. Added to this, an expert research working group has been assembled and rigorous research methods have already been formulated and made available for the broader public. There is some evidence that the team in Bangladesh feel their capacity to do research has been built.

This awareness and, even more, the expected results of the ongoing research and of the studies on ICT4D impact assessment frameworks that are underway are much needed to legitimize the telecentre
community and the telecentre.org project, as policy makers and donors are increasingly divided on the impact – and, hence, the appropriateness of setting up public access to ICTs policies and projects.

In this sense, some interviewees observed that in order to face the actual technological and social changes – within the telecentre community and in the society at large – the research would have better been started before, so that the results could already be available. These observations were especially made in regard of impact at the micro level and its relationship with telecentre sustainability. On the other hand, another interviewee also commented that, while desirable, scholarly knowledge on telecentres and public access points was scarce when telecentre.org began its journey, so “telecentre.org did good in creating a network of networks and not waiting for the research”.

Possible or not, there is a major concern – as could be witnessed during eAsia 2009 or through the makings of this same independent review – about legitimacy of the project and monitoring and assessment of the investments made at the telecentre or the telecentre network levels. Thus, if not able to legitimate the creation of telecentre.org, the pillar should indeed be able to legitimate its continuity.

Though the deployment of resources to achieve the goals of the pillar is impressive, it is yet to be clarified how this pillar will benefit from previous research in other pillars (e.g. Content and Services for Sustainability) or how lessons learned from these other pillars (e.g. Content and Services again, or Knowledge Sharing) will add to the Research findings. Even if R&D has a different nature from academic research, it certainly overlaps more often than not.

Added to that, the concentration of almost all the resources in a single project might make it difficult to accomplish the aim of telecentre.org to raise awareness on public access research and create a community of scholars devoted to this topic. The intersection between this project and other research projects run or funded by the IDRC or the Gates Foundation might be a good approach to this issue.

Last, but not least, as the Research pillar is serving two masters – providing the intelligence that the discontinued Monitoring and evaluation strategy aimed at providing to telecentre operators, and providing evidence to policy makers – it is very important that researchers are able to “speak” at a broad audience and in their own words. The open research approach of the project might help in that, but telecentre.org should be able to capture and translate the results into effective and applied practices.

7 Event and Website Analysis
The business plan of Telecentre.org argues that face to face meetings (convening) are a key to strengthening the movement and to starting and supporting networks, and the investment in face to face meetings was emphasized during the briefing for the review.

In order to test this, a sample of 23 events were identified and participant lists gathered. The analysis has limitations. The sample focused on international events (not national events), and by default tended to be those that had been documented and archived effectively. It is interesting to note that the dates span 2004 to 2007 but there is an absence of 2008 and 2009 – this may reflect the greater focus on regional events. One programme officer noted that “reasons may also include a combination of: a) lack
of resources remaining within telecentre.org program, and b) telecentre.org has build up capacity of our partners to the point that they can now run/organize these events themselves.” This is a reasonable hypothesis, although the evidence does not clarify which is the main reason. It may also be that reporting tended to be delegated to content facilitators who shared their blogs on the social network orientated Ning telecentre.org site, and no one systematically ensured that a single event report was submitted. Blogging may have greater impact on the movement than a full report which sits on a (virtual) shelf – however we do not have enough information to evidentially determine this.

The following analysis has its limitation but nevertheless represents a substantial investment by the program during its early stage, and illustrates how early face to face events enabled (or not) networks and more recent outcomes.

In the 23 events, over 1,200 individuals were engaged. The diagram below graphically illustrates this engagement – black squares are events and red circles persons, with the size of the circle representing the number of events engaged. Annex 5 presents the details.

![Illustration 6: Representation of individual networks in telecentre.org](image)

### 7.1 Who are these people?

There is a sample of 50 individuals who have each attended more than 2 events. The single most strongly represented country is India (12 people), followed by Canada (6). There is an even regional distribution:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>58.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>67.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
N. Af / Middle East  2  4.0  4.3  71.7
N. America  10  20.0  21.7  93.5
Latin America / Carib  3  6.0  6.5  100.0
Total  46  92.0  100.0
Missing System  4  8.0
Total  50  100.0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographical distribution of top 50 ranked event attenders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The gender balance is 60:40 (male:female)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 7.2 Engaging institutions

The organisations that have more than one representative in this sample are:

Microsoft  7
IDRC  6
M S Swaminathan Research Foundation  3
Sarvodaya  2
UGABytes  2

They are drawn largely from the NGO sector:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Donor</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>75.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Sector</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>94.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telecentre</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>74.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing System</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisational distribution of top 50 ranked event attenders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.3 Engaging in the social network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In an attempt to delve deeper into the outcomes of face to face meeting, we hypothesised that if people were internationally networked, they might engage with the social network website. There are currently 1992 members of telecentre.org English site, although the following is based on a subsample of 1945 members. Member profiles were queried for their involvement in website activities - Community Blogs, Discussions, Events, Groups, Photos, Photo Albums, Video, Consultation, the latter being whether they joined in the recent consultation on the future of telecentre.org.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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It appears that telecentre.org has created something of “critical mass” in a number of countries, where it has attracted substantial membership:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table Number of online telecentre.org members by Country*

There is a concentration in Asia:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>872</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>67.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>73.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. Af / Middle East</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>82.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. America</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>92.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America / Carib</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>99.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>.4</td>
<td>.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1917</td>
<td>98.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing System</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1945</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table geographical distribution of online telecentre.org members (December 09)*

There is a 77:23 (male:female) gender ratio among members.

### 7.4 Outcomes of events

In this section we attempt to consider the impact of the face to face events on the subsequent involvement of the country in the telecentre movement and with telecentre.org.

India has had a number of strong champions in its telecentre ecosystem, and unsurprisingly some of these individuals engaged with the events. India has also been able to generate political support and nationwide dialogue in Mission 2007, which has been an example to other countries (e.g. Bangladesh Mission 2011).

We know that despite the high attendance of Nepali representatives, the network startup was hampered until recently by external political factors. USA, Canada and Switzerland are unsurprisingly predominantly donors, while Egypt has had the strong support from Champions in the UNDP system. Uganda has had strong engagement with Ugabytes, which has led to more regional networking for East Africa. The Dominican Republic has seen policy adoption using the GEM research.
The outliers seem to be Malaysia, which despite its high ranking in attendance does not seem to have a network nor evidence of a strengthened ecosystem, and Hungary. Hungary was initially involved through telecottages. Interviewees suggested that the partnership between telecentre.org and telecottages struggled as telecottages was unable to be as inclusive as telecentre.org would have liked. Since then telecentre Europe has blossomed with a slightly different set of stakeholders (see below).

The remaining surprise is the relative absence of Latin America and the Caribbean. This may represent the comparative isolation LAC feels due to language – it is difficult to engage in Asian and African English language based events. This was visibly obvious at eAsia where Brazilian delegates struggled to engage. On the other hand it may just be due to the sampling of the events and so we do not read too much into this.

7.5 Engaging in the website

Question – is there a possible link between attending events and website involvement?

Of the 50 people who attended 2 or more events 36% are members of TeleCentre.Org. and are active members; Although 36% seems relatively high, the table below presents the correlation between attending events and participation in the website.

Question – is there a link between the networks in the key countries and website activity.

With strong awareness of its limitations, one approach is to sum the number of postings on each of 7 website activities (see below). Indeed, telecentre.org pays content facilitators, who have an obligation to produce a certain number of blogs or content per month. Of the 61 who on the English site have added 5 or more blogs, 13 are paid community facilitators (the 14th falls outside the cut off of 5 blogs – and is not a native English speaker). The table presents with and without inclusion of the paid for blog content.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13.55</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>11.64</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>5.37</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>1.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>4.85</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>4.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>2.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>1.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table Website activity by Country (December 09)*

We note from the table above that while the paid content facilitator makes considerable difference in most countries, it makes little difference to the Bangladesh and Chile data, although it surprisingly makes more difference than one might expect to India. This may be because the brand of telecentre.org is not as strong in India as it is comparatively in Bangladesh. Nepal does not have a paid content facilitator.

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Community Facilitators cost relatively little to maintain and make the site alive. However, the analysis suggests that relatively new networks such as Nepal are registering members but not yet engaging in activities on the site.

**Question(s)**
- are there a links between event attendance and involvement in the telecentre consultation?
- was the consultation dominated by people who are the more active on the website?

It should be noted that approximately 10% of members of telecentre.org made comments on the consultation about telecentre.org future.

The following table presents relationships that exist between various website activities (note that this is based on the activities of a small sub-sample that make active use of the site).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Blogs</th>
<th>Discussions</th>
<th>Events</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Photos</th>
<th>Albums</th>
<th>video</th>
<th>consultation</th>
<th>Attend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blogs</td>
<td>0.442***</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.42***</td>
<td>0.382***</td>
<td>0.399***</td>
<td>0.33***</td>
<td>0.278***</td>
<td>0.222***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussions</td>
<td>0.442***</td>
<td>0.417***</td>
<td>0.359***</td>
<td>0.31***</td>
<td>0.257***</td>
<td>0.262***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.205***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups</td>
<td>0.42***</td>
<td>0.417***</td>
<td>0.383***</td>
<td>0.255***</td>
<td>0.234***</td>
<td>0.323***</td>
<td>0.288***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photos</td>
<td>0.382***</td>
<td>0.359***</td>
<td>0.383***</td>
<td>0.479***</td>
<td>0.355***</td>
<td>0.242***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albums</td>
<td>0.339***</td>
<td>0.31***</td>
<td>0.205***</td>
<td>0.255***</td>
<td>0.479***</td>
<td>0.434***</td>
<td>0.243***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>video</td>
<td>0.33***</td>
<td>0.257***</td>
<td>0.234***</td>
<td>0.355***</td>
<td>0.434***</td>
<td>0.258***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consultation</td>
<td>0.278***</td>
<td>0.262***</td>
<td>0.323***</td>
<td>0.242***</td>
<td>0.243***</td>
<td>0.258***</td>
<td>0.203***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend</td>
<td>0.222***</td>
<td>0.288***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.203***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table Correlations between intensity of website activities (all members, December 09)*

There is a strong degree of correlation between all website events with the exception of organising events (minimal activity).

There is a link between attendance at face to face events and participation in the consultation about the future. There is also a link between participation in face to face events and involvement in blogging. What might be of mild interest is the absence of a correlative link between attendance and discussions on the website.

**7.6 Conclusions,**

There is a mantra within telecentre.org (staff, close associates, IDRC) that investment in face to face events was key to forming networks and engaging the telecentre movement globally. Other studies strongly suggest that online presence is strongly influenced by a face to face meeting first - that people do not engage with each other using electronic media until they have met at least once.

The analysis picks up on events in the first 3/5ths of the programme, while the website only became a social network in the latter part of the programme. Nevertheless it is informative that there is a correlation between attendance at an event and involvement in the website.

**In terms of the review, we would conclude the following:**
• The analysis provides some evidence (with limitations) that events were important for engaging a wide range of people involved in the telecentre movement in order to identify the key players.
• telecentre.org engaged predominantly with NGOs at face to face events; other mechanisms were used to engage with government representatives and the private sector.
• While the idea of networking may spread through events, the presence of networks seems more strongly influenced by the presence of Champions and external factors.
• Online presence can be established and strengthened through face to face events.
• Some targeted work on gender following the GEM guidelines could be appropriate across the online presence.

Having made the last statement, it is important to note that the majority of content facilitators are female. Regarding curriculum development, in both the Singapore and Kuala Lumpur meetings in 2009 there were more females than males in attendance. These are perhaps indications that telecentre.org is working out some of the recommendations of the GEM research.

8 Findings regarding the social investors partnership

8.1 The partners
At the start of the programme, three key social investors formed a partnership to invest in telecentre.org. The intention was said to be to draw others into the partnership but this does not seem to have happened. At a local level key grantees of telecentre.org are often juggling the requirements of a range of donors. For example while telecentre.org provides the majority of funding, Ugabytes has other donors. On the one hand this is healthy, making them less vulnerable to the cessation of any one donor (as they now face with the changes in telecentre.org), but on the other hand leaves them trying to fulfil different donor agendas.

Other donors could not be drawn into the programme. Some interviewees felt that IDRC holds a strong brand and that other donors would not be comfortable with the risk of being subsumed by this. Others suggested a similar comment regarding Microsoft - that private sector players would be wary of joining the programme in case they were overshadowed. Still others suggested that the programme of work was not attractive. One key respondent noted that telecentre.org did not identify the “low hanging fruit” and make early outcomes that could impress other donors.

The reviewers note that the ICT4D sector, such as it is, has evolved during the time of the programme and many donors have withdrawn from funding ICT4D programmes per se. This is evidenced by the closure of the DFID UK ICT team with the consequential outcome of Catia not entering a phase 2. Similarly the Open Knowledge Network (OKN), which had been found to have difficulties in delivering its objective, was also not funded in subsequent phases. This view of a general shift on donor responses to ICT4D is also supported by the changes in SDC. After the Paris meeting SDC has shifted its emphasis
towards ICT in support of other sectors rather than being a consideration in itself. They wish to focus on content for enhancing and improving local governance, livelihoods, health, education, citizenship. As such while they see a role for telecentres, they point to local SDC funds supporting specific initiatives rather than SDC supporting a global Telecentre programme of work.

8.2 Relationships within the donor partnership

The telecentre.org programme developed from an impetus led by Microsoft. R Fuchs was approached by Pamela S. Passman (now Corporate Vice President and Deputy General Counsel) at WSIS, who raised ideas and questions about Telecentres. Rich Fuchs (then ICT4D Director at IDRC) had already established his reputation for involvement in telecentres, being the founder of the first telecentres in NewFoundland. At IDRC he had explored ideas such as a helpdesk, bringing together of an early network of telecentre activists, and “strengthening” telecentres. These early responses were taken up by UNESCO. When Microsoft proposed to Fuchs a specific programme of work hosted by IDRC, which included strengthening the telecentre ecosystem, Fuchs responded positively. There were some discussions about the core values, the name of the programme, and so on but soon a MOU was signed, and the programme launched. Mark Surman was hired as the programme manager. It is important to note that while Mark was passionate about telecentres he was also focused on Open Source software solutions.

SDC took a high level role in the advisory steering group. They contributed to the strategy discussions and broad directions but left the operational implementation to the secretariat. This seems to have been a workable arrangement. It was mentioned by some interviewees that the branding on some publications has not always reflected the equality of the partnership – SDC sometimes being on the back of the book and not the front cover.

Regarding Grant giving the distribution between donors is given in graph 1. This graph is derived from the portfolio of approvals for grants not the official accounts.

Note that these figures do not include the core funding for the secretariat and shows the BMGF Funding for the Impact study in 08/09.

Specifically answering the question objective in the TOR

What strategic advantage has IDRC brought to the program and what where the challenges faced in having the program being “hosted” at IDRC?

IDRC had a significant credibility among the development community. By hosting the telecentre.org secretariat with IDRC, Microsoft was able to distance itself from its private sector image of being focused on software, and to contribute to public good in the telecentre movement.
Having said that, there were considerable challenges to IDRC working with Microsoft. Strategically, IDRC (and SDC?) was focused on a participatory “developmental” approach. The private sector by definition is more familiar with “rapid prototyping and commercial roll out”, i.e. rapid solutions to users needs. It has been good that these two cultures have been able to cooperate on a single programme but it has sometimes proved frustrating according to some of the interviewees.

Of all those interviewed, 42% said that there was a misfit between telecentre.org and IDRC, although 20% said it was a good fit. Overall the experience left 62% of the interviewees with a positive impression of the private sector, and 30% with enough negative impression that they made a negative comment.

In studies on partnership IDRC has identified 8 factors that enable good partnership. The key lessons published in Partnering by Design: Case Studies on the Factors Influencing Partnership Effectiveness are:-

- “Bilateral agencies and private sector partners operate under a set of pressures different than those experienced at IDRC. Communication for public relations purposes is more onerous; IDRC should anticipate and plan for communication strategies that take into account co-funders’ needs in order to optimize partnership effectiveness.
- Team IDRC works well at initiation, planning and signing stage and contributes to partnership effectiveness. Upon implementation, internal communication posed some challenges.
- IDRC may wish to adopt more dynamic and flexible internal processes, especially when partnering with private sector foundations. Effective communication between IDRC’s Resources Branch and program initiatives is important if realistic targets and timelines are to be set and achieved.”

This overriding statement from the case studies seems tailor made for the telecentre.org experience. As described above the different pressures came into play, and it does not seem that Team IDRC anticipated and planned communication strategies to take into account the private sector donors needs. Similarly the initiation went well, but it was on implementation that challenges arose. And finally there is explicit feedback from interviewees that IDRC internal processes did not feel “dynamic and flexible” resulting in unrealistic timelines in the business plan.

Having said that one must acknowledge that telecentre.org was one of the 6 case studies so by definition it would likely encapsulate the statements made in the Lessons learned section of the study. Annex 5 presents an analysis of the PBDD case study 8 factors based on the IDRC/SDC/Microsoft partnership for telecentre.org. (NB Since the PBDD study was based on internal consultation only, and this review has included external views, the PBDD observation is supplemented by reviewers observations).
9 Case Studies
Annex 6 presents 3 detailed case studies – Mali, Bangladesh, Colombia. The case studies illustrate the engagement of telecentre.org in either creating or strengthening national networks. It also examines the role of face to face international meetings in the formation of these activities.

10 Analysis - What was the role of Telecentre.org
When it started Telecentre.org was addressing a specific context and environment. It was started at a time when the internet was reaching developing nations, and the wide range of stakeholders focused on public good (Government, Civil Society and CSR Private Sector) were making telecentre investments focused on local infrastructure: computers; Internet access; software; electricity. As the business plan put it “too few resources have gone into building the skills of telecentre managers, creating high-value content and services to offer through telecentres, or networking telecentre people so they can learn and collaborate with each other.” The focus of the programme was therefore on the telecentre ecosystem and movement. “Movement” because if telecentres were to be community spaces, there was a need to focus on people. “Ecosystem” because the survival of a telecentre was not about having a computer or even connectivity, but about its complex context in the livelihoods of the community.

70% of respondents made positive comments about the contribution of telecentre.org to the Telecentre movement. However 34% also made negative comments. Importantly, 46% said they could identify policy influences, and 58% felt telecentres had a positive future.

Given the emphasis on building capacity of telecentre operators or managers, one approach to discussing the role of telecentre.org would be to focus on the key stakeholders, and consider the processes that were undertaken by the programme in order to build their capacity. The reviewers present the diagram below. From the findings the key boundaries of stakeholders seem to be as illustrated:-
The Secretariat focused much of its efforts on Key Telecentre operators or fledgling networks in order to strengthen the National and Regional Networks. It also engaged with Content providers to create content that would support the ecosystem (e.g. Drishtee Study of Sustainability), and it intended to engage with local donors (to bring more donors into the partnership). In theory these players in turn engaged with policy makers and telecentre operators to support the national and regional telecentre ecosystem. The telecentre Operators engaged with Users, with the benefits flowing onward to their families and communities even if they were non users. Branding is given its own line since the Business Plan mentions that the telecentre.org Brand is intended to influence the policy environment by giving credibility to the telecentre movement.

The diagram is not intended to communicate a linear approach. As discussed in the methodology, telecentre.org could not expect to control the change that might occur in these key players, but only influence that change and contribute to change.

As we have seen, the early part of the programme was able to build relationships with key players but was unable to deliver on “concrete services”. As at 2007 the team summarised it like this for the SWG:-

“Feedback: keep going, but communicate and follow through better

- Great start up! We've created powerful relationships and a strong, authentic brand.
- Our vision is widely supported by partners at all levels....
- Our 'organic network of networks' approach has been well received......

... however ...

- We do more than we show, and we almost never talk about concrete outcomes or achievements. People beyond our core partners don't know what our value proposition is.
- We create energy but don't follow up....... We need to finish what we have started.
- Partners don't always know how to grab on and get involved..... .
- Bottom line: we have the vision and the relationships right, but we need to improve our execution in a number of areas. We need to 'deepen, explain and grow (slowly)'.”

It is against this backdrop that the pillars become revised and focused, and, as we have seen, begin to deliver. Interestingly in the 2006 startup evaluation there are a number of recommendations, some of which get implemented from about 2008 onwards, and some remain a ongoing need:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendations from 2006 startup evaluation</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>telecentre.org should become a sustainable community fostering on-going collaboration among participants beyond the funding timeline of the telecentre.org program</td>
<td>The creation of the website in 2008 emphasised online social networking creating a forum for ongoing collaboration – national and regional networks put in place possibilities for the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formally introduce members of the telecentre community to each other and provide times and spaces for them to build relationships with each other; virtually and face to face</td>
<td>A growing emphasis on national meetings and enabling regional meetings gave time and space, as did the social network site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute steering committees for convening events to participants’ needs</td>
<td>This was not so well implemented (see below comment ensure that forums and meetings closely meet the about events), but the plans for telecentre.org foundation put this in place.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Enable increased follow-up after workshops both from telecentre.org and among participants to report on progress, next-steps and new developments.

Network leaders prefer opportunities to cooperate with each other over training activities; however, managerial training should be prioritized over technical skills.

For local telecentres, prioritize internet access, online resources and hardware discounts over software discounts, on-demand tech support and innovative technologies.

Give priority to offline content to address the bandwidth issue for telecentres with slower connections.

Ensure that the telecentre.org website does not duplicate existing regional online resources, help desks and external technology portals.

The program should remain focused on supporting the sustainability of existing networks as a top priority.

The study below suggests this was not systematically put in place, and follow-up is still an ongoing need.

The creation of the academy pillar has enabled telecentre.org to implement a longer term strategy for giving the telecentre movement professionalised potentially sustainable management skills.

The programme evolved to create discussion about entrepreneurial services and in recent days has create forums for discussing longer term financial sustainability for telecentres – the emphasis on technology has decreased even further than this recommendation suggests.

In Mali case study there is a clear example where offline content was facilitated.

Ensure that the telecentre.org website does not duplicate existing regional online resources, help desks and external technology portals.

The emphasis on an online social network picks up on the evolution of the web and positions the site with relevance to today’s internet.

While the Mali case study questions sustainability of the network, telecentre.org has enabled discussion throughout the movement on the question.

11 Analysis - What are the outcomes of Telecentre.org

11.1 Regarding engaging in key network players
We have seen in the findings that telecentre.org undertook activities to stimulate networks. Presentations by IDRC staff now state that telecentre.org has contributed to the formation of 60 Networks. The event analysis suggests that international meetings invested in a limited number of key stakeholders. The face to face events caused a “buzz”, and provided opportunity for networking and side meetings which contributed to certain Champions engaging in creating and strengthening national networks.

We can define the specific contribution of telecentre.org:

• holding events that gave opportunity for visioning and capacity building around networks;
• encouraging and participating in dialogue with some players around the ideas of networks;
• providing core funding to some networks to maintain a secretariat.

From the case studies, we know that in Mali there were several donors involved in telecentres and this was impeding national cooperation. The idea of networking pre-dated telecentre.org. The contribution of telecentre.org was to assist in the creation of an “independent” or overarching secretariat which enabled all telecentres to participate. We also know that contributions from telecentre.org enabled networks to be initiated in neighbouring West African countries.
In Bangladesh, the idea also seemed to pre-date telecentre.org, but was also hampered by organisational “politics”. The contribution of telecentre.org seems to have been the provision of funding for a secretariat and provision of fora for discussion. The Case Study suggests that sometimes the contribution of telecentre.org was a little more directive than the local players expected, and it is difficult to say if this in the end was a positive or negative contribution. What can be seen is the mobilisation of a secretariat now for the Bangladesh Telecentre movement, which is engaging with over 2000 telecentre operators, and is positioned for the future - and that telecentre.org has contributed to this.

The Colombian case is definitely different from the two preceding ones. On the one hand, the network, Colnodo, was already established and functioning; on the other hand – or maybe because of that – the contribution of telecentre.org was never seen as directive but, on the contrary, as highly supportive of Colnodo’s own ideas. In this sense, telecentre.org is said to be crucial in lobbying with the Colombian Ministry of Communications and the Compartel project, with which the network partnered in a project to share and strengthen the public telecentre network strategy, a successful project that was financially supported by telecentre.org. Colnodo also successfully reached out for help or partnerships with networks in Spain, Peru and Chile, and ended up being appointed member of the board of directors of the Red de redes de telecentros de América Latina y El Caribe.

We note Europe has one of the strongest networks. The contribution of telecentre.org was relatively small, responding to prompts from local Microsoft representatives, and yet again the network is well positioned for the future, accessing EU funds and playing a potentially key role in the telecentre ecosystem.

There is a potential contribution from telecentre.org into the behaviour of networks in the way they conduct meetings. By using open space ideas in their own meetings, telecentre.org may have encouraged more open space meetings in national networks – however this outcome remains untested.

Nevertheless, despite the contributions noted above, in their strategic plan 2010 to 2012, Ugabytes notes that it remains with a number of weaknesses – many of which are recurring themes in this review, e.g. :- Minimal formal engagement with ICT4D stakeholders; poor recording of telecentres due to using a narrow view that excludes cybercafés, Televillages and village phones; weak connections to policy makers; project based funding and donor dependency; poor organization impact capturing and telling to stakeholders.

11.2 Regarding engaging in content providers
The approach was said to be about working “with partners individually and together to deliver concrete services to telecentres.”

We have seen that the programme had a number of content challenges:
- Soon after starting it found that it would be difficult to deliver content – it realised that delivering content would need to be done by a network of telecentre champions.
- The question of sustainability remains and evolves, despite it being a pillar it has been difficult to deliver a concrete solution to the perennial challenge of sustainability
- Delivery of certain overarching pieces of work that may have created core content for the movement was delayed and many pieces such as the Network Guide have only just become available.
• The website that was intended to be a place of delivery of overarching content, and to create a forum for shared content was significantly delayed and has only been available for 18 months.
• The website became a social network site, supporting the networking activities above, and in theory being a place where telecentre operators could access content by asking the members questions. Analysis above suggests this does not happen frequently at the moment although it is potentially growing.
• The social networking site is such that some overarching content deliverables are not easily visible on the internet.
• The main contributors to the social network are currently paid content facilitators. While this is a relatively inexpensive way of creating content and creating “buzz”, its sustainability is not yet clear.

Having said that, there are behavioural changes in the telecentre ecosystem that we can say telecentre.org contributed to. The study by Drishtee led Drishtee to reconsider how they run their telecentres and adjust their plans accordingly. telecentre.org has contributed to discussions about sustainability and fund raising. For some of this contribution, another pot of money from IDRC PDBB has been used.

Associated with content has been the Academy Pillar. Again this is really just getting underway towards the end of the five year period. Academic institutions are engaged with the idea, and one can identify a clear contribution from telecentre.org in the intention to deliver certification for Telecentre operators. Curriculum is being developed but almost more importantly, it is being developed by a network of academies that intend to work together to deliver in several languages. telecentre.org seems to have made a direct contribution to this thread of work, almost to the point where one might “attribute” it to telecentre.org.

Similarly part of the outcomes regarding content providers is the research pillar. In order to influence the policy environment with evidence based tools, the research thread has been creating content on the impact of public access on users. Again this is in the early stages and few pieces of content are available. However telecentre.org contributed to the formation of this key research thread, and the early pieces of work show considerable promise. Illustrating the complexity of telecentre.org outcomes and their contribution to the movement would be the current contribution of Christine Prefontaine, who now handles the communication for the study. She talks of applying lessons learned during her time as communications officer at telecentre.org, and her capacity, having been built by telecentre.org she is a continuing contribution to the Telecentre movement.

With the Gender Research there has been one very clear outcome on the policy environment of the Dominican republic.

SANTO DOMINGO 7 December 2009 (El Nuevo Diario) -- The Dominican Republic is the first Latin American country to act on their commitments to involve women in the information society nationwide. This Caribbean island nation of ten million has promised to include a “gender perspective” in every information and communications technology initiative and policy developed by the government from now on. “This is great news for women’s equality in the Dominican Republic,” said APC’s Dafne Plou who trained government officials in November. “And it’s potentially a breakthrough for millions of other..."
women in Latin America because the Dominican Republic is leading Latin American governments’ thinking around gender and technology as part of the regional eLAC2010 plan”. The tool the Dominicans have chosen to design and evaluate all the public policies is the APC gender evaluation methodology (GEM).

http://www.apc.org/en/node/9690  The original article in Spanish:

12 Analysis - What is the impact of Telecentre.org

Telecentre.org was said to exist (according to the business plan) to support the telecentre movement, and build the capacities of interwoven telecentre ecosystems. As we move further out from the direct contributions and outcomes on the boundary stakeholders, we can ask the question what has been the impact on the outer stakeholders and can we identify contributions from telecentre.org.

12.1 On the telecentre community

The case studies suggest that where a network has been established and it has funds to undertake activities, that the telecentre community is strengthened. Networks have been able to engage with policy makers, and in a few cases have been able to create a more enabling environment for the telecentre ecosystem.

For example:- “In 2007, UgaBYTES test implemented a project that aimed at using CBOs as providers of information, services and content to communities through telecentres and using a combination of tools. The project that was supported by hivos, taught us that it is better to focus on a specific sector and narrow down as well to a specific niche. As result, two projects have emerged, the e-learning service for secondary schools, a service that avails access of teachers and students in disadvantaged communities to good teachers and peers in well-to-do communities and the community health service ecosystem – a wireless interconnection project among clinics, main hospital, Telecentre and Nutrition or preventative health NGOs at Kamuli UDS telecentre. The project is supported by Intel Corporation- USA.”

This example illustrates how the localised national network can engage with local donors, and have impact onto the telecentre community. The contribution of telecentre.org in this case are the preceding support to Ugabytes that bring them to the point where this can happen.

However it is important not to lose sight of the realities, and not to get lost in hyperbole. Uganda is cited as a long standing network with a telecentre helpdesk. And yet the response of a Ugandan telecentre operator who was involved in only one telecentre.org meeting states: “Apparently in Uganda we have no any existing network. But I find the idea very useful because a network has many benefits to the Telecentre including advocacy, information sharing, Capacity building and technical support.” (Respondent interview). This suggests that while the profile of the Ugandan network is relatively high in East Africa there remain shortfalls and gaps in the support structure to ordinary telecentre operators.

There are less documented examples where a contribution of telecentre.org in content has directly strengthened the telecentre community.
12.2 On the end users
The review has not engaged directly with end users of telecentres. However the early pieces of research from the Impact study give some indication of the benefit of telecentres to users.

Respondents emphasised the rapidly changing nature of the world and ICT4D in particular. 66% made a comment about the changing world, and 23% said the keyword was Livelihoods, 23% had the keyword social entrepreneurship, and 34% said the key was in the provision of community space.

12.3 What is the role, outcome, impact and future of Telecentres?
Outside the scope of this review is the overarching question of what is the role and future of telecentres. Annex 7 discusses the question, enabling the reader to see the report about telecentre.org activities and outcomes in the light of the rapidly changing world and ICT sector in particular.

13 What is the future of the Telecentre.org brand
“The Philippines will provide a great home base for telecentre.org. It has a strong, national telecentre movement and has worked for years with telecentre.org and its partners to make telecentres stronger and more sustainable around the world. Its experience – in adopting a comprehensive approach to building a movement, inviting multiple stakeholders to the table, using new technologies for development and effecting policy change in the field – reflects the focused engagement that best benefits telecentre.org and our global community. More than that, the Philippines has roots in Asia and Europe and it understands and supports telecentre.org’s global mission. For all these reasons, it represents an ideal location for a multicultural, multilingual initiative such as telecentre.org.”
Telecentre.org Foundation draft business plan 2010 -2015

It is not clear that the telecentre.org brand has established itself as “the” key link point between telecentres, ie community spaces that provide public access to information and policy makers, donors and the global ICT4D community. As we have said elsewhere, telecentre.org is seen as a partner, ie an organisation in its own right within the Telecentre Movement, and people do not speak of themselves as “a part” of telecentre.org where telecentre.org is synonymous with the Telecentre movement. The Foundation will likely be seen as an organisation and it will take strong leadership for it to become a Champion for the Telecentre Movement that is recognised by the majority.

Some interviewee felt that the focus on telecentres, to the exclusion of cyber cafe and libraries, limited the contribution of the programme to public access and livelihood improvement. Libraries are said to have a firmer legal footing, and are evolving as knowledge centres. To some extent we must wait for the outcomes of the impact study, nevertheless the very fact that the study includes a “public access” rather than narrowing the field to telecentres reflects the evolving ecosystem. While 34% were positive about the brand, 42% made negative comments about it.

Some people argued that the name telecentre.org also limited what the programme could achieve, while others argued that by excluding cybercafes, and focusing on the role of telecentres for community space, the programme has been able to contribute to a more specific and definable movement.

In the coming phase, the telecentre.org brand is being transferred to the Philippines. The fact that the government of Philippines is willing to host and facilitate the next phase of the programme is a tribute to
the contributions of telecentre.org to the Philippines. 50% of interviewee made some positive comment about telecentre.org Foundation, although 38% also made negative comments.

In keeping with the above report, we would like to discuss the future with an eye on the boundary stakeholders. To this end we repeat the “telecentre.org role” diagram.

**Regarding interaction with the key telecentre network players**, telecentre.org 2.0 will have an advisory group of 12 of these key champions. The convening of the advisory group will enable these champions to keep a view on the global evolution of the telecentre movement.

However overall telecentre.org Foundation will have less resources to convene international meetings. Since the brand is not established beyond question, the Foundation may have less ability to convene. IDRC was said to have good convening authority – will the same be said for the telecentre.org Foundation? Add this to the less physical resources and it is likely that telecentre.org Foundation will not be able to spearhead the Telecentre movement. Its role in the movement will be strongly determined by the effort its secretariat puts into online networking, making its presence known and useful.

**Recommendation** – telecentre.org Foundation should establish a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system and track engagement within events that it convenes or participates in. It should systematically identify its investment in individuals and ensure that it does not invest too much in any one person. It should be more mindful of post event deliverables than telecentre.org requesting participants not just to blog about the event but to define (blog, twitter, report) one or two outcomes or action points.

**Regarding content providers.** Continuation of the website and its brand should enable the international network to grow. Paid content facilitators seems to be a viable way of ensuring that there is interesting content on the site to engage people. Content will be being developed by the Academy thread of work, and will be potentially both centred on IGNOU and scattered across the networks. The telecentre.org Foundation will need to systematically engage with the Academy thread, as well as ensuring that it has a role in brokering relevant content (not becoming a transactional point but facilitating the movements sharing of content).

As the research is published there will be a need for national networks to “translate” both in language and format, so the results feed into policy dialogues and for the network members to grasp the key messages. Research communication is a challenge in itself with many research groups struggling to communicate their research to key policy stakeholders. The secretariat of the telecentre.org Foundation
should liaise specifically with the Impact Study to ensure this flow of information and mark its progress on their workplan.

Telecentre Times is said to be not financially sustainable. It does serve a useful purpose in creating buzz. A full costing will need to be done to see whether it is worth continuing or whether other communication strategies would be just as effective and more sustainable.

**Recommendation** – continue engaging content facilitators to put content onto the international site and their local sites. Content facilitating contracts should ensure that local content is mirrored on local and international sites, and that facilitators are engaged in other ICT4D sites. Ensure that someone has responsibilities to engage with the academies to ensure content is shared and promoted across the whole network. This also applies to the research outcomes.

14 Conclusions

14.1 To evaluate the extent to which the program has met its objectives as set out in the Business Plan, and how the program identifies and manages risk to the achievement of those objectives.

Evidence, people and, most especially, time have proven that the telecentre.org programme was, with respect to the Telecentre movement, needed and demanded, and one that both fitted the expectations and needs of the telecentre community in 2005 and which fits the expectations and needs of the telecentre community in 2010.

telecentre.org contributed to creating a consensus around an umbrella concept – the telecentre – under which most of the people and institutions working on public access to ICTs were comfortable. This helped in gathering a community (the Telecentre community) and creating a momentum by making a movement converge on similar goals and by sharing efforts.

The vision, goals and strategy of the overall project have embedded the importance of networks, synergies that come from sharing knowledge, sustainability based on appropriate and renewed content and services, and the need to update human capital by training. In addition, the project has been able to listen to the telecentre community and respond to their needs.

The need to legitimise the movement at the macro level, and to assess it at the micro level, was addressed by a fifth field of work: research on impact and evaluation.

The perceived need to work in these areas, and the fact that telecentre.org addressed them in a very straightforward way has contributed to the view that the project has been a success as stated by many (though not all) of those involved in the programme and the Review.

As we can see from the above, the programme set out in the business plan to contribute significantly to strengthening the Telecentre Movement. It sought not so much to add new units of value but to add value to the existing movement. The business plan talked about supporting the overall ecosystems both nationally, regionally and globally, and the programme has been able to achieve this.

From interviews it is clear that the programme has changed the way it has worked over the time of the programme, managing the risks to learn from experience and in the latter half of the programme in
particular to deliver mechanisms for strengthening the movement. Elsewhere we note the absence of a rigorous Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy for the programme, however there were a considerable number of learning mechanisms including the Project Appraisal Documents, Project Completion Reports, reports for the SWG and team meetings to reflect on the progress of the programme. These reflections and the guidance of the telecentre.org management enabled the programme to evolve.

We note that Interviews with telecentre.org staff indicated that the majority of the funds had been committed by late 2007. The early half of the programme was characterised by the need for Projects to be developed (2 to 3 years) and the upfront investments (communications, etc). The latter half of the programme benefited from those early investments (network capacity, early findings). However it is of credit to the new manager, Florencio Ceballos, that given the need and pressure for increasing the “concrete deliverables” of the programme, he led the team response utilising the remaining budget in more cost efficient ways. The team used the lesson learning of the first half of the programme to deliver in very cost effective ways.

14.2 To offer reflections on the strengths and weaknesses of the overall and specific program approach, particularly how any changes or evolution have contributed to meeting and transforming the program objectives
We can see from the above narrative, that the changing structure of the programme was based on lesson learning throughout the programme, and although some pillars made little or late contributions to achieving the objectives, the whole was able to bring a significant contribution to the Telecentre Movement. As summarised by one interviewee “The networking and the establishment of the telecentre Academy have done well. The research side is just starting, but looks good, and the knowledge sharing has had its problems but made a reasonable recovery. The sustainability component, it argues hasn’t really produced much.” Most importantly the whole has contributed strongly to the Telecentre movement.

Besides what has already been said about planning, monitoring and evaluation in general, we would like to stress these issues in the management of the programme itself.

Overall, it appears that the management of the projects, initiatives, pillars has suffered from some informality and improvisation. Throughout interviews with programme officers they spoke of learning, of trying something in the first half of the programme and “finding what worked” and building on the experience. This is not to be confused with lack of professionalism or knowledge about the topic of telecentres by the managing staff, and is to be commended: on the contrary, all the professionals we have found, interviewed or known about are reputed people in their fields and most valued by their peers, colleagues or people that have worked with them at large. It is about structures; the absence of an M&E strategy led to a less structured learning, and less reporting on the roots of the learning, which now prevents some communication of lessons learned to others in the sector.

Despite the evident fact that most pillars overlapped in many points, collaboration between pillars has been scarce, with some exceptions in the TLFs and other events by the Networking and Knowledge Sharing pillars. One programme officer noted that “The Network Guide is also an example where the analysis crosses different pillars.” Activities and projects have tended to be compartmentalised, not only horizontally across pillars, but also vertically along these same activities and projects. As we have said,
long-term strategic planning has often been absent, as past experiences have not naturally feed present or future experiences.

We believe this is why many things have been started up or replicated on the (frail) basis of the general acknowledgement of success provided by enthusiastic testimonials.

Isolation has also diminished the building of a brand – the telecentre.org brand – and of a community based on a sense of partnership rather than a sense of *colleguiness*. Interviewees tend to see telecentre.org as a partner and as an external entity. They see it as a very important partner, and one that they would be proud of working with. However in our review few if any institution – network or telecentre – considers themselves “members” of telecentre.org. This has implications if sharing and networking are seen as prior stages to building together. In other words, the way the telecentre.org programme has been managed has definitely contributed to rapidly creating a strong momentum and a global community, but it may not have set up a foundation on which to grow stronger and long-lasting institutions for the future.

**14.3 To assess the significance of the program results (i.e. outputs, reach, outcomes, and recognition) and analyze how the program results have or have not contributed to the changes in policy or capacity of its key partners.**

This perception of success, stated in 14.1, is not so clear when considering outcomes as changes in behaviours.

In general terms, outcomes associated with the pillars can be grouped in two main categories:

- Areas where there were some major outcomes: networking and knowledge sharing
- Areas where it is expected that there will be major outcomes, but they will take place in the future as, for different reasons, they lagged behind in the overall performance of the programme: content and services for sustainability, the Academy and Research.

Both in networking and knowledge sharing there are changes in behaviour in the boundary partners. New networks have been created and existing networks have been strengthened through the contribution of telecentre.org; they have been able to engage in lobbying, partnering to design projects and raise funding, or have increased their soft assets both in terms of human capital and management capacity. The strengthening of networks has been both cause and consequence of a manifest increase of knowledge transmission across networks and amongst their members. Events, online platforms and several other initiatives have contributed in this.

We note the absence of a rigorous Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy for the programme, however as stated above there were a considerable number of learning mechanisms including the Project Appraisal Documents, Project Completion Reports, reports for the SWG and team meetings to reflect on the progress of the programme. These reflections and the guidance of the telecentre.org management enabled the programme to lesson learn and change the way it worked over time. However, without a systematised set of the procedures to rationalize, replicate and measure these outcomes the Telecentre Movement as a whole may have missed out on some lesson learning. What enables effective networking remains untracked, both in the origins and in the results: though there has been some external training...
in organizing networking events, there is almost a total lack of explicit methodologies that complete newcomers can benefit from. The exception to this is the Network Guide recently published which attempts to systemise the learning of the Pillar. However, even long time members are unaware of most methodologies and outputs. This lack of clarity of how things happen necessarily leads to a lack of clarity of the impact of such things. Besides valuable testimonials on good practices – some of them excellent flagships of the programme – telecentre.org in its contribution to the Telecentre Movement seems to lack the basic systematic monitoring and evaluation necessary for replication and impact assessment, and a serious strategy of knowledge management that takes into account the whole value chain: creation of knowledge; categorization; storage; ease to search, find and retrieve; possibility to reuse and recycle; measurement of performance or appropriateness of the knowledge used and quality assessment. Thus, hard data on the efficiency and efficacy of the project in these issues is replaced by soft data coming from subjective impressions that are always subject to biases, context and personal perceptions and interests.

As said, the pillars of content and services, the Academy and research are yet to prove their impact at a high level as they are either mostly unfinished or actually just starting.

Content and services for sustainability did have some outputs although there seems to be very little evidence on usage or impact, either in the telecentre community at large nor on the end users. The Content and Services Channel Project seems to be working with different premises and has an inner structure that is more outcome than output-focused. In this sense, it has already reported some side-effects; the real impact is yet to come and will not be evident in the very short-run until this project is in a more mature stage.

The impact and outcomes of the Academy and Research are promising, but yet to be realised.

Research came late to the overall telecentre.org programme and will not be ready on time to legitimise its second phase. Despite the opinion of some that the second phase of the programme should launch without waiting for the research results to be produced, it is also true that to many – including these reviewers – that there is a strong need to monitor, to evaluate, to assess impact in order to provide policy makers with an evidence base that shows how telecentres assist their citizens. This necessity has been addressed in the Research Pillar (belatedly) and the preliminary outputs of the research pillar are most promising, not for themselves – as they are merely instrumental – but because they show a radical and committed approach of the programme towards measuring the impact of the programme itself and of telecentres both at the macro and micro levels.

The Academy is similar to the research pillar in its perspectives: new focus, promising outcome and impact, etc. The difference – and quite a big one – is the inner structure: while the research is mostly about a single project, led by a coordinated team, with indisputable leadership, and with a very compact approach, the Academy is about collecting many sensibilities, reaching consensus, creating heterogeneous output while keeping some degree of standardization and coherence. It also faces a much greater difficulty not in measuring outputs, but certainly in assessing outcomes.

Much effort has been made in this sense and the basic building blocks have been put in place in the latter years of the programme: some initial learning materials, the learning management system, the permanent secretariat, etc. However, the Academy is being built at several speeds, as perceived by the
telecentre community and as shown by some evidence. The Asian leadership and the Latin American commitment – especially in those countries where networks are stronger – are beyond doubt. Nevertheless, it is clear there still is an important lack of consensus. Europe seems not to be playing the game. The European telecentre community is somehow detached from the daily life of the new telecentre.org Academy; reasons may include stronger bureaucracies in the education ministries and/or universities, different levels and needs of telecentre training, etc. In addition, Africa (perhaps for opposite reasons to those of Europe) seems also to be struggling to catch up with changes within the telecentre.org Academy.

14.4 To review the benefits and challenges of telecentre.org partnership model, including the management of the program at IDRC.

The findings suggest that telecentre.org has been able to contribute significantly to the telecentre movement. While the partnership of the social investors has at times had its stresses and strains, the three core social investors have been able to steer a programme of work that has contributed to its original vision:- that telecentre.org program would invest in efforts that strengthen the entire telecentre ecosystem.

The investment has very much been based on the passion and vision of the key stakeholders within the key social investors. The reviewers conclude that some of the initial assumptions of the programme, such as the key role of telecentres (as opposed to other forms of public access) in reaching the marginalised were untested. We note that only in the last 18 months has solid research been put in place to test those assumptions.

As the key stakeholders and Champions have changed their roles (e.g. Fuchs, Surman, Ceballos), the partnership has adapted, both to the changing world but also to the changing needs of the social investors. This adaptation has held the partnership together although there were definable points of stress. We conclude that the programme could have developed early “wins” regarding content provision and support for the telecentre ecosystem.

Many interviewees declared that money was never an issue. Although the lack of money constraints did help in the creation of short-term momentum, there might have been a trade-off with stronger relationships based on trust and joint effort.

The project had sufficient funds. There is one question which can be asked with hindsight but which has a difficult answer: The greater proportion of concrete deliverables were in the second half of the programme when much of the money had been committed in the first half of the programme. Interviewees speak of learning how to do things with less funds (eg events). Given the outcomes of the project and these “latter half lessons”, could the overall money have been allocated in other ways earlier in the programme?

The answers, at this moment, are impossible to answer, but we raise it because it is worth further reflection in the makings of the second phase of the programme (telecentre.org Foundation).

A few interviewees made negative comments about the monetary value of the programme. In considering this we note the evident fund drainages that have appeared along the project – eg the setting up of the website(s), the creation of some unused content and services reports, etc. With
hindsight these could have been if not eliminated (there is always a room for trial and error, of course) but at least either reduced or leveraged for a return of the invested funds in them. However we accept hindsight is a wonderful thing!

We also note that there is a strong dependency of some networks and initiatives on this money, and the fact that some now express concern about their future as funding seems to be fading out of the programme.

14.5 On the future
Some last words have to be devoted to the future of the initiative. Though they can be inferred from our previous paragraphs, we want to stress the importance of strengthening the sense of a common brand, a common initiative and, now that it has been incorporated, a common institution that has to be able to lead the community and debate on telecentres worldwide.

The telecentre community and, specifically, the telecentre.org community faces two opposite sign forces: a centripetal one, working towards convergence, homogeneity and a genuine sense of sharing and working together – arguably the most successful outcome of the programme – and a centrifuge one, where differences in perceptions and goals work towards the atomization or, at least, the regrouping in smaller units of the global telecentre movement.

Strong leadership by the telecentre.org promoters and generous funding made the centripetal force much stronger than the centrifuge one. Change of hands of the initiative and progressive decrease in funds are likely to put severe stress on its continuity.

15 Recommendations

15.1 Recommendations for telecentre.org 2.0 regarding future programmatic implementation
If the vision remains supporting the telecentre movement and telecentre ecosystems, then the key is in the tracking and support of people, of social networks, of networks. To do this effectively we recommend:

1. Continue to think in terms of the pillars as used in the previous programme – the ideas behind networking, academy, research, content and services and knowledge sharing were basically on target. No single pillar is significantly more important than the others although treat the subjects as an overlapping whole as opposed to “silos”.
2. Consider a more formalised M&E strategy, possibly picking up on the Outcome Mapping approach with particular reference to identifying the Boundary stakeholders and the behaviour change one expects in them.
3. Monitoring and evaluation of the project should, thus, accompany an outcome mapping strategy, including the inventory of outputs and tracking the evolution of outcomes. As knowledge is, in many ways, one of the main currencies of a programme of this kind, we strongly encourage strengthening a formal design for knowledge management, including a vertical approach (along the life of knowledge: creating and collecting, categorizing, storing, finding, retrieving, reusing and recycling knowledge) and a horizontal approach (knowledge sharing amongst pillars and different initiatives, managers, trainers and training projects, etc.)
4. Keeping on strengthening networks and network creation seems a good way to go. Now that there are changes ahead concerning leadership and funding, special monitoring of weakest networks should apply, including providing specific support to avoid collapse.

5. Acknowledging that the programme will have little control over the whole environment, the key task will be identification of Champions and considered investment across a range of those Champions (i.e. not too much investment in any one person).

6. Implementing “Customer Relationship Management” (CRM) software in order to ease contact with the boundary stakeholders and to track investments in any one person. Attendance at events, meetings, staff exchange visits could be monitored on the database, and annual interrogation of the data for gender, regions and institutions could be implemented for reporting.

7. Events need to be recorded. Knowledge management of events should be both formal reporting including participant lists and archive of presentations, and informal reporting through the social network sites (through paid informants – see next point).

8. The idea of paid content facilitators does seem an effective way of creating “buzz” and if funding permits we recommend that telecentre.org2.0 continue with these content facilitators, making clear where and how often they should deliver content. These actors are much needed to transfer knowledge between communities/websites, vertically (international-national) and horizontally (languages).

9. If content facilitators and other channels to share knowledge exist, it is good to keep the two layer virtual community: a general international or “official” community for “high level” and strategic discussions, and another one based at the local/national and grassroots level for direct engagement. In this sense, replicating the general community structure to lower levels should be kept done and spread where such local networks are still unavailable.

10. Along with the role of content facilitators, some channels to bring knowledge and opinion bottom up should be established. This aspect can be especially critical with the Academy and the creation of syllabuses that answer specific user needs.

11. “Telling the story” - telecentre.org noted in 2007 that it was not good at telling its story. The subsequent story telling focused on hyperbole detailing the achievements as though they were attributable to telecentre.org. We recommend a more nuanced story telling of the contribution of telecentres to livelihoods, since the majority of donors have shifted their gaze away from ICT4D per se and wish to know how ICT can support Development activities.

15.2 Recommendations for telecentre.org 2.0 regarding institutional factors

11. Institutionally, telecentre.org 2.0 should have strong leadership. We recommend this is made a key factor in recruitment – a single leader with international credibility. Beyond recruitment, strategies of leadership transmission should be designed so that telecentre.org 2.0 is acknowledged as the legitimate heir of telecentre.org.

12. Besides institutional legitimacy, the project itself has to be backed with scientific support. In a context of economic crisis and important challenges ahead in the international arena (e.g. climatic change, water and oil crises, and the persisting AIDS pandemic) it is essential that the mere existence of a programme such as telecentre.org is based on scientific evidence of positive impact of public access points on the end beneficiaries, both at the micro and at the macro levels.

13. In terms of governance, the advisory group should specifically seek out interested parties who are not part of the telecentre movement but have general respect and experience in poverty
alleviation or inclusion of the marginalised, to contextualise telecentres in the changing development context.

15.3 **Recommendations for IDRC**

14. The linkage with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation seems to fit well with IDRC mandate, and we recommend that support for the programme of work continue – particularly with its emphasis on the impact of public spaces on the livelihoods of the poor.

15. If Private Sector wishes to engage in research and cooperate with IDRC, then IDRC could consider the fit within its mandate – private sector can do effective research.

16. If on the basis of 17 above, IDRC engages with the private sector as a partner again, we recommend that a detailed agreement be reached on the specific expectations, workplan and deliverables (much more than the telecentre.org MOU and Business Plan provided).

15.4 **Recommendations for Private Sector**

17. It seems a common view that a government institution such as IDRC has difficulty responding to the rapid change that the private sector is used to. If private sector engages with government institutions as a partner, we recommend that a detailed agreement be reached on the specific expectations, workplan and deliverables (much more than the telecentre.org MOU and Business Plan provided).

18. Risk assessment should be undertaken regarding the key leadership roles – what might happen if the manager or Champion moves on.

15.5 **Recommendations for other donors**

19. One of the main successes – and now its major asset – of telecentre.org was contributing to the creation of a (arguably) unique, global community on the telecentre movement. The “think globally, act locally” motto perfectly fits in the telecentre.org philosophy, where the vision was put globally while the activities were rooted in the local communities and exchange of knowledge and experiences between both levels were eagerly facilitated. We strongly advise donors in general to follow this example.

20. If a donor such as SDC wishes to engage in a similar programme, the relevance and scope of its contribution to poverty alleviation strategies for the countries it is engaging with should be documented from the start and an M&E framework established to use the language and parameters of the wider donor activities to describe the contribution of such a programme.
telecentre.org External Program

Review

Annexes to Report

By Simon Batchelor & Ismael Peña-López
for Telecentre.org
January 2009

telecentre.org
a collaborative social investment program supported by:
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This document provides the Annexes for the report Review of the telecentre.org Program at IDRC, Batchelor and Peña-López Feb 2010.
1. Background

telecentre.org is a program to develop and strengthen a global community of people and organizations committed to increasing the social and economic impact of grassroots telecentres. The “community” (also branded as telecentre.org) is a combination of formal and self-identified collection of institutions and individuals that include:

- National and regional telecentre networks and organizations, the core of the telecentre.org community
- “Social Investors” (funding partners), that fund telecentre.org social investment program and provide strategic guidance: IDRC, Microsoft, and SDC
- A team of Community Facilitators, who engage, connect, and assist community members in knowledge sharing
- A support team (hosted at IDRC) that manages day-to-day activities, builds the community, and implements the telecentre.org program vision

The focus of this program review will be on the work carried out by the telecentre.org support team at IDRC since its inception, particularly in building and sustaining the telecentre.org community; in strengthening institutions and efforts of other organizations that make up the community; in facilitating the sharing and delivery of pertinent content, knowledge, and training opportunities; and in the management of the overall vision and mission of telecentre.org program.

2. Users and Uses of the External Evaluation

2.1 Intended Users

Primary User:
- IDRC (includes IDRC management and the current tc.org Support Team)

Other Stakeholders and Users:
- New telecentre.org Foundation in the Philippines
- Other tc.org “social investors” – Microsoft and SDC
- Key telecentre.org network partners (select national and regional telecentre network organizations).
Note: this program review is primarily intended to serve the purpose of accountability to the IDRC Board of Governors. Independent external review of IDRC funded programs, such as telecentre.org, is mandatory. However, other stakeholder of this program review will be given the opportunity to provide input into the design of the external evaluation so that their perspectives and questions can be built into the review (when and where it is feasible to do so). Additional resources are set aside by tc.org in order to accommodate additional review objectives requested by other stakeholders, if and when they can be reasonably incorporated into the existing review process.

2.2 Intended Uses

The primary purpose of this review exercise is to better understand the extent that tc.org has achieved its program objectives. However, it is also an opportunity distill salient lessons from the current telecentre.org program and use the findings of this review for: a) informing future program direction; b) improving operational and management strategies of telecentre.org in the future (following the transfer of the program to the new tc.org Foundation in the Philippines); and c) developing a set of recommendations for IDRC that can be used in future management of a large multi-donor partnership program, and particularly one that involves a private sector partner.

2.2.1. Summative evaluation

- Determine and assess the extent that to which telecentre.org has achieved the main program objectives, and in accordance to the key program modalities (commonly referred to as “pillars”): network support, telecentre.org academy, content and services, sustainability, knowledge sharing, and research
- Assess the significance of telecentre.org results, particularly in relation to how the results have created influence and changes among the work of the institutions and individuals identified within the telecentre.org community.

2.2.2. Formative evaluation

- The review will provide information regarding lessons from the implementation and management of telecentre.org since its inception, particularly focusing on issues such as: planning and execution of the program's Business Plan and other strategies; operational issues (e.g. financial and grant management, human resources requirement and capacity, etc); programmatic risk management and mitigation; partnership engagement (with social investors and other network partners); and the communications efforts. The goal of this formative exercise is to determine the key lessons that can contribute to making telecentre.org more effective and efficient in the future (following its transfer to the tc.org Foundation).
3. Objectives

3.1 Objectives:

1. To evaluate the extent to which the program has met its objectives as set out in the Business Plan, and how the program identifies and manages risk to the achievement of those objectives.

2. To offer reflections on the strengths and weaknesses of the overall and specific program approach, particularly how any changes or evolution have contributed to meeting and transforming the program objectives.

3. To assess the significance of the program results (i.e. outputs, reach, outcomes, and recognition) and analyze how the program results have or have not contributed to the changes in policy or capacity of its key partners.

4. To review the benefits and challenges of telecentre.org partnership model, including the management of the program at IDRC.

3.2 High-Level Review Questions (preliminary only – need further review):

For Objective 1:

- Do the various achievements in the different program elements of telecentre.org (“the pillars”) have contributed to the fulfillment of telecentre.org program objectives?

- What were the main changes that could be identified in the program execution strategy (overall and in each individual pillar)? Have these changes influence the extent to which telecentre.org were able to achieve its objectives?

- Has the staffing and program implementation partners of telecentre.org been a significant factor in the achievement of the program objectives? How?

For Objective 2:

- How have the telecentre.org program strategies contributed to the effectiveness (cost and outcomes) of program delivery? For example, has the website been an effective tool in building and shaping telecentre networks and telecentre-related activities?

- What were the main benefits and challenges faced in the execution of the key telecentre.org program elements, and taking into account the changes that took place within the program?
For Objective 3:

- How have the telecentre.org brand and communication effort resulted in greater recognition of the program within the telecentre and development community?

- What were the main outcomes of telecentre.org training and capacity building activities? Were there differences across regions, institutions, and gender?

- To what extent has telecentre.org been able to commit its community to activities that contribute to greater awareness and understanding on the benefits of a global, regional, and/or national telecentre movement?

For Objective 4:

- What were the results of telecentre.org partners’ (including other social investors) level of engagement in the execution of the program?

- What were the values of providing “core” funding to networks as opposed to strategic support only? Did partnership within the telecentre.org community excel in light of varying level of collaborations due to stronger and weaker telecentre networks?

- What strategic advantage has IDRC brought to the program and what were the challenges faced in having the program being “hosted” at IDRC?

4. Methodology

The methodology will be determined through discussions among the project team, the Evaluation Unit, the reviewer(s), and senior management.

The section below offers some preliminary ideas on the overall review approach:

- Review of program and project documentations, as well as reports that indicate the program’s measure of success:
- Interviews with program team members, managers, telecentre.org community leaders, and other telecentre.org partners (including the funding partners)
- Interviews with a sample of telecentre.org project leaders and other key individuals among the telecentre.org network (to be identified by telecentre.org teams).

The results of the interview and review of documentations will be triangulated to produce a comprehensive report on the programs’ overall success in relations to the objectives. However, in addition to the report on the extent of the program achievements, the report will also include in-depth case studies on a sample of projects. This will entail a review of 2-4 projects (selected from different program pillars) in consultation with telecentre.org staff, the Evaluation Unit (EU), and the reviewer(s).

Using data collected from each of the above sources, the reviewer(s) will establish a baseline on the situation when telecentre.org commenced, and the purpose will be to address questions related to the four review objectives.
The expected output of the external review is:

- Preliminary report prepared by the reviewer(s) of no more than 20 pages that responds to the 4 objectives;
- Final report prepared by the reviewer(s) of no more than 30 pages that responds to the 4 objectives, and taking into account comments obtained on the preliminary report.
- An executive summary of no more than 4 pages;
- Appendices with details on the methodology and other important findings (outside the 4 review objectives) discovered during the course of the review.

5. Process and Timeline

The external review process will be managed by telecentre.org, with guidance from IDRC’s Evaluation Unit. The timing of the review will be as follow:

July: Development of external review plan in consultation with relevant stakeholders

August: Finalization of the external review plan and hiring of two independent external reviewers (evaluation consultants)

Sept-Oct: Data gathering and field visits (if necessary)

Mid/Late Oct: Presentation of preliminary review findings & sharing of findings with all stakeholders

Nov: Verification of findings and preparation of final review report

Early Dec: Draft final report submitted to IDRC for feedback and circulated to other review stakeholders

Mid/Late Dec: IDRC submit the consolidated feedback to the reviewers

End of Jan: Final external review report completed and shared with all stakeholders\(^1\)

March: Final report presented to the IDRC Board of Governors

\(^1\)Timing was revised due to unforeseen delays.
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<th>Position</th>
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<td>Jose</td>
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<td>Akhtar</td>
<td>Badshah</td>
<td>Senior Director, Community Affairs</td>
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<td>Isidre</td>
<td>Bermúdez</td>
<td>Project Manager tc Academy</td>
<td>Fundación Esplai</td>
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<td>Maria Teresa (Tess)</td>
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<td>Commission on ICT - National Computer Center</td>
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<td>Dil Partha</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seuwandi Yapa</td>
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</table>
4 Annex Interview Findings

4.1 Methodology
The interviews were free form qualitative interviews generally asking about the person's involvement and experience of telecentre.org. In an iterative process, the answers were coded for common themes. Once the coding was established, a count was made of the number of times a person made a comment that fit the coding. This was not done on keywords but by reading the context of the comment from notes and assigning the coding. Some comments could fit more than one code, and some people made both negative and positive comments about a single subject.

Two analytical approaches were explored – a count of the number of people who made at least one comment for a coded subject, and a count of the number of comments made about the coded subject (representing the intensity of feeling about the subject). In addition, interviewees were assigned descriptors enabling further analysis along 4 axes.

- Distance to IDRC –
  - IDRC Team –
  - Social Investor or Other IDRC department
  - Grantee or funded partner
  - Other
- Level of Management
  - CEO or very high management
  - Director or Manager
  - Officer
  - Other
- Distance from telecentres
  - Field practitioner
  - Partner
  - Activist (Global)
  - Other
- Stakeholder Groups (suggested by Frank Tulus)
  - Steering Working Group (member of)
  - telecentre.org staff
  - telecentre.org partner (grantee)
  - External

Given the request for the fourth axis, this annex includes some details of responses unpacked by the stakeholder groups.

4.2 Objective 1
“To evaluate the extent to which the program has met its objectives as set out in the Business Plan, and how the program identifies and manages risk to the achievement of those objectives”.

Each pillar had its own set of targets and the first coding of data were comments around the five pillars and were commented on by many (not all) interviewees. The graph below shows the count for people who made positive and negative comments about the subject area of each pillar. We can see that in keeping with other data, the ideas of Networks, Academy and Knowledge Sharing are all spoken of
positively by over 50% of interviewees. There is considerable less awareness of the Research telecentre.org has undertaken, and therefore a higher proportion of negative comments. Proportionally there is a similar balance between positive and negative comments for the Content thread.

![Diagram showing responses on the 5 pillars](image)

**Figure 1  Responses on the 5 pillars**

The positive comments about networking can be found across all stakeholder groups.

![Diagram showing breakdown of comments on Networking - by Stakeholder groups](image)

**Figure 2  Breakdown of comments on Networking - by Stakeholder groups**

However negative Academy comments came more from partners (Grantees),

![Diagram showing breakdown of comments on Academy - by Stakeholder groups](image)

**Figure 3  Breakdown of comments on Academy - by Stakeholder groups**

For Content, where there were expectations of delivery of specific content items, the most negative stakeholders were the Steering Working Group, although the staff themselves were self critical.
Knowledge sharing had a mix of comments across all stakeholder groups.

Research, which has yet to publish and deliver to useful information to the telecentre movement, was most criticised by the practitioners, while the SWG saw the potential delivery of the research and spoke highly of it.
4.3 Objective 2
To offer reflections on the strengths and weaknesses of the overall and specific program approach, particularly how any changes or evolution have contributed to meeting and transforming the program objectives.

The reflections on the timing of delivery of some of the pillars, on the overall strategy and even the management of the programme, were dominated by negative comments. The only subject that attracted a relatively high proportion of positive comments was the convening – the face to face meetings.

![Figure 7 Overall responses on programme delivery]

4.4 Objective 3
To assess the significance of the program results (i.e. outputs, reach, outcomes, and recognition) and analyze how the program results have or have not contributed to the changes in policy or capacity of its key partners.

Considering the outcomes, results and future of telecentre.org gave a mix of positive and negative comments. Regarding policy influence no one spoke negatively, and in general people spoke highly of the contribution of telecentre.org to the telecentre movement. The Brand had a mixed response as did the idea of the Foundation.

![Figure 7 Overall responses on programme delivery]

If anything, insiders are more critical of the telecentre.org contribution than outsiders:
While the brand is more criticised externally:

The idea for the Foundation finds its support and its critics across all stakeholder groups.

4.5 Objective 4
To review the benefits and challenges of telecentre.org partnership model, including the management of the program at IDRC.

A much more limited section of the interviewees commented on the partnership. Some outsiders commented on the idea of the private sector as social investor, reflecting on their impressions of the private sector involvement in telecentre.org, and offering a number of positive views.
In general there was a strong view that the telecentre.org programme did not fit with IDRC.

Of course those who could comment tend to be insiders:

While a greater range of people had comments on the role of the private sector in such a programme.
5 Annex - Network Analysis

This annex presents the data from a network analysis. A sample of 23 events were identified and participant lists were gathered. The sample focused on international events (not national events), and by default tended to be those that had been documented and archived effectively. It is interesting to note that the dates span 2004 to 2007 but there is an absence of 2008 and 2009 – this may reflect the greater focus on regional events. One programme officer noted that “reasons may also include a combination of: a) lack of resources remaining within telecentre.org program, and b) telecentre.org has build up capacity of our partners to the point that they can now run/organize these events themselves.” This is a reasonable hypothesis, although the evidence does not clarify which is the main reason. It may also be that reporting tended to be delegated to content facilitators who shared their blogs on the social network orientated Ning telecentre.org site, and no one systematically ensured that a single event report was submitted. Blogging may have greater impact on the movement than a full report which sits on a (virtual) shelf – however we do not have enough information to evidentially determine this.

The following analysis has its limitation but nevertheless represents a substantial investment by the program during its early stage, and illustrates how early face to face events enabled (or not) networks and more recent outcomes.

In the 23 events, over 1,200 individuals were engaged. The diagram below graphically illustrates this engagement – black squares are events and red circles persons, with the size of the circle representing the number of events engaged.

5.1 Who attended events

Figure 14: Entire network (1268 individuals)
Individuals attending more than 2 events are presented in the figure below.

Figure 15: Individuals attending more than 2 events

<table>
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<th>Name</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Events attended</th>
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</thead>
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<td>Ndaula Sula</td>
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<td>UGABytes</td>
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<td>Sarvodaya</td>
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<td>USA</td>
<td>Microsoft</td>
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<td>UGABytes</td>
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<td>Lagos Digital Village</td>
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<td>Microsoft</td>
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<td>Karin Delgadillo Ecuador</td>
<td>somos@telecentros</td>
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<td>M S Swaminathan India</td>
<td>M S Swaminathan</td>
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<td>Manuel Marcelino Garcia Guatemala</td>
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<td>Michael Gurstein Canada</td>
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<td>Sagarika Bose India</td>
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5.2 Who are these people?

There is a sample of 50 individuals who have attended more than 2 events.
The single most strongly represented country is India (12 people), followed by Canada (6). There is an even regional distribution:

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<th>Valid Percent</th>
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The organisations that have more than one representative in this sample are:

- Microsoft 7
- IDRC 6
- M S Swaminathan Research Foundation 3
- Sarvodaya 2
- UGABytes 2

They are drawn largely from the NGO sector:

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<td>14.0</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>94.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telecentre</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>74.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing System</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The gender balance is 60:40 (male:female) – we don't have gender for 7 participants in the sample.

36% are members of TeleCentre.Org. Many are active members; the numbers of individuals making various contributions to the website are presented in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>No of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3 Investment in organisations

Organisational affiliations were found for only xx% of participants at TeleCentre.Org events. This included over 700 organisations (724 – checked for obvious duplicates). The number of person-events attended by organisations (with 5 or more person-events) are presented in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Person-events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Microsoft</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDRC</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDC</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UgaBYTES</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GKP Secretariat</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIT Nepal</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M S Swaminathan Research Foundation</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somos Telecentros</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4CLI</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bellanet</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEPES</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.Net/Bangladesh Telecentre Network</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nabweru CMC</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCC Dhulikhel</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Information Center Panauti</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIUEM</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL&amp;FS</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information and Communication Technology Agency of Sri Lanka</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NASSCOM</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OKN</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Society Institute</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SchoolNet</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda Development Services</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Universal Service Agency (USA) 6
University of Washington 6
AFRIKLINKS 5
Constellation Pvt. Ltd 5
DIT 5
High Level Commission for Information Technology 5
IIT Bombay 5
INICTEL 5
Kawolo S/C telecentre 5
Lagos Digital Village 5
MSSRF 5
Nepal Telecomm Limited 5
Nyamate Telecentre 5
Rural Information Center Bun-gamati 5
SAMBAD Project 5
TARAhaat 5
telecentre.org 5

Figure 16: Network of institutions (N=724)
5.4 Engagement by Country

The following table presents the sums of the number of person-events attended by delegates from each country. Note that of the sample of delegates attending events (1268), information on their country was available for only 716 (56%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Person-events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 17: Network of institutions attending 5 or more person events
Uganda 24
Malaysia 23
Sri Lanka 23
Bangladesh 17
Dominican Republic 17
Hungary 11
Switzerland 10
Mali 9
Brazil 8
Jamaica 8
Morocco 8
Nigeria 8
Philippines 8
Rwanda 8
Kenya 7
Pakistan 7
Spain 7
Benin 6
Chile 6
Colombia 6
Mozambique 6
Puerto Rico 6
Slovakia 6

Is there a link between website activity and creating country networks? The following table presents for selected countries, the number of people from each country that are either members of TC.O or have attended an event, along with a mean score of website activity (that is, the sum of number of postings on each of 8 website activities).

Website activity (mean scores for all activities) – including paid bloggers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>11.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>5.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>4.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>4.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>2.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Website activity (mean scores for all activities) – excluding paid bloggers

Annexes for Review of the telecentre.org Program at IDRC, Batchelor and Peña-López
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>4.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>2.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>1.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>1.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Alternative approach - Another indicator of intensity of website activity – sum of number of activities taken part in.

Number of website activities that members have taken part in – including paid bloggers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of website activities that members have taken part in - Excluding paid bloggers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 5.5 Participants in Events by Country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>1.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Bangladesh**

- Ananya Raihan D.Net/Bangladesh Telecentre Network NGO 4
- Mahmud Hasan D.net NGO M 3
- AHM Bazlur Rahman Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and NGO M 2

---

*Annexes for Review of the telecentre.org Program at IDRC, Batchelor and Peña-López*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AHM Sultanur Reza</td>
<td>Grameen Phone Ltd</td>
<td>private sector</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shawkat Milton</td>
<td>ATN</td>
<td>Private Sector</td>
<td>M 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohammad Rafiqul Islam</td>
<td>Bangladesh Association of Software &amp; Information Services</td>
<td>M 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abdullah-Al Mamun</td>
<td>Bangladesh Friendship Education Society</td>
<td>M 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rasheduzzaman Ahmed</td>
<td>Bangladesh Friendship Education Society</td>
<td>M 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reza Salim</td>
<td>Bangladesh Friendship Education Society</td>
<td>M 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Md. Mojahidul Islam</td>
<td>eBiz(ittfgaq Group of publications)</td>
<td>M 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tariq Been Yussouf</td>
<td>Grameen Communications</td>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>M 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.M.M. Yahya</td>
<td>Grameen Phone</td>
<td>private Sector</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moniruzzaman</td>
<td>Grameen Phone</td>
<td>Private Sector</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Md Shahid Uddin Akbar</td>
<td>ICT for Development Programme</td>
<td>M 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faisal Islam</td>
<td>Padma</td>
<td>M 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lutfur Rahman</td>
<td>Pundra university of Science and Technology</td>
<td>education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M Rokon Uz Zaman</td>
<td>South Asia Enterprise Development Facility</td>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>M 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chile**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leonel Rojas Urrutia</td>
<td>ATACH</td>
<td>M 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivan Sanhueza Belmar</td>
<td>Telecentro Red Vision</td>
<td>telecentre</td>
<td>M 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bernada Labarca</td>
<td>ATACH</td>
<td>M 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcela Correa</td>
<td>Corporación Encuentro</td>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>M 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claudio Orrego Larraín</td>
<td>Major of Peñalolen</td>
<td>govt</td>
<td>M 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcello Frattasio Gonzales</td>
<td>Subsecretaria de Telecomunicaciones</td>
<td>Govt</td>
<td>M 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Colombia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization/Role</th>
<th>Type of Organization</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Olga Paz</td>
<td>Red Colombiana de telecentros</td>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vilma Almendra</td>
<td>ACIN</td>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julian Alfonso Casasbuenas Gallo</td>
<td>Colnodo</td>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PABLO JARAMILLO VILLEGAS</td>
<td>FEDERACION NACIONAL DE CAFETEROS DE COLOMBIA-COMITE DE CAFETEROS DE CALDAS</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angel R.E. Lagos</td>
<td>Red de Informacion Comunitaria de La Araucania</td>
<td>NGO</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauricio Beltran</td>
<td>Sistema de Comunicación para la Paz</td>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table lists only those delegates attending more than one event.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M S Swaminathan</td>
<td>M S Swaminathan Research Foundation</td>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S Senthilkumaran</td>
<td>M S Swaminathan Research Foundation</td>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rufina Fernandes</td>
<td>NASSCOM Foundation</td>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jocelyne Josiah</td>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satyan Mishra</td>
<td>Dristhee DotCom Ltd</td>
<td>private Sector</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Tulus</td>
<td>IDRC</td>
<td>Donor</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reema Singh</td>
<td>IDRC</td>
<td>donor</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alok Bhargava</td>
<td>IL&amp; FS</td>
<td>govt</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subbiah Arunachalam</td>
<td>M S Swaminathan Research Foundation</td>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ankhi Das</td>
<td>Microsoft</td>
<td>Private Sector</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sagarika Bose</td>
<td>National Association of Software and Service Companies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surender Rana</td>
<td>Tarahaat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roy Matthew</td>
<td>Kerala State IT Mission</td>
<td>Govt</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentaro Toyama</td>
<td>Microsoft</td>
<td>Private Sector</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senthil Kumaran</td>
<td>MSSRF</td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinesh Kumar Tyagi</td>
<td>National Informatics Centre</td>
<td>govt</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M J Muthukumaraswamy</td>
<td>World Corps India</td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table lists only those delegates attending more than one event.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shikha Shrestha</td>
<td>Bellanet</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allen Bailochan Tuladhar</td>
<td>FIT Nepal</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick A V Hall</td>
<td>SAMBAD</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ganesh Ghimire</td>
<td>SAMBAD Project</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ishwor Thapa</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prakash Manandhar</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Philippines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daan Boom</td>
<td>ADB</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Donor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyunjung Lee</td>
<td>ADB</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>donor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tess Camba</td>
<td>Commission on Information and Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merlita Opeña</td>
<td>DOST</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ricardo Varela</td>
<td>DOST</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teresita N Terremonia</td>
<td>National Computer Centre</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Govt</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Napoleon Nazerio</td>
<td>Smart Communications, Inc</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Govt</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria Teresa M Camba</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Govt</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ndaula Sula</td>
<td>UGABytes</td>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esther Nasikye</td>
<td>UGABytes</td>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rita Mijumbi Epodoi</td>
<td>Uganda Development Services (UDS)</td>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>F</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward Jjuuko</td>
<td>Nabweru Multi-purpose Community Telecentre</td>
<td>telecentre</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Balaba</td>
<td>Nakaseke CMC</td>
<td>telecentre</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Kakinda</td>
<td>SchoolNet</td>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E Bwana Simba</td>
<td>ARIS – NARO</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babirye Racheal Nazziwa</td>
<td>Buganda Kingdom Telecentre</td>
<td>telecentre</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Owe’k T.K. Malokweza</td>
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<td>telecentre</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joan Okune</td>
<td>Community Based Rehabilitation Africa Network</td>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td>O.J. Okee</td>
<td>CPAR</td>
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<tr>
<td>Waiki Alfred Camara</td>
<td>CPAR</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fredrick Kintu</td>
<td>Information Society Foundation</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyarisiima Merab</td>
<td>Kigezi High School Telecentre</td>
<td>telecentre</td>
<td>F</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maureen Ouma</td>
<td>Makerere University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Henry Musenze Mukasa</td>
<td>Mission Harvest Uganda Community Training</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivan Kibirige</td>
<td>Nabweru CMC</td>
<td>telecentre</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ssonko Hannington</td>
<td>Nabweru CMC</td>
<td>telecentre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Geoffrey Kikomeko</td>
<td>Nabweru Telecentre CMC</td>
<td>telecentre</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex J Kakungulu</td>
<td>Shimoni Resource Centre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Andrew Yiga</td>
<td>Uganda Development Services</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorothy Okello</td>
<td>WOUGNET</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.6 Activity on website

Looking at a sub-sample of 1945 members.

It appears that TeleCentre.Org has created something of “critical mass” in a number of countries, where it has attracted substantial membership:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is a concentration in Asia:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REGION</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>1917</td>
<td>98.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>872</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>67.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>73.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. Af / Middle East</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>82.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. America</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>92.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America / Carib</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>99.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>.4</td>
<td>.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing System</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1945</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is a 77:23 (male:female) gender ratio among members.

Considering the entire sample, the following table presents relationships that exist between various website activities (note that this is based on the activities of a small sub-sample that make active use of the site).
### Correlations between intensity of website activities (all members)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Blogs</th>
<th>Discussions</th>
<th>Events</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Photos</th>
<th>Albums</th>
<th>video</th>
<th>consultation</th>
<th>Attend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blogs</td>
<td>0.442***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.42***</td>
<td>0.382***</td>
<td>0.339***</td>
<td>0.33***</td>
<td>0.278***</td>
<td>0.222***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussions</td>
<td>0.442***</td>
<td>0.417***</td>
<td>0.205***</td>
<td>0.383***</td>
<td>0.255***</td>
<td>0.234***</td>
<td>0.323***</td>
<td>0.288***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups</td>
<td>0.42***</td>
<td>0.359***</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.383***</td>
<td>0.479***</td>
<td>0.355***</td>
<td>0.242***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photos</td>
<td>0.382***</td>
<td>0.359***</td>
<td>0.205***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albums</td>
<td>0.339***</td>
<td>0.31***</td>
<td>0.205***</td>
<td>0.255***</td>
<td>0.479***</td>
<td>0.434***</td>
<td>0.243***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>video</td>
<td>0.33***</td>
<td>0.257***</td>
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<td>0.234***</td>
<td>0.355***</td>
<td>0.434***</td>
<td>0.258***</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>consultation</td>
<td>0.278***</td>
<td>0.262***</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.323***</td>
<td>0.242***</td>
<td>0.243***</td>
<td>0.258***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend</td>
<td>0.222***</td>
<td>0.288***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.203***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is a strong degree of correlation between all website events with the exception of organising events (minimal activity), and attendance at face to face events. Note that there is a correlation between people attending events and taking part in the consultation.

---

### Correlations between intensity of website activities (excluding paid bloggers)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Blogs</th>
<th>Discussions</th>
<th>Events</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Photos</th>
<th>Albums</th>
<th>video</th>
<th>consultation</th>
<th>Attend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blogs</td>
<td>0.411***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.393***</td>
<td>0.344***</td>
<td>0.275***</td>
<td>0.284***</td>
<td>0.229***</td>
<td>0.22***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussions</td>
<td>0.411***</td>
<td>0.397***</td>
<td>0.266***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.209***</td>
<td>0.224***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups</td>
<td>0.393***</td>
<td>0.397***</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.361***</td>
<td>0.219***</td>
<td>0.204***</td>
<td>0.298***</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.287***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.344***</td>
<td>0.329***</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.361***</td>
<td>0.435***</td>
<td>0.309***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albums</td>
<td>0.275***</td>
<td>0.266***</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.219***</td>
<td>0.435***</td>
<td>0.358***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>video</td>
<td>0.284***</td>
<td>0.209***</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.204***</td>
<td>0.309***</td>
<td>0.358***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consultation</td>
<td>0.229***</td>
<td>0.224***</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.298***</td>
<td>0.2***</td>
<td>0.2***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.203***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend</td>
<td>0.22***</td>
<td>0.287***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.203***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 6 Annex Partnership Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partnership Roots Factor</th>
<th>Partnership Roots Factor Description</th>
<th>Complementarity Factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There was no previous history of collaboration between IDRC and Microsoft. Furthermore, the Centre was cautious about the risks of working with a private sector organization such as Microsoft. The extent of experience of each partner and the role of Richard Fuchs was very significant and positive throughout the exploration, initiation and planning stages. In addition, the previous positive collaboration with SDC facilitated the establishment of that particular partnership. During the implementation stage, shifts in the internal organizational environment have brought uncertainty and lack of continuity. However, it appears too early to discern the influence of these changes. One of the main lessons learned is that the minimization of delays and disruptions resulting from internal staff changes and leadership, could increase partner interaction and efficiency of progression through stages.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>While the case study refers to institutional relationships, interviewees emphasised individuals within the partnership. The change in personnel at the director or manager level of the social investors very much influenced the ongoing partnership. While the individuals were able to establish the partnership, and enable initiation, personnel changes have with hindsight caused the predicted uncertainty and lack of continuity.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Despite sharing the vision and goal of the telecentre.org initiative, Microsoft and IDRC’s organizational needs and motivations, and ways of operating were not fully complementary. To a certain extent, this was a factor which undermined partnership effectiveness. In particular, practices and expectations within both organizations around communications with external audiences differed significantly, which led to occasional frustrations. In addition, there were perceived differences in the views of SDC and IDRC on the role of telecentres, which had an impact on their level of involvement during the implementation stage and the relevance of their inputs. IDRC needs to understand private sector partner needs and motivations from the outset in order to manage expectations and mitigate risks for participating partners. Private sector ideologies are fundamentally distinct from those of IDRC but they are of equal importance in a partnership.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The statements made in the case study were confirmed by the external interviewees. Expectations, particularly around communication continued to be a point of stress. The focus of the private sector is often delivering to a given timescale. Some external interviewees directly expressed their disappointment that IDRC as the hosting secretariat was not able to focus on “early easy wins”. While focusing on the misfit between IDRC and the private sector, nevertheless many interviewees acknowledged the added value of the partnership – particularly credibility at a policy level.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Additional Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment Factor</td>
<td>Both IDRC and Microsoft were highly committed to the initiative, both at the Director Program and Program Management levels. This greatly facilitated the development of the partnership and its contribution to achieving programmatic objectives. Motivated individuals and champions who spearhead partnership development contribute significantly to partnership effectiveness.</td>
<td>This was confirmed by external interviews. In an echo of the above comments about individuals, one voice questioned IDRC's commitment once Rich Fuchs was no longer ICT4D director.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal Footing Factor</td>
<td>The factor of equal footing is characterized by a back-and-forth process of partners dominating meetings and re-clarifying roles with open dialogue. The maintenance of equal footing is a crucial element of partnership effectiveness, and it has required a significant amount of time and energy for IDRC to maintain. This aspect has had a negative influence and undermined partnership effectiveness during implementation. One of the main lessons from this, is that IDRC must clarify its management role with respect to other partners from the outset in order to maintain equal footing.</td>
<td>For many the necessary “back and forth” referred to here, is based on a lack of clarity on the details of the business plan and MOA. They believe that a more detailed documentation at the start would have helped considerably regarding “equality”. Members of the Steering Working Group sometimes treated their role differently, some believing they were there to steer and some to be a non governance advisory group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk Identification and Management Factor</td>
<td>As telecentre.org represented the Centre’s first large public-private partnership, the risk was a very important concern to which IDRC devoted significant attention. Adopting risk mitigation strategies appear to have been relatively effective at ensuring that IDRC’s reputation was not negatively affected by its involvement in this initiative. Overall, risk mitigation strategies had a very important and positive influence on partnership effectiveness throughout all stages. In comparison to other case studies, the risk factor did not have a substantial influence on the other factors analyzed in this case study and was therefore not considered particularly pervasive.</td>
<td>Overall, risk mitigation strategies had a very important and positive influence on partnership effectiveness throughout all stages. In comparison to other case studies, the risk factor did not have a substantial influence on the other factors analyzed in this case study and was therefore not considered particularly pervasive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms of Engagement Factor</td>
<td>The terms of engagement (i.e. the MOA between IDRC and Microsoft and the Business Plan for the initiative) appear to have had a positive influence on the effectiveness of the partnership, as they guided implementation and clarified roles and responsibilities. However,</td>
<td>External interviews do not seem to agree with the point made here – that the MOA was detailed enough. They tend to believe that early disappointments about strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision Making and Governance Factor</td>
<td>Overall, the governance and decision-making structures and procedures functioned well, though, the effectiveness of the governing body was somewhat undermined by the imbalance in the participation of Microsoft and SDC. However, this does not seem to have been an ongoing issue as it has mainly occurred during the implementation phase. One of the main lessons, stemming from this is that importance of having regular interaction with governing body, in order to keep them engaged and involved in the initiative.</td>
<td>External interviewees expressed a desire for more regular and frequent communication. They confirm that the governance and decision making was in broad scope functioning well but they hoped for more informal participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Factor</td>
<td>It is evident that communications was the strongest influence of all the factors, contributing both positively and negatively to partnership effectiveness. During the pre-implementation stages, negotiation successfully led to the inclusion of two additional clauses by Microsoft and IDRC to address their respective concerns. During implementation, communication between the partners, particularly between Microsoft and IDRC (though to a lesser extent with SDC), was perceived as regular and responsive, thus contributing to partnership effectiveness. The creation of an internal working group facilitated internal communications within Team IDRC during the pre-implementation stages of the initiative. However, interviewees highlighted some areas of internal communication that could be strengthened. Finally, the issue of communications with external audiences challenged the relationship for a specific period of time during implementation. This was due in part to</td>
<td>Branding of external communications did not always demonstrate the equality of the partners, with SDC sometimes getting the back cover only. External interviewees emphasised the importance of communications with external audiences and felt that this had not been one of the programmes strong suites.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
differing expectations between the two organizations. The issue negatively influenced other factors, such as the level of equal footing between the two partners but this was resolve.

Communications with external audiences, public relations, results dissemination and recognition are very important to partners, particularly for those in the private sector. Given this, IDRC may consider dedicating increased human resources in order to meet the communications expectations of such partners.

Strong internal communication and dynamic, flexible and adaptive internal processes are also vital, for example in relation to contracting and hiring staff.
7 Annex Case Studies

7.1 Mali
Mali has effectively been engaged with the Network Pillar.

When telecentre.org started Mali already had a number of telecentres. The key Champion, Aminata Maiga Fofana, who is to become part of telecentre.org Foundations’ advisory board, was already working with telecentres. Since 2003 she and her colleagues recognised the importance of networking and that the CLICs (Community Learning and Information Centres, started with USAID funding) were very isolated. This isolation caused a gap in support, particularly technical support within the centres. In 2003 they came together in an association, 13 CLICs, enabling their managers to share with each other. Unfortunately other telecentres funded by other partners were not involved. At end of the USAID funded project the team created Afrilinks, in order to find ICT funding and support all centres regardless of donor.

telecentre.org contacted Afrilinks after Tunis. They asked to work with all Mali centres, and Afrilinks brokered discussions with Unesco, IICD, KFW funded centres to create a federation. The Afrilinks institution was said to be willing to open the protocol for everyone to join, but it is reported that other donors felt that they would all seem to become “USAID” centres. For this reason a new federation was started FETAMA; Afrilinks assisted them to register and get the necessary legal documents, and Afrilinks became the secretariat.

Sustainability is a problem for many telecentres, so it seen as almost inevitable that the telecentre movement in Mali cannot take care of a secretariat. The first step was to undertake profiling – noting the equipment, technical capacity, host institution, motivation, service provision – in order to establish training needs. Afrilinks has focused more and more on training, and to date has probably trained about 400 managers. With the federation and network established, capacity really grew as people connected with each other. It is now common for a manager of one centre to phone and talk with the manager of another centre (who he/she perhaps met on a training) to ask specific advice. Regarding the curriculum of the trainings, Afrilinks noted the priorities and created a few general modules relevant to the majority.

A key element in the success of the network was the promotion of the federation – to the Ministry, to Partners, to the Telecom company (in the hope of getting preferential prices). At one point the government decided to tax centres as profit making businesses, but with the lobbying of the federation the government recognised that centres are for the community, and only charging costs, so were tax exempt.

The continuation of FETAMA remains in question. According to interviews, FETAMA has not been able to secure a budget line to support the network. It has undertaken some fund raising and this resulted in a French corporation donating computers but to date these are not yet being used. Microsoft provided funds to FETAMA – specifically to train young women after school – and FETAMA paid telecentres to implement the programme - which enabled telecentres in turn to purchase extra equipment. However the core challenge is seen as FETAMA being too dependent on the founding NGO Afrilinks.
Meanwhile, Afrilinks has also been championing networks in neighbouring countries. They have tried stimulating federations in other west Africa countries, for example they gave IT support to UNESCO CMCs in Burkino Faso.

Not all telecentres in the region have connectivity. Other activities of Afrilinks included organising specialists to work together (including Ugabytes, and centres in Mozambique) to put websites onto a CD Rom every three months and distribute them. This enabled the centres that were not connected to have website experience. Similarly to address the needs of telecentres, profiling revealed 5 centres which were very good, and they were asked to help Afrilinks deliver training. Thus the network offers a number of services – ICT training, Mentor relationship, enabling problem solving. Mentors and personal connections have proven to be the key - eg one telecentre manager needed to create a businesscard with photo. Not knowing how to do it, they contacted their mentor who explained within “5 minutes”.

7.2 The role of telecentre.org?
Mali is a prime example where telecentre.org has had a contribution, but has not been the only player. In http://www.iicd.org/articles/meeting-iicd-afrilinks-telecentre-stakeholders-mali/ we see IICD (2007) bringing together telecentres across the donor divide. The meeting is facilitated by Afrilinks, and hence a contribution by telecentre.org via Afrilinks. However of note is the absence of credit given by IICD to telecentre.org (even though SDC is mentioned). One article in itself does not evidentially define the key stakeholders of the Telecentre ecosystem in Mali, however it does perhaps illustrate the territorial nature of donors, and the absence of telecentre.org as a single unifying global brand.

In contrast we see http://www.telecentre.org/profiles/blogs/french-telecentre-leaders where donors have come together to present a Telecentre Leaders Forum for West Africa. Unfortunately the participants list was not available for this forum. “The "Forum des Leaders de Telecentres Francophone" FLTF started here in Bamako, Mali today with commitment from government of Mali to improve communication infrastructure and ensure that telecentres get access to the internet when they want to. This was said by Dr. Iam Diallo with the Ministry of Communication as he opened the first French TLF. The event has attracted more 60 telecentre practitioners, network leaders and development organizations from Mali, Burkina Faso, Benin, Congo Brazzaville and Senegal.” We can assume the right people were at the TLF, and are actively involved in the network, but in the absence of the participants list we were unable to assess this.

When one considers the international events analysed in the event network analysis, the outcome for a search of Malian participants reveals only a limited participation, and with few connections. (See Network Analysis Section).
While the network analysis illustrates the connections made by the Mali ecosystem into the international movement and facilitated by Telecentre.org, it seems to communicate that those connections are in themselves relatively few in number, and it is the presence of a single Champion (Aminata) and the support given to her by tc.org which seems to have predominately facilitated change in the Mali telecentre ecosystem.

A fuller analysis of the online presence at telecentre.org can be found in the report, however the above examines whether the Mali network have been engaged with the online telecentre.org. 20 persons are members from Mali, one of which is the paid content facilitator. These people on average have taken part in one type of social networking website activity, and on average (excluding the paid for content) have averaged 5 contributions. The table above shows how the more proliferate bloggers are also the ones most likely to load photos, join groups and discussions. What is most interesting though, given the relatively low attendance of Mali based stakeholders to international events is the resulting negative correlation between attendance at events and discussions – ie people who have attended face to face events are less likely to join in discussions on the website. The analysis belows shows that globally this is not the case. We did not investigate whether this phenomena was unique to Mali.

7.3 Bangladesh
Bangladesh has been effectively engaged in the Network and Research Pillar.

The current outcome of the networking activities, Bangladesh Telecentre Network, is said to be a move prompted by Bangladesh NGOs with support from telecentre.org.

“D.net, a recipient of IDRC’s grant in Bangladesh took an active role in the global leaders meet with a keen interest to replicate the Indian Mission 2007 initiative which was launched at WSIS II as one of the flagship activities of Connect the World initiative......Leaders from Bangladesh have witnessed these developments in recent past and have visited Indian telecentre projects many a times. Their attendance at IDRC/telecentre.org sponsored events relating to the above initiatives took them a step closer to the formation of the Bangladesh Telecentre Network. This was strengthened by visits made by representatives of M S Swaminathan Research Foundation who stressed upon the need for bring all telecentre-related organisations in Bangladesh together. telecentre.org, further nurtured the emerging
interest by involving them in various regional initiatives. Sarvodaya, with support from IDRC organised a meeting in Colombo to discuss the outcomes of WSIS in which some representatives from Bangladesh were present. In meetings such as the one mentioned above, the idea towards creating a telecentre network in Bangladesh was discussed time and again.”

“Capitalising on these interests, telecentre.org mooted the idea of holding a meeting of telecentre networks in Bangladesh to discuss if and how such a network could be formed. In Rangpur, an international workshop for social entrepreneurs and practitioners was organised with a view to building a telecentre family in Bangladesh on 27-29 August 2006.....The idea for a Bangladesh Telecentre Network was concretised at this meeting, and a roadmap was prepared similar to that of Mission 2007. Mission 2011 was thus conceived to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Bangladesh’s independence with over 40,000 telecentres.”

“..d.net, one of the partners of telecentre.org undertook to fulfilling the suggestions made by Barrister Hasan. Together with its key partners, Youth Power in Social Action (YPSA), Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio Communication (BNNRC), d.net has since been promoting the concept and building consensus towards the establishment of BTN in their nation. Five months after Barisster Hasan's suggestions, in January 2007, with the help of 17 leading organisation, the Bangladesh Telecentre Network was formed. It was decided that the network would seek support from telecentre.org and UNDP to meet the alliance building costs for the first two years while striving to develop a self-sustainable model to maintain the network. Basheerhamad Shadrach, SPO since then has had many rounds of discussions with the proponents, attended their regional consultation meeting in Chittagong and participated in their BTN steering committee meeting. Having served the Indian Mission 2007 initiative as its Secretary since inception, Basheerhamad Shadrach was able to offer insights into MSP based alliance building process which greatly enabled the concept for BTN evolve into more of a multistakeholder alliance.”

BTN currently has 2165 Telecentres on its database. A significant proportion of these are single providers through the Grameen village phone programme. It is not clear whether these single providers create the community space and cohesion that is key to current definitions of Telecentres. BTN has focused on training. It notes that a single provider would not be able to serve all proposed 40,000 Telecentres.

D.net and Brac are also part of the research Pillar – the Global Impact Study. The profiling has established that “There are 861 public access venues operated with a for-profit orientation, not necessarily by private sector entities. For example, D.Net, being a not-for-profit organization, is promoting 26 for-profit public access venues with mobile phone based services. The private sector organizations are planning to expand coverage with exponential growth target by 2011. The second largest number of public access venues with ICTs with telecentre model is in NGO or not-for-profit sector. Total 323 telecentres of different kinds are operating in the country. Many of those are based in educational institutions, others are in community or growth centres. A few of them are in local government institutions. An exercise of identifying potential venues shows that NGOs have also ambitious expansion plan with a number of 14185 to be opened in next 4-5 years. The not-for-profit models are also different in terms of approach, technology mix, service-mix, target-beneficiaries.” In the paper “benefit on investment: justification for investment in telecentre”, there is the beginning of some excellent work on the costs and benefits of telecentres in bangladesh which could potentially inform policy making.
7.4 The role of telecentre.org?

Interviews revealed that alongside this official narrative there were the usual challenges, particularly in getting organisations to work together. The interviewees very much saw the initiative as Bangladeshi owned with contribution from Telecentre.org. They described the relationship with Telecentre.org as both sweet and salty, explaining that at times the advice seemed a little too prescriptive.

As evaluators it is difficult to catch the direct implications of the telecentre.org contribution. There is a saying that goes around the development community regarding participation and social mobilisation, attributed to the Lao Tzu, Father of Taoism, that “A leader is best when people barely know he exists, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say: we did it ourselves.”. The interviewees were very much of the persuasion that Bangladesh Telecentre network came together from the impetus of Bangladesh stakeholders – and it is difficult to know whether this is the case, or whether telecentre.org was able to be a good Lao Tzu leader.

It is clear that the resulting alliances and the inputs from telecentre.org have contributed to a strong network which has been able to engage the government and work towards a national programme, consolidating the hard work of individual Telecentres. The Research pillar has added research capability, which is generating evidence of impact that can inform not just Bangladesh policies but gives insight for global views on the role of Telecentres.

From the social network we can illustrate some of the investment made in the Bangladesh Telecentre ecosystem.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Investment</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ananya Raihan</td>
<td>D.Net/Bangladesh Telecentre Network</td>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahmud Hasan</td>
<td>D.net</td>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHM Bazlur Rahman</td>
<td>Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication</td>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHM Sultanur Reza</td>
<td>Grameen Phone Ltd</td>
<td>private sector</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shawkat Milton</td>
<td>ATN</td>
<td>Private Sector</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohammad Rafiql Imam</td>
<td>Bangladesh Association of Software &amp; Information Services</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abdullah-Al Mamun</td>
<td>Bangladesh Friendship Education Society</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rasheduzzaman Ahmed</td>
<td>Bangladesh Friendship Education Society</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reza Salim</td>
<td>Bangladesh Friendship Education Society</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Md. Mojahidul Islam</td>
<td>eBiz(Ittefaq Group of publications)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tariq Been Yussouf</td>
<td>Grameen Communications</td>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.M.M. Yahya</td>
<td>Grameen Phone</td>
<td>private Sector</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moniruzzaman</td>
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<td>Private Sector</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Md Shahid Uddin Akbar</td>
<td>ICT for Development Programme</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faisal Islam</td>
<td>Padma</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lutfor Rahman</td>
<td>Pundra university of Science and Technology</td>
<td>education</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M Rokon Uz Zaman</td>
<td>South Asia Enterprise Development Facility</td>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We can see clearly how key d.net stakeholders who become the leaders of BTN, are exposed to the international telecentres movement. At the same time there is considerable investment in raising the awareness of other Bangladesh stakeholders.
Telecentre.org funded support for the network which had a number of intended deliverables. These included:-

- strengthen the inherent local capacity and steer a collaborative approach to problem solving, especially in the context of telecentres that are finding hard to survive.
- Six task forces, established under the BTN will identify policy and implementation level constraints with a view to suggesting changed practices, technologies, policies and laws towards the poverty reduction agenda set in place in recent past.
- strengthening South-South cooperation and collaboration among institutions in the South.
- a number of key researchers in Bangladesh who strive to make international connections while grounding their practice in Bangladesh towards driving an anti-poverty agenda through telecentres.
- Sustainability First.

The six task forces were appointed to redefine current practices and help to support the following aspects: redefining telecentre policy; capacity development of knowledge workers in each of the proposed 40,000 telecentres; content and solutions development based on the local needs of communities these telecentres serve; technical and reference desk support to telecentre operators and organisation that would like to initiate telecentres; resource mobilisation for upscaling telecentres and the BTN; and, finally, promotion and knowledge sharing of BTN activities among telecentre networks within Bangladesh and all over the world. Each of the taskforces is being led by an organisation of repute with member organisation helping to implement the activities.

The taskforces have been established and allocated to 6 organisations for coordination.

- Telecentre Policy Taskforce: SDNF
- Human Capacity Development Taskforce: YPSA
- Content and solutions Taskforce: KATALYST
- Technical and Reference Support Taskforce: D.Net
- Promotion and event management Taskforce: DKF
- Resource Mobilisation Taskforce: D.Net

The proposal for support to BTN states:-

“Encouraged by its successful Grameen Phone operation, in partnership with Telemedicine Reference Centre Ltd, Telenor have launched a health helpline for poor communities for a fee. This service rendered through telecentres and through direct phone lines have emerged useful for communities where public health system has for decades been a failure. Bangladesh Rural Advancement Centre’s bracnet.net initiative has shown encouraging early results in strengthening local governance and knowledge based decision taking at the village level. Telecentres with relevant locale-specific databases and value added services to communities are in demand in Bangladesh. IDRC’s support to d.net has
helped in exploring certain innovative ideas in service delivery for the poor through telecentres. UNDP has initiated a telecentre and connectivity program to support communities in Chittagong hill tracks.”

Interviews confirm the actions in Chittagong seem to have had a good impact regarding supporting the communities.

BTN seems active in the telecentre ecosystem within Bangladesh. However, it can be noted that the website was created in 2008 and many items remain unchanged since then – most notably the latest public announcements which all remain late 2008 events. In contrast to the “static” website, the discussion groups show very current activity, and 225 Bangladesh residents are members of telecentre.org community site. These observations seem to support the notion that social networking is at the heart of the telecentre movement, and not “information delivery”.

7.5 Colombia

Colnodo\(^2\) is a non-profit association of non-governmental organizations whose aim is to “facilitate communications and the exchange of information and of experiences amongst the Colombian organizations at the local, national and international level, by means of low cost electronic networks”.

The relationship between Colnodo and telecentre.org began at the Colombian III National Telecentre Meeting in Cali, where both institutions met and realized that they shared a common vision and a will to make an impact that the policy-making level.

telecentre.org helped in bringing together Colnodo and Compartel\(^3\) – the Colombian Ministry or Communications’ programme of Social Telecommunications – to partner in a project on social appropriation models for telecentres to foster their impact on their respective communities. The project’s goal was to achieve higher impact and a certain degree of financial sustainability by implementing this new appropriation model in three telecentres run by Compartel. The main action lines would be:

- To produce materials on the appropriation model\(^4\) with which to guide telecentre operators
- The sharing of these and other materials amongst telecentres
- The creation of a national portal for Colombian telecentres

External monitoring would be provided by telecentre.org.

To help in the training part of the project, telecentre.org introduced Fundación Esplai\(^5\) – a Spanish foundation which had acknowledged reputation on telecentre training – in early 2007. In Colnodo’s own words, “telecentre.org would always put us in contact with potential partners, managing knowledge very efficiently”. telecentre.org funded trips to both institutions so make knowledge sharing happen. The relationship between Colnodo and Fundación Esplai would be the origin of the later first national telecentre academy, the Academia Nacional de Telecentros de Colombia\(^6\).

By end of 2007, Compartel was convinced of the power of the model, the pilot project was almost over and had proven definitely successful. The academy was set up.

\(^2\) http://www.colnodo.apc.org/
\(^3\) http://www.compartel.gov.co
\(^4\) http://www.telecentros.org.co/index.shtml?apc=h1-1--&x=1073
\(^5\) http://www.fundacionesplai.org/
\(^6\) http://www.telecentros.org.co/academia
Once the first pilot phase was ended, a strategy for scaling up the project was designed with the concurrence of telecentre.org – that helped in providing knowledge, technological and methodological support, networking and, over all, legitimacy at the highest level – and consultant John Zoltner\(^7\), that would lead the scaling up by using the Academy to reach hundreds of telecentres with their online training programme.

The strategy was articulated during 2008-2009 at the ministry level. telecentre.org funded it with 230,000 US$, an amount of money that was leveraged to "get double or triple founding, besides the backing support, which doubtless was the main asset".

One of the major outcomes of the project was a radical change in the Colombian Ministry of Communications and its strategy to provide public access to ICTs. The scaling up of the project did not come before Compartel had pursued an impact analysis which provided evidence that their telecentres had benefited from the appropriation model, thus confirming Colnodo’s hypotheses.

In light of the evidence provided, the Colombian Consejo Nacional de Política Económica y Social (CONPES, National Council for Economic and Social Policy) officially changed Compartel's strategic plan – published in the CONPES Document 3032\(^8\) – for a new one that was adapted to the new appropriation methodology in its new CONPES Document 3457\(^9\). In general terms, the initial commitment of Compartel to limit its contribution to only providing infrastructures turned into a commitment with appropriation and training.

By 2006, Compartel was running 1490 telecentres with no appropriation processes that implied serious difficulties in sustainability issues. In the two-year period of 2008-2009, 1668 new telecentres were created by Compartel, all of them with the new appropriation model developed by Colnodo.

The online training sessions have reached more than 600 people during this same period, and it is expected that 6,000 people – community users, telecentre operators, network administrators and organizations that run telecentres – from 52 telecentres will have been trained offline by end of 2009. On the other hand, training sessions are normally open to managers of public access points – belonging or not to Compartel – so that, actually, anyone can join them or access the training materials for free.

The capacity building of the local organizations focuses in issues like appropriation, endogenous development, sustainability or networking. Evidence keeps on showing that training is not only a driver of inclusion, but also a valuable tool for telecentre sustainability.

### 7.6 The role of telecentre.org

Besides the flagship project between the multi-stakeholder partnership of Colnodo, Compartel and telecentre.org, Colnodo is an active member of the telecentre.org network and states to be benefiting from its membership.

Following the experience of telecentre.org with the Ning website and the success of the Spanish version\(^10\), Colnodo decided to create their own virtual community, the Comunidad Virtual de Telecentros.

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7 http://www.zoltner.com
10 http://telecentre-comunidade.ning.com/
The community now has 693 members. The reason behind the creation of their own site is to create a community where telecentre operators and project managers “feel at home”, as the debates that take place at the regional/international websites are “discussions on another and higher level”.

This discussions are nevertheless followed by Colnodo’s team, especially at the higher and strategic positions. Some of these positions’ holders have attended national and international meetings like workshops, knowledge fairs or exchanges of experiences. The output of these meetings is gathered and diffused afterwards through their own website or the Spanish international website, as local facilitators – Colnodo hires a telecentre.org Community Facilitator – accompany telecentre operators in these events gathering ideas and the main outcomes. Telecentre operators are encouraged to share their experiences and four of them have joined the National Telecentre Academy as tutors where they can transfer their expertise to their trainees.

This knowledge sharing also happens at the international level by attending telecentre leaders fora, where natural allies have been met like CEPES – that helped in the implementation of the Academy – ATACH or Fundació Esplai, and partnerships established.

Access to funding, to networking, to knowledge and to guidance “without imposition”, methodological support, conceptual support, help in strategic design, legitimate backup in lobbying actions are among the most cited benefits that Colnodo got from telecentre.org.

Colnodo has been appointed member of the board of directors of the Red de redes de telecentros de América Latina y El Caribe.

For completeness we include the network map resulting from the analysis of international events, and detail the attendees in the table below. However as the narrative above describes, the involvement in the Colombian Telecentre ecosystem by telecentre.org has been very productive, influencing policy and encouraging national activities – which is not represented in the engagement in international events. The strength of the resulting activities in Colombia calls into question the assumption that involvement in face to face international networks is the precursor to active and productive engagement with telecentre.org and the Telecentre networks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Olga Paz</td>
<td>Red Colombiana de telecentros</td>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vilma Almendra</td>
<td>ACIN</td>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>F</td>
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<tr>
<td>Julian Alfonso Casasbuenas Gallo</td>
<td>Colnodo</td>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>M</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>PABLO JARAMILLO VILLEGAS</td>
<td>FEDERACION NACIONAL DE CAFETEROS DE COLOMBIA-COMITE DE CAFETEROS DE CALDAS</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angel R.E. Lagos</td>
<td>Red de Informacion Comunitaria de La Araucania</td>
<td>NGO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mauricio Beltran</td>
<td>Sistema de Comunicación para la Paz</td>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>M</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

11 http://comunidad.telecentros.org.co/
8 Annex The role of Telecentres in the future
A comment by the Reviewers

8.1 What is the role of Telecentres

There is a general consensus that Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have forever changed life. And there is also a major consensus that lack of access to ICTs creates a digital divide that increases the risk of social exclusion of the more vulnerable ones. R Fuchs, one of the key Founders of telecentre.org argues that there is a growing digital divergence – he argues “The 21st Century is witnessing a new transformation brought on by the near ubiquitous availability of the mobile phone. The authors point out two new trends. First is the divergent growth of mobile telephony and the internet, especially in the developing world. Second is the rise of “shared use computing”.” Given this backdrop, is there a role for telecentres as we know them now?

As it happened with the aim to foster literacy and access to knowledge with public libraries, many have defended the role of public access to ICTs as a means to bridge the aforementioned digital divide. Indeed, there are a few voices that claim access to information and knowledge as a human right, or others that claim that universal access – to ICTs or information, increasingly overlapping concepts – should be a priority policy.

The role of telecentres is, precisely, to provide public access to ICTs. But there are many ways in which this public access can be provided:

- Ownership of the telecentre can be public or private
- The telecentre can run for profit or not for profit
- Independently from the two previous aspects, the telecentre can charge or not charge a fee for using its infrastructure and/or for specific content and services
- The telecentre can limit its scope to just providing access to ICTs (normally meaning access to a desktop computer connected to the internet or access to a landline or mobile phone) or can provide other community services like training, specific market information, guided access to government services, etc.

Of course, different names apply to different models and even to the same model. telecentre.org has succeeded in providing a single term, telecentre, to identify the public access point whose aim is social rather than profit and, in consequence, providing a wide range of content and community services in addition to ICT access, and independently from type ownership or the price paid (if any) for these services.

The role of telecentres as understood by telecentre.org is to impact on the development of communities by means of ICTs. Thus, the stress is put on the usual drivers of development: training and education, targeted services (public services, health) and support to the entrepreneur.

This approach has become increasingly relevant as ICT penetration (Internet, mobile phone) increases and physical access to ICTs is less of an issue in comparison with capacity or with access to knowledge. Thus, digital skills and competences are mostly demanded and a core issue in the role of telecentres.

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12 Access understood here in a very broad sense, including capability, effective usage, an appropriate legal framework, etc.
On the other hand, the community side of the telecentre has made of them gathering places and thus relevant venues for participation and engagement activities and (public) policies. In fact, this is what some point to as the natural evolution of telecentres: community spaces enabled with ICTs where everyday’s tasks can be performed more efficiently.

8.2 What are the outcomes of Telecentres
Although there is not enough literature – especially that resulting from methodical research – to make strong statements on the outcomes of telecentres, some preliminary insights can still be made.

If anything, telecentres have broadly raised awareness of the revolution that the Information Society implies and the risks of falling in the “bad side” of the digital divide. There is enough evidence to state that digital competences and access to ICTs provide benefits to the overall population and, in the best scenario, not having these competences or access to ICTs definitely reduce the probability of social and economic inclusion. Telecentres have thus been a main actor diffusing the benefits – and the challenges and threats – of the digital revolution.

On a more practical basis, telecentres have undoubtedly increased the amount of population that can access ICTs, especially when run under a non-profit basis and with cost prices or zero prices, then taking affordability out of the equation. On an elemental approach, more coverage has implied more informed people and, over all, more people communicating with each other, be it for personal purposes be it for professional ones.

Concerning digital competences – the other great barrier along with affordability –, telecentres have trained millions of people all over the world, and this training has been done all along the spectrum of digital competences, from the basic technological ones up to the skills required to have a job in the IT sector. But training has not been bound to digital skills: managerial and entrepreneurial competences are constantly listed as one of the main outcomes of telecentres in relationship to training, and increasingly many telecentres include courses in the field in their portfolios. Other specific skills include basic literacy and language learning.

After physical access to infrastructures and capacity building, access to information is also one of the major outcomes of telecentres. There has been a huge deployment of content and information platforms and services that are accessed from telecentres and targeted by economic sector: information on the structure of the demand, market information for distributors and retailers, agricultural information of all kinds (market prices, weather forecasts, information about crops, etc.)… Interestingly enough, many of these content and services have been produced outside of telecentres, but triggered by the needs of their users.

Related with content, services and more people communicating with each other, telecentres have also enhanced the communication between governments and their citizens. In many cases telecentres have just made possible the deployment of public services (now distributed online) whose cost was prohibitive in an analogue world: e-government, e-health or e-learning services, though requiring higher levels of literacy and digital skills, are increasingly present in telecentres around the world.
If looking towards how telecentres run, one of the interesting outcomes has been new business models that can operate and be sustainable while anchored in the bottom of the pyramid and serving low income communities.

Last, but not least, telecentres are providing very relevant data about their users’ profile and their users’ preferences. Statisticians and statesmen have thus been able to use this intelligence to improve the design of their researches and policies.

8.3 What is the impact of Telecentres

As we have already mentioned, though the amount of scholarly literature is steadily increasing, evidence on direct impact is still smaller than desirable. One of the first outcomes of the Global Impact Study has precisely been a comprehensive literature review of the impact of public access to ICTs. In this document, the authors group the papers reviewed according to the aspect where they have had an impact. Though some papers and inconclusive, the list of domains is as follows:

- Education
- Governance and Transparency
- Income and employment
- Institutional Capacity
- Social equity and trust
- Civic Engagement
- Health
- Culture and Language Preservation
- Gender Empowerment

To which we could add – with all the caveats and cautions that come with generalizations and extrapolations – some of the economic benefits that have been proved to come from access to ICTs. That is, as far as telecentres have provided access to specific information, improved communication, computing facilities, financial services like microcredit, or public services, it would be likely to find (though pending demonstration):

- Economic growth
- Improvement of markets
- Higher rates of investment
- Efficiency and productivity
- Innovation
- Increase in trade and the demand

Nevertheless, one of our interviewees stated that impact was still very difficult to measure, especially at the macro level. Indeed, it might well be that “taken at the political level (everyone will access to health, better businesses, etc.), telecentres are ‘deceiving’”.

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14 A reader on telecentre impact can be found at http://ictlogy.net/bibciter/reports/bibliographies.php?idb=56
But, if looked from a grounded theory approach, and thinking in terms not of the original goals, but in what difference has the telecentre made in people’s lives, there is strong evidence that there has been quite a huge impact due to public access points. This, of course, reverses the usual top-down developmental model, and puts the stress on a bottom-up one. In this train of thought, telecentres would be part of a horizontal approach to ICT4D, providing services not tied to specific outcomes. While making the impact even more difficult to measure, this could be the way to measure impact, similar to the economists’ approach when measuring total factor productivity.

8.4 What is the future of Telecentres

At the time when we are writing this report, most forecasts about ICTs and the Information Society speak of an increase in the pervasiveness of Internet and mobile coverage in the next years to come. Added to this (physical) pervasiveness, affordability will become less of an issue, in part because prices have lowered and will continue to drop (and new low-cost devices will keep on appearing, like cheap laptops), in part because benefits (impact) from ICT usage will become more clear and hence cost will be seen as investment, not expenditure.

In the light of this scenario, there is a surprising – for it is, at first glance, counterintuitive – consensus that telecentres will not disappear. On the contrary, many telecentre operators have seen the usage of their facilities increase in the last months and the demand for their services raise.

A first explanation is that as access to ICTs increases and makes of it a more important topic, it pushes more people to enter the Information Society not to be excluded from the digital mainstream. And, where penetration is still low, they do that in telecentres.

Of course, this does not explain why people that live in places where penetration is higher, access is cheaper, policies are more developed and, in general, can have household access still go to telecentres.

According to telecentre operators, network administrators and researchers, the answer for the increased usage is:

- Training, especially in digital competences
- Access to information, for which many times an expert guidance is required
- Access to online and offline services, sometimes only provided at telecentres, sometimes, as content, requiring expert guidance
- Community building, collective activities, social events

In general, it is all about what is beyond the mere access to ICTs, what is related with the social component of the telecentres. Hence, the consensus of a bigger role of telecentres in the future is accompanied by the acknowledgement that telecentres will have to focus social sustainability in order to achieve financial sustainability. That is, embed their activities in their host communities, answer their daily needs and figure out how ICTs can help them in fulfilling them. So, it is expected a gradual movement from mere access to ICT infrastructures to services, a movement that has already began its path in many telecentre networks.

And as services are usually more difficult and complex to manage than infrastructures – even in a sector where infrastructures (hardware and software) evolve at great speed –, it is also expected that telecentres will keep on clustering around networks with which they will have a two-way conversation: one the one hand, individual telecentres will supply the networks with lessons learnt, knowledge about their customers and users and their needs, and ideas of new services; on the other hand, networks will
supply their members with standardized (cost-effective) services, while acting as a hub between the individual telecentres and third parties aiming to supply these services (e.g. governments).

When asked about their future challenges, most of respondents said that the same wide variety of challenges present today, will be there in 2010. These were related mainly to sustainability (both social and financial), appropriate technologies and ability of the communities to absorb them, connectivity (cost and availability), community impacts and social use, the capacity of the local operators (to become successful local social entrepreneurs), and the enabling environments (policy, etc). At the network level, the challenges mentioned were the need to build sustainable help desks, develop fruitful partnerships (nationally and locally), deliver effective training, channel useful services and applications, and the capacity to reach out to government programs which are preparing to invest significantly in telecentre programs, so that the lessons learned can influence the government initiatives toward establishing real local community development hubs. Yacine consultation 2007.

Although most of the respondents agreed that the core entity articulating the telecentre “movement” in 2010, should be “small”, “light”, “non-bureaucratic” and flexible, the responses to the “how” question, were quite diverse. Several existing models of networks were proposed for further analysis but most respondents agreed that the global movement should be flexible, not centralised, working via virtual venues, with nodes/groupings structured around both geographical and thematic/project networking nodes/channels.

In terms of the executive structure to manage the “movement”, most respondents agreed with having a small core staff, or a secretariat, with an animation and facilitation role, and with funds to manage all the networking tools and articulations. Many respondents stressed the importance of having either officers or executive correspondents in the field, at the regional or sub regional nodes level, close to the practitioners, with a certain level of decentralised decision making capacity. Yacine consultation 2007
9 Annex Findings Online Survey

More than 1200 participants of events were identified as part of the event analysis. A random sample of 10% were taken, emails identified, and a small survey conducted using a limited Delphic method with 5 2 part questions. 16 responses were gathered, representing 14% response rate, which is as expected. While the results are presented below, the results must be taken in the light of the respondents being self selecting (ie they are likely to have a predisposition to the subject of telecentres.)

9.1 Question 1

There is considerable debate about the difference between Telecentres and cybercafes. The key difference seems to be that Telecentres are a place where communities either come together or form. It is the social development of communities that makes them distinctive. Do you agree that Telecentres by definition include some aspect of community?

Selected commentary includes:

Trainees come together according to the training programme, the training taking in account the gender aspect.
In most of our Telecentres we move from Telecentres to knowledge centres and we establish community projects and within that project we improve the quality of training and capacity building and provide many e-services and we have 4 website to communicate with the community and our partners and in each project the end users are completely involved.
a) Our telecentres (actually mainly CMCs, incorporating community radio stations) are usually owned by local associations; b) radio programming for and by specific interest groups – women, children, etc – and local volunteer involvement; c) outreach activities with schools, etc.
Telecentres in Burkina contribute to improving liveshoods of communities through following actions:
- Facilitates access to information
- Capacity building by training
- Education in promoting E-learning
By offering meeting space like for conferences etc Offering a place where community members can access and share information on issues pertinent to their community.
It promotes community by bringing together people of various backgrounds who are interested in the Internet.
9.2 Question 2

Telecentre.org has arranged a number of face to face meetings and workshops. From our records you attended at least one of these. Some of these meetings were formal and some used “open space” processes where the emphasis was on giving people time to discuss and network. People have said that the open space meetings were less boring but they found that sometimes it was difficult to identify specific increase in capacity. If I made the statement on your behalf that “Telecentre.org meetings have always been really useful and I can see clearly how they have increased my capacity for managing my Telecentre”, would you agree?

Selected commentary includes:

In my case I attended more than 10 telecentre workshops and in generally in the last three years I attended more than 20 conferences and workshops and presented 18 papers and we organized the 5th EATLF and we are going to organize on the 11th jan. 2010 the knowledge centre for disadvantage communities with ESCWA, but when ever I attended I talk about telecentre movement. The differences between the formal and the open that each one has its own merits the open one gives wide range of information which you may not expect but with no concentration the other one gives you a chance to concentrate on what you need. Generally both of them are good in sharing knowledge, experiences and best practices which save us a lot of time and save us money in replicating projects. Agree that learning through exchanging experiences with other countries/networks has been useful, getting new ideas. But for me the best meetings were the ones with specific objectives, more focussed - open space is good for general involvement and network building but not for reaching conclusions about real issues or problems – we seemed to be discussing the same issues over and over again, at too general a level.

Participants were given the opportunity to share their experiences. However, such meetings should also focus on some projects and assign responsibility individuals to coordinate them otherwise such meetings will become meaningless if there no expected out put.

the open space methodology were quite complicated because it must seek the agenda with participants, it sometimes made things difficult; however there are training facilitators or exchanges between telecentres and networks that have been beneficial it would have helped incorporated many aspects of gender in telecentres I have attended just one meeting and I do not remember it that well.
9.3 Question 3

Telecentre.org has put a lot of emphasis on Networks. Do you agree that Telecentres must work together in a Network if the Telecentre movement is to survive?

Selected commentary includes:

I am member of telecentre movement in west Africa. Zorking as network helped telecentres networks at country level to share knowledge and tools through training, study visit, online knowledge sharing space.
Yes we have the GCIS
We believe it is feasible to have more resources and synergies of belonging to a network
It is important to be a member and work with the national, regional, global networks, it is time for consolidation and showing success. The networks focus on research, movement, etc.. on how behavioural pattern changes along with technology appropriation for development our community. For example I am a member in many development networks such as Telecentre.org GKP, UN-Gaid, Civil Society to promote Social Development, and more networks, therefore I so far emphasis on networks at national, regional, global level
Also, for example I create new social network community of ICT for Development Persons with Disabilities it's very impressive to help disabled people to use ICTs through network
Kindly find the link as bellow:http://ict4dpwd.ning.com
I am a member of the African Teachers Network and it has helped educators learn through sharing success and failures and challenges to integrating ICT in the curriculum
Apparently in Uganda we have no any existing network. But I find the idea very useful because a network has many benefits to the Telecentre including advocacy, information sharing, Capacity building and technical support.
9.4 Question 4

Part of the way that Telecentre.org has assisted Networking has been to create the Telecentre.org website. Some people have said that the site is working well because it connects people and it is possible to get answers to important questions. Do you agree that the website offers an opportunity to get “answers to important questions about Telecentres”?

Selected commentary includes:-

I wasn’t sure where to put my X on this one, because not sure what is meant by “important questions”. If it means, eg, the future of telecentre.org, then I DON’T agree that this is a key positive feature of the website, or at least not the way discussions have been conducted so far. If it means getting clues about how to get in touch with other people who might have useful answers to our local problems, or being able to contact a helpdesk, then I agree it’s useful, though I think more was initially promised and cd have been done in these areas. However, again language limitations for us. Plus for the telecentres (were they to speak English), barriers of connectivity access, or quality and cost if there is access, and time spent. My sense is that it is mainly the national networks talking to each other, not the grassroots – which is perfectly legitimate and useful, but we shd be clear about it (of course I may be wrong, as I’m not such a regular user myself). Eg We can take material and translate into Portuguese for our own national site.

I have been able to share and learn from other peoples experiences especially on issues concerning sustainability business model(s)

Telecentre.org web site designed on the Ning platform is a dynamic and interactive. Thousands of people of all skills related to telecentres are listed on the site. Discussion forums, blogs provide most importants information. What is interesting is when someone has a particular issue. Once the question is asked on web site, more competent persons involved to give the appropriate answers and suggestions.

For example, personally I have had answers to a question that I asked on how to create a WIFI network. telecentre.org website is a great and valuable resource, I also blogged with my colleagues in the network, sometimes there are interesting contributions *

However, it is not easy for the network members here have time to blog or pay the internet fees at a local cybercafe for blogging only

This site also helps to learn about new telecentre initiatives, gives ideas, and also connections with other people

But this does not prevent the networks have their own websites
The blog is much more fun. The fact that it now works more like a social networking site has helped to keep the contacts that we make at telecentre.org events. It is much easier now than it was before. It brings true meaning to the word NETWORK. People feel closer.

It also brings meaning to the word COMMUNITY. Whereas I am part of the larger group, the site helps me own my own page and manage my contacts and networks as in a real community. "KINDA COOL"

It has helped me understand what is happening with the telecentre movement.

9.5 Question 5

Sustainability of Telecentres is a big concern among the Telecentre movement. Telecentre.org has been exploring other products that Telecentres can sell (such as airtime) and services they might provide (such as Business Outsourcing). And yet people are concerned about the future of the Telecentres particularly with changes in technology. Do you agree that changes in technology in the near future make achieving financial sustainability for any one Telecentre even harder to achieve than it is today?

Technological sustainability involves choosing technology that will be effective over the long term. In a rapidly changing technology environment, this becomes a particularly tricky issue as planners must contend with the threat of technological obsolescence. At the same time, there is the tendency to acquire only the latest technologies (which is understandable in part because these are the models which vendors are likely to push aggressively) Generally, however, planners should go with tried and tested systems; stability issues plague many of the latest technologies. Again, the rule of thumb is to let the learning objectives drive the technology choice and not vice versa - the latest technologies may not be the most appropriate tools for achieving the desired educational goals. When making technology decisions, planners should also factor in not just costs but also the availability of spare parts and technical support.

Changing in technology is not an issue for sustainability … I think the idea, innovation and the type of Telecentres are the factors affecting sustainability. .. I think the national telecentre academy will be one of the brands will affect sustainability because it provide quality of training and capacity building of telecentre mangers and operators in addition the involvement of IGNOU in the certification will attract many people for training in Telecentres.

Not necessarily more difficult, but requiring more and faster adaptation – as much a human resource issue as a hardware/investment issue. But again, this depends on your Q1 – what is a telecentre? – as well as on the speed with which the new technologies will reach our rural areas in a practicable way. Re branding per se, not v useful for us because of our move away from “telecentres” to “CMCs”. But the existence of telecentre.org has been v useful in raising visibility and helping us get our issues on the national agenda, as well as its strategic intervention into getting our national network more solidly off the ground.
Changes in technology mean that more people now are able to access the same information at less cost than ever before making intermediaries less and less necessary. This phenomenon is easily witnessed in urban and developed spaces, which means that telecentres still have some shelf life in rural areas and developing geographies.

We believe that resources are very important when a new project starts, especially if it is in sectors such as rural with very few resources.

more and more people are becoming computer literate and information technology equipment is becoming cheaper. so future financial sustainability prospects are much better than now.

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