Information on GRACE contributions to the field of ICT for development from a gender equality and women’s empowerment perspective

Publications, policy influence and profile raising activities accomplished, currently underway, and planned contributions

August 13, 2010

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1. Introduction

The following GRACE outputs have contributed to a formal body of knowledge in ICT4D, integrating gender analysis, and bringing to light the gender-blindness of current mainstream thinking concerning the potential for ICT use to facilitate development efforts. In so doing, these activities and outputs have the potential to influence current thinking regarding how ICT use can contribute to development and women’s empowerment.

The GRACE interventions expose how existing (gendered, inequitable) socio-economic lived realities, norms and assumptions run counter to apparent or claimed development goals and visions. Alternative relevant pathways are envisioned, soundly researched and presented. This exposure has the potential to influence people’s thinking, over time and space, and subsequently their practice.

The following are examples of intended and unintended (unexpected) positive activities and outputs that are logically aligned with the changes individual GRACE sub-projects, and the overall GRACE Project, want to see; they are envisaged to have the potential for future influence that will really make a difference by changing how people understand and think about current realities, what is possible, and what is needed for sustainable (equitable) development.

2. Summary of publications, presentations and public resources

- Yemen anti-violence project takes its message to Yemen TV, July 2010
- Grameen Foundation Community Knowledge Workers project learning from GRACE in Uganda, July 2010
- GRACE-MENA researchers provide poster presentation at the TWOWS Fourth General Assembly and International Conference, June 2010
- GRACE presents among opening day prominent speakers at the 3rd GRACE MENA Workshop in Tunis, May 26th, 2010
- Trading Stories chapter published by GRACE Cameroon researcher, Gisèle Yitamben, May 2010
- Radio Program Series on ICT Research in Sudan aired on May 23rd, 2010
- [www.Femtales.com](http://www.Femtales.com) blog launched by Jordan research team leader Rula Quawas, April 2010

- Radio interview with Wanjira Munyua on cybercrime against women in Kenya, April 8, 2010

- Radio Series, “How can ICTs be used to raise gender awareness and resilience in female students at Bethlehem University,” aired on March 19, March 26 and April 14, 2010

- “Highlighting the Convolution that is the ICT World: Professional Career Women in Kenya Speak,” presented at Research Voices from Africa, hosted by the International Federation for Information Processing (IFIP) Technical Commission 9 – Relationship Between Computers and Society, held at Makerere University, Uganda 22-23 March 2010

- GRACE Uganda researchers and authors, Susan Bakesha and Grace Bantebya, held a book launch in Kampala in February 2010

- *African Women and ICTs* Book launched in Douala, Cameroon, December 2009

- GRACE Project leader and MENA Researchers Participate in The 2nd International Interdisciplinary Conference on Gender in Science and Development. Aden, Yemen, 12 to 14 December, 2009

- The GRACE Zimbabwe team launched *African Women and ICTs* in Harare 24 November, 2009

- GRACE Researchers Participate in ACACIA Learning Forum Dakar, Senegal 5-8 October 2009

- Dr. Rokhsana Ismail presented at the first Arab Women in Science and Technology Conference in Dubai, September 2009

- GRACE Project Leader contributes to the IKM Emergent Workshop on Emergence in Development Planning and Development Research in Cambridge Forum, September 2009

- GRACE Project Leader contributes to the Harvard Forum on ICTs, Human Development, Growth and Poverty Reduction, September 2009

- Pretoria launch of *African Women and ICTs*, September 2009

- Mozambique authors launch *African Women and ICTs*, Maputo, July 2009
- Kenyan researcher, Salome Omamo, presented on her team's GRACE 1 research at the Sixth International Critical Management Conference held at the University of Warwick, UK, July 13-15, 2009

- Book launches in Toronto and Ottawa, Canada, May 20 and 21, 2009

- Launch of *African Women and ICTs* in Tanzania, April 24 2009


- ITC research seminar, Enschede, the Netherlands, 31 October 2008

- GRACE Zambia researcher Kiss Abraham presents his GRACE research at the first Communications Authority of Zambia ICT research symposium, October 2008

- GRACE presents at the International Federation for Information Processing Pre-Conference Workshop and the 8th International Conference on Human Choice and Computers in Pretoria, September 2008

- GRACE 2 Proposal, March 2008 - February 2011

- GRACE presents at the 3rd Global Knowledge Conference in Kuala Lumpur, December 2007

- Leila Hassanin presents at the conference Rooms of their Own: Women in the Knowledge Economy and Society, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada, May 2007

- “Gender Research in Africa into ICTs for Empowerment,” Ineke Buskens, in the International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa Newsletter, UNESCO, December 2006


- “Gender, ICT and …ostrich eggs? GRACE, an African ICT Research Network” APC-WSPN, September 2007

- GRACE brochure, 2005
- GRACE Project Rationale, Ineke Buskens, 2005
- GRACE Proposal, Ineke Buskens, Anriette Esterhuysen and Jenny Radloff, September 2004
3. Publications, presentations and public resources

Articles, presentations, interviews, radio/TV programs, web sites about GRACE projects, and by GRACE researchers in relation to gender and ICT4D are described and linked below

Yemen anti-violence project takes its message to Yemen TV, July 2010

The GRACE research project, “How can ICTs be used to combat gender-based violence against women in Yemen?” lead by Rokhsana Ismail, broadcast its first in a series of TV programs July 15. In the 45 minute program Rokhsana talks about GRACE and her team’s research, announces the hot line which is available to women in Aden, and provides information about the legal units which exist in the Yemeni Women’s Union. Rokhsana is accompanied on the program by a lawyer, and a member of the hot line service. The broadcast will be linked to this information on the GRACE web site as soon as the recording is received. The program could be viewed in the Gulf countries and beyond.

According to Rokhsana, within hours of the program “I received the first call by mobile from a man who expressed his feelings about what we are doing. He is proud of our work and how we are trying to help those women. The next call I received from a woman who is also proud of our work and promised me that she will help us and will raise awareness among women in her district. So these are the first reactions. It is very interesting also that the presenter of the program was exited with the method that we are working with, she had never heard about it. I'm personally proud of our work.”

A week later Rokhsana added: “the nice news is that they repeated this program three times in the week because at the TV station they liked it and many people asked them to repeat it. Also many women asked me about the hot line and legal unit at YWU.”

Grameen Foundation Community Knowledge Workers project learning from GRACE in Uganda, July 2010

Susan Bakesha held consultative discussions with Mr. Enock Mugabi from the Grameen Foundation – Mobile Telephone Network (MTN) partnership project called Community Knowledge Workers (CKW). The Community Knowledge Worker project is part of the information and communications technology (ICT) initiative whose main objective is to build a self-sustaining, scalable network of rural information providers who use cell phones to help close critical information gaps facing poor, smallholder farmers. Mr. Mugabi identified GRACE on the internet and approached Susan as the contact person in Uganda to find out how CKW could learn from the GRACE work to develop appropriate strategies and approaches to ensure that poor women benefit from their interventions.
**GRACE-MENA researchers provide poster presentation at the TWOWS Fourth General Assembly and International Conference** - Women Scientists in a Changing World held in Beijing, China during the period 27-30 June 2010. Six GRACE-MENA researchers who participated in the conference giving presentations in their fields of expertise, displayed the GRACE-MENA poster and informed conference participants about the GRACE project in general and about their specific research initiatives within GRACE-MENA.

http://twows.ictp.it/news-items/twows-fourth-general-assembly-and-international-conference

Huda Basaleem (Yemen) and Saneya M. El-Neshawy (Egypt) discuss GRACE-MENA with onlookers

**GRACE presents among opening day prominent speakers at the 3rd GRACE MENA Workshop in Tunis, May 26th, 2010**

GRACE MENA held its third workshop, focusing on data analysis and data sharing, in Tunis May 26 to June 4. The workshop was honored by the High Patronage of Mrs Leila Ben Ali, Tunisia's First Lady and Chairwoman of the Arab Women's Organization. The opening day program (attached here) of prominent speakers included GRACE project leader, Ineke Buskens, and Tunisia research project leader and President of Tunisia’s Women and Sciences Association, Oum Kalthoum Ben Hassine. Papers will be made available on the GRACE web site.

Media coverage of the GRACE workshop, and interviews with the GRACE project leader and several lead researchers undertaking projects within the GRACE Network, can be read here (in Arabic). The English translation will be posted on the GRACE web site shortly.

**Trading Stories chapter published by GRACE Cameroon researcher, Gisèle Yitamben**


**Sharing GRACE at the 5th International Conference on ICT for Development, Education and Training, in Lusaka, Zambia, May 26-28, 2010**

Zimbabwe GRACE 1 researchers, Elizabeth Mlambo and Precious Mwatsiya, involved in the project led by Buhle Mbambo-Thata, were sponsored to participate in the 5th International Conference on ICT for Development, Education and Training, in Lusaka, Zambia, May 26-28, 2010 ([http://www.elearning-africa.com/](http://www.elearning-africa.com/)). Liz and Precious found this a valuable venue to speak about the Zimbabwe team's work, which is published in *African Women and ICTs*. The team continues to work with the findings of the Zimbabwe research and is working with the collaboration of the university vice-chancellor to counter gender bias in access to computer labs at the University of Zimbabwe, the site of their 2005-2008 research.

**Radio Program Series on ICT Research in Sudan aired on May 23rd, 2010**

The third radio program in a series of three on research conducted into: How are ICTs used to draw young Sudanese women into premarital sexual activities and how can ICTs be used to protect them against this? was broadcast at 8:30 to 10:00 am (Mecca time) Sunday 23/5/2010 on radio FM 100 Sudanese House, Sabah Elbuit program. The series garnered much attention as listeners tuned in via their mobile phones, or listened to the program on bus radios on their way to work. The follow-up includes spontaneous discussion meetings among students and many phone calls to the research team leader Ikhlas Ahmed Nour. The series can be listened to (in Arabic) by following this link: [http://www.grace-network.net/publications.php](http://www.grace-network.net/publications.php).
**GRACE research and methodologies presented at the Third International Nursing Conference, Amman Jordan, 27-28 April, 2010**

**Arwa Oweis**, Jordanian lead researcher for her GRACE project, introduced the GRACE network by giving a poster presentation at the Third International Nursing Conference, “The Heart of the Matter: Relevance of Nursing Responsiveness,” held in Amman Jordan, 27-28 April, 2010. The conference was held under the Patronage of HRH Princess Muna Al Hussein, President of the Jordanian Nursing Council and was attended by around 1500 nurses from 17 countries including the USA, UK, Australia, Japan, Bosnia, Pakistan, Lebanon, South Africa, Oman, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Imarets, Egypt, Iraq, Palestine, and Sudan. For more information about the conference please visit, [http://www.jnc.gov.jo/jnconconfweb%202/home.htm](http://www.jnc.gov.jo/jnconconfweb%202/home.htm)

GRACE project leader Ineke Buskens conducted a pre-conference workshop entitled “The Power of Intent and a Touch of the Unexpected: Using Research to Change Practice,”

Ineke and Arwa also participated in a round table discussion that discussed the challenging issues facing nursing education, practice, research and leadership. It was attended by the conference expert guests and keynote speakers who shared their experiences and discussed various suggestions to tackle these issues.

**Femtales.com blog launched by Jordan research team leader Rula Quawas, April 2010**

As part of **Rula Quawas**’ study of “How can ICTs be used by young Jordanian women to ‘unlearn not to speak’?” questioning how and if blogs are being used by Jordanian Bloggerettes to empower and transform themselves from victims into agents of resistance by telling their stories and protesting the vast injustice that is being done to them, she has launched her own project blog, [www.Femtales.com](http://www.Femtales.com) for sharing and dialogue among her students, herself and research participants.

**Radio interview with Wanjira Munyua on cybercrime against women in Kenya**

**Wanjira Munyua**, Kenya research team leader for the project, “What can be done to overcome cybercrime against women to enable them to exercise their right to communicate without fear of abuse, harassment or violence?” was interviewed on this topic April 8 on Nairobi’s Kiss FM morning breakfast show by host Caroline Mutoko. The interview will be made available on the GRACE web site in August.

**Radio Series, How can ICTs be used to raise gender awareness and resilience in female students at Bethlehem University, aired on March 19, March 26 and April 14, 2010**

A three-program radio series was broadcast by Palestinian GRACE researcher **Vera Baboun**'s
research participants based on the research question: How can ICTs be used to raise gender awareness and resilience in female students at Bethlehem University -- Palestine. The programs titled "Voices of Grown-Up Women" were broadcast from 7:00 -- 8:30 pm on Mawwal Radio, and are archived at: http://www.mawwal.ps/site2/programs.html

The series was conducted by the female student participants who organized a live debate on controversial issues among themselves, and with the radio reporters, and the listeners. The titles of the first and the second programs were: 1. Gender based violence in Palestine as perceived by young Palestinian women and men. Do young men need to be more aware and empowered as women to minimize GBV in Palestine? 2. What does it mean for a woman to be financially independent and how does it affect her choices in life? For the third program the participants decided to own a voice similar to Scheherazade's, and they used the title: Scheherazade, let your voice be uttered. According to Daisy Jacaman, a radio series participant:

*Personally speaking, the radio series experience was for me very informative, challenging, out of the box, new, full of emotions and full of responsibility. Generally speaking, instead of having 10 radio stations that are playing songs and commercials all day and all night long, I think people deserve a positive change! More shows like ours should air every now and then, with fresh perspectives and with a young, vibrant heart.*

**Highlighting the Convolution that is the ICT World: Professional Career Women in Kenya Speak**

Presented at Research Voices from Africa, hosted by the International Federation for Information Processing (IFIP) Technical Commission 9 – Relationship Between Computers and Society, held at Makerere University, Uganda 22-23 March 2010

Author: [Salome Omamo](#)

This paper emerges from a study that investigated how professional career women in the information and communication technologies (ICT) sector in Kenya have accessed and are appropriating ICT. The paper has been inspired by women who have ventured into the fast growing sector of information and communication technology (ICT), either as owners, CEOs or technical persons working in various organizations and companies in Nairobi, Kenya. They are well educated, trained and occupy senior technical and managerial positions in their respective organizations/institutions. The study examined their educational backgrounds, career progression, experiences and the challenges they face or have faced though exploratory interviews. The women in the study are seen as role models to young Kenyan girls and youth who need to build their careers and be effective in their work places. They have indicated that gender stereotypes, gender bias, sex role socialization and discrimination against women in general need to be challenged and dismantled if equity is to be enhanced. This paper therefore also provides recommendations
for educational institutions, civil society, private organizations and the government...

**GRACE Uganda researchers and authors, Susan Bakesha and Grace Bantebya, held a book launch in Kampala in February 2010**

The launch was attended by over 50 participants including the Minister of State for ICTs and the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Makerere University. *African Women and ICTs* was reviewed in the Ugandan press in advance of the launch: [http://newvision.co.ug/D/9/31/709535](http://newvision.co.ug/D/9/31/709535). READ MORE and [view the photos here...](http://newvision.co.ug)

Subsequent to the launch, the Minister of State for ICTs has pledged to provide computers for a computer lab at the Department of Women and Gender Studies, Makerere University. This he said was a contribution towards increasing female students' access to computers.

In addition, an article profiling Susan Bakesha, as Head of the GRACE Africa secretariat, has been published in a national on-line daily: 'Girls can click away to bigger things' [http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/Insight/~/688338/866000/-/temabo/-/index.html](http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/Insight/~/688338/866000/-/temabo/-/index.html).

L to R: Mr. Aramanzand Madanda, lecturer at the department of women and gender studies, Makerere University, Ms Beatrice Lamwaka for the Uganda women writers association (FEMWRITE) and The Minister of State for ICTs in Uganda flanked by Grace Bantebya left and Susan Bakesha right.

**GRACE Researchers Participate in ACACIA Learning Forum Dakar, Senegal 5-8 October 2009**

The ACACIA Learning Forum is a networking, learning and sharing platform for projects within the IDRC envisaged ACACIA program whose goal is to unleash the potential of ICTs to empower poor African Communities. The forum attracted about 150 Acacia project partners from Africa. The forum provided participants an opportunity to share their experiences and research findings on the role of ICTs in facilitating development in Africa and influencing policy. The GRACE project was represented by 6 participants including Ineke Buskens the Project Leader, Susan Bakesha, Head of Africa Secretariat/Researcher, Gisele Yitamben (Cameroon), Kiss Abrahams (Zambia), Alice Wanjira (Kenya), Ibou Sane (Senegal) and Comfort Kazanka (Nigeria).

The GRACE Zimbabwe team launched *African Women and ICTs in Harare* 24 November, 2009

The GRACE Zimbabwe team launched *African Women and ICTs* in Harare in November, presenting the research journey that lead to their chapter, 'When a gender-blind access policy results in discrimination: realities and perceptions of female students at the University of Zimbabwe'. The research team is continuing to work with the recommendations they made in their chapter, seeking to assure that women students at the university can access computers.

[READ MORE](#)

**African Women and ICTs Book launched in Douala, Cameroon**

GRACE Researcher Gisele Yitamben launched the GRACE book, *African Women and ICTs* in Douala, Cameroon. The launch took place at the Faculty of Science of the University of Douala during its 'Week of Science, Enterprises and Development' event which took place from 7th to 12 December 2009. GRACE Cameroon also participated as a partner in the event.

Following the launch, Gisele has been invited to speak about the book at three other universities in the near future. [Book Launch in Douala](#)

**GRACE Project Leader and MENA Researchers Participate in the 2nd International Interdisciplinary Conference on Gender in Science and Development, Aden, Yemen, 12 to 14 December, 2009**

The Second International Interdisciplinary conference on gender in science and development was held in Aden, Yemen, December, 12-14-2009. Invited speakers to the conference on Globalization, Engendered Knowledge Systems and Strategies for Women's Empowerment, included experts from The Netherlands, Germany, Denmark and from India (President of the Third World Organization for Women in Science), from Arab women's organizations and from the GRACE project, as well as directors of gender studies centers in the Arab world. GRACE project leader Ineke Buskens presented a keynote address on the first day that spoke to the main theme of the conference, and research team leader Saneya Neshawy of Egypt, and the three Yemeni research team leaders, Rokhsana Ismail, Ahlam Hibatulla Ali, and Zahra Al-Saqqaf presented their work. For more information on Ineke's talk, please [click here.](#)

For more conference information, follow this link: [http://wrtcw.org/default.asp? id=96](http://wrtcw.org/default.asp? id=96)
Dr. Rokhsana Ismail presented at the first Arab Women in Science and Technology Conference in Dubai

Rokhsana Mohammed Ismail, team leader of one of the three GRACE Yemen research teams, presented the work of GRACE in Arab Countries at the first Arab Women in Science and Technology Conference (http://www.astf.net/womenrdi/) in Dubai, 28-30 September 09, through a poster presentation.

Dr. Rokhsana also presented on September 30 as part of a panel discussion on Arab Science and Technology, Women's and Community Participation.

Poster presentation: The information society comes with lots of opportunities and challenges and is creating new areas of inclusion and exclusion. The new Information and Communication tools, however, have the potential to contribute to development and empowerment through their unique potential for human connection, sharing and learning. Because of their traditionally disadvantaged positions, women may experience internal as well as external barriers in making full use of these tools... READ MORE

GRACE Project Leader contributes to the IKM Emergent Workshop on Emergence in Development Planning and Development Research in Cambridge Forum, September 2009

As an outcome of the IKM Emergent (http://wiki.ikmemergent.net/index.php/Main_Page) workshop, Ineke Buskens was asked to take together with Mark Thompson, the lead in compiling a book that outlines a new paradigm for Development Planning. According to the book outline, developmental initiatives seeking funding must submit a plan anticipating both outcomes and benefits in advance, and demonstrating how these will be achieved. Experience drawn from a growing number of researchers and practitioners working in development, however, shows that such predictions are little more than ‘informed guesses’: at best ill-founded, and at worst, actually ‘counter-developmental’ in their consequences. The traditional response to this problem within development planning has been to include a ‘participatory’ component within the guessing game, where planners show that they have ‘listened’ to peoples’ needs and concerns, and thus that their plans for the future are grounded and sustainable.

In this book, a range of policymakers, funders, practitioners, and academics working in development argue that participatory design techniques are unlikely in themselves to solve the issues of emergence and unpredictability that characterise development processes in daily reality. Drawing on a range of examples, the contributors show that the nature of people’s interaction with developmental interventions is subject to a variety of factors that emerge only in practice, and cannot be anticipated through informed guessing.

In response, the book challenges conventional development planning models to stop guessing and start taking emergence seriously, theoretically and practically. An alternative approach to planning and funding development initiatives is outlined. Grounded in an understanding of
development processes as systemic undertakings that have to be subjected to quality and accountability protocols, this approach recognises and nurtures the emergence of unexpected benefits and offers practitioners models and techniques for understanding, managing and reporting on processes and incidences of emergence.

**GRACE Project Leader contributes to the Harvard Forum on ICTs, Human Development, Growth and Poverty Reduction**

Convened by Nobel Laureates Amartya Sen and Michael Spence, in collaboration with Randy Spence and the International Development Research Centre, the Harvard Forum II: ICTs, Human Development, Growth and Poverty Reduction took place 23-24 September 2009 at Harvard University. Leading thinkers and practitioners in the area of development discussed how ICTs could contribute to poverty reduction in developing countries, now and in the future. Ineke Buskens was one of 30 panelists from around the globe to contribute to the Forum. Her position paper and discussion paper can be viewed here. Ineke’s discussion paper, in a revised form, has been chosen as the foreword for the book *Openness in ICT for Development*. Details on the Forum, as well as on-line Forum coverage and papers are available via the IDRC web site: [http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-140355-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html](http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-140355-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html)

**What Matters Most? Reflections for the Discussions on Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) for Human Development, Growth and Poverty Reduction**

*Discussion paper for Harvard Forum II*

Forthcoming as the Forward for the book, *Openness in ICT for Development*

Author: Ineke Buskens

... There is no bottom without a top, and the top is just as much part of the problem as the bottom: we define each other; and what is more, we are all connected. Separation is an illusion. The reality, which we are all waking up to in these days of global warming and financial decline, is that we are all connected. What should thus matter most for us, here, the people who have this beautiful opportunity to reflect together in this beautiful place on questions of Human Development, poverty reduction, growth and the use of Information Communication Technology, is to work with and within concepts that are aligned to this dream: the dream for a world that is worthy of human aspiration and conducive to conscious human evolution. Concepts are powerful tools that once accepted as intricate part of a collective consciousness create the parameters for people’s thoughts, emotions, experiences and realities... [READ MORE](#)

**Becoming Aware Of What Is Going On: Reflecting on Social and Gender Injustice In Context of Human Development, Poverty and ICTs**

*Position paper for Harvard Forum II*

Author: Ineke Buskens
In concerning ourselves about the role of ICTs for human development and poverty reduction, we take a position grounded in a sense of social justice and we look through the lens of human agency at the economic potential of ICTs. The concept of human development is grounded in social justice. A commitment to social justice in a gendered world means commitment to the practical application of gender justice. Gender justice is an end in itself, yet social and gender issues are inextricably inter-twined. Women have the right to experience their being-ness for themselves, perceive themselves as the most important reason for their own existence and not be defined mainly by what they mean to others: husbands, children and parents. Having said that, social and economic empowerment of women will have a wider development impact than individual women’s advancement, because women are “concerned with the well being of their children, their husbands and the economics of their villages” and wider communities...

**Pretoria Launch of African Women and ICTs**

On 8 September 2009 the publication of *African Women and ICTs* was celebrated by UNISA Press at the UNISA Library. The event directed by Dr Judy Henning, Deputy Executive Directory of the UNISA Library, and introduced by Ms Beth Le Roux, Director, UNISA Press. The keynote address, *What it took: Reflections on the GRACE Research Journey*, was given by Ineke Buskens, GRACE Project Leader, Research Director and co-Editor of the book, with a response by Dr Buhle Mbambo-Thata, contributing author and Executive Director of UNISA Library.

*What it took: Reflections on the GRACE Research Journey*

Author: Ineke Buskens

Keynote address at the launch of *African Women and ICTs: Investigating Technology, Gender and Empowerment*, at the UNISA Library in Pretoria...

... Our concepts do not only shape our physical reality, they also shape our non-physical reality. Our concepts are the houses we live in, and we look out from the windows of these houses. And then we create our reality according to what we see, and this reality leads in turn to more emotions and other thoughts, which then lead to other realities - and so we can go on and on...

**READ MORE**
Mozambique authors launch African Women and ICTs

The primary authors Gertrudes Macueve and Judite Mandlate of "Women's use of information and communication technologies in Mozambique: a tool for empowerment?" celebrated the publication of African Women and ICTs on 30 July 2009 in Maputo. The event, hosted by Sangonet as part of their series of ICT Discussion Forums (http://www.ngopulse.org/event/mozambique-qlhangano-ict-discussion-forum), was well attended, and included a presentation from IDRC South Africa representative, Khaled Fourati. The authors were pleased to receive a representative for Graça Machel representing Fundação para o Desenvolvimento da Comunidade.

In the photo are: contributing author Gertrudes Macueve, and Khaled Fourati, IDRC South Africa representative.

Kenyan researcher, Salome Omamo, presented on her team's GRACE research at the Sixth International Critical Management Conference held at the University of Warwick, UK, July 13-15, 2009. Salome's paper presentation was in STREAM 3: ICTs and globalization. This stream aimed at critically questioning how Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are presented and promoted as global capitalism has developed. Critical studies and empirical studies that question determinism whether of technology or globalization and place studies of ICTs and globalization in context were presented. To read Salome's paper, Professional Women in ICT Careers in Kenya: What Successful ICT Journeys Entail, please click here.

Authors: Salome Omamo, Okwach Abagi and Olive Sifuna
Creating an empowering environment for women to venture into ICT careers as professionals requires that families deconstruct gender stereotypes and roles in society. They need to support girls and women to make informed choices about their careers in ICT – careers that do not perpetuate so called ‘sex-appropriate roles’. Gender bias, sex role socialization and general discrimination against women are so entrenched in Kenyan society that individuals (men and women, including policy makers, leaders, and students) think discrimination of women in society in general and in work places in particular is ‘natural’... READ MORE

Book launches in Toronto and Ottawa, Canada

African Women and ICTs was launched by co-publisher and project funder the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in Canada
in Ottawa and Toronto (May 20 and 21, 2009). Heloise Emdon (IDRC), Ineke Buskens and Anne Webb (co-editors) spoke on the significance of the project, the research approach, and the essence of the chapters (http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-141463-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html). We appreciate the contributions made at the launch, and also wish to thank Pauline Dole for organizing both events.

Launched of African Women and ICTs in Tanzania, April 2009


EuroAfrica-ICT Project presentation, Brussels, December 10, 2008

Ineke Buskens spoke in Brussels at the 6th concentration meeting of the EuroAfrica-ICT project as an invited keynote speaker. EuroAfrica-ICT aims at promoting and supporting the development of strategic cooperation on ICT research between sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean and Europe. The one day conference brought together officials of the European Commission, network leaders and project managers operating in Africa. To view the program please follow this link: http://euroafrica-ict.org/events/concertation_meeting_6.php Ineke’s talk was titled: “Gender Research in Africa into ICTs for Empowerment: what did we learn from GRACE?” The presentation can be viewed here: http://euroafrica-ict.org/downloads/cm6/ineke_buskens.pdf

ITC research seminar, Enschede, the Netherlands, 31 October 2008

GRACE Project Leader, Ineke Buskens, spoke about the lessons learnt from GRACE with a group of staff and PhD students of the International Institute for Geo-information Science and Earth Observation (ITC) in Enschede, the Netherlands (http://www.itc.nl/). Issues of
coordination of multiple research sites, capacity building, leadership and transformation in the context of a research network were addressed.

**GRACE Zambia researcher Kiss Abraham presents his GRACE research at the first Communications Authority of Zambia ICT research symposium** (October 2008) – information on the presentation can be viewed [here](#).

**GRACE presents at the International Federation for Information Processing Pre-Conference Workshop and the 8th International Conference on Human Choice and Computers in Pretoria (September 2008)**

GRACE was well represented at the International Federation for Information Processing ([http://www.ifip.or.at/](http://www.ifip.or.at/)) pre-conference workshop (Working Group 9.4) and the 8th International Conference on Human Choice and Computers (HCC8 [http://www.hcc8.org/](http://www.hcc8.org/)), both held in Pretoria in September 2008. Project Leader Ineke Buskens presented on behalf of GRACE (Africa) Network members at the WG9.4 in a presentation entitled “Gender on the ‘ICT Research for African Development’ Agenda: Learning with GRACE” ([the PowerPoint presentation can be viewed here](#)).

The HCC8 conference included GRACE Researcher Leila Hassanin’s presentation entitled: “Egyptian Women Artisans: ICTs are not the entry to modern markets” ([the PowerPoint presentation can be viewed here](#)). GRACE also held a panel presentation under our own project name. The panel was chaired by Ineke and Research Coordinator Anne Webb, and the presenters were GRACE Researchers Susan Bakesha (Uganda), Gertrudes Macueve (Mozambique) and Ibou Sane (Senegal). Leila’s paper and a summary of the panel presentation are published in Social Dimensions of Information and Communication Technology Policy, edited by C. Avgerou, M. Smith and P. van der Besselaar (Springer 2008 [http://www.springer.com/computer/information+systems/book/978-0-387-8421-1](http://www.springer.com/computer/information+systems/book/978-0-387-8421-1)).

Twenty-two members of GRACE Africa attended the workshop and conference and actively engaged in the sessions, posing informed questions and contributing to discussions. Ineke was invited to join a closing panel at the HCC8 conference to discuss “Emerging Issues in ICT Policy Research.”
GRACE 2 Proposal
Authors: Ineke Buskens and Anne Webb
This proposal emerges from the accomplishments of the first phase (May 2005 – February 2008) of the GRACE project, and from a recognition that the emergence of a sustainable research network can be achieved through an additional implementation and capacity development phase. Based on the effectiveness of the first phase in relation to the objectives of research capacity development and analysis of the relationships between gender, ICTs and empowerment, we propose extending this initiative, enriching its initial methodological basis and expanding its reach. In terms of the network’s initial methodological grounding in qualitative research for transformation, we aim to evolve this focus into action directed approaches, participatory policy research, quantitative approaches that are coherent with the transformative objectives of the project, mastering the transformative qualitative techniques and methodologies that were initiated and explored in GRACE 1, and integrating outcome mapping methodology in the research designs. GRACE 2 will also expand the reach of the initiative to introduce certain elements from the overall process and specific training from the above mentioned transformative research techniques to partners in Asia and MENA (the Middle East and North Africa). It is envisaged that GRACE 2 will run from March 1, 2008 until February 29, 2011 ... READ MORE

GRACE presents at the 3rd Global Knowledge Conference in Kuala Lumpur
Two GRACE research team leaders, Gisele Yitamben from Cameroon and Kazanka Comfort from Nigeria, along with GRACE Research Director Ineke Buskens, presented at the GK3 Conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 11-13 December 2007. The two GRACE team leaders presented on their research processes, findings and interpretations, while Ineke provided an overall understanding of the GRACE project and the approach to qualitative research learning and research processes embedded in GRACE during a 2-part workshop entitled: Learning from Stories Shared by Empowered 'Homepreneurs' and Tele-Workers in the Information Economy. Following a lively discussion, which also drew upon the perspectives of Nigeria team member John Dada who was present, one workshop attendee described the GRACE presentations as the most rigorous research that she had come across in Africa in 20 years ... the type of research that
would belong to the finest universities. The content of the presentations will be captured in the forthcoming GRACE book, *African Women and ICTs: Investigating Technology, Gender and Empowerment*, (March 2009), and in the country research reports that will be posted on this site in the Fall of 2008.

- To view Ineke's PowerPoint presentation, please click [here](pdf file).
- For more information on the GK3 see: [www.gkpeventsonthefuture.org](http://www.gkpeventsonthefuture.org)

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**Stories of Women's Empowerment: Experiences from GRACE**

**Kazanka presenting the GRACE Nigeria project**

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**Leila Hassanin presents at the conference Rooms of their Own: Women in the Knowledge Economy and Society**

Leila Hassanin was a speaker at *Rooms of their Own: Women in the Knowledge Economy and Society*, conference organized by the Royal Society of Canada and University of Alberta, Edmonton, May 2007. The conference addressed local and international cultures that promote and hold back women's active, creative and significant involvement in the knowledge economy. To view Leila's presentation click [here](https://example.com).

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**Gender Research in Africa into ICTs for Empowerment**

*Author: Ineke Buskens*

The dream for GRACE is to evolve into a sustainable research network that will continue to engage research into women, ICTs and gender issues beyond the limited time frame of this project and will expand its base of participating
researchers and countries beyond the current ones. Inspired by this vision, GRACE embraces a strong emphasis on research capacity building in all the phases of the research process. Furthermore, creating a nurturing research environment for junior researchers is a priority for all involved: for the GRACE coordinating team as well as for the site projects’ senior researchers...

**Gender and ICT in Africa: ICT Career Women Speak Out about ICT, Gender and Education in Kenya**  
Author: Okwach Abagi  
Although the three professional women did not face obvious gender discrimination or stereotyping during their school days, they believe that girls were and are still facing a lot of challenges that are gender based. They hasten to add that the challenges they faced while in school were normal. These had largely to do with the biological changes which occur, especially during puberty, which if not well managed, tend to affect girls’ performance in their work at school. This is particularly serious at high school, in cases of mixed secondary schools, where boys and male teachers harass female students...

**Have Women Taken Advantage of the Digital Revolution?**  
Author: Gisele Yitamben  
Various countries have taken advantage of the advent of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs). For some, the political goodwill was frankly displayed and translated into true telecommunication policy reforms. As for Cameroon, it shows a significant delay regarding the density of fixed and mobile telephone connectivity. Despite the major obstacles to profit from the advantages of the digital revolution, there are a few lucky women who have been able to take advantage of ICT...

**Rethinking Energy Access: Integrating ICTs and gender for sustainable solutions**  
Author: Jocelyn Muller  
It is estimated that 900 million of the world’s poorest people are concentrated in rural areas, and approximately 70% of these people are women (UNDP 2003). Why is this the case after decades of attempts at rural development, with many projects targeting women specifically? More recent attempts at reducing poverty include country level Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and the Millennium Development Goals...
Gender, ICT and … ostrich eggs? GRACE, an African ICT Research Network
Author: APC-WSPN
What do ostrich eggs, free attitudes, ICT and graciousness have in common? An exciting new research initiative that brings together African researchers to study Africa, ICTs and women's empowerment, called GRACE. The Gender Research in Africa into ICTs for Empowerment held its first researcher capacity-building workshop in Durban in July 2005, and while researchers from all over the continent honed their project proposals and fine-tuned networking skills, they also learned how to create ostrich eggs around themselves... READ MORE

GRACE brochure, 2005
“In thinking through what ICTs can mean for women’s empowerment in Africa, we will turn to the women who can give us their perspectives in their own words, while being grounded in our contexts and understandings as African researchers.” Ineke Buskens ... READ MORE

GRACE Project Rationale
Author: Ineke Buskens
Women are crucial to the transformation of Africa. The link between a country's overall status of evolvement and that of its women has found general acceptance. Research done in the last 35 years has made women's contributions and gender induced disadvantages more visible and yet much (and we do not know how much) is still unknown. Especially Africa appears under-researched when it comes to women... READ MORE

Grace Proposal
Authors: Ineke Buskens, Anriette Esterhuysen and Jenny Radloff
This project aims to explore the ways in which women in Africa use ICTs to empower themselves, the external, structural barriers as well as the internal factors which prevent them from using ICTs to their advantage, and the strategies they employ to overcome these impediments. The project comprises 15 sub-projects, reflecting 14 research sites in 12 countries and one meta research sub project. While coherent with the general aim of the overall research initiative, the sub-projects differ from each other greatly in terms of target group and research focus. Furthermore, the concepts of gender and empowerment which frame the project’s general direction and commitment, may not have unequivocal meaning within the sub-projects... READ MORE
4. **GRACE policy influencing activities, accomplished and currently underway: Informing policy processes through dialogue, advocacy and analysis**

**Engagement in Policy Processes**

- In many cases GRACE research team leaders are prominent scientists and academics in their fields of expertise. Many are involved in national and international commissions, organizations and consultancies. This information is provided on the GRACE web site as part of each researcher’s profile: [http://www.grace-network.net/research_teams.php](http://www.grace-network.net/research_teams.php) Through these high-level commitments, GRACE researchers are in positions to contribute to policy influence through such avenues as policy briefs, publications, the formation of national strategies, and research, all informed by their in depth analysis of gender dimensions of their field of expertise. The research capacity development that is central to the GRACE project contributes to the groundedness, reliability and applicability of their contributions. Below are examples of recent nominations of GRACE researchers to positions of influence.

At the TWOWS Fourth General Assembly and International Conference - Women Scientists in a Changing World held in Beijing, China 27-30 June 2010, GRACE research team leader Rokhsana Ismail of Yemen was elected to the executive board of TWOWS (which has now changed its name to the Organization for Women in Science for the Developing World OWSDW) and assistant to the new Vice President for the period of 2010-2014 [http://twows.ictp.it/news-items/new-executive-board-was-elected](http://twows.ictp.it/news-items/new-executive-board-was-elected)

Members of the OWSDW Executive Board at the conclusion of the International Conference in Beijing, China, left to right: Fang Xin, Mayra de la Torre, Rokhsana Ismail, Dolly Ighoroje, Esi Awuah, Sudha Nair.
Also sharing the thinking and findings of GRACE in a prominent position is research team leader from Egypt, who is currently a board member in the Arab Women Association on Research, Development and Innovation (AWARD), under the umbrella of the Arab Science & Technology Foundation (ASTF). She was also recently selected by the National Research Centre in Egypt as a distinguished scientist for the International publications.

Nagwa Abdel Meguid with Dr Najjar, head of ASTF, and Dr Tarek, the head of the UNESCO office in Egypt.

- A number of GRACE researchers have seen their research or their research experience contribute to **policy dialogues** within their communities, regions and countries. According to the Nigerian team, they have become involved in a team that is designing a framework for Nigeria broadband due to their work with un-served and under-served communities, and “it is our [GRACE] work in these areas that has made us an advocate for rural communities.”

In Uganda, a GRACE researcher spoke of her contribution to policy formation in this way:

*During the GRACE project, WOUGNET was requested to contribute to the development of the Uganda Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Policy by identifying gender issues in the draft policy and proposing strategies to ensure that gender and women's issues are catered for. As a member of WOUGNET, I was requested to analyze the draft policy and write a brief paper highlighting the said issues. Using my training and knowledge acquired from the different GRACE activities including the research, I was able to do this. The issues raised by my gender analysis of the Uganda ICT Policy were used by WOUGNET to lobby policy makers and government and some of the issues were taken on board and reflected in the national policy.*

In Kenya, one research team reported this particular influence of her research:

*Most of the women interviewed had cited that the use of mobile phones in Kenya to conduct business in terms of correspondence/communication using, for example sms was not recognized legally. We shared this report with the Ministry for Information and Communication, and while we can not attribute the inclusion of the clause acknowledging sms/email communication to the GRACE research only, the results contributed to enhancing advocacy work to speed up the*
Communication Act process. For those who are aware of this, it will contribute to reducing overhead costs for conducting business: there is no longer a need to have physical offices/landlines to be considered legal.

Researchers have also been made aware of the research participants using the knowledge and expertise gained from participating in a GRACE project to influence policy discussions within their communities. According to the South African researcher:

The research participants regularly shared their experiences of the GRACE project within their local community governance structures. People's understanding of the mini-grid (electrical) system improved as they realised potential opportunities that could be explored if the system functioned properly. So initially, when the project started people wanted the system to be removed, they now were of the opinion that it should be fixed and an ICT centre established for use by the community.

Publications and Presentations

- The release of the GRACE book, African Women and ICTs: Investigating Gender, Technology and Empowerment (http://www.zedbooks.co.uk/book.asp?bookdetail=4280 Zed Books, IDRC http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-135944-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html and UNISA Press 2009), explicitly takes the approach that women’s recognition of their agency is key to their empowerment and to development. When women recognize their own agency they can start to visualize the world as they believe it should be. The chapters also recognize and illustrate, through well-researched case studies, that the use of ICTs can potentially be transformative, and that this use is informed and formed by the consciousness of the user and this consciousness is formed and informed by her environment. The chapters provide practical, functional knowledge about how women in Africa are using, experiencing and being affected by use of ICTs. It is this sort of knowledge that can lead to changing people’s awareness and understanding of current realities and what is needed for sustainable change.

- Following the release of African Women and ICTs, a number of book launches have been held and further launches are still being planned (details in section 3). These events have provided venues for the authors and editors to present their particular perspectives on the question of how women can draw upon access, use and programming aspects of ICTs to further their empowerment and the development of their communities. We see these venues as avenues through which to potentially influence how people will see and understand the potential for empowering ICT use. For example, speaking at the largest on-line library in Africa, UNISA, GRACE author and Executive Director of UNISA library services Buhle Mbambo-Thata, together with Ineke Buskens, GRACE Project Leader, spoke to the gender inequality of gender blind university ICT access policy. We see this activity as potentially leading to the outcome we want to influence: “more women in Africa making more use of ICTs to make their own lives and that of their families and communities better.”

- In addition to the publication of a book, the GRACE researchers have written a number of articles that present their thinking and research on women’s use of ICTs in relation to
empowerment and development. These are listed above under Publications, and are available on the GRACE web site (http://www.grace-network.net/publications.php)

- GRACE researchers and the Project Leader have presented their findings, analysis and perspectives at a number of national and international conferences (see section 3 for details, or: http://www.grace-network.net/news.php). This is another avenue for presenting alternative visions and pathways, and to potentially influence thought and ideas on socio-economic development and the centrality of gender justice in this endeavour. Involvement in one conference in particular may have influenced behaviour within a fairly short time period. Several members of the GRACE Network presented and made substantive contributions to discussion periods at the International Federation for Information Processing (http://www.ifip.or.at/) pre-conference workshop (Working Group 9.4) and the 8th International Conference on Human Choice and Computers (HCC8 http://www.hcc8.org/), both held in Pretoria in September 2008. The GRACE participants inserted the need to integrate a gender analysis into the consideration of “human choice” as well as the need to recognize the knowledge construction and expertise grounded in regions outside of the North. The IFIP Technical Committee 9 (IFIP TC9) later announced it would hold a research workshop on ICT and Development, Research Voices from Africa, at Makerere University in Uganda in March 2010. GRACE Kenya researcher Salome Omamo presented on her GRACE 1 research at this workshop, and Susan Bakesha represented GRACE as the Head of the GRACE Africa secretariat. http://docs.google.com/View?id=ajfr5cm33w54_496grn847cp.

- The Communications Authority of Zambia invited researcher Kiss Brian Abraham to present his GRACE research process and findings to the First National ICT Research Symposium in Lusaka in October 2008. One of the several objectives of the symposium was “[to assist] the Authority to identify areas for potential research in the ICT sector aimed at accelerating development of telecommunications and ICTs in Zambia.” Kiss was pleased to accept the invitation, recognizing the significance of this first initiative of CAZ to bring a broad spectrum of researchers in the country together and initiate a formation of links among Zambians and Zambian organizations that would work to formulate collective knowledge to meet Zambia’s needs for progressive development. Kiss’s GRACE presentation at the symposium was unique in that it focused on gender completely.

Further, through the symposium the GRACE research process was introduced to the Zambian research community and CAZ. This was the first time that the project was shared at a national level to an audience of media and peers. Due to the fact that the GRACE Zambia project is connected to the overall GRACE Network, it proved valuable in illustrating how Zambian researchers could collaborate to form research networks similar to GRACE.

- An unintended, unexpected and positive activity that it also a form of publication and presentation is the media coverage that has accompanied some GRACE activities. For example, the GRACE MENA workshops held in Tunis in May 2010 and Aden in December 2008 were covered by print and radio media. Research team leader Wanjira Munyua was interviewed on popular radio in Nairobi regarding her current GRACE 2 project on women and cybercrime. Media coverage accompanied the GRACE book launches in Uganda, Cameroon, Tanzania and Mozambique, and some projects, such as the Kenya GRACE 1 study, have had their findings
New Initiatives

- An initiative that the GRACE 1 Kenyan research contributed to was the start of an organization called Big Sister’s Network, a centre for mentorship and capacity building for teenage girls and a youth centre for ICT access and training.

*It became apparent from the research findings that young women were still dealing with different challenges in their education and careers. It also emerged that the women who we interviewed received support from their families, and mentors had a major role to play in their education and careers. Apparently not many girls especially in rural Kenya are exposed to such mentorship and still have to deal with stereotypes and fear of science subjects. Most of them are not exposed to technology and don’t even know what a computer is. In Nyanza, Kenya, there are other problems such as school dropouts due to teenage pregnancy leading to many single mothers who cannot proceed with their education. We want to assist young women especially in rural Kenya who are not exposed to different forms of mentorship/support and are left behind in regards to women’s empowerment since they, their parents or teachers do not know how to help them. We have partnered with several girl schools in Nyanza Kenya to offer this mentorship and support. With the passion in our hearts as BIG sisters offering support to our younger ones, we hope that we will be able to impact this society through this dream.*

This initiative contributed to by the Kenyan team’s research for change seems well aligned with the outcome we intend to see in GRACE (aligned with our vision and the ACACIA mandate): “more women in Africa making more use of ICTs to make their own lives and that of their families and communities better.”

- Other new initiatives that were influenced by GRACE outputs were the introduction of GRACE into the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, where a network of 15 research teams in 7 countries is actively developing research proposals within the GRACE focus and research approach (for the research questions, please see: http://www.grace-network.net/research_projects.php).

Furthermore, building on the accomplishments of the first phase of GRACE, a second 3-year phase in Africa started in March 2008. This second phase, in addition to including another region, expands the methodological basis of the researchers, sees the researchers becoming more engaged with one another, and sees the researchers becoming increasingly aligned with their vision for a better world and their own expertise in their identification of and action on their research purpose. It is this alignment that leads to research excellence and the production of practical, functional and transferable knowledge.
5. **GRACE profile raising activities, accomplished and currently underway, from the most recent**

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**GRACE Zimbabwe team leader presents on "Open access in Developing countries"**

On June 2, 2010, Buhle Mbambo-Thata (UNISA Library, South Africa, and GRACE Zimbabwe) presented on a panel titled, Open Access: Transforming research in the developing world, at the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences Congress, held at Concordia University, Montreal, and hosted by the Canadian Association of Research Libraries. The panel was moderated by Haroon Akram-Lodhi (Trent University), with panelists Leslie Chan (University of Toronto) and Hebe Vessuri, (Venezuelan Institute of Scientific Research) joining Buhle. The panelists explored the potential impact of Open Access on the developing world. Access to knowledge is fundamental to all aspects of human development, from health to food security, and from education to social capacity building. Yet access to academic publications is severely restricted for many developing countries. As well, the prohibitive cost of publishing and distributing journals in the developing world means much of the research done there remains 'invisible' to the rest of the world. Buhle's presentation is below. Full video footage of the panel discussion is [linked here](#).

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**GRACE members contribute to IFIP workshop: Research Voices from Africa**

Two GRACE members took part in Research Voices from Africa, hosted by the International Federation for Information Processing (IFIP) Technical Commission 9 – Relationship Between Computers and Society, held at Makerere University, Uganda 22-23 March 2010. Explaining the purpose of the workshop, the organizers stated "often we hear about ICTs in Africa, much more rarely about ICT from African voices. Why did our knowledge about the correlations between ICT and the economy and society fail to develop ICT to support development? Is the mainstream model of conceptualizing and implementing ICT4D applicable and helpful in the African context? What are the alternatives to dominant approaches? This workshop is intended to provide a forum for discussion of ICT research approaches and findings that emerged from and are relevant to the African contexts." Ugandan researcher and Head of the GRACE Africa secretariat, Susan Bakesha, participated, and Kenyan researcher Salome Omamo presented her paper "Highlighting the Convolution that is the ICT World: Professional Career Women in Kenya Speak" [here](http://mak.ac.ug/documents/IFIP/CONVOLUTIONTHATISTHEICTWORLD.pdf).

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**Second Phase of GRACE underway in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) in Aden, Yemen, December 2008**

From 13 until 19 December 2008, thirty researchers from seven countries in the Arab world met in Aden, Yemen, with the purpose of initiating another GRACE Research Network: Gender
Research in Arab Countries into ICTs for Empowerment. The week was filled with several rounds of research presentations, lively discussions, walking on the beach, good food and riveting visits to old Aden.

The interest from the national media was astounding. The workshop was visited by camera crews during four of the six days, resulting in twice being front page news in national newspapers, several radio broadcasts and two appearances on national television. The group took all this attention in its gracious stride and kept its focus.

The result of this dynamic event is a collection of fifteen viable research pre-proposals which touch the essence of women’s disempowerment in the region.

Second Phase of GRACE underway in Africa with workshop in Pretoria, September 2008

The second phase of GRACE, which began in March 2008 with Africa members preparing research proposals and finalizing the manuscript of our forthcoming book, brought Africa
research teams together in September for the first Proposal Development Workshop of this phase. Thirteen research teams in eleven countries are preparing to explore the role of technologies in women’s empowerment processes, engaging an action research orientation in the interests of creating an emancipatory and transformative research process for those involved, while seeking change that will further women’s capacity to assert their own agency (see GRACE 2 research proposal).

The workshop lasted five days. We found that, after working together for more than three years, the benefits of mutual sharing and feedback among Network members have become highly self-evident. There is a sense of trust and intellectual sharing and support that makes the GRACE Network a unique community. The Africa research teams will fully develop their proposals and meet again in April for a Methodology Training and Design Workshop.

Grace Bantebya Kyomuhendo promoted to a full Professor of Women and Gender Studies
Grace Bantebya Kyomuhendo, a member of the GRACE Network from Uganda, was promoted to the position of full Professor of Women and Gender Studies on 1 October 2008. The professor position is the highest in academic institutions. According to Grace Bantebya, “it is indeed fulfilling to attain my vision.” Her GRACE colleagues may remember the flip charts in first Durban workshop, “all the drawing and cutting and pasting we did, mapping out our vision – I have attained mine. Now I have to draw another one!! The GRACE Network has indeed made me a different person especially in terms of reflections on my inner soul. With that reflection it becomes easier to understand situations and appreciate diversity and differences. As a member of the GRACE Network, I have indeed benefited a lot from our deliberations, training and networking.

The experience I have gained as a member of this network is insurmountable. The love and encouragement even when situations seem difficult have kept me going. Graciousness you are all part of my journey and I will forever be grateful for this opportunity.”

Zimbabwe GRACE researcher awarded for her innovation

Precious Mwatsiya was awarded the Aluka Award for Innovative Teaching in March 2008. According to Precious, through GRACE "I have discovered the researcher that is in me and have become more focused in my career as well. GRACE has taught me that I can be anything that I want to be and through this determination, I wrote a proposal that won me an award called the Aluka Award for Innovative Teaching." A brief description of Precious’ proposal can be viewed at: http://www.aluka.org/page/about/news/award20080319.jsp
6. Planned publications and presentations

Publications:

- Inekes article “Becoming Aware of What is Going On: Reflecting on Gender Justice in the Context of Human Development, Poverty and ICTs” has been submitted to the *Journal of Information Technologies and International Development*

- Inekes article, “What Matters Most” has been chosen to function as Foreword for the forthcoming IDRC publication: *Openness in ICT4D*

- GRACE Face book site for sharing reflective writings is currently set up and is being developed

- Reflective writing on experiencing the power of expression and self-reflexivity, written by Jordan research team leader Arwa Oweis, will be posted shortly on the GRACE web site

- The Egypt research project led by Nagwa Abdel Meguid, “How can ICTs be used to enable mothers of disabled children to combat the stigmatization they experience in Egypt?” is about to launch a web site, GRACE Ability, providing supportive information for parents of disabled children, and specifically recognizing the interests and contributions of her project’s research participants.

- Sudan research team leader Ikhlas Nour will be launching a facebook site for her project, in addition to the blog that she has already established.

- GRACE 2 book: A book proposal will be submitted to Zed Books that will encompass chapters from each research project, as warranted by the quality, findings and analysis in each case. External reviewers will be engaged.

- Writings on the contributions of GRACE sub-projects to ICT4D thinking and understanding from a gender perspective will continue, and

- An analysis of the contribution of the GRACE project as a whole will be written in article form for submission to a journal where this analysis will reach a broad and engaged audience

- Writing on the methodologies for transformation that have informed and been developed throughout GRACE are being written by Ineke with special emphasis on the relationship between research quality and gender awareness.
Presentations:

- Kenyan project leader, Wanjira Munya, will speak about her project, “What can be done to overcome cybercrime towards women to enable them to exercise their right to communicate without fear of abuse, harassment or violence?” at the East African Internet Governance Forum, taking place August 11-13 in Kampala Uganda, and at the United Nations Internet Governance Forum (IGF) taking place 14-17 September 2010, Vilnius, Lithuania.

- Arwa Oweis has been invited to speak about her GRACE research project in a 2-part radio interview on the station of the Irbid municipality. The program is Academic Research Studies, and the interviews with Arwa were recorded July 31 and August 7 and will be broadcast August 28 and September 4. Links to the program or recordings will be posted on the GRACE web site.

- Ineke has been invited to give a key note address at the ICT Women Empowerment summit which will take place 28-29 September 2010 in Johannesburg, South Africa. The summit is organized by CorpTrain, which has also requested speakers if they can take part in interviews before the event on SAFM Radio. Ineke will participate in this and interviews with iWeek magazine.

- The two GRACE Kenya research teams will be joining forces to present their book chapters from African Women and ICTs, in collaboration with IDRC in Nairobi in September 2010.

- Jenny Radloff and Ineke Buskens have been invited to lead a gender panel for the IDIA2010 Conference: Exploring Success and Failure in Development Informatics: Innovation, Research and Practice on 3-5 November 2010 in Cape Town, South Africa (http://www.developmentinformatics.org/conferences/2010/4th.html ). Two PhD students will, under their guidance, analyse all conference contributions from a gender analysis perspective and Ineke and Jenny will comment on their analyses during the last day.

- Ineke has been asked to lead the online discussion leading up the 2010 ICTD conference in London, December 2010 (http://www.jctd2010.org/ ). Four Graciousnesses have agreed to act as co-facilitators: Gisele Yitamben, Buhle Mlambo, Lina Abou Habib and Oum Kalthoum Ben Hassine.

- Ineke will co-facilitate the session, “The power of intent and the touch of the unexpected: exploring a new paradigm for ICT research and planning for development” with Mark Thompson (Cambridge University) at the 2010 ICTD conference in London, December 2010 (http://www.jctd2010.org/?page_id=118 ).

- The Kenya ICT board, the Kenyan coalition on violence against women and the African women and child feature will be attending the next Commission on the Status of women conference in New York March 2011. The priority theme will be “Access and
participation of women and girls to education, training, science and technology, including for the promotion of women’s equal access to full employment and decent work.” The Kenya ICT board has offered to organize a national workshop to plan for a Kenyan position on cybercrime against women based on the GRACE 2 research currently being undertaken by Wanjira Munya.