

Final Case Study Report

Capacity Development for Research: Strategic Evaluation

Positive Relationship Work:
*Organizational Case of Study of the
Association for Progressive Communications
(APC)*

by
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Positive Relationship Work: Case Study on Capacity Building through the IDRC-APC Relationship (1996–2006) – v3.1

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Executive Summary

Background

IDRC's Evaluation Unit (EU) is conducting a strategic evaluation to examine the Centre's contribution to the capacity development of those organizations and individuals with whom it works. There are few systematic reviews in the international development field of how agencies construct the concept of capacity building and then assess whether and how their approach leads to results. IDRC's EU is therefore undertaking a series of six case studies of capacity building efforts that have been identified across IDRC's programming, in order to develop an intellectual framework and a useful common language to approach capacity building more systematically.

Purpose of the case study on the Association for Progressive Communications (APC)

This report explores what can be learned from the sustained support that IDRC has provided to APC, from 1996 to 2006, through a combination of grants for project implementation, for collaboration, and for institutional strengthening, and through the development of positive peer relationships between key staff of the two organizations. The APC study explores a more informal approach to capacity building, where the relationships, characterized by a spirit of professional friendship, have been the key determinant in how capacity building has been possible and successful.

The study is based on a review of documentation and key informant interviews, with significant consultation with both IDRC and APC staff on the draft findings. Externalities during the review period that impacted the relationships are also explored, in particular rapid changes in the field of information and communications technology for development (ICT4D), where both organizations have significant competencies, and significant structural and leadership changes at both organizations. Three analytical frameworks have been used in the study: the Girgis framework for assessing individual relationship work as the basis for capacity building; the McKinsey "Capacity Assessment Framework" for assessing the institutional structure and skills of non-profit organizations; and the Bernard framework for "Mapping Research Capacity" of organizations. Two major areas of strengthening are reviewed: APC's institutional capacity to achieve its mission; and APC's capacity to contribute research into the field of ICT4D.

Limitations to the Study

The study did not take into consideration the impact of core funding sourced by APC from other donors that may have created an enabling environment for the relationship work between IDRC and APC, or the types of capacity building that may have occurred through relationships with other donors and organizations. The study therefore cannot be construed as a review of what has been most or least effective overall in building APC's capacity.

Major findings

This case study observed the following on the relationship between IDRC and APC:

The relationship between the two organizations is multi-faceted; APC serves at times as a project implementer; or project collaborator; but also is considered a strategic partner in project activities; and, most important, a strategic ally in moving the ICT4D field forward.

All aspects of the relationship have served to support the two organizations to become “partners in learning”, challenging each other’s perspectives and advancing the field of ICT4D.

The study observed the following on the capacity development process:

- An understanding of a peer to peer relationship is essential. IDRC teams should consciously engage in strategic discussions with partners as equals about new developments in their field, about research planning; and about organizational capacity.
- Building and maintaining a relationship during a period of continuous external and internal change pushes the limits of an informal approach to capacity building. However, such an approach can yield positive results so long as open and honest communications between the two organizations is maintained.
- Communications must not only cover substantive issues (projects and trends in the field of work), but also explore organizational priorities and management, on both sides.

Key findings with respect to institutional strengthening:

Individual IDRC project support, together with a specific institutional strengthening grant (INSPRO), have contributed to key elements of APC organizational capacity. Following the McKinsey framework, IDRC has helped to influence aspirations (vision, mission), assist with strategies (for leadership and financing), build organizational skills (particularly in the area of performance evaluation), supported human resource development (enabling, through project funding, an increase in staffing), and strengthened systems and infrastructure (direct and solid support through an institutional strengthening grant). Of the remaining elements in the McKinsey framework, organizational structure and culture, the study found no evidence of IDRC contribution, although clearly the two organizations share many cultural values and reinforce those through the positive peer relationships. Principal observations include:

- There is a need for more engagement (needs assessment, capacities existing and gaps) and mentoring on organizational capacity during the planning phase of a specific capacity building and institutional support investment
- There should be a differentiation between the purpose of core funding (supporting existing systems) and institutional capacity building (requiring the investment of staff time to develop and implement new systems and procedures).
- Institutional strengthening grants cannot necessarily resolve challenges with specific projects, particularly where value differences may be at the root of conflict.
- The peer to peer relationship should be encouraged to include discussion of organizational management issues, not just substantive issues. The opportunity for such discussion was particularly valued by APC.

Key findings with respect to research capacity

During the study period, 1996 to 2006, the study identifies a shift in the IDRC ICT4D program from research through experimentation towards more formalized research with a policy agenda. This shift impacted on the expectations of IDRC for research performance by APC. Of particular concern is the finding that, with the exception of the Gender Evaluation Methodology work, IDRC has not funded APC to undertake research. It is therefore difficult for IDRC, and this study, to comment upon APC’s capacity to conduct research, and whether and how that has been strengthened through IDRC’s interventions.

Investments have more specifically been made in project design and management, in three discrete areas of shared interest: women / gender and ICTs; community networking; and ICT policy. The study identifies several areas where existing capacity for project management, network building and knowledge generation and brokering was strengthened through IDRC project investments and collaboration:

- Understanding how to evaluate women's involvement in ICT4D
- Creating innovation in community connectivity, strategic uses of ICTs by civil society, networking and collaboration
- Building civil society awareness and engagement in ICT policy issues as they affect social justice and human development.

The study also identifies a number of circumstances in which existing capacity can be undermined rather than strengthened, through:

- Mandated collaborations on projects
- Conflicts over values in research project management
- Misalignment of research approaches (between academic and practitioner research) and capacity building methodologies
- A lack of attention to the multi-skilled nature of ICT4D project management, and overlooking opportunities to build that capacity

Lessons Learned

1. Living up to good practices: IDRC is currently developing a list of good practices for capacity building. In applying these practices to the APC relationship, IDRC has demonstrated persistence in sustaining the relationship for 10 years; flexibility with funding; resilience in spite of periods of miscommunication and differences of opinion; relationship building through working side by side on projects; mutually strengthening strategic intelligence in the ICT4D field; and has built on existing capacity. In the good practice area of ensuring a locally driven agenda, there is some divergence between IDRC's embracing of the more economics-motivated ICT4D agenda, and APC's grounding in the social justice and rights movements.

2. Positive relationship work: The Girgis model includes three key instruments for relationship work: negotiation, suggestive dialogue and helping. The study shows a slight trend within IDRC away from dialogue and helping to more structured negotiations around APC's capacities and roles as an IDRC partner. Whether this is a cause or an outcome of areas of conflict in recent years is unclear. However, APC indicates a strong desire to offset the negotiating approach with an increase in dialogue and helping. In terms of Girgis' ideal attributes, the study confirms that where these have been present in IDRC, APC's capacities have flourished: Sensitivity; creativity; shared understanding and commitment.

3. Challenges facing IDRC: IDRC should consider the following as it shifts towards a more explicit focus on organizational capacity building: Conscious investment in capacities can lead to results; IDRC should strengthen its understanding of what constitutes "organizational capacities"; IDRC needs to be more conscious of the difference between supporting an organization to achieve its own goals versus supporting an organization to achieve IDRC's goals; challenges in a relationship may be related more to communications

gaps between the organizations rather than capacity limitations on the part of one or the other; brokering relationships between partners in order to build capacity of one or the other or both carries real risks of conflict, and failure must be recognized as a possible outcome; IDRC needs to promote opportunities that it can provide for individual capacity development as part of institutional capacity building; and finally, IDRC needs to be more aware of potential underfunding of project management costs in budgets, where lack of such funds has the potential to adversely affect capacity to deliver on projects.

The Way Forward

As IDRC decides how to undertake organizational capacity building forward, it should consider the following:

1. **Expand the IDRC Good Practices framework to incorporate more elements of the Girgis framework.**
2. **Provide opportunities within IDRC to reflect on organizational relationships and relationship management.**
3. **Ensure that IDRC staff working on capacity building of an organization have the seniority to work with the senior levels of the partner organization.**
4. **Undertake the mapping and network analysis of organizations active in a research field** in order to select keystone organizations important to the advancement of a field; and to understand how IDRC's support for other organizations may impact on key partners.
5. **Build the capacity of IDRC staff to understand and apply appropriate organizational capacity frameworks according to the needs of the partner organization.**
6. **Improve IDRC's understanding of research capacity to include the full Bernard "Mapping Research Capacity" framework.** which identifies abilities to conduct research; to manage research activities; to conceive, generate and sustain research in a sector; to use research outcomes in policy or practice; and to mobilize research-related policy and program "systems" thinking. The study reveals that the last two areas are frequently overlooked by IDRC staff, although they are central to the discussion of APC's capacity for research dissemination and systemic change through policy advocacy.
7. **Improve IDRC's own organizational memory and transparency** in order to understand how IDRC's own corporate culture and organizational history can impact its relationship with partners and to share its strategic plans with partners to ensure that they understand how these may impact the relationship in the future.
8. **Continue to promote the fundamental values underlying positive relationship work** – Sensitivity, creativity, shared understanding and commitment.

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1 Introduction

Over the past several decades, the International Development Research Centre (IDRC)—in line with many development agencies, organizations and donors—has grappled with the issue of how to assess capacity-building initiatives. Many of these agencies have struggled with how to articulate and document the complex array of results of their capacity-building activities. Part of this difficulty lies in the fact that there are few systematic reviews of how development agencies construct the concept of capacity building in order to look systematically at how this construction leads to results. While there is a great deal of information regarding development projects that have attempted to build capacity, there is a dearth of information regarding how development agencies approach the concept of capacity building.

In response to the above considerations, IDRC's Evaluation Unit (EU) is conducting a strategic evaluation to investigate the Centre's contributions to the development of capacities of those with whom the Centre works. The evaluation aims to provide IDRC's own staff and managers with an intellectual framework and a useful common language to help harness the concept and document the experiences and results that the Centre has accumulated in this domain. Specifically, the strategic evaluation focuses on the processes and results of IDRC support for the development of capacities¹ of its Southern partners—what capacities have been enhanced, whose, how and how effectively. In IDRC's view of *complete capacity*, there is a need to pay attention to and fund multiple functions to enhance the capacity to do research-related activities, including how to conduct, manage and communicate research.

This case study on the Association for Progressive Communications (APC) is one of a series of six exploring organizational capacity building across IDRC program areas and regions. Organizational case studies have been chosen in order to capture how, over time, IDRC's sustained support contributes to capacity development at the individual/group, organizational and network levels in the field. The organizational case studies examine both the *processes* and the *results* of capacity development with Southern partner organizations.

The APC case study provides interesting insights into how capacity building may occur seemingly against all odds:

- in a thematic area undergoing rapid global change – the field of Information and Communication Technologies for Development (ICT4D) was transformed through the rapid growth of the Internet after 1996, requiring ICT4D organizations to change in order to keep up with the field and new players in it;
- in a thematic project-based context – most interactions between the organizations were focused on funded projects related to mutual ICT4D interests;
- between two global, largely virtual organizations – the relationship between IDRC and APC involved large numbers of individuals spread across five continents—few

¹ The international development community tends to use the term “capacity development” rather than “capacity building.”. The latter is often seen to mean that capacities are assumed to be absent, or that the process is one of moving from one level of capacity to the next, whereas “capacity development” acknowledges existing capacities, and the political dynamics of change. In this document, both terms are used somewhat interchangeably as “capacity building” is the term most frequently used in IDRC parlance.

- of whom have regular opportunities to meet face-to-face with others within their organization; and
- during periods of organizational change – IDRC and APC both underwent structural and leadership changes during the decade, altering both capacity needs and the application of capacity-building instruments.

Ultimately, an atmosphere of friendly professionalism between IDRC and APC enabled both organizations to learn from one another and to position themselves as leaders in a rapidly changing field. While each organization has at times missed important transformations in the other, the number and diversity of contacts between the organizations has enabled them to weather any resulting conflicts. Moving towards the future, however, the APC case study clearly indicates the importance of IDRC teams more consciously engaging in strategic discussions with partners as equals about new developments in their field, research for development and organizational capacity. Without these discussions, there is a danger that the prospectus-driven nature of IDRC will blind the organization to its partners' goals, insights and needs, thereby rupturing relationships and turning IDRC into just another development donor or think tank.

2 Research Methodology

In order to address capacity-building opportunities, achievements and failures in the relationship between IDRC and APC, the case study focused on two levels: projects and activity areas. Projects included the 17 APC projects funded by IDRC from 1999 to 2006. It also included four projects led by APC members during the 1996–1999 period while APC was in the process of legal incorporation. These select projects were identified by APC interviewees as APC-wide projects, not merely projects of the particular network member. All projects were then clustered by the research team into the following activity areas representing areas of shared IDRC-APC interest: women/gender; prizes/connectivity; policy; and institutional capacity building. These activity areas, rather than projects, guided the development of the research. Nevertheless, it is important to note that within each activity area, one or two projects were mentioned repeatedly during scoping interviews with IDRC and APC as critical to understanding the relationship between the two organizations. Additional data were gathered on these projects.

The study relied primarily on the following data collection techniques:

- Document Review – This review was fortunate to benefit from the excellent electronic archiving practices of both IDRC and APC. Complete IDRC project documentation (proposals, project approval documents, project interim and final reports, project completion reports, key e-mails) and trip reports were available for most relevant projects. In addition, IDRC was able to provide all ICT4D strategy documents and prospectuses dating back to 2000, with some information also available on earlier ICT4D-related Program Initiatives. Particularly useful were the reports from the Director of the Programme Area (DPA) to the Board from 2001, 2003 and 2005. APC in turn provided annual reports dating back to 2000, plus their bylaws and a member handbook containing extensive operational details. It is important to note that documents from 1996–2000 for both organizations tend to be less thorough.

- Key informant interviews – Semi-structured interviews were conducted with individuals with direct knowledge of IDRC and APC between 1996 and 2006. In order to provide as broad a perspective as possible on the IDRC-APC relationship, all individuals (with direct project contact) suggested by IDRC and APC in scoping interviews and APC team interviews (see below) were given the opportunity to provide input to the study. These individuals included not only staff and former staff of both organizations, but also consultants and project co-funders as well.

Depending on the individuals, questions focused on two or more of the following issues: frameworks for capacity building, the evolving nature of ICT4D research; key organizational capacities for IDRC partners; specific moments in which APC's organizational capacity was stretched through its involvement with IDRC; and recommendations for IDRC to improve its engagement with partners on their organizational capacity.

Four types of interviews were conducted:

- Scoping interviews – From 3 to 5 July 2007, a series of one-hour interviews were conducted in person with Richard Fuchs, Sarah Earl, Steve Song and Chat Ramilo in Ottawa, Canada. These interviews provided an overview of the IDRC-APC relationship, as well as indications of organizational sensitivities and important moments in the relationship between the two organizations.
- APC Team interviews – From 3 to 7 August 2007, a series of eight 1.5–2 hour interviews were conducted with the 11 current APC staff at their semi-annual management team meeting in London, England. These interviews focused primarily on broad thematic areas (e.g., prizes, policy, gender) and were conducted with all relevant members of the team together. This enabled team members to construct a collective story of how the thematic area evolved within APC and how this related to the relationship with IDRC.
- Telephone/Skype interviews – Between 17 August and 20 September 2007, 19 one-hour interviews were conducted by telephone or Skype with other key informants including current and former staff of IDRC (11) and APC (3), as well as consultants (one) and other APC funders (three). The limitations of this interviewing technique were offset to some degree by the author's previous relationship with many of the interviewees.
- E-mail questionnaires – An additional nine key informants responded to an invitation to provide e-mail comments to a loose series of questions regarding the IDRC-APC relationship, capacity-building approaches and the rapid changes in the field of information technology and development. These key informants were: five current and former IDRC staff; two members of the APC Women's Network; and two consultants.

All interviewees were provided with the opportunity to review interview notes, revise them for accuracy and completeness and to indicate if there were any portions which they would prefer to maintain off the record. Additional e-mail communications and Skype chats enabled follow-up with key informants to clarify important points. A complete list of key informants is provided in Appendix 2.

Case study drafts underwent extensive review by IDRC and APC staff to ensure both its historical accuracy as well as ensuring that it provides critical insights into opportunities and challenges for capacity building in IDRC's relationships with this key partner.

The directions and findings of this study were constrained in several important ways:

- It focused primarily on APC as an organization, with a strong focus on the APC staff. Understanding the impact of IDRC on capacity building of APC as a network would have required more extensive interviews with APC members regarding how their relationship with IDRC may have enabled (or interfered with) their abilities to work collaboratively as a global network. Also missing is a sense of whether or how IDRC's support for APC may have influenced individual APC members.
- It focused primarily on the IDRC-APC relationship, perhaps missing important capacity-building moments and events supported by other donors or undertaken by APC on its own. Some interviews with APC staff revealed specific complex non-IDRC projects as transformative moments in the network's history; however, it was not possible to follow up on these in detail. In addition, other APC partners were not interviewed, although IDRC has supported many of these partners as well. It was not possible, therefore, to assess whether or how IDRC's support of these other organizations may have helped to build APC's organizational capacity. Nor was it possible to demonstrate whether IDRC's organizational capacity support for APC had broader impacts within the ICT4D community.
- Interviews were not conducted with APC core funders. These funders were not ones which APC staff listed as a high priority for interviews. It was not until late in the project that the research team fully appreciated the implications of core funding on APC in recent years or the types of capacity building which may have occurred through those relationships.

Given these constraints, this case study should be understood solely as a review of what IDRC efforts and relationships have been most—and least—successful in building APC's organizational capacity. It should not be construed as what has been most—and least—successful in building APC's organizational capacity overall.

3 Analytical Framework

Historically, IDRC has not had a coherent organizational capacity-building framework that drives its efforts. While it has invested in the development of a performance assessment framework in collaboration with the Inter-American Development Bank and Universalia,² until now the Centre appears to have spent considerably less effort in determining how best to nurture the capacity for high performance among its organizational partners. The result is that **while IDRC staff may be aware of *what* capacities in general partners should have, they are unsure of *how* to foster these capacities.**

Organizational capacity building frequently occurs, therefore, as an undercurrent within all interactions between IDRC and its partners, rather than as a discrete activity—or series of activities—*per se*. As noted by Mona Girgis (2007), working

² This collaboration has resulted in two key publications: Enhancing organizational performance: a toolbox for self-assessment (1999) and Organizational assessment: a framework for improving performance (2002).

with Oxfam Australia in East Timor, in these situations individual relationship work serves as the basis for capacity building. Practitioners use three instruments in relationship work: negotiation, suggestive dialogue and helping. These instruments focus on developing the capacity of the counterpart with the broader goal of developing organizational capacity:

- Negotiation is a dialogue in which the practitioner consciously works through an issue with a counterpart through discussion. The power to undertake and lead the negotiations lies within the practitioner's perceived link to financial resources.
- Suggestive dialogue is a conscious attempt not to tell others what to do but instead to give strategic suggestions and ideas over a longer period of time. The purpose behind suggestive dialogue is to give the local counterpart an opportunity to consider the ideas and translate them to the local context. Suggestive dialogue occurs when the practitioner is aware of his or her limitations in a cross-cultural environment. That is, this instrument is used in order to combine the practitioner's imported experience and knowledge with the local knowledge of the counterpart.
- Helping has a facilitative function and does not imply that one is doing something for or on behalf of someone else. Helping recognizes local capacity and knowledge and is about growth and improvement. It is different from the imposition of external ideas or values: it is about acknowledging existing local knowledge and capacity.

Using these instruments requires certain attributes or characteristics in the practitioner, including: sensitivity, creativity, shared understanding and commitment.³

- Sensitivity is a state of alertness to others. It assists in understanding others in relation to oneself. It requires the development of an awareness of the environment and the differences between people, cultures and places. In order to develop sensitivity, practitioners consciously apply listening skills as they try to understand how their own comments have affected their counterparts, and whether there is mutual understanding.
- Creativity is the ability to adapt to different environments and contextual elements. It is the art of creating a unique relationship for the purpose of capacity building, rather than merely picking up tools and implementing them. Creativity requires awareness of one's power and one's role in relation to the local counterpart. The use of creativity enables the practitioner to overcome the contextual elements that may otherwise impede positive relationship work.
- Shared understanding is the ability to understand the contextual elements that others may perceive, in addition to one's own perceptions, and the reconciliation of differences in these perceptions. Shared understanding is one of the most difficult attributes to develop in positive relationship work. It requires the practitioner to develop an awareness of the differences between themselves, their counterparts and the environment in which they are working. Shared understanding requires reflection on their own cultural context and the assumptions that they bring into the relationship. The practitioner needs to find some common ground with the counterpart, to enable capacity building to occur.

³ Note that for the purposes of the APC case study, the author has changed Girgis's term "friendship work" to "positive relationship work" based on negative reactions to the terminology during case study interviews, although not to the concept itself.

- Commitment provides the practitioner with the impetus, motivation and soul to do the work that he or she is doing. Commitment is a practitioner's dedication to, and willingness for, positive relationship work that enables a positive focus to remain on the counterpart and capacity-building outcomes. Commitment is difficult to develop if it is not already present, as it is about passion, vocation and the giving of self to the work.

Girgis's model is particularly well-suited to informal capacity-building efforts that are untaken over long periods of time. This analytical framework, however, requires the articulation and understanding of the complete relationship between two organizations in order to assess the degree to which informal influence has been brought to bear in a healthy and positive manner.

While the Girgis framework serves as the primary framework for the APC case study to analyze *how* capacity building has occurred, two additional frameworks have been used to assess *what* capacities have been built:

- McKinsey Capacity Assessment Framework – related to non-profit organizational capacities; and
- Anne Bernard's Mapping Research Capacity Framework – related to research capacities.

These frameworks are introduced in greater detail in Sections 5 and 6 of the case study respectively. While neither framework on its own was found to be sufficient to describe the capacities required by APC to be successful in achieving its goals, together these frameworks provide insights into the organization and its relationship with IDRC.

4 IDRC-APC Capacity-Building Context

Capacity building between IDRC and APC has largely occurred within the context of a professional friendship or friendly professionalism between individuals in the two organizations. The relationship between the organizations, and ultimately among the individuals in the organizations, has been the most vital determinant of the degree to which capacity building has been possible and successful. Relationship work, however, is not easy and requires an in-depth understanding of the contexts within which the relationships have evolved.

The following sections outline the contexts within which the IDRC-APC capacity-building relationship evolved between 1996 and 2006. **At all levels, from the macro-level of the development and ICT4D fields to the micro-levels within each organization, the context of the relationship has been one of continuous change. These changes have pushed the limits of an informal approach to capacity building, but have ultimately proven that such an approach can still yield positive results—as long as open and honest communications between organizations is maintained. Essential in maintaining those communications has been a complex relationship involving components beyond the standard donor-recipient interactions.** As project partners, strategic partners and strategic allies, IDRC and APC have been able to help each other to keep abreast of relevant changes within their organizations and in the field of ICT4D.

4.1 Development Capacity Building

Donor perspectives on capacity building have changed significantly over the past two decades. As Ann Whyte details in her landscape analysis of donor trends (2004), the development paradigm shifted in the early 1990s towards one emphasizing participation of groups beyond central government, especially NGOs and civil society. As democratic forces unfolded, they opened up policy spaces for capacity building with these groups. However, as the decade closed, the establishment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) required national governments to play a central role in their countries' development and re-emphasized their capacity needs. Simultaneously, the decentralization and devolution of government services to local offices of central government and to local authorities made obvious the need for capacity building of these government levels as well.

As these forces converged, capacity building rapidly was placed at the centre of models of Overseas Development Assistance (ODA). However, capacity-building models in the early 2000s quickly came to focus on the needs of national governments because of the larger roles accorded to them through Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), Sector Wide Approaches (SWAs) and Program-based Approaches (PBAs). With reduced financial resources as main OECD countries cut their ODA budgets, and the downturn in the stock market reducing the availability of philanthropic funds for development, less expensive models for training and capacity building generally became more popular. ICT-based knowledge networks, an emphasis on needs assessment and ongoing learning, and increased donor coordination became normalized within the development community (Whyte, 2004).

These changes have been mirrored in the types of relationships existing between donors and grantees around the world. During the mid-1990s as the global economy was riding the Internet wave, venture philanthropists burst onto the scene with a vision of bringing business sense to bear on the achievement of non-profit goals. At the centre of the venture philanthropy model was the concept of treating funding as an investment rather than as the traditional concept of a charitable grant, with corresponding expectations of return on investment, operating efficiencies and management oversight that this shift requires (Sievers, 2001). While some traditional ODA stakeholders decried these trends as simply the rehashing of old ideas, they nevertheless impacted on how they related to their grantees. Giving funds to support project ideas brought forward by developing country partners was no longer seen as sufficient for donors; direct project involvement and the building of "partnerships" to achieve shared goals became more common.

However, in the new millennium, venture philanthropy began to confront significant challenges in translating the approaches of venture capitalists to non-profit giving, including:

- the challenge of defining, and measuring, the "bottom line" for performance;
- the notion of "going to scale";
- issues of power and control arising from the differences between being an owner vs. a donor; and
- the problem of defining an exit strategy.

Cumulatively, the four challenges were seen to represent the leading edge of a trend in social thinking that posed a serious challenge to the autonomy of the non-profit sector: the

increasing encroachment of the market into the realm of civil society, substituting the singular idea of return on investment for the rich pluralism of material, associative, aesthetic and moral ends of civil society. Donors began to pull back from some of the most intensive forms of “engaged donorship” and to redraw boundaries between their operations and that of their civil society partners and grantees.

The convergence of these trends resulted in heavy investment and engagement of donors in the operations of civil society organizations during the late 1990s. Organizational capacity building of civil society organizations (CSOs) through direct engagement in projects and the establishment of finite periods of support became increasingly common. However, much of this support for CSO organizational capacity building quickly disappeared following 2000 as official development assistance (ODA) funds were reduced, emphasis on governments’ roles in development increased and enthusiasm for venture philanthropy waned in the light of actual experiences. CSOs had to quickly learn to navigate in these new waters as expectations for performance measurement and operational investments continued, while funds and donor engagement were reduced and redirected into pooled capacity-building knowledge networks on both programmatic and operational aspects of development programming.

4.2 Rapid Transformation of ICT4D

Between 1996 and 2006, the field of ICT4D was rapidly transformed in both policy and practice. The most dominant catalyst of this transformation was the rapid growth of the Internet. Another important factor was also the exponential increase in subscriptions to mobile telephone services in developing countries. The explosion of new ICTs and reduced costs led to a period of intense innovation in their application to development problems around the world. Early leaders both the social justice and ICT fields, IDRC and APC were pushed to the limit to monitor changes in the field and to adapt and grow—on both project and institutional levels—in order to maintain their utility to their constituents.

The academic community began experimenting with early forms of the Internet in the early ’80s, focused primarily on e-mail exchange and bulletin boards. These applications began to demonstrate the transformative power of information sharing between groups, not only within academia but in the social justice and environmental sectors as well. For nearly 30 years, such low-bandwidth technologies have remained among the most used technologies in the world.

However, the entrance of the private sector into Internet service provision and technology development in 1989 marked the beginning of the Internet explosion. It was the innovation of graphical browsers in 1993 that suddenly made the possible uses of the Internet easily accessible to the masses. As the Internet community started to grow, investors began to see the potential this new medium represented for bringing together unrelated buyers and sellers in seamless and low-cost ways. An investment spree in the late 1990s quickly ensued resulting in the sharpest rise globally in the rate of telecommunications network growth since the 1950s.⁴ Despite the bursting of the dot-com bubble in early 2000, the preceding investment frenzy had serendipitously resulted in a glut of cheap fibre-optic capacity which had the effect of making large quantities of bandwidth available at ever increasing lower

⁴ International Telecommunications Union (ITU). The World Telecommunication Development Report 2002: ‘Reinventing Telecoms’, <http://www.ictdevagenda.org/frame.php?dir=07&sd=10&sid=2&id=122>

costs. As a result, the spread of commercial networks and the growth of Internet usage worldwide have been overwhelmingly rapid.

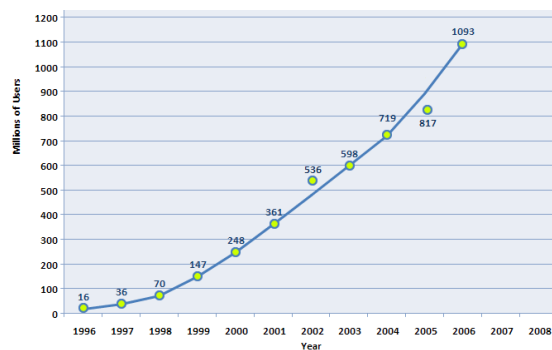


Figure 1: Internet Usage (1995–2006)

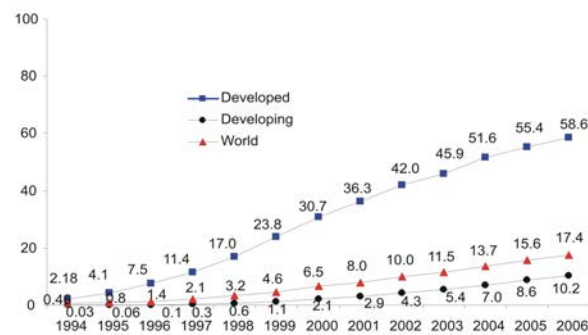


Figure 2: Internet Users per 100 Inhabitants (1994–2006)

Mobile phone services also rapidly grew world-wide as a result of the late 1990s investment spree in telecommunications. The most unique and surprising growth specifically in mobile phone services was however to occur in Sub-Saharan Africa. In the decade from 1995 to 2005, US\$25 billion was invested in the ICT sector in Sub-Saharan Africa, mainly by private operators and investors.⁵ However, fixed-line telephony in Africa has been largely the responsibility of governments and more often than not the private sector has set up and operated the cell phone networks.⁶ Therefore a disproportional amount of this investment was directed towards cell phone infrastructure. The result has been that by the end of 2001 28 African nations—over half the countries in the region—had more mobile phones than fixed-line subscribers; a higher percentage than any other continent.⁷ For the last few years, the African mobile market has been the fastest-growing market of all regions, expanding at twice the rate of the global market. There are now at least five times more mobile than fixed-telephone subscribers in Africa (see Figures 3 and 4).⁸

⁵ World Bank. Global Information and Communication Technologies, Connecting Africa: How ICT is Transforming a Continent. <http://go.worldbank.org/VLGR60GOD0>

⁶ Berger, Guy. "International funding agenda at Africa telecoms meeting," Highway Africa News Agency, Monday, 3 May 2004, http://newsagency.blogspot.com/2004_05_03_archive.html

⁷ International Telecommunications Union. The World Telecommunication Development Report 2002: 'Reinventing Telecoms'. <http://www.ictdevagenda.org/frame.php?dir=07&sd=10&sid=2&cid=122>

⁸ World Bank., *ibid.*

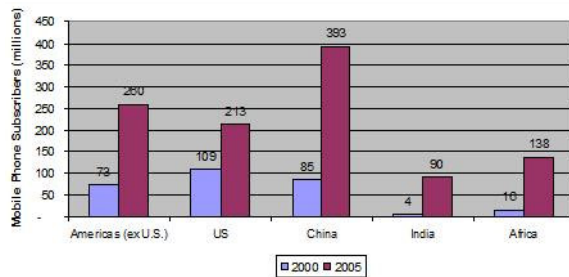


Figure 3: Mobile Phone Subscribers (2000 and 2005)

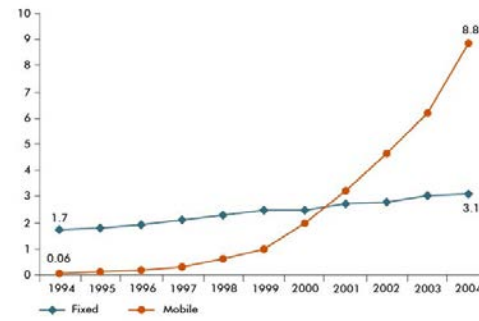


Figure 4: Mobile vs. Fixed Subscribers, Africa (1995–2004)

The obvious linkages between economic growth and the sudden ICT proliferation fuelled by the Internet and mobile telephony boom observed at the time, helped elevate the ICT4D premise that the major issue in development is the capacity to develop, derive and transmit ideas about the economy, about business and about how we organize our societies and institutions. Also, that realizing this development requires a fundamental underpinning of access to relevant technologies, skills and, eventually, markets.⁹ The emerging economic-focused ICT4D paradigm began to erode earlier focuses on information technology within the development community which held that access to information and communications are critical to empowerment, learning, participation, rights realization and more open societies, which are essential building blocks for development.

The prevalence of economic thinking in the 1990s led to growing concern that as the gap between the technological haves and have-nots widens, the rich would get richer and the poor would get poorer. A movement to address this concern started to appear in the international ICT4D discourse in the mid-1990s. The Information Society and Development Conference held in Johannesburg 1996 was one of the first international meetings to declare as its objective the inclusion of the developing world as “significant participants” in the rapidly expanding Information Society.¹⁰ Adding to this international momentum, in 1997 the Global Knowledge for Development Conference was convened in Toronto by public, private and not-for-profit organizations all committed to sharing information, experiences and resources to promote broad access to, and effective use of, knowledge and information as tools of sustainable, equitable development. Out of this came the formation of the Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP), an internationally recognized network promoting innovation and advancement in Knowledge for Development (K4D) and ICT4D.

It was however in 1998 that the issue started to appear at the international policy level when the World Bank released its report on Knowledge for Development.¹¹ Two weeks later, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) declared Resolution 73 at the ITU

⁹ Fuchs, Richard. Information and Communication Technologies for Development (ICT4D) Program Area – Report to the Board of Governors, 2005. IDRC: Ottawa, 2005.

¹⁰ Information Society and Development Conference, South Africa, 13–15 May 1996, http://ec.europa.eu/archives/ISPO/docs/promotion/past_events/isad_exhibition_tor.doc

¹¹ World Bank. World Development Report 98/99: Knowledge for Development. World Bank: Washington, DC, 1998. <http://www.worldbank.org/wdr/wdr98/index.htm>

Plenipotentiary Conference in Minneapolis¹² instructing the UN Council to consider and decide on the Union's contribution to the holding of a world summit on the information society. From there the international momentum built up rapidly. In 2000, GKP convened its second Global Knowledge for Development Conference in Kuala Lumpur. Later that year the United Nations put the information society high on its agenda at the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) meeting. The ECOSOC Ministerial Declaration affirmed that urgent and concerted actions, at national, regional and international levels, are imperative for bridging the "digital divide" and building digital opportunities and putting ICT firmly in the service of development for all.¹³ Almost simultaneously, the G8 Kyushu-Okinawa Summit committed to mobilizing the instruments and resources of the international community to address the widening digital divide.¹⁴ The publication of the flagship report "From the Global Digital Divide to the Global Digital Opportunity" by the Digital Divide Task Force of the World Economic Forum (WEF) was also released at the G8 summit. This report represented a shift in ICT4D policy at the international level in that it began by debunking the notion of "digital divide" as overly pessimistic.

An outcome of this summit as a result of this report was the formation of The Digital Opportunity Task Force (DOT Force), which brought together 43 teams from government, the private sector, non-profit organizations and international organizations, representing both developed and developing countries, in a cooperative effort to identify ways in which the digital revolution can benefit all the world's people, especially the poorest and most marginalized groups.¹⁵ When the United Nations (UN) Millennium Declaration was released later that year, it also included a development and poverty eradication resolution, "To ensure that the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communication technologies, in conformity with recommendations contained in the ECOSOC 2000 Ministerial Declaration, are available to all."¹⁶ This initial linkage of Millennium Development Goal (MDG) objectives to ICT4D policy was later expanded in 2001 by the creation of the UN ICT Task Force to provide leadership to the UN in formulating strategies for the development of ICTs, and to guide the confluence of ICTs with the UN's wider development targets contained in the Millennium Declaration.¹⁷

The confluence of ICT4D objectives and the MDGs was to gain traction during the regional and global meetings convened to prepare for World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). Finally in 2003 the first phase of the Summit took place in Geneva, where an astounding 175 governments and 12,000 delegates participated. The WSIS declaration of principles coming out of this phase contained an acknowledgement of the challenge to harness the potential of information and communication technologies to promote the

¹² International Telecommunication Union. Resolution 73 of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference, Minneapolis, 1998, <http://www.itu.int/whsis/docs/background/resolutions/73.html>

¹³ ECOSOC Ministerial Declaration on Development and International Cooperation in the XXI Century, <http://infolac.uco.mx/observatorio/ecosoc.pdf>

¹⁴ G8 Information Centre, Kyushu-Okinawa Summit 2000, Final Communiqué, <http://www.g7.utoronto.ca/summit/2000okinawa/finalcom.htm>

¹⁵ Digital Opportunities for All: Meeting the Challenge Report of the Digital Opportunity Task Force (DOT Force), <http://www.g7.utoronto.ca/summit/2001genoa/dotforce1.html>

¹⁶ United Nations Millennium Declaration, G.A. Res. 55/2, U.N. GAOR, 55th Sess., Supp. No. 49, (2000), <http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.pdf>

¹⁷ Hamilton, Paul. "Regional Roundup: The ICT Development Agenda Moves On – Highlights of 2002." ICT Development Agenda. <http://www.ictdevagenda.org/frame.php?dir=07&sd=10&sid=2&id=341>

development goals of the Millennium Declaration, and a commitment to turning this digital divide into a digital opportunity for all, particularly for those who are at risk of being left behind and further marginalized.¹⁸ The commitment to these principles was reiterated in the second phase of the Summit, held in 2005 in Tunis, where the number of delegates attending increased to 19,000.

Over the time frame of 1996–2006, the rise of the “digital divide/opportunity” agenda to the UN level resulted in ICT4D practice moving from small-scale grassroots rural access projects such as telecentres, to attempts at larger-scale approaches including top-down national ICT strategies encompassing a broad array of new technologies. Mirroring these changes, leading ICT4D organizations had to make the shift from successfully cultivating grassroots projects to fostering coalitions able to tackle the underlying policy issues limiting the achievement of digital opportunities for all.

Accompanying the burst of new small organizations working at the grassroots level, at the international level the ICT4D sector saw the increasing consolidation and failure of many early leaders. Similar to their private-sector counterparts during the dot-com boom and bust, development-oriented ICT players learned that while it was tempting to ignore the fundamentals of organizational management in the rush to develop new projects and products, ultimately only those organizations committing significant resources to developing accountable and adaptive management structures would thrive. **Unfortunately, organizational capacity building is difficult in such a context as organizations struggle for position and niches within a growing field that attracts a broad array of new stakeholders and participants. In addition to having a lack of time and human resources to dedicate to organizational management exercises, it can often be difficult to determine in advance what successful organizational forms and operational niches will be.**

4.3 Continuous Organizational Change

In response to the changing ICT4D context and other pressures, both IDRC and APC underwent significant organizational change between 1996 and 2006. These changes had a direct impact on each organization’s strategic directions, human resources and management systems. These systems underlay the ability of the two organizations to establish and maintain their relationship—particularly their openness to giving and receiving insights on organizational capacity. While detailed organizational histories of IDRC’s ICT4D team and APC are available in Appendices 4 and 5, this section seeks to highlight the most significant turning points for each organization.

4.3.1 IDRC

The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) is a Crown corporation created by the Parliament of Canada in 1970 to help developing countries use science and technology to find practical, long-term solutions to the social, economic and environmental problems they face.¹⁹ Since the organization began, ICTs have always been an area of development research as well as an underlying enabling service and resource. However, **the ability of IDRC’s**

¹⁸ WSIS Declaration of Principles. <http://www.itu.int/wsis/docs/geneva/official/dop.html>

¹⁹ International Development Research Centre. “About IDRC.” http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-8513-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html

ICT-oriented staff to focus on the needs of its partners changed drastically in the 1990s through a period of rapid downsizing and continuous reorganization.

In the autumn of 1991, IDRC was listed among 46 federal organizations to be eliminated. IDRC's new President focused his efforts on preserving the Centre and mitigating threats to its closure. In addition to undertaking significant restructuring, staffing was slashed by 18 per cent between 1991 and 1992. With another real budget cut of 16 per cent (and accompanying 20 per cent staffing cut) from 1995 to 1996, it became clear that it would be impossible to maintain such a diverse body of research programming. Beginning in 1995, projects formerly structured into thematic divisions were clustered into multi-disciplinary Program Initiatives (PIs) to be developed with Southern partners and to address particular problems within a clear timeline. In 1997, each PI was also required to develop a comprehensive prospectus detailing a three-year workplan as well as an annual budget.

A number of ICT4D-related PIs and special projects emerged during this turbulent time. In 1994 IDRC launched a new Secretariat, Bellanet, to work with the development community to use ICTs more effectively to broaden collaboration, increase participation and transparency of action and facilitate the diffusion of lessons learned. Similarly, IDRC reviewed its program in Asia and concluded that there was a need to help increase the networking capacity of the "information poor" and the research and development institutions that serve them. These approaches were adopted through the Pan Asia Networking (PAN) initiative launched in 1995. In 1997 Acacia was formally launched as an IDRC special initiative focusing on ICTs in Africa. PAN also expanded to becoming a global initiative including Latin America and the Caribbean. Because connectivity was more advanced in Latin America and the Caribbean, PAN's efforts focused more immediately on information-poor communities. Unganisha was also started in 1997 as a special project to extend the network of the IDRC's connectivity out beyond the Regional Offices to the actual projects that the IDRC funded. The 1997–2000 period can be seen as one of relative calm for the PIs, allowing IDRC staff to focus with its partners on the development of a wide array of new projects. Program Officers had a great deal of authority under this structure to develop new projects and to explore new directions.

However, the Corporate Strategy and Program Framework for 2000–2005 reintroduced a layer of management in the form of three directors of program areas (DPAs), including one for Information and Communication Technologies for Development (ICT4D). In January 2001, Richard Fuchs began his duties as the new DPA for ICT4D and began to craft a more coherent program out of the Program Initiatives. In order to increase programming coherence, the status of Acacia was shifted from special initiative to Program Initiative and Fuchs was also given a position on the Bellanet Steering Committee. In addition, PAN Americas spun off as a corporate project from PAN, which returned to its initial Asian roots. With PIs established on a regional basis, the ICT4D team struggled at the human resource level to develop global programming. However, they established strong lines of communication internally to ensure the coordination and combination of financial resources to support global initiatives and networks.

From 2000 to 2003, the ICT4D activities more than doubled within IDRC. This was due, in large measure, to the fact the IDRC's programming in this area was widely respected and, as international policy incorporated this type of programming, IDRC was often "top of mind"

when new initiatives were considered. From 2003 to 2005, the ICT4D program grew yet again, largely through external funding²⁰ and attention brought to ICT4D through the WSIS process. When the world's largest software company, Microsoft, was looking for an organization to host a new *pro bono* telecentre support network, it sought ICT4D@IDRC to lead this new initiative.

Despite the growth in activities and budgets, the program area became even more integrated. Critical to this were the decisions to unify the leadership of regional activities. This unification greatly simplified relationships with IDRC partners and gave greater flexibility to IDRC to fund both research and non-research activities, such as training or technical innovations within proposed projects.²¹ The WSIS process also acted as a unifying force within IDRC given the need to coordinate efforts to engage IDRC partners in WSIS and its accompanying conferences and exhibitions. In November 2004, with the approval of the Corporate Strategy and Program Framework, along with renewed support for the Acacia and PAN Asia Program prospectuses for 2005–2010, PAN Americas was approved as a Program Initiative.²²

4.3.2 APC

The Association for Progressive Communications (APC) is an international network of civil society organizations dedicated to empowering and supporting groups and individuals working for peace, human rights, development and protection of the environment, through the strategic use of ICTs, including the Internet. APC's institutional story during the case study period is one of astonishing growth and consolidation as both a network and an organization.

Table 1: Institutional Growth of APC (1996–2006)

	Income - USD	Expenditure - USD	Staff - FTEs	Staff - Individuals²³	Members
1996	150,000	190,000	1	1	
1997	540,000	310,000	2.5	3	
1998 ²⁴	10,000	230,000	2.5	4	
1999			3	3	
2000	660,000	670,000	2.5	3	18
2001	780,000	720,000	3.75	5	25
2002	1,340,000	1,110,000	5	9	25
2003	1,330,000	1,430,000	12.5	12	35
2004	1,300,000	1,330,000	12.5	25	37
2005	3,100,000	2,920,000	17.55	26	41
2006	3,630,000	3,360,000	19.6	29	Approx 50

²⁰ In 2005–2006, the ICT4D Program Area will allocate \$24.3 million with \$11.3 million (46.5 per cent) emanating from external sources. Source: Fuchs, Richard. Information and Communication Technologies for Development (ICT4D) Program Area – Report to the Board of Governors, 2005. IDRC: Ottawa, 2005.

²¹ Elder, Laurent. IDRC. 20 August 2007. Interview.

²² Fuchs, Richard. Information and Communication Technologies for Development (ICT4D) Program Area - Report to the Board of Governors, 2005. IDRC: Ottawa, 2005.

²³ Excludes consultants.

²⁴ APC was legally closed as a project of the Tides Center on 30 September 1998. No financial data are available for the 1998–1999 transition period as APC began its legal independence.

APC's members were often the first providers of Internet services in their countries. By the mid-1990s, however, APC members were forced to make the transition from being pioneers in the use of online communication, to facing intense competition. APC members shifted their attention away from the nuts and bolts of connectivity and towards helping non-government organizations (NGOs) make better use of rapidly emerging new Internet tools. At the February 1997 Council meeting, governance changes introduced three key ideas that allowed for APC to pursue new directions in the following years:

- Membership – APC would look for ways to open up to members that may not be connectivity providers, but were still compatible with APC's mission.
- Decision-making – Some decision-making responsibility was shifted to a seven-person Executive Board to work with staff to produce APC's action plan and oversee and monitor its implementation.
- Management – Operational management was formalized with the recognition of the APC Secretariat as the "glue" between members as well as a body which could help bring about meaningful and practical collaboration.

Simultaneously, it was decided to become independent from the Tides Center. As APC grew and attracted more funding, the nine per cent overhead fees charged by Tides on all projects was perceived as too expensive. APC incorporated as an independent non-profit organization in California, USA, effective 30 September 1998. The following two years were a period of intense organization building, with the establishment of all basic institutional systems. In May 1999, the APC Secretariat and Executive Board underwent a facilitated strategic planning process.

The implementation of this plan, however, was slowed with the departure of Edie Farwell, APC's first Executive Director. APC's Canadian-based fundraising manager, Maureen James, took over interim leadership of the organization for the next year. In May 2000 Anriette Esterhuysen joined APC as Executive Director. Prior to her post with APC, Esterhuysen was the Executive Director of SANGONeT, an APC member in South Africa, and in that capacity had served on the APC Executive Board from 1997 to 1999. Esterhuysen's arrival shifted the focus of operations to South Africa and brought with it a much closer association to developing country interests and priorities in ICT4D. It also brought a stronger focus to establishing organizational priorities as Esterhuysen led APC through a process of internal restructuring to more clearly distinguish between the leadership of programs and management systems.

In 2002, seven management systems were recognized with responsibility shared among senior management staff: Member Participation and Development; Network Development; Communications, Media and Promotions; Human Resources; Finance and Administrations; Fundraising; and Strategic Management. The six program areas operating since 1997 were conflated into three broad programs:

- Communications and Information Policy Program (CIPP)
- Strategic Uses and Capacity Building (SUCB)
- Women's Networking Support Program (WNSP)

The people who managed these 10 areas (programs and management systems) were formally recognized as APC's strategic management team.

Through this growth, however, APC had to continue to grapple with its dual character as a network and as an organization. Tension grew with the APC Council as APC evolved from a flat network structure governed and financed by its members to a larger network in which responsibilities were delegated to an elected Board, that relied on donor funding, and developed an increasingly empowered staff that played both strategic and facilitation roles. However, a carefully prepared and intensive, open process to develop revised bylaws has served to reduce tensions. The new bylaws approved in November 2007 clarify roles and responsibility of staff, members and Board, and of the Executive Director in particular.

4.3.3 Eras in the IDRC-APC Relationship

Looking at the individual histories of the two organizations, it becomes clear that the relationship between IDRC and APC between 1996 and 2006 can be divided roughly into two eras: 1996–1999 and 2000–2006. The year 2000 was a pivotal year for both organizations with changes in leadership, staffing and institutional structure. As we will see in the following sections, the nature and style of organizational capacity building between the two organizations was of a different style and scale in each period.

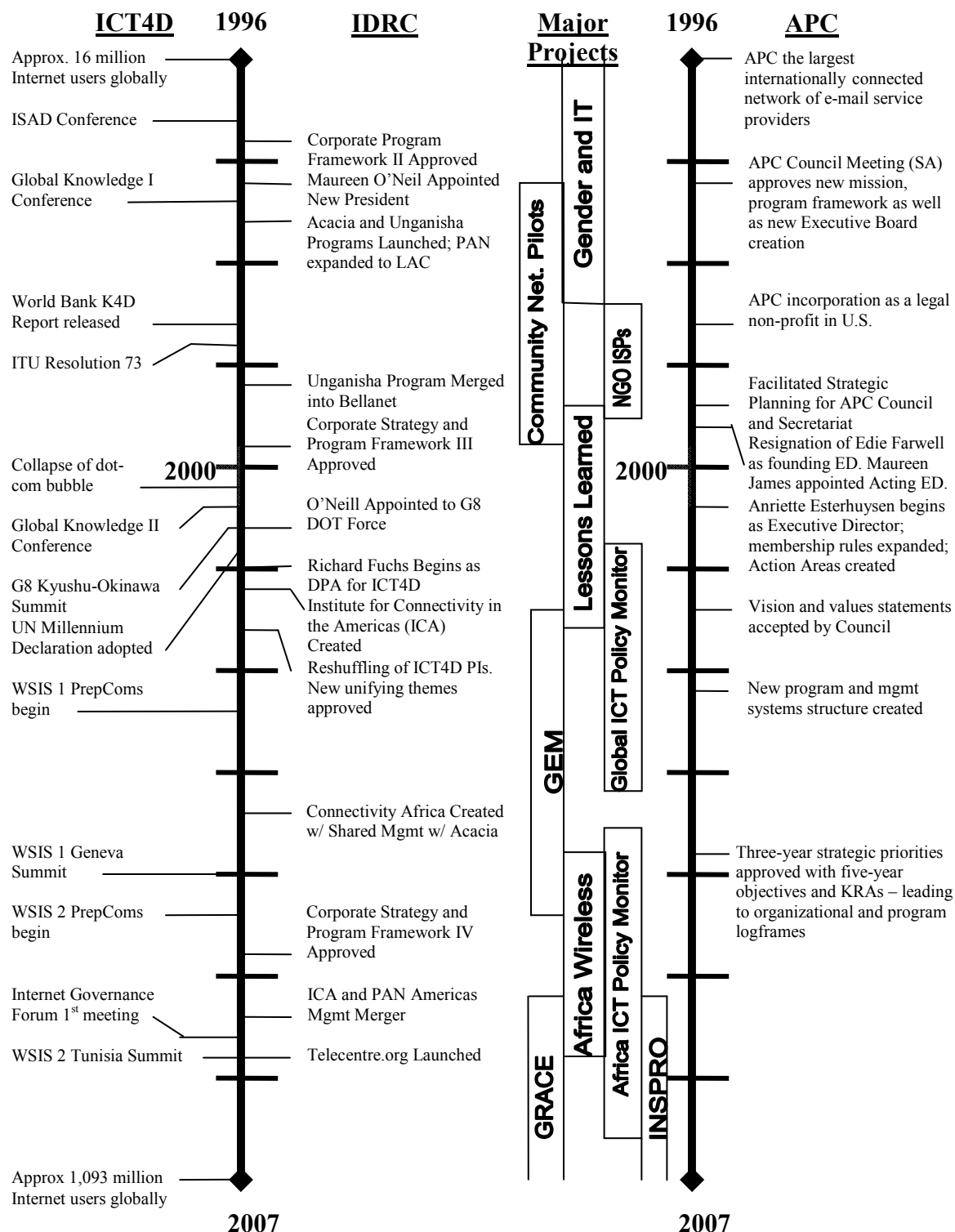


Figure 5: IDRC-APC Relationship Timeline (1996–2006)

1996–2000

From 1996 to 1999, the relationship between the organizations was extremely collegial with strong personal friendships emerging between IDRC Senior Project Officers and APC staff. Each organization had relatively few staff involved in the relationship,²⁵ making it easier to maintain an atmosphere of openness, frankness and trust. As IDRC PIs were to be developed in consultation with partners, there was a great deal of give and take in the relationship. In particular, Maureen James's location in Toronto, Canada—while serving as APC's Fundraising Manager and later as the Acting Executive Director—enabled easy and rapid communications with the IDRC ICT4D Senior Program Officers (POs) located in Ottawa. Gilles Cliche served an important role as well in introducing APC staff broadly throughout the IDRC organization and sought to build a strong partnership between the WNSP and IDRC's Evaluation Unit in order to ensure that the APC relationship would not be lost in a period of internal IDRC change. However, the ability of IDRC to undertake conscious capacity building of its partners was severely constrained by its own internal changes and cutbacks, resulting in IDRC spending a good deal of time on forging their own organizational capacities rather than those of others.

2000–2006

The relationship between APC and IDRC cooled slightly in 2000 while each organization established new structures and/or priorities. At IDRC, Fuchs's desire to regionalize the ICT4D program and to push out the greatest responsibility possible to IDRC regional offices resulted in an explosion of new ICT4D program staff in Africa, Latin America and Asia. As a result, APC had to establish new relationships with the regional staff of the various ICT4D PIs. At the global level, the relationship between the organizations was cordial throughout the WSIS process. The relationship between the organizations improved in early 2005 when both began to serve on the GKP Executive Committee. This neutral global venue provided the opportunity for frank discussions regarding emerging trends in ICT4D and organizational strategy. However, divergences between the two organizations continued to arise due to IDRC's gradual shift towards supporting more academic-style research on ICT4D. In addition, the maturation of IDRC program prospectuses resulted in IDRC driving more new project development than in the previous period, forcing APC into a position of responding to IDRC initiatives rather than developing their own.

The case study revealed little evidence indicating that either organization was fully aware of the profound organizational challenges and changes facing their partner in the relationship. With most interactions between the organizations focused on either projects or trends in ICT4D, important conversations regarding organizational management were not seen as a priority. Nevertheless, IDRC may be seen as bearing considerable responsibility for this shortcoming. While APC at least invited IDRC to their bi-annual members/donors meetings and provided IDRC with copies of its annual reports and strategic plans, IDRC did not regularly provide APC with the types of strategic and operational information available in the DPA Reports to the Board of Governors. Furthermore, interviews with IDRC program staff confirmed that they neither remembered receiving nor reading APC organizational material provided to them over the years. Focused on the research problématique and projects, IDRC appears to have vastly underestimated

²⁵ The main players in the relationship from 1996 to 2000 were Maureen James (APC), Karen Banks (APC/Greenet), Mark Surman (Web/APC), Gilles Cliche (IDRC) and David Balson (IDRC).

the importance of both communicating organizational management information as well as paying attention to such information provided by partners. **While individuals within each organization noticed changes in the relationship over time, there was a tendency to attribute the changes to individual leaders within each organization rather than understanding that these leaders seem to have been chosen for their ability to implement a course of action which had been strategically chosen by the organization's governing bodies.**

4.4 Aspects of the Relationship

The relationship between IDRC and APC has been multi-faceted, with each providing a different style of interaction through which capacity building has been possible. The main aspects of the relationship have included:

- Project implementation
- Project collaboration (with Bellanet)
- Strategic partnership (e.g., joint planning)
- Strategic alliance (e.g., joint advocacy)

All aspects of the relationship have served as avenues through which the two organizations have become “partners in learning”—challenging each other's perspectives, seeking to improve performance, and advancing the application of ICTs to furthering social justice and addressing development issues.

With over CAD\$3.75 million contributed to APC-managed projects from 1996 to 2006, IDRC has invested significant resources to the organization. In this context, the loci of the IDRC-APC relationship has clearly been on APC as a *project implementer*. IDRC funding has provided both the rationale and the resources for ongoing discussions about areas of shared interest. Over 80 per cent of funds were dedicated to APC's work on women/gender, community and civil society networking, and ICT policy. Through the development, implementation and evaluation of these projects, the two organizations have maintained a continuous dialogue regarding emerging directions in ICT4D as well as organizational strategies and needs. In addition, IDRC provided over CAD\$620K for direct institutional strengthening projects. A complete list of funded projects is provided in Appendix 3; however, a shortened list of major projects (>\$100K) is provided in Table 2:

Table 2: IDRC-Funded Projects >\$100K (1996–2006)

IDRC Project #	Project Title	Total IDRC \$	Years
001269	Gender and Information Technology (APC Women's Networking Support Program)	240,360	1995–1998
003219	Community Networking Pilot Projects in Latin America	245,441	1997–1999
004124	Strengthening NGO ISPs	123,661	1998–1999
004428	Lessons Learned: Building Strong Internet-Based Women Networks	246,586	1999–2001
100505	Global ICT Policy Monitor	280,300	2000–2003
100994	Gender Evaluation Methodology for ICT Initiatives	196,944	2001–2004
101972-001	Africa Civil Society ICT Policy Monitor, Discussion Forums and Book	215,317	2003–2006
102508	Gender Research in Africa into ICTs for Empowerment	975,889	2005–2007
102693	Capacity Building for Community Wireless Connectivity in Africa	379,645	2004–2006
102899	Capacity Building and Institutional Support for APC	498,000	2005–2008

Over the decade, the relative importance of each of these thematic areas of collaboration has shifted. One can see that within the overall growth of the relationship between the two organizations, there has been a steady collaboration on gender, with periodic bursts of energy around community networking, policy and institutional strengthening in response to new challenges which have emerged in ICT4D. Most notable, however, was the dramatic increase in project funding from IDRC in 2005.

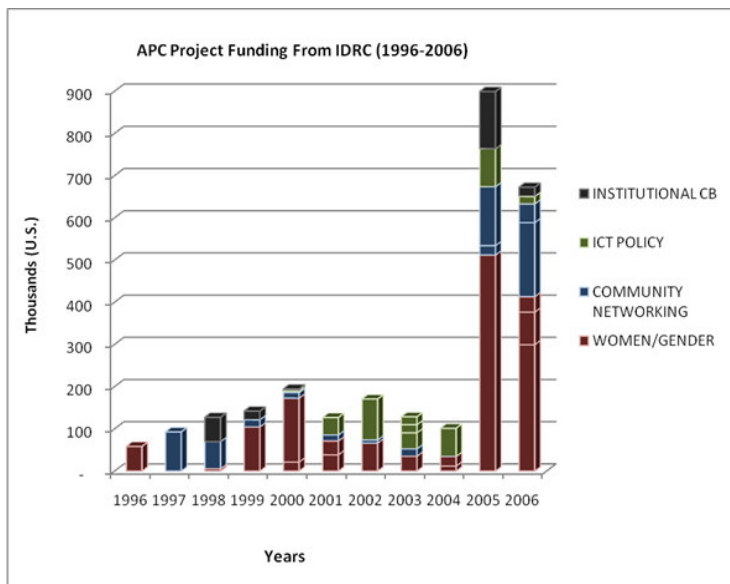


Figure 6: APC Project Funding from IDRC (1996–2006)

APC has also served as an important *project collaborator* with IDRC through its relationship with Bellanet. As an independent network Secretariat housed within IDRC, Bellanet was a peer collaborator with APC on several projects related to the strategic use of ICTs by civil society organizations. Both received funding from IDRC, as well as other donors, for the implementation of these projects. However, Bellanet was administratively housed within IDRC, which provided its financial and management services. While Bellanet staff did not perceive themselves to be part of IDRC and had their own independent strategic plan from 1996 to 2006, their identity was somewhat blurred to many outside IDRC. This “insider outsider” nature of Bellanet with respect to IDRC enabled it to function as an excellent partner to many IDRC partners.

In addition to project-oriented work, IDRC and APC have had an important relationship as *strategic partners*—providing insights into the evolution of the ICT4D field and the shifting priorities of stakeholders within it. These insights are valuable inputs to both organizations’ strategic planning processes and the emergence of new complementary programs. In 1997, IDRC funded an APC Africa Strategy Meeting as part of the Acacia Preparatory Phase. This meeting resulted in both the creation of an APC Africa network and the provision of targeted recommendations to IDRC on the implementation of its Acacia priorities. In this way, APC’s and IDRC’s ICT4D work in Africa efforts emerged from the same consultations and frameworks. On a broader scale, each organization has sought to involve the other in strategic planning on a periodic basis. IDRC has been invited to all donor days at APC Council meetings. In return, APC greatly valued the invitation to IDRC’s Africa regional planning session in January 2005 as well as hoped for greater opportunities to discuss strategic shifts in development thinking. As one IDRC staff member comments, “IDRC and APC have a symbiotic relationship. We wouldn’t be where we are without them and vice versa.”

Finally, IDRC and APC have functioned as *strategic allies* in global ICT4D discussions and policy processes. From Global Knowledge ’97 to the DOT Force to GK2000 to WSIS and the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), IDRC and APC have had regular opportunities to participate on panels together sharing their perspectives and insights into ICT4D. Given a similar pro-social value orientation, they have been able to advocate for shared interests and approaches to development. While this has not usually been formally coordinated, these activities have provided the intellectual space for IDRC and APC to learn from each other and to reinforce their relationship. The election of both organizations to the GKP Executive Committee for 2005–2006 provided an important venue for the development of this relationship, reinforcing a peer relationship that had lain somewhat dormant since 2000. Through the provision of strategic advice to a third party, Fuchs and Esterhuysen had an opportunity to get to know each other and to develop a level of professional respect beyond what is usually possible within a donor-recipient relationship. Esterhuysen notes that, “The most valuable part of being on the GKP Executive Committee was having a chance to get to know Richard [Fuchs] better. I learned a lot from him.”²⁶ Similarly, Fuchs comments, “Through the GKP ExCom, I found Anriette to be a very strategic person. I enjoyed her thinking; she made it fun.”²⁷ The two organizations have maintained their role as strategic allies in 2006 and beyond.

²⁶ Esterhuysen, Anriette. APC. 7 August 2007. Interview.

²⁷ Fuchs, Richard. IDRC. 5 July 2007. Interview.

While each of these aspects of the IDRC-APC relationship—and the multiplicity of staff involved—can be seen as complementary in constructing a rich context for capacity-building, they have also served as a source of some confusion. As one APC staff member notes, IDRC comes across as a bit “schizophrenic towards APC. Are we just one more project partner or are we a peer?”

5 Strengthening APC Institutional Capacities

IDRC has traditionally rated APC strongly in its ability to achieve its mission. As one IDRC Program Officer found in the late 1990s, “Results were always significant. They could pool resources and make something good.” Nevertheless, IDRC has always sought to support its partners’ efforts to improve themselves even further. **IDRC has explicitly sought to build the institutional capacity of APC as both a network and an organization throughout the case study period. Projects and discussions have emerged during periods of great change for APC: the mid-1990s emergence of competing commercial ISPs, and the mid-2000s aggregation of ICT4D research projects.**

Key individuals involved in the IDRC-APC relationship from 1996 to 2006 on Institutional Strengthening have included:

- IDRC – Gilles Cliche, Laurent Elder, Khaled Fourati, Lee Kirkham
- APC – Mark Surman, Maureen James, Edie Farwell, Anriette Esterhuysen, Ann Tothill

In order to understand what influence IDRC has had on the evolution of APC’s institutional capacities, we must analyze the evolution of the organization within a standardized organizational capacities framework. Then we can turn our attention to when and how IDRC’s interventions may have coincided with periods of rapid change and growth for APC in order to understand the appropriateness and effectiveness of IDRC’s support—as well as what opportunities it has missed.

5.1 IDRC Efforts towards APC Institutional Strengthening

IDRC contributed throughout the mid-1990s to the institutional development of the APC Women’s Network. Both the Gender and IT and Lessons Learned projects provided funding for opportunities which built the profile and reach of the WNSP. Beyond this, however, the Lessons Learned project also proposed to undertake research into financial sustainability mechanisms for the WNSP. In reality, this element was not fully realized. The WNSP applied a portion of the funds to implement a “Fund Leveraging Strategy”—providing seed funds to:

- three regional and national women’s programs in order to “build a strong programme, as well as to attract further funds from additional sources.”²⁸; and
- produce a fundraising proposal and identifying key funders for a WNSP global training initiative.

²⁸ IDRC. Lessons Learned Project (004428): Final Technical Report.

In addition, the WNSP identified an opportunity to generate some revenue through the development of the Gender Evaluation Methodology (GEM) ICT gender analysis tools into a service and methodology that could be offered to agencies needing this type of expertise. While the WNSP did secure additional funds from United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), U.K. Department for International Development (DFID), Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and Mama Cash for the completion of the first phase of the gender methodology, they did not reach the stage of implementation where they could pursue the planning of a gender analysis service until nearly three years later.

Out of concern for the potential extinction of many of APC's African networks in the face of commercial ISP competition, IDRC funded an APC Africa Strategy Development Meeting in February 1997 as part of the Acacia Preparatory Phase (003230).²⁹ This meeting involved APC partner network representatives, development information providers and media networks, APC Women's Program in Africa representatives, partner institutions and donor agencies—including IDRC. The primary objective of the meeting was to develop an action framework and coordinated strategies to address the following:

- mobilization of existing knowledge about development networking in Africa;
- building the capacity of information providers to develop and make local information resources available;
- building strategic partnerships between service providers and information content providers;
- building the institutional capacity of development service providers to meet the needs of their constituencies;
- implementation of Regional Help Desks; and
- providing an opportunity for partner institutions (e.g., IDRC – Acacia and USAID AfricaLink) and APC partner networks in Africa to exchange perspectives, plans and experiences.

During this same phase of increasing commercial ICT pressure, IDRC also provided over CAD\$120,000 through APC member Web Networks to “contribute to long-term operational sustainability of NGO information and communication service providers by developing business planning models which bring together the best of private sector and civil society practice in the delivery of online services.” The Strengthening NGO ISPs project (aka, APC Mission Driven Business Planning Project, co-financed by the Ford Foundation) aimed to create resources and transfer skills that would help community networks develop creative approaches to sustainable service delivery. It also aimed to take the best ideas from both the for-profit and non-profit worlds and combine them into a useful NGO ISP strategy toolkit.³⁰ In order to provide an indication of the “business issues” faced by APC members and to gather lessons learned, the project included a major case study component. This component included a historical overview of the issues faced by APC members as well as a “snapshot” of the experiences of eight APC members. The informal circulation of the case studies gave APC members a chance to learn from each

²⁹ IDRC. APC Africa Strategy Development Meeting Report, 8–11 February 1997.
<http://idrinfo.idrc.ca/archive/corpdocs/108358/op-apc.htm>

³⁰ Surman, Mark. Strengthening NGO ISPs: The Business of Bringing Civil Society Online (004124). Final Project Report.

other's experiences. Through the two workshops with APC members in Latin America and one with the APC Council, APC discovered that in addition to strategic planning support, there was a strong demand for support in more "practical" areas like finance management and day-to-day operational management. Building on the momentum of workshops funded through this project, a number of other regional workshops—primarily funded by the Open Society Institute (OSI)—were developed and delivered using the *Business Planning Toolkit* as a foundation. And, the facilitated session with the APC Board in May 1999 resulted in a strategic plan focused on activities required to meet the Secretariat's goals in five broad areas: membership; revenue generation; public profile; products and services; and organization.

Formal IDRC support for APC institutional strengthening lapsed for several years as each organization sought to implement needed organizational changes and to focus on thematic project-oriented activities. By late 2004, IDRC became concerned that it was stretching APC too far by asking it to administer several large new projects. As an IDRC Project Officer notes, "Here was an institution we often asked to come to bat for us to manage different programs and projects. But, we knew that they had very little core support and were thin administratively. We didn't want to be the ones causing their demise; you can't build an organization on an overhead of 10 per cent of direct costs." Using the model of an institutional strengthening grant from the IDRC Vice-President's office to the Association of African Universities (AAU), Elder and Steve Song received permission to provide an "institutional

strengthening" grant from Acacia to APC in order to provide a form of core support. With these funds, APC began a process of staff

Project Title:	Capacity Building and Institutional Support for the APC (INSPRO)
IDRC Project #:	102899
Project Duration:	February 2005 – February 2008
Total IDRC Funds:	CAD\$498,000

training, financial systems upgrading, and project management tool building. It also set up funds for more regular in-person management team meetings and established a fund for APC members to travel to learn from one another. As important, the institutional strengthening project fostered a stronger relationship among Esterhuysen, the Africa Regional Controller, Lee Kirkham, and Elder on their mutual interests in organizational management and capacity building.

As one of the only explicit institutional capacity-building projects between IDRC and APC, there is ample room to learn about how this more direct approach has worked:

- *Need for more engagement and mentoring on organizational capacity during the planning phase* – The INSPRO project came together very quickly due to the availability of end-of-year funding. The APC Finance Manager and Manager of the SUCB Program wrote the proposal in less than two weeks while Esterhuysen was in Latin America. Fortunately, the organization had had internal conversations about institutional capacity needs, so they had something to start with. However, there was no rigorous needs assessment process to confirm that the proposal reflected current priorities. Lacking an organizational assessment framework, the initial proposal and activities focused too strongly on the development of individual staff capacities rather than

organizational systems. After a period of initial implementation, APC reoriented the project to focus on more systemic information sharing challenges as well as dealing with issues in its outdated financial management system. IDRC's PO in charge of the project admits, "If I were to redo INSPRO, I would do it quite differently. I would continue to let them decide their key priorities, but I would give them more information on organizational assessment frameworks and activities."

- *Need to differentiate between core funding and institutional capacity building* – A number of IDRC interviewees referred to the INSPRO project as a mechanism for providing core funding to APC in order to help it grow administratively to meet the challenges of the larger complement of projects and staff it was now juggling. However, there did not appear to be recognition that institutional capacity building requires staff time to develop and implement systems and procedures. This is intrinsically different than the types of activities and staff time one would fund from a core support grant. Core funding usually supports the basic infrastructure of an organization, allowing it the stability to maintain a foundational level of activity regardless of the ebb and flow of project funding. This does not usually include change processes. Both core funding and institutional capacity-building funding are necessary for maturing organizations, but should be developed and supported differently.
- *Need to differentiate between fundamental institutional capacity and problems with specific projects* – The institutional grant to APC came at a time of conflict between IDRC and APC over two research projects (GRACE and Wireless, see below). There was some hope that this grant would build the capacity of the organization in such a way that the challenges faced in these projects would be addressed. However, a review of these two projects was not built into the design of the INSPRO funding. Given this, the underlying value conflicts—and capacities needed to manage them—were not addressed. Even with the improved systems which INSPRO has fostered, those projects would likely encounter the same problems if implemented today.
- *APC greatly appreciates the opportunity to discuss organizational management issues with IDRC colleagues* – Prior to the development of the INSPRO project, APC staff had engaged in dialogues with Elder regarding institutional management issues, valuing his MBA background and insights. When part way into the project implementation Elder moved to a new position within IDRC and had to reassign his projects, APC adopted the African Regional Controller as their new Project Officer since they valued his contributions to the project.

In addition to the INSPRO project with IDRC, in early 2005, APC began to engage again with Bellanet on a joint project on strengthening African networks. The organizations strategically selected the APC African Women's Network (AAW) as one of the four focus research networks for the project. Through Harambee, the AAW has been able to conduct a circle of interviews (members interviewing each other) about networking. This sharing of responsibilities has catalyzed collegiality and a sense of belonging within the network, even in advance of the analysis and publication of research results. The online skills audit conducted within the AAW will also provide useful information upon which to build future networking strategies in the region.

5.2 APC Institutional Capacities

For the purposes of this case study, the McKinsey Capacity Assessment Framework³¹ has been selected as the primary framework for organizing observations regarding APC's organizational capacities. In partnership with Venture Philanthropy Partners and in collaboration with several other philanthropic organizations and sector experts, McKinsey & Company developed a definition of non-profit organizational "capacity" as well as an easy-to-use tool for assessing it. The framework is based on seven closely interrelated elements: aspirations; strategies; organizational skills; human resources; systems and infrastructure; organizational structure; and culture.³²



Figure 7: Seven Elements of Non-profit Capacity

In February 2006, APC used the McKinsey Grid to undertake a retrospective self-assessment from 2002 to 2005 for the Ford Foundation (for results grid, see Appendix 6). The exercise was done by APC managers as individuals and then compiled by the operations manager. As such, it represents a composite of individual managers' responses, rather than a team assessment. While this assessment does not cover the entire period of the case study, it does give some indication of the perceived areas of concern and improvement within the organization.

While this tool is not one that IDRC has promoted or used in its relationship with APC, it is the *only* comprehensive framework against which APC has a documented self-assessment. As such, it is the easiest framework for organizing both internal and external observations regarding APC's organizational capacity.

³¹ McKinsey & Company. "Effective Capacity Building in Nonprofit Organizations." Venture Philanthropy Partners, 2001 <http://venturephilanthropypartners.org/learning/reports/capacity/capacity.html>

³² McKinsey and Company. "Seven Elements of Nonprofit Capacity" <http://venturephilanthropypartners.org/learning/reports/capacity/elements.pdf>

Each of the following sections provides a brief definition of the capacity element according to the McKinsey Grid, followed by a summary of the evolution of this capacity area within APC, and observations by case study key informants on APC strengths and weaknesses in this area. Finally, possible IDRC contributions to this area of organizational capacity are highlighted in textboxes.

5.2.1 Aspirations

Non-profits need to spend time and effort evaluating and articulating their aspirations. Aspirations inspire staff, volunteers and donors. They define what an organization will do—and won't do. They help define an organization's overall approach and set priorities for action. They are a basis for strategy, which in turn defines the necessary organizational skills that can be delivered only with the proper design of human resources, systems, and organizational structure. In short, aspirations drive everything.

In preparation for legal independence, in 1997 the APC Council approved a new mission statement which continues to serve the network today.

The APC Mission:

“The Association for Progressive Communications is a global network of civil society organisations whose mission is to empower and support organisations, social movements and individuals in and through the use of information and communication technologies to build strategic communities and initiatives for the purpose of making meaningful contributions to equitable human development, social justice, participatory political processes and environmental sustainability.”

In addition, in 2001 as part of the monitoring and evaluation of implementation of APC's strategic action plan, the Board approved the creation of a vision statement.

The APC Vision:

“A world in which all people have easy, equal and affordable access to the creative potential of ICTs to improve their lives and create more democratic and egalitarian societies.”

These aspirational declarations have proven bold and robust enough to weather extraordinary change and development in the field of ICT4D. They have also proven flexible enough to enable significant shifts in goals as APC evolved from primarily a member-services network to a more complex organization able to lead research and advocacy efforts. The mission and vision continue to challenge APC and its partners, and to attract outstanding staff and members.

IDRC Contribution:

IDRC support for the February 1997 APC Africa Strategy Meeting as part of the Acacia Preparatory Phase provided a unique opportunity for that region to influence the character of APC as it headed towards legal independence. The spirit of the African consultation likely influenced staff as they drafted the mission, vision and goal documents for consideration by the APC Council meeting occurring three months later.

5.2.2 Strategies

Strategy represents an organization's means for reaching its aspirations. Optimally, organizations will implement strategies that are coherent, well integrated, and linked directly to an organization's major goals. More than simply the sum of an organization's activities, well-conceived strategies should build on a non-profit's core competencies, allocate resources to priorities and help delineate its unique point of differentiation.

APC's overall strategy, programming and funding model have all evolved considerably since 1996. The basis for these changes was laid at the 1997 Council meeting when the network acknowledged that it needed to broaden its focus to embracing the emerging ICT4D movement in a more holistic way. This led to the changes in 2000 which opened up APC membership to non-ISPs and abolished the one-member-per-country rule. The 1997 Council meeting also began the process of defining program areas to guide the development and management of new projects. Of the six initial program areas (four functional and two cross-cutting), three survived and evolved into the present areas adopted in 2002. Through the WSIS process from 2002 to 2005, these programs became increasing well-planned, well-managed, and well-integrated. The 2000–2003 strategic action plan was also important for its establishment of APC Key Result Areas (KRAs) for APC as a whole, as well as for each of its programs. These performance targets have helped APC to maintain focus through the resulting growth.

The funding model for APC changed significantly through these transitions. With legal independence in 1998, it became easier for APC to access project grant funding and to significantly increase the amount of revenues handled. From 1999 onwards, this shifted the financing emphasis for the Secretariat from membership dues to international projects. Core funding from a number of donors has also made APC significantly more stable for the foreseeable future, particularly with regard to staffing, and certainly up to and including 2008.³³

IDRC Contribution:

The Strengthening NGO ISPs project (co-financed by IDRC and Ford) coincided with the revitalization and reorientation of the APC network in the wake of the boom in commercial ISPs. The facilitated session with the APC Council enabled members to understand what would be needed for the APC Secretariat to play a stronger leadership role in achieving the APC mission and vision. While many of the results of this session were not implemented, it at least created the intellectual space within which a new Executive Director could initiate significant changes in the following years. Additionally, support for the WNSP Fund Leveraging Strategy helped to foster discussions within the APC regarding the viability of a mixed services-grant model for organizational funding.

5.2.3 Organizational Skills

For many high-performing non-profits, the most important component of the value chain is the process through which they develop, implement, fund and measure programs. Crafting a successful

³³ IDRC. APC Institutional Profile and Admin Risk Assessment. 30 May 2006.

process—one that increases social impact—draws on the full range of an organization’s skills, from strategic planning to marketing and fundraising to program development and execution.

Following its legal independence, APC had to quickly build organizational skills such as financial planning, operational planning and human resources planning. These capacity areas complemented existing expertise in strategic planning, the development of partnerships, communications and some fundraising. Without these skills, APC could not have survived the transition to independence and existed beyond a year or two.

Perhaps the best documented area of organizational skills development for APC has been the evolution of their efforts around performance measurement. As the WNSP developed GEM from 1999 on, APC became increasingly aware of different approaches to evaluation. As the Women’s Network began to share its knowledge with other organizations, it also worked hard to spread evaluative thinking skills throughout APC as well.

The stabilization of program areas in 2002 and the adoption of KRAs helped to drive planning and performance management down to the program level; however, it was difficult to predict the level of funding and staffing growth which occurred in the following years. To some degree, this was likely unplanned growth which stretched the organizations more fundamental capacities (human resources, systems and infrastructure, and organizational structure) to their limits.

Three additional areas of organizational skills received additional comment from case study interviewees, shedding light on the challenges and opportunities of unanticipated strong growth:

- Legal and liability matters – Of all capacity areas, APC staff consistently rated the management of legal and liability matters as the lowest (1–2). While the organization has a solid legal base for the organization as a 501(c)3 incorporated charity in the United States, and its bylaws are currently under review, it has had to undertake considerable effort over the years to determine what country’s laws are applicable in a wide variety of contracting situations. In 2005, APC hired a California-based law firm specializing in non-profits on a retainer to assist with the reworking of the bylaws and to review APC contract templates.
- Human resources planning – APC has struggled over the decade to match work with available staff. In order to find qualified people to work on new contracts, the organization has increasingly relied on an ever-expanding number of staff working on a part-time basis. At present most APC staff that work part time do so because they choose to. This is a trend in the workplace, particularly among younger people who want to divide their time between being activists, pursuing non-work interests, etc. Although this human resources model minimizes financial risk for the organization and maximizes skills and regional bases, it may not be a sustainable model. Institutionally, recruiting, orienting and managing part-time staff requires the same amount of effort as managing full-time staff. And, as staff increasingly work on multiple projects and project teams, conflicting deadlines—and deadlines from other

employers—are becoming challenging to manage. Under such conditions, managing the potential for staff burnout is a constant concern.

- Ability to develop and nurture partnerships and alliances – One of the most remarkable things APC has done has been networking and finding partners to walk with them. APC is constantly reaching out and building new nets of people. As another APC consultant observed, “One of their greatest strengths is their ability to mobilize and energize and keep involved a significant number of organizations (and the individuals within them) across countries that are very different. And they unite them in support of ‘progressive’ goals in what can be a sector that is not particularly progressive.”

IDRC Contribution:

IDRC’s contribution to this capacity area has largely related to the area of performance measurement. The IDRC EU discussed and shared elements of their own evaluation system, culture, and approach with APC over the years. IDRC has also invited WSNP colleagues to evaluation capacity development events so as to build their skills in this area (e.g., Chat Garcia Ramilo to IPDET 2007; Dafne Plou to the OM Users’ Workshop in Peru in 2005; and Jenny Radloff to the African Evaluation Association meeting in South Africa).

In addition, IDRC has contributed to “monitoring of landscape” and “partnerships and alliances developing and nurturing.” In all aspects of the relationship (project funder, project collaborator, strategic partner and strategic ally), IDRC staff have shared their perspectives on trends in ICT4D and sought to facilitate relationships between APC and other IDRC partners.

5.2.4 Human Resources

People—professional staff, volunteers, Board members—are the lifeblood of any non-profit organization. An organization’s human resources represent the collective capabilities and experiences of its people, and yet non-profit organizations not only are reluctant to manage talent actively (especially compared to the private sector) but they also tend to undervalue their people. Yet, when organizations succeed in attracting talented people and unleashing their full potential, good things happen.

The human resources basis for APC expanded exponentially over the decade, with an increase in staff from one to 29 individuals and a growth in network membership from 22 to nearly 50 organizations.

In order to keep up with this rapid growth, a great deal has been asked of the APC governance bodies over the years (Council, Board and Chair). While the individuals serving on the Board have been extremely committed to APC, it has been difficult for APC management staff to ensure that Board members take the time required to read and understand the nuances of decisions presented to them. It also has traditionally been difficult for Board members to “change hats” from being APC members to being Board members with a perspective on what is best for the organization as whole. As the IDRC’s institutional risk assessment in 2005 observes, “There continue to be issues about the governance

structures of this member organization. Existing members are reluctant to change and the Board does not necessarily reflect the range of expertise that APC now needs; past attempts to introduce non-member representation at the Board level have been squashed.”³⁴

At the level of the Executive Director and senior management team, APC has a strong history of passionate, committed and effective leadership. APC has attracted and cultivated a talented pool of outstanding managers who know what is needed in the ICT4D field. As one former IDRC staff member noted, “What guidance could you give?? They are the pioneers who know their niche and where they should focus their attention.” Nevertheless, APC’s growth did require the establishment of more formal relationships within the management team in order to ensure their effectiveness. With the formal establishment of the program and management areas in 2002, APC gained its first formal management team.

In terms of staffing overall, it wasn’t until 2005 that APC staff felt that they had adequate staffing levels and diversity of skills to accomplish the work at hand. Operating as a virtual organization, APC seeks out individuals through its networks and partners who are good independent workers, who get things done. Having members in different regions doing different ICT-based work contributes to APC’s sustainability in terms of ensuring that APC’s work remains relevant to different contexts and groundbreaking. The organization spends a lot of time focusing on the diversity of the team and has a broad second layer of people that it works with on particular types of projects or in certain regions. The fact that APC allows its staff to live in their own countries means that the staff bring with them grounded and “localized” understanding to the overall work that APC does. However, this staffing model lends the impression to many outsiders and donors that APC is simply a loose association of consultants. As one donor commented, “I have less of an impression of them as an organization than of individuals working in an organization. It’s kind of like the Wizard of Oz; I have no idea what’s behind the curtain. It’s a real challenge of their virtuality.”

IDRC Contribution:

IDRC has been one of the largest APC funders over the past 10 years, enabling an increase in the organization’s staffing levels.

5.2.5 Systems and Infrastructure

Systems are the processes, both formal and informal, by which the organization functions—in short, how things work. Non-profit systems can be complex, even mystifying, especially in relation to managing decisions, knowledge and people. Infrastructure, meanwhile, describes the assets that support the organization, both physical and technological.

As a virtual organization, systems and infrastructure take on an added importance for APC. Lacking a physical infrastructure of offices and organization-owned assets, APC has had to compensate by creating a strong technological infrastructure to underpin its operations. APC relies on a continuous use of e-mail, phone calls, instant messaging, its public Web sites and its Intranet (including wikis and online databases) to enable its virtual teams to collaborate on projects around the world. Given that APC staff members live in different countries, this

³⁴ IDRC. APC Institutional Profile and Admin Risk Assessment. 12 May 2005.

means that as an organization APC has a realistic view of how ICTs can be strategically (even creatively) used in different contexts. Staff wish, however, that their use of databases and management reporting systems were even stronger in order to offset the challenges of operating virtually.

APC has needed to invest considerable resources in developing systems for decision-making, documentation and information management that can be implemented virtually—as well as providing virtual training and enforcement of these systems and policies. APC staff estimate that the additional overhead of doing the development and implementation of these systems with a virtual network has been around 50–70 per cent.³⁵ Systems development began in earnest in 2001 with the development and maintenance of human resource, financial and knowledge management systems to support the growing organization. However, in 2005, a complete revamp of systems was initiated with support by IDRC through the INSPRO project.

APC has paid careful attention to human resource management. The 1998 APC Handbook contained the organization's first rudimentary human resources policies. In November 2000, the organization created a more elaborate human resources policy manual. By the end of 2006, APC was up to Version 9 of the highly detailed document. Dealing with a wide variety of topics³⁶—including progressive policies on gender and HIV/AIDS status—the policy manual provides clear principles and guidance for the fair treatment of all staff.

Staff compensation models have changed over the decades. With a small staff and a start-up orientation in the early years, APC's salaries were low and lacking in differentiation. However, APC's first Executive Director (ED) anticipated and noticed that as early staff got older and started to have kids, they needed to have greater income to support their families. Farwell states, "Those early financial discussions were hard for people. We wanted to keep good staff, but as life circumstances changed, we needed structures to change."³⁷ Today's APC staff remuneration principles and model took three years to negotiate with staff and Council (2000–2003). It is based on five clear categories of positions, with post adjustments (PA) designed to compensate for the differences in living costs to provide the same purchasing power for staff in various countries. APC uses the PA factors that are used by the United Nations (UN) and developed by the International Civil Service Commission.³⁸

Hiring and orienting new staff is a difficult process for APC. When the organization budgets for a salary, it may take up to six months for recruitment and selection. Working for APC tends to incorporate a strong element of being plunged into the deep end, working from home or another office. It's sink or swim with tight timelines and high levels of responsibility. APC has found it most efficient to recruit new staff from its extensive networks of members and partners on a part-time cost-shared basis. This helps to verify the value orientation of the new recruit and provides a context for their day-to-day work

³⁵ APC. INSPRO Team. 6 August 2007. Interview.

³⁶ Key sections of the HR Policy Manual deal with: Hiring processes, hours of work, leave policies, notice periods, no smoking policies, other business interests, consultancies, HIV/AIDS, internships, remuneration, performance management, disciplinary code and procedure, grievance procedure, advances on salary, training and development, contract of employee template, benefits and gender policy.

³⁷ Farwell, Edie. 7 September 2007. Interview.

³⁸ APC. APC Human Resources Manual v.8. March 2006.

environment. Unfortunately, this also opens APC to criticisms that they do not bring in fresh people from the outside with fresh opinions often enough.

In terms of staff development, APC does not send people off to courses on a regular basis. From its experience, that approach has not added much value to the individual or to the organization. In addition, it can be a struggle for an organization like APC to cover the workload of a person on course. Work still has to go on if a staff member goes for staff development, and the ability to handover when necessary can be impeded if competencies differ greatly among team members within a particular program. Most staff capacity building is based on mentoring and teaming up more and less experienced staff for participation in advocacy events.

APC's financial management systems and situation improved dramatically from 2003 to 2006. In particular, the INSPRO project enabled the introduction of a new financial management system with improved online functionality. This system has raised the awareness of all staff of basic cost code centres and general financial education. With the introduction of standardized budget templates and checklists around event management, these systems continue to improve.

Knowledge management systems have also been improved through the INSPRO project. The APC Intranet was split into two platforms: one for project management systems; and one to access a shared calendar and document library. The Intranet revamp, however, was paused as staff decided to redesign the public Web site, including more information that had previously been considered internal (e.g., completed donor reports). The team also needed to decide how best to incorporate wikis into the Intranet since staff were increasingly using these on projects. They needed to step back to draw on strengths of each tool and figure out how to manage the interactions between them.³⁹ Ultimately, the goal is to improve the data and information flows between project and management teams, as well as to ensure that lessons learned on projects are incorporated into new efforts. For example, APC staff acknowledge that in the past there was no conversation between the APC Prizes, Genardis small grants and Harambee network research managers on tools and processes to manage the process of collecting and selecting applications. Each has faced challenges in verifying information submitted, but have not had the opportunity to share these learnings with each other. Things have improved somewhat since the advent of management team meetings, with increased communications between the WNSP and Prizes teams. However, virtual systems can help to backstop these in-person meetings.

IDRC Contribution:

The INSPRO project has focused solidly at this level of organizational capacity since 2005. Contributions to the human, financial and knowledge management systems of the organization are enabling the organization to survive with a virtual largely part-time staff of nearly 30 individuals around the world.

³⁹ APC. INSPRO Team. 6 August 2007. Interview.

5.2.6 Organizational Structure

An organization will never achieve institutional alignment unless its organizational design supports not only systems and human resources, but also its aspirations, strategies and skills.

At the Board governance level, APC has undergone significant transitions. In 1997, it established a Chair and Executive Board of Council in order to facilitate strategic decision-making and oversight for the network. It also enabled the network to maintain an organization-based Council with each member appointing two representatives, while permitting an individual-based Executive Board able to fulfil its requirements under U.S. charities laws. As the network grew, decision-making powers have been shifted increasingly from the full Council to the Executive Board to staff. This has helped to reduce the challenges faced in bringing new Council members up to the level of knowledge required to make informed strategic decisions consistent with the network's history and culture.

At the staff level, organizational design, inter-functional coordination and individual job design have improved somewhat between 2002 and 2005. APC staff are clustered into teams, with a "job profile" system providing a basic template for expectations. These individual job profiles can be adjusted according to need, although more might be done to communicate such adjustments more effectively to other team members. The use of *Inside APC*, however, has helped greatly to keep all staff and the network informed of staff changes.

IDRC Contribution:

There is no evidence that IDRC provided input to the APC on its organizational structure from 1996 to 2006.

5.2.7 Culture

Culture holds the organization together, an important reason why non-profit employees are willing to accept relatively low pay and work so hard. There are two aspects of an organization's culture: its core values, beliefs, and behaviour norms, on the one hand; and its performance orientation, or "performance culture" on the other.

APC's core values and behaviour norms have remained remarkably stable, with a deep commitment to social change and innovation embedded within the organization's culture. As noted in the 2001 APC Vision and Strategy Discussion Document, "One aspect of the APC that has not changed significantly in the last 11 years is its values. It is these values that inspired our founders, and that still keep us together."

Despite the organizational growth, there is not much formality within the culture and staff tend to relate as equals. Coupled with Esterhuysen's no-nonsense management style, staff need to be able and willing to speak out on issues of importance to them. Some personalities may not be able to achieve that, but the overarching culture encourages it.

This commitment to equality has an external component as well. In comparison to some other ICT4D organizations, APC encourages everyone to play a role in representing APC. This leads not only to improved cost effectiveness of operations (shorter trips with closest

staff selected to participate), but also opportunities for in-action capacity building as staff speak on behalf of the network and organization. APC has found that overall staff tend to be on target on values, although the quality of the presentation and dialogue is variable. While sometimes new or more junior staff may miss broader priorities, APC only feels strongly about it if it's someone from the management team who should be conveying an overall picture of the organization. This belief in and commitment to its staff is likely one of the reasons why it has a low rate of turnover.

In terms of its culture, the organization has been gradually increasing its formal performance orientation since 2001 when the first performance management review policies and procedures were approved by APC Council. Underlying this, however, is a much longer results-orientation reflective of its history as a small organization with big aspirations. In a small organization, there is simply nowhere to hide. Lack of performance is immediately obvious and has direct impact on one's colleagues. As APC has grown, it has somehow managed to maintain this small organization accountability within teams—and most, importantly, within the senior management team.

Values that are important in the APC (APC, 2001)

- local initiative, decentralized action, local ownership;
- open content: sharing of information in the public domain;
- open source application development: sharing tools in the public domain;
- social equality and gender equality;
- having a strong Southern base and orientation;
- creating and strengthening an international membership community for joint action and learning;
- peer support and community;
- collaboration and partnerships;
- inclusiveness and diversity;
- creativity and capacity building;
- democratic, accountable and transparent governance, at international, national and institutional levels;
- appropriate and affordable ICT solutions; and
- freedom of communications and information.

IDRC Contribution:

There is no evidence regarding IDRC's contributions to the APC's culture from 1996-2006. However, the two organizations share many cultural values with likely positive feedback loops between them, reinforcing these values.

6 Strengthening APC's Organizational Research Capacity

One of the greatest areas of contention between APC and IDRC towards the end of the case study period has been whether or not APC has the institutional interest and capacity to undertake more traditional peer-reviewed ICT4D research—in order to achieve its mission, and in order to help IDRC achieve its mission. While APC had demonstrated the ability to undertake advocacy work based on research developed by other groups, it was unclear whether they saw themselves as large-scale research project managers themselves. As one IDRC PI Manager emphasizes, “We still see APC as an important partner on communications and influence. If they turned around and said they wanted to be more credible in the research arena, we'd help them. APC may not have understood how big of a shift we are doing, how serious we are about producing credible research.” How this contentious issue is resolved will have large implications for the intensity of the relationship

between the two organizations in the future. Given that the notion of ICT4D research has been—and continues to be—politically charged within IDRC itself, the resolution of issue will likely require not only changes in APC, but within IDRC as well.

6.1 *Evolution of ICT4D Research and Research Capacities in IDRC*

Described as a “venture capitalist of development ideas,” IDRC is proud of its reputation for taking risks and working with innovators. However, its approach to venture capitalism in a given field has changed over time. At the crossroads of the rapid changes in the ICT4D field and the institutional changes in IDRC, has been the evolution of thoughts regarding the nature of ICT4D research at IDRC.

ICT programming at IDRC in the 1980s and early 1990s was initially developed as action or applied research—helping organizations to be capable of supporting development. Early ICT4D staff remember their work as being “a hard sell with the other divisions who were claiming it wasn’t *research* but merely *support* to research” or simply not considered by their peers as not “*real* research.” The focus on action research continued through the late ’90s in the first phase of Acacia, which sought to “try things, see if they worked, and then report back.”

Following the development of program areas and hiring of Fuchs as director in 2001, the ICT4D area stopped being an experimentation project and began to develop more of a research element beyond action research. Ironically, this occurred despite Fuchs’ passionate commitment to “research which is close to and part of the action” and to “demo or die!” The shift towards more formalized research was also driven in part by the PA’s increasing orientation towards policy influence. This was of extreme importance since access barriers were perceived as being largely policy issues in regions such as Africa. Other development partners and donors were also increasingly asking IDRC, “where is the evidence regarding ICT4D?” IDRC began to more systematically define the development entry points (e.g., education, agriculture, governance) it was building a body of evidence around through its PIs. The era of supporting individual action research projects and case studies at IDRC was drawing to a close, in favour of broader more rigorous research exercises on ICT’s impact on key development sectors on a regional basis. In 2003, Song went so far as to decide that within the African region 80 per cent of all ICT4D funding had to be part of a larger thematic picture, linking IDRC Program Officers together in larger projects (this has little to do with research and more to do with ensuring projects weren’t taking place in isolation as had been the case previously).

These shifts in emphasis have brought about accompanying changes in IDRC’s ICT4D partners around the world. As one Program Initiative manager indicates, “In the past we used to attend many meetings where ICT4D people went. Now we’re mostly going to meetings with doctors, teachers and engineers—dealing with development problems. We still relate with the ICT community to bring in new technologies and ways of thinking. But most partners are working on health, education, governance, the informal economy and so on. We’ve shifted from implementation to knowledge development.” In another region, a Program Officer notes that “we have built our research domain so much, getting supply side statistics and whether policy-makers are achieving their stated objectives... Our partners stretch from the pure academics down to implementers and activists. We’re working with

industrial development institutes and universities.” Furthermore, as the number of organizations involved in ICT4D has grown, IDRC has shifted its efforts towards working with national and regional organizations serving as hubs for ICT4D research and research capacity building. Some believe that in the next phase of IDRC’s ICT4D work, “We are funding intellects who are out to build a body of knowledge in this field... Ultimately the best partners we could have are research institutes and universities since their primary interest is in developing research capacities.”

However, not all IDRC staff believe that the types of research and research partners needs to be narrowed so dramatically. As another IDRC staffer observes:

We call all knowledge activity that’s evidence-based research. Research for development brings in a whole other dimension. If we had a rigid definition, we would lose a large portion of our project partners regardless of what type they are. If we went more towards only supporting research capacity (e.g., design, methods), we would lose all our advocacy, farmer-led and participatory research. If we went the other way, we would lose our modelling and academic work. Diversity is IDRC’s strength.

Furthermore, the same individual noted that IDRC staff tend to forget that other program areas have gone through the same type of maturation and shifts in research methodologies over the decades. Different research approaches have added greatly to IDRC’s understanding of development and development change since its founding.

Fortunately, IDRC’s corporate understanding of research capacity extends beyond the selection and implementation of research methodologies. As outlined by Anne Bernard in 2005, IDRC has sought to build a wide variety of mutually reinforcing research capacities in its partners (See Appendix 8 for a complete description). These include:⁴⁰

- **conducting** research;
- **managing** research activities and organizations;
- **conceiving, generating and sustaining** research with respect to a sector/theme or country/regional priorities;
- **using/applying** research outcomes in policy and/or practice; and
- **mobilizing** research-related policy and program “systems” thinking.

The final two capacity areas are extremely important with respect to the APC case study as they concern the capacities necessary for research dissemination and systemic advocacy. However, these capacity areas are frequently overlooked by many IDRC staff debating the nature and focus of ICT4D research. Many seem to assume that it is impossible to undertake these activities without first possessing the individual and organizational capacities to conduct and manage research. Other staff, however, have a more nuanced approach and recognize that it will likely be necessary to work with a variety of organizations—some with stronger capacities to conduct research and others with stronger research dissemination and advocacy capacities.

6.2 APC’s Research Capacity

In general, APC would argue that it has been involved in research since the early 1990s. APC recognizes that they need evidence to support their positions and to influence change, that research increases their credibility as an organization. As the WNSP team observed, “The

⁴⁰ Bernard, Anne. Mapping Capacity Development in IDRC. IDRC: Ottawa, 2005.

first gender and IT proposal to IDRC had an explicit research element because we had a lot of questions. We needed to find out about the area we were working in.”⁴¹ IDRC’s support for these activities enabled APC to bridge into more explicit research processes and opportunities. As an APC staff member declares, “Having IDRC with a research orientation helps to locate those places where you can get the research and learning from the action. Having someone look over your shoulder and point out the opportunities... what a boon!”

As APC matured into a more advocacy-oriented role and began to develop larger funded projects, its research style evolved as well. From 1997 to 1998, APC began to engage in more explicit action research. This built upon APC’s qualitative orientation. IDRC staff have found that APC has tended to attract “social scientists who are more interested in the intangible aspects—things that are hard to quantify.... They are also more grounded in participatory and action research methods than most of the other organizations in the ICT4D field.... APC is good at identifying and working with people who are good researchers. Wherever they have not had the skills in house, they can identify and work with them.”

In addition to drawing on a vast pool of partners and consultants, APC has worked hard to engage its members in research. APC members have often called for the network to do more action research that they can be involved in, e.g., GISWatch and the ICT policy portal project, case studies and so on. Unfortunately, the research capacities among members are quite uneven. Collaborative action research projects have required quite a bit of active management of the research process and products in order to ensure quality. Often, the best way around these capacity differences has been for the APC project manager to provide detailed outlines and guidelines which clearly delineate expectations and mitigate differences—followed by the provision of support and mentoring. In the process of jointly implementing the project, research capacities get built among members. Simultaneously, the process of preparing those guidelines requires the APC staff to step up their thinking about what kinds of information are needed and how to organize that information.

The WSIS process provided an important opportunity for APC to undertake more structured and formal policy research. The three to four issue papers commissioned by APC between the 1st and 2nd phase of WSIS were very useful in getting people thinking about the issues. APC is proud of its successes in focusing on specific aspects of general issues—ones that are intractable in terms of finding a collective way forward, and provocative in their direction, (e.g., financing ICTD, interconnection costs, e-strategies, etc.)—in order to assist conflicting parties to come to a common ground upon which negotiations could be based. Even critics of APC’s research capacities concede that its policy-oriented work has been “thorough and to the point in its own way.”

In other areas—community networking and gender—the objectivity and quality of APC’s research has been called into question. One funder notes that they “do quite a lot of research and produce quite a lot of research papers. But they’re not always completely objective.” Similarly, a consultant observes, “They have become too uncritical of their own knowledge construction processes—too fast, too glib and too superficial. They need to transform

⁴¹ WNSP Team. 3 August 2007. Interview.

themselves or there will be other organizations with more depth, subtlety and understanding. It would be a pity.”

This is an important issue upon which the leadership of APC—particularly its ability to undertake strategic thinking, planning and management—appears to be called into question by IDRC. If, as some within IDRC believe, the future effectiveness of APC hinges upon its ability to provide evidence-based research for changes in policy and ICT investment, APC will need to transform itself again in order to prioritize these types of projects and skills within its staff. If, as others in IDRC and APC believe, the debate over “research” is simply a smokescreen for differences in ideology between the two organizations, then APC should stick with its established niche and continue to focus on ICT4D research dissemination and advocacy approaches within the development community.

6.3 Research Focuses

Research capacity-building between IDRC and APC has occurred to date solely within the context of funded projects. Within the field of Information and Communications Technologies for Development, IDRC and APC have focused their collaborations on a small number of discrete areas of mutual interest:

- women/gender and ICTs;
- community networking; and
- ICT policy.

Each of these fields evolved significantly between 1996 and 2006, leading to changes in direction and emphasis within each by both IDRC and APC. The sections below outline the areas of research collaboration between the two organizations and attempt to provide a sense of when and how APC’s research—and often institutional—capacities were built through issue-based collaboration.

Four projects (two gender; one community networking; and one ICT policy) have been reviewed in greater detail with their lessons learned presented in this section. The stories selected attempt to represent all thematic areas of the IDRC-APC relationship, but focus heavily on the project-based aspect of the relationship since this is better documented and has served as the focus of discussions and learning between the organizations. In terms of the timeframe covered, most of these stories are from the second period of the IDRC-APC relationship (2000–2006) since there is a greater depth of institutional memory within both organizations from which to draw.

6.3.1 Women/Gender

The longest standing and most strongly funded area of collaboration (CAD\$1.82 million) between IDRC and APC from 1996 to 2006 has been around the issues of women/gender and information technology. The depth of the relationship between the two organizations reflects both the importance of the issue, as well as the existence of structural units in the organization able to collaborate on both global and regional levels over the decade.

Key staff involved in the IDRC-APC relationship from 1996 to 2006 on women and gender have included:

- IDRC – David Balson, Gilles Cliche, Sarah Earl, Heloise Emdon and Remata Thioune.
- APC - Karen Banks, Chat Ramilo, Jenny Radloff and Cheekay Cinco.

The APC Women’s Networking Support Program (WNSP) emerged in 1993 as a response to convergent needs and demands from within the women’s movement. The 1995 United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women (also called the Beijing Women’s Conference) and the rapid development of international communications technologies were key factors which gave rise to the program’s beginning. By 2006, the APC Women’s Network had grown to include over 100 women from more than 35 countries. Members are individual women and women’s groups and organizations working in the field of gender and ICT and actively supporting women’s networking at both global and regional levels.

IDRC’s support has been crucial to the growth of the WNSP since its early days. As the former WNSP coordinator notes, “the single person we owe most thanks to” is David Balson at IDRC. When Banks and Sally Burch started talking in early 1994 about developing a plan to engage women in ICTs at the Beijing Women’s Conference, Banks suggested contacting IDRC through Balson whom she had met in 1992. IDRC provided a small (approx CAD\$1,000 grant) for Burch to attend a Beijing NGO committee meeting in New York. This opened the door for the development of the CAD\$240K Gender and IT Project (1995–1998) which provided critical resources for the Women’s Networking Support Program to expand its women’s networking and ICT training in Asia, Africa and Latin America as well as to undertake groundbreaking research on women’s use of ICTs.

Over the following decade, IDRC built on the general themes of this project and consolidated its support in three areas:

- building the WNSP as a network with the ability to impact both ICT policy and practice;
- developing a gender evaluation methodology; and
- highlighting the perspectives of African women and the impact of information technology on their lives and societies.

Building the WNSP as a network was an early focus of the APC-IDRC relationship. Through multiple projects, IDRC supported WNSP networking and training activities related to the Beijing and Beijing +5 Conferences, as well as ongoing activities between the conferences. These activities enabled the WNSP to establish itself as a credible network of experts and to begin to collaboratively identify Southern women’s concerns including: advocating gender-aware ICT policy within ICT decision-making bodies, and with women’s organizations; coordinating support to regional and national women’s networking initiatives; and operationalizing mentoring and support for women as workers in the ICT field.

One of the most important outcomes of the early WNSP-building activities was the emergence of a shared APC-IDRC interest in evaluating women’s involvement in ICT projects, as well as the impact of ICT policies and practices on women’s lives. Through the Lessons Learned project, APC developed an initial guide for analysing ICT initiatives using a Gender Evaluation Methodology (GEM). Through subsequent projects in collaboration with the IDRC Evaluation Unit and all of the ICT4D regional programs, the APC WNSP

produced innovative material and enhanced learning through the evaluation of 32 ICT projects spread over 25 countries in Africa, Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, and Latin America. The GEM results were shared through a practitioners networking meeting at APC's WNSP Global Gender and ICT Forum in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2004 and through a South Asian workshop in March 2006. IDRC's Pan Asia also hired the GEM Project Manager, Chat Ramilo, for consultancies on integrating gender into large IDRC projects in Asia.

Accompanying APC's institutional growth and with strong recommendations from the Evaluation Unit, IDRC's Acacia program began to approach the network in early 2004 about managing two new projects which it hoped would provide additional insights into the perspectives and roles of women and ICTs in Africa. Given the vitality of the APC African Women's Network since its founding in 1996, APC was interested in building upon the insights of its network of partners and members. In this context, APC agreed to manage the Gender Research in Africa into ICTs for Empowerment (GRACE) project as well as the second round of the GENARDIS small grants fund to address ICTs in Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries regarding Agriculture and Rural Development. This was followed by a contract to evaluate the first and second round of GENARDIS in order to provide recommendations to IDRC and its funding partners. While both projects initially seemed to provide opportunities for APC to provide both administrative and substantive leadership, APC ultimately pulled out of the GRACE project following a series of conflicts with the IDRC Program Officer and the consultant brought into the project as the research coordinator.

Working on gender and ICT issues has stretched APC's capacities to balance its organizational programming with a strong individual constituency. The APC WNSP functions as a network of women—separate from APC's membership—and their organizations who are actively involved in activities which promote, support, or facilitate women's access to, and use of, ICTs. The program works primarily in an online world. They engage in research, evaluation, training, information and support activities in the field of ICT policy, skills-sharing in the access and use of ICTs, and women's network-building.⁴² Given the broad scope of their work—and their virtual nature—APC as a whole has had to struggle to retain the network nature of the WNSP now that it has evolved into a fairly consolidated program. The GEM work also challenged the WNSP staff to embrace more rigorous methodologies for analysis than those with which APC had traditionally worked. To a large degree, GEM laid the foundation for APC to be viewed by IDRC as not only an excellent information dissemination mechanism, but also as a potential ICT4D research partner.

⁴² APC. About the Women's Networking Support Program. http://www.apcwomen.org/about_wnsp

6.3.2 Gender Evaluation Methodology (GEM)

Projects Duration:	July 1999 – July 2004; February 2006 – February 2007
Total IDRC Funds:	\$342,000 CAD (plus \$251,000 CAD from DFID, UNIFEM and UNDP)
IDRC Project #s:	004428, 100994, 102606, 103592

APC's Gender Evaluation Methodology (GEM) suite of projects has unfolded through a series of four IDRC-funded projects and an ongoing relationship with the Evaluation Unit on methodology. Through these four projects, the APC Women's Network developed a framework and methodology for evaluation of ICT initiatives. This has been a pioneering activity that is complex and requires several layers of translation of experiences and lessons into usable practical tools. The WNSP had to dig deep into resources within and outside the network to create all the building blocks of an evaluation approach that was consistent with WNSP's research principles, yet could still be communicated in plain language for users. The GEM approach was tested, revised and communicated through global and regional workshops.

The GEM projects have been the most successful thematic-oriented collaboration between IDRC and APC. They have helped to build APC's capacities on multiple levels:

- *They helped APC to evolve into a more externally-oriented project-based organization* – Early APC work was primarily focused on practical and immediate member needs (e.g., e-mail, cheap communications for activists). GEM was one of the first big projects where APC started doing things that were beyond the scope of being a technical services provider. As a former APC consultant observes, “It was a real fork in the road... If you look at the capacity trajectory, APC went from being an organization with strong technical capacities (e.g., optimizing when modems dialled which countries) to being an organization with the ability to manage complex, important and abstract projects... The upside to working on a project perspective is also that APC has had to rise to the standard of working with pathological IDRC administrators. APC has had to become a strong organization to manage that kind of money and those kinds of relationships.”
- *They introduced APC to more formal evaluation and research theory and methodologies* – GEM was APC's first introduction to formal evaluation theory and methodologies. In GEM Phase I (part of the Lessons Learned project), they did not have a theoretical foundation and the initial materials were of moderate to low quality. The Project Officer in charge, Gilles Cliche, quickly brought Sarah Earl from IDRC's Evaluation Unit into the project to provide methodological support and feedback. Earl's feedback and participation in GEM workshops over the years have greatly expanded the WNSP's appreciation of more academic research methodologies in the pursuit of social change. In particular, Earl points to the importance of APC's up-take of use-oriented evaluation and its advocacy of whichever design or method is most appropriate to the context. The exposure to formal theories and methodologies was expanded through support for the GEM coordinator to participate in international

trainings such as EVALTICA in 2000 on IDRC's emerging community-based ICT evaluation.

- *They expanded the number of APC's partners in strategic areas* – One of the areas which APC has lacked significant and sustained partnerships in was South Asia. This was a huge gap in APC's work as South Asia is one of the key spaces for ICT for Development. The GEM workshops in India contributed to APC's partnerships in the region. In the next phase of GEM, APC has invited participants from that workshop as key partners in developing adaptations of GEM for telecentres, localization rural ICT development and national policy advocacy. Similarly, the collaboration facilitated a partnership between APC and the PAN Localization project. This has contributed to APC's understanding of localization projects and it enriches APC work in ICTs.
- *They reinforced the ability of APC to interact with IDRC as a research peer, contributing to the corpus of IDRC's knowledge and practice* – The GEM collaboration was frequently cited throughout the case study process as having also contributed to IDRC's capacity, in that it is now applied in the development of many large ICT4D projects. Without GEM, it's not likely that IDRC would have had such an active consideration of gender in all ICT4D areas. Through supporting GEM, IDRC found itself in the position of having to "walk the talk." To assist it in its "walking," the ICT4D team has hired some WNSP members to act as GEM consultants in Southeast Asia and Latin America. Earl also acknowledges that the GEM has challenged her to rethink her own assumptions about the gender neutrality of IDRC's other flagship evaluation methodology—Outcome Mapping. Earl notes, "Outcome Mapping doesn't explicitly bring [gender] out. The GEM team helped me realize that. Maybe we do need to make it more explicit."⁴³

The GEM collaboration has benefited greatly from the multi-faceted support of IDRC's Evaluation Unit. Initially simply a collaborator on the GEM work, the Evaluation Unit eventually took over responsibility for GEM when the Program Officer in charge left IDRC. Concerned that GEM would be dropped due to institutional politics of the ICT4D team following Fuchs appointment, the PO wanted to ensure that the program continued on more neutral ground. The result of this shift, however, was not only the continuity of the GEM, but also a greater explicit focus on capacity building.

Since the Evaluation Unit works across the Centre to help staff and partners develop evaluations, they have developed a robust and multi-faceted way of providing support:

- They try to promote linkages with the global evaluation community. Partners are only going to be the best if they work with the best. They help partners access people and materials from the community.
- They support testing and learning by doing—do some conceptual work, then test, then refine and so on. Evaluation is both science and art. Unless you have the opportunity to press yourself on the science side and then on the people/art side, you don't fully understand how to do something.

⁴³ Earl, Sarah. IDRC. 6 September 2007. Interview.

- They try to always be there to answer any question or request, put partners in touch with people, and offer mentoring and coaching on an ongoing basis. They try to act as a resource on evaluation and research methods for IDRC partners regardless of whether the Centre has a project with them or not.
- They try to help support where partners are strong and challenge partners to be more rigorous, where they are weak.
- They put a lot of emphasis on dissemination and communications because evaluation methodology is nothing if it's not well-disseminated. They encourage quality—workshops, preparation of materials and communicating with the evaluation community not only the thematic ICT community

APC staff have been extremely thankful for the ongoing capacity development support:

IDRC has been such a valuable partner in the development of GEM. Aside from the financial support that IDRC has provided for this initiative, IDRC has also contributed to its own know-how and resource persons towards the development of the tool. This includes recommending appropriate partners for the development and promotion of GEM—which has resulted in a growth in APC partners.

6.3.3 Gender Research in Africa into ICTs for Empowerment (GRACE)

Project Duration:	1 April 2005 – 1 April 2007
IDRC Project #:	102508
Total Funds:	\$1,458,480 CAD (\$975,889 CAD to APC)

The GRACE project sought 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—the largest ever funded by the Acacia PI—comprised 15 sub-projects, reflecting 14 research sites in 12 countries and one meta research sub-project. An important focus of the overall project was to be capacity building. Researchers were given the opportunities to develop research capacity as well as capacity to use ICTs effectively. The project made provision for intensive training and ongoing mentoring and support, intending to integrate the research and the ICT aspects into a holistic capacity-building experience for the participants.

The collapse of APC's participation in the GRACE project was perhaps the largest lost opportunity for capacity building in its relationship with IDRC. While the explicit capacity-building elements of GRACE were focused on a network of African researchers, the project could have led to further building APC's capacity in the application of formal research methodologies. Unfortunately, the project was plagued by misunderstandings and value differences between IDRC, APC and an external consultant from the proposal development phase on. Each party had slightly different objectives which ultimately proved to be irreconcilable.

Despite the failure of the project partnership, however, the GRACE experience served as an important experience for APC and, if anything, strengthened its understanding of its own values, research style and capacity-building style. It also served to highlight differences with

IDRC regarding the nature of ICT4D research and the degree to which APC could or should conform to IDRC's expectations of research partners. Important learning emerging from the GRACE project included:

- *The potential pitfalls of IDRC arranged marriages on projects* – One of the fundamental challenges leading to the collapse of APC's participation in GRACE was their relationship with a research consultant brought into the project by IDRC. An IDRC Senior Program Officer initially invited the consultant to participate as a facilitator at an APC-hosted workshop for IDRC which brought together African researchers on gender and ICTs. While APC and the research participants were all very enthusiastic about the consultant's contributions to the workshop, issues began to crop up as APC tried to negotiate an acceptable contract with her.⁴⁴ The more the consultant and APC got to know each other, the more the conflict escalated. The project went into formal mediation between the three parties *before* the proposal was even submitted. While the relationship between IDRC and the consultant, IDRC and APC—and between APC and the activists it brought into GRACE—have largely survived, a great deal of tension arose through the project's triangular politics.
- *The importance of values in research project management* – Some of the most vehement conflicts between APC and the consultant involved deeply held values regarding capacity building. On the surface, these conflicts were about workshop locations, durations and activities; the number and location of research assistants to support the research director; and the treatment of individual researchers. However, underneath, these conflicts were about how best to respect the professionalism and growth of the African researchers involved in the project. Ironically, while both parties speak passionately about their commitment to the research network, their underlying values led them to very different approaches in achieving a common goal.
- *The need to recognize and reinforce partners' research capacities* – While the initial GRACE brainstorming meeting was entitled "GEM in a haystack," the GEM methodology was quickly sidelined as one of many tools which the researchers might make use of in their project. While no one at APC apparently felt any ill will at this, problems arose during the proposal development when APC felt there was little recognition of their substantive knowledge and research. Relegated to administration and ICT support, APC began to question their involvement in the project and what they would gain from it. Eventually they agreed on the participation of one APC staff member, Jenny Radloff, as a researcher in the project, undertaking an action research project on the use of ICTs in GRACE itself.
- *The differences in capacity-building styles between academic and practitioner research* – Another underlying conflict within the GRACE project revolved around how to structure the knowledge support and capacity building provided to the African researchers. As noted by an APC member, "Collaborative research processes... are probably more likely to happen in communities where there aren't deep levels of experience around

⁴⁴ Contracting conflicts ranged from salary level to clauses regarding whether the relationship was subject to U.S. laws as per the standard APC contract.

research. Part of the process of sharing is capacity building.... But ICT4D researchers in the academy are still caught up in a hierarchical paradigm. Those in the academy are very much caught up around protecting ideas, protecting copyright, caught up in paradigm that's about publishing a new idea." These ways of working are founded in different socio-political paradigms that are difficult to bridge. Given its expertise in electronic networking, APC enthusiastically began to create discussion spaces to support the formation of a virtual community of the researchers. APC staff looked forward to participating in the discussions and learning more about gender and ICT in Africa through these electronic spaces. However, the IDRC PO was not interested in the "standard electronic approach" and wanted to do something else—more like a virtual university. Unfortunately, this was not well communicated to APC and led to significant clashes between the APC team and the consultant over her desire to develop a more one-on-one professorial relationship with the researchers in order to protect the researchers' development processes. APC challenged the style and appropriateness of this approach with the consultant, as well as chafed at being locked out of participation in some of the researchers' discussion spaces.

- *The importance of seeking legal counsel in the preparation of international contracts* – Given the conflicts that emerged during the GRACE project, APC did not have a regular law firm. Instead it hired a California-based lawyer (given APC's legal incorporation there) as needed. Unfortunately, the creative commons clauses in the researcher contracts was not clearly spelled out, implying that APC was the copyright holder; contracts also included APC's standard clause about non-transferability. When APC pulled out of the project and all contracts were handed over to the consultant's firm, IDRC's lawyers flagged these problems. APC later hired a regular firm on retainer to review large contracts and to assist it with the revision of its bylaws.

Preoccupied by the constant conflict over project management and administration, GRACE was a missed opportunity for APC to learn more formal research methodologies from and with other African women.

6.3.4 *Community and Civil Society Networking*

APC members have always been on the cutting edge of assisting civil society organizations in their countries to gain access to information and communication technologies and to apply these technologies in their work. Following the rapid growth of commercial Internet Services Providers in the late 1990s, APC members in many countries began to reassess what community connectivity meant and what their role was in supporting civil society and local networks. At the international level, APC supported their members and partners by developing large multi-country initiatives to test community networking approaches and to document and share lessons learned.

From 1996 to 2006, IDRC supported APC with over CAD\$770,000 in funding to its community networking innovation through three key areas:

- community connectivity pilot projects and training;
- research and training on the strategic use of ICTs by civil society; and
- awards.

Key individuals involved in the IDRC-APC relationship from 1996 to 2006 on community networking have included:

- IDRC – Gilles Cliche, Adel el Zaim and Ben Petrazzini.
- APC – Ann Tothill, Anna Feldman, Maureen James, Sonia Jorge and Karen Higgs.

The IDRC-APC collaboration on community connectivity during the study period began with support (CAD\$245,000) provided from 1997 to 1999 to test, for the first time in LAC, the implementation of telecentres. The project examined two very different telecentre implementation contexts: that of isolated indigenous communities in the Amazon in Ecuador; and that of poor urban neighbourhoods in Bogota, Colombia. The project had a steep learning curve in Colombia where the technical challenge was not significant and where the local civil society organization could champion the process while having easy access to close by lead partner, Colnodo, also in Bogota. In Ecuador, the project was an almost total failure due to both ultra-low-cost technical choices made, as well as the linguistic and cultural challenges of working with Amazonian indigenous groups.⁴⁵

IDRC did not support further APC community connectivity projects again until 2004, when the Acacia Program approached APC to manage a CAD\$380,000 project to develop training materials on community wireless connectivity. In contrast to the earlier project with its strong hand-on element, this initiative focused primarily on gathering existing lessons learned from an international community of experts, packaging them into training materials and testing the materials through workshops in Africa. The project suffered from a misalignment of goals between IDRC and APC, as well the lack of a project manager with standing within the wireless community until very late in the project. However, the initiative did catalyze the development of an APC member-led wireless initiative in LAC.

APC has also been a strong IDRC partner on capacity-building initiatives seeking to strengthen civil society use of ICTs. In 1997, IDRC's Uganisha program began to develop free Internet training materials for use by IDRC staff and partners around the world. In 1998, Uganisha and Bellanet worked together to publish the book "From Workplace to Workspace" co-authored by Maureen James (then working for SANGONeT) and Canadian consultant Liz Rykert, expanding the depth of knowledge about using ICTs for collaborative work.⁴⁶ By 2000, the "ITrain" collection was transferred—along with Steve Song, its manager—to Bellanet, which began to solicit training materials from other partners and consultants. APC member SANGONeT continued to contribute Web site development training materials. When infoDev funded a large APC project to create an "online resource centre" of training materials and other resources to support civil society organizations in their use of ICTs, they decided to collaborate with Bellanet and other partners with similar projects. This was the genesis of the ITrainonline portal.

Similarly, in 2005 the Harambee project—jointly developed by APC, Bellanet and UNECA—began to conduct action research around successful technologies and processes for collaboration in Africa. Moving beyond technology, Harambee recognizes that the effectiveness of a network is heavily dependent on the milieu within which communications

⁴⁵ Community Networking Pilot Projects in Latin America (003219). Project Completion Report.

⁴⁶ James, Maureen and Liz Rykert. *From Workplace to Workspace: Using Email Lists to Work Together*. IDRC: Ottawa, 1998. http://archive.idrc.ca/books/848/index_e.html

and information and knowledge sharing occur. The extent to which networks in Africa can operate within ongoing collaborative frameworks will, to a significant degree, determine the nature and amount of the impact their activities have.⁴⁷ In addition to providing useful knowledge in their own right, these Bellanet-related activities bridged the gap between the two large community networking projects and developed the methods and approaches applied (and contested) in the wireless work.

From 1999 to 2006, IDRC also supported a series of prizes and awards coordinated by APC. The small prizes (USD\$7,500) were meant to be a way of recording and documenting how people were using ICTs at a low cost in interesting and innovative ways. The APC Communications Prizes are the only ones driven by an NGO community of ICT practitioners and the only ones to award cash to winners, enabling them to invest in and extend their work⁴⁸:

- APC Herbet de Souza “Betinho” Communications Prize – awarded 2000, 2001, 2003 and 2005 to non-governmental organizations, community-based groups, coalitions, working groups or social movements that successfully use ICTs as an essential part of their social justice and development work. In 2003 and 2005, the prize was offered solely in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- APC Africa Hafkin Communications Prize – awarded in 2001, 2002 and 2004–05 recognizes African initiatives which demonstrate the creativity of their use of ICTs (especially the Internet) and the success of their work in terms of mobilizing participation and building capacity. The prize is now biennial and is open to people and groups from any sector of society.

Since 2002, the prizes have had annual themes (e.g., people-centred ICT policy, people-centred ICT initiatives, community connectivity projects for economic development), carefully selected to elicit efforts which have been under-invested in and lacking in documentation.⁴⁹ While IDRC provided full funding for the administration and awards for the 2000 and 2001 Betinho Awards, since that time it has only provided the actual prize money for the APC Communications Prizes. APC has covered the rest of the costs associated with the prizes (coordination, Web site, promotion, data collection, documentation, etc.) through in-kind and volunteer contributions. In addition to these prizes supported by IDRC, APC has also used the prize recruitment and selection methodologies developed to support additional prizes on women in ICTs and free and open source software.

Working on community and civil society networking stretched APC’s capacity to balance itself between being a membership-based network and finding new partners and collaborators around the world. Like all member-based networks, APC must strive to provide services and project opportunities which engage its members in achieving common goals. In this context, working with non-member organizations must be done on a selective basis to enhance the knowledge and skills base of the network. Community connectivity, strategic ICT use, and prize projects have all provided APC with the opportunity to work with partners beyond its traditional network members. In many cases, these new partners

⁴⁷ Harambee: Reinforcing African Voices through Collaboration (102982). Project Proposal.

⁴⁸ APC Communications Prizes (101395). Project Approval Document.

⁴⁹ APC Communications Prizes (101395). Final Technical Report.

have gone on to become APC members. The community connectivity work also stretched APCs staff capacity to act not only as project managers, but also as substantive experts in order to build and maintain the networks of subject experts on various community connectivity and networking technologies.

6.3.5 *Capacity Building for Community Wireless Connectivity in Africa*

Project Duration:	December 2004 – November 2006
IDRC Project #s:	102693, 103523
Total IDRC Funds:	CAD\$411,145 (plus CAD\$120,650 from OSI)

The high cost of conventional “wired” infrastructure is an obstacle to those looking to harness the potential of information and communications technologies (ICTs) for development and social change. Wireless fidelity (WiFi), on the other hand, offers tested, low-cost options to complement conventional infrastructure, for example, making use of unlicensed radio spectrum to deliver fast Internet access. This initiative aimed to empower communities and individuals in Africa to harness the potential of ICTs for development and social change through WiFi. It aimed to do so through capacity building, training materials development, knowledge networking, information dissemination and general awareness-raising in selected regions in Africa. In addition to the original project, additional funding was provided for outreach activities at WSIS II in Tunisia, along with the translation of selected project materials into French and Arabic.

Like the GRACE project—and happening at the same time—the Wireless project was a low point in the relationship between IDRC and APC. Many of the issues between IDRC and APC appear to stem from IDRC’s approach to developing a project idea and then asking APC to administratively manage it. Problems were compounded as APC was asked to facilitate the group of primarily Northern wireless experts convened by IDRC. Without previous relationships with many in that expert community—or any standing within it—APC and IDRC wrestled for control over the project as allegations of poor management by APC and micro-management by IDRC were traded. The relationships between both organizations and the expert community were ultimately damaged. As the project proceeded and goalposts shifted, a number of conflicts emerged regarding the relative importance of subject matter expertise, capacity-building approaches and how to build an ongoing community of experts supporting ongoing innovation in the field of community wireless communications.

Important elements of the capacity-building story within the wireless project have included:

- *The challenge of handing off visions* – The initial concept for the Wireless project began in 2004 when Esterhuysen and Song had an opportunity to brainstorm informally at the IDRC strategic planning session in Senegal. APC had begun to become more interested in wireless community networking through one of their members in Peru. Esterhuysen had also been impressed with Onno Purbo, supported as a fellow by IDRC for one year, as a wireless evangelist. Upon completion of the Senegal workshop, responsibility for writing up the wireless concept paper was given to the APC Strategic Uses and Capacity Building Program Manager. On IDRC’s side, the project was eventually handed to a relatively new IDRC Program Officer who had not worked with APC previously. Neither manager was involved in the original

visioning and had little understanding of the interpretations and emphases each laid over the project proposal.

- *The multi-skilled nature of ICT4D project management* – APC went through three project managers (two staff and one consultant) in an attempt to find the right mix of skills. As the APC team indicates, “The project stretched our capacity to find the right kind of person to manage the project. We needed a combination of people to have the time, personality, and technical knowledge to work with that group. By the time we realized it, it was too late.”⁵⁰ In the meantime, the IDRC PO had become deeply involved in all aspects of the project down to the details for the locations for training workshops and selection of participants when he felt his concerns were not being addressed in a timely and effective fashion.
- *The need to balance concerns for subject expertise versus capacity-building expertise* – The APC team became increasingly concerned as the project progressed that in all conflicts, IDRC sided with the gurus. They never felt that their capacity-building experience was as valued in the project as the subject matter experts. This led to unequal dynamics in the project, down to concerns as to whether this hierarchy of concerns could be linked to gender dynamics (primarily male subject experts working with female capacity-building APC team members).
- *The importance of selecting a capacity-building methodology which meets all stakeholders’ needs* – Early in the project development, APC proposed that the wireless training project be conducted in line with their recent experiences with the UNESCO-sponsored multimedia toolkit (MMTK) and incorporated into the ITrainOnline site. This methodology had its roots in IDRC’s early ITrain work to develop open source Web documentation based more on Socratic dialogue than on lecture-led training. The old ITrain model was based on the principle that you had to continuously ask questions of people in training to test if what you are teaching is getting through. MMTK built upon this philosophical basis, but became much more modularized with a toolbox approach that enabled trainers to select only the modules they desired to present at a given workshop. While this approach gives greater flexibility in application, IDRC became increasingly concerned that trainings could become incoherent if each module was not built upon the skills and understandings built in previous ones. The adoption of the MMTK’s strict format also led to increasing concerns that the training materials were cumbersome for subject experts to write and would become quickly outdated. While there was some discussion of—and desire to—shift towards a more wiki-based platform for materials development, the APC project manager rejected this approach in favour of a more traditional materials review and editing process, with materials only publicly available once they had reached a certain standard.
- *The politics of participant selection* – The four wireless training workshops were initially envisaged as mechanisms to test the training materials developed by the gurus. However, as the project progressed, the workshops became an important mechanism

⁵⁰ APC Wireless Team. 5 August 2007. Interview.

for building the community of wireless experts. Demand for participation in the workshops through an open call vastly outstripped the available training slots (e.g., 300–400 applications for 30 slots at each of the workshops). The dynamics of sorting through these applications, attempting to verify people’s claims, and managing the inclusion of additional IDRC-identified participants eventually led to criticisms that the process was too random and too political. The politics of participant selection and networking began to overshadow the original purpose of the workshops—to test and revise the training materials.

- *The challenges of building and maintaining a community of practice* – IDRC and APC seemed to struggle throughout the project to define the scope of the wireless community to be drawn together. Initially dubbed the “Guru Initiative,” IDRC’s early focus seemed to be on the community of primarily Northern wireless development consultants whose knowledge they hoped to capture and pass along to the more global ICT4D community through the training materials. IDRC was also hoping to build greater connections with other community wireless initiatives. However, the need to establish contracts with the gurus for the creation of materials undercut the community feeling and quickly narrowed the focus to the experts present at the initial scoping workshop. APC staff felt “very lucky to have had the partners that IDRC and OSI brought. Most had on-the-ground experience and field research.” However, the APC’s community-building interests seemed to align more with building a broader more inclusive community involving trainees from the pilot materials testing workshops. They felt that IDRC underestimated the time and resources required to build that kind of network of people doing wireless work and willing to provide ongoing sharing and support for each other.
- *The importance of cross-regional relationships and learning* - In 2006, a team of APC-LAC members, APC partners and SUCB staff worked together to finalise a Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) wireless proposal to IDRC. The initial project design was largely a LAC reflection of the African project, but as the team monitored the strengths and weaknesses of the emerging Africa workshops, the project was reconfigured. The final proposal puts more emphasis on constructing permanent usable networks that will be left to communities who host workshops, as well as on developing a strong network of LAC experts and community network administrators. The relationship between IDRC and APC on the Wireless LAC efforts appears smooth under the coordination of Sylvia Cadena, contracted by APC member EsLaRed. As a long-time WNSP member, Cadena has worked both for APC member Colnodo and for the IDRC ICT4D team in Montevideo. Admirably, APC has appeared very comfortable with the transition from the Wireless Africa initiative being APC staff led to having a member led project in Latin America in order to satisfy IDRC demands that funds from the Institute for Connectivity in the Americas (ICA) stay in Latin America.

With IDRC’s focus on the documentation of expert wireless knowledge, it missed important opportunities to contribute to the capacity development of APC’s over-stretched SUCB team - the only APC programme area lacking core programme funding. While the IDRC PO communicated project concerns openly with the APC ED, the budget did not allocate

sufficient resources for coordination and APC struggled to identify suitable personnel. APC would have benefited from an open and equal discussion of strategies to divide up management responsibilities among their team and with consultants and community members as soon as IDRC perceived problems to be arising.

6.3.6 ICT Policy

APC defends and promotes the Internet as a powerful tool and space for social and environmental justice, development and democracy through awareness-raising, and by creating plain-language resources and opportunities for discussion and learning about the impact of Internet policy decisions on civil society.⁵¹ While APC had supported NGO electronic networking at UN conferences since 1992, its efforts to engage civil society in ICT policy making, and to collectively influence policy directions began in earnest through the Beijing preparatory process and conference in 1995. APC was instrumental in inserting a strategic objective in the Beijing Platform for Action regarding the need to increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication.

In 1997, concerns regarding ICT policy making began to emerge simultaneously from within the APC Africa network (in response to the African Information Society Initiative), the WNSP (in the development of ICT and media policies for Beijing +5), and through the Global Knowledge '97 electronic conferences hosted by Web networks. In 1998, during the preparation of the European Union's Action Plan for Safer Use of the Internet, APC's European members took the lead on establishing the concept that specific "Internet Rights" need to be established as a translation of human and social rights in a modern world of computer communications.⁵²

Key individuals involved in the IDRC-APC relationship from 1996 to 2006 on ICT Policy have included:

- IDRC - Gilles Cliche, Heloise Emdon, Laurent Elder, Edith Adera, Stephan Roberge, Steve Song
- APC - Maureen James, Anriette Esterhuysen, Karen Banks, Willie Currie, Emmanuel Njenga Njuguna, Valeria Betancourt.

APC began to work with IDRC in 1999 to expand the emerging Internet Rights movement to Africa and Latin America. From 2000 to 2006, IDRC supported (approx CAD\$520,000) the collection and interpretation of policy information in Latin America and Africa to build civil society awareness of ICT policy issues in the context of other basic human rights, and to provide a means to monitor and engage ICT policy issues in the interests of social justice and human development.⁵³ The research, online ICT Policy Monitor portals, and newsletters produced through these projects played an important role in informing and catalyzing civil society partnerships during both phases of the World Summit on the Information Society. In addition, the second phase of funding (2003–2006) for the African Policy Monitor provided additional resources for APC to create a French African policy monitor and newsletter, as well as the coordination of African civil society inputs to the WSIS II process. IDRC and

⁵¹ APC. Programmes. <http://www.apc.org/english/about/programs/index.shtml>

⁵² APC. European Civil Society Internet Rights Project. <http://europe.rights.apc.org/>

⁵³ Global ICT Policy Monitor (100505). Project Approval Document.

APC staff frequently met at regional and international WSIS preparatory committee meetings and the summits between 2002 and 2005. These conferences provided useful opportunities to share insights into the development of ICT policies, how to further engage civil society, and what types of policy influencing skills might be needed at the national and regional levels.

With the end of the WSIS Process, the focus of the IDRC-APC Policy relationship in 2006 has shifted to more specific ICT4D policy arenas such as the Internet Governance Forum and the governance of the Eastern Africa Submarine Cable System (EASSy). These new areas of collaboration build upon research and national capacity-building projects conducted by APC with support from EED, Hivos and DFID.

Working in the ICT Policy arena stretched APC's capacities in multiple ways. One of the greatest challenges was in stitching together a patchwork quilt of regionally-funded activities to participate in WSIS as global policy processes. In order to be effective, APC staff had to put a lot more time and attention into the global policy spaces than originally envisioned. Esterhuysen, Banks, and Currie all brought different capacities into the global process - sometimes colliding - but able to synthesize between regions and issue areas. APC's Policy work also stretched the organizations human resources to the brink. While APC knew that the policy work was important, it tended to seek funding prior to identifying network members or potential new staff who could manage aspects of the projects. In this emerging area of ICT policy, the organization was caught in the "chicken-egg" dilemma of not being able to recruit and hire qualified staff until funding was available. Unfortunately, the projected timelines for the projects did not always take the time for recruitment and orientation into account. With responsibility for managing interwoven grants in a fast-paced policy environment, project managers inevitably fell behind. Lastly, APC's ICT Policy work stretched the organization's knowledge about substantive ICT policy debates and the national contexts within which they are embedded. By WSIS Phase II and the Working Group on Internet Governance, APC had built the institutional knowledge and confidence to shift from facilitating civil society participation in the processes to direct engagement in the substance of the debates.

Other key APC donors on women and gender who have influenced the direction of the work have included DFID, Hivos, EED, CTO, Ford Foundation, OSI, DGIS, SDC and CIDA. In particular, it is essential to note the strong influence in 2004–2006 of DFID, which provided \$200–275K per year for policy-related capacity-building activities through the CATIA program.

6.3.7 ICT Policy Monitors

Projects Duration:	October 2000 – July 2006
Total IDRC Funds:	CAD\$525,617 CAD (plus approx USD\$300,000 from Hivos and OSIWA)
IDRC Project #s:	100505, 101746, 101972-001

These projects constructed an online policy clearinghouse by researching, organizing, analyzing and monitoring ICT policy. Particular emphasis was to be placed on global, regional, national and local policy developments that affect the ability of developing

countries and marginalized communities to benefit from the information revolution. The ICT Policy Monitor sought initially to collect and interpret policy information in Latin America and Africa. The idea was to build civil society awareness of ICT policy issues in the context of other basic human rights and provide a means to monitor and engage ICT policy issues in the interests of social justice and human development. The ultimate goal of the projects was to achieve recognition that access to and use of ICTs is a basic human right.

Despite the enormous emphasis which IDRC and APC have placed on policy, and the central role of WSIS in opening space for discussions and capacity-building, the ICT Policy Monitors appear to have flown completely under the radar at IDRC. The case study interviews did not elicit many reflections on the projects from IDRC staff, other than a general acknowledgement that APC was a key ally throughout the WSIS process in terms of facilitating civil society participation and framing important debates. Nevertheless, the ICT Policy Monitor projects do provide some insights into the capacity-building relationship between the two organizations:

- *The role of large-scale event-related funding in capacity building* – The rather vague terminology and outline of civil society activities in the proposals enabled APC to flow with the WSIS process, engaging when, where and how needed to ensure the full participation of African civil society. This funding for broad-based participation and regional leadership provided APC with the finances and space to rise to meet the challenge.
- *The institutional capacities built through maintaining control of a programme agenda* – APC's Communications and Information Policy Program (CIPP) developed a series of programmatic goals in 2003, which it strove to ensure achievement of through a series of large inter-related projects with different donors. From 2001 to 2005, APC received nearly USD\$1.65 million in funding from eight donors. APC knit this funding into a densely interconnected web of events, publications, and services related to WSIS. APC noted in its final technical report that, "the overlap between a number of projects that CIPP was coordinating such as the CATIA program and the Global CIPP Program made maintaining a focus on the project's specific deliverables complex."⁵⁴ One of the most transformative activities of the project for APC and its partners was a joint Monitor and CATIA regional ICT policy advocacy workshop. While the interrelated accounting and reporting on these activities has been a source of great confusion for IDRC, all agree that the results have nevertheless been impressive. The whole has been much greater than the sum of its parts and the strategic thinking and planning skills evidenced through this approach are considerable.
- *The role of information brokers* – Much of the work undertaken by APC through the Policy Monitors could be considered as information brokering—activities to ensure that civil society in Africa and Latin America were aware of the substance and processes for policies surrounding ICT access, content and security. Collecting, processing and disseminating this information plays to APC's strengths as an

⁵⁴ APC Africa ICT Policy Monitor Project (101972). Final Technical Report.

electronic advocacy-oriented network. However, in the first phase of the project, APC was unable to live up to IDRC's hopes that they would go beyond capturing ICT policy information to providing intelligent analysis and comparisons for users.⁵⁵ And it is unclear whether IDRC funds were ever used to directly support the commissioning of new policy research through APC. Ironically, it appears that the bulk of global and regional policy research undertaken by APC was funded by Hivos and CATIA.

- *The APC human resources dilemma* – As identified in the original Project Approval Document in 2000, “the main challenge faced by the methodology concerns APC’s ability to recruit adequate staff for the global and regional coordinator positions, and the engagement of non-APC experts who can actively participate in the project working groups and fill the weaknesses in policy analysis and broaden the participation.”⁵⁶ These identified challenges were played out in both phases of the project. In the first phase, the African region took longer to recruit the coordinating staff while its process managed to access solid staff from a variety of backgrounds. In LAC, a senior coordinator was hired through a competitive process, but he was replaced after one year. The problems continued in the second phase of activities in Africa when the regional coordinator relocated to Australia to pursue a master’s degree. His location in Australia and the CIPP director’s location in the U.S. made project management difficult and exacerbated the tension between online activities and face-to-face activities. At the CIPP management level, the continuity of project management was also problematic, shifting from Peter Benjamin to Sonia Jorge, followed by a long gap before Willie Currie was hired in the second phase of the project. Nevertheless, in spite of the problems APC managed to maintain continuity and to build capacity. The African coordinator was with the project for a long time (2001–2005), and the project assistant in LAC (2001–present) grew into the coordinator role and excels in it.
- *The IDRC obsession with partnering and project unification* – IDRC funding for the Latin American Policy Monitor was not renewed in 2003, since it was conditional on reaching a high level of synergy with the IDRC-funded MISTICA network, coordinated by FUNREDES in the Dominican Republic.⁵⁷ In particular, IDRC was hoping that the LAC Policy Monitor could be combined with a second phase of support to MISTICA’s Observatory of Social Impacts of ICT. Despite seed funding for partnership exploration, the resulting APC-FUNREDES proposal did not meet IDRC’s expectations and was not funded. Ironically, both Sula Batsu (staffed by individuals who worked on MISTICA) and FUNREDES have since become members of APC, indicating that the challenge was not one of collaboration, but of meeting IDRC’s views of what was needed in the region. In Africa, a similar challenge has arisen in meeting IDRC’s demands to partner with the LINK Centre, a more academic ICT Policy research body. While APC and the LINK Centre have a solid professional relationship, and an agreement in principle to work together, the

⁵⁵ Global ICT Policy Monitor (100505). Project Completion Report

⁵⁶ Global ICT Policy Monitor (100505). Project Approval Document.

⁵⁷ Global ICT Policy Monitor (100505). Project Completion Report

timing of availability of staff within both organizations has not been in synch in order to proceed with a joint proposal.

- *Knowing when to say no* – During negotiations around support for the second phase of the African Policy Monitor, an IDRC PO asked APC if it would be willing to administer two additional policy related projects proposed by SANGONeT and a South African lawyer. Following a coordinating meeting with the three project proponents in May 2003, it was decided that the projects should be administered separately, but that they would form an omnibus project within the IDRC in order to encourage collaboration.⁵⁸

While the ICT Policy Monitors did not achieve their planned level of regional information sharing (e.g., number of newsletter editions), the projects filled a niche within APC's CIPP programming, enabling it to be more effective within the WSIS global process.

7 Lessons Learned

The IDRC-APC case study provides a rich array of capacity-building actions and interactions. While many lessons learned have been explored within Sections 5 and 6 of the paper, the following sections seek to summarize the lessons learned from the various aspects of the relationship.

7.1 *Living Up to Its Good Practices*

Through the process of the strategic evaluation on capacity building, IDRC has commenced on developing a list of good practices for itself. It hopes that these practices will become a gold standard of operations guiding interactions with partners.

Table 3: Good Practices that Contribute to IDRC's Capacity Development (adapted from DAC, 2003 and IDRC's Corporate Assessment Framework, 2006).

GOOD PRACTICES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT	MANIFESTED IN IDRC THROUGH:
IDRC characteristics	
Persistence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustained mentoring • Continuity, prolonged engagement • Iterative learning process • Aim to build legitimacy, credibility and trust
Flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding arrangements • Location within Canadian government system • Agility to respond to developing country needs
Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay engaged under difficult circumstances • Provide legitimacy, credibility and trust
Building partnerships	
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networks of individuals and organizations/institutions • Inter-organizational linkages

⁵⁸ APC Africa ICT Policy Monitor Project (101972). Project Approval Document.

GOOD PRACTICES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT	MANIFESTED IN IDRC THROUGH:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face-to-face interactions between/among IDRC staff and researchers • Providing legitimacy and credibility to partners and beneficiaries
Harnessing existing capacities	
Strategic intelligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scan locally and globally, reinvent locally – regional presence to determine existing capacities • Staff knowledge of regions
Build on existing capacities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustained mentoring – provide long-term support beyond “one-off training” sessions • Regional presence – to determine existing capacities • Use local, existing capacities rather than creating parallel systems
Relevance of the Problem	
Locally-driven agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local ownership • Local and global participation in determining the agenda • Programs continually evolving to meet developing country demands • Bring Southern perspectives and voices to the analysis of development challenges • Support devolvement of major research initiatives when appropriate

Applying these “good practices” retroactively, we must ask, “How well did IDRC live up to its aspirations in its relationship with APC from 1996 to 2006?” **Based on this case study, it would appear that IDRC has lived up to its aspirations. When and where IDRC has invested in APC’s organizational and research capacities, capacities have been developed. The two direct institutional capacity-building projects supported have assisted the organization to grow and evolve to meet changing needs. Furthermore, APC has built a strong reputation for information dissemination and for its advocacy for systemic change. These are precisely the types of activities which IDRC has funded it to undertake over the previous 10 years. IDRC has a tenuous position upon which to stand when criticizing APC’s capacity to conduct research since, with the notable exception of GEM, it has not funded the organization to undertake research. Lacking funded projects in this area, there has been a minimal context within which to engage in conversations which might further build the APC understanding and application of a wider range of research theories and methodologies.**

In achieving these results, IDRC has sought to build partnerships, harness existing capacities, and ensure the relevance of development problems addressed in its formal and informal organizational capacity-building efforts with APC. In addition, it has demonstrated persistence, flexibility and resilience in its relationship. These characteristics are explored briefly below.

- *Persistence* – IDRC maintained a continuous relationship with APC from 1996 to 2006, with a broad variety of POs involved in the relationship. As APC encountered various organizational challenges associated with its rapid growth and shifts in the development field, IDRC was viewed as a colleague to be counted on for honest feedback and insights.
- *Flexibility* – IDRC was extremely flexible in its funding arrangements. Projects were extended with relative ease in order to ensure that the best results were achieved and that APC was not overextended. Particularly helpful was the innovative financing of

INSPRO, which enabled APC to directly confront organizational capacity-building issues. Perhaps the only shortcoming of IDRC during the period was its seeming lack of interest in joining the broad CATIA program implemented by APC; merging some of the IDRC-funded ICT policy projects within this broader program may have resulted in additional achievements and easier project management by APC.

- *Resilience* – The relationship between IDRC and APC was very resilient and was sustained through periods of miscommunications and differences of opinion. The variety and number of staff involved in the relationship for both organizations seems to have contributed to the resilience. At any point in time, while some relationships may have been strained, others were working very well.
- *Relationships* – IDRC’s networked approach to development harmonized well with APC’s own nature as a network. APC greatly appreciated IDRC’s willingness to introduce them to potential new partners who could expand their capacities and reach. While not all new relationships brokered were ultimately successful, they have not been without value. In particular, APC has benefited from more recent IDRC efforts to bring together a wide diversity of stakeholders to define new research areas and projects. Working side-by-side on defining the research problems and approaches enables these IDRC partners to identify and share their existing areas of expertise as well as to learn new skills from their peers. Finally, face-to-face interactions with IDRC staff through these types of activities and project meetings have enabled a deepening of the relationship with IDRC and fostered a strong degree of trust and honesty, critical factors underlying organizational capacity building.
- *Strategic intelligence* – IDRC and APC have expanded each other’s strategic intelligence capacities. Both organizations have extensive networks of individuals and organizations around the world, enabling them to realistically assess existing capacities and to determine what types of initiatives are most needed. While the GEM is the clearest contribution back to IDRC’s approaches to ICT4D, IDRC’s trend toward embracing open source software also has its roots in APC’s steady championing of Free and Open Source Software. Similarly, IDRC’s and APC’s strong commitments to access and connectivity in an era when many organizations abandoned these key issues were the result of continuous dialogue and sharing of experiences.
- *Build on existing capacities* – IDRC has provided sustained mentoring to APC supporting its organizational capacity. The Centre has consistently maintained an attitude that APC knows best what it needs to improve in order to be most effective. All tacit and explicit capacity-building work has started from this premise, with the exception of some informal efforts related to building APC’s use of formal research methodologies. Visits of the Africa regional controller have led to further opportunities to discuss organizational capacity challenges and possible solutions.
- *Locally-driven agenda* – While IDRC’s ICT4D agenda is driven by its highly-networked regional programs, this does not always mean that the agenda is locally-driven or has

the full support of all regional stakeholders. While IDRC and APC collaborate on issues of shared concern, their perspectives have diverged somewhat over the decade. Through the case study process, it became increasingly clear that APC differentiates between its own efforts grounded in the social justice and rights movements and IDRC's post-2000 embracing of the more economics-motivated ICT4D agenda. This type of divergence has implications for the types of projects—and capacities—of greatest interest to each organization. It requires a high degree of integrity within each organization in order to find the correct balance of collaboration and critique.

7.2 Positive Relationship Work

Girgis's model of positive relationship work as the foundation for capacity building appears to be based on similar fundamental values to those encapsulated within IDRC's list of "good practices" for capacity building. As a slightly more structured model, its application provides an opportunity for IDRC to compare itself to other organizations seeking to build the capacity of their partners. It also highlights some additional characteristics which IDRC may wish to incorporate in its own good practices model.

In terms of the three instruments which practitioners may use in relationship work, **the APC case study shows a slight trend within IDRC to shift from suggestive dialogue and helping towards negotiation over the decade. This has clashed to some degree with APC's organizational culture and values.** From 1996 to 2000, the relationship was more clearly one of equals. Both APC and IDRC's ICT4D PIs were building their programs and institutional identities during this phase of rapid change in the ICT4D field. POs appear to have placed a high value on suggestive dialogue, giving strategic suggestions and ideas over a long period of time. Also, through the relationships with Unganisha, Bellanet, APC was able to receive timely help and support on jointly implemented projects. They were also seen as providers of help and support in these projects. Since 2000, relationship work seems to have shifted somewhat to more structured negotiations around APC's capacities and roles as an IDRC partner. Conflicts appear to have been more prevalent during this time. However, it is unclear whether the increased conflicts have led to a greater focus on negotiation—or whether the negotiation approach has led to increased conflicts arising. Interviews with APC staff indicated a strong desire to offset the more power-conscious negotiations with an increase in helping and dialogue approaches.

In terms of Girgis's ideal practitioner attributes, the case study confirms that where these have been present in IDRC, APC's capacities have flourished.

- Sensitivity – IDRC has a good reputation for sensitivity, benefiting from its dispersed and diverse staff around the world. Most staff seem committed to understanding how their comments have affected APC and whether or not there is mutual understanding. Ironically, the capacity-building relationship between IDRC and APC has been hindered in recent years by a misplaced oversensitivity on IDRC's part. In several projects, IDRC staff restrained themselves from providing important feedback to APC on project methodologies out of a concern for not wanting to abuse their power as a donor. Unfortunately, the unstated concerns or insights later proved to be important to projects outcomes.

- Creativity – IDRC has displayed a high degree of creativity in its relationship with APC. This is in large part due to the multiplicity of staff involved in the relationship, each bringing a unique facet to the work. It is also a positive side-effect of IDRC’s non-conscious approach to capacity building. Lacking a “capacity-building toolkit,” staff have improvised—providing advice in particular situations, sharing strategic perceptions of ICT4D trends, funding training opportunities, developing institutional support grants, etc. Unfortunately, however, IDRC’s traditional creativity appears increasingly constrained as it seeks to develop larger multi-stakeholder projects. By the time APC was brought into some projects and raised concerns about their role, a trajectory was set which was difficult to shift.
- Shared understanding – As Girgis notes, shared understanding is one of the most difficult attributes to develop since it requires an awareness of differences. Over the decade, with changes in staffing, some IDRC staff do not have a full appreciation of the institutional histories and strategies of either IDRC or APC—or the impact that these changes have had on their relationship. They also lack an awareness of APC’s own strategic goals and operational realities. Without these kinds of contextual knowledge, it is difficult for IDRC to provide needed help and strategic suggestions. Negotiations have also tended to deteriorate as APC’s concerns have become caricatured as being the result of it being an “advocacy” organization or one which is “donor dependent” for its financing.
- Commitment – IDRC has shown a strong commitment to APC over the decade as a consistent and continuous supporter of APC projects and activities. However, as IDRC’s programming priorities shifted in 2005, some POs clearly began to question whether a relationship with APC was important to IDRC for the future. While it is important for an organization to reassess its strategic relationships on a periodic basis, the drop in commitment at exactly the time in which funding spiked and the relationship intensified appears to have been detrimental in the short run. Without a strong commitment to APC from all ICT4D staff, opportunities for capacity building were clearly lost.

The IDRC-APC case study indicates that an informal relational approach has the potential to work well for research capacity building and to support the development of organizational aspirations and human resources. However, the development of strategy, organizational skills, systems and infrastructure, and organizational structures require a much greater investment of time and resources by organizations. They can also require external expertise and knowledge of how other similar organizations have managed transitions within these areas. When focusing on these capacity areas, organizations can strongly benefit from focused financial support and mentoring far beyond the incidental capacity building which occurs as part of the ongoing relationship.

7.3 Challenges Faced

The IDRC-APC case study illustrates a number of issues which IDRC will need to grapple with if it decides to shift towards a more explicit focus on organizational capacity building:

- *Conscious investment in capacities can lead to significant results* – When and where IDRC has invested in APC’s organizational and research capacities, capacities have been developed. The two direct institutional capacity-building projects supported have

assisted the organization to grow and evolve to meet changing needs. Furthermore, APC has built a strong reputation for information dissemination and for its advocacy for systemic change. These are precisely the types of activities which IDRC has funded it to undertake over the previous 10 years. IDRC has a tenuous position upon which to stand when criticizing APC's capacity to conduct research since, with the notable exception of GEM, it has not funded the organization to undertake research. Lacking funded projects in this area, there has been a minimal context within which to engage in conversations which might further build the APC understanding and application of a wider range of research theories and methodologies.

- *IDRC has not had a clear idea of what organizational capacities are* – There are many models of organizational capacity available for IDRC and its partners to choose from. However, it does not appear that most POs were familiar with these models, let alone their strengths and weaknesses. During the development of this case study, several frameworks were reviewed including: the McKinsey Capacity Grid, Anne Bernard's Capacity Map for IDRC, Dr. Florence Omosa's capacity charts and the IDRC-Universalia performance assessment framework. While there is some overlap among these models, they differ greatly in emphasis and how they conceptually organize organizational capacities. At the most basic level, they vary in the degree to which they focus specifically on organizational capacities to undertake development and/or research activities. The APC case study clearly illustrated that while the McKinsey Grid was fine for assessing general organizational capacity, it was completely lacking in tools to help APC assess its strengths and weaknesses to achieve its core development mission. It was necessary to add the Bernard model to illuminate how these strengths and weaknesses intersected with IDRC's interests in research capacity.
- *Differences between building capacity to achieve an organization's goals vs. IDRC's goals* – In the post-prospectus era, the IDRC ICT4D team has been required to unify its programming in pursuit of a focused range of research questions. IDRC seeks partners who are willing and able to help it achieve its own goals. While this shift is understandable in the context of the Canadian political reality of results-based management and accountability, it has nevertheless shifted the emphasis of the relationship from what APC hopes to achieve to what IDRC hopes to achieve. As noted by a senior APC staff member, "I've never experienced with IDRC any interest in what we want to do and our strategic plan. I've never been asked about that. [One senior IDRC staff member] thought we didn't have one; I don't know if they looked at it when we sent it... But, if they DO want to build capacity, they have to build it in terms of what the organization wants to do. They need to look at our goals and strategic plan or at least to show recognition of that. It's hard for them though since they work on regional programs... it's hard for them to get the whole picture. Project Officers tend to look at only little slices."
- *Greatest challenges to the IDRC-APC relationship were not from capacity lacks, but communications challenges* – While a number of APC projects during the period faced challenges in the identification of appropriate managers, the most severe breakdowns

in the relationship occurred due to communications and value challenges. There is a certain degree of irony in that in Wireless and GRACE projects, conflicts between IDRC and APC broke out in part due to switched positions in advocating for more or less formal capacity-building approaches. The differences in capacity-building cultures between two different parts of IDRC and two different parts of APC resulted in APC advocating a more formal approach to Wireless, while IDRC was the advocate for more formalized methodologies in the GRACE project. One could say that perhaps APC learned its lesson from GRACE too well. There needed to be a much more honest and open dialogue between the two organizations in order to come to a shared understanding of when different approaches are most useful and meet objectives. Furthermore, these same two projects were ones with origins in IDRC which they desired to hand over. In general, this approach has led to very different interpretations of the project between the organizations. IDRC's culture as an activist donor has resulted in at least these two cases in an inability to let go of the project and to empower APC to bring their own objectives to the table. When IDRC has been willing to let go, the results have been greatly improved. As noted by an IDRC PI Manager, "Our experience is that when they take it up, they do a good job. Through GENARDIS, they turned a donor-led award and made it more grassroots with workshops and after-action reviews. Competitive grants became more than the sum of its parts. This met their own objectives (e.g., focus on gender), so it was perfect."

- *Relationship brokering is a high-risk endeavour* – IDRC takes great pride in relationship brokering among its partners. However, all parties must accept that relationships are always risky; they can—and often will—fail dramatically. In such cases, people need to be able to let go and move on. As noted by a former APC member working for IDRC, "Relationship brokering is a spectrum between throwing a party and an arranged marriage. A party allows people to form relationships they want to form. Good relationships don't exist in a static moment in time... there are many steps along a path." In the past few years, it appears that the ICT4D team has moved from gradual relationship brokering to the trickier process of arranging marriages. This has had mixed results with APC. In the case of the wireless project, the arranged marriage with the wireless gurus worked relatively well and led to a number of additional activities undertaken between APC and individual gurus. However, APC learned/stretched little through exposure to the GRACE consultant. IDRC's insistence that APC work more closely with the LINK Centre or other ICT4D policy research institutes have similarly borne little fruit. In the case of the Latin American ICT Policy Monitor, APC's lack of building a significant relationship with another regional IDRC-funded organization resulted in the termination of IDRC's relationship with the project. Ironically, in the following years APC's research results from the project—now funded by Hivos—skyrocketed. By insisting on an arranged marriage, IDRC walked away from a project on the crux of research productivity and eliminated opportunities to influence the direction and quality of that research for the future. At the very least, the APC case study demonstrates that if IDRC is going to act as a matchmaker, it needs to accept that it does not need to act as a marriage counsellor as well if things go poorly.

- *IDRC has not always been clear with partners that it would be open to supporting capacity-building opportunities for project managers* – Throughout the 10 years of the case study, APC has largely been unaware that there were possibilities to tap into IDRC resources to build the individual capacities of key project managers. While IDRC Project Officers has been quick to identify shortcomings in project management—and frustration with changes in project managers—APC managers indicate that IDRC officers never asked how they might be able to build the capacity of the project leader in order to get the project back on track. It wasn't until the INSPRO project and the Evaluation Unit began offering to fund the participation of key GEM managers to attend workshops and short courses that APC began to realize that this was even an option.
- *IDRC has not always provided constructive criticism to partners on proposal budgets which underfund project management activities* – Through the case study process, APC identified that it had underestimated the true costs of project management in many—if not all—IDRC-funded projects. These underfunded line items were never challenged by POs, although these tight line items frequently led to implementation difficulties. Proposals were instead challenged on the grounds of potentially insufficient human resources. This misinterpreted APC's human resources model and its approach (and costs) of hiring part-time staff in real time based on needs.

8 The Way Forward

As IDRC decides how to undertake organizational capacity building in the future, it should consider the following:

1. **Expanding the Good Practices framework to incorporate more elements of the Girgis framework** – While the IDRC Good Practices framework is a good starting point to examine capacity-building practice, it lacks some elements of the Girgis framework which were very important in the APC case study. In particular, the IDRC framework would benefit from the inclusion of “sensitivity” as a desirable IDRC characteristic. “Persistence” also lacks the positive connotations of “commitment.” Finally, the framework could be strengthened by the inclusion of a more “tools” oriented section for POs, including the informal tools Girgis details (negotiation, suggestive dialogue and helping) as well as the more traditional formal techniques available (e.g., training, peer networking).
2. **Providing opportunities to reflect on organizational relationships and relationship management** – Much of the capacity building undertaken by IDRC is done informally through the relationships between IDRC staff and partner organization staff. Ultimately, capacity building in such a context requires strong skills in relationship management. IDRC needs to ensure that all staff working with an organization have an opportunity to exchange observations periodically on the partner—what is working and what is a challenge. This will hopefully help POs to come to a better shared understanding of the partner organization, including what may or may not be an emerging capacity issue. In preparation for these meetings, IDRC should ensure that all staff have access to the current strategic plans and priorities of partners for review.

3. **Ensuring that IDRC staff working on organizational capacity building have the seniority to do so** – Over the past decade, the role of the PO has changed within IDRC. As the management model was flattened and rebuilt, there is some evidence that IDRC has increasingly sought POs with a more generalist knowledge of a field. If POs are assigned primarily to project files, they may not have sufficient management experience to recognize when organizational capacity constraints are being confronted in a project. Similarly, they may not have sufficient authority to work with the Executive Directors of organizations whose capacity IDRC is trying to build. DPA and PI managers will need to play a stronger role in organizational capacity building in these cases. However, Directors do not have time to get to know all partners IDRC is working with. They will need to focus on a few well-selected organizations.
4. **Undertaking the mapping and network analysis of organizations active in a research field** – With the understanding that capacity building is embedded in relationships, IDRC programs need to more consciously map their boundary partners and understand the interlinkages between these partners. This will help IDRC in two key areas: selecting keystone organizations important to the advancement of a field; and understanding how IDRC's support for other organizations may impact on key partners.
5. **Building the capacity of IDRC staff to understand and apply organizational capacity frameworks** – IDRC does not necessarily need to select a single organizational capacity framework for use by all partners. Rather, IDRC staff need to be able to help partners choose an organizational capacity framework and to work with it. Such an approach could be modelled on the Evaluation Unit's "Use-oriented evaluation" approach. While IDRC is known for Outcome Mapping, it aims to help its staff and partners understand the strengths and weaknesses of various evaluation models depending on their goals. Similarly, IDRC can continue to support the development of its Performance Assessment framework while supporting partners' choices of a wider array of models. It is important to recognize that other donors are already pushing models on organizations; IDRC needs to be able to work with those rather than adding an additional burden onto organizations.
6. **Improving IDRC's understanding of research capacity to include all of Bernard's areas** – Anne Bernard's Capacity Mapping indicates that IDRC has supported the development of capacities to:
 - **conduct** research;
 - **manage** research activities and organizations;
 - **conceive, generate and sustain** research with respect to a sector/theme or country/regional priorities;
 - **use/apply** research outcomes in policy and/or practice; and
 - **mobilize** research-related policy and program "systems" thinking.

Currently, however, many POs seem to restrict their views of research capacity to primarily the first three, with a strong emphasis on the capacity to conduct research. This is ironic given that in the last decade, there has been a strong push to make IDRC research more policy relevant and to improve policy linkages. These activities require strong capacities around information dissemination, change management and advocacy.

These are extremely important research capacities, yet the case study indicates that they are still not appreciated as such by all within IDRC.

7. **Improving IDRC's own organizational memory and transparency** – All relationships have histories that colour how current initiatives are perceived by partners. IDRC staff need to understand how the organization has changed, as well as how their own corporate culture and organizational history has impacted on its relationship with partners. IDRC needs to be willing to share its own institutional journey with others who may be going through similar transformations. Furthermore, IDRC should seek to become more proactive in sharing its strategic plans and reports to the Board of Governors with partners to ensure that they understand how these may impact the relationship in the future.
8. **Continuing to promote the fundamental values underlying positive relationship work** – Sensitivity, creativity, shared understanding and commitment are all values fundamental to the development community. However, these are tough values and often demand tough conversations—ones in which everyone has to be open to the possibility that they do not have a full understanding of the context within which the other is operating. The capacity of IDRC POs to provide constructive critical feedback within an atmosphere reaffirming the Centre's commitment to its partners is essential to building organizational capacity.

9 Appendices

Appendix 1: List of Acronyms

AAU	Association of African Universities
AAW	APC Africa Women's Network
APC	Association for Progressive Communications
CAD	Canadian Dollar
CATIA	Catalysing Access to ICT in Africa (APC)
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CIPP	Communications and Information Policy Program (APC)
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CTO	Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation
DFID	Department for International Development (U.K.)
DGIS	Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
DOT Force	Digital Opportunities Taskforce
DPA	Director of Program Area (IDRC)
EASSy	Eastern Africa Submarine Cable System
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council (UN)
EED	Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst (Church Development Service)
ED	Executive Director
EU	Evaluation Unit (IDRC)
FTE	Full-time Equivalent
FUNREDES	Fundación Redes y Desarrollo [Networks and Development Foundation]
GEM	Gender Evaluation Methodology
GKP	Global Knowledge Partnership
GRACE	Gender Research in Africa into ICTs for Empowerment
ICA	Institute for Connectivity in the Americas
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies
ICT4D	Information and Communication Technologies for Development
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IGF	Internet Governance Forum
ISAD	Information Society and Development Conference
INSPRO	Institutional Strengthening Project (aka Capacity Building and Institutional Support for APC)
ISP	Internet Service Provider
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
K4D	Knowledge for Development
KRA	Key Result Area (APC)
LAC	Latin America and Caribbean
LINK Centre	Learning Information Networking Knowledge Centre
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MISTICA	Metodología e Impacto Social de las Tecnologías de la Información y de la Comunicación en América
MMTK	Multi-media Toolkit

NED	National Endowment for Democracy
NGO	Non-government Organization
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OSI	Open Society Institute
PA	Post Adjustment
PAN	Pan Asia Networking (IDRC)
PBAs	Program-based Approaches
PI	Program Initiative (IDRC)
PO	Program Officer (IDRC)
PRSPs	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
SANGONeT	Southern African NGO Network
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SUCB	Strategic Uses and Capacity Building (APC)
SWAps	Sector Wide Approaches
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIFEM	United Nations Fund for Women
USD	United States Dollar
WEF	World Economic Forum
WNSP	Women's Networking Support Program (APC)
WSIS	World Summit on the Information Society

Appendix 2: List of People Interviewed

IDRC Staff (Current and Former):				
Name	Relevant Positions	Interview Type	Location	E-mail
David Balson	Former Director, Bellanet	Interview	Canada	dbalson@rogers.com
Sylvia Cadena		E-mail	Montevideo, Uruguay	
Gilles Cliche	Former IDRC Senior Program Officer, now at RIMISP	Interview	Santiago, Chile	gcliche@rimisp.org
Sylvain Dufour	Director	E-mail	Ottawa, Canada	sdufour@idrc.ca
Sarah Earl	Senior Program Officer, Evaluation Unit	Interview	Ottawa, Canada	searl@idrc.ca
Laurent Elder	Program Leader, Pan Asia. Former Program Officer, Acacia	Interview	Ottawa, Canada	lelder@idrc.ca
Adel El Zaïm	Senior Program Specialist, Connectivity Africa	Interview	Cairo, Egypt	aelzaim@idrc.org.eg
Heloise Emdon	Senior Program Officer, Acacia	Interview	Midrand, South Africa	hemdon@idrc.ca
Richard Fuchs	Regional Director, Regional Office of Southeast and East Asia (ASRO); Former Director, ICT4D	Interview	Singapore, Republic of Singapore	rfuchs@idrc.org.sg
Riff Fullan	Former Program Officer, Bellanet.	E-mail	Switzerland	riff.fullan@helvetas.org
Allison Hewlitt	Senior Program Officer, Bellanet	Interview	Ottawa, Canada	ahewlitt@bellanet.org
Lee Kirkham	Regional Controller	Interview	Nairobi, Kenya	lkirkham@idrc.or.ke
Sam LanFranco	Bellanet	Interview	Canada	-
Maria Ng		E-mail		-
Ben Petrazzini	Manager, ICT4D Americas	Interview	Montevideo, Uruguay	bpetrazzini@idrc.org.uy
Loretta Rocca	Administration Officer	E-mail	Ottawa, Canada	lrocca@idrc.ca
Chaitlai Sinha		Interview	Ottawa, Canada	csinha@idrc.ca
Steve Song	Manager, ICT4D Africa	Interview	Ottawa, Canada	ssong@idrc.ca

APC Staff (Current, Former, and Consultants)				
Name	Position		Address	E-mail
Estelle Baker	Operations Manager	Interview	South Africa	-
Karen Banks	Networking and Advocacy Coordinator; Former WNSP Coordinator	Interview	London, U.K.	karenb@gn.apc.org
Debbie Budlender	Consultant	E-mail	South Africa	debbieb@wn.apc.org
Ineke Buskens	Consultant	Interview	South Africa	Ineke@researchforthefuture.com
Cheekay Cinco	Asia-Pacific Region Coordinator, WNSP	E-mail	Philippines	cheekay@apcwomen.org
Willie Currie	Program Manager, Communications and Information Policy Program	Interview	U.S.	wcurrie@apc.org
Anriette Esterhuysen	Executive Director	Interview	South Africa	anriette@apc.org
Edie Farwell	Former Executive Director.	Interview	Hartland, VT, U.S.	efarwell@sustainer.org
Anna Feldman	Wireless Connectivity Project Coordinator	Interview	U.K.	anna@gn.apc.org
Karen Higgs	Communications Manager	Interview	Montevideo, Uruguay	khiggs@apc.org
Ian Howard	Consultant	E-mail	Canada	ihoward@adaptic.ca
Maureen James	Former APC Fundraising and Promotions Coordinator; Programs and Projects Manager; Deputy Executive Director.	Interview	Ottawa, Canada	james@ifex.org
Angela Kuga Thas	Consultant	E-mail	Malaysia	amkt@apcwomen.org
Natasha Primo	APC Executive Board, Chair. Executive Director, Women'sNet	Interview	South Africa	natasha@womensnet.org.za
Jennifer Radloff	Coordinator, APC-Africa-Women	Interview	South Africa	jenny@apcwomen.org
Chat Ramilo Garcia	Program Manager, Women's Networking Support Program	Interview	Philippines	chat@apcwomen.org
Maya Sooka	Finance Manager	Interview	South Africa	msooka@apc.org
Mark Surman	Former Web Networks. Also Director of telecentre.org for IDRC	Interview	Toronto, Canada	msurman@commons.ca

Funders				
Name	Position		Address	E-mail
Janet Haven	Open Society Institute	Interview	Budapest, Hungary	jhaven@osieurope.org
Paul Massen	Stichting Hivos	Interview	Netherlands	p.maassen@hivos.nl
Joanne Sandler	United Nations Development Fund for Women	Interview	New York, U.S.	joanne.sandler@undp.org

Appendix 3: List of IDRC-Supported Projects with APC (1996–2006)

IDRC Project #	Project Title	IDRC PI	IDRC Program Officer	APC Project Manager	Total IDRC \$	Start Date	End Date
Women/Gender							
001269	Gender and Information Technology (APC Women's Networking Support Program)	Pan Americas	Bessette	Banks (GreenNet)	240,360	03/01/1995	30/06/1998
004428	Lessons Learned: Building Strong Internet-Based Women Networks	Pan Americas	Cliche	Ramilo	246,586	08/07/1999	17/10/2001
100994	Gender Evaluation Methodology for ICT Initiatives	Pan Americas	Earl	Ramilo	196,944	01/08/2001	01/07/2004
102606	WNSP Global Gender and ICT Forum	PRES-EVAL	Earl	Ramilo	30,000	04/08/2004	01/09/2004
102508	Gender Research in Africa into ICTs for Empowerment	Acacia	Emdon	Ramilo	975,889	01/04/2005	01/04/2007
102900	Genardis: A Small Grants Fund to Address Gender Issues in ICTs in ACP Agricultural and Rural Development Round II	Acacia	Thioune	Radloff	88,250	07/02/2005	01/08/2006
103592	Gender Evaluation Methodology (GEM) Workshop for Asia	Pan Asia	Flynn-Dapaah	Ramilo	45,800	15/02/2006	15/02/2007
Community and Civil Society Networking							
003219	Community Networking Pilot Projects in Latin America	Pan Americas	Cliche	Delgadillo (EcuaneX)	245,441	24/03/1997	30/09/1999
004551-001	The Herbert de Souza "Betinho" Communications Prize	Pan-Asia	Cliche		39,520	15/06/1999	13/02/2002
100866	APC Nancy Hafkin Prize	PB-SID	Smyth		5,000	16/04/2001	30/04/2001
101395	The APC Communications Prizes	Pan Americas	Petrizzini	James, Jorge, Higgs	58,400	30/08/2002	30/08/2006
101849-002	OSILA: Observatory for the Information Society in Latin America	Institute for Connectivity in	Petrizzini		13,436	10/10/2003	01/01/2008

	and the Caribbean (Phase II) [top-up funding for APC Prizes]	the Americas					
102693	Capacity Building for Community Wireless Connectivity in Africa	Connectivity Africa	El Zaim	Tothill, Feldman, Howard	379,645	30/11/2004	30/11/2006
102982	Harambee - Reinforcing African Voices through Collaboration	Connectivity Africa	Fourati	Radloff		23/01/2006	16/04/2008
103523	Wireless Training Workshop at WSIS	Connectivity Africa	El Zaim	Tothill	31,500	01/11/2005	01/04/2006
104172-001	Wireless Going Forward : All Partners' Meeting	Connectivity Africa	El Zaim	Howard	51,655	18/12/2006	18/06/2007
ICT Policy							
003476	Electronic Conference for the Global Knowledge '97 Conference		Cliche	Surman (Web)	?	30/09/1997	25/03/1998
100505	Global ICT Policy Monitor	Pan Americas; Acacia	Cliche		280,300	22/10/2000	19/03/2003
101746	Olistica Phase II Project Development	Pan Americas	Cliche	Jorge	30,000	21/01/2003	21/05/2003
101972-001	Africa Civil Society ICT Policy Monitor, Discussion Forums and Book	Acacia	Emdon	Njuguna	215,317	31/07/2003	01/07/2006
103707	Making EASSy Easy: Media and ICT Policy	Connectivity Africa	Adera	Currie	20,600	10/03/2006	31/07/2006
Institutional Capacity Building							
004124	Strengthening NGO ISPs	Pan Asia	Cliche	Surman (Web)	123,661	22/06/1998	20/08/1999
102899	Capacity Building and Institutional Support for APC	Acacia	Elder, Fourati	Esterhuysen	498,000	01/02/2005	01/02/2008

Appendix 4: IDRC ICT4D History (1996–2006)

Since the organization began, ICTs have always been an area of development research as well as an underlying enabling service and resource. Beginning in 1970, IDRC established an Information Science program to “promote access to information for researchers, policy-makers and information...practitioners.” Just a few years later in 1975 IDRC developed and introduced MINISIS, a computerized library database tool that became the standard in international development. The organization hosted the first computer conferencing systems beginning in the early 1980s, pioneered the use of CD-ROMs for development information and demonstrated leadership in helping to introduce the use of low-earth-orbit-satellites to deliver health information in developing countries in the 1980s.⁵⁹

However, the ability of IDRC’s ICT-oriented staff to focus on the capacity building of its partners changed drastically in the 1990s through a period of rapid downsizing and continuous reorganization.

Downsizing and Reorganization (1991–1996)

In 1991, IDRC entered a period of difficult downsizing and restructuring as a result of past and looming budgetary cuts requiring immediate transformation, especially given that in the autumn of 1991 IDRC was listed among 46 federal organizations to be eliminated. IDRC’s new President, Keith Bezanson, focused his efforts on preserving the Centre and mitigating threats to its closure. The Board approved the “Empowerment Through Knowledge” Strategy built on staff consultations held throughout the 1980s about emphasizing interdisciplinary and inter-divisional approaches to research and problem solving. Program divisions were consolidated from seven to five with each division headed by a director general reporting directly to the President. Staffing was also slashed by 18 per cent between 1991 and 1992. With IDRC’s designation as an Agenda 21 organization following the Earth Summit, it survived threats to its continued existence. However, the new Corporate Program Framework (1993–1996) became an exercise in attempting to capture and salvage all past areas of IDRC’s work within 21 programs clustered under five subject headings related to sustainable development. With another real budget cut of 16 per cent (and accompanying 20 per cent staffing cut) from 1995 to 1996, it became clear that it would be impossible to maintain such a diverse body of research programming.

In June 1995, Bezanson launched another round of structural changes eliminating the 21 programs and creating five themes each with a chief scientist responsible for monitoring the intellectual quality and coherence of the programming being developed and implemented within 24 funded Program Initiatives (PIs) evolving out of 54 clusters of existing projects. Each PI was to be developed with Southern partners and to address particular problems within a clear timeline. PIs would be comprised of three to five Program Officers and be disbanded upon the accomplishment of their objectives. This new structure quickly proved unworkable as Program Officers voted themselves into three or more PIs in order to increase their likelihood of continued employment. There was also no formal management authority initially for each PI. Coupled with the loss of corporate memory through the two rounds of staff cutbacks, PIs suffered and existing projects floundered to their conclusions.

⁵⁹ Fuchs, Richard. A Proposal to the Board of Governors for the ICT4D Program Area. February 2001.

The Corporate Program Framework II introduced in 1997 addressed the challenges facing the new PIs—reducing them from 24 to 15 and limiting the number of PIs in which any Program Officer could participate to two. Each PI was also required to develop a comprehensive prospectus detailing a three-year workplan as well as an annual budget. The pace of organizational change at IDRC slowed for the next three years and the organization entered a period of calm following the appointment of Maureen O’Neil as IDRC President in 1997. This allowed PI teams to begin to work together and to once again focus on their partners, rather than the changing dynamics of IDRC and their own employment stability.

In this context, it becomes easier to understand the many configurations of IDRC staff working on issues related to information and communications technologies throughout the 1990s.

- 1992 – Information Sciences Division transformed into Information Sciences and Systems Division (ISSD), under Martha Stone as Director General
- 1993–1996 – ISSD included three programs on Information Capacity Building, Software Development and Applications and Information Policy Research
- 1995–1999 – Divisions eliminated. Information Theme, with Robert Valantin as Chief Scientist, clustering together emerging PIs on ICTs.

Impressively, in the midst of the organizational turmoil, IDRC continued to develop and expand its ICT work throughout the 1990s, spurred on by the rapid emergence of the Internet and World Wide Web.

In 1994, IDRC launched a new Secretariat, Bellanet, to work with the development community to use ICTs more effectively to broaden collaboration, increase participation and transparency of action and facilitate the diffusion of lessons learned. The Bellanet Initiative was funded by a consortium of development assistance agencies, some of whom also served as members of an independent Steering Committee to set policy and monitor the initiative’s progress. The Bellanet Secretariat, led by David Balson, maintained a small team of technical and networking specialists working with partner agencies, with Collaborative Initiatives, and with Bellanet’s in-house projects.

Similarly, IDRC reviewed its program in Asia in 1994. At that time, research and policy institutions oriented to sustainable and equitable development had already recognized the revolution that was occurring and were increasingly asking IDRC for assistance to connect with their peers and exchange knowledge with other sources of expertise. In response, IDRC commissioned consultations with concerned institutions in 16 cities in 10 Asian countries. The general conclusion of these consultations was that there was a need to help increase the networking capacity of the “information poor” and the research and development institutions that serve them. Four related approaches were suggested to facilitate knowledge networking:⁶⁰

- extend access and use of knowledge networking to poor countries, to marginalized men and women, and to research and development organizations;

⁶⁰ IDRC. PAN Prospectus 1997–2000. <http://web.archive.org/web/19990427205154/www.idrc.ca/pan/prospectus.html>

- build content about development research and knowledge that can be shared electronically, specifically via the Internet;
- initiate and support communication about key development problems and their potential solutions, and;
- support applied research on ICT applications and policy reforms.

These approaches were adopted by IDRC through the Pan Asia Networking (PAN) initiative launched in 1995 at the outset of the new IDRC PI structure.

Building on the momentum generated at the Conference on Information Society and Development (ISAD), hosted by the South African government in May 1996,⁶¹ Africa was the next region to be addressed by IDRC. Then known as “Communities and the Information Society in Africa: A Canadian Initiative for the Millennium,” the idea began to take shape as an effort to fill an important gap in development activities in Africa, as well as a leading contribution by Canada to the objectives of the African Information Society Initiative. To lay the groundwork for the initiative, a number of studies were commissioned on a variety of topics involving Africa and ICTs. The list includes reports on health, education, governance and natural resources.⁶² A further preparatory phase from October 1996 to March 1997 enabled consultations with partners and stakeholders, as well as the completion of a multi-year plan. In 1997, Acacia was formally launched as an IDRC special initiative. As such, it was not required to undertake the same types of formal research activities that normal Program Initiatives were.

In 1997, PAN expanded to becoming a global initiative including Latin America and the Caribbean. In that region, PAN planned to build on IDRC-supported information activities dealing with networking and ICTs in the fields of agriculture, small-scale enterprises, environment, new and renewable energy sources, and health. Because connectivity was more advanced in Latin America and the Caribbean, PAN’s efforts focused more immediately on information-poor communities.

Unganisha was also started in 1997 as a special project under the leadership of newly recruited Steve Song. From 1997 to 1999, the goal of the Unganisha project was to extend the network of the IDRC’s connectivity out beyond the Regional Offices to the actual projects that the IDRC funded. In addition, it was the goal of the Unganisha project to facilitate/explore/prototype better means for facilitating collaboration, between geographically diverse projects, between Program Initiatives and Program Officers, and between different departments at the IDRC. In 1999, Unganisha was wrapped up, with its intellectual property on collaboration (and Steve Song) picked up by Bellanet.

Consolidation and Expansion (2000–2006)

By late 1999, IDRC was once again ready for another round of changes to increase its operational efficiency and effectiveness. In order to resolve accountability issues arising out of the flattened PI system, the IDRC Board of Governors adopted a Corporate Strategy and Program Framework for 2000–2005 which reintroduced a layer of management in the form

⁶¹ ISAD was itself a follow-up to the G7 Conference on the Information Society hosted by the European Commission in February 1995.

⁶² IDRC. Acacia Phase I. <http://web.archive.org/web/19970720061542/www.idrc.ca/acacia/phase.htm>

of three directors of program areas (DPAs): Social and Economic Equity, Environment and Natural Resources Management, and Information and Communication Technologies for Development (ICT4D). Combined with the regional directors, this led to a matrix organization with each region and each program area having a director. Budget allocations continued to be with the PIs and decided at the corporate level in order to minimize the recreation of earlier divisional behaviour.

In January 2001, Richard Fuchs began his duties as the new DPA for ICT4D and began to craft a more coherent program out of the Program Initiatives. The Corporate Strategy and Program Framework had clearly delineated that the new ICT4D Program Area should address *Universal Access and Benefits* and *Information Economy*⁶³ program areas. However, Fuchs recognized that the new program area would need to move beyond these narrow confines in order to be relevant and effective in the rapidly changing (and increasingly crowded) ICT4D field. He therefore sought and received support from the Board of Governors to expand IDRC's research themes to include poverty reduction, people development, networks, learning and development, and partnerships. The issue of gender was also made a cross-cutting theme within the PA.⁶⁴ In order to increase programming coherence, the status of Acacia was shifted from special initiative to Program Initiative and Fuchs was also given a position on the Bellanet Steering Committee. In addition, Pan Americas spun off as a corporate project from PAN, which returned to its initial Asian roots. With PIs established on a regional basis, the ICT4D team struggled at the human resource level to develop global programming, they established strong lines of communication internally to ensure the coordination and combination of financial resources to support global initiatives and networks.

From 2000 to 2003, the ICT4D activities more than doubled within IDRC. This was due, in large measure, to the fact the IDRC's programming in this area was widely respected and, as international policy incorporated this type of programming, IDRC was often "top of mind" when new initiatives were considered. In 2000, IDRC President Maureen O'Neil was appointed a member of the Digital Opportunity Task Force (DOT Force), launched by the G8 at its Kyushu-Okinawa Summit Meeting. The DOT Force was intended as a vehicle for the G8 to develop concrete steps to help bridge the international digital divide. Given the increased profile of O'Neil and ICT4D, when the Prime Minister announced the establishment the Institute of Connectivity in the Americas (ICA) at the Summit of the Americas (April 2001), it was not surprising that IDRC was selected to house this new fund. The same was true when Canada hosted the G8 Summit in 2003 and the Canada Fund for Africa included a new initiative, Connectivity Africa, which was a direct outcome of IDRC's participation and leadership in the DOT Force.⁶⁵

From 2003 to 2005, the ICT4D program grew yet again, largely through external funding⁶⁶ and attention brought to ICT4D through the WSIS process. When the world's largest software company, Microsoft, was looking for an organization to host a new *pro bono*

⁶³ International Development Research Centre. Corporate Strategy and Program Framework. 2000–2005. January 2000.

⁶⁴ Fuchs, Richard. Information and Communication Technologies for Development (ICT4D) Program Area. Report to Board of Governors. October 2003.

⁶⁵ Fuchs, Richard. DPA Report 2003.

⁶⁶ In 2005–2006 the ICT4D Program Area allocated \$24.3 million with \$11.3 million (46.5 per cent) emanating from external sources.

telecentre support network, it sought ICT4D@IDRC to lead this new initiative. Additionally, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation joined in the new Telecentre.Org corporate project with a new investment of \$5 million to IDRC. Finally, Foreign Affairs Canada, CIDA and Industry Canada all agreed to support a second proposed phase of the Institute for Connectivity in the Americas for an additional 10 years with a proposed budget of \$40 million.

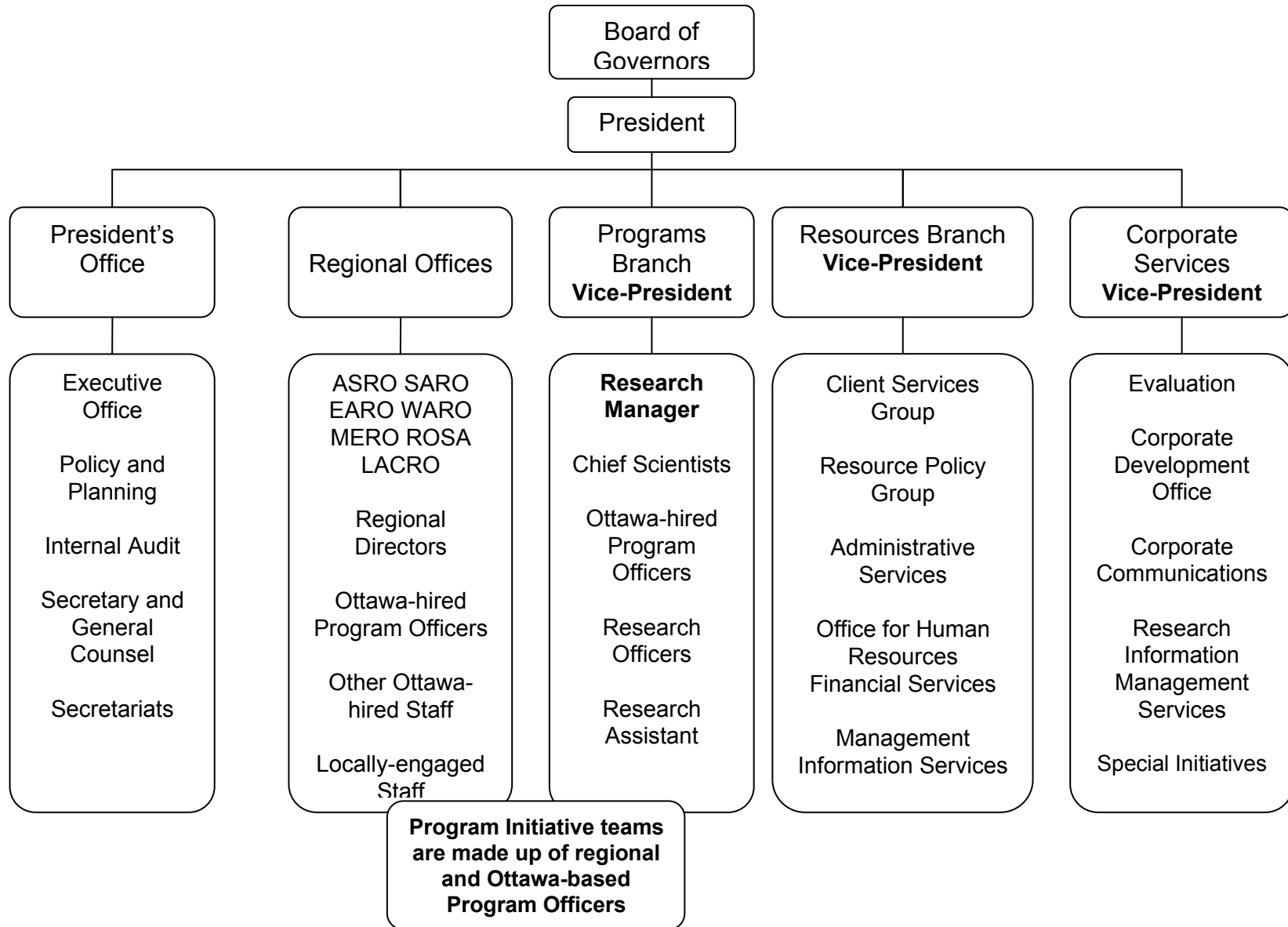
Despite the growth in activities and budgets, the Program Area became even more integrated. Critical to this were the decisions to unify the leadership of regional activities. The Acacia Program Initiative and Connectivity Africa Corporate Project were programmatically and organizationally integrated in mid-2003. Since that time, there has been one manager, Steve Song, for these two African ICT4D programs and all Program and Research Officers have “joint appointments.” With this approach IDRC has been able to locate senior staff in each of the African regional offices as well as in a satellite office in South Africa.⁶⁷ Similarly, in 2005 the Institute for Connectivity in the Americas and Pan Americas gained Ben Petrazzini as a manager of both program elements and all staff assumed “joint appointments.”⁶⁸ This unification greatly simplified relationships with IDRC partners and gave greater flexibility to IDRC to fund both research and non-research activities such as training or technical innovations within proposed projects. The WSIS process also acted as a unifying force within IDRC given the need to coordinate efforts to engage IDRC partners in WSIS and its accompanying conferences and exhibitions.

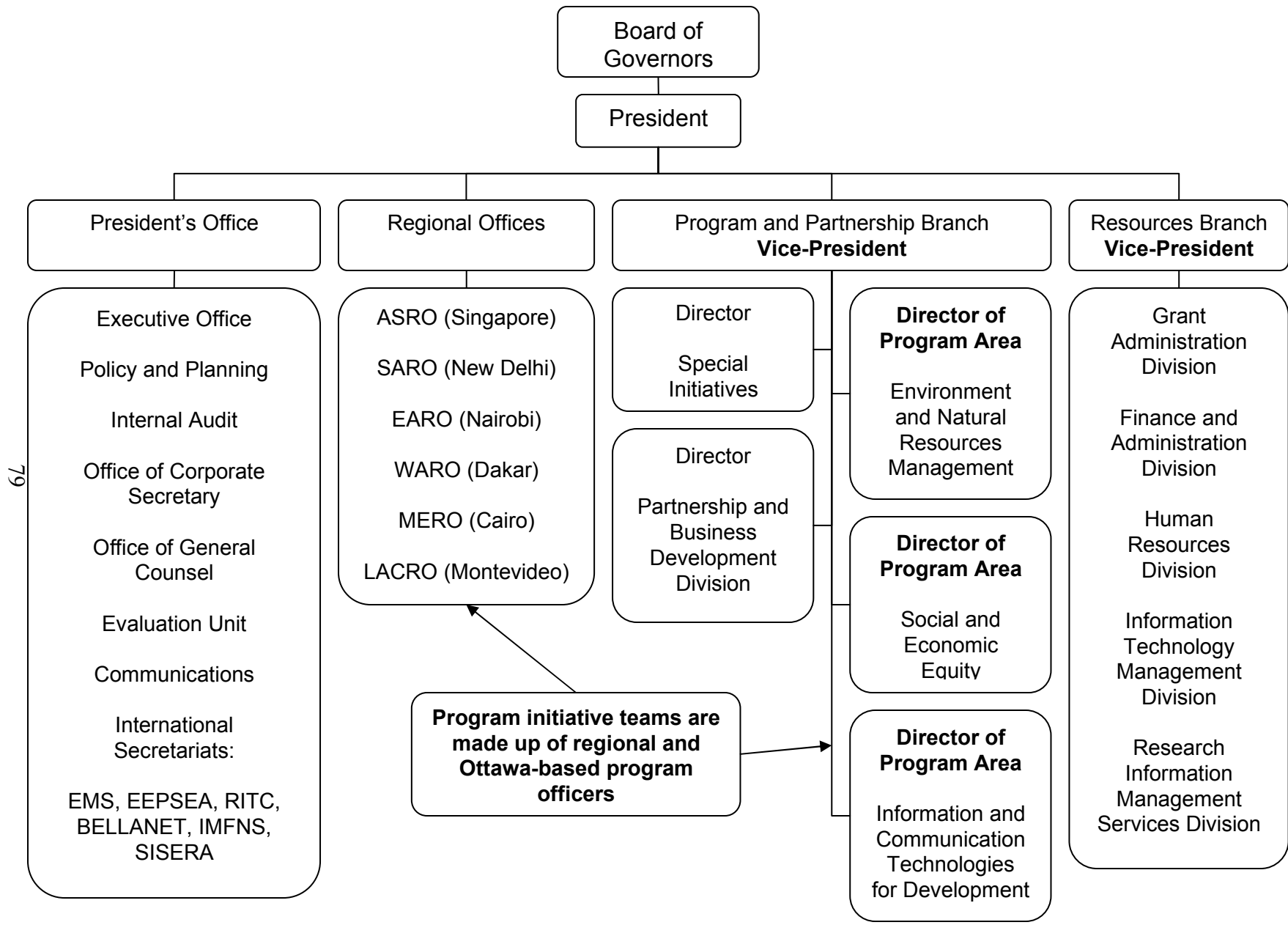
In November 2004, with the approval of the Corporate Strategy and Program Framework, a further generation of Information and Communication Technologies for Development programming was authorized for the 2005–2010 period. Along with renewed support for the current Acacia and Pan Asia Program prospectuses the existing Corporate Project, Pan Americas, was approved as a Program Initiative. Several new explorations were also planned and developed for consideration as Corporate Projects in the 2005–2010 CS&PF generation of programs. With the support and regional guidance by IDRC’s MENA Regional Office a new Corporate Project in the Middle East was to be developed. Additionally, a small policy and technology coordinating mechanism was proposed for the Program Area.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Fuchs, Richard. DPA Report 2005.

⁶⁸ Fuchs, Richard. DPA Report 2005.

⁶⁹ Fuchs, Richard. DPA Report 2005.





Appendix 5: APC History

Pre-APC Member Establishment and Collaboration (1982–1989)⁷⁰

Between 1982 and 1987 several independent, national, non-profit computer networks emerged as viable information and communication resources for activists and NGOs. The networks were founded by people with experience in communication and international collaboration in the NGO world, and a deep commitment to making new communication techniques available to movements working for social change. Most networks were founded by a small number of people who devoted their personal equipment and all their free time to spread electronic communication to their colleagues working for change. Almost all networks started from somebody's home or in borrowed office space, using a personal phone line and a simple PC, before they grew and moved to offices with professional and volunteer NGO staff—still with the same commitment.

In 1987, people at GreenNet in England began collaborating with their counterparts at the Institute for Global Communications (IGC) (then known as PeaceNet/EcoNet) in the United States. These two networks started sharing electronic conference material and demonstrated that transnational electronic communications could serve international as well as domestic communities working for peace, human rights and the environment. This innovation proved so successful that by late 1989, networks in Sweden (NordNet), Canada (Web), Brazil (AlterNex), Nicaragua (Nicarao) and Australia (Pegasus) were exchanging information with each other and with IGC and GreenNet.

APC Creation (1990–1996)

In the spring of 1990, these seven organizations founded the Association for Progressive Communications (APC) to coordinate the operation and development of this emerging global network of networks. In 1991, APC was formally adopted and structured as a project of the Tides Foundation—located in San Francisco, USA—which provided all managerial and accounting services. When the Tides Center was created in April 1996, it took over as the APC fiscal sponsor. While Alternex was an APC member (until 1998), APC was also a project of IBASE in Brazil.

As a membership-based network, APC was governed by a Council of members. Each member (one per country) paid dues and had one representative on Council; however, larger members had more votes than smaller ones in order to protect their greater technical and financial investment in establishing the network. Membership grew from seven to 22 organizations between 1990 and 1996. This growth proved challenging to manage since some new members didn't pick up the APC culture easily. Nevertheless, the network operated as a "very collegial family" with strong relationships between the small APC Secretariat staff and member networks.

While the notion of APC Partners formally existed from the earliest governance structure of the network, they did not play an institutionally strategic role. Partners of APC are those organizations that are committed to the same mission of APC, mostly NGO networking, but

⁷⁰ APC Members Handbook. October 1998.

have not yet the institutional capacity to become paying members. In the first five years of existence, APC partners had direct relationships to an APC member. APC was aware of this relationship, however, APC secretariat and other members had no direct contact with them, except during joint APC projects, like UN conferences, or when invited to an APC face-to-face meeting. At the 1995 Council meeting, Council decided APC secretariat should make direct contact with partners, and communication with partners should be made in a three-way loop between partner, member and Secretariat. This procedure was established to bring partners closer to APC, encourage them to be more participative in APC discussions, and eventually, to become dues-paying members.

Until 1996, most core expenses were funded by member dues. The ability of the APC Secretariat to generate its own funding through grants helped to reduce financial pressure on members, as well as increase the services the secretariat could provide to members. In 1991, the APC budget was \$50,000—paid in full by member dues. The core budget increased to \$130,000 in 1996, supported by member dues. Given its reliance on these membership dues, over the years APC has attempted to be aware of members' overall stability, supporting them where necessary in technical, administrative, development and other needs. Nonetheless, situations have arisen where a member institution has undergone deep crises that ranged from financial to institutional instability. For these situations, APC drafted a "Node in Crisis Strategy Plan" in April 1996 so that APC would be better prepared to deal with such situations.

Grant fundraising pursued by Council and the General Manager also helped to increase the variety of activities which the network could undertake. In the early years, a member network would often take the lead for a network-wide project. Other times, the project was routed through the APC Secretariat at Tides. The decision was based largely on the needs of the donor as well as geographic considerations for where the majority of the funds would be spent, particularly in the case of projects associated with major conferences and events. As former APC Director Edie Farwell notes, "There was an easy and transparent back and forth. For example, IDRC couldn't easily fund non-profits in the U.S. They could, however, provide funds to NGOs in Canada and developing countries, so they tended to route funding through our members."⁷¹

The majority of APC-wide projects from 1991 to 1996 were related to UN conferences. In 1992, APC began to serve as the primary provider of telecommunications for NGOs and UN delegates during the preparatory process and on-site for six UN World Conferences from the 1992 Earth Summit through the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women. At each of these events, APC worked with staff and volunteers from member networks around the world to set up on-site communications centres offering e-mail and Internet access as well as training and support. The UN conferences built the depth of relationships between APC members and helped to spread an understanding of what APC member networks had to offer. As a result of this increased UN exposure, in 1995 APC was granted Consultative Status, Category 1, to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Organizations with this status are entitled to submit written statements to the Council, to be granted hearings and to propose agenda items for consideration by the Council and its

⁷¹ Farwell, Edie. 7 September 2007. Interview.

subsidiary bodies. Consequently, APC gained an official capacity to sponsor NGO access to information technology with regards to UN policies.⁷²

Spin-off and Incorporation (1997–1999)

By the mid-1990s, APC members were forced to make the transition from being pioneers in the use of online communication, to facing intense competition. The emergence of the Web was a real watershed for APC and its members. There was at once tremendous competition and huge new opportunities to strengthen civil society using the Internet. But as a network of Internet service providers (ISPs) and e-mail providers, APC was initially caught off guard by the explosion of commercial Internet providers that took place in most parts of the world.⁷³ In response to these changes, APC members shifted their attention away from the nuts and bolts of connectivity and towards helping NGOs make better use of rapidly emerging new Internet tools.

APC itself needed to broaden its focus from primarily facilitating technical interconnection, to embracing the emerging “ICT (information and communication technologies) for justice and development” movement in a holistic way.⁷⁴ At the February 1997 Council meeting, APC implemented a new framework within which to organise its work. Due to its fast growth in the previous seven years, APC needed to define programs and management systems to help it fulfill its mission more effectively.

The major decisions regarding the new structure were:

- to organize APC’s activities into program areas;
- to establish more formal organizational management systems; and
- to establish a Chair and an Executive Board of Council.

To optimize APC’s ability to take full advantage of its capacity as a global network of networks, and to promote greater sharing and cooperation among members, APC established four core functional programs:

- Network Development;
- Strategic Uses;
- Information, Content and Tools; and
- Communications Policy Awareness.

These programmes provided a framework for the activities that APC undertook, largely through its membership, since 1990. This framework marked the beginning of a new phase of APC operations—more outward-looking, community-driven and focused. This expression of APC member networks’ common aims and activities allowed for more cohesive coordination and planning at the regional and national levels. In addition to the four core functional programs, APC incorporated two existing programs, whose activities encompass aspects of all four functional programs: Women’s Networking Support Programme (operating since 1993) and APC Africa (established in 1997).

⁷² APC. Annual Report 2000.

⁷³ Mark Surman, APC Annual Report 2000.

⁷⁴ APC Annual Report 2000.

In terms of establishing more formal organizational management teams, the APC Secretariat was redesigned and expanded to serve a broader role. The APC Secretariat was now recognized to be the “glue” among members, and to help bring about meaningful and practical collaboration as well as share the workload of serving its target user communities in the following ways:

- providing advice and support to regional and global projects;
- facilitating information networking between members, and among user communities;
- elaborating and moving forward in each of the program areas;
- fundraising and collaborative project development;
- promotion through various marketing materials: brochure, WWW site, best practices examples, articles, etc.; and
- representation of APC member interests in various forums.

The Secretariat staff was from multiple countries and worked out of different offices. All institutional infrastructures were online and virtual to enable collaboration. In addition, a 7–10 day annual meeting became absolutely fundamental for staying closely in touch.

Governance changes in 1997 introduced two key ideas that allowed for even greater expansion of APC in the following years. First, due to the new reality of Internet worldwide, as well as structural changes of some members, it was decided that APC would look for ways to open up to members that may not be connectivity providers, but were still compatible with APC’s mission. As a result, members now did not need to be connectivity providers themselves, but still needed to find a solution for local NGOs to have access to APC conferences and material. Secondly, some decision-making responsibility was shifted to an eight-person Executive Board. Each APC member would now appoint two representatives to APC council - the body that sets APC strategic priorities every four years. The council then elects an eight-person Executive Board. The EB works with staff to produce APC’s action plan and oversees and monitors implementation. While this change was necessary to deal with the ever-increasing membership, it did shift the organizational culture of APC from being a closely knit group to something more structured without some of the early creative “start-up” feeling.

As a result of the changes in 1997, APC initiated a period of intensive fundraising for five years to further APC’s development and programs. It was expected that in five years, APC would again be self-sufficient for core expenses, funded through stronger members being able to pay larger dues and/or by generating revenue for services, information and contracts. In October 1997, APC hired Maureen James (formerly of Web Networks) as Fundraising Manager to ensure sufficient resources for APC’s core programs to operate.

Simultaneously, it was decided to become independent from the Tides Center. As APC grew and attracted more funding, it became increasingly expensive to be a project of Tides because Tides administration took nine per cent of every grant for overhead. APC incorporated as an independent non-profit organization in California, USA, effective 30 September 1998—at which time all human resources, financial, legal and administrative work became the sole responsibility of APC. The following two years were a period of intense organization building, with the establishment of all basic institutional systems. In May 1999, the APC Secretariat and Executive Board underwent a facilitated strategic planning process

at its annual meeting. The resulting strategic plan focused on activities required to meet the secretariat's goals are in five broad areas: membership, revenue generation, public profile, products and services, and organization.

It was also a period of change with the loss of two founding APC members in 1998—Pegasus and Alternex—and the resignation of Edie Farwell as APC's Executive Director in 1999. Maureen James served as acting ED for approximately one year while the organization sought a new leader to build the APC's organizational and network structures for the new millennium.

Growth of the APC Organization and Projects (2000–2006)

In many ways, the year 2000 was a turning point for APC. During the 6th APC Council Meeting in May 2000 in Hungary, APC gained a new Executive Director, broadened its membership rules, and modified its governance and staffing models to become a more project-oriented organization. These changes were built on in 2001 and set the tone for the following years during which time the APC Secretariat evolved to become a powerful organization in its own right, as well as a strong facilitator for the APC network.

In May 2000, Anriette Esterhuysen joined APC as Executive Director. Prior to her post with APC, Esterhuysen was the Executive Director of SANGONeT, APC member in South Africa, in which role she had served on the APC Executive Board from 1997 to 1999. Esterhuysen had a background in information and communications in the social justice and development sectors and had served on the African Technical Advisory Committee of the UN's Africa Information Society Initiative. Esterhuysen's arrival shifted the focus of operations to South Africa and brought with it a much closer association to developing country interests and priorities in ICT4D. With Esterhuysen's arrival, Maureen James assumed a new role as Programs and Projects Manager, helping to maintain the continuity of relationships she had built on projects both as a fundraiser and acting ED. APC's core management systems staff—Executive Director, projects and programmes manager, and finance and communications managers—remained small. However, 2001 saw a significant expansion in their capacity to handle projects as they began to take on project managers and regional and thematic project staff on a contractual basis.

The APC governance model was modified in this new phase of operations. In 2000, APC opened its ranks to a more diverse range of organizations, by revising their membership criteria to include any organization with a commitment to empowering civil society through the use of the Internet. The “one-member-per-country” rule was scrapped, membership fees were lowered, and the application process was simplified. While APC lost two existing members in 2000, it gained two new members from Eastern Europe and in 2001, six new organizations became APC members.

Perhaps one of the most significant crises APC faced as a membership organization came to a head in 2000. This revolved around a grant of \$50,000 received from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) in support of their Internet Rights work. The decision to approach NED initially for funding had been approved by the Executive Board, and there had been some discussion on the issue within Council. However, as is often the case with online decision-making, participation in the process was not engaged at a sufficient level at

the necessary time. After the grant had been received, several member organizations remained deeply concerned that APC's association with NED, an agency previously connected to particular US-based political interest groups acting in Central America, would be perceived as an indirect endorsement. In 2000, at the face-to-face Council meeting in Hungary, APC Council decided almost unanimously to return the grant to NED. It was a trying case, but APC emerged from it internally with a more consensual, engaged membership.⁷⁵ It also led to a proposal in 2001 that allocated greater responsibility in decision-making to APC's Executive Board, a smaller, more easily-convened group of representatives.⁷⁶

Perhaps of greatest significance in 2000, though, was the adoption of the APC action areas: Internet Rights; Mobilizing Civil Society; Participation and Building Information Communities. The APC action areas were not intended to replace the thematic programs developed in 1997 to enhance communication and cooperation among people and groups working in the social justice community. APC programs together with the action areas were to function as two dimensions for organizing and assessing the scale, scope and impact of APC's work.

However, the action areas themselves were displaced somewhat two years later in favour of a revamped set of programmes. In April 2002 APC's Executive Board approved an organizational structure made up of programmes and management systems.

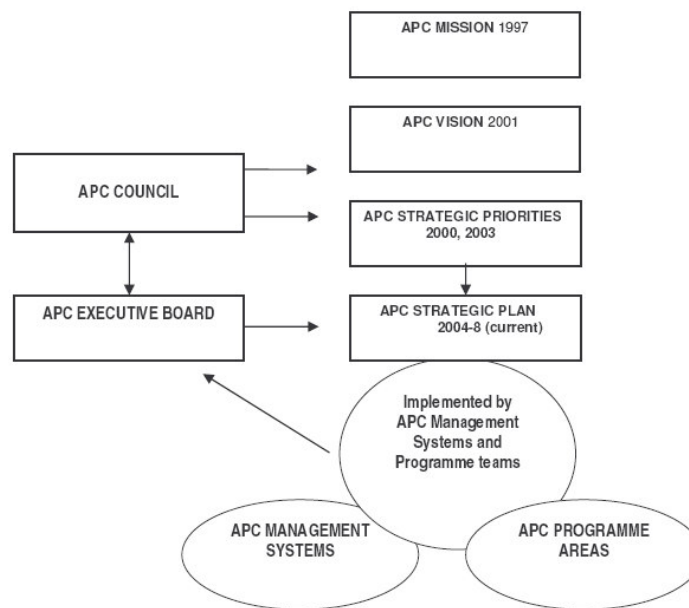


Figure 8: APC Management Structure (2002–2006)

Seven management systems were recognized with responsibility shared among senior management staff: Member Participation and Development; Network Development;

⁷⁵ APC Annual Report 2000.

⁷⁶ APC Annual Report 2001.

Communications, Media and Promotions; Human Resources; Finance and Administrations; Fundraising; Strategic Management. The six program areas operating since 1997 were conflated into three broad programs:

- Communications and Information Policy;
- Strategic Uses and Capacity Building; and
- Women's Networking Support.

The people who managed these 10 areas (programmes and management systems) were formally recognized as APC's strategic management team. APC reporting always distinguishes between programmes and management systems—management systems and staff provide the support function for programs, and also for the member network.

These shifts in staffing, membership, governance, and program priorities put APC into an excellent position to assume leadership prominence through the WSIS Process from 2002 to 2005. APC had moved from being a member services organization, to one that operated within the broader context of ICT and civil society, from building online content to securing an enabling policy and regulatory environment. Supporting this level of staffing and activity required the development of a more structured APC action plan against which projects could be assessed and monitored. At the APC Council Meeting in November 2003, the council identified APC's strategic priorities for the following three years. These strategic priorities were converted into APC Objectives (Key Result Areas – KRAs) for APC as a whole, as well as for each of its three programs, for 2004–2008. These KRAs then formed the basis for a Logical Framework Analysis to be shared with all staff and funders. With these management tools in place, APC secured nearly USD\$3 million in core funding from the Ford Foundation and DGIS for 2005–2008. With the increase in donor attention and funding, APC was able to significantly increase the scale of its activities. By the end of 2006, APC had a staff team of 29 people and had grown to having 45 members in 34 countries around the world.

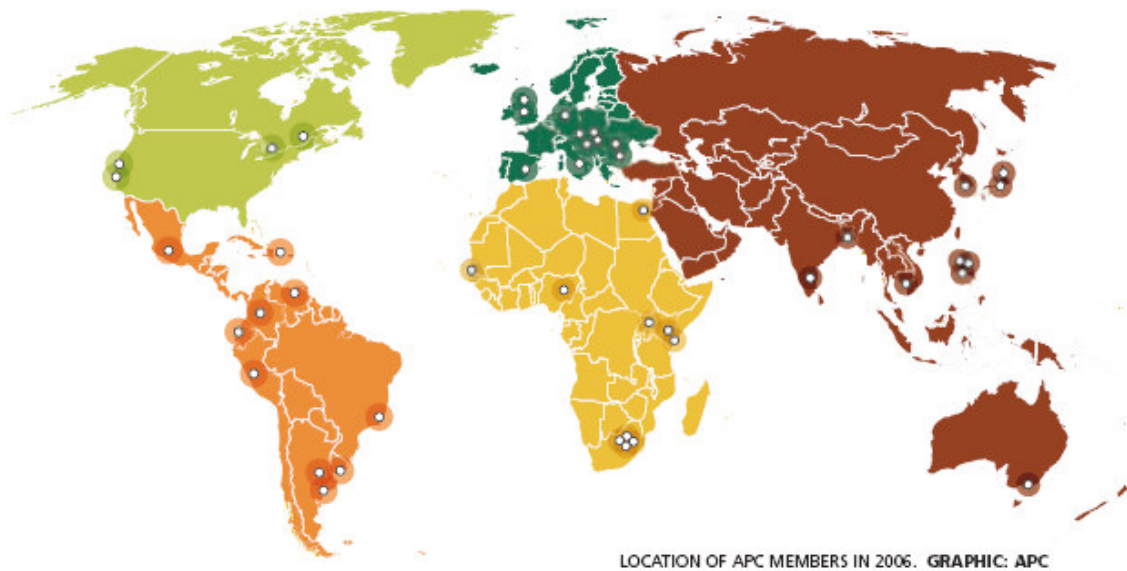


Figure 9: APC Member Map 2006

Through this growth, however, APC had to continue to grapple with its dual character as a network and as an organization. Tension grew with the APC Council as APC evolved from a flat network structure governed and financed by its members to a larger network in which responsibilities were delegated to an elected Board, that relied on donor funding, and developed an increasingly empowered staff that played both strategic and facilitation roles. However, a carefully prepared and intensive, open process to develop revised bylaws has served to reduce tensions. The new bylaws approved in November 2007 clarify roles and responsibility of staff, members and Board, and of the Executive Director in particular.

Appendix 6: APC Organizational Capacity Self Assessment Worksheet

* Note: Scoring on this worksheet is on a scale of 1-4, with 4 representing a high level of capacity in place. The McKinsey Capacity Assessment Grid provides detailed descriptions of each of the four levels of capacity for all elements in order to guide staff in identifying which best reflects their organization.

McKinsey Organizational Capacity Self Assessment Worksheet					
Time Periods for benchmarking (e.g., MM/YY) ==>		2002	2003	2004	2005
		Insert scores below for each time period			
Aspirations	Mission	3	4	4	4
	Vision – clarity	3	3	3	3
	Vision – boldness	3	3-4	3-4	3-4
	Overarching goals	3	3	4	4
Strategy	Overall strategy	2	3	3	3
	Goals/performance targets	2	3	3-4	3-4
	Program relevance and integration	2	2	3	3
	Program growth and replication	2-3	3	3	3
	New program development	2-3	2-3	3-4	3
	Funding model	1	1-2	2-3	3
Organizational Skills	Performance measurement	1	2	2	2-3
	Performance analysis and program adjustments	2	2	2-3	2-3
	Monitoring of landscape	3	3	4	3-4
	Strategic planning	2-3	3	3	3
	Financial planning/budgeting	3	3	3	3
	Operational planning	2	2	3	3
	Human resources planning	1	2	2	2-3
	Fundraising	3	3	3	3
	Revenue generation	2	2	2	2-3
	Partnerships and alliances development and nurturing	2	3	3-4	3-4
	Local community presence and involvement	3	3	3	3
	Public relations and marketing	2	3	3	3
	Influence of policy making	2	3	3-4	4
	Management of legal and liability matters	1-2	1-2	1-2	1-2
	Organizational processes use and development	2	2-3	3	3
Human Resources	Staffing levels	1-2	1-2	2-3	3
	Board composition and commitment	2	2	2-3	2-3
	Board involvement and support	3	3	3	3

CEO/Executive Director and/or senior management team	Passion and vision	2-3	2-3	3	3-4
	Impact orientation	3	3	3-4	3-4
	People and organizational leadership/ effectiveness	3	3	3	3
	Personal and interpersonal effectiveness	2	2	3	3
	Analytical and strategic thinking	3	3	3-4	3-4
	Financial judgment	3	3	3	3
	Experience and standing	3	3	3	3-4
	Management team and staff dependence on CEO/Executive Director	2	2-3	3	4
	Senior management team	2-3	3	3	3
	Staff	2-3	3	3	3-4
	Volunteers	-	-	-	-
Systems	Planning systems	2	2-3	3	3
	Decision making framework	2	3	3	3
	Financial operations management	2-3	3	3	3
	Management, recruiting, development and retention	3	3	3	3
	Incentives	1-2	2	2	2
	Knowledge management	2	2-3	2-3	2-3
	Physical infrastructure – buildings and office space	-	-	-	-
Technological Infrastructure	Telephone/fax	--	-	-	-
	Computers, applications, network and e-mail	4	4	4	4
	Web site	3	3	3-4	4
	Databases and management reporting systems	2	2	2	2
Organizational Structure	Board governance	2-3	3	3	3
	Organizational design	2	2	3	3-4
	Inter-functional coordination	2	2	2-3	3
	Individual job design	2	2-3	2-3	2-3
Culture	Performance as shared value	2-3	3	2-3	3
	Other shared beliefs and values	3-4	3-4	3-4	4
	Shared references and practices	3	3	3	3

Appendix 7: Bernard Research Capacity Framework⁷⁷

In the context of IDRC's research-for-development mandate, capacity development activities are intended to create and strengthen the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for good quality, relevant and useful research. Based on the 40-project review, these can be grouped into five broad capacity categories, each reflecting something an individual or institution is expected to be able to do or to do better, as a consequence of the Centre's intervention. These are

1. ***conducting*** research;
2. ***managing*** research activities and organizations;
3. ***conceiving, generating and sustaining*** research with respect to a sector/theme or country/regional priorities;
4. ***using/applying*** research outcomes in policy and/or practice; and
5. ***mobilizing*** research-related policy and program "systems" thinking.

These capacities are not mutually exclusive. Rather, they reflect the various tasks or dimensions of a full research enterprise, the kind of overall competency which should be available within any country's research environment, to address any development problem.

Examples of capacity characteristics suggested here to be subsumed under the five categories are suggested below.

1. *The capacity to conduct research:* This refers to the technical, disciplinary and/or sectoral knowledge, mastery of research methods and analytical skills appropriate to conducting either a current or an evolving research investigation. Specifically, it includes capacities to:

- work effectively within a research paradigm;
- conduct technical/scientific lab work at a level of expertise and independence appropriate to the research activity;
- conduct fieldwork (social, biological) data collection and analysis;
- communicate ideas to, and collaborate with, peers and supervisors; and
- interpret and present results appropriate for policy/practice users.

Participatory research projects imply particular additional capacities to:

- analyze issues of the sector/discipline as they relate to broader socio-economic factors, especially those of community assets and vulnerability;
- communicate with a wide spectrum of stakeholders, e.g., community members and counterparts, government and sector officials;
- facilitate the learning of others, both in research methods and more generalized areas of community life-management; and
- understand the implications of PR as a process of initiating social change within fragile communities.

2. *The capacity to manage research:* This refers to the professional knowledge and practical experience of management principles, processes and procedures within the research context

⁷⁷ Bernard, Anne. 2005.

appropriate to conceiving, initiating, facilitating implementation and ensuring monitoring of a research activity, program or institution. Specifically, it includes capacities to:

- negotiate research activities appropriate to available/potential human and infrastructure resources in the programme, organization or wider environment;
- identify technical and fieldwork requirements of the research;
- develop and oversee execution of workplans, including monitoring and assessment systems;
- select, direct and supervise researchers, support staff, resource people;
- facilitate internal coordination and external liaison; and
- plan and execute efficient, transparent and accountable finances; and maintain or write technical reports.

3. *The capacity to conceive, generate and sustain research:* This refers to the sophisticated and comprehensive disciplinary, sector or problem area expertise, coupled with strong and experienced-based knowledge of the field, appropriate to engaging with, inventing and exchanging new ideas and to generating research. It includes capacities to *reconceive* a development problem in ways which account for its interaction with other problems and sectors, and to present the problem in ways that reach beyond the immediate moment and/or local conditions. It includes being able to perceive the importance of the specific issues within the context of the wider whole. Specifically, it includes capacities to:

- analyze and synthesize complex ideas and data;
- perceive problems or issues in researchable terms;
- challenge existing research paradigms, and create new ones;
- formulate theory and concepts, think laterally;
- initiate first-order questions and set them within a research design;
- generate/implement data gathering, analysis and synthesis procedures;
- articulate implications of results in policy and/or use-oriented terms;
- serve as independent/senior resources regionally and globally on matters of theory, policy and practice; and
- manage teams of researchers, coordinate networks, generate/catalyze research and exchange activities.

4. *The capacity to use research results—in policy-making and implementation, programme development and management, development/sector practice, and to facilitate contributions to other research activities.* For researchers: This refers to the professional knowledge of factors (concepts and processes) underlying communication and adoption of innovation and management of change, and of the nature and implications of the research outcomes in terms of potential risks and benefits, constraints and opportunities for users, appropriate to moving from the generation of ideas and analysis to enabling their dissemination and application—and helping others to engage with this process. Specifically, it includes capacities to:

- tailor research designs, methods and the articulation of results in terms of specific application for specific users;
- analyze the types of attitudes, knowledge and skills needed by users to put the research innovation into practice and the capacities they need to maintain it, e.g., to overcome bureaucratic, technological or socio-economic barriers to sustainability;

- conceive and execute dissemination strategies;
- present/disseminate research and results in clear actionable terms;
- plan and execute “risk-mitigating” strategies in introducing innovations;
- facilitate user access to/practice with research products and ideas;
- design and implement participatory research/adult learning methodologies;
- design and manage on-site and post-research extension activities;
- act cooperatively in putting time and imagination into joint project development and application with practitioner/users; and
- tolerate ambiguity of the real world, using incremental, iterative approaches.

For users (practitioners, programmers, policy-makers in the specific research context): This refers to having a knowledge of the substance, processes and/or technologies involved in the research, including its underlying justification and rationale, theory and assumptions and its potential risks and benefits, appropriate to applying it in their policy and/or practice environment. Specifically, it includes capacities to:

- engage in/understand the “language of research” and of the researchers (especially important where the cultural/social divide between researcher and user is wide, e.g., with indigenous communities);
- critique the research in terms of its relationship to reality on the ground;
- exercise self-confident judgement in deciding to enter into, and withdraw from, application of innovation activities;
- test and adapt ideas and innovations; and
- access and manage human and infrastructure resources for immediately applying the innovation and sustaining it.

5. *The capacity to create or mobilize research links to systemic policy formation or change, and to promote systems change:* This refers to knowledge of the research area, particularly in relation to development problems/issues and dimensions of risk or benefit in dealing with the research problem at national, regional and/or global levels; and professional and practical knowledge of policy systems and processes in general and within the specific contexts relevant to research application appropriate to mobilizing and facilitating application. This is arguably among the most *institution-intense* of the capacity areas, requiring people with capacities to think and act in terms of *organizations as systems* and *individuals as part of coherent groups* and able to work collaboratively with common goals. Specifically, it includes capacities to:

- interpret and implement research results in policy and organizational systems terms;
- communicate research results/implications horizontally and vertically to policy-makers and implementers;
- advocate and mobilize within and across policy bodies and interest groups;
- network—not simply “be in” a network—with self-confidence as an active-listener, interlocutor, catalyst;
- disseminate skills and results of research to other communities; and
- think and act in institutional and systems change terms.

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004428 Lessons Learned: Building Strong Internet-Based Women Networks	Project Approval Document Final Narrative Report Project Completion Report
100994 Gender Evaluation Methodology for ICT Initiatives	Project Approval Document Trip Report (Cuernavaca, Mexico) Final Technical Report Rolling PCRs - Stage 3 Interview
102508 Gender Research in Africa into ICTs for Empowerment (GRACE)	Project Approval Document Rolling PCRs - Stage 1 Interview
102606 WNSP Global Gender and ICT Forum	Project Approval Document Final Report
102900 Genardis: A Small Grants Fund to Address Gender Issues in ICTs in ACP Agricultural and Rural Development Round II	Project Approval Document Trip Report (Uganda) Report to IDRC Consulting Contract for Genardis Evaluation Evaluation of GenARDIS-Phases I and II. Summary of Key Findings and Recommendations. and Full Report.

Project Number and Name	Project Documents Reviewed
103592 Gender Evaluation Methodology (GEM) Workshop for Asia	Project Approval Document Final Report
Community and Civil Society Networking	
003219 Community Networking Pilot Projects in Latin America	Project Completion Report
004551 The Herbert de Souza “Betinho” Communications Prize	Project Approval Document Year 1 Report
100866 APC Nancy Hafkin Prize	Project Approval Document
101395 The APC Communications Prizes	Project Approval Document Proposal Hafkin Prize Interim Report, September 2003 Betinho Prize Interim Report, February 2004 Third Technical Report, April 2006 Final Technical Report, October 2006
101849-002 OSILA: Observatory for the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean (Phase II) [top-up funding for APC Prizes]	Project Approval Document Final Report, February 2004

Project Number and Name	Project Documents Reviewed
102693 Capacity Building for Community Wireless Connectivity in Africa	Project Approval Document Project Proposal East African Regional Workshop Report Southern African Workshop Report Technical Report, 31 July 2005 Technical Report: Revised, 20 January 2006 Technical Report, 21 July 2006 Report on Participants' Evaluation of Wireless Training Workshops, February 2007 Project Completion Report Stage 3
102982 Harambee – Reinforcing African Voices through Collaboration	Proposal Technical Report (October–December 2006)
103523 Wireless Training Workshop at WSIS	Project Approval Document Technical Report, 31 January 2006
104172 Wireless Going Forward : All Partners' Meeting	
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003476 Electronic Conference for the Global Knowledge '97 Conference	Final Report
100505 Global ICT Policy Monitor	Project Approval Document Trip Report (Chicago), 1999 Trip Report (Ecuador), 2001 Project Completion Report
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101972-001 Africa Civil Society ICT Policy Monitor, Discussion Forums and Book	Project Approval Document APC Africa ICT Policy Monitor Project Human Resource Capacity Memorandum Interim Report, May 2004. Interim Report, January–December 2005 Final Technical Report
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Appendix 9: TORs for Case Study

Strategic Evaluation on Capacity Development: Terms of Reference for Organizational Case Studies

1. Background

Over the past several decades, IDRC in line with many development agencies, organizations and donors, has grappled with the issue of how to assess capacity-building initiatives. Many of these agencies have struggled with how to articulate and document the complex array of results of their capacity-building activities. Part of this difficulty lies in the fact that there are few systematic reviews of how development agencies construct the concept of capacity building in order that they may systematically look at how this construction leads to results. While there is a great deal of information regarding development projects that have attempted to build capacity, there is a dearth of information regarding how development agencies approach the concept of capacity building.

In response to the above considerations, IDRC's Evaluation Unit (EU) is conducting a strategic evaluation to investigate the Centre's contributions to the development of capacities of those with whom the Centre works. The evaluation aims to provide IDRC's own staff and managers with an intellectual framework and a useful common language to help harness the concept and document the experiences and results that the Centre has accumulated in this domain. Specifically, the strategic evaluation focuses on the processes and results of IDRC support for the development of capacities⁷⁸ of its Southern partners—what capacities have been enhanced, whose, how and how effectively.

Assisted by the consultant firm Universal Management Group, during the first three phases of this strategic evaluation, significant progress has been made in (1) defining what IDRC means by “building” or “developing” capacities and in sharpening understanding of *how* IDRC supports capacities and with *whom*; (2) developing an initial set of typologies that will assist IDRC staff and partners in conceptualizing, planning, monitoring and evaluating capacity development and (3) elaborating a list of “good practices” that capture some of the elements of IDRC's support that staff and partners view as being critical to building research organizations and systems.

Initial conceptual work developed in the first phases of the strategic evaluation indicates that “for IDRC staff, capacity building is an essential variable in their approach to development. With a focus on process and on learning-by-doing, and especially on sustaining long-term personal relationships, IDRC is fixed on the value of the individual partner (the researcher or group of researchers) as the key component in capacity building.”

⁷⁸ The international development community tends to use the term “capacity development” rather than “capacity-building”. The latter is often seen to mean that capacities are assumed to be absent, or that the process is one of moving from one level of capacity to the next, whereas “capacity development” acknowledges existing capacities, and the political dynamics of change. In this document, both terms are used somewhat interchangeably as “capacity-building” is the term most frequently used in IDRC parlance.

IDRC's approach to capacity building was found to be normally instrumental or functional in nature, and focused on tangibles, such as professional competencies, capabilities, and the tools needed to conduct research. These skills included the ability to identify research problems, to design and implement projects, to monitor and evaluate, to achieve good financial management, to link with other researchers and with donors, to publicize results, and so on. For IDRC, therefore, capacity building means working with partners to conduct better research in a specific field and that any change that occurs as a result of this capacity building is at the problem or research area level rather than at the institutional or systems level. And yet, analysis undertaken during the first three phases of the strategic evaluation also indicates that IDRC partners are always connected to others within the research problématique or system. As such, at IDRC, capacity development often takes a *systems approach*. In other words, it not only addresses the individual(s) directly involved in the project(s) or program, but also looks at how these individuals are connected to others: other individuals, organizations and/or networks.

It is clear that it is only through examining the dynamics and evolution of how all the involved parties and communities work together to solve the development challenge that we will better understand how IDRC supports *the capacity to do research-related activities*. In light of these findings, IDRC has a growing interest in understanding how its capacity support (through projects or other activities) at the individual level—individuals and/or teams/groups is able (or not able) to influence change within their organization or network. IDRC would also like to have a deeper understanding of how individuals have the capacity to build or establish relationships and partnerships to influence change through research, and how these partnerships and relationships interact within the various settings (organizations, networks).

With a view to increasing the Centre's ability to capture and track capacity changes in terms of the dynamics and interactions between individuals, organizations and networks and to understanding if and how IDRC contributes to capacity changes, Phase 4 of the strategic evaluation will focus on the development of six organizational case studies. Case studies will better ground the findings of Phases 1 to 3 of in specific, in-depth experiences.

2. Case study scope and methodology

The case study work consists of a purposeful sample of six organizational case studies, chosen on the basis of maximum variation. Maximum variation sampling aims to capture and describe the central themes that cut across a great deal of variation. For small samples, it turns the apparent weakness of heterogeneity into a strength by applying the logic that “any common patterns that emerge from great variation are of particular interest and value in capturing the core experiences and central, shared dimensions of a setting or phenomenon” (Patton, 2002, 234-235). In this strategic evaluation, it is expected that this approach will bring to the fore important learning on IDRC's experiences and abilities for supporting research capacity in different types of organizations and research environments.

Organizational case studies have been chosen in order to capture how, over time, IDRC's sustained support contributes to capacity development at the individual/group, organizational and network levels in the field. The organizational case studies will examine

different types of organizations in different geographic regions and with diverse sectoral concentration, which have received significant IDRC support over the last 10 years.

All of the case studies selected for this strategic evaluation have been chosen on the basis of being within the top 50 Southern-based recipient organizations of IDRC financial support since 1996. Being longitudinal in nature, the case studies will examine the cumulative results of IDRC's significant investment (more than \$ 2 million in each case) extended through a number of projects or capacity support interventions, by different IDRC programs over a significant period of time. The organizational case studies will examine both the *processes* and the *results* of capacity development with Southern partner organizations.

The case studies will present rich narratives of different capacity development processes. In IDRC's view of *complete capacity*, there is a need to pay attention to and fund multiple functions to enhance the capacity to do research-related activities, including how to conduct, manage, and communicate research. For IDRC, communicating research goes beyond simple presentation of results; it involves dissemination strategies that include effective approaches so that research can be taken up and used by policy-makers, communities, private sector, NGOs, governments, other researchers, etc. to find solutions to their development problems. Analyzing *complete capacity* will bring the evaluator into contact with the multiple IDRC areas that provide capacity development support including Programs Branch, the Evaluation Unit, the Partnership and Business Development Division, Research Information Management Services and the Grants Administration Division

These narratives will be developed through (1) A review of documents including organizational assessments (Institutional Risk Profile), project design documents, monitoring documents (*inter alia*, technical reports, trip reports, correspondence) and project reports; and where they can be located; (2) Interviews with project leaders, project participants and other key informants in the organizations being evaluated; (3) Interviews with relevant IDRC staff from programs, grant administration and financial management (GAD, regional comptrollers) and units involved in capacity development work with the organizations being evaluated (e.g., responsible program staff, senior IDRC managers, Evaluation Unit, Library, PBDD, etc.). Additional research components (e.g., Internet or academic literature reviews, focus groups, surveys, etc.) can be added as needed by the case study author to answer the evaluation questions.

The case studies will need to explore what collaborative efforts were established and achieved throughout the projects/interventions being examined and determine whether these collaborations were established to achieve particular development tasks: to do research, to manage research or to communicate/disseminate research to others to use and/or apply in policy and/or practice. Since our understanding of capacity is that it changes and shifts over time, the case studies will also need to illustrate how these collaborative efforts evolved and shifted over time, and if and how the research problem also evolved or shifted over time.

Each of the case studies will cover a range of projects and activities in the same organization in order to demonstrate the rich diversity of capacity support interventions that are employed by different IDRC programs and units. This diversity will assist IDRC to look back at its collective work with the organization in question and to evaluate—in its own

terms—the Centre’s ability to apply what has come to be seen as its own tacit list of “good practices” for capacity development. (See Annex 1)

By collecting data at the lowest level of analysis (the project or capacity development intervention), the case study authors will need to layer or “nest” these units in order to aggregate their data analysis upwards to come up with findings at the organizational level. The end goal is not to measure the partners’ performance *per se*; rather, it is to explore what links can be made between partners’ performance and the level/type of capacity development support received from IDRC. In framing the case studies around the five data clusters mentioned below (environment, intention, description, performance and findings), findings will test key corporate assumptions and should provide information and insights into *what and how* we are doing under *different working conditions*, *how we understand* the concept of capacity development, *how we can do better*. In all cases, the focus of the analysis should be centred on capacities related to research for development as this is IDRC’s mandate.

3. Use of organizational case studies

As a central piece of this strategic evaluation, the case studies will be used by IDRC staff to support the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of capacity development projects and activities. The case studies will also be used by IDRC Senior managers to better understand IDRC’s particular approach to capacity development, as a key corporate result area.

4. Case study data collection areas:

(i) Examination of the research for development context

Lead questions:

- How has/does the overall legal, political, social/cultural and economic environment influence the partner organization’s ability to engage in research for development?
- What have been the factors that have most inhibited or enabled the uptake of capacity support for research?

Sub-questions:

- How has/is the organization affected by the administrative/legal environment? (Does it have a clearly defined legal framework? Is it affected by bureaucracy?)
- Has/is the organization considered influential by others in its external environment?
- How is the organization affected by the political environment? (stability, corruption, links to government, links to civil society)
- Does the organization take into account the effect of culture on possibilities for access to and participation in capacity development initiatives? (e.g., religious/ethnic/gender/class customs and biases; nepotism; violence and crime)
- Does the organization have access to a predictable pool of capable human resources?
- Does economic policy support the organization’s ability to acquire technologies and financial resources for research capacity building?
- Are there other partnerships have been formed with other donors, researchers and civil society stakeholders? For what purpose?

- Is there adequate physical and technological infrastructure to enable the partner organization to make the best use of capacity development support?

(ii) Intention at the outset of the IDRC-partner organization relationship:

Lead questions:

- What were the intentions/expectations of IDRC and the partner organization in terms of capacity development at the outset? How were these intentions/expectations developed and to be accomplished?
- To what extent were the intentions explicit, logical (i.e., based on a theory of change), coherent, appropriate, and connected to the research context and problématique?

Sub-questions:

- What lead IDRC and the partner organization to become involved with each other through the project/activity?
- What did each one hope to achieve?
- If appropriate, did these intentions/how did these intentions change over time?
- If there was an explicit objective to build capacity, how was this determined and formulated? If there was no explicit or implicit objective, why not?
- Who is/was involved in the building of capacities—individuals, organizations, networks?
- What is/was the overall understanding of how capacity changes?
- How was the approach to capacity designed? Was there a set approach or was it a “mixed bag” of approaches?
- Did it fit with any conception of “complete capacity”—or was *conducting the research* considered good enough?

(iii) Description of the capacity development intervention(s)

Lead questions:

- What capacity development strategies were employed and how were they implemented? Why were they chosen?
- How relevant, strategic and effective were the capacity development strategies?
- How did the strategies evolve over time? Why?

Sub-questions:

- What actually happened? Why did it happen this way?
- What kinds of capacity were addressed? (e.g., to do research, to manage research, to communicate/disseminate research?) Using what type(s) of interventions?
- How relevant, appropriate and effective were these interventions to the capacity problem or research problem being addressed?
- Did/how did the approach to capacity in the project/intervention evolve over time? What results were achieved?

- What outputs were produced by the project/intervention? At what level? (individual, organizational, network?)
- What (if any) collaborations (partnerships, relationships) were achieved by the partner through the project /activity? What roles did people involved play? How did these change over time? Did the relationship with IDRC lead to other/new collaborations with others?

(iv) Performance and continuity of the IDRC-partner organization relationship

Lead questions:

- What are the outcomes of the IDRC support in terms of individual and organizational capacities and the conduct and uptake of the research?
- What factors helped/hindered the achievement of the outcomes? (related to IDRC and beyond)?
- How has IDRC been influenced by the relationship with the partner organization?
- What is the ongoing nature of IDRC's relationship with the partner organization?

Sub-questions:

- What capacity changes/outcomes have occurred in the partner organization? (improving/expanding research capacities, generating new knowledge, affecting policy and/or practice? Other?)
- What changes (if any) have occurred in IDRC as a result of the capacity support relationship between the two?
- Did/how did the partner organization's perception of a research or development problem shift or change over time? To what extent was/were the IDRC intervention(s) a factor in this change of perception?
- Are there any significant cases in which the building of capacities at the researcher level has led to macro change at the organizational level? Are there any significant cases in which the opposite has been true?
- Has IDRC capacity development support allowed researchers to take on a leadership role in their organization?
- How has/has the building of capacities (individual, organizational, network) contributed to the ability of an IDRC partner organization to fulfill its mandate?
- How has/has the partner's definition of capacity changed over time?
- Did/how did IDRC staff collaborate and consult with one another in their dealings with this organization?
- What other factors affected the capacity development results with this organization? (internal context of IDRC, IDRC program objectives, other initiatives in place, including those of IDRC as well as other donors).
- Has IDRC capacity-building support contributed to effecting systemic change within the research environment? Has it played a role in "influencing established (and often firmly held) paradigms, practices, attitudes and behaviours?" (Adamo) How??

v) Findings

Lead questions:

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of IDRC's approach to capacity development?
- How can IDRC improve its capacity support in the future to this organization?

Sub-questions:

- How can IDRC best support organizations to respond to challenges and shifts in the external research environment?
- How can/can IDRC target the capacity needs of organizations—while continuing to support individual researchers and research groups?
- What changes (if any) should IDRC consider incorporating into its plans for capacity development support to the partner organization?

5. Responsibilities and Tasks

The case study authors will complete the following tasks:

Case Study Design and Management:

- a) Review of documents including organizational assessments (Institutional Risk Profile), project design documents (Project Approval Documents, correspondence between IDRC and partners), monitoring documents (*inter alia*, technical reports, trip reports, correspondence) and project reports (technical reports and Project Completion Reports); any other documentation relevant to evolution and status of IDRC's organizational relationship on issues of capacity development with the case study organization.
- b) Travel to Ottawa and participate in **a two-day methodology workshop being organized by IDRC's Evaluation Unit on 3, 4 and 5 July 2007**. The objective of the methodology workshop is two-fold: First, to brief case study authors on IDRC's objectives and rationale for this strategic evaluation and ground the authors' understanding and development of the case studies on the knowledge base of progress (in both conceptual and in practical terms) achieved under the first phases of the evaluation. Second, by addressing any unanswered questions or doubts that the authors might have, the methodology workshop will provide a space for collective author feedback to IDRC on the direction of the case studies and generate a common understanding of IDRC expectations around case study objectives, questions, content and analysis.
- c) Based on the Terms of Reference (TORs) including the lead questions noted under the data clusters outlined above, the reading of the organizational case study file, and discussions at the methodology workshop, the consultant will develop a case study **workplan (one for each case study)** for submission and approval by IDRC, prior to beginning data collection in the field. The workplan should include a description of the proposed case study methodology and data collection instruments, a work timeline and should flag any outstanding questions requiring attention of clarification from IDRC's Evaluation Unit.

Collection of Data:

- d) Compile a list of key case study informants including, but not limited to: project leaders, project participants and other key informants in the organizations being evaluated; relevant IDRC staff from programs branch, grant administration and financial management (in Ottawa and regional comptrollers) and units involved in capacity development work with the organizations being evaluated (e.g., senior IDRC managers, Evaluation Unit, Library, PBDD, etc.); external actors including other donors and stakeholders who have interacted with the case study organization in a capacity development capacity.
- e) Using the qualitative and/or quantitative collection methods of preference, collect any additional data (either insider or outside of IDRC), that the case study author deems appropriate and necessary for answering the evaluation questions being posed by IDRC.
- f) Travel to the field in order to interview key informants (varies according to case study). Interviews should normally move out from those most directly affiliated with the project to those purported to have been affected by or to have used the results in some way. Because there is inherent bias in interviewees to present findings in the best possible light, triangulation of data sources is crucial. Every effort should be made to ensure that interviews are conducted with representatives of at least three of the main groups involved: project implementers in the organization, beneficiaries, IDRC and where applicable related project participants (other funded or departmental studies which have been linked to the project). The consultant will normally have an opportunity for follow-up visits for data verification or further data collection where warranted.
- g) Participate in a validation workshop in a location to be determined (most likely Ottawa), the consultant will make a brief presentation, describing the case and indicating preliminary findings. The consultant may be asked to facilitate the data analysis or may be asked to be an active participant in the process. Following the workshop, the team may determine that it is advantageous to follow up the findings with further data collection in the field, either for the introduction of new respondents or to gather data in areas not yet addressed in the case.
- h) Finalize the case report based on inputs and any further verification carried out, and submit final satisfactory reports in hard copy and electronic format by in accordance with the schedules outlined for each case study. Upon completion of all the case studies, the Evaluation Unit may invite the consultant to participate in a cross comparative case study analysis of the data.

6. Timeline

Timeline varies for different case studies due to variations in authors' abilities to travel to the field and/or IDRC regional office abilities to accommodate author visits. Overall, first drafts of the case studies are expected in November 2007. The Evaluation Unit plans to hold a validation workshop with case study authors, IDRC staff, select partners and other interested stakeholders in the first months of 2008. Final drafts are expected by the end of first quarter in 2008.

ANNEX 1:

Good Practices that Contribute to IDRC's Capacity Development (adapted from DAC, 2003 and IDRC's Corporate Assessment Framework, 2006).

GOOD PRACTICES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT	MANIFESTED IN IDRC THROUGH:
IDRC characteristics	
Persistence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustained mentoring • Continuity, prolonged engagement • Iterative learning process • Aim to build legitimacy, credibility and trust
Flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding arrangements • Location within Canadian government system • Agility to respond to developing country needs
Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay engaged under difficult circumstances • Provide legitimacy, credibility and trust
Building Partnerships	
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networks of individuals and organizations/institutions • Inter-organizational linkages • Face-to-face interactions between/among IDRC staff and researchers • Providing legitimacy and credibility to partners and beneficiaries
Harnessing Existing Capacities	
Strategic intelligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scan locally and globally, reinvent locally – regional presence to determine existing capacities • Staff knowledge of regions
Build on existing capacities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustained mentoring – provide long-term support beyond “one-off training” sessions • Regional presence – to determine existing capacities • Use local, existing capacities rather than creating parallel systems
Relevance of the Problem	
Locally-driven agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local ownership • Local and global participation in determining the agenda • Programs continually evolving to meet developing country demands • Bring Southern perspectives and voices to the analysis of development challenges • Support devolvement of major research initiatives when appropriate

Appendix 10: Biography of Case Study Author

Terri Willard is an Associate with the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD). Previously she worked as a Project Manager from 1996 to 2005 (seconded from IDRC to IISD in 1996–2000)



Willard's primary areas of activity have included communications and knowledge networks for sustainable development, engaging young people in Information and Communications for Development, and researching the links between the information society and sustainable development. From 2000 to 2003, Willard was heavily involved in the Global Knowledge Partnership and the World Summit on the Information Society. She currently focuses on network governance, communications and evaluation challenges at all levels from the local to the global.

Willard holds a B.S. in Foreign Service from Georgetown University and a M.Sc. in Forestry and its Relation to Land Use from Oxford University. She has been recognized for her achievements as a Rhodes Scholar, Henry Luce Scholar, Hearst Senate Youth Program Scholar, and Georgetown School of Foreign Service Scholar.

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