



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Strengthening Information Society Research Capacity Alliance (SIRCA II) is a capacity building programme for information society research in an international development context in the Global South (Africa, Asia and Latin America). It is an expansion of its predecessor, the Strengthening ICTD Research Capacity in Asia (SIRCA I, started in August 2008) as the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the Singapore Internet Research Centre (SiRC) continue to bring their endeavours together in order to pursue and promote excellence in information society/ICTD research in its target regions.

In its last two cycles, the SIRCA programme has broadly achieved three overarching goals.

First, it has supported theoretically-based and methodologically rigorous social science research into Information and Communication Technologies and Development (ICTD).

Second, it has covered a geographical footprint across the Global South (The SIRCA II programme had principal investigators in Latin America, Africa and Asia) and fostered connections through a mentorship and collaboration networks. The SIRCA programme has also strongly emphasized research capacity building and training.

Third, it has disseminated research findings through such venues as academic journals, conferences and other relevant online and print media outlets. The impact of research conducted under SIRCA has gone beyond academia, into the university and policy level of influence.

The programme closes in August 2014, after close to 3 years of intense capacity-building efforts and research impact that have benefitted both the selected grant recipients and the ICTD community.

Research Projects

The Programme funded 15 research projects (15 grant recipients across 3 continents – better known as Project Investigators or PIs). The selected projects focused on theoretically-based and methodologically rigorous social science research in the ICTD area. The research covered a variety of topics (close to 70% of all projects were inter-disciplinary in nature) including research in e-services in Brazil, new media use in China and questions of gender, political participation, economics and fundamental theory in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

SIRCA PIs have engaged in a number of interesting collaborations and research activities: One PI, along with a collaborator, has initiated a Brazil/Ghana partnership



for students to design and build relevant mobile applications. Another PI was instrumental in helping set up a new Internet Research Group in his university's Communication Department. Yet another PI was approached by the International telecommunications Union (ITU) to help organize a joint ITU and US State Department gender empowerment programme for school girls.

All 15 research projects have been completed with most meeting their research objectives. Some have exceeded their objectives. Many of these interesting research projects and others have been published in journals or presented at conferences. These will also be subsequently published in a dedicated SIRCA book volume ("Impact of Information Society Research in the Global South", Springer) and a special peer-reviewed journal issue of the Electronic Journal of Information Systems in Developing Countries (EJISDC) in the latter part of 2014. The research was also presented at conferences and other events locally and internationally. SIRCA PIs have continued to conduct research, going on to achieve much more than what was expected and many have been recognized for their work academically and professionally:

- Rajesh Chandwani (India) was appointed as a faculty member at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad in the Personnel And Industrial Relations department;
- Nikos Dacanay (Thailand) and Paz Olivera (Peru) were admitted to the Msc in Practicing Sustainable Development (ICT4D track) at Royal Holloway, University of London;
- Matias Dodel (Uruguay) was admitted to a PhD program at the University of Haifa in Israel.
- Kabran Djane (Cote D'Ivoire) successfully completed his PhD and then started his teaching post in the rural area of Korhogo;
- Fabro Steibel (Brazil) started consulting as an "information and technology architect" in a new portal on Human Rights policy in the MERCOSUR region, and is now an independent researcher from Brazil on the new Open Government Partnership programme.
- Baohua Zhou (China) became an associate professor at the School of Journalism, Fudan University, Shanghai

Apart from the achievements of current SIRCA researchers, past graduates of the SIRCA programme have also made impressive strides in their work. The achievements of SIRCA alumni showcases of the sustainability and long term effect of the programme's intensive mentorship model:



- Regina Hechanova was appointed the President of the Psychological Association of the Philippines, and is the current Chair of the Dept of Psychology of Ateneo de Manila University since June 2013.
- TB Dinesh was involved with a project by the ISIF, leading to a paper presentation at the Proceedings of the International Cross-Disciplinary Conference on Web Accessibility in Lyon, France.
- Mahfuz Ashraf and Sirajul Islam were appointed joint Notes Chair for the next iteration of the ICTD 2015 conference to be held in Singapore.
- Komathi Ale collaborated with current SIRCA PI Paz Olivera on the second phase of a research project based in Peru; the collaboration resulted in enhancing the quantitative component of the project, thus allowing for triangulation of earlier qualitative work, and providing greater rigor in results.

Mentorship

SIRCA was built on a three-pronged capacity-building approach of providing financial support in terms of research grants, providing relevant research training workshops and exercises, and finally, through a one-on-one mentoring arrangement. This unique mentorship component provided PIs with the assistance and guidance to ensure steady progress and completion of project, while the collaborators were able to enhance their own personal and professional knowledge. The learning and exchange between mentor and mentee (collaborator and PI) facilitated the outcome of stronger and more rigorous research findings within the programme.

Collaborators benefited from their relationships with their PIs and the research work they were involved in immensely. Many of them stated that they were able to use their learnings and experiences from the SIRCA research they were involved in, with their personal work and research. For instance, Dr Rich Ling collaborated with PI Kabran Djane on a number of papers based on his research into food supply networks. Jude Lubega and PI Fabro Steibel are collaborating on a joint app-building workshop. Elsa Estevez and Marisol Montoya were appointed guest editors of a special journal issue of The Electronic Journal of Information Systems in Developing Countries (EJISDC). Overall, they were positive about the approach to capacity building and felt that this was indeed a practical way of improving the skill sets of emerging researchers in the region.

Training and Capacity Building

Another key component was the workshops. SIRCA conducted three Training Workshops: one each in Atlanta 2012, Jamaica 2013 and Mauritius 2013. The first workshop focused on research fundamentals and basic research methods. The second, in Jamaica, focused on research methodology and theory, while the third in Mauritius focused on academic writing. The workshops included one-on-one sessions between mentors and PIs, external and internal trainers, and support on



managing deadlines and keeping track of SIRCA timelines and deliverables. Two of these events, Atlanta 2012 and Jamaica 2013, were conducted at the sidelines of major ICTD conferences, and allowed SIRCA PIs to participate in and interact with other audience members and experts from the broader ICTD field, and present their work.

In December 2013, SIRCA participated in both a Pre-conference workshop and main conference 'open session' at the ICTD 2013 in Cape Town, South Africa. The open session provided PIs the opportunity to present their work to a large audience (over 100 people in attendance or passing through) and engage in discussions and potential collaborations.

PIs were also given the opportunity to publish their research work in a forthcoming issue of the EJISDC journal, as a part of training to publish in academic journals. Many submitted their completed papers and will hope to be published after the blind and three-tiered review process.

PIs were also given the opportunity to present their work at international conferences and publish in other academic and non-academic forums. A three-day SIRCA 'Bootcamp' was held after the ICTD 2013 conference in South Africa as both a training and dissemination event, as they got yet another opportunity to present their final works to the SIRCA community and invited ICTD experts from around the world.

Dissemination

SIRCA collaborated with The Electronic Journal of Information Systems in Developing Countries (EJISDC) to release a special journal issue in mid-2014 comprising of papers from SIRCA research grantees. As part of SIRCA's capacity building efforts, two SIRCA collaborators, Elsa Estevez and Marisol Montoya, served as guest editors under Roger Harris and Arul Chib. 10 papers were submitted, and a double blind peer-review process is ongoing.

A book titled "*Impact of Information Society Research in the Global South*", edited by Arul Chib, Julian May and Roxana Barrantes and published by Springer is also in the pipeline for publication in 2014. The publication examines the question of impact, looking at both the impact of ICTD research, and research on impact from within the SIRCA programme.

In addition to these activities, the programme also encouraged PIs and mentors to disseminate their research locally and internationally where possible. As listed in the annexes, it is evident that many PIs took this opportunity to present their research.

Process Improvement

Based on SIRCA's experience in the current cycle of capacity building projects, future iterations are expected to tweak the process based on feedback and suggestions from PIs and Collaborators. Based on collaborator feedback, most of the challenges that PIs had were due to their limited research experience in the field. Challenges such as difficulties in application of theories and fieldwork planning and design were directly due to the lack of research skill-sets. To overcome these limitations, SIRCA hopes to allow emerging research participation in the literature review and theory-building phase of SIRCA III. In addition, the programme hopes to use SIRCA Affiliates (such as doctoral or post-doctoral students, engaged full-time) as support for SIRCA III in advancing theory and field building.

Upon reflection, the first objective of theoretical and methodological rigor was the most challenging. As a consequence, the theoretical contribution to the field has been limited. This occurred as a consequence of two policies. First, since emerging PIs submitted research proposals on specific topics, there was no over-arching theme that could be assumed to emerge, beyond general ideas of impact in various domains. Secondly, since PIs were necessarily emerging researchers in need of capacity-building, the theoretical argumentation was not cutting-edge, but largely derivative. For greater impact on the field as a programme, SIRCA may need to shift strategies by involving senior researchers much more in the process of theory-building. One suggestion was to increase the motivation of PIs, as well as the time that can be devoted to SIRCA projects, to allow in their budgets a monthly compensation as principal researchers. SIRCA will consider and investigate whether salary claims may be submitted as part of research proposals in the next iteration of the program. An analysis of the Collaborator-PI intensive mentorship model has shown that mentors engage more productively if the PI's research aligned with their own interests, a tweak SIRCA hopes to introduce in SIRCA III by better pairing PIs with senior researchers based on thematic interests.

Impact Beyond Academics

A number of SIRCA II PIs took their projects beyond the academic level – engaging at the policy level with local communities where their field work was based (Nikos Dacanay at the Thai/Burmese border), at the university level with regards to research focus and funding (Ezmieralda Melissa in Indonesia, and Matias Dodel in Uruguay), with national media and policymakers (Sebastian Benitez in Argentina) and the international level, representing the ICTD perspective in global public consultations on issues of Open Government (Fabro Steibel).

These impacts are detailed in the snapshot below, along with publications, collaborations and appointments resulting from PI work during the SIRCA II timeline:

Snapshot of SIRCA II Achievements:

Region	Publications and Presentations	Collaborations	Impacts	Degrees	Appointments and Promotions
Asia	<p>Baohua Zhou - <i>Contemporary Communication</i> (Vol. 2, pp.41-48) and third-place prize for “Deng Xiaoping Theory Research”, Shanghai Social Science Research Association,</p> <p>Ezmieralda Melissa - Media Asia 2012 conference, Osaka, Japan</p> <p>Nikos Dacanay - 2nd International Conference on Human Rights and Peace and Conflict in Southeast Asia, Jakarta.</p> <p>Mary Luz Feranil - 7th International Technology, Education, and Development Conference (INTED) 2013, Valencia, Spain.</p> <p>Elinor May Cruz - Philippine Political Science Association 2013 International Conference in April 2013, and International Association for the Study of Sexuality, Culture and Society International Conference, Buenos Aires, Argentina.</p>	<p>John Traxler, Elinor May Cruz, Ezmieralda Melissa and Rajesh Chandwani – Connect2SEA “Reflexive societies and ICT” grant.</p>	<p>Nikos Dacanay Findings from the PIs research were used to get national funding for Burma Women’s Union’s (BWU) citizen journalism project, which documents political and current events/stories in several parts of Burma.</p> <p>Ezmieralda Melissa The PIs research resulted in similar research projects being taken up at the university-level (Swiss-German University, Indonesia) and the incorporation of ‘ICT’ as a key research theme under the university’s umbrella.</p>	<p>Nikos Dacanay – MSc, Royal Holloway, University of London</p> <p>Ezmieralda Melissa – University of Western Australia</p>	<p>Rajesh Chandwani –Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad.</p> <p>Baohua Zhou became Associate Professor, Fudan University, Shanghai</p>
Africa	<p>Kabran Djane - panel discussion on “Gender, Mobile Phone and Food Security in Africa” at World Social Sciences Forum (WSSF)</p> <p>Stephen Kimani - INTERACT 2013 conference , Cape Town and e-Learning Africa 2013, Windhoek, Namibia</p> <p>Achille Tefong - Pre-Conference Doctoral Student Workshop and</p>	<p>Jude Lubega and Fabro Steibel - joint Africa/Latin America app-building workshop</p> <p>Rich Ling and Kabran Djane on research into food supply networks in</p>		<p>Kabran Djane – PhD</p>	

	Academy of Management Africa Conference, Johannesburg	Cote D'Ivoire			
Latin America	<p>Matias Dodel - "TIC, educación y sociedad. Reflexiones y estudios de casos a nivel iberoamericano"</p> <p>Paz Olivera – IFIP WG 9.4: Social Implications of Computers in Developing Countries, Jamaica</p> <p>Sebastián Benítez Larghi - Propuesta Educativa and Digital Literacy, Technology and Social Inclusion: making sense of one-to-one computer programmes around the world, University of Minho, Braga, Portugal. Also at The XXIX Congreso Latinoamericano de Sociología ALAS, Santiago and X Jornadas de sociología de la UBA in July 2013, by the Facultad de Cs. Sociales, Argentina</p>	<p>Elsa Estevez and Marisol Montoya – guest editors for the EJISDC journal</p> <p>Fabro Steibel and Elsa Estevez- field visit to Macao</p>	<p>Fabro Steibel The PIs work led him to work with the 'Marco Civil da Internet', or the Brazilian Civil Rights Framework for the Internet. The PI was called to design two other public consultation portals, one for the Ministry of Justice, and one for the Human Rights agency of Mercosul (IPDH), and was recently selected as the independent researcher from Brazil for the global Open Government Partnership</p> <p>Matias Dodel The PIs work led him to creating/coordinating a new research group on Internet's impacts in Uruguay: the Research Group on Uruguay, Society & Internet (GIUSI): http://www.ucu.edu.uy/giusi The group's mandate is to create a general theoretical or analytic framework on Internet's impact in Uruguay. The group is also the national chapter for the World Internet Project</p> <p>Sebastián Benítez Larghi The PI discussed his research with policy makers at the Programa Conectar Igualdad (PCI), an institution focused on digital inclusion in Argentina. The PI was also invited several times to TV and radio programs and interviewed by different news agencies and newspapers.</p>	<p>Paz Olivera – MSc, Royal Holloway, University of London</p> <p>Matias Dodel – PhD, University of Haifa, Israel</p>	<p>Fabro Steibel – Open Government Partnership, Brazil</p> <p>Andrea Ordonez – independent research with SDPI's Sixteenth Sustainable Development, and ICT for Change Roundtable, India</p>



Future

As the SIRCA programme draws to an end, its follow-up initiative is under way. Also managed by SiRC and funded by the IDRC, the SIRCA III program focuses on cross-cutting issues of Openness and Open Development. SIRCA III will start with a distinct research phase, comprising multidisciplinary teams of senior researchers from around the world. Emphasis will be placed on thematic projects that foster interdisciplinary research with respect to issues around openness, and the first phase will be active for 10-12 months.

SIRCA III hopes to increase the programme's impacts on its community, widen the scope of said impact and pioneer a participatory, democratic, participant-driven working model for capacity building built on principles of Open Development.

Technical Report Table of Contents

1. **Executive Summary**
2. **Programme Overview**
 - 2.1 IDRC Support and Its Rationale
 - 2.2 About SIRCA I
 - 2.3 SIRCA II's Global Presence
 - 2.4 The SIRCA Ecosystem – PIs and Collaborators
 - 2.5 SIRCA II So Far
3. **Administrative System and Process**
 - 3.1 Site visits and collaborations
 - 3.2 Intensive mentorship model
 - 3.3 Reporting systems and communications support
 - 3.4 Feedback from Regional POs
 - 3.5 Success stories and impact
 - 3.6 Scope for improvement and issues faced
4. **SIRCA PI Research Progress**
 - 4.1 Africa
 - 4.2 Asia
 - 4.3 Latin America
5. **SIRCA II Workshop, Jamaica**
 - 5.1 SIRCA II Research Training Workshop
 - 5.2 Open Session at IFIP 2013
6. **SIRCA II Writing Workshop, Mauritius**
7. **SIRCA Bootcamp, Cape Town, South Africa**
 - 7.1 SIRCA Participation at UWC Pre-conference
 - 7.2 Open Session at the ICTD 2013
 - 7.3 SIRCA Bootcamp at Spier Wine Farm
8. **SIRCA Impact and Dissemination**
 - 8.1 Research outputs and international recognition
 - 8.2 Online presence
 - 8.3 Achievements and accolades
 - 8.3.1 SIRCA Alumni
 - 8.3.2 SIRCA Affiliates and Graduate Students
9. **Moving Forward**
 - 9.1 SIRCA II Book Publication
 - 9.2 SIRCA III

Appendices

2. Programme Overview

SIRCA is a capacity building programme for information society research in international development context in the Global South, namely in the regions of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Its predecessor the Strengthening ICTD Research Capacity in Asia (SIRCA I) began in 2008 as a capacity building programme in the area of information and communications technology for development (ICT4D or ICTD) with a regional focus on Asia. The International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada, appointed the Singapore Internet Research Centre (SiRC) based at the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information (WKWSCI), Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore, as the partner providing administrative and managerial support while IDRC provided funding.

2.1 IDRC Support and Its Rationale¹

The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) is a Canadian organisation supporting research activities in developing countries “to promote growth and development” with a goal of “bring[ing] choice and change to the people who need it most.”² Under the motto, it has supported ICT4D research (now referred as Information Society research by the organisation) activities around the world in developing countries for over 10 years.

From their extensive experiences, the authors of “SIRCA: An Opportunity to Build and Improve the Field of ICT4D” point out the following as the challenges in ICT4D research in general around the world:

- Weak relevance of research projects to development practices and policies
- Difficulties in measuring development outcomes (and impact) with a tendency of relying heavily on anecdotal evidences which do not always contribute to the measurement
- Failures in learning based on inadequate documentation and analysis of failures and successes in the field
- “[L]imited relative contribution from researchers in developing countries”³

They also state that “approximately two-thirds of the authors [publishing on the issues of ICT4D in Asia] were based at organisations in regions outside of Asia,”⁴ pointing out the need for capacity building for the Asia-based, “home-grown” scholars.

¹ Majority of the information is obtained from a chapter in *Linking Research to Practice*, “SIRCA: An Opportunity to Build and Improve the Field of ICT4D,” written by Chaitali Sinha, Laurent Elder and Matthew Smith of IDRC.

² “Who We Are,” IDRC. <http://www.idrc.ca/EN/AboutUs/WhoWeAre/Pages/default.aspx> Accessed on 15 July 2012. Please find more information on the organisation and its activities on its website at <http://www.idrc.ca/EN>.

³ Sinha, Chaitali, Laurent Elder and Matthew Smith, “SIRCA: An Opportunity to Build and Improve the Field of ICT4D,” in *Linking Research to Practice*, eds. Arul Chib and Roger Harris, (Singapore: ISEAS Press, 2011), 14.

⁴ Ibid, 17.

In order to address these challenges, the discussion of establishing a programme for “informed and systematic” research based in Asia was started in 2006 with several experts. IDRC led a 3-day workshop in Manila in 2007, and the event provided a platform for identifying key needs and directions for a programme for institutional support.⁵

In addition to the general challenges above, the workshop identified 3 specific categories of “problems,” each of which was accompanied with a problem tree.

- Lack of rigour

The term rigour, although not strictly defined, “is closely related to issues of validity, reliability, trustworthiness and quality.” Lack of rigour could potentially lead to bad policy making and wastage of resources.⁶

- Lack of support for interdisciplinary research

The complexity of interdisciplinary research and lack of understanding in it lead to low-quality output and lack of empathy/understanding of the “intended audiences and users,” not to mention the lack of rigour.⁷

- Lack of collaboration

Collaboration in research is considered “inherently good,” yet the process might run into barriers due to the differences in incentives, goals and processes in disciplines. These have led to lack of openness to failure and doubtful perception towards the usefulness of academic research towards development policies and practices.⁸

The authors emphasise that the problems mentioned above “represent distinct but highly interdependent and interconnected challenges.”⁹ They point to the broad lack of effort in research capacity building in ICTD field, ranging from insufficient resources and training (both in quantity and quality) to the unsupportive research environment due to political, structural and other reasons.¹⁰

⁵ Ibid, 14-15.

⁶ Ibid, 17.

⁷ Ibid, 18-19.

⁸ Ibid, 19-20.

⁹ Ibid, 20.

¹⁰ Ibid, 17-21.

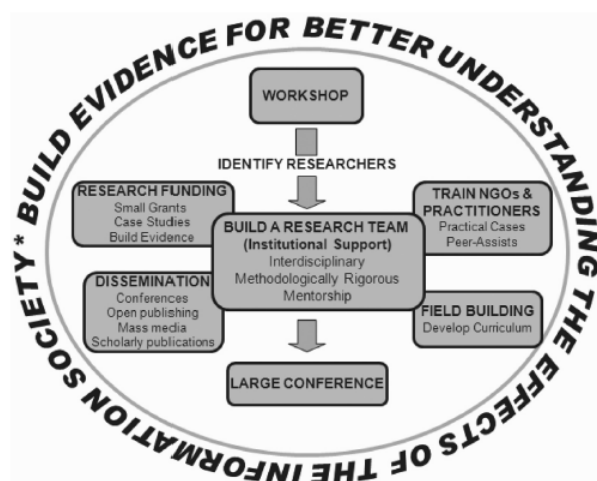


Figure 2.1 Integrated Framework (Source: chapter 2 of *Linking Research to Practice*, p21)

The Workshop participants produced an integrated framework (figure 2.1) based on their problem analysis, emphasising the need for a research programme offering institutional support for interdisciplinary and methodologically sound projects led by emerging researchers with mentorship of senior researchers.¹¹ Hence Strengthening ICTD Research Capacity in Asia programme (SIRCA I) was launched in 2008.

2.2 About SIRCA I ¹²

SIRCA I focused on 3 objectives:

- To promote high-quality multidisciplinary social science research in internet development, e-services, new media use and its social impact, and policy for the benefit and advancement of individuals, organisations, nations and society.
- To support networks and linkages among researchers through a mentorship programme, as well as workshops and conferences to share knowledge and conduct training activities.
- To disseminate the research findings through such venues as academic journals, conferences and other relevant online and print media outlets.

In order to achieve the above objectives, the programme provided research grants, training opportunities and mentorship of senior researchers for emerging researchers from various countries.

Through a competitive process, 15 emerging scholars (Principal Investigators; PIs) were selected from various Asian countries. The countries of origin included Bangladesh (2 projects), Cambodia (2), China (1 project with 2 PIs), India (4), the Philippines (2), Singapore (1), Sri Lanka (1), Thailand (1) and Vietnam (1) while their

¹¹ Ibid, 21.

¹² Much of the information is adopted from the technical reports of SIRCA I.

projects covered a wide range of topics such as agriculture, community development/empowerment, education, health care, migration, political participation and ICT sector employment. Such diversity in topics and specialisation amongst the members were intended to challenge the major difficulties in ICTD research identified in Manila Workshop led by IDRC –lack of rigour, interdisciplinarity and collaboration. The mentorship from 10 senior researchers (“mentors”) from diverse disciplines (from communication to development to engineering and management to mobile learning) and nationalities (Bangladesh, India, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Singapore and the United Kingdom) provided effective advice and academic collaboration in order to assist the PIs to realise their potential in their respective fields.

At the end of the three-year programme, not only were SIRCA PIs better equipped with research capacity, but also were they able to yield significant research outcomes such as international publications, admission and scholarships to prestigious PhD programmes, and conference attendance. A later section in the report (Section 8.3.1 and 8.3.2) will focus and elaborate on the outcome and impact of SIRCA I programme.

2.3 SIRCA II: Expansion to the Global South

The Strengthening Information Societies Research Capacity Alliance (SIRCA II) continues such research capacity building effort on ICTD and information society in a more global scope, expanding the program to the Global South. It aims to:

- a. Build scientific and critical research skills and capacity among emerging researchers (Principal Investigators) in Africa, Asia and Latin America by
 - Creating opportunities for mentorship between established international researchers (Collaborators) and grant recipients (PIs);
 - Providing spaces at a regional and international level for grant recipients to share experiences and knowledge in face-to-face settings; and
 - Providing training on ICTD and Information Society key issues.
- b. Establish network connections between African, Asian and Latin American researchers; and
- c. Disseminate findings locally and internationally in order to strengthen the body of theoretically-based, methodologically sound, and inter-disciplinary research.

The term “Collaborator” instead of “Mentor” was preferred for senior researcher who would provide guidance to PIs as to emphasize the aspect of bi-directional collaborative learning and experience sharing for both established and emerging researchers, instead of hierarchical knowledge delivery.

SiRC partners with the University of Western Cape (UWC),¹³ South Africa, and Instituto de Estudios Peruanos (Institute of Peruvian Studies- IEP), Peru. Through the partnership, SiRCA aimed to create greater synergy for research capacity building within each continent and across the three continents.

2.4 The SiRCA Ecosystem – PIs and Collaborators

The Grant Review Committee selected fifteen (15) grant awardees (Principal Investigators) from the following countries.

- Africa: Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Senegal and Tanzania
- Asia: China, India, Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand
- Latin America: Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador, Peru and Uruguay

During SiRCA I, some countries were represented more than others, namely Bangladesh, Cambodia and India, but for SiRCA II, all 15 PIs are from different countries, reflecting the higher competition during the grant review process and diversity in topics and countries.

While all the projects are interdisciplinary in nature, there are 4 broad themes —new media, education, gender and labour— and 2 to 3 projects fall under each theme, exploring the importance and impact of ICT for development and information society within the specific categories.

The PIs' research topics and other information are as in **Table 6.1**.

SiRCA II Collaborators

SiRCA programme has pursued academic development of its selected Principal Investigators through connecting the grant awardees with senior researchers since the beginning. SiRCA II continues with the tradition where the senior researchers provide expertise, guidance and a “third eye” to the emerging researchers and their projects. While SiRCA I called these senior researchers “mentors,” SiRCA II incorporated a new term, “Collaborator,” in order to emphasise the mutual collaboration and learning experience.

The programme needed 15 Collaborators as the programme decided to assign one Collaborator per project for maximum attention for each project and PI. Director of SiRC Ang Peng Hwa and Assistant Director Arul Chib, as the core members of SiRCA and renowned Information Society/ICTD scholars, were appointed initially as well as the Regional Coordinators Roxana Barrantes and Julian May. In addition, 4 senior scholars who were SiRCA I mentors were invited to become a part of the team, and they were Rahul De, Alexander Flor, Roger Harris, and John Traxler.

¹³ The initial institution of collaboration was University of Kwazulu-Natal (UKZN) based in Durban, South Africa. With the regional collaborator's transfer to UWC, the partnering organisation has changed accordingly.



The selection process for collaborators for the remaining 7 spots was fairly competitive. The call was sent out through the academic connections that the pre-selected Collaborators and their affiliated institutions have around the world, and 22 scholars from various institutions and locations applied to become SIRCA Collaborators. After a review of qualifications and specialisations amongst the group members, the following senior scholars were invited to join SIRCA as Collaborators: Richard Ling, Gloria Bonder, Jude Lubega, Jack Qiu, Hernan Galperin, Elsa Estevez, and Maria Soledad Ramirez Montoya.

Details of collaborators and projects are given in **Table 6.2**

Table 6.1 Grant Recipients

Proposal Ref. No.	PI Name	Research Country	Category	Proposal Title	Grant Amount (in SG\$)	Project Duration
AF/2011/010	Mr. Kabran Aristide Djane	Ivory Coast (Cote d'Ivoire)	New Media	The use of mobile communication in the marketing of foodstuffs in Côte d'Ivoire	21098.00	18 months
AF/2011/011	Dr. Kassimu A. Nihuka	Tanzania	Education	The impact of academic research on academic practices	24000.00	18 months
AF/2011/025	Dr. Stephen Kimani	Kenya	Gender	Online Portal Requirements for Kenyan Female University Science & Technology Students	14911.00	18 months
AF/2011/038	Mr. Mamadou Alhadji Ly	Senegal	New Media	Does mobile banking increase micro savings, payments and household welfare: evidence from Senegal using randomized controlled data?	24000.00	18 months
AF/2011/045	Mr. Tefong Vaumi Achille	Cameroon	Labour	Adoption of Enterprise Resource Planning within Sub-Sahara Africa Firms: Empirical Evidence from Cameroon	20844.00	16 months
AS/2011/012	Ms. Elinor May Cruz	Philippines	Gender	Cybersex as affective labor: Critical interrogations of the Philippine ICT framework and the Cybercrime Prevention Act of 2012	24000.00	18 months
AS/2011/017	Dr. Rajesh Kumar Chandwani	India	New Media	Impact of telemedicine: The institutional dynamics perspective of ICT for health initiatives	21690.00	18 months
AS/2011/019	Dr. Baohua Zhou	China	Labour	ICTs and Opinion Expression of Migrant Workers in China: An empirical study of new generation migrant workers in Shanghai	23990.00	18 months

AS/2011/035	Mr. Nikos Dacanay	Thailand/ Burma border region	Gender	ICT Usage Among Burmese Ethnic Women Organizations in Thailand: Enabling Change For Women and Communities	23454.00	18 months
AS/2011/047	Mrs. Ezmieralda Melissa	Indonesia	Gender	The Internet and Women Empowerment - A Study of How Women in Indonesian Urban Areas Use Social Media to Become Entrepreneurs	19758.00	18 months
LA/2011/004	Ms. Andrea Lucía Ordóñez Llanos	Ecuador	Labour	A new set of questions: ICT4D research and policy	24000.00	12 months
LA/2011/011	Dr. Fabro Boaz Steibel	Brazil	New Media	Designing web 2.0 tools for online public consultation	15155.00	18 months
LA/2011/013	Dr. Héctor Sebastián Benítez Larghi	Argentina	Education	Gender, social class & ICT. The constitution of social and digital inequalities among Argentinian adolescents	22246.00	18 months
LA/2011/030	Ms. Maria Paz Olivera Rodríguez	Peru	Education	Utilizing participatory action research in developing educational applications: The case of Peruvian primary schools	21700.00	18 months
LA/2011/032	Mr. Matías Dodel Schubert	Uruguay	Labour	Lowering barriers to entry: An analytical framework to incorporate ICT as an independent variable	23657.00	18 months

Table 6.2 Principal Investigators and Collaborators

Continent	Principal Investigator	Collaborator	Collaborator Affiliation
Africa	Mr. Kabran Aristide Djane	Richard Ling	IT University of Copenhagen, Denmark
	Dr. Kassimu A. Nihuka	John Traxler	University of Wolverhampton, UK
	Dr. Stephen Kimani	Gloria Bonder	The Gender, Society and Policies Area of FLACSO Argentina
	Mr. Mamadou Alhadji Ly	Jude Lubega	College of Computing and Information Science, Makerere University, Uganda
	Mr. Tefong Vaumi Achille	Julian May	Institute of Social Development, University of Western Cape, South Africa
Asia	Ms. Elinor May Cruz	Ang Peng Hwa	Singapore Internet Research Centre, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
	Dr. Rajesh Kumar Chandwani	Rahul De	Indian Institute of Management Bangalore
	Dr. Baohua Zhou	Jack Qiu	The School of Journalism and Communication, the Chinese University of Hong Kong
	Mr. Nikos Dacanay	Roger Harris	Consultant, Roger Harris Associates
	Mrs. Ezmieralda Melissa	Alexander Flor	University of the Philippines, Open University
Latin America	Ms. Andrea Lucía Ordóñez Llanos	Hernan Galperin	Center for Technology and Society at the Universidad de San Andrés, Argentina

	Dr. Fabro Boaz Steibel	Elsa Estevez	International Institute for Software Technology-United Nations University
	Dr. Héctor Sebastián Benítez Larghi	Roxana Barrantes	Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, Peru
	Ms. Maria Paz Olivera Rodríguez	Arul Chib	Singapore Internet Research Centre, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
	Mr. Matías Dodel Schubert	Maria Soledad Ramirez Montoya	Universidad Virtual del Sistema Tecnológico de Monterrey, Mexico

During the Grant Review Committee meeting, the members went through the topics and details of all the research proposals, and then compared them with the academic and regional specialties of the selected Collaborators. Many of the GRC members were already Collaborators hence having detailed knowledge of the proposals was helpful for the assignment procedure.

2.5 SIRCA II So Far

The SIRCA Secretariat prepared a proposal for SIRCA II in July 2011 while SIRCA I was wrapping up. The SIRCA administrative team submitted necessary documents to IDRC initially in August and a revised version in September which eventually resulted in a contract for SIRCA II in October 2011.

Even before securing the contract for SIRCA II, the Secretariat prepared the ground work for the potential programme during these preparatory months. The quality planning was in part due to the experiences accumulated over the 3 years during the first phase. The SIRCA team learned from both achievements and challenges from the pioneering programme, in turn applying the wisdom obtained. In addition, it has built a strong rapport with the funding partner IDRC, which has been supportive of SIRCA's development and witnessed its performances throughout the years. Hence SIRCA Secretariat was confident of the renewal with potential expansion to other regions beyond Asia.

After the confirmation of SIRCA II collaboration with IDRC, the Secretariat focused on the following items in preparation of the programme:

- Production of grant call for proposals
- Identifying of grant application review process
- Developing grant review matrix
- Identifying Collaborators

- Developing a webpage to support the roll out of the programme

These were essential steps preparing for the new programme which would be more global and grander in scale than its predecessor.

The SIRCA administrative staff since then had the following responsibilities in addition to everyday operational responsibilities:

- Dissemination of call for application
- Grant review
- Grant award and disbursement
- Monitoring of initial research progress
- Capacity building workshop planning
- Publication planning

These issues have been covered in detail in the **1st Technical Progress Report (October 2011 – August 2012)**. This final technical report will cover the period from August 2012 to August 2014, during which period the SIRCA administrative staff have had the following responsibilities:

- Tracking research progress and awarding disbursement of remaining grant amount
- Capacity building workshop planning
- Publication planning and logistics
- Program wrap-up and project closing
- Planning for SIRCA III

The Secretariat staff members have held regular weekly administrative meetings in Singapore to discuss and plan the details of the programme and meet the needs of PIs and other associates to SIRCA II (minutes recorded and available upon request). The collaborating organisations' Regional Coordinators and Programme Officers are informed about, and often involved with, the discussions that the Secretariat discusses, and are encouraged to provide inputs.

3. Administrative System and Process

3.1 Site visits and collaborations

First Site Visits

As of January 2014, site visits for 13 projects (4 African, 4 Asian and 5 Latin American) have been completed, and 24 feedbacks from 12 PIs and 12 Collaborators have been received. The feedback survey forms are included in the appendices. The 2 remaining projects have not completed the site visit as of 29 August 2012, due to the following reasons:

- Mamadou Ly and Yaya Ky (Senegal): Due to the personal issues with the Collaborator Jude Lubega, the visit has not been completed. An alternative visit (Yaya Ky's visit to the Collaborator's institution) was suggested but not taken forward.
- Rajesh Kumar Chandwani (India): The Collaborator (Rahul De), is part of the same institution as the PI, but did accompany him on a field visit for data collection to telemedicine sites around India.

Objectives

While each project had various objectives, the common objectives of the site visits at the current stage of research found are as noted:

- To understand the current capabilities of the PIs and identify the areas of research that the Collaborators can contribute their expertise
- To come up with better, more focused research strategies
- To observe and address the issues and challenges that may exist in the particular research field settings
- To map the future directions of the projects

Research Areas for Support

The elements that were included in the feedback questions were theory, method, findings analysis, literature review, dissemination, ethics, and others. Many PIs checked all the categories while Collaborators identified fewer elements as the areas in need of support. It appears that PIs were not clear about what type of specific support would be needed and provided from the Collaborators while Collaborators seemed to have clearer ideas on what the collaborators may need at the initial stage of the projects. The mutual benefit may have been higher if they had discussed and established the potential areas for support (along with the objectives of the visits) in advance.

Helpful Elements from the Collaborators (from PI perspectives)

In general, the PIs conveyed that having face-to-face interactions while showcasing their work increased the rapport between the two parties. The Collaborators were able to provide more situation-specific advice based on their observations, sometimes challenging the PIs' assumptions regarding their approaches to the subjects. All PIs found that the visits were helpful for moving forward.

Progress and Challenge Observed from the PIs (from Collaborator perspectives)

The observations on progress and challenge from some Collaborators are shown on the table below.

Table 9.1 Examples of Progress and Challenge of PIs

Collaborator	Progress	Challenge
Alexander Flor (on Ezmieralda	Application of the totality of the ICTD research experience	The PI and her team seemed challenged in dealing with

Melissa)		research contingencies in the field.
Roger Harris (on Nikos Dacanay)	Research design and questionnaire design	Questionnaire design
John Traxler (on Kassimu Nihuka)	Unpacking the background and the context to the research question	revisiting some assumptions and preconceptions about engaging with users, underlying explanations
Rich Ling (on Kabran Djane)	The organization of the project and its focusing on some more specific dimensions, i.e. focusing on the situation of the “free” wholesalers who seem to be the people who are most open to using the mobile phone for their work.	Application of theory
Hernan Galperin (on Andrea Ordonez)	The PI had made little progress before the visit. To a large extent I believe this was due to her limited research experience, particularly involving fieldwork. During the visit the PI made significant progress in terms of fieldwork planning and design, and I believe she now has the tools to make significant progress on her own.	Fieldwork planning and design
Roxana Barrantes (on Sebastian Benitez)	The methodology for interviews is well-designed. He has assembled a superb research team.	Selection of cases for life-story development; access to one of the schools due to a bureaucratic matter

Analysis and Reflection

Most of the challenges that PIs had were due to their limited research experience in the field. Challenges such as difficulties in application of theories and fieldwork planning and design are directly due to the lack of research skill-sets. Such challenges can be overcome with further learning and training in skills while Collaborators can assist the learning process during the projects.

In addition, handling of research contingencies and situations due to the field's situations (such as bureaucratic delays and political issues) would be a learning experience for the emerging researchers. While no one can predict the surprises and difficulties, they would

be able to keep those “unexpected” elements in mind during the planning stage and have alternative action plans.

For the future site visits, the PI-Collaborator teams will be strongly encouraged to pre-plan the visit. Some of the PIs felt that there is a lack of guidance from SIRCA programme. However, as the projects are at various stages, it would not be proper for the Secretariat to provide exact guidelines, not to mention that such “checklists” will only add an unnecessary micromanagement. Hence, the programme will ask the two parties to establish objectives and expectations clearly for each other to yield the best outcome during the short visit period.

Elements in Need of Improvement

Some Collaborators found some of the situations on the ground surprising. Roger Harris found that the refugees’ situation in the Thai-Burmese border to be quite harsh and challenging, worse than he had thought. Richard Ling was faced with a situation where his PI and he were coerced to pay a bribe although they negotiated their way out. He was concerned that it may affect the relationship building in the long run for the research project, which would be important for information gathering. Gloria Bonder felt that PI Stephen Kimani and his team should include or consult gender or social-science experts for his team since it currently included only computer scientists. In order to assist such cases, the SIRCA Secretariat created a shared online library (through Dropbox) where academic documents (such as journal articles) and bibliography will be available upon contribution of SIRCA PIs and Collaborators. This sharing component is also a critical part of the SIRCA III research agenda. The secretariat feels that PIs could benefit from such actions, especially for the literature review and research tool design process, and is hence pushing for sharing and openness to be central to the next iteration of the SIRCA programme.

A few PIs expressed that they were not clear about what SIRCA’s expectations were regarding the objectives of the visit, hence they said that clear guidelines from the programme would be helpful for productivity of future site visits.

There were also some positive surprises from the Collaborators’ end. Roxana Barrantes found PI Sebastian Benitez’s research team with great capabilities. María Soledad Ramírez was surprised by a very deep literature review by Matías Dodel, her PI.

Extra Activities

Many PIs found that the Collaborators’ extent of knowledge and willingness to help their host organisations’ research capacity building quite constructive. Although it was not mandatory for Collaborators to lead extra activities such as workshops for the PI and his/her research communities, many volunteered to share their expertise and engage their PIs in activities beyond the fieldwork.

Several senior researchers led workshops and seminars to share their knowledge with the organisations (and beyond) that the PIs are based and involved in. Alexander Flor led mini

workshops on ethnovideography and Southeast Asia ICTD research tradition and shared his expertise with Ezmieralda's colleagues in her institution and other institutions who can potentially collaborate on working paper series for ICTD. Jack Qiu also had a workshop over four hours with his PI Baohua Zhou and his colleagues. Arul Chib gave talks at Instituto de Estudios Peruanos and University of Western Cape for ICTD and development researchers and practitioners called "Mobile Health in Developing Countries: Developing a Research Agenda."

Collaborator Julian May suggested that rather than his visit to PI Tefong Achille, Tefong should come to South Africa as he would benefit more from the resources and other exposures (such as interactions with prominent scholars and other PhD students). The special case was supported by SIRCA Secretariat, and the innovative way benefitted the PI to shape his research at the initial stage better.

Richard Ling met with Kabran's PhD advisor and host institution while they had much individual interactions which exposed the Collaborator to Ivorian culture. Roger Harris advised one of the organisations that his PI Nikos Dacanay works with for his research, and they discussed about organizing a potential workshop to benefit the women's organisations that Dacanay works with.

Suggestions

Some suggestions from the PIs and Collaborators are below:

- SIRCA support for workshops during site visits to benefit not only the PIs but also the hosting organizations which could contribute to the greater capacity building effort. (Roger Harris and Nikos Dacanay, Alexander Flor)
- Increasing the days of the visit (Kassimu Nihuka)
- Having mandatory extra activities such as conferences, workshops and interviews related to the projects in order to disseminate the research, to inform the young researchers of their environment and to increase impact in each context (Roxana Barrantes)
- Having the option of the PI visiting his/her Collaborator as well so that the PI is exposed to/has access to the wealth of resources that the Collaborator has available at the research design stage (Julian May)

3.2 Intensive mentorship model

SIRCA's intensive mentorship model that connects PIs to experts and established collaborators has worked remarkably well during the project. A number of PIs have benefitted enormously from collaborator input, and gone on to devise new projects, and research work. Feedback gleaned from the SIRCA Academic Writing Workshop in Mauritius (August 2013) suggests that the mentorship is seen as the most useful part of the SIRCA capacity building process. 100% of the attendees of the Mauritius workshop (6 PIs and 6 Collaborators) noted the effectiveness of one-on-one intensive mentorship sessions. Some of the comments include:

- PIs noted that getting critical feedback from mentors was crucial in shaping their research to international standards
- PIs noted that speaking with collaborators gave them insights into official review processes, and the kind of questions they need to ask themselves and their research before submitting to peer reviewed journals or conferences.
- Collaborators noted that identifying common pitfalls and errors helped them craft better advice and guidelines for future researchers.

3.3 Reporting systems and communications support

SIRCA's reporting systems through the secretariat and regional officers worked well for the most part, but could use minor tweaks to increase effectiveness:

- Two projects by African PIs, Kassimu Nihuka and Yaya Ky, had reporting troubles and delays in communication. Both projects missed crucial deadlines, and were unable to submit completed research drafts for both the SIRCA book and journal special issue.

3.4 Feedback from Regional POs

Laura Leon, Latin America Regional Coordinator:

All five Latin American PIs have already completed their research work.

Doctoral student Matias Dodel has successfully completed his research "ICT and Welfare policies: Digital skills' impact on formal education and labor market trajectories of young Uruguayans evaluated by PISA 2003 (Panel study)". The most important finding of his research, which can be considered as a contribution to the evidence of ICT impact on education is that "E-skills constitute a significant part of the explanatory component in the variance of occupational achievements at 19-20 years old. Despite the fact that their weight is not the biggest one, having a quantum of e-skills (an Office-like level) at 15-16 years old compared to not to, increases -ceteris paribus- the chances of getting a white-collar occupational achievement at 19-20 years old by 60%." This research has contributed also to the completion of his MA thesis, and to the acceptance to his doctoral studies in the

University of Haifa, Israel. Furthermore, as a consequence of the results of both SIRCA II's project and the PI's M.A. thesis, the Research Group on Education-to-Work Transition (TET- Universidad de la República; a non ICT research group) is considering to start a new research line within the topic of pathways: focusing on digital skills impacts. Finally, the fact that Matias was conducting his SIRCA research within the Universidad Católica del Uruguay has influenced in the creation of a new Internet Research Group on the Communication Department.

PhD. Sebastián Benitez has successfully completed his research "Youth, inequalities and ICT. A qualitative study of youth paths to the incorporation of computer and Internet in the frame of the Plan Conectar Igualdad in La Plata and Gran La Plata". His research has produced useful information for the adaptation of the national education & ICT project to the needs of the targeted social groups, providing evidence and elements to public authorities for the development and adaptation of policies which will be able to have a greater impact on the issue of digital inclusion. The SIRCA funding has strongly benefited not only Dr. Benitez, but also other young researchers gathered in the team. This can be noted from the contribution of the other researchers to the outcomes: 06 articles were published or presented in academic conferences by 2 or 3 researchers of the team (including the PI); and 05 articles by the other 2 young researchers (the PI not included). In general, Sebastián and his team have been a prolific team research, with 05 published articles and 12 presentations in academic conferences.

Ms. Paz Olivera conducted the research "Are digital textbooks a sustainable alternative in Peruvian schools? Adapting the pedagogical approach of the program Leer es estar adelante" to a digital format". She and her co PI, Komathi Ale, implemented a 2 phase research, including a qualitative and a quantitative strategy. As a junior researcher -the youngest of the cohort-, and thanks to the SIRCA funding, she has been introduced to academic career, attending and presenting in international conferences, experiencing research project management and academic publishing. Interacting and working with more experienced scholars, like Dr. Arul Chib and PhD student Komathi Ale has been very important as well to successfully complete her research.

MSc. Andrea Ordoñez conducted the research "ICT's and the Natural Knowledge Economy: diverging or converging paths?" Although the PI reported this project has been completed, unfortunately, this research has reported only an outcome (SIRCA book chapter) which is not directly derived of the original research proposal. Being her collaborator Dr. Hernan Galperin, we consider that her research and outputs could be strengthened by working more closely with him. Unfortunately, she did not make the most of his collaborator. In spite of all difficulties, the SIRCA research has driven her to change her position, looking to a more research-oriented career, and she hopes to apply to a PhD program soon.

PhD. Fabro Steibel -- At the final phase of the project, this PI had problems with his host institution. Internal institution politics and the departure of some of its authorities -who signed the SIRCA agreement- ended in a termination of the contract. At that time, due to administration bureaucracy, the PI did not claim the expenses of the research project. In other words, the PI paid for all the research expenses hoping that the institution would

reimburse him all in one final installment, avoiding all the administrative hurdles until the end of the project. However, the institution refused to reimburse him and proceeded to reimburse SIRCA with all the funding. As a solution, IEP has offered to host the PI and we are now trying to find the easiest solution.

Issues and project problems:

In general, the PIs have been very responsible with their research work. Some administrative and on- the-field issues we had to manage at our end are listed here. In general, Latin American research and academic positions are not necessarily well remunerated. Among others, payment is a good incentive to promote young researchers to stay and involve more with the academic career. Almost all the Latin American PI were expecting that the SIRCA grant would include a compensation for them, as researchers.

One PI had major problems (considering she is not an experienced researcher yet) when her co-PI decided to leave the project. He had research duties which he could not complete due to personal issues. This was managed by the PI collaborator (Dr. Chib), offering an external co-PI who has contributed to fully conclude the research and to strength research capacities on the PI. This project has further issues when the replacement assistant too left abruptly, meanwhile adding the complication that all data had been lost. This project component (qualitative section) is currently under recovery.

Another case was the lack of motivation of a PI who has not made the most of the research grant. In the first stage of her research she did not made major progress in months. The visit of her collaborator helped to move the research forward. After that, the same situation repeated: the research was moving very slow, with many non-replied emails from the LAC coordinator and collaborator asking for findings or the full manuscript of the final research report. Furthermore, her collaborator reported that she did not incorporate his suggestions after his field visit.

Finally, at the final stage, we had some informal communications for project extension. Even though these PIs were asked to submit the formal forms for extension, they preferred to manage it through the informal way. Through informal conversations, they suggested that the program had too much bureaucracy.

Suggestions and recommendations:

One suggestion was to increase the motivation of the Latin American PIs is to allow in their budgets a monthly compensation as principal researchers. In the future, compensation may be tied to individual milestones related to the overall goals of the SIRCA project. This will ensure greater focus on productivity and associated outputs.

Although the departure of co-PIs or team members cannot be anticipated, perhaps a signed document by the research team members may commit them to stay until the end of the project.

Finally, we would suggest simpler forms to fill down for any formal request to the SIRCA Secretariat.

Kathleen Diga, Africa Regional Coordinator:

January 2014: SIRCA II is coming to a close and the Africa region has had strong contributions to the SIRCA network. After Atlanta (March 2012), Dr Djane, Cote d'Ivoire, during the SIRCA II period successfully completed his PhD and then started his teaching post in the rural area of Korhogo, soon afterwards. He had the opportunity to share his research in two West African workshops and one international conference in Montreal. He also attended the SIRCA writing workshop in Mauritius (August 2013). Dr Djane has finished one SIRCA book chapter with Dr Ling and is hoping to work with Dr Ling on a future journal article. Dr Djane states that the SIRCA project helped his agriculture and woman project to "unearth a reporting system involving food distribution which was disregarded in local scientific literature".

Dr Kimani, Kenya had also a successful period as a SIRCA scholar. He presented at two Southern Africa international conferences (Cape Town in September 2013 and Namibia in May 2013), as well as one local Kenya event in Jun 2013. Stephen participated in the Jamaica SIRCA writing workshop and states that the SIRCA programme has helped him in making linkages with various international and local experts in the field. For example the ITU had asked Dr Kimani to help organize the ITU and US State Department's ITU-Global Girls in ICT Day Project in Kenya. Dr Kimani has also submitted a book chapter for the SIRCA book.

Mr Tefong, Cameroon had attended several emerging scholar workshops besides SIRCA including one in Johannesburg (Jan 2013) and CPRsouth in Mauritius (Sept 2012). Mr Tefong states greatly appreciating the opportunities to share knowledge with colleagues from around the world and the experience to work with senior experts. Mr Tefong has also developed an article ready for publication.

Mr Ky and Dr Ly, Senegal, has had ongoing delays on their project. From last correspondence, 11/29/13, Mr Ky reports on their team finishing the second survey after treatment and that he was in midst of writing the report. The team had been able to provide preliminary descriptive results of the first wave of data from the Jamaica IFIP May 2013 workshop. In February 2013, the mid-term report had mentioned the struggles of collecting the first wave of data from 400 respondents especially in this case of a randomised controlled trial design.

Dr Nihuka has also progressed with his research papers as per the contract with completion. He has graduated one of his BSc students from his institution in October 2013. He has presented at a workshop in Rwanda (Aug 2012) and he is publishing an article for the SIRCA book.

SIRCA had also participated in a two day academic writing pre-conference which provided the opportunity for our group to network with those global South emerging scholars who received scholarship to attend ICTD2013. It was a great opportunity to cross-pollinate ideas as well as advertise to potential future applicants of SIRCA. The SIRCA Africa coordinator assisted in liaising with UCT/UWC conference logistics (ie providing various Cape Town supplier recommendation and contacts to Singapore) as well as on the content

(programme, setting up the evaluation form) of the pre-conference. This included the inclusion of Dr Chib within the programme in order to connect the two groups. The SIRCA group also coordinated their Open Session at ICTD2013 at the University of Cape Town. The Africa coordinator is also working on a chapter for the SIRCA book.

Issues and project problems:

While some of our African emerging academics maybe developing their credentials as prominent scholars in their respective fields, this does not mean that they are relieved of their heavy work duties and responsibilities at their institutions. As PhD credentials at university is at a premium, many end up in high administration positions within national government or within the executive council of their university as was the case for two of our African academics. With that said, delays on project reporting were ongoing. In one case where the researcher joined a government position, he was also the crucial insight to designing a randomised controlled trial (RCT) on mobile savings. With the reigns passed on to a junior counterpart, the project thereby becomes absence or deficient of ongoing monitoring of the RCT which may also cause delays. The other emerging scholar who works as the key contact to their Vice Chancellor is travelling every month to its various campuses (the university is based on distant education / correspondence) across the country, holding him back from conducting his research portfolio. Nevertheless, the job of an academic is to balance the various roles and responsibilities handed to them and the pressure of the paid work may in these cases supersede that of the SIRCA projects they had intended to complete. The collaborators in these two projects were also active to try to work with the SIRCA scholars, but efforts were not as fruitful as anticipated.

In the case, one collaborator had updated SIRCA, stating they had put much effort to assist in incorporating gender with one project and they felt that the SIRCA scholar had not attempted to incorporate their suggestions into their paper and rather kept the paper technical. Other slight issues included when one scholar was stuck in Nairobi on his way home from the Mauritius workshop for a few days due to the airport fire. At ICTD2013, the one hiccup was SIRCA open session had ended being re-located in a building outside of the main open session building.

Suggestions and recommendations:

The resolve of the above issue is not easily preventable. I suppose one may want to take into consideration in the selection criteria whether they are already in high administrative positions. Nevertheless in one case it was not predictable.

4. SIRCA PI Research Progress

4.1 Africa

Kabran Aristide Djane

Cote D'Ivoire

Kabran Aristide Djane is a Lecturer/Researcher in the sociology department at the Peleforo Gon Coulibaly University of Korhogo in the north of Côte d'Ivoire. His research background is in population and environment. He has presented papers on ICTs and Environmental Education at various African fora, and has conducted two studies funded by African research organizations ERNWACA and CODESRIA. Today, his research focuses on multilevel analysis in decision making for development approaches.

The use of mobile communication in the marketing of foodstuffs in Côte d'Ivoire

This paper examines the use, and non-use of mobile communication in the food distribution system of Côte d'Ivoire. It examines how this mediation form plays into the existing systems for producing, transporting and marketing of food by women in that country. It bases the analysis on five focus groups and 51 interviews carried out between May 2012 and February 2013, and finds that mobile communication allows for more responsive and flexible planning on the part of large-scale and smaller wholesalers. They are able to use it to manage and adjust the delivery of products to different retailers as surpluses and shortages develop. It also finds that the mobile phone is not used by some producers since there are well established systems for the marketing of their products that preclude the need for mobile communication.

Kassimu A. Nihuka

Tanzania

Dr. Kassimu Nihuka works as a lecturer in the Institute of Continuing Education at the Open University of Tanzania in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Before that, he has worked as a Biology teacher in several secondary schools in Tanzania. He holds a Bachelor of Science in education, A Masters in science education (from the Dar es salaam University in Tanzania), an M.S. in educational science and technology and a PhD in educational science and technology (from Twente University). As an emerging researcher, Dr. Nihuka has published and presented papers in several local and international conferences and journals.

The impact of academic research on academic practices

Integration of learning technologies in Open and Distance Learning (ODL) institutions in most developing countries is an emerging phenomenon. Evidence indicates that among other things, learning technologies have the potential in enhancing delivery of programmes, improving interactions and communication and enhancing academic outcomes of students. However, feeding evidence from academic research into academic policy has remained as a critical challenge in most ODL institutions. This Chapter discusses the impact of SIRCA-

supported academic research on academic practices in the context of the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) as compared to other ODL institutions in Africa.

Stephen Kimani

Kenya

Dr. Stephen Kimani is an academic and research member of staff at the Institute of Computer Science and Information Technology of the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) in Kenya. He has previously been a researcher at CSIRO (Australia), and a post-doctoral researcher at the University of Rome “La Sapienza” (Italy). He has a BSc in Mathematics and Computer Science from JKUAT), an MSc in Advanced Computing from the University of Bristol, UK, and a PhD in Computer Engineering from the University of Rome, Italy. He has been involved in proposing and running ICT projects in Kenya, Italy and Australia.

Online Portal Requirements for Kenyan Female University Science & Technology Students

Throughout their science and technology (S&T) careers, women drop out at virtually every step on the education/career ladder until extremely few are found in positions of power, recognition and influence. Although this is a global problem, the situation in Africa is even more critical. In Kenya, women in universities comprise slightly more than 20 percent of the total number of students and very few major in S&T studies. In Africa unlike other developing regions, the number of women pursuing S&T studies at university has remained low and stagnated for the past about three decades. There is therefore a dire need to support the few women pursuing S&T in universities especially in African countries. Moreover, research indicates that Internet-based interventions (e.g. online portals) could lead to positive changes in motivation, perception and behaviour. This paper reports on a study that was conducted to determine Kenyan female S&T university students' Internet access and usage; and their experience with existing online portals. The study showed that the Internet access methods Kenyan female S&T students use the most necessitate mobile-based versions of the corresponding desktop-based applications. The study also yielded what could be considered to be the appropriate services/features of online portals for Kenyan female S&T university students.

Tefong Vaumi Achille

Cameroon

Tefong Achille Vaumi works with the Development Initiative Centre (DIC), a research and development Institution based in Cameroon. He graduated with a Master of Philosophy in Management Science in 2009 at the University of Ngaoundéré, Cameroon. He has contributed to several projects of the Centre and is eager to explore issues of Labour Productivity and ERP adoption in Cameroon.

Adoption of Enterprise Resource Planning within Sub-Sahara Africa Firms: Empirical Evidence from Cameroon

The growth of the small and medium-size enterprises sector and an effort on the part of local companies to replicate global business and marketing trends have led to increased uptake of Enterprise Resource Planning systems in sub-Saharan Africa. With improved and affordable connectivity throughout the region, sub-Saharan Africa has attracted global brands that have set up offices or partnered with local companies, bringing a wider variety of business solutions to regional businesses. This study seeks to describe the ICT component which are existing within SMEs in Cameroon, explore the explaining of the ERP demand in Cameroonian firms, and analyze the determinant factors among adoption of ERP

This research is a new point to understand the behaviour of the Cameroonian firms face to a component of ICT, namely ERP software which is recognized as a tool for improving the competitiveness and performance of a firm. Also, this study is uncommon, regarding developing countries in general and Cameroon in particular.

Mamadou Alhadji Ly

Senegal

Mamadou Alhadji Ly has been working in the ICT field since 2006 as an economist for ICT sector analysis. His PhD thesis was titled “Digital Poverty Analysis in Sub-Saharan Countries,” and he wrote an ICT sector report on Senegal. He is currently a member of Research ICT in Africa Network (RIA).

Yaya Ky is a PhD student at the faculty of Economics and Management, University Cheick Anta Diop of Dakar (UCAD, Senegal). He has developed an expertise in impact evaluations of public policy with econometric methods and models of computable general equilibrium (CGE). He is an engineer in statistics from the National School of Applied Economics, Senegal and has two Master's degrees - one in statistical and econometric methods from UCAD and another in economic and social policy from Grenoble, France. His research interests include innovation, economic growth, knowledge diffusion and ICT, with a focus on mobile banking and wealth creation.

Does mobile banking increase micro savings, payments and household welfare: evidence from Senegal using randomized controlled data?

This paper evaluates the impact of mobile banking on micro savings, access to mobile payments and household welfare in Senegal. It uses an experimental randomized controlled method with two groups. The first one receives a treatment (given through a mobile banking account, and training to use this service) and the second one does not receive treatment. The difference-in-difference method and other categories of empirical methods are then used to evaluate the impact of the program. This research will provide some analysis elements to the African authorities specifically in Senegal to the increase volume of savings in African countries and facilitate access to modern services to the poor population and improve their welfare.

4.2 Asia

Elinor May Cruz

Philippines

Elinor May Cruz is a research associate at the University of the Philippines Third World Studies Center. She is an associate editor of *Kasarinlan: Philippine Journal of Third World Studies*, the Center's internationally refereed journal. She is also coordinator for the Center's programs on Training and Advocacy and Visiting Research Fellowship. She earned a Bachelor's Degree in Communication Research from the College of Mass Communication, University of the Philippines-Diliman and is writing her Master's thesis on risk discourses in the Philippine cosmetics industry.

Cybersex as affective labor: Critical interrogations of the Philippine ICT framework and the Cybercrime Prevention Act of 2012

Cybersex is an illegal yet pervasive enterprise in the Philippines labeled as the cybersex capital of the world. This study explores cybersex as an anomalous offshoot of ICT development in the country. It explores the operations of cybersex as a business and its uses of ICT; documenting the life histories of cybersex workers from Olongapo and Angeles—to understand how they make sense of their work, sexuality and identity, concerns and issues pertaining to their health and economic well-being; and examined responses of key informants from legislation, law enforcement, local government units, and nongovernmental organizations. The study reveals that cybersex is yet another variation of sex work, where ICT use simply extends the tried and tested ways of “easy money” and short-term economic gain. Philippine legislation on cybersex have obscured the structural and relational dynamics of its operations leaving little information on how they impact on the worker's wellbeing or how the state's desire to achieve the promise of ICT development ironically propels these activities. In this view, the study offers data-driven insights on the lived experiences of cybersex workers and how ICT legislation can be more responsive to on-the-ground realities of the cybersex phenomenon

Rajesh Kumar Chandwani

India

Dr. Rajesh Chandwani completed his doctoral degree from the Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore (India) in the OBHR area (Organizational Behavior and Human Resource Management), and is now a faculty member at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad. He is particularly interested in research on mitigating the gap between the ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’ in health care in India. At present his research areas include scaling up of affordable health care services for the masses and the role of ICT in improving the access, quality and affordability of health care.

After a Masters in Pediatrics (M.D) in 1999 from Baroda Medical College (Gujarat, India), he served in public health institutions in remote rural areas as well as urban areas covering both primary and tertiary centers. He also has rendered voluntary services for poor people

by offering his clinical services through an NGO. His long standing interest in the issue of inequality in distribution of health care facilities across urban and rural areas has its roots in his experience as a pediatrician.

Impact of telemedicine: The institutional dynamics perspective of ICT for health initiatives

As there has been a considerable investment in ICT for development (ICT4D) initiatives, policymakers, practitioners and academics call for more comprehensive and meaningful assessment of the impact of such initiatives. While the impact assessment of ICT4D can be carried out from multiple perspectives, the institutional lens is opportune in examining the softer aspects of the impact such as the behavioural, cultural and social dimensions. ICT4D interventions juxtapose two institutional logics, that of designer and of the users, which may or may not align with each other. The impact of the initiative depends upon how the interplay between the logics unfolds. The study exemplifies the importance of institutional context in impact assessment of ICT4D initiatives by examining the interplay of the institutional logics in the healthcare system. It conceptualizes healthcare system in terms of the logic of choice, perpetuated by the ICT for health initiative, and the logic of care which is embedded in the core of health system. The interaction between the two logics, in turn, determines how the intervention evolves. It arrives at a framework outlining the tensions arising from the interplay of the logic of choice and logic of care in healthcare system when an ICT4D intervention is introduced.

Baohua Zhou

China

Dr. Baohua Zhou is an associate professor at the School of Journalism, Fudan University, China. He coordinates the university's new MA program in new media communication. He is also a research fellow at the Center for Information and Communication Studies and associate director of Fudan's Media and Public Opinion Research Centre (FMORC). He studied at Nanyang Technological University of Singapore as an exchange student and was a visiting scholar at University of Pennsylvania. His research focuses on new media, media effects, migrant workers, and public opinion. His current research projects include: social differentiation, media use, opinion expression and political participation in China; ICTs and migrants workers; and social media and public opinion, among others. His research has been published in Asian Journal of Communication (SSCI), Chinese Journal of Communication (SSCI), Communication & Society, and various major journals in the field of communication in China.

ICTs and Opinion Expression of Migrant Workers in China:

An empirical study of new generation migrant workers in Shanghai

By observing new generation migrant workers' opinion expression behaviours via using ICTs in China, this study argues that a less studied issue concerning the empowerment role of ICTs is that whether new technologies could help the marginalized group to voice themselves when they are faced with actual problems in their working and living situations. Compared to other social strata, the new generation migrant workers have less opportunities and skills to express their opinions in traditional media environment because

of their inaccessibility for such marginalized groups. Then, will new ICTs empower new generation migrant workers by facilitating their intention to express their opinions via new media channels? Will expression via new media channels further encourage them to express via other channels such as interpersonal network or official institutions? These questions deserve careful empirical studies. The current study will pay particular attention to the two major actual problems facing the new generation migrant workers in China: labor rights protection and personal emotion problems.

Ezmieralda Melissa

Indonesia

Ezmieralda Melissa is a lecturer in the Department of Communication and Public Relations at the Swiss German University, Indonesia. Apart from lecturing Communication subjects, she is also an active member of The Association of Indonesian Translators (HPI).

Ezmieralda obtained her Bachelor of Communication in Business from Bond University, Australia and her Master of Arts in Global Media Communication from The University of Melbourne, Australia. Ezmieralda's research interests include new media technologies, representation of minorities in the media, and media, nationalism and democracy.

The Internet and Women Empowerment - A Study of How Women in Indonesian Urban Areas Use Social Media to Become Entrepreneurs

Indonesia, an archipelago of more than 260 million people, faces a huge challenge in providing jobs for its working force. There are many causes of unemployment, but the main one is the lack of available jobs. Entrepreneurs create jobs. Therefore, entrepreneurship can be seen as an important component for the economic development of this country. Women entrepreneurs generate income for themselves and their families, create jobs, and make significant contributions to the country's economy. ICTs bring entrepreneurial opportunities that free limitations imposed upon women, such as the lack of capital and social mobility to promote business. By conducting research on women in five main Indonesian cities who operate online businesses, this study investigated how Internet technology can boost women entrepreneurship by allowing them to open up businesses from their homes. Several indicators that were used to measure empowerment in the context of this study include domestic decision making, access to or control over resources, freedom of movement, economic contribution to the household, appreciation within the household, sense of self-worth, and knowledge gain.

Nikos Dacanay

Thailand

Nikos Dacanay is currently pursuing an Msc in Practicing Sustainable Development (ICT4D track) at Royal Holloway, University of London. He is also currently involved in a cyber-security project with Burmese human rights organizations, sponsored by the Citizen Lab, University of Toronto. Before this, he did research on telecenter and cybercafé use by ethnic womens organizations in northern Thailand, as well as research on the use of ICT to

increase uptake and access of HIV testing and counseling by young Thai and migrant men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender (TG). He is co-author of the book *Txt-ing Selves: Cellphones and Philippine Modernity* (De La Salle University Press, 2002). His research work has shaped both the nature of his research (ethnographic and policy-oriented) as well as his interest in various and inter-connected subjects/topics: migration/diaspora, gender, sexuality, ICT, notions of the self, identity, body, citizenship, and human rights. He is also a consultant with the Human Rights Education Institute of Burma (HREIB), a non-profit organization based in Chiang Mai, Thailand

*ICT Usage Among Burmese Ethnic Women Organizations in Thailand:
Enabling Change For Women and Communities*

This chapter examines the role of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) in empowering women from community-based organizations (CBOs) who access ICT in work places. It specifically showcases the access to and use of Internet and mobile phones among Burmese ethnic women organizations in Thailand-Burma border within the context of forced displacement and migration from Burma's military control. While ICTs provide differentiated emancipatory and empowering impacts to women and their CBOs ranging from political, social, economic, and cultural, full utilization and maximization of benefits are constrained by their mobility brought about by security threats in living at the border, technical competence in the use of computer/internet, language, and numeracy and literacy skills. The study recommends a programmatic ICT policy for migrants in terms of non-formal education and training together with infrastructure development. A multisectoral approach of cooperation by NGOs, private sector, international donors, and Thai government is necessary in enabling faster ICT penetration for the Burmese population. Equally important and crucial is advocating for a change in migration policies for Burmese migrant workers to the Thai state by the multisectoral groups.

4.3 Latin America

Matías Dodel Schubert

Uruguay

Matías Dodel is a Sociologist (with an M.A. from Facultad de Ciencias Sociales-Universidad de la República and B.A. from Universidad Católica del Uruguay or UCU) and Psychologist (B.A. from Psychology Faculty from Universidad de la República or UdelAR) who specializes in Information Society, Public Policy and Poverty/Inequality issues.

He was a researcher at UCU's Department of Social and Political Sciences, and taught Methodology and Statistical Software packages. In 2013, he was appointed director of the World Internet Project's Uruguayan Chapter at UCU's Department of Communication.

Simultaneously, since 2009 he has been working as an expert Sociologist on Information Society and Electronic Government at the National E-government and Information Society Agency (AGESIC) of the Uruguayan government presidency.

He is currently enrolled in a PhD programme at the University of Haifa in Israel.

Lowering barriers to entry: An analytical framework to incorporate ICT as an independent variable

This chapter presents an analytical framework to guide the assessment of Information and Communication Technologies' (ICT) impact on individual level development (or wellbeing). Based on content analysis methodology, it argues that the amount of polysemy and lack of common basic guidelines in ICT's research fields constitutes one of the main barriers to both the incorporation of ICT into a broader research problems spectrum (outside the ICT researchers communities) and, consequently, to widen ICT's impact research. After a synthesis of the historical development of the digital divide concept (a framework for the analysis for digital inequalities), it discusses and selects some plausible analytical models to assess ICT's impact on well-being. Based on Selwyn's approach, the chapter advocates the idea that every researcher testing an ICT related hypothesis should analyze -at least- 3 stages of hierarchical digital achievements (access, usage and appropriation) plus one last divide's stage: ICT's outcomes (measured by the effect of previous stages on the dependent well-being variable). Finally, it proposes some guidelines for the applications of this framework and presents an actual case of use, showing how this framework guided the research design of this project, which tested the effect of digital skills on education-to-work transition.

Maria Paz Olivera Rodríguez

Peru

Paz Olivera is a Bachelor in Communication for Development by the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Peru. At present, she is a research assistant at the Institute of Peruvian Studies, focusing on educational textbooks, adapting academic history books for school children. Her thesis Project, named "Usage and perceptions of the XO laptops from the OLPC Project. A case study of two schools in Cieneguilla", was fulfilled between 2010 and 2011 is currently awaiting a date for defense. The study utilizes a qualitative approach in order to understand the effectiveness of the program as a way to empower learning and digital literacy. Since 2008, she has worked in different areas at the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, and has gained experience in research project management, journal publishing, and planning for academic events. As of 2011, she has been organizing workshops about digital literacy aimed specifically at school teachers.

Utilizing participatory action research in developing educational applications: The case of Peruvian primary schools

Achieving intended educational impact in development projects using information and communication technologies (ICTs) depends on the design of applications and the underlying implementation strategies used in the classroom. It is a constant challenge to design successful technical solutions that fully deliver intended capabilities (Rodriguez, Nussbaum, & Dombrovskaja, 2012), while operating in resource-constrained environments

that are further complicated by the social, psychological, geographic, and cultural differences (Chib & Zhao, 2009) between developers of these technologies and their intended users. In bridging this disparity, it recommends a participatory action research approach that supports iterative data gathering and on-going technology development that would, ultimately, positively impact teaching and learning in schools in developing countries. Hence, this shifts the focus to building capacities to bolster the educational infrastructure in which technologies are deployed.

Héctor Sebastián Benítez Larghi

Argentina

Dr. **Héctor Sebastián Benítez Larghi** is a professor in the Department of Sociology at Universidad Nacional de La Plata, La Plata. He is Assistant Researcher at Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología (CONICET). He is the author of 4 chapters in scholarly books and many articles and papers in fields of Sociology of Culture and Social Studies of ICT Appropriation. Some of his works are: "La vuelta al mundo en ochenta bytes" in Wortman, A. (comp.) *Imágenes Publicitarias/Nuevos Burgueses* (Buenos Aires, Prometeo, 2004); "Un piquete a la brecha digital" in *Revista Argumentos*, N° 9, (Buenos Aires, 2008); "Una cultura trasnochada. Los usos culturales de los sectores movilizados de la clase media argentina a partir de diciembre de 2001" in Wortman A. (comp.), *Entre la política y la gestión de la cultura y del arte. Voluntades de clases medias en acción* (Buenos Aires, Eudeba, 2009), "Internet y la computadora como estrategias de inclusión social entre los sectores populares. Imaginarios y prácticas desde la exclusión." with Rosalía Winocur Iparraguirre in *Revista Comunicação & Inovação de la Universidade Municipal de São Caetano do Sul*, N° 20. (San Pablo, 2010) y "TIC, democracia y sectores populares" in *Revista Andamios*, Volumen 7, N° 14 de la Universidad Autónoma de la Ciudad de México (México, 2010), and the chapter "La apropiación del acceso público a las computadoras e Internet por jóvenes de sectores populares en la Argentina" published in the book *Tecnología y Cambio Social* (2012, DIRSI/IEP)

Gender, social class & ICT. The constitution of social and digital inequalities among Argentinian adolescents

This paper presents the results of ongoing research focused on the relationships between ICTs and social inequalities by studying computer and Internet appropriation by young students in the frame of Programa Conectar Igualdad (PCI) [Connecting Equality Program], a public policy that targets the digital divide.

The purpose of this chapter is to understand the importance of social class and gender in the constitution of digital inequality. To achieve this objective, it compares ICTs appropriation processes between adolescents from popular and middle classes, analysing data collected by a questionnaire applied to young students benefitted by PCI in Greater La Plata, Argentina.

The main findings of this research stage show that in terms of access, skills and use type, gender differences are accentuated among popular classes whereas there is not such a gap among middle-class young people.

In this context, the implementation of PCI has a positive impact among lower-class women because they have guaranteed access to the computer without using other Public Access Support Centre as an Internet Café, a space perceived as masculine and dangerous for girls and women.

However, it is confirmed that the unpaid domestic work (cleaning, cooking, and looking after siblings) is a threat against the use of netbooks by women who belong to low-income classes because they do not have enough time to use those devices and consequently they even lose interest in them. In fact, it can be argued that the unequal housework gender division tends to turn the computer and Internet insignificant for those women's daily life.

Meanwhile, middle-class young people, male and female, unlike lower classes, bring with them a long family and personal history on connectivity and access to various electronic and digital devices. Thus, ICTs become socially significant for them in terms of sociability and communication: naturally, computers, the Internet and mobile phones are part of all their daily practices.

Andrea Lucía Ordóñez Llanos

Ecuador

Andrea Ordóñez is an independent researcher. She is currently researching the natural knowledge economy in Ecuador after coediting a book on the Ecuadorian Knowledge Sector: *Ecuador Será Conocimiento*. In this book she authored a special chapter on the possibilities of generating knowledge clusters in Ecuador. Additionally, she works on understanding the links between research and policy and promoting new perspectives on the issues among researchers in Politics and Ideas, a thinknet. Previously she was Research Director at Grupo FARO where she leads the debate, articulation and revision of the institutional research agenda. Andrea holds a Masters in Economic Development from the Facultad Latino Americana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO) in Ecuador.

A new set of questions: ICT4D research and policy

The objective of this chapter is to present and debate a framework that would allow the ICT4D community to reflect on the links (or lack of) between the research it carries out and policymaking processes in developing countries. The aim of having an initial framework is to be able to combine and bring together mainly three distinct streams of academic inquiry: policy studies, the interface between research and policy, and the conceptualization of ICT4D research. This framework will critically look at the way in which research has been framed, and the way in which policy processes are carried out – both in the political and bureaucratic arena – to identify possible gaps, issues and future lines of research. This will require a political perspective that has usually been missing in a scholar tradition focused on development outcomes.

Fabro Boaz Steibel

Brazil

Fabro Steibel did his PhD at the Institute of Communications Studies (Leeds University /UK), under the supervision of Prof Stephen Coleman; and his MA at UFF/Brazil, under the

supervision of Prof Afonso de Albuquerque. Steibel's research focuses on the use of technology for deliberation and development, having published on the topic since 2004. He is the current consultant in charge of the new portal of Human Rights of Mercosul, and a project manager at the Institute of Technology and Society of Rio for the Ford Foundation on developing freedom. Steibel has 8 years of experience with international research bodies, having worked for projects sponsored by the European Parliament, the European Commission, the Reuters Institute for the study of Journalism, the EU Fundamental Rights Agency, the Fundación Comunica, the WUN, and others. During his PhD studies in the UK (2007-2011), Steibel presented papers at the main international conferences on Political and Media Studies (ie, IAMCR, PSA, ECPR, Epop), and studied at the UCSD as a visiting researcher under the supervision of Prof Daniel Hallin. He was currently Director of Communications Studies at the Universo University (Brazil), a research consultant for the Fundación Comunica, and is now the new independent researcher of the Open Government Partnership in Brazil.

Designing web 2.0 tools for online public consultation

Public consultation is a formal mechanism of social participation where government invites citizens to participate in policy making. Increasingly, public consultations are being held online, where web 2.0 tools and other Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools become central to understand the design of virtual spaces for government-citizen interaction. Through analysing two case studies from Brazil – the “Gabinete Digital” and the “Marco Civil Regulatório” initiatives – this chapter discusses how online public consultation spaces are designed, using a combination of ICTs. Based on three frameworks of deliberative theory and characteristics of web 2.0 tools, the aim of this paper is studying what aspects of web 2.0 tools are useful for online consultation, and what democratic environments they might generate when combined. The main contribution of this work is raising awareness on how the usage of certain web 2.0 tools can reinforce or diminish some attributes of political communication and therefore, as a result, produce different models of online democratic communication.

5. SIRCA II Workshop, Jamaica

- a. SIRCA II Research Training Workshop
- b. Open Session at IFIP 2013

The Strengthening Information Society Research Capacity Alliance (SIRCA) is a research capacity building programme on information society in the context of international development in the Global South. The SIRCA network (<http://www.sirca.org.sg/>) supports opportunities for emerging scholars to work closely with senior researchers in ICTD research.

On May 19 and 20, The Strengthening Information Society Research Capacity Alliance (SIRCA) Programme organized a workshop on the sidelines of the Social Implications of Computers in Developing Countries (IFIP) 2013 conference in Jamaica. The aim was to allow feedback and discussion around chapters submitted for the SIRCA Volume II book on the “Impact of Information Society Research in the Global South.”

Before the start of the IFIP conference, SIRCA ran a two-day publication workshop, featuring research projects from 3 continents. The topics covered ranged from Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Peruvian primary schools, an mFinance review, the impact of the Internet on Kenyan university students, to the cultural implications of telemedicine in India. SIRCA Principal Investigators (PIs) simultaneously presented at the IFIP poster session on Day 1 of the conference, with one PI presenting her paper at the PhD track session.



Crafting versatile frameworks

Arul Chib, Assistant Director of the Singapore Internet Research Centre started the workshop by outlining the logistics, themes, organization and conceptual framework undergirding SIRCA's work. He then explained some of the "domains" – Conceptual Development, Education and Knowledge Building, Gender and Society, Political and Participation, and Economics – that the SIRCA volume will investigate in detail. "The overriding concern [with this volume] was to expand the scope of what we started with Volume I, which was linking research to policy and practice," he said.

Following this, John Traxler spoke, via video, on some of his expectations for the "Education" domain in particular, and how it fit into the overall theme of "impacts" within the programme. He urged the PI researchers to approach their literature reviews with greater care, as research on the use of technology was often grounded within a particular locality's institutions, infrastructure and patterns of use. "You have to be careful about what you use," he said. "It may come from different cultures, both in terms of micro-cultures within a school or college...or from a national or ethnic culture different from yours, which means different ideas about pedagogy, teaching and learning."

Traxler concluded by listing some of the issues that were worth paying attention to in other research: the sampling methodology, the interpretation of findings and definitions of "ICT", amongst others.

Next, Alexander Flor spoke via video on the "Conceptual Development" domain, pointing out that theory building was always an ambitious project and therefore fraught with challenges. "But there is a real potential for us to contribute to the body of knowledge," he said. He underscored the importance of crafting versatile frameworks, ones that were elegant, comprehensible and coherent.

Roger Harris then spoke on the impact that ICT and information society research has had on policy and practice, and the implications therein for ICT4D research. Expanding on some of the concerns raised earlier by John Traxler, Harris explained the “parallel universes” that researchers and policy makers lived in, with different value systems and outlooks. This in turn led to frictions between the two factions on questions of impact, and a greater need for “translating” research for non-scientific audiences.

The literature showed, Harris concluded, that ICT research was significantly lacking in impact on policy on practice, and major cultural and institutional shifts were needed to make it happen. Some of those, he pointed out, could be solved relatively easily by focusing more on “translation” efforts to disseminate research findings to a wider audience.

The subsequent hours on Day 1 were spent on domain experts giving chapter comments to each assigned project leaders.

Looking ahead: Preparing for Journal Publication

On Day 2 of the SIRCA workshop, Roger Harris and Francois Bar spoke on writing for academic journals.

Roger Harris disaggregated the different sections of an academic piece, from introductions and objectives to appendices and references – carefully laying out common pitfalls, editor expectations and best practices for each. “Proof read, proof read again, and proof read yet again,” exhorted one of his slides.

Francois Bar , editor of the Information Technology and International Development (ITID) journal, the leading journal in the field, was a special SIRCA invitee. He provided a behind-the-scenes look at how a top journal works, from the editor’s and publisher’s point of view, and its historical progression. The journal was initially created to bridge the technical side with the social science side, as a forum for conversation between the two disparate groups of researchers. The workshop ended with yet more opportunities for review discussions of book chapters. The SIRCA publication workshop thus addressed objectives of building research capacity of emerging developing countries researchers, specifically providing expert feedback on book chapters for the forthcoming book volume and preparing PIs for future journal submissions. PIs simultaneously got to disseminate research project findings at an international conference and interact with their global peers, developing networks for information exchange.

6. SIRCA II Writing Workshop, Mauritius



On August 4 and 5, the SIRCA programme organized a writing workshop at Le Victoria in Mauritius. 7 of SIRCA's Principal Investigators (PIs) participated – 4 from Africa, 2 from Latin America and 1 from Asia. They came together with 4 of SIRCA's expert collaborators to provide both peer and expert reviews on chapter drafts submitted for SIRCA's second book volume on the "Impact of Information Society Research in the Global South".

Arul Chib, Assistant Director of the Singapore Internet Research Centre and lead editor of the forthcoming volume on impact, began the workshop by talking on the theme of "impact" – and the conceptual frameworks that lay beneath SIRCA's work on the topic. He then analysed how individual SIRCA projects used these frameworks, and how these connected thematically.

"This workshop is to engage in the process of capacity building, and create a space for dialogue," he said. "This is a place to talk about the connections in your research – moving from your standalone project to seeing your work as part of a larger body of research, and as part of the SIRCA community."

Following this, PIs broke out into one-on-one sessions to get feedback from collaborators and experts. These experts included Dr Julian May, Professor at the Institute of Social Development, University of Western Cape in South Africa, Arul Chib, Dr Roger Harris, ICT consultant and Dr Ang Peng Hwa, Director of the Singapore Internet Research Centre (SiRC) at the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. PIs also debated in groups among themselves, offering peer-to-peer feedback and constructive criticism.

On the second day, Dr Julian May opened the workshop by speaking about academic publishing. After a sobering reminder of the rather difficult odds of getting published in top journals ("Only 1/9 papers submitted to two reviewers will get positive reviews from both"), he offered pragmatic, practical advice on the dos-and-donts of academic writing. In particular, he urged PIs to take criticism (harsh or otherwise) as an integral part of the process, and responding to it with patience and neutrality. "How you analyse your data is more important than your data," he said. "Pay careful attention to how you critically engage with your chosen topic."

Dr Roger Harris then built on Julian May's talk, methodically breaking down the components of an academic submission, and disaggregating the pitfalls and challenges in each part – from introductions and frameworks to conclusions and bibliographies. He repeated a piece

of advice that “can’t be repeated often enough”: Proof read, proof read again, and proof read yet again.

The rest of Day 2 was again spent on one-on-one sessions. By the end of the SIRCA writing workshop, participants had gained a wealth of critical feedback on their chapter drafts, preparing them for more effective dissemination of their research work. The workshop straddled two SIRCA objectives, simultaneously building the research capacity of researchers from emerging countries and giving them solid advice and concrete next steps on disseminating findings to global peers. The PIs are now working towards submitting book chapters for the SIRCA II book volume, and working on journal papers for submission to top-tier journals.

7. SIRCA Bootcamp, Cape Town, South Africa

- a. SIRCA Participation at UWC Pre-conference
- b. Open Session at the ICTD 2013
- c. SIRCA Bootcamp at Spier

SIRCA Open Session – ICTD 2013, Cape Town

SIRCA’s open session at the ICTD 2013 conference in Cape Town was held on the morning of December 7, 2013 at the Kramer Law Building in the University of Cape Town. At 9:00 am, SIRCA Collaborators Roger Harris and Gloria Bonder led a panel discussion on the “Impact of ICT4D Research on Policy and Practice: Lessons from International Development”. The venue was packed to capacity, with attendance restricted to standing room only from the start. SIRCA staff distributed copies of the original SIRCA book volume and pamphlets to attendees.

At 10:45 am, conference attendees could stop by the large LT1 lecture theatre in the Kramer Building to see a large row of posters of SIRCA research projects. All the SIRCA Principal Investigators (PIs) were on hand explaining their research, and senior SIRCA collaborators led discussions and impromptu chats.

The mood at the poster session was informal, with local ‘doughssants’ distributed to attendees and a presentation on SIRCA’s work running on loop in the background. There was a constant bustle for the next 90 minutes, with a steady stream of visitors. Attendees also paused to pick up SIRCA books outside the hall, or sign up for a SIRCA-sponsored township tour of the Langa township in the afternoon.

61 people signed up for the township tour, against an original estimate of 40. Two extra buses were hired to accommodate this vociferous response, and the tour itself was well received.



SIRCA Bootcamp

The SIRCA Bootcamp was a three-day event centred on the theme of research capacity and openness, held at the SPIER Wine Farm in Stellenbosch between December 9 and 11, 2013.

The Bootcamp was an experimental space for the SIRCA community to explore avenues and topic of interest to them, and collectively weigh in on the future of the SIRCA program. It followed a loose “unconference”-style structure. Participants, including 13 SIRCA PIs, were encouraged to bring ideas, paper drafts, research proposals, data, survey results, or any material that they wished to share with the group.

The SIRCA Bootcamp was built on **Open Space** principles: an approach for hosting events focused on a specific and important purpose or task—but beginning without any formal agenda, beyond the overall purpose or theme. As a result, a lot of the tangible ‘outputs’ of the event such as new collaborations, ideas or connections happened on the sidelines, and beyond the ‘official’ activities.

On **Day 1**, participants checked in to the farm and attended an opening session that involved quick, 3-minute flash presentations on personal goals and to-dos for the Bootcamp. Following this, participants broke out into smaller groups for the first of three ‘open spaces’. There were groups that discussed policy and practice, e-learning, networks, and textual analysis. Other groups swapped quantitative analysis techniques, while others worked on editing their research drafts with senior collaborators.

On Day 2, SIRCA collaborators and guest editors Elsa Estevez and Marisol Montoya delivered a presentation on the upcoming SIRCA special issue of the EJISDC journal. Following this, Roger Harris and Gloria Bonder led a discussion on ICT4D research sparked by their panel discussion a few days earlier at the ICTD 2013 Conference. The group then split into two more open spaces, working on poolside laptops and farm bistros.

In the evening, the first half of the Bootcamp officially came to end with a celebratory party. The DJ for the evening was Mohato Leken, an ICT researcher at the University of Cape Town who performs as 'Wildebeats'.

On Day 3, SIRCA collaborators, invited guests and representatives from IDRC gathered to discuss the future of the SIRCA program. Matthew Smith of IDRC opened the day with a presentation on 'Open', and IDRC's focus on Open Research, followed by a freeform discussion on how the concept related to future iterations of the SIRCA program.

After a break, participants broke out into impromptu groups to discuss different aspects of Open research, and the social processes it engenders. Each of these processes (from Adaptation and Collaboration to Re-use and Social Mobilization) were then elaborated on and disaggregated. Participants then brainstormed ideas on programmatic frameworks for SIRCA based on these processes, with deliberations on future research directions and potential projects.

The SIRCA Bootcamp ended as a portent for the future of the programme – its experimental structure forming the basis for future iterations and its discussions fuelling the direction of its research outputs.

8. SIRCA Impact and Dissemination

8.1 Research outputs and international recognition

Throughout 2013, SIRCA Principal Investigators made fruitful achievements across the globe.

Africa

SIRCA II Principal Investigator from the Ivory Coast (Cote d'Ivoire), **Kabran Djane**'s work was featured in a panel discussion on "Gender, Mobile Phone and Food Security in Africa" at the World Social Sciences Forum (WSSF) in October 2013.

Kenya-based PI **Stephen Kimani** presented a paper at the INTERACT 2013 conference held in Cape Town in September 2013. His presentation was based on his SIRCA research on designing an online portal for female science and technology university students in Kenya. He also presented his work at the e-Learning Africa 2013 conference in Windhoek, Namibia in May 2013.

His research was also featured in two poster sessions – one at the sidelines of the IFIP International Conference on Social Implications of Computers in Developing Countries in Jamaica (where SIRCA held a workshop), and as part of an exhibition by the Kenyan Commission for University Education in June 2013.

Principal Investigator **Achille Tefong** participated in a Pre-Conference Doctoral Student Workshop and Academy of Management Africa Conference in Johannesburg, South Africa in January 2013.

Asia

PI Baohua Zhou's paper based on his SIRCA project, titled "New Media and Opinion Expression among Chinese New Generation Migrant Workers" was published in *Contemporary Communication* (Vol. 2, pp.41-48), a well-regarded Chinese journal in communication research. (March 1, 2013)

A similar paper based on the same research was awarded a third-place prize for "*Deng Xiaoping Theory Research*" by the Shanghai Social Science Research Association, and remains the only award disbursed to work from the media and communication research field in 2013

Zhou and his collaborator, Dr Jack Qiu, were also part of a workshop on Chinese new generation migrant workers, held in Ningbo, July 2013, by some leading sociologist and communication scholars in China.

Indonesian PI **Ezmieralda Melissa** presented her research on women entrepreneurship and social media use at the Media Asia 2012 conference in Osaka, Japan in late 2012. Her research was also featured in publications by the department of Communication and Public Relations, Swiss German University in Tangerang, Indonesia and the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre in cooperation with Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta

PI Nikos Dacanay was accepted into the MSc in Practicing Sustainable Development program at Royal Holloway, University of London. His SIRCA research on Advocacy Work By Women Migrant Community Based Organizations (CBOs) in two districts along the Thai-Burmese border was presented at the 2nd International Conference on Human Rights and Peace and Conflict in Southeast Asia in Jakarta, October 2012. **Mary Luz Feranil**, who joined SIRCA researchers at the academic writing workshop in Mauritius, presented a paper titled "Collective Agency in the Information Society: Women Migrant Organizations in Thailand" at the 7th International Technology, Education, and Development Conference (INTED) 2013 in Valencia, Spain.

Elinor May Cruz presented her work on Cybersecurity, cybersex and "understanding cybersex work as laboring bodies of contestation" at the Philippine Political Science Association 2013 International Conference in April 2013.

She also submitted an article, with **Trina Joyce Sajo**, titled "Affect as an approach for examining cybersex" for the International Association for the Study of Sexuality, Culture and Society International Conference held at Buenos Aires, Argentina.

In August 2013, she spoke at a number events, including "The First Philippine Conference on ICT for Development (ICT4PhD)" held last 21-22 September 2012 at the Philippine Social Science Council, Quezon City, the "Forum on the Cybercrime Prevention Act of 2012" last 9 October 2012 organized by the Department of Justice Office of Cybercrime and the Department of Science and Technology-Information and Communications Technology Office and a talk titled "Cybercrime Law: Why Women Want It Deleted" last 22 November 2012 at the University of the Philippines sponsored by international feminist organization The Just Associates – Philippines Network

Latin America

Brazilian PI **Fabro Steibel** (Brazil) undertook a field visit to Macao to work with collaborator **Elsa Estevez** on his research project. In 2013, he started consulting as an "information and technology architect" in a new portal on Human Rights policy in the MERCOSUR region.

Matias Dodel (Uruguay) wrote an article titled "Un marco conceptual para evaluar el impacto de las TIC en el bienestar" ("A conceptual framework to assess the impact of ICT on wellbeing") in an e-book titled "TIC, educación y sociedad. Reflexiones y estudios de casos a nivel iberoamericano" (ICT, Education and Society. Considerations and case studies in Latin America)

Sebastián Benítez Larghi published a journal article titled "La inclusión masiva de tecnologías digitales en el ámbito escolar. Un estudio comparativo de la apropiación de TIC por estudiantes de clases populares y clases medias en el marco del Programa Conectar Igualdad en La Plata y Gran La Plata" (The massive inclusion of digital technologies in schools. A comparative study of the appropriation of ICT by popular and middle class of the Programa Conectar Igualdad in La Plata y Gran La Plata areas) in the Latin American Social Science Institute (FLACSO)-published journal *Propuesta Educativa*. He Author Names: Sebastián Benítez Larghi, Magdalena Lemus and Nicolás Welschinger Lascano

He also published a piece titled "Massive inclusion of digital technologies in schools. Argentinian young adolescents' appropriation of computers and the Internet in popular and middle classes" in a book called *Digital Literacy, Technology and Social Inclusion: making sense of one-to-one computer programmes around the world* bought out by the Communication and Society Research Center at the University of Minho, Braga, Portugal

Sebastian also participated in two conferences: The XXIX Congreso Latinoamericano de Sociología ALAS, organized in September 2013 by the Asociación Latinoamericana de Sociología (ALAS) in Chile, Santiago and X Jornadas de sociología de la UBA in July 2013, by the Facultad de Cs. Sociales, Universidad de Buenos Aires in Argentina

8.2 Online Presence

SIRCA's online presence in this iteration was extended to a Facebook group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/256367887780373/>) for both past and present SIRCA researchers, and a digital library shared through Dropbox. The Facebook group was used for announcements for calls and conferences, as well as to share new research and/or articles of interest to researchers. There was some experimentation with a monthly newsletter for calls and conference information, but this was discontinued.

8.3 Achievements and accolades

8.3.1 SIRCA Alumni

The SIRCA program is dedicated to building sustained, long-term research capacity, and is pleased to note the continuing achievements of SIRCA alumni – researchers who were part of the programme's first cycle.

SIRCA I PI Mary Grace Mirandilla-Santos published an article in Asian Politics and Policy titled "P-Noy: A Click Away From Every Pinoy? A Review of the Web Site of the Office of the President of the Philippines"

Regina Hechanova was appointed the President of the Psychological Association of the Philippines, and is the current Chair of the Dept of Psychology of Ateneo de Manila University since June 2013. In August 2013, she was one of the authors in a paper titled "Problem Severity, Technology Adoption, and Intent to Seek Online Counseling Among Overseas Filipino Workers", published in the prestigious CyberPsychology, Behaviour and Social Networking journal (Vol. 16, No. 8, August 2013: 613-617)

Balwant Singh Mehta wrote a paper titled 'Evolution of Telecom Policy' published in SPET Research Journal of Social Science (Anand, Gujarat, India). He also put out two working papers for the University of Manchester's 'Capturing the Gains' research project - one titled 'How Social Upgrading Drives Economic Upgrading By Indian IT Majors: The Case of Telecom IT Services' , and the other titled 'Capabilities, Costs, Networks and Innovations: Impact of Mobile Phones in Rural India.'

His work on Women's participation in labor markets was presented at a number of conferences – from the

Women Employment and Occupations-Issues and Challenges" event held in Delhi in January 2013, to the International Labor Organisation's "Women's Labour Force participation in India and South Asia" conference in February 2013

TB DINESH was involved with a project by the ISIF, leading to a paper titled "Alipi: A framework for re-narrating web pages.", presented at the Proceedings of the International Cross-Disciplinary Conference on Web Accessibility in Lyon, France.

Sirajul Islam and Mahfuz Ashraf were selected as the 'Notes Chairs' for the next iteration of the ICTD conference in 2015, to be held in Singapore.

8.3.2 SIRCA Affiliates and Graduate Students

SIRCA also worked with graduate students and affiliates at the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, who had the following to say about the program:

Komathi Ale:

What started as an Asia-based ICTD research capacity building program, had in my case, progressed into a global-level research collaboration opportunity. My research experiences with SIRCA has given me the capacity to catalyze changes – designing methodologies, analyzing data, and disseminating ideas at conferences, and via publications. In the process, I was able add to this on-going role of research, and ultimately to benefit society. Navigating through unfamiliar cultural systems, I spent months running experiments in primary schools in India and Peru with children and teachers to assess the impact of computer technologies on education. Not only was I offered new learning opportunities, but also given the chance to network and establish connections with global research institutions and education programs. I believe that my experiences with SIRCA hitherto have prepared me to undertake independent research in pursuing my Ph.D. dissertation study in this ICTD research area.

Thanomwong Poorisat

The grant from SIRCA was my very first external funding. It has given me an opportunity to explore research on ICT4D, an area outside of my normal focus. I learnt that I really enjoy working on it, despite the challenges of juggling my thesis with this extra project. Now, that I have just submitted my thesis, I plan to publish our findings soon and continue building on this work in the years to come.

Rajiv George Aricat

Being part of SIRCA as a graduate researcher has been a great experience for me. Primarily, the programme is very broad-based, bringing academicians, practitioners and consultants under one umbrella. As a student, it helped me think beyond the academic realm and understand how experts looked at the field of ICTD from different perspectives. I could also meet with experts doing research in areas that are foundational to ICTD, for example, ethics in ICTD research, and the role of community participation in the implementation of ICTD projects. Being part of the SIRCA programme, I was able to have discussions with scholars who saw the larger picture of ICTD research. Along this line, I wish future SIRCA programmes would conceptualize ICTD on a broader level and engage with the epistemological issues in social science at a more theoretical plane. I also wish it would accommodate more critical approaches based on power, gender, cultural hegemony and critiques on modernity.

The financial support provided by SIRCA helped me defray much of the cost incurred while doing PhD research. SIRCA has been generous to cover the expenses of my trip to different international conferences on ICTD. I learned a lot through peer collaboration and

expert guidance, under the aegis of SIRCA and International Development Research Centre (IDRC). I am grateful to all their support.

9. Moving Forward

9.1 SIRCA II Book Publication

The SIRCA II book volume is being published by Springer Publishing, and will feature 15 chapters from SIRCA PIs and Collaborators.

The book addresses two aspects of information society research from the perspective of the Global South:

1. *Impact of research*: How is the research on ICTs in the Global South playing a role in achieving the information society? (such as policy formulation, media coverage, implementation in practice)
2. *Research on impact*: What is the evidence of the impact of ICTs on society? (i.e. end objectives of socio-economic development)

The topic of research impact upon the information society offers the potential for exploring definitions, theoretical approaches, methods of evaluation, and the process of technological change. The volume's stated aim is to enrich discussions and debates about the information society within the ICTD research community and beyond to policymakers and practitioners. Chapters in the volume contain both conceptual and evidence-based studies, and the overall SIRCA II volume aims to both provide an agenda-setting platform for discussion, definition and debate, as well as a forum for showcasing empirical evidence from the individual research projects sponsored by SIRCA II. The complete book proposal is enclosed as Appendix 7 of this document.

9.2 SIRCA III

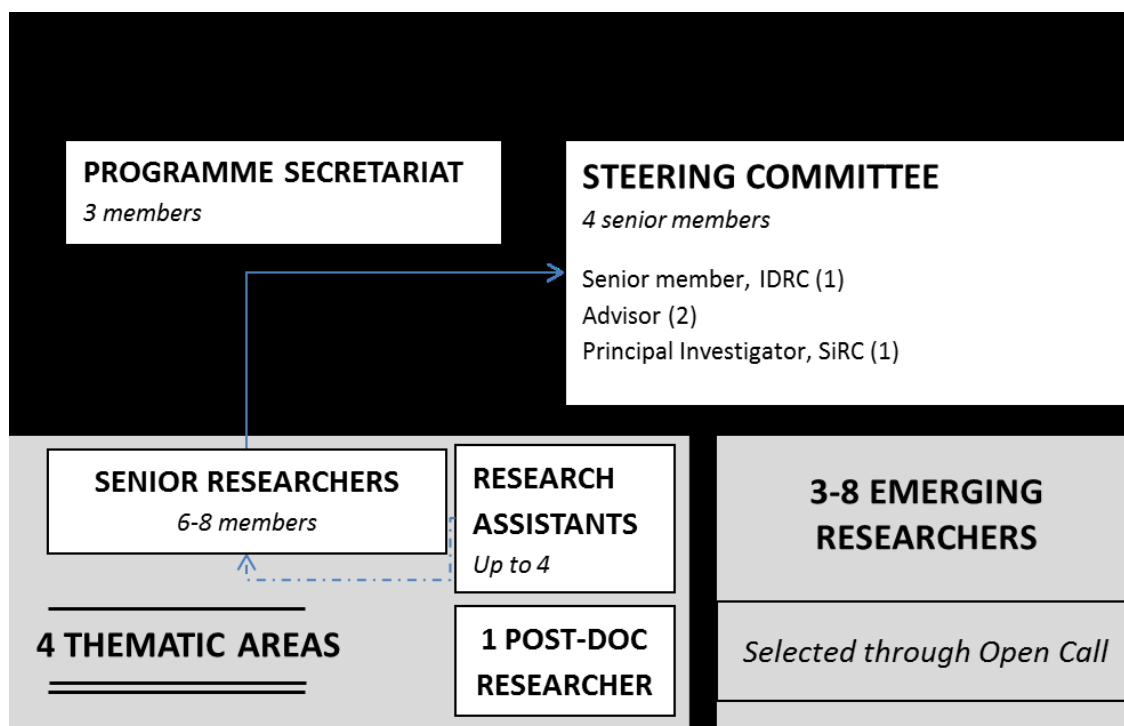
The third iteration of the SIRCA programme (henceforth 'SIRCA III') takes a significant step forward in both operational innovation and interdisciplinary scope. SIRCA III will bring together established academic experts and emerging researchers interested in engaging with the key theoretical and methodological issues introduced by the concept of Openness in technology and society.

The programme will focus on what might be termed 'Open Development' - the strategic application of open approaches in development processes of information society to better achieve development objectives. It will focus on generating cross-cutting thematic projects around issues of openness, inclusion and rights. It will generate seminal output and interdisciplinary theory for open research. This conceptual work will then act as foundation for to be tested and validated with empirical field work in developing and priority countries.

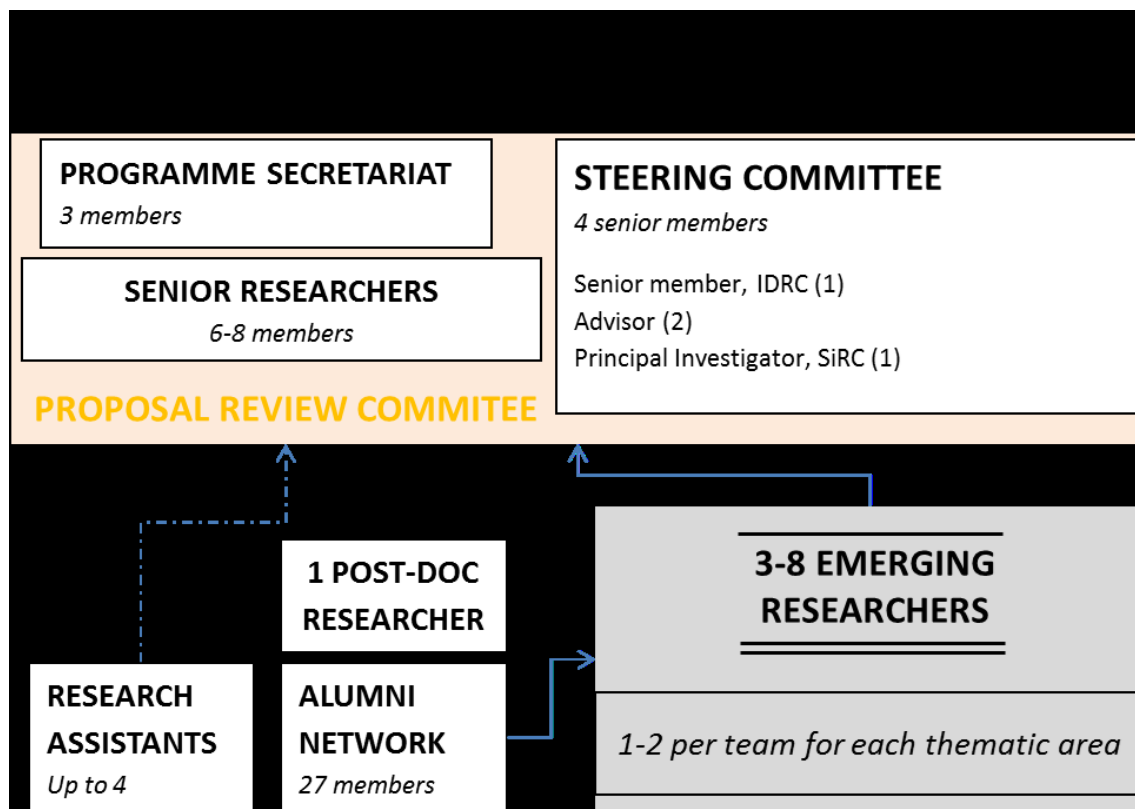
SIRCA III will therefore focus its efforts on conceptual development, and will hope to lead capacity building efforts on top of this conceptual foundation in the future. 4 Selected number teams of 2 or more senior researchers will work for 12 months (from August October 2014 to July September 2015) on generating rigorous, interdisciplinary methodologically-sound conceptual frameworks for research into issues of Openness. These projects will be coordinated by the SIRCA secretariat, and by a senior advisory committee. A proposed timeline is enclosed as Appendix 6 of this document.

This conceptual work will then act as foundation for field work in developing and priority countries. SIRCA III will sponsor up to 20 emerging scholars to attend the International Conference for Information and Communication Technologies for Development (ICTD) 2015 in Singapore, where the programme will conduct a workshop on Open research. Of these, up to 10a selected grou of emerging researchers from developing countries will be provided grant support and capacity building to conduct field research in their own countries.

The existing SIRCA programme framework (pictured below) has been tweaked and re-aligned to offer greater support to both these thematic research projects, and to develop an integrated mechanism for interdisciplinary research in the field. While Phase I research projects will form the theoretical core of SIRCA's work, Phase II will also feature high-quality programming and relevant regional capacity building workshops.



SIRCA III will also feature a reflexive learning approach to its programme framework – by continually monitoring, adapting and tweaking its operations and activities through a real-time process of feedback and data gathering. All research activity, in both phases of the programme, will be subject to Nanyang Technological University's ethical review process, if applicable.



The discourse around Open, and its related issues of inclusion, access and rights have deep ramifications for society, politics and development. SIRCA III is interested in creating a vibrant interdisciplinary approach to Open research, and hopes to participate in field building and enhance society's understanding of and ability to adapt to an Open-mediated world.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Grant Review Criteria (Used in “Project Assessment Decision Matrix”)

Relevance	
1. Research Gap	Does the literature review identify a research gap?
2. Research Question	Does the proposal clearly articulate and describe research question(s)?
3. Beneficiary Community Relevance	Is the project relevant on a beneficiary community level?
4. Sustainability	Does the project promote sustainable development (e.g. economically competitive, environmentally responsible) of impact medium and long term?
Influence and Knowledge Transfer	
1. Contributions of Outcomes to Beneficiary Community	Will the outcomes of the project contribute to enhanced understanding of changes in either development practice, policy, or well-being, on beneficiary communities as a result of the information society or ICTD?
2. Practical Application/Impact	Does the proposal include a viable policy influence plan?
3. Contribution to New Knowledge (Uniqueness)	Will the proposal contribute to new knowledge and understanding with respect to advancing research in the field of Information Societies?
4. Sharing of Results	Does the proposal include plans for the communication and dissemination of research findings through the various strategies and avenues beyond those offered by the program, such as the SiRC website, the program's annual conference and peer-reviewed journals?
Feasibility	
1. Objectives clear	Are the proposal outcomes and objectives clearly set out?
2. Adequacy of methodological rigor	Are the methods appropriate and well described?
3. Value for Money (Cost Benefit)	Will the planned outcomes provide sound value for money benefits?
4. Achievability	Are the proposal outcomes achievable within the proposed budget and timelines?
5. Risk Management	Does the proposal address relevant risk and limitation issues? Particularly consider ethical treatment of participants
PI Profile	
1. Eligibility	Is the PI in need of capacity building?
2. Qualifications	Has the PI got the appropriate academic qualifications?
WEIGHTS USED	TOTAL WEIGHTED SCORE
RELEVANCE	30%
INFLUENCE AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER	20%
FEASIBILITY	30%
PI PROFILE	20%

Appendix 2. Open Session Proposal for ICTD 2012

Open Session Proposal for multiple sessions on March 12, 2012 “Information Society Research in the Global South”

Submitted by Arul Chib, Assistant Director
Strengthening Information Society Research Capacity Alliance (SIRCA II)

Contents

Background of the SIRCA II Program	1
The SIRCA II Training Workshop	1
Proposed Structure of the SIRCA II Training Workshop	1
<i>Day 1 – Sunday, March 11, 2012</i>	2
<i>Day 2 – Open Sessions on Monday, March 12, 2012</i>	2
Justification for Conducting the SIRCA II Training Workshop alongside ICTD2012	4
References	4

Background of the SIRCA II Program

The Strengthening Information Society Research Capacity Alliance (SIRCA II) is a 24 month information society and development research capacity building program aimed at young and emerging researchers in Africa, Asia, and Latin America (collectively referred to as the Global South). The program commenced operations in September 2011, and it is hoped that 15 research grants will be awarded (5 in each region) to such scholars through a competitive selection process. Each grantee will be provided with sustained training and mentorship during their research periods and will be assigned a collaborator (i.e. a senior scholar, aka mentor) to guide them with their research such that they can develop and execute sound and interdisciplinary research for development.

The SIRCA II Training Workshop

The SIRCA II program intends to hold its first training workshop in March 2012 and sees the invitation for Open Sessions as a welcome opportunity to join forces with the ICTD2012 conference program and its participants. The training workshop is held early on in the SIRCA II program to impart knowledge on research tools, methodologies, ethics, gender issues, and other pressing related topics of interest and importance to emerging researchers. The specific objectives of the training workshop will be to:

- Equip grantees with a clear understanding of literature and methodological issues with regards to their research;
- Equip grantees with a clear understanding of how their research relates and contributes to the broader information society discipline; and
- Highlight practical issues and challenges in fieldwork.

Proposed Structure of the SIRCA II Training Workshop

In the previous SIRCA I program, the training workshop was held over a two day period with full day sessions covering a wide number of research-related topics. Keeping in line with this, the SIRCA II program will also conduct full day sessions over a period of two days.

Day 1 – Sunday, March 11, 2012

The first day will be hosted and conducted by the SIRCA II program, and will provide a space for grantees and their appointed senior collaborators to meet face to face for the first time and discuss their research proposals. Four plenary sessions will be conducted over the course of the day, and grantees and collaborators will make the case for their research and obtain feedback from selected trainers on a variety of issues. Over the day's sessions, it is hoped that both collaborators and their grantees will be able to iron out theoretical and methodological details, settle on an appropriate research method(s), and design a suitable communication and dissemination strategy for their research.

The tentative training sessions will be as follows:

Session	Structure
Morning Session 1 (90 Minutes)	5 minute introduction 5 presentations x 10 minutes + 7 minutes of panel discussion and feedback
Tea/Coffee break and networking	
Morning Session 2 (90 Minutes)	5 minute introduction 5 presentations x 10 minutes + 7 minutes of panel discussion and feedback
Lunch	
Afternoon Session 1 (90 minutes)	5 minute introduction 5 presentations x 10 minutes + 7 minutes of panel discussion and feedback
Tea/Coffee break and networking	
Afternoon Session 2 (90 minutes)	One on one discussion between grantees and collaborators to fine-tune research proposal based on feedback received

It is hoped that the grantees will be able to obtain the necessary feedback and advice on:

- how to conduct literature review, theory and methodology in order to refine their research questions and hypotheses;
- understand various research methods and choose the appropriate method/s for their work, including how to conduct rigorous fieldwork in difficult situations;
- understand the positioning of their project in relation to the larger field information society research; and
- learn about research communication and dissemination strategies.

Day 2 – Open Sessions on Monday, March 12, 2012

On the second day at the ICTD2012 hosted Open Sessions, grantees will present their revised research proposals (based on the suggestions from the day before) and obtain general feedback from the audience on how best to proceed. This will ensure that they (i.e. the grantees) have access to advice from a larger audience than they otherwise would, as registered ICTD2012 conference participants – upto 20 of them at most – will be welcome to attend any of these sessions without the need to pre-register for them. For the general audience, this will be an opportunity to observe and understand the various types of interdisciplinary research initiatives and activities being conducted in the Global South.

The final open session for the day will be a panel discussion focusing on Key ICTD and Information Society Research Issues which will be of relevance to any researcher or scholar involved in the field. The SIRCA II program will engage four eminent academics in the ICTD and Information Society space from the Global South to expound the challenges they face in conducting such research in their regions. In this regard, the SIRCA II program is already in talks with Dr. Gloria Bonder¹⁴ (from Argentina) and Dr. Alison Gillwald¹⁵ (from South Africa) to participate in the Training Workshop to educate grantees and other scholars on the gendered aspects of ICT use in research. Both Dr Bonder and Dr Gillward are members of the SIRCA II Grant Review Committee. Similarly, other scholars will be identified to talk about the ethical and theoretical considerations of conducting research in the Global South – identified as key research issues in this field.

¹⁴ Director of the Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Women's Studies Program, University of Buenos Aires, and Director of the Center of Gender, Society and Policies based in the Latin American Post Graduate Institute of Social Sciences – FLACSO, Argentina which coordinates the UNESCO Regional Chair on Women, Science and Technology in Latin America program. She is also a Consultant on Women, Science and Technology for several national, regional and international organizations such as DAW, United Nations, Women and Development Unit, ECLAC and the Office of Science and Technology, OAS, IDRC/CRDI, UNICEF, UNIFEM, UNDP and UNESCO.

¹⁵ Executive Director of Research ICT Africa based in Cape Town, South Africa and Adjunct Professor at the University of Cape Town Graduate School of Business, Management of Infrastructure Reform and Regulation Program.

The proposed open sessions will be as follows:

Session	Structure
Morning Session 1 (90 minutes)	5 minute introduction 5 presentations x 10 minutes + 7 minutes of discussion
Tea/Coffee break and networking	
Morning Session 2 (90 minutes)	5 minute introduction 5 presentations x 10 minutes + 7 minutes of discussion
Lunch	
Afternoon Session 1 (90 minutes)	5 minute introduction 5 presentations x 10 minutes + 7 minutes of discussion
Tea/Coffee break and networking	
Afternoon Session 2 (90 minutes)	Panel discussion on Key ICTD and Information Society research issues (such as gender, ethics, and theory) 5 minute introduction 4 speakers x 15 minute presentations 25 minutes of Q&A

The structure of the panel sessions will facilitate open discussion and inclusive interaction making the sessions as participatory as possible.

Resource and Other Requirements

The following will be required to conduct the open sessions on March 12, 2012:

- Audio-visual equipment
- Videolink
- Flipcharts
- Pinboards; Space configuration
- Tea/coffee breaks; Lunch
- Large enough conference room/space
- Waiver of the Registration fee for the conference for all SIRCA II participants; given that these sessions will guarantee upto 30 participants, it is hoped that ICTD2012 will provide the SIRCA II program grantees, collaborators, coordinators and secretariat staff with a waiver on the Conference Registration fees to participate in the open session.

Justification for Conducting the SIRCA II Training Workshop alongside ICTD2012

Bringing in our grantees and collaborators and conducting the Training Workshop alongside the ICTD2012 conference will provide our grantees, particularly, with the opportunity to interact with established senior scholars and practitioners in the same field as well as experience the ICTD2012 conference first hand. They will also be able to obtain as much feedback from a larger audience than they otherwise would have access to.

For the ICTD2012 conference organizers, this will ensure a guaranteed audience of up to 30 registered and paid scholars (approximately 15 grantees and 15 collaborators) at the conference. As mentioned, it will also be an opportunity for the ICTD2012 audiences to observe and understand the various types of interdisciplinary research activities being conducted in the Global South. There is indeed a significant lack of Southern research activities in the ICTD and information society space (see Coward, 2007; and Ojo, 2005 for a discussion on this), and the inclusion of these open sessions will give these emerging researchers from Africa, Asia, and Latin America the opportunity to showcase their research initiatives to the larger audience present at ICTD2012.

At this stage, however, the SIRCA II program is unable to list out the research topics that will be presented at the proposed Open Sessions, as well as the speakers who will make these presentations. We will only be able

to furnish this information by the end of December 2011. Nevertheless, it is assured that there will be a diverse array of research up for presentation and discussion by a host of researchers from countries in the African, Asian, and Latin American regions. Based on the experience of the SIRCA I program, the range of studies from Asia alone included research in agriculture, education, evaluation, geography, marginalized groups, political science, public health, and sociology, and had participants from nine countries in the region.

References

Coward, C. (2007). Research capacity in Asia: A literature review on the information society. Presented at the Workshop on Research in the Information Society in Manila, Philippines, April 25-27, 2007.

Ojo, T. (2005). Old paradigm and ICT4D Agenda in Africa: Modernization as Context. Paper presented at the International Communication Association, in New York City, New York, USA, May 26-30, 2005.

For more information on the SIRCA I program, visit www.sirca.org.sg.

Appendix 3: Open Session Proposal for ICTD 2013

Revised Proposal of Open Session for ICTD 2013 Conference

Submitted by:

Title of Session: SIRCA II Showcase Organizers and their Institutional Affiliations: Nanyang Technology University (NTU) University of the Western Cape (UWC) <u>Instituto de Estudios Peruanos (IEP)</u>	Title of Session The Impact of ICT4D Research on Policy and Practice: Lessons from International Development Organizers and their Institutional Affiliations: Dr. Roger Harris, Roger Harris Associates & Universiti Malaysia Sarawak
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Background

SIRCA will conduct two open sessions at the ICTD 2013 conference – the first a keynote session on the Impact of ICT4D Research on Policy and Practice, led by Dr Roger Harris and the second a SIRCA II Showcase focusing on the research experiences of emerging ICTD scholars based in the global South. This showcase will take the form of a **poster session** and display.

The sessions provide both a high-level debate on issues of ICTD research, as well as present high-quality peer-reviewed research conducted in Asia, Africa and Latin America in the last two years. The sessions hope to disaggregate the deep linkages between the issues on discussion and research on showcase, and highlight overlapping themes and concerns. This full-day session will include supplementary activities that both highlight and go beyond the content of the aforementioned discussions.

One of SIRCA's key focus areas is analysing concepts of "Openness" within the Global South – looking specifically at the means people use to connect, share, organise, and produce on information networks. As part of this, the SIRCA session, in the afternoon, will take participants out of the conference halls and in to real-world locations that are doing interesting work, or offer intriguing points of discussion. The principal aim of the second part of the session (which involves a visit to the Langa Township, see below) is to immerse people into HOW our research areas – specifically ICTs - impact on development, and connecting some of the theoretical discussions on SIRCA's work to networks and technologies in the real world. In other words, SIRCA wants to give participants a sense of how to take the programme's relevance beyond the academic realm into engaging with real-world communities.

Proposed Programme:

The above mentioned two separate workshops are combined into a single full day session with the following programme. **We expect between 35-40 participants:**

Programme for the day:

09:00 to 10:45	11:15 to 13:00 (<i>ending is based on actual lunch break of the Conference</i>)	13:00 to 14:30	14:30 to 1700
The Impact of ICT4D Research on Policy and Practice: Lessons from International Development By Dr Roger Harris Roger Harris Associates & Universiti Malaysia Sarawak	SIRCA II Showcase: Overview and Poster Session Introduction By: Dr Arul Chib, Nanyang Technological University	Lunch	Transfer to outdoor ICT visits: Trip to Langa Township
SIRCA Poster session (Posters will be on display throughout the day, with a special showcase by SIRCA PIs during the morning break for tea and coffee)			

Note: SIRCA team is requesting for the day session to be placed on 7 December 2013. The SIRCA members will depart the ICTD conference on 9 December for some private events in another location.

The session will begin with a review of the literature on the Impact of ICT4D Research on Development Policy and Practice and debate how the potential for practical impact from ICT4D research can be realized. This will be followed with a quick run through of the SIRCA's current work. These talks will cover roughly the first 3 hours of the session.

SIRCA team will also be putting up a poster display of the SIRCA current research projects, giving participants the chance to engage with them through an interactive board. The display will describe some of the lessons and experiences in providing collaborative support to our Principal Investigators (PIs), and will get feedback on our research outputs.

In the afternoon, SIRCA will take interested conference attendees (with a cap of 40 registrants) to a field visit of communications networks and facilities in the Langa township. The tour will last approximately two hours, and will be free of charge for ICTD attendees (including pick up and drop from the ICTD venue). As only limited seats are available, attendees of SIRCA's morning session will be given priority.

NOTE: For the tour, SIRCA is collaborating with a local, community-based organization that works for the economic empowerment of Langa Township.

Contribution to the conference

The SIRCA network builds on the dialogue which started in Atlanta at ICTD2012 around the ICTD research interests of fifteen chosen global scholars. SIRCA's broader goals are: 1) to give a platform to emerging scholars on their latest research work status, 2) to promote the forthcoming SIRCA book and special journal issue where most of them will have published, and 3) to improve the network opportunities for these emerging scholars and their collaborator counterparts within the ICTD community.

The opening session led by Dr Roger Harris will ground participants in some of the theoretical issues of ICT4D research, and connect them to practicalities on the ground. At that point, the SIRCA II showcase will describe these practicalities in vivid detail, and also offer some lessons and experiences in providing collaborative support to emerging scholars around the world.

The afternoon outdoor visits will build on the morning's groundwork by taking the frameworks and issues discussed to real-world locations, offering participants and conference goers a tangible sense of how ICT research transfer to questions of "impact".

Logistics Requirements:

The morning sessions are scheduled to take place in the "Kramer 2A" hall, with a seating capacity of 49 people. Apart from standard A/V equipment, SIRCA will require space and boards to set up the poster display. There will be approximately 16 posters on display.

Appendix 4. Site Visit Feedback Form for Principal Investigators

SIRCA Site Visit Feedback Form-PI

As part of SIRCA's efforts to ensure a fruitful and mutually beneficial relationship between the SIRCA PIs and Collaborators, we would like to invite all PIs to participate in a feedback exercise. We hope that this questionnaire will serve as another channel through which we could obtain feedback on the programme.

We believe your inputs will be most useful to the improvement of the SIRCA programme. Please be assured that your answers will be kept confidential. Thank you for your participation.

Name of PI	
Name of Collaborator	
Date of Site Visit	

Site Visit Overview
1) When did your Collaborator visit (Date of Visit)?
2) What were your expectations for the site visit interaction before the visit?

Areas for Support in Research
3) What were the areas in which you required support during site visit? (Check all that applies.)
<input type="checkbox"/> Theory
<input type="checkbox"/> Method
<input type="checkbox"/> Fieldwork
<input type="checkbox"/> Findings Analysis
<input type="checkbox"/> Literature Review
<input type="checkbox"/> Dissemination
<input type="checkbox"/> Ethics
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify):

During Site Visit
4) What were your key objectives during the collaborator's visit? Were they accomplished?

5) In which aspect was the collaborator most helpful?
6) Did you encounter any difficulties during the site visit? If yes, what difficulties did you encounter? How did you manage to overcome the difficulties?
7) Did you encounter any surprises? If yes, please describe.
8) What extra activities did the Collaborator undertake during the site visit (lecture, meeting, etc.)? What were they and what did you think about them?
9) What do you think SIRCA can do to maximize the benefits of the site visit?
10) What is your overall satisfaction level with the site visit?
<input type="checkbox"/> Very High <input type="checkbox"/> Reasonably High <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Very Low <input type="checkbox"/> Indifferent

Other Comments

Appendix 5. Site Visit Feedback Form for Collaborators

SIRCA Site Visit Feedback Form-Collaborator

As part of SIRCA's efforts to ensure a fruitful and mutually beneficial relationship between the SIRCA PIs and Collaborators, we would like to invite all collaborators to participate in a feedback exercise. We hope that this questionnaire will serve as another channel through which we could obtain feedback on the programme.

We believe your inputs will be most useful to the improvement of the SIRCA programme. Please be assured that your answers will be kept confidential. Thank you for your participation.

Name of Collaborator	
Name of PI	

Site Visit Overview
11) When did you visit the site (Date of visit)?
12) What was the primary language of interaction?
13) What were your expectations for the site visit interaction before the visit?

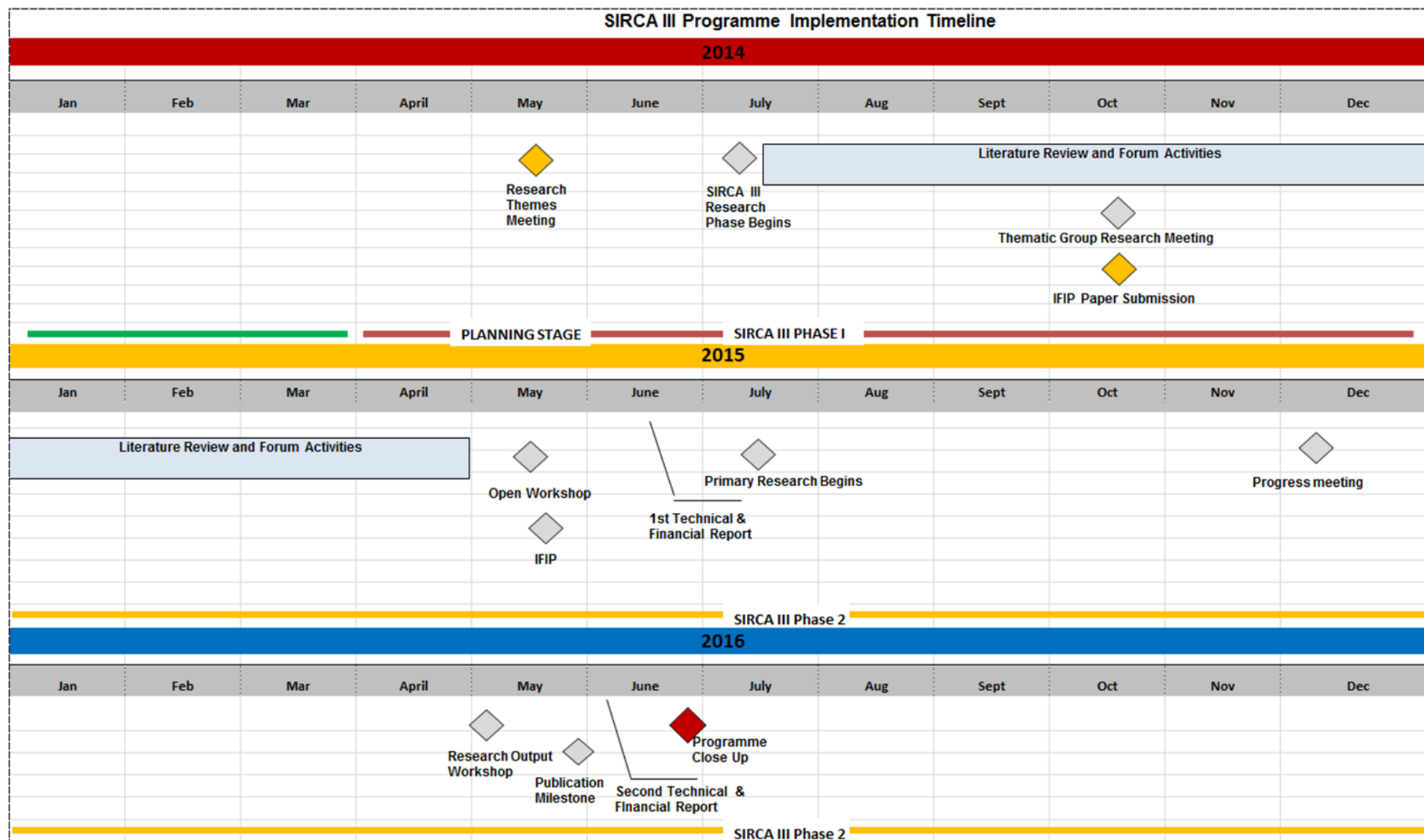
Areas for Support in Research
14) What were the areas in which you hoped to provide support during site visit? (Check all that applies.)
<input type="checkbox"/> Theory
<input type="checkbox"/> Method
<input type="checkbox"/> Fieldwork
<input type="checkbox"/> Findings Analysis
<input type="checkbox"/> Literature Review
<input type="checkbox"/> Dissemination
<input type="checkbox"/> Ethics
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify):

During Site Visit
15) What were your key objectives during the site visit? Were they similar to the objectives that the PI(s) had in mind? Were they accomplished?

16) In which aspect did the PI demonstrate most progress?
17) In which aspect did the PI seem most challenged?
18) Did you encounter any difficulties during the site visit? If yes, what difficulties did you encounter? How did you manage to overcome the difficulties?
19) Did you encounter any surprises? If yes, please describe.
20) Did you undertake any extra activities such as a lecture, meeting, etc.? What were they and how were they received?
21) What do you think SIRCA can do to maximize the benefits of site visits?
22) What is your overall satisfaction level with the site visit?
<input type="checkbox"/> Very High <input type="checkbox"/> Reasonably High <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Very Low <input type="checkbox"/> Indifferent

Other Comments

Appendix 6: Proposed SIRCA III Timeline



Book Proposal

IMPACT OF INFORMATION SOCIETY RESEARCH IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

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OVERVIEW

The Strengthening Information Society Research Capacity Alliance (SIRCA II) is a research capacity building programme in its second cycle on information society in the context of international development in the Global South. The programme is managed and implemented by the Singapore Internet Center, in alliance with global partners, and supported by the International Development Research Centre.

During the first cycle (SIRCA I), the programme launched a book series with a volume entitled *Linking Research to Practice: Strengthening ICT for Development Research Capacity in Asia*. Volume 1 took a first step towards examining the broader impact of information society initiatives by extending the discussion of boundaries of academic research into the realm of practice. The book is available as an open online resource (<http://www.sirca.org.sg/sirca-publications/books-by-sirca/>)

The proposed Volume II of the SIRCA book series extends this enquiry to focus the analysis on impact. Further the scope is extended globally, encompassing Africa and Latin America in addition to Asia.

In discussing information society research, the international scholarly community has taken an assortment of approaches to question impact on the wider population. This book addresses two aspects from the perspective of the Global South:

3. *Impact of research*: How is the research on ICTs in the Global South playing a role in achieving the information society? (such as policy formulation, media coverage, implementation in practice)
4. *Research on impact*: What is the evidence of the impact of ICTs on society? (i.e. end objectives of socio-economic development)

The topic of research impact upon the information society offers the potential for exploring definitions, theoretical approaches, methods of evaluation, and the process of technological change. We hope this volume enriches discussions and debates about the information society within the ICTD research community and beyond to policymakers and practitioners.

Both conceptual and evidence-based studies will be sought to promote meaningful discussion on the impact of research in information societies in the Global South. Hence, the proposed SIRCA II volume aims to both provide an agenda-setting platform for discussion, definition and debate, as well as a forum for showcasing empirical evidence from the individual research projects sponsored by SIRCA II.

Two sets of authors have been invited to contribute to the volume. The first set includes SIRCA-funded emerging scholars and their senior information society researchers (See biographies below). The second set of authors were invited in order to reflect the dynamic discussions within the information society, including Mark R. Levy (Michigan State University), Peter Haddawy (United Nations University), Matthew Smith (IDRC), Stefan Germann (WHO), and Najeeb Al-Shorbaji (World Health Organization) amongst other distinguished scholars.

By engaging both emerging scholars from the Global South and established scholars from the Global North, this volume seeks to contribute to new patterns of communication and theoretical understandings. Such an inclusive, multi-pronged participation will create a space for diverse voices, dialogues and mutual exchange in the discussion.

RATIONALE

Strengthening Information Society Research Capacity Alliance, SIRCA II (www.sirca.org.sg), is a research capacity building programme on information society in the context of international development in the Global South. It aims to firstly build scientific and critical research skills and capacity among emerging researchers in Africa, Asia and Latin America, secondly establish network connections among the Global South researchers, and finally disseminate findings locally and internationally in order to strengthen the body of methodologically sound, interdisciplinary and theoretically-based research. This proposal suggests a volume to survey the impact of information and communications technologies (ICTs) in the development of the Global South and the impact of ICT research on achieving the information society.

With advancement in modern ICTs —the networked systems of various technological means such as computers, the Internet and mobile telephony— creating and sharing of knowledge have

become an easier and more horizontal (i.e. less hierarchical) process. They are in fact an essential part of the globalising modern world. Mobile phones and the Internet became the major tools promoting such development while becoming widely accessible to communities across various socio-economic strata, including those from the countries in the Global South. The world, both developed and developing parts, is progressing towards an information society.

The modern information society is gaining credence as an idea not simply due to the greater access to such tools. The information Society arises when technologically enabled processes, available through networked technologies, are utilised in order to transform human lives for the better. This structural change is occurring across various sectors, from government to private sector, from schools to microenterprises, and from university students to refugees, amongst a host of examples. The new platforms have the potential to improve and enhance education, governance, livelihood and beyond through open development (Smith et al, 2011, iv).

However, as open, networked technologies impact social, political and economic developments, civil society, governments and industry –the information society as a whole – face completely new challenges. Despite all the potential positive developments discussed so far, there are also potential challenges such as “the curtailment of individual rights to freedom of expression, privacy, access to knowledge, and collective action in the developing world” (IDRC, 2011, iii). In other words, the power dynamics that exist within the current Global North-South relations can be recreated within the new space, limiting the opportunities for constructive and collaborative growth. From paving the way for better political and economic mobilisation to monitoring and surveillance at all levels, the potential and challenge for transformative development opportunities is now more important and apparent than ever. Hence it is timely for the information society community — scholars, policy makers, civil society actors and citizens — to discuss the various aspects of *impact*.

Of course, the first challenge is defining what *impact* means within the information society context and how it could be measured. While there have been many programmes and investments in information society development in various communities in the Global South, the impact measurement has been challenging due to the lack of assessment guidance (Bhatnagar and Singh, 2010, p. 105). There have been, however, numerous discussions on the necessity of theoretically solid models, and a few scholars made attempts to establish frameworks.

Batchelor and Norrish (2005) present a framework for ICT pilot projects which seek to go “beyond monitoring and evaluation to applied research” (p.15). They address “project purpose” questions and research questions as the main pillars of the framework based on the challenges observed so far for ICT utilisation within development context, which are impact, mainstreaming, enabling environments, scaling up and technological change (p. 15). The authors emphasise the necessity of in-depth research and theorising based on the evidence collected from multiple pilot projects which will contribute to better project planning and implementation. This should ultimately lead to positive impact at various levels such as poverty reduction, better government service delivery and health improvements. Alsop and Heinsohn’s empowerment framework (2005) focuses on “individual agency” and “opportunity structure” in achieving development outcomes. They focus on

“existence of choice” and “achievement of choice” as the key measures of degree of empowerment while individual assets are to be measured from “psychological, informational, organisational, material, social, financial or human” perspectives.

From the discussions available so far on impact, it is noticeable that the definition of impact is both varied *and* limited. The variation ranges from macro-structural, meso-societal to micro-individual levels and could be seen as a technological output, access and availability, and/or behavioural or attitudinal changes. But rarely are there cases which provide a link between these levels. The discussion can also be limited in a sense that the dimensions of impact rarely go beyond strict boundaries of socio-economic advancement; particularly in examining influence on policy, legal frameworks, public opinion, or practical solutions.

Further, the measurement of impact can be too general and unrelated to specific recommendations. Many researchers, including the scholars of above mentioned literature, have employed Amartya Sen’s Capability Approach (Sen, 2001) as a mainstream framework in development theories. The Capability Approach challenged the prioritisation of economic growth and claimed the importance of one’s freedom to make choices. However, while many information society scholars base their theoretical development on this approach, they often do not go beyond the discussion of theory itself and lack practical implications for the information society research and development for the Global South, not to mention the lack of diversity in theoretical basis.

The literature on impact has tended to be optimistic as well. When projects are bordering on technological-determinism, there is a noticeable lack of critical perspectives or explanations for the failure to show evidence of credible and verifiable impact. Richard Heeks’s ICT4D 2.0 Manifesto (2009) is an example which greatly emphasises various hopeful potentials and impact for the disadvantaged individuals and communities, and such insights are prevalent in the discussions of the potential of information society in international development context. Meanwhile the necessary discussions on challenges and “negative” impact are significantly lacking while critical assessment is just as essential for a better use of ICTs in bridging the North-South gap. Finally, the impact recorded under individual domains tends not to overlap, failing to provide a deeper sense of context and inter-relationships, or acknowledging the cross-cutting themes that are necessarily at play.

During the first cycle (SIRCA I), the programme launched its book series with a volume entitled *Linking Research to Practice: Strengthening ICT for Development Research Capacity in Asia* (Chib and Harris, 2012). Volume 1 took a first step towards examining the broader impact of information society initiatives by extending the discussion of boundaries of academic research into the realm of practice with case studies from Asia (please see <https://bookshop.iseas.edu.sg/publication/474> for further information).

The proposed Volume II of the SIRCA book series continues this inquiry and extends the analysis to observe impact more in depth, encompassing Africa and Latin America in addition to Asia.

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