

# Global Impact Study – Review

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## 1 Executive Summary

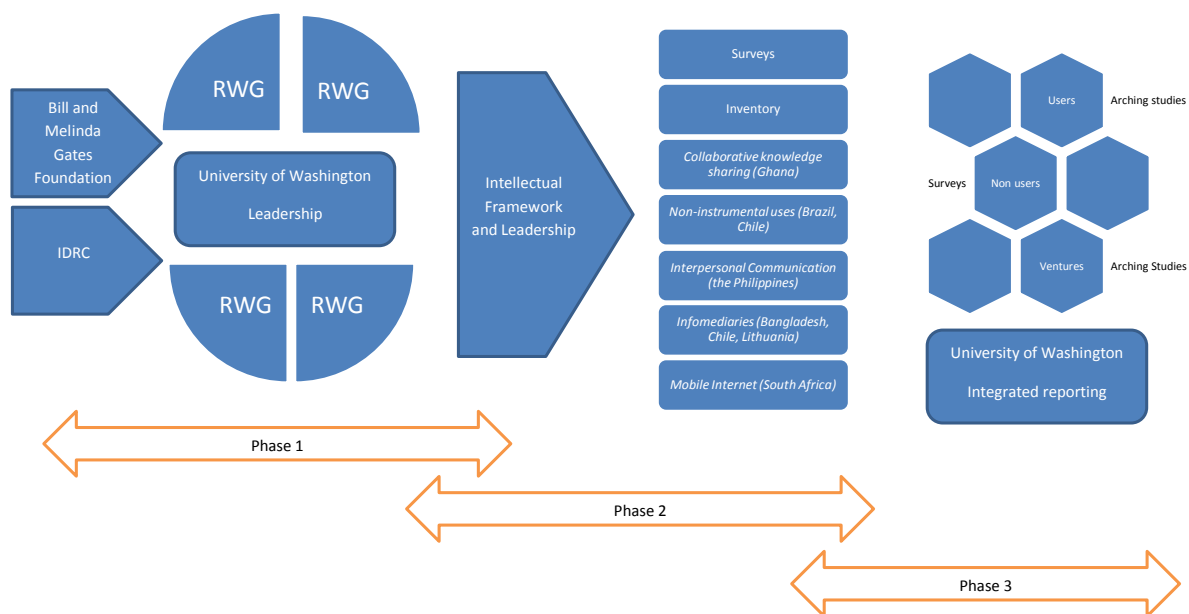
The Global Impact Study of Public Access to Information & Communication Technologies (or simply called the Global Impact Study) is a five-year project (2007-2012) to generate evidence about the scale, character, and impacts of public access to information and communication technologies (ICT). Looking at libraries, telecentres, and cyber-café's, the study investigates impact in a number of areas, including communication and leisure, culture and language, education, employment and income, governance, and health.

Implemented by the University of Washington's Technology & Social Change Group (TASCHA), the Global Impact Study is part of Investigating the Social and Economic Impact of Public Access to Information and Communication Technologies — a broader CAD\$7.9 million research project supported by Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and a grant to IDRC from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Managed by IDRC, this broader project includes the Global Impact Study (the component to be evaluated) as well as the Amy Mahan Research Fellowship Program, led by Universitat Pompeu Fabra, which aims to deepen the capacity of emerging scholars with the goal of increasing the quality and quantity of research on public access to ICT produced in developing countries.

The primary objective of this evaluation is to develop a set of recommendations based on the lessons that have emerged from the coordination, management, and implementation of various activities within the Global Impact Study. The results of the evaluation will be used to inform future work in the project, particularly as it begins to move forward on meta-analysis and research dissemination activities. The main approach of the evaluation centres on interviews with key stakeholders (alongside secondary sources). Interviews with representatives of the project donors (IDRC and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation), TASCHA staff, Research Working Group members, and other select audiences targeted for project outreach.

### 1.1 Findings

The original concept of the programme governance was formed around a Research Working Group (RWG). The programme as originally conceived was modified with the University of Washington taking a more central role in directing and facilitating the intellectual process. The report makes an attempt to illustrate the key change in the way the programme was implemented as a change in the trajectory in the diagram – see the figure below. It is noted in the findings that this change was a strategic choice regarding implementation and while it changes the trajectory of the programme, it by no means puts that trajectory outside the original hopes and goals of the programme.



Regarding the evaluation questions and the findings:-

Evolving roles of the Research Working Group (RWG) – Summary against framework	
Needs Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial choices made on a collective intellectual leadership</li> </ul>
Theory of Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programme allowed for emerging frameworks</li> <li>Some respondents noting that theory of change was not detailed and nuanced enough</li> </ul>
Strategy (for managing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of clarity over roles</li> <li>Evolution to UW point of intellectual leaderships</li> </ul>
Management (Coordination)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UW undertaking co-ordination</li> <li>Respondents report no longer feeling that they are a collective</li> </ul>
Monitoring and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Little ethnographic observation on the role of RWG</li> <li>Choices and tradeoffs made based on programme plan</li> </ul>

Internal communications and reporting practices between the project research team members and the research coordinating and management team at UW/TASCHA, and from UW/TASCHA to the project sponsors – Summary against framework

Needs Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Internal communication initially too frequent</li> <li>•Misjudged need for full time administrator</li> </ul>
Theory of Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•For researchers there was lack of clarity over why the reporting is happening</li> </ul>
Strategy (for managing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Difficult to manage disparate senior researchers reporting</li> <li>•Full time administrator required</li> </ul>
Management (Coordination)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Once information flows handled by administrator, and explained why, then internal communication improved</li> </ul>
Monitoring and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Monthly reporting with clear guidelines works well</li> </ul>

Potential gap between external communication needs and the existing strategy/ execution plan – Summary against framework

Needs Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Clear communications strategy in place early in programme</li> </ul>
Theory of Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Communications strategy has implicit theory of change</li> </ul>
Strategy (for managing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Communications plans not executed in timely way</li> <li>•Weakened by reluctance to publish interim results</li> <li>•Website available but the practice of updating regularly was belated</li> </ul>
Management (Coordination)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Administrator now focusing on external communications and securing some cooperation from others</li> </ul>
Monitoring and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Missed windows of opportunity in policy moments - needed interim results</li> </ul>

Open access to research data and tools – Summary against framework

Needs Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Openness encourages participation by South based researchers</li> </ul>
Theory of Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Participation by South based researchers would build capacity, and create opportunities for policy moments</li> </ul>
Strategy (for managing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Strategy partially overtaken by alternative views?</li> <li>•Future openness unclear</li> </ul>
Management (Coordination)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Ethical issues remain unclear</li> <li>•Publishing regime has taken into account academic needs</li> <li>•Not yet seen</li> </ul>
Monitoring and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Greater requirement to discuss at start of similar programme to ensure respondents know how data is to be used</li> </ul>

## 1.2 Recommendations

This review is intended to be formative for the next phase of the programme. There are also lessons that contribute to the design of future programmes that have similar elements.

### 1.2.1 Formative recommendations for the coming phase

The following are suggestions. There is little if anything in the overall programme to raise red flags of warning for the donors. Trade-offs have been made (as discussed in the main report), and having chosen the hub and spoke model of programme management with the associated high quality research rigour it brings, there is no real reason to move away from this. However, given that there have been trade-offs in moving away from the original 'intellectual collective' model, there may be an opportunity in this final phase to bring some of the benefits of collective commentary into the integration phase. Most of the recommendations focus around this idea.

- Hire a good facilitator for the summer 'integration bringing it together meeting'. Ensure this person has a good overview of the research and a skillset that is robust enough to work with senior researchers.
- Give 'enough' time to the collective analysis and integration discussions. I suspect that it will be tempting to have a workshop and then assign individuals or small teams to writing up chapters (hub and spoke). While this is a trade-off and has fewer costs, there may be benefits in the final version of the analysis to have a more open discussion.
- Seek to bring in one or two new voices for the integration phase. I suspect this is a controversial recommendation, but as a compromise to opening the incomplete analysis for crowd commentary, perhaps some key professionals might be re-engaged. Richard Heeks and members from the International Advisory Committee (IAC) are possibilities. This may bring the benefit of a broader range of voices commenting on the data, but there may also be associated costs in terms of delays – so this is once again a trade-off.

In terms of open research and external communication:-

- Reassess the role of interim results – as survey analysis and in-depth studies are brought to the attention of the programme team, ensure that web announcements and short publications (briefing notes) are made available, building up to the publication of the integrated whole (as opposed to the embargo model which holds back the insights in order to make a 'splash'). This recommendation should only be considered alongside the advice of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and IDRC research communication strategies. Since the two donors have the greater convening power and are most likely to disseminate the final report, their own teams will have views on the best approach (embargo or gradual feed).
- Seek to get the agreement of all researchers on the open data scheme. My personal recommendation is to open the data as in the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) model, with the opening happening after a given time (so that the programme researchers can publish their analysis first). However my voice has no greater credibility than any of the respondents and therefore the recommendation is actually focused on brokering an agreement among the programme researchers.
- Re-consider the ethical considerations of the current data set, and ensure that programme researchers, including the country research teams, agree that the form of the data being opened does not present any ethical threats to those studied.

- Give sufficient priority and resources to developing the planned policy briefing documents.
- Revisit the communication plan and disaggregate the stakeholders into 'interested' and 'disinterested'. Nuance the plan for strategies to reach the 'disinterested' (who might benefit from the information about public access).

### 1.2.2 Recommendations for similar future programmes

- This programme acknowledged from the start that 'research takes time', and this has been a benefit to the programme. Future design should also acknowledge this.
- A programme such as this requires a dedicated near full time administrator, a focal person, from the beginning.
- This programme sought to have a collective intellectual lead, which proved difficult. In future programmes, tighter contracts explicitly stating responsibilities, with much stronger support from a dedicated administrator may successfully enable a more collective view.
- If collective intellectual leadership is not expected for the project, then senior directive leadership by the few could be supplemented with junior researchers as the 'team', giving a collective effect but with a more manageable team. The contracted senior researchers can then undertake peer review of the progress.
- Engaging South based researchers take time - this needs to be factored in. If the goal of the project is to develop better research capacity in the South, then ideally South based researchers should be engaged in the design at all stages and not be commissioned as disconnected subcontractors.
- South based capacity building is an important element of any programme that engages South based researchers, and in future programmes should be retained in the core of the programme.
- Where donors come together to fund a single programme, it is important they each understand the others' goals. The desire for high quality research evidence is not incompatible with capacity development but requires considered harmonisation.
- Good research communication begins at the start of the programme and continues throughout the research. Communication plans need to be well resourced from the start.
- In such a fast moving sector, mechanisms to publish emerging results needs to be built in. This needs to be discussed with researchers at the start of the programme and built into contracts.
- Clarity of the open research agenda needs to be achieved early in the programme to ensure that study subjects sign off on the use of the data, and that researchers are clear on their obligations when publishing.
- Engaging with policy moments is important. This can be facilitated by clear stakeholder and contextual mapping as part of the communication strategy, and by being flexible to tackle windows of opportunity in specific contexts as they arise.

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## 2 Introduction

The Global Impact Study of Public Access to Information & Communication Technologies (or simply called the Global Impact Study) is a five-year project (2007-2012) to generate evidence about the scale, character, and impacts of public access to information and communication technologies (ICT). Looking at libraries, telecentres, and cyber-café's, the study investigates impact in a number of areas, including communication and leisure, culture and language, education, employment and income, governance, and health.

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The Global Impact Study component of the project focuses on the development and execution of research studies that aim to answer the following research questions:

- What are the social, economic, and political impacts of public access to ICT?
- What is the magnitude of these impacts and how can we measure them?
- What is the relationship between costs and benefits of providing and using public access to ICT?

Researchers examine both the positive and negative impacts of a range of shared, public access models, such as the provision of ICT in libraries and telecentres, as well as other models and innovations in public access computing that emerge over the life of the project (2007–2012).

As the Global Impact Study passed the halfway point of its 5-year mandate, a number of important lessons have begun to emerge from research and other project-related activities. IDRC is interested in carrying out an evaluation of the Global Impact Study in order to systematically capture these salient lessons. As such, this is strictly a formative evaluation with the purpose to primarily identify and gather lessons that can help improve the management of the research and other project-related activities for the remainder of the project.

### 2.1 Terms of reference

The primary objective of this evaluation is to develop a set of recommendations based on the lessons that have emerged from the coordination, management, and implementation of various activities within the Global Impact Study. The results of the evaluation will be used to inform future work in the project, particularly as the project begins to move forward on meta-analysis and research dissemination activities.



## 2.2 Methodology

Four areas have been identified as the most relevant aspects of the project to evaluate and obtain critical feedback on:-

1. Evolving roles of the Research Working Group (RWG).
2. Internal communications and reporting practices between the project research team members and the research coordinating and management team at UW/TASCHA, and from UW/TASCHA to the project sponsors.
3. Potential gap between external communication needs and the existing strategy/ execution plan.
4. Open access to research data and tools.

The review included a view on project documentation (initial proposal, strategy documents, research reports, web sites, communication products, etc.) Documents consulted are listed in Annex 4.

The main approach centred on interviews with key stakeholders. Interviews with select representatives of the project donors (IDRC and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation), TASCHA staff, selected Research Working Group members, and other select audiences targeted for project outreach. A list of interviewees has been provided in Annex 1. The questions for objectives 1 to 4 were guided by a simple framework:-

- Needs Assessment
- Theory of Change
- Strategy (for managing)
- Management (Collaboration)
- Monitoring and Evaluation

### 2.2.1 Guiding Checklist of Questions for Interviews

Evolving roles of the Research Working Group (RWG)	
Needs Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•How was the RWG commissioned?</li><li>•What were the criteria for recruitment to the RWG - expertise?</li></ul>
Theory of Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Was there clear agreement on goals and purpose?</li><li>•How was the research designed, and with what framework?</li></ul>
Strategy (for managing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•How was the reporting from a disparate group of researchers to be coordinated?</li><li>•What if any were the governance issues for the Research?</li></ul>
Management (Coordination)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Was the design of the overall project fit for purpose?</li><li>•Was the governance of the overall purpose clear?</li></ul>
Monitoring and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•How did the role of the RWG evolve,</li><li>•How was any evolution of the RWG driven by evidence from M&amp;E</li></ul>

Internal communications and reporting practices between the project research team members and the research coordinating and management team at UW/TASCHA, and from UW/TASCHA to the project sponsors

Needs Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•How were the needs of internal communication established?</li> </ul>
Theory of Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Was there clear agreement on goals and purpose?</li> </ul>
Strategy (for managing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•How was the reporting from a disparate group of researchers to be coordinated?</li> </ul>
Management (Coordination)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•How was the reporting from a disparate group of researchers coordinated in practice?</li> <li>•Was their enough communication on achievements?</li> </ul>
Monitoring and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•What lessons are there for other broad networked research programmes regarding internal communications?</li> </ul>

Potential gap between external communication needs and the existing Strategy/ execution plan

Needs Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•What did the needs analysis look like?</li> </ul>
Theory of Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•How are people going to use the outputs and outcomes of the programme?</li> <li>•What is the implicit (or explicit) theory of change?</li> </ul>
Strategy (for managing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•How will results be used for advocacy (to whom)?</li> <li>•What is the external communications strategy?</li> </ul>
Management (Coordination)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•What communications products (policy briefing notes, alliances for web distribution) have been put in place?</li> </ul>
Monitoring and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•What lessons are there for other broad networked research programmes regarding external communications?</li> </ul>

Open access to research data and tools

Needs Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•What was the intention behind the open access?</li> </ul>
Theory of Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Who might use it and for what purposes?</li> <li>•What is the implicit (or explicit) theory of change?</li> </ul>
Strategy (for managing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•How will results be used for advocacy (to whom)?</li> <li>•How does this fit the external communications strategy?</li> <li>•What is the sustainability plan for this aspect of the work?</li> <li>•Ethical issues – how are these being handled?</li> </ul>
Management (Coordination)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•IPR – published under what licence?</li> <li>•Have alternative approaches been considered?</li> </ul>
Monitoring and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•What are the lessons learned from this intention to provide open access?</li> <li>•Any examples so far?</li> </ul>

### 3 Overview

The programme was first discussed between IDRC and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (the foundation) in 2006. Mark Surman, then telecentre.org's Programme Manager raised the idea of the study, and given their investment in the Global Libraries Programme, the foundation agreed it would be a worthwhile idea. The foundation committed funds to the programme which were matched by IDRC.

The original concept of the programme governance was formed around a Research Working Group (RWG) which is discussed in detail below. In brief the programme brought together senior researchers from across the globe to form a collective working group that would provide intellectual leadership to the programme. The University of Washington (UW) was commissioned to support the functioning of the RWG, and to provide coordination and logistical support. I will call this Phase 1<sup>1</sup>.

The original trajectory of the programme can be summed up in Figure 1 on the next page.

However, as the findings discussed will demonstrate below, the programme as originally conceived was modified with UW taking a more central role in directing and facilitating the intellectual process as an outcome of the Seattle meeting in April 2008. This decision to move towards a more disaggregated research design, in particular including in-depth studies, was confirmed at the Atlanta meeting in August 2008. In addition, in-depth studies were introduced and coordinated by UW. These studies have had very little interaction with each other, and the RWG has effectively operated as discreet teams conducting in-depth research. The transition of the above model to the current model with its two components, one of them giving a more central role to TASCHA and the introduction of in-depth studies, is marked by a transition note sent by IDRC and UW in July 2009 - I have called this Phase 2.

I have made an attempt to summarise this as a change in the trajectory in the diagram – see Figure 2 below. ***It will be noted in the findings that this change was a strategic choice regarding implementation and while it changes the trajectory of the programme, it by no means puts that trajectory outside the original hopes and goals of the programme.***

In the coming months, there will be a new phase, which I have called Phase 3. This is the bringing together of the various studies and the integration of the results into a single coherent whole. This process is strongly dependent on assumptions about the process of research and will be discussed in detail below. It does, not as such, alter the trajectory.

Throughout the report, I attempt to place the findings within the context of each 'phase'.

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<sup>1</sup> Respondents and the documentation do not refer to distinct phases, nor refer to them as phases. However

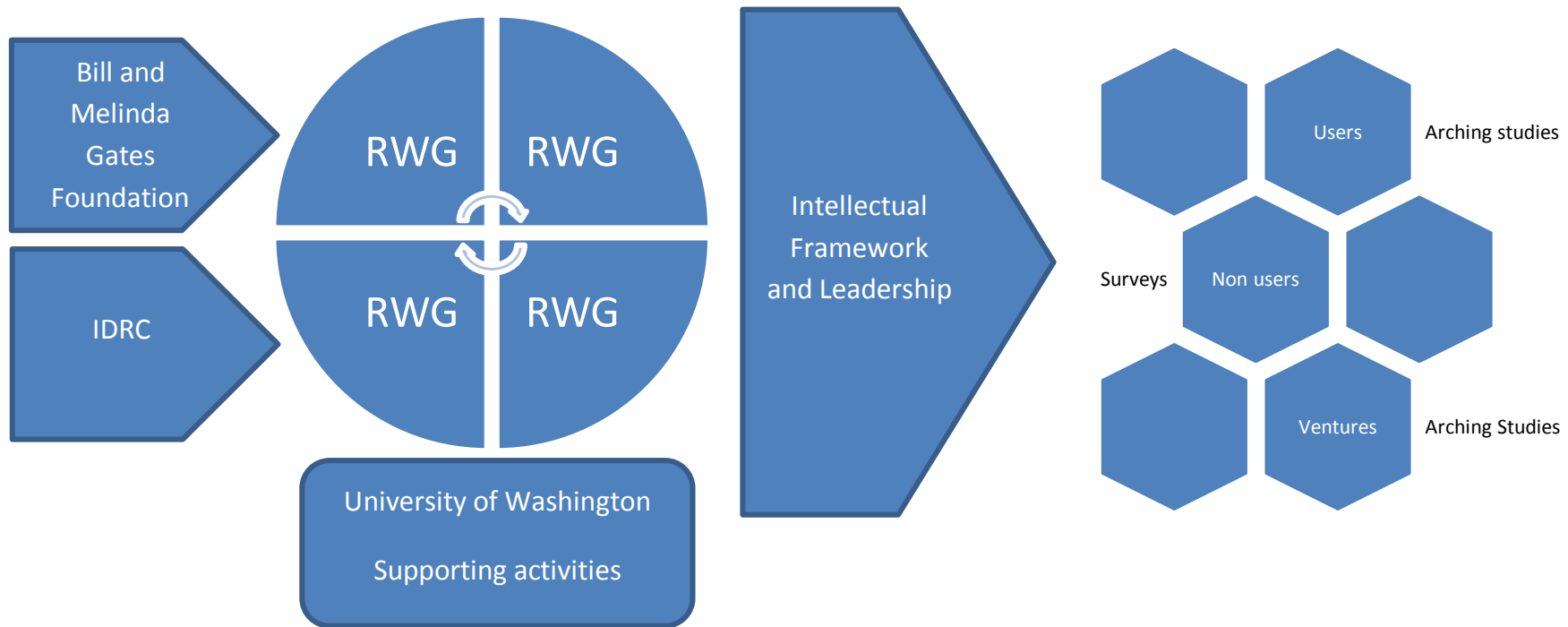


Figure 1 – Reviewers summary of Phase 1 construct.

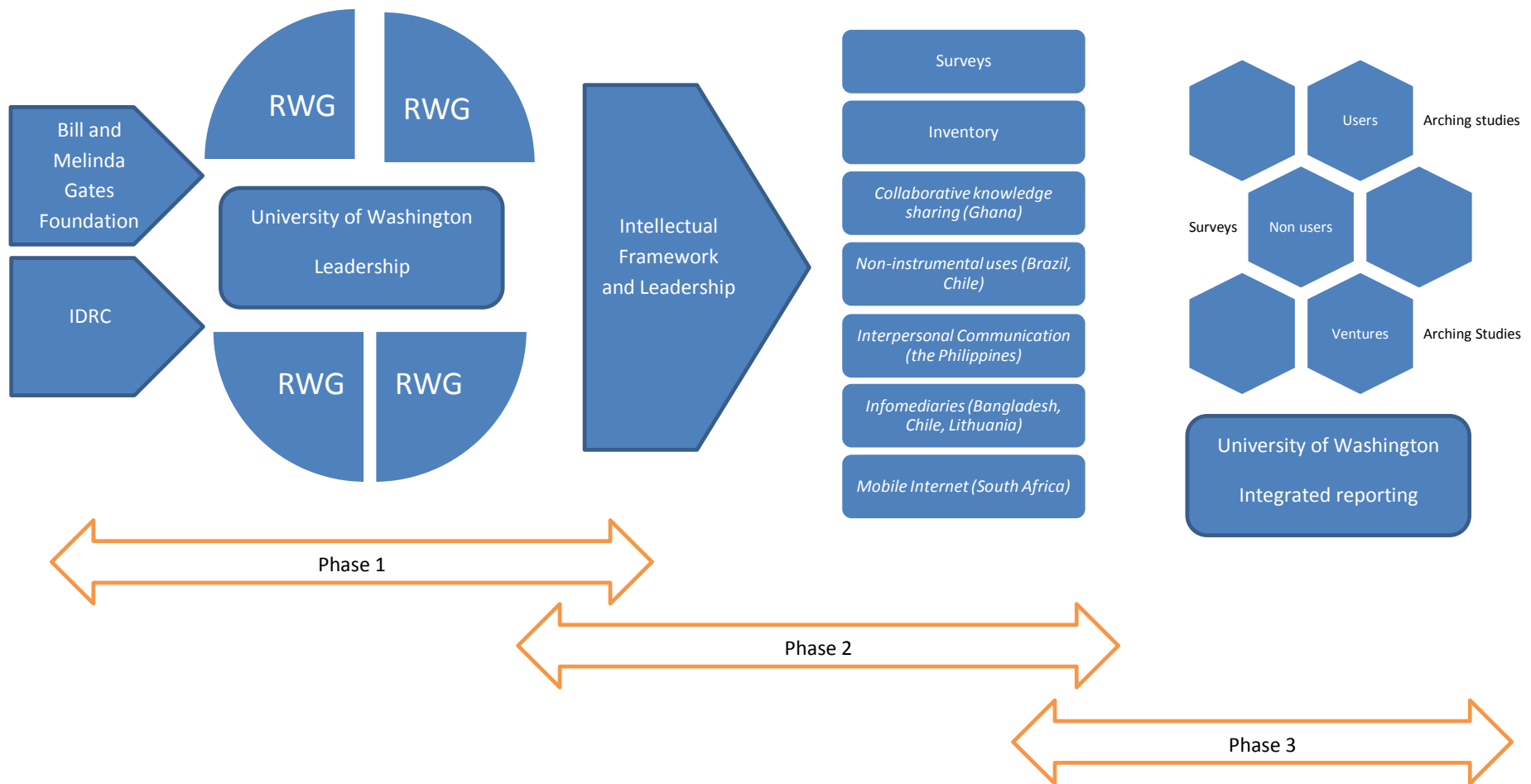


Figure 2 Reviewers summary of revised programme construct after Phase 1

Note, there are other in-depth studies planned and at the proposal stage.

## 4 Findings

### 4.1 Research Working Group

Of the four key questions asked in the terms of reference, one is focused on the evolving role of the Research Working Group. This is because from the outset of the project, the RWG was expected to have a central role in the design and provide expertise to the UW and country teams. A bringing together of senior researchers from across the world, the collective RWG was conceived as providing the intellectual leadership to the programme. As the UW proposal to IDRC puts it *'The RWG will be a relatively small group to facilitate rapid progress and decision-making. It will be a "doing" group responsible for producing the research design and accompanying materials'*. The context of the RWG was that the country research teams (CRT) were to drive the implementation, and IDRC was to provide grants to the CRTs, which would receive guidance from UW and RWG. The UW was a coordinating body.

#### 4.1.1 Phase 1

From the interviews, it seems that the early meetings of the RWG were times of rigorous intellectual debate. The group deliberated several times (three times in the first 6 months of the project). The subject matter of public access to ICT was one of open debate. Constantly evolving, there was little in the way of a typology, epistemology and even ontology for the various forms of public access. While the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Global Libraries Programme focused their attention on libraries, IDRC had invested significantly in the telecentre movement. Discussions had to include cyber-cafes, and according to the respondents, there was debate about the nature of public access models, and even the scope of the programme – which to include and which to exclude.

Most respondents reported that this was a good time for debate, and they felt intellectually challenged and stretched by the process. Most researchers reflected that this early set of discussions was a 'good time' (i.e. one that developed their interest in the issues and research questions). The overall framework presented by the RWG, and repeated in a number of documents, was seen as a good summary of these debates.

Respondents had differing memories as to whether the RWG had a governance directive, or an advisory role. For some, they saw it as advisory, and appreciated the debate but expected someone else to take the debate forward into an actionable framework. Others understood they were trying to reach a consensus which would then be taken into action. However, this lack of clarity on the objectives and goals of the RWG, and the individual roles of each member of the RWG, was a likely root cause of the lack of progress from a programme point of view. Respondents suggested that clearer and more detailed contracts would have helped them understand their commitment at this stage.

Another potential root cause raised by respondents and highlighted in the feedback was the challenge of the CRTs to generate research questions that the RWG thought would have global relevance.

#### 4.1.2 Phase 2

From a programme point of view, the debate was useful but seemed to reach a natural point of evolution. The donors walked a line between hoping for and expecting 'results', and their own

understanding that this was a complex ecosystem, and that research required time and thought. By most accounts, a natural point was reached when there was a need for a more grounded practical intellectual leadership, which was not forthcoming from the collective of the RWG or from the CRTs. Here the memories vary with one respondent suggesting that the RWG asked UW to take over the intellectual leadership role while another recalls a fuzzy process where they were informed that there would be in-depth studies and UW would lead this process. For TASCHA, the watershed moment was the Seattle workshop in April/May 2008. This was the moment the team abandoned the CRT-led approach and decided the RWG had to shift from advisors to implementers.

A transition memo puts it this way *"In order to effectively execute the research design developed in the first phase of the project, we also needed to adjust the project's operating structure. Originally, the project was conceived as driven by Country Research Teams with the Research Working Group providing advice and the University of Washington providing coordination. Under this arrangement, IDRC provided grants directly to the Country Research Teams to carry out the research. Going forward, IDRC remains accountable for the management of the overall project. However, the need for more guidance and consistency in the implementation of different studies and the need for coherent analysis across the studies' results, UW will now play a more significant role in the management of the research process."* (Transition Memo 2009).

To our mind, the accuracy of the historical narrative does not affect the learning that comes out of this transition. It is clear that the collective of busy senior researchers could not give the programme the intellectual steer that the donors were hoping for. It seems a reasonable choice that the programme was taken forward by reorienting the roles of the major players.

UW took the lead, and the RWG members were asked to submit proposals for in-depth studies that reflected the scope of the overall project. Core to this theoretical framework was to question the idea that public use is a substitute for private use; *'Public use thus conceived is a transitory solution and public access facilities should become unnecessary as users gain private access.'* (Best 2008). This contrasts with an alternative theory that public use is different from private use and in some situations superior to it. These ideas set up the framework for the in-depth studies. As Michael Best puts it *'to the extent public use differs from private use, we need to understand what the differences are and articulate the mechanisms through which they produce impact. For example, does staff assistance, or info-mediaries, in a public venue allow job seekers to be more successful in securing employment than if they searched alone? Do collective use practices emerge in public venues, with impact different from that of private individual use?'* (Best 2008). To this end, UW coordinated the bids to ensure that together and overall they would answer key questions which had been raised by the RWG (Phase 1).

In most cases, the in-depth studies were intentionally led and undertaken by members of the RWG. However it is clear from almost every respondent that the RWG no longer thought/thinks of itself as a 'group', or even a network. The clusters of researchers for each in-depth study naturally correspond with each other, and with their in-country research teams, and with the UW for reporting. However, there were almost no examples of contact between researchers of the in-depth studies, and where there were examples, the contact was friendship-based rather than as a part of the programme. Some respondents thought that the RWG had been 'disbanded' while others thought it still existed as a reference group for UW.

This lack of clarity has not affected Phase 2 as such but may affect Phase 3.

### 4.1.3 Phase 3

It is not clear whether this lack of connection between RWG members during 'Phase 2' will affect the outcome of the programme. The coming phase, 'Phase 3', will bring together the various studies, seeking to identify general learning, and to produce an integrated product that can be championed around the world. At the time of this review, it is not clear to what degree the analysis and integration of the results will be a collaborative exercise. Certainly there are plans to gather the lead investigators of each in-depth study, and together, to discuss the outcomes. However, the impression is that this may be more of a coordinating exercise rather than a truly collaborative one. The impression given in some interviews is that respondents expect each in-depth study to be a chapter in the integrated text, with other chapters drawing on their results to make overall comment. The respondents did not indicate that they saw the coming summer workshops to require a significant amount of work – again the impression was they expect to present findings and be available to debate wider points of view.

In general, respondents are confident that the seniority of the people involved will have meant that each in-depth study is rigorous and robust enough to withstand examination during the coming integration process. A few of the respondents expressed some concern about how to integrate the in-depth studies, and speculated as to whether this was going to be an easy process, but most caveated their comments with expressions of confidence in the UW staff and other senior researchers.

A few respondents suggested that there may have been added value had contact been maintained at a higher level during Phase 2, and several respondents thought it would have been a good idea once the interviewer asked a question about it. In the feedback, one reviewer noted that there was extensive discussion on surveys and in-depth proposals, in particular. However, as stated above, most remain confident that while it may have added some value, the network effect of the RWG was not crucial to the success of the programme of work.

Evolving roles of the Research Working Group (RWG) – Summary against framework	
Needs Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Initial choices made on a collective intellectual leadership</li> </ul>
Theory of Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Programme allowed for emerging frameworks</li> <li>•Some respondents noting that theory of change was not detailed and nuanced enough</li> </ul>
Strategy (for managing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Lack of clarity over roles</li> <li>•Evolution to UW point of intellectual leadership</li> </ul>
Management (Coordination)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•UW undertaking co-ordination</li> <li>•Respondents report no longer feeling that they are a collective</li> </ul>
Monitoring and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Little ethnographic observation on the role of the RWG</li> <li>•Choices and tradeoffs made based on programme plan</li> </ul>



## 4.2 Internal Communication

### 4.2.1 Reporting – UW to donors

The various phases of the programme are reflected in the internal reporting. Respondents stated that initially there was a weekly phone call between the UW and the donors. On reflection, the relevant respondents noted that as research is a relatively slow process, there was often very little movement to report, and that such detailed engagement by the donors was perhaps not the best use of precious time (for either donors or researchers).

There also emerged a feeling from some relevant respondents that the reporting was sometimes unfocused. In the early days, members of the team who were primarily researchers at UW were being asked to account for administration and logistics. This eventually led to an acknowledgment of inadequate administrative support on the UW side. This was belatedly addressed by hiring a dedicated administrator for the programme in the second half of 2010.

A reporting template was developed and this is now given to the donors monthly. It is not clear whether this template was prepared in advance of hiring the extra administrative support. This template and the monthly cycle supported by an administrator have greatly eased the process. From the wider group of respondents, some observed that there was a considerable difference between ‘research grants’ that often provide research funding and make virtually no performance demands, and this study. Here they felt that the donors, while accepting that research takes time and that the complex ecosystem would need a flexible research process, were nevertheless demanding performance reporting – as described above, initially on a weekly basis, and latterly on a monthly basis. The respondents noted the difference between the two types of grant – this is discussed in the conclusions.

Most of the relevant respondents seemed to accept that after an initial ‘too frequent’ reporting, the programme had found a good balance.

### 4.2.2 Reporting – Researchers to UW

Many of the wider set of respondents spoke highly of the administrator and the process of their own monthly reporting to UW. Many of the research respondents acknowledged that they were busy academics and that they found reporting ‘onerous’. They acknowledged the need for it, and were aware of the difference between a programme of this nature (i.e. one sponsored by two donors that have goals and objectives for the research), and other funding in which a science council might give a lump sum and simply expect certain publications or speculative research.

Nevertheless, in general, I was left with the impression from respondents that reporting requirements had been balanced and that it was inevitable that it would be a struggle to get everyone to report on time. Again the process was greatly enhanced by the belated presence of the administrator.

Some respondents noted the lack of clarity about the use of the information. When asked for information they were unsure as to whether this was for reporting to donors, blogging or Twitter on the website, or some other use. A few respondents stated they wished that every request for information came with a statement of how that information would be used. In one case this was fed

back to the administrator and the respondent acknowledged that consequently, most requests for information now come with an explanation of how the reporting will be used.

### 4.2.3 Workshop facilitation

A number of respondents commented on the facilitation of the workshops and collective time together. Most who offered comments as part of their narrative felt that facilitation had been weak. Of those who commented, they felt that not enough time was given to wrestle with the details of the research. In the mind of one, this spilled over into the much larger question of the framing of the research, and suggested there was inadequate initial discussion on the agreed language to be used – and that this might affect Phase 3 when results would be integrated. To others who commented, the issue was more around the facilitation of open spaces to ensure that everyone had a voice and adequate space to make their case. Some quoted the workshop in France where the debate-orientated processes of the early time together were replaced with a more presentation style format. A concrete suggestion made by some respondents was that professional facilitators should sometimes be hired, and that if decision making is to be collective, more time should be allocated to workshops.

### 4.2.4 Network effects – internal connections

As briefly discussed above, the RWG members have had little contact among each other (outside of friendship circles), and the in-country teams have had little to no contact with each other. Indeed, even within a country (e.g. Philippines) where an in-depth study is taking place and another team is undertaking the broad based survey, the in-country researchers have not specifically shared notes and ideas regarding the programme of work. As the review did not systematically contact every team, there may be examples of contact or even joint work that I am unaware of. However, it seems reasonable to state from the findings that there has been a limited systematic attempt to create a network effect within the research. One reviewer noted that attention to the implementation of a systematic attempt had to be relegated to the back burner for lack of capacity. The resulting model of implementation is very much ‘hub and spoke’.

Internal communications and reporting practices between the project research team members and the research coordinating and management team at UW/TASCHA, and from UW/TASCHA to the project sponsors – Summary against framework	
Needs Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Internal communication initially too frequent</li> <li>•Misjudged need for full time administrator</li> </ul>
Theory of Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•For researchers there was lack of clarity over why the reporting is happening</li> </ul>
Strategy (for managing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Difficult to manage disparate senior researchers reporting</li> <li>•Full time administrator required</li> </ul>
Management (Coordination)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Once information flows handled by administrator, and explained why, then internal communication improved</li> </ul>
Monitoring and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Monthly reporting with clear guidelines works well</li> </ul>

## 4.3 External Communication

### 4.3.1 Communication strategy

At the start of the programme there was a part time communication officer. A collaborative effort between IDRC and UW, with input from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, developed a communication strategy. A wiki based website was put in place, and researchers were encouraged to place early studies on the site. This wiki site was not intended to be public, and therefore had no visibility to Internet search engines, and the Global Impact Study did not show in public access searches.

At the start of Phase 2, the UW administrator (mentioned above in Section 4.2.1) also worked with the communication officer to revise the communication strategy, and in particular, to plan towards Phase 3; the publication of integrated results. A public website was started and the UW administrator started Twitter feeds, encouraged blogging by the researchers and sought to create interest around the site.

Interestingly, and in contrast to the comments about network effects above, the main audience of the Global Impact Study website was initially seen as the research team. It was for those involved with the programme to be encouraged and prompted by other people's activities, to comment on interim results, and to gain a view of how their work fitted into the whole. Some respondents also felt that it was for the donors to see that something was happening. This was later changed to use the website as part of the reach towards the target audiences of the study.

The communication strategy, as documented, is a comprehensive and reasonable strategy that seeks to inform and advocate the results of the study into the policy domain. It should play a greater role in the coming Phase 3.

The communication strategy highlights certain groups the project wants to reach:

#### Internal

- the Global Impact Study researchers
- the research coordinators in the Amy Mahan fellowship
- staff at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, IDRC, TASCHA and UPF

#### External

- Donors of public access to ICT programs - including larger multilateral organizations (e.g. the UN's Regional Economic Commission, the World Bank and some bilateral agencies that are interested in public access to ICT research)
- Private sector investors, such as Intel and Microsoft
- Policy-makers - in the developing world (none identified in report) and the developed world (especially Canada)
- Academic community - in the area of ICT4D and libraries, as well as health, education and democracy building
- Operators and networks – e.g. the foundation's Global Libraries grantee community and telecentre.org
- Canadian Public

- Media

#### 4.3.2 Applying the communications strategy

Most of the research and in-country respondents said they had never read the communication strategy! While some acknowledged that it probably existed, few if any could say they had read it.

There are a number of emerging issues around external communication – which have been in play so far, but might yet be mitigated in Phase 3.

Academics generally do not like to share ‘interim results’. The research is of a complex and rapidly evolving system. As such the approaches to the research have tended to be experimental rather than purely hypothesis driven. Respondents described how surveys are undertaken, and then examined with public access lens, rather than there being a solid detailed hypothesis that is being tested. As reported elsewhere, there are research questions and hypotheses – the previous statement is not to diminish the quality of the research. However its relevance is that it has been very difficult with partial data to produce an interim set of results. Most research respondents stated they needed to see the whole scope of the data before attempting an analysis. They were very wary of drawing conclusions that might then be contradicted by a larger data set.

The feedback suggests that this is further complicated by the timeline of the different studies, including the surveys. Their assessment is that there have been no “interim” results to share because there has been no data to analyse. Most studies have been in planning and fieldwork status until recently. Those who did have some early findings have shared them, at least for the website. In other feedback, a reviewer noted “Some early findings have been shared on the website as very general pieces. Perhaps what has been missing is a piece or document on all preliminary findings to date”.

One respondent reported that a PI believed that it was the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation that was discouraging the release of interim findings across the project – however a key respondent stated that the foundation wanted interim findings that are practical and can be used by their grantees, rather than academic products.

Whatever the reason, this produces two difficulties for communications. The first is internal, as the donors had hoped for some early reported results. Discussion with the donors has mitigated this and there seems to be a willingness to wait and get it right rather than rush it and get it wrong. The second is external; there has been little to report! While the website can blog about the activities, there is little for the enquirer who seeks to know – what is the effect of public access?

This is a challenge – should researchers expose early thinking and interim results to the world to perhaps get a collective comment and assistance (crowd sourced opinion) to the final analysis, or should they stick to an older model where academics only publish draft final analysis? During Phase 1, a number of country reports were developed (Bangladesh, Chile, and Lithuania). These reports were initially available on the project wiki site. They included an early cost benefit analysis by the Bangladesh team. One respondent suggested the assumptions of the Bangladesh cost benefit analysis were not clear, and another suggested that this was why it is not available on the main site. However this does not apply to the country reports which are also not available on the main site.

While these reports are descriptive in nature they nevertheless constitute ‘findings’ strengthening the audiences understanding of the public access landscape.

In France in 2010, the programme team was still debating this point. The reports states *“Most researchers are not comfortable sharing interim content (reports, instruments) via the website. They prefer to have a private space to share and discuss their work. DECISION: Provide a private space. But all researchers did not agree about this. Those working on the infomediaries study, however, felt so strongly about documenting and sharing early work that they created a short, public version of their report complete with illustrative images.”*

Whatever the quality of an analysis there is in today’s world, the two approaches are commonly used. One is to hold back the results until they, and all the analysis, are complete, and then to publish. The other is to make available ‘work in progress’ to invite comment with clear caveats as to the scope and validity of the interim analysis. The aspirations of the programme to make open the research, data and instruments at the end of the programme, and to create a growing discourse that communicates the findings widely, seem at odds with the current situation where a limited set of interim results are on the main website and are not highlighted.

Regarding the desire to influence, this lack of interim results has been frustrating for some respondents. There have been examples where the in-country teams have seen a window of opportunity to influence policies, and not been able to take those opportunities due to the constraints put on them by the view of the programme on ‘interim results’. There is no hard and fast rule concerning this – one team was said to have contacted TASCHA, and there was discussion about cooperation that would enable presentation to policy makers. In this case, the scheduled meetings with policy makers were cancelled and the data was not needed. There is a possibility that the Global Impact Study has missed windows of opportunity that may not come around again.

If there is a misunderstanding around ‘interim results’, then perhaps subsequent phases and similar programmes should clarify the stance of the programme for all concerned. It would be good to clarify whether this includes partially analysed results that may be retracted later, small amounts of data that are analysed thoroughly, or something else.

External connections – website statistics – The early public website did not have much visibility and was not easy to use. The website as it is today was overhauled and launched in September of 2009, around the same time that the first newsletter was published. Respondents note that it was a time when there was a push towards external audiences. To some respondents, the push for a more visible website and newsletter was belated and there has been a stronger focus on external communications later in the project than from the beginning.

In the Global Impact Study Interim report: July – December 2010, a Google analytics webstats summary is presented as an annex. This shows that there is a rise in website hits after a newsletter, and that there is gradual growth in website visits.

June 2010	340		November 2010	722
July 2010	338		December 2010	573
August 2010	457		January 2011	677
September 2010	557		February 2011	696
October 2010	611		Total 6/10-2/11	4,971

What is of particular relevance to the analysis below are the words people are using to find the site.

Keywords	Visits
global impact study	300
ethnographic case study	102
global impact	53
impact study approach	52
<a href="http://www.globalimpactstudy.org/">http://www.globalimpactstudy.org/</a>	38
ethnographic case study approach	34
impact study	32
araba sey	27
global impact research	27
study on recommendations on access to information	26

The use of the relatively new name 'Global Impact Study' suggests that the person has heard of the study and is searching specifically for it. This is likely for the other variations. 'Ethnographic case study' is of more interest in that it suggests the searcher was looking for case studies about a particular methodology rather than the specific public access study per se – this being reinforced by the addition of the word 'approach' in the lower ranking version.

The absence of combinations of 'Global Impact Study' and subject defining words also suggests that people have heard of the project directly and are trying to find it, rather than have heard vaguely and are trying to find info on public access. In terms of external communication, the absence of some combinations around words such as public access, libraries, telecentre, ICT4D, etc., suggests that the website is not yet ranking highly enough for these words to lead people to it. The exception is the lowest ranking – which suggests the 26 searches were about finding studies on access.

These findings feed into the idea that the website is in place for the presentation of final integrated reporting, but is not yet building a following that is anticipating the publishing of the report.

Other web activities noted in the communication plan include engaging in the GL Toolkit, an extranet site hosted by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and used to engage the Global Libraries community. Respondents stated that there had been few entries on the site – again focused on announcing the timing of activities rather than producing interim results that might interest the GL community.

IDRC have pages that point to the programme’s website, as do the University of Washington. There seem to be opportunities for cross fertilisation between the TASCHA website and the Global Impact Study site that are not being taken up. For instance, the TASCHA site hosts the report for “The Landscape of Public Access Technology in Developing Countries” project, also funded by the foundation. However, there seems to be no reference to this study on the Global Impact Study website. This link between websites is examined further in the next section.

#### **4.3.3 External connections – a twitter analysis**

Given the acknowledged lack of interim results and the relatively limited feed of the website, nevertheless we asked who is following the website, and is therefore positioned to receive the results when they are published on the site? One of the ways to analyse this ‘prepositioning’ is through the Twitter accounts. I strongly note the limitation of this analysis – as Twitter is an emerging tool and not comprehensively used by all, it is not yet ubiquitous. Given the slightly caveated nature of these findings, they are presented in an annex.

Twitter was planned by TASCHA as originally being the tool to reach out to the funders more systematically by providing quick tweets. However, it became apparent that Twitter served a broader purpose. The specific strategy for the twitter account is:

*“Micro-updates are posted weekly by the TASCHA core team using Twitter (@ictimpact). The main target audience for them is project sponsors, as a supplement to bi-weekly phone calls. These are 140-character posts document ongoing activities and milestones or directing followers to new web content (using bit.ly so TASCHA can track click-throughs). A micro-update can be created for each new piece of web content. They feed into the website and the most significant among them are disseminated quarterly via the newsletter” Communications Plan.*

Effort is being applied to the Twitter feed, and the analysis is intended to share helpfully formative findings on its effectiveness. With all the caveats regarding a Twitter analysis, it shows that the main target audiences (the sponsors) and other groups mentioned, such as the World Bank and telecentre.org, are not being reached by the Twitter feed.

The analysis also examines the Twitter account to see if it is positioned with network effects for information (Tweets) to flow throughout the ICT4D community and relevant audiences. While there are very limited connections, such as to DIRSI, there are few other connections which might create sustainable and influential network effects.

#### **4.3.4 Policy influence**

Returning to interim findings of the Global Impact Study, the findings of this review seem to suggest that the combination of academic reluctance to publish interim results and the delay in getting a

dedicated administrator who would update external communications as part of their duties. has not positioned the project well for the widespread publication of its integrated results.

Publication of the integrated results will likely reach *'those interested'*. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and IDRC are both highly respected organisations. IDRC has a reach into Southern countries based on years of pioneering and context specific research. The foundation has been sponsoring the Global Libraries programme, and is known to be an advocate for the role of public spaces in society. As long as these two organisations use their influence and resources to support the external communication of the integrated results, then the integrated results are likely to reach those interested.

The challenge is to reach *'those disinterested'* but who *'should'* be aware of the results. The communication strategy acknowledges the presence of the *'disinterested'* - *"The donor landscape is also changing. Some traditional donors (bilateral and multilateral institutions) are moving away from funding public access to ICT initiatives partly due to the absence of hard evidence proving the value of these investments"* (Communications Strategy Revised October 2010). The strategy goes on to say that public access is increasingly funded by government and private sector. However even the government funding is in question. For instance, the current Chilean government is committed to enhancing private access to ICT. The in-country teams find there is a resistance to debate the added value of public access. The in-country teams may also have connections into the telecentre movement and may be able to place the results in front of the disinterested. However, respondents could not articulate a strategy for getting results in front of the disinterested in other non-study countries. (For instance, suppose Nicaragua had a similar government policy for private access – how would the team get the results in front of the public access disinterested in Nicaragua?)

The communication strategy talks about conferences with the implication that some of the *'disinterested'* may be present. However, conference exposure has not been exploited and is relatively limited.

The Executive Meeting Notes of 2009 note:- *"For the Gates Foundation, the Global Libraries Grantees remain the most important audience and need to be reached in a distinct way. As project outputs are not ready to be packaged, a method of communicating to this group is essential in order to stir up interest and dialogue on the project's work."*

They also note:- *"As outputs begin to emerge from the research, packaged products must be designed to be practical for librarians and telecentre practitioners."*

Some in-country teams have good connections into the policy environment. For instance, the CEO of the contracted Philippine team was former commissioner of the Telecom Regulator in the Philippines. Such connections will naturally create a flow for the integrated results. However, the communication strategy articulates the creation of policy briefing notes, and there are fledgling plans on shape and format for such one, two and four page creations. It was not clear whether these will be published in other languages. Nevertheless, there are limited plans to create contextualised briefing notes. For example, Chile could use a note that directly discussed the findings in terms of the benefits of private access vs. public access. There are plans to provide, say, a *'research brief'* targeting advocates and policy makers.



Potential gap between external communication needs and the existing strategy/ execution plan – Summary against framework	
Needs Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear communications strategy in place early in programme</li> </ul>
Theory of Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communications strategy has implicit theory of change</li> </ul>
Strategy (for managing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communications plans not executed in timely way</li> <li>• Weakened by reluctance to publish interim results</li> <li>• Website available but the practice of updating regularly was belated</li> </ul>
Management (Coordination)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrator now focusing on external communications and securing some cooperation from others</li> </ul>
Monitoring and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Missed windows of opportunity in policy moments - needed interim results</li> </ul>

## 4.4 Open Research

Related to the publication and distribution of the integrated results are the various ideas of open research. This takes a number of forms and raises related questions.

### 4.4.1 Creative Commons publications

IDRC, in particular, has encouraged publications of the analysis to be shared under a Creative Commons licence. There was a very diverse commentary from the respondents on this point. Some leading researchers did not see any difficulty with this – they stated they like to publish under Creative Commons, and that doing so did not prevent publishing in other journals as long as you slightly reworked the articles. Others articulated a dilemma of academia – that career paths are often directed by the publication (and citation) records, and that peer reviewed (often closed) journals remain the top scoring.

Some of the respondents noted that they were themselves so senior that they no longer needed to be concerned with their publication record. However, this raises the question as to how this might affect the upcoming researchers, and perhaps more importantly, the international credibility of South based researchers. The call for open publication formats is made by IDRC because they are actively seeking to enhance South based researchers' ability to access research materials. If the analyses are not in the free access domain, but are locked behind peer review 'commercial' journals, this may affect South based access, particularly by research assistants to policy makers who may not be at an academic institution with journal subscriptions.

### 4.4.2 Inventory

One of the major components the programme (added as a part of the initial discussions) was an inventory of libraries, telecentres and, where possible, cyber-café's. This inventory, which is presented in an innovative 'mash-up' of mapping and database, was gathered by the in-country teams from mostly secondary sources. In most cases the data was gathered from registrations with the government.

Respondents, both in-country teams and researchers, reported in the interview that the inventory data was unreliable. They quoted examples where when they undertook field visits, registered centres did not exist. They also reported that sometimes where a centre did exist, it had very limited equipment or connection, or both, and that sometimes 'around the corner' were other cybercafés which people used. According to general feedback from the survey effort, perhaps 20% of venues picked from the inventory could not be located.

This raises the question – what is the use of the inventory? One respondent stated that its use was to show the scale of application for the forthcoming results. As part of the advocacy for public access, policy decision makers needed to see how many of these public access points exist and that the results affect a large number of their constituency. While this is a good argument for the inventory, some respondents questioned whether an unreliable database was the best way to communicate this. If policy makers decided to visit one centre on the database, and then discovered it didn't exist, they might be turned off from the whole.

On the other hand, this is an example of published 'interim' results, and is part of the advocacy strategy, and the project's implementation of open data and sharing instruments and findings. As one respondent put it, "Research is inherently a risky enterprise. We thought it would generate more accurate info, but it didn't. That's research!"

#### 4.4.3 Opening the data

There is an intention to open up the database so that other researchers (not currently associated with the programme) could use the data for their own analysis.

In general, respondents approved of such an ideal although some saw difficulties. The difficulties included:-

- Contextualising the data - Respondents felt that data without context was dangerous. Data alone could not explain a situation and someone coming in and using the data could misinterpret it.
- Ethical constraints - Some respondents felt that an anonymous dataset had no particular ethical concerns. Other respondents felt that since the University of Washington had submitted its protocols to the Human Research Committee (HRC) for ethical approval, ethics were covered. Clarification of this point reveals that the HRC only commented on the user, non-user and venue operator surveys. However, some respondents felt that even anonymised data could be dangerous to some of those surveyed. Where there were effectively illegal telecentres, they felt the centre could be identified through the data and that an open dataset might open the Global Impact Study to legal challenge by a centre that was subsequently shut down by its government. Connected to this, some in-country teams felt that they had not secured permission from those surveyed for their data to be made open. The user survey included surfing habits of people and some respondents felt that even if data was anonymised, explicit permission to open the data was required.
- Analysis and publication - Opening the data could potentially mean that others might publish their analysis before the project researchers were able to do so. This seems to be an overall concern and has been discussed and mitigated by a plan to open the database only after a given period of time. This has the potential added benefit that it gives urgency to the

researchers to publish while the database is closed – in order to claim their place on the publishing stage.

- Tracking the use of the database - Some of the respondents expressed concern that in order to maintain the 'branding' of the Global Impact Study as high quality research, there will be a need to track and monitor how the data is analysed and used (and published). Mitigation of this concern is being discussed and there is likely to be a registration process for those downloading the data, connected to a promise to share the analysis back with the Global Impact Study group.
- Sustainability - There were a few questions raised as to the sustainability of such a database. Once the programme of work finishes, who will fund the administration of the database, and handle enquiries and technical support?

There was very little awareness among the respondents, including those working with the plan to open the data, of other open database initiatives. The reviewer is particularly familiar with the Demographic Health Surveys (DHS), which are open to all. Since 1984, the MEASURE DHS project has provided technical assistance to more than 240 surveys in over 85 countries, advancing global understanding of health and population trends in developing countries. With few limitations, these data have been made available for wide use.

The style of an open database affects the cost. This was acknowledged in the Executive Committee Report of 2008:- *"Although the LIRNEAsia program does open research, it is relatively undemanding, because the data is made available as it is – users are responsible for figuring out ways to make it usable for their purposes. If the IPAI project wants to take the extra step to make data usable, there also needs to be a set of tools to help people use the data. An example of how this could escalate into a large endeavour is that when Richard Heeks sent out a message directing readers to the compendium on ICT4D evaluation frameworks, three people in LA sent enquiries asking if they could be provided with a Spanish version."*

By 2009, the executive committee was continuing to debate this point:- *"It would be good to take a hard look at our assumptions about who will be the real audience(s) for our open access research, and check those assumptions with representative candidates. This would help determine what data to make available, in what form, etc. We were encouraged to provide open APIs for analysis that would be hosted on our (TASCHA) server, rather than simply a way to download the data files. This way, we get to see what analysis people are interested in conducting, and have an opportunity to create conversations around that analysis. By simply making the data files available, we lose that window and learning opportunity."* (Executive Committee Report of 2009, François Bar).

Open access to research data and tools – Summary against framework	
Needs Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Openness encourages participation by South based researchers</li> </ul>
Theory of Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation by South based researchers would build capacity, and create opportunities for policy moments</li> </ul>
Strategy (for managing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy partially overtaken by alternative views?</li> <li>• Future openness unclear</li> </ul>
Management (Coordination)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethical issues remain unclear</li> <li>• Publishing regime has taken into account academic needs</li> <li>• Not yet seen</li> </ul>
Monitoring and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater requirement to discuss at start of similar programme to ensure respondents know how data is to be used</li> </ul>

## 4.5 Other Findings

This section contains insights that did not readily fit into the four sections outlined in the terms of reference, but are thought to be relevant findings.

### 4.5.1 Donors' goals and objectives

Were the donors agreed on the goals and objectives? While there was a consensus on the objectives of the programme, the two donors had slightly different emphases on their interest.

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation funds the Global Libraries programme, and it wanted a set of evidence based research that could enhance its grantee performance, and provide ammunition for advocacy by its partners to their respective governments and policy makers on the role of public libraries.

IDRC has a wide portfolio of ICT4D research programs which included funding telecentre.org, a network of partnerships that supported the worldwide telecentre movement. In general, IDRC also has a focus on strengthening the capacity of researchers in the South. Therefore, its engagement in the programme had some interest in generating stronger research capacity in the South.

These slightly different interests did not seem to affect the research scope of the programme. If anything they enhanced the programme. The RWG in Phase 1 engaged in the debate about public access and differentiated between the roles of public libraries, telecentres, and even cyber-cafes. This debate was inevitable for a research programme on public access, and the fact that each donor had slightly different interests in the debate, only strengthened the confidence of the researchers to broaden the debate to include all forms of public access.

There was also a difference between the two donors in their hopes of 'results'. Given the purpose of the study for the foundation, there was inevitably a request for early results, and even interim results. By way of contrast, IDRC, with their emphasis on capacity building, were more interested in

the process of getting the research. Respondents noted that the IDRC officer seemed to gradually buy in and respect the foundation's objectives, while keeping the balance of IDRC interest in the projects. The donors were thus able to present a single narrative to the programme. Respondents saw this as good and commended the IDRC officer.

#### **4.5.2 International Advisory Committee (IAC)**

The IAC seems only to have met once. There were some clear recommendations from members, many of which address several of the points above. For instance, one of the members noted:-  
*Consider three tiers of "success" for the project itself: data, analysis, and policy impact. In terms of concrete output, these could manifest as (1) publication of a corpus of data, (2) publication of peer-reviewed papers, and (3) instances of policy impact. Capacity building in each country runs parallel along these tiers, with the goals being (1) to collect good data, (2) to have the country teams publish papers, and (3) to ensure that someone in those countries can use the data and analysis to impact country policy."*

The same IAC member goes on to suggest:- *"Make all of the data, as well as the data-collection methodology, available to the general public. It sounds like IDRC and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation are already planning for this. Benefits include... Greater buy-in and more feedback from the worldwide research community. More visibility for IPAI. More research on the data, done independently; potential for greater policy impact. Additional capacity building of the country teams, as they will have more reason to collect data rigorously and carefully."*

There are reasons why the IAC was not engaged further throughout the programme. However, the engagement of the IAC was not a focus of the review, and these details have not been explored. Given that the advice above matches some of the observations made by respondents, it seems very insightful. Perhaps future programmes might clarify the role of any IAC.

#### **4.5.3 Capacity Building**

Respondents stated that with the shift from Phase 1 to Phase 2, it seemed that IDRC's hopes for strengthening the capacity of South based researchers was being dissipated. Some respondents felt that this was not the case – one in particular noted that they had to give considerable support to the country research teams in the creation and implementation of the surveys, and that this was effective capacity building. However, most country teams act as subcontractors to the programme and have very little engagement with the direction of the research or its intellectual overviews. Indeed respondents of the in-country teams often stated they did not understand why some actions were taken. We will examine this further in the next section. However, with regard to the IDRC notion of capacity building, it seems that these expectations were not fulfilled.

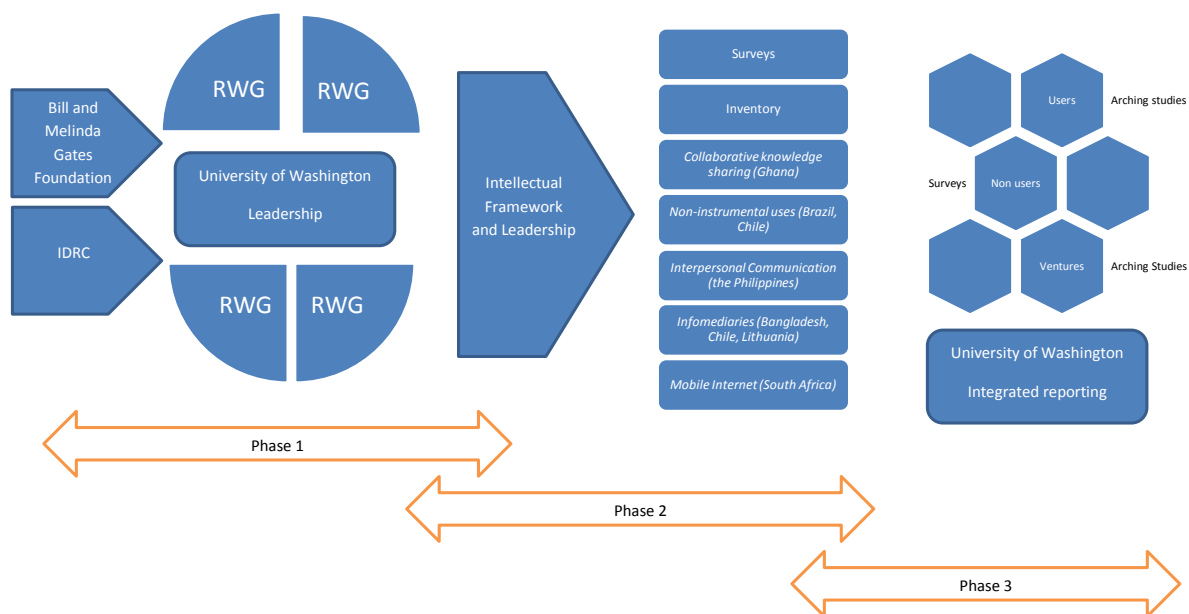
One of the key researchers died during the programme. Amy Mahan was much loved and appreciated by her colleagues. There had been discussions about a parallel set of activities that were more capacity building focused. This untimely death provided a focus for the programme, and the Amy Mahan Research Fellowship Programme was set up. We note that at the start of the project, IDRC had already set aside some of its funding specifically for a separate capacity building component. IDRC was open to having this project component integrated within the Global Impact Study and pitched the idea to the RWG during its inaugural meeting. However, a concrete proposal never materialized from the RWG, thus IDRC decided to create a separate project component. This programme offered up to 12 fellowships to South based researchers. These research projects are

intended to strengthen researchers and contribute to IDRCs capacity building objectives. There are currently 11 research projects being carried out, and while being on the subject area of public access, they will not directly contribute to the integrated Global Impact Study report. One respondent notes that the fellowship, to some extent, plays into the open data tension. With the open research idea being that existing data can be built upon by people outside of the Global Impact Study component itself, the fellowship component might theoretically contribute to knowledge in this area. However as already noted there are tensions around sharing ‘unproven’ instruments which creates complexity and difficulties for the interaction between the fellowship programme and the Global Impact Study.

## 5 Conclusions

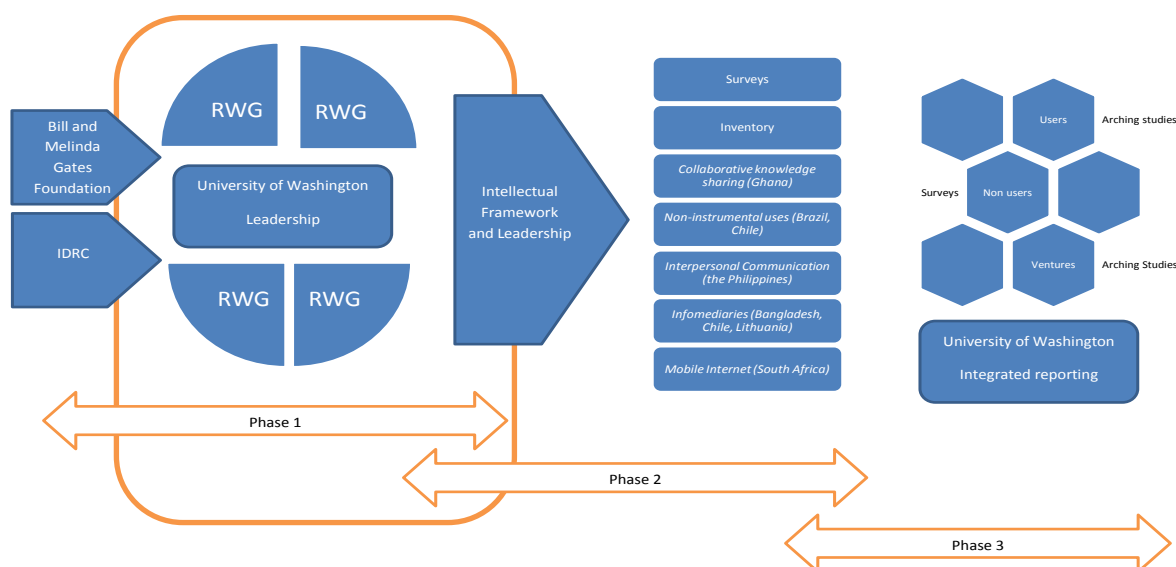
The findings show a programme that has changed its trajectory to accommodate for learning within. The trajectory remains within the original hopes and aspirations for the programme.

The diagram has been annotated with general observations based on respondents’ comments.



The following seeks to unpack the main conclusions by the core review questions.

## 5.1 Evolving Roles of the Research Working Group (RWG)



### 5.1.1 Phase 1 - Research Working Group intellectual leadership

A core premise of the programme is that by engaging senior researchers in the Research Working Group, it will produce high quality research.

This assumption leads to a strategic choice in implementing the programme, and continues to have implications even though the RWG is no longer the intellectual lead. The premise assumed that senior researchers would have clarity in their intended roles and be committed enough to the programme to take the intellectual lead. As described in the findings, the realisation that the RWG was not able to take the intellectual lead is narrated from different points of view. However, there seems to be consistency that contributing factors for its inability to take the lead included:-

- A lack of clarity about the purpose of the RWG by some members
- Collective decision making is great in principle and circular in practice!
- Seniority brings a portion of self-actualisation, i.e. researchers have decided on their own interests and are focused on fulfilling those interests

As described in the findings, eventually the RWG was allowed to evolve into the in-depth studies, and the University of Washington took the intellectual lead inclusive of consultation with a few members of the RWG.

The core premise remains in place to some extent. The donors are still relying on the presence of senior professional researchers at UW to coordinate and bring together high quality research. The difference is that a single institution is taking the responsibility rather than a disparate collective scattered across many institutions.

**Lesson:-** The inability of the RWG to take the intellectual leadership forward seems to be mainly accounted for in the lack of clarity over the roles. This was also influenced by the challenge to the CRTs in generating research questions that the RWG thought would have global relevance. It would seem that in a similar situation, a slower recruitment process with very explicit inception phase discussing the roles of the RWG would be useful.

There also seems to be a need for a very explicit challenge to be laid at the feet of senior researchers as to their interest and commitment to the programme.

### 5.1.2 Phase 2 - Research Working Group legacy

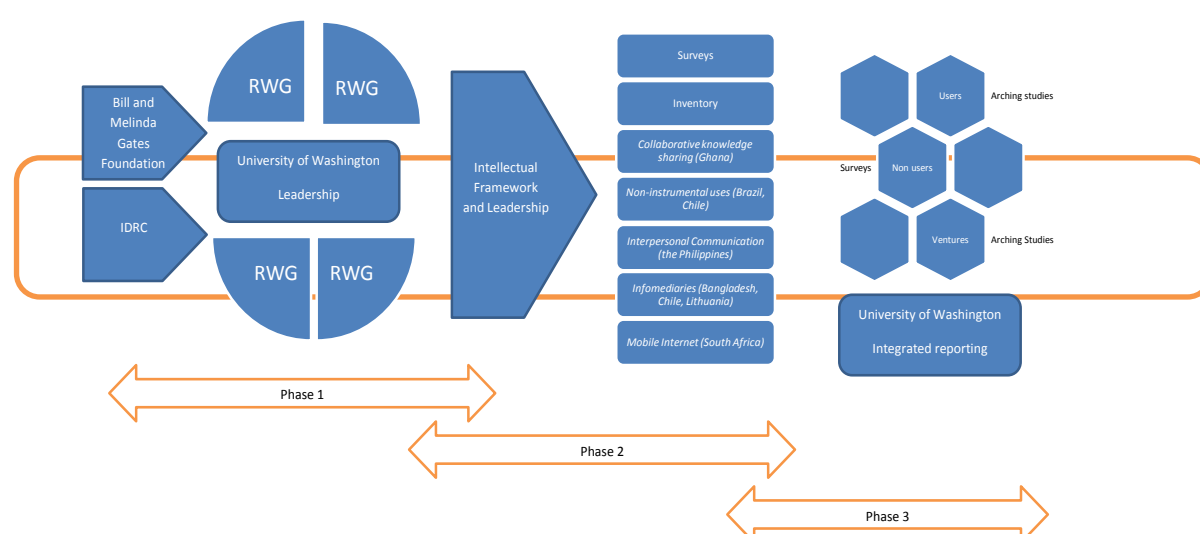
The above evolution of the RWG has created other challenges for the programme. Senior researchers have been resistant to reporting, and are often distracted by their other work from timely field trips or workshop meetings.

**Lesson:-** If the programme had settled on the intellectual lead from UW at an earlier stage, several respondents suggested it might have been beneficial to commission more junior researchers to implement in-depth studies. Less senior researchers would likely be more responsive to requests for information, enhancing the communication strategy, and be more 'hungry' for timely innovative research.

However, as one respondent notes when presented back with this suggestion, in retrospect, this would have been difficult to do. UW/TASCHA was thinly staffed at the beginning of the project, and IDRC policy discourages the use of a northern institution as the main driver of its projects. A network approach, consisting of UW and a series of competent South based researchers would have been better from an IDRC point of view, but this would require a much longer lead time to facilitate, a luxury that the project could not afford.

## 5.2 Internal Communications and Reporting Practices

Internal communications and reporting practices between the project research team members and the research coordinating and management team at UW/TASCHA, and from UW/TASCHA to the project sponsors





### 5.2.1 Network effects

The programme seems to have missed opportunities for network effects in the research. The in-depth studies are being conducted almost in isolation from each other, with some exceptions – this may yet cause difficulties in Phase 3, integration of the whole. Other studies do have working teams, but have little interaction outside those teams. The hub and spoke model of the programme has been effective in coordinating and getting the studies and surveys implemented. However, many respondents expressed a desire to know what others in the programme are doing, and to have an opportunity to engage with them.

**Lesson:-** In-country teams could have been encouraged to contact each other and to share information in planned workshops. In-depth study teams could have been offered opportunities for discussing early results or their methodologies. One respondent suggested a monthly conference Skype call that would have presented one in-depth study followed by discussion. The RWG could have been encouraged to keep in contact with each other and to get involved with each other's thinking. The idea of a wiki with shared insights could have been pursued further.

### 5.2.2 Capacity building

As argued in the findings, some respondents felt that the interaction between senior North and South based researchers had built South based research capacity. While this is probably true to some extent, in the same way that almost any friendly interaction between an experienced person enhances the other, the opportunity for systematic capacity building as experienced in other IDRC programmes has not been in place. In-country teams have become subcontractors, and while they have a say in the programme as much as any subcontractor feeds back to a client, the power relationship between them and UW is clearly not equal.

**Lesson:-** While this programme has downplayed the expectations of capacity building, and brought them to bear in the Amy Mahan Research Fellowship Programme, there seems to be a missed opportunity for a more nuanced engagement with the in-country teams. To do this would have required a different type of coordination built into the UW team. Most of the UW team are researchers in their own right, and they are not professional capacity builders. As described in the findings, facilitation of several of the workshops were said to have room for improvement, and this may well illustrate that facilitation, whether of a workshop or of capacity learning, needs to be treated as a skill to be specifically brought in to a programme such as this.

**Lesson:-** This reflection on capacity building also supports the ideas around network effects. The hub and spoke model is not the best for adult-adult dialogue which builds South based capacity. A more network based approach might have mitigated some of the feelings of isolation that a number of respondents mention, while bringing a more equitable/peer-like relationship among the researchers within the network.

### 5.2.3 Internal reporting

The findings suggest that sometimes getting busy academics to report is like 'herding cats'. The programme has learnt that a dedicated administrator is required and that tools, such as a monthly reporting template, are important. Such a lesson needs to be implemented at an early stage of any similar programme, and continued through into the next phase.

**Lesson:-** Several respondents stated that, when asked for information, they would like to know how the information will be used and who it is for. They distinguished between the needs of the donors, the needs of management and the needs of the external communication strategy. Requests for information in the last month or so have been attached to such explanations and the lesson is that this should continue.

### 5.2.4 Donor reporting

The findings suggest that weekly contact on a research programme between donor and implementing agency is probably not the best use of everyone's time. A monthly reporting template supplemented with phone calls has generated a sense of balance in the reporting, and seems welcomed by both donors and programme staff.

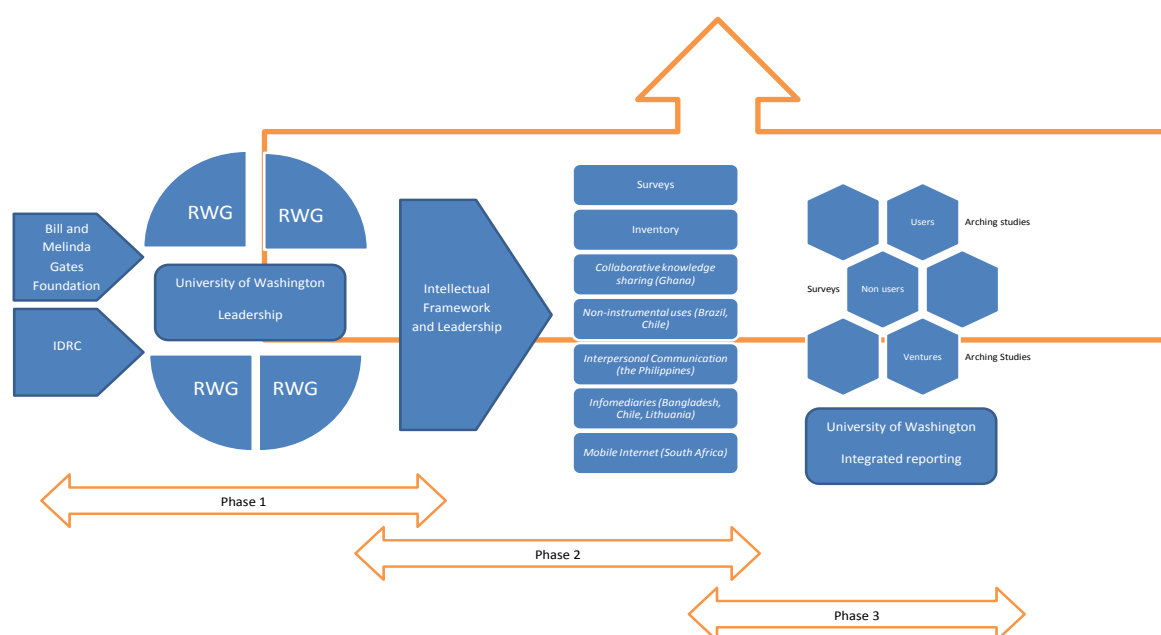
**Lesson:-** Research takes time. Donors need to understand that research programmes, particularly of complex systems, are often slow in start-up and are different from development interventions. Reporting on a monthly or quarterly basis seems adequate.

### 5.2.5 Getting everyone to buy in

With the emerging programme, the in-country teams were mainly used as consultant data collectors, with little decision making ability. This has left some respondents frustrated with their lack of understanding of the whole programme, and their place in it. They also do not understand the timing of result production and how they can use this for policy influence within their country.

**Lesson:-** It seems worth sharing, and reflecting on, the vision and mission statements for the overall programme, even with a subcontractor. This can better help South based researchers to feel engaged and to understand the context of their implementing requests.

## 5.3 Potential Gap between External Communication Needs and the Existing Strategy/ Execution Plan



### 5.3.1 External communication plan

Despite the presence of an external communication plan, the findings suggest that most of the researchers have not really understood nor bought into the reasoning behind the plan. In 2010, the report from France still reflects this noting that:- *“There is confusion as to the primary audience. Some feel it is policymakers (to be reached via the media), others want to focus on practitioners and program designers at the country level.”* This is not unusual in academia and research. There is a growing call for researchers generally to consider how their research is going to be used and how it might be brought to the attention of the key stakeholders. Donors such as DFID have built communication plans into the criteria for assessing research programmes. In this case the plan exists, and there have been attempts by some to implement it, but in general this has been a frustrating task.

The plan specifically has objectives to:- *“Position the project as a reliable source of knowledge and resources on public access to ICT within the ICT4D and library communities”* and to *“Enhance the ability of researchers to communicate the results of their work for policy influence and practice”* (Communications Plan Revised Oct 2010).

**Lesson:-** Communication plans need to be discussed more clearly during the inception phase and actions taken among the team to get as much buy in as possible. If a hub and spoke model is to be implemented, the hub needs to use its administrative capacity to ensure that, where possible and necessary, everyone contributes to the communication plan. What those actions are, and how far they will always be diluted by the realities of pressurised life, is not easily anticipated. Nevertheless the lesson is that this buy in needs to be explored as fully as possible, and as early as possible in any programme.

### 5.3.2 An integrated report

The coming phase is one where the in-depth studies, surveys, inventory and all data will be discussed, and analysis of the overall dataset will seek to conclude with an integrated research report. A number of respondents believe this process will be ‘doable’, and that the resulting report will give considerable insight into the overall subject area of public access. A number of respondents doubt this – their comments include wonderings about the methodological incompatibility or even epistemological differences among the different studies. The hub and spoke model with the University of Washington at the centre may have enough overview to bring together the very different in-depth studies. Some respondents felt that the lack of interaction between in-depth studies will likely lead to a vacuum of basic principles – disagreements on framings, ontology, etc.

This debate can be seen in the 2010 report from the workshop in France:- *“One of the facilitators then pointed out that it would be useful for in-depth study principal investigators to understand the minimum expectations and requirements so that an element of dovetailing can take place.”* This includes some documented pushback *“I’d like to get some clarification about the meeting agenda. Is it about helping me develop indicators or getting me to align my study?”*

It would seem that there is, as yet, no documented overarching unifying theory or theory of change that brings together the series of studies. The responsible respondents seem to suggest that there is an undocumented one that is emerging as data comes in and analyses contribute to understanding of the complex whole. Their faith is in the process of integration once the results are in. Certainly some involved in in-depth studies would have liked to see a more unified framework. As a quote

from France states:- *“Our hypothesis are nested — you cannot take one in isolation. They represent a stab at what we think is important.”*

From the comments made and from experience, this reviewer is sceptical that the process will be smooth, and has the impression that some datasets may not fit together. The resulting report may become one of chapter by chapter reporting, rather than an integrated whole. However this is pure supposition, and given that it is a future activity, it may be that an integrated report is brought together collectively, with all datasets included.

**Lesson:-** There is no lesson as such because the end product has yet to be seen, and not so much the end product as the length and stress of the process by which that end product is developed. In terms of formative advice for Phase 3, I would suggest that if the report is to be developed collectively, then considerable amounts of face-to-face time should be budgeted for. The default is that a few key researchers will do the bulk of the writing and the report will effectively be a nearly traditional piece of research. If budgeting allows, I recommend that the process by which Phase 3 occurs be documented in depth – with a rapporteur who is trained in ethnographic observation commissioned to write up the process for future learning by complex research teams.

### 5.3.3 Eagerly awaited, but only by some

The point of drawing attention to the above is that the external communication is very dependent on this final report. As stated above, the publication will be eagerly received by interested stakeholders. These include the main audiences of communication plan. However, as the caveated analysis of the website suggests, there is much to be done to reach the disinterested.

The final report will be accessible via the web. This will allow access ‘just in time’ and ‘just in case’, i.e. those policy makers about to undertake planning of public access can access it in a timely manner. It will remain there for future access by researchers and policy makers alike.

What the final report will not do, on its own, is reach the relevant but disinterested. For example, policy makers, such as those in Chile, who are planning to increase private access and have not stopped to consider the alternatives of public access. For these, the communication plan has developed templates for one and two page briefing notes.

As discussed above, and noted by one respondent, the idea of briefing notes also brings up the “central communications” approach at UW where country research teams and PIs contribute to pieces hosted by the site. The respondent wished that somehow decentralising, but supporting, certain activities would be more effective in reaching local policy makers and reaching out to regions that surround the study sites.

Similarly, journal articles and conference papers, such as at those presented at ICTD, also rarely reach the disinterested.

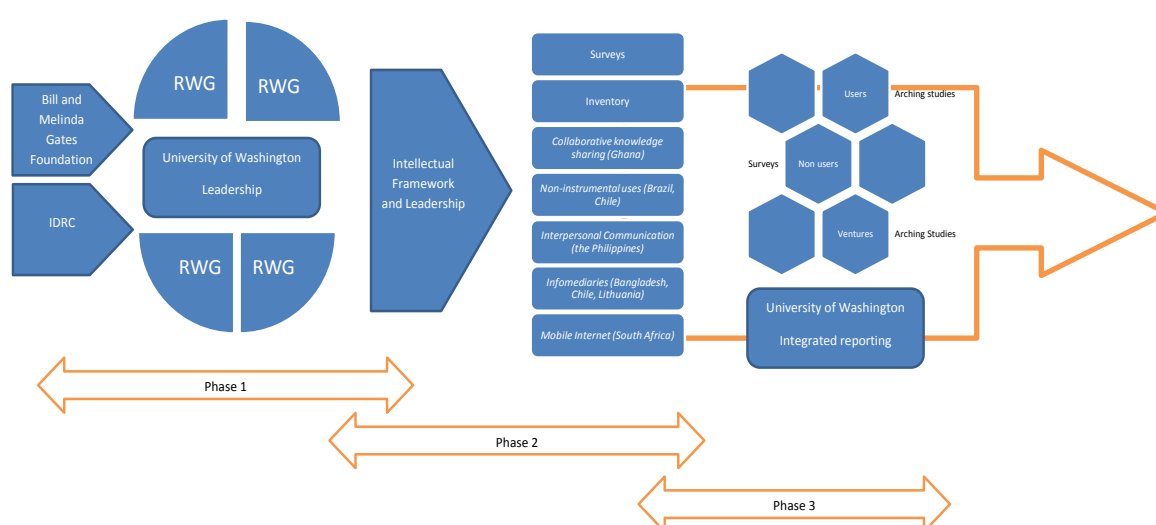
**Lesson:-** There needs to be a plan for not only producing the multiple outputs of the study, but for reaching the relevant but disinterested. For five countries, using country research teams, the core group could find out what their countries need in the way of documentation, workshops and local seminars in order to reach those they might classify as relevant but disinterested. They need to find the ‘sticky messages’ emanating from the research, and be able to make them context specific. Policy influence is a complex activity and often ‘messy’, leveraging windows of opportunity and

networks of actors (see Carden 2009 KNOWLEDGE TO POLICY Making the Most of Development Research IDRC, and Sumner, A., Ishmael-Perkins, N. and Lindstrom 2009 'Making Science of Influencing: Assessing the Impact of Development Research' as two books worth reading on the research to policy praxis). At the same time, there are only five CRTs out of 200 countries in the world – how will the disinterested be engaged in the other 195? One respondent suggested that there are five CRTs in four major global regions able to reach a huge multilingual audience that the core of the project cannot.

**Lesson:-** Since policy making is a ‘messy process’, timely interim results have the potential to create interest and stimulate adult-adult dialogue, even if the results are later nuanced by further research. I would suggest that academics in this era of instant communication have to contribute to the global on-going dialogue, rather than hold back research until it is ‘perfect’.

In the feedback, this lesson was challenged by the notion that there have not been interim ‘results’ to publish. Since the inventory and the surveys are for informing policy makers about the landscape of public access, these items (results) could have been highlighted in local language and contextual briefings.

## 5.4 Open Access to Research Data and Tools



### 5.4.1 Instruments

Some respondents see the greatest output of the Global Impact Study not so much as the current results, but as the framing of the research and the resulting tools and instruments used. They feel that these will be of most long term value, offering to other researchers a guided path for similar investigations. The DHS data, mentioned above as an example of open access, publishes its tools and provides a detailed guide as to why each set of questions has been created, and what the set of questions can be used for.

**Lesson:-** The instruments may well prove to be very valuable. They will need to be annotated to explain to researchers why the questions were asked and what the resulting data may be used for (and in some cases what it should not be used for). It is not clear if this activity has been budgeted for. There is also a case of releasing the instruments for comment before the gathering and integration of the final report.

#### 5.4.2 Creative Commons licence

As stated in the findings, this has been encouraged as the default licence for publication. Most respondents do not have any difficulty with it, although the reality of the current publication scene does not always support it. For instance, one respondent noted that the ICTD conference had ‘old fashioned’ copyright.

**Lesson:-** While the Creative Commons licence is probably the most effective way of creating an openness of analytical results, especially to be able to reach South based researchers, programme managers could be mindful of some academic constraints to its use, and be flexible in their approach (as the current Global Impact Study management has been).

**Lesson:-** Ensure that the entire project team (including the management) understands the implication of publishing with an open content license, both in terms of its benefits and drawbacks.

#### 5.4.3 Open data

Respondents seemed especially varied in their approach to the idea of opening up the database. While some saw no problem and that it was a natural extension of spending public money, others felt that ethical issues of true anonymity would be challenging.

**Lesson:-** It seems important to explain upfront to all involved how the data will be treated and used. Some in-country teams felt they had not secured the correct permissions from their interviewees for opening up the database. Whatever the details of the current plans to use the data and the narrative of how much explanation there was from the beginning, the lesson is that any future programmes should spend considerable time discussing and documenting their intentions for the data.

## 6 Overarching Commentary

This section draws on the evidence of the findings and their implications as stated in the conclusions, but adds a commentary based on experience from the reviewer. As such, it is mainly personal observation and while informed by respondents, cannot be directly attributed to them.

### 6.1 Trade-offs of strategies

*“Better understanding of the positive and negative implications of the evolving roles of the RWG, in studies they are leading and within the project as a whole” (TOR 2011).*

The programme was started with the intention of using the collaboration of a group of senior researchers (RWG) to steer the intellectual direction of the programme, and minimise any central administrative ‘command and control’. It became apparent that this was unlikely to fulfil the programme direct objectives of an integrated evidence based study on public access, and so the programme has evolved to a hub and spoke model. UW has become an administrative coordinator

(rather than supporter), and in-depth studies, while having contact with UW, have not had contact with each other.

One strategy cannot be said to be clearly better or worse than the other. Each strategy includes trade-offs, some of which fit the donors' objectives while others may not. What were the trade-offs between the original strategy and the current one?

<b>'RWG Intellectual steer'</b>	<b>UW Intellectual Steer (and tighter administration)</b>
More potential for South based capacity building - The early country studies showed that Bangladesh, for instance, 'published' a cost benefit analysis. This stretched the thinking of the country team, and there is some evidence this stimulated outsiders thinking about cost-benefit analyses.	Traditional banking type education of South based researchers, i.e. North based researchers sharing why they do things, and being the expert that apprentices the South based researcher (a specific example of this came up in the interviews).
More potential for network effects - There is a (unproven) possibility that network effects may have generated unexpected outcomes – for instance, the collaboration of two country research teams on their collection of data.	Few network effects - Researchers remain set in their own interests and develop the friendships they want to develop.
Collective or crowd sourced ideas – potentially a more widespread set of ideas – more chaotic idea forming, and an unknown path towards the final product.	Ideas refined by a closed collective of senior researchers, each of whom gives limited time to the programme (as defined by their contract).
Delays and greater administrative headaches – with each RWG member being given space to develop their agenda, there was the potential for long delays to commissioning and collating data. While not impossible to manage, it may have required considerable investment by donors.	Seemingly more timely collection of data – contractors pushed to deliver stated deliverables within given timeframes.
Potentially weaker evidenced publications with weaker analyses (e.g. Bangladesh interim Cost Benefit Study).*	More measured publication of research, with more rigorous analysis before publication.
Possibly a gradual publishing of interim results and a build-up of interest in the final product.	Withholding publication until the quality of the research is clear, leading to a build-up of suspense among onlookers as to what the outcome will say – leading to a rising dam of interest in the final outcome.

\*It is perhaps important to note that the RWG needs to be disaggregated from the in-country teams. Although the example given is of a product from the in-country team, nevertheless my understanding is that it was 'published' (on the IPAI site) at a time when leadership was in the hands

of the RWG. Therefore I surmise that if the RWG had remained in 'command', more interim studies might be available now on the main site.

## 6.2 Future Phase

*"Optimal role(s) for select RWG members in the future of the project, taking into account their research interest, workload, and availability" (TOR 2011).*

Given the above view of the trade-offs of RWG intellectual leadership, where now is the programme and what is the optimal role for the RWG?

There are a series of meetings and events planned for the summer. Small working groups, such as the survey team, intend to meet although the group seems to have been reduced from its original 5 members to 3. A bringing together of the in-depth studies and the integration of the whole is planned for the summer.

Respondents were generally characterised by a deep trust in TASCHA at the University of Washington. They could each articulate how their own in-depth study was going, and most seemed confident that they had results that would be of interest to those engaged in the public access debates. Few, if any, had an overview of how the in-depth studies would come together. However, most expressed a trust that UW had oversight of the whole, that the starting process had been rigorous enough that the in-depth studies were relevant, and that all could be brought together. A few expressed a concern that there was a limited framework for the studies, and that slight differences in methodology, and even epistemology, might make the coming together of the studies a challenge.

In terms of the specific question raised by the TOR, much seems to depend on the summer meetings, and the skill of UW in steering the process of bringing together the whole. Some respondents raised the idea that facilitation in previous meetings had not been ideal and that this had prevented a more collaborative atmosphere. It therefore seems likely that whether the RWG engages with the creation of the integrated whole will depend on the facilitation provided.

Other respondents noted a concern that workshops in general (not just for this programme), tend to be too short for real engagement. A respondent notes that TASCHA tries to manage this with pre-workshop assignments, and the quality of work is often influenced by the extent to which people do give attention to those assignments. The implication is therefore that the coming series of work needs to be given enough time. And yet many researchers noted that they had other duties and it may be difficult to get the full attention of some of the RWG members.

Given the current position of the programme, my recommendations focus on the process of integrating the whole. I would not suggest changing the evolved structure at this point as the need now is to publish an integrated high quality synthesis of the entire body of the project research in addition to multiple reports on subsets of the research, with a multiple channel external communication strategy; and the structure of hub and spoke from UW is the current structure that will best do this.

## 6.3 Internal communication observations

*"Internal communication activities and tools that have worked well and not well to date"*



*“Internal communication activities and tools that need to be changed or done differently in order to improve their chance of success, within this project or other similarly executed projects.”*

*“Existing reporting mechanisms to the project donors (IDRC and the Gates Foundation), and whether they meet the expectations of the project donors in terms of quantity, quality, and frequency/timeliness.” (TOR 2011).*

If we consider the current state of reporting, the monthly reporting seems acceptable to most respondents. While there is a little push back from some busy academics, this is rooted in the difference between pure research funding and this programme of action research funded by international donors. The idea that when requesting information the administrator should state why the information is required, seems to be widely accepted as an important element of internal communication.

In future similar programmes, it seems clear that there needs to be a full time administrator in place from the start, and one who looks after the day-to-day affairs in the project. This administrator should not be a researcher per se, but skilled in communication. Gathering of information should be a balance of documentation and phone calls. The current administrator is a personable character and this is much appreciated within the programme. A likeable ‘personality’ adds considerable value to this hub and spoke model.

Given the current feeling that monthly reporting is reasonable (from donors and researchers alike), I would suggest that future programmes should aim at monthly reporting.

Only one person mentioned the Twitter feed as a source of keeping up to date with the programme. While it may have its use as an external communication tactic, it does not have relevance internally.

## **6.4 External communication commentary**

*“Different communication needs among specific groups within the primary target audiences, and to what extent the project has focused its outreach activities accordingly”*

*“Expectations of the project donors and TASCHA on the type of outreach and communication products that need to be developed in the project for: a) the different groups within the two primary external target audiences; and b) other external target audiences”*

*“Communication/outreach tools and methods (existing and new) that can contribute towards meeting the needs of the external target audiences (primary and secondary)” (TOR 2011).*

It has taken the programme a long time to grasp the external communication strategy. The presence of the administrator has enabled a flow of information from researchers into the programme for reporting and dissemination.

The website has few results that an external person can hook into. This is said to be due to the reluctance of academics to publish interim results that they may then have to nuance or even contradict in the near future when more data and analysis is conducted. For some respondents, and in my own view, this is an old academic model. The modern world has been enhanced by a collective view of emerging ideas. Again this refers only to a trade-off between two views.

<b>'Interim result' model</b>	<b>'Integrated final product' model</b>
Interim results are discussed by communities of interest	Interim results are discussed only within the in-depth study team, and not made public
The discussion above potentially provokes new ideas, and leads to changes in the research	Senior researchers steer emerging ideas and keep an informed approach
Potential embarrassment if some early results are contradicted by further research	A coherent story is presented with due evidence
Crowd sourced ideas generate insights that focused researchers overlook	Focused researchers use their professionalism to ensure that 'all bases are covered'
Research spin offs are difficult to integrate into a coherent whole as different ideas 'contradict' each other	In-depth studies are integrated into the whole in a relatively short time
Instruments are taken up by others and used (with and without due care and consideration to their appropriateness)	Instruments are only available at the end of the process
Interim results available for engaging in policy windows of opportunity	A single time line for engaging the results with policy processes

The key question seems to be – what is one's view of how ideas are generated in this modern world? To some respondents, the idea of collective generation of ideas was key to the original plan of the programme. Given this idea, external transparency of the processes and interim results of the study would then likely enhance the final product. To some respondents, the most important outcome would have been that when windows of opportunity arose within policy processes (policy moments), there would be something to engage policy makers.

To other respondents, the quality of the research ranks highest in their opinion. They require a measured process that ensures rigour and leads to a high quality product.

My own commentary aligns with the former camp. I believe that policy making is a messy process that often relies on windows of opportunity. While high quality evidence based research can, and should, influence policy, it often does not. According to policy research, policy making depends on 'policy moments'. The respondents brought to my attention two policy moments that they wish they had had the results to engage with. The 'interim result' route might have been more able to address these moments.

However, this discussion is based on opinions and not evidence. We have no evidence to suggest one route is more 'effective' (in terms of policy influence) than the other. The current focus of the Global Impact Study's external communication strategy is to have an integrated publication that is promoted through the contacts of IDRC, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and TASCHA. This publication will sit on the Internet for reference and the convening power of the three key players will likely create interest. The feedback pointed out that this integrated report does not preclude publishing interim and sub-reports. The integrated report will be the source of many of the other outputs, whether or not findings are shared earlier or later.

Research by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) suggests a number of features that increase the likelihood of evidence influencing policy<sup>2</sup>:

1. It fits within the political and institutional limits and pressures of policy makers, and resonates with their assumptions, or sufficient pressure is exerted to challenge them.
2. The evidence is credible and convincing, provides practical solutions to pressing policy problems, and is packaged to attract the interest of policy makers.
3. Researchers and policy makers share common networks, trust one another, and communicate effectively.

The 'interim result' model tends to play to the first point – fitting timely interventions into political context – hence the Chilean and Philippine respondents talking about engaging with review processes in their countries.

The Integrated final product model plays to point 2, i.e. 'credible and convincing'. In addition, the external communication plan has plans for suitable briefing notes and multiple outputs. As long as this plan is followed through there is likely to be effective dissemination of the results and conclusions.

The lack of the network effect in the programme speaks to point 3, since in-country teams have not been able to use the study to engage and strengthen their in-country research policy connections as they have not been engaged in the decision making and design.

## 6.5 Open Research – a view

*"The perceived benefits and costs of adopting an open research approach among the project team members"*

*"Important lessons regarding its implementation, including challenges and any breakthroughs in overcoming technical, legal, and/or ethical issues"*

At this stage it is difficult to discuss with authority the lessons learned regarding its implementation. Respondents expressed a number of concerns highlighted in the above findings. This reviewer is left with the impression that respondents have not felt that this programme is any more open than a standard research programme. Some members of the CRTs have expressed a lack of understanding of the reasoning behind the design and purpose of the programme. In-depth study researchers have expressed feelings of isolation. In addition, the move towards a hub and spoke model for the programme has meant that the core people understand the whole, but that this is not a particularly transparent process.

The absence of interim results has its logic in the desire for high quality coherent publications. However, as discussed above, this is only one approach and the use of the collective to discuss interim results would have been a different model. Given the call for open research, the lack of interim results has a further element of surprise. Open research would imply a transparency of process – in the instruments, the data and the analysis. If anything, this has been a traditional programme of work.

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<sup>2</sup> Enriching policy with research. Pellini & Serrat. ADB. 2010.

There remains the intention to focus on Creative Commons licencing, and to make the database open after being closed for a time. As reported above, there are some tensions within the respondents as to how this open research might be manifested. As the documents show, it has not been clear which model of 'openness' the programme wishes to implement – making raw data available to registered users, or data that is partially analysed and annotated?

Turning to the TOR questions – 'benefits and costs of open research' – Although the programme is on a trajectory of openness, it is not there yet. Some respondents remain sceptical that the data can be opened up with associated value, others suggest that partial analysis and annotation is needed which will require further cost. While the majority aspire to open research, few could articulate the benefits of open data.

One of the more public data sets has been the inventory. However, this is largely based on secondary sources and is said by respondents to be unreliable. While it will fulfil its primary purpose, which is to be a factor in a convincing equation, i.e. demonstrating to policy makers that they need to take the in-depth findings seriously as they have implications on vast numbers of public access points, it is unlikely that a researcher could analyse the dataset to gain any nuanced conclusions because of its unreliability. It is, however, a good example of an open data set and sets a precedence within the programme for the openness and innovative presentation of data. For it to be useful, one of the documents suggests it needs a primary data gathering exercise with further associated costs. Survey data may be more suited to further research, but it is likely that in-depth studies are so context specific and qualitative, making their data open and hoping for further analysis may have little extra benefit.

Having said this, it is the nature of the world that data sets are becoming open, and that some analyses are being achieved that were not conceived when the sets were made open. This may apply to all the Global Impact Study sets – we won't know until they are made open.

However, the instruments behind the surveys and data collections are also intended to be open. There is the example of Mozambique where the instrument is being adopted. Respondents suggested that Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation were now focused on making the instruments open, which would enhance the analysis and strengthen the sector of public access.

Most respondents support the Creative Commons publishing, and especially now that there are contractual clauses enabling limited publication in closed journals, this does not seem to be an issue and will not create extra cost. The benefits of open publishing are well documented elsewhere.

In terms of the important lessons, it is not clear what they are. With limited interim results and limited progress towards creating an open database, it is not possible to state clearly what the technical, legal and ethical issues are. Some respondents are concerned with the ethical issues, such as illegal venues being identified even if the data is anonymised, which could be used against them. They are also concerned that respondents did not sign waivers on the use of the data and that again, even if anonymised, to publish their surfing habits is ethically wrong. On the other hand, UW has placed its research in front of its Office of Research Ethics and gained approval. Many respondents are dismissive of the ethical concerns stating that the data will be anonymised.

This brings us to the technical side. This anonymisation process does not sound an easy task. There may be associated costs with it which have not been thought through. Respondents were not clear on this point. There is the cost of maintaining the database, which if it takes a completely open route (download by registration), has relatively few associated costs. However, if the data has to be contextualised, and the downloading and use 'managed', there may not be long term provision for such.

Legally, there are precedents on open data, such as in the case of MEASURE DHS, which would seem to suggest there are no core legal issues.

## **7 Recommendations**

This review is intended to be formative for the next phase of the programme. There are also lessons that contribute to the design of future programmes that have similar elements.

### **7.1 Formative recommendations for the coming phase**

The following are suggestions. There is little if anything in the overall programme to raise red flags of warning for the donors. Trade-offs have been made (as discussed above), and having chosen the hub and spoke model of programme management with the associated high quality research rigour it brings, there is no real reason to move away from this. However, given that there have been trade-offs in moving away from the original 'intellectual collective' model, there may be an opportunity in this final phase to bring some of the benefits of collective commentary into the integration phase. Most of the recommendations focus around this idea:-

- Hire a good facilitator for the summer 'integration bringing it together meeting'. Ensure this person has a good overview of the research and a skillset that is robust enough to work with senior researchers.
- Give 'enough' time to the collective analysis and integration discussions. I suspect that it will be tempting to have a workshop and then assign individuals or small teams to writing up chapters (hub and spoke). While this is a trade-off and has fewer costs, there may be benefits in the final version of the analysis to have a more open discussion.
- Seek to bring in one or two new voices for the integration phase. I suspect this is a controversial recommendation, but as a compromise to opening the incomplete analysis for crowd commentary, perhaps some key professionals might be re-engaged. Richard Heeks and members from the IAC are possibilities. This may bring the benefit of a broader range of voices commenting on the data – and there may also be associated costs in terms of delays – so this is once again a trade-off.

In terms of open research and external communication:-

- Reassess the role of interim results – as survey analysis and in-depth studies are brought to the attention of the programme team, ensure that web announcements and short publications (briefing notes) are made available, building up to the publication of the integrated whole (as opposed to the embargo model which holds back the insights in order to make a 'splash'). This recommendation should only be considered alongside the advice of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and IDRC research communication strategies. Since the

two donors have the greater convening power and are most likely to disseminate the final report, their own teams will have views on the best approach (embargo or gradual feed).

- Seek to get the agreement of all researchers on the open data scheme. My personal recommendation is to open the data as in the DHS model, with the opening happening after a given time (so that the programme researchers can publish their analysis first). However my voice has no greater credibility than any of the respondents and therefore the recommendation is actually focused on brokering an agreement among the programme researchers.
- Re-consider the ethical considerations of the current data set, and ensure that programme researchers, including the country teams, agree that the form of the data being opened does not present any ethical threats to those studied.
- Give sufficient priority and resources to developing the planned policy briefing documents.
- Revisit the communication plan and disaggregate the stakeholders into 'interested' and 'disinterested'. Nuance the plan for strategies to reach the 'disinterested' (who might benefit from the information about public access.)

## 7.2 Recommendations for similar future programmes

- This programme acknowledged from the start that 'research takes time', and this has been a benefit to the programme. Future design should also acknowledge this.
- A programme such as this requires a dedicated near full time administrator, a focal person, from the beginning.
- This programme sought to have a collective intellectual lead, which proved difficult. In future programmes, tighter contracts explicitly stating responsibilities, with much stronger support from a dedicated administrator may successfully enable a more collective view.
- If collective intellectual leadership is not expected for the project, then senior directive leadership by the few could be supplemented with junior researchers as the 'team', giving a collective effect but with a more manageable structure. The contracted senior researchers can then undertake peer review of the progress.
- Engaging South based researchers take time – this needs to be factored in. If the goal of the project is to develop better research capacity in the South, then ideally South based researchers should be engaged in the design at all stages, and not be commissioned as disconnected subcontractors.
- South based capacity building is an important element of any programme that engages South based researchers, and in future programmes should be retained in the core.
- Where donors come together to fund a single programme, it is important they each understand the others' goals. The desire for high quality research evidence is not incompatible with capacity development, but requires considered harmonisation.
- Good research communication begins at the start of the programme and continues throughout the research. Communication plans need to be well resourced from the beginning.
- In such a fast moving sector, mechanisms for publishing emerging results needs to be built in. This needs to be discussed with researchers at the start of the programme and built into contracts.

- Clarity of the open research agenda needs to be achieved early in the programme to ensure that study subjects sign off on the use of the data, and that researchers are clear on their obligations when publishing.
- Engaging in policy moments is important. This can be facilitated by clear stakeholder and contextual mapping as part of the communication strategy, and by being flexible to tackle windows of opportunity in specific contexts as they arise.

These recommendations highlight a number of items that the existing programme has done which were of considerable benefit. These include (but are not restricted to):-

- Having a communication plan early in the programme
- Ensuring a seniority in research experience to guarantee rigour
- Creating an overall intellectual framework as soon as reasonably possible
- Treating the data as emerging, rather than hypothesis bound
- Providing administration for collating reports
- Enabling research to be conducted within realistic time scales
- Seeking ways to apply open research
- Bringing together disparate data and in-depth studies into an integrated whole
- Creating anticipation among the 'interested' for the final results.

## 8 Annex Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADB – Asia Development Bank
CRT - Country Research Team
DHS - Demographic and Health Surveys
IAC – International Advisory Committee
ICT4D – Information and Technology for Development
ICTD – International Conference on Information and Communication Technologies and Development
IDRC - International Development Research Centre, Canada
IPAI - Impact of Public Access to ICT
PI - Principal Investigator
RWG - Research Working Group
TASCHA - University of Washington’s Technology & Social Change Group
“the foundation” – Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
UW- University of Washington

## 9 Annex Global Impact Study Project Evaluation Interview Lists

<b>1. Evolving roles of the Research Working Group</b>	Interviewed
Chris Coward, University of Washington	y
Araba Sey, University of Washington	y
RWG Members (interviewees to be determined by TASCHA/UW)	
François Bar, University of Southern California (chair of RWG)	y
Michael Best, Georgia Tech	y
Mike Crandall, University of Washington	y
Andy Gordon, University of Washington	n
Beth Kolko, University of Washington	y
Carlos Manjarrez, Institute of Museum & Library Services	n
Balaji Parthasarathy, International Institute of Information Technology	n
Ricardo Ramirez, University of Guelph	y
George Sciadas, Statistics Canada	y
<b>2. Internal Communications and Reporting</b>	
<b>Centralised Project Management at TASCHA, UW:</b>	
Chris Coward	y
Araba Sey	y
Christine Prefontaine	y
Melody Clark	y
Rebecca Sears	y
In-depth Studies Principal Investigators	
Collaborative knowledge sharing (Ghana) Michael Best	y



Non-instrumental uses (Brazil, Chile)	Beth Kolko	y
Non-instrumental uses (Brazil, Chile)	François Bar	y
Interpersonal Communication (the Philippines)	Erwin Alampay	n
Infomediaries (Bangladesh, Chile, Lithuania)	Ricardo Ramírez	y
Infomediaries (Bangladesh, Chile, Lithuania)	Balaji Parthasarathy	n
Infomediaries (Bangladesh, Chile, Lithuania)	Andy Gordon	n
Mobile Internet (South Africa)	Marion Walton	n
Mobile Internet (South Africa)	Jonathan Donner	n
Cost-benefit analysis (Chile)	Tyler Davies	n
Sustainable Livelihoods (Botswana)	(Not yet started)	n
Community information ecology	Carlos Manjarrez	n
<b>Inventory:</b>		
George Sciadas		y
Chris Rothschild		y
<b>Surveys:</b>		
George Sciadas		y
Mike Crandall		y
Beth Kolko		y
Carlos Manjarrez		n
Araba Sey		y
<b>Country Research Teams:</b>		
Bangladesh	Ananya Raihan	y
Brazil	Marta Voelcker	n
Chile	Rodrigo Garrido	y
Ghana	Godfred Frempong	n
Lithuania	Birutė Mankevičiūtė	n
Philippines	Mayette Macapagal	y
<b>Project Funders:</b>		
Sandra Fried, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation		y
Frank Tulus, IDRC		y
Raymond Hyma, IDRC		y
<b>3. Communication needs and existing strategy</b>		
Chris Coward		y
Christine Prefontaine		y
Sandra Fried, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation		y
Frank Tulus, IDRC		y
Raymond Hyma, IDRC		y
<b>4. Implementation of open research</b>		

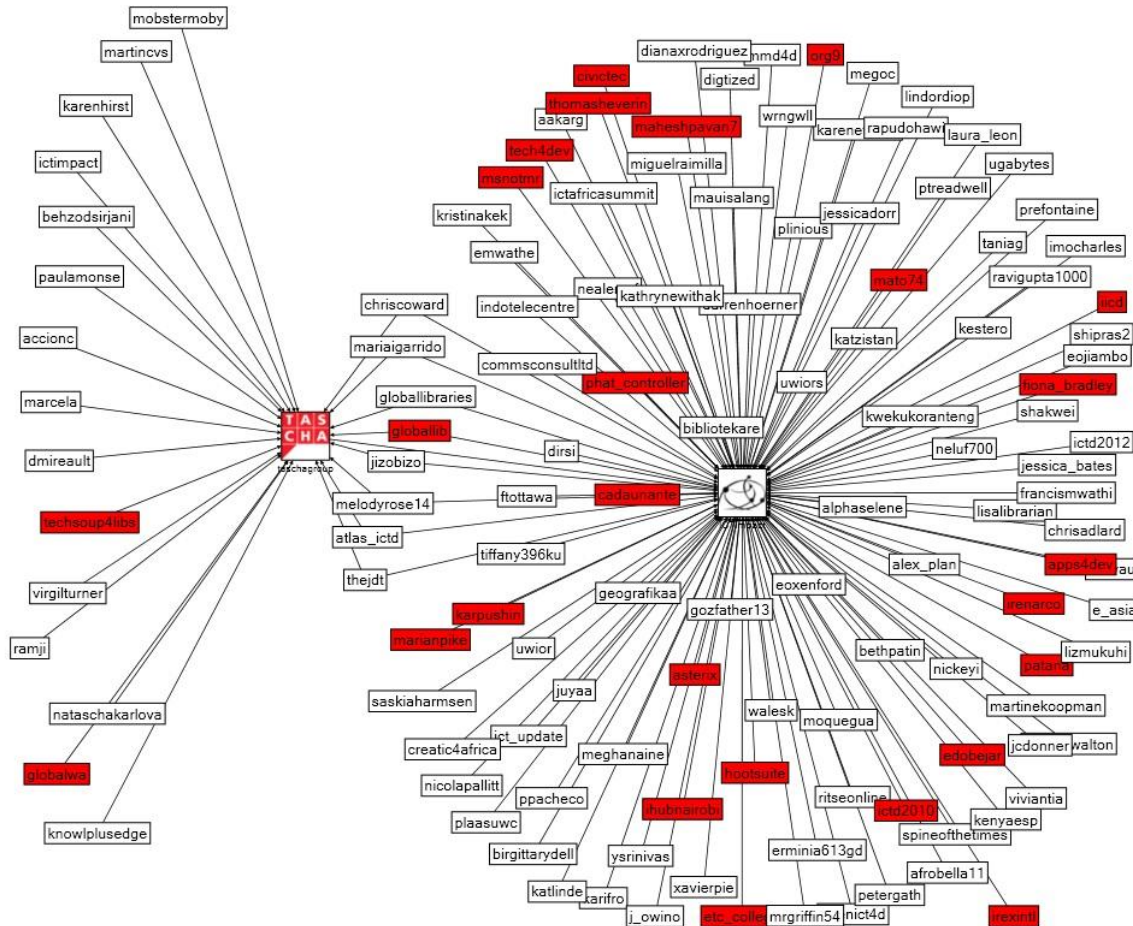
TASCHA, UW	
Chris Coward	y
Araba Sey	y
Chris Rothschild	y
Alex Tulinsky	n

## 10 Annex External Connections – A Twitter analysis

Given the acknowledged lack of interim results (stated in the main report) and the relatively limited feed of the website, nevertheless we asked who is following the website and is therefore positioned to receive the results when they are published on the site? One of the ways to analyse this ‘prepositioning’ is through the Twitter accounts. I strongly note the limitation of this analysis – as Twitter is an emerging tool and not comprehensively used by all, it is not yet ubiquitous

The specific strategy for the Twitter account is:

- Micro-updates are posted weekly by the TASCHA core team using Twitter (@ictimpact). The main target audience for them is the project sponsors, as a supplement to bi-weekly phone calls. These 140-character posts document on-going activities and milestones or direct followers to new web content (using bit.ly so TASCHA can track click-throughs). A micro-update can be created for each new piece of web content. They feed into the website and the most significant among them are disseminated quarterly via the newsletter.



The relevant Twitter accounts are:-

- Global Impact Study - <http://twitter.com/#!/ICTImpact>
- TASCHA - <http://twitter.com/#!/taschagroup>
- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation - <http://twitter.com/#!/gatesfoundation>
- IDRC - [http://twitter.com/#!/idrc\\_crdi](http://twitter.com/#!/idrc_crdi)
- University of Washington News - <http://twitter.com/#!/uwnnews>
- University of Washington Change Group - <http://twitter.com/#!/uwchange>
- University of Washington Global Health - <http://twitter.com/#!/uwghrc>
- telecentre.org - <http://twitter.com/#!/telecentreorg>
- World Bank - <http://twitter.com/#!/WorldBank>
- Universitat Pompeu Fabra - <http://twitter.com/#!/univpompeufabra>
- One of the Amy Mahan Fellowship Principal Investigators - <http://twitter.com/#!/jbossio>
- DIRSI - <http://twitter.com/#!/DIRSI>

The TASCHA and Global Impact Study Twitter accounts have regular updates but few followers. The Global impact Study homepage has an RSS feed button, but no button for the Twitter account. A search for 'Twitter' reveals links although even then there is no direct link – one has to copy and paste across the @ictimpact tag. The TASCHA homepage has a direct link, but not the recognisable Twitter button most websites use. Even though these accounts are fairly regularly updated, another

way to attract more people to a twitter account could be to "retweet" other people's (e.g. Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, IDRC) messages.

LIRNEasia and Research ICT Africa don't have twitter accounts. The LIRNEasia website, which has regular news updates and writers (who also don't have twitter accounts), seems particularly suitable for a Twitter account.

So this simple analysis is in the context of the question (Who follows the Global Impact Study and is therefore positioned to receive the results when they are published on the site?) is addressing it only through the Twitter account.

All the names of people following the Global impact Study and TASCHA accounts are shown on the social network diagram 'TASCHA and Global Impact' and 'TASCHA and Global Impact 2'. Followers who have more than 500 followers themselves, and are therefore likely to be relatively influential, are highlighted in red. Despite the primary aim of the twitter account being to reach program sponsors, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, IDRC, University of Washington and UPF accounts do not follow either TASCHA or Global Impact. The foundation has a very large Twitter account (almost 500,000 followers) but follows only 135 – including the University of Washington's Global Health account. The fact that the foundation does follow others implies that the Twitter account might follow the Global Impact Study if it was a more well used Twitter account. In addition, being followed by the foundation is likely to attract many more followers. To see if the target groups mentioned above were amongst the follows of TASCHA or Global Impact, we selected a few and copied their profile descriptions (or a summary) below:

- chrisoward - TASCHA group in Washington (Programme leader of the GIS)
- melodyrose14 - Research Coordinator for TASCHA Global impact study
- behzodsirjani - University of Washington student
- jizobizo - technology and social change group at University of Washington
- mariaigarrido - Research Assistant Professor Technology & Social Change Group (TASCHA)
- ramji - Masters Student at University of Washington
- thejdt - Grad Student. MLIS. UW. TASCHA.

The above are direct links within the University of Washington. Here follows the external links, which show only a mild penetration into the relevant external Twitter world.

- globallibraries – GL Bulgaria (not the Gates Global Libraries programme, which doesn't have Twitter)
- atlas\_ictd - ICTD Graduate program director at University of Colorado
- Plinius - Library teacher. Statistician.
- Saskiaharmen - ICT4D, learning, knowledge sharing, knowledge management
- iicd - non-profit foundation that specialises in information and communication technologies (ICT)
- martinekoopman - German, ICT4D country manager in Ghana
- etc\_college - English Teaching College Bournemouth
- e\_asia – e asia conference

- apps4dev - World Bank competition challenging developers to apply their skills to create apps to help address global problems
- tech4dev - The UN Foundation & Vodafone Foundation partnership
- techsoup4libs - Sharing tips and techniques on maintaining public computers from libraries across USA
- ictd2010 – ICTD conference 2010
- martincvs – Management Consultant
- phat\_controller – founder and CEO of computeraid.org
- DIRSI
- ictafricasummit – Technology event.

We should not read too much into the absence of researchers involved in the Global Impact Study. This is a very limited analysis, based on the emerging ‘tool’ of Twitter – only one form of communication. It is likely that researchers, do not operate Twitter accounts, or similar to the reviewer, having got a Twitter account do not strategically use it.

However, following the linkages described above, the websites and profiles of organisations listed as following the Global Impact Study (e.g. civictec) were checked to see if they mentioned the study or retweeted information. No links were found, except for ICTD2010 which mentioned the presentation given by Chris Coward.

Therefore, with all the caveats regarding a Twitter analysis, the main target audiences (the sponsors) and other groups mentioned, such as the World Bank and telecentre.org, are not being reached by the Twitter feed.

#### 10.1.1 Network effects for External Communication

Are the current external communications, which focus on blogs and twitter, creating any network effects? The initial dataset of people following and followed by Global Impact and TASCHA was supplemented by all the people followed by a few interested parties (DIRSI, telecentre.org, University of Washington News and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. This is given in the diagram **'initial Global Impact communications 3'** for a network diagram in which names of anyone with a degree of at least two have been added. This shows that DIRSI follows a few people that follow Global impact, so (in theory) information could flow from the Global Impact Study to the DIRSI page. There is less of a connection with telecentre.org, and a very poor connection with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The link with the main University of Washington news account is also not strong (the foundation follows UW Global Health, UW Change Group follows Global Impact).

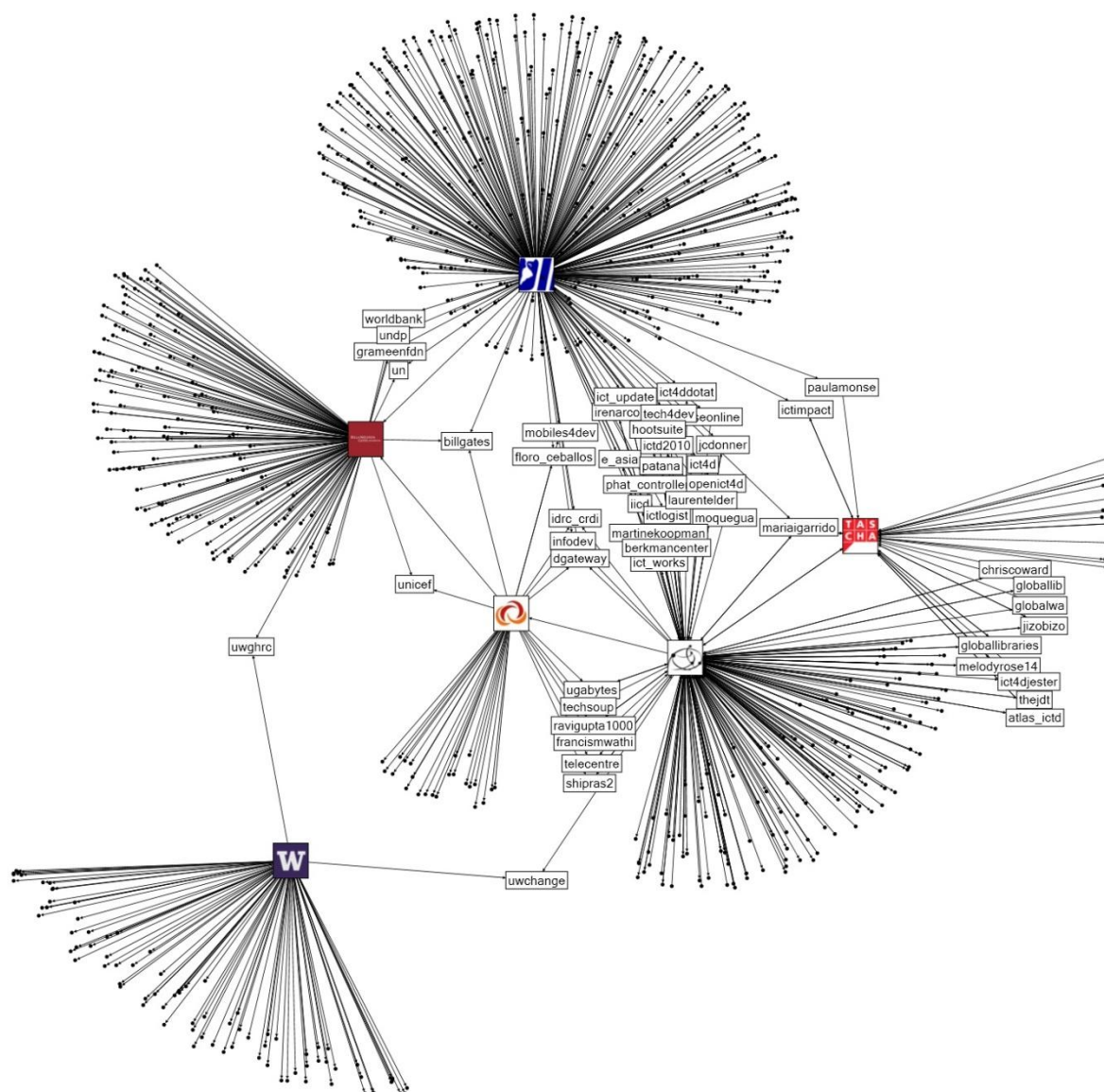


Figure 3 'initial Global Impact communications 3

## 11 Annex Documents consulted

IDRC proposal to the Gates Foundation (the “draft 5” version is actually the final one)
UW proposal to IDRC (Nov 27, 2007 is the final version)
Original Project governance structure document (Nov 2007)
RWG Terms of Reference (April 2008)
Note on Project Funder’s priorities (July 29, 2008 version)
IPAI Phase I Strategy (May 2008)
IPAI Phase II Strategy (Dec 2008)
IDRC-UW Transition Memorandum (July 2009)
Latest Communications Strategy (including plan by TASCHA)
Ottawa - project Inception workshop report (October 2007)
Seattle – 1 <sup>st</sup> project wide workshop (April 2008)

Delhi – one and only IAC Meeting (June 2008)
Atlanta – RWG Research Design Meeting (August 2008)
Chile – 2 <sup>nd</sup> project wide workshop (October 2008)
Seattle – Executive Committee Meeting (Dec 2008)
Doha – 3 <sup>rd</sup> project wide workshop (April 2009)
Ottawa – Executive Committee Meeting (Dec 2009)
Montpellier – RWG Impact indicators Workshop (March 2010)
Seattle – “Exec Committee/Sponsor Meeting” Meeting (October 2010)
Revised reporting schedule between IDRC-Gates (October 2009)
Revised reporting schedule between IDRC-UW (September 2009)
Reporting templates for interim/annual (Gates)
Reporting template for progress report (IDRC)
IPAI site (From 2009 onwards)
Global Impact Study Website (as at April 2011)
IDRC Website (as at April 2011)
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Website (as at April 2011)
telecentre.org Website (as at April 2011)
Inventory web app users.xls
<a href="http://www.globalimpactstudy.org/2009/08/phase-one-findings-from-bangladesh-chile-lithuania/">http://www.globalimpactstudy.org/2009/08/phase-one-findings-from-bangladesh-chile-lithuania/</a>
<a href="http://www.telecentremagazine.net/articles/article-details.asp?Title=The-Global-Impact-Study:-Preliminary-Findings&amp;articleid=253&amp;typ=Features">http://www.telecentremagazine.net/articles/article-details.asp?Title=The-Global-Impact-Study:-Preliminary-Findings&amp;articleid=253&amp;typ=Features</a>
Interim Report Period: July 1, 2010 – December 31, 2010

## 12 Annex Terms of Reference in full

### Background

*The Global Impact Study of Public Access to Information & Communication Technologies* (or simply called the *Global Impact Study*) is a five-year project (2007-2012) to generate evidence about the scale, character, and impacts of public access to information and communication technologies (ICT). Looking at libraries, telecentres, and cyber-café's, the study investigates impact in a number of areas, including communication and leisure, culture and language, education, employment and income, governance, and health.

Implemented by the University of Washington's Technology & Social Change Group (TASCHA), the Global Impact Study is part of *Investigating the Social & Economic Impact of Public Access to Information & Communication Technologies* — a broader CAD\$7.9 million research project supported by Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and a grant to IDRC from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Managed by IDRC, this broader project includes the *Global Impact Study* (the component to be evaluated) as well as the *Amy Mahan Research Fellowship Program*, led by Universitat Pompeu Fabra, which aims to deepen the capacity of emerging scholars with the goal of increasing the quality and quantity of research on public access to ICT produced in developing countries.

The Global Impact Study component of the project focuses on the development and execution of research studies that aim to answer the following research questions:



What are the social, economic, and political impacts of public access to ICT?

What is the magnitude of these impacts and how can we measure them?

What is the relationship between costs and benefits of providing and using public access to ICT?

Researchers examine both the positive and negative impacts of a range of shared, public access models, such as the provision of ICT in libraries and telecentres, as well as other models and innovations in public access computing that emerge over the life of the project (2007–2012).

As the Global Impact Study passed the halfway point of its 5-year mandate, a number of important lessons have begun to emerge from research and other project-related activities. IDRC is interested in carrying out an evaluation on the Global Impact Study in order to systematically capture these salient lessons. As such, this is strictly a formative evaluation with the purpose to primarily identify and gather lessons that can help improve the management of the research and other project-related activities for the remainder of the project.

### **Objectives and Scope of the Evaluation**

The primary objective of this evaluation is to develop a set of recommendations based on the lessons that have emerged from the coordination, management, and implementation of various activities within the Global Impact Study. The results of the evaluation will be used to inform future work in the project, particularly as the project begins to move forward on meta-analysis and research dissemination activities. Given their respective roles in managing the project and the research, IDRC and the TASCHA group at the University of Washington are the intended main users of this evaluation.

Four areas have been identified as the most relevant aspects of the project to evaluate and obtain critical feedback on:

### **Evolving Roles of the Research Working Group (RWG)**

Throughout its execution, the Global Impact Study has relied on a number of subject matter experts and experienced researchers (constituted as a Research Working Group). In the beginning, the RWG guided the development of the overall research framework for the project. As the project advanced from planning to implementation, however, members of the RWG began to assume new roles and responsibilities. Many have now become Principal Investigators (PIs) for different research studies commissioned within the project. Within this role, PIs assume accountability and intellectual leadership over their respective studies, but not necessarily for the project as a whole. As the project is entering a stage where it begins to conduct meta-analysis across different studies, questions arise over the need to clarify the roles of these experienced researchers in such an undertaking. In order to maximize the expertise available within this group of individuals in the future, this review is expected to provide insights into the following:

- Better understanding of the positive and negative implications of the evolving roles of the RWG, in studies they are leading and within the project as a whole.



- Optimal role(s) for select RWG members in the future of the project, taking into account their research interest, workload, and availability

#### Internal Communications and Reporting Practices between the Project Research Team Members and the Research Coordinating and Management Team at UW/TASCHA, and from UW/TASCHA to the Project Sponsors

Various methods and protocols for communications and disseminations have been defined within the Global Impact Study. A comprehensive communications strategy has been developed, and complimentary to this strategy, the research team at the University Washington's Technology and Social Change Group (TASCHA) created a specific execution plan that are in line with the vision and objectives outlined in the umbrella strategy.

While a large part of this strategy and execution plan concerns the project outreach to external audiences (who are not directly involved in the project), a number of the proposed activities also pertain to internal communications needs and priorities. In particular, the two-way flow of communications between TASCHA and the research teams is of utmost importance to allow for the centralization of data analysis as well as to ensure effective communication among the research teams. The communications flow from TASCHA/UW (as the research implementation coordinator), to the donors (IDRC and the Gates Foundation) is also essential to keep donors abreast of the developments as well as ensure effective reporting. In an effort to improve internal communications and reporting activities, the evaluation is expected to examine the following:

- Internal communication activities and tools that have worked well and not well to date
- Internal communication activities and tools that need to be changed or done differently in order to improve their chance of success, within this project or other similarly executed projects.
- Existing reporting mechanisms to the project donors (IDRC and the Gates Foundation), and whether they meet the expectations of the project donors in terms of quantity, quality, and frequency/timeliness.

#### Potential Gap between External Communication Needs and the Existing Strategy/ Execution Plan

In addition to internal communications, the communication strategy and execution plan developed for the Global Impact Study outlined a number of activities aimed at reaching certain external audiences who have a stake, but are not involved with the project's planning and execution. Two primary external audiences that the research intended to benefit are the Gates Foundation's Global Libraries (GL) Grantees, and the Telecentre.org Foundation and its community partners (a group of formal network partners and a loose network of institutions and individuals who are subscribed to [www.telecentre.org](http://www.telecentre.org)). Notwithstanding, the needs among groups within the primary external target audiences do vary, and the project donors have identified certain level of expectations for outreach to different groups within the primary target audiences. Furthermore, there are other target

audiences which that the research can benefit. In light of this situation, this part evaluation is expected to assess the following external communication issues:

- Different communication needs among specific groups within the primary target audiences, and to what extent the project has focused its outreach activities accordingly
- Expectations of the project donors and TASCHA on the type of outreach and communication products that need to developed in the project for: a) the different groups within the two primary external target audiences; and b) other external target audiences
- Communication/outreach tools and methods (existing and new) that can contribute towards meeting the needs of the external target audiences (primary and secondary)

### Open Access to Research Data and Tools

The Global Impact Study has adopted a principle of providing free access to research data and tools to other researchers and institutions that are interested in public access research. This is a method of carrying out research (often coined —open research ) that had not been attempted before in an IDRC-supported project. The first sets of data released on a public domain consist of data collected from the inventory of public access to ICT venue study:

<http://www.globalimpactstudy.org/2010/09/release-of-public-access-ict-venue-database>. Given the novelty of open research approach in the social science field (and in public access to ICT research domain), a series of issues have come to bear in its execution, such as cost-benefit issues, legal framework, and ethical treatment of private data. In order to determine the extent these issues may play out in the future, the evaluation is expected to capture and recommend lessons from its implementation thus far, namely:

- The perceived benefits and costs of adopting an open research approach among the project team members
- Important lessons regarding its implementation, including challenges and any breakthroughs in overcoming technical, legal, and/or ethical issues

### Expected Deliverables

There will be three key deliverables from this evaluation assignment:

1. First draft report, capturing key findings, lessons, and important recommendations on the four strategic issues facing the project as stated in Section B, Objectives and Scope of the Evaluation. The first draft report shall not exceed 30 pages (excluding annexes but including an executive summary).
2. Organize and facilitate a 1-2 day workshop on the findings of the evaluation. The purpose of the workshop will be to outline the findings of the evaluation and to facilitate the uptake of key lessons and recommendations among the key actors in the project (the primary intended users of the evaluation), including the project sponsors, TASCHA, and other relevant research team members.  
**Note that this deliverable is still to be confirmed following an initial consultation with IDRC and the University of Washington.**

3. A final report, consisting of the findings captured in the first draft report, along with comments and additional input obtained from the official feedback given on the draft report, and comments and feedback obtained during the workshop. The final report shall not exceed 40 pages (excluding annexes but including an executive summary).

### **Principles and Approach**

Consistent with the spirit and approach of the partnership in this project, the evaluation shall be conducted in an open and transparent manner. All evaluation results shall become available to the project donors, advisors, and research team members. The evaluation process is also expected to:

Focus on continuous learning and quality control

Maintain an open communication approach among the primary intended users of this evaluation

Adopt a collegial and solution-oriented approach to problem-solving

Respect innovation and ideas tabled by stakeholders involved in the evaluation process

Ensure diligent use of available resources to deliver outputs and results

### **Methodology**

The evaluator will design the evaluation methodology in consultation with IDRC and with input from the University of Washington. We anticipate the following processes to be incorporated into the methodology, in addition to other processes which the evaluator may suggest:

Review of project documentation (initial proposal, strategy documents, research reports, web sites, communication products, etc.)

Interviews with select representatives of the project donors (IDRC, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation), TASCHA staff, Research Working Group members, and other select audiences targeted for project outreach.

Facilitation techniques appropriate for the evaluation results workshop.

The evaluation report should include the information detailed in the following guideline on formatting evaluation reports: [http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-58450-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html](http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-58450-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html)

The quality of the evaluation will be judged by IDRC's Evaluation Unit using the international standards of propriety, feasibility, accuracy, and utility. For more information see: [http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-44703-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html](http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-44703-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html)

### **Reporting**

For the purpose of contracting, reporting, and seeking approval of deliverables, the evaluator shall communicate directly with:

Mr. Frank Tulus

Senior Program Officer

IDRC Canada

(613) 696-2559

ftulus@idrc.ca

In his absence, the evaluator may also contact:

Mr. Raymond Hyma

Program Management Officer

IDRC Canada

(613) 696-2164

rhyma@idrc.ca

### **Timing and Level of Efforts**

The evaluation is expected to last not more than 6 months for a total effort of up to 35 person-days. The following are some indicative dates for key milestones of deliverables:

Jan-Feb \_11: IDRC identifies and contract the evaluator

Feb-Mar \_11: Methodology development and data collection & analysis

Mar 31, 2011: Draft report due

April \_11 Evaluation findings and possible uptake workshop

May 31, 2011: Final report due

## 13 Annex Simon Batchelor Short Biography

Company / Position	Gamos Ltd. Managing Director/  2010 – 2011 Seconded part time IDS Impact and Learning Team Manager
Qualifications	PhD (Engineering), Renewable energy, University of Reading, 1989  BSc Agricultural systems, University of Reading, 1980  Member Institute of Energy
Expertise	Information and Communication in social empowerment  Pro-poor policy issues in communications (and other infrastructure)  Innovative monitoring and evaluation techniques  Training teams on participation and community mobilisation  Understanding of the social factors involved in mobilisation of the poor

Dr Batchelor has over 30 years overseas development experience. In the Eighties his work was mainly with appropriate technology in agriculture (systems), rural water supplies and renewable energy technology. In the Nineties his work became more focused on social mobilisation and community development. From 2000 onwards he has concentrated on the role of Information and Communication in social empowerment. He has undertaken planning, training and evaluation of community development projects drawing on his general experience to constructively comment on the social and management components of programmes.

He has been called upon to lead teams in evaluations of large scale communications initiatives, such as DFID's pan-African CATIA programme and IDRC Acacia, Connectivity Africa and telecentre.org programmes, among others. This is in addition to DFID funded communications related research projects conducted across many countries. He has also been requested to synthesise his experience into policy papers for a number of agencies including OECD, infoDev.

In 2002, based on research in Africa, Simon began to Champion the potential of using Mobile Phones for banking the unbanked and lowering remittance costs. His successful lobbying contributions resulted in attention being paid to the problem by the UK Treasury, mention of remittances in the G8 Gleneagles statement, inclusion in the Commission for Africa report, allocation of funds by IADB, World Bank, DFID, CGAP, GSM, SIDA, IDRC and most importantly the successful startup of Mpesa by Vodafone in Kenya. DFID acknowledged his role as Champion in 2005 and he currently works with a number of private sector initiatives which are not mentioned below due to NDAs.

His recent research interests are on Research Policy Praxis, how research evidence can inform the complex environment of decision making in development.