

IDRC Small Grants Program for ICTD Research Capacity Building

**Strengthening ICTD Research Capacity in Asia
(SIRCA)**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since its inception in 2008, the Strengthening ICTD Research Capacity in Asia (SIRCA) Program has aimed to fulfill its mandate of building research capacity in Asia through a series of small steps to ensure high-quality outputs. The program closes in December 2011, after 3.5 years of intense capacity-building efforts that have benefitted the selected grant recipients.

Research Projects

The Program funded 15 research projects (12 grant recipients and 3 graduate awardees – better known as Project Investigators or PIs) in eight Asian countries. The selected projects focused on theoretically-based and methodologically rigorous social science research in the ICTD area. The research covered a variety of topics including inter-disciplinary research in e-services, new media use and social impact, and policy for the benefit and advancement of individuals, organizations, nation and society in Asia.

Several PIs engaged in innovative research activities as a part of their project: one PI set up a wiki to engage people on their views on the significance of open source, and the costs and scale of the technology, and initiated an online journal¹ to facilitate discussions and nurture further involvement from participant communities. Another PI conducted a focus group discussion with local political bloggers in the Philippines and then made her findings publicly available online at a website called *FLIPISM* (Filipino Politics, ICT and Social Media). Also in the Philippines, another PI's online project was used during the floods that hit Manila in 2009 as a source of information for Filipinos who were outside the country.

All 15 research projects have been completed with most meeting their research objectives. Some have exceeded their objectives. These interesting research projects and others were subsequently published in two special peer-reviewed journal issues by the Media Asia Journal, published by the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC) in Singapore) in the latter part of 2010 and in early 2011. The research was also presented at conferences and other events locally and internationally. SIRCA PIs have continued to conduct research, going on to achieve much more than what was expected and many have been recognized for their work academically and professionally:

- Peou Chivoin (Cambodia) was awarded Australia's Endeavour Award for PhD study at the University of Melbourne, Komathi ALE (Singapore) was awarded a PhD scholarship to USC Annenberg in USA, and Pham Huu Ty was awarded the Nuffic Scholarship for PhD studies at Utrecht University in the Netherlands;
- Regina Hechanova (Philippines) was the recipient of The Outstanding Women in Nation's Service (2010), Philippines, and the Cardinal Sin Book Award, Philippines;
- Mahfuz Ashraf (Bangladesh) was awarded the UNESCO Chair in ICTD scholarship to attend the ICTD2010 IEEE/ACM Conference in December 2010;
- Balwant Singh Mehta (India) was selected to be part of the Amy Mahan Research Fellowship Program to Assess the Impact of Public Access to ICT (2010-11);
- Phal Des (Cambodia) was awarded the Distinguished Paper Award at IEEJ Japan-Cambodia Joint Symposium on Information Systems and Communication Technology 2011 (JCAICT 2011) in January 2011, in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, and Rajiv Aricat George (India) was awarded a top-three paper award at the Inaugural Honors Symposium for Asian Students in Communication Research held in City University of Hong Kong in November 2010.

¹ tgc.janastu.org

Mentorship

SIRCA was built on a three-pronged capacity-building approach of providing financial support in terms of research grants, providing relevant research training workshops and exercises, and finally, through a one-on-one mentoring arrangement. This unique mentorship component provided PIs with the assistance and guidance to ensure steady progress and completion of project, while the mentors were able to enhance their own personal and professional knowledge. The learning and exchange between mentor and mentee facilitated the outcome of stronger and more rigorous research findings within the program. In all, 10 mentors from were countries were selected for the program. Most mentors conducted two site visits each during the course of the research.

Mentors benefited from their relationships with their PIs and the research work they were involved in immensely. Many of them stated that they were able to use their learnings and experiences from the SIRCA research they were involved in, with their personal work and research. For instance, Dr. Roger Harris obtained further work in Bangladesh due to his activities there as a part of mentoring his PI Mahfuz Ashraf. Similarly, Dr. Richard Heeks indicated that the climate change work he did with his PI led him to submit another research proposal to IDRC which he was awarded. Prof. May Lwin conducted another study on international health crisis communication in Cambodia following her mentoring stint in the country. Overall, mentors were positive about the approach to capacity building and felt that this was indeed a practical way of improving the skill sets of emerging researchers in the region.

Training and Capacity Building

Another key component was the workshops. SIRCA conducted two Training Workshops in Singapore, one at the beginning of the program in July 2009, and the second mid-program in June 2010. The first workshop focused on research methods, quantitative and qualitative analysis, and other program-related issues. It was also the first meeting of mentors and PIs. The workshop included external and internal trainers. The second workshop focused on the progress of PI research, and the importance of disseminating their findings effectively. This event also coincided with the International Communication Association Pre-conference, which was conducted by SiRC, and allowed SIRCA PIs to participate in and interact with other audience members from the main ICA conference as well.

The Pre-conference workshop, "*Innovations in Mobile Use*", provided PIs the opportunity to present their work to a larger audience (approximately 73 people in attendance) and engage in discussions on how developments in emerging markets reflect the trends in mature markets.

PIs were also given the opportunity to publish their research work in the *Media Asia* journal, as a part of training to publish in academic journals. Many submitted their completed papers and six were published after the blind and three-tiered review process.

PIs were also given the opportunity to present their work at international conferences and publish in other academic and non-academic forums. The final conference, although referred to as a dissemination event, was also considered a training event for PIs, as they got yet another opportunity to present their final works to another group of ICTD experts from around the world. The conference "*Global Dialogue on ICT for Development*" was held in Phuket, Thailand in April 2011.

Dissemination

SIRCA collaborated with the Media Asia Journal (published by the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC) in Singapore) to release two special journal issues in December 2010 (Vol. 37, No. 4) and April 2011 (Vol. 38, No. 1), comprising of papers from the ICA Mobiles Per-Conference event in June 2010, and from among SIRCA research

grantees respectively. The first issue sourced papers from the SIRCA's event at the ICA 2010 Mobiles Preconference "*Innovations in Mobile Use*". Seven papers were selected and the review panel was made up of 12 senior scholars and practitioners from around the world. The second issue published in April 2011 comprised of papers sourced from among SIRCA mentees and mentors. Six were published and the review panel was made up of 16 senior scholars and practitioners, many of whom participated at the ICA 2010 Mobiles Preconference.

A book titled "*Linking Research to Practice in Asia: ICT for Development Research, Management and Future Perspectives*" is also in the pipeline for publication in 2012. The book will be published by ISEAS, and is edited by two mentors Arul Chib and Roger Harris. The publication showcases the intricacies of grant management within the SIRCA program, and research perspectives with views from mentors and articles from mentees. The book is arranged into three sections: Research Perspectives, Management Perspectives, and Outcomes and Future Directions, and contributions have already been sourced from the SIRCA Program's PIs, Mentors, and the management team.

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

Evaluation

Ann Mizumoto, SIRCA's full-time Evaluator, conducted two evaluations during the course of the SIRCA program. The evaluations were conducted in order to assess the impact and outcomes of the program. The first evaluation, a program evaluation, was aimed at identifying how the SIRCA program was performing in relation to meeting its objectives, while the mentorship evaluation took a critical look at how the mentorship model functioned. The recommendations from both studies were implemented where possible and the program trajectory and mentorship model corrected where necessary. The evaluations did enable the program to be constantly improved and corrected. Several recommendations have been identified and implemented where possible, and others have been noted for future capacity building programs along the lines of the SIRCA program.

Future

As the SIRCA program draws to an end, its follow-up initiative is under way. Also managed by SiRC and funded by the IDRC, the Strengthening Information Society Research Capacity Alliance – or SIRCA II program moves up a notch, taking the research capacity-building program to the Global South. Learning from the experience of building capacity in the ICTD field in Asia, SiRC will scale the program to include researchers from Africa, Latin America as well as Asia. Emphasis will be placed on inter-disciplinary research with respect to information societies in these locations, as opposed to simply focusing on ICTD research. SIRCA II will be active for a period of 24 months, and based on total funding of CAD \$1,346,038.

The first discussion for the second program was held at the final conference of the first SIRCA program in Phuket, Thailand in April 2011. The forum not only provided a platform for grantees to present their research findings, but also brought together potential coordinators for the global grant from Africa and Latin America to meet with the SIRCA team for the first time. At this time, the Call for Proposals and Grant Review meeting were completed and the grants award is in-progress.

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1 ABOUT THE SIRCA PROGRAM

1.1 Research problem and objectives

The Strengthening ICTD Research Capacity in Asia (SIRCA) Program was initiated in 2008 to build the research capacity of emerging scholars in the Asian region. Funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the Singapore Internet Research Centre (SiRC), based at the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information (WKWSCI), Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, commenced the program with the aim to strengthen the capacities to conduct research in the area of Information and Communications Technology and/or Development (ICTD) in selected Asian countries. As detailed in the original grant proposal, the objective of the program was to enhance research capacity in broad-based high-quality multidisciplinary research in ICTD so as to better capture the lessons from ICTD.

More specifically the objectives were listed out as follows:

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

Diagram 1 provides a visual indication of how the program was broken down by tasks in relation to each objective set out in the original proposal.

The program was initiated to address the increasing lack of rigor and interdisciplinary research² and Southern scholarly representation and collaboration among ICTD professionals (practitioners and academics).³ With limited contributions from researchers in developing countries, it was overwhelmingly evident that these studies were of little relevance to, and use in, influencing policy debates in these countries that need them the most. Reinforced by IDRC's experiences in building capacity in the Global South (i.e. in Africa, Latin America, and Asia), the SIRCA program was therefore designed to enhance research capacity by supporting studies that were scientific, replicable, generalizable, collaborative, and actionable (i.e. applied research).

The unique features of this program that set it apart from other capacity building initiatives were that it included a mentorship component, aimed at providing the selected grant recipients (referred to as the principal investigator or PI) with the hands on guidance and supervision needed to conduct their research in an ethical manner and at a professional level.⁴ At the stage of proposals review, all proposals received were discussed in length and

² Existing ICT research was lacking in rigor given the deficiency of suitable data and theories and models. In Heeks R. (2008). "ICT4D 2.0: The Next Phase of Applying ICT for International Development". In *Computer*, June 2008, 41 (6), 26-33. Washington, DC: IEEE; Burrell, L. and Toyama, K. (2009) What Constitutes Good ICTD Research? *Information Technology and International Development*, 5(3): 82-94; and Best, M.L. (2010). Understanding Our Knowledge Gaps: Or, Do We Have an ICT4D Field? And Do We Want One? *Information Technology and International Development* 6(Special Edition): 49-52.

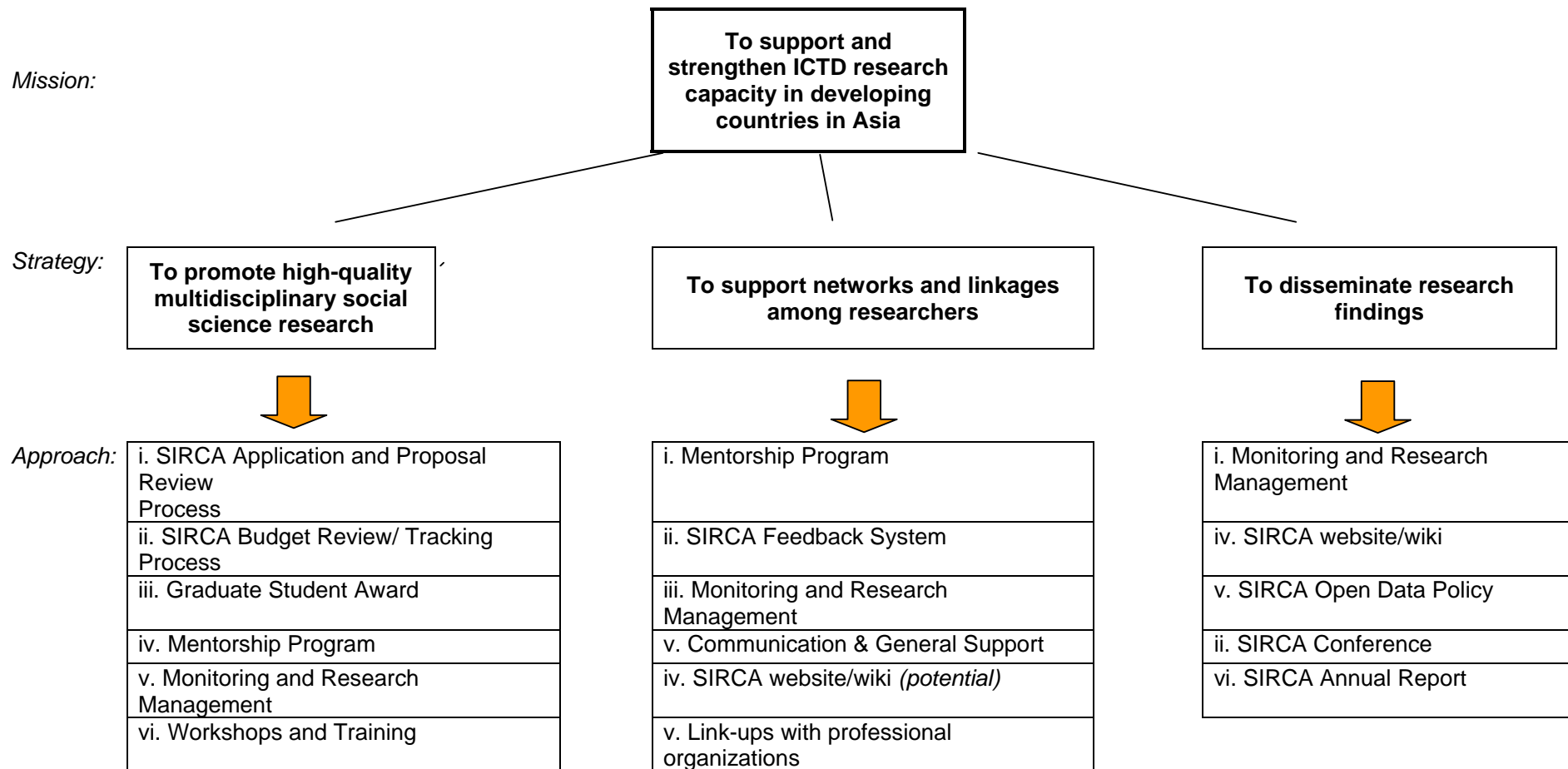
³ Most author affiliations in published research were from the developed or Northern world, resulting in a Western-centric discussion of challenges and issues faced in the South. In Coward, C. (2007). Research capacity in Asia: A literature review on the information society. Presented at the Workshop on Research in the Information Society at Manila, 25-27 April, 2007; and Ojo, T. (2005, 2005). *Old paradigm and ICT4D Agenda in Africa: Modernization as Context*. Paper presented at the Conference Papers -- International Communication Association.

⁴ The need for mentoring emerged at an IDRC workshop in 2007, and it was decided that the SIRCA program would be a test case for their future capacity building projects. The SIRCA program was the first of its kind to incorporate a mentorship arrangement in order to create opportunities for professional relationship building and mentoring between established researchers and grant recipients selected to the program.

unsuccessful proposals were provided with specific comments in order for the researchers to improve their project proposals.

SiRC was selected as a suitable host for the program, with its experience in conducting broad-based high-quality multidisciplinary research related to new media and related technologies across Asia, and because of its wide-reaching networks for research collaboration, analysis, and technological development, as well as with industrial, research and educational organizations in Singapore and overseas.

Diagram 1: Snapshot of SIRCA Program



2 RESEARCH GRANTS

The SIRCA program set a manageable target of funding 10 to 15 research projects. Three categories of funding were identified: SGD20,000, SGD26,500 and SGD33,000. The period of support was determined to be between 12 and 24 months.⁵

The SIRCA Grant Call was launched in late August 2008 following the commencement of the program. To gauge the response in terms of the research topic as well as geographical location, a call for interest was issued a month prior to the actual call for proposals. The call was disseminated via email to numerous researchers in various Asian universities, research centers, NGOs, associations and groups relating to the field of ICTD. *More information on the Grant Dissemination Process is found in Section 7.1.*

2.1 SIRCA Grant Recipients

2.1.1 Grant Recipients

Fifteen proposals were shortlisted for the SIRCA grant award. From this list, there were two withdrawals⁶, and during the program, one candidate dropped out after 15 months.⁷ In all, the SIRCA program funded 12 research projects in eight countries around Asia during the program period.

2.1.2 Synopsis of Research

The selected projects focused on theoretically-based and methodologically rigorous social science research in the ICTD area. The research covered a variety of topics including interdisciplinary research in e-services, new media use and social impact, and policy for the benefit and advancement of individuals, organizations, nation and society in Asia.

Table 1 provides details of the selected candidates, their corresponding research titles, grant values, and project duration information.⁸

As the SIRCA program wraps up, all of the grantees who were able to carry on have completed their research projects with promising results. Most PIs extended the duration of their projects as the SIRCA program itself was extended; one completed his project two months before the deadline.⁹ Although the original intent of the program was to be up to 18 months, grant recipients took on average 22 months to complete their projects, indicating that this was a more likely and realistic timeframe for research projects of this scale and nature. Furthermore, in December 2010, additional funding of up to SGD 5,000 was provided to those PIs who wanted to explore emerging issues that they had not made allowances for in their original research project proposals. Three of the 12 PIs provided suitable justifications and got the necessary approvals from their mentors and the SiRC Secretariat for the additional funding, in order to bolster their ongoing research investigations.¹⁰ This

⁵ This was later revised as the SIRCA program obtained an extension until December 2011 from IDRC; the original date of completion was July 2010.

⁶ Cesar Allan C. Vera, CBNRM Learning Center, *Determining the Degree and Outcome of ICT Integration as a Tool for Learning and Knowledge Management in Community-Based Coastal Resource Management in the Philippines* – his institution was facing financial difficulties and had to close operations. The second drop out was Srinivas Yerramsetti, Centre for Studies in Science Policy, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India. *Technology, Business and "transformation" of the Indian Village: A case study of EMRI/HMRI, Byrraju Foundation interventions in rural Andhra Pradesh* – he decided to withdraw from the program as he was at a point where he was choosing between a career in a private organization or one in research and academia.

⁷ Grant recipient number 9 – Shefali Oza – withdrew from the program because she made little progress over multiple reporting periods. Her project first encountered infrastructural and manpower issues and finally her project reached a standstill because of severe illness in her family, and she was also unable to participate in SIRCA Workshops I and II and the ICA 2010 Mobiles Preconference.

⁸ More details on each research project can be found at <http://sirca1.sirca.org.sg/current-projects/>.

⁹ Chivoïn Peou, Cambodia.

¹⁰ Md. Mahfuz Ashraf (Bangladesh), T.B. Dinesh (India), and Ma. Regina M. Hechanova (Philippines).

was of immense help, especially for PIs who uncovered potential areas of investigation relevant to their work that they had not considered at the outset or were seen as emergent issues during their research. The additional funds enabled them to deepen their studies and focus on these select emergent areas improving the quality of the output.

As part of their project deliverables, PIs submitted three progress reports at specified points (ideally every six months) detailing their research progress and research financial status at the time. These reports helped the SIRCA Secretariat (SiRC) identify areas for PI training, and provided an insight into how the mentor-PI relationships were developing. They also gave the PIs the opportunity to reflect on the status of their research and to report all the research activities carried out from the period of their last report. It helped PIs flag problems to the SIRCA management and seek appropriate assistance. For instance, if the PIs required more time/resources for the successful completion of the project, SIRCA was able to address/resolve these issues internally, and when the need arose, put forward the case to, and seek approval from, IDRC. In one case, a PI indicated SIRCA's intervention in communicating with the assigned mentor – the PI in question was progressing well on the research project but appeared to need the support of the mentor during the data collection period. Accordingly, the PI sought SIRCA's help to appeal to the mentor to conduct the site visit as soon as possible.

2.2 SIRCA Graduate Awards

As part of SIRCA's mandate to build ICTD research capacity amongst emerging Asian scholars, the SIRCA Graduate Award was designed to provide research grants to current or incoming graduate students of the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, Nanyang Technological University. This award helped raised the profile of ICTD research and SIRCA within the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information community.

There were two Graduate Awards offered:

1. The SIRCA Graduate Award (Stipendiary) to promote and support graduate study in ICT4D by offering supplemental stipendiary support on a competitive basis of up to SGD21,000 for a period of two years. This award required the recipient to support SIRCA-related work in the hope that it would influence and benefit them in their research endeavors.
2. The SIRCA Graduate Award (Research) was designed to enhance opportunities for graduate students to conduct research by offering supplemental financial support on a competitive basis of up to SGD15,000 for a period of two years.

Table 1: Grant Recipients (By Country)

No	Country	PI Name	Institution	Research Title	Project Duration (Months)	Research Grant (SGD)	Project Start	Actual Project Completion (Original)
1	Bangladesh	M. Sirajul Islam	Bangladesh Centre for E-governance	Agricultural Market Information Services (AMIS) and its implications on the rural community in Bangladesh : Theory and practice	24	20,537	15 Feb 2009	Feb 2011 (15 Dec 2010)
2	Bangladesh	Md. Mahfuz Ashraf	Brainstorm, Bangladesh	An impact assessment framework to evaluate the effectiveness of Information Communications Technology (ICT)-led development project at micro (community) level in developing country; Bangladesh	22	23,900	15 Feb 2009	Dec 2010 (1 Mar 2011)
3	Cambodia	Chivoin Peou	Royal University of Phnom Penh	Internet for Learning and Knowledge Building: Students' Perceptions and Utilization in Cambodian Higher Education	16	19,810	15 Feb 2009	April 2010 (15 Jun 2010)
4	Cambodia	Phal Des	Royal University of Phnom Penh	Mobile Phone Application Development for Rural Cambodia	24	24,564	15 Feb 2009	15 Feb 2011
5	China	Kanliang Wang	Electronic Commerce Research Center	Healthcare Information Systems in China	23	32,290	15 Feb 2009	15 Jan 2011
6	India	Balwant Singh Mehta	Institute for Human Development	Nature of Work, Quality of Employment and Working Conditions in ICT Sector: A Case of India	22	26,196	15 Feb 2009	Mar 2011 (Jan 2011)
7	India	T. B. Dinesh	Servelots	Communities, Participation and Technology	28	25,956	15 Feb 2009	31 May 2011, with additional funding cum extension (July 2010)
8	India	Devesh Kishore	Institute of Management Studies, NOIDA, India	Empowerment of farming community through use of ICTs: A study in the Indian Himalayan region	26	26,511	15 Feb 2009	15 Feb 2011 (Dec 2010)
9*	Nepal	Shefali Oza	Nyaya Health	Telemedicine for Community Health Workers: An Analysis of the Effects of Connectivity on Health Equity in Rural Nepal	17	25,243	15 Feb 2009	Terminated in Jul 2010 (15 Feb 2011)
10	Philippines	Mary Grace P. Mirandilla	Center for Research and Communication	The Filipino Blogosphere: An Emerging Alternative Venue for Political Participation in the Philippines	25	28,717	15 Feb 2009	Aug 2010 (1 Aug 2011)
11	Philippines	Ma. Regina M. Hechanova	Ateneo de Manila University	Lifeline Online: E-Counseling And The Well-Being Of Overseas Filipino Workers And Their Families	21	26,021	15, Feb 2009	30 Oct 2011 with additional funding cum

							Project extensi on from April 2011	extension (March 2010)
12	Sri Lanka	MJR David	Association for Development and Peace through Community Action	Learning from challenges; an image based mapping process to study influences of community based ICTD initiatives in Sri Lanka.	23	25,450	Jun 2009	Aug 2011 (<i>Mar 2011</i>)
13	Vietnam	Pham Huu Ty	Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry	Upper River Erosion and Landslide Protection Planning: An integration of erosion and landslide hazard mapping using GIS and remote sensing and the value chain approach	14	13,853	15 Feb 2009	15 Apr 2010

2.2.1 Graduate Award Recipients

Following the Call for Graduate Awards in 2009, five applications from three candidates were received – two for Stipendiary, and three for Research. IDRC reviewed the proposals and recommended Komathi ALE from Singapore for the Research category of the award. Although the other candidates' research topics were interesting and ICT-related, they were lacking the development component, and the topics submitted were not fully in line with SIRCA's objectives. Therefore, the stipendiary award was retained for the following round of applications.

In December 2009-January 2010, another Call for Graduate Awards was distributed among students at the Wee Kim Wee School, and three applications were received. Of this, two more candidates were selected under the Research category: Rajiv George Aricat from India, and Thanomwong Poorisat from Thailand. The maximum grant amount was SGD 5,000 this round.

All selected candidates were treated similar to SIRCA Grant Recipients, and assigned a full-time mentor. Dr Arul Chib undertook the supervision of all three Graduate Award recipients. In recognition of the increasing importance of ICTD research within NTU, and his contribution to the program and school, Dr Chib was also given the opportunity to teach ICTD as a Masters-level course since 2010.

Table 2 provides details of the selected candidates, their corresponding research titles, grant values, and project duration information.

2.2.2 Synopsis of Research

As the SIRCA program wraps up, all three Graduate Award recipients have successfully completed their research projects. Thanomwong Poorisat obtained an additional funding grant in June 2011 to extend her research scope under the SIRCA program's additional funding initiative.

The recipients also submitted progress reports like other SIRCA PIs and their research progress was tracked regularly. Any research issues were managed with the help of their mentor in a timely manner.

Table 2: Graduate Award Recipients

No	PI Name	Research Title	Project Duration (Months)	Research Grant (SGD)
1	Komathi ALE (Singapore)	Evaluating the Impact of the OLPC Laptops on the Psychological Empowerment of Primary School Children in Rural India	18	SGD 15,000
2	Rajiv George Aricat (India)	Acculturation of Migrants in Work Sector: Identifying the Facilitative Role of Mobile Phones	12	SGD 4,290
3	Thanomwong Poorisat (Thailand)	Mobile phones for healthcare in rural Thailand	12	SGD 8,079

2.3 SIRCA PI Research Activities

This section details interesting or innovative research activities conducted by SIRCA PIs and Graduate Award recipients.

Chivoïn Peou (Cambodia) published a paper in November 2011 in the International Journal of Emerging Technologies and Society. In addition to this dissemination channel, the Department of Media and Communication at the Royal University of Phnom Penh agreed to sponsor the printing of 500 copies of Chivoïn's research results in a 45-paper research report format. These were distributed to universities, libraries and relevant organizations around Cambodia. Chivoïn is currently working with the Department of Media and Communication, RUPP, on continuing the research on Internet in education with a five-month grant from Freedom House.

In relation to his SIRCA-funded research, T.B. Dinesh (India) set up a wiki to engage people on their views on the significance of open source, and the costs and scale of the technology, and initiated an online journal¹¹ to facilitate discussions and nurture further involvement from participant communities. He also conducted three open/public workshops on technology, governance and citizenship in India in 2010-2011.

Grace Mirandilla (Philippines) was able to administer a Political Blog Reader Survey online as well as conduct a focus group discussion with local political bloggers in the Philippines. As a part of her research dissemination, she presented her findings to bloggers in Manila, Cebu, and Davao. Her research is also to be made publicly available online at a website called *FLIPISM* (Filipino Politics, ICT and Social Media). The website content and format features the results of her SIRCA-funded political blogging research. The website has gone live in December 2011 and the website link is <http://flipismresearch.net/>.

Regina M. Hechanova's (Philippines) project on "*Lifeline Online: E-Counseling and the Well-Being of Overseas Filipino Workers and Their Families*" was used during the floods that hit Manila in 2009. As the mobile phone towers were down, the only way to connect, especially for those outside of the Philippines, was the Internet. The online counseling service had a 24-hour watch, and so that became a communication node. This spurred the interest of the Philippine government in furthering the project, and Regina has already presented some of her findings at two conferences in the Philippines.

Pham Huu Ty (Vietnam) made efforts to devise protection planning maps that were shared with the local communities in Vietnam, a result of his research project on "*Upper River Erosion and Landslide Protection Planning*".

Komathi ALE (Singapore) conducted a two-month long fieldwork to India to carry out a quasi-experiment among primary school children in the Nainital district of Uttaranchal, India. She collaborated with members of an Indian non-governmental organization, UDAAN Foundation, who assisted with the data collection in her assessment of the impact of the One Laptop per Child project.

2.4 SIRCA PI Research Outputs and Achievements

SIRCA's activities and the results fuelled interest and motivation amongst its PIs to pursue further research – and many PIs managed to outdo expectations. Three SIRCA PIs were awarded scholarships to pursue their PhDs, and others were honored with awards and recognized for their SIRCA research work (Table 3).

¹¹ tgc.janastu.org

Peou Chivoin (Cambodia) was awarded Australia's Endeavour Award for PhD study at the University of Melbourne with research emphasis on Internet and youth issues. The Australian scholarship will build on the experience of his SIRCA project, *"Internet for Learning and Knowledge Building: Students' Perceptions and Utilization in Cambodian Higher Education"*. His project has been documented as an active research project for the Department of Media and Communication, RUPP, which is planning to set up a media research program that builds further on the project experience. These outcomes attest to the capability of the SIRCA grant program to nurture and sustain research capacity in ICTD. To quote Chivoin:

The SIRCA grant I received between 2009 and 2010 not only offered me a chance to research an under-researched yet significant area of ICTs in Cambodia, but also paved my way into a committed research and academic career. The SIRCA experience has both aided my admission into the PhD program at the University of Melbourne and inspired my research and academic vision within my current PhD program.

According to Sirajul Islam (Bangladesh), "the fellowship of SIRCA not only has given me an opportunity to help in conducting field work for my PhD study, but also has contributed to broadening my research capacity and network."

And finally, in keeping with its overarching goals, Mary Grace P. Mirandilla attests:

SIRCA has provided not only a platform for research, but a venue for enriching exchanges, the much needed support for scientific and relevant inquiries, and a community of passionate individuals who are committed to improving lives with the aid of information and communication technology.

Table 3: Summary of SIRCA PI Achievements

Scholarships	Recognition of work	Research paper awards
Komathi ALE, PhD scholarship to University of Southern California Annenberg School in USA in August 2011	Regina Hechanova, recipient of The Outstanding Women in Nation's Service (2010), Philippines, and the Cardinal Sin Book Award, Philippines	Phal Des, Distinguished Paper Award at IEEJ Japan-Cambodia Joint Symposium on Information Systems and Communication Technology 2011 (JCAICT 2011) in January 2011, in Phnom Penh, Cambodia
Peou Chivoin, PhD scholarship to University of Melbourne in Australia in July 2010	Mahfuz Ashraf, UNESCO Chair in ICTD scholarship to attend the ICTD2010 IEEE/ACM Conference in December 2010	Rajiv Aricat George, top-three paper award at the Inaugural Honors Symposium for Asian Students in Communication Research held in City University of Hong Kong in November 2010
Pham Huu Ty, Nuffic Scholarship for PhD at Utrecht University, Netherlands in May 2010	Sirajul Islam, Reviewer, Chair and Moderator at ICTD2010 IEEE/ACM Conference in December 2010; Reviewer at the 44 th Hawaii International Conference on Systems Science (HICSS) in January 2011, at the 2 nd International Conference on Mobile for Development, in Kampala, Uganda in November 2010, and for the Journal of Information	

	Technology for Development (ITD), Routledge, Taylor & Francis group, UK	
Balwant Singh Mehta	Balwant Singh Mehta, selected, to be part of the Amy Mahan Research Fellowship Program to Assess the Impact of Public Access to ICT (2010-11)	

ANNEX 1 details the comprehensive list of conferences attended, publications, awards, and other honors.

2.5 Assessment and Recommendations

Based on the experience of the past three years, there are a few issues that should be considered in future grant calls:

1. *SIRCA contract with individual PIs, instead of mandating institutional affiliation*
Under the current SIRCA Memorandum of Grant Conditions (MGC) signed between NTU and IDRC, NTU is obligated to ensure that all resulting contracts with Subcontractors (i.e., PIs) are consistent with NTU's obligations to IDRC stated in the MGC. Hence, even though a few of the PIs had requested that the contract be made with them as individuals, NTU requires that all PIs be affiliated with an institution for funds disbursement. Of course, the assumption is that with institutional affiliation comes institutional support, which is critical for the smooth execution of a research project. Nevertheless, there are two main reasons for granting the award to individuals instead of institutions:
 - a. First, SIRCA's aim is to train and improve the skills of individual researchers. Should the individual move to another institution in the duration of the project, the money can be brought over with the PI. If awarded to the institution, the current PI may be required to find a replacement. In addition, for some developing countries, the amount of bureaucracy involved sometimes mean that very little of the funds actually go to the PI;
 - b. Second, funds utilization for direct compensation on time spent on project. The current NTU/IDRC regulations do not allow SIRCA funds to be used to compensate for the researcher's effort and time invested in the project. This can be a big disincentive especially from a developing country researcher's point of view, as is evident in one of the withdrawal cases. A suggested compromise would be to rephrase the wording of the grant as buying-out of researcher's time, instead of a salary top-up.
2. *Designation of PI*
In some projects, owing to the requirement of institutional affiliation, a relatively established researcher may be the designated PI while others work substantially on the project. In such cases, SIRCA will advise that the actual investigator working on the project be sent for any SIRCA training workshops and seminars. This is essential in achieving our objective of nurturing emerging researchers and facilitating knowledge-sharing and network creation.

3 MENTORSHIP

The mentorship component was the unique feature of the SIRCA capacity building program. One of the aims of the SIRCA programs was to enable opportunities for established researchers to mentor emerging scholars in Asia. For the mentee (i.e. grant recipient), this not only provided the assistance and guidance to ensure steady progress and completion of

project milestones but the opportunity to learn how to navigate the terrain of academia, or related fields, and move forward professionally. For the mentor, it was an opportunity to enhance his/her own personal and professional knowledge while teaching and learning from the mentee. It was clear that the bi-directional learning and exchange between mentor and mentee facilitated the outcome of stronger and more rigorous research findings.

3.1 Mentors

The Call for Mentors was disseminated in November 2008 and a total of 21 applications were received. From this, ten Mentors were selected based on their research experience and match to the research topics of the grant awardees.

Table 4 provides details of the selected candidates and their corresponding academic/professional disciplines.

Table 4: SIRCA Mentors

No	Country	Mentor Name	Academic/Professional Discipline
1	Bangladesh	Prof. Shaikh Abdus Salam	Mass communication and journalism
2	Hong Kong	Dr. Roger Harris	Information systems
3	India	Prof. Rahul De	Engineering and management
4	India	Dr. Vibodh Parthasarathi	Culture, media and governance
5	Philippines	Prof. Alexander Flor	Information and communication studies
6	Singapore	Dr. Arul Chib	Communication
7	Singapore	Prof. Ang Peng Hwa	Law and communication
8	Singapore	Prof. May Lwin	Communication
9	United Kingdom	Dr. John Traxler	Mobile learning
10	United Kingdom	Prof. Richard Heeks	Development policy and management

As a part of their deliverables, mentors were expected to conduct one site visit during the course of the research project, at a mutually agreeable time. The site visit was included in the program in order to give mentors a firsthand experience of the research they were helping to conduct. In addition to this, the mentor was expected to provide professional guidance and leadership in such a way that the PI could develop greater initiative, increased independence, and self-reliance. The mentor was also expected to share relevant research knowledge and experience with the PI from a variety of sources, and identify and resolve potential obstacles the PI might have faced in achieving his/her research objectives, and help the PI develop professional networks.

Only one site visit was prescribed at the start, but following feedback from PIs, a second opportunity for a site visit was provided to all mentors towards the middle of the program. By then, all mentors had completed their first site visit. Four mentors made use of the second opportunity and completed these site visits by mid-2011.

3.2 SIRCA Mentor Outputs and Achievements

In addition to achieving the specified objectives of the SIRCA program, it was clear that collaborative networks did blossom out of the mentor-PI relationship. This unique approach indeed made a difference to the quality of research produced by SIRCA PIs, and also resulted in progressive network building between mentors and PIs.

To quote Dr. Roger Harris on his engagement with his PI Md. Mahfuz Ashraf:

My activities with SIRCA dovetail nicely with the other work that I do with universities, especially in bringing academics, practitioners and beneficiaries together so that each can better understand the others' perspectives as they

work towards a common set of goals. My mentoring opportunity in Bangladesh is heading in this direction and I am now advising the University of Dhaka on further activities relating to this topic.

More statements from mentors describing how the SIRCA program benefitted their work and helped to further their professional research expertise:

My main work this year has been focused on a research topic triggered by the SIRCA mentoring process. On my field visit to Vietnam, I saw how climate change was increasing the problems of landslides and erosion, but also increasing the need and opportunity for ICTs to play a role. This led to a proposal to IDRC which I'm now working on: a two-year project on ICTs, climate change and development. We are just in process of publishing a set of thematic papers reviewing the key areas in which ICTs can have an impact: adaptation, mitigation, monitoring and governance. And we will shortly publish a set of case studies from Africa and Asia bringing new case evidence to light. *Dr. Richard Heeks on his experience mentoring Pham Huu Ty.*

The SIRCA experience has helped to widen my regional network and collaborations in health communication especially in Cambodia where the mentorship was based. Thanks to SIRCA, I was able to include Cambodia in a recent study on an international health crisis communication project. *Prof. May Lwin on her experience mentoring PI Chivoin Peou.*

The program also gave the mentors a refresher course on new research methods:

I was inspired by what I saw in [my PI's] class when they went over the transcript of the online counseling. She had combined her research project with a class seamlessly and meaningfully. Students were learning how to be better counselors through live cases that happened only a few days before. That "let's-do-it" spirit that was in the air inspired me to run a new course on Internet governance, which is my area of research. It is a lot of work as the whole area is new, without a proper text. But it's been refreshing and rewarding. *Prof. Ang Peng Hwa on his experience mentoring PI Regina Hechanova.*

The SIRCA Program has served as a platform for the cross-fertilization of ideas between first generation ICTD scholars and the new generation, between the old school and the new crop. And this collaboration has occurred across academic traditions, cultural backgrounds and ethnic boundaries. In this sense participation in program has brought higher order benefits to both its principal investigators, mentors and staff. *Prof. Alexander Flor on his experience mentoring PI Grace Mirandilla.*

3.3 Assessment and Recommendations

Based on the experience of the past three years as well as the evaluations conducted, there are a few issues to be considered for future mentorship arrangements:

1. *Language problems between mentor and mentee*

During a site visit, a mentor found that the PI and collaborators were not able to efficiently use English as a mode of communication. The mentor further noted his suspicion that the progress report was written by an American co-PI, and that the PI did not have much idea about some of the content. In another case, during the SIRCA Training Workshop I, a mentor found it quite difficult to communicate with his PI.

2. *Mentor collaboration*

At least two mentors mentioned that it might be useful for more interaction between their peers (i.e. other mentors). Although they had face-to-face meetings with their respective PIs, the mentors had very little interaction with each other and as such felt a sense of isolation and alienation from the rest of the SIRCA members. This was resolved during the course of the program through offering the possibility of a second sit visit as well as reminding mentors and PIs to communicate online regularly.

3. *Site visits*

The greater the number of site visits for mentors was clearly a better way for the mentor-PI relationship to flourish. Also, based on feedback from the evaluations, it was important that the site visits were scheduled at the beginning of the project, at fixed points of the research cycle. This was important for troubleshooting and fixing errors and mistakes early that might otherwise go unnoticed until later, and avoid scheduling conflicts. Such a move would definitely improve the outcomes of the visit as well as the research. This was not enforced during this cycle of the program, and should be seriously considered in any future incarnations of the SIRCA program.

4 TRAINING AND OTHER EVENTS

4.1 SIRCA Training Workshop I, 3-4 July 2009

The first face-to-face meeting of all SIRCA stakeholders took place on 3-4 July 2009 in Singapore. The Workshop brought together all of the SIRCA PIs and mentors, and trainers, as well as IDRC representatives. The Workshop I aimed to:

- a. Equip PIs with a clearer understanding of the literature, theoretical and methodological issues with regards to their projects;
- b. Equip PIs with a clearer understanding of how their project relates and contributes to the broader ICTD discipline;
- c. Provide PIs with necessary information to adhere to the SIRCA Secretariat compliance; and
- d. Highlight practical issues and challenges in fieldwork.

Figure 1: PIs, Trainers and the SIRCA Team at the SIRCA Training Workshop I, Singapore



The workshop was conducted by Trainers, including mentors Prof. Alexander Flor, Dr. Arul Chib, and Prof. Rahul De, as well as Dr. Czarina Saloma-Akpedonu (from the Philippines). The four Trainers were selected from among seven applications, obtained in response to a Call for Trainers announcement that was disseminated across the SIRCA Secretariat's networks in February 2009. The Trainers were selected based on their research experience and how it fit with the objectives of the workshop.

The two-day workshop focused on several capacity building exercises and group consultations between PIs and their mentors and trainers, while a lot of time was spent on elucidating ICTD research methods, and research ethics – areas that were deemed to be of importance to all emerging ICTD scholars. SIRCA took the opportunity at this workshop to reinforce the importance of research ethics by dedicating an entire session to it.

ANNEX 2 contains more information on this event.

4.2 SIRCA Training Workshop II, 20 June 2010, and ICA 2010 Mobiles Preconference, 21-22 June 2010

The second face-to-face meeting of all SIRCA stakeholders took place on 20 June 2010 again in Singapore. Piggybacking on the International Communication Association (ICA) 2010 Conference, which was held in Singapore on 21-26 June 2010, the second Training Workshop brought together PIs and mentors once again to discuss the progress of their research while giving them the opportunity to interact with other audience members from the ICA conference.

Figure 2: SIRCA participants take turns to introduce themselves and their projects at the SIRCA Training Workshop II, Singapore



Training Workshop II aimed to:

- a. Equip PIs with a clearer understanding of possible avenues for dissemination with regards to their projects.
- b. Equip PIs with practical skills in communication and presentation of research findings
- c. Highlight practical issues and challenges in fieldwork.

- d. Provide a platform for mentors to meet face-to-face with PIs and discuss research challenges and solutions.
- e. Nurture a shared spirit of commitment, passion and motivation for continuing research in the field of ICTD.
- f. Stimulate problem-solving and critical thinking skills among PIs through observing and learning from other projects.

The PIs presented their research in the form of poster presentations. Learning from the first Training Workshop, PIs and mentors were given one-on-one time to discuss and find solutions to individual research issues and challenges. Furthermore, PIs were given the chance to rehearse their presentations and obtain feedback in order to improve their presentation skills.

Figure 3: SIRCA mentors share their insights on research dissemination at the SIRCA Training Workshop II, Singapore



Under the banner of the SIRCA program, the Singapore Internet Research Centre (SiRC) organized the ICA 2010 Preconference workshop, “*Innovations in Mobile Use*”, at the National Library Building,¹² Singapore, from 21-22 June 2010. The preconference attracted a total of 73 participants from around the world, including 19 SIRCA participants i.e. PIs, co-PIs, and mentors.

The Preconference sought to examine innovations in a variety of societal contexts highlighting different phenomena of cell phone uses. The workshop aimed to foster discussions around how developments in emerging markets reflect the trends in mature markets, and assess potential for the cross-pollination of information and communications technologies for development and/or empowerment.

A Call for Papers was issued in October 2009, to researchers involved in the field of ICT and mobile communications around the world, inviting them to submit abstracts focusing on the social scientific understanding of mobile communication. A total of 53 submissions were received, and the genres ranged from mobiles intersecting with gender, learning, the public sphere, and development. Patterns of use and social impacts of mobiles were also analyzed, against a converging media landscape. Of these, 24 papers were selected for presentation

¹² The National Library kindly agreed to be the venue sponsor of the preconference. In exchange, SIRCA provided eight preconference passes to the National Library staff. In addition, the National Library was given due mention and credit in all marketing collaterals i.e. SIRCA Annual Report, SIRCA website, ICA Newsletter.

through a blind review process.¹³ SIRCA PIs and mentors were also encouraged to submit their abstracts for the Preconference. Out of the seven PIs and two mentors who submitted their abstracts, two PIs, Balwant Mehta Singh and Md. Mahfuz Ashraf, and one mentor, John Traxler, were selected to present their full papers at the ICA 2010 Mobiles Preconference.

Figure 4: Participants at the ICA 2010 Preconference, Singapore



To balance the academic and industry perspective, SIRCA invited Mr. Alex Siow, Head of Information Systems and Business Excellence from StarHub (a Singapore-based telecommunications company) to be the keynote speaker at the Preconference. Mr. Siow's speech was relevant to the audience and well-received as he discussed mobile innovations in terms of technology and application, and the impact on the developing world.

Being the largest international academic association for scholars interested in the study, teaching, and application of all aspects of human and mediated communication, the ICA 2010 Preconference served as an ideal platform for the SIRCA PIs to showcase their work, increase their research network as well as participate in capacity-building seminars and exercises.

In addition to paper sessions, the preconference organized short poster segments which provided an opportunity for the SIRCA scholars to discuss work-in-progress studies with international mobile communication scholars. This tied in neatly with the SIRCA objectives of building networks among researchers and enhancing opportunity for dissemination of research findings. PIs and mentors also had the opportunity to attend the main ICA conference (22-26 June 2010) held at Suntec City Convention Centre, as SIRCA funded their stay in Singapore for an extra day, 23 June 2010. SIRCA had successfully negotiated with the ICA organizing committee for a group discount rate of USD75 from the original of USD275 for each participant.

ANNEX 3 & ANNEX 4 contains more information on these events.

¹³ The review panel comprised seven senior scholars and practitioners: Dr. Arul Chib (Nanyang Technological University); Dr. James Katz (Rutgers University); Dr. Jonathon Donner (Microsoft Research); Mr. Laurent Elder (IDRC); Dr. Richard Ling (Telenor Research and Innovation); Dr. Rohan Samarajiva (LIRNEasia); and Dr. Trisha Lin (Nanyang Technological University), who was also the co-organiser of the ICA 2010 Mobiles Preconference.

Figure 5: Mr. Alex Siow speaks at the ICA 2010 Preconference, Singapore



4.3 SIRCA Final Research Dissemination Conference: Global Dialogue on ICT for Development, 15-17 April 2011

The third and final meeting between PIs and mentors and other SIRCA stakeholders, “Global Dialogue on ICT for Development”, took place on 15-17 April 2011 in Phuket, Thailand.

The objectives of the conference were to:

- a. Provide a platform for SIRCA Principal Investigators (PIs) to showcase current research;
- b. Present framework for the next capacity building initiative, the “global grant”; and
- c. Provide a forum for ICTD scholars to meet face-to-face, network and exchange ideas.

Conducted at a time when most PIs were wrapping up their research projects, the final workshop provided the perfect opportunity for them to showcase their final research findings to internal and external partners. SIRCA PIs presented their final research papers on pertinent issues surrounding the use of ICTs for development in livelihood, education, employment, health and the environment. Mentees were able to fine-tune their presentations with their mentors during the first session, before presenting to the larger audience. The event brought together specialists from academia, industry, social welfare organizations and government to discuss and debate ideas to resolve challenges in the field of ICTD. It was a great opportunity to network and collaborate with researchers and scholars in the field of ICTD.

The event also coincided with the launch of the *Media Asia* journal, Vol. 38, No. 1, which was a product of papers from the ICA 2010 Preconference. This is discussed in more detail in Section 5.1.

In addition to this, the conference provided an opportunity for selected invitees to discuss the potential of the next global capacity building initiative building on the SIRCA program which is to be administered by SiRC and funded by IDRC once again. Representatives from South

Africa and Latin America participated at the event and provided SiRC and IDRC officers with their views on how to scale the next grant to work with emerging researchers from their locales.

ANNEX 5 contains more information on this event.

4.4 Capacity building of SIRCA staff

The SIRCA project has helped build capacity within SiRC, exposing staff to first hand experiences of managing the research and administration of an international project, with clear deliverables and outputs.

In 2010, SIRCA Senior Manager, Yvonne Lim, and SIRCA Evaluator, Ann Mizumoto, participated as panel speakers at “*The Evaluation Conclave 2010: Making Evaluation Matter*”, organized by CoE (Community of Evaluators) held in New Delhi, India, from 25-28 October 2010. SIRCA's experience of undergoing a formative evaluation using the Utilization-Focused Evaluation (UFE) approach was discussed in detail and provided an excellent opportunity to promote the SIRCA Program to a literate and international audience. The Conclave brought in participants, key note speakers, and perspectives from evaluators, donors, program managers and academics from all over the world. Apart from promoting the program, the Senior Manager was exposed to a better understanding about evaluation matters that could be used in the future SIRCA program. Evaluation of the SIRCA program is discussed in more detail in Section 6.

In July 2011, SIRCA Project Officer, Tahani Iqbal, undertook a training course on *Planning & Managing Projects*, conducted by ESI Singapore. The training provided a clear understanding of how to manage projects, how to define milestones, and document and record the management of an entire project cycle.

In September and November 2011, SIRCA Finance and Admin Officer Ms Liaw Wan Tieng and SIRCA Senior Manager, Yvonne Lim attended the Business Analytics & Reporting (BAR) and Program Management course respectively.

BAR aims to help to improve the participant's productivity in reporting & analytical work by combining the various advanced tools and features of Microsoft Excel to fulfil the participant's monthly financial reporting, financial analysis, budgeting and investment appraisal tasks in an automated fashion while the program management course included various case study that provided an opportunity to walk through the entire program life cycle while facing the types of realistic challenges the manager would surely encounter. The course also aimed at increasing the effectiveness of a program manager in managing stakeholder relationships effectively.

4.5 Assessment and Recommendations

Based on the experience of the past three years, there are a few issues worth considering for future capacity building and training events:

1. *Need for relevant and timely training sessions for PIs*

A key learning from the two training workshops was that they were held a little too late into the program. Each PI had their own research project cycles, and so in the first training workshop which was delayed due to operational issues, the event happened to be of limited relevance to some PIs who had already begun data collection; although they got good feedback on their work, it was too late to make

drastic changes to their research methodologies at that point. Similarly, at the second training workshop, some mentors and PIs were of the view that the dissemination strategy and plan should have been discussed at the first workshop as well, and not as an afterthought once the bulk of the research work was conducted.

2. *Engage a variety of media to meet training needs*

It was evident that having two training events over a large period of time with little interaction in between PIs and mentors, was not the best way to develop a sustainable communal relationship. It would seem more useful to PIs (and mentors) if training materials were available to them on a more regular basis via a variety of media, including on the website, via webinars, YouTube lectures, etc. Although PIs did benefit from the face-to-face workshops and other events, it would have had a greater impact if the trainings were more regular and relevant and customized to the extent possible. In fact, PIs requested for more frequent meetings, at least twice a year, instead of just once a year, but the budget allocated was not sufficient to meet these needs.

5 RESEARCH AND PROGRAM DISSEMINATION

5.1 Media Asia Journal Special Issues

As a part of dissemination efforts, SIRCA collaborated with the *Media Asia* journal (published by the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC) in Singapore)¹⁴ and released two special journal issues in December 2010 (Vol. 37, No. 4) and April 2011 (Vol. 38, No. 1), comprising of papers from the ICA Mobiles Per-Conference event in June 2010, and from among SIRCA PIs respectively.

The first issue in December 2010 sourced papers from the SIRCA's event at the ICA 2010 Mobiles Preconference "*Innovations in Mobile Use*" held on 21-22 June 2010. Seven papers were selected and the review panel was made up of 12 senior scholars and practitioners from around the world. The Call for Papers was disseminated in June 2010 and submissions from ICA 2010 Preconference applicants were also considered. It was decided that the special issue would reiterate the theme of the ICA 2010 Mobile Preconference, as it stimulated discussions about the social impact of mobile technologies in Pan-Asia markets.

The second special journal issue published in April 2011 by AMIC comprised of papers sourced from among SIRCA mentees and mentors. Six were published and the review panel was made up of 16 senior scholars and practitioners, many of whom participated at the ICA 2010 Mobiles Preconference. The aim of this second special issue was to publish cutting-edge research in the area of ICTD in Asia.

Both publications went through a rigorous double blind peer-review process. The review panels were made up of up of 12 senior scholars and practitioners from around the world for the first Issue, and 16 senior scholars and practitioners, many of whom participated at the ICA 2010 Mobiles Preconference for the second Issue.

ANNEX 6 contains both the *Media Asia* journal special issues.

¹⁴ *Media Asia* is a quarterly magazine which serves as an important platform for the exchange of views and information on mass communication in the countries of the Asia-Pacific region. Each issue of the journal has valuable information, views and comments relevant to communication professionals, scholars and laymen. It is a joint publication of the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre, Singapore and the School of Communication and Information, Nanyang Technological University of Singapore.

5.2 SIRCA BOOK “LINKING RESEARCH TO PRACTICE IN ASIA: ICT FOR DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH, MANAGEMENT AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES”

A book on the insider perspectives of the SIRCA Program will be published by Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) in 2012. Edited by Arul Chib and Roger Harris, the book showcases the intricacies of grant management within the SIRCA Program, and research perspectives with views from mentors and articles from mentees.

The book consists of three sections: 1) Management Perspectives; 2) Research Perspectives; and 3) Research Outputs. The contributions have already been sourced from the SIRCA Program’s own PIs, Mentors, and the management team. Table 5 provides a breakdown of chapters and contributors to be included in this publication. More specific details about the book can be found in Appendix A and a sample chapter can be found in Appendix B.

The publication is directed at an un-addressed niche in the ICTD field – that of a guidebook which translates rigorous academic evidences to relevant development practices; offering a synthesis of experiences from those involved in this capacity-building initiative. Hence, the aim is to establish a research-practice link within the ICTD community, in order to foster holistic research approaches and quality outputs.

ISEAS has been identified as a potential publisher. The IDRC has also indicated interest in publishing and distributing the book and negotiations are currently underway with both entities.

The manuscripts are due to be submitted in mid-December 2011, provided no unforeseen circumstances shift the editorial schedule.

Table 5: Contents of “Linking Research to Practice in Asia: ICT for Development Research, Management and Future Perspectives”

Section	Title	Author/s
	Foreword	<i>Jonathan Donner</i>
Management Perspective: Insiders' Thoughts on the Program	Perspectives on ICTD Research and Practice	Roger Harris & Arul Chib
	SIRCA: An Opportunity to Build and Improve the Field of ICT4D	Laurent Elder Chaitali Sinha Matthew Smith
	Managing SIRCA	Tahani Iqbal Yvonne Lim, Arul Chib
	Mentorship Evaluation	Ann Mizumoto
Research Perspective: Theoretical Reflections by Experts	ICTD Praxis: Bridging Theory and Practice	Alexander Flor
	Messy Methods for ICT4D Research	Rahul De
	Ethics and ICTD Research	John Traxler
	ICTD Curriculum Development and Professional Training: Mainstreaming SIRCA Research Models	Alexander Flor & Roger Harris
	Multistakeholder Perspectives Influencing Policy-Research-Practice	Komathi Ale Arul Chib May-Ann Lim
	From Production... To Dissemination... To Adoption	Ma. Regina Hechanova
Research Outputs	It's the Talk, not the Tech: What Government Should Know about Blogging and Social Media	Grace P. Mirandilla-Santos
	Integrating Digital and Human Data Sources for Environmental Planning and Climate Change Adaptation:	Pham Huu Ty Richard Heeks Chuong Van Huynh

	From Research to Practice in Central Vietnam	
	The Challenge of Working across Contexts and Domains: Mobile Health Education in Rural Cambodia	John Traxler
	Dynamics and Challenges of Academic Internet Use Among Cambodian University Students	Peou Chivoin May O. Lwin Santosh Vijaykumar
	Synthesis and Conclusion	Roger Harris & Arul Chib

ANNEX 7 contains the book proposal.

5.3 Annual Report

Two Annual Reports were published during the course of the SIRCA program, one covering research and program progress 2009-2010 and the other in 2010-2011. The reports form an outreach, as well as provide exposure for SIRCA PIs and their research projects as they highlight the program's uniqueness, objectives and achievements to date. Inputs were gathered from SIRCA PIs, mentors, trainers, and reviewers, and the report compiled in-house.

The reports were disseminated widely at SIRCA events and other international conferences attended by SIRCA stakeholders.¹⁵

ANNEX 8 contains copies of both the SIRCA Annual Reports.

5.4 Website¹⁶

As part of the effort to support SIRCA PIs as well as other SIRCA associates (e.g. mentors, reviewers, trainers), SIRCA adopted an open and transparent approach to its communication.

In addition to encouraging constant feedback, the SIRCA website has been the main channel of communication with the key stakeholders of the program. The website acts as a platform between SIRCA and its stakeholders, as well as among the PIs and mentors, and enables the external ICTD community to keep abreast of what the SIRCA community is up to. Most importantly, it helps to cultivate a community of ICTD researchers with a shared passion and common goal.

The SIRCA website designed at the beginning of the project, to advertise the Call for Proposals in 2008, and has been revamped since then. The website was officially launched at the SIRCA Training Workshop I. At this time, the website followed a simple and clear format, including information on the SIRCA program, resources for SIRCA PIs and other ICTD scholars (such as links to ICTD journals and websites of ICTD-related organizations and groups), SIRCA Participants (with information on PI research projects, PI and mentor profiles, etc), SIRCA e-newsletter, and an FAQ page.

The website also linked to the program's Flickr account which gives access to visual updates from the SIRCA community. To date, PIs have shared photos taken during mentor site visits and other activities conducted as a part of their SIRCA funded research work. The Flickr account has been a success and it is hoped that this platform will also engage a larger group of ICTD researchers to build a more dynamic network under the SIRCA program.

¹⁵ The reports are available at: <http://sirca1.sirca.org.sg/sirca-annual-report-0910/> and <http://sirca1.sirca.org.sg/about-sirca/sirca-annual-report-1011/>.

¹⁶ www.sirca.org.sg/

In its most recent incarnation, the SIRCA website has been divided into two main sections: the first provides information on this program, and the second provides information on the SIRCA II program currently underway. The site now features a blog to keep SIRCA alumni and present participants updated on announcements, events, and other relevant news.

ANNEX 9 contains screen shots of key webpages of the new SIRCA website.

5.5 Wikipedia

A Wiki page was also created as a platform for SIRCA participants to share their research information including project progress, draft research papers, and fieldwork problems in 2009. Although SIRCA stakeholders were each given an account on the wiki, and the use of the wiki was demonstrated at the Training Workshop I, participation was found to be lacking. The wiki function was removed from the website in January 2010.

5.6 Open Policy

As per the original SIRCA Call for Proposals, raw research data projects funded under the initiative would be made available in the public domain following one year of project completion. Accordingly, all of the project reports will be linked to on the SIRCA website allowing any interested parties to access the research, such that the work can be cited and critiqued by others in the same field.

In line with this, SIRCA also shared its experiences as a capacity building initiative via the website. Documents including call for proposals, grant award letter, legal documents, etc were made available to other grants programs such as the “*Radio, Convergence and Development in Africa*” project, managed by Carleton University and funded by IDRC.

5.7 Assessment and Recommendations

Some issues to be considered for dissemination measures:

1. *Publications are an important aspect of the capacity building program*
The two journal publications, as well as the forthcoming SIRCA book proved to be useful training tools for PIs. SIRCA Mentors were in favor of this method of dissemination as it enabled their PIs to go through the processes of submitting their research work for publication in a journal and/or edited volume. Although some did not make the cut into any of the publications, the process of going through multiple revisions and edits was useful to their training in writing academic and publishing academic articles. Furthermore, PIs and mentors indicated that it would also benefit them professionally if they had access to a wider range of online journals that feature specific topics relevant to their research.
2. *The spirit of fellowship is critical to the success of the program*
Based on the response to the Flickr platform for PIs and mentors to upload photos of their ongoing research work enabled the group to come together and see what each one was doing. While some contributed more than others, the platform increased the usage of the SIRCA website and encouraged PIs and mentors to play a more participative role. However, the SIRCA Wiki failed to make as big an impact as the introduction of Flickr, and as such the importance of visual media over plain text in increasing engagement is telling. The Wiki was clearly not conducive to fostering in-depth discussions for a dispersed group of researchers, although the Flickr account also did not encourage PIs and mentors to engage in in-depth discussions related to their research work.

6 EVALUATION

Two evaluations were conducted during the course of the SIRCA program. A program evaluator was retained in 2009 to conduct both these investigations. Ann Mizumoto, SIRCA Evaluator, was selected after much deliberation and appointed to conduct the evaluations.

The Evaluator attended the International Program for Development Evaluation Training (IPDET) on the campus of Carlton University in Ottawa, Canada. IPDET is an initiative of the Independent Evaluation Group of the World Bank and Carlton University. It is an executive training program that aims to provide monitoring and evaluation practitioners the generic tools required to evaluate development policies, programs, and projects at the local, national, regional, and global levels. The program features a two-week core course, followed by two weeks of more than 25 hands-on workshops. The Evaluator participated in the two-week core course which aided design the formative evaluation.

In conjunction with the search for an Evaluator, SIRCA worked with IDRC on a related project called the Development Evaluation Capacity in ICTD (DECI). SIRCA was among the five PAN projects that were selected for this initiative. Essentially, DECI provided resources to help SIRCA design a utilization-focused evaluation (UFE) plan owned by the program. What this meant was that DECI funded the design phase activities (including capacity development activities and working with an evaluation expert based in the region). The evaluation itself was then funded by dedicated SIRCA funds.

The evaluations were conducted in order to assess the impact and outcomes of the program. The first evaluation (the UFE), a program evaluation¹⁷, was aimed at identifying how the SIRCA program was performing in relation to meeting its objectives, while the mentorship evaluation¹⁸ took a critical look at how the mentorship model in place functioned. The recommendations from both studies were implemented where possible and the program trajectory and mentorship model corrected where necessary. The evaluations did enable the program to be constantly improved and corrected.

6.1 Program Evaluation

The first evaluation was formative – it focused on improving the program – and covered a period of two years and four months, from its inception in March 2008 to July 2010. The Evaluator worked with SIRCA's management to select the areas of study, to articulate the uses of the evaluation, to identify the primary users of the evaluation, and to define the key evaluation questions.

The *Grant Review Process* was one area for evaluation because SIRCA's management had gotten feedback about the short review time of proposals which may have affected the application screening process. The question was asked as to what extent did the Grant Review Committee (GRC) select the most appropriate candidates to receive the SIRCA grants given the available time and resources.

The *Mentorship Program* was the second evaluation area as it was a unique component of SIRCA that went beyond a typical research grant program. This was guided by the question of how SIRCA's Mentorship Program facilitated learning and collaboration between emerging and established researchers.

¹⁷The report is available at: http://sirca.org.sg/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/SIRCA-FINAL-EVALUATION-REPORT_November-2010.pdf

¹⁸ The report is available at: http://sirca.org.sg/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/MENTORSHIP-EVALUATION-REPORT_May2011.pdf

The third and final evaluation area was the SIRCA *Workshops and Conferences* which management could organize and immediately rectify with anticipated planning. The question was whether these activities facilitated the publication and dissemination of research findings to the wider world.

The findings and recommendations identified from this evaluation are listed in more detail in Section 8.2.

6.2 Mentorship Evaluation

A Mentorship Evaluation was conducted from January to March 2011 to deepen the understanding of the Mentor-Principal Investigator (PI) relationship since the inception of the SIRCA program. Given the results from the Program Evaluation, it was deemed valuable to conduct an in-depth evaluation of the *Mentorship Model* as issues and questions for further clarification surfaced.

The second evaluation was entirely qualitative, with PIs and Mentors participating in individual interviews, and where possible, joint PI-Mentor interviews. Most interviews were conducted at the project site but the evaluator also talked to PIs during SIRCA's final dissemination conference in April 2011. The evaluation was completed by May 2011.

The findings and recommendations identified from this evaluation are listed in more detail in Section 8.2.

6.3 Assessment and Recommendations

Following the two evaluations carried out, it was clear that there were *limitations to the evaluation study design*. The Utilization-Focused Evaluation (UFE) and mixed methods used for the program evaluation had drawbacks. The issues of staff turnover and as such discontinuity and disruption of work, the participatory and perception-based nature of the methods, data collection problems, were among the limitations highlighted. However, they were analyzed and selected to be the most relevant and suitable from among other evaluation methods. As such, while the evaluations were not 100% foolproof, they still did provide an understanding into the workings of the program and mentorship model.

The PIs and mentors and other stakeholders did, however, appreciate that their views were being sought in developing and re-structuring the program during its course. Almost all of them contributed their comments and ideas and experiences in order to help the evaluation studies conducted.

7 SIRCA PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

As a pioneer program, it was important for SIRCA to develop systems, processes and documents to assist in the smooth running of the varied administrative procedures. Hence, the first few months were dedicated to setting up the program and putting it into. ANNEX 10 depicts program activities over the three and a half years of operations.

7.1 Grant Call for Proposals Dissemination

The SIRCA Grant Call was launched in late August 2008. In order to gauge the response in terms of the research topic as well as geographical location, a call for interest was issued a month prior to the actual call for proposals. In the registration of interest, applicants were asked to provide their name and project title. The call was disseminated via email to

numerous researchers in various Asian universities, research centers, NGOs, associations and groups relating to the field of ICTD. The dissemination list was compiled from the contacts provided by various faculty members in the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information (WKWSCI), NTU, IDRC, and an Internet search conducted by the SIRCA Secretariat. In addition, a website was set up for the call with the necessary information such as deadlines, submission instructions and related documents.

A total of 111 registrations of interest were received by the deadline of 29 September 2008. This translated to a total of 57 full proposal submissions. Table 7 details the number of submissions and topics on which the proposals focused. In a deliberate effort not to limit the areas of research, applicants were free to choose their topic of study as long as there was an ICT and a development element in the project.

Table 7: Registration of Interest vs. submission for the SIRCA Grant

	Registration of interest	Submissions	% (Subject/Registration of Interest)
Total	111	57	51
Topic* (Technology)	13	11	85
Topic* (Beneficiaries/Outcomes)	25	19	76
Country	23	19	83

*Categories of Technology and Beneficiaries/Outcomes are not mutually exclusive.

For the short time frame of the Call for Proposals, the 111 responses were indeed overwhelming and encouraging. The final submission rate of 51% is equally heartening. The categories reflect the focus of the projects including technology use, beneficiaries or outcomes/impact of some form of intervention. "Country" translates to the number of countries the projects covered.

Sample topics include:

- Technologies: Community radio, E-Centers, Mobile Phones, Weblogs, Community Radio, Information Systems
- Beneficiaries/Outcomes: Agriculture, Disaster, E-Commerce, E Government, Healthcare, Education

Sample countries include:

- China, India, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Cambodia, Vietnam, Nepal, Philippines, Mongolia.

7.2 Grants Review and Selections

7.2.1 SIRCA Grant Review Committee

Figure 6: Grant Review Committee Meeting in Singapore



Back (from L-R) Dr R Harris; Prof Rahul De; A/P E Alampay; Prof Ang Peng Hwa; Prof Heather Hudson; Prof John Traxler; Dr J. Donner; Ms K. Flynn-Dapaah; Ms J. Tan
Front (from L-R) Ms K. ALE; Dr A. Chib; A/P M. Lwin; Ms C Sinha; Ms G. Kwan

To ensure the selection of grant awardees were in line with SIRCA's aims, the SIRCA program invited academic researchers whose expertise was in the area of ICTD to form the Grants Review Committee. The reviewers were actively involved in the selection process of the grant awardees and worked with SIRCA in the evaluation of these projects to determine the funding.

The call for reviewers was sent in mid-September 2008. Application for the SIRCA GRC closed on 6 October 2008 and a total of 12 applications were received. The selection of the GRC was based on assessment of CVs and research experience in ICTD. The final SIRCA GRC consisted of nine members including seven established ICTD researchers and two IDRC representatives. Each member was required to outline areas of interest or geography to aid in assignment of proposals.

7.2.2 Grant Review and Selection Process

The review of proposals was a double-blind process wherein two reviewers reviewed each proposal. The allocation was based on the CVs and research background of each reviewer. The names and all identification information were removed from all proposals to ensure anonymity. Each reviewer was given two documents to guide their review process: the Project Assessment Decision Matrix and the SIRCA Assessment Framework.

The SIRCA Assessment Framework was an introduction to the Project Assessment Decision Matrix, detailing the objective and explanations of the various categories to ensure a standardized review process. The Project Assessment Decision Matrix was a scoring system which reviewers used to grade the proposals based on their relevance, level of influence, knowledge transfer and feasibility.

The reviewers were given approximately seven days to review the proposals allocated to them. The SIRCA Secretariat consolidated the scores of each proposal for the SIRCA Grant Review Meeting. In the future, it is hoped that a greater amount of time will be allocated to the review process so that reviewers will have ample time to go through the papers thoroughly before making their final decisions.

7.2.3 SIRCA Grant Review Meeting

The Review Meeting took place from 25-26 October 2008. The list of reviewers was: Dr. John Traxler, Prof. Heather Hudson, Prof. Rahul De, Dr. Jonathan Donner, Dr. Erwin Alampay, Dr. Roger Harris, Dr. Arul Chib, Ms. Chaitali Sinha, Ms. Kathleen Flynn-Dapaah. All 57 proposals were discussed at the meeting and feedback was compiled for each proposal. All applicants received feedback to help them improve on their proposals. Of the 57 proposals, 15 proposals were accepted for the SIRCA Grant Award conditional upon stipulated changes to their proposal and/or budgets. Specifically, PIs were advised to revise their budgets according to the SIRCA budget guidelines. The Grant Awardees were given one month to revise their proposals based on the feedback of the GRC. The revised proposals were then reviewed and approved by the SIRCA team. Through this process, a total savings of SGD66,269 was achieved.

Table 8: SIRCA Projects Budget Overview (SGD)

Total Budgeted	Total Applied	Total Recommended	Total Revised	Total Approved
401,700	414,133	336,167	352,429	335,431

Table 9: SIRCA Projects Budget Difference Overview (SGD)

Budgeted – Applied	Budgeted-Recommended	Budgeted – Revised	Budgeted Approved –
-12,433	65,533	49,271	66,269

The double-blind peer review, in which both the authors and the reviewers are anonymous, was chosen to ensure maximum level of objectivity in the assessment of the proposals.

For the SIRCA Graduate Awards, the Graduate Award Review Committee comprising Senior Management of SIRCA and a representative from IDRC evaluated the submissions based on the following criteria: relevance, problem formulation, research methodology, expected outcomes and outputs, cost effectiveness, risks and limitations, feasibility and how results would be shared professionally.

The award assessment process required all applicants to first pass NTU's graduate admissions criteria. Thereafter, qualifying applications were submitted to IDRC for review and decision to award.

The first time around the call for application closed on 15 June 2009 and the results of the SIRCA Graduate Award were released in late July 2009. The second call was made in September 2010 and results were released in October 2010.

7.3 SIRCA Grant Recipients

The award announcement was made on 28 November 2008. The SIRCA team factored in time to allow for the completion of administrative and procedural matters, which included the signing of legal and financial documents. Hence, the projects were scheduled to begin in February 2009.

Owing largely to the difficulty of finding institutional affiliation for funds distribution, two of the projects were delayed and could only start in April 2009.

There were two withdrawals from the SIRCA program.

7.4 SIRCA Mentorship Program

7.4.1 Call for Mentors

The SIRCA call for Mentors was sent on 3 November 2008 to GRC members and GRC applicants who had indicated their interest. Grant applicants were able to recommend their preferred mentors although it was pointed out that the SIRCA management board would have the final say, in case of conflicts of interest.

In the SIRCA program's efforts to build research capacity amongst emerging researchers in Asia, the mentorship program was viewed as an invaluable tool in consolidating relationships, both among PIs and among mentors, as well as between PIs and mentors.

7.4.2 Mentors-PI Interdisciplinary Matching

It was also important that the research projects were interdisciplinary in nature. Selected grantees emerged from a variety of educational backgrounds such as agricultural studies, business administration, computer science, engineering, journalism, physics, and psychology, and conducted ICTD research relevant in these fields. In terms of mentor-PI matching, it was important that there were few pairs who had similar backgrounds, enabling them to work together to devise an interdisciplinary research project together (Table 10).

SIRCA was also fortunate to tap on past experiences of earlier IDRC sponsored program such as PANACeA, as well as the PIs and mentors which lead to the rationale behind creating a systemized and responsive mentorship program. An example of this is the addition of mentorship feedback forms within the first few months of the grants being issued. Above and beyond the site visits that were planned, this additional form of feedback was indicated as something that would bring value to the mentors and the mentees and thus hopefully strengthen the outcomes of the SIRCA program.

Table 10: Mentor-PI Matches and Disciplines

Mentor	Mentor discipline/ Research interests	PI	PI discipline/Research interests
Arul Chib	Communication	Kanliang Wang	Management science and engineering
Rahul De	Engineering and management	Balwant Singh Mehta	Human Development
		T. B. Dinesh	Computer science
Alexander Flor	Information and communication studies	Grace Mirandilla	Politics and international relations
Roger Harris	Information systems	Md. Mahfuz Ashraf	Management information systems
Richard Heeks	Development policy and management	Pham Huu Ty	Land resources and agricultural environment
Ang Peng Hwa	Law and communication	Regina Hechanova	Psychology
May Lwin	Communication	Chivoïn Peou	Sociology
Vibodh Parthasarathi	Culture, media and governance	Devesh Kishore	Journalism and mass communication
		MJR David	ICTs and development
Shaikh Abdus Salam	Mass communication and journalism	M. Sirajul Islam	Business administration

John Traxler	Mobile learning	Phal Des	Information technology
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These matches proved to be helpful in most cases as there was definite cross fertilization and learning between mentors and PIs, due to the diversity in their backgrounds. This is evidenced by the comments provided by mentors and PIs in the evaluations as well as in general feedback from both parties. In some cases, however, the matches were completely unworkable due to past differences that the Secretariat was not made aware of at the onset, resulting in limited communication and a lack of enthusiasm by the particular mentor and PI to be involved with each other. All in all, the research did benefit from the way the matches were set up, given that mentors and PIs could fall back on each others' backgrounds and disciplines for better insight.

7.5 Monitoring Research Progress

Monitoring PI research projects was an important task of the Secretariat. All PIs are required to submit a progress report every six months detailing their research progress and report the expenses to date.

Once the SIRCA Secretariat evaluated the progress report on two levels: research progress and financial reporting, they made a recommendation to the SIRCA Board as whether to proceed with the disbursement of the second and final payment of the grant. The evaluation was based on a comparison of the current progress and expenditure of the project to that of the original proposal.

For Graduate Award (Stipendiary) recipients, the deliverables were as follows:

- a. An annual progress report in March of every year for the duration of the grant.
- b. Performance of a minimum of 10 hours per week of ICT4D research and SIRCA administrative work.

For Graduate Award (Research) recipients, the deliverables were as follows:

- c. An annual progress report in March of every year for the duration of the grant.
- d. The grant recipient is required to attend and assist in the coordination of two SiRC seminars annually.

7.6 Disbursements

PIs received their grant funds in three tranches. The first tranche of 35% was provided at the beginning of the program, once their proposals were selected and revised and they were given the green light to proceed with their work. The second tranche of 50% was disbursed based on the progress and expenditure information provided in the progress reports – this was not disbursed until it was clear that the 50% of the first instalment was spent. The last 15% of the grant fund was disbursed at the completion of the project, after the acceptance of the final progress report.

For mentors, their funds were disbursed at the beginning of each project year.

7.7 Assessment and Recommendations

The administration of the program was at times difficult and at times unproblematic. Given that it was the first instance, issues did come up along the way, some of which were resolved and others that were highlighted or flagged for reconsideration in similar future initiatives.

1. *Progress reports and reporting measures*

Every PI was expected to submit a detailed progress report every six months, signed and certified by their financial institutions and mentor. However, a few failed to do so at the times specified and so did not follow through with the stipulated requirements. In fact, the second progress report was trimmed down to just a page-long summary to encourage PIs to provide some information about their projects. While this was not optimal, it was clear that although detailed project progress reports were useful, they do take up the time of PIs and mentors and do little to contribute to project output.

2. *Termination of research grants*

Based on the experiences had with some of the PIs, such as PIs dropping out or returning unacceptable research outputs, it was important that the project makes provisions for terminating the grant funds. Such a provision was not explicitly made during the SIRCA program and therefore, the secretariat faced some difficulty in coming up with an amicable solution where needed.

3. *Mentor-PI communication*

It was evident that PIs did not communicate with their mentors as much as was expected. Most communicated as often as 2-3 times a month which was in some stages of research work and some cases clearly insufficient. Although the mentors were encouraged to liaise with their PIs as much as possible, and go on site visits, scheduling issues, and doubts on the level of commitment required, were areas for concern. There was sometimes a mismatch in terms of expectations of involvement between mentors and PIs from both sides. This will need to be made more explicit in similar future capacity building initiatives.

4. *Access to subject experts or allocating more than one mentor per PI*

Future programs should also consider altering the nature of mentorship programs, allowing PIs to access more than one mentor. For example, one PI could have access to two or more mentors – one for research and methodological issues, and the other for theory. This would allow PIs to gain relevant expertise, hitherto unavailable, over the course of their project.

8 OVERALL ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Fulfillment of Objectives

An analysis of the fulfillment of objectives is provided in Table 11 below.

Table 11: Analysis of Fulfillment of Objectives

Projected Objective	Expected Results	Indicators	Accomplishment as at End of Program (Met/Exceeded/Failed)
Promote high-quality multi-disciplinary social science research in Internet development, e-services, new media use and social impact, and policy for the benefit and advancement of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grantees establish themselves as academic scholars and researchers in their field, in their countries and or region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grantees receiving awards, invitations to academic conferences, publications in academic journals, progressing to PhD courses, documented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This objective was met. All participating grant recipients completed their research work successfully, and attest to the benefit that the program and training has had on their professional and academic developments.¹⁹ See Annex 1 for a list of Research Outputs and

¹⁹ Write up about the grantees current progress updates and videos by participative grantees on their “Journey with SIRCA” are uploaded for viewing at <http://sirca1.sirca.org.sg/> under “Projects”.

individuals, organizations, nation and society		social impact with their work	<i>Achievements, and Table 3 for a Summary of SIRCA PI Achievements.</i>
Support networks and linkages among researchers through a mentorship program, as well as workshops and conferences to share knowledge and conduct training activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentors and mentees (i.e. grantees) collaborate on research in the present and in the future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research collaborations (papers, articles, presentations, etc) between mentors and mentees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This objective was met. While the mentorship model, the defining factor of this program, led to mentor collaboration in a book, more mentor-PI networks are required. The evaluations and experiences from the program have helped to determine problem areas that need to be looked at in future programs. • See Annex 1 for a list of Research Outputs and Achievements, Annex 6 for Media Asia issues, and Annex 7 for SIRCA book proposal.
Disseminate research findings through such venues as academic journals, conferences and other relevant online and print media outlets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish grantee research via (academic) online and print media • Enable grantees to develop their communication skills, as well as disseminate their research to a varied audience; this will help them appreciate feedback and constructive criticism of their work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-publish grantee research in an academic journal • Have grantees publish their research in the media • Encourage grantees to apply and attend at least one international conference • Post blogs/updates on each research as it progresses and generate some online discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On a case-by-case basis, this objective was met by some, and exceeded by others. While some grant recipients were more efficient at producing research papers, and presenting and disseminating their work locally, regionally and internationally, others did not have the same outreach plans due to poor communication (presentation and writing) skills. This is to be given more focus in future capacity building initiatives. • See Annex 1 for a list of Research Outputs and Achievements, Annex 6 for Media Asia issues, and Annex 7 for SIRCA book proposal.

8.2 Recommendations for Improvement

The most significant findings of both the evaluations conducted during the SIRCA program cycle are detailed in Table 12.

Table 12: Program and Mentorship Evaluation Findings

Program Evaluation	Key Findings
Dissemination of Grant Call	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 57% of the grant call was disseminated among universities around the region, while only 20% were sent to research institutes and think tanks, 7% to government organizations, and 15% to online ICTD websites. • The largest number of registrations of interest was from India (26), the lowest from Australia, Mongolia, Singapore, South Korea, and the UAE (1).

	<p>The largest number of proposals received was from India (11), followed by the Philippines (6) and Bangladesh (5).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education was listed as the most popular interest area, followed by healthcare and public sector during registration of interest. From proposals received, agriculture-related theme was most common, while environmental disasters and rural development were close seconds.
Selection of grant proposals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 proposals from India, 3 from the Philippines and 2 from Bangladesh and Cambodia, and 1 each from China, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Vietnam were selected. • Agriculture, healthcare and rural development were the themes of the most common proposals selected. • 3 weeks or more for reviewing proposals was deemed necessary than the 2 weeks provided to GRC members. • The less number of proposals each GRC member had to review was deemed to be better, as they could focus more on individual proposals than briefly run through multiple proposals. • More than 70% of GRC members felt that a 2 days GRC meeting to discuss proposal selections was necessary than just 1 day. • Some respondents felt that the scoring system of the Project Assessment Decision Matrix created bias favoring certain proposals over others; the way the GRC was structured and selections made, it seemed that they leaned towards picking applicants with well written proposals and outstanding resumes, as opposed to weaker candidates who might be more worthy of receiving the capacity building training.
Mentorship program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to PIs, mentors had the most influence on their research methods (86%), followed by research theory and networking (64% each). The least impact mentors had on their PIs was in terms of improving their writing and dissemination skills (36% each). • Mentor-PI communication was primarily limited to 1-2 times a month. • PIs reports few challenges with their mentors, however mentors reported a greater incidence of challenges in terms of scheduling meetings or communication. • The site visits were deemed useful, but mentors and PIs felt that there were too few site visits (only one was planned during the course of the entire program, and subsequently revised and increased to two). • The mentor site visit was seen to improve the working relationships between mentors and PIs, and helped mentors gain a better understanding of the research site context. • Mentors and PIs were unclear of the exact role and responsibilities of the former. • 45% of mentors felt the mentor-PI matching could have been better, based on geographic, academic, and other differences.
Workshops and other events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops and conferences were the pillars to SIRCA's immediate capacity building efforts • PIs gained exposure to ICTD theory and research tools at these events • The workshops were beneficial and PIs requested for more workshops, topics, and time.
Mentorship Evaluation	Key Findings
Ambiguity of mentor role and responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both PIs and mentors both had clear ideas of what an ideal Mentor should be like but in reality there was much ambiguity and vagueness regarding the actual responsibilities of the mentor. Mentors were not sure whether to act as PhD supervisors or let the PI hold the reigns all along the way with minimal support from them. PIs were disappointed when mentors did not meet their expectations. • Co-authorship was deemed to be something that had to happen organically if both parties were engaged enough, and not enforced as a requirement of all mentor-PI relationships.

Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentors and PIs used mostly e-mail and the phone to communicate. • Physical proximity was preferred, although it was evident that PI outcomes in terms of capacities built, personal and professional growth, and publication and dissemination can still happen successfully even if the mentors and PIs were based in different locations.
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Based on the findings of the two Evaluations carried out during the SIRCA program, several assessments and recommendations have been made to improve the program.

8.2.1 Selecting Grant Awards Recipients

- a. *SIRCA needs to be clear about its target applicants, objectives and mission, who it will fund, etc.* Will it fund emerging researchers, or experienced researchers that can impact the ICTD field? This will affect the GRC selection process.
- b. *Create an online application template for applicants to fill out, to standardize information obtained from all applicants.* This will ensure that all applicants present the same information to the selection committee. The SIRCA grant call did not specify any guidelines and as such the variety of applications that were submitted made it difficult for the selection committee to identify key aspects of each proposal. This meant that each reviewer took longer to understand and review each application.
- c. *Increase diversity of GRC members.* It is recommended that the GRC comprise of individuals from academia, government, private sector, think tanks, civil society – as this diversity is reflected in the topics of research and countries of applicants. Having practitioners and policy makers in the GRC will help to maintain relevance to development and social science research. The more reviewers in the GRC will also ease the burden per reviewer to assess many proposals.
- d. *Advertise SIRCA to non-academic entities.* Often, there are think-tanks and NGOs working in ICTD and they certainly can use training in research.
- e. *Improve and increase PI screening criteria, through written applications or personal interviews.* SIRCA should consider including age, professional occupation, and other details to get more background information about applicants. In hindsight, one GRC member realized that a PI and his team might have not written the grant application themselves as their spoken English was much poorer than their written proposal.
- f. Not necessary to hold an on-site GRC meeting if SiRC decides to accept assessment decisions from reviewers electronically
- g. *GRC should be involved with SIRCA Project until completion.* This is in order to keep them involved and enable them to participate and liaise with PIs and mentors throughout the program duration.

8.2.2 Mentorship Model

- a. *Increase number of site visits (at least 2) for Mentors* to enable better interaction and support during the research program.
- b. *Increase Mentor compensation to attract and retain senior qualified academics and practitioners to the program, as well motivate them to integrate more with the mentorship model.*

- c. *Maintain a database of potential Mentors.* SIRCA should maintain a database of Mentors obtained through personal networks, PI recommendations, leading ICTD journals, other IDRC sponsored programs in ICTD, conference programs, and renowned institutions so that they can be tapped into for the variety of roles that SIRCA has to offer (Mentor, Reviewer, Trainer, Speaker, Observer, etc.), or in case if any of the selected candidates for these roles backs out at a later time. The database should include people from Asia, Africa, Latin America, North America, and Oceania.
- d. *Compile a Mentorship handbook to clarify roles and expectations for Mentors.* Given the ambiguity in roles and level of commitment expected, it was deemed important for such guidelines to be provided and made explicit at the beginning of the program and open to all involved.
- e. *Introduce a Project Management Tool on the website.* This would allow PIs and mentors to see project progress of other PIs and gain inspiration, advice, and fulfill the open data policy requirements as well. Such a tool would make it easier for the secretariat to track PI progress as well.
- f. *The creation of a Facebook page for the program was considered to be a bad idea.* The suggestion had been mooted to reduce the sense of isolation that some participants mentioned. Many, however, disliked Facebook for professional activities. They considered the existing mailing list and website to be adequate for interaction.
- g. *Provide a time and setting for mentors to discuss their experiences with each other,* such that there can be learning from each other on how to tackle different situations, academic issues, etc.
- h. *Alternative mentorship models.* Given some of the issues faced with the existing mentorship model, a few other ideas were floated among SIRCA PIs and mentors. One included the possibility of PIs picking their mentors, and mentors picking the projects they work on (rather than simply being assigned by the secretariat and GRC). Other models included having two mentors per PI – one domain expert and another methodology expert; introducing a collaborator into the PI-mentor match – one who would be solely responsible for ensuring that research outputs are published strategically; and finally, instead of having one dedicated mentor, instead appoint a pool or panel of experts as mentors who could be consulted by any one PI for support and guidance. The preferred alternative was a hybrid - one where PIs had some say in the mentor-PI matching, and where the mentor would double up as a collaborator and co-publish with the PI, thus increasing the commitment and involvement of the mentor.
- i. *Have PIs recommend Mentors or pick “top three Mentors” for their projects* to give them some control over what type of supervisor they are assigned.
- j. *Enforce more stringent Mentor-PI communication rules.* This is in order to ensure that mentors and PIs maintain a working relationship at all times and reduce isolation.
- k. *Enforce more stringent Mentor-PI co-authorship rules.* To involve mentors as much as possible, it is recommended that they be given the responsibility to co-publish any research outputs from the research they are mentoring, along with their PI. This would be an added incentive of being a mentor as it would mean publications as well.

8.2.3 Workshops/Conferences

- a. *Consider more topics to present/teach at the workshops as suggested by the respondents and by gauging their interest via webinars, online courses, and videos.* If not all topics can be covered in workshops, topics can be presented in “packaged” form via webinars, online courses, videos, and mentors can be encouraged to discuss these topics with the PIs throughout their mentorship.
- b. *Consider deepening the workshops topics by allowing more time per topic; through intensive workshops or a weeklong course.* An intensive workshop could be extended to a 1 or 2 week course, perhaps adjoined with the “Pre-Project Workshop”. Facilities such as computer labs, library resources, and e-journals could be made available online depending on the topics.
- c. *Diversify workshop speakers and trainers.* People from different professions and regions such as journalists should be invited to talk about writing styles and dissemination, and practitioners from development agencies and NGOs to talk about research, practice and policy. These speakers can come deliberately from the country where the PI will be conducting the project to link the PI to that practitioner or journalist in the future.
- d. *Provide tutorials on communication and presentation skills at Workshops.*
- e. *Discuss PI’s publication strategy during early stages of project, at first Training Workshop.*
- f. *Provide videos (on a SIRCA YouTube channel) to encourage discussion of PI projects and for those PIs who are absent.* SIRCA can video record 30-second PI self-introductions during workshops and post them on the web to get their “instant reactions” to the workshops or their SIRCA experience so far. This is also in line with SIRCA’s open data policy to share their learning and outputs with others.
- g. *Bridge research and practice – through adding a “policy recommendations” or “policy implications” section as an outcome of PI research projects.* This will allow PIs to think about their social science research findings more closely to the community or beneficiary, and guide their publication strategies. This will be emphasized from the start of the program, when PIs set out on their research, as it will help guide their entire process including define their research questions, methodologies, and dissemination strategy.
- h. *Conduct pre-project workshop to discuss scheduling issues, research scope, publication strategy, etc.*
- i. *Provide PIs with templates on slides and posters to help them prepare.*
- j. *Improve workshop format from lecture style to round table set up to encourage more discussion.* SIRCA can consider a “round table” layout where speakers/mentors/panelists are at the same level and PIs sit around a table in a more intimate setting.
- k. *Mentors should be able to present on their area of expertise at least once.*
- l. *No three-minute PowerPoint presentations.* It is recommended that at least 5 minutes per presentation were necessary. Practice sessions were also important.

- m. *Monitor/track PI and Mentor outcomes more consistently.* PIs have had tremendous outcomes, some fully related to SIRCA projects, and some that have tangential relation to SIRCA but nevertheless inspired by their participation in the program. Both kinds of outcomes are important to monitor because it demonstrates that SIRCA has had a broad influence on their careers.

For full reports online, please access <http://sirca1.sirca.org.sg/about-sirca/sirca-evaluation/>.

9 LOOKING AHEAD

9.1 Global grant

From the outset, the SIRCA program aimed to identify future research leaders in Asia and facilitate their development through the support of research grants. While the initiative provides the necessary financial support to conduct the research studies, it also equips researchers with the resources needed to produce high quality research deliverables. The program includes a one-to-one mentoring arrangement with an experienced senior scholar appointed to supervise the progress of every project grant. In addition, researchers are exposed to new ideas in the ICTD field, provided with training and expertise to conduct research, and develop their writing and presentation skills.

As the projects draw to a close, it is clear that much of the SIRCA-funded research has been received well. SIRCA project grant recipients PIs have presented their research findings in conferences around the world with positive feedback, and the program has published two special journal issues with the *Media Asia*, comprising of peer-reviewed academic articles from mentees. Furthermore, three of the program's grant recipients got admission into doctoral programs and are now reading for their PhDs.

With growing interest among academics, practitioners and civil society in understanding the role of ICTs for development, in the areas of health, agriculture, human rights, climate change and in social marketing in general, the SIRCA program could not have been more timely. Focusing on Asian researchers in the first instance, it is evident that the initiative has been successful in developing the capacity of its researchers in conducting rigorous, scientific and critical research that is of relevance to those involved in the ICT field.

The second incarnation of the SIRCA program is under way, also managed by SiRC and funded by the IDRC. The Strengthening Information Society Research Capacity Alliance – or SIRCA II program moves up a notch, taking the research capacity building program to the Global South. Learning from the experience of building capacity in the ICTD field in Asia, SiRC will scale the program to include researchers from Africa, Latin America as well as Asia. Emphasis will be placed on inter-disciplinary research with respect to information societies in these locations, as opposed to simply focusing on ICTD research. SIRCA II will be active for a period of 24 months, and based on total funding of CAD \$1,346,038. Several of the above recommendations have been considered and implemented in this program. If SIRCA I was promising, the sequel looks to be even more so.

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ANNEX 1: RESEARCH OUTPUT AND ACHIEVEMENTS

CONFERENCES

Komathi ALE (Singapore)

- Presentation on “Examining community aspects of ICT in education initiatives: Case of the One Laptop per Child laptops in Indian schools” at the International Association for Media and Communication Research Conference, in Istanbul, Turkey, 13-17 July 2011.
- Presentation on “Evaluating the impact of low-cost computers in education: An Indian field study” at the International Technology, Education and Development Conference, in Valencia, Spain, 7-9 March 2011.
- Presentation on “Cheap and good ICTs in education: Low-cost computers in Indian rural primary schools” at the Annual International Conference on Infocomm Technologies in Competitive Strategies (ICT 2010), in Singapore, 25-26 October 2010.

Rajiv George Aricat (Singapore)

- Forthcoming presentation at the Second symposium of Asian PhD students in Communication Research, Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, 11-13 November 2011.

Mahfuz Ashraf (Bangladesh)

- Presentation on “Operationalizing the capability approach for evaluating the contribution of ICT to development at an ICT4D project in Bangladesh” at the IFIP WG9.4 Conference 2011 *Partners for Development: ICT Actors and Actions*, in Kathmandu, Nepal, 22-25 May 2011. Appointed as a Member of the Program Committee for this event.

Phal Des (Cambodia)

- Presentation on “Mobile innovations to promote protecting awareness against Sexual Transmitted Diseases (STD): Showcasing mobile solutions designed for young Cambodian people”, at IEEJ Japan-Cambodia Joint Symposium on Information Systems and Communication Technology 2011 (JCAICT 2011), in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 6-8 January 2011.

Regina Hechanova (Philippines)

- Presentation on “Counseling OFWs: perspective of users, non-users and counselors” at the Psychological Association of the Philippines, 18 August 2011.
- Presentation on “Prospects for Online Counseling for Migrant Workers” at the Living the Information Society Conference, October 2010.

VLV Kameswari (India)

- Presentation on “New Communication Technologies for Agricultural Extension: A Relook at Public Extension in the Indian Context” at the International Conference on Future Imperatives of Communication and Information for Development and Social Change, organized by University of Massachusetts, Amherst and Thammasat University, in Bangkok, Thailand, 20-22 December 2010.
- Presentation on “ICTs and market participation of small scale farmers in the Indian Himalayan region” at the 5th Annual ACRON-REDECOM conference, in Lima, Peru, 19-20 May 2011.

Pham Huu Ty (Vietnam)

- Invited to present his paper at the GSDI 12 World Conference, organized by GSDI Association, Permanent Committee on GIS Infrastructure for Asia & the Pacific (PCGIAP) and Singapore Land Authority (SLA), in Singapore, 19-22 October 2010, but could not attend.

- Presentation on “Impoverishment Risks Due to Involuntary Displacement and Resettlement in the Hydroelectric Development Project: How Are They Managed?” at the “2D, Equitable Resource Allocation and Poverty Reduction” session at the 17th Annual International Sustainable Development Research Conference in New York, 8-10 May 2011.
- Presentation on “Lessons learnt from a participatory intervention for livelihood restoration for hydropower development in Vietnam” at the Nature™ Inc? Questioning the Market Panacea in Environmental Policy and Conservation 2011, in the Netherlands, 30 June-2 July 2011.

Sirajul Islam (Bangladesh)

- Presentation on “Knowledge Management practices in e-Government: A developing country perspective” at the 4th International Conference on Theory and Practice of Electronic Governance (ICEGOV2010), in Beijing, China, 25-28 October, 2010.
- Presentation on “The Bangladesh National Biometric Database: A Transferable Success?” at the 9th International conference on Electronic Government on Information Systems perspective (EGOVIS-DEXA, 2010), in Bilbao, Spain, 1-2 September, 2010.

Grace Mirandilla-Santos (Philippines)

- Presentation on “A-list Filipino Political Bloggers and Their Blog Readers: Who They Are, Why They Write/Read Blogs, and How They Perceive and Participate in Politics” at the “The Filipino Blogosphere: Political Expression, Communication, and Participation” hosted by CRC at the National College of Public Administration and Governance (NCPAG), University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines, on 26 February 2011 (<http://www.scribd.com/doc/49764715/A-List-Filipino-Political-Bloggers-Readers-Mirandilla-NCPAG-Feb-26-11>).
- Presentation on “A-list Filipino Political Bloggers and Their Blog Readers: Who They Are, Why They Write/Read Blogs, and How They Perceive and Participate in Politics” at the “The Filipino Blogosphere: Political Expression, Communication, and Participation” hosted by CRC and Cebu Bloggers Society, Inc. in Cebu, Philippines, on 5 March 2011 (<http://www.scribd.com/doc/50337529/Mirandilla-A-List-Filipino-Political-Bloggers-Readers-Cebu-Mar-5-11>).
- Presentation on “A-list Filipino Political Bloggers and Their Blog Readers: Who They Are, Why They Write/Read Blogs, and How They Perceive and Participate in Politics” at the “The Filipino Blogosphere: Political Expression, Communication, and Participation” hosted by CRC and Davao Bloggers in Davao, Philippines, on 9 April 2011 (<http://www.scribd.com/doc/61359610/Mirandilla-A-List-Filipino-Political-Bloggers-amp-Readers-Davao-Apr-9-11>).

PUBLICATIONS

- Ashraf, M.**, Grunfeld, H., Harris, R., Alam, N., Ferdousi, S., & Malik, B.T. (2011). An Explorative Study of ICT for Developmental Impact in Rural Areas of Bangladesh. *Media Asia Journal*, 38(1).
- Des, P.**, Kong, M., Khim, C., Srun, S., Traxler, J., & Scharff, C. (2011). Mobile Innovations to Promote Protecting Awareness Against Sexual Transmitted Diseases (STD): Showcasing Mobile Solutions Designed for Young Cambodian People. *IEEEJ Japan-Cambodia Joint Symposium on Information Systems and Communication Technology 2011 (JCAICT 2011)*, 73-77. ISBN 978-4-88686-072-9.
- Hechanova, M.R.**, Tuliao, A.P., & **Ang, P.H.** (2011). If you build it will they come? Adoption of Online Counseling among Overseas Migrant Workers. *Media Asia*, 38(1), 32-40.

- Islam, M.S.** (2011). Evaluation of an M-Service for Farmers in a Developing Region: A Case Study from Rural Bangladesh. *Media Asia Journal*, 38(1).
- Islam, M.S., & Grönlund, Å.** (2011). Factors influencing the adoption of mobile phones among the farmers in Bangladesh: Theories and practices. In press for publication in the forthcoming issue of *International Journal on Advances in ICT for Emerging Regions* (ICTer).
- Islam, M.S., & Grönlund, Å.** (2010). Agriculture Market Information Services (AMIS) in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs): Nature, Scopes, and Challenges. In M.A. Wimmer et al. (2010) (Eds.). *IFIP e-government conference 2010, Lausanne, Switzerland, August 30-September 2, 2010, Proceedings*. Springer Lecture Notes in Computer Science #6228, 109-120.
- Mehta, B.S.** (In press). Decent work in Indian Information and Communication Sector. *The Indian Journal of Labour Economics*, New Delhi, India Vol. 55, No. 2.
- Mirandilla-Santos, M.P.** (2011). A-List Filipino Political Bloggers and Their Blog Readers: Who They Are, Why They Write/Read Blogs, and How They Perceive and Participate in Politics. *Media Asia Journal*, 38(1).
- Peou, C.** (2010) *Internet integration among Cambodian students* [Research Report]. Phnom Penh: the Department of Media and Communication, Royal University of Phnom Penh.
- Raman, B., & Bawa, Z.** (2011). Interacting With the State via Information and Communication Technologies: The Case of *Nemmadi Kendras* in Karnataka. *Media Asia Journal*, 38(1).
- Wansong, Z., Chib, A., Ping, G., & Kanliang, W.** (2011). Factors Influencing Physicians' Intention to Share Electronic Medical Records: An Empirical Investigation in China. *Media Asia Journal*, 38(1).

SUBMITTED FOR REVIEW/FORTHCOMING

- Ale, K., & Chib, A.** (In press). Community factors in technology adoption in primary education: Perspectives from rural India. *Information Technologies & International Development*, 7(4).
- Chib, A. & Aricat, R. G.** (forthcoming). 'Seeking the Non-Developmental within the Developmental: Mobile Phones in the Globalized Migration Context', in Parker, R. & Appelbaum, R. (eds.). *Emerging Economies, Emerging Technologies: Can Technology Make a Difference in Development?* Routledge: city to be added.
- Peou, C. & Lwin, M. O.** (forthcoming). Integrating the Internet into Cambodian higher education? Exploring students' Internet uses, attitudes & academic utilization. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies and Society*.
- Wansong Zheng, Yuhao Li, & Kanliang Wang.** The research for influencing factors of knowledge and information sharing across organizations: Taking EMR sharing for an example, to *Management Science*.

AWARDS/HONOURS

Komathi ALE (Singapore) was awarded a PhD scholarship from USC Annenberg in USA in August 2011.

Mahfuz Ashraf (Bangladesh) was awarded the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Chair in ICT for Development (ICT4D) scholarship to attend the ICTD2010 IEEE/ACM International Conference on Information and Communication Technologies and Development in Royal Holloway, University of London, UK, from 13-16 December, 2010.

Peou Chivoin (Cambodia) was awarded a PhD scholarship from the University of Melbourne in Australia in July 2010.

Phal Des (Cambodia) won the Distinguished Paper Award at IEEJ Japan-Cambodia Joint Symposium on Information Systems and Communication Technology 2011 (JCAICT 2011) in January 2011, in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

He was also promoted from Director of the IT Center to Vice-Rector at the Royal University of Phnom Penh.

Rajiv Aricat George (India) won a top-three paper award at the Inaugural Honors Symposium for Asian Students in Communication Research held in City University of Hong Kong in November 2010.

Regina Hechanova (Philippines) was awarded The Outstanding Women in Nation's Service (2010), Philippines. Her book *For the People, With the People: Developing Social Enterprises in the Philippines* also won the Cardinal Sin Book Awards, Philippines.

Sirajul Islam (Bangladesh) was invited to participate as the Chair of the paper session, and a Moderator of the panel session on “Mobile for Development”, Post-Graduate strand at ICTD 2010, co-hosted by IPID (International Network for Post-Graduate Students in the Area of ICT4D), on December 13, 2010, at Royal Holloway, London. He was also a Reviewer of the papers presented at this event.

Siraj was also invited as a Reviewer to comment on papers presented at the 2nd International Conference on Mobile for Development, in Kampala, Uganda, from 10-11 November 2010, and at the Knowledge Management Track, 44th Hawaii International Conference on Systems Science (HICSS), USA.

In addition to this, he was a Reviewer for the Journal of Information Technology for Development (ITD), Routledge, Taylor & Francis group, UK – a high ranking journal in the discipline of ICT4D, and for the International Journal of E-Services and Mobile Applications (IJESMA), Denmark (IGI-Global).

Pham Huu Ty (Vietnam) was awarded the Nuffic Scholarship for PhD at Utrecht University, Netherlands in May 2010. His PhD thesis is on development induced displacement and land grabbing in Vietnam.

Pham Huu Ty's (Vietnam) project opened up a new future research trajectory for him, as he now bid for a centre on climate change research at his university.

ANNEX 2: SIRCA TRAINING WORKSHOP I, 3-4 JULY 2009

ANNEX 2: SIRCA TRAINING WORKSHOP 1, 2 & 3 JULY 2009

Program and Agenda	Day 1	Day 2
0900 - 0930	Welcome by SiRC / IDRC	Seminar 2:Quantitative Methodology / Q & A
0930 - 1000	Panel Session 1: Overview of ICTD Research and Issues	
1000 - 1015		
1015 - 1030	Break	Break
1030 - 1100	Seminar 1: Theorizing ICTD Research/Q & A	Group Consultation
1100 - 1130		
1130 - 1200		
1200 - 1230	Lunch	Lunch
1230 - 1300		
1300 - 1330	Group Topical Exercises	Seminar 3: ICTD Qualitative Methodology / Q & A
1330 - 1400		
1400- 1415		
1415- 1430	Break	Break
1430 - 1500		Group Consultation
1500 - 1530		
1530 - 1600	Panel Session 2: ICTD Research Ethics	SIRCA Compliance Forum & Feedback
1600- 1630		
1630 - 1700	Group Consultation	
1700 - 1730		
1730 - 1800	Dinner	Dinner
1800 - 1830		
1830 - 1900		

Expectations of SIRCA Workshop 1

Name of Participant	Expectations of Workshop
Kameswari	Tools, techniques and data analysis methods that can be specifically used for ICTD research in the third world context with case studies or practical examples.
Pham Huu Ty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Necessary information to adhere to the SIRCA Secretariat compliance Highlight practical issues and challenges in fieldwork Quantitative and qualitative researches related to ICTD How to develop a good research related to ICTD
Chivoin Peou	<p>The topics in urgent needs, which I expect to learn from the workshop, for me to develop research expertise in ICTD are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a more solid and comprehensive theoretical understanding of ICTD; a clearer understanding of conceptual frameworks available for social science research; and a better skill in statistical procedures to be used for quantitative data analysis (my limited command of statistical procedures and SPSS is a major obstacle).
Shefali Oza	I would like to discuss the methodology of our research study with other experienced researchers. Dr. Arul Chib, our mentor, has been invaluable already for this discussion of methodology. It would be great to have other researchers also share their views about our research methodology so that we can improve the study. I am also excited to have in-depth discussions with the other researchers about their specific projects. Since we are all working in ICT, this

	<p>sharing of information I think will also help in brainstorming creative ways to improve the pilot study and hopefully I can contribute something to the queries of other researchers as well.</p> <p>So primarily, I am very interested in hearing from both the workshop organizers and the other PIs present about their current and past research on these topics, as I think that is the best way to form new ideas and learn from others' experiences. If there are formalized training sessions about where current ICT research is, then that would also be quite helpful I think.</p> <p>My expectations from this workshop are having the ability to meet my peers and the conference organizers. I hope to have many discussions with everyone else who is at the workshop about our respective projects. I am also very pleased with the point that we will be discussing challenges in fieldwork, as I believe that is one of the biggest challenges for completing this kind of work.</p> <p>Thank you for organizing this workshop – I am really looking forward to attending!</p>
Wansong Zheng	<p>In the first place, I expected that I can learn the methods of Qualitative and Quantitative about information system. Secondly, I feel that I'm lack of theory of information system; I expected the workshop can explain some new theories in deep. Of course, the health information system is an important application of information system, but researcher of health information system is less, I looked forward to communicating with others country researcher about health care information system.</p>
Mahfuz Ashraf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical issues and challenges are facing to initiate the project from the donors perspective. • Find out the relationship between low cost technologies such as \$100 laptop, solar panel and human/social resources that make ICT4D project successful. • To what extent do specific ICTs have the capability of being acquired and used in a given situation • Specific mechanism to identify and measures user capability that means acquisition, development and accumulation for ICTs appropriateness. • Necessity and mechanism of integrating micro level impact assessment findings to meso (organisation) and macro (national) level.
Phal DES	<p>Workshop is a great opportunity for scholars to meet, share, and exchange creative new ideas and experience in research field. We, anyway, highly appreciate the workshop organized by SIRCA. We expect that we will get some recommendation and new ideas in the field of mobile health from scholars who attend workshop and we are looking forward to cooperation related to this research.</p>
Sirajul Islam	<p>I expect which the SIRCA also outlines that I will be gaining a clearer understanding of methodological issues with regards to my project. The exchange of views will enable the researchers to have concrete guidelines to proceed with the critical practical issues and challenges in fieldwork that needs to be framed theoretically. The familiarity of the other projects funded by SIRCA will also help to understand of how their project relates and contributes to the broader ICTD discipline and how my preconceived ideas in ICT4D match with their perceptions. If not, how the gap of my understanding be corrected as well. This workshop will also guide me the way SIRCA wants me to proceed.</p> <p>Above all, as a PhD student, this workshop will provide me a strong direction towards the path of achieving methodological and theoretical excellence in my ongoing research initiatives.</p>
Mary Grace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I hope to be able to discuss and refine my research methodology by being given ample time and the opportunity for a one-on-one discussion with a trainer who has done a similar study or can refer me to other scholars who can guide me, as the study progresses. Being a first of its kind in the Philippine context, consultations with experts would be very helpful. • I expect the workshop to open channels of communication among the participants <i>beyond</i> the workshop proper. The meeting should only be the

	<p><i>first step</i> at establishing a network of PIs and scholars who can start regularly communicating and consulting each other.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The workshop can serve as a match-making mechanism, wherein expertise can be maximized and gaps in ICT research in developing countries addressed.
Balwant Singh	My expectation from the seminar is to broaden my understanding of ICTD and the practical issues and challenges related to the field survey. I am also interested to know about the data analysis techniques can be used to study such problems.
Gina Hechanova	New approaches to qualitative analysis
TB Dinesh	We would specifically like to understand the projects which other researchers are undertaking and the theoretical frameworks which they are using to approach the questions under study.
MJR David	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a network of working relationships with SIRCA researchers and other principal investigators Refresh and catch up on social science research methodology and relevant computer based applications. Discuss user friendly and interactive research presentations.

SIRCA I Workshop Trainers Allocation

Day 1		
Time	Sessions	Trainer(s)-in-charge
0930 - 1015	Panel Session 1: Overview of ICTD Research and Issues	Dr. Arul Chib (Chair), Dr. Alexander Flow, Dr. Czarina Saloma-Akpedonu, Dr. Rahul De
1030 - 1200	Seminar 1: Theorizing ICTD Research/Q & A	Dr. Alexander Flor
1300 - 1430	Group Topical Consultations	
	<i>Agriculture/Rural</i>	Dr. Czarina Saloma-Akpedonu
	<i>Capacity-building in education/political participation</i>	Dr. Alexander Flor
	<i>Socio-economic psychological development</i>	Dr. Rahul De
	<i>Healthcare</i>	Dr. Arul Chib
1445 - 1600	Panel Session 2: ICTD Research Ethics	Dr. Arul Chib (Chair), Dr. Alexander Flow, Dr. Czarina Saloma-Akpedonu, Dr. Rahul De
1600 - 1730	Group Consultations	
	<i>Agriculture/Rural</i>	Dr. Czarina Saloma-Akpedonu
	<i>Capacity-building in education/political participation</i>	Dr. Alexander Flor
	<i>Socio-economic psychological development</i>	Dr. Rahul De
	<i>Healthcare</i>	Dr. Arul Chib
Day 2		
Time	Sessions	Trainer(s)-in-charge
0900 - 1015	Seminar 2: Quantitative Methodology / Q & A	Dr. Rahul De
1030 - 1200	Group Consultations	
	<i>QL/Interviews, field observations</i>	Dr. Czarina Saloma-Akpedonu
	<i>Quantitative Modeling</i>	Dr. Rahul De
	<i>Case studies/mixed</i>	Dr. Arul Chib
	<i>Ethnography/mixed</i>	Dr. Alexander Flor
1300 - 1430	Seminar 3: ICTD Qualitative Methodology / Q & A	Dr. Czarina Saloma-Akpedonu
1445 - 1600	Group Consultations	
	<i>QL/Interviews, field observations</i>	Dr. Czarina Saloma-Akpedonu
	<i>Quantitative Modeling</i>	Dr. Rahul De
	<i>Case studies/mixed</i>	Dr. Arul Chib
	<i>Ethnography/mixed</i>	Dr. Alexander Flor

ANNEX 3: SIRCA TRAINING WORKSHOP II, 20 JUNE 2010

SIRCA Workshop II

“Innovations in Mobile Use” Preconference Workshop
ICA Conference, June 2010

SIRCA Workshop II (20th June 2010)

Venue: Hotel Grand Pacific (formerly known as Allison Hotel) Seminar Room

1200-1300 Lunch & Welcome by SIRCA Senior Manager, Yvonne Lim Yin Chum

1300-1430 Practice Sessions for Poster/Paper Presentation (see table below)

Name of Presenter	Poster Presentation
1. Mahfuz Ashraf (Bangladesh)	Impact study of ICT4D projects in rural Bangladesh: the results from a preliminary field study
2. Sirajul Islam (Bangladesh)	Mobile phone based Agricultural Market Information Services (AMIS) and its implications on the farmers in Bangladesh: Theories and practices
3. Peou Chivoin (Cambodia)	Internet for Learning? Uses & Perceptions of Cambodian Students
4. Phal Des (Cambodia)	Presumptive Diagnosis and Awareness for STDs via SMS for Young Cambodians in Rural Areas
5. Kanliang Wang (China)	Effects of social capital and organisational climate factors on doctors' sharing of EMR: An empirical investigation
6. Balwant Singh Mehta (India)	Decent Work in ICT Sector: An Indian Case
7. Devesh Kishore (India)	Information and Communication Technologies for Agriculture
8. TB Dinesh (India)	Communities, Technology, Participation
9. Mary Grace Mirandilla (Philippines)	A-List Filipino Political Bloggers: Who they are, why they blog, and how they participate in politics
10. Regina M. Hechanova (Philippines)	Lifeline Online: E-counselling and the Wellbeing of Overseas Filipino Workers and their Families

1430-1450 Break

1450-1620 Mentor-PI Discussion on Research Progress

1620-1630 Break

1630-1730 Group Discussion on planning for publication and dissemination issues; Chaired by Dr.

Arul Chib

1730 End of SIRCA Meet

ANNEX 4: ICA 2010 MOBILES PRECONFERENCE, 21-22 JUNE 2010

“Innovations in Mobile Use” Preconference Workshop
21-22 June 2010
Level 5, Imagination Room, National Library Building

Day 1 (21st June 2010)

0900-0930 Registration (Tea and snacks will be provided).

0930-0940 Welcome address by Arul Chib (Assistant Director, SiRC).

0940-1010 Keynote address by Alex Siow (Head, IS & Business Excellence, Starhub).

1010-1140 Mobile & social groups in Asia: Richard Ling, Professor at the IT University of Copenhagen, Denmark & Sociologist, Telenor Research and Innovation

1	<i>‘Mobile phones are just like our hands and legs’– the use of mobile phones by disabled persons in China, Lin Jin, National University of Singapore</i>
2	<i>Connection vs. Control: Mobile phone usage of foreign domestic workers in Singapore, Trisha Lin, Shirley Sun, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore</i>
3	<i>Mobile Phone and Impact on Status of Women in Rural India, Balwant Singh Mehta, SIRCA Grant Awardee</i>
4	<i>Evaluating the impact of mobile phone based ‘health help line’ service in rural Bangladesh, Md. Mahfuz Ashraf, SIRCA Grant Awardee</i>

1140-1300 Lunch / Browse SIRCA Poster Display

Introduction to SIRCA by Arul Chib (Assistant Director, SiRC).

1300-1400 Speed presentation of 12 projects (3 mins + 3 slides each)

1400-1530 Mobiles & Learning: Vibodh Parthasarathi, Associate Professor at the Centre for Culture, Media & Governance, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi

1	<i>Mobile people, mobile societies, mobile cultures not just mobile learning, John Traxler, University of Wolverhampton / Learning Lab</i>
2	<i>An m-learning reflexivity: Learning about the mobile and using the mobile for learning, Fernando Paragas, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore</i>
3	<i>Texting among like aged persons, Richard Ling, Telenor Research and Innovation</i>
4	<i>The Media Convergence Lifestyle Profile in Thailand, Parichart Saithanoo, Thammasat University</i>

1530-1550 Break

1550-1710 Mobile theory & culture: Alexander Flor, Professor, and Dean of the University of the Philippines

1	<i>Are We Evolved to Live with Mobiles? An Evolutionary View of Mobile Communication, Chih-Hui Lai, James E. Katz, Rutgers University</i>
2	<i>Redefining Mobile Society: Emerging Concepts and Theories of Wireless Communication, Deb Aikat, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill</i>
3	<i>‘Movable Type: Findings from the Young, Mobile, Networked Study’, Kate Crawford, Gerard Goggin, University of New South Wales</i>
4	<i>The skillful management of mobile phones’ ring in institutional social performances, Christian Licoppe, Telecom Paristech</i>

1730 Board bus to Marina South Pier

1800-2100 Cultural Activity: Imperial Cheng Ho Cruise

End of Day 1

Day 2 (22nd June 2010)

1000-1130 Mobile emotions & relationships: Roger Harris, Independent Consultant & Activist, ICT for Poverty Reduction in Asia

1	<i>Out of touch? On the lack of emotional support over the mobile phone, Orit Ben Harush, Queensland University of Technology</i>
2	<i>A World More Intimate: Exploring the Role of Mobile Phones in Maintaining and Extending Social Networks, Rhonda McEwen, University of Toronto</i>
3	<i>Does mobile phone make egalitarian couples? The Effect of Mobile Phone Use on Perceived Behavioral Control in Romantic Relationships by Ban-ya kim, Seoul National University</i>
4	<i>Constant Connections: Piloting a mobile phone based peer support program for Nuer (southern Sudanese) women, Dennis Wollersheim, La Trobe University</i>

1130-1300 Lunch / Browse SIRCA Poster Display

1300 – 1430 Mobile and Space: Harsha de Silva, Lead Economist/ Project Director, LIRNEasia

1	<i>Mobile Communications and the Public Sphere in South Korea: Possibilities and Limitations, Hyun-Chin Lim, Seoul National University; Joonkoo Lee, Duke University</i>
2	<i>Mobile Internet Uses in Everyday Life and a Sense of Place: A Korean Case Study, Dong-Hoo Lee, University of Incheon</i>
3	<i>"Simply leaving my house would even be scarier": How mobile phones alter women's perception of safety and experiences of public places, Kathleen M. Cumiskey, College of Staten Island - City University of New York</i>
4	<i>United States' Rural Poor: Emerging Mobile Markets in Appalachia, Emil Bakke, Meghan Peirce, Ohio University</i>

1430-1450 Break

1450-1620 Mobiles, Future & Youth: John Traxler, Professor of Mobile Learning at the University of Wolverhampton & Director of Learning Lab

1	<i>The Future of the Public Phone: Findings from a six-country Asian study on telecom use at the BOP, Nirmali Sivapragasam, LIRNEasia</i>
2	<i>Mobile Internet in France: between innovation and social contexts of media reception, Corrine Martin, Université Paul Verlaine</i>
3	<i>Users' perspectives on an evolving mobile media ecology. Uses and conceptualizations of the mobile Internet by American and German college students, Lee Humphreys, Cornell University; Veronika Karnowski, LMU München; Thilo Von Pape, Universität Hohenheim</i>
4	<i>The Mobile Music Device Uses and Gratifications: The Interactions of the Mobile Music Device Uses and Motivations, Yi-Fan Chen, Old Dominion University</i>

1620-1630 Closing Remarks by Richard Ling (Professor at the IT University of Copenhagen, Denmark & Sociologist, Telenor Research and Innovation)

1630-1700 Wrap-up session

End of day 2

ANNEX 5: SIRCA FINAL RESEARCH DISSEMINATION CONFERENCE “GLOBAL DIALOGUE ON ICT FOR DEVELOPMENT”, 15-17 APRIL 2011

SIRCA Research Conference: Global Dialogue on ICT for Development April 15-17 in Phuket, Thailand

The SIRCA (Strengthening ICTD Research Capacity in Asia) Programme

The SIRCA Programme is a capacity building initiative, primarily aimed at improving the social science research skills of emerging Asian scholars in the information and communications technology for development (ICTD) space. SIRCA is managed by the Singapore Internet Research Centre (SIRC), based at the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, and funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada.

Objectives of the conference

- Provide a platform for SIRCA Principal Investigators (PIs) to showcase current research;
- Present framework for the next capacity building initiative, the “global grant”; and
- Provide a forum for ICTD scholars to meet face-to-face, network and exchange ideas.

Date	Time	Programme	Venue
Day 0: Apr 15	19.30	Welcome dinner	Bistro
Day 1: Apr 16	9.00-9.15	Registration	
	9.15-10.45	ICTD experts and invitees: Introduction to SIRCA for invitees	Patong
		SIRCA Mentors and PIs: Presentation practice session	Kata 1 & 2, and Karen 1 & 2
	10.45-11.00	Tea Break	
	11.00-12.30	Empowering communities through ICTs Chair: Roger Harris <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agricultural market information services: Implications on the rural community in Bangladesh (Sirajul Islam) Empowerment of farming communities through the use of ICTs: A study in the Indian Himalayan region (V.L. V. Kameswari) Mobile phone application development for rural Cambodia (Phal Des) Lifeline online: E-counseling and the well-being of overseas Filipino workers and their families (Regina Hechanova) 	Patong
	12.30-13.30	Lunch	Bistro
	13.30-14.45	ICTD Applications Chair: May Lwin <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internet for learning and knowledge building: Students' perceptions and utilization in Cambodian higher education (Peou Chivoin) The Filipino blogosphere: An emerging alternative venue for political participation in the Philippines (Grace Mirandilla) Erosion and landslide hazard mapping in Vietnam (Huynh Van Chuong) 	Patong
	14.45-15.00	Tea Break	
	15.00-16.15	Participation in ICTs Chair: John Traxler <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An impact assessment framework to evaluate ICT-led development projects in Bangladesh (Mahfuz Ashraf) Nature of work, quality of employment and working conditions in ICT sector: A case of India (Balwant Singh Mehta) Communities, participation and technology in India (T.B. Dinesh) 	Patong

	17.00	Show and Dinner at Phuket FantaSea	<i>Phuket FantaSea</i>
Date	Time	Programme	Location
Day 2: Apr 17	9.30-10.30	Graduate Award presentations Chair: Ang Peng Hwa - <i>Evaluating the impact of the One Laptop Per Child project on the psychological empowerment of primary school children in rural India (Komathi Ale)</i> - <i>Acculturation of migrants in work sector: Identifying the facilitative role of mobile phones (Rajiv Aricat)</i> - <i>Mobile phones for healthcare in rural Thailand (Thanomwong Poorisat)</i>	<i>Patong</i>
	10.30-10.45	Tea Break	
	10.45-12.00	Future plans for global grant	<i>Patong</i>
	12.00-13.30	Lunch	<i>Bistro</i>
	13.30-15.00	ICTD experts and invitees : Global grant – Focus on South America and Africa	<i>Patong</i>
		SIRCA Mentors and Pls: Collaboration discussions and video interviews	<i>Kata 1 & 2, and Karen 1 & 2</i>
	16.00	Closing of conference	<i>Lounge 98</i>

Confirmed attendees

Mentors

Alexander G. Flor, University of the Philippines - Open University
Ang Peng Hwa, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
Arul Chib, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
John Maurice Traxler, University of Wolverhampton, UK
May Lwin, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
Rahul De, Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore, India
Roger Harris, Roger Harris Associates, Hong Kong
Shaikh Abdus Salam, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh

Experts

Matthew Smith, International Development Research Centre, Canada
Francisco Proenza, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona
Gerard Goggin, University of New South Wales, Australia
Gloria Bonder, FLACSO Argentina (Latin American School of Social Science), Argentina (did not attend due to flight problems)
Idris Rai, Makerere University, Uganda
James E .Katz, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, USA
Karim A. Kasim, Young Social Innovation Programme, Egypt
Portia Marcelo, National Telehealth Center, Philippines
Roxana Barrantes, Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, Peru

ANNEX 6: MEDIA ASIA JOURNAL SPECIAL ISSUES

See attachments

ANNEX 7: SIRCA BOOK PROPOSAL FOR “LINKING RESEARCH TO PRACTICE IN ASIA: ICT FOR DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH, MANAGEMENT AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES”

Book Proposal

LINKING RESEARCH TO PRACTICE THROUGH CAPACITY-BUILDING INITIATIVES IN ASIA: ICT FOR DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH, MANAGEMENT AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

Edited by

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June 2011

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RATIONALE

The SIRCA – Strengthening ICTD Research Capacity in Asia programme started as a seed project in 2008, but its impact is far-reaching in developing the skills of researchers in Asia. Emerging scholars in the information and communication technologies for development (ICTD) space have gained from efforts that focused on improving the quality of research outcomes. These were designed to help mentors and mentees collaborate to conduct high-quality theoretically-grounded research related to new media and technologies across Asia. Scholars in this multidisciplinary field seek to use ICTs for the betterment of communities in the education, healthcare, and livelihood domains, among others. The overarching objective of the capacity-building activities was to support ICTD research that stimulates sustainable development in the Asian continent.

As SIRCA initiatives translate into applicable research outputs, continued efforts are directed towards establishing keen insights on realities in practice. Presenting a synthesis of experiences and lessons of those involved with SIRCA, the proposed publication will fill an important un-addressed

niche that establishes a research-to-practice link within the development community. In a nutshell, this volume will be a culmination of SIRCA personnel perspectives, mentee research outputs, and mentor experiences and thought pieces on how best to bridge the gap between ICTD theory and practice.

THE READERSHIP

The book will appeal to academics, researchers, practitioners, and policy-makers in the development community who wish to gain insights on the latest debates in the ICTD field. The first section provides fresh deliberations that would appeal to the professional audience. The second section is aimed at informing project-developers from various organizational bodies on best practices in project design and implementation. The final section of the book, with its focus on research outcomes and future directions, will attract the larger academic readers and policy-makers. Despite the Asian focus, there will be interest for a book of this theme in many countries. In particular, thriving ICTD research efforts in areas such as Africa and South America suggest that there will be an audience for the book in these countries. The book, in its complete form, will enable these target audiences to acquire a deeper understanding of issues in bridging ICTD research and practise.

THE EDITORS

Arul Chib is an assistant professor and the assistant director of the Singapore internet Research Center (SiRC), Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. Dr. Chib examines the impact of development campaigns delivered via a range of innovative information and communication technologies. His research and teaching examines the impact of campaigns delivered via a range of communication technologies. The primary theoretical deliberation is around developing a robust explication of the mechanisms underlying the process of media effects. The analysis attempts to bridge multiple level of analysis—technology-mediated effects at the individual level and socially-mediated effects at the structural level.

Roger Harris Associates (RHA) is a consulting and social entrepreneurial firm based around the work of Dr. Roger W. Harris. Its mission is to alleviate poverty by facilitating access to Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) for underserved sections of society in Asia, and to ensure they are able to make good use of the technology according to their own development aspirations. Dr. Harris has been working in this field since 1997 and the firm has been providing consulting and knowledge sharing services for eight years in the area of ICTs for poverty reduction and rural development in Asia. Services include; policy advice and development, programme design and evaluation services, project implementation assistance and research - to governments, international development agencies and civil society bodies.

EXTENT

The single-spaced manuscript will be 120 to 180 pages long, with word count of approximately 36,000 to 40,000 words. It may include 5 to 10 tables or figures, and 5 to 10 photographs (black and white).

SUBMISSION DATE

A final copyedited manuscript will be ready for submission on 1 October 2011.

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Chapter 1.2 SIRCA: An Opportunity to Build and Improve the Field of ICT4D; *Chaitali Sinha, Laurent Elder, and Matthew Smith (IDRC)*
Chapter 1.3. Managing SIRCA, *Tahani Iqbal (Nanyang Technological University)*
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SECTION 4. SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSION; *Arul Chib (Nanyang Technological University) and Roger Harris (Roger Harris Associates)*

CHAPTER SYNOPSIS

This edited book is arranged into three main sections: (1) Management Perspectives, (2) Research Perspectives, and (3) Research Outputs. Contributions in each section will come from the editors, as well as SIRCA personnel, mentors, and principal investigators.

FOREWORD

SECTION 1. MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVES: INSIDERS' THOUGHTS ON THE PROGRAM

This section will discuss how the programme functioned, with a look at the inside workings of the Secretariat. This section will document the administration of the initiative from the perspectives of the

Director, Manager, Programme Officer and Finance personnel. The resulting section will provide an in-depth and holistic picture of how the grant was administered, including a discussion on the successes and failings within the university context.

Chapter 1.1 Perspectives on ICTD Research and Practice; *Roger Harris and Arul Chib*

The introductory chapter will synthesize the ideas behind the chapters. This will include editors' review of the chapters, and their view on the significance of research and management perspectives to future implications on the ICTD research domain in Asia.

Chapter 1.2. SIRCA: An Opportunity to Build and Improve the Field of ICT4D; *Chaitali Sinha, Laurent Elder, and Matthew Smith*

The first chapter in this section outlines the need for and objectives of the SIRCA Program. From the point of view of the funders, the background, expectations and aims in conducting such a capacity building are outlined and explained in detail.

Chapter 1.3. Managing SIRCA, *Tahani Iqbal*

The intricacies of operationalizing the SIRCA Program are detailed in this chapter. Based on experiences from the managers and officers who worked on the program, this chapter will provide an insight into how the research grants, mentorship model, and the relationships between the SIRCA Secretariat, researchers and mentors were managed.

Chapter 1.4. Mentorship Evaluation; *Ann Mizumoto*

Based on the Program and Mentorship Evaluations conducted during the course of the SIRCA Program, this chapter highlights some of the findings borne out of the process. This chapter provides an honest insight into how the Program was perceived by both researchers and mentors who participated.

SECTION 2. RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES: THEORETICAL REFLECTIONS BY EXPERTS

This section opens the discussion to Mentors to share their views on the SIRCA objective of capacity-building. Mentors will discuss their experiences in grooming an emerging researcher, and elaborate on their roles so that others can benefit from their leanings and actions. The section also includes their thought-pieces on latest issues in ICTD, particularly theoretical and critical perspectives.

Chapter 2.1. ICTD Praxis: Bridging Theory and Practice; *Alexander Flor*

This chapter provides an in-depth look at the importance of theory in ICTD practice. Based on the experience of the author as a mentor in the SIRCA Program, this article discusses the need for the cross-fertilization of ideas between first generation ICTD researchers and the new generation.

Chapter 2.2. Messy Methods for ICT4D Research; *Rahul De*

This chapter makes a case for "messy" methods, those that engage the complexity of details and data in ICTD research and enable a researcher to proceed with the inquiry with whatever tools available. Messy methods have to be opportunistic, appropriate, and flexible. The chapter draws on the experiences of the SIRCA mentorship program and also on the field experiences of the author's own research.

Chapter 2.3. Ethics and ICTD Research; *John Traxler*

This chapter discusses ethics of ICTD research, an important and challenging contribution to both emergent and established researchers. Beyond presenting reasons for the importance of research

ethics, the chapter expands on the discussion of ethics at institutional, and developing and online community domains.

Chapter 2.4. ICTD Curriculum Development and Professional Training: Mainstreaming SIRCA Research Models; *Alexander Flor and Roger Harris*

This chapter focuses on how the SIRCA Program has and can directly contribute to capacity building in Asia by looking at its research results add to the content of ICTD instruction, and its research models. The impact of SIRCA then assumes a multiplier effect when linked to curricular content and professional training, perhaps even more so that the publication of its research findings.

Chapter 2.5 Multi-stakeholder Perspectives Influencing Policy-Research-Practice; *Komathi Ale, Arul Chib, and May-Ann Lim*

This contribution explores observed gaps in theory and practice in ICT projects with experiences from India, examining perspective at three levels – researcher, practitioner, and beneficiary. It draws theoretical insights from Stakeholders Communication and Technology-Community-Management models in discussing ICT in education cases in the rural context.

Chapter 2.6. From Adoption...To Production...To Dissemination; *Regina Hechanova*

Focusing on the need to bring theoretical research to the public domain, this chapter revolves around the new media platforms available for ICTD researchers to engage with a variety of audiences. It explores the dissemination options in conferences, forums, community feedback, open access, journals, popular media, and digital media.

SECTION 3. RESEARCH OUTPUTS

The final section will present various research work conducted by SIRCA-supported researchers. This is aimed at both sharing the work of SIRCA PIs to the larger research community, as well as allowing others to have a better understanding of the SIRCA programs via the dissemination on completed projects.

Chapter 3.1. It's the Talk, not the Tech: What Government Should Know about Blogging and Social Media; *Grace Mirandilla-Santos*

This research based article will present some critical and practical insights on how social media, such as blogs, can be used as an effective tool for engaging citizens by understanding social media through their point of view. This includes a discussion of the emergence of Web 2.0 gave rise to low-cost, user-centric, and interactive new media that promote social networking.

Chapter 3.2. Integrating Digital and Human Data Sources for Environmental Planning and Climate Change Adaptation: From Research to Practice in Central Vietnam; *Pham Huu Ty, Richard Heeks and Chuong Huynh Van*

This chapter outlines how geographic information systems can help provide guidance on environmental planning. Based on a study in Vietnam, this research reports on the transfer from research modeling to environmental practice, and also draws some broader conclusions about data source integration for ICT4D practitioners.

Chapter 3.3. The Challenge of Working across Contexts and Domains: Mobile Health Education in Rural Cambodia; *John Traxler*

Focusing on a project to enhance health education for rural Khmer youth in Cambodia, specifically sexual and reproductive health education, this chapter discusses how research can be conducted under negative conditions where there exists no robust and mature research culture. The chapter discusses how researchers are at the mercy of the environment they work in.

Chapter 3.4. Dynamics and Challenges of Academic Internet Use among Cambodian University Students; *Peou Chivoin, Santosh Vijaykumar, May O. Lwin*

This chapter explores the extent to which students at select Cambodian universities utilize the Internet for general and academic purposes, and makes sense of the associating dynamics that shape Internet use. It examines actual uses of the Internet by university students and provides empirical data on actual uses and associating dynamics of Internet use are indispensable for critically informed policy.

SECTION 4. SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSION; *Roger Harris and Arul Chib*

The concluding chapter will provide a summary of all the concepts discussed in the book. This chapter will outline the need for theoretical and applied research, how the SIRCA Program intended to fill this gap and what similar capacity building programs can do to create the similar impact that the SIRCA Program has.

ANNEX 8: SCREEN SHOTS OF KEY WEBPAGES



ANNEX 9: SIRCA ANNUAL REPORT

See attachments.

ANNEX 10: TIMELINE OF PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

See attachment.

SIRCA ANNUAL REPORT 09/10



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Strengthening Internet Research Capacity in Asia

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Message

I am delighted to write this message because I am reporting on truly pioneering work. I believe that this group of pioneers will change the course of development for the better through well-planned and well-executed research.

We have the Canadian International Development Research Centre (IDRC) to thank for the opportunity to be part of this effort. SIRCA launched the grant call in August 2008. We received 111 registrations of interest from researchers in various Asian universities, research centres, NGOs, associations and groups relating to the field of ICTD. This effectively translated to a total of 57 full proposal submissions, of which 15 were short listed to receive the SIRCA grant award. The focus of the projects analysed technology use, and examined the impact of technology intervention in development.

Various activities to support the programme have been carried out: mentorship, training, and a regional meeting with eminent speakers from Asia discussing ICTD research theories and ethics.

We are seeing the first fruits. Less tangibly, we are seeing collaboration in its truest spirit where researchers from Asia are able to contribute in equal measure to research projects with mentors. More tangibly, we are seeing research papers being accepted for international and regional peer-reviewed conferences. Especially heartening is a project that, by chance, came in handy in a national disaster and so will likely be supported by the government.

The SIRCA experience has set an example for similar grant programmes in other parts of the world to emulate. With our open data policy, all SIRCA documents are accessible to the Impact of Public Access to ICT (IPAI) grants programme. These documents have been well-crafted, thanks to the able managers and supervisors in the Secretariat, and so have helped considerably in getting similar programmes running.

I am confident that with the support from the research community, the active involvement of IDRC and other potential partners, and the continued dedication of the SIRCA Secretariat, we will continue to develop and sustain impactful research in the area of ICT4D.



Director
Prof. Ang Peng Hwa

The SIRCA programme started as a seed project but its impact is far-reaching in practice, publication, policy and public opinion. In 2010, SIRCA will encounter a good deal of restructuring and change as we reflect on how the programme has helped in the capacity-development of our beneficiaries. SIRCA is working with IDRC on a project called Development Evaluation Capacity in ICTD (DECI). Our programme is among the five Pan Asia Networking (PAN) projects that have been selected for this initiative. Through this evaluation process, we will be able to analyse the extent to which our research capacity building programme and activities ensure appropriate and relevant dissemination to maximise impact.

Consequently, this will motivate us to explore new possibilities of expansion and intensification in terms of project reach and goals. Building from our current model, we hope to bring capacity-building initiatives to researchers beyond Asia. This would stimulate diversity in ICTD projects and bridge valuable networks around the world. For now, we are focused on seeing our current SIRCA projects through to completion as we create opportunities for our SIRCA scholars to present and publish their works to relevant audiences. The high quality output from the SIRCA programme is being recognised by the fact that in early 2011, a peer-reviewed issue of Media Asia journal will be dedicated to the best projects of the programme.

As I pen this message, the SIRCA team is in the final throes of preparing for the International Communication Association (ICA) 2010 Mobiles preconference workshop which will be held at the National Library of Singapore from 21st-22nd June 2010. This preconference workshop will look at the social science understanding of ICT use. Under the banner of the SIRCA programme which aims to facilitate emerging ICTD researchers in Asia, we will organise short poster sessions, in addition to paper sessions. These poster sessions will provide an opportunity for Asian SIRCA scholars to discuss work-in-progress studies with international mobile communication researchers.

I am proud to say that over the past year, our SIRCA scholars have grown tremendously in research capability, confidence, and professionalism. Some of their projects have successfully gained acceptance into international peer-reviewed publications like the Journal of eHealth Technology and Application and the Journal of Multicultural Counselling and Development. Some have also presented their research findings at various conferences such as the E-Asia Conference in Colombo, Sri Lanka, the IEEE International Conference on e-Health Networking, Application and Services (Healthcom2009) in Sydney, Australia, and the 4th Annual Conference of the International Network for Postgraduate Students in the Area of ICT4D in London, UK.

In developing the research capacity of our SIRCA scholars, it was interesting and gratifying to observe a natural multiplier effect set in where university students, communities, NGOs, and government organisations benefitted from the practice and implications of the different research projects. The SIRCA grant made it possible for the recruitment of undergraduate and postgraduate students to provide research assistance to the SIRCA scholars. These students who hail from different educational backgrounds and disciplines such as computer science, economics, business, psychology and political science, were exposed to ICTD research and experienced firsthand the complexities in the field. In turn, I'm sure they contributed to bringing fresh perspectives to the domain of ICTD.

On that note, I hope you continue to support our work here at SIRCA. I urge you to read on to find out more about what we do and how you can be a part of this growth in process.



Assistant Director
Dr. Arul Chib

THE BEGINNINGS OF SIRCA

“

There is no programme in the world like SIRCA. Every senior researcher I have talked to about SIRCA has endorsed the programme. There is the proverbial saying that it's better to teach a person to fish than to give that person a fish. SIRCA is about both—small fish (grants) are given out but the more important part is equipping the applicants how to fish (a.k.a. doing research).”

Prof. Ang Peng Hwa

Director of Singapore Internet Research Centre, Nanyang Technological University

Our Mission

The Strengthening ICTD Research Capacity in Asia programme (SIRCA) establishes and brings together the endeavours of IDRC's Pan Asia Networking (PAN) and the Singapore Internet Research Centre (SiRC), NTU.

At SIRCA, we aim to enhance research capacity in Asia by supporting research that is scientific, replicable, generalisable, collaborative, and actionable (applied research). By creating opportunities for mentorship between established researchers and grant recipients, SIRCA provide spaces for sharing of experiences and knowledge. Ultimately, the goal is to contribute to the growing field of ICTD research through disseminating research findings in peer-reviewed publications and international conferences.

Where it all Happens



Singapore Internet Research Centre at Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, Nanyang Technological University

The Singapore Internet Research Centre (SiRC) was established by the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information (WKWSCI) at the Nanyang Technological University of Singapore. SiRC initiates and conducts research related to new media and media technologies in Asia.

WKWSCI meets the demand in Singapore and the region for well-trained personnel to staff the media industry and information services. It does so through its quality undergraduate and graduate communication and information degree programmes.

The school has become a premier research institution that generates empirical and humanistic analyses of communication topics and policy issues important to Singapore and the region. Faculty members publish their research and showcase their creative works in international journals and forums.

WKWSCI continues to establish and maintain an international network of educators, researchers, and infocomm professionals through collaborative projects, conferences and other exchanges.



Seated from left to right; Dr. Arul Chib, Dr. Rahul De, and Dr. Czarina Saloma-Akpedonu, in a joint panel discussion on areas to consider when conducting research in ICTD.

"The SIRCA programme is important as it is a pioneer in its field. Despite the existence of research programmes, workshops and conferences that point to the need for strengthened research capacity in regions such as South and South East Asia, SIRCA is the first programme that has been designed to address this need. SIRCA is the result of multiple planning workshops that informed its design and contributed to the carefully planned activities and outcomes-oriented approaches that it currently comprises."



Ms. Chaitali Sinha
(Programme Officer, Pan Asia
Networking, International
Development Research Centre,
Canada)

Our Sponsor

The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) is a Canadian Crown corporation that works in close collaboration with researchers from the developing world in their search for the means to build healthier, more equitable, and more prosperous societies. Pan Asia Networking (PAN) is a program within IDRC, which supports research that examines the positive and negative impacts of ICTs on people, culture, the economy, and society, so as to strengthen ICT uses that promote sustainable development on the Asian continent.

ICTD: Developmental Research

ICTD research refers to research in the area of information communication technology (ICT) for development. Scholars in this multidisciplinary field seek to use ICT for the betterment of disadvantaged communities. Some areas of research include using ICT to provide and/or improve the provision of education, health care services, and agricultural work. ICTs are also used to aid in humanitarian efforts in disasters or to bring about economic development.

Our Programme

Strengthening ICTD Research Capacity in Asia (SIRCA)

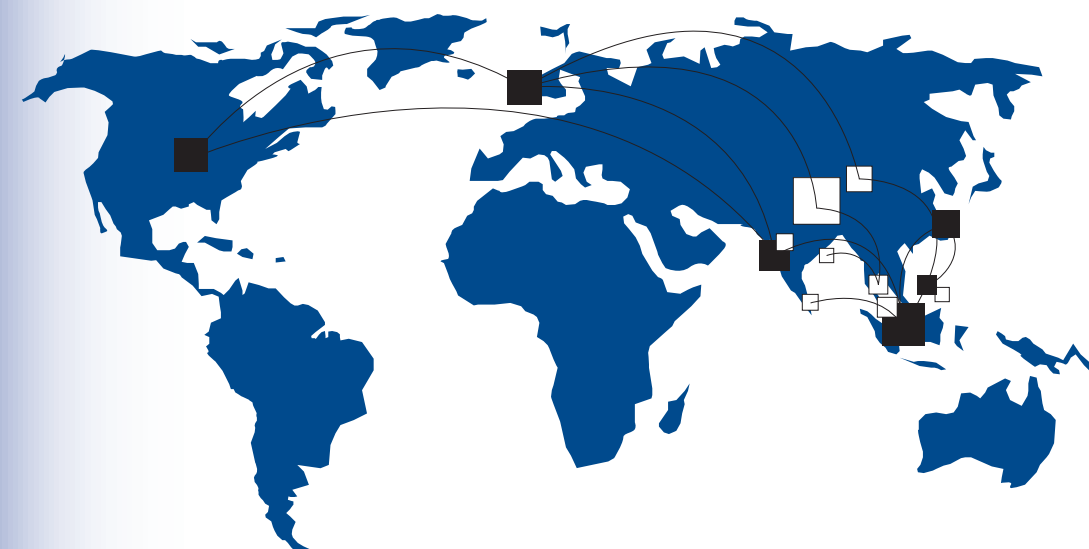
In August 2008, IDRC appointed the Singapore Internet Research Centre to manage the SIRCA programme, with the aim of strengthening research capacities in the area of ICT4D or ICTD in Asia. The SIRCA Programme identifies future research leaders and facilitates their development through the support of research grants.

Its ultimate objective is to promote broad-based high-quality multidisciplinary research in ICT development, e-services, new media use and social impact, and policy for the benefit and advancement of individuals, organisations, nation and society. Basically, the grant focuses on social science research, in particular, the relationships between ICTs and society.

The grants especially apply to emerging researchers based in Asia who are relatively new to ICTD research and are interested in undertaking theoretically-based and methodologically rigorous research.

Successful applicants stand to benefit from concerted capacity building exercises including a mentorship arrangement. They are also fully-funded to attend training courses where they are equipped with sound research skills and are given the opportunity to engage and consult with eminent trainers. Finally, these grant awardees will get to present their research findings and outcomes at a dissemination conference, "ICTD Researchers in Asia."

YEAR IN REVIEW



■ ICTD Experts
□ SIRCA Grant Awardees

Over the past year, SIRCA has been instrumental in developing the capabilities of 14 grant awardees to conduct rigorous and meaningful research in ICT4D. To date, we have reached out to emerging ICTD scholars in 8 Asian countries (Philippines, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Cambodia, Nepal and China) and established networks with ICTD experts in 6 countries (US, UK, Philippines, India, Hong Kong and Singapore).

Key Milestones

What did you think about the quality of applications?

"I was impressed by the diversity of applications. There were very interesting projects and also from unusual places. It was a pleasure to see how people from highly diverse backgrounds are interested in using ICT."

Dr. Rahul De

How did you find the review process?

"It was refreshingly open and fair and it facilitated ready convergence of opinions toward a group decision that we could all safely support."

Dr. Roger Harris

The SIRCA grant call was launched in the fall (August) of 2008, piquing the interest of researchers worldwide, despite its applicability only to those based in Asia.

In less than a month, we received over 100 registrations of interest from researchers in various Asian universities, research centres, NGOs, associations and groups relating to the field of ICTD. Many countries in Asia were represented i.e. China, India, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Cambodia, Vietnam, Nepal, Philippines, Mongolia.

Over half of them submitted full proposals and their research topics focused on technology use, beneficiaries or outcomes/impact of intervention. Of these, the top 26% were short listed to receive the SIRCA grant award.

Grant Review Meeting

The committee was made up of seven established ICTD researchers; Dr. John Traxler, Prof. Heather Hudson, Prof. Rahul De, Dr. Jonathan Donner, Dr. Erwin Alampay, Dr. Roger Harris, Dr. Arul Chib, and two IDRC representatives; Ms. Chaitali Sinha, Ms. Kathleen Flynn-Dapaah. Dr. Ang Peng Hwa and Dr. May Lwin served as observers from the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, Nanyang Technological University.



SIRCA grant awardees and mentors taking in the sights of Kampong Glam, Singapore's Malay-Arab district, on the final day of the workshop.



Back (from L-R) Dr. R Harris; Prof. Rahul De; A/P E Alampay; Prof. Ang Peng Hwa; Prof. Heather Hudson; Prof. John Traxler; Dr. J. Donner; Ms K. Flynn-Dapaah; Ms J. Tan, Front (from L-R) Ms K. ALE; Dr. A. Chib; A/P M. Lwin; Ms C. Sinha; Ms G. Kwan

The SIRCA grant review committee convened at the Nanyang Executive Centre in Singapore from 25th to 26th October 2008. Friendly greetings and handshakes were exchanged before the committee got down to serious debate over who would make the cut.

Prior to the crucial meeting, the reviewers thoroughly evaluated the merit of each proposal through a rigorous criteria based on international standards. The entire selection process lasted for about two weeks, but at the end of it, the committee left satisfied, knowing that they had a hand in selecting the most deserving candidates for the award.

Training Workshop



As part of our mission to build capacity in ICTD research, we organised the SIRCA Training Workshop to meet the following objectives:

- 1) Equip grant awardees with a clearer understanding of literature and methodological issues with regards to their projects;
- 2) Equip grant awardees with a clearer understanding of how their project relates and contributes to the broader ICTD discipline;
- 3) Provide grant awardees with necessary information to adhere to the SIRCA Secretariat compliance;
- 4) Highlight practical issues and challenges in fieldwork.

"The SIRCA workshop held in July 2009 was an integral step in the SIRCA programme. The holistic approach taken to research capacity building adopted by the SIRCA workshop – and the SIRCA programme as a whole – makes significant contributions to ICTD research at large. This is accomplished at two main levels – the first is at the level of the PIs, as the pool of theoretically based, methodologically rigorous and reflective researchers across Asia is broadened and deepened; and the second is at the level of cross-regional networking and ICTD research publications, as the twinning of mentors with the PIs enables knowledge exchange and generation among the SIRCA participants, as well as a concerted push toward research publications in peer-reviewed and open access journals."

Ms. Chaitali Sinha (Programme Officer, Pan Asia Networking, International Development Research Centre, Canada)

The SIRCA workshop was held over two days, from 3rd – 4th July 2009, at the Nanyang Executive Centre, Singapore. Participants took part in various capacity-building activities including two panel sessions where ICTD research theories and ethics issues were discussed. The panel sessions were chaired by SIRCA Assistant Director, Dr. Arul Chib. There were four trainers altogether; Dr. Alexander Flor, Dr. Arul Chib, Dr. Czarina Saloma-Akpedonu and Prof. Rahul De.

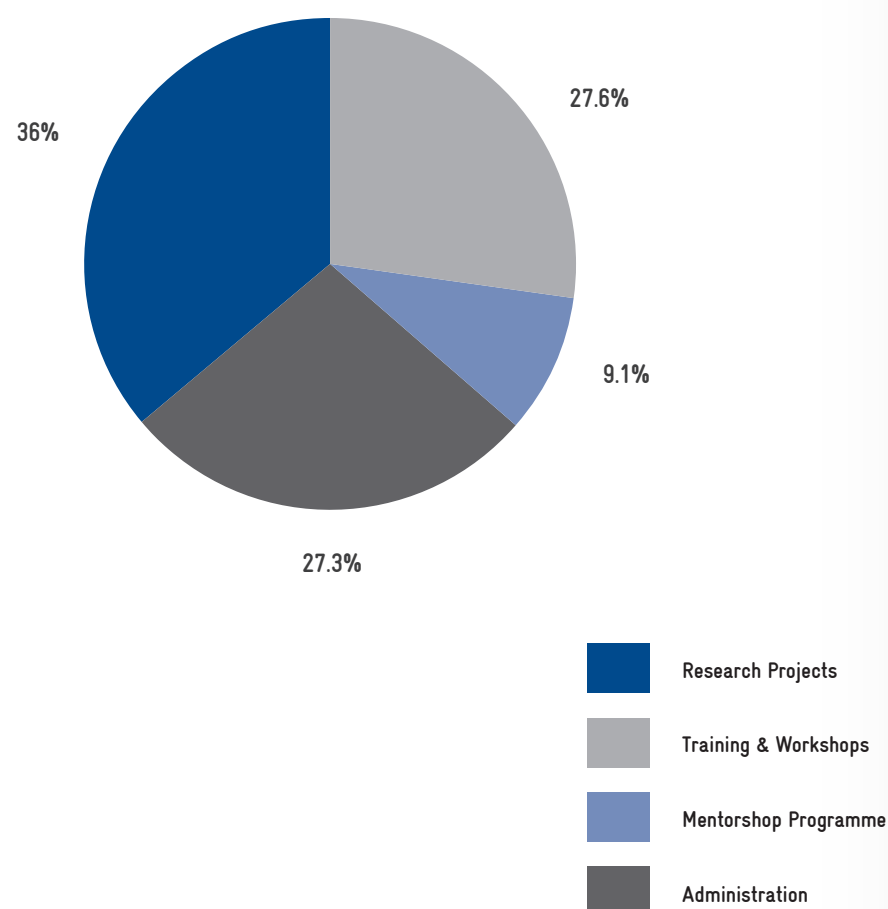
On the first day of the workshop, Dr. Alexander Flor, a renowned Filipino academic, shared his insights on the importance of theory in guiding research. Participants later engaged in group topical exercises and consultations with the trainers. To facilitate these sessions, they were divided into groups based on their research topics: Agriculture/Rural, Capacity-building in education/political participation, Socio-economic psychology, healthcare.

The second day of the workshop focused on ICTD research methods. Two seminars were conducted by Dr. Czarina Saloma-Akpedonu and Dr. Rahul De, on qualitative and quantitative research methodologies respectively. The workshop ended with lively group discussions on research methods where participants got to interact with, share experiences and learn from fellow researchers who employed similar research techniques in their projects.

Annual Expenditure

The SIRCA programme received total funding of about S\$969,326 from IDRC, which covered a period of two years (Aug 2008 – Jul 2010). As seen from the financial chart below, a significant portion of the budget was dedicated to enhancing research capacities and organising training activities. In its pioneer year in 2008, SIRCA successfully managed a total of 14 research projects.

As part of the mentorship arrangement, SIRCA sponsored the mentors' visits to the research sites of the grant awardees. All mentors also received an honorarium in gratitude for their effort and commitment to the programme.



FUTURE AWAITS US

ICA 2010 Mobiles Preconference

24 papers were selected from a total of 53 submissions. The review panel was made up of seven senior scholars and practitioners: Dr. Arul Chib (Nanyang Technological University); Dr. Jonathon Donner (Microsoft Research); Dr. James Katz (Rutgers); Dr. Laurent Elder (IDRC); Dr. Richard Ling (Telenor Research and Innovation); Dr. Rohan Samarajiva (LIRNEasia); and Dr. Trisha Lin (Nanyang Technological University).

Under the banner of the SIRCA programme, the Singapore Internet Research Centre (SiRC) organised the International Communication Association (ICA) 2010 preconference, "Innovations in Mobile Use", in Singapore, from 21st – 22nd June 2010.

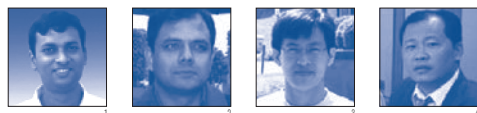
One day prior to the preconference, on 20th June 2010, SIRCA held its 2nd workshop to give the grant awardees a chance to discuss their poster presentations for the ICA 2010 Mobiles Preconference. In addition to the paper presentations of the preconference, the poster segment provided an opportunity for Asian SIRCA scholars to discuss work-in-progress studies with international mobile communication scholars. The workshop also enabled the grant awardees to meet with their mentors and discuss research development and publication.

The Mobiles Preconference examined innovations in a variety of societal contexts, highlighting different phenomena of cell phone uses. The preconference fostered discussions around how developments in emerging markets reflect the trends in mature markets, and assessed potential for the cross-pollination of information and communications technologies for development and/or empowerment.

Researchers were invited to submit abstracts focusing on the social scientific understanding of mobile communication, including the following themes:

- Social impacts of mobile phones use
- Mobile communication for development
- Trends in mobile media systems and social contexts
- Public sphere, social networks, and mobile communication
- Mobile communication policy and regulation
- Mobile broadband
- Theoretical and methodological perspectives on mobile communication research

FACES OF SIRCA



Grant Awardee / Country

1 Md. Mahfuz Ashraf, Bangladesh

Biography

Md. Mahfuz Ashraf was awarded his PhD degree (Dec 2008), sponsored by Australian Government International Post Graduate Scholarship (IPRS) from the School of Computer Information Science at the University of South Australia. Ashraf's scholastic training is broad and encompasses a range of areas: Marketing, Information Systems (IS) and Information Technology (IT). His Honours degree provided him with a sound theoretical understanding of various business subjects with an emphasis on marketing while his Masters degree and PhD training provided him an opportunity to learn information/technology interaction with humans and to understand the complex process of the participants' attitude, learning and experiences towards information/technology.

Project Description

Research in the multi-disciplinary domain of ICT and Development indicates there is potential for ICT to contribute to a nation's socio-economic, socio-technical and socio-cultural development. With this in mind, developing countries have been rushing to implement ambitious ICT4D projects in rural areas under the direct/indirect supervision of different international institutions and donor/local agencies. This research will develop and test a conceptual framework to investigate ICT-led developmental impact in rural areas in the developing country, Bangladesh. Our framework will encourage further investigation into ICT-led development projects which explicitly acknowledges the perspectives of the to-be-affected community/ies.

2 M. Sirajul Islam, Bangladesh

M. Sirajul Islam graduated in BBA and earned two MBA degrees in Finance and Digital Technologies Management respectively. He has been studying PhD in AMIS at the Örebro University since October 2006. His career started in a management consulting firm and later became devoted to teaching in the area of Business and ICT, where, in due course, he worked as the Head of Business Department at the State University of Bangladesh. He is the founding President of Bangladesh Centre for E-governance and elected fellow of the UK based World Innovation Foundation.

This is a multidisciplinary (socio-technical) research study mainly focusing on grounding theories and analysing the existing knowledge. The specific aim of this research is how the adoption of mobile phone technology empowers the Bangladeshi farmers in accessing the agriculture market information service. The hypothesis on correlation between the ownership of new media and poverty will be examined during the study. In addition, an evaluation methodology will be developed since a gap remains in the existing knowledge on analysing the impact of new media on the society.

3 Peou Chivoin, Cambodia

Peou Chivoin holds a dual appointment as a lecturer at the Master Program of Education and at the Department of Media & Communication, Royal University of Phnom Penh. His initial interest in the development of Cambodia's education led to his first degree in education in 2001. Fascinated by Cambodia's development process, he went on to complete his Master's degree in Media Studies at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale in early 2008, with primary research interest in intersecting issues of media and Cambodia's development. In 2007, he completed a textual study on gender and generational relations in Cambodian film. He is currently completing a conference paper on the role of Cambodia's broadcast TV in promoting consumer response.

The project studies the impact of the Internet on learning by capturing differential awareness and behaviour of Cambodian students in perceiving, accessing and using the Internet in their academic work and for other purposes. Specifically, it will:

- (1) Survey the extent to which the Internet is used by Cambodian students in researching for their academic study and for other purposes.
- (2) Assess the differences of the learning application of the Internet among Cambodian students across institutions, their wider Internet use, Internet expertise, attitudes toward the Internet, gender and age.
- (3) Assess the causes of their differential access, knowledge, attitude and practice.
- (4) Assess the learning and cultural impacts of the Internet based on the students' uses and perceptions of the Internet.

4 Phal Des, Cambodia

Phal Des is the Director of the IT Center of RUPP. His focus is on training students, faculty and staff at RUPP in a variety of modern ICTs and engaging RUPP in participating in regional and international research projects and activities. He is involved in a project looking into building and developing applications based on Mobile Computing and 3G Wireless Networks for health care, education and heritage. In 2007, he was awarded an Obuchi/UNESCO fellowship to work on a project called "System Support for Mobile and Distributed Multimedia Computing". From 2005 to 2007, he worked on projects such as the Grand Mekong Sub-region Virtual University project and the "Open Source e-Learning" project of UNESCO Paris.

This research is carried out to apply advanced technology of ICT (Information Communication Technology) to, to some extent, improve the health care in Cambodia, especially in rural areas. The main objective of the research is to develop a mobile phone application to support health care in rural areas of Cambodia. An application will be developed in the framework of mobile phone technology and telecommunication technology to fulfill some needs of the doctors, health workers, pharmacists, and patients in rural areas.



Grant Awardee / Country

5 Kanliang Wang, China

Biography

Kanliang Wang is a professor at the Management School of Xi'an Jiaotong University, China. He is the research dean and the director of the Electronic Business Research Center of this school. Dr. Wang is a leading researcher in China in the area of electronic business. He is the vice chair of the AIS China Chapter. Dr. Wang is the holder of several key research programs on electronic business funded by China Science Foundation. He sits in the editorial boards of several top Chinese IS journals. Dr. Wang's work appears in top Chinese journals and some recognized international journals like Communications of the ACM, Information & Management, Decision Support Systems, Electronic Government, and Quarterly Journal of Electronic Commerce.

Project Description

This project analyses healthcare information systems (HIS) in China. HIS are emerging as a critical part of healthcare institutes. It improves health services and enhances healthcare information for the hospitals. Drawing on actor-network theory and the HIS evaluation model of Heeks (2006), this project proposes a research framework that attributes the success or failure of the HIS usage to whether it can align the interests of hospitals, patients and government. This framework will be used to conduct case studies on three sorts of representative HIS in China: hospital HIS, community HIS, and telemedicine system. This research will also identify the future challenges of HIS adoption in China's healthcare sector.

6 Ping Gao, China

Ping Gao (Co-Principal Investigator) is a lecturer in Development Informatics, at the Institute for Development Policy and Management (IDPM), University of Manchester. His current research focus is e-government and telecommunications policy in developing countries. He was a consultant for the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications in China, and a researcher on mobile communications market and standardisation at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland and Copenhagen Business, Denmark.

7 Wansong Zheng, China

Wansong Zheng (Co-Principal Investigator) is a PhD candidate of the Xi'an Jiaotong University in China. His research interest focuses on Information Systems, especially Healthcare Information Systems (HIS). He has worked in this field for over 11 years in the Department of Information Technology of a hospital, and accumulated experience on design, adoption, and development of HIS. His research aim is to develop quantitative and qualitative models that can explain and instruct the development of HIS.

8 Balwant Singh Mehta, India

Balwant Singh Mehta has handled and managed successfully, 15 independent, and more than 40 social research projects. The projects are mainly related to various human development issues like employment, industry (information technology), education, poverty, rural development, child labour, social security, migration, shelterless people (urban development) and health. They have been sponsored by various national and international organisations. He has published more than 15 articles in various national/international level journals and books and has worked as a consultant for ILO in their study of labour market conditions in information and technology sector in 2001.

The growth of IT-ITeS is contributing significantly to export earning and emerging as a major source of incremental employment to different segments of the society. Despite having such an important place in the national economy, policy makers are faced with pressing questions about how ICTs are likely to affect the quality of work and careers, skill enhancement, and autonomy at work in developing countries like India. Questions are also raised as to whether ICTs foster equality or reinforce existing labour market segmentation, such as those based on gender, skill and space as those observed in traditional and other modern sectors.



Grant Awardee/ Country

Biography

Project Description

9 Devesh Kishore, India

Devesh Kishore is Dean, School of Journalism & Mass Communication, Institute of Management Studies, Noida. He is involved in developing teaching and research programmes at graduate and post-graduate level and production of audio and video materials. He planned and conducted an International Conference on Intercultural Communication at IMS, Noida which was widely attended by academics, scholars and practitioners all over the world in September 2009.

The study aims to:

- (1) Document the communication behaviour of the farming community with specific reference to ICTs.
- (2) To enlist the constraints surrounding the use of ICTs for agriculture.
- (3) To study the relationship between economic and socio-cultural characteristics of farmers and constraints faced in the use of ICTs for agriculture
- (4) To study the relationship between different types of ICTs and constraints faced by the farmers.
- (5) To develop an ICT based integrated Agricultural Knowledge Information System for the study area.

10 V.L.V. Kameswari, India

V.L.V. Kameswari (Co-Principal Investigator) is with the College of Agriculture at G.B.Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, India. Her project, titled "Janadhar" provided information to farmers through telecentres located in various parts of Nainital district of Uttarakhand. The project was funded by UNDP and implemented by Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee, India.

11 T. B. Dinesh, India

T. B. Dinesh completed his Ph.D. in 1992, from the Department of Computer Science, University of Iowa. He spent several years in Amsterdam at CWI, the Dutch National Institute for Mathematics and Computer Science. He has had various academic, research and industrial positions where he has worked on object-oriented programming, generation of software and course-ware from specifications, and structuring information for its use on the Internet. He co-founded Pagelets, Inc. in 1999 while in California, which was responsible for the research and development of a community and social software called Pantoto Communities.

The aim of this project is to analyse and conceptualise what community participation means in the context of technology, and how technology facilitates/debilitates the interactions within the communities in different contexts. The project is premised on the grounds that the creation of software technology or a platform for a community/institution is not the end, but the beginning of a process. We therefore seek to examine how community participation in the development and use of technology can take place when the community is involved in defining and constructing the technology and its standards, and is imbricated in its evolution.

12 Shefali Oza, Nepal

Shefali Oza earned her undergraduate degrees in Physics and Anthropology at MIT and a Masters in Epidemiology from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. She then worked as a research fellow at Harvard University on the epidemiology of noncommunicable disease and childhood illnesses. She has worked on health-related issues in Peru, India, and South Africa prior to her current work in Nepal. Her professional interests are in health systems and engineering with a focus on technology to improve health outcomes and access to healthcare. She is now the ICT research coordinator for Nyaya Health, a medical relief organisation providing healthcare services in rural Far-Western Nepal.

This is a pilot study to analyse the effectiveness of connectivity in training and improving the performance of Community Health Workers (CHWs) in Achham, Far Western Nepal. This initiative would expand the outreach abilities of the existing clinic, and would provide a model of health care networking which, if successful, could be adopted by other health facilities and government agencies in Asia. By providing CHWs with access to comprehensive health care information and the means to communicate despite geographic distance, this system will serve to directly involve community members and alleviate disparities in health care accessibility. This will in turn empower populations in the area to obtain access to vital resources that will serve as platforms for further educational and economic improvement.

13 Ma. Regina M. Hechanova, Philippines

Ma. Regina M. Hechanova is the Executive Director of the Ateneo Center for Organization Research and Development (Ateneo CORD) and an Associate Professor at the Psychology Department, of the Ateneo de Manila University. Gina has a Ph.D. in Industrial/Organisational Psychology from the Central Michigan University and obtained her M.A. in Psychology and B.S. degrees from the University of the Philippines (UP) Diliman. In 1996, she received the UP Chancellor's Award for Most Outstanding Faculty. In 2005, Gina was also named Outstanding Young Scientist by the National Academy of Science and Technology. She is co-editor of the book *The Way We Work: Research and Best Practices in Philippine Organizations* which was a finalist at the 2006 National Book Awards.

This project aims to examine the role of ICT as a means of providing social support to overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) and their families. Specifically, OFWs and their families shall be provided access to an Internet site where they can interact with each other (through forums) or an e-counsellor. At the end of a 6-month period, OFWs and their families will be asked about their concerns, experiences and difficulties with regards to their use or non-use of the said site. At the same time, the internet-mediated communication will be content analysed to elicit the themes and concerns of OFWs and their families. This project will be conducted within a period of one year with three months devoted to the preparation (recruitment of participants and orientation), six months devoted to the intervention and three months devoted to analysis of data.



Grant Awardee/ Country

Biography

Project Description

14 Mary Grace P. Mirandilla, Philippines

Mary Grace P. Mirandilla is a consultant on ICT research at the Center for Research and Communication (CRC) and the Asian Development Bank's Regional and Sustainable Development Department (RSDD). She is a telecommunications and ICT researcher who has been involved in various foreign-funded technical assistance projects on policy reform in the Philippines since 2001, which included the drafting of the first Philippine ICT Strategic Roadmap and a number of policies for universal access. From 2005 to 2006, she served as one of the lead researchers and project manager of a 20-month study on community telecenters, a project under the Center for Research and Communication (CRC) funded through the Pan Asia Networking R&D Grant Programme of IDRC Canada.

In general, the study aims to explore the potential of the Filipino blogosphere as an alternative, open access information environment where indepth discussions can lead to improved political participation and empowerment among Filipino blog readers. Specifically, the study aims to:

- (1) Determine the motivation of Filipino bloggers who write and maintain political blogs.
- (2) Explore the ways in which blogs are used as a source of news and information and as a forum for open debate and in-depth discussion of political issues and public affairs.
- (3) Determine the political attitude of blog readers and analyse it vis-à-vis the political blogs they read.
- (4) Determine the potential of political blogs as a venue for political participation.
- (5) Recommend ways in which internet resources such as blogs can have more meaningful use in improving political participation and governance in the Philippines.

15 Komathi Ale, Singapore

Komathi Ale earned her Bachelor's degree in Communication Studies (Honours) at Nanyang Technological University, specialising in public and promotional communication. She is currently pursuing a Masters by research, in the field of information and communication technologies for development (ICTD). Ms. Ale is interested in exploring the socio-cultural, psychological and gender dimensions of technology appropriation by marginalised communities in the developing regions of Asia. As a young ICTD scholar, Komathi also analyses various conceptual frameworks and theories for a practical focus within the discipline.

Ms. Ale's research examines the impact of low-cost computing devices on children's learning. Her study investigates the design and evaluation of ICTD initiatives specifically catered to the educational needs of rural learners. She conducted preliminary fieldwork in a village primary school in Tamil Nadu, India. Using ethnographic research methods, her formative study illuminated issues influencing community participation in ICT use. Komathi will conduct a combination of quasi-experiment and participatory action research to empirically assess the impact of the One Laptop per Child laptops among primary school children in the Nainital district of Uttaranchal, India.

16 MJR David, Sri Lanka

MJR David started as a community broadcaster in Sri Lanka and later moved on to be a senior lecturer of Journalism at the University of Colombo. He is currently a PhD candidate of the University of Pradeniya and has been involved in projects in Sri Lanka and community radio movements in South Asia. He chaired the Radio Asia Conference on Community Radio hosted by AMIC. He has been a consultant to the Ministry of Media in Sri Lanka and was appointed Chairman of the Ministerial Committee to restructure the state broadcaster. He has been Board Member of the Sri Lanka press council and Acting Head Department of Media studies, Sri Pali campus, University of Colombo.

The objective is to come up with an image based methodology to reflect on challenges faced by ICTD initiatives in Sri Lanka with active engagement of beneficiaries. The study will attempt to:

- (1) Develop a catalogue of challenges faced by community level ICTD projects in South Asia.
- (2) Gain an understanding of how challenges are handled in each situation.
- (3) Study differences in perception among beneficiaries, implementers and policy makers regarding selected challenges.
- (4) Identify the complexities surrounding the selected challenges.
- (5) Develop techniques of digital story telling as a means of reflection analysis and presentation and come up with an applicable methodology for the study of community based ICTD initiatives in South Asia.

17 Pham Huu Ty, Vietnam

Pham Huu Ty is a lecturer in the Faculty of Land Resources and Agricultural Environment at Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry (HUAUF), Vietnam. He graduated with a Master of Applied Science in Jan 2008 at Dalhousie University, Canada, and specialises in teaching and researching on soil erosion, landslide, land use planning, GIS and remote sensing. He has participated in many rural development projects in Central Vietnam and is very keen to contribute to the prevention of severe river landslides and in ensuring sustainable livelihoods for river-based relying communities.

This project aims to formulate an integrated Upper Huong river erosion and landslide protection planning using GIS and remotely sensed data, incorporating the value chain approach. Specific Objectives:

- (1) To integrate GIS and remotely sensed data and participatory approach for river erosion and landslide hazard mapping.
- (2) To identify trees with economic and erosion-landslide protection potentials through consulting villagers, experts, and local authorities, and using satellite imageries to map those potential trees distribution.
- (3) To formulate an integrated river erosion-landslide protection planning at community level.

Research and Achievements

Balwant Singh Mehta (India) presented his paper, titled "Decent Work in ICT Sector: An Indian Case" at the E-Asia Conference, Colombo, Sri Lanka, (2nd – 4th December 2009). His paper, "Mobile Phone and Impact on Status of Women in Rural India" was selected to be presented at the ICA 2010 Mobiles Preconference (21st – 22nd June 2010). Balwant was selected from 4 Fellows in Asia and among 12 in Africa, Asia and Europe, to be part of the Amy Mahan Research Fellowship Program to Assess the Impact of Public Access to ICT (2010 – 11).

Mahfuz Ashraf (Bangladesh) presented his paper titled 'Evaluating health behaviour outcomes of an ICT project, results from research in three villages in Bangladesh' at the IEEE International Conference on e-Health Networking, Application and Services (Healthcom2009), Sydney, Australia (16th – 18th December 2008). He has also published his research findings in the Journal of eHealth Technology and Application ISSN: 1881-4581, Volume 7, Number 2, December 2009.

Peou Chivoin (Cambodia) was awarded Australia's Endeavour Award for PhD study at the University of Melbourne with research emphasis on Internet and youth issues.

Regina M. Hechanova (Philippines) presented her paper, titled "Issues, Coping and Responses of Male Filipino Migrant Workers to Online Counselling" at the Migration Conference in the University of the Philippines (10th January, 2010). She also presented "OFW Online: Supporting the Filipino Overseas Worker using ICT" at the Living the Information Society Conference in Ateneo de Manila University (28th October, 2010).

Sirajul Islam (Bangladesh) presented his paper titled "Factors influencing the adoption of mobile phones among farmers in Bangladesh: theories and practices" at the 4th Annual Conference of the International Network for Postgraduate Students in the Area of ICT4D, London, UK (11th – 12th September 2009).

Mentorship Programme

One of the aims of the SIRCA programmes is to enable opportunities for established researchers to mentor grant recipients.

For the mentee, this not only provides assistance and guidance to ensure steady progress and completion of project milestones, but the opportunity to learn how to navigate the terrain of academia, or related fields, and move forward professionally.

For the mentor, it is an opportunity to enhance his/her own personal and professional knowledge while teaching and learning from the mentee. Mentors are also required to make a site visit to the research field to gain a better understanding of the research site.

The final 10 mentors were selected based on their research experience and fit with the research topics of the grant awardees. The mentors are: Dr. Alexander Flor, Prof. Ang Peng Hwa, Dr. Arul Chib, Dr. John Traxler, Dr. May Lwin, Prof. Rahul De, Dr. Richard Heeks, Dr. Roger Harris, Dr. Shaikh Abdus Salam and Dr. Vibodh Parthasarathi.



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Biography

Dr. **Alexander Flor** is Dean and Professor of Faculty of Information and Communication Studies, U.P. Open University. As the founding Dean of the UPOU Faculty of Information and Communication Studies (FICS), Dr. Flor oversaw the successful merging of computer science, information science and communication science under one Faculty. Dr. Flor has linked the UPOU FICS to the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, the InfoBridge Foundation (Netherlands), the EU InterSARD initiative, CGIAR, the China Agricultural Broadcast and Television School and other development agencies. As the UPOU's sole Professor of Information and Communication Studies, he undertakes research and instruction on ICT4D and KM4D in collaboration with international organizations. He has mentored close to 100 FICS researchers & graduate students. Dr. Flor is featured in Wikipedia for his work on ICT4D.

Prof. **Ang Peng Hwa** is Director of Singapore Internet Research Centre (SiRC) and Professor of Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information at Nanyang Technological University. He earned his Bachelor of Law in National University of Singapore and Master in Communication Management in the University of Southern California. He then went on to pursue his Ph.D. in Mass Media at Michigan State University. His research interests include media law and policy with a special emphasis on Internet governance. Some of his publications include Ordering Chaos: Regulating the Internet and Communication Education and Media Training Needs in ASEAN.

Dr. **Arul Chib** is the Assistant Director of the Singapore Internet Research Centre. He examines the impact of development campaigns delivered via a range of innovative information and communication technologies (ICTD or ICT4D). The theoretical deliberation explicates the mechanisms underlying the process of effects. The analysis bridges multiple levels of analysis—technology-mediated effects at the individual level and socially-mediated effects at the structural level. He has proposed theoretical frameworks of analysis, including the ICT for healthcare development model (ICT4H), and the Technology-Community-Management model (TCM), contributing to the conceptual progress of the discipline. His work can be found in international refereed publications, such as the International Journal of Communication, the Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, the Asian Journal of Communication, and the International Communication Association Conference Theme books, and numerous other books.

Dr. **John Traxler** is Reader in Mobile Technologies for e-Learning and Director of Learning Lab at the University of Wolverhampton. He earned his BA (Hons) in Computing in Open University and BSc (Hons) in Aeronautics in University of Southampton. He then obtained his Master in Science (Astronomy) in the University of Sussex and Master in Philosophy in CNAA. His research interests include theories of learning technology, mobile learning and ICT for Development (ICT4D). He has done ICT-related studies in Southern and Eastern Africa. He was the Associate Editor of the International Journal of Mobile and Blended Learning and Founding Director of the International Association for Mobile Learning.

Dr. **May Lwin** is an Associate Professor and heads the Division of Public and Promotional Communication, School of Communication and Information in Nanyang Technological University. She lectures in integrated marketing communications and other promotional management courses at both undergraduate and graduate levels, as well as for executive development programs. Prior to joining the School of Communication and Information, she was with the NUS Business School where she received the Outstanding Educator Award in 2004. Dr Lwin's research interests are mainly in the areas of social and health communications, as well as in marketing communications.



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Biography

Dr. **Rahul De** is Hewlett-Packard Chair Professor in ICT for Sustainable Economic Development at IIM Bangalore, Quantitative Methods and Information Systems Area. He started his career as a consultant with S. B. Billimoria & Co. Chartered Accountants and Management Consultants. He then went on to pursue his Ph.D. at J.M. Katz Graduate School of Business, University of Pittsburgh where he majored in Management Information Systems/Artificial Intelligence. His research interests include ICT for Development, particular design and assessment of e-Government systems, multi-agent modelling and open source systems. In 2007, he was awarded The Rene Wagenaar Outstanding Paper Award for the most compelling research by the European e-Government Society.

Dr. **Richard Heeks** is Professor of Development Informatics and also Chair of the Institute for Development Policy and Management at University of Manchester. He obtained his BA in Natural Science in University of Cambridge and completed Ph.D. in Technology and Development Policy in the Open University. His research mainly focus on issues related to information systems, ICTs for development; e-Government and IT sector industries. He is involved in consultancy and advisory work at the World Bank Development Gateway (ICTs for Development) and Commonwealth Centre for e-Governance. He is also responsible for the creation of the four new postgraduate programmes at the University of Manchester, which include the world's first Master in ICTs for Development.

Dr. **Roger Harris** is Independent Consultant for Roger Harris Associates, Hong Kong. He obtained his Higher National Diploma in Business Studies, completed British Computer Society Examination Parts I & II. He earned his Master in Business Systems Analysis and Design in City University, London and Ph.D. in Information Systems in City University, Hong Kong. Roger Harris Associates (RHA) is a consulting and social entrepreneurial firm based around the work of Dr. Roger W. Harris. He has been working in this field since 1997 and the firm has been providing consulting and knowledge sharing services for six years in the area of ICTs for poverty reduction and rural development in Asia.

Prof. **Shaikh Abdus Salam** passed his SSC Examination in 1970 from Jessore Board and stood 8th in order of merit. He passed HSC in 1972. He did B.A (Hons.) in Economics from Govt. B. L. College, Khulna under Rajshahi University in 1975 and stood 2nd in order of merit. Dr. Salam did his M.A. in Economics from the University of Dhaka in 1976. He studied Mass Communication & Journalism and earned M.A. Degree in 1980 (stood 2nd). Dr. Salam has his Law Degree (LL B) from Dhaka University (1981). He earned his Ph.D Degree in Communication & Journalism from Poona University, India (1986). Dr. Salam is now a senior member of the Social Science Faculty and the Academic Council of the University of Dhaka. He has been the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Dhaka since January 2009.

Dr. **Vibodh Parthasarathi** is Associate Professor at the Centre for Culture, Media & Governance (CCMG), Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. He received his BA (Hons) in History in St. Stephens College, University of Delhi. He then obtained his Master in Communication Studies in Mass Communication Research Centre, Jamia Millia University and Master in Development Studies in Institute of Social Studies, The Hague. He maintained a multidisciplinary interest in media theory, communication and development policy, and comparative media practice. His research explores the trans-national history of the media industry, governance of media infrastructure and market structure of Indian creative industries under globalisation.

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MESSAGES

FROM THE DIRECTOR

It is with great pleasure that I write this note, as it gives me the opportunity to celebrate the achievements of the SIRCA Programme over the past year. This also marks the end of the first phase of this unique initiative.

In my message last year, I spoke of the pioneering work we set out to do, to improve the course of development through well-planned and well-executed research. Together with the support of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada, and the Singapore Internet Research Centre, I believe we have achieved much of what was attempted.

During the past year, we saw the completion of all 15 SIRCA-funded research projects. The findings of these projects have been disseminated at local and international conferences, and published in academic journals and other media worldwide. In this phase of SIRCA, we have focused our efforts on improving the quality of research outcomes through activities designed to help mentors and mentees collaborate, publish and distribute their research widely. In line with this and in collaboration with the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC), SIRCA guest-edited two special peer-reviewed journal issues in January and April 2011. The articles were selected from the SIRCA event at the ICA 2010 Mobiles Pre-Conference held in June 2010, and from among our own grant recipients. Also, we will soon launch a book about moving from research into practice, with contributions from all those involved with the programme, published in collaboration with AMIC.

We are pleased to note that two of our grant recipients were awarded PhD Scholarships from universities in Australia and Netherlands in 2010. The scholarship awards are an indication of our success in building capacity in the ICTD research space through the SIRCA Programme. We are proud of the achievements of these SIRCA grantees, and hope that they continue to contribute to the body of useful ICTD research through their work.

Our experience from SIRCA has inspired us to expand our scope for building research capacity. Our next initiative will replicate much of the existing programme, but will be scaled up to include Africa, Latin America and Asia. We envisage this as an upgraded Release 2.0 of SIRCA, with weak spots eliminated and suggestions for improvement incorporated. We will continue to look to assistance from IDRC, our growing network of mentors and mentees, and the ICTD research community at large in the new initiative. We believe that together, our efforts to improve the research skills of emerging scholars and thereby change the course of development will be as rewarding as it has been so far.



Director
Ang Peng Hwa

FROM THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

As the first round of the SIRCA program draws to a close, we enter a period of reflection on our past performance and planning for the next round. The capacity-building initiatives successfully bore fruit, with investigators translating research skills and confidence into essential outputs. Evidence of the longer-term impact of the mentorship program was seen in multiple manuscripts passing the rigorous peer-reviewed standards of global publications. High-quality academic articles continue to be accepted in premier outlets such as the Media Asia Journal, the Indian Journal of Labor Economics, and the International Journal on Advances in ICT for Emerging Regions.

In June 2010, SIRCA researchers began interacting with established scholars at the International Communication Associations pre-conference "Innovations in Mobile Use" in Singapore.

Research findings were further disseminated on several occasions, including at the Living the Philippine Information Society Conference, the 4th International Conference on Theory and Practice of Electronic Governance in China, the 17th Annual International Sustainable Development Research Conference in USA, the IEEJ Japan-Cambodia Joint Symposium on Information Systems and Communication Technology in Cambodia, and at the 5th Annual ACRON-REDECOM conference in Peru.

It was also a busy period for the SIRCA Secretariat. In collaboration with the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC), we released two issues of the Media Asia Journal in January and April 2011. The first issue comprised of articles sourced from the ICA 2010 Mobiles Preconference and the second featured articles from among our own SIRCA scholars. Individually too, SIRCA scholars gained broader recognition—we are pleased to announce that two SIRCA investigators gained admission to prestigious doctoral programs in Australia and the Netherlands.

As SIRCA initiatives translate into research outputs, we turn to longer-term outcomes, such as developing sustainable practices, establishing scale, and influencing policy. First, emphasizing the need to conduct applicable research grounded in theory, we are publishing an edited book "Research to Practice: Building ICTD Research Capacities in Asia" later this year. This volume will be a culmination of our Pls research outputs, mentor experiences and thought pieces on how best to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

The overall evaluation of SIRCA performance was supplemented with a focused mentorship evaluation study. These evaluations helped chronicle our successes, but more importantly, provided insight on how to improve procedures and, in turn, service quality. This reflective experience and positive feedback from a host of stakeholders has prompted us to expand the reach of the program to a global level. We therefore hope to take our own institutional capacity in strengthening research capabilities amongst Asian ICTD scholars to African and Latin American shores.

As I pen this message, deep in preparations for the final dissemination conference due in Phuket in April 2011, SIRCA aims to successfully forge new relationships and further develop research capacity in this field. With your continued support and that of our donor, mentors, scholars, and the ICTD research community, I have no doubt that, together, our efforts will be transformational.



Assistant Director
Arul Chib

ABOUT THE SIRCA PROGRAM

The Strengthening ICTD Research Capacity in Asia (SIRCA) Program is a capacity building initiative, primarily aimed at improving the social science research skills of emerging Asian scholars in the information and communications technology for development (ICTD) space. The Program was initiated in August 2008 and completed its third and final year in July 2011.

To date the SIRCA Program has facilitated the research of 15 (12 grant recipients, and 3 graduate awardees) emerging ICTD researchers from 8 Asian countries, through the provision of financial grants, mentoring and capacity building exercises aimed at improving their research. The researchers, who were identified through a stringent selection process and then assigned a full-time mentor to supervise and guide their research, have focused on conducting theoretically-based and methodologically rigorous social science research in the ICTD area. Their research covers a variety of topics including multidisciplinary research in ICT development, e-services, new media use and social impact, and policy for the benefit and advancement of individuals, organizations, nation and society in Asia.

At the end of the Program, it is evident that much of the SIRCA-funded research has been received well. Mentees (i.e. SIRCA project grant recipients) have presented their research findings in conferences around the world with positive feedback, and the Program has published two special journal issues with the Media Asia Journal (published by AMIC, Singapore), comprising of peer-reviewed academic articles from mentees. Two of the grant recipients have progressed to the next level and are now reading for their PhDs (in Australia, and Netherlands), underscoring the value of the SIRCA Program in capacity building. In due course, the Program will have achieved its objective of promoting broad-based, high quality multidisciplinary research and developing future research leaders in the ICTD space.

The fellowship of SIRCA not only has given me an opportunity to help in conducting field work for my PhD study, but also has contributed to broadening my research capacity and network.

–Sirajul Islam,
SIRCA Grant Recipient

The SIRCA experience has both aided my admission into the PhD program at the University of Melbourne and inspired my research and academic vision within my current PhD program.

–Peou Chivoin,
SIRCA Grant Recipient

VISION AND MISSION

At SIRCA, we aim to enhance research capacity in Asia by supporting research that is scientific, replicable, generalizable, collaborative, and actionable (applied research). By creating opportunities for mentorship between established researchers and grant recipients, SIRCA provides spaces for sharing of experiences and knowledge. Ultimately, the goal is to contribute to the growing field of ICTD research through disseminating research findings in peer-reviewed publications and international conferences.

PARTNERS

The SIRCA Program was conceived by the Singapore Internet Research Centre (SiRC), based at the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information (WKWSCI), Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, and supported by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada.

SiRC initiates and conducts broad-based high-quality multidisciplinary research related to new media and related technologies across Asia. The Centre develops international networks for research collaboration, analysis, and technological development, as well as with industrial, research and educational organizations in Singapore and overseas. Although the research efforts are primarily supported by faculty from NTU, it engages in a wide variety of collaborative efforts with researchers and institutions worldwide.

WKWSCI meets the demand in Singapore and the region for well-trained personnel to staff the media industry and information services, through its quality undergraduate and graduate communication and information degree programs. The School is a premier research institution that generates empirical and humanistic analyses of communication topics and policy issues important to Singapore and the region. WKWSCI has established and maintains an international network of educators, researchers, and info-comm professionals through collaborative projects, conferences and other exchanges.

IDRC is a Canadian Crown Corporation that supports research in developing countries to promote growth and development. The SIRCA Program is funded under the IDRC's Pan Asia Networking (PAN) program, which supports research on the impacts of ICTs on people, culture, economy, and society.



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GRANT AWARDEES

Grant Awardee /
Country

Biography / Project Description

1 Md. Mahfuz Ashraf,
Bangladesh



Md. Mahfuz Ashraf has been studying the impact of ICT4D projects in developing nations for over five years. He brings to his work a nuanced and sophisticated understanding of interpretive research methodologies and theories drawn from a wide range of fields including information systems and development economics. His ICT4D impact works have been recognized by the Singapore Internet Research Centre, Singapore and IDRC, Canada, the UNESCO Chair in ICT for Development and Research Division, London, the Ministry of Planning, Government of Bangladesh and so on. Mahfuz has published a number of research articles in peer-reviewed academic journals, edited books, and presented papers in international conferences. He currently works at the Department of Management Information Systems at the University of Dhaka as a Lecturer and conducts research for Brainstorm Bangladesh.

An impact assessment framework to evaluate the effectiveness of ICT-led development project at micro (community) level in a developing country

It is argued that ICT4D projects have developmental impacts on people's lives. Interestingly, the main focus of the interventions has been on the implementation of ICT4D projects themselves, rather than on understanding their impacts at the recipient or community level. The objective of this SIRCA funded project is to develop and test a conceptual framework to investigate ICT-led developmental impact in rural areas in the developing country, Bangladesh. This study, which is informed by the seminal work of Amartya Sen, "Development as Freedom" (DaF), adopts an interpretive qualitative research style and illustrates the importance of understanding the local context. Our findings demonstrate that the two ICT interventions studied in this research had significant impacts on the five freedoms espoused in DaF. Our framework will encourage further investigation into ICT-led development projects which explicitly acknowledges the perspectives of the to-be-affected community/ies.

2 M. Sirajul Islam
Bangladesh



M. Sirajul Islam is a final year PhD student in Informatics at the Swedish Business School, Örebro University, Sweden. He has a Bachelor in Business Administration, an M.Sc. in Informatics (e-Government), and MBAs in Finance and Digital Technologies Management. Siraj is the founding President of the Bangladesh Centre for E-governance and a former fellow of the UK based World Innovation Foundation. He is currently a Coordinator of the 'International Network for Post Graduate Students in the area of ICT4D' (IPID). His research has been published in high-ranking ICT4D, e-government, information systems and e-practices journals worldwide. He has had the opportunity to present his work in a number of European and Asian countries and has been invited to be a guest reviewer, session chair and session moderator for journals and conferences on ICT4D.

Agricultural Market Information Services (AMIS) and its implications on the rural community in Bangladesh: Theory and practice

The specific aims of this research project were to find out how the adoption of mobile phone technology empowers the farmers of Bangladesh in accessing agriculture market information service, and how effectively an electronic service can be provided in a rural context. The mobile-service in question was an 'Agriculture Market Information Service' (AMIS), locally branded as PalliNet (RuralNet). AMIS supported 100 small farmers in rural villages connected to three wholesale markets located in a northern district of Bangladesh, through the daily provisions of information about the price of crops. It was found that the service helped the farmers to improve their bargaining position with the traders, and reduced transaction costs by reducing their risk and empowering them.

3 Peou Chivoin,
Cambodia



Peou Chivoin is a PhD candidate in Sociology at the University of Melbourne. He is also a Lecturer at the Department of Media and Communication, Royal University of Phnom Penh, and a Researcher at the Cambodia Communication Institute. His research interests are centered on the cultural, social and political implications of traditional media as well as new ICTs, and his previous works include published articles on Cambodian film and broadcast TV industry, and the annual Cambodian Communication Review, published by the Department of Media and Communication.

Internet for Learning and Knowledge Building: Students' Perceptions and Utilization in Cambodian Higher Education

The project aims to explore the extent to which students at select Cambodian universities and high schools utilize the Internet for general and academic purposes, and the associating dynamics that determine Internet use. The understanding of actual uses of the Internet by these students inform, and adjust if necessary, the currently overt enthusiasm for the integral role of the Internet in education in developing countries. Furthermore, empirical data of actual users and associating dynamics are indispensable for critically-informed policy and well-designed educational programs. Data from a total sample of 2074 students (53.6% males, 75.5% university students) was collected through a cross-sectional survey using structured questionnaires. Some of the main findings include:

1. The motivations to use the Internet are mainly information seeking and entertainment, followed by socialization, the levels of which could be accounted for by differences in access point, gender, and level of education and Internet experience.
2. The students overall feel positive – comfortable, optimistic and enthusiastic – towards the Internet, though again differentiated in terms of degree by gender, level of education and Internet experience.
3. The level of Internet use for academic purpose is unfortunately marginal.

4 Phal Des,
Cambodia



Phal Des is the Director of the IT Center of RUPP. His focus is on training students, faculty and staff in a variety of modern ICTs and engaging RUPP in participating in regional and international research projects and activities. He is involved in a project based on Mobile Computing and 3G Wireless Networks for health care, education and heritage. He is currently working on projects such as Mapping Healthcare Centers in Cambodia and Presumptive Diagnosis, and on Awareness for STDs via SMS for Young Cambodian in rural areas. In 2007 he was awarded an Obuchi/UNESCO fellowship to work for a project called "System Support for Mobile and Distributed Multimedia Computing" at University of Technology of Dresden, Germany. From 2005 to 2007 he worked on projects such as the Greater Mekong Sub-region Virtual University project and the "Open Source e-Learning" project of UNESCO Paris. In 2009 he was awarded the title of Research Fellow in e-media & Virtual Reality from Group T, National University College Leuven, Belgium.

Awareness on Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs): Showcasing a Mobile Solution Designed for Young Cambodian People

Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) are currently one of the biggest healthcare issues that the Cambodian government is trying to overcome. These diseases affected many young Cambodians, and due to inherent social and cultural obstacles, young people with STD symptoms are afraid and ashamed to seek advice from professional doctors. Such social and cultural pressures are even stronger in rural areas.

In parallel, mobile subscribers are growing rapidly in Cambodia attributed to phone and subscription affordability, and improvements of network coverage. This leads to the suggestion of using the mobile phone as a secure, trustworthy, and discrete means of communication between young Cambodians and health service providers. This research mainly aims at establishing a new and close communication in order to reduce the cultural obstacles to consult STD-related problems with professional doctors. In addition it also offers the STD-related education through the mobile phones, which are connected to our server. The final outcome of this project is to change the attitude of young Cambodians and motivate them to consult with professional doctors in their community.



Kanliang Wang is a Professor in Management Information Systems at the School of Business, Renmin University of China. He has a PhD in Management Science & Engineering, Master and Bachelor of Computer Science & Engineering from Xi'an Jiaotong University, China. His research interests include IT/IS and organizational change, e-commerce strategies, decision analysis and support systems. His papers have appeared in Communications of the ACM, Information & Management, Decision Support Systems, The DATA BASE for Advances in Information Systems, Computer in Human Behavior, Quarterly Journal of Electronic Commerce, Journal of Global Optimization, Expert Systems, Annals of Operations Research, Electronic Government, International Journal of Technology Marketing, and so on.



Wansong Zheng is a PhD candidate of the Xi'an JiaoTong University in China. His research interest focuses on Information Systems, especially Healthcare Information Systems (HIS). He worked in the HIS area for over eleven years at the Department of Information Technology of a hospital, and accumulated a lot of experiences about design, adoption, and development of HIS. His research aims to develop quantitative and qualitative models that can explain and instruct the development of HIS in developing countries. He has taken part in 5 Science Foundations of China, and 3 Foundations of Shan'xi in China. His papers have been published in Chinese journals.

Healthcare Information Systems in China

In recent years, the rapid deployment of healthcare information systems (HIS) amongst many developed countries has led to significant achievements. However, the health resources of developing countries such as China are far less than that of developed countries. To mitigate the widening healthcare supply-demand gap, the Chinese government aimed to use information technology. Electronic medical records (EMR) are a core application within HIS, and adopting sharing EMR has many benefits. However, physicians are not willing to share their EMR. The research questions examined here are: what factors influence physicians' attitudes towards sharing EMR, and how do these factors impact physicians' intention to adopt sharing of EMR? Based on social capital theory and planned behavior theory, we designed a research model. A total of 270 physicians were surveyed in the field study conducted across 20 hospitals in Xi'an (seven hospitals), Shanghai (six hospitals), and Beijing (seven hospitals) of China from November 2009 to May 2010. The combined model has a satisfactory explanation of physicians' intention ($R^2=0.52$).

The results indicate that social capital plays an important role in EMR sharing. We find that there are no direct effects of reciprocity, loss of knowledge power and social trust on intention to share knowledge, being mediated by attitudes towards sharing knowledge.



Rajiv Aricat has a Bachelor in Psychology from MG University, Kottayam, India. He completed his masters in Communication and Journalism from University of Kerala (India) and has a research degree (Master of Philosophy) from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. He worked in the editorial departments of various media organizations and web portals in New Delhi for 6 years, where he wrote and repurposed news and information content for a global audience. Catapulted into the world of IT-enabled services after doing an M.Phil. dissertation on "deconstruction of history in a literary work", he picked up the thread for his current research on the job. Rajiv joined the PhD program at Wee Kim Wee School of Communication, Nanyang Technological University in 2010. He currently works among temporary 'impatriates' from India in Singapore to investigate how ICTs can help them acculturate to their new culture.

Acculturation of Migrants in Work Sector: Identifying the Facilitative Role of Mobile Phones

The objective of the research is to find out the ways in which mobile phones are being used by Indian migrant workers (low-skilled) in Singapore to acculturate to its work sector. Trained in a different work environment, like that in India, migrant workers face adjustment stress as they undergo 'on-boarding' to the competitive work sector of the host society. Drawing on from the typologies of acculturation – assimilation, integration, separation and marginalization – this research tries to understand which of the four acculturation orientations helps the employees the most to make use of their mobile phones effectively in the new culture? Further, what changes in acculturation orientations can be predicted with a certain usage of mobile phones? Existing acculturation scales measure various aspects of respondents' cultural life, including cultural affiliation, participation in cultural activities, multicultural ideology, nature of multicultural contacts, etc., but not acculturation to work sector. Whereas, field studies show that with the advent of mobile phones traditional kinship networks have been weaved in the form of a mobile kinship network that have a bearing on migrant movements. This study complicates the measurement of acculturation by incorporating 'mobile phones' and highlighting the importance of 'work sector' in migrant acculturation studies.



T.B. Dinesh has been part of the computer science and Internet research communities since 1984, in the USA and The Netherlands. He is the Technical Director of Janastu.org and Servalots.com located in Bangalore, India. Janastu is an NGO and Servalots is a Company, and both conduct research and open source development. As an organization, they have been working with various communities and NGOs, pastoral networks, intangible-heritage projects, etc. They have also been debating various technology, social, cultural and infrastructural issues. For over a decade, they have been working on a product for communities to managed community information. And over the last year, they have been defining and developing the idea of a re-narration Web towards aiding Web-accessibility for the print-impaired.

Communities, Technology, Participation

In India, the use of technology for enhancing community participation has been documented for particular ICT initiatives and e-governance projects. In this kind of documentation, participation is narrated merely in terms of people using the technology and reaping its claimed benefits.

Towards this, we study how the introduction of ICTs influences citizens' engagement with the state by analyzing Nemmadi Kendras, which are computerized kiosks established in rural areas of Karnataka to provide revenue services and land records to citizens under a public-private partnership. The findings suggest that an analysis of the impact of information technologies in governance necessitates paying attention to the larger political and social processes within which the technology is introduced and embedded.

On the other hand, there exists documentation of how user and developer communities have participated in developing "open source" technology. This material explains how participation by multiple users in modifying and building upon every new version of the technology eventually improves the performance of the technology. Towards this, we did an action-research study of School Information Management Software for Teachers. The objective of this project is to involve teachers in managing the software by which different forms of information in the school are managed and communicated.



Devesh Kishore is Dean, School of Journalism & Mass Communication, Institute of Management Studies, Noida. He is involved in developing, teaching and research programs at graduate and post-graduate level and production of audio and video materials.

V.L.V. Kameswari is an Associate Professor at the Department of Agricultural Communication at G.B. Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Uttarakhand, India. Prior to this, she was a Lecturer at the Indian Institute of Forest Management, Bhopal, India. She was a Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence and has international and national publications. Her main area of interest is Development Communication and she has supervised research work on use of ICTs for Development.

Empowerment of Farming Community Through Use of ICTs: A Study in the Indian Himalayan Region
Indian agriculture is faced with the challenge of providing adequate and sustained livelihood to over 103 million farm families spread across the country. Information needs of the farming community in India are largely met by the public extension system, whose actual impact is limited by logistics, resources, skills, sheer numbers and poor track record of reaching small farmers. In this context, the use of ICTs is widely seen as one way of addressing the information needs of the farmers. Against this backdrop, this study was taken up to examine the relevance of ICTs to the farming community. The study was conducted in the state of Uttarakhand, which falls in the Indian Himalayan region, using a descriptive and analytical research design. Some preliminary observations include:

1. Range of ICTs available to farmers is limited and usually confined to mobile phones.
 2. Mobile phones are mostly used for fulfilling social needs rather than seeking agricultural information.
 3. Proactive usage of ICTs for agriculture by farming community is limited due to poorly developed marketing opportunities.
 4. Use of ICTs by public extension agencies is limited in scope and content.
-

Grant Awardee /
Country

9 Balwant Singh
Mehta,
India



Biography / Project Description

Balwant Singh Mehta works as a Faculty Member at the Institute for Human Development, New Delhi, India. He has served as a Consultant to Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation, Path International, Action Aid and Population Council, and received research grants from Save the Children, USAID, UNICEF, International Labor Office and World Bank. He was awarded the Amy Mahan Fellowship Award (2010-11), the Indian Social Science Award (2009-10) by IDRC, South Asia, and Mentorship of SPSS South Asia (2007-9). He has attended various training programs internationally on research methodologies and policy analysis techniques. His research interests include Human Development Issues and Information Technology, with a special focus on India.

Nature and Quality of Employment in ICT Sector in India

The study sought to examine the nature and quality of employment in the ICT sector in India and comprehend its implications for future employment policy. It was conducted in the National Capital Region (comprising Delhi, Gurgaon, Noida, Faridabad, and Ghaziabad) of India. The sample size constituted 300 workers, with 150 workers (50 per cent) from both from IT and ITeS sub-sectors.

The study showed that majority of workers in the ICT sector were youth (20-30 years) belonging to upper and middle income groups, with average salaries high in comparison to traditional manufacturing and service sectors. The sector was characterized by shift-based long working hours, excessive pressure and very few days of leave. Women participation was significantly high, particularly in ITeS sub-sector, men and women were not discriminated in terms of salary. The rate of attrition was quite high and job hopping a common phenomenon. The study concluded that there was an urgent need to improve the overall working conditions in the sector and extend social security and other job related benefits to workers to improve employment conditions in particular and for the overall development of India's ICT sector in general.

10 Ma. Regina M.
Hechanova,
Philippines



Ma. Regina M. Hechanova is an Associate Professor at the Psychology Department, of the Ateneo de Manila University, and the Executive Director of the Ateneo Centre for Organization Research and Development (Ateneo CORD). Gina has a PhD in Industrial/Organizational Psychology from the Central Michigan University and has over 20 years of experience as an HR practitioner. She received the University of the Philippines Chancellor's Award for Most Outstanding Faculty in 1996 and was named Outstanding Young Scientist in 2005 by the National Academy of Science and Technology. Her book *For the People, With the People: Developing Social Enterprises in the Philippines* won the Cardinal Sin Catholic Best Book in Ministry during the Catholic Mass Media Awards 2010. She was recently named one of The Outstanding Women in the Nation's Service (TOWNS) 2010.

Lifeline Online: E-Counseling and the Well-Being of Overseas Filipino Workers and their Families

This project aimed to study the effects of ICT as a means of providing social support for Filipino Overseas Contract Workers (OFWs) and their families. Data from counseling transcripts and interviews with OFW/family non-users were obtained to elicit the attitudes towards help-seeking and the drivers and barriers for adoption of online counseling. Results suggest that online counseling adoption may come in phases beginning with a felt need. OFWs raised issues related to marital and relationship issues, family and parenting, homesickness and loneliness, work-related, cultural adjustment during the counseling sessions. Majority of site users were based in the Middle East also suggesting the difficulty of the location. Another factor influencing online counseling adoption is technology acceptance and adoption. In particular, data from non-users reveal that access to technology and lack of skills are major barriers to use indicating technology. Finally, the interviews also highlight the cultural barriers and misconceptions that may hinder migrant workers from seeking online counseling. However, site users report positive feedback indicating its viability as a means of providing support for migrant workers.

11 Mary Grace P.
Mirandilla,
Philippines



Biography / Project Description

Mary Grace P. Mirandilla is an independent Filipino researcher on ICT and its impact on society, development, and politics. Over the past 10 years, she has conducted research on various topics, including political socialization, international relations, and public policy. In 2001, Grace first got involved in telecommunications and ICT research and, in 2005, worked on her first independent research on community telecenters through an IDRC grant. In 2009, she conducted two independent studies on cyber-campaigning and political blogging. A frustrated painter, Grace studied political science instead. She's currently finishing her Master's in Public Administration at the University of the Philippines. Grace works as a Research Consultant for the Center for Research and Communication, The Asia Foundation, and the Asian Development Bank. This year, she is expecting two published works—a journal article on political blogging and a book chapter on telecommunications policy reform in the Philippines.

The Filipino Blogosphere: An Emerging Alternative Venue for Political Participation in the Philippines

The research project looks at political blogging among the citizens of a developing, democratic country, like the Philippines. As an exploratory-descriptive study, it aims to determine the profile, motivation, political attitude, and political activities of 30 A-list Filipino political bloggers and 64 of their readers. The blogger and reader respondents are found to be mostly male, young, college-educated, high-income, and veteran internet users. They see blogging as a form of political participation that has led to the exchange of ideas offline. In terms of participation, there was no significant change in political activities engaged in by bloggers and readers before and after accessing blogs. As to motivation, a blog is created to keep track of bloggers' thoughts, to inform others, and maintained over time to formulate new ideas. This is in sync with readers' expectation of gaining information and knowing others' views through blogs. Readers are found highly cynical and moderately efficacious, which may be caused by exposure to blogs that authors self-rate as critical of government. The low-cost, non-hierarchical nature of a blog makes it an empowering tool for citizens to express political views. However, its influence is perceived to be very limited unless it gets the attention of mainstream media or political gatekeepers. Despite its limited impact, blogs support democracy by allowing expression and encouraging participation despite the odds in Philippine politics.

12 Komathi Ale,
Singapore



Komathi ALE recently completed a Masters by research at the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, Singapore. She also earned her Bachelor's degree in Communication Studies (Honors) at Nanyang Technological University, specializing in public and promotional communication. Komathi's research interests are in the field of ICTD, particularly in the areas of disaster management, m-health and education. Her research examines the impact of low-cost computing technologies on rural education. She is interested in exploring the socio-cultural, psychological and gender dimensions of technology appropriation by marginalized communities in developing countries. She has done research in Indian village primary schools, where she spent over four months to conduct fieldwork in states of Tamil Nadu and Uttaranchal. As a young ICTD scholar, Komathi analyzes various conceptual frameworks and theories for a practical focus within the discipline.

Evaluating the Impact of the OLPC Laptops on the Psychological Empowerment of Primary School Children in Rural India

The increased hype and hope surrounding the advent of low-cost computing devices, specifically targeted at rural children, called for scientifically established research to test their impact on education. The project aimed at impacting the psychological empowerment of children through an ICT in education intervention. The study was designed to influence three community aspects of unbiased access, local language, and teacher training. The Extended Technology-Community-Management model has been used to establish these community aspects. The impact assessment was guided by the cognitive component of the Psychological Empowerment theory, focusing on variables of computer self-efficacy, technological literacy, and functional literacy. Using quantitative pre- post- intervention surveys, fieldwork was conducted from May 2010 to June 2010 to carry out a quasi-experiment among children primary schools in the rural regions of Uttaranchal, India. Participants in the test group interacted with One Laptop per Child (OLPC) laptops during a five-month period. The results of survey questionnaires completed by all children and teachers were analyzed, indicating significantly greater changes in the test variables for children exposed to the OLPCs than those of the control group. All hypotheses were proven significant.

13 M.J.R. David,
Sri Lanka



Biography / Project Description

M.J.R. David is a PhD candidate of the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka. He served as the Project Manager of the Kotmale Community Radio Internet project, initiated by UNESCO and Implemented by the University of Colombo. He began his career in community broadcasting and has set up several community radio stations in Sri Lanka. David later moved on to university teaching and played a key role in setting up the first media studies campus – Sri Pali campus of the University of Colombo. His current research interest is the interaction between local knowledge and ICTD.

Learning from Challenges: An Image-based Mapping Process to Study Influences of Community-based ICTD Initiatives in Sri Lanka

The primary objective of the study was to explore the challenges faced by community-based ICTD facilities in the central province of Sri Lanka. The study proposed an image-based mapping process that included digital story telling. The study is in progress and two key areas are emerging.

From a methodological point of view digital story telling has been proven to be an analytical tool capable of bringing out complex and challenging realities faced by ICTD facilities and its user communities. The methodology helped communities to reflect upon hidden realities that may have not emerged through conventional evaluations.

Secondly the concept and practice of the knowledge pool is emerging. The communities have been identified as ecologies and the ICT facility has been defined as a nucleus in the ecology. The knowledge pool is the point where ICT's relate to the social and production structure of the community ecology. The structure, dynamics and functionalities of the knowledge pool play a significant role in determining the effectiveness and sustenance of the community-based ICTD facilities.

14 Thanomwong
Poorisat,
Thailand



Thanomwong Poorisat is a PhD student in Communication Research at the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. She has a Bachelor and Master degree in Communication Research. She is working on several areas including cognitive processing, computer-mediated communication, health communication and public opinion. Her work was presented at international conferences, such as the International Communication Association and Association of Internet Researchers, and accepted for publication in a book: "Strategic Health Communication in Urban Contexts".

Mobile Phones for Healthcare in Rural Thailand

Many studies have provided empirical evidence to demonstrate the potentials of mobile phones in healthcare but a few are theoretically based. This paper will propose a model that aims to capture the process in which mobile phones alter the communicators' concept of time and space, and how this varies along the hierarchy in the rural healthcare context. Data from the 46 interviews with frontline health workers are being analyzed. The preliminary findings suggest that the use of mobile phones has significantly collapsed the time and space, leading to faster work flow for healthcare delivery, more flexibility for medical personnel and greater access to healthcare for rural people. While reducing time for patients to be treated, the use of mobile phones also increases the amount of workload workloads for doctors and staff at the remote community health centers. It was also found that the use of mobile phones varies along the hierarchy: doctors in particular are more likely than nurses to be contacted for information but less accessible.

Grant Awardee /
Country

15 Pham Huu Ty,
Vietnam



Biography / Project Description

Pham Huu Ty is a Lecturer at the Faculty of Land Resources and Agricultural Environment at Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry, Vietnam. He graduated with a Master of Applied Science from Dalhousie University, Canada, and is currently a PhD candidate at the Utrecht University. Ty specializes in teaching and research on soil erosion, landslide, land use planning, GIS and remote sensing. He has participated in many rural development projects in Central Vietnam and is keen to contribute to the protection of severe river landslides, and the enable sustainable livelihoods for river-based relying communities.

Upper River Erosion and Landslide Protection Planning: An Integration of Erosion and Landslide Hazard Mapping Using GIS and Remote Sensing and the Value Chain Approach

The objectives of the study were to collect data to simulate soil erosion and landslide susceptibility maps, and eventually investigate the impacts of soil erosion and landslide, and determine the awareness of local people on soil erosion and landslide.

The findings suggest that riverbank erosion has been increasingly severe. A map was produced to show potential areas which could be suitable for Lo O tree to be planted. The trees are a good measure to prevent and mitigate erosion and landslides in the future, but it needs time to grow (5 to 7 years) enough to provide protection from riverbank erosion and landslides. Protection planning maps were built and shared with local communities. The Lo O tree is easy to plant and locals have very good experience in planting and taking care of them.

MENTORS

Mentor

1

Arul Chib (Dr.)
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Biography

Dr. Arul Chib is the Assistant Director of the Singapore Internet Research Centre at Nanyang Technological University. He examines the impact of development campaigns delivered via a range of innovative ICTs. He has contributed to the conceptual progress of the discipline by proposing theoretical frameworks of analysis, including the ICT for healthcare development model, and the Technology-Community-Management model. Programmatically, Dr. Chib pursues action-oriented research with marginalized communities in varied cross-cultural contexts, particularly in resource-constrained environments. Dr. Chib has published in international refereed publications, such as the *International Journal of Communication*, the *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *New Media and Society*, the *Asian Journal of Communication*, has contributed to various book chapters from leading publishers such as Cambridge Scholars, Hampton Press, Springer, and Taylor & Francis, and has received top paper awards at major international refereed conferences, organized by the International Communication Association, and Telecommunications Policy and Research.

2

Rahul De (Dr.)
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Dr. Rahul De is the Hewlett-Packard Chair Professor in ICT for Sustainable Economic Development at IIM Bangalore. He has a B.Tech. from IIT Delhi, an MBA from University of Delhi, and a PhD from the School of Business, University of Pittsburgh. His research interests are in ICT for development, economic impacts of open source and evaluation of e-Government systems. He also works in applied AI. He has published over 40 articles in international journals, refereed conference proceedings and as chapters in books. He has won two Outstanding Paper awards for his research and one for teaching, conferred at international conferences. He currently serves on the Board of IIM Bangalore and also on the Board of the Software Freedom Law Centre, India.

3

Alexander G. Flor (Dr.)
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http://www.telecentre.org/profile/AlexanderGFlor?xg_source=activity



Dr. Alexander G. Flor is Professor of Information and Communication Studies at the University of the Philippines – Open University. Formerly UPOU Vice Chancellor for research and development, he was the founding Dean of the Faculty of Information and Communication Studies serving two terms (2004 to 2010). Professor Flor was the first Knowledge Management Program Manager (1998-2002) of SEAMEO SEARCA, a regional organization based in Los Banos. In 1998, he designed, developed and introduced KM as an academic course under the UP Los Baños development communication program. He has authored the following books: *eDevelopment and Knowledge Management* (SEARCA, 2001); *Digital Tools for Process Documentation* (SEARCA, 2002); *Ethnovideography: Video-Based Indigenous Knowledge Systems* (SEARCA and the International Potato Center, 2003); *Introduction to Development Communication* (SEARCA and UP Open University, 2003); *Environmental Communication* (UPOU, 2004); *Development Communication Praxis* (UPOU, 2007); and *Developing Societies in the Information Age* (UPOU, 2009).

4

Roger Harris (Dr.)
Roger Harris Associates
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Dr. Roger W. Harris has a PhD in Information Systems from the City University of Hong Kong. He has been advancing the use of ICTs for poverty reduction and rural development in Asia since 1997. Dr. Harris is the founder of Roger Harris Associates, a consulting and social entrepreneurial firm that provides services to Asian governments and aid agencies, including the United Nations, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. He has worked on assignments for project design and implementation, evaluation, policy and strategy development, knowledge sharing and research in more than a dozen Asian countries. Mostly, this involves village telecenters with computers and internet access and mobilizing communities towards making use of them for local development. He has a long association with a remote indigenous community in Borneo where he is currently setting up a community radio station.

Mentor

5

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6

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7

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8

Vibodh Parthasarathi (Dr.)
Centre for Culture,
Media & Governance, India
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Biography

Dr. Richard Heeks is Professor of Development Informatics at the Institute for Development Policy and Management, University of Manchester; and Director of the Centre for Development Informatics. He is the founder of the M.Sc. program in ICTs for Development, and has been consulting and researching on ICTs and development for more than 20 years. He has a PhD in Indian IT industry development.

His book publications include *India's Software Industry* (1996), *Reinventing Government in the Information Age* (1999), and *Implementing and Managing eGovernment* (2006). His research interests are IT industry development, IT social enterprise, informatics in remote regions, and ICTs and climate change. He runs the ICT for Development blog: <http://ict4dblog.wordpress.com>.

Prof. Ang Peng Hwa is Director of the Singapore Internet Research Centre at the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. He is the author of *Ordering Chaos: Regulating the Internet* (Thomson, 2005) and was appointed by then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan to the Working Group on Internet Governance in 2004. Most recently, he spent academic year 2008 on sabbatical in Ahmedabad, India, to help start the Mudra Institute of Communication Research.

His teaching and research interests combine law and communication, touching on internet governance, censorship, and the social impact of media. His articles have appeared in the *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, *New Media and Society*, *Cyberpsychology and Behavior*, as well as trade publications such as the *Asian Wall Street Journal*, and the *Singapore Straits Times*. Ang is also chairman of the regional non-profit media organization Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC)

Dr. May Lwin is an Associate Professor and Associate Chair at the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information in Nanyang Technological University. She specializes in strategic communication, health and social communication. Dr Lwin has undertaken major cutting-edge research projects in the various areas of strategic communication as well as societal and health communication. She has published in leading international journals such as the *Journal of Communication*, *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *Journal of Consumer Research*, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *Journal of Health Communication*, *Journal of Retailing* and *Journal of Advertising*. She has also co-authored a number of books, including the best-selling *Clueless Series* (includes titles like *Clueless in Advertising* and *Clueless in Marketing Communications*) and *Marketing Success Stories*, contributed to major marketing texts (e.g. *Handbook of Markets and Economies*, *Services Marketing in Asia*) and written a large inventory of cases which are used widely in various universities in Asia/Australia. Her textbook on advertising in Asia Pacific (*Principles and Effective IMC Practice*) was published by Pearson Prentice Hall in end 2006.

Dr. Vibodh Parthasarathi maintains a multidisciplinary interest in the business history of creative industries, comparative media policy, and governance of media infrastructure. Currently Associate Professor at the Centre for Culture, Media & Governance, Jamia Millia Islamia, and ex-officio Coordinator-Research & Innovation, he directs projects on Media Policy Literacy, Pluralism in the TV News industry, and on Exhibition & Curatorial Policy. An awardee of numerous Fellowships & Grants, he is the co-editor of *L'Idiot du Village Mondial* (Editions Luc Pire/ECLM, 2004), *Media and Mediation* (Sage, 2005), *The Social and the Symbolic* (Sage, 2007) and *Communication, Culture and Confrontation* (Sage, 2009). His last documentary *Crosscurrents: A Fijian Travelogue* (2001) explored the underbelly of 'reconciliation' following a decade of military coups in Fiji. Vibodh's current nominations include International Advisory Board, India Media Centre, University of Westminster; International Editorial Board, 'Global Media and Communication', Board Member, Centre for Internet & Society (Bangalore).

Mentor

9

Shaikh Abdus Salam (Prof.)
University of Dhaka, Bangladesh
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Biography

Prof. Shaikh Abdus Salam has been teaching at Dhaka University Department of Mass Communication and Journalism for the last 24 years. He is a Senior Professor and served the Department as its Chairman for 3 years. He was also the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. Dr. Salam has a BA (Hons) and MA in Economics, and holds a Bachelor of Law. He also has an MA in Mass Communication & Journalism. He is a PhD in Communication and Journalism. Dr. Salam worked with TDH (Netherlands), Bangladesh Association for Voluntary Sterilization – a huge national health/population NGO in Bangladesh. He served in the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Government of Bangladesh. He was previously the Director General of the Press Institute of Bangladesh, and a visiting professor in Oslo University College, Norway. Dr. Salam has authored 4 books on Bangladesh media and 28 research articles which have been published at home and abroad and often provides consultancy in the areas of Media, Health and Population.

10

John Maurice Traxler (Dr.)
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Dr. John Traxler is a Professor of Mobile Learning, probably the world's first, and Founding Director of the International Association for Mobile Learning. He is an Associate Editor of the *International Journal of Mobile and Blended Learning* and of *Interactive Learning Environments*, and he is on the Editorial Board of *Research in Learning Technology* and *IT in International Development*. He has guest edited three special editions of peer-reviewed journals devoted to mobile learning including *Distance Education* and is now editing an African edition of the *International Journal of Mobile and Blended Learning*. He has given more than ten international keynotes in the past year on mobile learning mostly outside Europe and contributed or lead workshops in universities, agencies and departments around the world. In most cases these have addressed issues of distance, disengagement and disadvantage, and are now engaging increasingly with issues of scale and sustainability

YEAR IN REVIEW

KEY MILESTONES

In the past year, the SIRCA Program has achieved several key milestones. All of the SIRCA funded research projects were completed within the specified time period. The researchers together with their mentees spent much of the latter part of the project on disseminating their research findings worldwide, and received positive feedback on their work. Following the ICA Pre-conference where mentees obtained feedback on their research, many were able to participate and present their work in international conferences, and publish their papers in academic journals and other media. Six of the 15 research projects were published in a special peer-reviewed journal issue, coordinated by SiRC and published by the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC) in Singapore in April 2011. Two SIRCA mentees have gone on to pursue their Doctorates, Peou Chivoin (Cambodia) at the University of Melbourne in Australia, and Pham Huu Ty (Vietnam) at the Utrecht University in Netherlands.

While SIRCA mentees and mentors were busy wrapping up their research projects, submitting final reports and presenting research, SIRCA staff members based at NTU have been occupied with many other related tasks.

SIRCA Senior Manager, Yvonne Lim, and Evaluator, Ann Mizumoto, participated as panel speakers at *"The Evaluation Conclave 2010: Making Evaluation Matter"*, organized by CoE (Community of Evaluators) held in New Delhi, India, from 25-28 October 2010. SIRCA's experience of undergoing a formative evaluation using the Utilization-

Focused Evaluation (UFE) approach was discussed in detail and provided an excellent opportunity to promote the SIRCA Program to a literate and international audience. The Conclave brought in participants, key note speakers, and perspectives from evaluators, donors, program managers and academics from all over the world.



ICA 2010 Mobiles Preconference, June 2010

In January 2011, SiRC published a special peer-reviewed journal issue, published by AMIC. The papers were sourced from the SIRCA's event at the ICA 2010 Mobiles Preconference *"Innovations in Mobile Use"* held on 21-22 June 2010. Seven papers were selected by a review panel comprised of 12 senior scholars and practitioners from around the world. The second special journal issue published in April 2011 by AMIC comprised of papers sourced from among SIRCA mentees. Six research articles were published based on inputs from a review panel made up of 16 senior scholars and practitioners, many of whom participated at the ICA 2010 Mobiles Preconference.

The Program's final research dissemination conference was held from 15-17 April 2011, in Phuket, Thailand. The event, "Global Dialogue



ICA 2010 Mobiles Preconference, June 2010

on ICT for Development” was a huge success with research grantees presenting their final research findings. In addition to this, the conference provided an opportunity for selected invitees to discuss the next global capacity building initiative to be administered by SiRC and funded by IDRC once again. Mentees were able to fine-tune their presentations with their mentors during the first session, while invitees were briefed on the whole Program. Representatives from South Africa and Latin America participated at the event and provided SiRC and IDRC officers with their views on how to scale the next grant to work with emerging researchers from their locales.

A book on the insider perspectives of the SIRCA Program will be published by AMIC in September 2011. Edited by Roger Harris, Arul Chib, Komathi Ale and Tahani Iqbal, the book showcases the intricacies of grant management within the SIRCA Program, and research perspectives with views from mentors and articles from mentees.

Thank you so very much for making this happen and for inviting me to participate. I had a very good experience with the mentorship program, saw positive outcomes and feel that the **the project contributed positively to the Cambodian society.**

–May Lwin,
Mentor

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

A Mentorship Evaluation was conducted from January to March 2011 to deepen the understanding of the Mentor-Principal Investigator (PI) relationship since the inception of the SIRCA program. As the key objective of SIRCA is to build the capacity of emerging ICTD researchers, mentorship was thought to provide a unique opportunity for emerging researchers to rely on the vast knowledge and experience of senior ICTD researchers to gain, among others, research skills and learn about the latest trends and techniques in the field. Mentorship is a unique component that SIRCA integrates into its grant scheme as it is concerned with not only the professional growth of researchers through increased quality publications, but also with the personal growth of the researchers as they begin to tread the rigorous path of an academic career. Because the Mentor and the PI have both invested considerable time and energy into sustaining this relationship, it was deemed necessary to evaluate the commitment and the outcomes in the hope that a better and mutually beneficial mentorship model can be devised as SIRCA goes global and involves more Mentors and PIs from around the world.

At the time of writing, preliminary findings have been gathered from face-to-face interviews conducted in Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, the Philippines, and Singapore from January to February 2011. Mentors and PIs sometimes did not have a clear idea of the Mentor's role. While the Mentors understood "mentoring" to be providing advice to PIs regarding their projects, it was unclear how much time commitment was expected of the

Mentor, whether the Mentor stepped beyond mere "guidance" and became akin to "supervising police" of the project progress, or whether they were supposed to collaborate with the PI and write a paper together. While some PIs expected their Mentors to be PhD advisors, some Mentors felt that their role should be a lot more distant and less time consuming as PIs were assumed to be fairly mature researchers.



Mentorship evaluation meeting, March 2011

In this first round of SIRCA, several PIs have successfully published, some of them for the first time, SIRCA-related papers in peer-reviewed journals and presented papers in international conferences. Co-authorship with the Mentor, however, did not happen as often as it was hoped and this area could be improved to enhance the network and cross-collaboration of ICTD researchers. SIRCA hopes that paper co-authorships becomes a more central tenet to its mission as it goes global with the possibility of making it a mandatory outcome.

The Mentor Site Visit was one of the most valuable activities that both the Mentor and the PI did in the SIRCA

program. The number of visits, funding availability, and the mandatory/ optional nature of Site Visits, however, was unclear. Furthermore, the location of the Mentor relative to the PI was important to some Mentor-PI pairs but not for others. Ease of traveling, juggling busy schedules, knowing the language, and understanding the context were key reasons for having a Mentor live and/or work near the PI's project site. On the other hand, some respondents felt that location was completely irrelevant as communication today entails a lot of electronic and long-distance interaction using email, telephone, and Skype. The kind of support and input that a particular project required also did not necessitate the Mentor to be in the same project site.



Mentor site visit: Dr. John Traxler in Cambodia

Different models of the mentorship scheme are currently being explored. PIs have expressed their interest in having a panel of experts whom they can consult for different questions at different stages of their project. A nodal person at the Secretariat could direct the PI to the appropriate expert in the panel. PIs could also nominate people whom they would like to work with as Mentors instead of the SIRCA Secretariat doing the Mentor-PI matching.

By offering a blend of national and international expertise to emerging scholars in Asian countries, SIRCA has devised a powerful mechanism of mentorship to inculcate research capacity.

–Vibodh Parthasarathi,
Mentor



BUILDING NETWORKS, BRIDGING GAPS

As a testament of successful Mentor-PI relationships and capacity building, even among mentors, here are a few comments from our Mentors...

My activities with SIRCA dovetail nicely with the other work that I do with universities, especially in bringing academics, practitioners and beneficiaries together so that each can better understand the others' perspectives as they work towards a common set of goals. My mentoring opportunity in Bangladesh is heading in this direction and I am now advising the University of Dhaka on further activities relating to this topic.

-Roger Harris

My main work this year has been focused on a research topic triggered by the SIRCA mentoring process. On my field visit to Vietnam, I saw how climate change was increasing the problems of landslides and erosion, but also increasing the need and opportunity for ICTs to play a role. This led to a proposal to IDRC which I'm now working on: a two-year project on ICTs, climate change and development. We are just in process of publishing a set of thematic papers reviewing the key areas in which ICTs can have an impact: adaptation, mitigation, monitoring and governance. And we will shortly publish a set of case studies from Africa and Asia bringing new case evidence to light.

-Richard Heeks

I was inspired by what I saw in Gina's class when they went over the transcript of the online counselling. She had combined her research project with a class seamlessly and

meaningfully. Students were learning how to be better counsellors through live cases that happened only a few days before. That "let's-do-it" spirit that was in the air inspired me to run a new course on Internet governance, which is my area of research. It is a lot of work as the whole area is new, without a proper text. But it's been refreshing and rewarding.

-Ang Peng Hwa

The SIRCA experience has helped to widen my regional network and collaborations in health communication especially in Cambodia where the mentorship was based. Thanks to SIRCA, I was able to include Cambodia in a recent study on an international health crisis communication project.

-May Lwin

I found the youth and camaraderie of the team in the IT Centre very encouraging, as well as their enthusiasm for building the wider skill set needed to give their work real relevance. Working with the team and the project has been very useful for me professionally for a variety of reasons. It was valuable to see how the team engaged with the local network operators and health agencies, and how issues of learning with mobiles complemented my work in Africa and Europe.

I have joined the International Advisory panel for the Centre's MSc in IT Engineering and hope to maintain contact in the coming years. Giving a talk to the current cohort of students was a valuable addition to my recent mentoring visit.

-John Traxler

RESEARCH OUTPUT AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Conferences

Komathi Ale (Singapore) presented her work on “Evaluating the impact of low-cost computers in education: An Indian field study” at the International Technology, Education and Development Conference, in Valencia, Spain, 7–9 March 2011.

She also presented her paper on “Cheap and good ICTs in education: Low-cost computers in Indian rural primary schools” at the Annual International Conference on Infocomm Technologies in Competitive Strategies (ICT 2010), in Singapore, 25–26 October 2010.

Mahfuz Ashraf (Bangladesh) presented his paper on “Operationalizing the capability approach for evaluating the contribution of ICT to development at an ICT4D project in Bangladesh” at the IFIP WG9.4 Conference 2011 Partners for Development: ICT Actors and Actions, in Kathmandu, Nepal, 22–25 May 2011. He was also appointed as a Member of the Program Committee for this event.

Phal Des (Cambodia) presented his paper on “Mobile innovations to promote protecting awareness against Sexual Transmitted Diseases (STD): Showcasing mobile solutions designed for young Cambodian people”, at IEEJ Japan–Cambodia Joint Symposium on Information Systems and Communication Technology 2011 (JCAICT 2011), in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 6–8 January 2011.

VLV Kameswari (India) presented her paper on “New Communication Technologies for Agricultural Extension: A Relook at Public Extension in the Indian Context” at the International

Conference on Future Imperatives of Communication and Information for Development and Social Change, organized by University of Massachusetts, Amherst and Thammasat University, in Bangkok, Thailand, 20–22 December 2010. She also presented her paper on “ICTs and market participation of small scale farmers in the Indian Himalayan region” at the 5th Annual ACRON-REDECOM conference, in Lima, Peru, 19–20 May 2011.



Conducting field research: PI Kameswari's team carries out interviews in India

Pham Huu Ty (Vietnam) was invited to present his paper at the GSDI 12 World Conference, organized by GSDI Association, Permanent Committee on GIS Infrastructure for Asia & the Pacific (PCGIAP) and Singapore Land Authority (SLA), in Singapore, 19–22 October 2010, but could not attend. He presented his poster on “Impoverishment Risks Due to Involuntary Displacement and Resettlement in the Hydroelectric Development Project: How Are They Managed?” at the “2D, Equitable Resource Allocation and Poverty Reduction” session at the 17th Annual International Sustainable Development Research Conference in New York, 8–10 May 2011. Pham also presented his paper on

"Lessons learnt from a participatory intervention for livelihood restoration for hydropower development in Vietnam" at the Nature™ Inc? Questioning the Market Panacea in Environmental Policy and Conservation 2011, in the Netherlands, 30 June-2 July 2011.



Mobile phone use in Cambodia

Sirajul Islam (Bangladesh) presented his paper on "Knowledge Management practices in e-Government: A developing country perspective" at the 4th International Conference on Theory and Practice of Electronic Governance (ICEGOV2010), in Beijing, China, 25-28 October, 2010.

He also presented his paper on "The Bangladesh National Biometric Database: A Transferable Success?" at the 9th International conference on Electronic Government on Information Systems perspective (EGOVIS-DEXA, 2010), in Bilbao, Spain, 1-2 September, 2010.

Grace Mirandilla-Santos (Philippines) presented her work on "The Filipino Blogosphere: Political Expression, Communication, and Participation: A Dissemination Forum" at the National College of Public Administration and



Conducting field research: PI Grace manages a focus group discussion in the Philippines

Governance (NCPAG), University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines, on 26 February 2011.

Publications

Ashraf, M., Grunfeld, H., Harris, R., Alam, N., Ferdousi, S., & Malik, B.T. (2011). An Explorative Study of ICT for Developmental Impact in Rural Areas of Bangladesh. *Media Asia Journal*, 38(1).

Des, P., Kong, M., Khim, C., Srun, S., Traxler, J., & Scharff, C. (2011). Mobile Innovations to Promote Protecting Awareness Against Sexual Transmitted Diseases (STD): Showcasing Mobile Solutions Designed for Young Cambodian People. IEEJ Japan-Cambodia Joint Symposium on Information Systems and Communication Technology 2011 (JCAICT 2011), 73-77. ISBN 978-4-88686-072-9.

Hechanova, M.R.M., Tuliao, A.P., & Ang, P.H. (2011). If You Build It Will They Come? Adoption of Online Counseling Among Overseas Migrant Workers. *Media Asia Journal*, 38(1).

Islam, M.S. (2011). Evaluation of an M-Service for Farmers in a Developing Region: A Case Study from Rural Bangladesh. *Media Asia Journal*, 38(1).

Islam, M.S., & Grönlund, Å. (2011). Factors influencing the adoption of mobile phones among the farmers in Bangladesh: Theories and practices. In press for publication in the forthcoming issue of International Journal on Advances in ICT for Emerging Regions (ICTer).

Islam, M.S., & Grönlund, Å. (2010). Agriculture Market Information Services (AMIS) in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs): Nature, Scopes, and Challenges. In M.A. Wimmer et al. (2010) (Eds.). IFIP e-government conference 2010, Lausanne, Switzerland, August 30–September 2, 2010, Proceedings. Springer Lecture Notes in Computer Science #6228, 109–120.

Mehta, B.S. (In press). Decent work in Indian Information and Communication Sector. The Indian Journal of Labour Economics, New Delhi, India Vol. 55, No. 2.

Mirandilla-Santos, M.P. (2011). A-List Filipino Political Bloggers and Their Blog Readers: Who They Are, Why They Write/Read Blogs, and How They Perceive and Participate in Politics. Media Asia Journal, 38(1).

Peou, C. (2010) Internet integration among Cambodian students [Research Report]. Phnom Penh: the Department of Media and Communication, Royal University of Phnom Penh.

Raman, B., & Bawa, Z. (2011). Interacting With the State via Information and Communication Technologies: The Case of Nemmadi Kendras in Karnataka. Media Asia Journal, 38(1).

Wansong, Z., Chib, A., Ping, G., & Kanliang, W. (2011). Factors

Influencing Physicians' Intention to Share Electronic Medical Records: An Empirical Investigation in China. Media Asia Journal, 38(1).

Awards/honors

Mahfuz Ashraf (Bangladesh) was awarded the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Chair in ICT for Development (ICT4D) scholarship to attend the ICTD2010 IEEE/ACM International Conference on Information and Communication Technologies and Development in Royal Holloway, University of London, UK, from 13–16 December, 2010.

Peou Chivoin (Cambodia) was awarded a PhD scholarship from the University of Melbourne in Australia in July 2010.

Phal Des (Cambodia) won the Distinguished Paper Award at IEEE Japan-Cambodia Joint Symposium on Information Systems and Communication Technology 2011 (JCAICT 2011) in January 2011, in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Rajiv Aricat George (India) won a top-three paper award at the Inaugural Honors Symposium for Asian Students in Communication Research held in City University of Hong Kong in November 2010.

Regina Hechanova (Philippines) was awarded The Outstanding Women in Nation's Service (2010), Philippines. Her book For the People, With the People: Developing Social Enterprises in the Philippines also won the Cardinal Sin Book Awards, Philippines.

Sirajul Islam (Bangladesh) was invited to participate as the Chair of the paper session, and a Moderator of the panel

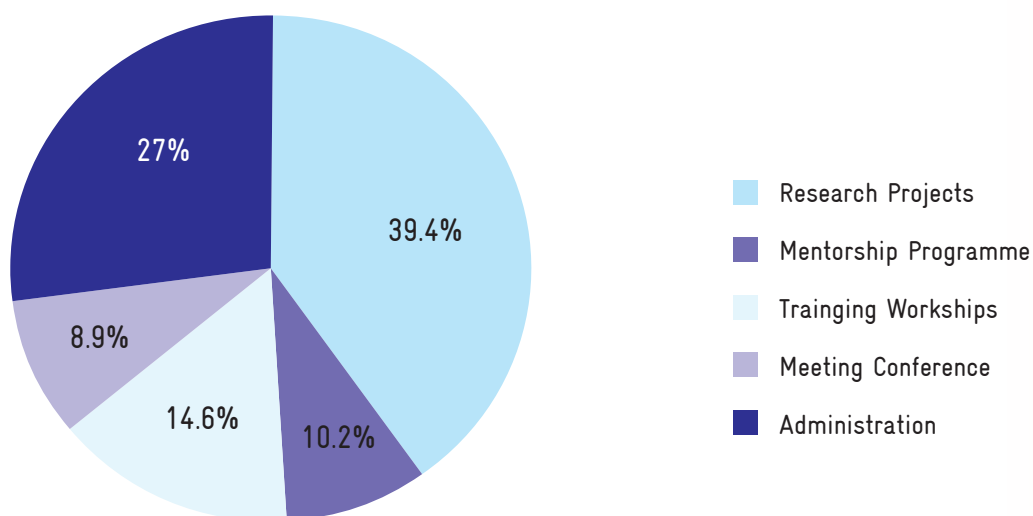
session on “Mobile for Development”, Post-Graduate strand at ICTD 2010, co-hosted by IPID (International Network for Post-Graduate Students in the Area of ICT4D), on December 13, 2010, at Royal Holloway, London. He was also a Reviewer of the papers presented at this event.

Siraj was also invited as a Reviewer to comment on papers presented at the 2nd International Conference on Mobile for Development, in Kampala, Uganda, from 10-11 November 2010, and at the Knowledge Management Track, 44th Hawaii International Conference on Systems Science (HICSS), USA.

In addition to this, he was a Reviewer for the Journal of Information Technology for Development (ITD), Routledge, Taylor & Francis group, UK – a high ranking journal in the discipline of ICT4D, and for the International Journal of E-Services and Mobile Applications (IJESMA), Denmark (IGI-Global).

Pham Huu Ty (Vietnam) was awarded the Nuffic Scholarship for PhD at Utrecht University, Netherlands in May 2010. His PhD thesis is on development induced displacement and land grabbing in Vietnam.

ANNUAL EXPENDITURE



The SIRCA programme received total funding of about S\$1,245,586.30 from IDRC, which covered a period of three years (August 2008–July 2011). Almost two-thirds (64.2%) of the total fund was dedicated to research activities that were aimed at enhancing the researchers' research capacities. These activities, apart from direct funding to the 15 projects, include a mentorship scheme, training for the grantees through regional meetings, and workshops and conferences. The invitation of renowned ICTD researchers

to the SIRCA final conference in Phuket in April provided a platform for SIRCA grantees to explore recent and relevant research in their field with those senior researchers.

A total of 12 independent projects and three graduate student projects were funded under the programme.

The fund was also used to explore the possibility of developing of a global SIRCA model.

FUTURE



LOOKING FORWARD

With growing interest among academics, practitioners and civil society in understanding the role of ICTs for development, in the areas of health, human rights and in social marketing in general, the need for scientific and theoretically-based research is imperative. Focusing on Asian researchers in the first instance (through the SIRCA Program), it is evident that the initiative has been successful in developing the capacity of its researchers in conducting rigorous, scientific and critical research that is of relevance to those involved in the ICTD field. However, there is much to be still done. Even with the proliferation of ICTs in the most rural and marginalized societies, the benefits of a knowledge society have not trickled down to all social sectors, and the importance of open, networked knowledge societies is emerging as a frontline issue in the ICTD arena.

The proposed initiative, therefore, moves up a notch taking the existing model of disbursing grants and capacity building global. With hands on experience in building capacity in the ICTD field in Asia, SiRC intends to scale the project as a global initiative to include researchers from Africa, Latin America as well as Asia. While SiRC will remain the chief administrator of the grants, it will have the institutional support from selected organizations in the African and Latin American continents.

The first round of discussions with these institutions was held at SIRCA's final conference in Phuket, Thailand. Subsequent meetings between potential collaborators have taken place and the final proposal for this initiative has been submitted to IDRC for their consideration. This Program will also operate for a period of three years, and if initiated in August 2011, will be completed in July 2014. The Call for Proposals has already been sent out and applicants have been asked to submit ICTD proposals with a focus on policy. Twenty-four emerging researchers will be identified, 8 from each continent, and every one of them will work with a senior collaborator whose role will be to refine and guide the progress of their research work throughout the entire process.



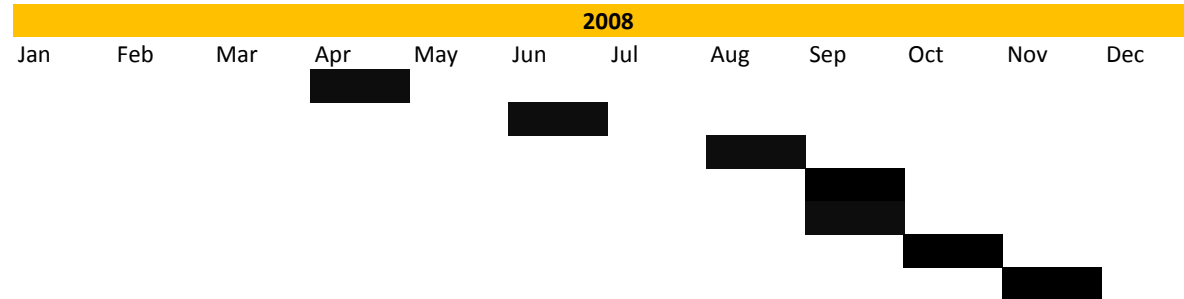
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Annex 10: ANNEX 10: TIMELINE OF PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

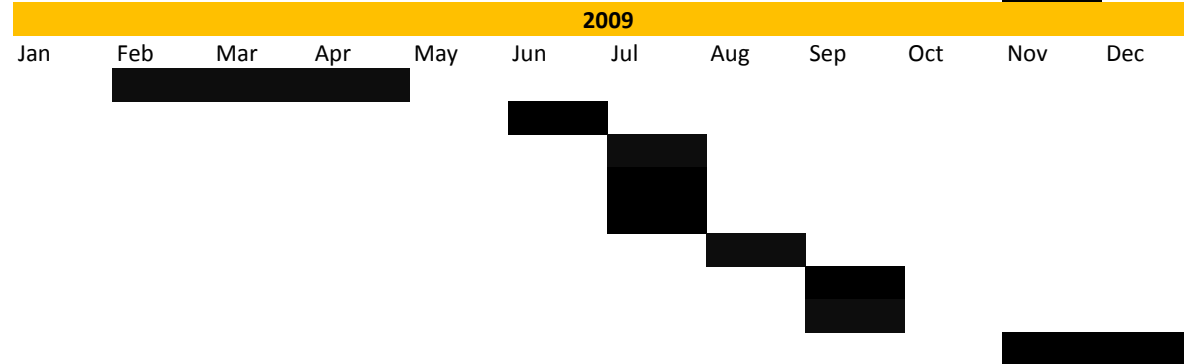
Activities

Submission of Grant Application to IDRC
 Invite Management
 Memorandum of Understanding Sign off
 Call for Reviewers
 Call for Proposals
 Grant Review Meeting
 Annoucement of Awards



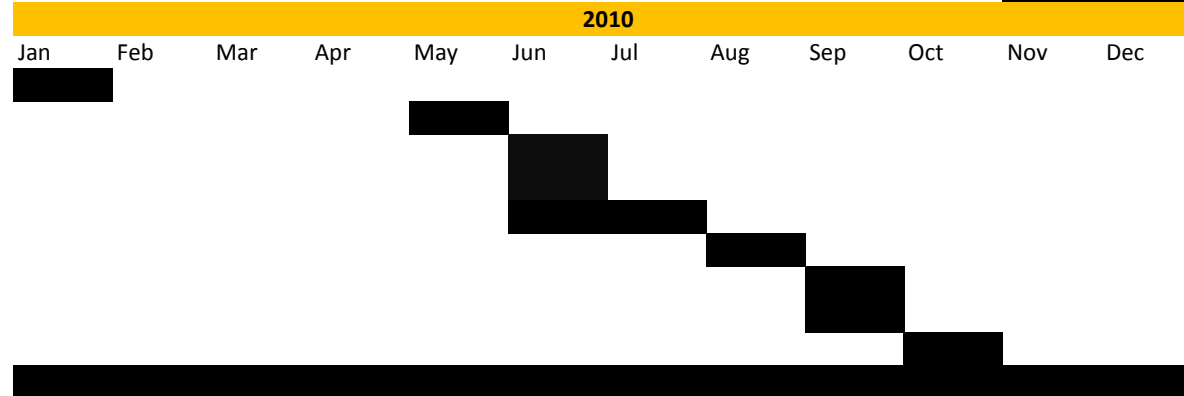
Activities

SIRCA I Project Begins
 Graduate Award Call I
 SIRCA Training Workshop I
 Graduate Award I Annoucement
 First Progress Report
 Submission of First Technical Report
 Management Board Meeting
 Submission of First Financial Report
 Program Evaluation



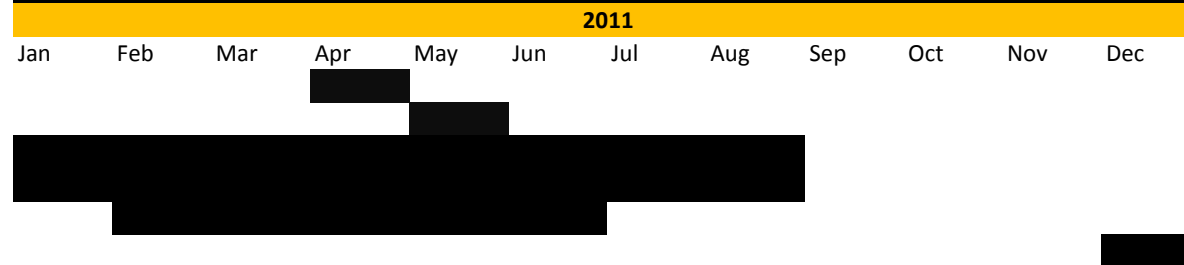
Activities

Second progress report
 Management Board Meeting
 SIRCA Training Workshop II
 ICA 2010 Mobile Preconference
 Third progress report
 Submission of Second Technical Report
 Submission of Second Financial Report
 Graduate Award Call II
 Graduate Award II Annoucement
 Program Evaluation (continue)



Activities

SIRCA Final Dissemination Conference
 Management Board Meeting
 Project Final Report Submission (submitted at different period for all projects)
 Mentorship Evaluation
 Submission of Final Technical Report
 Submission of Final Financial Report



Jan-12