

A SAMPLE OF IDRC'S ACTIVE "SMART COMMUNITIES" PROJECTS¹

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AFRICA

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East Africa: Exchange of Information and Sharing of Experiences Among Communities in E&S Africa Thru Electronic Communications

Project	: 978541 (055285)	ISN	: 17570
Donor	: IDRC	Funding Unit	: Communities and the Information Society - Africa
Total grant	: 132541 CAD	Starting date	: 19980331
Status	: active	Completion date	: 20020416

This project aims to build the capacity of three rural communities in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, respectively, to access, receive, share and disseminate information and experiences for their own empowerment and development. It will set up electronic links between three resource centres and FM Radio stations that will enable each of the three to communicate, debate, consult and build solidarity, and to share their development concerns with the relevant development agents. It will also enable the communities to electronically obtain, package, repackage, exchange and share information with other communities in East and Southern Africa. The project will build capacity to carry out these tasks. It will also provide an opportunity to see how social and economic change can be effected in rural communities through the application of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to local problems.

Co-funding agency: Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
Co-funding agency: UNESCO, Phnom Penh, KH
Recipient: EcoNews Africa, Nairobi, KE
Researcher: Wagaki Mwangi/Mercy Wambui

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¹For more details on these and all other IDRC projects, please consult our project database (IDRIS) at www.miniweb.idrc.ca/idrislog.htm. For other IDRC information sources, please refer to www.idrc.ca/resources.

Kenya: Enhancing Women's Participation In Governance Through Increased Access to Civic Information

Project : 978546 (055394) ISN : 17573
Donor : IDRC Funding Unit : Communities and the Information Society - Africa
Total grant : 101364 CAD Starting date : 19980331
Status : active Completion date : 20010419

This project will be based in two rural communities, Kakamega and Makueni, where there are active women's groups already involved in civic education. The project will link the two groups to each other and to other women's groups, in Kenya and beyond, through electronic communication systems. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) will allow them to access and utilize the information being generated by various organizations and participate in discussions related to women's interests. The overall aim is to create gender awareness in the target communities and to empower women to have a greater voice in policy discussions.

Recipient: Family Support Institute, Nairobi, KE

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Kenya: School to Community Connectivity

Project : 975574 (055395) ISN : 17279
Donor : IDRC Funding Unit : Communities and the Information Society - Africa
Total grant : 33600 CAD Starting date : 19980331
Status : active Completion date : 19990331

This pilot project will enable six secondary schools and their respective neighbourhoods to access information and communication technologies (ITCs) for the purpose of enhancing learning in the schools and information sharing between schools and communities. The objectives are as follows: to show pupils and teachers how ICTs can enhance learning in the school; to provide communities with access to information they can use; and to explore how schools might form an entry point for development and survival information, for instance on drought, famine or flooding. Initial training will take place during the Kenya National Science Congress in May and June. Once the computers are installed in the schools, demonstrations will be held for students and staff, community leaders, and potential users within the community. The experience gained from these school-community initiatives will be utilized in the development of a national plan for school-community linkages.

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Mozambique: Pilot Telecentres in Manhica and Namaacha

Project : 988904 (004227) ISN : 17762
Donor : IDRC Funding Unit : Communities
and the Information Society -
Africa
Total grant : 496950 CAD Starting date : 19981021
Status : active Completion date : 20031217

Community access to information and communication technologies (ICTs) is seen by authorities in Mozambique as a way to accelerate rural development and reduce rural-urban imbalances. This project will assess the telecentre approach in two small communities. The project will involve preparing the premises, buying and installing equipment, and managing the telecentres over four years. Telecentre staff will be locally recruited, trained and supervised. The telecentrew will have e-mail, Internet access, printing, photocopying and public telephone. Efforts will be made to reach all strata of society. Through research and evaluation, it is hoped that a systematic and objective process can be developed and used when establishing telecentres on a large scale in Mozambique, and which may be helpful to other countries.

Recipient: University Eduardo Mondlane, Maputo, MZ
Researcher: Polly Gaster

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Senegal: ICT introduction in the village soil management process

Project : 978161 (065226) ISN : 17393
Donor : IDRC Funding Unit : Communities
and the Information Society -
Africa
Total grant : 207500 CAD Starting date : 19980312
Status : active Completion date : 20010329

Tambacounda communities live under precarious economic, medical and social conditions. A major barrier to Tambacounda's development is the insulated and scattered nature of its village soils. These make it difficult to reach markets and increase the cost of development programs. Since 1993, West African Rural Foundation (FRAO) has helped the Community Development Action Group (GADEC) define and implement the Village Soils Management and Rehabilitation Program (PRGTV). This subsidy will enable them to evaluate how ICT impacts soil resource conditions and management methods as well as economic, social and educational activities.

Recipient: West Africa Rural Foundation, Dakar, SN
Researcher: M. Abdou Fall

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South Africa: Community Libraries as Gateways for Information in Africa

Project : 985929 (004545) ISN : 17767
Donor : IDRC Funding Unit : Communities
and the Information Society -
Africa
Total grant : 67390 CAD Starting date : 19990129
Status : active Completion date : 20000331

The South African Government views information, and information and communication technologies (ICTs), as important conduits for sustainable development. IDRC's Acacia projects in South Africa use the telecentre and schoolnet approach, and fit in well with this goal. Gauteng Provincial Library and Information Services (GPLIS) and the Northern Province Library and Information Services (NPLIS), have identified the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Johannesburg, to facilitate and manage the start-up of 2 pilot telecentres and show how ICTs can enhance the "gateway to information" feature of community resource centres. This activity will show how community libraries or information centres can provide communities with multiple, development-oriented services.

Co-funding agency: UNESCO, Paris, FR

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South Africa: Empowering People's Organisations with Internet Access

Project : 978902 (003729) ISN : 17023
Donor : IDRC Funding Unit : Communities
and the Information Society -
Africa
Total grant : 52980 CAD Starting date : 19970528
Status : active Completion date : 19991027

The Alternative Information Development Centre (AIDC) is a multifaceted development trust involved in research, education and training; the generation of information; and lobbying on the macro issues affecting the development process in South Africa. In this project, AIDC will help build the capacity of primary role players in civil society such as community-based organizations (CBOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), local trade unions, civic organisations, etc., to take advantage of ICTs. The project will focus primarily on organizations associated with black women and youth. A comprehensive range of services is envisaged to enable them to use ICTs such as the Internet as a tool to enhance their community-based work.

Recipient: Alternative Information & Development Centre, Woodstock,ZA

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South Africa: Information Literacy Course for Community Activists

Project : 985912 (004365) ISN : 17561
Donor : IDRC Funding Unit : Communities
and the Information Society -
Africa
Total grant : 1500 CAD Starting date : 19980828
Status : active Completion date : 20000331

This grant will support the development and presentation of an information literacy course at the Graduate School of Public and Development Management (P&DM), University of Witwatersrand, South Africa. The course is aimed at people from community organizations in Gauteng. Women will be strongly encouraged to participate and organizations will be asked that at least half their participants be women. The course will be equally divided between computer skills and policy debate. Participants will learn to use the computer as an information and communication tool; use software packages, including Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Pegasus and Netscape Navigator; understand the modern computing and telecommunications industry; understand the policy and regulation environment of the information and communications technology (ICT) industry in South Africa; and participate in debates on the social, economic and political impact of ICTs and the "information community." It is expected that those who complete the course will transfer their knowledge to their communities.

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South Africa: Local Economic Development Planning for SME Promotion in the Wild Coast

Project : 978906 (003741) ISN : 17024
Donor : IDRC Funding Unit : SMME
Innovation and Technology
Total grant : 248182 CAD Starting date : 19970729
Status : active Completion date : 20010814

The Wild Coast of Eastern Cape Province has been designated by national and provincial governments as the first of a series of rural spatial development initiatives (SDIs) that target regions with under-utilized potential for rapid and concentrated economic development. The key to equitable development is widespread collaboration among planners, small businesses, developers, communities, non-governmental and community-based organizations, and public authorities. The project will apply field research and planning methodology along with information and communications technologies (ICTs) and public media bases.

Co-funding agency: Eastern Cape Socio Economic Consultative Council, ZA
Recipient: CIET Canada, Ottawa, ON, CA
Researcher: Neil Andersson

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South Africa: National Information and Communication Programme

Project : 940611 (002294) ISN : 15590
Donor : IDRC Funding Unit : Information Sciences and Systems
Total grant : 1100000 CAD Starting date : 19950324
Status : active Completion date : 20000121

Two IDRC missions conducted in 1994 identified the need to develop national information policies, including a national telecommunications policy. This project will advise and assist the government in conceptualizing, designing, and implementing information programs, systems, and policies in support of its development goals. Participants will help formulate sector-specific information and communication policies to constitute a national information policy. They will design and develop a management information system/decision support system for government (central,provincial, and local).

Co-funding agency: Norway. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oslo, NO
Recipient: International Development Research Centre, Ottawa, ON, CA
Researcher: SHAHID AKHTAR

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South Africa: The Rosslyn Project - Establishment of a Collaborative Learning Centre Network between the Private Sector, Labour and Communities

Project : 988906 (004327) ISN : 17709
Donor : IDRC Funding Unit : Communities and the Information Society - Africa
Total grant : 191705 CAD Starting date : 19981218
Status : active Completion date : 20010318

This pilot project will develop and implement the concept of a sustainable learning centre network with collaboration between the private sector, labour, communities, government at local, provincial and national level, and a variety of support institutions. It aims to set up two pilot learning centres in Rosslyn, an industrial park just outside the city of Pretoria, South Africa. These two centres will be linked to a third learning centre in a neighbouring community, Soshanguve. The latter will allow direct community access to web-based course content developed within the learning centre network. It will be developed for Level 4 of the South African National Qualifications Framework (NQF). A further outcome of the project will be the development of a business model for the sustainable replication of the learning centres.

Recipient: m-powa, Midrand, ZA
Researcher: Mr. Bernd Oellermann

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South Africa: Soweto Community Information Day (Singakwenza)

Project : 985906 (004264) ISN : 17449
Donor : IDRC Funding Unit : Communities
and the Information Society - Africa
Total grant : 5000 CAD Starting date : 19980523
Status : active Completion date : 20000331

This activity will support a Soweto Information Day, to be held on May 23, 1998, in Soweto, South Africa. Soweto has approximately 1.97 million residents, or 25% of the Gauteng population. The Information Day is being organized by the National Information Technology Forum (NITF) to promote public awareness of how ICTs can enable economic growth. The idea is to stimulate interest that will translate into a buoyant local demand for ICTs. This will be achieved through presentations by various local public and private sector representatives, with inputs from the international donor community. Soweto Information Day will provide a forum for leaders in ICTs to share their ideas on future trends with the community, and to exhibit ICTs that could have a positive impact at the community level.

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South Africa: Status Survey on Multi-Purpose Community Centres

Project : 968901 (003333) ISN : 17094
Donor : IDRC Funding Unit : South
Africa: Reconstruction and
Development
Total grant : 84356 CAD Starting date : 19960926
Status : active Completion date : 19971124

Several initiatives are exploring and developing the concept of multi-purpose community centres (MPCCs) at a policy and implementation level. MPCCs are increasingly seen as centres that can integrate the developmental needs of the community with the providing services. This project will build on ongoing MPCC initiatives in collating existing information and beginning a process for researching best practice models and evaluation criteria for MPCCs.

Recipient: National Information Technology Forum, Johannesburg, ZA

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Uganda: Community Empowerment Through The Use of Information and Communication Technologies

Project : 978545 (055377) ISN : 17571
Donor : IDRC Funding Unit : Communities
and the Information Society - Africa
Total grant : 365191 CAD Starting date : 19980331
Status : active Completion date : 20010414

Recognizing the potential of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to transform rural communities both socially and economically, the government of Uganda is committed to extending the telecommunications infrastructure and expanding access to telecommunications services to all parts of the country. The project team will do a feasibility study to find suitable telecentre sites; design the telecentres, acquire and install equipment; and train operators and end-users; develop content and create finance mechanisms. Expected outcomes of this project are as follows: two or more functional telecentres; local capacity to use ICTs; knowledge regarding the key to the successful implementation of telecentres; enhanced awareness of the potential of ICTs in rural community development; and some income and employment from ICT-related activity. The project should attract private sector funding, which will accelerate community development in the participating communities.

Recipient: Uganda National Council for Science and Technology,
Researcher: Dr. Z.M. Nyiira

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Uganda: Multipurpose Community Telecentre Pilot Project

Project : 970022 (003225) ISN : 17142
Donor : IDRC Funding Unit : Communities
and the Information Society - Africa
Total grant : 145870 CAD Starting date : 19980116
Status : active Completion date : 20020223

This project is part of a series of pilot initiatives to test, disseminate and assess the impact and viability of multipurpose community telecentres (MCTs) in Africa. The International Telecommunications Union (ITU), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and IDRC are partnering with national and local African organizations to plan and support pilot telecentre projects in up to 5 countries. The MCT project in Uganda will develop and test a model for integrating rural library and information and communications services to address the needs of target groups in Nakaseke, Luwero District (population: 31,000) located 50 km north of Kampala. The MCT will have telephone, fax, e-mail and World Wide Web access, along with video, audio and documentation production facilities.

Co-funding agency: Unesco under DANIDA Funds-in-Trust, Paris, FR
Co-funding agency: International Telecommunication Union, Genève, CH
Recipient: Uganda National Commission for UNESCO, Kampala, UG

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West Africa: Experimentation of information technologies in Western African centres for reading and cultural animation

Project : 970215 (003702) ISN : 17016
Donor : IDRC Funding Unit : Communities and the Information Society - Africa
Total grant : 450000 CAD Starting date : 19971213
Status : active Completion date : 20011231

This project aims to reinforce communication activities for development led by Western African centres for reading and cultural animation. The project is an extension of a project on the integration of grassroots communication activities in target groups of local African communities where reading and cultural animation centres are established. Case studies dealing with experiments in information technologies at the community level will be produced and disseminated over the Internet, as well as in print to potential users and donors. They will be used to define directions in this area and to stimulate reflection on the developmental uses of these tools. Recommendations from this experiment will also be submitted to the Agence de la francophonie, branches of culture and communications and policy and planning.

Co-funding agency: Canada. Foreign Affairs and International Trade
Recipient: Agence de la Francophonie, Paris, FR
Researcher: Pasteur Nzinahora

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ASIA

PAN - APCC Coconut Information Network

Project : 960010 (040341) ISN : 16391
Donor : IDRC Funding Unit : Pan
Networking
Total grant : 74000 CAD Starting date : 19961212
Status : active Completion date : 19980712

The Asian and Pacific Coconut Community (APCC), an intergovernmental organization of 13 full member countries accounting for 85% of the world coconut production, is tasked to promote, coordinate, and harmonize activities of the coconut industry to benefit producers and those engaged in the processing and marketing sectors of the industry. The project will provide e-mail and Internet access to APCC institutions and assist national programs by providing training for national coconut information specialists. Coconut-related information will be published on the World Wide Web; e-publishing and on-line access to APCC databases will be developed. The project will test e-mail and Internet connectivity with stakeholders (researchers, producers, policymakers, processors, etc.) to determine future needs; and develop and test the efficiency of computer conferences for discussions between APCC member institutions and stakeholders.

Recipient: Asian and Pacific Coconut Community, Jakarta, ID
Researcher: P.G. Punchihewa

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Electronic Networking for Rural Asia/Pacific Projects

Project : 980211 (004039) ISN : 17600
Donor : IDRC Funding Unit : Pan
Networking
Total grant : 85500 CAD Starting date : 19980909
Status : active Completion date : 20020908

Electronic Networking for Rural Asia/Pacific Projects (ENRAP) aims to bring the Internet to rural development projects financed by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in the poorest parts of Asia and the Pacific. The funding will be used to develop and introduce participatory methods in project implementation and to provide comprehensive training to stakeholders in IFAD projects. Initially, ENRAP will help selected projects acquire Internet connectivity and use in eight countries: Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines and Sri Lanka. A number of projects in 3 countries, i.e. China, Nepal and the Philippines, will receive intensive assistance for developing national, regional and international networking at the project level.

Co-funding agency: International Fund for Agricultural Development,
Recipient: International Development Research Centre, Ottawa, ON, CA

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PanAsia R&D Grant Program II

Project : 980006 (003820) ISN : 17485
Donor : IDRC Funding Unit : Pan Networking
Total grant : 1330000 CAD Starting date : 19980727
Status : active Completion date : 20010825

This project aims to increase the capacity of information and communications technologies (ICTs) personnel in the Asia Pacific to undertake research and development (R&D) on networking applications, technologies, policies and impacts. The Program will support R&D projects undertaken by Asia-based organizations and directed toward original and innovative networking solutions to specific development problems. A committee will set grant guidelines, oversee program implementation, and evaluate the results of both the research projects and the program itself. The committee comprises a diverse group of individuals with experience in development research, regional problems, networking applications, policy and technology, and R&D methodologies. The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS), Hamilton, will administer the project.

Recipient: University of Indonesia, Jakarta, ID
Recipient: International Rice Research Institute, Manila, PH
Recipient: Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety,
Recipient: University of Dhaka, Dhaka, BD
Researcher A : Sri Hartati Suradijono
Researcher B : Robert T Taab
Researcher C : Dr. Patabendi K. Abeytungga
Researcher D : Dr Fazlul Alam

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PAN - Web Site Development and Marketing

Project : 958015 (040282) ISN : 16283
Donor : IDRC Funding Unit : Pan Networking
Total grant : 220690 CAD Starting date : 19960322
Status : active Completion date : 19970921

The Pan Asia Networking (PAN) Program has been designed to provide the physical electronic infrastructure for general networking in the Asian region. The PAN Server is a necessary tool for coordinating, implementing, monitoring, and marketing the workplan. There is potential for offering the PAN Website on the Internet as the one-stop place for information on development issues in Asian countries. This project will show the power of the Internet for networking people and institutions. A key objective is to identify R&D institutions and information sources of the region that are working toward sustainable and equitable development to enable their active contribution to PAN. These institutions will be assisted to publish electronically and to start an Internet presence on PAN. Concurrently, the capacity of the PAN Server to provide services and innovative technologies to these clients will be enhanced.

Recipient: International Development Research Centre, Ottawa, ON, CA
Researcher: Maria Ng Lee Hoon

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PAN - Information Networking and Services (PINS) - Philippines

Project : 958011 (040320) ISN : 16281
Donor : IDRC Funding Unit : Pan
Networking
Total grant : 150000 CAD Starting date : 19960108
Status : active Completion date : 20020113

This project will establish a PAN information server at the Philippines Department of Science and Technology (DOST). The server will provide opportunities for organizations based in the Philippines to use modern networking technologies. It will enable the organizations to access and exchange information for enhancing collaboration in regional programming work. Approtech Asia is the first of five Asian networking groups to benefit from this PAN facility. The project marks the start of PAN's work on the content aspect that is outlined in its strategic framework.

Recipient: Philippines. Dept. of Science and Technology, Manila, PH
Recipient: Asian Alliance of Appropriate Technology Practitioners,
Researcher A : Ms Merlita Opena
Researcher B : Mrs Lilia Ramos

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Philippines: Multipurpose Community Telecentres in Selected Barangays

Project : 980219 (004029) ISN : 17713
Donor : IDRC Funding Unit : Pan
Networking
Total grant : 215815 CAD Starting date : 19981116
Status : active Completion date : 20011209

This project will set up pilot multipurpose community telecentres (MCTs) in four barangays (villages) in Mindanao and operate them on a trial basis for two years, with a view to making them sustainable. The MCTs will deliver Internet services with a primary focus on health care, agriculture, education and livelihoods. The project team will investigate the legal, financial, operational and technical issues of establishing and maintaining MTCs in the Philippines; identify the information and communication needs of villagers; enlist local participation in developing a framework for the MTC; build capacity; develop content with public, private and civil society organizations; encourage local partners to develop their own information applications; assess the impact of the telecentre; determine enabling factors in the sustainable operation of MCTs; and deliver guidelines for expanding MCT coverage in Mindanao, and the country.

Co-funding agency: Canadian International Development Agency, Hull,
Recipient: Philippine Council for Health Research and Development,
Researcher: Merlita M. Opena

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LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Capacity Development for Internet Use in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)

Project : 980204 (004240) ISN : 17531
Donor : IDRC Funding Unit : Pan
Networking
Total grant : 110000 CAD Starting date : 19980828
Status : active Completion date : 20010827

This project will support small capacity-building training and networking activities by selected researchers and institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean. The project is a response to the increasing accessibility of information and communication technologies (ICTs) by previously marginalized sectors of society. Project funds will be used for IDRC-administered grants to fulfill selected requests for training, website enhancement and networking, in amounts of up to CA\$10 000 per grant. Priority will be given to requests that involve collaborative networks, grassroots participation, innovative experimentation with Internet resources and uses, potential for future collaboration in regional networking (PAN) projects, and links with other IDRC-supported activities.

Recipient: International Development Research Centre, Ottawa, ON, CA

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Community Networking Pilot Projects in Latin America

Project : 960031 (003219) ISN : 16342
Donor : IDRC Funding Unit : Pan
Networking
Total grant : 242731 CAD Starting date : 19970312
Status : active Completion date : 20000323

The projects are low-cost public telecommunications access centres based on a telecentre concept providing local access to communications equipment; training in the use of computer networks; and support in making strategic use of electronic communications to engage local citizens and organizations in community development. The two APC networks, EcuaNex in Ecuador and Colnodo in Colombia, will implement the projects to enable community groups to participate in developing local policies, and the specifying infrastructure needs. This local involvement will ensure that technologies meet community needs and will help spread information more widely to smaller and rural communities that have no access to this medium. Pilots will be run with indigenous people in the Ecuadorian Amazon, and low-income housing groups in Colombia.

Co-funding agency: Colnodo, Bogot|, CO
Recipient: Intercom Nodo EcuaneX, Quito, EC
Researcher: Karin Delgadillo Poepsel

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Web-based Communication and Information Service in S&T Policy and Management for Latin America and the Caribbean

Project : 978757 (050302) ISN : 17299
Donor : IDRC Funding Unit : Pan
Networking
Total grant : 83050 CAD Starting date : 19980325
Status : active Completion date : 19990920

University of Sao Paulo, proposes to pilot a Web-based communication and information service in science and technology (S&T) policy and management in 4 countries. The service will be based on a Canadian design and will be defined and used by a S&T policy researchers, educators and managers in business, university and government. The project will end with a workshop to review the experience, gather support and promote the next stage. CECAE will act as the hub of the service, with the Centro Interuniversitario de Desarrollo (CINDA), Chile, the Red Iberoamericana de Indicadores de Ciencia y Tecnologia (RICYT), Universidad Nacional de Quilmes, Argentina, and the Asociación Latinoamericana de Gestión Tecnológica (ALTEC), Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, acting as subsidiary participants. It is expected that the project will enhance the interaction between the various actors in the field of S&T policy and management, and provide government with expert advice for S&T policy-making.

Recipient: Universidade de Sao Paulo.
Researcher: Eva Stal

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SOUTH ASIA

India: Telework: Implications for Employment, Trade and Social Equity

Project : 960219 (003220) ISN : 16288
Donor : IDRC Funding Unit : Trade,
Employment and Competitiveness
Total grant : 233320 CAD Starting date : 19961213
Status : active Completion date : 20001030

This project will incorporate the findings of the pre-project consultation and analysis of the implications of teleworking in India and Malaysia. With globalization and the potential importance of teleworking to the economy, the Indian government has over the past decade made serious efforts to ensure the development of infrastructure and incentives for software exports. This project will provide important input into policy-making for adapting to the opportunities and constraints posed by globalization. The research will assess the roles of telecommuting (telematics-assisted distant work) in Bombay and teletrade in Bombay, Bangalore, and Calcutta. An important outcome will be to inform the global discussions on trade in services, employment, and competitiveness. The research will evaluate the factors at the macro and micro levels that affect telework in the service sector; highlight emerging strategic alliances; identify institutional and organizational considerations; and assess the impact on employment. The participatory nature of the research will enable the dissemination of the results to the stakeholders. Contributions to global discussions will be made through a global meeting including representatives of international organizations such as the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Recipient: UNU Institute for New Technologies, Maastricht, NL
Researcher: Prof. Swasti Mitter

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Pakistan: Pilot for Providing Internet Services in Northern Areas

Project : 980223 (003872) ISN : 17738
Donor : IDRC Funding Unit : Pan
Networking
Total grant : 253440 CAD Starting date : 19981222
Status : active Completion date : 20020120

This pilot project will identify and analyze technical, organizational, legal and human problems pertinent to Internet service delivery in remote locations of northern Pakistan. Information materials and Internet-based applications will be developed to provide reliable and comprehensive information and advice to decision-makers and donor agencies interested in developing an Internet infrastructure to serve development programs and local communities. The output of the project will be the establishment of an Internet service provider (ISP) in Gilgit - as well as in Skardu and Chitral districts, if feasible - and a number of pilot websites focusing on local issues, if possible, in local languages. Local governmental organizations or small businesses will maintain the ISP system and provide assistance to subscribers.

Recipient: International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development,
Kathmandu
Researcher: Wahaj us Siraj
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GLOBAL

Connecting to the World Partnership Grants: 1998-99 (98-0805)

Project : 980805 (004239) ISN : 17416
Donor : IDRC Funding Unit : CSB -
Special Initiatives Program
Total grant : 186000 CAD Starting date : 19980623
Status : active Completion date : 20010622

For the second year running, this project will provide a number of small grants to Canadian organizations and institutions in the development community that seek to enhance the quality and reach of their knowledge brokering activities through information and communication technologies. The specific objectives will focus on electronic networking, an enhanced presence on the Internet and dissemination of information on global issues through a variety of broadcast media. The aim is to increase the number of Canadians - particularly young Canadians - exposed to new ideas and knowledge about global issues.

Recipient: International Development Research Centre, Ottawa, ON, CA

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MUSA Germplasm Information System

Project : 930604 (000049) ISN : 15281
Donor : IDRC Funding Unit : ISS
Total grant : 452000 CAD Starting date : 19931126
Status : active Completion date : 19980228

The International Network for the Improvement of Bananas and Plantains (INIBAP) will develop an information system and software to coordinate the thousands of accessions presently existing in regional and national collections of banana and plantain (MUSA) germplasm. The information system (MGIS) will contribute to the understanding of the diversity of the two crops, which are staple food sources in many parts of the developing regions of the world, thereby improving research and the provision of healthy planting material to small farmers who are the main producers of the two crops. MGIS will link a network of regional and national curators of the germplasm to facilitate the exchange of information and planting material. Information on terminology and agronomic practices employed in different regions will be brought into the system, which will contain 11 modules linked in a relational database. Network members will be closely involved in the development of the system and will receive training to participate in documenting collections and in sharing information.

Co-funding agency: Centre de coopération internationale en recherche
agronomique pour le développement (CIRAD)

Recipient: International Network for the Improvement of Banana and
Plantain, Montpellier, FR

Researcher: Dr. Nicolas Mateo

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**Assessment Indicators for the Impact of Information on Development -
Phase I**

Project: 910249 ISN: 14911
Donor : IDRC
Funding Unit: IS - Special Initiatives

To date, IDRC's Information Sciences Division has supported over 500 information projects in developing countries. These activities include developing global, regional, and national information networks; strengthening information services; facilitating access to information resources; training personnel to manage information; and research on the application of information technologies for development. The information community has yet to measure to what extent these information activities directly influence the economic and social advancement of people in developing countries. In this project, IDRC will gather leaders of the information science community to discuss these issues face-to-face and through a computer conference. The aim of this brainstorming will be to produce valid models to assess the impact of information activities on development and to build a workable framework for designing more relevant information programs and research in the future.

Area under study : /global/
Amount of grant : 139840 CAD
Fiscal year : 9192
Date funds committed : 19920225
Completion date : 19930225
Status : Closed

Recipient: International Development Research Centre (IDRC)
Address: IDRC, 250 Albert Street, P.O. Box 8500, Ottawa,
Ontario, Canada K1G 3H9

Researcher: McConnell, Paul Mr

Post-Project Summary: The project started in March 1992, with an initial two-day workshop that continued as a computer conference for seven months. It was a "closed" conference of 15 international experts, although the views of several external commentators were also entered in to the conference. Almost 400 messages were exchanged. Issues debated included background considerations and definitions; the different perspectives from which to assess benefits; the various types of benefits to be obtained; experience with assessment methods; characteristics of indicators; etc. The findings of the computer conference were reviewed at a workshop attended by a limited number of the participants from the computer conference and several policymakers and practitioners, mostly from developing countries. They examined the validity and applicability of the models and assessment methods contained in the summary report of the computer conference and formulated a comprehensive framework for field testing the results in developing countries. Findings were presented to the Canadian Association of Information Scientists; and an evaluation of the computer conference approach was submitted to the Journal of the American Society of Information Science. Support continued in a second phase.

Impact of Information on Development - Phase II

Project: 930605 (000071) ISN: 15269
Donor : IDRC Funding Unit: ISS - SED, IPR
Amount of grant : 244000 CAD Starting date : 19931105
Status : closed Completion date : 19980127

Phase II will field test the methodology formed in phase I and support related activities (publications, workshops, and networks) to increase awareness of progress in this field; promote adoption of the updated assessment methodology; facilitate sharing of practical experience; and strengthen the research base to bring about further improvements. The results of this project will improve understanding of the impact of information on development; improve the design of information activities to better serve the needs of clients; and reinforce the allocation of resources to information activities that can demonstrate usefulness.

Recipient: International Development Research Centre, Ottawa, ON, CA
Donor funds: 244000

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Impact of Information on Development : a Path Analysis Approach - Phase III

Project: 940605 (001063) ISN: 15454
Donor : IDRC Funding Unit: Information Sciences and Systems - SED Information Policy
Amount of grant : 249600 CAD Starting date : 19940921
Status : active Completion date : 19981108

This project will develop a methodology for assessing the impact of information on development activities through the use of the "path analysis" technique. The research study will undertake two pilot test studies in Canada, followed by a developing country study undertaken by the Institute of Scientific and Technical Information of Shanghai (ISTIS), China. The study will rely on a statistical analysis of broadly-based indicator data, coupled with more specific information about inputs and outputs of information services and other potentially contributing factors. The technique used is known as causal modelling, implemented in the LInear Structural RELations (LISREL) software package. The results of the project will improve understanding of the impact of information on development; improve the design of information activities to better serve the needs of clients; and reinforce the allocation of resources to those information activities that are able to demonstrate their usefulness.

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Researcher: Jean Tague-Sutcliffe

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