

INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION
Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT)



**MULTI PURPOSE COMMUNITY TELECENTRE
NETWORK PROJECT FOR AFRICAN WOMEN**

*In partnership with
Benin, Burundi, Central African Republic, Democratic
Republic of Congo, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Malawi,
Congo, Rwanda, Tanzania & Zambia*

June 2004

Multipurpose Community Telecentres Network for African Women

Project Number:		
Project Title:	MCT Network for African Women	
Executing Agency:	International Telecommunications Union African Ministries responsible for ICTs & Telecommunications	
Duration:	24 months	
Project Sites	20 African countries	
Starting Date:	January, 2005	
Participating Partners:		
	Ministries responsible for ICTs ¹	US \$ 100,000
	International Telecommunication Union	US \$ 200,000
	OTHERS	US\$ 700,000
	Total	US \$ 1,000,000

Brief project Description:

The MCT Network for African Women project will involve construction of a network of at least 100 MCTs in 20 or more African countries, owned and managed by women, providing public telephone, fax and internet connectivity and e-mail as well as basic information and a host of ICT applications such as:

Health , education, government and other information services, e-commerce, shared office facilities, including IT equipment, training in computer literacy, use of computer applications and support in use of the MCT facilities, trade services (access to market information), radio and television, advertising and announcements, photocopying service as well like word processing, spreadsheets, etc.

If partners agree at the end of the project, the Project Committee could be converted into an **African MCT Network Women Committee** whose mandate will be, among others to lead the creation of an **African MCT Network Fund for Women**.

The main objectives of this project include creation of an enabling environment where women will actively participate in the development process of the African continent and expand women's role in ICTs and its new technologies and services; improvement of the basic economic conditions and lifestyle of the population; to facilitate affordable and easy access to basic telecommunications and information services by ensuring that the benefits of telecommunications applications and services

¹ This amount represents an estimated value of contributions in kind by local partners including the various women groups.

are available to all; to guarantee immediate and easy access to telecommunications services during emergencies for all and to encourage women's participation in ICTs by enabling women manage and control the telecentres.

The project which will heavily rely on inputs available locally is estimated to cost approximately US\$ 1.0 million, that is a maximum of about US\$ 50,000 per telecentre.

1. Background

African women shoulder more responsibilities in their societies particularly in taking special care of the more vulnerable members of the family, children and the elderly and for ensuring adequate food is available. In most rural areas due to emigration to the urban areas in search of employment, women need to find solutions to sustain the entire family in an environment where communication facilities are non-existent to help them fulfill their responsibilities. It has been noted that availability of ICT infrastructure is a prerequisite for improving the basic economic conditions and lifestyle of a country's population, and that women and children are the most affected by poor economic conditions and that more than 70% of Africa's population is made up of women and children.

2. Project Definition

The MCT Network project involves construction of a network of 100 MCTs in 20 African countries, owned and managed by women, providing public telephone, fax and internet connectivity and e-mail as well as basic information and a host of applications such as:

- Health and education
- Government and community information services.
- E-commerce
- Shared office facilities, including IT equipment
- Training and support in use of the MCT facilities
- Trade services (access to market information)
- Radio and television:
- Community information
- World information
- Advertising and announcements
- Photocopying service
- Computer literacy and use of computer applications like word processing, spreadsheets, etc;

If partners agree at the end of the project, the Project Committee may be converted into an **African MCT Network Women Committee** whose mandate will be, among others to lead the creation of an **African MCT Network Fund for Women**.

3. Development Objectives

The main objectives of this project are the following:

- To create an enabling environment where women will actively participate in the development process of the African continent and expand women's role in ICTs and its new technologies and services.
- To improve the basic economic conditions and lifestyle of the population.
- To facilitate affordable and easy access to basic telecommunications and information services by ensuring that the benefits of telecommunications applications and services are available to all.
- To guarantee immediate and easy access to telecommunications services during emergencies for all.
- To encourage women's participation in ICTs by enabling women manage and control the telecentres.

The successful implementation of this project will enhance the development of sectors like education, health, agriculture and the informal sector of business traditionally operated by African women. This would also enable women to venture into non traditional business such as ICTs and mining because the market for the mining products, for example, would be readily available through internet. In addition specific training in ICTs will enable more women to get into new areas of technology applications and services and consequently taking full advantage of all that the applications bring to development and to poverty alleviation.

This project will be used as a women MCTs incubator. In addition an **MCT fund for African Women** will be created to provide expertise and funds to build other African MCTs. The MCT fund will be sustainable and independent from ITU.

4. Project Inputs

In order to attain the stated objectives, the project will require financial resources mainly to be provided by the ITU and other external partners while the local partners will mainly provide contributions in kind: Such contributions include accommodation for the telecentres, training in some countries and any other logistic inputs that may be required at the local level.

Source	Estimates in US \$
• ITU	200,000
• External	700,000
• Local partners	100,000
TOTAL	1,000,000

Project Outputs

a) Development of self-sustainable, community-based MCT-Network

operated by women in at least 20 African Countries .

b) Development of:

- Strategies for assessing women local needs for poverty alleviation;
- Training on use of ICTs as well as training for 115-120 women in the operation and management of MCTs;
- Innovative policies and partnership arrangements for information and communication;
- Applications and services which meet the needs of the community, and in particular the children and elderly persons under women responsibilities;
- Local contents for e-education, e-governance, telemedicine and e-commerce shared-interest business for African women.

c) Creation of an MCT-Network fund

d) Assessment of the impact of the MCT-Network on social, economic and cultural development of the Africa Region.

5. Project Justification

Given the fact that African women constitute a large proportion of the informal sector in Africa, the project is socially and economically desirable as it will engage women in the process of getting involved in all social, cultural and economic activities in their communities and countries through timely access to relevant information. Such empowerment to information could contribute to poverty reduction and overall improvement in the quality of their lives. Furthermore, the project would provide affordable and easy access to basic telecommunications and information services Other benefits would include knowledge in developing:

- A standard business plan to guide the operations of the Telecentres;
- A standard cost based basic accounting system for the each MCT;

- 115-120 women trained to operate and manage MCTs;
- A counterpart committee to assist women to design, finance, implement and operate future privately owned Multipurpose Community Telecentres in each country;
- Access to Web Sites delivering local contents on education, health, and business among others.

6. Estimated Cost

The project is estimated to cost approximately US\$1.0 million². This amount includes the cost of studies, training, equipment and installation, coordination and evaluation of the project. The contribution of ITU will be about 20% of the total cost. The estimated breakdown of the cost elements will be as follows:

Item	Cost in US\$
Equipment	513,800
Accommodation	100,000
Training	108,000
Start up costs	200,000
Supervision and Coordination	20,000
Evaluation	10,000
Contingency	48,200
TOTAL	1,000,000

7. Implementation timeframe

The foreseen implementation timeframe is two years starting as soon as partner financing is identified.

8. Target Beneficiaries

The target beneficiaries of this project are the African women, the youth and the vulnerable groups in the communities who are normally under the care of women.

9. Project Strategy and Sustainability

The implementation of the MCTs will be done in phases after securing the project funds. The project will be implemented in partnership between the ITU and other international partners on the one hand and local partners consisting of Ministries responsible for ICTs and Telecommunications, Ministries responsible for gender and youth, local

² Details are provided in Annex 1

governments where the women groups are located and the women groups themselves in the participating African countries on the other hand. All women groups have identified their leaders who are coordinating and managing the activities at the local level providing coordination with the responsible ministries and local partners. The countries have taken this initiative to ensure that there is strong local leadership and commitment without which success and sustainability of the projects would be in danger. Furthermore, the selection of the women centres which was done by the local partners is based on viability criteria based on the business plans developed for each center. It is well understood by all the participants that the operation of the MCTs activities should apply business principles to ensure their long term sustainability. It is also proposed that each center should pay back 1-2% of its net annual income which should be a contribution into the African Women MCT Fund should this proposal be accepted by the partners. Availability of this fund would not only enable development of more MCTs projects, but would also be an incentive for efficient management of the MCT operations. Business orientation for the participating women groups will of course be one of the products from this project .

10. Project Management

The day to day management of the MCTs will be under leadership of the Women and MCT operating staff. Training of the national project coordinators and the MCT operating staff will be conducted during the first year, while procurement would also be done according to an implementation plan to be drawn when funding is secured. In addition to the local women groups leadership, each country will have a national Steering Committee under the Ministries responsible for ICTs or Gender composed of representatives from all partners to oversee the implementation and operation of the MCTs as well as coordinate activities between partners. Some countries already have some kind set ups but more will implement before take off of the projects in their respective countries. There will also be periodic reports from the Steering Committees to the ITU and other participating external partners .in order to ensure full realization of this project. The frequency of these will be discussed among partners and reflected in the Project Agreement. A Mid-Term Review (end of year one) and a Final Review of the project will be undertaken by the partners at the end of the first and second years respectively.

11. Conclusion

The significance of using the MCT Network project as a tool for capacity building and a business catalyst to create an impact in the social and economic developments of African communities can best be summed up by the following statement: “If you economically empower a woman, you empower a family and by analogy a nation”. It goes without saying that, MCTs managed by women will enhance their participation in economic activities and raise their incomes and social status. Through the MCTs, women will have a powerful tool to transform “small informal business women“ into formal and professional businesswomen, by having affordable and reliable access to the entire world through the internet, radio and television. As a result, they will be better informed on important issues which affect their daily lives, business and any other social and cultural activities thereby leading to poverty reduction in their communities.

Annex 1

MCT Network Project for African Women
Budget in US \$

Cost item	...Quantity	unit cost	Total
1. Computers	1601000160,000
2. Printers	32	... 500	16,000
3. Scanners	32	... 200	6,400
4. Photocopy machines	32	1250	40,000
5. TV Sets	32	400	12,800
6. VCRs	32	200	6,400
7. Transreceiver	36	250	9,000
8. Worldspace receivers	33	150	5,000
9. UPS	180	200	36,000
10. Electric power stabilizers	33	1000	33,000
11. video projectors & screen	30	2000	60,000
12. Public pay phones	30	1000	30,000
13. Fax machines	32	300	9,600
14. Loud speakers	72	300	21,600
15. LAN cabling & equip. installations	36	500	18,000
16. Solar panels(in absence of mains power)	10	5000	50,000
17. Sub-total equipment and accessories			513,800
18. Accommodation and furniture	33	3000	100,000
19. Training	72	1500	108,000
20. Start up costs			200,000
21. Supervision & Coordination missions	4	5000	20,000
22. Evaluation	2	5000	10,000
23. SUB-TOTAL			951,800
24. Contingency			48,200
25. GRAND TOTAL			1,000,000

Annex2

Basic equipment package for the Multi-Purpose Telecentre Network Project for African Women

1. Computers

Pentium 4., 1.5Ghz, 512kB cache, 128MB RAM, 20GB hard disk drive, diskette drive, DVD-ROM drive, English board, 17" color monitor, Ethernet card, 220 volt operation, mouse with pad, Microsoft Windows 2000 or XP , Microsoft XP Professional 9 including software license), web camera, Worldspace datacasting software

2. Printer

Basic color or black and White ink jet model, 220V, with 25 replacement cartridges

3. Scanner

CD-RW external drive

CD-RW "burner" drive with USB connection ,40x/12x/48x , external, 220 V operation

4. Photocopy machine

Tabletop model capable of enlarging and reducing, for A4 size paper , 220v

5. Television

Multi-system PAL/SECAM/NTSC . 220V, 20" screen minimum, color, with A/V inputs
for connecting a VRC

6. VCR

Multi-system PAL/SECAM/NTSC 220 V

7. Transreceiver 3-30 HZ

This is an FM radio or also walky talky

8. Worldspace receiver

This should be a Hitachi, Polytron or Celeste model that has WS satellite radio, FM, Cassette recorder, weatherproof outdoor antenna, operable in 220 V or batteries, DDA adaptors (for data transmission)

9. UPS

Sufficient to provide temporary power to computers to allow for saving any files (usually laptops have batteries as stand by)

10. Electric power stabilizer

11. Video projector and screen

For PC output or DVD on a large screen for training sessions

12. Public pay phones

- 13. Fax machines**
- 14. 2 Loud speakers**
- 15. Solar panels**
- 16. Mobile handsets**

Annex 3

List of participating countries:

1. Benin
2. Central African Republic
3. Democratic Republic of Congo
4. Burundi,
5. Gambia
6. Guinea Bissau¹
7. Kenya
8. Malawi
9. Rwanda
10. République du Congo
11. Tanzania¹
12. Zambia

¹ Three MCTs in Tanzania and Guinea Bissau jointly funded by the ITU and local partners are already under implementation

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