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PROPOSED DEFINITION OF DIGITAL COMMUNITY CENTRE

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SUMMARY

1. Reminder of past debate on community connectivity
2. Key factors in community connectivity
3. Scope of existing definition
4. Limits of definition
5. Proposed definition of DCC
6. Conclusion

1. Reminder of past debate on community connectivity

1.1 The community connectivity issue

This centres on the principle whereby, in order to make universal access a reality, emphasis should be placed on the establishment of DCCs and the use of broadband technologies rather than aiming for a fixed telephone line for each household in the short term

1.2 Definition of digital community centre

A DCC is a centre where the public may access digital telecommunication and Internet services from terminals put at its disposal. It must offer equitable, universal and affordable access.

1.3 Basic criteria of a DCC

- Availability to all without discrimination;
- Free or very low cost access to telecommunication and Internet services.

Three (03) Groups of key factors

- Utilization/users;

* Infrastructure
- Resources: * Human
                      * Financial

- Content

3. Scope of existing definition

This definition takes clear account of the following key factors:

- Infrastructure;
- Human resources;
- Financial resources;
- Content;
- Equitable access.

4. Limits of definition

- Equitable access evokes users but in the definition their requirements might not be taken into account;

- Dimensioning of a DCC must take priority account of target users' requirements.

Case of the developing countries

Establishment of a DCC in a rural area:

1. Bringing out of requirements that are latent in target populations, as communication issues are not a priority for them. In such a case, a DCC should be established in order to stimulate requirements on the part of the population;

2. If the population has the minimum sophistication required, the DCC should be adapted to their requirements. The DCC's equipment must constitute a means to an end (fight against corruption, poverty,…).

5. Proposed definition of DCC

A DCC is a centre whose dimensioning may or may not be based on the requirements of the target users of a community, and whose purpose is to provide those users with access to telecommunication and Internet services using community access equipment made available to them. Such access must be equitable, universal and affordable.

6. Conclusion

A DCC is rather like an information boutique. Thus when defining the concept, it is important to take account of the kind of information to be sold or made available to buyers/users. The information must match the users' requirements in order to allow the full integration of peoples in the information society (IS).

It should be borne in mind that the IS must guarantee the respect of the profound cultural and linguistic diversity of peoples; otherwise, we will see DCCs set up without suitable content.

Thank you for your kind attention