TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT BUREAU

ITU-D STUDY GROUPS

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Question 10g/2: Enhancing the capacity of NGOs to achieve development aims, through the use of telecommunication

STUDY GROUP 2

SOURCE: PLATFORM FOR COOPERATION ON COMMUNICATION AND DEMOCRATISATION

TITLE: ENHANCING THE CAPACITY OF NGOs TO ACHIEVE DEVELOPMENT AIMS, THROUGH THE USE OF TELECOMMUNICATION

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The following text is a proposed revision to a new Question which was presented at the World Telecommunication Development Conference 1998 in Valletta (Malta) in March 1998 (Ref. Doc. 73, item 27, page 95-100).

1 Statement of Problem or Situation

Increasingly, development efforts in less and least developed countries are being led by national and international NGOs, recognised by governments, the UN system and others as key actors. Some are directly involved in media (e.g. community radio, development video, telecentres); others use telecommunication to achieve their aims (e.g. aid agencies, training and educational initiatives, local economic initiatives etc.); while others still are generally aware of the important role of telecommunication but have yet to come to grips with the issues and possibilities.

There is a danger that many opportunities to enhance development using telecommunication are being lost, because of lack of awareness of potential especially of new technologies, lack of coordination between NGOs, national authorities and private sector, (often unintended) obstacles in national and international broadcasting policy and telecommunication regulation, and even poorly designed international standards that impede appropriate technologies.

Finding a solution to these problems should significantly increase the capacity of these NGOs to achieve their development aims, through the use of telecommunication and information technologies.

2   Question or issue proposed for study

General Question:

What is the actual and potential impact of current telecommunication trends on the activities of development NGOs, and what policies and actions can enhance their capacity to utilise telecommunication more effectively to achieve development aims?

Specifically:

1)   Based on existing evidence, what new opportunities have recent ~~events~~developments opened up for development-oriented NGOs through communication media and technologies use (e.g. Internet, radio and television broadcast, satellite, video)? How do they, and can they, contribute concretely to achieving the development aims of NGOs, especially in least developed countries?

2)   What are the current obstacles to the widespread dissemination of these benefits? This might include: lack of awareness regarding benefits; lack of finance; inadequate universal service and access to basic network; restrictive telecommunication regulation; unsupportive broadcast policy including frequency allocation; inappropriate technology and standards, including digital sound broadcasting; etc.

3)   ~~What~~ What are the long-term strategic issues that may into the future impact on the adoption and use of media and communications by NGOs in their development activities? What are the implications of different standards developed in Digital Audio Broadcasting and other areas? What impact will liberalisation have, and the growth in importance of the WTO? What is happening of relevance in modes of spectrum allocation?

4)   What policies and action, from NGOs, governments, ITU, and others, can best address these obstacles? These might include better coordination between NGOs; additional support for non-commercial Internet use; regulation and frequency provision of local development-oriented radio; support for innovative universal service actions, especially in the context of liberalisation; access to satellite broadcasting by NGOs; ~~and so forth.~~an ITU Liaison unit for NGOs; etc.

3   Description of the Expected Output

-        An analysis, and examples, of the impact and potential of telecommunication technologies on~~the~~ development-oriented NGOs, especially in least developed countries.

-        An analysis of the obstacles, short-term and strategic, to disseminating the effective use of telecommunication technologies, in terms of awareness, regulations, access to resources and services, broadcasting policy, standards etc.

-        Concrete policy guidelines and proposals for actions, at national and international level, to ensure NGOs can take advantage of these technologies, working with national governments, ITU and others, to maximise development gains.

~~The users will be:~~

~~National and International NGOs, and their representative and other organisations; national government, especially those involved in telecommunication and broadcasting policy and regulation; broadcasting and telecommunication regulators; telecommunication operators; the ITU.~~

4 Required timing of the expected output

~~This question must be addressed urgently, but without undue haste. The timescale for the recommendations extends into the future, taking into consideration the rapidly evolving national and international telecommunication environment~~

~~A careful consultation and research methodology (see below) will have to be deployed, if the output is to address the issues effectively. An 18- to 24-month study period would seem reasonable, before preliminary results can be achieved.~~ A 12- to 18-month study period is envisaged. Responses to preliminary round (ITU-D and Focus Group Members) are requested by January 1999, after which a second round of activities will begin . Completion is by September 1999.

5 Proposers/Sponsors – Those who requested study of the Question or issue

Organisation: Platform for Cooperation on Communication and Democratisation

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The Platform is in the process of becoming a member of ITU-D.

6 Sources of input required in carrying out the study

The following organisations~~would benefit from the output and~~ are to contribute to the work in different ways:

a) Media related NGOs: The Proposers comprise an association of NGOs, members of which have agreed to contribute to this Study Group. Among these are:

1) AMARC: World Association for Community Radio Broadcasters;

2) APC: Association for Progressive Communication;

3) Article 19: International Centre Against Censorship;

4) Catholic Media Council;

5) IAMCR (PCR Section): International Association for Media and Communication Research;

6) IFJ: International Federation of Journalists;

7) IWTC: International Women's Tribune Centre;

8) MacBride Round Table on Communication;

9) PANOS London;

10) People's Communication Charter;

11) Vidéazimut: International Coalition for Audiovisuals for Development and Democracy;

12) WACC: World Association for Christian Communication;

13) Worldview International Foundation;

14) ZEBRA: Audio-Visual Network for North-South Understanding;

15) Group of Eight: A Network of Communication in Latin America and the Caribbean;

16) WorldSpace Foundation;

17) VITACom.

~~The support of others will be gained prior to the WDTC. These include:~~

~~- Other agencies and organisations involved in communications and development especially in least developed countries, such as IDRC and FES,~~

~~16. - Major development NGOs, such as Concern Worldwide, OXFAM and Trócaire, a number of whom have already been contacted.~~

~~- National governments,~~

b) ITU-D Members, especially regulators and policy makers in broadcasting, media and development.

c) Multilateral organisations, including UNDP (especially Sustainable Development Media Programme); UNESCO (Communications, Information and Informatics Sector); ITU (all three sectors). ~~and Inter-Agency Project on Universal Access)World Bank (InfoDev Programme)~~

7 Target audience for the output

7.1 Indicate expected types of target audience, by noting all relevant points on the matrix which follows

	Developed Countries	Developing Countries	LDCs
Telecom Policy Makers	Limited	Yes	Yes
Telecom Regulators	Yes	Yes	Yes
Service Providers (Operators)	Limited	Yes	Yes
Manufacturers	Limited	Limited	

The enhancement of development activities by NGOs is of keen interest to governments and indeed regulators from the universal service perspective. Major commercial service providers have some interest in providing service, but small operators with a development brief, for instance in Internet provision, will be most interested. ~~Manufacturers mayhave an interest in niche areas such as digital radio standards for use in local and small scale development radio.~~

7.2   Target audience – Who specifically will use the output

The target audience is primarily national and international NGOs, working hand in hand with government and international policy makers. and development support actions.   Those in development policy, telecommunication, and broadcasting will be especially targeted. The pPolicy recommendations and actions will be focused especially on theirNGO requirements, and related to the practical problems they face in achieving their aims and the environment in which they daily work.

International organisations, especially the UN Agencies such as ITU, UNDP and UNESCO, will also be targeted for practically useful and feasible policies and actions that can, with minimallevels of financial support, significantly enhance the use of communications by NGOs.

7.3   Proposed methods for the implementation of the results

The Platform for Communication and Democratisation comprises now over 20 international NGOs active in media, communication and development issues, . This offering a ready-made means of dissemination, to their target groups, collaborators, partners and others. Several of these produce regular magazines and newsletters, organise conferences and meetings and engage in other dissemination and information activities. Members will also undertaken to publicise the findings atthe many international and national gatherings in which they participate.

The output will also be the subject of one or more Colloquia, or Workshops dedicated to the results.Depending on recommendations, the ITU itself may also be called upon to follow up on certain elements of the Results.

8.   Proposed Method of Handling this Question or issue

a) HOW: Suggested handling of the proposed Question

The preliminary proposed methodology for addressing this question is:

- A survey questionnaire to a selected number of NGOs, with a view to gaining at least 200 responses biased towards those involved in least developed countries;

- A review of the literature, including 'grey literature' (unpublished reports, conference proceedings etc.) in the academic, NGO, UN and commercial contexts;

- A review of the activities of UN organisations in this domain, and possibly of selected countries, especially least developed countries;

- A series of interviews with key individuals among NGOs, UN and other agencies, national government, telecom operators and service providers;

- At least one Colloquium/workshop, or perhaps one each in a couple of regions, to debate preliminary findings and proposals.

The appropriate combination of mechanisms is still a matter for discussion. However, the following is a first approximation.

Within a Study Group

- Question (over a multi-year study period)   yes

- Focus Group (12 months duration maximum)   possible

Within Regular BDT Activity

- Programmes   yes

- Projects   uncertain

- Expert consultants   yes

This work will be completed working closely with the *Platform for Cooperation on Communication and Democratisation*, and its member organisations. In particular, the Platform will be willing to prioritise this issue and devote its resources, in terms of time and energy, towards completing and disseminating the work.

b) WHY: Why we selected the alternative under a) above.

A Study Group would seem appropriate is order bring together the range of interest represented at the ITU, and to allow a sufficient amount of time to complete the work.   A Focus Group might be relevant only at a certain stage on the work.

A Programme (sharing with other related Questions) would be useful in organising the Colloquia, and in piloting possible actions towards the end of the study period.

The Question is being developed within the context of a Focus Group. The following are the key steps:

1)   Constitute the Focus Group: Focus members are drawn from NGO members of the Platform (which sponsors this Question), and from invited others, including specifically people from: VITACom, an NGO that is currently setting up a global communication network for low-cost use by NGOs; WorldSpace Foundation, a Foundation set up by WorldSpace which is developing a global network for digital radio; and the Task Force on Gender, set up at Malta. (See Annex 1 for list of members)

2)   Circulate the Question to ITU-D members, clarifying the purpose and required response.

3)   Undertake research directly with NGOs, to determine the key issues, opportunities and blockages.

4)   Preliminary assessment of the above inputs with preliminary findings and proposing further actions

5)   Pursue those further actions, such as a Colloquium to debate preliminary findings, or targeted investigations into specific identified issues.

6)   Write a Final Report. This is expected by September 1999.

The bulk of the work will (as is usual) be carried out by the Focus Group members, and by ITU-D members and others voluntarily making contributions. However, it is expected that a limited amount of consultancy support, and of ITU officers' time, as well as possibly support for running a Colloquium or other event, will be required to see the report through to its final conclusions.

Expert consultancy would be required in developing the methodology to be used, in undertaken the literature reviews and in organising the interviews.

9   Co-ordination requirements of the study

Cooperation has been agreed with the Task Force on Gender, set up at Malta. Otherwise, coordination will be required with~~related Study Groups and Programmes of ITU-D. Currently, in the two Study Groups, issues of relevance arise in:: SG1/1; SG 2/1 SG 3/1; SG4/1; SG1/2; SG2/2; SG 4/2; SG 6/2; SG 7/2; SG 8/2.   In relation to BAAP Programmes 1, 6, 9 10, 12 and 12 appear to be most relevant.~~

~~However, close cooperation~~several other Questions. Cooperation may also be required with specific issues discussed in Study Groups of ITU-T and ITU-R, around specific spectrum allocation, technology and standardisation issues.

Coordination will also be required with a range of organisations outside the ITU, including UN agencies as mentioned above; NGOs coalitions; regional telecommunications organisations; etc.

~~10.   Other Relevant Information.~~

~~Fundamentally, this is a request from the NGOs involved in the Platform for Cooperation on Communication and Democratisation to engage in constructive cooperation with ITU member and UN agencies to together explore the obstacles, and develop proposals to enhance the use by NGOs of communication media to achieve common development aims.~~

Annex 1: Focus Group Members

Seán Ó Siochrú (Rapporteur)

Pradip Thomas (WACC: World Association for Christian Communication)

Steve Buckley (AMARC: World Association for Community Radio Broadcasters)

Alain Ambrosi (Vidéazimut: International Coalition for Audiovisuals for Development and Democracy)

James Deane (PANOS Foundation, London)

Karin Delgadillo (APC: Association for Progressive Communication)

Henry Norman (VITACom)

WorldSpace Foundation (not confirmed)

Nimal Martinus Worldview International Foundation (not confirmed)

Member of the ITU-D Task Force on Gender

Additional members may also be added.

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