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14 June 2011

ITU Member States  
ITU-D Sector Members

**Subject: Telecentre Women: Digital Literacy Campaign**

Dear Sir/Madam,

The **International Telecommunication Union (ITU)** and **Telecentre.org Foundation** are pleased to invite you to join our efforts in promoting ICTs for women's empowerment!

We have joined hands to launch the **Telecentre Women: Digital Literacy Campaign** to make a difference in the lives of at least one million disadvantaged women in developing countries who are currently excluded from the global digital revolution. This joint campaign will give women who lack digital literacy skills the life-changing opportunities offered by information and communications technology (ICT).

What this campaign is, who we are, who we intend to reach, and what we seek to achieve is all explained in the campaign brief we have enclosed with this letter.

Being well aware of your proven commitment to women's empowerment, we extend this invitation to you to join the ITU-telecentre.org Foundation Telecentre Women: Digital Literacy Campaign. We are confident that our shared concern and priority for the growth and welfare of women will open up many common areas for shared effort and resources towards achieving a successful campaign for digital literacy for women.

It will be a distinct privilege to count your institution among our ranks. We shall be glad to discuss your participation in this campaign as we encourage your continued empowerment of women at the grassroots.

Yours faithfully,

[Original signed]

**Maria Teresa M. Camba**  
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[Original signed]

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# Telecentre Women: Digital Literacy Campaign

## Introduction

### Bridging the digital literacy gap for women

Today's world runs on information and communications technology (ICT). ICT has given people the reach and power to achieve new levels of personal growth and the means to shape events, aspirations, relationships, and their futures in ways before unimaginable.

For women especially, ICT has proven to be life-changing. It has broken traditions and social prejudices, expanded their roles in society and at home, given many a new economic and social freedom that has redefined them as persons of stature and value in their communities. ICT-empowered women, such as members of the eHomemakers grassroots community and the Mothers for Mothers network in Malaysia who successfully pursue tele-exchange and teletrading careers from home, demonstrate the life-altering power of technology. Seeing mothers, disadvantaged women, and single women actively participating in the knowledge (k) economy shows what ICTs offer many other women.

But too many women remain disconnected from the global technological revolution. This is especially true in developing countries where 60% of women end up as unpaid family workers, UN Women statistics show. They are trapped in traditional family roles, without basic digital literacy that could help them grow and achieve more of their potential.

Basic digital literacy means more than the mere operation of a computer and communicating via email or social networking. It also means being able to use ICT to improve women's lives in ways shaped by the realities of their environments and needs. For women agricultural workers, it may mean producing more and selling at better prices with helpful market information. For home-based women, it may mean becoming a homepreneur, finding livelihood opportunities that increase productivity and family income. For those on the balance beam between family and career, it can mean being able to work from home and fulfilling the multiple roles of homemaker and co-provider.

For millions of women, digital literacy is the lifeline to a new future— a lifeline which a new global campaign seeks to cast in all corners of the world. This is the **Telecentre Women: Digital Literacy Campaign** spearheaded by the **International Telecommunication Union (ITU)** of the United Nations and the global telecentre leader, **telecentre.org Foundation**.

## The Telecentre Woman

The **telecentre woman** comes from or is linked to the grassroots. This campaign views her in two perspectives:

1. She is the telecentre manager or knowledge worker who ensures telecentre services, encourages

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wider use of the telecentre in the community, and adopts resource maintenance and generation approaches to bring in local and external resources for telecentre sustainability.

2. She is the community woman, with or without formal education or even functional literacy, who is a telecentre user or a potential user. Even without extensive knowledge of computer operation or ICT, she uses— or has the potential to use— a telecentre to better perform her roles or expand the boundaries of her life.

## The Campaign

**Global Target: Disadvantaged community women, telecentre women**

**Originators: International Telecommunication Union (ITU), telecentre.org**

**Movers: telecentre women achievers, private and public sector partners, international agencies and local stakeholders, the global network of telecentres and knowledge workers**

**End Results: Empowered community women with information access, entrepreneurship and employable digital skills, opportunities for higher schooling, and membership in a helping global digital community**

The Telecentre Women: Digital Literacy Campaign is a global initiative to help empower disadvantaged and underserved community women with knowledge of information and communications technology for personal growth and expanded opportunities for better lives.

At the helm of the campaign is telecentre.org, a global program that supports the establishment and sustainability of grassroots level telecentres towards a vision of opening up "digital opportunities for poverty alleviation at the grassroots". Leveraging the combined reach of telecentre.org Foundation's global network of 300 organizations, 100,000 grassroots telecentres worldwide and over 200,000 individuals with direct stakes in the telecentre movement with ITU's 192 Member States and 700 Sector Members, the **Telecentre Women: Digital Literacy Campaign** will:

- reach out to one million women, unreached and untouched by ICT and its promise and help them acquire digital literacy via telecentres and telecentre networks throughout the world;
  - launch a global search for the top 100 Outstanding Telecentre Women Managers whose experiences will be published in an eBook. The 100 winners will receive training scholarships to telecentre.org courses and a plaque of recognition, among other prizes. The Top 10 also will be invited by ITU, telecentre.org and its partners to share their experiences in regional or national conferences where their stories can be shared.
  - bring together a corps of accomplished women from the academic-corporate ICT sector to serve as mentors, tutors, and ambassadors teaching and inspiring telecentre women to achieve digital literacy and make it work for them.
  - stimulate and bring together support and participation of telecentres and networks for the campaign from all over the world, reinforcing them with resource mobilization for fund generation as well as content and curriculum packages for digital and eBusiness skills for community women.
- Target: 20,000 telecentres as classrooms**
- enlist private and public sector partners, international agencies and local stakeholders to demonstrate the role of telecentres in empowering communities in line with the UN Millennium Development Goals.

Summarizing, the campaign has these components:

1. Wide-scale digital literacy training for one million grassroots women
2. Recognition of telecentre women-achievers
3. Operating telecentre classrooms with custom digital literacy curricula based on country needs
4. Enlistment of partners and supporters as champions for the cause.

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## The Impact

The **Telecentre Women: Digital Literacy Campaign** empowers one of the groups most vulnerable to poverty and its consequences — **women**. Bringing disadvantaged women into the mainstream of the digital revolution empowers them with access, information, choices, opportunities, and options they never had before.

Digital literacy increases the value of the telecentre woman to her family and community whether in Africa, the Arab States, Asia Pacific, the Americas or the CIS region and Europe. She will become more employable, and be able to contribute more, as an asset to any enterprise. Promoting digital literacy provides a significant impetus to the global crusade against poverty.

## How You Can Help

To help is to join up. International organizations, companies, governments, telecentre networks and operators, individual champions of ICT and literacy all are welcome. There are many ways you can contribute.

### Companies and international organizations can

- configure and position social responsibility programs towards disadvantaged sectors, particularly the women that the **Telecentre Women: Digital Literacy Campaign** targets.
- make **ITU** and **telecentre.org** their focal point and partner with them, find common ground in objectives, promote their organizational interests while helping push the **Telecentre Women: Digital Literacy Campaign** with their support.
- if inherently involved with education, community development, and ICT, works with **ITU** and **telecentre.org** to develop the digital literacy curriculum that is vital to the campaign.
- consider and prioritize resource-sharing for common or aligned objectives

### Governments can

- align social development programs and operations to support the **Telecentre Women: Digital Literacy Campaign**.
- launch national initiatives to support the **Telecentre Women: Digital Literacy Campaign** by aligning it with gender and women-specific programs already in the national development agenda.
- on the part of local governments, highlight the vital roles of telecentres, increase resource support for telecentre operations, and encourage citizen usage of telecentres with creative incentives.

### Regional & National Telecentre Networks can

- mobilize telecentres in their regions and countries under the banner of a regional or national campaign in support of the **Telecentre Women: Digital Literacy Campaign**
- be the area hubs linking telecentres with the global campaign and the funnel by which resources, support, partnerships can flow
- encourage local telecentres to partner with local organizations and educational institutions in the spirit of the global campaign and motivate local resource sharing and generation

### Telecentre Operators can

- intensify reach-out to disadvantaged women in their localities and increase telecentre access and usage by women
- partner with local schools, social organizations, and local governments for resource mobilization with women-specific themes and programs; offer the telecentres as conduits for implementation of women programs of local partners.

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Your support for the **Telecentre Women: Digital Literacy Campaign** can bring you, in general,

- the fulfilling satisfaction that you are part of a momentous global surge empowering women against poverty and its traditional cycle, standing on equal footing with some of the biggest international institutions, organizations, and personalities in the common aspiration for digital literacy for women
- the recognition and partnership benefits with the world leader in telecentres, telecentre.org, its extensive reach and operations in over 100 countries in 40 languages, its global corps of more than 1-million students, its multi-continent online community and resources, and a host of global activities and exchanges among others, the potentials of which open up a horizon of limitless opportunities.

For international organizations and companies who join as partners, your participation gives you:

- the gratifying experience of directly contributing to changing the lives and futures of millions of women throughout the world, creating a new generation of empowered, skilled, and more confident women growing with the opportunities opened by digital literacy
- a prominent image of social responsibility highly visible globally and attested to by the entire array of **Telecentre Women: Digital Literacy Campaign** partners which include some of the largest names in technology, poverty reduction, and people empowerment
- officially recognized participation and highly visible acknowledgment in all **Telecentre Women: Digital Literacy Campaign** activities, collaterals, transactions, and exposures

## We can make the difference for women.

### About ITU

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) located at Place des Nations, CH-1211, Geneva 20, Switzerland, is an international organization with 192 Member States and a specialized agency of the United Nations. It facilitates peaceful relations as well as economic and social development via efficient telecommunication services. It fosters international cooperation in the delivery of technical assistance to developing countries for the development of their telecommunication networks and services.

ITU recognizes the need for digital inclusion, information and communication technology (ICT) accessibility, and the use of ICTs for the social and economic development of disadvantaged people. It is now undertaking a global effort to mobilize resources and partners to ensure implementation of action lines of the World Summit on the Information Society seeking to connect the world by 2015 and achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

### About telecentre.org

telecentre.org is a global network of people and organizations working for the establishment and sustainability of grassroots telecentres as catalysts for development. It is supported by the telecentre.org Foundation, an independent, non-profit, non-stock International Organization located at the Commission on Information and Communications Technology (CICT) Building, UP Campus, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines. Funded by Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Microsoft, and Commission on ICT, Philippines (CICT), telecentre.org has provided grants and technical assistance to telecentre networks and organizations in about 40 nations. It has a strong knowledge sharing program and the telecentre.org Academy to improve the knowledge and skills of telecentre operators. telecentre.org's global network counts 100,000 telecentres, half of the world total. Over 300 organizations and 200,000 people with a stake in the telecentre movement help drive telecentre.org.

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