

**BCO Meeting
DFID, London
Monday, 24th January 2005**

Present:

Lucie Lamoureux – Bellanet
Anriette Esterhuysen – APC
Styn van der Krogt – IICD
Piet den Heijer – DGIS
Nicola Woods – DfID
Geraldine Kouadio – SDC
Loe Schout HIVOS
Ivan Kulis – IICD
B. Shadrach – OneWorld Asia
Priscilla Jere – OneWorld Africa
Pete Cranston OneWorld International
Kishor Pradhan – Panos South Asia
Lauren Fok – BCO
David Woolnough – DfID
Kitty Warnock-Panos

1. Welcome

The BCO meeting formally opened at 10h15.
Ivan Kulis welcomed everybody present and presented the agenda over the two days and the objectives for the meeting.

2. Introductions

Everybody present introduced themselves. (please see attached attendance register)

3. Emerging organisational issues

- The need to link theory and grassroots communities in our presentations
- What is the current status/progress of WeConnect and how can organisations get more involved
- Developing a common format for donor reporting vis-à-vis the process towards expediting payments and developing a balance between accountability and learning
- Exploring business models, as a form of investment capital, in the context of sustainability for core funding of Partners.
- Need advice on financial and project management models available online
- DFID wants to know whether its current modis operandi makes sense, with specific reference to the contracts that DFID has entered into with each Partner
- What is the nature of the relationship between Donors and the individual partners in the BCO context? Do the Donors continue to have an independent relationship with each Partner or does the BCO meeting constitute the meeting place for reporting, accountability and learning?
The observation was made that this is a longer term question confronting BCO as an institutional entity

4. Implementing Partner and Donor Reports

*Detailed partner reports are available on the BCO workspace
<http://www.dgroups.org/groups/bdo>. These minutes do not capture a list of all*

activities reported on by the partners, but focus on the key issues that emerged during the session.

APC

- APC highlighted the policy advocacy arena, particularly around WSIS. Specifically, APC is involved in the WSIS working groups on Financing and Internet Governance. Country participation is high and this process would be a useful learning opportunity to engage in a critical assessment of developing country participation
- Much of APC's work is demand-driven and this results in the APC getting pulled in different directions e.g. Working in a networked way (WSIS), working with a country focus (CATIA), or working directly with members all pose strategic organisational challenges. While this is a dynamic and grounded approach, it can lead to an unfocussed way of working.
- Internal knowledge management was also identified as a challenge in keeping staff, members and governance structures fully informed – internal reflection and reporting was seen as crucial to keeping track
- BCO Partnerships on joint projects are working very well
- As a consequence of the WSIS activities, the following questions have emerged for BCO. The first question relates to meaningful gender mainstreaming across BCO activities and generally in relation to ICT policy and advocacy. The second is how will the analytical assessment of the findings of the work done as a result of the WSIS process be fed into policy development and improvement of international ICT conferences.

Bellanet

- Within the BCO framework, Bellanet is exclusively focused on implementing WeConnect (funded by DFID and IICD) in four countries with different foci. Initial work is being done in mainstreaming ICTs in Nepal within peace promotion processes, together with OneWorld Asia. A mapping study will be carried out in the form of four regional consultations, including stakeholders, ending with a national workshop that will include local donors scheduled for March 2005.
- It was noted that Dorothy Okello was appointed to head Bellanet Africa.

DFID

- It was reported that DFID is currently undergoing an internal transition process. It is anticipated that the ICD team will decrease over the next 2-3 years with the possible implication that there will no longer be a ICT champion in DFID. Within DFID, the External communications, Media and Technology departments will merge.
- BCO could respond by: i) arguing to mainstream ICDs through using BCO examples; ii) building evidence on the positive impact of mixing old and new technologies; iii) adopting a country focus as funding continues to flow to DFID country desks for ICDs

DGIS

- The Dutch government is currently rethinking its funding strategy. HIV, water management, education and the environment have been prioritised over ICTS. Moreover, due to pressure from Dutch NGOs who feel that too much money is leaving the country, it is probable that international (non-Dutch) foreign organisations will be excluded from future funding. The Minister has been asked to rethink this decision owing to the influence of INGOs. The final decision will be taken in 2005.
- The current focus is to make a link between ICT and knowledge production initiatives. It is envisaged that academic institutions will partner with policy

makers to emerge with research information outputs that will be widely disseminated in a more coordinated meaningful way.

- A consultant has been commissioned to explore the relationship between ICD and pro-poor public / private partnerships. This will involve an Internet search and emerge with recommendations for future initiatives.
- The group was informed that Dutch Embassies are encouraged to explore knowledge sharing initiatives with local organisations and partners. WeConnect was highlighted as an important project.

HIVOS

- HIVOS has been involved in ICD processes and policy for the last 5 years, working with NGOs and human rights organisations in 14 countries. A shift has taken place from access to supporting the strategic uses of ICTs and new media.
- ICD Team has become one of the core pillars and is part of the Management Team of the HIVOS institutional structure (as opposed to cross-cutting team).
- Launched a Knowledge sharing strategy to improve communications and knowledge sharing within HIVOS, between HIVOS and partners and between partners. A team has started with concrete activities, with the focus on building civil society in developing countries. This has led to a partnership with The Institutes for Social Studies (ISS) based in The Hague. This collaboration will result in a series of materials, and activities, including a training component (ISS), website (backbone of KS network) and research (ISS & HIVOS)
- In each HIVOS regional office there is no dedicated ICD person, but the offices are well informed of ICD developments and projects.

IICD

- IICD has been working on ICT Policy Making, coordinating this programme at a country level with local partners. Much effort has been going into strengthening partners by building competencies in this regard.
- When it comes to “mainstreaming”, IICD is focusing very much on the process, and the content side can sometimes remain weak. A comment was made that there are issues related to capacity at content development especially relating to ICT policy in Africa.

OWI

- The BCO meeting was informed of the autonomous status of OWAsia & OWAfrica that came into effect in September 2004. OneWorld International Ltd will cease to exist on 31 March 2005 and its legal shell will be taken over by OW UK who will continue to form new alliances e.g. mobiles and technology incubator/ innovation activities.
- Africa and Asia will focus on “grass roots one voice” and ways to amplify these voices through the strategic use of ICTs. Multi-stakeholder processes involving private/public partnerships have been applied in achieving the objectives of mainstreaming ICTs. OWAfrica works with partners on content and capacity building e.g. WoughNet and Forum Mulher. This is different from other centres: for example, Latin America is building ICT capacity within organisations
- The work will be done both on the level of Community Media as well as high tech.
- The English language super site, the biggest OW flagship, will be dependent on the southern centres to keep it alive.

Panos

- Mainstreaming ICTs will focus on strengthening the capacity of journalists (and CSOs) to report on ICT issues through a series of “tool kits (10) focusing on various issues like VSAT, ICANN and IP.

- The “stronger voices” activities focus again on strengthening capacity of journalists, but with the objective of bringing the voices of the poor.

SDC

- SDC ICT4D unit is in the concept development phase regarding the internal mainstreaming of ICD and poverty. There are several issues at stake: how to engage local offices? how to implement the concept? how to give “new identity” to the unit that was closely linked with the WSIS process? It has been decided to open up the process.
- On the positive side, the SDC Director is supportive of and is pushing very much an ICT4D agenda. While ICD4D is not mainstreamed, it is central to the work of the local offices. SDC is working a lot with IICD on local implementation e.g in Bolivia and Ecuador.
- There is an continued engagement in the WSIS process: SDC participated in drafting of the Chennai Statement which will be discussed at the WSIS meeting in Geneva in March 2005.

5. The group selected 3 issues on which to focus in the afternoon:

- Reporting: checking the balance between accountability and learning
- BCO communication effort: strategy, tools and steps?
- BCO and WSIS

5.1 BCO Reporting

The group discussed the quality – and meaningfulness – of the current reporting format. Does it add to the collective leaning? Does it provide sufficient input for the meetings?

It was agreed:

- Format is quite satisfactory, although it could be even more “learning-oriented”. We are not speaking about any major changes, but some functional improvements. Anriette had a proposal, and coordination will follow up bilaterally. Reporting for the first semester 2005 will be done according to the new format
- Donors should coordinate the accountability reporting. DfID and SDC indicated that they are flexible, and would be eager to try to use the DGIS reporting format. Mr den Heijer committed to checking the internal procedures, and pending the outcome he would share the DGIS format with other BCO donors. If there is a common ground, then the donor group will come with a unique accountability reporting format for all partners. Coordination will facilitate this process.

5.2 BCO Communication activities

This was a 30 minute brainstorming session on what the group believes should be the communication priorities of the BCO coordination.

Who is the target group?

Private sector, partners and their organisations, donors, local country desks

Type of format?

Newsletter, website, international fora

What?

- Market and brand BCO in a professional way with specific regard to packaging and linking content to target group

- Disseminate lessons learnt that have a strong country focus and make use of national and SWAPs to communicate learnings
- Relate stories in a way that informs and influences the debate towards ICTs becoming an MDG
- What is unique about each partner and what each partner brings to the table
- Communicate results and findings

The brainstorm emerged with the following:

- BCO should opt for a assertive marketing and promotion
- After some debate, the BCO participants proposed that instead of inventing a new “BCO logo”, it should use the iConnect logo, as it expresses the idea of collaborative working in the area of ICDs. It was noted that the IConnect logo had already been used in the BCO Learning Study booklet and 4-pager
- A 2-page leaflet should be developed explaining what BCO is, who each of the alliance partners are, its purpose, ICD: what is it (advocacy approach), the countries involved, activities, evaluation process
- Regarding the “Learning Products” it was questioned whether the Learning Day outcomes were publishable and would in fact not have much of an audience. It was decided that the BCO evaluation exercise should be published as a learning product instead.
- The coordination should make sure that we are aware working with the same networks?

5.3 BCO and WSIS

The meeting received an update of the WSIS process and the topics currently being debated: Financing, Internet Governance, Implementation plan

There is a process underway to develop ICT Policy that will feed into building National and Global/International ICT policy. Each country will present national action plans.

In addition, there is a strong focus on Human Rights issue, given that the host country is Tunis. Given the HR issues, the climate is less enthusiastic, and the progress achieved in the area of multi-stakeholder cooperation and trust has been partially damaged.

The meeting was informed of a World Bank ICD Conference to take place in October 2005

It was agreed that:

- The group can **not come with any specific input** for the WSIS at this moment;
- However, as some partners (APC, HIVOS) are constantly involved in the process, we need to be aware of what’s going on, and about possibilities for the BCO input. The coordination will **keep this topic on the agenda** and will liaise with the partners involved in this process.
- It was suggested that one of the BCO learning days focus on the issue of **financing**. The coordination will see how this can fit in the BCO learning days.

6. Issues that need follow-up

Due to time limitations, the following important issues were not discussed:

- **Relationship with donor desks.** This is of big importance to implementing agencies, but even more to donor agencies. For example DfID has explained

how integrating of ICDs in desks will be crucial, given the decentralisation efforts, and in-country processes (PRSPs, donor coordination, basket funding, etc).

This issue needs further discussion especially as some activities focus specifically on this issue (WeConnect).

- **Conducting an overview of networks that BCO partners are involved in their programmes and the nature of the collaboration**, at country level, in order to avoid duplication of resources.
- Compile a register of all countries that partners are involved in.

7. Next meeting

It was agreed that the next BCO meeting should focus on **PRSPs**. It was also agreed that the content will be lead by **Panos**.

It was tentatively agreed that the meeting would take place in **Zambia**, in **June 2005**. The location will be confirmed over the next few weeks pending a discussion between Panos (Zambia) and OW Africa Based in Zambia.