



building communication opportunities

BCO offers opportunities for rich reciprocal learning that, because each partner participates in other broader networks, contribute to the ICT4D sector as a whole.

What is the BCO alliance?

The Building Communications Opportunities (BCO) alliance is a network of organisations experienced in information and communications for development that have made a commitment to learning and collaboration. BCO members, or 'partners' as they are referred to, include donor agencies from Canada, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the UK and international non-governmental organisations.

What are the BCO alliance goals?

- Integrate information and communication technology for development (ICT4D) in development sectors such as health, agriculture or education
- Strengthen the voice of poor and excluded communities and facilitate debate and dialogue through the use of ICTs
- Demonstrate the impact of ICT4D on poverty

A cornerstone of the partnership is peer learning and knowledge-sharing on how information and communication technologies can be used as a strategic tool for sustainable development and poverty alleviation.

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What do BCO partners have in common?

BCO partners' work includes a wide range of information, communications and development interventions – from media and advocacy, to policy development and capacity building.

BCO partners are actively committed to the belief that access to and the use of ICTs assists people and communities to have greater choice in determining and improving their lives and their standard of living, for example through

- engaging governments around ICT policy or poverty reduction strategies
- advocating how ICTs can support health, education, agricultural and food programmes
- raising awareness of how ICTs can promote debate and activism on culture, human rights, gender equality, HIV/AIDS, trade and aid, conflict prevention, and media
- networking with civil society and other development actors to promote cheaper alternative technologies.

What is the impact of ICT for development work?

The BCO alliance hopes to add significantly to the body of development knowledge on the role that information, communication and technology initiatives play in changing lives and eradicating poverty, by aggregating the collective experiences of the BCO partners and their networks. In line with this commitment, BCO partners have pooled resources to undertake a major impact assessment study, which is being carried out from July 2006 to July 2007. This study is looking at the impact which is being achieved by alliance partners in their work to empower excluded communities by raising their voices and increasing their participation in decision-making through increased access to policy-making, the media and ICTs.



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