



Association for Progressive Communications

**BCO Partnership Agreement with DFID -
Accountable Grant- AG3875**

Report for the period October 2004 to December 2005

Contact:

Anriette Esterhuysen

APC Executive Director

anriette@apc.org

Tel/Fax +27 11 7261692

<http://www.apc.org>

Table of Contents

1.	Introduction	2
2.	Background and context	2
2.1	Goals of the partnership agreement	2
2.2	Reporting period	3
2.3	APC in 2004-5	3
2.3.1	APC Council Meeting, Varna, October 2005	4
3.	Activities and Progress.....	4
3.1	Policy advocacy on ICD's role in key development agendas	4
3.1.1	Regional and national policy advocacy	4
3.1.2	Increase understanding within the international mainstream development community, of the role of ICD.....	6
3.1.3	Alternative approaches to poverty alleviation and 'sustainable development' and how these relate to ICD.	9
3.2	Gender equality and women's empowerment promoted through ICD and in the ICD sector	9
3.2.1	Awarding innovation in gender and ICTs	10
3.2.2	Gender and ICT Policy Advocacy	11
3.2.3	Gender ICT Evaluation Methodology (GEM).....	14
3.2.4	Publications and their dissemination as a basis for learning.....	15
3.3	Increased capacity, networking and influence of poverty focused southern based civil society organisations, through their strategic use of ICD.....	15
3.3.1	Support and coordinate ItrainOnline partnership	16
3.3.2	Tools for online advocacy and campaigning	17
3.3.3	An integrated approach to low cost connectivity and appropriate technologies	18
3.4	Poverty impact of ICD evaluated and disseminated to key development audiences.....	19
4.	Conclusion	19

1. Introduction

APC entered into an accountable grant relationship with DFID in August 2004. The agreement built on APC's previous associations with DFID through CATIA, and the development of the Gender Evaluation Methodology.

APC achieved substantial results in all four outcome areas:

- Policy advocacy on ICD's role in key development agendas;
- Gender equality and women's empowerment;
- Strategic use of ICD by civil society organisations;
- Poverty impact of ICD.

We achieved this through integrating activities related to these BCO outcomes with the work of the three APC programme areas: Communications and Information Policy, Women's Networking Support and Strategic Use and Capacity Building.

2. Background and context

2.1 Goals of the partnership agreement

The Association of Progressive Communications (APC) was invited to join the Building Communications Alliance in January 2004. APC entered into an accountable grant agreement with DFID in August of that year.

The PA's purpose is to provide support to APC to fulfil the principal strategic goals of the organisation over the next three years and to contribute to the overall BCO purpose: *"to investigate, mobilise and support key ICD opportunities that impact poverty"* and is structured around four themes:

- Policy advocacy on ICD's role in key development agendas;
- Gender equality and women's empowerment;
- Strategic use of ICD by civil society organisations;
- Poverty impact of ICD.

APC is in an international member network and has a presence in nearly 40 countries. However, for the purpose of this agreement it was agreed that work will take place principally within Africa and South Asia, augmented by a few global and regional outputs. The specific **strategic outcome areas** are:

- 1) Informed and inclusive debate and policy dialogue around ICD's role in mainstream development agendas;
- 2) Gender equality and women's empowerment promoted through ICD and in the ICD sector;
- 3) Increased capacity, networking and influence of poverty focused southern based civil society organisations, through their strategic use of ICD;
- 4) Poverty impact of ICD evaluated and disseminated to key development audiences

2.2 Reporting period

This report covers the period September 2004 to December 2005.

2.3 APC in 2004-5

APC members periodically identifies strategic priorities for the network. In November 2003, at its meeting in Cartagena, Colombia, members focused on two areas of challenge and opportunity facing civil society organisations that are using ICTs as an essential part of their work:

- Firstly, the strategic use of ICTs: how CSOs can make use of ICTs in ways that integrate with their goals and utilise the transformative potential of working in a networked way (across geographical, institutional and other boundaries). CSOs all over the world need to be empowered to be able to use ICTs strategically.
- Secondly, members emphasised the need for continued APC involvement in ICT policy, planning and regulatory processes internationally and support for our members and partners' ICT4D advocacy work nationally and regionally.

In response to these challenges APC members agreed on three strategic priorities for the period 2004-08:

1) Promoting and facilitating strategic use of ICTs by civil society organisations.

Enable CSOs to make use of ICTs in ways that integrate well with their goals and needs and harness the potential for collaboration and change that can come from working in a networked environment. APC believes CSOs can become more than consumers of ICTs; they can shape technologies, applications and solutions and facilitate ICT developments that respond to needs of people who are not considered part of a significant market.

2) Strengthening APC and CSOs' role and engagement in ICT policy processes.

Build more inclusive ICT decision-making processes by facilitating civil society engagement through building their capacity and supporting advocacy, at national and international levels. Civil society inclusion in policy-making will lead to their involvement in implementing and monitoring policies, and ultimately to societies in which there is greater citizen participation.

3) Growing and strengthening the network of CSOs promoting the use of ICTs for social justice and development.

Build networking for learning and collaboration among organisations promoting the use of ICTs for social justice and development through information exchange and collaborative project implementation.

APC's strategic priorities and actions are crosscut by two additional themes:

a) Commitment to sustainable development. APC believes that social and economic inequalities within and between countries is the underlying cause of the so-called 'digital divide' and for that reason, APC prefers not to use this misleading term. By specifying that development must be sustainable, APC chooses to explicitly engage factors that are often ignored by the mainstream ICT4D sector.

b) Commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment: APC's strategic priorities and actions are grounded in the belief that ICTs and the internet can play a crucial role in working for gender equality and women's empowerment. This recognition includes an awareness of the unequal power relations which exist - between women and men, north and south, rich and poor, urban and rural, connected and unconnected - in local communities, in sovereign countries, and globally.

August 2004 to December 2005 has been an intensely busy period for APC. For an overview of events we organised and participated in refer to the APC calendar for the period, attached as Appendix 1.

2.3.1 APC Council Meeting, Varna, October 2005

APC members met for its 10th Council Meeting in Varna, a small city on the Black Sea coast of Bulgaria. It was attended by more than 50 APC member representatives from 32 countries. Hosted by member Bluelink¹ the meeting included a public forum on Open Access attended by Bulgarian NGOs, government and development agencies (UNDP New York and Bulgaria), the EU's Aarhus Convention secretariat, the Free Software and telecentre communities, as well as Bluelink board members and users (Bluelink is an ICD support provider to NGOs in Bulgaria). We also invited partner organisations from other Balkan countries.

Through this public forum (a tradition at APC council meetings) we were able to demystify the term and talk about different dimensions of 'open access', ranging from access to information, to decision making, access for people with disabilities, infrastructure, etc.. Conversations and learning took place with people who do environmental sustainability work at local level and who generally do not consider how information and communication policies impact on them.

3. Activities and Progress

3.1 Policy advocacy on ICD's role in key development agendas

3.1.1 Regional and national policy advocacy

Uganda

Through our existing work in Africa we were easily able to develop a partnership with WOUGNET (Women of Uganda Network) to initiate a process to "engender national ICT policy in Uganda". APC signed a contract with WOUGNET in November 2005 but work started earlier in the year. WOUGNET has been a participant in Ugandan ICT policy processes since 2003. Focusing on how ICT policy considers, includes and impacts on women filled a gap and would provide learning that could be of value in other countries in the region. Activities in 2005 included:

Participation of Ugandan gender experts and advocates in ICT policy processes

- In 2005 WOUGNET was actively engaged in the WSIS process, ensuring that discussions at the national and local level were gender sensitive. Four public Forums were organised on WSIS together with the Ministry of Works, Housing

¹ <http://www.bluelink.net/>

and Communications and the Uganda Communication Commission. These forums raised awareness, provided updates to members of the public, identified the national relevance of internet governance and financing mechanisms and informed Ugandan participation in the WSIS preparatory processes and in Tunis 2005.

- WOUGNET was also actively engaged with the WSIS Gender Caucus.
- The Uganda Women Caucus on ICT (UWCI) had an opportunity to revive and rejuvenate its activities through a planning meeting held in December 2005.

South Africa

Through a project supported by the Open Society Institute of Southern Africa, we were able to launch a South African Creative Commons License and raise large scale awareness of open access to content in other countries in the Southern African Region. The most exciting part of this project was working with lawyers from the media industry, particularly those representing African musicians.

Other activity in South Africa consisted of supporting our member, SANGONeT, in its national WSIS consultation process. SANGONeT conducted several meetings, in Johannesburg, Cape Town and in smaller centres, that brought together business, government, NGOs and community organisations to talk about ICT policies and how these impact on them.

South Asia

To try and understand the South Asian environment APC, together with BCO partner, One World South Asia, organised a South Asian WSIS consultation and capacity building workshop in Dhaka in January 2005. It was hosted by Bangladesh Friendship Education Society (BFES) and included participants from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka and a few APC members from elsewhere in Asia.

From this meeting a collaboration with BFES on legalising VOIP in Bangladesh and ensuring open access to broadband developed. APC and BFES entered into a one-year contract in November 2005.

Bolivia and Ecuador

During 2005, the APC ICT policy curriculum was used as a basis for building policy and advocacy capacity in Bolivia and Ecuador through training workshops conducted jointly by APC and IICD.

National ICT policy information and discussion spaces elsewhere

Ongoing development of national ICT portals took place in several other countries: Argentina, Mexico, Colombia, Uruguay and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. http://rights.apc.org/policy_sites_list.shtml

We drafted plans with local partners to establish new national ICT policy advocacy and policy portals in Pakistan, Bangladesh and India (with BytesForAll, BFES and IT for Change).

With CRIS (Communications Rights in the Information Society) we implemented a research project 'Communication Rights and Global Governance' in 5 countries – Bolivia, Brazil, Kenya, Philippines, and the EU (as a region).

Regional information gathering and dissemination

Africa ICT Policy Monitor² was given a new look and navigation structure in late 2004 and the French Africa ICT Policy Monitor site³ was launched at WSIS in November 2005.

The Latin American and Caribbean ICT Policy Monitor⁴ continues to be the region's primary ICT policy information resource. Refer to Appendix 2 for a statistical overview of APC's website usage from 2003-5.

3.1.2 Increase understanding within the international mainstream development community, of the role of ICD

Objectives: Increase understanding within the international mainstream development community of the intersection of existing development models and the role of ICD which can have both positive and negative implications.

APC responded to this outcome by targeting civil society organisations working in development and rights; global ICT policy spaces that tend to neglect development issues, such as the WSIS, particularly the Working Group on Internet Governance, the UN ICT Task Force and donors and development agencies.

Activities included producing and disseminating publications, conducting research, position and discussion papers, convening online discussions, and face-to-face capacity building events, giving inputs at international events and online information dissemination.

In the WSIS, as well as in other spaces such as national ICT policy processes, or global forums such as the UN ICT Task Force, we found that the case for ICD still needs to be made at several levels: both by integrating development knowledge into ICD strategy and vice versa. It is essential for ICD advocates to work much more closely with development policy and practice.

We did have some impact. APC was able to engage the WSIS process in Geneva and Tunis at the level of policy interventions through the Internet Governance Caucus, the Informal Finance Coalition and the Gender Caucus. We stimulated debate and dialogue on financial mechanisms for ICD and internet governance, for example, by engaging in a policy debate and dialogue on the Digital Solidarity Fund in Accra; focussing on the internet and development cluster within WGIG (Working Group on Internet Governance) and advancing positions in support of developing country participation in internet governance; participating in three WSIS regional conferences in Accra, Rio and Tehran and ensuring civil society positions were advanced in spite of very limited CS participation in the LAC and Asia events; forming an informal finance coalition at WSIS PrepCom-2 in Geneva that succeeded in getting civil society positions into the texts under discussion by the inter-governmental plenary.

A critical intervention was made in Tunis to ensure that the Internet Governance Forum stay focused on broad public policy issues affecting the internet as a whole rather than be limited by a narrow definition. At the same time, APC supported ICD positions within the internet governance process especially with regard to

2 <http://africa.rights.apc.org/>

3 <http://afrique.droits.apc.org/>

4 <http://lac.derechos.apc.org/>

interconnection costs. APC was also able to play a role in support of independent Tunisian NGOs on the issues of human rights and freedom of expression in Tunisia.

The WSIS (World Summit on the Information Society)

APC participated in the African Preparatory meeting in Ghana in January 2005, WSIS2 PrepCom-2 in Geneva in February, the Latin American PrepCom in June, the Asia Pacific regional PrepCom in June, WSIS2 PrepCom 3 in Geneva during September and in the Tunis Summit in November 2005.

Willie Currie made a presentation at the Internet Governance Project Symposium: Regime Change on the Internet? Internet governance after WGIG, Washington, July 2005, which warned about the dangers of fragmenting the internet if the concerns of developing countries regarding internet governance were not taken seriously.

The WSIS in Africa

In mid-2004, APC published a paper that reached depressing conclusions about the lack of preparation and prioritisation by African governments and other stakeholder groups in the first phase of the WSIS, leading directly to African concerns not receiving serious attention.⁵

To help address this, APC focused on the regional preparatory process for the second phase. We produced three issue papers for the African Regional WSIS Preparatory Conference, Accra, Ghana, 2-4 February 2005, (on financing ICD, internet governance and African priorities for the WSIS) which formed the basis of a pre-event online discussion. At the event, we supported ACSIS (African Civil Society in the Information Society) and collaborated with them to hold orientation and training sessions for civil society participants.

WSIS Working Group on Internet Governance

APC's Karen Banks was a member of the Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG) and consistently kept development on its agenda. We collaborated with DIPLO in supporting and providing advice to students from developing countries in their Internet Governance course.

Overall, we had significant impact on the outcomes of the process. We worked closely with the civil society internet governance caucus, inputting into formal positions submitted by the caucus, and also submitting APC positions. APC's recommendations to the WSIS on Internet Governance, November 2005 can be read at: http://rights.apc.org/documents/apc_recommendations_ig_EN.pdf

WSIS in Latin America

APC facilitated civil society participation at the Inter-ministerial Regional Latin America and the Caribbean Conference, Rio de Janeiro, June 2005 and provided input into the final document, the eLAC2007 Action Plan emerging from the event.

WSIS in Asia-Pacific

A small group of APC representatives were the only civil society participants at the High-level Asia-Pacific Conference for the WSIS, Tehran, 31 May – 2 June 2005. The event was boycotted by Iranian civil society organisations, who felt that governments were unwilling to work inclusively. These organisations,

⁵ African Participation in WSIS. Review and discussion paper by David Souter, APC, July 2004. http://rights.apc.org/documents/africa_wsisis_review.pdf

however, supported APC's presence and the statement challenging governments in the region to engage with civil society, that APC read at the event.

'Assessing the Involvement and Impact of Developing Countries in WSIS 2'

This is an APC research initiative, that examines the involvement and impact of developing countries in WSIS2, particularly the role of governments and civil society organisations, under the leadership of Prof. David Souter. BCO support contributed to two African case studies that looked at how participation in WSIS related to national policy processes. These studies, looking at Kenya and Ethiopia, were conducted by Lishan Adam and will be included in the final research report due to be released mid-2006.

UN ICT Task Force Activities

This body, created in 2002 to take forward the work of the DOT Force and the ECOSOC ICT advisory panel was intended to provide a platform for supporting efforts to bridge the global digital divide, foster digital opportunity and put ICT at the service of development for all.

APC remained a member of the UN ICT Task Force (Anriette Esterhuysen) and coordinated the Task Force working group on ICT policy and governance. We convened meetings and discussions on ICD and ICT policy at the Seventh Meeting of the UN ICT Task Force, 19-20 November 2004, Berlin, and at the Eighth Meeting in Dublin, Ireland, 13-14 April 2005.

At the Berlin meeting, we focused on raising debate on financing ICD as a global public good, making links with broader development finance processes, and trying to explore alternative approaches, e.g. identifying ways of securing private sector contributions (e.g. through the controversial but innovative means of a tax on micro-chips, or through pooling funds from commercial domain name registrations).

At the Dublin meeting, we facilitated a discussion that evaluated the UN ICT Task Force with a view to ensuring that any follow up body learns from the successes and failures of the Task Force. We proposed that a follow up body should place much stronger emphasis on integrating into the mainstream development sector. Sadly, our recommendations, although they received wide-spread support, were not taken very seriously in the formation of the Global Alliance for ICT and Development, (to be launched in June 2006).

UN General Assembly

APC participated in the Informal Interactive Hearings of the UN General Assembly with non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector, New York 23-24 June 2005. We tried to draw attention to the minimal consideration given to ICD in the Secretary General's report to the Millennium Summit review.

Gender and development sector

One of our primary mainstream development audiences has been the gender and development sector. Since the World Conference on Women in 1995, we have created awareness of the importance of ICTs for women's social and economic empowerment. Detail on how we targeted this sector follows below under the next outcome area.

Publications Targeting Development and Human Rights Communities

- Assessing Communication Rights: A Handbook, WSIS, Tunis, 14-18 November 2005 produced by CRIS.⁶
- Karen Banks: Summitry and strategies. What in the world is going on at the World Summit on the Information Society? Index On Censorship (September 2005)⁷
- Anriette Esterhuysen: The right to development in MIT publication "Human Rights in the Global Information Society" (forthcoming, May 2006)
- Anriette Esterhuysen: Chapter on development policy processes in GKP publication 'Access, Empowerment & Governance - Creating a World of Equal Opportunities with ICT'⁸
- WSIS Discussion Paper: Mike Jensen, Interconnection Costs, September 2005⁹ (This publication aimed to put development issues on the internet governance agenda. It was distributed to official WSIS delegations and was used in official deliberations.)

3.1.3 Alternative approaches to poverty alleviation and 'sustainable development' and how these relate to ICD.

Objective: Deepening knowledge around new/alternative approaches to poverty alleviation and 'sustainable development' and how these relate to ICD.

APC implemented two activities that specifically tried to achieve this objective:

ICTs, environment and sustainability programme

We developed, working with our international member network, an action plan for gathering and disseminating resources on how ICTs are impacting on the natural environment. Working with Alan Finlay we produced a discussion paper on electronic waste.¹⁰

The network and portal will be implemented in 2006.

Panel discussions addressed this topic at the APC open day during the Council Meeting Bulgaria in October and at the Tunis Summit (in the BCO village). We liaised with Aarhus Convention Secretariat and Michael Stanley Jones, Principal Officer of the Aarhus Task Force on electronic information tools attended the Council meeting.

3.2 Gender equality and women's empowerment promoted through ICD and in the ICD sector

Objectives: Contribute to building an effective gender and ICD advocacy movement, with specific focus on rural development, poverty reduction, the media, and governance and women's rights.

Research, learning and knowledge sharing on gender and ICD.

Capacity building for BCO and other strategic partners.

⁶ <http://www.crisinfo.org/CRAFT>

⁷ <http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2005-10-19-banks-en.html>

⁸ http://www.globalknowledge.org/gkps_portal/view_file.cfm?fileid=3502

⁹ <http://rights.apc.org/papers.shtml>

¹⁰ http://rights.apc.org/documents/e-waste_EN.pdf

*Embed gender within key international ICD development and policy processes.
Develop gender and ICD resources to support advocacy.
Extend the use of gender evaluation approaches in ICD initiatives.
Diversify the network of GEM practitioners with the BCO and other strategic partners.*

In the period this report covers activities to implement these objectives focused on the following areas:

Awarding innovation in gender and ICTs
Gender and ICT policy advocacy
Gender ICT Evaluation Methodology
Publications and their dissemination as a basis for learning

3.2.1 Awarding innovation in gender and ICTs

In 2005 the Gender and ICT Awards (a collaboration between APC and the Global Knowledge Partnership, implemented by the APC) was supported by the DFID BCO accountable grant and focused on information and communication technology initiatives that promote women's economic empowerment and development in South Asia and the Pacific. For the purpose of the award we defined economic empowerment as the ability to overcome marginalisation and oppressive social norms, increase choice and opportunities for women, provide strong encouragement for women to fulfil their potential, and support women's voices and capability to counter lack of socio-economic and political power in their communities.

The four major criteria used to evaluate applications were:

- innovative use of ICTs to promote women's economic empowerment and gender equality;
- upscaling of initiatives;
- using community-centred technologies; and,
- the promotion of cooperation and social networking.

The 2005 GICT Awards winner, the Pallitathya Help-Line (Call Center for the Poor and Underprivileged) Project operates in rural Bangladesh. Through its 'mobile operator ladies', it provides information services to women who, due to poverty and social norms, so not have access to information. D.Net, the organisation that launched the Pallitathya Help-Line, used the prize money to publish the learnings of the project which D.Net believes can easily be replicated by other developing countries.

D.Net also chose to acknowledge the mobile operator ladies, who receive only a small salary and a percentage from the call fees. D.Net recognised 29-year-old Erika Biswas as Best Mobile Operator Lady. Erika received a cash prize taken from the \$8,000 Gender and ICT awards prize money.

The two runners-up were the Putting ICTs in the Hands of the Poor of the Seelampur Community Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Center in India (Datamation Foundation Charitable Trust) and the eHomemakers network of Malaysia were awarded \$3,000 USD each.

The women of the Seelampur ICTs Center come from a Muslim ghetto in rural India. Through the Center's 'Putting ICTs in the Hands of the Poor' project, they are trained in using various ICT tools that would enhance their capacity to develop livelihood skills. Project coordinator Datamation Foundation chose to use

the award money to purchase of fifteen iPAQ hand-held computers for testing the impact of mobile computing on the lives of the marginalised and disadvantaged women. These were deployed in the field amongst the women for upscaling the Seelampur initiative.

Through its website, the eHomemakers network of Malaysia build the capacity and capabilities of homemakers to become owners of home-based businesses. Ehomemakers stated that winning the gender and ICT award gave them increased status, allowing for project collaboration both inside and outside of Malaysia. Prize money was employed in revamping the eHomemakers' website.

The Gender and ICT award ceremony¹¹ took place at the 10th AWID Forum on Women's Rights and Development in Bangkok, Thailand on 27 October 2005, featured a knowledge-sharing session where the winners and guests deliberated the issue, "Can ICTs Really Help in Women's Economic Empowerment?". To deepen debate, a media briefing entitled Paddling in Circles while the Waters Rise: Gender Issues in ICTs and Poverty Reduction¹², a condensed version of the APC WNSP issue paper on poverty reduction and ICTs, was printed and distributed. Winners shared their projects' history and related first-hand experiences in economic empowerment and social change.

3.2.2 Gender and ICT Policy Advocacy

Our dual goals are to ensure gender and development and women's empowerment is integrated into ICD, and that women's rights and development practitioners consider ICTs and ICT policy.

To achieve these goals we built capacity among women's networks, made direct interventions in policy spaces, and created a new interactive online gender and ICT policy information resource.

The momentum achieved during the WSIS process augured well for more active global and national policy processes. But in order for this momentum to be harnessed into actions which transform current policy regimes, the APC WNSP believed that strategies must incorporate the following:

- Build capacity for gender and ICT advocacy at the local (national) level to advocate for gender and ICT issues
- Support, strengthen and diversify the global gender and ICT advocacy movement for continued engagement in regional and international policy processes
- Form partnerships at different levels with the broader women's and social movements, with donor partners, national gender machineries and international agencies, with a view to developing a cohesive gender and ICT agenda
- Create greater understanding and take up of the gender and ICT agenda amongst Civil Society actors
- Widen the discourse on the links between poverty alleviation, gender equality, women's empowerment and ICTs

To achieve this, the APC WNSP launched the gender and ICT policy monitor (GenderIT.org), commissioned issue papers to provoke reflection and increase

11 <http://www.genderawards.net/winners/winners.htm>

12 http://www.genderawards.net/the_awards/2005a/mediabrief.htm

knowledge of key areas, and drew the links between ICT policy and gender for women in important feminist and social movement events throughout 2005.

GenderIT.org ¹³

In June 2004 participants at the APC WNSP Networking for Change and Empowerment Forum in Rio de Janeiro identified the need for an online tool to support gender and ICT advocacy. In November 2004, APC WNSP members from across the world came to be trained in the Action Apps content management system and to define and shape the Gender and ICT Policy Monitor. Building from the models of the existing APC global, African, and Latin American and Caribbean ICT policy monitors, GenderIT.org sought to unpack ICT policy implications for women's issues such as violence against women, economic empowerment, health and citizen participation.

Linking awareness raising to action: Awareness raising is not an end in itself, and it needs to be linked to action and change. Therefore the Gender and ICT Policy Monitor provides women's rights activists with practical tools and guidelines, as well as with gender analysis of existing ICT policy frameworks. A critical success factor was integration of the Monitor with APC and APC WNSP ICT advocacy work in national, regional and international arenas.

Launch of Gender and ICT Policy Monitor

The GenderIT.org - Gender and ICT Policy Monitor was launched at a series of panel discussions "What's gender got to do with IT?" hosted by APC WNSP during the 10-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) at the UN Commission on the Status of Women Meeting on March 7th, 2005 in New York.¹⁴

"The Monitor project is a critical and unique tool to build our technological literacy so that staff and partners have easy access to resources that help us to understand the issues related to access, content and policy. This is important for ongoing work to support women's rights organising and particularly timely in the lead up to the World Summit on the Information Society, where we need to secure a clear and unwavering commitment to incorporating women's interests and perspectives in ICT policy-making". Comments at the GenderIT.org launch by Joanne Sandler, Deputy Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

The site, as well as the APC WNSP's advocacy work in general, is geared towards women's movements, policy makers and ICT4D activists. APC WNSP has always grown out of local and regional on-the-ground work, and so felt that in order to be relevant to national processes, GenderIT.org should offer a special regional and local focus, via editors in Africa, Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, and Latin America.

What one can find on GenderIT.org

Events and Who's Who in policy present the main actors and arenas for ICT policy from the global level right down to the national scene.

Resources and articles link local to global, to ensure that activists at home can take advantage of trends in international policy instruments and processes. It highlights local and regional ICT policy examples and implications.

The **policy-makers' section** provides orientation for policy makers on how to draft gender-sensitive national ICT plans.

A Beginners' section offers introductory material for those who are new to gender and ICT policy, and is one of the most popular areas of the site.

¹³ <http://www.genderit.org>

¹⁴ <http://www.genderit.org/en/index.shtml?w=a&x=91220>

Jargon demystifies ICT policy and technical language.

Feminist talk is an open space for discussion and information exchange of people interested in feminist aspects of ICT policy.

During 2005, content development was the main priority for the GenderIT.org team. The monitor's archive continues to grow and now has over 500 resources. GenderIT.org published fifty-one analytical articles¹⁵ and blog entries¹⁶ between March and December 2005. The majority of them evaluated the gender sensitivity of national policy processes, gender and ICT policy advocacy, and global governance – information gaps in gender and ICT previously identified by the APC WNSP.

The Spanish version of GenderIT.org (which will house Portuguese resources as well) is still in progress, and will be launched in the first quarter of 2006.

Policy Advocacy in WSIS II Process

APC WNSP organized a parallel event at PrepCom-3 entitled "Gender and Internet Governance at WSIS". The objective of the event was to create space for discussion on the report of the WSIS Working Group on Internet Governance. It brought together women active in the WSIS process from civil society and interested governments, UN agencies, with gender and ICT advocates from women's organisations.¹⁷

Inclusion of gender and ICT in the language of policy documents and declarations: During the second phase of the WSIS the APC WNSP team cooperated closely with other gender and ICT advocates, including the WSIS Gender Caucus, and contributed substantively to lobbying documents, such as the "WSIS Gender Caucus Position on Internet Governance".

Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) regional WSIS activities

In May 2005, The APC WNSP in Latin America (PARM LAC) took part in a meeting convened by the WSIS Gender Caucus' LAC Chapter. The meeting resulted in a paper, "From Margin to Centre: Gender Equity in Building the Information Society"¹⁸, which was sent to WSIS government delegations.

APC WNSP's regional coordinator, Daphne Plou, participated in the Regional Ministerial Preparatory Conference of Latin America and the Caribbean for WSIS II Phase (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, June 8-10, 2005), and took part in the drafting of declarations and interventions by civil society in plenary sessions in this conference. Civil society organizations were very supportive of the inclusion of gender issues in the Regional Conference's final documents.¹⁹

In addition APC WNSP has been an active member in the regional CRIS Campaign, and a founding member of the new LAC Coalition for Communications Rights (DECAL) that was presented in the Rio de Janeiro Conference and launched at the World Social Forum, Venezuela, at the end of January 2006.

National initiatives

We completed a study on "Engendering Rural Information in Indonesia" for the World Bank, and presented it at a national workshop on "Increasing Access to Rural Information and Communication Technologies in Indonesia: Issues and Options," Jakarta, June 2005

¹⁵<http://www.genderit.org/en/index.shtml?apc=---e--1&w=a&y=->

¹⁶<http://www.genderit.org/en/index.shtml?apc=f--e--1>

¹⁷<http://www.genderit.org/en/index.shtml?apc=f--e--1&x=91676>

¹⁸<http://www.catunescomujer.org/ponencias.htm>

¹⁹http://www.riocmsi.gov.br/documentos/docs_prod

We are providing support for “Engendering the Uganda National ICT Policy Processes”, Uganda, June 2005, described under outcome 1.

3.2.3 Gender ICT Evaluation Methodology (GEM)

In 2005 APC focused on further consolidation of GEM resources and services for the ICD community. The GEM tool was fully revised, incorporating feedback from the 20 test sites and the Practitioners Exchange that took place in Rio de Janeiro in 2004. Now translated into Spanish and French, the Portuguese translation of the new version is planned for 2006. All translations are available for download from the GEM site²⁰.

The English GEM Manual and CD were launched at WSIS II in Tunis, with print publications in other languages planned for 2006.

The demand for GEM workshops and consultancies continues to grow, demonstrating the uniqueness and robustness of the GEM Tool. In an effort to address gender issues in ICD, the Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) required its Seed Grants and Small Initiatives Projects (SGSIP) grantees to incorporate gender in their project design and final reports, and GKP approached APC WNSP to assist the 10 grantees in using GEM.

As a result, APC WNSP provided on-line support and mentoring visits to initiatives as diverse as their geographic location. They ranged from women's crisis centre in Kazakhstan to a pro-youth organisation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and a rural information help line in Bangladesh. As part of the GKP project, APC WNSP conducted a GEM workshop in collaboration with GKP during their annual meeting in May 2005, Cairo, Egypt. The workshop provided the 30 participants (7 males and 28 females) with the opportunity to exchange experiences, insight and knowledge in gender and ICT issues. The workshop focussed on gender analysis, gender and ICT issues, gender and ICT indicators, and incorporating evaluation learnings in our work. In addition to GKP grantees, participants included members of the Africa Gender Caucus for WSIS, in an effort to deepen their analysis of gender and ICT policy²¹.

Other GEM workshops during 2005:

- A workshop on women's empowerment through ICT at a pre-WSIS Summit regional meeting for Middle East and Western Asia, Kish Island, Iran, August. Although this conference was cancelled one day prior to the workshop by local authorities, GEM trainers were able to present some issues informally.
- APC member Unimundo/OneWorld South East Europe organised a GEM workshop in Sarajevo. APC WNSP provided the online support
- A session on the GEM framework was held at a pre-WSIS Summit seminar in Costa Rica in September 2005, organised by Radio Fire
- GEM Workshop for The Network Towards Unity for Health in November 2005.

GEM practitioners network

A GEM Practitioners section on GEM website²² was created. It is the knowledge-sharing component of the website space for GEM users containing the profiles of GEM practitioners and projects, analyses of lessons learned, and recommended gender evaluation resources.

20 <http://www.apcwomen.org/gem>

21 <http://www.apcwomen.org/news/index.shtml?x=91504>

22 <http://www.apcwomen.org/gem/practitioners>

3.2.4 Publications and their dissemination as a basis for learning

Three ICT policy issue papers were published in 2005:

- Digital Dangers: Information and Communication Technologies and the Trafficking in Women, in cooperation with AWID²³ (English, Spanish, and French versions)
- Cultivating Violence Through Technology? Violence Against Women and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)²⁴ (English version)
- "Paddling in Circles while the Waters Rise: Gender Issues in ICTs and Poverty Reduction"²⁵

The first two papers were launched at UN CSW's (United Nations Committee on the Status of Women) Beijing+10 review in New York in March 2005 at a side event entitled "Exploitation and resistance: Intersections of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), Trafficking and Violence against Women". papers were made available in electronic and printed formats.

An online thematic discussion based on the paper "Cultivating Violence Through Technology? VAW and ICTs" was held from 23 May to 21 June 2005. Discussion participants looked at harmful representations of women on the internet, censorship and internet governance, global policy processes, and strategies for change.²⁶

The papers were presented in various ICT policy and feminist events, for example at the WOCTIS - European/North American Regional Conference on Gender and the World Summit on the Information Society (Berlin, Sep. 2005), AWID Forum "How does change happen?" (Bangkok, Oct. 2005), WSIS PrepCom-3 (Geneva, Sep. 2005) and the WSIS summit (Tunis, Nov. 2005) and at other regional and local events. These

The third issue paper "Paddling in Circles while the Waters Rise: Gender Issues in ICTs and Poverty Reduction" is available online. Its aim is to examine definitions of poverty, systemic causes of global poverty, as well as ICT tools used to address poverty. The paper covers:

- Poverty measurements
- Political will within national and international contexts
- The application of ICTs toward poverty elimination
- Recommendations to facilitate a stronger gender perspective in poverty reduction initiatives

3.3 Increased capacity, networking and influence of poverty focused southern based civil society organisations, through their strategic use of ICD

Objectives: Amplify voice and debate among CSOs in the South through the provision of information, appropriate tools, facilitation of on and offline learning/consultation exchanges, and capacity building to ensure that CSOs are able to make effective use of such resources. Specifically to:

23 http://www.genderit.org/upload/ad6d215b74e2a8613f0cf5416c9f3865/digital_dangers_EN.pdf

24 http://www.genderit.org/upload/ad6d215b74e2a8613f0cf5416c9f3865/VAW_ICT_V1_MARCH2005.pdf

25 <http://www.genderit.org/en/index.shtml?w=r&x=91782> (the issue paper is currently being edited further)

26 See the bottom of page <http://www.genderit.org/en/index.shtml?apc=f--e--1&nocache=1>

Support and co-ordinate the multi-stakeholder ItrainOnline partnership, which aims to empower CSOs to take full advantage of the ICTs to accomplish their development and social change objectives.

Develop and facilitate, with BCO partner IICD, a trainers and training materials practitioners network;

Develop and make widely available a simple-to-use and freely available package of tools for online advocacy and campaigning, tailored to the needs of Southern CSOs;

Promote an integrated approach to low cost connectivity and appropriate technologies.

3.3.1 Support and coordinate ItrainOnline partnership

ItrainOnline is a partnership initiative²⁷ of eight organizations with particular experience of capacity building in development contexts. APC provides overall coordination of the partnership, and the information resource. ItrainOnline currently has two main thrusts:

The ItrainOnline portal: a gateway to a wealth of online resources to help development and civil society organizations use ICTs effectively.

The ItrainOnline Multimedia Training Kit (MMTK): a collection of workshop kits to help trainers working with telecentres, NGOs, community media organizations and the development sector to present effective training courses on a wide range of ICTs and non-ICTs topics.

The ItrainOnline MMTK approach attempts to separate generic skills and information from the contextual (region, language, type of audience, type of training, tools, pedagogical approach) to promote flexibility and ease of reuse and repackaging. Modularization facilitates:

- "Mixing and matching" of content
- Updating of content
- Translation and localization (because content is "chunked" it is easier to translate only small, directly relevant sections of materials)
- Adaptation (for example through the addition of local case studies, or exercises for use with different types of group) – as well as the contribution of these adaptations back into the pool

In addition to benefits such as reusability, adaptability and reduced duplication of effort, the format also promotes good training practice. Providing trainers with models of the core elements of an effective training programme helps to form good training habits.

From the *learner's* perspective, strong written materials help the learner review and test skills and knowledge acquired during face-to-face training, and offer a starting point for further skills development. It also provides them with materials to share with colleagues, promoting the multiplier effect of the training.

From the *trainer's* perspective, a bank of written materials reduces the need to develop training materials from scratch for each training course and topic. It also allows trainers to be more flexible during the training course itself by quickly slotting in additional topics where needed, or referring learners to handouts

²⁷ Current ItrainOnline partners are APC, Bellanet, FAO, International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD), International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP), OneWorld.net, Telecentre.org and UNESCO.

rather than presenting full sessions where the time could be used more effectively for another activity.

Making the materials freely available online (in this case, under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike license) extends their reach and increases the return on investment in training. Trainers not directly connected with the project are able to benefit from the expertise and experience of a wider pool of subject experts.

2005 saw the first materials in French released, and the swelling of the collection overall. By the end of the year the collection boasted over a hundred units in English, French and Russian, with topics ranging from producing content for radio to choosing open source software.

The MMTK was evaluated during 2005 by OneWorld.Net, one of the partner organizations of the MMTK initiative. One of the findings was that the MMTK is "meeting a previously unmet need", according to 87.4% of users questioned.

The evaluation used field research, interviews, questionnaires, an online survey, case studies and web statistics.

"Overall, I've found the MMTK CDs to be very useful as they contain tons of user-friendly material that's packaged in formats that allow for the creation of myriad learning environments. Most encouraging is the fact that anyone can build their own capacity as well as run collective workshops", noted Elizabeth Araujo, Training Co-ordinator with Women'sNet, South Africa, in one of the evaluation's case studies.

An article on the UNESCO website²⁸ states that: "The evaluation described the main achievement as "the creation of an effective partnership to deliver a widely used training product, which is having an impact in building the capacity of grassroots communication trainers". The production system was described as efficient and cost-effective.

3.3.2 Tools for online advocacy and campaigning

The internet is now well-established as a tool to support campaigning and advocacy; the use of information communications technologies can streamline the co-ordination of campaigns, extend participation and collaboration, and facilitate campaign monitoring and evaluation. Many of the individual tools needed for online advocacy and campaigning are also widely available. To be truly effective and easy-to-use, however, an *integrated* toolset aimed at the particular needs of civil society campaigning is needed.

Through BCO APC worked with members and partners to develop specifications for such a toolset in late 2004. Planning started in earnest in 2005 on the "ActionKit", a Drupal-base toolkit to address just these needs.

The ActionKit project has also provided an opportunity to breathe new life into ActionApps, APC's open source content management system (CMS).

Work on ActionApps started in 1999 in response to a need in the CSO sector for tools to support automated web publishing and share information across web

²⁸ http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=19323&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

sites. Six years on, with a wealth of mature open source CMSs for CSOs to choose from, what is the status and the future of ActionApps?

ActionApps continues to drive many sites within the APC network, and this is expected to continue. ActionApps' value is not just as a "legacy system", however. Its unique attractions lie with the shared databases, ability to display the same content in multiple sites, and ability to plug sections of content into existing sites which it offers.

Part of the ActionKit project is looking at how ActionApps can share content with *other* content management systems, which will help strengthen the tool as it seeks to establish a new niche in the evolving CMS terrain.

3.3.3 An integrated approach to low cost connectivity and appropriate technologies

During 2005 APC focused on developing resources and building capacity in low cost connectivity solutions in Africa through wireless networking. Our approach integrated four approaches to low cost connectivity:

- wireless connectivity and networking
- free and open source software
- recycling through building antennas from tin cans and other reusable bits of equipment
- refurbished computers

Capacity Building for Community Wireless Connectivity in Africa

APC's "Capacity Building for Community Wireless Connectivity in Africa" project gathered momentum during 2005. This partnership project²⁹ is building wireless-related skills and awareness across Africa by providing face-to-face training, disseminating tools and information resources, and facilitating the sharing of local knowledge around wireless technologies.

Wireless technologies offer developing countries the possibility of a low-cost and dynamic complement to wired infrastructure. Open wireless standards are not only bringing new technical opportunities at very low cost, but also bringing the decentralized internet model to an area which has been restricted to traditional telecommunication operators. In order for the promise of wireless to be fulfilled, interventions are needed at a number of levels, ranging from policy, to technical development, to capacity building are required.

The project has four broad interrelated components: materials development, pilot face-to-face workshops, the development and maintenance of a distributed knowledge base on wireless for ICT4D, and the building of partnerships and knowledge networks. The primary target audience are potential "champions" – those who as technical implementers, managers and trainers will be able to apply and share the skills and knowledge acquired.

In 2005 we completed

- Regional training workshops in East and Southern Africa
- A series of presentations at the second phase of WSIS in Tunis, November 2005

²⁹ Partners: APC, wire.less.dk, Alberto Escudero Pascual, Kyle Johnston, Bruno Roger, CUWiN with support from the IDRC and OSI.

- The release of 15 training units on wireless topics ranging from technical skills to budgeting and planning for a wireless network:
<http://www.itrainonline.org/itrainonline/mmtk/wireless.shtml>
- The development of an ItrainOnline section on wireless connectivity:
<http://www.itrainonline.org/itrainonline/english/wireless.shtml>

Demand for the training workshops has by far exceeded expectations and availability of places - an indicator of the growing awareness among community organizations of the potential of wireless communications. Drawing on the extensive collective experience of the implementing partners in community wireless project implementation and capacity building, the Africa Wireless project is helping to turn potential into reality.

3.4 Poverty impact of ICD evaluated and disseminated to key development audiences

Objectives: Contribute to the analysis of the poverty impact of ICD, through developing, testing and applying appropriate evaluation methodologies and then disseminating the results effectively through other key networks – co-ordinated closely with the DFID funded 'Impact Programme'.

Apply the gender evaluation methodology (GEM) tool to evaluate the relationships between the impact of ICD initiatives on poverty and on women's empowerment. Help identify and support scaleable, innovative, southern led opportunities for poverty focused ICD policy & practice, as part of the BCO peer-prioritised 'Poverty Focused Scalable ICD Fund'.

*Commission discussion papers and facilitate influential discussion forums
Increasing meaningful participation of southern voices and civil society in public policy platforms and in key ICD forums.*

Much of the activity that APC implemented to demonstrate and evaluate the poverty impact of ICD was done and described in relation to the above three outcomes. For example, work related to objective to " *Apply the gender evaluation methodology (GEM) tool to evaluate the relationships between the impact of ICD initiatives on poverty and on women's empowerment.*"

We also commissioned an evaluation of our ICT policy work from 2002-5 by an independent consultant, Debbie Budlender. This report was shared with BCO partners, but not funded through BCO.

And, most of the work described under outcomes one and two contributed to "increasing meaningful participation of southern voices and civil society in public policy platforms and in key ICD forums".

However, in response to a request by DFID, made in January 2005, we held back on financial support for activities under this outcome until BCO agreed on a joint impact assessment strategy.

4. Conclusion

This DFID BCO APC accountable grant has been of enormous value to APC. The outcome oriented nature of the agreement enabled us to use the resources in all three APC programmes (policy, women and strategic use of ICTs).

Working in a learning oriented partnership has also been of value, and much of the work described above involved other BCO partners.

The challenge has been finding the capacity to manage the wide range of activities implemented, and to ensure overall strategic coherence with APC's strategic priorities. We do feel that we have been relatively successful at doing this. This process has also allowed us to strengthen our network and to work through local partners, which we believe is essential for the sustainability of the impacts we aim to achieve.