



BUILDING COMMUNICATION OPPORTUNITIES Bi-Annual Meeting
Tuesday 29th August 2006
IICD, HIVOS, DGIS
The Hague, Netherlands

Day 1: BCO Business Day, IICD

Welcome of Mr. Jac Stienen IICD

Three days organised by three Organisations: IICD, HIVOS, DGIS.

Introduction by presentation (see)

Lauren Fok did logistic introduction and introduced agenda (see agenda)

Introduction of the BCO website (Lauren Fok)

Together with Greenet, BCO developed the website. The website is intended to be provide information about BCO, the partnership, be used as an archive and a way for people to find out about the work BCO is engaged in. Need a login and a password to access the "members only" area and use BCO website to talk to other BCO partners. You can create that to click in create new account. On website in any paragraph you can add comments. In the news tab is good to read and add comments or add your news. Calendar can be used by BCO partners as well, please feel free to do that. Protected pages can be created for BCO partners to start discussions. Best is to add comments or discussions for Impact study and save them as wiki space.

Remark SDC Gerolf: is there possibility to link D-groups to BCO site.

Introductions through a PPP exercise

See participants list

BCO context

Role of bilateral donors.

SDC: highlight of trends within SDC.

SDC has increased effectiveness and finalised an ICT4D strategy 2006-2010, which in particular highlights a new partnership with India. This partnership is a work in progress and is a pilot that symbolises the new shift in development strategies. There has been a recentralisation of development aid due to cuts abroad. In general, SDC uses ICT as a tool to achieve development goals. See presentation for more details.

SDC is shifting towards a regional development program in terms of the use of ICT. Country directors are nowadays less sceptical about the role of ICT4D and thus more interested in its use. This unique process of change is ongoing, because Directors generally feel that they do not have enough capacities overall. SDC wishes to help them with the use of a new tool and to help them find a more efficient system to access the information they need.

Concerning the new partnership in India, SDC is working with a number of actors from the private and public sector. A number of other countries may be involved in this project, but this

is not yet finalised. By working with other donors, it would be a good entry point and it would be a good way to promote ICT4D.

DFID: overview of recent developments.

The growing budget and number of senior civil servants in office has led to an efficiency review where the department cannot now grow in terms of staff as they would desire.

In 2006 DFID produced a new White Paper to define development objectives. A zero based review internally will squeeze resources, leading to a shift in focus more on Africa. There has been a distinct restructuring within policy teams, and the development of a new team. One team is for general policy making and the other is to focus on aid effectiveness and ways in which they can improve aid. The ICD team is now merged into the communications division: one is within the stakeholder/management department while the other is more of a communications function. The ICD team sits within this department.

The ICD team will become a global communications team, capacity building will remain within the communications division and the policy making/media development team will move to other areas of DFID. ICT4D will move to central research department and will possibly be picked up by the policy team. It has not yet been decided what is to be picked up and what is to be dismissed. However DFID will manage all current commitments that are in place now. Nevertheless there is a high demand for C4D in the country so perhaps the small numbers within the team might not be permanent. There have been many shifts within DFID over the last years, so it is unclear at this stage what will happen over the next few years.

DFID will make sure that there is sufficient capacity is left, and it is now looking at funding a post within the EU and the World Bank and is committed to funding infoDev for 3 years. There are a number of initiatives under review including building an evidence base within ICT4D (a portal for peer review from which they can build policy); supporting the BBC world service trust; commissioned PANOS for formulating a case for lobbying ICT4D. A framework agreement has been set up for 3 more years, within that there are 5 categories with 3 subcategories that focus around ICT4D in general.

There are general concerns within BCO over the reality of strengthening African media that relies on the local regulator. One needs to look at training/infrastructure etc. The response from DFID is an optimistic one and explains that these elements will be dealt with. An African led media facility is raised as an option, and donors will meet in the near future to discuss the recommendations that arise from an independent consultation that has been commissioned. Has there been any consultation with the country offices? DFID explains that the target audience has always been the country offices. Some offices like India have been doing well with ICT4D. But the objective will always be to get issues into the country offices. DFID in Nepal does support a media project and works with media organisations whilst building capacities. DFID has a programme that is not specifically C4D, but the work is happening through a broader framework anyway.

DFID is demand-driven, and there is a clear demand in the countries for support for ICT4D. Mainstreaming the work of ICT4D within DFID will be easier now that some staff have moved to the policy department. However there are discussions about whether this will actually lead to a policy. DFID states that internal advocacy activities must of course continue, but it is essential that civil society continues to work on this matter. Mainstreaming has been discussed for several years, thus if it has actually happened DFID remains confident that it will survive. If it has not yet been mainstreamed, the outlook is gloomy.

DGIS: overview of discussion.

DGIS has been lively in the ICT4D sector. There is no elaborate policy, but there is attention to it given through the membership in BCO. It is part of a wider policy agenda, but is not a priority in the current or future agenda. Vision is rudimentary; DGIS endorses the MDGs and follows Goal 8. Technology is not an end in itself. Attention to ICT4D should be mainstreamed into other areas is the belief of DGIS. The research and communications departments focus on ICT4D and it is valued as a tool for communication, participation etc. but it is not valued in

terms of the technology used. New policy broadened the agenda on research to a wider focus on knowledge for development. This allows for new interfaces:

- 1) KM4D is part of the new policy and is looking for new areas to fund,
- 2) Research and information services and partnerships,
- 3) Indigenous (local) knowledge.

Other partners also focus on similar areas so DGIS is willing to investigate new areas.

For example, access to a knowledge movement which is linked to access to medicines. With these linkages, lots of access issues come together. The open access movement is a growing concern to DGIS; free and open source is the same discussion. KM4D – is it a broad knowledge management or related to MDGs? For now, it is merely a concept. Narrowing it down to the MDGs would not be best.

Hivos: overview of short presentation.

Dutch regulations on co-financing have changed. It has been liberalised and all NGOs involved in development cooperation could submit a proposal for financing. On 1st October decisions will be made. Ten percent of the Dutch annual development aid goes towards this type of funding; Hivos aiming to receive financing. There are a number of central themes, including public participation/cooperation with others etc. The Hivos plan is as a general development organisation and not as one specialised in ICT4D. The new Hivos program is “several voices”, which includes ICT4D by mainstreaming into other areas of their work, including the use for micro-financing. It aims to improve and strengthen civil media, with a focus on new media (portal websites etc.) where the voice of the poor is strengthened. Hivos wants to increase membership organisations and social groups and want to increase activities in access to knowledge. A knowledge programme has been set up and the wishes are to expand it to southern-based organisations.

Lauren Fok asked participants to look at the project outline taped in one of the IICD rooms – and to update any changes to their projects. Lauren will use post-its to update the projects.

Session 3. Partner Reports OPR

Three groups formed and were instructed to focus on three different themes:

- ICT4D mainstreaming
- Increased capacity networking and influence
- The impact on poverty and evaluation and dissemination.

The groups were asked to think about the issues before they began. Each group was asked to produce brief report of its findings according to a fixed format. People from the same organisation were discouraged from taking part in the same group. Participants were asked to ensure that the reports were not so much driven by OVIs but by their organisation’s own successes and failures. They were invited to identify one or two key BCO successes and problem areas, plus learning that has come out of their own experiences with the BCO. A reporter was identified for each group to list successes/failures. After the discussions, 7-minute presentations were given by each group.

Group 1. Mainstreaming session (Reporter: Anriette Esterhuysen, APC) (see full report on website)

PANOS: 16 reporters were hired. Broadcasts lasted for nine months. 16 discussion papers were produced. **Challenge:** hard to bring government departments to the studio – to make them accountable. They have kept statistics on participants in this process (in Nepal).

AMARC: Significant progress in Nigeria after a very long process to legalise community radio there. There was an awareness-raising campaign. The government has now committed itself to setting up an Advisory Group that will focus on legalisation. By mainstreaming this activity you are influencing development.

OneWorld Africa. Active in Zambia where they wrote a position paper on integrating ICT into the National Plan. During this process they found that it is important to be inclusive.

IICD: Getting ICTs onto the PSRP agenda, particularly in Uganda and two other countries.

Challenge: involving ministers, because IICD's approach is bottom-up. **Learning point:** Capacity Development is very important.

APC: working for national advocacy. Once this platform is up it can be effective at different levels. It can also have an emergency response role. It is also important to involve media and the private sector (local rather than multinational).

Key points were made on areas which we should consider: 1) mainstreaming ICTs in developing sectors, 2) national development policy (3) influencing the development agenda (gender, etc.), 4) influencing global debates, 5) having an enabling ICT policy environment, and 6) influencing the ICD sector.

Another key lesson is involving the media – in both 'carrot' and 'stick' mode: This is very important.

Group 2: Voice (Reporter: Kitty Warnock, PANOS) (see full report on website)

It is important to recognise the importance of media; blogging plus journalism at the grassroots level. Southern voices into Northern media. CBO websites. Communicating better with larger groups. Sector networks.

PANOS highlighted four areas: citizens monitoring their governments' commitments regarding HIV/AIDS and holding them accountable. Identifying gaps between civil society organisations (CSOs) and media and government. Taking journalists from the South to Northern conferences (Guardian blog, etc.). **Challenge:** assessing the real development impact.

SDC: linking local experiences with global processes.

HIVOS: new media, citizen's media, blogs in the west and in China.

IICD: added up the number and variety of workshops held. Sector networks: many meetings (120) were held involving large numbers of people.

One World South Asia: building capacities, Training journalists. Getting their stories into the mainstream media.

General observations: the tension between qualitative and quantitative indicators was discussed. There is a need to boil down a large range of activities into a manageable mass. Developing capacity, developing curricular and putting them on ITrain Online. The challenge is to measure how much it is being used. FOSS training – this is now included in other training courses and not given separately.

Discussion

- It's important to look at new emerging tools that would help local people to have a voice – audio rather than text-based, for example, and blogs.
- When we listen to grass roots voices this is in fact a reality check on the MDGs.
- We should examine how the existing OVIs fit in with the current activities. We could perhaps agree to different frames for different activities?

Group 2: Poverty (Reporter: Elizabeth Clarke, UMAL) (see full report on website)

Five organisations were present in this group.

IICD: M&E partners are our strong point. Local organisations learn from these M&E activities. They ask end-users how the activities impact their lives. **Challenge:** disseminating this information.

AMARC: **Successes:** measuring the impact of community radio. Multi-stakeholder participation in this process. Results disseminated through their website. Gathering best practices. **Challenge:** Defining indicators to measure impact. Also developing indicators to evaluate processes.

OneWorld: Results now in on the impact of their methodology to integrate ICTs at the grassroots level (Guatemala and Costa Rica). **Challenge:** measuring impact on economic gain.

DFID: **Success:** David Woolnough is now the key ICT4D contact person within DFID, also at the ministerial level. The Secretary of State made a speech on the role of ICT4D. Discussions ongoing with high level science community. Still gathering evidence on the economic impact of ICT4D.

IDRC: published a book and launched it relating to digital divide. Studying emerging countries, particularly behavioural changes of individuals and institutions, in relation to the

digital divide. It is currently in the process of creating indicators to measure performance. Using Outcome Mapping methodology.

- The five groups considered the Methodology and Publication Dissemination OVIs to be especially relevant for their work.
- Specifying audiences was also considered important. ABC and the World Dialogue on Regulation will be doing a critical review of all indicators (literature review, including strengths and weaknesses).
- It was pointed out that in most cases we evaluate our partners; what about our partners evaluating us? This could also fit in the training methodology – defining how this should be done.
- It was also noted that while the indicators are present, they often do not reflect the finer aspects of ICT4D activities.
- Terms need to be clarified as there is sometimes confusion among local partners about what is actually meant by 'output'.

A discussion ensued about the differences between quantitative and qualitative outcomes. This was not discussed today – however, it was stressed that if we want to do a positive impact study we need to recognize that there is an important attribution gap, particularly regarding different perceptions of terms such as 'outcome' and 'output'. However, it was pointed out that it would be too time-consuming to develop a homogenous group of terms – rather we should continue using our own terms.

Facilitated discussion on the impact of BCO processes on the participants' own work.

This is in response to a recurring request from David Woolnough (DFID) to discuss the added value of this type of alliance. Two coloured cards were given to each participant. They were asked to answer the following questions: What added value has membership of the alliance given your organisation? What are the issues that still need to be addressed?

The 'value added' cards were then sorted into three main clusters: knowledge sharing cluster; networking cluster; 'vindicating experiences' cluster. Miscellaneous points included: 'Donors on board and shared responsibility'; and 'Reducing the gap between the regional and local understanding of development'.

What issues still need to be addressed?

- More input from development specialists from outside the ICT4D field;
- More cooperation in developing countries;
- Prioritising joint BCO work;
- Genuine pooled use of impact money;
- Synergy and collaboration; and
- Who are we and what do we do?

Participants indicated their level of satisfaction with BCO by standing at a particular side of the room. The majority of participants were satisfied, DFID was not. They were asked to explain their choice.

Comments: The discussions in Lusaka were very interesting – particularly the impact on poverty. In the BCO context this is very useful – it's hard for small organisations to see how they can bring about change, however in the BCO context this is much easier.

DFID: we set up our contractual agreements to be very light, so our choice is more a reflection on us than on BCO. The language we use in the BCO environment is very different – the impact at the country level has not been what we expected but, as far as BCO is concerned, we see many opportunities for the group as a whole. It also enabled us to give you lots of money to do lots of good things.

IICD expressed concern about the lack of recognition received for the work we carry out in the field of ICT4D and hopes that the BCO group will help us compete more effectively in this area.

What will be the difference in the next six months?

We now have a sound basis so it is easier to be more positive about the future: we have a clearer focus and therefore the ability to improve. Six months was not felt to be enough time to change a lot. People must take the impact study seriously, particularly the donor community. We must remove the ambiguity about the knowledge sharing aspect of BCO: at the moment it is quite shallow as we do not have time to get to grips with the themes we discuss.

Have you had good collaboration at the project level within the BCO alliance?

Have you had any good partnerships as a result of taking part in this alliance?

It's hard to say with any accuracy whether any subsequent partnerships can be attributed to membership of BCO as all the partnerships are involved in the same field. Some members stated that no partnerships had resulted from their membership of BCO, although they were hopeful that partnerships might be formed in future. Conversely, another partner reported excellent collaboration as a result of their membership of BCO but stated that, nevertheless, it was hard to deepen this into another layer of more substantial work. Some BCO partnerships, on the other hand, reported a positive effect as a result of having just one BCO partnership and this has led to partnerships with other organisations. During the discussion, it became apparent that different BCO members have different expectations of their membership of BCO. Trust-building aspect of BCO membership still needs to be worked upon.

BCO as a funding mechanism?

It was stressed that BCO should focus more on its role as a mechanism for knowledge exchange rather than functioning as a funding mechanism. Members were asked to indicate their views on this point. Some partners saw BCO more as a catalyst for obtaining funds rather than a primary funding mechanism. Hivos has a double-sided role as both a donor and an implementer and strongly advised against making BCO a purely funding mechanism. APC: there is a fine balancing line for the continuity of the partnership – we should be able to discuss our financial situation with donors who belong to BCO, while not perceiving BCO as a potential source of funding. This is also in part because it is costly and time-consuming to take part in BCO.

DFID had high expectations for BCO – particularly with regard to poverty-related outcomes - and had therefore hoped that this would be reflected in the members' perceptions of the impact they were having at the grass roots level. Instead, most of the added value seems to centre around what members themselves got out of their own membership of BCO. APC felt that it could credit some of their achievements to their membership of BCO, even though their membership of the alliance had been a springboard for these activities.

Final Session. The Coordination Report was discussed (Document 7).

(APC): During the handover of the coordination role from IICD to APC in January 2006 we slightly restructured the plan. APC thanked IICD for its support. It was decided to split the collaborative role among partners, although this was not entirely successful. As a result, APC ended up playing a more hands-on role with regard to developing the website, etc. – in short: a 'recentralisation' process. The Work Plan of the Impact Study Group will be presented tomorrow: all members should be clear about what that the process involves. BCO's Communications Programme was discussed – perhaps brochures should be developed in future? It was pointed out that IDRC is present at today's BCO meeting as an observer and BCO welcomes their presence. An update was given on BCO's relationship with SIDA and DANIDA – DANIDA has been communicative, SIDA is - technically speaking - still a member (albeit a sleeping member). Their first impression of BCO was that it was rather chaotic: BCO will try to amend this, particularly as it has learned that SIDA is interested in becoming active once again in BCO. Lauren Fok and Anriette Esterhuysen have developed a list of reflections on the BCO alliance. The Learning Days have also been effective. Another BCO strong point is the continuity of the group. We also appreciate each others' differences much better.

BCO weaknesses were listed:

- The impact study process took too long;
- The OPR process was introduced at a late stage so it is hard to engage with it, although it is potentially difficult;

- Lauren finds it hard to obtain online feedback from partners – it is therefore very important for partners to respond more conscientiously;
- preparations for meetings – timely dissemination of meeting documents, etc.;
- the lack of donor meetings – this has not been operating effectively recently;
- the sustainability of the BCO alliance – we are therefore encouraged by SDC's willingness to provide funding.

Funding from SDC. SDC defined the first phase for this as being 2006 to 2008 and hoped that some other partners would also be forthcoming with funding. SDC also urged a lightweight mechanism to be put in place quickly so enable it to contribute funding.

Action Point: APC would like to work with other members on this, rather than attempting to take care of it alone.

A request came for space for members to have their own meetings too. APC indicated that this was in the Work Plan too.

Action Point: It was decided that SDC will discuss the funding aspect with DFID and what it will entail to have this clearly determined. DFID urged BCO to come up with a clear 'sales pitch' on its added value aimed at donors as this would help to bring in funding.

Action point: SDC needs to receive a clearly delineated framework from IICD in order to make its contribution.

Recommendations for follow-up

- Make a clickable map explaining BCO's work (this will be updated by members today).
- Develop an Action Plan for more strategic interventions at the bilateral level over the next two years;
- Obtain feedback from BCO members on learning events that target the donor community (for example, we could establish a two-tier system consisting of both internal learning events for members and external, more high profile learning events, or 'piggyback' on other events);
- Find a method to maximise learning (linked to reporting process);
- Set up networking spaces for people to get together;
- Participate in each others events using the BCO coordination budget to support this (reimbursement of costs);
- Collaborative action planning (partners often want to collaborate but cannot because of other constraints – we could use the impact study to proactively identify areas where we could be more effective and define common goals);
- Develop a dissemination strategy for the BCO impact study;
- OPR process.

Comments from the floor, relating to BCO Work Plan: We don't work closely together in the field and should make more efforts in this area. We should also link up donors with BCO, preferably linking up with donor-linking mechanisms that already exist.

BCO members will also list their attendance of the following events:

WCCD – 25 October 2006

Internet Governance Forum – 30 October – 1 November 2006.

UNECA/BBC Media - Addis

Highway Africa – September 2006

PICTA – early 2007

WSF Nairobi – end January 2007

GKK 3 – end 2007

ITO – Rome WCCD Partners

AMARC – Amman. (Panos, SDC)

Action point: BCO will develop a 'BCO brochure' for dissemination at the above events.

Note: The following issue was raised: when members attend an event will they be representing their own organisations or BCO?

The next BCO meeting (January 2007) will be organised in either South Africa, Nairobi, or between 12-14 February in Addis?

SDC expressed an interest in hosting a BCO meeting, but not in January 2007: this is too early.

Close of meeting.