KNOWLEDGE FOR DEVELOPMENT SERIES

Global Knowledge Partnership Secretariat
Lot L2-I-4, Enterprise 4
Technology Park Malaysia, Bukit Jalil
57000 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Phone: +603 8996 2379
Fax: +603 8996 2382
Website: www.globalknowledge.org
Email: gkps@gkpsecretariat.org.my

Youth.Poverty.Gender

ICT FOR DEVELOPMENT SUCCESS STORIES

GLOBAL
KNOWLEDGE PARTNERSHIP GKP

ABOUT THE GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE PARTNERSHIP

The Gobal Knowledge Partnership (GKP) is a worldwide network committed to harnessing the potential of information and communication technologies (ICTs) for sustainable and equitable development. GKP's vision is a world of equal opportunities where all people can access and use knowledge and information to improve their lives. The network enables the sharing of information, experiences and resources to help reduce poverty and empower people.

Within the GKP framework, governments, civil society groups, donor agencies, private sector companies and inter-governmental organisations come together as equals to apply ICTs for development (ICT4D). Such alliances are known as 'multi-stakeholder partnerships', a relatively new approach to forging collaborations among different sectors sharing a common vision and goal.

Founded in 1997, GKP now comprises more than 80 members from 38 countries covering all continents. It is governed by an elected Executive Committee and serviced by a Secretariat based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

ISBN 983-2588-05-7

© NOVEMBER 2003 GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE PARTNERSHIP (625215-K)

Global Knowledge Partnership Secretariat
Lot L2-I-4, Enterprise 4
Technology Park Malaysia, Bukit Jalil
57000 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Phone: +603 8996 2379
Fax: +603 8996 2382
Website: www.globalknowledge.org
Email: gkps@gkpsecretariat.org.my

Foreword

This publication by the Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) highlights initiatives that are using Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to make a real and meaningful difference in communities around the world, no matter how disadvantaged or isolated they may be. These stories on Youth, Poverty and Gender are snapshots of the learning process that accompanies the introduction and implementation of ICTs in a community development project.

In publishing these stories, the GKP hopes to share experiences and lessons learned to increase global understanding of how ICTs can be used to tackle poverty, injustice and inequalities. Conceptually, the idea of knowledge sharing and 'storytelling' underpins all of GKP programmes and projects. Good success stories have the ability to inspire and motivate communities. This is what the GKP hopes will happen when we award and recognise communities which have used ICT to uplift and empower themselves.

While we are very excited about the benefits of knowledge-sharing, we need to also remind ourselves that success stories are in themselves sometimes just the beginning of great possibilities. Projects need to be properly evaluated, particularly detailing problems faced, how they were resolved and if they could not be resolved, why. In-depth evaluation of projects are most often put aside in favour of addressing pressing operational and fund-raising needs, and valuable lessons, sadly, get lost in the constant search for innovation. These lessons are important if we are serious about replicating and upscaling successes.

The stories were submitted under three broad categories: Youth, Poverty and Gender. The best among them have been selected for the inaugural GKP Youth Award, the Tony Zeitoun Awards for poverty reduction, and the Gender and ICT Awards. The awards will be presented at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) to be held in Geneva in December 2003.

In the last six years the GKP has shown that if communities are empowered and engaged in shaping their own future they will be able to use technology to step out of poverty and underdevelopment. Youth, Poverty and Gender are three of the key focus areas of the GKP and through the awards and success stories mechanisms, we will continue to help increase the availability of information and knowledge on ICT4D and enhance the global knowledge base in this area.

This publication is part of the GKP's Knowledge for Development Series.

Rinalia Abdul Rahim
Executive Director, GKP Secretariat
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Table of Contents

Youth **Editorial** 7

Youth Award Success Stories – category winners

EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

(1) Digital Data Divide Cambodia ** **overall prize winner** 8

(2) OrphanIT 10

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

(1) Integrated Education and Capacity Building for Girls and Children 11

(2) Children's Voice 12

CULTURE

(1) Living Heritage 13

EDUCATION

(1) Engineers Without Borders Scala Project 14

ENVIRONMENT

(1) ENO-Environment Online 15

MEDIA

(1) MatMice: Free Homepages for Kids 16

HUMAN RIGHTS AND PEACE BUILDING

(1) Rwanda Youth Rehabilitation Initiative 18

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

(1) The Bridge: Suba Youth Training Programme 19

HEALTH

(1) The Impact of HIV/AIDS in Katutura 20

Youth Award Success Stories – finalists

EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

(1) Thai RuralNet's Social Incubator Service 21

(2) Economically empowering socially and deprived youth of India by creating employment opportunities for them in India's ICT sector 22

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

(1) Child Safety on the Internet 23

EDUCATION

(1) Strengthening and empowering low-income communities through Digital Inclusion 24

(2) NairoBits Digital Design School 25

(3) Habitat Learning Centre 25

(4) Kidlink 26

(5) Nunga IT 27

(6) Paradigm Initiative Nigeria 27

CULTURE

(1) Friends and Flags 28

ENVIRONMENT

(1) Community-Led Environment Action Network (CLEAN India) 29

(2) YWAT Project: Youth-Led Water Initiatives Database 30

MEDIA

(1) Youth One - Edmonton's Online Youth Community 31

(2) Nuff Stuff 32

(3) Young Asia TV (YATV) 32

(4) Vibewire.net 33

(5) Xfresh — Malaysia's Premiere Teen Community 33

HUMAN RIGHTS AND PEACE BUILDING

(1) Child Soldiers Project 34

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

(1) IndiaCalls — using the power of the Net to promote volunteering among youth in India 35

HEALTH

(1) eSwathsya — health in a card 36

Poverty **Editorial** 38

TONY ZEITOUN AWARDS SUCCESS STORIES

(1) El Correo del Agricultor — The farmer's mail ** **winning entry** 40
(2) Selp Help Groups Show the Way ** **winning entry** 42
(3) THAMEL: Reducing the social, cultural and economic cost of immigration through the power of ICT ** **winning entry** 44
(4) I play, my Mom learns! 46
(5) Africancraft.com generating pride and publicity for Africa's artisans: a case study of weavers in Lesotho 47
(6) Emergent e-governance ecosystem development in Bellandur, Karnataka 48
(7) eShopAfrica.com — Hand Made in Africa 49
(8) Plan International: "I am a Child, but I have my Rights too!" 50
(9) Advent of information economy in remote parts of India 52
(10) Advancing Society... Connecting People 54
(11) ICT & Teacher Education: Rewiring the Minds 56
(12) One small step — a tale of cybermagic 58

Gender **Editorial** 61

GENDER AND ICT AWARDS SUCCESS STORIES

A. INDIVIDUAL/COMMUNITY-BASED INITIATIVE: CAPACITY BUILDING CATEGORY

(1) e Seva (e services) of West Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh, India **winning entry 62
(2) Digital Divide 64
(3) Community Reproductive Health Project (REPROSALUD) 65
(4) MatMice: Free Homepages For Kids 66
(5) Women's E-Busines Support (WEBS) 68
(6) Women's ICT Trainers Education Centre (WEC) 70

B. INDIVIDUAL/COMMUNITY-BASED INITIATIVE: ADVOCACY/NETWORKING CATEGORY

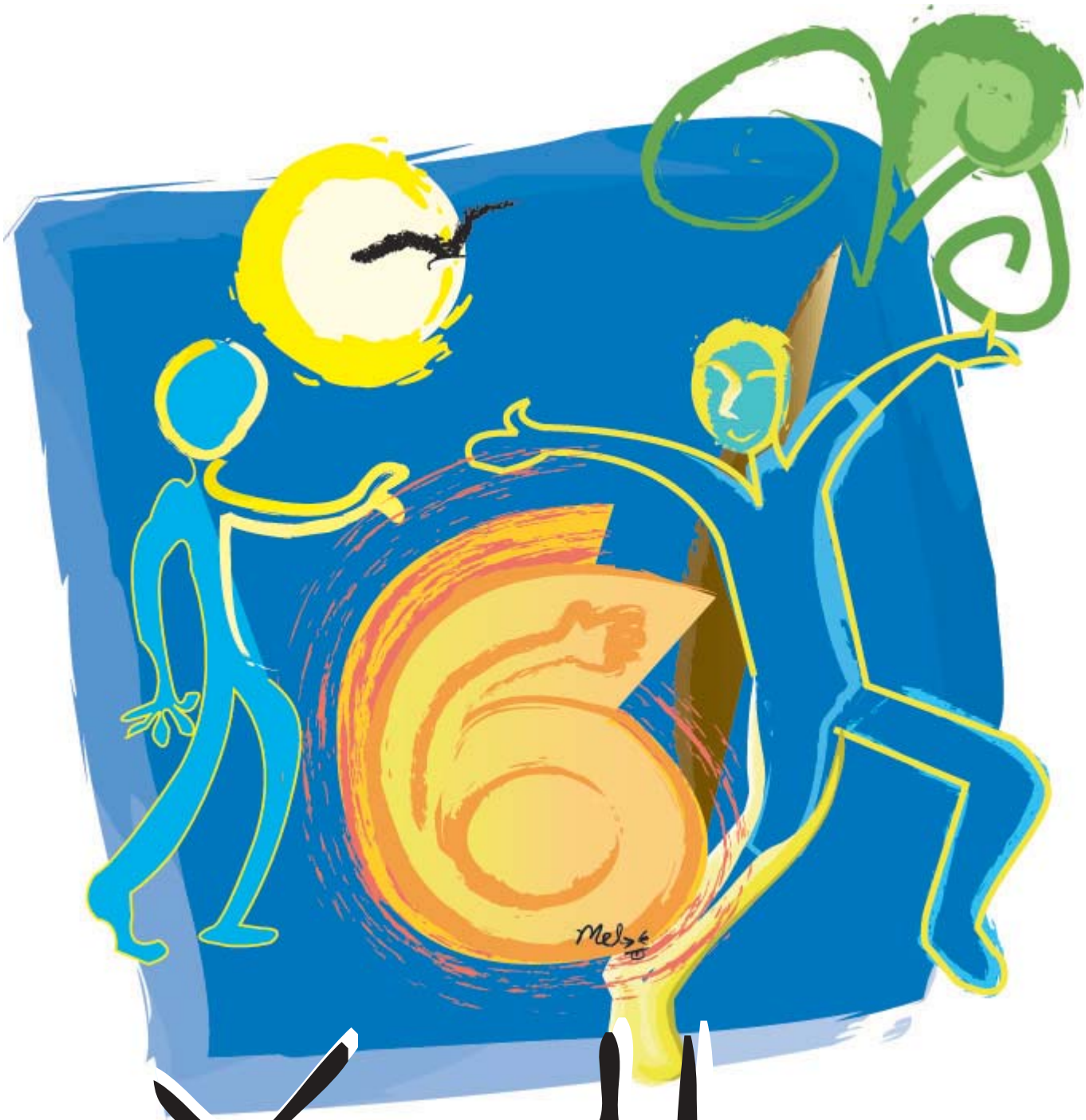
(1) Nabanna **winning entry 71
(2) ADA Network and Explore Training Project, Women in New Technologies 73
(3) fem'LINKpacific: Media Initiatives for Women 74
(4) Femmigration: Legal Agenda for Migrant Prostitutes and Trafficked Women 76
(5) Modemmujer: Mexico's Only Electronic Communications Network 77
(6) Giving Visibility to Invisible Work 78

C. MULTI-STAKEHOLDER INITIATIVE: GLOBAL/REGIONAL CATEGORY

(1) Women Mayors' Link **winning entry 80
(2) The Virtual Women's University (VIFU) 81
(3) Cyber Institute for Women's Empowerment and Leadership 82
(4) Achieving E-Quality in the IT Sector 84
(5) FIRE: Feminista International Radio Endeavour 86
(6) 'Where Women Want to Work' (www2wk) 88

D. MULTI-STAKEHOLDER INITIATIVE: NATIONAL/LOCAL CATEGORY

(1) Women's Experiences in Situations of Armed Conflict **winning entry 90
(2) Computer Mania Day 92
(3) Strengthening Cyberela Network 94
(4) Digital Teaching Units for Gender in History 95
(5) Economic Empowerment of Minority Muslim Women in India 96
(6) Women to Web 98



Youth

The Global Knowledge Partnership Youth award

If ever there was an area where young people are leaders not just of tomorrow, but also of today, it is undoubtedly in the fields of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). As you will see in the following pages — from the youth of Thailand connecting rural villages, to Sri Lankan youth developing television programmes — young people are at the forefront of transforming their societies through the information and communications revolution. They are early adopters and adapters of technologies, and often at the forefront of linking ICTs to development goals. Yet, too often youth initiatives face a lack of mainstream recognition, opportunities to participate in decision-making processes, and a sense of a peer community to learn from.

The inaugural Global Knowledge Partnership Youth Award is a major component of the Youth Creating Digital Opportunities initiative, a multi-stakeholder effort to realize the potential of young people to use Information and Communication Technologies to achieve more sustainable development in their communities. The Award aims to reward and bring international recognition to youth-led and focused ICT projects. Eleven finalists have been selected by an international body of ICT4D policy-makers and practitioners from around the world, and the winner shall be honoured at the 2003 World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS).

The judges were extremely pleased with the high quality of applications to this year's inaugural award. It was particularly interesting to see how many young people are developing hybrid institutions blending the management and funding strengths of small-scale for-profit enterprises with non-profit goals and outreach abilities. By focusing on their goals, these social enterprises are flexible in their ability to create partnerships in support of social change and sustainable economic development. Other projects provided vibrant new models of education, and powerful examples of technology being used to promote human rights.

We hope that by showcasing many of the top nominees in the Youth Award, we can introduce these excellent projects to new partners and supporters, and share models that will inspire other youth to use technology and knowledge for development of their communities.

YOUTH CREATING DIGITAL OPPORTUNITIES

GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE PARTNERSHIP GKP

OVERALL PRIZE WINNER - GKP YOUTH AWARD

Digital Divide Data Cambodia

category: Employment and Entrepreneurship
http://www.digitaldividedata.org
country: Cambodia

Digital Divide Data (DDD) is a project that involves disadvantaged youth in Cambodia in an integrated educational, vocational training and work program. The idea behind the project is to connect young people, who are struggling to survive in one of the world's least developed nations, with the global economy. DDD does this by creating non-profit data entry outsourcing centres that only hire individuals under 25 who are orphans, physically disabled or trafficked women.

DDD's operations are completely ICT based. Input is received in the form of digital images. DDD employees convert these to ASCii files, create databases, add HTML and then email the output to clients around the world. The centre has 50 computers and each employee spends most of his time working with ICT. DDD has also put in place a management information system that tracks work through its digitisation pipeline, maintains finances and monitors productivity, punctuality and quality.

The benefits of the project are enormous. In developing countries like Cambodia, most young people cannot complete secondary school education. Students drop out of school because they cannot afford the fees and have to support their families. DDD's employees not only benefit from having a job and wages far above local standards, but they also receive scholarships for education, health benefits, vocational counselling and work in a safe environment. This gives them the confidence and self-esteem that come from self-reliance.

DDD's social mission is to break the cycle of poverty by providing training and job opportunities. For Soy Sokorn for example, further education was an impossibility. He supports his immediate family of five, and helps support an extended family of 12. He now studies computers and English while working part-time at DDD. Keo Sambath who lost a leg in a landmine explosion, is improving his IT skills at DDD, and is enrolled in a degree programme. Muny is a young woman disabled by polio. Her stint with DDD resulted in a rapid improvement of her computer skills, English and self-confidence. She now works as a translator for the Australian Embassy, netting a high income for one so young, and has become a role model for others with polio who are struggling to overcome the stigma society has placed on them.

DDD's underlying philosophy is that the world must do more than build Internet lines and give computers. There is an added responsibility to connect the people to these resources in an empowering way that results in a tangible benefit in their everyday life. Since its inception in Phnom Penh two years ago, DDD has benefited more than 80 disadvantaged youths. All have received in-house training and work experience, and all

have been enrolled in outside certificate or degree programmes with DDD paying for their education.

Its business became a financially self-sustainable enterprise within 9 months, and has to date, earned more than USD140,000 in revenue. Clients include Bain Capital, the Harvard Crimson student newspaper, Mobitel, the local cellular phone provider, Tufts University Library and the University of Chicago.

DDD's partners include a wide variety of institutions, NGOs and businesses. In Cambodia, DDD works with Wat Than School, Future Light Orphanage, New Life Foundation, SME Cambodia, Cambodia Women Coordination Council, and Cambodia Volunteers Coordination Council. It has a strategic partnership with CyberData in Delhi, India, which assists with work that is challenging and has provided DDD with proprietary double entry software. Among sponsors for its scholarship programme are Mekong Project Development Facility, the Asia Foundation, USAID, World Bank, Rotary Club of Denver, Soros Foundation and Kearny Alliance.

This project has received numerous recognitions and awards. It has been honoured by the Ministry of Social Affairs, Labour, Vocational Training and Youth Rehabilitation of Cambodia for working with disabled people and was recognised as a good organisation and received support from the Ministry of Commerce, Cambodia. The Global Knowledge Partnership named DDD as one of the best practices in the Asia Pacific Youth Leaders in ICT Workshop and it has also been selected as a finalist in a World Bank award.

OrphanIT

CATEGORY WINNER
category: Employment and Enterpreneurship
http://www.OrphanIT.com
country: India, Philippines

OrphanIT delivers a host of IT services locally and internationally by training and employing disadvantaged youth in developing nations to work on Web Development, Data Processing, Business Process Outsourcing & Online Marketing projects. This project clearly demonstrates how the poor and vulnerable in developing countries (disadvantaged youths and orphans in particular) have a chance to 'piggy back' on ICTs to improve their lives and generate income on a sustainable basis. Currently, approximately 100 students are employed on an ongoing, part-time basis.

Under this project, GLOW centres (Global Opportunities on the Web) have been established. These are organic creative enclaves that give the young opportunities to shape their own destinies in the fast growing field of Remote Services and Business Process Outsourcing. By partnering with some of the world's leading ICT companies, Orphan IT has been able to work collaboratively as an online micro enterprise development association. The first GLOW centre is in Manila with the second centre being built in Chennai, India. Other centres are underway in Latin America and Africa.

Young people from the Philippines, India, Latin America and Africa receive training, scholarships and close mentoring. All jobs are secured through the project's relationship with some of the world's top online marketing companies, while mentors ensure good quality control and skills upgrading.

Already there is a waiting list of at least 30 international clients. It is estimated it will take 12 working months to clear and create approximately 250 new permanent part-time positions for under privileged youths. All the students being trained at the two ICT centers are under 20 years old. In addition, 60 per cent of the management and development team are under 25.

This project falls well within an emerging model for economic development that looks at the world's 4 billion desperately poor as a viable business target group. OrphanIT is already sustainable and expects to become profitable very quickly based on the future of the market for delivering remote services.

As mentioned in an article profiling the project in the Harvard Business Review, September 2002, “Serving the World’s Poor, Profitably” by CK Prahalad and Allen Hammond, “companies are realizing even greater savings by locating such labour intensive service functions such as call centers, marketing services and back-office transaction processing in developing areas. For example, the nearly 20 companies that use OrphanIT.com's affiliate-marketing services, provided via its telecentres in India and the Philippines, pay one-tenth the going rate for similar services in the United States or Australia.”

OrphanIT's job creation programme will be integrated into the broader global information society via its international job gateway that is currently under construction. The project's 10-year vision is to channel USD100,000,000 of new business, via the OrphanIT Jobs Gateway to 1,000 ICT computer centres from 10,000 customers, creating over 50,000 jobs and taking 250,000 families out of poverty by 2012.

* One of two final winners of the Global Junior Challenge Award

Integrated Education and Capacity Building for Girls and Children

CATEGORY WINNER
category: Children's Rights
country: Nepal

Thousands of girls in Nepal have no access to formal education or any other means to assure themselves of a livelihood. Many of them, some as young as eight years old, are sold to brothels where they are locked up for years. Often they are only released when they become too ill to work. By then, many are affected by AIDS. There are hundreds of others who are orphans or abused.

Nepal's Institute of Foreign Affairs and Maiti Nepal, a non-governmental organisation, initiated a programme to give Nepalese girls training in IT to equip them with basic computer skills in order to start them on the road to self-reliance.

Maiti Nepal comprises a group of socially committed professionals who are working to prevent the trafficking of women and girls. They have rescued girls forced into prostitution and given them an economic alternative to help them improve their livelihoods. The organisation runs rehabilitation programmes in Kathmandu and Itahari, as well as prevention centres, transit homes and awareness and advocacy programmes in several districts of Nepal.

The first phase of the integrated education and capacity building project, which began in March 2002, involved 25 adolescent girls and children residing at the Maiti Nepal Rehabilitation and Child Protection Centre in Kathmandu. They were given a working knowledge of applications such as Windows 2000, Microsoft Word, as well as the Internet and email. The idea was also for the older girls to then go out and teach these skills to other girls and children at the centre.

Under the second phase, the focus is on Human Resource and Institutional Development. Participants undergo two-month crash courses in applications such as word processing, power point presentation, spreadsheet, creating and maintaining a database, Internet and email. On completion of their training in Kathmandu, the girls are sent out to train residents at Maiti Nepal's field or branch offices.

Children's Voice

CATEGORY WINNER
category: Children's Rights
http://fyce.org/mediacenter/
country: Ukraine

"Children's Voice" is an independent media centre created and run completely by children between the ages of 10 and 18. Based on the belief that children have a right to express themselves, the project involves extensive use of ICTs to communicate a child's viewpoint on various issues concerning the situation of children in Ukraine through radio, video, the Internet, and the press. Through this, children are given an opportunity to participate in society and contribute towards developing the kind of society they want so that they will grow up to be responsible adults.

Not only do the children spread the message of children's rights to other children, they also draw the attention of the public, particularly government, NGOs and commercial organisations to some of the painful problems faced by Ukranian children, such as poverty, abandonment, juvenile delinquency, poor housing, street violence and environmental pollution.

The project is also helping participants develop journalistic skills. They do everything themselves, from research and interviews, to writing scripts, filming and producing videos, creating radio programmes from start to finish, and putting together pages for the children's sections in newspapers. They have also created a website which highlights children's issues.

There is a dearth of information about these and other issues in many areas of the Ukraine, which have no Internet access and just a couple of TV channels. Radio has been identified as the most effective medium given its reach and popularity. The Media Centre's library already has 34 radio programmes on CD dedicated to children's issues. These have been widely distributed and are continuously broadcasted by 54 Ukranian and regional FM radio stations. They were very much in evidence during the celebration of the International Children's Day of Broadcasting in Ukraine, initiated by the NGO, Foundation of Youth Culture and Education (FYCE) and Children's Voice. They are also available to a global audience on Media-Centre's website.

The project was initiated in 2001 by NGO FYCE. Funding has come from UNICEF, UNHCR, the World Bank, and International Renaissance Foundation. Various media organisations such as Stile Radio Productions, TV channels, newspapers and FM radio stations have provided advice and technical support.

Children's Voice has won wide recognition for its efforts to champion children's rights.

- Winner of the competition "The Day of Innovative Ideas" held by World Bank for Ukrainian Society in 2001.
- Winner of the 2003 International Competition of UNICEF/One World Radio for its radio programme, "Street Children".

Living Heritage

CATEGORY WINNER
category: Culture
http://www.livingheritage.org.nz
country: New Zealand

Living Heritage is a programme that brings schools, students and ICT together in creating a permanent, accessible digital record of New Zealand's heritage. Students explore a range of technologies and media to create web pages about the treasures they find in their local surroundings.

Participation in the project is free and open to students of all age groups from schools all over the country. They become investigators and storytellers, collaborating with each other to research, write and publish on the web. They go out and uncover important and unique stories about items of historical or cultural interest, such as indigenous personalities, events, landmarks, buildings or locations. They receive self-publishing software so that they can develop their stories into web pages with little or no help. These pages are hosted on the project's Living Heritage website.

The project gives the students an exciting encounter with website design and publishing, oral history and sound recording techniques, the use of digital cameras, scanners and image software, and the creation of coherent and relevant online materials. The stories produced by them for the Living Heritage collection make use of technology to produce resources of real value.

A Living Heritage story incorporates the use of ICT across a range of curriculum areas such as social sciences, technology and English. In addition, teachers have the benefit of a best practice model for inquiry-based learning which helps them integrate ICT into their classroom teaching and learning programme in a seamless and effective way. This is aided by the fact that the project director is a trained teacher who ensures equal emphasis on both the education and ICT focus.

By encouraging young people to be the nation's storytellers, the project hopes to inspire in them a greater sense of their own culture, values and identity that will benefit them, others around them, and future generations.

The springboard for Living Heritage was a collection of family treasures sourced through schools, which was put on display at the Porirua Museum. This inspired the idea of enabling students' work to be captured permanently in digital format for future generations.

The Learning Centre Trust of New Zealand administers and fosters the Living Heritage initiative, manages and develops the website, supports schools involved in the project and provides them with templates for web publishing. The National Library of New Zealand provided the seed funding for the project. It houses and administers the SunSITE computer which is supplied by Sun Microsystems, helps maintain the website, assists students in their research and provides schools with access to its data base of heritage resources.

The 2020 Communications Trust initiated the project and continues to promote creativity, challenge, innovation in ICT, and learning opportunities for all participants. Sun Microsystems supplies the SunSITE computer that hosts Living Heritage.

- Finalist in the TUANZ Innovation Awards (education category) 2003.
- Category winner of the Global Junior Challenge 2002
- Finalist in the Stockholm Challenge competition 2002
- Finalist in the New Zealand NetGuide's Site of the Month in August 2002.

Engineers Without Borders Scala Project

CATEGORY WINNER
category: Education
http://scala.ewb.ca/
country: Philippines

The Engineers Without Borders (EWB) Scala project was initiated by Canadian youth who set out to provide disadvantaged youth in the Philippines with the opportunity to benefit from ICTs in a way that would improve the quality of their lives. When fully implemented, the project will help over 3,000 young Filipinos every year to acquire the appropriate IT skills through month-long integrated programmes delivered via a network of 19 ICT centres.

In the Philippines, there is great potential for ICTs to help promote economic and human development, given the country's location, language, high literacy and other advantages. EWB's Scala project has identified unemployed, at-risk and out-of-school youth as being particularly vulnerable and most in need of support in their struggle to improve their lives. The project aims to provide these young people, who have no traditional access to ICTs, with the opportunity to acquire technical knowledge and training in a way that best meets their livelihood needs. The training helps to make them more employable so that they actually get a job and improve their livelihood. This has a positive impact on their families and communities.

The project's major innovations are firstly that it integrates IT training into the broader context of building life-skills. The training programme has been carefully designed to provide the youth with a marketable skill i.e. ICT literacy, education and a structure to help them market these skills. They also learn skills to help them manage their everyday life in an environment which encourages their return to formal education and the building of positive relationships. They are also provided with linkages to other public services and resources.

Secondly, the project incorporates a low-cost sustainable approach to the setting up of the IT centres. EWB leverages volunteer and donated resources to ensure there is a low cost to setting up the centres and transferring the skills. In-kind donations finance about 70 per cent of the project's costs. In addition, innovative cost-recovery models have been introduced to ensure the centre will be financially sustainable.

Thirdly, the Scala project supports a strong partner organisation, building within this, the capacity to replicate the project in future phases. The National Office of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) selects the project sites and monitors the project after the departure of the EWB team. In the future they will be fully involved in setting up an ICT resource centre in the hope of initiating self-replicability. The Local Government Units of the DSWD are responsible for the management, safe-keeping and sustainability of the resource centre which is built within their office. They also look after the ICT literacy and life skills training and other social services. The Technical Education and Skills Development Agency of the Philippines assesses the graduates and awards a certificate of completion.

The first two phases of the project, which was initiated in 2002, have been completed with 55 computers installed in 4 centres benefiting 500 people a year. The third phase, which will ramp the project up to 250 computers and 2,500 beneficiaries a year, will be completed in 2004.

ENO–Environment Online

CATEGORY WINNER
category: Environment
http://eno.joensuu.fi
country: Finland

Thinking global and acting local is the main underlying thrust of ENO-Environment Online, a global web school for environmental awareness. This project represents a big step towards creating an information society by connecting three main things: Young people, ICT and the environment. It seeks to knit the town of Joensuu in East Finland to the rest of the world in a common vision for environmental conservation and sustainable development.

ENO-Environment Online, demonstrates how a developed country can use its resources to rein in support from school children and empower them as ambassadors for the environment. Children of Joensuu identify critical local environmental issues and then put them in the context of global concern. Learning is student-centred and there are both on-line and off-line activities.

ENO uses 'cold ICT technology' to create warm environmentally concerned communities. It is an example of the power of individuals, people who are not officials but teachers. This web school currently connects 130 ENO classes in 52 countries, involving some 3,500 young people between the ages of 12 and 18, and 300 teachers.

In the last three years, students, teachers and schools have been connected through a community network where environmental concerns are shared with each other through the use of on-line discussions/chats, material database, learning diary and email. Live web sessions are held in Canada and Finland, where ENO worked with the European Forest Institute. Besides video material, a song that seeks to unify all ENO participants is available as a midi file and in karaoke format.

ENO is regarded not as a project but a cross-curriculum subject for students in Finnish schools. But by drawing in students and schools in Asia, Africa and Latin America, this powerful environmental information network is helping bridge both the environmental awareness and digital divides.

People are the backbone of this ICT initiative. Besides the involvement of students from 52 countries spanning Armenia to Zimbabwe, ENO has drawn in the University of Joensuu, The University of Helsinki, UNEP, UNESCO, UNITes and the WorLD Links Programme.

The local municipality, the National Board of Education and the European Commission, have funded the programme. In order to ensure its sustainability, it is to be integrated into the activities of the University of Joensuu's Centre for Sustainable Development.

- Quality Prize in Finnish eLearning 2003, a distinguished award from the Ministry of Education, Finland
- Finalist in the Stockholm Challenge Awards 2002
- Finalist in the Global Junior Challenge 2002
- Third prize winner in ChildNet Awards 2001
- Third prize in EcoG@llery Europe 2000

MatMice: Free Homepages for Kids

CATEGORY WINNER
category: Media
http://www.matmice.com/
country: Australia

Four years ago, during a conversation around the family dinner table, three teenage Australian sisters, Emily, Sarah and Elise Boyd, struck on the idea of setting up a website where kids could create their own web pages. They explored the Internet and found that while there were many such websites catering to adults, there was hardly any help for children. They felt that with children being the future, it was essential that they be able to embrace technology and become digitally literate.

Eight months later, MatMice was launched, and it has to date, been used by more than 350,000 children in over 150 countries around the world. The unique website gives children a voice on the web by providing them with an easy way to create webpages. All they have to do is to express themselves and communicate with others around the world. The site's innovative webpage builder is extremely flexible, allowing children as young as six years, to control the placement of headings, images, text and links without the need for any technical knowledge or ability. All the work on the project was voluntary. The website is free of advertising and access is free to all children.

Besides providing children with an opportunity to share ideas and experiences, MatMice allows them to communicate on common issues which affect young children wherever they live. A child from New Zealand, for instance, created a webpage describing her experiences as a diabetic. She received messages of support from all around the world, and it increased other children's understanding of what it is like to live with diabetes.

MatMice has also fostered greater tolerance and understanding, making it possible for children from different backgrounds and cultures to interact with each other on the Internet. The project addresses the issue of digital inclusiveness by allowing children in any country to create webpages using a very basic computer with Internet access. In this way, through a World Bank project, students at several schools in Nigeria were able to access the Internet and create their own webpages with MatMice, joining other children around the world. The government in the Solomon Islands has also used MatMice to introduce children to webpage creation.

Emily, Sarah and Elise believe that there are many young people all over the world who have much to offer to ICT projects, and that a youth perspective is important to such projects. Children who use MatMice, are making a significant contribution to the information society. The girls receive many emails from kids who say that without MatMice, they would never have been able to have their own

webpages. Five years ago, nearly all content on the web was written by adults. Today, up to 1,000 new children are signing up on the website every day.

The project is sustained by ongoing sponsorship from international telecommunications company, Cable & Wireless, and Scholastic Australia, the world's largest publisher of children's books. The girls plan to promote further communication and interaction between children from different countries by compiling a directory of children's webpages and launching a web-based messaging system.

- In 2003, Emily was recognised as NSW Young Australian of the Year and honoured with the Centenary Medal, an award which recognises her for her contribution to Australian society or government.

- The project was also winner of the Special Merit Award in the SIGTel Online Learning Awards 2003.

- Other awards and recognitions include:
  - Winner of the "Up to 15 years" category of the Global Junior Challenge 2002 in Rome, Italy
  - Finalist in the Education category of the Stockholm Challenge 2002.
  - Winner of the Individual category in the Cable & Wireless Childnet Awards 2002.
  - Winner of the Youth category in the Australian Internet Awards 2000.
  - Finalist for the ArsDiGita Prize 2000.

Rwanda Youth Rehabilitation Initiative

CATEGORY WINNER
category: Human Rights and Peace Building
http://www.solvepoverty.com/apc/cyberhost/youth
country: Rwanda

In the year 2000, a group of young IT experts from Kenya, under the banner of Cyber Host, initiated a project aimed at creating employment opportunities for youth who were left homeless, orphaned and without education and a means of livelihood after the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. This rehabilitation project, which is a collaborative effort between Cyber Host and Nu-Vision Ministry, provides these youth with basic ICT skills to enable them to meet Rwanda's need for Information Centres and ICT experts.

Centres have been set up at cybercafés across the country, using networked computers installed with software donated by Nu-Vision Ministry. The youth are taught basic computer skills, applications and database management, following which they learn how to maintain an information database. These ICT skills have enabled them to get employment in both the public and private sectors. Some 'graduates' are self-employed, maintaining and managing their own information centres which are used by various database customers.

The project began with 40 youth and two daily training sessions, but the numbers began growing as word went round. Over 240 youths have been trained in the past three years, all of whom have found employment. In addition to creating training and employment opportunities in the informal sector for Rwandese youth, the project helps to promote peace and reconciliation among participating youth through information sharing. Youths from both the previously warring Tutsi and Hutu communities, have come together to fight ignorance through the use of ICTs. The project is also creating partnerships between Rwandese youths and their Kenyan counterparts in knowledge sharing, experiences and technology transfer.

The project itself is self-sustainable on the revenue generated from the sale of ICT services to the community. Current services provided include Internet access, typing, photocopying, email, and job placement. Training in website development is to be introduced as an additional source of revenue. Cyber Host plans to transform the project into a major supplier of IT professionals in Rwanda, create synergies with universities around the world and pursue consultancy opportunities for both local and international organisations.

The project, which was a winner in the Global Junior Challenge 2002, has taken several challenges in its stride. A major one was the language barrier. Most of the youth speak Kinyarwanda, which is the official language in Rwanda and their mother tongue. Only those who have access to a better education learn to speak French and English. To compound the problem, the computers were in English. In addition, the youth felt computers were for the elite. It took a translator and lots of motivation and confidence building to get them past this hurdle.

In addition to Cyber Host, Nu-Vision Ministry and the cybercafés, the project has involved a number of other partner organisations. Santa Clara University, USA, provided project leaders with training in business entrepreneurship and planning in California, and donated computers to help expand the project. The E-Inclusion Organisation does the fund-raising and offers technical assistance. Solve Poverty sponsors, designs and hosts the project website.

- Winner of the Global Junior Challenge 2002 in Rome, Italy
- Winner of the Global Youth Incubator Award in Rome, Italy
- Finalist award, ICT Stories 2002 Competition in Washington D.C., USA

The Bridge: Suba Youth Training Programme

CATEGORY WINNER
category: Rural Development
country: Kenya

The Bridge is an after-school programme that provides young people from low income neighbourhoods in the Suba District in Nyanza Province, Kenya, with access to ICT resources, skills and experiences to help them succeed in their careers, contribute to their communities and lead outstanding lives. It meets young peoples' needs for a creative and safe learning environment where they can work with adult mentors to develop IT skills, explore new ideas and build self-confidence.

The youth training programme offers a promising strategy for bridging the technology gap for 60,000 residents and about 350 schoolchildren in Suba's under-served community. It is being implemented for children who are disadvantaged by poverty, and lack access to resources and opportunities.

The objective is not to teach stand-alone technology, but to use technology to spark project-based learning and inspire collaborative learning to enable participants to apply their skills in meaningful initiatives that improve the economic well-being of the community. The youths acquire a technical fluency that can be used in a variety of jobs and industries. They get experience working on high-end professional hardware and software and are encouraged to apply their skills in real-world employment settings.

In addition, the programme supports young people in preparing for higher education and employment by strengthening academic skills in language, arts, math, science and social studies through engaging software and exciting lesson plans. It also encourages problem-solving and critical-thinking skills.

The Community Initiatives and Social Support Organisation (CISSO) initiated the project in February 2002, and has been working with EDTEC. Its success has inspired the idea of a multi-purpose Community Technology Centre (CTC) project. The Bridge will set up the first centre in the Mbita Suba District in Kenya, with support from the local community. It will later be replicated in other parts of Africa.

Awarded the AOL Peace Pack Grant for unique application of ICT approaches in rural economic development and integration.

The Impact of HIV/AIDS in Katutura

CATEGORY WINNER
category: Health
http://www.schoolnet.na/projects/Katutura_AIDS/
country: Namibia

Young people know how to speak to each other. SchoolNet Namibia, a non-profit Internet service provider in Namibia, decided it might be more effective to use youth to create awareness about HIV/AIDS among their peers. A website project was initiated to look at the way AIDS has affected the community of Katutura, Windhoek's most populous neighbourhood, and to show how Namibian organisations, programmes and people are working to prevent further transmissions, to counsel those who might be affected, and to help those already touched by the virus. It is hoped the project, by bringing IT and AIDS awareness together, will create skilled youths and responsible citizens. Young people are given a first-hand encounter with the disease and its impact. Through the website, they then show others how people are made vulnerable to the disease by ignorance and risky behaviour.

The idea is to give youths the opportunity to form their own opinion and convictions about HIV/AIDS and help them learn how to take care of themselves. School students go out into the community and talk to doctors, counsellors, pharmacists, people on the street and even gravediggers in an effort to profile all the ways in which Katutura has been affected by AIDS. They then put the information together on a website using curiosity and communication in their approach. SchoolNet teaches the youth how to do the research and how to design the websites. The rest is left to the ingenuity, commitment and creativity of the young people.

This is the first website in Namibia that contains information about HIV/AIDS, and is encouraging youth to think critically and independently. At the same time, it is building confidence among the teachers in the educational value of the Internet. SchoolNet works closely with the schools in order to enable student participation and facilitate access to school labs and other resources.

Initially, schools from 5 regions have been selected as a test bed for SchoolNet's training method and a barometer to gauge students' skill levels and enthusiasm. The project, which began in July 2002, will be expanded to more schools, and will, within 12 - 18 months, be converted into a nationwide website competition. The next 2 to 3 years will see the project taken into schools across Southern Africa.

- The project has already won recognition. It was entered into the Global Junior Challenge 2002 where it won a special Global Youth Incubator prize.

Thai RuralNet's Social Incubator Service

FINALIST
category: Employment & Entrepreneurship
http://www.thairuralnet.org
country: Thailand

Thai RuralNet is a youth-initiative that utilises the country's student body to find effective means of using ICT to cost-effectively empower rural communities. This project provides a valuable opportunity for students and young people to apply skills in their field of interest and make a difference in rural Thailand. Youth volunteers via Thai RuralNet have implemented community-based agro and eco tourism programmes, making use of the Internet as a public relations and communications tool.

This project aims to transform rural entrepreneurial capability through innovative ICT empowerment and youth mobilisation activities by creating rural ICT consultants from youth volunteers and generating social awareness among youth groups especially regarding rural development. And since Thai RuralNet is youth-based, it is able to leverage the knowledge and resources from the government, private sector, and other organisations very well.

Although the primary beneficiaries of this project are rural communities, Thai RuralNet has benefited the community by providing a realistic scenario of viable ICT-driven entrepreneurships as a model in social development. Those in the target group have shown an increased confidence and skill in strategic thinking for planning and implementing their own ventures.

Economically empowering socially and deprived youth of India by creating sustainable employment opportunities for them in India's ICT sector.

FINALIST
category: Employment & Entrepreneurship
http://www.datamationindia.com
http://www.datamationfoundation.org
country: India

Datamation Consultants Pvt Ltd has built an innovative public-private partnership programme imparting IT education to deprived youth and women. It specifically targets rural as well as urban underprivileged youth living in the poorest parts of India. This programme endeavours to provide large-scale employment opportunities to Indian youths and women at a time when unemployment is a major problem.

Youths and women are given basic IT education with the aid of non-profit organisations, as well as mentoring, counselling, etiquette, new developments in IT, and project management. The aim is to create 3,000 full-time jobs for these people. Although the primary objective has been to transform Indian youths into a diligent and disciplined workforce, the project has also brought together minority communities who generally do not gain access to employment since rightist employment policies are still widely practised in India.

This project bridges the digital divide by identifying ICT services that require very basic levels of education like data entry, tele-calling, and repetitive e-service functions. These jobs are ideal for the under-privileged youths, whose language skills and technical capabilities are generally limited. The targeted youths are enabled to lead sustainable lives, look after their families and achieve higher standards of living for themselves. Opportunities offered in the information age will result in inter-generational change, as young people from the same families gain access to better health care and education.

The project has been successful and sustainable based on the socio-economic impact it has had on the lives of almost 1,800 young people that the project has found employment for so far. The Datamation Foundation is now working towards getting 100 Indian corporations to set aside and reserve 25 per cent of new jobs in the IT sector for underprivileged youths under this project.

Child Safety on the Internet

FINALIST
category: Children's Rights
www.icsfonline.org
country: Mauritania, Mauritius

The Internet Child Safety Foundation believes that people need to be educated and inculcated with the right values to become mature and responsible users of the internet, who are aware of the potential pitfalls of online content, contact and commerce. It aims to ensure child safety on the Internet by providing parental education, encouraging positive content for children, promoting Internet responsibility among parents and ensuring safe surfing.

Via this project, young children are encouraged to use ICT and the Internet as a tool for their studies and research, and parents are taught how to help their children to make the best use of the information available to them. The foundation currently conducts workshops for parents that provide hands-on experience on online safety. Participants are introduced to the potential of the Internet for educational, communicative and entertainment purposes, and given advice on ways to educate their children on responsible use of the Internet.

The community that the project has started is linked by its website, and information is also disseminated at schools, colleges and public places with posters, and through public talks on online safety. This project will soon be replicated in Rodrigues Island.

Strengthening and empowering low-income communities through Digital Inclusion

FINALIST
category: Education
http://www.cdi.org.br
country: Angola, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Columbia, Guatemala, Honduras, Japan, Mexico, South Africa, Uruguay

This project, initiated by the Committee for Democracy in Information Technology (CDI), uses the Internet as a communication channel for young people belonging to different social groups in Rio De Janeiro. Called Jovemlink, it started out with promoting dialogue between people living in 'favelas' and the rest of the city. It is based on the belief that mastering new technologies not only provides access to better work and income opportunities, but also to new information resources and social spheres.

CDI works in partnership with volunteers and low-income community centres and special needs individuals like the visually impaired, psychiatric patients, homeless children, prisoners, and indigenous people. Schools follow a programme that is designed to disseminate technical learning as well as discussion of local issues among target communities. For each IT tool, a project is created, and its contents foster community building through debates covering topics like human rights, sex education, non-violence and ecology. The project helps educators adapt methodology and develop specific curricula for different social groups. They also lend computers, printers, software and handouts to support the educators' work.

There is a high element of youth involvement in this project, as students themselves determine the direction of the projects that they develop. After a process of reflecting on issues within their communities, they collectively decide on what aspect of life in their community they want to change, and what type of activity they can develop to achieve this aim.

This project has networked and spread all over Brazil, and in countries located in 3 continents.

NairoBits Digital Design School

FINALIST
category: Education
http://www.nairobits.com/e-learning
country: Kenya

The NairoBits Digital Design School gives talented youths from Nairobi's disadvantaged slum neighbourhoods access to multimedia education. By teaching these youths basic computer and web design skills and stimulating their creative competencies and entrepreneurship, the school enables students to apply the technology in their own specific situations.

Students who complete the basic course can apply to the school's WebLab, where they design and build websites, collaborate with artists, and develop presentations for business. The WebLab functions as a link between regional demand for multimedia skills and the NairoBits graduates. The School maximises participation of graduates in future training activities, enabling it to use generated profits to train more youth and educators.

Incorporating the Internet in NairoBits curriculum means youths learn much more and use it to communicate with other youth groups within and outside Kenya. NairoBits' gender policy demands training of an equal number of boys and girls.

Habitat Learning Centre

FINALIST
category: Education
http://indiahabitat.org
country: India

Habitat Learning Centre (HLC) is a multi-purpose learning centre running a wide variety of programmes to uplift underprivileged children and facilitators working in the slums of Delhi, India. It aims to do this by bringing the potential of IT to underprivileged women and children who have never been exposed to computers and the Internet.

ICT in this instance has been used to get children off the streets and back into schools by making learning fun. Many children have been inspired to re-enter formal schooling systems after their programme at HLC.

Extensive use of the internet has allowed HLC to be in constant contact with all its partner NGOs, and made co-ordination of various programmes very simple. To date HLC has partnered with 29 NGOs, trained 209 facilitators and 731 children in the basics of computer literacy and computer-applied skills. This project has already been replicated in two areas where partner NGOs operate, carrying forward HCL's objective of bridging digital divides and educating women and children on the use of ICT.

Kidlink

FINALIST
category: Education
http://www.kidlink.org
country: Norway

Kidlink empowers youth by providing them with free educational programmes to help them mature, get better control over their lives, encourage creativity, create social networks, and collaborate with peers around the world, individually or through their classrooms. The ultimate goal is to build broad collaborations to help these children to start realising dreams together, and assume responsibility for their own development. Using the Internet, the project has resulted in over 100 public and private virtual conferencing communities in 19 languages, involving children from 159 countries. Its knowledge network is supported by 500 volunteers in over 50 countries.

This project has done much to actively promote the information society as a tool for educational solutions and borderless co-operation between children. In schools, teachers' curriculums are enhanced with educational programmes that leverage what is already taught in school. In institutions for street kids, like in Bolivia, extracts of Kidlink's programme are used to keep children off the streets, return to schools, and lead better lives. Children that enter the website on their own are met with a high level of interactivity that motivate collaborations.

Children are taught about themselves and how to present themselves to their peers in other countries and co-operate in meaningful ways. The project works around all the elements that the child is surrounded by - parents, family members, teachers, senior citizens, NGOs and whole communities.

Nunga IT

FINALIST
category: Education
http://www.nungait.org.au
country: Australia

Nunga IT is bridging the digital divide for Aboriginal youth in the poorer western suburbs of Adelaide, Australia, by helping them to acquire IT and multimedia skills in a conducive learning environment.

Over 2,500 people, 95 per cent of them being youths between the ages of 9 and 18, have benefited from the computer-based education programme in the last three years since the project's inception. They have learnt how to create web pages, many of which are posted on the project website, as well as animation, short film and music production. All this has helped improve the young Aboriginals' sense of identity and self-worth by giving them ownership of their work.

This ICT facility allows both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth to work comfortably together in an environment that supports them at school. It has also succeeded in attracting the interest of others who were disinclined to study and appeared to be moving away from the public education system.

Using ICT, Nunga IT has also improved health standards among Aboriginal people through its "health by stealth" approach. Key messages about means to better health standards are embedded in each of its lesson plans.

Paradigm Initiative Nigeria

FINALIST
category: Education
http://www.pin.itgo.com
country: Nigeria

Paradigm Initiative Nigeria (PIN) is a viable means of ensuring a place for Nigeria in the information society. It seeks to equip youth with the necessary IT skills that will promote personal development, national responsibility, regional co-operation, and global participation. This will further provide an existing platform for other young Nigerians to participate in regional and global IT activities, and create a network of youth leaders and volunteers who use ICT for development.

The project is focused on ICT as a medium of delivery of information and involvement, and all efforts contribute to the development of individuals, communities and the nation. PIN has been actively involved in Nigeria's ICT policy stakeholder meetings, providing youths input and making presentations on youth expectations. The recently re-launched National Information and Communication Infrastructure (NICI) ICT policy for Nigeria will have significant contributions from Paradigm Initiative Nigeria.

So far, PIN has contributed expertise in the digital divide issues in Africa, advised communities on workable action plans for bridging the digital divide, and shared experiences with other organisations with similar objectives.

Friends and Flags

FINALIST
category: Culture
http://www.friendsandflags.org
country: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, China, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, France, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, South Korea, Lithuania, Macedonia, TFYR, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Trinidad & Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, United Kingdom, USA, Uzbekistan, Taiwan, North Korea.

Friends & Flags promotes multicultural awareness by connecting classrooms around the world. More than 20,000 children from 45 countries collaborate in teams of 3 to 6 countries each. The project uses ICT with e-mail, supports the building of student websites, mentors participants in use of chat rooms, and uploads digital photography.

Students share their culture with a global audience via online, discussion boards, chat rooms, art corners, writing corners, photo albums and more. They also send each other packages through the post containing posters, artwork and craft that depict their culture. This has also helped participants develop and enhance their research and communication skills.

Target beneficiaries are learners and educators worldwide, scattered in schools, home-schools, hospital schools, camps, youth groups, computer clubs and more. These young people are empowered to be a generation of compassionate and responsible global citizens, and are young leaders who are well prepared for the dynamics of the world we live in.

The project has addressed the beneficiaries' ICT developmental need by enabling active interactions, and providing a canvas for cultural exchanges that have opened windows and built bridges between individual classrooms everywhere. The impact of this project has been realised in student actions that have included raising money for victims of September 11, teddy bear drives for the homeless as a result of bush fires in Australia, and sending supplies and care packages to victims of earthquakes and terror.

Community Led Environment Action Network (CLEAN-India)

FINALIST
category: Environment
http://www.cleanindia.org
country: India

CLEAN-India is a programme that envisages learning through community service and scientific investigation, helping youth discover and implement lasting solutions to environmental issues in their community, with the help of ICT tools. The idea is to develop life-long habits of active citizenship and environmental stewardship.

This programme directly enriches the school curriculum by giving students practical and scientific exposure, and allowing them to understand, assess and improve the local environment. Children explore environmental issues, gather and analyse related data, and develop action projects based on their research. For example, projects like vermicomposting, tree plantations, energy conservation and paper recycling have been initiated under the CLEAN-India project by member schools. The children that implement these environmental actions within schools further encourage adults to undertake environment improvement activities at the community level.

The CLEAN-India website helps keep partners informed of the different activities, provides a platform for exchange of ideas and is also a tool for monitoring and self-assessment. The website also enables a reach to audiences who are not directly connected with the programme but who also stand to benefit.

The direct beneficiaries are the children this project covers, but in the long run beneficiaries will grow to include the community in general as well. The children are able to fill an ICT developmental need by using the CLEAN-India website as an information centre on how to take ameliorative action at individual and community levels using both new and traditional solutions.

YWAT Project: Youth-Led Water Initiatives Database

FINALIST
category: Environment
http://www.ywat.org
country: Bangladesh, Belgium, Bhutan, Cameroon, Columbia, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, Eritorea, France, Germany, India, Iran, Japan, Kenya, Latvia, Lebanon, Malawi, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Netherlands, Pakistan, Peru, Poland, Russian federation, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Togo, Ukraine, United Kingdom, USA, Venezuela, Somalia

YWAT was born at the Youth World Water Forum in Netherlands in 2001, and aims to increase awareness of, participation in and commitment to water-related issues and activities among young people.

YWAT also wants to establish a global movement of young people who are interested in water, initiate and form local YWAT units to affect decision making processes in water-related issues at local and global levels. Key to the project is the YWAT NETWORK, a website with a database of youth-led water initiatives, contact information of relevant organisations, and YWAT members worldwide. This project makes extensive use of email and its website to promote activities, and disseminate information.

YWAT will expand and grow by adopting new members who start 'youth-led initiatives', focus on local and grass–roots level activities, and organise conferences and workshops with the aim of raising awareness.

Youth One – Edmonton's Online Youth Community

FINALIST
category: Media
www.youthone.com
country: Canada

Youthone.com provides youths in Edmonton, Canada, with a platform to openly publish articles, as well as chat and socialise with other youth through forums, and receive anonymous help through peer support and crisis chats. The website now sees youth actively supporting each other on issues that directly affect them, and personal testimonials show that youth's lives have shown an improvement since they became part of the online community that Youthone.com provides.

Youths decide on the content they would like to see on the website by posting information on the web board, and the website is also a springboard for activities like the publication of an online semi-annual youth magazine. Youthone.com is now a meeting point that connects youths, career and educational initiatives. The website has over 100 youth-related organisations in its directory.

Volunteers are kept connected by regular get-togethers and email contact, which provides a firm base for the community that Youthone.com has developed. With continuous promotional programmes, new youths are made aware of the website and its services, and the community keeps growing. Although the target group was originally youths between the ages of 13 and 24 in the Edmonton and surrounding areas, people around Canada, Europe and the United States are now part of Youthone.com's community.

Many beneficial projects have been born out of collaborations via Youthone.com, demonstrating that young people can be pro-active and responsible for their own lives. Youthone.com believes that if young people are able to develop in a more positive atmosphere, they will grow up to become more constructive valuable citizens. It is ultimately the community who will then benefit as a whole.

Nuff Stuff

FINALIST
category: Media
http://www.acmi.net.au/bighart/nuffstuff/nuffsite.htm
country: Australia

Nuff Stuff is an innovative, highly specialised, educational, interactive multimedia project working with marginalized young people — primarily indigenous — either in the juvenile justice system, at risk of entering the juvenile justice system, or exiting the system in the Northern Territory of Australia.

This project specially targets the most multiply disadvantaged young people in rural and regional communities, many of whom cannot access mainstream educational opportunities. Participants have learned how to express themselves using ICT, with individual projects including animation, claymation, graphic design, video editing, sound editing, web design and desktop publishing. Even basic ICT applications have been adapted for things like song/script writing, and submission of their material for competitions and awards.

Every project that is undertaken under Nuff Stuff has an ICT component, and participants are continually advancing their skills through mentorship and training. All project information is uploaded in an e-newsletter that is sent out monthly.

Future plans involve designing a flexible Certificate in Multimedia for the Nuff Stuff project. It will cover areas such as graphic design and video production, and it is hoped that the new courseware will be applicable to low literacy groups across a broad spectrum of the community in the area of multimedia.

Young Asia TV (YATV)

FINALIST
http://www.yatv.net
classification: Media
country: Sri Lanka

YATV promotes sustainable development by informing, educating and empowering youth of Asia through media programmes conceptualised and produced by young people. The primary objective of this project is to reinvent the usefulness of media in support of sustainable development, realised through the production and dissemination of socially conscious media programmes.

YATV's youthful perspectives are reflected in all its media programmes, that have been crafted to provide a space for marginalised groups to talk about what matters to them and highlights successful development initiatives in which they participate. Youth issues and concerns are often sidelined by mainstream media organisations in the South East Asian region, and this project addresses this need by giving Asian youths a voice.

The ICT focus is on the development of local content for the youth community, paying special attention to marginalized young people. YATV also contributes to the information society by building young journalists and producers, giving them training in communication skills. It has trained 30 to 40 people annually in content development for video, radio and print and its dissemination. These young people will eventually be in a better position to harness the potential of ICT in whatever field they pursue.

The target beneficiaries were originally young people from urban and rural societies. However, the infotainment value has caused its popularity to spread immensely, and now includes professionals and parents who have recognised the value of the knowledge imparted through these programmes. YATV has been replicated so far in Africa and Latin America.

Vibewire.net

FINALIST
category: Media
www.vibewire.net
country: Australia

Vibewire.net is an online project set up in response to a range of important issues facing young Australians. It offers Australian youth opportunities to create accessible and meaningful pathways to expression and involvement. This website provides an outlet for youth to gain experience in leadership and management roles, as well as in the definition and expression of their interests and concerns. It further stimulates this generation's interest in ICTs by applying them to areas that are relevant and interesting to young people. The primary stakeholders and beneficiaries of Vibewire.net are young Australians in the 15 to 30 age bracket.

This project takes a unique approach by focusing on media skills as a pathway to increased participation in society and culture. It does this by providing information and building a supportive, open and accessible online community for Australian youth, including isolated and at-risk youth. The project brings young people into the information society as active participants, not just passive consumers.

IT literacy has improved rapidly as members become more involved with the site, connecting themselves to other online ventures by means of online partnerships. Many people who have been involved with Vibewire.net in its pilot stages have been able to take the skills they have learned to the next level by developing their own projects or contributing to other organisations and corporations.

Vibewire.net's 'sanctuary" project, which provides a platform of young refugees and migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds to tell their stories and explore settlement issues, is a finalist in another youth award in a New South Wales based community council.

Xfresh – Malaysia's Premiere Teen Community

FINALIST
category: Media
http://www.xfresh.com
country: Malaysia

Xfresh is a web-based online community built by teenagers and catering strictly to their interests. This project is meant to bring Malaysian teenagers together at an online meeting point to share opinions and exchange information. This website and all its spin-off activities are co-ordinated by a small group of youths that manage Content, Web Development, Marketing and Teen Development and Xfresh Education. Members of the Xfresh team are hand-picked while in school, and they run the project under the tutelage of professionals. Almost 100 teenagers are logged onto the website at any one time. It acts as a one-stop education information centre offering information on scholarships, lists of courses and educational institutions in the country, financial aid, and options for studying abroad. This is envisioned as a long-term project, providing Malaysian youths with a voice.

Plans are currently underway for a high-level forum on youth rights. Run in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Malaysia, it will involve young people from all over the world. Xfresh will also expand into television where teenagers from all over the country will be feaured on a major cable network in the country. This is expected to bring in more members who are still unaware of the existence of such a project, and to reach out to teens who are not able to access the Internet on a regular and consistent basis.

Child Soldiers Project

FINALIST
category: Human Rights and Peace Building
http://www.childsoldiers.org
country: Canada, Sierra Leone, USA

This project exploits the full benefits and resources of ICTs to reintegrate ex-fighters, separated children and other war-affected youths into their communities, relieving their trauma, empowering and keeping them engaged while transforming them into responsible citizens through meaningful activities.

The targeted beneficiaries of this project are war-affected children and youths of Sierra Leone, although it has spread to include other children and young people worldwide who share a similar plight.

The project aims to narrow the digital divide among war-affected students in marginalised communities in Freetown, Sierra Leone by improving their educational performance and enabling them to compete with their counterparts in developed countries. The project involves the setting up of a community-based ICT training and resource centre in Freetown, which will be used to promote information and communications, increase literacy rates, make young people patriotic, and enable them to live meaningful and productive lives through education and training.

The Child Soldiers project encourages collaborative learning among children and young people using Multiple Media Technology, where participants track the impact of war on other young people who are forced to engage in military action. Students' respond via a web and e-mail-based forum structure, based on a server in Freetown. These forums are also distributed automatically via http feeds to news readers and via email to people that cannot access the internet on a consistent and cost effective basis. The participants, who now number about 500,000 from 95 countries, read the postings and share them in their own schools and communities.

Over the two years of its operation, Child Soldiers has enabled over 300 youths to develop ICT skills in relevant fields of telecommunication technology.

IndiaCalls–using the power of the Net to promote volunteering among youth in India

FINALIST
category: Rural development
http://www.giveindia.org/site/volunteer/user/home/jsp
country: India

Developmental organisations in India lack skilled people. On the other hand, there is a large pool of human resources, including plenty of young people wanting to give something back to their communities, that just does not know where to look. IndiaCalls has been set up to bring these willing individuals and organisations together. The online portal aims to promote the spirit of volunteerism in India by reaching 10,000 individuals, 4,000 NGOs and 100 corporations over the next three years. IndiaCalls also hopes to attract the attention of foreign volunteers in India.

An online presence provides easy access, allowing anyone anywhere in the world to be involved; volunteer bureaus develop networks at local levels, and a marketing team is building up a network of retail chains, corporations and media houses. In this way, ICT is being used as a primary tool in addressing specific information and networking needs. So far, the project has placed hundreds of volunteers with almost 200 organisations, and all the volunteers have provided value to the organisations where they have been placed.

In 3 years' time, the project is expected to be fully economically viable and IndiaCalls will also be the most credible volunteering platform in India.

eSwasthya – health in a card

FINALIST
category: Health
http://www.biesindia.org/eswasthya
country: India

The objective of this project is to provide healthcare to the poorest section of the population. The target group is the hardcore poor in Madhubani, a district in Bihar. The idea is to deliver healthcare through ICT so that the poor regions in Bihar are not left behind in terms of healthcare facilities and modern technology as India moves forward.

Health ID cards are given to residents, to popularise the project and raise awareness about healthcare services that are newly available. These cards link residents to a new world of information that will help in terms of hygiene, population control and other advancements in healthcare. When the underprivileged start making use of these facilities, diseases and illnesses eradication and population control objectives can be met. Through this and the eventual creation of Internet kiosks, it is also hoped that the local community can increase literacy rates and gain valuable computer skills in order for them to join the job market. It is also hoped that the health centres will be self-sustainable after five years of operation.

ICT has been used as a backbone for this project because of the various positive features that are linked to it. The connectivity of the health centre via the Internet will usher in a new dimension to the rural sector by exploring areas like e-governance, e-commerce, e-health, and so on.

Special emphasis is on the holistic health of women citizens. The program will increase the number of medical personnel per facility by instituting the project as a revenue-sharing system with medical practitioners, to entice those previously avoiding work in smaller towns because of smaller salaries.

The immediate effect of eSwasthya is improvement in the healthcare system for rural people. However, it also aims to provide local residents, particularly unemployed youths, with basic computer training. This has a two-pronged effect — the youths are able to maintain the eSwasthya in their own community; in addition they are equipped with a new skill that will open new doors and opportunities.

Poverty

The Tony Zeitoun Award

The Tony Zeitoun Award

As a tribute to the late Tony Zeitoun from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the awards for the ICT Stories competition are now known as the Tony Zeitoun Awards.

Through the Tony Zeitoun Awards, the Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP), IICD and infoDev share learning experiences and acknowledge excellence among practitioners of ICTs for development.

Background

In 1998, IICD and infoDev agreed to partner and support the ICT Stories Project to acknowledge the importance of experiences and lessons learned in the field of ICTs for development.

Knowledge is generated throughout the entire course of a project. The objective of the ICT Stories Project is to capture the learning process that accompanies the introduction and implementation of ICTs through exemplary stories. These stories describe good practices and lessons learned from the contributors' experiences.

IICD and infoDev kicked-off the ICT Stories Project by launching an annual competition, which motivated story owners to share their knowledge. Every year, an internationally acclaimed panel of judges selects the winners from a growing number of submitted stories.

Since 1998, the stories have been collected and stored in a database in a joint website (http://www.iicd.org/stories). They are available to anyone interested in projects with ICT components. The stories deal with a range of issues and opportunities and with a variety of actors, project sizes, objectives, target groups and regions, thus maximising the learning value for the readers.

GKP–IICD–InfoDev Partnership

In 2003, the GKP joins IICD and InfoDev as a partner in supporting the ICT Stories Project. One of its primary motivations in doing so is to seek and highlight stories that demonstrate the potential and impact of ICTs on poverty reduction.

The GKP agreed to bring the following value-adding contributions to the partnership:
* An expansion of the Project's input and dissemination channels via its worldwide network;
* A publication on the 2003 ICT Stories;
* A financial contribution and trophies for the winners of the 2003 Awards;
* Joint coordination of the judging process, which includes formulation of the selection criteria.

Awards Presentation

This year the 'ICT Stories Competition - Tony Zeitoun Awards' will be presented at the ICT4D Platform, a parallel event held during the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Geneva, Switzerland, in December 2003.

About Tony Zeitoun

Tony Zeitoun was a tireless and effective advocate of the role of ICTs as tools for the development process. He passed away on May 5, 2003.

Tony Zeitoun worked for the Policy Branch of CIDA as Senior Advisor, Knowledge for Development Initiative. There, he provided strategic policy advice to senior management, coordinated the development of CIDA's strategy on Knowledge for Development through ICTs, and represented Canada/CIDA at major meetings of international telecommunications associations dealing with development issues.

Tony Zeitoun strongly supported the ICT Stories Competition. Renaming the ICT Stories awards is a small tribute to Tony Zeitoun's achievements in the area of ICTs for Development. It is our hope that it will help others, who have followed or will follow Tony Zeitoun's footsteps, to be inspired and stimulated by his work.

GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE PARTNERSHIP GKP

infoDev

iicd
INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNICATION AND DEVELOPMENT

WINNER OF THE TONY ZEITOUN AWARDS

El Correo del Agricultor – The farmer's mail

http://www.ondaslibres.org
country: Bolivia

In Santa Cruz, Bolivia, a simple means of using the radio, with information sourced from the Internet and communicated through e-mail, has helped improve the lives of 14,500 families.

These are families of peasant farmers who produce 70 per cent of the vegetables consumed in the city of Santa Cruz.

As the farmers rarely ventured from their villages, they depended on middlemen and brokers who collected the products directly from the farms. The brokers would take the vegetables to the markets in Santa Cruz without paying the producers. After selling the products in the market, they would return to the farms and pay the farmers whatever they wanted.

As the farmers were not aware of the market prices of their produce, they had no negotiating power, and accepted whatever they were given.

Most times farmers were not even able to cover the cost of production.

All that has changed since the creation of a radio programme called El Correo del Agricultor under the auspices of Instituto de Capacitación del Oriente (ICO).

In Bolivia, radio is an important form of mass media in rural communities.

El Correo del Agricultor has helped change things around for farmers in the region by offering them information, such as the price list for the main agricultural products for that day.

A lady called Gisela Ojeda goes to the market very early in the morning to find out the prices. She then e-mails it to the radio station, who then broadcasts the information to the farmers.

The radio programme also contains two other important sections: a discussion about the environment and sustainable development, and a segment on Health, Nature and Life that deals with natural medicine and local practices. These segments incorporate information found on the Internet which is made relevant to local issues.

Don José Burgos, a small producer, says his life has changed since the establishment of the radio programme.

"I listen to the radio program every day. It is very helpful for us, small farmers... it permits us to know about the prices in the wholesale markets... It has given us the possibility to discuss the price of our products with the dealers and the middlemen. If the prices that they offer are convenient for us, we have a deal, if not, we may even decide together with other farmers to take our produce to the market by ourselves."

Don Abigail Toledo is another producer who claims to have benefited.

"One morning, we were cutting lettuce to take to the market in Santa Cruz. Although I had a big portion of my land grown with lettuce, we were only cutting a little amount because we had been told that the price of lettuce had gone down a lot in the market the previous week. Then, a buyer arrived in her truck, and this does not happen very often, and she offered to pay 5 Bolivianos for

each basket of lettuce. I was ready to accept her offer when a worker of my farm came to me and told me that he had heard on the radio program that the price for a basket of lettuce was 15 Bolivianos in the market of Santa Cruz. If that man hadn't listened to the ICO radio program I would have given away my lettuce. Thanks to this program I sold my produce at a better price. Since then, we listen to this radio program every day in order to be perfectly informed".

Despite the challenges of those working behind the scenes of the radio programme, such as having to work through the night and go to the market very early in the morning, "the effort was worth making because El Correo del Agricultor soon obtained a great audience among the small farmers who began to listen to the program every morning. They even came to the offices of I.C.O. to ask for information or take leaflets and brochures with them" says Sonia, who is responsible for the broadcasting of the program.

The program has been broadcast on local radios every Monday to Friday since January 2001. As a result of the programme, the terms of negotiation between the middlemen and the producers have improved tremendously. This in turn has improved the income of thousands of families by at least 10 per cent. The number of farmers who take their produce to the market themselves has also increased.

Because of the program, the stories of the farmers from the region have become widely known. This has led to the publishing of a book called "Valles Cruceños. Diagnostico del sector agropecuario" (Valleys of Santa Cruz: Diagnostic test of the agricultural sector), published by Clovis Cárdenas of the ICO.

The Health, Nature and Life segment has led to the publishing of two recipe books dealing with natural medicine, traditional practices and local experiences. This is an important documentation as much of this knowledge lay dormant within the elder generation and could have been lost forever.

The quality of the radio program has also led to the improvement in the quality of other local radio programs. One of the radio stations actually went as far as copying all the digital editing equipment of the project, including the furniture! Today, the farmers have access to all sorts of more pertinent and relevant information, through the radio, which was formerly dominated by foreign content. They feel more wired and connected and are able to discuss issues that are important to them.

The project is being executed with the help of the the Central de Asociaciones de Pequeños Productores de Vallegrande (CAPA).

WINNER OF THE TONY ZEITOUN AWARDS

Self Help Groups Show the Way

http://www.westgodavari.org
country: India

Project e Seva (e-services) is not only helping to bridge the digital divide in the district of West Godavari in the province of Andhra Pradesh in India, it has also helped improve women's position in the communities there while bringing the government closer to citizens.

It represents an effort by the district administration, in consultation with the World Health Organisation, to use Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to provide access to various C2C (citizen-to-citizen) and C2G (citizen-to-government) services.

The project works on the principle that if something — in this case a telephone wire — can carry the citizen's grievance to the authorities, instead of the citizen going himself, then why not?

Under this project, web-enabled rural kiosks have been established at the mandal (a sub district unit of administration) level to provide a range of services for the citizens.

These services range from the issuance of various certificates, or accessing information about various programmes, to getting a loan under self employment schemes, applying for an old age pension or asking for subsidized agricultural inputs.

One of the objectives of the project has been to improve the transparency and accountability in government operations and to demystify the entire process that governs them.

The unique thing about these centres is that they are run and managed by women from self-help groups.

The women were trained to handle the computer and the software programmes and then positioned as information intermediaries at the kiosks. This is a stark contrast to their previous situation when they were subjected to exploitation and comparatively inferior treatment vis-á-vis their male counterparts.

While on the one hand, the kiosks run by the women's groups act as a tool for their socio-economic empowerment, on the other hand, citizens from very poor parts of the district are the main beneficiaries of this project.

Government departments are now forced to follow the citizen's charter and respond properly to queries and requests.

The project allows citizens to file their grievances and applications for various government programmes in these centres. Every grievance is acknowledged and transferred online for action.

Rural folk are now able to post their products for online auctions at any of the centres. The products may include agricultural commodities, farm implements, land or buildings etc, literally anything that a rural household would like to buy or sell in the rural areas. The rates prevailing in other markets elsewhere are also available for the citizens to watch the trends and make the right decision after weighing all options.

Citizens can also pay electricity bills, telephone bills and land revenue through the kiosks. They can even seek medical consultation and get prescriptions over the Net.

There is also a database where prospective brides/grooms can place their bio-data and elicit suitable offers.

Through the portal, the Centre expects to provide a virtual meeting place for citizens to discuss issues relating to the districts/villages, its problems and prospective solutions. They have online forums to air their grievances, voice their opinions and cause necessary social change. It also provides an opportunity to conduct opinion polls on important topical issues leading to improved decision making.

Students can also use these centres to enrich their education.

With almost over 80 kiosks operating in the district the project has been able to carry out more than 300,000 transactions relating to various C2C and G2C services so far. Over Rs 50 million in electricity bills have been collected.

As a result, the government departments have the benefit of expeditious collections and can also save on collection costs.

The old age pensions were computerised and put on the project website along with the photographs and the citizen identification number, helping the administration weed out over 7,000 bogus names and saving over Rs. 7 million yearly for the state!

Not surprisingly, the project has been awarded the first prize for the National IT Awards 2003 by the Computer Society of India.

The government departments are the major partners in this project. The local political representatives have also played a major role by agreeing to the moving of power from their hands directly into the citizens' hands. The local banks also have come forward and financed these units.

WINNER OF THE TONY ZEITOUN AWARDS

THAMEL: Reducing the social, cultural and economic cost of immigration through the power of ICT

http://www.thamel.com
country: Nepal

In 1999, Nepal was still an under-performing economy, where college graduates had no way of making full use of their talents. Many left their home country and went abroad in search of jobs and a better life.

Meanwhile, there were those in Nepal with little or no education. They too had brothers or sisters who went to work abroad and sent money home.

Around this time, a group of young undergraduates came together to find a way to stop the brain-drain from Nepal and do something useful to help improve the country's economy.

And so Thamel Dot Com was born.

What started as an idea for a web-based business incorporating all the technical, marketing and business skills that lay dormant within these young graduates, is today providing jobs for hundreds of people and making some US1 million in revenue for the country.

Thamel Dot Com started out as a web-based directory for local businesses. Initially it had limited success.

Then came Dashain, the greatest festival celebrated annually in Nepal. Someone had a bright idea. An important part of the Dashain celebration is the sacrifice of a ceremonial goat (or Khasi). Unfortunately, not all can afford the expense for the goat, which brings blessings if sacrificed.

Thamel decided they would provide a service where family members abroad could send the gift of a Khasi to their loved ones back home.

They did this by marrying the tools of ICT, with local traditions and an existing supply chain from the Nepalese market place.

When a person orders a goat on the Thamel Dot Com website, a gift certificate is issued and delivered to the recipient in Nepal. The recipient is instructed to take the certificate to the goat market to redeem it for a Khasi of his choice.

Once the person has selected a Khasi, a digital picture is taken of him with his prized gift. This picture is then transmitted back to the gift giver as proof of delivery and as a thank you note.

Through this simple process Thamel Dot Com found its niche, and built trust among the Nepalese community living abroad.

This led them to build a transaction portal for Nepalese all over. Here, families can stay in touch through email or chat over the Internet.

The portal provides local news, links to other related sites, and a catalogue of gifts that people could send their friends and family. The gifts of over 5,000 items are fully supplied by local business affiliates.

On this website, Nepalese living abroad can find information about the cheapest airline tickets to Kathmandu and even support local charities.

Thamel Dot Com currently contributes over one million US dollars a year in revenue to the local economy. It is serving over 18,000 people in 25 countries; and over 500 local business affiliates in Nepal.

The portal allows Nepalese living abroad to continue to be a part of their traditions and culture, while helping Nepalese at home share in the cultures of other peoples.

Thamel's business affiliates — those who are part of the supply chain — have seen their businesses grow.

A third of these affiliates have added some type of IT to their businesses; over 80 of them have established their own websites.

As those who had never touched a computer before are now running their businesses with ICT; there is a breaking down of the digital divide. There is also a multiplying effect taking place as more learn about ICT-based applications and businesses, which in turn is boosting the local economy.

The most valuable outcome of Thamel's initiative is that many jobs have been created and the associated benefits are accruing in Nepal.

Today, Thamel employs over 50 full-time local staff directly. During the festival seasons they add another 50 people to help with operations. They believe their affiliates have created an additional 50 new jobs as their own businesses have grown.

Even the National Bank of Nepal and the Municipality of Kathmandu have benefited and are benefiting others. This is because, as they helped Thamel meet their infrastructure needs, the Bank and the Municipality had to make certain changes within their jurisdiction. Through this collaborative educational effort with their government partners, there is now a more conducive environment for other local ICT-based applications and businesses.

An unexpected but much valued outcome of all this is that Thamel is directly and indirectly creating new leaders for Nepal. These leaders are home-grown and their leadership benefits locals.

"We are utilising the talent our country has invested in over the last thirty years," writes Bal K. Joshi (of Thamel) & Robert E. Granger (of Granger and Granger). "We are young, energetic and have a new way of looking at the possibilities for our country in the world economy. Our impact reaches beyond our business interests to the broader needs of the Nepalese community."

I play, my Mom learns!

FINALIST

country: Ecuador

In Latin America, funding from UNESCO is helping to narrow the digital divide between the rich and the poor. Using existing community-based toy libraries in six countries - Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala and Haiti - many poor children and low-income families are able to use Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to access information.

The toy libraries have been in existence since 1996, and were developed by the Coopération Internationale pour les Equilibres Locaux (CIELO), an organisation working in disadvantaged communities across Latin America.

Today there are about 20 of these libraries in existence. They are administered by mothers and fathers from very poor sectors of the community, giving them an income, while benefiting more than 25,000 children in terms of non-formal education, instilling values, social risk prevention and integral human development.

The UNESCO-CIELO partnership began in July 2002 with a pilot project, using the community-based regional training centre for grassroots toy librarians in Latin America in Quito, Ecuador.

Ten toy librarians from five of the libraries were given theoretical and practical training on basic computation skills, use of ICT, Internet navigation, and usage of a CDROM. After the training, each of the five libraries were fitted out with basic computer equipment.

The main goal of the pilot project is to empower the poorest of the poor and to reduce the digital divide. It allows families and children who use the library, a new and free range of services made possible by ICT, such as information access, and exchanges with other communities (through e-mail). It also helps families deal with critical issues such as early childhood education, child psychology and development, health and nutrition.

At the moment, the services are provided for four hours a week, and already 150 families are benefiting.

With access to information, more families are empowered. This is because for the first few months after the project was implemented, the librarians were to spend time finding out what issues concerned the families that used the services, what information they wanted access to, and what were their priorities.

With this information, the librarians were able to provide a guide as to how to use the Web to gain access to information that the community needed.

The librarians also spent time explaining the values of ICT and discussed the best opening hours for this new service (in order not to interfere with the existing functions of the toy libraries)

By mid 2003, other projects were established in order to support the operating costs of the UNESCO-CIELO project. Fundraisers were held and the services were extended to the other libraries. Where there was no Internet connection, CDROMS were used.

Thanks to this project, children and poor members of the community are able to have free access to information, and reduce the knowledge gap.

They can retrieve information on issues that concern them according to their own priorities, such as children's rights, prevention of violence within the family, early childhood development and caring for disabled children. Educational games, using CDROMS, are also helping in child development.

The project is also partnered by "Familias Amigas", another community based organisation.

Africancraft.com generating pride and publicity for Africa's artisans : a case study of weavers in Lesotho

FINALIST

http://www.africanfract.com/artist/elelloang

country: Lesotho

African art is well known and admired throughout the world. However, for a long time, their artisans remained invisible.

In a bid to give recognition to African artisans and showcase their work, two men, John Nash and Lewis Meyer from the USA, joined hands to set up a website called Africancraft.com.

Both men were inspired by a mutual acquaintance, Bobbo Ahiagble, an Ewe Kente weaver from Ghana. They started off in 1996 by creating a website to document and market the works of Bobbo and his weaving brothers.

As their exposure to the great diversity of African art and craft grew, the two decided to incorporate the works of other artisans throughout the continent. Thus in 1999 Africancraft.com was born.

The website has two objectives. The first to provide a forum where anyone with an interest, or business, in the arts of Africa can contribute information and have discussions. They hope this will eventually lead to a site that documents all the different ideas and techniques found in African art.

Secondly, the creators wanted to showcase the work of African artisans on a site with links to books, articles and educational materials of interest.

The site also supports efforts of fair trade, sustainable development, and women's empowerment; and hopes to instil pride and hope in disadvantaged craftspeople.

One such African group that has benefited from collaboration with Africancraft.com is Elelloang Basali (or Be Aware Women).

In November 2002, Africancraft.com incorporated the work of Elelloang Basali - a women's weaving business that specialises in fine hand-woven mohair bags, rugs, table runners and wall hangings.

Although the group of women had formed Elelloang themselves, they had difficulties starting up, as well as problems with finance, publicity and communication. In addition, they had little means to share their work with overseas customers.

Due in part to the efforts of Siiri Morley, a United States Peace Corps Volunteer in Lesotho since 2001, the work of the Elelloang Basali Weavers and Africancraft.com came together.

The website has greatly improved Elleloang Basali's export capacity, which in turn has contributed to the success of a number of other grassroots efforts.

Now, Elelloang is providing work to over 40 women, who in turn support hundreds of children. This employment is crucial, as there are many female-headed households in Lesotho. Unemployment is also a big problem in this country.

"What makes us happy so much is the customers that we now have from overseas and all over the world because of your website. So for that reason our tapestries are known and bought by so many customers and we also, are families with the world."

– Members of Elelloang in their thank you letter to John Nash

Emergent e-governance ecosystem development in Bellandur, Karnataka

FINALIST
http://www.compusolsoftware.com
country: India

In Bellandur, Karnataka, India, a corporate initiated partnership with the local public administration has enabled the implementation of more efficient and systematic governance.

This was done by equipping the Gram Panchayat (the smallest administration unit that involves a few villages) with computers and software to meet its administration needs.

COMPUSOL Software, a private company had approached the village development committee and offered to implement e-governance solutions for the GP, free of any cost.

Thus the GP in Bellandur became the site of a pilot project, and indirectly, an opportunity to explore the implications of implementing the same solutions in villages across India.

COMPUSOL had to come up with software and solutions that would assist rural citizens without causing too much disruption to the existing socio-political fabric of the community.

Initially, the services that were integrated with ICT were Property Transactions, Water Billing, Trading, Licenses, and a Financial Tracking System

This has resulted in a much more efficient method of collecting payment for bills. In 1999-2000, the revenue to the local body was INR (Indian Rupees) 1,421,000. After the integration of ICT for more systematic tax collections, Bellandur managed to collect an additional INR 1,414,000.

Revenues have increased every year since then, and the good thing is the local administration is using this extra income to improve conditions in the rural areas.

For instance, the local administration has used the revenue to construct new roads and bore wells. Citizens now have access to clean drinking water and pay a monthly tax of INR 25. Bellandur also now has a sophisticated underground sewage system, which was facilitated through this additional revenue.

The success of the pilot project has demonstrated that it is possible to sustain successful private-public partnerships in India.

In addition, COMPUSOL has been invited to replicate the process of e-governance in other parts of Karnataka.

COMPUSOL was assisted in the implementation of this project by the Bellandur GP and Microsoft.

eShopAfrica.com – Hand Made in Africa

FINALIST
http://www.eShopAfrica.com
country: Ghana

eShopAfrica.com was founded by Cordelia Slater-Nour in Accra, Ghana in June 1999. It was formed to help promote African art and craft beyond traditional barriers and into new global markets.

In Africa, the Internet is an affordable form of technology and very useful for businesses that want to expand their horizons.

eShopAfrica.com deals with African arts and crafts and aims to give artisans a good price that reflects their talents and the quality of their products.

The company takes small customised orders that do not interfere with the artisans' other important income generating activities, such as agriculture. Although the artisans get a good deal for their products, the prices are still a lot more reasonable than for the same product sold outside Africa.

For instance, a poor quality Djembe drum was seen for sale in a New York music shop for $500. But the cost of a genuine Djembe through eShopAfrica, and including the ridiculous shipping prices to the US, is still way below that.

As a result of this, eShopAfrica has earned a list of contented and regular customers.

The avenue to sell their products overseas through online orders has been a breakthrough for the lives of many of the artisans.

By providing them a website, the articans are able to connect to a global market - an avenue that was not there for them before as IT skills are in short supply in Africa and is out of reach of many small and medium-sized businesses.

The ability to sell their products overseas has provided income for so many artisans who were not able to generate much income from their talents prior to the project. This has also helped enhance the local economy.

Writes Cordelia, "... if you're an artisan in Africa your 'hand-made' thing won't command a high price... you'll be made to feel inferior because your society never industrialised. Perceptions and economics will force you to accept a low price for your work and you may not be able to feed your family. When they get sick you won't be able to afford medicine, and schools cost too much. You may not own or have the legal right to your house and may have no water. When your children grow they'll look down on you, move away, disassociate themselves from your traditions telling you you're living in a world they don't like. This is the scenario for traditional African artisans all over the continent and in this way centuries old skills are being lost."

eShopAfrica has helped dissolve the hopelessness many African artisans felt, given them a market for their craft, and is part of a wider work in motion to prevent the loss of traditional skills.

Today, each order eShopAfrica.com receives represents the completion of their mission — to get global orders for African artisans.

Plan International: "I am a Child, but I have my Rights too!"

FINALIST
http://www.plan-international.org
country: Senegal

"I am a Child, but I have my Rights too!" was produced on radio in 1998 by Plan International. Today it is a highly successful programme that explores the concept of "edutainment" (entertainment and education) and has helped to increase awareness about children's rights.

The radio production can be heard on Internet via the website of Plan's partner, One World Radio (http://radio.oneworld.net).

With children as the main actors in the show, the programme creates stories that are broadcasted in seven West-African countries: Burkina Faso, Guinea, Togo, Mali, Senegal, Guinea Bissau and Benin.

The show informs parents, children and authorities about their roles and responsibilities with respect to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

The stories promote the right to go to school, to have access to potable water, to grow up healthy, and so on. Hundreds of children have participated in the shows and productions have been made in 20 languages. The show is broadcast in up to 20 radio stations in each country.

The overall goal of Plan's radio project is to promote the rights enshrined in the UNCRC in a region where not enough is known about children's rights, and girls are not sent to school.

A radio campaign on the Rights of the Child is needed because "children do not even know that they have rights here!" (girl, 14, Senegal). "The radio campaign tells children good things and adults should start to listen to what they say" (boy, 17, Burkina Faso). "I think the campaign can make people change. Maybe it can give them the idea to send their girls to school" (girl, 14, Senegal).

The success of the programme lies in its unique use of the concept: by children, for children.

When the public hear children analysing concerns and working on solutions, even policy makers sit up and listen.

On the other hand, when children are invisible in a society - so are children's rights.

The children participate on the show as actors. For instance, eleven-year-old Poda Yeri was on one of the shows where she played the role of a little girl who is beaten by her uncle, Abdoulaye. She had to cry a lot to make the play seem realistic; to simulate on the radio what other children live through every day.

Radio listeners will hear a moving story of a child who is suffering; who has no one to love her; who is unfairly punished. Some will see themselves in the story, or will think of a neighbour, or a cousin.

More often than not, the drama moves people enough to realise that everything possible must be done to protect the rights of all children.

The radio campaign has been recognised by all stakeholders as one of the most successful projects in promoting the rights of the child in West Africa.

"I am a Child, but I have my Rights too!" has filled a void created by a lack of quality, focused, purpose-driven media for children in West Africa.

Interviews and group discussions have shown that the show has had an impact.

Children have started to clean up school courts and advise their parents on basic hygiene. They put up plays in their neighbourhoods or start discussions at home to spread awareness about children's rights.

Parents and teachers have started to listen to what children have to say. They are even finding arguments to send their girls to school or to stand up against female genital mutilation.

It is assumed that the campaign has been effective in rural areas as well, where radio is the only source of information.

The show has mobilised children to become advocates for their own rights; this was especially apparent among the children who had participated directly in the production or broadcast of the campaign.

These children said that they were happy to have contributed towards improving the lives of other children, and in raising awareness among their own parents.

The show also serves as an example that children are capable of talking about important issues and coming up with creative solutions. Children can be actors and not merely spectators in defending their rights.

The radio campaign is the first regional initiative and is supported with other related activities such as the creation of children's clubs, cartoon books, and teachers' guides.

A Plan WARO media website has been created as part of a global strategy to promote the rights of the child, inform the general public about them and involve children in development projects.

Soon, there will be a video project that is produced by young people for young people. The children will be involved in creating the content for the video, by choosing specific issues to deal with — issues that they find affect their own lives.

The films will cover a wide range of themes such as early marriages, drug addiction, environmental pollution, disabled children, street children, sexual exploitation and abuse, child labour and HIV / AIDS.

Finally, a new radio show will be created in 11 West African countries entirely hosted by children.

And all these are in motion now, because of "I am a Child, but I have my Rights too!".

The project is partnered with five radio professionals who help coordinate activities at the regional level, seven national coordinators, 10 to 25 radio stations in each country and One World Radio which made audio productions available on the Internet.

Advent of information economy in remote parts of India

FINALIST
country: India

The manager of a cooperative bank in Bhawani Mandi, India, had personally made several complaints to the electricity board about a loose high-tension wiring, over his house. Unfortunately, the complaints seemed to have fallen on deaf ears. No action was taken.

Fearing for the safety of his family members, he approached one of the Jan Mitra IT-enabled information kiosks set up in the district, under the Government of India-UNDP initiative. The kiosks help improve citizen's access to information pertaining to government services in some of the remoter parts of the country and deal with problems like the one faced by the bank manager.

To the manager's amazement, once he registered his complaint online through the kiosk, the wires were fixed within three days.

Because of this and other stories, Jan Mitra is now known as a "friend of the public".

The info-kiosk was initiated in 2001 as part of a project on "Improving Citizens' Access to Information". Among others, it hopes to empower Indian citizens by providing them with free access to information, making administration more participatory, ensuring greater transparency, and deterring the arbitrary exercise of official power.

The project has benefited citizens and especially rural folk in many ways. It has provided unemployed youth with honest work as kiosk operators.

Kiosk operators in turn are mandated to provide certain services of public interest, such as information on BPL families, development schemes and information related to hygiene and health, free of charge.

A nominal fee is charged for other services, for instance, a computer print out, an Internet connection, with a small mark up for the kiosk operators. Prices are controlled by Jan Mitra.

The villagers are reported to be happy to pay the small price. In fact they are counting their savings.

This is because most of them live in very remote parts of the country. For instance, Raju Mali, in his mid-thirties, has a problem concerning a piece of land left to him by his late father.

Raju is an electrician in a textile mill, hired on a daily wage. He cannot afford to waste a full day going all the way to the district office, only to be sent back and forth between various government offices.

Mr. Pandey, the kiosk-owner he approached, showed him an online application form and promised that the transfer certificate will be issued to him in seven days. This for a fee of ten rupees (20 cents, US) only.

Raju is more than happy to pay the small sum if it means avoiding government red tape and local officials with an inflated sense of importance.

Redressing grievances speedily is one of the success stories of the Jan Mitra initiative, which currently has 28 info-kiosks in the districts of Jhalawar, Rajasthan, Mandya in Karnataka, Bhuj & Panchmahal in Gujarat, Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh, and Kalahandi in Orissa.

Kiosk operators are also allowed to expand the variety of services they provide to their customers. Some kiosks even run a range of other IT-enabled services under the banner of the Divine Computer Institute. They teach village high-school children basic computer skills.

Maqsood Alam Gori and his two younger brothers who run a kiosk in Dug, Jhalawar, say one of their biggest hits are online application forms that allow people to pitch for dozens and dozens of poverty-alleviation schemes that the villagers earlier did not even know existed. The brothers are also constantly on the lookout for software training schemes for the poor, which they bid the government for, and then line up for their customers.

The average citizen gains in that he saves time, effort and also money, because he is spared repeated visits to a distant office which would have meant incurring transport costs and loss of wages.

The ICT kiosk, by bringing public services closer to the citizens, restores their faith in the government machinery.

The Government also benefits as it is able to “virtually” reach out to the citizens without physically having to do so, which would have meant financial overheads.

Citizens are also shedding their former servile attitude and seeking information with confidence. They are now able to access government services and schemes which open many windows of opportunity for them. These opportunities help them develop in their personal capacities while empowering them to build a better and more stable tomorrow, for themselves and for their country.

Advancing Society...Connecting People

FINALIST
http://www.ascp.am/en/community.html?PHPSESSID=956865bc3
country: Armenia

Project Harmony (PH) is helping to build online communities in Armenia - that part of the world where Internet connecting is a novelty, and many have not heard about the World Wide Web.
Through the project, Internet Computer Centres have been set up in schools throughout the country (300 to date) to expose students to the Internet.

Project Harmony has also established pilot projects, such as Project Healthy Lifestyle which had the following goals:

- To promote and develop online communities.
- To unite doctors for exchange of experience and information.
- To educate parents and teenagers living in poverty by giving them useful basic medical knowledge for conducting a healthier life style.
- To provide the 53 participants with basic computer skills, as well as to give them some knowledge of the possibilities of the Internet.

After a two-week computer orientation course, 15 physicians and 38 parents and teenagers from peasant communities were allowed to interact with one another through discussions on the Internet.

The discussions were divided into several forums such as Healthy Life Style from Childhood, Teenagers and Bad Habits, General Health Problems, Healthy Food, Healthy Soul in Healthy Flesh, Physical Training, Alcohol and Smoking and At the Dentist.

Health was incorporated into the Internet exposure programme as it reflected the population's needs.

"The present social and economic state of Armenia directed us, as most of the population live in poverty, having no means for earning a living, let alone money to see a doctor. People from villages have to travel long distances and spend much time to get medical consultation," says Seda Mkhitaryan, Regional Community Developer of PH`s Armenian School Connectivity Projects (ASCP).

"I have had no opportunity to see a specialist very often, as I had to travel a long distance and spend too much money for it," said one participant. The opportunity to interact with specialists online, through the Project Healthy Lifestyle, broke all those barriers for her.

The participating doctors were also very excited. It was their first online experience and it allowed them to give medical consultation to patients "online" and even prescribe medicine.

The online discussions also included a "Physicians' Private Room", where only doctors interacted. Because of the interaction that took place in this private room, the doctors decided to hold a meeting where they could provide free consultation to members of the public. PH helped organise this meeting by announcing it on the radio, two days prior to the event.

The meeting took place in Vanadzor School #1, on August 2, 2003. About 40 community members of different ages came to visit the 13 doctors present. Serious cases were referred to the hospital and the less serious ones were attended to.

The project turned out to be a real morale booster. Many people were delighted that they could obtain knowledge about bringing up healthier children through the Internet.

Physicians of three different regions were able to make acquaintances, exchange experience and keep in touch. Sixty community members received free medical consultation. And 53 participants of the online project gained basic computer skills and experience.

After the free consultation meeting of physicians in Vanadzor, urologist Alla Avanesyan on behalf of the rest declared: "This online interaction was is novelty in our work experience. This is a step towards a more civilized life style. Nowadays Information and Communication Technologies are becoming widely adopted all over the world and this is quite a good undertaking for reaching modern standards. And the first and the hardest work is done and the understanding of "online" justified itself. Now it is time to think about organising a "Pan-Armenian Medical Forum", which will connect people separated by time and distance."

Indeed Project Harmony is helping to connect people in remote regions in Armenia, to the outside world. Many live in mountain villages that are sometimes cut off from the rest of the country in winter. For them, the Internet is an affordable way of keeping in touch with the rest of the world.

PH also helps develop online facilitators. Training has a multiplying effect and the online facilitators are able to spread what they have learnt to others. They are also able to create web pages and resources on the Net in Armenian as many Armenians do not speak English or Russian.

PH is partnered with the Social Transition Programs (PADCO) and now, a group of physicians.

ICT & Teacher Education: Rewiring the Minds

FINALIST
http://www.eastafricateachers.net
country: Kenya

The Learning Resource Centre (LRC) was first established in January 2002 as part of a new educational management training programme launched by Kenya Technical Teachers College (KTTC).

It incorporates an Internet Research Unit, a Documentation Unit and a working space. The Flemish Organisation for Development and Technical Assistance (VVOB) supports this project by providing equipment and advisory services.

UNESCO provided the funding that enabled the KTTC-VVOB project to link its Internet Research Unit to a wireless satellite connection that provides for 24-hour access. The wireless connection is much cheaper and faster than a dial-up line and does not get interrupted as is common with TELKOM telephone lines.

The aim of the project is:

- To train lecturers and students in the use of ICT and in Internet research
- To introduce lecturers to innovative ways of teaching and learning
- To train lecturers on how to incorporate the wealth of information available on the Internet in their learning materials
- To train lecturers on how to develop user-friendly updated course material
- To further train lecturers in their subject area (professional development)
- To induct students into a new learning culture
- To establish a lifelong learning culture within the KTTC community

The LRC provides a team of assistants who are available throughout the day (even after working hours) to help lecturers and students with Internet research and downloading, and any ICT-related issues. Teachers with no computer knowledge were trained to become active IT users.

This has allowed staff and students of KTTC to integrate ICT into their teaching and learning and have access to a wealth of information that can be used in their research and learning materials.

In just one and a half years, the exposure to ICT and the Internet has changed the lives of lecturers and students in KTTC in tremendous and positive ways.

Students say they have become more active learners and now develop assignments of better quality. They do not consider the lecturers as the sole source of knowledge anymore. They increasingly enjoy learning. They are also enjoying the democratisation process taking place at classroom level and they consider their lecturers as students themselves. It has also allowed them to stop spending considerable time and money running around libraries to look for information when given an assignment.

Lecturers, on the other hand, have discovered they cannot continue to teach in the traditional ways and are throwing away their 20-year-old notes. They don't seem to feel threatened, but feel their job has become more interesting. They see their work now as having to take up a guiding and facilitating role. Generally the lecturers enjoy the change and take advantage of the Internet, also for personal development purposes.

A side effect from all this is that a web portal has been created (www.EastAfricaTeachers.net) to network all teachers' colleges in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda as a first phase towards the establishment of a portal site including all educational institutions in Eastern Africa. This activity was co-funded by UNESCO. The LRC team is continuously coordinating efforts to further upgrade the site.

The LRC team also feels that there is now a sense of community that was not there before the use of ICT.

Other perspectives from international sources are integrated into the learning material, and thus upgrading its quality, which in turn results in more interesting and meaningful learning experiences.

"People do not waste their time anymore", which refers to how they used to spend their free time before they had access to the Internet

All research participants agreed that the changes in teaching and learning culture would never have taken place without the Internet.

For instance, student teachers have come to recognise the advantages of student-centred learning and teaching. There are changes that would have been almost impossible to implement without the exposure that came with access to the Internet.

One student teacher talked of his perceptions of corporal punishment before and after exposure to information on the Web: "Before I left my school to go on study leave, the government abolished caning, the corporal punishment that was still widely in use in Kenya until recently. I used to be opposed to that change, because I wondered how I could discipline difficult cases. But one day I looked through the Internet for specific information and I found out that in the USA and the Western world they abolished corporal punishment more than thirty years ago. I had no idea. I also got a lot of information about how you should deal with discipline. So... I think I am a better teacher. I think about all these things. I am a better person."

A lecturer also had this to say, "Once you get information and knowledge, you develop a sense of self-confidence. You develop a different image about yourself, a positive image about yourself, because you are no longer ignorant. And that tends to encourage people to speak out, to say what they know. I remember when the constitutional commission was soliciting our input towards the new constitution. Using the Internet, we were able to access quite a number of constitutions of other African countries, especially the South African one. The input we made was very balanced. I was not surprised to see some of our recommendations reflected in the draft constitution. We would not have presented that quality input without the information from the Internet. And that goes for the individual people themselves. Once you get quality information, quality knowledge, you are not afraid of expressing yourself. This helps the democratisation process"

The LRC is now developing open learning materials and hopes to launch a distant education programme for teachers in 2004.

One small step – a tale of cybermagic

FINALIST
country: Swaziland

Three years ago, none of the members of the Swazi Professional Handcrafts Association (SPHA), an association of informal crafters had touched a computer. Today they are a bunch of IT literate, empowered people who have managed to expand their businesses to foreign shores.

The association was formed by a group of 14 indigenous craftspeople who had been brought together by a German organisation, Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ).

From 2000 to 2002, GTZ was involved in a small project in Swaziland through which the 14 craftspeople were assisted to improve both their craft and their entrepreneurial skills.

When GTZ was about to stop operating in Swaziland, the departing GTZ Project Advisor suggested that the group of craftspeople might find it useful to be able to access the Internet and computers in general.

She felt that computer literacy would give the participants access to the world in an increasingly globalised economy; give them a skill which is fast becoming an essential part of the economic environment; and give them confidence to use a mainstream technology to build their businesses.

A Swazi employee of GTZ helped develop an appropriate course that would impart basic computer skills to the group who had generally low levels of literacy. They were taught simple things like how to start up and shut down a computer, to save information on a diskette, to create their own e-mail address, to send and receive e-mails, to send and retrieve attachments, to search the Internet for information, and to print and download materials.

GTZ made its computers available for the teaching and learning process. There were only a limited number of computers, so only five of the craftspeople participated initially. They each paid R10 in training fees into the SPHA account for each of the 26 four-and-a-half hour workshops.

When it was clear that the GTZ offices would not be available long-term for the craftspeople, they were introduced to Internet cafés. In this way, even when all the staff of GTZ had left, the craftspeople were still able to keep in touch with them through e-mail, and did not have to feel isolated.

GTZ's parting gift to the group when it withdrew from Swaziland at the end of 2002 was a year's subscription to an Internet café, allowing them 12 hours of Internet access a month. Thomas Lukehele, the founder of the association has made sure that not a moment of those 12 hours is wasted. He is in weekly contact with the ex- GTZ Project Advisor in Frankfurt/Germany and a consultant in Johannesburg, South Africa. In this way, he has been able to access advice on a range of issues from registration to fundraising to business development.

The moment they were introduced to the Internet and e-mail, the craftspeople began communicating with other stakeholders in the project via e-mail. They produced their own CVs, and some of them started developing other items such as certificates which they presented to those whom they in turn were training in their crafts.

Almost all of them now have a business card, which they created themselves on computers, and the SPHA has its own business card.

Many of the craftspeople in the group were barely literate but, in the course of the two years, they mastered computers and the Internet. They discovered that they were not just part of Swaziland, but part of the global village.

It gave them the confidence to put their wares out for sale in the international marketplace. With every order that came from outside Africa, their confidence increased.

Says one of the members, "About the computer I am also happy because I can send my messages everywhere in the world. I can advertise my goods wherever I like to sell them. This is a very easy way of doing things."

Each of the members now has his or her own web page. Access to foreign markets means their earning potential has increased.

The craftspeople also have access to advice from consultants across the world, at the cost of an Internet connection.

Through networking, they are also learning more about their crafts in terms of design, raw materials and production methods, leading to the development of innovative and market-oriented products.

As their struggle to learn how to use ICT has brought them closer together, and made them more dedicated in their business, they are now keeping basic financial records that enable them to make informed decisions about their businesses on everything from costing to marketing to delivery and customer service. They are setting up a shared office and venue for displaying their wares; and offering their services to train others in an informal apprenticeship relationship.

In fact, their experience with ICT has gone as far as to improve gender relations in a society where women are not regarded highly. As ICT is not gender specific, the ability of the women to master the skills as competently, if not more so, than the men, has been an equalising factor.

Their experience has shown that access to the world of ICT gives people confidence and a sense of empowerment. It has changed their view of the world and given them a feeling of being able to master something, rather than be mastered by it.

It has made them actors in the global market instead of being victims of globalisation.

Gender

In many international, regional and national fora on ICT, delegates gloss over the fact that 189 countries signed the Beijing Platform for Action, committing not only to mainstream a gender perspective into all policies and programmes, but also to adopt a strong gender analysis in designing them.

The Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) recognises that women and girls have very specific needs when it comes to the design and application of ICT. The GKP is also aware that to address the gender aspect of the "digital divide," many initiatives are being implemented around the world that aim to empower women and promote gender equity in access to ICT, as well as in their design, implementation and use. So when the Association for Progressive Communications-Women's Networking Support Programme (APC WNSP) proposed the four-year Gender and ICT Awards project, GKP was fully supportive, stressing the need for such an initiative. As a result, the Gender and ICT Awards project received a full year's financial support, aiming to honour and bring international recognition to the innovative and effective projects that encourage the strategic use of ICT by women for the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment. Special emphasis is given to projects designed and implemented by women.

The Awards' objectives are to: 1) Recognise gender and ICT initiatives globally and provide further impetus for others to mainstream gender in the field of ICT for women's empowerment, and therefore support a number of internationally agreed recommendations for gender equality, and women's rights and empowerment; 2) Provide a much needed avenue to recognise community-based or small-scale initiatives designed and implemented by women and women's organisations/networks while providing recognition to larger scale but cost-effective multi-stakeholder initiatives; and 3) Provide much needed opportunities to develop new collaborations/partnerships and opportunities for upscaling small-scale and community-based initiatives.

A total of 110 applications were received by the submission deadline and these came from all over the world — Europe, Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, the Pacific, and North America. Applicants competed under two main categories of "Outstanding Individual or Community-Based Initiative" and "Outstanding Multi-stakeholder Initiative". For "Outstanding Individual or Community-Based Initiative", applicants vied for the Awards under the areas of "advocacy/networking" or "capacity-building". The category of "Outstanding Multi-stakeholder Initiative" was further sub-categorised to "global/regional" and "national/local" levels. It was a very difficult task in screening these applications and to shortlist them for final judging. The team of judges also faced a challenging task of choosing the final winners. We wished we could have awarded each one of the finalists as they truly had their own winning edge. Hopefully, their stories will be told and re-told so that many more will come forward to support these effective initiatives and to further enable women towards self-determination and empowerment. The GKP is proud to be a partner with the APC WNSP on this Gender and ICT Awards project and invites others to join us in ensuring that women and girls truly count.

apc wnsp women's networking support program

GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE PARTNERSHIP GKP

WINNER OF THE GENDER AND ICT AWARDS
INDIVIDUAL/COMMUNITY-BASED INITIATIVE: CAPACITY BUILDING CATEGORY

e Seva (e services) of West Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh, India

http://www.westgodavari.org
country: India

The project e Seva (e services) in the district of West Godavari, in the province of Andhra Pradesh in India, was initiated as a tool to introduce ICT in the rural areas, especially to women.

Using ICT, the project provides these people with access to various C2C (citizen-to-citizen) and C2G (citizen-to-government) services.

Web-enabled rural kiosks termed e Seva centres, have been established at the mandal (a sub district unit of administration) level. A unique feature about these centres is that they are run and managed by the women from self-help groups, positioning them as information leaders, and helping to bridge the gender divide.

The women's groups act as change agents while drawing strength from the project. ICT has played a crucial role in facilitating this change.

Another important aspect of the project is that it replaces the traditional form of governance and its accompanying deficiencies with a modern, more open, transparent and responsive service delivery system.

The e Seva centres run on a district portal that allows access to various citizen centric services. These services range from the issuance of various certificates to getting information about programmes and also go to the extent of allowing citizens to network with each other for mutually beneficial transactions. Citizens can file grievances at these centres. Every grievance is acknowledged and transferred online for field action. They can also publicise their projects and goods through the portal for online auctions.

Even a marriage bureau has been operationalised so that prospective brides/grooms can place their bio-data online to attract suitable offers, thus making the search for life partners easier and more cost-effective.

Through the portal, the centres expect to provide a virtual meeting place for the citizens to discuss issues relating to their districts/villages, their problems and prospective solutions.

The citizens can freely interact with each other and post their ideas. This acts as an online forum for them to vent their grievances, air their opinions and cause necessary social change. It also provides an opportunity to conduct opinion polls on important topical issues leading to improved decision-making. The kiosks have also become an important mode of communication between the administration and the community. The initiative began in the year 2002 and has been steadily gaining ground.

The benefit is that rural villagers no longer have to travel for miles and go through lengths of red tape in order to get financial grants or access various government services.

It has empowered the women's self-help groups who own and run the kiosks. Moreover, the women who run the centres are trained to use ICT and they become information intermediaries and information leaders. This change in their status has helped improve their relative bargaining power.

Most of these self-help groups come from the poorest segments of the society and the project helps them achieve economic independence. With almost over 80 kiosks operating in the district, the project has been able to carry out more than 300,000 transactions relating to various C2C and G2C services.

These centres have been able to deliver 120,000 certificates while over Rs 50 million has been collected for the payment of electricity bills without any hitches. All the centres are doing good business and becoming self-sustainable. They are earning anything between Rs 6,000 to Rs 15,000 per month. Over 5,000 various grievances from citizens have been channelled through this project; over 4,000 of them have been redressed.

The project has helped in the creation of a knowledge and information economy thereby bringing in more opportunities and prosperity to the impoverished areas of this district. It helps dispel the myth that IT solutions are not for the poor and not for women.

Digital Divide

FINALIST
category: Individual/Community-Based Initiative (Capacity Building)
http://www.palmdps.act.edu.au
country: Australia

The Digital Divide Programme at Palmerston District Primary School aims to provide training in computer skills specifically but not exclusively for women from non English speaking backgrounds (NESB). This is because Palmerston District Primary School, in Gungahlin, has the largest NESB enrolment in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). The project received grants from the Australian Government to carry out this initiative.

The program aims to facilitate the return/entry to the workforce for those adults (particularly NESB women) by providing training in writing curriculum vitas and interviewing skills; while increasing parental (particularly NESB women) knowledge of computers in an educational setting so that they do not feel alienated from the school life of their children. So far, 310 women (279 from a NESB background) and 21 men, have successfully completed the eight-week training course in the three years of implementation.

All beneficiaries are from Gungahlin. All participants, especially the women, were seeking re-entry or entry into the workforce. Fifty-six women, 42 from NESB background, progressed from the introductory computer sessions, through the intermediate session to completing the advanced skills sessions. Of these women, 23 (15 from NESB background) have subsequently gained full-time employment within the ACT.

As a result of this program, some participants have found full-time jobs. Others have gained significant computer knowledge. A significant percentage of adults have gained the skills to access and use e-commerce transactions.

All participants have increased their self-esteem and have expressed their satisfaction in being able to understand what their children are doing at school, especially with regards to ICT. Previously, they felt (rightly or wrongly) that the children felt superior to them and spoke disparagingly to them whenever they asked a question at home. An unexpected outcome is that student enrolment has increased and as a result, vandalism has diminished. It was also not anticipated that the program would service so many people, nor that the project would extend over so many semesters, but it has.

Community Reproductive Health Project (REPROSALUD)

FINALIST
category: Individual / Community-Based Initiative (Capacity Building)
country: Peru

The Community Reproductive Health Project (REPROSALUD) is a co-operation agreement between the Manuela Ramos Movement, Alternativa and USAID (United States Agency for International Development).

It started in October 1995 with the Manuela Ramos movement responsible for its execution. REPROSALUD is an attempt to reduce the great gap that exists in healthcare between urban women and women living on the periphery and in rural areas.

It is also an attempt to reduce reproductive health problems among women in rural and peri-urban areas and to improve the under-utilisation of health services in those areas. The main objective is to get women to benefit from interventions in reproductive health. This includes both the health practices under the control of women (self-care) as well as for those dependent on the health facilities they go to.

The project aims to reach this target group by first providing technical assistance, training and financial support to grass-roots organisations in three lines of work: Community Reproductive Health Projects ("Subprojects"), Promotion and Advocacy of Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights and Income Generation Projects.

The second big task of the project is to develop a mass communications strategy. Thus, radio soap operas were developed under the direction of reproductive health communicators and educators.

The first production was broadcast between October 2002 and January 2003, under the title "Evelyn, a woman like you." The ideas and the script for the show were developed after collecting a number of real life stories and experiences of the men and women in the region.

The trilogy "Pregnancy, Delivery, Breast-feeding" allows participating women and men to reflect on their own stories and identify alternatives to risky situations faced by pregnant women who do not go for periodic health check-ups, or when the delivery is not attended to by a health professional.

This great effort helped create awareness about women's right to be heard and to be acknowledged as active agents whose opinions and proposals must be taken into consideration. And so, "Evelyn" became an opportunity for women to get a word out to the public through the radio.

The radio, an ideal medium for the discussion of national, local, community and routine issues, has confirmed its position as the preferred communications medium by users of the project. Thus, the use of radio has not been seen as conflicting or contradictory, but rather as the logical consequence of a dynamic and growing process which involves women and men who wish to improve their lives and health.

MatMice: Free Homepages For Kids

FINALIST
category: Individual/Community-Based Initiative (Capacity Building)
http://www.matmice.com
country: Australia

One day, three young sisters - Emily (20), Sarah (19), and Elise (14) decided that it would be the coolest thing if there was a place on the web where kids, and especially girls, could easily create their own webpages.

They did some investigating on the Internet and discovered that while there were many websites catering to adults who wished to create their own webpages, there were few available for children.

Many involved difficult steps in creating a page and then uploading it to the Internet, thereby discouraging children from learning how to publish on the web. Children were forced to be onlookers, rather than participants.

So the girls set up MatMice: Free Homepages for Kids in 2000, to provide an easy way for children to create webpages, thereby giving them a voice on a web that is mainly adult-oriented.

The girls' desire was that children the world over would be able to share their ideas and experiences with one another, and learn from children who may have backgrounds different from their own.

One of the goals of this project was specifically to encourage girls to embrace technology. But instead of creating a "girls only" project, MatMice decided it would be most effective to open up the project to everyone, but to make it very friendly and more targeted towards the needs of girls. Developed with this in mind, MatMice is unique in that it makes it easy for children as young as six years old to create their own webpages.

The innovative webpage builder is extremely flexible and allows children to control the placement of headings, images, text and links. However, it retains a simplicity that means that no prior technical knowledge of creating webpages is required.

The reason that the project is so successful is that it balances flexibility and simplicity and is incredibly easy to use. There are no other webpage builders that give the same result.

The MatMice project builds girls' skills with information technology and encourages them to become active participants and "owners" of their part of the worldwide web. The project empowers girls by helping them to use technology to publish their own webpages. It gives girls the same opportunities that boys have, to be heard on the web.

To date, MatMice has been used by more than 350,000 children in over 150 countries around the world. The children are generally between the ages of eight and fourteen. Although MatMice is used by both boys and girls, 76 per cent of the users are female.

Following the success of this project, the founders of MatMice have been invited into schools to give motivational presentations about technology to girls.

Alicia, a twelve-year-old from the United States had this to say after using MatMice to build a homepage: "When I first started, I was confused about a lot of things. Now, I am learning HTML code.

Who would have ever thought it possible? When I see all that you girls have accomplished and being so young, it somehow makes me more confident in myself. I say to myself that, 'Young girls can accomplish great things'. Your endless hours of work are quite an inspiration to us all!"

All work on the project has been done voluntarily, and can be used by children for free. The website is also free of advertising.

MatMice also allows children to communicate on common issues, such as serious illnesses, which affect young people wherever they live. For example, a young girl from New Zealand, created a webpage describing her experiences as a diabetic. She received messages of support from all around the world, and it increased other children's understanding of what it is like to live with diabetes.

One of the unique opportunities that the Internet gives us is for bridge-building. Children find it really exciting to hear from others from the far side of the world; they do not have the prejudices that many adults do and will happily communicate with people from any country.

When young people are on the web, race and religion are hidden and common interests take precedence over differences. There is much that children can learn about other cultures simply by communicating with others, and this leads to greater tolerance and understanding. One of the goals of MatMice is to facilitate this global learning and communication.

Until MatMice was launched, not many adults had even considered that children would want to have webpages. The worldwide web was dominated by content that was written by adults (and male adults at that). But today, the MatMice project receives hundreds of e-mails from kids who say that without MatMice, they would never have been able to have their own webpage. With 76 per cent of the children using MatMice being female, it has also significantly increased the amount of content on the web that is produced by young girls.

The project has won several awards for its innovativeness and has appeared on various television shows and in news items throughout the world.

Women's E-Business Support (WEBS)

FINALIST
category: Individual / Community-Based Initiative (Capacity Building)
country: United Kingdom

Much of the research into women's business networks indicates that such networks, in general, are very important to women business owners and that they differ from male networks and the way men use them.

However, very few women network, and those who want to are often excluded from traditional networks set up by men — especially those centred around the golf club or breakfast meetings.

Women are often too busy (sometimes with pressures of family) to acquire access to business support, much less research ICTs and apply these to their businesses. Most women-owned businesses in the UK are sole traders and this can lead to isolation and a lack of access to training and finance to invest in new technologies. Women also face barriers to self-employment that men do not — especially in the areas of access to business support, access to finance and the pressures of family life.

Manchester Women's Electronic Village Hall set up Women's E-Business Support (WEBS) to address these issues by encouraging women business owners in Manchester to network both physically and virtually.

Before women join the online network, they can seek support and advice from WEBS to set up Internet access and e-mail accounts.

The ultimate aim of WEBS is to enable women business owners to take advantage of new technologies to enable them to compete on a more equal footing, especially for those seeking to establish businesses in the male-dominated areas of computer services and internet-based services. Through WEBS, women are encouraged to take control of the technology used in their businesses and to understand how it works so that they are more confident in their use of ICT.

The project also aims to promote gender equality through supporting female-owned businesses to increase turnover, profitability and survival rates, and by encouraging women to participate in business networks and clusters.

WEBS provides initial business advice and counselling for women business owners, particularly those in computer software and services, creative industries, media, advertising and social enterprises. It helps the women develop links with existing business support services.

WEBS even develops and delivers specific services to meet the needs of women in business in the target sectors including (but not limited to): ICT audits and development of ICT and e-commerce strategies, practical support for the implementation of ICTs in business, seminars and workshops on priority issues, access to drop-in facilities providing resources and ongoing support in using new technologies.

WEBS encourages peer support and networking through the development and promotion of web-based services, which link women business owners. It also ensures equal opportunity policies and practices are integrated into the project's development and promoted amongst businesses supported.

In addition, ICTs are used in the project to network and create mailing lists and e-zines to keep widely dispersed women (and women working alone) in touch and informed about what is happening in the wider business community as well as in the local area.

WEBS also provides a business incubation space for women who wish to move from a home-based work environment to an office space. This is necessary as women cannot afford city centre rates and they usually need office space that is available on a flexible basis. WEBS work spaces offer these privileges as well as free technical support, free broadband access and onsite business support.

The beneficiaries of this project are women business owners or those wishing to set up a business in deprived urban areas of Manchester. They run varied businesses and most of them are sole traders. The women we have worked with so far are aged between early 20's and early 60's.

As a result of WEBS, these women are able to carry out their work through a female-focused approach that takes into consideration other commitments, including family and work (many women run their businesses part-time).

WEBS has helped in demystifying ICTs and is helping women to take control of the ICT systems and processes on which their businesses increasingly rely on.

With support and advice through WEBS, the women are able to negotiate the creation of business web sites, learning also to update, manage and market them themselves.

The women feel that they have truly and finally found the kind of support they need to run their businesses successfully. Previously, they felt patronised or that they lacked credibility because they wished to set up a part-time business, or were not interested so much in making large profits as in maximising the work-life balance.

WEBS took a holistic approach to meeting women's needs, by including both personal development and business development. By offering both virtual and physical networking opportunities, WEBS is helping women who run home-based businesses to become less isolated as they have an online forum to discuss issues and concerns they may have about their business.

WEBS partner organisations have benefited from the knowledge of the barriers and issues which affect women who wish to set up their own business. This makes them better able to provide ICT and general business support to women generally.

The community has benefited from more women becoming visible and involved in the areas of business and technology. It is hoped these women will act as role models and encourage other women to take the step into self-employment which often provides more flexible working conditions and professional development opportunities for women.

Women's ICT Trainers Education Centre (WEC)

FINALIST
category: Individual/Community-Based Initiative (Capacity Building)
http://www.e-jednakost.org.yu/projekti/ict.htm
country: Serbia and Montenegro

During the past decade the political situation and the economy in Serbia and Montenegro (former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) has been very difficult. The war caused an enormous brain drain followed by a lack of resources in every area. The development of the ICT sector has slowed down and the consequences have been evident in the country's economy. This has resulted in some very hard times, particularly for women.

The NGO "Equal Opportunities" wanted to help improve the situation for women by imparting ICT skills in schools with the hope that the impact would filter down into the community. However, it was found that there were no teachers to teach ICT in schools. This created the need for education of teachers in ICT, who would then transfer the knowledge to school children during school hours and their families after school hours.

To fulfil this need, the NGO launched the project “Women's ICT Trainers Education Centre” (WEC) in May 2003. Aside from teachers, the project targeted women in rural areas, medical doctors, staff in rural hospitals, defectologists, slightly handicapped women, unemployed women with a University degree, women politicians, women who lost their jobs in the transition process, refugees and displaced persons. Special training has also been organised for young single mothers who have been banished by their families, and orphaned girls (aged 14-18).

The project is in progress and already 65 teachers (62 women and 3 men) have successfully completed the programme. Each group of women that was trained was briefed on gender and its impact. The groups also discussed ways to advocate gender equality.

The impact of the programme has been quite widespread. The trained teachers can transfer their knowledge directly in classrooms, and in line with the National Educational Act which requires ICT programmes be taught from the lowest grade in primary school.

ICT enables the teachers to use improved methods of imparting information, which benefits the students. It helps marginalised young women to compete equally with men and privileged women, in the job market. These women are able to get better jobs that pay well, which in turn improves their living conditions.

It is a known fact that when you empower a woman, you empower the entire family. When women are empowered with ICT skills, you can be sure the knowledge is going to be transferred to the entire family and will be used for the improvement of everyday life. This will result in a more empowered society.

Women who had no opportunity to gain ICT skills, are now getting it free through the WEC. The project has reinforced awareness that using ICT to empower women is a tool for the overall progress of the whole society. As a result, the project has drawn the attention of many parties from the government (Ministry for Education and Sports) to the ICT sector and media. Other NGOs and women’s groups have expressed interest in joint activities.

WINNER OF THE GENDER AND ICT AWARDS
INDIVIDUAL/COMMUNITY-BASED INITIATIVE: ADVOCACY CATEGORY

Nabanna

country: India

Change Initiatives is an organisation that is putting a web-based information system to strategic use for the benefit of poor women in Baduria, a rural region in North-24 Parganas district, in the Indian state of West Bengal.

The project is called Nabanna and seeks to empower poor women who have been unable to fulfil even basic needs because of their lack of access to information and skills that could help them advance.

Change Initiatives also found that they were entrenched in a system that built barriers around them, and limited their participation in society.

The quest to develop an information system in Bengali to benefit these poor women gathered pace in August 2002, when Change Initiatives joined forces with UNESCO. The collaboration was established through a grant competition that the agency conducted on the Internet to locate partners for its project: "Empowering the Underprivileged through the Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)."

Under UNESCO's aegis, Change Initiatives began discussions with National Informatics Centre (NIC) which agreed to provide the web interface eNRICH; and with researchers from London School of Economics and Queensland University of Technology who decided to support the action research activities.

The pilot project, involving the women from Baduria Municipality, took off in February this year.

Baduria has four ethnocultural regions, separated by village bodies and geographical factors, yet they are actually quite close to one another. To connect the four regions and help them help each other, Change Initiatives is exploring innovative uses of databases, intranet portals and web-based partnerships in the local language. The emphasis is on building a framework for information sharing, content creation, off-line information dissemination and web-based partnerships with organisations located outside the region.

To facilitate information sharing, five ICT centres are being set up in Baduria and Rudrapur (they comprise a single landmass), Taragunia, Arbelia and Punda. The ICT centre in Baduria is the main hub while the other four centres will act as nodes.

The Baduria ICT centre has two desktops and a printer/scanner. The others will have a desktop and a dot matrix printer. All the computers run on WindowsXP operating system and are equipped with eNRICH, MS-Office, Adobe Photoshop & Adobe Pagemaker.

An Internet facility is only available at the Baduria ICT centre for the time being but networking with other centres has been made possible through the innovative use of portable drives.

The women are taught basic computer skills and how to use MS-Office and DTP applications. They are also learning data input and how to search for content in eNRICH — a programme with archival and retrieval properties.

An interesting component of Nabanna, is that the beneficiaries have been asked to maintain a diary on their lives.

Nabanna's ultimate plan is to build knowledge modules that will be a database of localised best practices to help women solve local problems.

To ensure efficient circulation of eNRICH contents, off-line information dissemination structures have been developed within Baduria through the creation of information groups of poor women, publication of a community newspaper and the setting up of bulletin boards in the houses of beneficiaries.

As a result of Nabanna's progress so far, government organisations, corporations and education institutes are showing an interest in building a web-based partnership with the women.

Nabanna's biggest achievement to date is having instilled a sense of personal empowerment among the beneficiaries. From women who were hardly recognised in their societies, they are now respected in their community for their ICT skills and creativity. The younger women feel they are able to approach the job market with greater confidence.

There has also been an emergence of solidarity — for as the women learn computers together at the ICT centres, they also often discuss their problems, creating a sense of unity among them and also bringing forth their inert leadership qualities.

Trainees at Baduria are taking their skills back to the regional centres and in turn becoming teachers there. For instance, one of the trainees of the Baduria ICT centre has been chosen to manage the Arbelia centre. She trains students in Arbelia while she continues learning computers at Baduria.

The diary contents have helped Change Initiatives develop modules for the information sharing groups. The groups meet once a week to discuss issues such as livelihood, agriculture, health, education and wisdom. The results of the discussions are recorded and researched for development of an adequate platform for eNRICH.

A newspaper with a circulation of 2,000, has reached out to a large-section of the local community to raise awareness about Nabanna and the activities of the women. This has garnered a positive response to Nabanna among the local community which will help facilitate the project's content-creation efforts.

Finally, Nabanna is fulfilling the practical needs of the poor women of Baduria through innovative use of ICTs by focusing on their immediate concerns such as livelihood, education and health.

Through ICT, these women are empowered and are able to network with other women. They are able to generate content resources, deliver them and use what others have uploaded into the eNRICH database.

Through the information sharing sessions, the women have become more knowledgeable. Through the computer lessons, they have acquired skills. Both have allowed the women to be held in high regard in their communities.

The community has found that a more empowered, knowledgeable and confident woman empowers her society by facilitating the process of collective decision-making at the family level and in the community.

ADA Network and Explore Training Project, Women in New Technologies

FINALIST
category: Individual/Community-Based Initiative (Advocacy)
http://www.ada-online.be
country: Belgium

Interface3 asbl is an independent centre offering vocational training and the long term integration of women into the labour market. In January 2001, the organisation together with four ICT vocational training centres and other partners set up the ADA Network and Explore Training Project, Women In New Technologies. The aim of the project was to help women gain ICT skills and equip them for a labour market that is continuously changing.

It has helped to raise awareness about gender discrimination among industry and firms. This goal was accomplished by collecting and publishing information about the image of women and ICT; finding and publishing positive examples of female students in ICT, women working with ICT and women who use computers in their day-to-day dealings.

The project also hoped to benefit under-qualified unemployed women looking for work or re-entering the labour market. Younger women and girls were included in efforts to introduce them to computers and the Internet.

A large number of the women came from different ethnic minorities. The strategy included sensitizing the general public about women and ICT through newspaper articles, presentations and local broadcasts (23 articles in 2 years and 2 broadcasts). The project homepage has been an important tool to educate people about women and ICT. Currently the site receives 4,000 hits a month. Participation in trade and labour fairs and ongoing debates and lobbying with decision-makers in government, industry and training centres, has also helped spread the message and influence change.

Young girls and women now have a more positive outlook in their approach to computing. They are also more self-confident about going into ICT.

As teachers were also trained in ICT, students had a role model to follow, thus creating a multiplying effect. Even industry is starting to mainstream gender in its system of recruitment and in its training processes.

The project has benefited a wide range of people.

fem'LINKpacific: Media Initiatives for Women

FINALIST
category: Individual/Community-Based Initiative (Advocacy)
country: Fiji

fem'LINKpacific — a community-based NGO - was born out of a desire to provide not just an alternative viewpoint but an additional viewpoint to the coverage of issues by the mainstream media. The organisation develops, produces and distributes a range of community documentaries which feature the voices, perspectives and stories of women on a range of topics.

Through the eyes of women and their community, fem'LINKpacific's productions take a critical look at the current developments in their country, the region and the world. For instance, one production, titled fem'TALK: Postcards for Peace, attempts to highlight peace within the current framework of Fiji's post-conflict reconstruction. This video highlighted issues such as How can a Woman Best Use Her Vote; Poverty issues; Young Women's issues; Violence against Women; People-centred Policies; and Qualities of Leadership, among others. Another video, fem'TALK: Not Just Sweet Talk, was a video that documented viewpoints of more than 20 women, in the lead-up to the 2001 General Elections.

Postcards for Peace brings together stakeholders from the NGO, civil society and tourism sectors to discuss a range of issues including: Sharing Experiences from our internal conflicts of 1987 and 2000; Conflicts and Challenges from the perspective of resource owners, security concerns, social and environmental impacts; 'Herstories' from women in the industry; and vision statements. At the same time, fem'LINKpacific continues to lobby the mainstream media industry to develop people-centred and gender-centred programmes, rather than pander to the interests of advertisers.

Most of the video production is done using a small digital video camera so that the women being interviewed do not feel uncomfortable. All these documentaries demonstrate the inherent 'power' of women to shape the future of their country.

E-mail is used to produce and disseminate a monthly e-news bulletin to various groups within the country and overseas. Other forms of ICT are being employed to develop a community radio initiative; and a lot of documentation work is taking place.

The beneficiaries of the project are the participants/interviewees of the community media initiatives, especially rural and semi-urban women, who are having their stories heard for the first time. Generally these are the women whose stories and issues do not make the news or even NGO information networks.

NGO, government and regional partners working with grass-roots women also benefit from the feedback given by the communities, and disseminate their development information through fem'LINK's video and audio productions and news bulletins.

The documentation work by fem'LINK enables "gender activists" to articulate critical issues within the context of Fiji's sociopolitical-economic climate; while community videos assist women to adopt issues in the video for their own advocacy campaigns.

Women also benefit from the community magazine/viewing guide which provides "women-centred" information without commercial sponsorship influence. And media alerts give the Press a wide range of women-centred "leads" to highlight and expand upon.

To pass on this production knowledge, young people from the community are being engaged in the production process to become sensitized community media practitioners.

In a society like Fiji, fem'LINKs efforts have helped break down barriers that prevented women, especially from the rural community, from speaking openly about their concerns. To free these women from the silence imposed on them, a small mobile radio unit goes out to them, offering a "safe space" for them to articulate and exchange viewpoints. A low-powered transmitter even allows women to interact with each other. All this enhances information sharing and the women know they are not alone.

Fem'LINK's initiatives are helping women understand how social, political and economic principles of human rights impact on the daily lives of women in communities across Fiji. Women's groups are being provided with advocacy and awareness tools that will assist them in devising appropriate strategies for action to address their concerns and problems.

Finally, fem'LINK's productions are being recognised as an important outreach tool to expand the mainstream media's awareness of the need to include stories about women, the poor and marginalised communities.

Femmigration: Legal Agenda for Migrant Prostitutes and Trafficked Women

FINALIST
category: Individual / Community-Based Initiative (Advocacy)
http: / / www.femmigration.net
country: Germany

Trafficking of women has reached alarming proportions in the EU. Many of them are migrant women who are tricked and forced into a cycle of violence and dependence. Even women who are in prostitution voluntarily are subject to a certain degree of sexual and physical abuse by punters and pimps.

Amnesty for Women, a human rights NGO which provides legal and social counselling to migrant women, migrant sex workers and trafficked women, wanted to reduce the number of trafficked women who are exploited and also the number who are tricked into prostitution.

This is how Femmigration came about, with the objective of advising migrant women of their rights and of support services within the EU. The beneficiaries of this programme are migrant women from non-EU states who work in the sex industry in the EU. It also benefits women who are intending to migrate to the EU by providing them information that can prevent them from being trapped by traffickers.

Femmigration's strategy was to build a website that would provide information about legal provisions with regards to migrant workers and prostitutes in the country of transit and country of destination. The information can be used by the women themselves, or by aid organisations in the countries of origin, transit countries and target countries. They receive advice about their legal situation surrounding migration and sex work in the target countries, about their rights as victims of human trafficking and of crimes, as well as support services offered by NGOs, and about health services. This preventive strategy also complements efforts to prosecute the offenders. Another important result of Femmigration is the creation of a network of organisations working in these fields.

Femmigration's work promotes respect for those women who freely choose to work in the field of prostitution. They abrogate a more tolerant society which respects the personal decision of every human being. As much as information has been a tool for empowerment, without ICT and the Internet, the impact of Femmigration would have been limited.

Modemmujer: Mexico's Only Electronic Communications Network

FINALIST
category: Individual / Community-Based Initiative (Advocacy)
country: Mexico

Modemmujer was formed by Mexican women wanting to establish continuous communication and outreach among feminist and women's movements at the national and international level in order to encourage social change and contribute to women's empowerment.

By facilitating access to the activities of women's movements, providing the space for them to interact, and creating a database of articles on women's issues, the project aims to play a leading and determinant role in the social and political arena and the decision-making process, by promoting women's rights.

Modemmujer began operations in 1995 offering coverage of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. Through 15 correspondents in different parts of the country and various participants at the conference, the daily events and discussions were distributed through e-mail. ICTs have been used strategically to distribute and support the women's and feminist movement's proposals and activities.

Modemmujer's strategy has been to offer an informative spot, twice a week, on the Internet, with texts on violence against women, reproductive and sexual health, citizen participation, youth, economy and labour issues. It has also incorporated new proposals, reflections and initiatives developed by women seeking gender equality.

Electronic mailing lists and newsletters form part of the internal communications strategy of various organisational networks that follow-up on population and health issues. Modemmujer helps publicise their activities through web pages and newsletters that are sent to government authorities, the media and general public. Every week, their electronic conference site is updated with national and international information selected from a gender perspective and organised by topic.

Modemmujer has also developed an archive of articles compiled from 1994 to date, on follow-ups to international conferences, experiences from women's organisations, analysis documents and proposals for gender equality. The archive is available to all the site's users. A web page that is regularly updated provides information on the daily activities of national and international women's organisations as well as a strategic link to the international arena. It has also facilitated online communication channels for international women's organisations, giving them an opportunity to build capacity as advocates for gender equality. The project is also creating greater awareness of the importance of new technologies from a gender perspective. Use of ICT has benefited both women in society as well as the women's organisations. Both now have a powerful tool to distribute and acquire information that can help improve women's position in society.

The networking created by Modemmujer between the organisations has encouraged the development of joint proposals that demand respect for women's rights. Through the use of various electronic bulletins introduced by Modemmujer, the project is able to support and promote urgent calls for action that are distributed by women's rights organisations globally.

Giving Visibility to Invisible Work

FINALIST
category: Individual / Community-Based Initiative (Advocacy)
country: France

Women's work is often invisible, even when it is creative and time-consuming. This is especially true of women who work collectively in obscure groups, not for money but for survival. They do not have the skills or mechanisms to market their products or activities; neither are they actively networking with those who face similar challenges and obstacles as them.

In order to expose their work to the right markets and to make these women more visible, Les Pénélopes, a feminist association created in France in 1996 set up "Giving Visibility to Invisible Work".

ICT was chosen as a means to achieve this objective. Websites that could be self-updated were created to act like a "calling card" for the different groups. The women were taught how to maintain their websites using simple software. Networks were created through e-mail and the use of the Internet, so that different women groups were able to communicate with each other. They no longer felt alone and isolated.

Les Pénélopes further extended the network of women in 2002, by including groups of women who worked in isolation in 16 other countries - Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Cameroon, Haiti, Bolivia, Mali, Paraguay, Ecuador, Mexico, Democratic Republic of Congo, Bulgaria, Senegal, South Africa, Yugoslavia, Canada and France.

This network is helping to empower women and raise awareness on gender issues. They have further developed a wide variety of activities such as reading and writing, learning, knitting, sewing, embroidery, photography, catering service, ironing, decoration, radio programmes, music and singing, social work, neighbourhood mediation, cooking lessons, theatre, painting, poetry, dyeing, pottery, cinema festivals, expositions and sales, children's day-care, cattle breeding, fur farming, fruit and vegetable transformation, production of peanut pastry, dressmaking, recycling, woodworking, home repair courses and printing. There is also a notice board where members can post information about their activities.

Interestingly, none of the participants had prior contact with ICTs. Today, they can not only send e-mails, exchange information, and search the Net, but they also update and add new tools to their websites. For example, Déclic, a group involved in radio, will soon install audio clips on their website. Their radio programs will be available through the Internet, enhancing their reach and impact.

The beneficiaries of this project are of course the women. Women who previously were barely surviving are now recruiting clients, acquiring skills and recovering their dignity. Victims of domestic violence are now able to move away and gain self-sufficiency

Armed with communication tools, a website and the space to express themselves, the women have become more confident. This confidence has helped them in turn to contribute to society.

For instance, having seen how their work has been appreciated and given value, these women are now more conscious of their social role and have become involved in the fight for gender equality. All of them confess to feeling "less lonely" and isolated. Some say they feel more accepted.

Most of the women involved in the project are migrants who speak very bad French. They can hardly read or write. However, their children are completely immersed into French society and sometimes feel ashamed of their mothers. Seeing their mothers give interviews on a website has somewhat changed this attitude and they too are beginning to recognise their mothers' creative talents. The women also feel that being part of a network makes clients take their work more seriously and gives their work more weight.

Another benefit of the networking is that groups stand by each other through challenges and difficult times. For instance, when one of the groups in Brazil was about to shut down as it could not afford to pay for some knitting machines that were loaned to them, the French group, Femmes Activities, held a fund-raising dinner in their benefit. They collected enough money to pay for the machines and even buy a ton of wool!

Les Pénélopes' next step is to determine and document common objectives, factors of success and difficulties encountered. The feminist organisation also dreams of gathering all the women's groups together in a seminar where they can evaluate their progress.

WINNER OF THE GENDER AND ICT AWARDS
MULTI-STAKEHOLDER INITIATIVE: GLOBAL/REGIONAL CATEGORY

Women Mayors' Link

http://wml.sef.ro
country: Romania

Women Mayors' Link (WML) is an initiative of the Stability Pact Gender Task Force (SP GTF), an NGO which calls for the full participation of women in the stabilisation process of the South Eastern European region. It was, and still is, very involved in training and campaigning for more women to be elected in local governments in 12 out of 13 countries/territories of the Stability Pact region. As a result of this work, the very first women mayors have been elected in Macedonia, their number was doubled in Albania, and some capitals now have women mayors (Belgrade, Ljubliana, Zagreb).

The biggest number of women mayors is in Romania, though most of them are in small, impoverished rural localities which men were not interested in. In Slovenia less than eight per cent of municipalities have women mayors, most of whom are responsible for the most developed cities.

These women had expressed their desire to network with other mayors from the region as well as the developed UNECE countries. As a result, the WML was set up to improve women mayors' leadership skills in building:

a) regional and international partnership and co-operation for projects that improve the quality of life of women and children in local communities; and
b) gender-balanced development and social consensus in local communities

About 50 selected women mayors from targeted SP countries and territories are beneficiaries of this project. The initiative collects information about women mayors in the Stability Pact Region and developed UNECE countries (women mayors' profiles and localities' profiles) by using the e-mail list server and the interactive webpage of the project. It also provides information such as proposal development, project implementation and written communication, that empowers women mayors and helps them improve their leadership skills. The website also presents the activities of women mayors in support of Justice and Development Initiatives for Women and Girls and indirectly promotes gender equality.

An e-news letter will be created soon to initiate and facilitate regional and international exchange of best practices in similar projects. The initiative is creating a framework for cooperation between women mayors at both national and regional levels and helping even the mayors themselves become more gender aware and enabling them to implement gender mainstreaming tools in all their project initiatives.

The WML is still in its teething stage and more will be done towards achieving its goals.

The Virtual Women's University (VIFU)

FINALIST
category: Multi-Stakeholder Initiative (Global / Regional)
country: Germany

The Virtual Women's University is an outcome of the International Women's University (IFU), which offered a 3-month postgraduate course in Germany in the year 2000. During the course, 700 participants — half of whom were from developing and transitional economies — researched global challenges such as water, information, migration, city, work and health.

The 700 participants were made up of researchers, journalists, NGO activists, artists and others.

In order to allow the participants to continue networking after the end of the course term, the web server www.vifu.de was created. The server consists of a virtual community, an electronic network and a virtual library.

This site provides extensive online resources on work and academic matters, politics, global and local conflicts and activism — all with a gender perspective. One is even able to find job offers and conference announcements and post messages on the message boards. This has allowed activists, journalists, students, scholars and politicians to continuously exchange knowledge, ideas and perspectives from all over the world.

VIFU's goal is to network among women internationally; to offer gender specific information, and to provide and strengthen IT competencies. Capacity building for women in the IT field is given particular emphasis as women users are often marginalised on the Internet by mainly male content. VIFU offers female users the opportunity to create and find content relevant to themselves, so that they may be empowered actors on the Internet and in IT-related fields.

Through the network's distribution of information, many women have received international jobs or scholarships. Increased technological competency has been acquired in the process of using the Internet and the server.

The impact of the server is probably best described in the words of a participant from the Philippines: "What VIFU has done is the empowerment of women through easy access to information. More importantly, it has engendered global solidarity in strengthening personal relationship among activists, academics and change agents the world over. I continue staying connected with human rights lawyers in Africa, with educators in Latin America, with activists and social workers in Asia. All this is possible because VIFU is the technological conduit where life-relationships are nurtured and kept alive. In a few days I will be in Ghana to connect with our sisters S. (human rights lawyer from Sierra Leone), M. (former member of parliament in Ghana) and S.K. (academic and activist from Bangladesh). Our work brings us to a common place at a common time. VIFU has made it possible that these encounters lead to countless possibilities where we can make a difference in the lives of other women. We will be there to draw plans on future collaboration; to keep ourselves engaged in each other's work; to be in close touch and involved in the realities that each of us represent."

Another participant from Myanmar said: "VIFU has made a great impact on my private, public and professional life. Technically speaking, we, the able women of the world all came together and had the honour of meeting the most able women of Germany. We left for our homelands after that — but we never (really) left because VIFU is part of our daily lives."

Cyber Institute for Women's Empowerment and Leadership (CIWEL)

FINALIST
category: Multi-Stakeholder Initiative (Global/Regional)
country: USA

The Cyber Institute for Women's Empowerment and Leadership (CIWEL) was founded in 2000 by the Women's Learning Partnership for Rights, Development, and Peace (WLP) organisation.

In the Middle East, only 6 per cent of Internet users in the region are female; the women leaders felt this was the main cause of inequality and lack of development there. In co-operation with women's organisations in Afghanistan, Jordan, Morocco, Nigeria, and Palestine, the WLP launched the CIWEL initiative.

The project was designed in response to the needs of women activists and NGO leaders, specifically in the Middle East and North Africa region, who identified access to knowledge and skill-building through technology as a primary resource for women's empowerment.

WLP convened a brainstorming and knowledge-sharing meeting at New York University. Women from 15 Muslim-majority countries were able to interact with their counterparts in the Global North. Together, they identified challenges, possibilities and resources for capacity and skill-building for the use of ICT to empower women.

The goal of WLP's CIWEL initiative is to ensure women's equal access to communication technologies and training. The expected outcome of this is their full participation in social, economic and political leadership.

The CIWEL project uses a combination of technology and communication tools: radio programmes; video programmes; live Internet radio webcasts and CD and web archives of the webcasts; multimedia packages consisting of CD-ROMs, videos and training manuals; and online e-mail.

In addition, web-based distance learning courses and an eLearning centre for women were established. The project also created roaming institutes for the training of trainers; multi-lingual websites; and provided training and capacity building for partner organisations. Each of these "tools" is adapted to the linguistic and cultural needs of target constituencies.

More than 3,000 women and girls have participated in WLP's CIWEL initiative in Afghanistan/Pakistan, Cameroon, India, Jordan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Morocco, Nigeria, Palestine, Turkey, Uzbekistan, and Zimbabwe.

As a result, project participants and women in target constituencies have felt more empowered to participate in economic, social and political decision-making. More women are playing an active role in the political sphere in Jordan, Morocco and Nigeria.

Women in Cameroon are organising radio shows focusing on women's issues and WLP's partner organisation in Zimbabwe is establishing a technology training centre for refugee women from Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Tanzania to increase their technical and capacity-building skills.

Women in all project countries are empowering their daughters and teaching their sons to respect women's rights; and women are being empowered to secure better working conditions, change organisational behaviour to be accountable and participatory and advocate for policy that supports their well-being and human rights.

WLP's online distance learning courses provide women and girls with the unique opportunity to dialogue with women from other countries and increase their knowledge about human rights, democracy and peace-building.

Women have become more aware of their rights and are better able to participate in governance, decision-making and organisational transformation.

For example, participants at a Turkish workshop came together to establish a Women's Cooperative that would elect representatives who would negotiate with municipal authorities about community issues such as access to clean water, gender discrimination and violence towards women, among others.

In Cameroon, participants from a workshop are establishing a women's education and technology centre in their community

Following workshops in Jordan, a participant changed her male colleagues' opinions about her potential as a team member on a municipal council. Initially unaccepting of her position on the council, her male colleagues insisted that she work from home. This was until the men recognised that she was making a valuable contribution. She was recently elected secretary-general of the council and is a role model and mentor for other women in her society.

An Afghan participant talking about her efforts to stand up for her rights says, "Although I am an educated woman, my family continually discourages me from accomplishing anything and does not respect my opinion. They did not even want me to come to the workshop, but I was determined to make this decision for myself. This workshop has strengthened my resolve to defend my rights and convince my family that women have an important role to play in building a peaceful and just society in Afghanistan."

An Uzbek workshop participant says, "Women and girls in Uzbek families traditionally have decisions made for us without anyone asking for our opinion. After this workshop, I feel I have the inner strength and confidence to change this practice, at least within my own family. I will show my family that I believe in myself and that I can achieve my goals."

Achieving E-Quality in the IT Sector

FINALIST
category: Multi-Stakeholder Initiative (Global/Regional)
http://www.unifem.org.jo/e-quality
country: Jordan

The development of ICT has caused disparities between knowledge-based economies and developing countries. Of those that have been left behind in developing countries, women are more likely than men to lack basic literacy and computer skills. Among women, Arab women are at a higher risk of being marginalised compared to women in other societies.

A study by UNIFEM on "Women's Participation in the Jordanian ICT Sector" found that there was a widening gender gap in the ICT sectors. This resulted in a project towards "Achieving E-Quality in the IT Sector".

UNIFEM teamed up with the Jordanian government, Cisco Foundation and Cisco Systems, Inc. to build women's technical and professional capabilities. The intention was to give women enough of an edge to compete effectively in a male-dominated ICT market, and to enable them to secure stable, well-paying jobs.

Ultimately, the goal is to train women to design, build and maintain computer networks and provide them with the market-required skills in order to mainstream them in ICT's diverse applications.

The project had five strategies:

1. Explore opportunities and challenges in the ICT market and policy environment
2. Sensitise existing policies
3. Build women's capacity
4. Link participants to the local and regional ICT job market
5. Raise awareness on the importance of ICT

UNIFEM ensures that the programme reaches a diverse group of women, with priority given to those from low-income groups. With this in mind, UNIFEM targets women at three levels:

- the Macro level (Government and public institutions),
- the Meso (NGOs, schools, universities and the private sector) and
- the Micro level (individuals).

Community Centres and the general public are also beneficiaries. For instance, the Queen Rania Center for Educational Technology and Princess Eman Center for Information Technology community centres target women who are already employed in the ICT sector (women make up 28 per cent of the ICT labour force) and would like to enhance their IT skills; female students of colleges and universities that do not provide the CNAP programme; unemployed ICT graduates who would like to gain additional IT skills and women who would like to increase their IT knowledge for their own use at home. The community centres target women aged 18 and above.

Many other computer-related programmes and courses have been incorporated in academies and universities throughout Jordan, ensuring that the women there benefit.

The project is said to have reached all its goals and benefited Jordanian women and society as a whole in many ways. One of its outcomes was research on "Jordanian Women in the ICT Space". The research has been requested and used by numerous stakeholders, including ministers and ICT strategists, as a base for planning ICT strategies, formulating national ICT initiatives and gender-sensitising of existing ICT policies and initiatives.

The project has been successful in creating a more positive and gender-sensitive ICT policy climate through developing a mechanism to gender-sensitise major national ICT initiatives (by creating a Policy Lobbying Task Force). It has helped in building the capacity of women and increasing the number of women equipped with networking skills by establishing and operating ten gender focused Cisco Networking Academy Programmes in national institutions.

In regard to job placement, the project has been instrumental in increasing women's participation in Jordan's ICT sector and providing exposure to UNIFEM/Cisco CNAP graduates by coordinating with online and offline recruiting programmes and initiatives to link CNAP graduates to the ICT job market.

Through the Bridging Training Workshops (over 60 workshops were conducted), CNAP participants (800 students) were equipped with the necessary soft skills (such as presentation, creative thinking, team building, CV writing, career planning, communication, gender and IT skills), enhancing prospects for their participation in Jordan's ICT job market.

In the awareness-raising component, the project succeeded in creating maximum exposure to the project activities and objectives and raised awareness on the importance of including women in the ICT sector.

The project's success has attracted interest from NGOs and women's organisations in other countries in the Middle East. As a result, this Jordanian pilot project will be replicated in Egypt and Lebanon in addition to other countries in the region.

FIRE – Feminista International Radio Endeavour

FINALIST
category: Multi-Stakeholder Initiative (Global/Regional)
http://www.fire.or.cr
country: Costa Rica

Feminista International Radio Endeavour or FIRE is the first international Internet radio produced by women. Set up in 1991, it was originally created as a resource to amplify the voices of the women worldwide.

Based in Costa Rica, FIRE was broadcast originally on short wave. In 1998, it merged its traditional radio service with the Internet. This has enabled diverse formats of communication, through re-broadcasts in local radios, international short wave radio, magazines, newspapers, electronic networks and web pages. Internet provides the possibility of converting the computer into a transmitter of high frequency, more economical than traditional radio.

FIRE's main objectives include developing new forms of communication and contributing to change in the world order by disseminating women's voices (usually missing in mainstream media) in all their diversity. This allows their perspectives to be heard by men and women around the world, crossing barriers of nationality, culture, race, geography, language and gender.

FIRE's feminist perspective is not about 'women's rights' instead, it broadcasts women's voices and perspectives on all issues. This is especially important as women's voices, especially from the Global South, are often ignored in global media.

FIRE is not 'for' women; it is by and about women and their thoughts on various issues. While it is international in scope and reach, it is mainly produced by Latin American and Caribbean feminists who are FIRE's permanent producers and directors.

FIRE's strategy is to amplify the voices and ideas of women, promote women's rights, connect multiple voices, technologies and actions as well as strengthen women's and Third World media efforts by participating in local, regional and global initiatives.

In addition, it seeks to generate individual and collective commitment to movement-building and action. It also wants to produce high quality, non-sexist, activist programmes in Spanish and English for radio and the Internet.

Activity-wise, FIRE conducts special coverage of events and organises and produces web cast marathons on special occasions. It also produces women's PEACECASTS, which help create awareness and mobilise participation. Training in web-casting is conducted to build women's capacities with new information technology.

FIRE organises special web-casts from conferences and events where women come together to influence agendas at the local, national, regional or international level.

The FIRE-PLACE on the Internet was introduced in 1999 as a virtual radio station. It would set up at seminars or conferences, while opening its microphones to women so they could interact with the conference participants and share their news, reports, debates, sorrows and joys with an international audience. One example was the FIRE-PLACE at the Beijing+5 UN process.

In 2000, FIRE initiated the development of another kind of webcast — webcast marathons in the form of uninterrupted webstreaming lasting 8 to 25 hours.

Under the name 'Full Spectrum Against....' the marathons are organised on special dates of celebration and commemoration such as International Day Against Violence Towards Women and International Women's Day. Women around the world are invited to give their input on a certain issue.

FIRE also produces programmes that invite women to come to the station or call in. In addition, journalists are invited to listen to the live broadcast from their own countries to produce material for their own stations or re-broadcast the sound files. Radio stations and other webcasting initiatives are invited to link live. The Internet audience is also invited to both listen in and write to FIRE.

As a result, FIRE marathons link many different events and voices from all over the world with one common goal. They have also succeeded in building awareness and informing audiences about the perpetration of injustice against women worldwide. This is especially true of women from marginalised groups such as immigrants and indigenous communities who face racial and/or ethnic-based violence, sexual abuse/trafficking, and limited or no employment opportunities.

Through its marathons, FIRE has broadcast the voices of women affected by inequality at work as well as women who battle against racism and other related forms of intolerance. By doing this, FIRE webcasts have drawn media attention to related campaigns.

Another success story is the production of the PEACECASTS, which took place in the immediate aftermath of 9/11. A joint effort with other groups such as Women's International News Gathering Service (WINGS) and Feminists for the Gift Economy (FGE), the PEACECASTS were designed to get women from across the board to discuss issues. The project is based on the belief that peace on Earth can be achieved by realising women's values.

'Where women want to work' (www2wk)

FINALIST
category: Multi-Stakeholder Initiative (Global / Regional)
http: / / www.www2wk.com
country: United Kingdom

'Where women want to work' (www2wk) is a free one-stop shop for women around the world to independently research and compare the best organisations to work for, based on their own needs and preferences.

www.www2wk.com is a real-time, interactive, online, independent e-tool for women. It encourages women to use ICT for free and to research independently.

Importantly, the www2wk e-tool encourages women to harness the strength of their collective voices by using the internet to share and advise other women about the best places to work. Whether they are looking for equal pay, a fast-track career, a progressive work environment, or even an on-site créche — www2wk provides interactive resources for women, whether female graduates, unemployed migrants, or those returning from maternity leave.

Women can research organisations based on their own interests and they can read how other women rate certain organisations. Women are even allowed to pose anonymous questions and comments to organisations.

They can identify women friendly organisations to work for and make informed decisions — as employees, consumers, investors and even suppliers.

Conceptualised in September 2002, the project was piloted in 15 multi-national organisations and is now sold to companies around the world. As a result, industry organisations are now using the tool to develop, measure and benchmark their gender capital (i.e. performance in attracting, retaining, developing and promoting women).

Government organisations are able to access data on employment preferences of women. Academic institutions are eager to use the research and statistical data collected through the e-tool.

Women have a free resource to independently research and compare organisations to work for, completely based on their own criteria. They have been able to tap into and harness the collective wisdom of women around the world, based on their own needs and preferences.

It has also forced organisations to be more transparent and accountable about how they attract, retain, develop and promote women. With more and more users, the www2wk e-tool provides a constantly current, reliable, authentic and valuable reference for women.

The www2wk e-tool also comprises an online community for online discussion forums, daily member polling research, a woman-owned business directory, business information and resources for women, ICT training courses and workshops offered both online and offline.

It has reached women across cultures as the software is in multiple languages and character sets (e.g. Cyrillic's, Arabic, Asian characters, etc).

This is the first time globally that such current and in-depth information has been made available about women's career needs, choices and preferences. The www2wk e-tool has saved women valuable time by helping them with important decisions about where to work.

It is a free one-stop shop for finding the right employer. On average, a woman changes jobs seven times during her career. Over 25 per cent of a woman's decision about where to work is not based on salary. Choosing the right organisations to work for means less stress, more satisfaction, and better opportunities. Women are able to inform other women about the best places to work. They provide truths about company cultures to help other women make more informed decisions.

Companies that realise the benefit of being women-friendly are increasingly becoming more sought after as 'employers of choice'.

The www2wk e-tool provides an opportunity for such companies to showcase why they are good places for women to work, what initiatives they have in place, how they can prove they are trying to attract and retain women in their organisations, and what innovative programmes and incentives they offer.

WINNER OF THE GENDER AND ICT AWARDS
MULTI-STAKEHOLDER INITIATIVE: NATIONAL/LOCAL CATEGORY

Women's Experiences in Situations of Armed Comflict

http://www.isis.or.ug
country: Uganda

Isis-Women's International Cross Cultural Exchange (Isis-WICCE) is a global, action-oriented women's resource centre based in Geneva. It envisions an informed society that values and ensures women's rights, and promotes the full realisation of their capacities and potential.

Established in 1974, it relocated to Africa in 1993 when it wanted to focus its attention on documenting the conditions and needs of women living in situations of armed conflict. Prior to its work, very little was known about women's experiences in such situations especially in Africa.

"Women's Experiences in Situations of Armed Conflict" was carried out using different ICTs. This included use of tape recorders, video recording, photography and face-to-face interaction through meetings, focus group discussions and validation workshops. Their research results are available for download on their website.

The major focus of the project was to highlight women's experiences in situations of armed conflict, the roles they play, the effects and how they are coping in post conflict situations.

Implementation partners included Isis-WICCE, media crew, professionals and technical experts from different fields, medical staff, the Heinrich Boll Foundation and UNIFEM.

The project targeted areas that have experienced or are experiencing armed conflict in Uganda. These included the districts of Luwero, Gulu, Kitgum, Kasese, Soroti, Katakwi and Kumi.

The documentation was accomplished with the full participation of women war survivors and local leaders. All the respondents were based in affected rural areas. Respondents were found to be living in abject poverty with no source of income. The staff from Isis-WICCE did not ignore the conditions they were living in. During interviews, 2,012 clients were treated for various ailments and 110 surgical cases handled. A majority of the survivors had ailments that had never been attended to for 10-15 years after the armed conflict.

As a result of this intervention, the respondents' lives have been restored and they can smile and actively engage in activities that will improve their lives. One woman who can now go to church after 14 years of absence due to a health problem, said "I am able to interact with others and now I am in control of my life again."

Some survivors have been able to receive redress in the form of building materials to improve the poor quality of their housing.

Forty-five women leaders have undergone a five-year training course in conflict analysis, peace-building and leadership. They have also been trained in the use of drama as a tool to further disseminate information in local communities.

Twenty-seven women and 11 men learnt how to document women's realities from a human rights perspective. The findings of the documentation highlighted the need to attend immediately to high levels of trauma, especially amongst women war survivors. Based on this evidence, the Ministry of Health incorporated mental health as a key area of focus in its five-year strategic plan (1999-2003), an area which had previously been ignored.

This project has resulted in six research reports, two video documentaries, photographs and pictorial posters. Such a comprehensive package of information has been useful to a cross section of development workers and policy makers in lobbying for peace-building.

The research reports and video documentaries are powerful tools in raising awareness amongst communities on the need for peaceful resolution of conflicts and peace-building. It enables both women and men, educated and illiterate to understand the causes of conflict, the physical and psychological effects on women and men, as well as the need for harmonious and peaceful living.

For women who are normally unable to access information due to their numerous gender roles, video offers an opportunity to receive the information since the tape is normally short (either 15 to 40 minutes) and participate in the discussion that follows. International partners have also been able to use the documentation and especially the videos for capacity-building and sensitisation.

The process of documenting women's realities gave women an opportunity to share their experiences with the entire world. They have learnt that through communication and sharing their pain, those who care can help find avenues of redress. This has to some extent helped heal their wounds.

As a result, a good number who had given up on life have been able to move on. Many of them have, at different fora, challenged decision-makers and opinion leaders in their communities and found ways to address their problems.

The documentation enabled Isis-WICCE to recognise the animosity that prevailed among the various affected ethnic groups. As a result, it was able to initiate women's initiatives that have effectively contributed to the peace-building processes in the affected communities

The research findings were used to influence the Ministry of Gender and Community Development to incorporate the issue of peace as a cross-cutting issue in the National Action Plan. The areas of priority in the action plan are: Poverty, Income Generation and Empowerment; Reproductive Health and Rights; Legal Framework and Decision-Making; and the Girl Child and Education.

The African Psycare Research Organisation, with whom Isis-WICCE worked during the documentation, has continued working on the issue of trauma among war-affected communities.

The findings acknowledge the role played by women in post conflict situations. They also highlight the zeal of women and therefore the potential they have in the peace-building process.

Another outcome is that Women's Information Units were set up to enable women leaders to meet and discuss issues affecting women in their communities as well as to access some literature.

Computer Mania Day

FINALIST
category: Multi-Stakeholder Initiative (National/Local)
http://www.computer-mania.info
country: USA

Computer Mania Day is a half-day programme that addresses the under-enrolment of girls in elective Information Technology (IT) courses in high school.

It began in 1995 under the leadership of Shirley Collier, CEO of Paragon Smart Technologies, and in collaboration with Howard County Public Schools.

In 1998, when the programme ended, Howard County reported that the percentage of high school girls enrolled in elective IT classes had increased from 20 per cent to 50 per cent. Feeling that the goal was achieved, the developers ended the programme. However, that percentage appears to have declined since Computer Mania ended.

As Howard County's enrolments reflected national statistics, which was worrying (only five to seven percent girls are found in an elective high school computer class), Computer Mania Day was re-established in 2003 by CWIT (Center for Women and Information Technology). It provided a morning session during which technology-related activities geared for middle school girls and their parents and teachers were introduced.

The primary goal of the event was to increase the number of girls taking elective IT classes in middle and high schools in Maryland. On Computer Mania Day, 253 students gathered in small groups of 20, and rotated between information technology demonstration stations.

At each station, the students learned about the application of technology in working life through fun and interactive activities. Students also visited tables where high schools presented information and encouraged recruitment in IT programmes.

Although the programme focused on two counties in Maryland (Howard and Baltimore), middle school students (aged 10 to 12) arrived representing three states (Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania) and the District of Columbia. They were ethnically diverse, representing all minority groups. The event was free to ensure cost would not be a barrier to attendance.

Howard County arranged buses for economically disadvantaged students who did not have transportation (the event was held on a Saturday morning). In addition to schools getting involved, Girl Scout troops, soccer teams, and private girls clubs also signed up and brought their girls. The girls represented both urban and rural communities.

In addition, 350 parents and teachers attended a programme which highlighted reasons for low enrolment of girls in technology courses. They talked about what parents can do to encourage girls to embrace technology.

One hundred and fifteen UMBC students and business and community members volunteered on the day to support the programme and provide a one-to-three ratio of IT role models to middle school girls.

UMBC Bookstore was so impressed with the event that they adopted one of the programmes that reached girls at a critical point in their career path. The programme was held in UMBC in May 2003.

The response to the programme organised by UMBC was so positive that companies wanted to sponsor it the following year, parents wanted to know how to get their schools more involved, teachers wanted to meet both parents and students, and the students almost unanimously wanted to come back the following year.

In addition, Baltimore City and Anne Arundel, Prince Georges, and Montgomery Counties have asked to join Howard and Baltimore Counties in next year's Computer Mania Day.

Currently, Cisco Systems is working with CWIT to develop a booklet to be published online outlining all the elements of the programme so that it can be duplicated anywhere in the world.

Outcome data will also be published and updated online as new information is reported. In addition, Shirley Collier is working with Howard and Baltimore Counties in an initial effort this fall to visit every middle and high school to talk with girls personally about taking elective IT classes.

CWIT will be providing CWIT Scholars (high achieving women students in IT programmes) to visit the schools and talk with the girls about why they chose an IT career.

The intervention provided by this programme is critical as studies point out that lack of exposure to IT from a young age can lead to an erosion of confidence, which in turn leads to an increased attrition rate among young women in the IT field.

Parents and children who were exposed have learned how to promote technology in the home and classroom, to be aware of the social and cultural barriers to their child's success with technology, and how to become comfortable with and have access to technology in their lives.

The programme is empowering girls who are critical of and uncomfortable with the current computer culture so as to allow them to shape the future designs, development and uses of technology. They can think of new applications, new software and new technology altogether. They can think of ways to make it more acceptable to girls and women.

This programme is innovative and adds value to the national dialogue for three primary reasons. First, it targets teachers, parents and their children in one event. In addition, Computer Mania Day is expected to have a broad impact upon hundreds of girls without requiring large amounts of time on the part of the participants as is often the case with more focused workshops and after-school, weekend and summer programmes.

Strengthening Cyberela Network

FINALIST
category: Multi-Stakeholder Initiative (National/Local)
http://www.radiofalamulher.com
country: Brazil

CEMINA, a non-profit organisation working with women's community radio initiatives and concerned with gender equality in Brazil, seized the opportunity to integrate community radio with the Internet as the means to empower women.

As access to the Internet was becoming cheaper in Brazil, it proved to be a suitable "marriage partner" for the main mode of communication: radio. "Strengthening Cyberela Network" was formed to facilitate this union.

The initative had three objectives:

(1) to improve the quality of radio content by equipping producers of women's radio programmes with access to a broader spectrum of information through the Internet.

(2) to make Internet access available to the communities through the creation of community radio-telecenters;

(3) to have a defined area in cyberspace with gender content.

A website, www.radiofalamulher.com, was set up to allow women to access radio programmes with gender content, through the Internet. The initiative gives women experience with the Internet while they access something that is familiar (radio programme) as well as specific to their needs (gender content). At the website, visitors can download audio-files that contain radio programmes with gender content.

Two public contests were held to select women producers. Popular female radio communicators participated and have become committed key people in the Cyberela Network. These women were trained to use ICT for radio production: how to download and upload files, how to use the Internet for research, exchange audio files, e-mail and interact with listeners. Finally, telecentres were created to make the Internet available to the community.

Although still in its early stages, the project is already benefiting women. Most of its success is in that it has built on something that already exists - community radio.

It has become a support of sorts for women community leaders who are in radio production — helping them to improve the gender content of their programmes.

These women are able to upload files on the website that contain radio campaigns that address issues of violence against women, HIV/AIDS, and other important issues.

The project contributes to women's empowerment in two ways:

(1) by providing access, connectivity and capacity building for women that work at community level (the Cyberela Network);

(2) by producing content that addresses aspects of gender equality, thus directly making the World Wide Web less gender biased.

Today, the website serves as a reference point on gender for other women's organisations, the media, students, radio producers across the country and internationally.

In 13 months, they have averaged 100,000 hits on their website. The best evidence of the success of this project is that it has been recognised throughout Brazil and is gaining recognition overseas as an example of best practice.

Digital Teaching Units for Gender in History

FINALIST
category: Multi-Stakeholder Initiative (National/Local)
http://server.fhp.uoregon.edu/dtu/entry/dtu.html
country: USA

While web-based learning objects are excellent and affordable supplements to textbooks, the University of Oregon's Center for the Study of Women in Society (CSWS) found that feminist-inspired content was under-represented.

CSWS thus began a sustained effort to build web-based digital teaching units on an array of topics concerning women in history. Their goal is to help provide teachers and students with feminist curricular materials of high standard at no cost.

Digital Teaching Units (DTUs) for Gender in History puts primary and secondary sources, images, sound files and video clips at the finger tips of students and teachers with access to computers and Internet connections. This enables them to supplement or replace standard textbooks that are costly and provide inadequate coverage of new research on evolving gender roles and status across history. The DTU materials are designed so that they can be woven into mainstream courses where they reach students with many different interests and backgrounds, rather than just those taking up gender-related courses.

The CSWS hopes that access to the DTUs will give students a broader understanding of the roots and causes of unequal power relations, which is a necessary step if things are to change. Beneficiaries of the programme are students aged 14 years and above, from all income levels, and from both urban and rural backgrounds.

To date, CSWS has produced 25 different DTUs. These have been used in over 70 university classrooms, reaching 2400 students. They have also been used in an unknown number of high school classes as well as in community lectures.

The DTUs are benefiting the students by opening their minds to historical structures that have perpetuated inequalities. They inspire them with a greater knowledge of the social forces that have been working to correct these lopsided power relations.

Mainstream textbooks, particularly surveys of national histories, rarely give sufficient attention to unequal power relations and their roots. Western histories often ignore other cultures' important differences in gender ideologies, and they overlook the impact that colonialism has had on non-Western concepts.

The DTUs are using ICTs to help students bypass these inadequate resources and deliver materials that will educate young women and men. They are empowering them with the knowledge that will facilitate the identification and transformation of practices and ways of thinking that perpetuate inequalities.

One of the DTUs, for example, "Women in Slavery in the Caribbean," highlights the life and testimonial of a nineteenth-century slave woman and how her words helped abolitionists turn the tide against the hateful institution of slavery.

Through these sorts of stories, the DTUs reveal structures that have created and perpetuated imbalanced relationships between human beings over the years, and provide inspiration on how we can move towards a more just and balanced world.

Economic Empowerment of Minority Muslim Women in India

FINALIST
category: Multi-Stakeholder Initiative (National/Local)
country: India

This project owes its genesis to several background factors:

-- Lack of higher and professional education amongst the Indian minorities, specifically amongst the women and their consistent economic deprivation and backwardness.
-- Low penetration of Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) amongst the minority women.
-- Inability of the minority women to use ICTs for the advancement of their businesses.

The minority Muslim community was specifically targeted for this project as historically, they have been one of the most backward, poor and marginalised communities in India.

Their per capita income compared to the average national income both in urban as well as rural areas, is very low. A large percentage lack even basic primary education and the school drop-out rate, especially among women, is distressingly high. They live in segregated ghettos which further compounds their economic disadvantage. A large number of them have been subjected to communal violence, bigotry and riots.

The communal violence has not only left a deep impact on the psyches of the people; it has also further strengthened the ghetto mentality and increased their sense of isolation.

These reasons were enough motivation for the Datamation Foundation — an NGO that promotes Gender empowerment — to develop the Community Multi-media and ICT Center concept in mid-2002.

Convinced about the relevance of ICTs for the suppressed minority women of the country, Seelampur-Zaffarabad, a predominant minority ghetto located in North-East Delhi — was chosen as the pilot project.

With funds and support from UNESCO, the project looked into the needs of the minority women of Seelampur. As a result, these goals were targeted:

1) Promote voice and empowerment through communication. Assess impact of ICTs on the overall integration of the minority women and youth in the society outside the "ghetto";
2) Localise appropriate communication and information networks;
3) Link resource-poor women and youth to the information and tools for knowledge management;
4) Establish buyer-seller linkages on the web towards eradication of absolute poverty.

Never before have ICTs been deployed amongst the socially and economically disadvantaged women in India, to this extent. For the socially and economically disadvantaged minority women of the Seelampur ghetto, where even finishing primary school is a big deal, to start using ICTs has been a major accomplishment. To date, more than 500 women have been trained in a large number of skills-development and income enhancement vocations.

Alongside the ICT training was capacity building, and participants were able to broach taboo subjects such as women's reproductive rights, health issues apart from life-skills, marriage rights and obligations. These are covered extensively in the multimedia courseware developed by the Datamation Foundation.

Because the Madrasa was used as a centre for recruitment, there was no problem enrolling women in the Community ICT Centre.

As more women benefited, other women, who had not ventured out of their homes and also out of the ghettos unaccompanied, have been enrolling themselves into the ICT Centre in large numbers. A significant number of women have gone ahead to use the ICT Centre despite opposition from their family members. In addition, many of them use the ICT Centre for very long hours despite having small children at home and other household duties.

Women who have not engaged themselves in any form of work or income generating activity, have felt motivated to start their own businesses, enabled by ICT. It has given women a mechanism to express their creativity and inherent talent. Their enterprises have already borne fruit, with several women already receiving orders from the buyers directly through the buyer-seller linkages.

The women who have been ICT trained, have been found to encourage their families and children to learn computing and start using them in their day-to-day work.

The women have proved that neither language nor education are barriers for socially and economically disadvantaged women, to gain access to and proficiency in ICTs.

Women to Web

FINALIST
category: Multi-Stakeholder Initiative (National/Local)
country: Germany

In 1998 *Brigitte*, a women's magazine decided to go online. However, a survey revealed that less than 20 per cent of Internet users were female.

The publishers at *Brigitte,* working with the women's department of the former Federal Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Technology as well as the association, Women Give New Impetus to Technology, decided to introduce Internet courses for women.

The Internet course campaign was named Women to Web.

In autumn 1998, the pilot project began in four business centres of the Deutsche Telekom. Female Internet trainers from Women Computer Schools provided the capacity building.

Targets were set as follows:

- to increase the quota of women using the Internet to at least 50 per cent;
- to introduce Internet at a low cost to those with no access to this technology;
- to provide a relaxing environment in which women can access the Internet;
- to show women how much fun the World Wide Web can be and how to use it for communication, entertainment purposes, information and further education;
- to motivate women to discover the usefulness of the Internet for their daily life and to participate in the information society.

The target group included local computer schools, technology centres, adult education centres, equal opportunity representatives and female founders of new businesses. Beginners were provided courses for free while advanced Internet courses were made available for a minimal fee.

Since the project's inception, 15,000 Internet courses held in over 300 cities and villages have benefited 130,000 women. These opportunities have been extended to rural areas, and especially to parts of the former East Germany. The most obvious impact of the project is that the number of female Internet users has doubled from under 20 per cent to over 40 per cent.

With more women using the Internet, local companies with websites of their own have acquired new customers and this has contributed to the local economy. The courses and introduction to the Internet helped many women set up businesses or to find self-employment. As the training was provided by women for women, there was a ready acceptance of the technology by the participants.

Most of the women who benefited from the project were found to be multipliers for other women. This has helped in the empowerment of more women.

The campaign has in particular benefited disadvantaged women, elderly women, women in rural regions and unemployed women.