



Community Multimedia Centres



« UNESCO undertakes to use its links with its professional partners to reach those who are unreached by ICTs and especially those who are under the greatest risk of being left out of the knowledge revolution: the rural populations, the urban poor, the illiterate and the marginalised. »

Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO



The voice of the poor, coming over loud and clear



Women on air and on line: in touch, empowered

A Programme offering digital opportunities to the underprivileged

the digital divide in figures

- ▶ One in four Africans has a radio, ⚡ while just one in 400 uses Internet (apart from North and South Africa).
- ▶ Monthly Internet charges represent 1.2% of the average monthly income in the USA, ⚡ 191% in Bangladesh and 278% in Nepal.
- ▶ Finland has more Internet hosts ⚡ than all of Latin America and the Caribbean. New York City has more ⚡ than the entire African continent.
- ▶ Fixed network telephone lines grew 9% p.a. between 1995/2001 in Africa, but mobile network subscribers have already surpassed fixed line users in most countries.

A CMC Lexicon

▶ Radio Browsing

Radio browsing programmes offer mass, indirect access to online resources. In these programmes, the content of selected web pages is discussed, explained and contextualised by the presenter and resource persons in the community's own languages.

▶ Community Browser

eNRICH is a ready-to-use, fully customisable knowledge management software tool. It enables communities to build their own gateway to the web and to multimedia resources – quickly and easily.

▶ Community Database

By developing a community database, the CMCs ensure that the whole community can access a pool of easily assimilated knowledge in local languages. Database contents can include administrative forms, official texts and other practical resources.

▶ CMC MultiMedia Training Kit (MMTK)

UNESCO and a group of partners working in the field of community capacity building are developing a complete suite of open access, multimedia workshop training materials for CMC staff. The MMTK modules are distributed on CD-ROM and can be downloaded from <http://www.itrainonline.org>



▶ Suitcase Radio

CMCs often use the portable Wantok FM broadcast unit, a low-cost, easy-to-use and robust “suitcase radio” that comes in 30 watt, 50 watt and 100 watt versions

▶ Lufo Lamp

UNESCO has piloted the use of a novel FM receiver using thermo-electricity made by Serras Technologies. Built into the base of a standard oil lamp, the AM/FM receiver is powered by the heat of the flame.



The CMC : a gateway to the global knowledge society

Community radio is low-cost, easy to operate, reaches all members of the community in their own languages and, as a local, grass-roots media, it maximises the potential for development to be drawn from sharing information, knowledge and skills within the community. Community radio not only informs, educates and entertains; it also empowers the community by giving a strong public voice to the voiceless, which encourages greater accountability in public affairs.



The community telecentre allows even the most remote village to communicate and exchange information with the rest of the world, and to locally manage, produce and access information for development. With training courses and the presence of facilitators, many people, and not only the best-educated, can use the ICT resources individually or in small groups. The use made of the telecentre by teachers, health workers and NGOs directly benefits students, patients and citizens.



The community multimedia centre, or CMC, by integrating the two, actively combines local contact and global contact, local content and global content, offering new possibilities for engaging a community in its own development. The added value of the community multimedia centre derives from the unbroken continuum of information and communication that it establishes: between the literate and the illiterate, between local, national and international languages, between the spoken and the written word.





Combining new and traditional
ICT to reach everyone



CMC users : recognised actors in the process of developing knowledge

The CMC offers a platform for the delivery of development information, services and activities in ways that involve the community. Local people can develop their own information resources, such as databases, audiovisual materials, posters and leaflets. The illiterate can participate actively, creating and accessing voice files on the community database, using special multimedia applications, following radio browsing programmes and attending literacy classes. The more a community is in charge of its own access to information, the more meaningful the knowledge acquired or generated will be.



A centre built by the community belongs to the **community**

What needs to be done?

CMCs have now been piloted in three regions of the developing world. Many existing community radio stations, telecentres and other grass-roots facilities can develop into community multimedia centres. Building on existing facilities avoids duplication and offers a sound basis for scale-up. Public authorities and the international community can facilitate CMC development by promoting :

- ▶ supportive national policy and regulatory environments that encourage CMC development
- ▶ the implementation of CMC projects, including capacity-building, local content production and preventive maintenance
- ▶ the development and dissemination of a wide range of appropriate ICTs and connectivity solutions
- ▶ the inventorying, evaluation and exchange of experience at national and international levels

What does it cost?

Typical CMC Equipment		Price in US \$
30 watt FM Suitcase Broadcast Station	(1)	4,470
PC Server (used by CMC manager)	(1)	1,100
PCs for CMC users	(4)	3,800
Dial-up Telephone Modem	(1)	100
LAN Hub and Cabling	(1)	200
Durable Printer	(1)	500
Flatbed Scanner	(1)	200
Standard Software Package	(1)	2,250
Digital Camera	(1)	480
Digital Projector	(1)	1,900
Total		15,000

These are minimum equipment costs, to which must be added the cost of training, premises, materials, connectivity and other recurrent expenditure. The CMC generates income to set against recurrent costs from some or all of the following services: radio announcements and productions, office services, computer training, local Internet service provider, telecom services. While some services generate income, others are offered to priority groups free or at especially low rates. CMC management training includes design and implementation of a business plan.

Working in Partnership

This key programme is supported through multi-stakeholder partnerships. It was launched within the framework of the Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP). Its goals and principles also closely relate to those of the UN ICT Task Force and the World Summit on the Information Society.

Partnerships for CMC development involve intergovernmental agencies, bilateral development agencies, governments, the private sector and civil society including national and international NGOs.



For further information:

<http://www.unesco.org/webworld/cmc>

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