



**Regional Seminar on
“Digital Opportunities for Central and Eastern Europe –
Community Multimedia Centres”
(Bucharest, Romania, 3-7 December 2001)**

FINAL REPORT

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INTRODUCTION : THE COMMUNITY MULTIMEDIA CENTRE

In the era of the knowledge society and the knowledge economy, access to the infrastructure to share information is paramount for social and economic development. It is evident that the traditional forms of information and knowledge acquisition are insufficient to foster an inclusive knowledge society. People and communities need access to mechanisms that provide multiple sources of rapid information and information exchange. The Internet and associated technologies are pivotal to full and effective membership of the knowledge society. However, disparities of access, language barriers, the cost of the technologies and of connectivity, lack of awareness and motivation are creating a growing digital divide which hampers vital access to these important new resources for many.

Community Multimedia Centres are being developed in response to this situation. The CMC integrates community access to information and communication technologies (ICTs), via a telecentre or “telecottage” facility combined with the far greater outreach of local broadcasting.

A Community Multimedia Centre combines:

Radio (or TV), by and for local people in local languages. Low-cost, easy to operate, it not only informs, educates and entertains but also empowers the community by giving a strong public voice to the voiceless, encouraging greater accountability in public affairs

And

Telecentre facilities offering access to Internet, e-mail, word processing, etc. This allows everyone within a community to communicate and exchange information both locally and globally

The CMC, by integrating these two facilities, actively combines local contact and global contact, local content and global content, with an unbroken continuum of information and communication between all members of a community, between local, national and international languages, between the spoken and the written word.

CMCs are *cost-effective*: they use broadcasting to raise awareness of ICTs and to involve the whole community in accessing, providing and exchanging information. With training sessions and facilitators, many people and not only the best educated use the CMC’s computers. In this way, collective community use of minimal equipment and connectivity offers maximum outreach and impact. The individual user model of access to ICTs in Western consumer societies is clearly inadequate for economies in transition. Even collective community ownership, management and use of these technologies is costly. Their integration with radio enables that relatively high investment to reap maximum returns by reaching the entire community and not only those who would make individual

use of ICTs. This puts a different perspective on the problematic issues of sustainability and public subsidy.

CMCs are ***country-differentiated***: they are adapted to individual community needs, to each local and national context. Formulated in response to differing contexts and challenges, they exploit the full range of ICTs and their convergence potential. From large-scale, fully connected networks to local community radio with modest information centres, CMCs are fully scalable, replicable and transportable.

CMCs are ***empowerment-oriented***: run by, with and for the community, the CMC overcomes barriers of educational level, language, gender, etc. through pro-active strategies for social inclusion including actively integrating broadcasting and ICTs:-

(1) Radio-browsing programmes In these programmes the presenters search the web in response to listeners' queries and discuss the contents of pre-selected websites on air with studio guests. This formula offers indirect but mass access to cyberspace. It overcomes language barriers when the presenters explain the contents of – say an English-language web page in their national language. It raises awareness of the value of on-line information and encourages listeners to come in and use the computers themselves. It bridges the generation gap by ensuring that people of all ages, whether they go online themselves or not, understand how cyberspace works.

(2) Multimedia databases for development The CMC can gradually build up its own database of materials that meet the community's information needs. Listeners to the radio-browsing programmes are aware that relevant data from the programme can be retrieved in this way. The database may contain administrative forms that can be printed out by users rather than going to an administration to collect the form.

(3) Open learning The CMC exists to meet development needs in such areas as education and training, health and income-generation. The combination of broadcasting with access to Internet and email offers an ideal facility for distance learning. In many cases, it should be possible to combine local library facilities with the CMC.

UNESCO first supported a pilot CMC project to bring new digital opportunities to the region of Kothmale in Sri Lanka. With compelling evidence of the success of the CMC strategy in the Kothmale Internet Project, a series of projects is now underway in three continents. For a full account of the CMC initiative, visit www.unesco.org/webworld/public_domain/kothmale.shtml

The hundreds of radio stations and telecentres serving the needs of local communities across Central and Eastern Europe offer a solid foundation for new initiatives to bring digital opportunities to those who most need them. The Bucharest Seminar “*Digital Opportunities for Central and Eastern Europe: Community Multimedia Centres*” explored the possibilities of convergence between radio stations and telecentre facilities as an effective strategy for harnessing information and communication for the development and empowerment of communities. Greater convergence was strongly endorsed by the seminar participants as a highly promising way of increasing the outreach and the impact of existing projects.

The needs in the region are acute, as a few examples will show. In Bulgaria there are many areas where access is nil. These areas have very high unemployment and very low opportunities for education. There is an exodus of youth. The telecentre project presented in the workshop currently covers only 10% of such areas of great need. In Poland, just 3% of rural populations have access to Internet while in urban areas, it is 20% and rising – so the digital divide is growing while economic activity in rural areas is in decline. In Russia, only 6% of Russians have access to Internet. On one project's rural information website, only one message in one hundred posted actually comes from a farmer. In Armenia, there are over 200 towns entirely without telecommunications. They *are*, however, reached by radio and TV broadcasting so a CMC could impact very directly.

Summary of presentations on 4 December

Opening Session:

Mr Serban Madgearu, President of the National Commission for the Audiovisual

Mr Dinu Malacopol, Secretary of State in the Ministry of Communications and Information Technologies

Presentation: "Digital opportunities in Central and East Europe – Multimedia Centers"
UNESCO Regional Seminar, December 4-7, 2001 (See PowerPoint presentation)Q&A:

- 1) Is this initiative linked to the 'e-government' initiative of the Stability Pact?
This particular project is a Romanian government initiative.
- 2) What financial resources do you rely on - what is the percentage of the central versus local funding (if any)?
The pilot project is fully financed by the government. The next phase will rely on public-private initiatives (40% - local, 60% - central).

Presentation of a CMC (services, activities, functions, target groups)

Stella Hughes, Senior programme specialist, UNESCO

Presentation: Community Multimedia Centres: Creating digital opportunities for all (See PowerPoint presentation)

Summary:

UNESCO launched its CMC programme in the developing world one year ago. We thought this region – though with many different features – could certainly benefit from the CMC formula – convergence between community broadcasting and telecentre facilities. It is this that we want to explore with you this week, so see if this programme can be adapted to the realities of your countries to help meet the development, information and communication needs of local communities, particularly underprivileged ones.

Q&A:

- 1) Are there other countries which have adopted the Sri Lanka model?
Yes, some countries in South Asia. In Sri Lanka they hope to create a network of up to 12 centers. In Africa, there are CMCs in Mali and Burkina Faso, soon to begin in Uganda, Benin, Mozambique. Next year radios in island States in the Caribbean will be linked and turned into full CMCs. In some places CMCs begin from a radio station, in others from a telecenter. Nowhere so far have they begun from nothing.
- 2) How is the qualification of people organized?
They usually start from an existing project, where there was already some initial training. We focus on training of trainers. Training materials and training videos are currently being created- the first for radio browsing.
- 3) From where do they recruit volunteers?
Local volunteers as well as some UN volunteers.

A Critical Overview of radio broadcasting and community telecentres in CEE: obstacles, successes, and perspectives.

Péter Nizák: Executive Director, Telecottages in Hungary

Presentation: Telecottages and Community Radios in Hungary (See PowerPoint presentation)

Summary:

The Hungarian Telecottage (HT) movement is an example of how a civic initiative can be a nationwide movement. The HT movement is one of the biggest networks in the region (within a few months more than 400 telecottages will be operating). The model is very articulated; minimum standard of telecottage is stated – both as infrastructure and services. Telecottages are run by NGOs and they cooperate with local government, other NGOs and business companies. The Telecottage Association provides detailed training course for telecottage leaders. The biggest challenge is the long-term sustainability and identification of the long-term goal of the telecottages. One of the possible ways is to lobby for state normative support - the “telecottage service” to be considered a public service. The telecottage model can be an attractive model for other CEE countries and Baltic region (based on local needs, combines community, social, economic and IT development). A large program was initiated in Yugoslavia, which adapts the Hungarian model (66 telecottages).

Q&A:

- 1) Do you have contacts with the Romanian Telehaz? *Yes, we have established contacts with the neighboring countries and provide technical assistance.*
- 2) What kind of information people want to exchange by the Telehaz? *Usually public benefit information in specific professional areas.*
- 3) How do you address the language barrier? *Translation is not very typical – there is enough information available in Hungarian.*
- 4) What does it mean telecottage services to become public services and how far are you in negotiating this with the government? *This is the next step – to articulate what public services mean. Negotiations/lobbying at governmental level has started and there is a reasonable chance to succeed. This will support the sustainability of the TC.*
- 5) If you succeed here, can you still charge for the services? *Currently the fee for the service is only 30-40% of the real cost. The rest comes from foreign funds, or governmental or local sources (as in-kind support).*
- 6) What is the form of community participation? *One of the TC services is to provide publicity to the community and to stimulate people to participate. Community radio would be an excellent example (3 telecottages run it as a pilot program)*
- 7) What is the cooperation between the TC and local NGOs? *The TC provide services for local NGOs, communication instruments and also space.*
- 8) In Hungary a net of information offices (IO) was developed. Is there any cooperation between them and the TC? *The IO office is in the bigger towns. It doesn't reach TC areas.*
- 9) How about certification? *In Hungary if you qualify for a training organization, you can offer courses. TC do not have an agreement with universities. They have relations with Labor offices (LO) - offer courses for secretaries, etc. In a few cases LO contract TC for training. TC disseminate LO information*

Dejan Pralica, Editor City News Radio 021, Yugoslavian Association of Free Radio (ANEM) Yugoslavia

Summary:

Radio 021 is a member of the Yugoslavian Association of Independent Electronic Media (ANEM). Its first program is broadcast in Serbian, the 2nd – in minority languages (Hungarian, Slovak, Romanian, Ruthenian and Roma). It supports the R021 strategy to help creating an open, democratic society, which will respect human rights. R021 promotes the idea of regionalism, which is an important element of establishing democracy. One of the main segments of R021 are topics that concern women.

Q&A:

- 1) Have the different radios in the region established links among themselves? *Yes, in our Web site we have a lot of links (in Serbian and Hungarian languages).*
The question is about specific partnership. Peter Nizak: *Hungarian TC association would be interested in establishing links with their organization*
- 2) What is your experience with advertisement time (selling), particularly for NGO sector (Macedonian media has traditional problems with this)? *In Voivodina it is the same. Cooperation in this sense works only with business organizations.*
- 3) Comment (Yugoslavia): *Connecting radio + telecenters can help sustainability.*
Reaction (Hungary): *Community radios are non-profit and connection with them can't help sustainability, it can address community purposes.*
Comment (Yugoslavia): *In Yugoslavia both telecottages and community radios are commercial.*

Borka Rudik, Refugee Radio Network (RRN) Bosnia and Herzegovina

Summary:

RRN is a network of nine local private radio stations in SEE. The focus of RRN are the problems of refugees as well as human rights in the region enabling the free information flow b/n countries. The RRN produce and exchange two programmes, 20 minutes each. The programmes have the form of a magazine and consist of 4 topics: current topic, introduction of an NGO, a story of a refugee, and a "Visiting ..." column. So far more than 200 programmes are produced, the level of the information for refugees and the knowledge of the audience about working with NGOs is increased. The information flow and exchange of information among the different radios is developed.

Q&A:

- 1) How many people does your radio reach? *Potential audience is more than 2million.*
- 2) Are peacekeepers among your listeners? *Our program is directed mainly to refugees and people with social needs, but broadcasting it can make other people, including peacekeepers, interested in these problems as well.*
- 3) What is the content, how is it different from the content of other (local/national) radios? Do you address political issues? *We insist on non-political issues, but sometimes we invite politicians to discuss some developments, e.g., opening the border b/n Albania and Montenegro.*

Dmitri Rabkine, The Centre of Community Networking and Information Policy (CCNS), Russian Federation

Summary:

The CCNS research and practical experience indicated that if the information networks are seen only as the installation of computers and telecommunication facilities, without any analysis of the meaning of these, centers quickly die. The community development through ICT is subject of specific social interactions. It is very important to develop informational resources together with people who will use it and therefore to give a voice to "digitally divided" groups. Community approaches are based on several principles including: i) Content provided by the members, ii) Bi-directional communication, iii) Focus on local matters. The CCNC provide need analyses and workshops to develop this approach. They also discuss the project "community schools as centers of community development" for the purpose of CMC networking in small cities in Russia.

Q&A:

- 1) You mentioned that only 7% of the NGOs use ICTs. Do you know how many radios use the Internet? *I do not have specific data, but my impression is that almost none do.*
- 2) Do you see as your next step promoting ICT and Internet to NGOs? *We are trying to promote our activities in an absence of community organization.*

Ivan Perov, Rural information network, Russia

Presentation: Russian Rural Information Network Project (See PowerPoint presentation)

Summary:

The Foundation for Agrarian Development Research (FADR) is a not for profit organization established in 1993 with the aim to support private farming initiatives by providing access to modern agricultural practices. FADR implemented a series of International Development projects, including cooperation with RODALE Institute, Eurasia Foundation, and others. In 1998 the Russian Rural Information Network Project (RIN) between FADR and Developing Countries Farm Radio Network (DCFRN) funded by Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) was established with the aim to enable Private Farmers to increase food production and competitiveness by providing access to the information via the Network of Rural Communicators.

Over the course of project The Network of 295 willing Rural Communicators consisted of radio and print journalists, educators, local leaders and government officials was created. The Network disseminated over 200 scripts of practical information via variety of media (primarily radio and Internet) to over 2 million rural residents and private farmers. The Network web-site was developed that provides access to over 1000 agricultural related topics, several discussion forums and web-boards, number of on-line catalogues. There are over six hundred thousand hits to the web site per month. Regular weekly radio program "Rural Internet" was launched and broadcast on a central radio "Russia" that potentially reach over 80 million people.

The project is ending in March 2002 and a prolongation is currently under approval. FADR and DCFRN are looking for opportunities to further support the Network initiative. The development of the Community Multimedia Centers is seemed to be an extremely important for Russia and being build on the Network experience and expertise can have a practical impact to sustainable rural development in Russia.

Q&A:

- 1) What is "Internet radio archive support"? *An archive of all programs we developed. Other radios can use them.*
- 2) Don't you have infrastructure problems? *Internet is the backbone of our activities.*
- 3) In what language is the web site? *In Russian, but we try to maintain an English version, too.*
- 4) How long is your program? *Multiple pieces of 2-7 minutes.*
- 5) Do they use some facilities in rural areas like former cultural centers, libraries, etc. *They are in a very poor shape. We do not work with libraries.*
- 6) What is the participation of the community? *It has to be developed. We provoke thinking.*
- 7) How do you produce your programs? *We pay to have access to the studio of the ministry of agriculture. The connectivity is from Moscow University through fiber optics.*
- 8) Do you have donors? *We are an NGO and have to be very careful how we address things.*
- 9) Your future plans? *We are working on a second phase now.*

Branislava Miloshevich, Oneworld Radio.

Presentation: OneWorld Radio Southeast Europe (See PowerPoint presentation)

Summary:

Based on a year of working on development and implementation of the radio programmes exchange on the internet project and the results of a research "The use of ICTs by NGOs in the Southeast Europe", we are looking into developing a portal site, that would help radio and NGO sectors in working for their communities. This portal would be in local languages of the Southeast Europe and would carry information relevant to the NGOs in the region, such as

civil sector news, radio programmes database, database of projects, database of members [NGOs and Radio stations], donor information.

We envisage that web pages in some languages of the region could be edited and maintained from community multimedia centres, that merge radio production/distribution and are on the source of information relevant to community.

In Yugoslavia commercial radios are obliged to broadcast community programs for certain amount of minutes.

In Latin America there was a strict legislation about Community Radios (CR), but now it is changing and they have to bid for frequency together with commercial radios, so CRs disappear.

Legislation is definitely an issue, which needs to be addressed – it is a definite gap in the countries of the former Soviet block. We have to advise/force our governments to handle this issue.

In this particular context of commercial media it is difficult, but the communities will definitely be happy to receive free content. In this respect community telecentres can contribute.

If the radio does not have Internet infrastructure, they can go to the telecentre to download a program.

Q&A:

- 1) In what way radio and telecentre projects can work well? Do you have experience of this kind? *This is a very good model. If we have different languages, the telecentre can be in charge of making a page and translating it for the others.*
- 2) Radio stations do not consider that rural audience is their audience. *Yes, this is a common problem. Commercial radios consider development too expensive and prefer advertising.*
- 3) What does it take to become a member of OneWorld net? *One has to accept the joint agreement and to credit the producers of the program he downloads. The service is free (OneWorld is non-profit).*
- 4) Do you evaluate the quality of the programs? *To the extent to which the programs do not brake the joint agreement.*
- 5) Do you produce your own programs or you only upload programs from radio stations at this portal? *We do not produce content ourselves.*
- 6) Where from does the funding come? *The financing is from a Dutch organization. We have coordinators in many places of the world. Most of them have strong radio background, but also NGO background.*
- 7) How many countries have legislation about Community Radio Stations (CRS)? *CRS in CEE do not exist as such. There are community programs by some private stations or by local governmental stations. We do not plan to work on legislation issues.*

Minutes, 5 December

Strategies for practical integration of technologies to meet the community's communication and information needs: The technical challenges – infrastructure, maintenance, technical training, back-up expertise and support systems.

Iliana Nikolova, from Bulgaria,

Presentation: Public Computer and Communications Center (PC3) Project (see PowerPoint presentation)

Summary:

Ms Nikolova put before the participants “Public computer and Communications Center (PC3) Project” sponsored by USAID /budget 700.000 USD/ & implemented by Academy for Educational Development – AED

The pilot project aims in partnership with selected local organizations – public and/or private to establish PC3. The ICT training is going to be extended to underdeveloped rural towns. It takes the innovative approach to organizational sustainability. PC3 is flexible in design and is going to be owned by locally based entrepreneurs /that present a sound business plan/, offering a mix of subsidized and fee-for-use internet access and computer services, related training, government and social services.

PC3 faces the technical challenge of poor telecom infrastructure, insufficient maintenance skills available locally, need of technical training for the local staff, need of technical guidance and support. Level of education is quite high, unemployment rate is still in a quandary.

Target group: Local communities from small (5,000 - 25,000 inhabitants) underserved Bulgarian towns with poor/no access to ICTs.

Q&A

- 1) How does the prepaid card system work?
- 2) *The prepaid card is funded by the donor and used as payment in the telecentre when the service is provided. It is limited to 10 coupons per person. Card holders may use different services .The prepaid cards are distributed to specific target groups such as teachers, GPs, entrepreneurs, students, unemployed.*
- 3) Activities of telecentres are free for the prepaid cards owner others must pay.

Ardi Pulaj Coordinator, OneWorld Albania

Presentation: Challenges to CMCs in Albania (See paper)

Summary

When the technology is going on and people are using more online services through the internet, Albania face some challenges that makes this difficult and the development of ICT sector for the moment is in the early phase.

While the staff of a radio station in Albania is interested to put their programs online, before they have to think about some issues. All the radios has at least one computer, but that doesn't mean that it will be connected to the internet. According to the connection with the Internet. In Albania there are working some ISP-s, but they don't have a good connectivity, which is slow and with a lot of problems, but the big problem is that the price is high. Another problem are the high costs of the telephone, while they try to connect through the Internet, which is provided by dial-up. The telecommunication lines are not in a good condition, so that makes more difficult.

Mostly all of the radio stations or NGO-s in Albania has a computer connected to the Internet, but some of them don't. And when you don't have a computer, a high cost of Internet access 89 USD per 160 hours, and also high costs for landline telephones, sure that it is not easy to use the Internet as a window for promoting the programs or online audio files.

Also another problem is that for the moment, Albania is facing an electricity crises, which is not in the favor of the Radio stations. That is a big challenge for them, because they have to add in their budgets the cost of other supplies for not interrupting the transmissions.

Most of the staff that works for a radio station in Albania is not trained how to work with online services, as uploading a program to the Internet.

Major challenges:

- lack of computers
- bad connectivity
- high prices for internet access
- high prices for landline telephone
- lack of money
- commercial radios
- power cuts
- lack of training

Solutions

- Encouragement to put programs online
- Offering possibilities to promote themselves
- Technical training

Miliana Bara, Cara Stern, OneWorld

Summary

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are central to the key roles NGOs play in Southeast Europe, serving as the often only method for crossing borders and maintaining connections. During the war-plagued years of 1991 –1995, the bulletin board service of the ZaMir (For Peace) Transitional Network (ZTN) overcame destroyed and disrupted telephone lines and transportation routes to bring together anti-war organizations, human rights groups, and others from Zagreb, Belgrade, Sarajevo, Ljubljana, Prishtina, Tuzla, and the rest of the world. Providing new possibilities for email, newsgroups, and conferences, the network allowed for continued communication in a time of conflict.

The Information Program of the Open Society Institute (OSI) and the Southeast Europe Initiative of OneWorld International joined together for a study to map the current status of ICTs among NGOs in Southeast Europe. In addition to assessing their online presence, the study aims to define the specific needs with regards to capacity building in each country, to identify other support and services which would have a significant impact on the NGO sector, and to determine the potential for a regional portal.

Cristian Kruzlics, from Romania, CREST, Resource Center for Nongovernmental Organizations Romania

Presentation: CREST Resource Center (See PowerPoint presentation)

Production and management of content: ensuring genuine grass-roots input, gender mainstreaming, good governance and cultural diversity. Documentation and Research Services. Exchange of Media Products.

Natalia Jakimovskaya - Regional Projects Development Manager – foundation for Independent Radio Broadcasting FNR

Presentation: The Foundation for Independent Radio Broadcasting (See PowerPoint Presentation)

Website: www.radioportal.ru and www.fnr.ru

Pawel Wiszniewski – Information For Democracy Foundation, Poland

Presentation: Work on establishing the CMC in Poland

Summary:

Process of recruiting the local communities access to the program “Polski Teledom – Technology-Media-Telecom Institution” – finished with 150 study visits/research and 80 signed agreements with the local community institutions such as local government, libraries, cultural centres, health centres, local farmers associations

Defining the objectives of CMCs /multi-functionality into convergence of the media – old and new/ & setting planned actions – finished with the Implementation Strategy

Organizing the human resources – finished with establishing the Organizing Committee

Creating the standards of accreditation for the CMC - finished

Selecting & training the managers/administrators/facilitators of the CMC – finished

Working on the local content – started

Looking for the partnership with the existing Internet access points that might be turned into CMCs - started

Seeking the international partners for the project, experienced in CMC implementation - started

Further funds raising necessary for implementation – started

Octavian Leu Technical Manager, Radio Delta RFI, Bucharest, Groupe Radio France Internationale

Dan Dionisie, UNDP Bucharest

Presentation of the SexDex initiative in Rumania (See PowerPoint presentation)

Models for generation of income: Strategies for Sustainability and for Networking. The business plan, funding strategies

Šlavo Hruska, Slovak Telecottage movement "Zdruzenie TeleDomov na Slovensku" (Slovakia)

Harutyun Mansuryan, Internews Armenia

Dejan Georgievski, One World Coordinator (Macedonia)

Minutes, 6 December

Community Centres and development targets: The use of CMCs for educational, socio-economic, cultural and other community development purposes

Gabriela Misaros, Center for Rural Assistance (CAR), (Romania)

Presentation: Romanian Telecentre Network (See Flash Presentation)

Iris Luarasi, Radio Project manager (Albania)

Presentation: Electronic Media in Albania (See PowerPoint Presentation)

Summary:

There is a great need to train radio *managers* as well as radio journalists. The managers are responsible for broadcasting policy and unless they are trained, they cannot identify the audience and audience needs or become aware of the importance of serving these needs through broadcasting. In Albania at present, radio stations give little thought to meeting community development needs.

The use of CMCs for community archive building (e.g. collaboration with libraries and information centres) and other community services (hospitals, schools etc.)

Ms Audrone Glosiene, Vilnius University, Lithuania - for Open Society Institute (Hungary)

Presentation: Public Libraries As Community Information Centres, Lithuania (See PowerPoint presentation)

Summary:

The Information society is not only about access but also about empowerment through new skills and through fulfilment of one's potential. In Lithuania, surveys have shown that there is very low access and, in contrast, very high expectations of ICTs. Some 70% of people want *public* access to the Internet. I have noticed that in the West, community access initiatives are supported by national strategies and organizations. In the rest of the world, we know we must « think global and act local » but we also need national support or it can be very tough. A strong argument for involving libraries in CMC development is their contribution to sustainability: they have premises and paid staff and can offer these permanent structures to CMC initiatives.

Dr. Danguole Rutkauskiene, Kaunas University of Technology (Lithuania)

Presentation: The Impact of ICT on Lifelong Learning at a Distance, Lithuania (See PowerPoint presentation)

Summary:

Our distance education network could offer a solid base for CMC development. It is quite hard to run the network from the university. With CMCs, we could add new projects in small communities. There are already some community-based activities, some telecentres. It could now be possible to pull all this together. One model CMC could possibly be developed with Lithuania's effective community radio station and the distance learning network.

7 December Round Table

Opening

Claude Ondobo, Deputy Assistant Director General of the Communication and Information Sector, UNESCO

Opening speech (See document 'UNESCO Speech to Round Table')

Presentation of seminar findings by two participants

Natalia Jakimovskaya, Regional Projects Development Manager, Foundation for Independent Radio Broadcasting (Russia) and

Péter Nizák, Executive Director, Foundation for Development of Democratic Rights/Hungarian Telecottage Association.

See PowerPoint presentation 'Seminar Presentation'

Highlights form the Round Table discussion

Dan Dionisie, UNDP

UNDP expressed interested in the CMC model and the possibility for UNDP involvement: The UNDP stressed the need for partnerships as these are complex projects, not just involving ICTs. They combine TV & radio and link to many other aspects of social development. They are not easy to carry out, so each partner brings added value. Must be approached from a development aspect, making difference in peoples' lives. Partnership is also important to measure impact and assess results in development terms. Our resources in this area limited – we need to see if this is the most effective way to use resources.

The CMC programme is at the cutting edge of development work as it includes new technology, new relationships and synergies between different technologies.

We must innovate to find best solutions in local context and CMCs are a powerful model as they combine ICT with community empowerment & development

UNDP can contribute to inserting the projects into broader development context and help evaluate projects. The partnership will need to flexibility, open, dynamic, approach involving especially civil society & private sector and must not disrupt private sector initiatives.

Tom Blinkhorn, World Bank

Focus on global development learning network – knowledge-sharing and content –using UN satellites- 30 centres worldwide reaching senior & middle level officials with content. In this region, the focus is on the English language and the reform agenda. The Bank is working with the British Council and Soros on developing learning and info centres

Main needs: local capacity for content development, sustainability and difficulties of reaching rural centres. Rural centres must be set up to provide basic info on daily needs – pension rights, disability payment etc., offer training in these centres. SME development.

The Bank has pilot projects in Romania, Ukraine Poland & Russia for unemployed miners providing the information they need, training and exchange of experience.

Jackie Davies, OneWorld International

OneWorld is an Internet portal for NGOs & broadcasters.

There is a great wealth of activities which have already been presented in detail during the workshop. Lets focus now on this region and the seminar outcomes

Riccardo del Castello, FAO

Agricultural information has to be adapted & packaged to be readily comprehensible to local people and one must also address needs of rural world from social perspective: education, health etc Rural radio and NICT convergence can be an effective tool to fill gaps between research centres and extension workers centres, which don't have the skills to address farmer's needs

Audrone Glosiene, Open Society Institute

The OSI network supports transition and promotes democratic values

Public libraries as civil community centres and community informatics projects are both relevant for CMC development

Possible areas of co-operation could be:

- focus on minorities and refugees eg the Roma population in Albania, Kosovo, Serbia, Macedonia and Montenegro
- senior citizens or disabled people
- local government info centres
- professional expertise in region
- Building digital communities of NGOs

Stephan Roman, British Council:

The Council has 250 libraries of its own world-wide and also offers support to the libraries of each country. The British Council is currently rethinking this strategy because of the development of the Internet. Libraries remain important centres of activity, but the Council is now also developing a world network of "knowledge and learning centres" in cyber café style. The British Council is interested in collaborating on initiatives for the global and local Information Society. We work in partnership wherever there are other partners active in the same field.

Mary Fontaine, Academy for Educational Development (AED)

Our organisations need to undertake good needs assessment and be aware of ongoing activities before starting new projects – many international development agencies may be working in a particular country but are not aware of each other's projects. So our design work should start here

Stella Hughes, UNESCO

UNESCO proposes to circulate a list of project ideas from the seminar to all partners for them to express interest in participating – this will then be recirculated so all are informed.

Stephan Roman, British Council

One forum we have for co-ordination is the GKP – we are all members. Perhaps we could look at how GKP might support closer project coordination. I am ready to act as a link with our partners in this region.

Mary Hanson, Farm Radio Network

Farm Radio Network supports activities on all areas in rural environment. It is partnering with the association for agrarian research in Moscow to co-manage the rural network project. Farm Radio Network trains broadcasters to develop content and tries to effect social change.

Training steps: 1 provide tools to analyse audience needs, 2 then seek local information to meet needs –collect data – then seek other required data further 3 adapt data

Alfonso Gumucio Dagon, representing the Rockefeller Foundation

The Foundation wants to develop training courses/materials for development communicators. There is a real need to draw knowledge & experience out of community and train people to help do that. I noticed during the workshop that many participants stressed the importance of legislation and the need for international partners to promote and support the emergence of appropriate and supportive regulatory frameworks for community ICT activities.

Rockefeller Foundation is committed to idea of CMCs. Research shows that radio is most effective communication tool but it is also important to look at ICTs and the CMC programme makes this connection.

Mary Fontaine, Academy for Educational Development (AED)

AED works in 17 countries on ICT use for development (Learn Link). The Bulgarian PC3 is a hybrid model, where businesses operate telecentres but also provide social good services (content and access to social change agents) The Romania project is experimenting with online learning as a low-cost but high-outcome learning model. We also have the DOTCOM initiative –Policy & regulatory reform

Other issues:

Training is important for telecentres – managers and users

Needs creative outreach, marketing, needs assessment

Gender issues come into in training & need for progressive training

We should remember the value chain of education: data ➡ information ➡ knowledge ➡ wisdom

Jerri Dell, World Bank Institute, CESI

The World Bank Institute is a training body with learning programs around themes such as distance learning. For cost & outreach reasons, we focus on video conferencing – this is limited to big cities, mostly for policy leaders. We also offer web based courses and CD Rom courses.

These not yet used for training of trainers but could be.

CESI has top down work with governments to promote decentralisation of decision-making and with local governments to decentralise further. CESI has teams in Africa/Asia/Latin America working with micro-enterprise, youth, women, training for economic empowerment. Our added value as a training partner: we help illiterate populations to plan strategically, market their products, manage their resources.

CESI can contribute with development of content, high quality, practical knowledge. We can also help assess and evaluate.

This partnership gives CESI the opportunity to up scale their activities to a broader audience.

Karel Novotny, The Association for Progressive Communications (APC)

APC is an association of NGO Internet providers with activities in the area human rights, gender & environment. APC provides Internet basic services, connection, web page development and hosting, as well training and develop tools for information sharing and training in basic use of ICTs as well as building contents. Among APC's projects are women's networks in marginalized communities, Open source training material database on APC website, ITrain online.