



Caribbean Community Telecentres Workshop

Taller de los Telecentros Comunitarios del Caribe

Atelier des Télécentres de la Caraïbe

20-22 / 07 / 2006

www.taigüey.org/CTW

Workshop Outputs Summary

Validated by the participants

1	Common issues and challenges for the Caribbean Telecenters	2
1.1	Sustainability:	2
1.2	Technical issues:	2
1.3	Social impact,	2
2	Things we do to individually address them	2
2.1	Financial Sustainability:	2
2.2	Telecentre services:	2
2.3	Physical facilities:	3
2.4	Social Sustainability:	3
2.5	Energy:	3
3	Things we could do together	3
3.1	Connectivity:	3
3.2	Software	3
3.3	Hardware:	4
3.4	Social Impact and Content	4
3.5	Management and sustainability	4
4	More detailed proposals from working groups	5
4.1	Resource and knowledge sharing	5
4.2	Group: Financial sustainability	5
4.3	Group: Policy/Advocacy/Research	6
4.4	Other groups:	6
5	Proposals to move forward adopted by all the participants	7
5.1	Agreed principles for a regional collaboration mechanism	7
5.2	Regional Collaboration Framework and its characteristics	7
5.3	Taskforce mandate:	8
5.4	Mailing list next steps	8
5.5	Additional ideas and project leaders	9

1 Common issues and challenges for the Caribbean Telecenters

1.1 Sustainability:

- Innovative services
- Strategies for sustainability
- business models

1.2 Technical issues:

- recycling,
- hardware,
- Software: Significant cost, linguistic problem
- Access and connectivity lack of basic infrastructure, high cost, dependence on satellite access.
- Security of facilities
- Energy poor quality or no at all, high cost (maintenance).

1.3 Social impact,

- Community outreach,
- relevance for the communities
- integrating old/new media
- training strategies and materials
- social use and appropriation by community and organizations
- research action,
- community participation Challenges: Social fear of computers, passivity, fear of change,
- literacy issues throughout the region,
- making true community centers, social hubs,
- bureaucracy
- rigid management,
- governance
- integration

2 Things we do to individually address them

2.1 Financial Sustainability:

- obtain resources (gov. international, private, mutual funding, scholarships)
- Generate revenues for the telecenter from paid services (mostly to institutional clients)

2.2 Telecentre services:

- Innovate!: Games, entertainment, IT classes,
- social membership,

- telephone and e-commerce,
- typing and printing,
- e-government,
- regional initiatives

2.3 *Physical facilities:*

- security procedures of facility, equipment, clients awareness, disaster preparedness, joint insurance

2.4 *Social Sustainability:*

- social activities, membership, community participation,
- government support and autonomy,
- private sector support, community empowerment,
- community management,
- advocacy,
- legal aspects,
- communication rights,
- media outreach,
- cultural productions with actors in the community
- qualified volunteers,
- employability of local workforce, empowering,
- Old and new together, link between generations,
- flexibility and integration into overall community development strategy,
- business development in depressed areas of employment,
- flexibility within program structure,
- research for implementation, community support,
- certificate training

2.5 *Energy:*

- look for alternative sources,

3 Things we could do together

3.1 *Connectivity:*

- survey satellite use and services and aggregate negotiations for better price over Caribbean,
- Lobby Public policies for access
- Share connectivity solutions and strategies

3.2 *Software*

- Promote Open Source and freeware,
- Resource center to help localization,

- Collaboration on development of specific applications
- Training workshops
- Prepare and share packages for telecenters

3.3 *Hardware:*

- Regional recycling facility/projects
- Efficient hardware disposal
- Alternative sources of energy

3.4 *Social Impact and Content*

- Share and develop together:
 - Strategies and manuals about integrating telecenters and community radio, implementation of community radio, web radio
 - Incorporation community radio and other forms of media as a part of the Telecentre concept.
 - Strategies and manuals for accessibility and special needs
 - Relevant research, best practices and mistakes, on social impact and participation
 - performance indicators
- Develop Content for Caribbean users, community based,
- Multimedia resource center to share resources
- Organize Peer to peer exchanges (operators, technicians, trainers, managers etc)
- Share common Certification/Training programs
- Data base content and media information

3.5 *Management and sustainability*

- Develop and share
 - strategies for financial sustainability
 - strategies for community improvement and institutional improvement of local organizations
 - Methodologies for capacity building in communities
 - Efficient organization methodologies
 - information on resources (gov. international, private, mutual funding, scholarships) , Fundraising/sustainability/partnership
 - Education and training materials for operators
 - Market applications
 - Collaborative tools
- Network and coordinate for advocacy on public policies
- Develop and share Methodologies for bottom-up design and implementation of telecentres projects
- Using ships and alternative infrastructure
- Strategies for Diaspora integration

- Take into account Languages and Gender

4 More detailed proposals from working groups

4.1 *Resource and knowledge sharing*

- Specific proposal: to create a portal where we can exchange content and data
 - The portal should provide language solutions to work together
 - Database of content and media in the region
 - Mechanism for p2p exchange
 - Free software resources
 - Publication and sharing of experiences and ideas, news and notices
 - Web radio broadcasting
 - Shared media resources (video, pics, audio)
 - Calendar for monitoring and evaluation of activities and commitments
 - List of resource persons, institutions and telecenters in the region
 - Tasks:
 - Technical implementation and design, including maintenance.
 - Find funding and budget implementation.
 - Content strategy: who organizes, what to publish etc.
 - Marketing and promotion.
 - Assign responsibilities within each team.

4.2 *Group: Financial sustainability*

- The door that opens financing is proposal writing
- Developing a proposal style for different donor agencies is key
- IDRC explains on idrc.org.ca, see also ford foundation
- Understand who gives what to whom
- Develop a directory of funding sources
- Sustainability must be built into project design (what do you do when the founder pulls out)
- Pay attention to performance indicators and logical framework (time-lines) and governance (your project must be transparent)
- It is important to have an understanding of project management (a formal course is recommended) CDB will offer this on-line from Sept 2006 (see caribank.org)
- How to make a project sustainable? Create a database for sustainability guidelines and ideas. Also look at best practices for sustainability.
- Understand the difference between proposal and business plan (BP should be attached to proposal)
- Business/Development plan goes beyond the life of the project
- Training in business/development plan writing is essential
- Budgets. Itemize resources e.g. I) training II) administrative costs iii)

human resources etc.

- Be detailed and breakdown all costs (remember 14% - 15% contingency)
- **Collective bargaining**: sometimes consider regional initiatives wherever possible, very important!

4.3 *Group: Policy/Advocacy/Research*

Policy /advocacy

- Need to identify who we are, what we have, what we need and how to get it .
- Challenge: to get an identity a voice that can help get issues addressed.
- Policy needed to address access to information; rights of access rights to communicate
- Advocacy – need public awareness at both levels- on right to information and right to communicate ;
- need a mobilizing force to concretize the advocacy approach
- Establish a network / framework that can –advocate a the highest level on behalf of the lowest (grassroots level)- for access to resources;
- look at pros and cons to ally with of existing networks as SOMOS, - CIVIC - UNDP CORICS, IADB POETA, UNESCO Caribbean CMCs, TAP (Telecenters of the Americas Partnership), GTA (Global Telecentres Alliance)
- Can take from each of these (eg by linking), but a specific approach is needed to take account of the SIDS (small Islands developing states) in the region.

Research

- Research should bridge gap between practitioners’ and researchers/policy makers
- Suggested Tasks
 - Inventory of research in region (Review CIVIC database) practitioners, actions, material;
 - Facilitate human exchanges and face to face encounters on common issues
- Action research on how to achieve community development through telecenters

4.4 *Other groups:*

- Technology
- Organization
- Training/Capacity

*Notes not available (still trying to get them)

5 Proposals to move forward adopted by all the participants

5.1 *Agreed principles for a regional collaboration mechanism*

- A Caribbean telecentre network¹ IS necessary
- The activities of the networks should NOT be separated by language
- The resources and contents developed by telecentres or their projects should be made available to all
- A network should include the participation of operators, programme coordinators and cooperation agencies in equal conditions.
- We should not try to put one computer in every house of the world.
- Build taking into consideration what exists and articulating with it

Discussion that followed also raised these issues:

- The need to validate basic objectives here before we leave
- Need Participative decision making mechanism
- Has to target information exchange and Collaborative projects
- Neither loose or nor hard network coordination mechanism
- Use the tools that already exist
- Use of various platforms
- Include a funding strategy
- The possibility to establish a group under CIVIC and work under that structure/model
- the possibility to work under Somos@Telecentros as its Caribbean part

5.2 *Regional Collaboration Framework and its characteristics*

After plenary debates participant agreed

We need to build a regional framework for sharing and collaboration among telecentres, to strengthen the impact of telecentres initiatives.

This framework/structure/mechanism should:

¹ Network was not precisely defined at this stage: could be also understood as "framework/structure/mechanism"

- Include Participation and decision making mechanism
- Facilitate knowledge sharing and information exchange
- Facilitate the development of collaborative projects
- Takes advantage of existing initiatives, resources and conditions that exist in other networks
- Be organized under/like CIVIC with specific mechanisms and autonomy

5.3 *Taskforce mandate:*

A taskforce was nominated with the mandate to

- Shape this into a proposal
- Submit it to all participants for approval during September 2006
- Administrates the mailing list to continue with the discussion
- Ensures debate and approval
- Takes proposal to donors, manages fundraising

Taskforce members;

- Stephane Bruno
- Valerie Gordon
- José A. Sánchez Lugo
- Arnaldo Coro
- Yacine Khelladi

Additional amendments:

- Include the issue of integration of community radio and multimedia production as one of the key issues
- Make sure not to duplicate efforts with existing networks
- Answer carefully about who will take part of the network, organizations or individuals? This is relevant for CIVIC involvement.

5.4 *Mailing list next steps*

The agreement is to leave the list temporarily closed, only for workshop participants, in order to circulate the first proposal. Afterwards the list should be open to others, for example, those who could not attend the workshop because of lack of space or resources.

5.5 *Additional ideas and project leaders*

Additional areas for action and question

- A formal project management training was proposed
- To create a local expert pool and make it available to the network
- To create a media bureau to keep track of resources in the region
- Donors involvement should go beyond the workshop, Telecenter.org involvement
- To determine who will create content within the network
- To create a database of funding sources and financial sustainability resources.

People who are committed to maintain some of the ideas shared during the workshop and make sure they don't get lost in the general discussion:

- Wendy Sealey – Caribbean Development Bank/will develop a funding source directory
- Michael/Trinidad – information on integrating centres with community radio
- Prof Arnaldo Coro, KKB/Alternative Energy, Sustainable Technology Team
- Alton Grizzle Unesco – is willing to support together with Telecenter.org a regional initiative based on concrete proposal to be completed in this respect (from this workshop conclusions)
- David Rojas/OAS – group expertise offered to strengthen the access to funding
- Kimberly King-Burns of Briland Modem Fund (Harbour Island, Bahamas) has offered to jumpstart a Caribe Media Bureau,
- Stephane Bruno: development of online applications in general, online market tools in particular for telecenters