

## Monitoring and Evaluation National Program TiCBolivia 2006

**The TiCBolivia program is in implementation since the year 2000, and formed around 15 ICT for development projects contributing to the Bolivian Poverty Alleviation Program in three key sectors in Bolivia: Governance, Agriculture and Education. The projects are owned and implemented by 20 organizations including grass-roots organizations, NGOs, the private sector and public entities. In 2006, the organizations have formed the ICT for Development network TiCBolivia to formalize the collaboration in ICT for Development in Bolivia.**

**By Elizabeth Rodas, GEBROPOL, Bolivia**

*'In addition to having learned how to use these technologies together with my students, I now use the computer as an effective additional teaching tool.'*, Maria Lourdes, teacher Ayni project in Oruro.

This is but one of the testimonies of users of the TiCBolivia program in Bolivia. The program is in implementation since the year 2000, and formed around 15 ICT for development projects contributing to the Bolivian Poverty Alleviation Program and Millennium Development Goals in governance, agriculture and education. The projects are owned and implemented by 20 organizations including grass-roots organizations, NGOs, the private sector and public entities. In 2006, the organizations have formed the ICT for Development network [www.ticbolivia.net](http://www.ticbolivia.net) to formalize the collaboration in ICT for Development in Bolivia.

The program in Bolivia has hitherto 61,000 users that make direct use of digital information services through one of the 70 information centers for agriculture and governance and 70 schools with computer labs throughout Bolivia. Among the active users we find 65,000 indigenous producers and leaders, farmers, teachers and students, researchers and professionals. Moreover, over 500,000 persons benefit from the ICT programs as listeners of radio programs, Web site visitors or users of computers or the Internet.

This report describes the opinions of more than 50 project team members and of a representative sample of more than 900

users participating in the program. To measure satisfaction and impact an auto-evaluation methodology is used which combines on-line questionnaires and focus group meetings, spaces where achievements and difficulties are discussed and joint decisions can be taken around possible solutions to improve project and program performance. The auto evaluation is an input that helps us to take effective decisions, make adjustments during implementation of projects and to provide feedback of findings of the on-line evaluation system to the project users.

To be able to implementation the auto-evaluation philosophy to the full benefit of the users, we have had have benefited from broad support of the directors and project managers of the participating institutions and the country team of IICD. The program receives support from the government of Bolivia, the Dutch, Swiss and British governments, and from the Dutch NGOs PSO, Hivos and Cordaid

### **More political participation of indigenous people and women**

In the governance sector participate the ICT project on land rights by the Confederation of Indigenous People of Eastern Bolivia ([www.cidob-bo.org](http://www.cidob-bo.org)) and the ICT project Free Waves ([www.ondaslibres.org](http://www.ondaslibres.org)). The projects have currently 9,000 beneficiaries.

The Land Rights projects focuses on the use of ICT to enhance the information and communication capacities and network of the 32 indigenous peoples living in the



indigenous territories scattered all over Bolivia, enabling the lobbying for legalization of indigenous land rights at international and government levels. The project also strengthens overall information and communication between the central office and its 10 regional chapters of the indigenous people equipped with information centers widely spread over Bolivia (See picture: *Training of indigenous people by CIDOB*).

The Free Waves projects provides in a political information and discussion platform operated by three NGOs including Casa de la Mujer, ICO and CIPCA focusing on socio-political issues and women rights, especially relevant in the complex political situation in Bolivia.

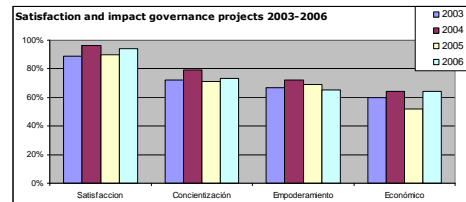
The opinions of the users demonstrate the following tendencies:

- The projects continue to show a high level of satisfaction and impact on users in the use of Internet, email and rural and voice radio as the key tools provided by the projects.
- In the particular case of CIDOB, capacity development has been a key element to ensure a much faster and on-time exchange of information between indigenous people, living in extremely dispersed areas throughout Bolivia, in particular in support of the social participation of marginalized indigenous groups and the overall demands for indigenous land rights towards the Government of Bolivia.
- The users of Ondas Libres manifested a high grade of satisfaction with the information disseminated through the web site and via radio, particularly information related to political issues and gender issues. Visitors and listeners indicate that Ondas Libres is one of the few independent sources of political information and a unique discussion platform for political issues.

- A main lesson in this sector is found in the need for specific ICT training courses for women with limited formal education to enable their participation in on-line discussions and to strengthen their role in decision making processes. Therefore, both projects have now engaged in a new program focusing on training women groups in the use of ICT to strengthen their position in decision making.

### ICTs improving the quality of education

In the education sector, project partners



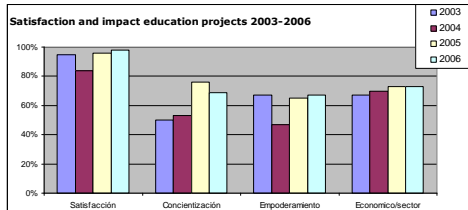
AYNI and APCOB support schools with the set up of computer labs, training of teachers in technical maintenance, pedagogic skills and in the development of ethnographic materials, lesson materials and educational games for mathematics and languages for the younger pupils (See picture: *Example of mathematics game developed by teachers working with AYNI*).



Head masters and parents sustain the centres financially with small monthly contributions and are responsible for the financial and organisational management of the computer facilities. Both projects have strongly increased their outreach in Bolivia. AYNI has expanded their network through collaboration with local governments in the department of Tarija and is now working now with 53 schools in Oruro, La Paz and Tarija. APCOB ([www.apcob.org.bo](http://www.apcob.org.bo)) works with 17 schools in the department of Santa Cruz. Both support schools in rural and sub-urban areas. Currently around 45,000 teachers and students are participating in the two projects.

The opinions of teachers and students indicate the following results:

- Teachers and students indicate to be very satisfied with the services provided, with 65% of the users indicating a positive impact in terms of awareness and empowerment.
- The interactive ethnographic materials



developed by APCOB allow teachers and students to learn about and preserve their indigenous culture. The teaching materials produced by teachers with support of AYNI enable teachers and students to make lessons more effective and efficient.

- While most schools are able to independently sustain the project, an important success factor is found in the limited but continuous support of a team of trained teachers that work closely with the two NGOs in case of new challenges found by the schools.
- A key challenge is found in the lack of ICT facilities to expand access to all students in the participating schools. While IICD and its development partners assisted in the expansion of the projects in 2006, up-scaling will only be possible if the projects are integrated in with government initiatives.
- One initiative is the collaboration with local governments in the case of the department of Tarija, where AYNI and local governments co-invest in the infrastructure on a 50%-50% basis. Much is expected from collaboration with a national ICT for schools program started by the Ministry of Education of Bolivia. Steps to collaborate directly with the Ministry are currently made to ensure further expansion of the successful pilot projects.

### Farmers improving their market position

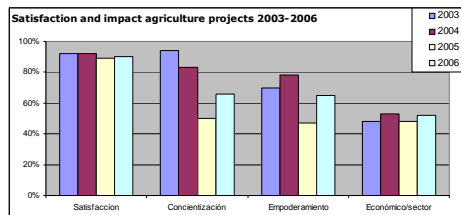
In the agriculture sector impact is monitored in the case of 5 projects implemented by ACLO, CIOEC, AOPEB ([www.aopeb.org](http://www.aopeb.org)), APCOB ([www.apcob.org.bo](http://www.apcob.org.bo)), ICO ([www.ondaslibres.org](http://www.ondaslibres.org)), CEPAC

([www.cepac.org.bo](http://www.cepac.org.bo)) and AGRECOL ([www.agrecolandes.org](http://www.agrecolandes.org)). The projects assist farmers with market and price information and in the exchange of traditional and modern production techniques. (See picture: Geographic information system assisting cacao farmers to digitize information for certification of ecological products [www.elceibo.org](http://www.elceibo.org), member of AOPEB).

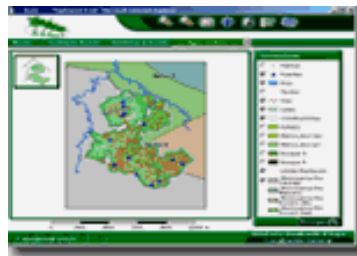
The information is collected and distributed by the farmer organisations through 56 information centres with Internet connectivity in agriculture centres combined with radio programmes and voice radio systems to connect to isolated rural areas. Currently 8,000 producers directly collaborate with the projects through the information centres, and 175,000 farmers listen to the radio programmes.

Results found in this sector:

- Farmers indicate high levels of satisfaction with the agriculture information received and contributed.



- Users of three of the projects feel that they benefited economically from participation, thanks to better market price information and access to new market opportunities. Still, also producers from these projects of most projects demand more equipment and capacity development, especially related to the interpretation of agriculture information.
- An important lesson is found in the effectiveness of combining information centres with agriculture radio programme, providing price and market information. These programs have



become the most popular programs in

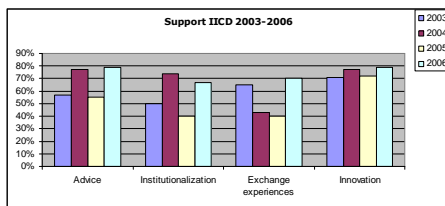
the region with a large and loyal audience.

- Many producers indicate that they are now aware that the access to information centres with Internet is not any more an option, but a necessary means to strengthen production and create market opportunities. Yet, they indicate in general that the high costs and low quality of Internet connectivity remains a principal limitation to reach the objectives of the projects. Government initiatives to provide connectivity through telecentres do not seek collaboration with these projects and their experiences.
- Still, the economic impact of the other projects is weak, particularly explained by the lack of technical support from the project staff and problems with retention of centre managers. Once receiving ICT training, staff often moves to other and better work opportunities. One important way to overcome the problem of staff in the centres is to seek ways to train a larger group of users making the centres less dependent on one or two contracted centre managers.

### Appreciation of the support of IICD

IICD is supporting project partners since 2000 with strategic and technical advice, capacity development, and exchange of experiences and fund raising. The support is provided directly by IICD staff and through local consultants. Some of the results mentioned by the project partners include:

- Thanks to the strategic and technical advice, the project teams indicate that that *'Thanks to more knowledge and experiences in implementing ICTs are now capable of continuing independently their projects.'*
- The team of local consultants formed by IICD has been very effective in assisting all projects in terms of advice on innovation and capacity development to project teams and end users, based on the particular needs of each project. This has strengthened the transfer of knowledge and capabilities to the end users.
- IICD has continued the support in formulation of new projects and fund raising, resulting in additional funding for 10 projects which are not yet fully self-sustaining.
- The partners also indicate that a better integration of the ICT projects in the core activities of the organisations enhances chances of organisational and financial sustainability. This also results in new applications of ICT in other areas in which the institutions operate. Example is the introduction of an ICT component in the education program of CEPAC, which had so far been working with ICT only in the field of agriculture.
- The exchanges of experiences between project partners in regular meetings and the focus group meetings has allowed as a learning space for technical and managerial staff of the different projects. The regular meetings also created an environment of trust where challenges can be shared in a trustworthy space (See picture: *Directors and project staff at a national focus group meeting*).
- The introduction of focus group meeting with end users has provided in a new approach which allows more interaction with users and a space to discuss alternative ways to improve the satisfaction and impact of the projects by both project staff and end users.



*now capable of continuing independently their projects.'*

---

The International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD) assists developing countries to realise locally owned sustainable development by harnessing the potential of information and communication technologies (ICTs). IICD realises its mission through two strategic approaches. First, Country Programmes bring local organisations together and help them to formulate and execute ICT-supported development policies and projects. The approach aims to strengthen local institutional capacities to develop and manage Country Programmes, which are currently being implemented in Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Ecuador, Jamaica, Mali, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. Second, Thematic Networking links local and international partners working in similar areas, connecting local knowledge with global knowledge and promoting South-South and South-North exchanges. Thematic Networking focuses on sectors and themes like education, health, governance, the environment, livelihood opportunities (especially agriculture), and training. These efforts are supported by various information and communication activities provided by IICD or its partners. IICD is an independent non-profit foundation, established by the Netherlands Ministry for Development Cooperation in 1997. Its core funders include the Directorate-General for Development Cooperation (DGIS), the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the Swiss Agency for Development and