![iicd logo](People - ICT - Development)

Stimulating change through ICT

People

Working in development is about people: their needs, their involvement, their future. That's why local people own each IICD project, and why the very existence of these projects is based on discussions about development needs with stakeholders from various backgrounds – public, private, and non-profit. This multi-stakeholder approach ensures that all our activities are more sustainable. Because all stakeholders are involved from the beginning, we all work together to achieve the end result.

ICT for development

With the right tools, people in developing countries can considerably improve their livelihoods and quality of life. Better access to information and communication technology is particularly vital in enabling them to achieve their goals. This is why the International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD) creates practical and sustainable solutions that connect people and enable them to benefit from ICT.

As well as having insufficient access to food, education and health care, people who are poor often may lack access to public services, technical innovations and even electricity. They are also frequently left out of politics, as they are unable to know what is going on or to voice their needs. ICT can be a powerful economic, social and political tool when placed in their hands. It can help them to access, process and disseminate information quickly, effectively and on an unprecedented scale. Here are some examples to show what ICT can do:
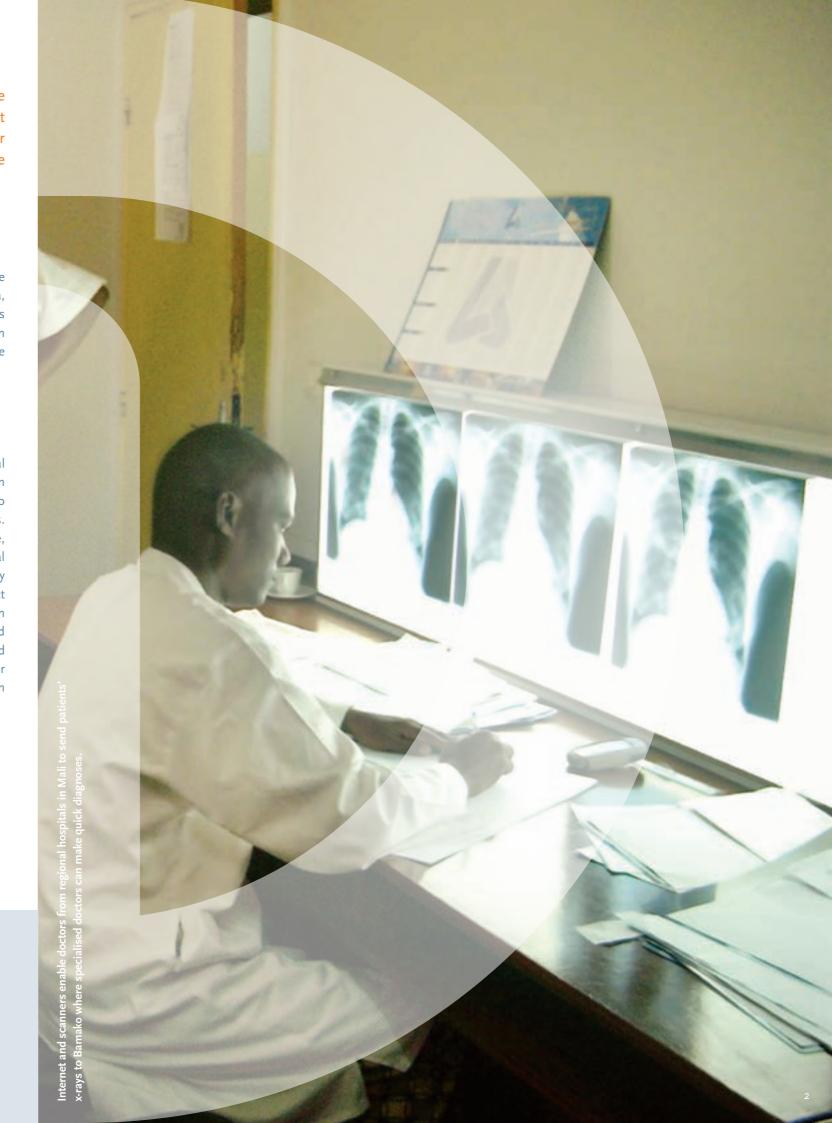
• Small-scale farmers in remote areas lack information on market prices and conditions. This leaves them vulnerable and with little room to negotiate good sales terms. Increased access to information gives them a stronger bargaining position, enables them to do business more freely, and improves their production methods.

• As a result of poor education systems and a lack of study material, many poor people in developing countries receive no education at all. ICT can improve the quality of education and increase access to learning materials. The ability to use a computer also enhances students' chances on the labour market.

• In countries where the health sector is under-resourced, ICT can make a world of difference. By implementing better health management systems and improving access to treatment, doctors in remote areas can diagnose patients more accurately and treat them faster and more cheaply.
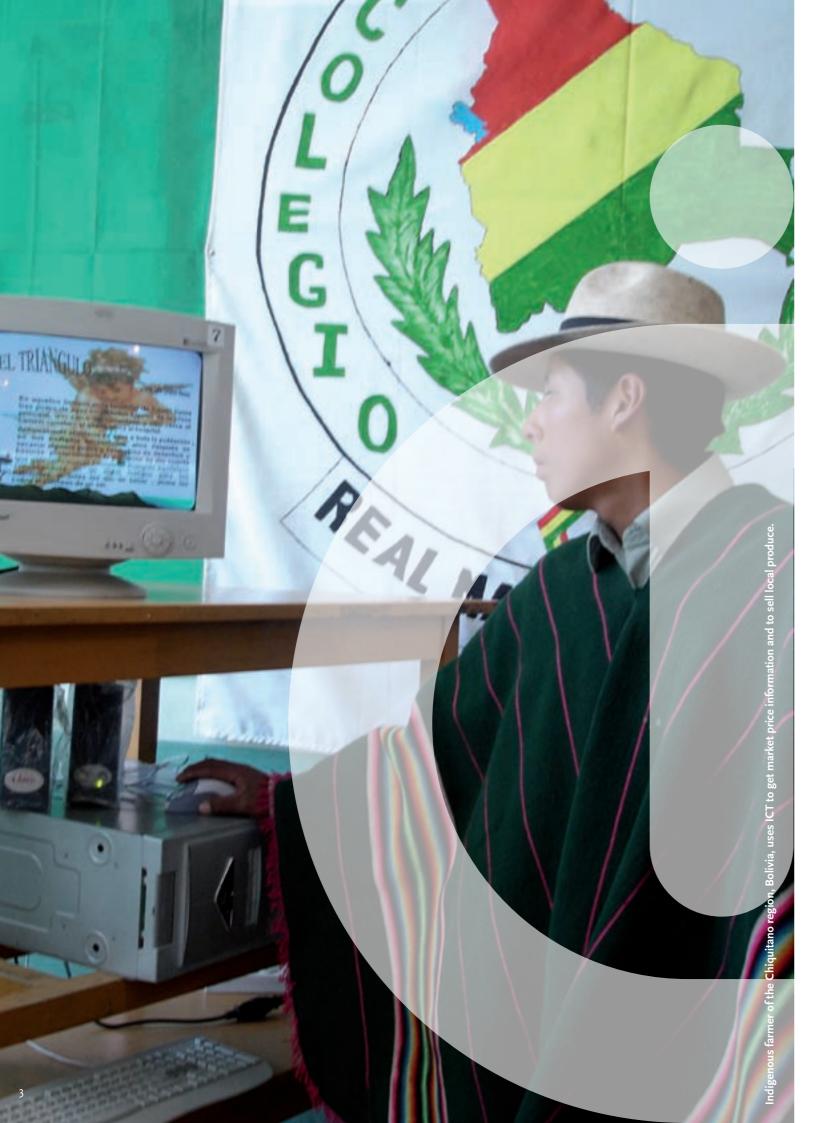
Nine countries, five sectors

We are currently working in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. In Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Ecuador, Ghana, Jamaica, Mali, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia we have set up programmes which create and enhance development opportunities in education, good governance, livelihoods, health, and the environment.

Policies & projects

Within each country, IICD supports projects that help local partners to understand and successfully apply ICT in their own setting, to share knowledge on the effective use of ICT, and to contribute to national dialogues on ICT policies and priorities. Our support takes a number of different forms. For example, we may offer 'seed funds' for pilot projects, or find technical solutions to improve connectivity with private partners. We may also set up capacity development programmes to train project partners, direct and indirect beneficiaries to use information and communication tools effectively. Building national and regional networks for knowledge sharing, advocacy and lobbying is another way IICD supports its partners and other stakeholders in a specific sector. Monitoring and evaluation enable everyone involved to learn from each experience.

Internet and scanners enable doctors from regional hospitals in Mali to send patients' x-rays to Bamako where specialised doctors can make quick diagnoses.

ICT

Technology is not the prime objective; it is merely an essential link to the benefits that can be gained via information and communication. As most developing countries have limited or low connectivity, IICD looks for the best ways to connect people and create new opportunities. These may include mobile solutions or combinations of modern and traditional media – like radio and TV with computers and the internet.

Learning by doing

It is only by sharing knowledge that we can stimulate sustainable development. Together with our local partners we use materials that show how communities have benefited in practice from the use of ICT in different countries and sectors. Tools like iConnect, Dgroups, ItrainOnline, research papers, impact studies, ICT4D stories, workshops and cross-country learning events all help to harvest and share lessons learned for the benefit of IICD's partner organisations in particular, as well as for national policy makers and the international community in general.

Our partners

As an independent, non-profit foundation, we put knowledge, innovation and finance to work with partners from the public, private and non-profit sectors. Our role is to motivate people and organisations, promote the exchange of knowledge and build capacity.

Local partners are at the heart of IICD. The lion's share of our efforts goes towards helping them realise their development goals and objectives. They work at project, programme and policy-making levels. Our local partners have various backgrounds: grassroots, non-profit, government and private.

Having international partners enables us to meet the needs of local partners more effectively and gives us the opportunity to think strategically. Over the years we have built up long-term alliances with several institutional donors, including DGIS (the Netherlands), DFID (United Kingdom), SDC (Switzerland), CIDA (Canada) and DANIDA (Denmark), as well as partners from the non-profit sector such as Hivos, Cordaid and PSO, and private-sector partners such as CapGemini, KPN, Ordina, Manobi and InterAccess.

Guiding principles

IICD's work is defined by a set of guiding principles that influence all our activities. Even though they are automatically applied at all levels within IICD, they are continually re-evaluated and reviewed to ensure their relevance to development cooperation. Capacity development addresses those skills that are essential in order to work effectively; multi-stakeholder involvement ensures that the added value of each sector is fully utilised; partnerships enable IICD and its partners to further impact development sector experiences and resources; local ownership involves each partner recognising their own role and working towards sustainability of the activities; demand-driven ensures that the development activities respond to local demands and are workable in the local context; learning by doing tackles the issue of making sure that there is a conducive environment for expanding the knowledge base; and gender equality enables women to remain as prominent stakeholders at all stages.

More than 10 years of experience with people, ICT and development

Over the years, IICD has been able to bring valuable project, programme and policy experience to the table and demonstrate a clear link to poverty alleviation and the wider Millennium Development Goals. We have built up an evidence base with the help of more than 10,000 questionnaires containing feedback from project partners as well as direct and indirect beneficiaries. This evidence base continues to grow, enabling us to harvest the lessons learned and increase our accountability. We continuously reinvest the knowledge gained to enhance our existing work and identify new opportunities in the future.

Development

IICD uses ICT as an effective tool to support existing and new development activities. We focus on 'traditional' development sectors, such as education, governance, health, livelihood opportunities (especially in agriculture) and the environment. ICT is a way to empower people, enabling them to improve their living standards and quality of life.

Facts & Figures

- IICD was established by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1996, and is located in The Hague in the Netherlands.

- Our core funders include the Dutch Directorate-General for Development Cooperation (DGIS), the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

- We are currently involved in Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Ecuador, Ghana, Jamaica, Mali, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia in the following sectors: education, governance, health, livelihoods (mainly agriculture), and the environment. Most of our activities are geared towards improving livelihoods, followed by education, governance, health and the environment.

- By the end of 2006, IICD supported more than 130 project and policy processes, of which 30% continued independently without support from IICD. Only 10% could not be sustained.

- These projects and policies reached a total of 250,000 users and 2,500,000 beneficiaries, the majority of whom live in rural areas.

- More than 5,000 people participated in over 120 seminars and training courses related to these projects.

- To sustain development activities involving ICT, IICD and its national networks supported two national ICT policy-making processes in Bolivia and Uganda, and nine sector-based ones. These were in Bolivia (agriculture and livelihoods), Ghana (health and livelihoods), Tanzania (education and health), Uganda (health and livelihoods) and Zambia (education).

ICT4D networks in developing countries

www.iConnect-online.org	(Africa, Asia, Latin-America)
www.ticbolivia.net	(Bolivia)
www.burkina-ntic.org	(Burkina Faso)
www.infodesarrollo.org	(Ecuador)
www.ginks.org	(Ghana)
www.ict4djamaica.org	(Jamaica)
www.mali-ntic.com	(Mali)
www.swopnet.or.tz	(Tanzania)
www.mwanzacommunity.org	(Tanzania)
www.i-network.org.ug	(Uganda)
www.ebrain.org.zm	(Zambia)

For more information

For more information on IICD and ICT for development, please visit www.iicd.org or www.iconnect-online.org.

Local children in front of a telecommunications mast in Sélingué, Mali.

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