Youth Promotion through ICT

Lessons learned from the Chawama Youth Project

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This Thematic Brief describes the lessons learned of the Chawama Youth Project (CYP), a Community based skills training centre in Lusaka, Zambia. The project shows how ICT can be integrated into youth promotion and particular in vocational training. These lessons are intended for practitioners in the field as well as organisations that would like to learn from the experiences of this project and implement similar activities.

Most of this brief's content is based on results from monitoring and evaluation exercises that have been performed with support from IICD and Travaillant Vers Une Economie Liberale (TEL), a local Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) partner over the last two years. This M&E system, which was developed by IICD, consists of quantitative and qualitative assessments. Each year, questionnaires are filled in anonymously by the end-users of the project (a representative sample). The answers are then analysed to discover more about end-user profiles, levels of use and satisfaction, and the impact of the project. This process is complemented by periodical Focus Group discussions which are attended by project staff and end-users in order to reflect on the data that has been collected through the questionnaires and discuss successes and challenges relating to the project, and possible solutions.

Context

CYP is based in an urban township of Lusaka, the capital of Zambia. The Chawama Township has a population of 37,500. The population is very young, 65% is 25 years old or younger. Most of the youths (between 15 and 25 years old) are unemployed and lack skills to generate their own sustainable livelihoods. One of the main factors is the low level of education. Many youths do not finish their school, because their (grand) parents are not able to afford the school fees. Zambian families are big (6 to 10 children) and many parents are not able to afford to send their children beyond primary education. Most school drop outs are unskilled and unproductive, which in turn has negatively affected their self-esteem and has led to increased levels of loitering, alcohol abuse and criminal activity. *"We realized that there is a*

rampant employment among youth of Chawama Township. So we decided to come up with a skills training centre to give them life skills. This would help them to get employment or be self employed" said Rodgers Mulenga (Secretary General of CYP).

The Chawama Youth Project

CYP is a community-based non-governmental organisation established in 2001 and registered with the Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training Authority (TEVETA)

Rodgers and Justin in front of Chawama Youth Project building

Zambia Profile
Surface Area (sq. km) 752.6
Population total: 12.6 million
Life expectancy: 44.5
School enrolment, primary (% net): 94%
School enrolment, secondary (% net): 41%
(44% male, 38% female)
Human development index (UNDP): 164
Source: Human Development Index (UNDP)

Access to communication technologies %
Mobile subscribers: 28%
Internet Users: 5.5%
Personal computers: 1.12%
Source: UN eGovernment survey 2008
World Bank Zambia report 2009

Data on the project
Sector: Economic Development
Number of users: 400
Number of beneficiaries: 1,600
Target group(s): youth, women and community members

in Zambia under the name of Chawama Skills Training Centre (CSTC). The activities of the CSTC are two-fold: namely a training centre and a production centre. The CSTC began with providing training in carpentry and joinery skills as well as designing and tailoring skills, and later added courses such as electrical power and house wiring skills, automotive mechanics skills and welding and metal fabrication skills. With IICD support an ICT skills training facility was added. The production units consist of carpentry, tailoring, and metal fabrication, and since the IICD-supported project, also includes a service unit in music recording. The production and service activities generate income which in turn helps to sustain the organisation. In the second quarter of 2009 the production and service units generated revenue of around €5,300. Fees for the training centre hardly contribute to this revenue, since fees are kept as low as possible to ensure the courses are affordable for all community members. Nevertheless, not all students are able to pay the fees for the training material.

CYP has 21 members of staff with a Management Team of two people. Since its inception CYP has trained around 1,000 youth in vocational and life skills and 300 of them in basic ICT skills.

Phase 1: The Small Intiative Fund
In 2003 IICD identified small community-based organisations that saw the potential of ICT to support their work. CYP was one of these initiatives and received a grant of $5,000 under the IICD Small Initiative Fund (SIF). One member of the management, Rodgers Mulenga, participated in an initial training in 2003, which included basic ICT skills and project formulation activities. Rodgers mentioned *"this was the first time for me to work on a computer with hands*
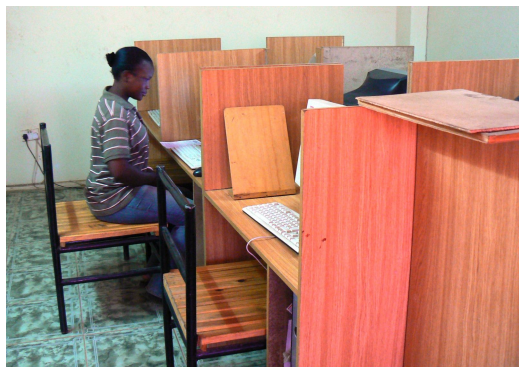
Small internet café

on training. I am now very skilled. Afterwards this training made it possible for me to obtain a certificate from the Zambia Institute of Chartered Accountants (ZICAS), which would not have been possible without the basic ICT skills I acquired". Using the SIF grant, CYP acquired two computers, a scanner, a digital camera and a printer, and also used part of the funds as a contribution towards connectivity costs. Initially they wanted to concentrate on the marketing of products from the carpentry section, and using the digital camera and the PCs for desk top publishing, small flyers were produced and distributed at churches, market places, high schools and primary schools to sensitise the public about CYP's services and products. A major first challenge was the installation of the equipment and the dial-up internet connection through a landline. The modem was a source of trouble. The first one did not work at all after lightning struck, and the replacement modem had a similar problem. The motherboard was blown up during the raining season, because they could not afford an Uninterruptable Power Supply (UPS). Justin Somi, Executive Director said: "*The start was difficult; everyone was confused as to why it took so long to connect. It was not only the equipment, but Zamtel, the local ISP, took also time to connect us"*. CYP started a small internet café in order to pay for the connectivity, but the building was flooded and inaccessible during part of the rainy season. Outside the rainy season CYP provided secretarial services for community members who were not able to type letters themselves, they provided their first training in basic ICT skills and recorded and burned music CDs for youth that wanted to record their own 'flows'. More youths started finding their way into the CYP grounds, the community at large started to take notice, and the existing small ICT centre soon became too small.

A significant challenge at this time was the payment of allowances to the instructors. CYP could not afford to pay them enough to meet the living standards in the township, while at the same time staff trained in ICT had more employment possibilities and moved to greener pastures. Another challenge was the lack of capital. People wanted only to pay a small amount upfront for example for furniture from the carpentry department, which did not cover the full cost of materials. CYP needed to pre-finance that, what was not always easy.
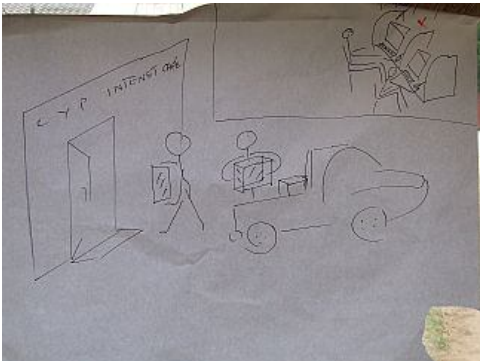
Picture significant moment Rodgers

During the evaluation of the SIF project, Rodgers drew a picture and told his story of his most significant moment in the project: *"At this time I was finance director, this is the time that we received the equipment, you can see Justin and myself offloading, we received computers, scanner, so of course we had to immediately come and install them. We had our internet café ready. The time that I was most excited was when we had the internet connected and we had our opening. We invited a lot of community members, including the Area Councillor, many people appreciated that ICT was being brought into their community. For many this was the first time that they were seeing a computer, previously they had only heard about computers."*

Phase 2: from SIF to Full Project
During the SIF phase CYP proved that they could meaningfully engage with ICT in their training centre, but the project had become too small to cater for the demand and truly impact the community. CYP conducted a needs assessment with IICD on what services were being asked for by the Chawama Community, which led to the development of a larger IICD-supported project with CYP in 2006. This project focused on three components:

- Improvement of livelihoods especially of the youth and women in Chawama Township
- Improvement of information access for the Chawama Township
- Enhancement of services offered by CYP

CYP acquired equipment (9 computers, 10 UPS, 2 printers, a photocopier, an LCD projector, music studio equipment, air-conditioning and wireless internet). Except for equipment there was support for software (office software, internet café software, multi-media software), capacity building, a contribution to the running cost and technical advice.

To improve the livelihood of the several unemployed youths in Chawama the youth wanted to explore their talent as music artists. A recording studio was established. The skills of the CYP staff in audio and video recording were enhanced, and assistance was offered for the marketing of the music under CYP's own label: CYPRO Records. CYP approached radio stations so that the recorded music would be aired. An inhibiting factor was CYP's inability to afford the airtime fees, and thus could not create as much commercial exposure for their artists as they wanted to. However, they improved the capacity of the artists and furthered links between the musicians, broadcasters and other parties. A lesson learned by CYP was that they underestimated their marketing capabilities and investments necessary to start a music production company. The recording studio has mainly helped youth to record initial demos which they use to approach production companies, and church choirs who do not need support in music promotion. One of the youth that used the music studio is Turibious Mpundo Romano (22). He produces his own music and follows also an ICT class at CYP. His dream is *"to become a famous producer like Dr Dré"*. The recording studio is his stepping stone to achieve this.

At another level, information provision for community members improved with the introduction of an information resource centre / internet café for the general public. CYP also started ICT training at their centre for students and community members of the Chawama Township. CYP combined this with offering secretarial services as another revenue generation.

In the third component, ICT was used to enhance administration of CYP, in the area of reporting, financial administration, cost calculations and communication. This positively influenced the professionalism and the efficiency of the organisation. The use of ICT has also been integrated into the various skills training classes, for example in design (both in carpentry and tailoring). The internet is used to search new designs and other relevant information, as well as for marketing purposes. Marketing is important in order to increase the sales of CYP's products and services in the township and beyond. CYP also uses sensitisation meetings with community members, incl. pastors, police officers, health centres and school managers from the Chawama Township, where they distribute flyers designed with the computers of what they produce, The capacity of trainers and instructors was enhanced in order to be able to incorporate ICT in their lessons by, for example, preparing teacher notes and drawings on the computers and distributing them as hard copies to the students. Currently a significant

challenge is that the staff room that was equipped with three computers intended for staff use is being used to generate additional income as a cyber café. This makes it difficult for instructors to prepare their lesson plans and hand-outs. Another challenge is that there are no computers in the classrooms, and the 1 beamer is used in the ICT training room. Instructors can only print their presentation as handout, but are not able to project it in the classroom. This discourages the use of ICT for some of the instructors.

Target Group

In January 2009, Chawama Youth Project In January 2009, Chawama Youth Project and TEL - IICD's local M&E partner in Zambia – organised an end-user Focus Group discussion with the aim to review the level of satisfaction and perceived impact of the project with their end-users and with CYP project staff, while focusing on learning from the past for improvement in the future. The Focus Group discussion was based on an analysis of 84 questionnaires, a representative sample of the Chawama youth that frequents CYP. Most of them followed ICT classes or use the resource centre on a regular base. The Focus Group discussion had 17 participants from both end-users and project staff.

According to the profile of participants (see table below), most respondents live in the neighbourhood, the majority is male, between 21 and 30 years of age, with secondary education, and a below average level of income.

Profile		
	Rural	1%
Geographical area	Provincial	1%
	Urban	98%
	Primary	12%
Education	Secundary	58%
	Tertiary	30%
	below 21	13%
Age	21-30	70%
	above 30	17%
Gender	Male	58%
	Female	42%
	below average	59%
Income level	average	36%
	above average	6%

The stated reason to participate in the project varies among the youth. Some focus on learning, illustrated by responses like "*I want to be computer literate*" or "*to acquire a lot of knowledge and skills in ICT*". Others look more at 'sharing', e.g. "*In order to share information with individuals I can not physically communicate with, to learn new things and share it globally.*"


ICT classes for the youth.

79% of the respondents achieved their goals by participating in the project. Reasons stated on why they achieved their goals include: "*I am now able to use facilities without much help*" or "*because I am able to find the information I need most.*" For some CYP opened a complete new world: "*I never had known computers before, but through training at CYP at least I am able to start the computer, open and edit document and close the computer again.*" From the people that said not to have achieved their goals, responses include: "*there are too few computers and too many students*", or the very honest "*I have just started to learn and there is so much more.*"

Suggestions made during the Focus group include that CYP should continue their sensitisations in the township, and also target older people as the young people still need the support of their parents and guardians in order to get approval to attend services offered by CYP. It really helps when their parents or other elderly and respected people acknowledge the importance and relevance of CYP. For example, market women who received entrepreneurial training and basic ICT skills better appreciate the value of ICT and encourage their children to follow ICT courses as well. CYP should encourage the use of their services by successful women in order for them to be role models and encourage young women to enrol in ICT and related trainings.

Satisfaction

The chart shows an overview of the Satisfaction with the ICT and information services provided through the project (from 2007 and 2008 together). Most respondents are strongly satisfied with the *"Quality of information"* (66%), while "*Access to electronic information*" is also valued high with 56% of the respondents being strongly satisfied. Attention points for CYP could be "*the access to electronic information for women and disadvantaged groups*" and "*suitability of facilities for women and disadvantaged groups*"

Legend: ■ Strong □ Partly satisfactory
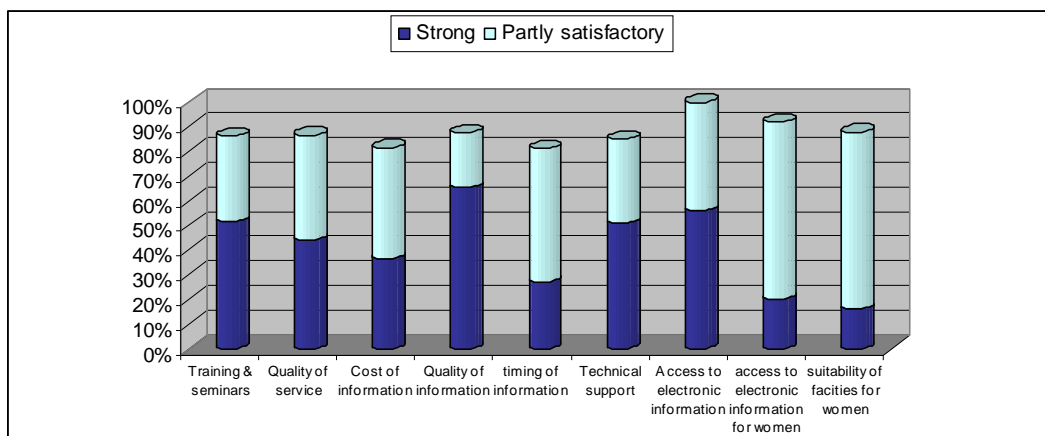
since most respondents indicated to be only partly satisfied with these elements. These elements were measured for the first time in 2008. More awareness-raising sessions targeted at women could help to improve the satisfaction rates.

The Development Impact

The development impact for CYP's end-users is measured using the following five impact indicators: empowerment, economic impact, sector impact, awareness and negative impact. The impact is measured over a period of two years (2007 – 2008)[1].
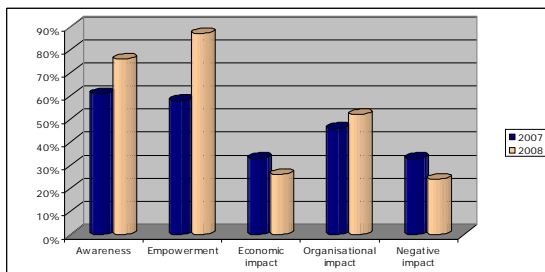
Awareness among users on the potential use of ICTs

The Awareness indicator looks at whether or not users of the project see themselves having become more aware of the possibilities that ICTs offer (for their work). Awareness for the potential use of ICT increased from 59% in 2007 to 76% in 2008. Sensitisation meetings in the community may have contributed a lot to this, and the increase in trained students in ICT who see the benefit is another factor that could have contributed to this boost. One of the women groups that participated in the sensitisation activities is the "Power for

Women" group, which deals with HIV/AIDS issues in the community. They now use the internet café to write their reports and to communicate with the outside world.

Empowerment of the users

The Empowerment indicator looks at what people have done as a result of their enhanced awareness, e.g. whether they acquired new knowledge and skills or are helping others. The respondents see a rise in empowerment in terms of increase in skills, social status, self-confidence and influence on decision-making. In 2007 58% of the respondents were positive about empowerment and this increased to 87% in 2008. Very important factors for the respondents were: "*Through this project I have gained more self confidence*" (91%), "*Through the project I have gained more skills and knowledge*" (91%) and "*Since I am participating in this projects others have been inspired by me*" (87%). Decision-making processes have not changed as much yet through the project: "*Through this project I am more involved in decision making*" was answered positively by only 60% of the respondents.

Economic impact

Economic impact indicates what the influence of the project has been on the economic situation of the people that used its services, e.g. did they earn more money or become more productive? Often real economic impact is not seen until the project has been in implementation for some time. Respondents were not so positive about the economic impact of the project. In 2007 33% of the respondents were positive about this aspect; in 2008 this was decreased to 26%. This could be due to this project contributing to creating better (future) economic opportunities, which is not measured. Respondents do see positive aspects, for example 67% positively agree with the statement "*through this project my*

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[1] *Although questionnaires were collected for the SIF project before 2007, these results could not easily be compared with the current ones and are therefore not included here.*

standard of living has improved". The low economic impact could partly be caused by the fact that students have followed courses, but do not work yet or earn money with their skills. If you look at students who graduated from CYP, you see that many found employment after following training courses, although CYP does not record concrete figures. Some of them found work at CYP itself as instructor or in the production unit (all production workers are trained at CYP). Others have undertaken new activities as a result of their participation in the project: some of the women found employment as secretaries in the township after following an ICT course. Some of the trained youth found employment at the local SPAR supermarket. Some of the carpenters started successful businesses employing people who were trained at CYP as well. Some of the tailors have started their own businesses at the local market. Most respondents mention that they followed more training in various ICT skills through their participation in the project.

Carpentry production.

ICT has also had an impact on CYP as an organisation and their ability to earn income. Due to their staff being online, a German organisation contacted them by e-mail. They were starting a school 400 km from Lusaka in the Southern Province and they were looking for a local producer of desks, chairs and furniture for the dining hall. They contacted CYP and through e-mail contact, digital photos and electronic quotations they received the order for over €4,000 which would not have been possible without the use of ICT.

Sector impact
Sector impact shows what the influence of the project was on the sector the project operates in. In 2008, respondents reported a small improvement in sector impact. In 2007 46% of the respondents were positive and this increased to 52% in 2008. 71% of respondents rate "*increased collaboration since participating in the project*" positively. Respondents appear to not yet have adopted "*more efficient*

(production) methods after participating in the project", as only 28% of them rate this statement positively.

According to Rodgers (Executive Secretary of CYP) ICT has had a very high impact on the organisation and their reputation in the sector (vocational training centres). In 2006, during the development of the National Youth Policy (NYP) by the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Child Development (MYSCD), CYP was recognized by MYSCD as a well-run youth organisation and was invited as representative in the Youth Policy development committee. CYP brought in their experience with ICT which was seen as important in the National Youth Policy. The participation in the NYP development process formed the basis for a very good relationship between MYSCD and CYP, which resulted in a large-scale programme between IICD and MSYCD for Youth Resource Centres. The experience and lessons learned of two IICD-supported youth organisations CYP and Ndola Resource Centre (NRC)[2] are used to build the capacity of 16 other Youth Resource Centres (YRC) in Zambia to also integrate the use of ICT in their activities. They also enhance the capacity of the Ministry and provincial staff of MYSCD in ICT skills to enhance their products and services delivery. Through this programme, CYP's experience will have a significant impact on the vocational training sector in Zambia.

Negative impact
The negative impact indicators look at unintended negative consequences, both personal and for the sector. 24% of respondents answer as seeing negative impact, although the number of people claiming negative impact has decreased since 2007 (from 33%). This could be a point for CYP to give more attention to during the awareness meetings in the communities. In the last ICT trainings more women are participating than men. This could have decreased the number of people that are afraid of technological change. If more people are computer literate this will decrease the digital gap that people see at the moment. Staff turnover may also have contributed to the negative impact, since, although it has often resulted in better job opportunities for the individuals trained, it creates challenges for the organisation when new staff needs to be trained.

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[2] *NRC is another small youth project that came out of the SIF programme*

Current Challenges
After phase 2 not all challenges have been addressed. Currently challenges can be divided in four areas:

Administration:
The staff turnover at the administration has affected the overall ICT capacity of the organisation. Trained staffs have left and new staff members lack ICT capacities required to further strengthen the administration in record keeping, reporting and marketing of the organisation.

The increase in the number of trainees also revealed that the sanitation at CYP is no longer in line with the TEVETA standards. TEVETA revoked their licence until the sanitation is up to standard.

Instruction & Training:
Tailoring, carpentry, auto-mechanics, and electrical power instructors each handle their own lesson plans, scheme of work, content

The music studio.

preparation, and instructional materials. Challenges faced in delivering instructionally-sound training include: instructors are currently sharing computers with the public which makes it difficult to prepare their lessons in good time. Currently there is no ICT equipment in the classrooms, and instructors depend on handouts which has implications on the costs for printing. At the same time, instructors are unable to put what they have learned about enhancing their classroom-based teaching with ICT into practice,

Production
Currently there is no production manager to run the department, causing improvements in marketing and production methodologies to not take place. During the focus group discussion it was observed that fewer people than expected in the Chawama Township were aware of CYP's activities in carpentry and ICT. CYP would like to address this by organizing more sensitization

meetings within the community and by producing and distributing flyers to reach out to churches, NGOs and faith-based organisations with the aim to increase the number of young people participating in skills development programmes.

The music recording studio also needs specialised knowledge and skills which core CYP staff do not have. For the moment they will rent the studio out to a producer who can offer these services to community members.

Community ICT Information resource centre
The demand for internet services is very high, causing people to queue. Three computers intended for instructional use are instead being used to serve the public. These same computers are used by the instructors to prepare lessons, which make it difficult for both instructors and clients, who at times go to another internet cafe (about 3 kilometres from the resource centre). There is currently no billing software at the internet café which makes it difficult for both the clients and the staff to calculate what they customer owes CYP for their browsing.

Lessons Learned
During the past three years, CYP highlights a number of lessons that they learned, namely:
- The internet café has become very important for attracting additional clients. Clients become interested in buying other goods and services while they visit the internet café. A school manager who visited the internet café ordered 50 desks for his school from the carpentry unit.
- Linkages to MYSCD, NYDC (National Youth Development Council) and the other Youth Resource Centres have been very fruitful. By sharing experiences the image of CYP has been improved and has received recognition from MYSCD. CYP in turn has learned from other Youth Resource Centres about managing skills centres in rural areas.
- Self-esteem, believing in, and trusting staff and community members is essential.
- Build in flexibility: achieving improvements is more important than implementing the planned activities. During the implementation phase there needs to be room for changes in the plan if new ideas come up after more capacity is acquired.
- Ongoing capacity building is needed in an environment with high staff turnover.

Next Steps and Future Plans

CYP's future plans consist of three main areas. Firstly, the internet café for the Chawama Community will be enlarged. A staffroom will be created where instructors will be able to work on lesson plans, presentations and handouts, and where they will be able to access the internet without disturbance from the general public. The instructional materials will be stored and the instructors will be better able to share their experiences with each other. ICTs will also be more integrated in the classroom instruction through the use of a laptop and beamer. This will increase the students' exposure to how ICT can be used. The administration will be strengthened by the development of advanced ICT skills for administrative and financial functions. Revenue generation will be enhanced through improved marketing, incl. the production of catalogues and flyers, and production design aims to be enhanced through better use of internet and computer-aided design capacity. The recording studio will be moved to another room, and CYP will concentrate on the recording and production of music and video, and no longer on marketing and sales of the CDs. The current room for the recording studio will be used for the ICT resource centre where the general public can browse the internet and access relevant information for community members.

The area of future attention is expansion of CYP's activities to a new geographical location. CYP obtained 5.6 hectors of land in Kanakantapa (Rural Chongwe, 70km from Lusaka) from the Vice President Department of Resettlement, through the Ministry of Sport, Youth and Child Development, Department of Youth. CYP received this land in order to develop it into a similar skills training centre. Focus will be partly on traditional vocational training skills like ICT, carpentry, tailoring and auto mechanics, but also on farming techniques and entrepreneurship. CYP is still looking for support in order to develop the plot into a vocational centre which addresses the wants and needs of young people in the vicinity.

The third line is to further share the skills, knowledge and experiences that they gained as Chawama youth project with other youth centres in Zambia through the leveraging programme. The ministry (MYSCD) has asked CYP and Ndola Resource Centre to continue to train the Youth Resource centres, but also to train the staff of the ministry itself (285) in basic ICT skills.

Contact information about the project

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