

## Summary Learning report Ghana 2009 Impact of the Livelihoods programme

*"I want to know more about ICT to help me know how to keep my own accounts."*

**This report is a summary of the Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) report on the Ghana Country Programme in 2009. Summaries are published on the IICD website to show the work of our local project partners and the results that these partners and IICD have achieved. Important to point out is that evaluation reports are meant for learning, hence they focus on the outcomes and impact of the projects as well as their successes and challenges, rather than checking on project progress or money spent, which is done via progress reports.**

**Evaluations are based on questionnaires for different stakeholders. Depending on the country, the evaluation includes project teams reflecting on IICD's support), participants of trainings (reflecting on capacity development) and end users (reflecting on the projects they take part in). Data from these questionnaires is analysed by a local M&E partner, who also facilitates a subsequent Focus Group meeting with the partners who implement the different projects. The discussions in this meeting result in more qualitative data from the projects (what is actually happening on the ground) as well as exchange of experiences (successes and challenges), and lessons learned for partners and IICD.**

**The evaluation report below is the unmodified original work of Hippolyt A. S. Pul of Development Alternative Services Foundation, the M&E partner in Ghana. It gives an overview of both the data collected and the discussions that followed in the Focus Group, in this case mainly focussing on end users of Livelihoods projects, trainings and support from IICD. Though sensitive information from specific partners has been removed to maintain a trust relationship with and between partners, M&E reports are an honest representation of the processes and lessons concerning the Country Programme. In 2009, the Country Programme in Ghana projects collected 775 questionnaires.**

The International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD) works with a number of partner institutions in Ghana to promote the use of information, Communication and Technology (ICT) as an instrument of development. Partner institutions range from the Ministry of Communications of the Government of Ghana to local NGOs working in various parts of the country. Target beneficiaries therefore vary from government functionaries through students in selected schools, NGO staff, to community-based groups of farmers, all of whom are assisted to increasingly use ICT for their work; increased access to markets for their produce, as well as, other forms of

information that enhance their production, productivity, and incomes.

The Monitoring and Evaluation system that IICD has put in place is designed to promote learning within and between projects at various levels. It allows IICD, its partner institutions annually, and in some cases a cross section of project participants, to receive feedback on the outcomes of the project implementation during focus group discussions. These focus group discussions also provide opportunities for the stakeholders to reflect on the progress and achievements of the project, as well as, take appropriate actions, where necessary, to ensure that the project interventions achieve the desired results. This report presents a

summary of the outcomes of the evaluations and focus group discussions for 2009.

Overall, the profile of respondents to the survey has continued to change, in many cases for the better. Although male dominance remains overall, significant progress has been made in increasing the participation of women in the projects across all sites. It is also observable that relatively younger people of 40 years and below are dominating the participant lists for most of the projects. Educational levels continue to vary widely across project sites, with some projects being dominated by people with secondary and tertiary level education while other projects are predominantly clients with no formal to primary education only. The relevance of this difference in educational levels is highlighted in the reasons respondents had for participating in the project as well as the varying expectations different clients have in respect of the project services they require from their respective service providers. As the focus group discussions highlighted, the multiple and sometimes divergent expectations have implications for the ability of service providers to meet the needs of the different client groups.

Despite the multiplicity and differing expectations, however, most clients expressed satisfaction with the services they received from their respective projects. The frequency of usage of services improved considerably across project sites, even for situations where there were lingering difficulties in accessing services either because of distance or inadequacy of the equipment. The increased use of cell phones, in particular, seemed to have boosted access to information and other services. For all projects, more than 78% of respondents indicated that they had achieved their aims for participating in their respective projects.

Participants in all but one project affirmed that they had experienced increased development impacts on their lives as a result of their participation in the various project interventions. They also did not witness any negative impacts on their lives or line of business. The gender impact of the various interventions was however mixed as some beneficiaries did not see the gender impacts of the interventions. Sector-wide impact was reported to be high in all projects except one, where it was noted to be low. As noted during the focus group discussions respondents in the project where the impacts

were reported lower than the average may have come from backgrounds and with expectations that were not compatible with the design and objectives of the livelihood projects for which this evaluation was intended.

Suggestions that users made for the improvement of the project and/or sustaining the services of the projects beyond the lifespan of IICD funding were varied, and perhaps, reflective of the differences in the backgrounds of participants mentioned above. While some requested for free or subsidized equipment and loans to support their continued participation in the project and/or the expansion of their productive activities, others were of the view that the service providers should adopt commercial approaches to service delivery. Such respondents advocated the charging of fees for the services provided and the professionalization of service delivery through the engagement and retention of qualified service providers at all service points. Others simply wanted the service providers to create access to equipment that they can purchase on their own for use, rather than depending on centralized equipment that they cannot access easily. Again, managing these different perspectives was discussed in the focus group. Suggestions emanating from the discussion included the need for service providers to know their customers better and to develop and target different kinds of services to different categories of clients. In this way, they may be able to charge fees for some services while retaining some form of subsidies for others.

The evaluation of the project implementation process showed that by and large, project managers were happy with the kinds of assistance received from IICD on technical, strategic, and operational level of the interventions in 2009. They were also satisfied with the internal organizational support, collaboration, and exchange, as well as the training provided by IICD. They however, grappled with the challenges of sustaining their services after IICD funding is phased out. In addition to considering the commercialization of some aspects of their services as discussed above, other suggestions made during the focus group discussion to contain the eventuality of IICD funding ceasing include the need to incorporate ICT4D components into future project designs for the funding consideration of other donors.

Capacity development services were also highly appreciated in the evaluations. A major challenge identified during the focus group discussion was how to sustain the capacity development component beyond IICD funding. Among the several suggestions that emerged included the agreement to have greater resource-sharing between IICD partner institutions.

Under this, it was agreed to look into the possibility of identifying the strengths of each member institution and contracting them, at lower costs, to provide services within their areas of competency to other needed members. The option of identifying specific institutions or bodies and keeping them on retainer basis to provide training and other capacity development services as and when the need arises was also agreed on.

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*With the right tools, people in developing countries can considerably improve their livelihoods and quality of life. Better access to information and communication technology (ICT) 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 an independent not-for-profit foundation, we put knowledge, innovation and finance to work with partners from the public, private and not-for profit sectors. Together, we can make a world of difference.*

*IICD is active in Africa, Latin-America and the Caribbean, where we create and enhance development opportunities in education, good governance, livelihoods, health and the environment. Our approach includes linking local, national and international organisations as well as formulating and implementing ICT-supported development policies and projects.*

*IICD was established by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1996. Our core funders include the Dutch Directorate-General for Development Cooperation (DGIS) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). For more information, please visit [www.iicd.org](http://www.iicd.org).*