

Jamaican projects serve as input for sector-wide development programmes

Country Programme Jamaica

Initiated in 1998, the Jamaica Country Programme has matured into a programme, in which local partners have taken strong ownership. Currently, 6 projects are in implementation and a range of new projects is in the pipeline. Although moderate in scale, the projects have served as catalysts within the implementing organisations and beyond. The attention has therefore shifted from embedding the projects in the partner organisations to increased collaboration and mainstreaming of projects in sector-wide development programmes.

ICT Roundtable Processes

Jamaica's Country Programme is based on a series of ICT Roundtable workshops, set up in collaboration with the National Commission on Science and Technology (NCST). After a first National ICT Roundtable workshop in 1998, a second workshop in 1999 – co-organised by the Ministry of Agriculture – focused on agriculture. Projects that are in implementation have stemmed from these Roundtables.



In 2001, a Sector Roundtable workshop on good governance was organised in collaboration with the Portmore Municipal Development Committee (PMDC).

Currently, 4 projects on governance are being formulated. The Portmore Tele-city Network will be set up by PMDC to enhance Internet access at the community level. Another project aims to strengthen the internal organisation of community-based organisations and their interaction with government agencies in key areas of concern. The Principals Association in Portmore will focus on the application of ICTs to promote local education

facilities. Finally, a project developed by the Police and Citizens Associations aims to use ICTs to improve collaboration between the police and citizens in discussions on legal rights and obligations. If successful, the Portmore experience may form the basis for similar e-governance initiatives nationwide.

Projects

The six projects that are in implementation cover the education and livelihood - music and agriculture - sectors. Three projects have matured from the pilot into an expansion phase, performing an exemplary role at the sector levels (ABIS, Caribbeat, CME). Next to IICD seed money, these projects have also been able to generate additional sources of funding, including JAMPRO, EU, Doen Foundation and private investors.

Instructional Technology Institute

The Instructional Technology Institute (ITI) project is developing an ICT-based curriculum and training programme to enhance English, mathematics and ICT teaching skills of teachers and trainers in Jamaica. The project is an initiative of three educational organisations: the Jamaica Computer Society/Education Foundation, HEART/NTA and the Institute of Education/Joint Board of Teacher Education.

So far, the virtual institute – ITI – has been set up and all members of the project team have been trained. English language experts have done an assessment and adjustment of the current English language curricula in Jamaica. Currently, the team is working on the selection of an ICT tool that will support the curriculum. This innovative project is

expected to generate valuable lessons on the uses of ICTs in education from which Jamaica and other developing countries can benefit.

Global Teenager Project

Coordinated by JCSEF, Jamaica joined IICD's Global Teenager Project (GTP) in early 2000. So far, 250 students from 8 schools are actively participating in the Global Teenager Learning Circles. In March 2002, an expansion project – called Global Teenager Network Jamaica – has started fundraising for the expansion from 12 schools in 2001 to 60 schools in 2006. The project will include participation in bi-annual international learning circles, development of annual national learning circles, a web page and development of an electronic newsletter/newspaper by students.



Agri-Business Information System

In the livelihood opportunities sector, the Agri-Business Information System (ABIS) project is developing a product and market information system for both small farmers and buyers in Jamaica. The project owner is the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA), which has adopted the project as a key element in its national product information and marketing policy.

So far, the project has resulted in the collection of information by field officers on producers and buyers, including registries and production and marketing information. By means of handheld computers, all information is collected and stored in a central database. The database is accessible at all field offices through RADA's intranet. Interested parties are informed on results through publications on the RADA website and by means

of automatically generated reports for specific target groups; producers, buyers, and policy makers. Strategic information on E-business aspects has been provided through IICD's partnership with Cap Gemini Ernst & Young (CGEY) and an extensive training programme for the system's operators is currently being developed. Over the next three years, the project will be extended to all other parishes with funding from the Jamaican government and the European Union (EU). In addition, an agreement has been signed with Jampro's Trade Point programme, which will serve as an electronic trade system linking Jamaica to the world market.

Central and Satellite Agricultural Information Centres

Complementary to ABIS is the Central and Satellite Agricultural Information Centres project (CSAIC), owned by the St Elizabeth / Manchester Vegetables Growers Association and a local newspaper. The 1,400 members of the association will be able to use the information centres to obtain, disseminate and exchange information to help them improve their marketing and production methods.

So far, agricultural information centres have been set up in two regions, a prototype of a database-driven website has been developed and the project staff has been trained. Members have also received direct support in solving specific production and marketing problems, such as a credit scheme for water provision. Transactions via email between subscribing producers and major buyers have just started. So far, 300 farmers have subscribed to the existing information centres. Through extensive local promotion, the project seeks to further increase subscription to the centres.

Caribbeat

The e-business project 'Caribbeat', owned by Caribbeat Ltd, aims to promote young Jamaican musicians and the local music industry, and so to contribute to national development. After a successful first year, the project was able to expand with funding from Caribbeat, an EU-supported Trade Development Project run by JAMPRO and the Doen Foundation. The Caribbeat website has proven to be an effective promotional tool for Caribbean music. Its online facilities have been improved, including streaming

radio, information on artists and festivals, booking facilities and CD sales.



The website's database currently includes over 3,000 CDs of Caribbean (Cuban, Jamaican, Dominican republic and Haiti) music, mainly covering salsa, merengue and reggae. The project has been promoted in the Caribbean, USA and Europe through participation in major entertainment events. In this respect, off-line sales have already increased and sales of online products have also started. In addition, the project staff members have been trained and IICD's partner CGEY has provided strategic e-business advice.

Caribbean Music Exposition

A second project in the music sector, 'Caribbean Music Exposition' (CME), owned by CME Conventions Ltd., is also promoting Caribbean music. Since 1999, three Expos have been realised. In the Caribbean region, such expositions are quite unique. They provide a meeting place for small producers and young talent from the region and producers and marketing companies from the Caribbean, Europe, Japan and the USA. The project has developed a three-year business plan focusing on optimisation of Internet use.

In the upcoming time, CME will focus on awareness creation on the uses of digital production facilities and on e-business opportunities in marketing and promotion. Next to seminars and workshops, CME provides a platform for talented young performers from the Caribbean region. CME is currently receiving support from the Tourist Board of Jamaica, JAMPRO, IICD and a number of private sponsors.

Capacity Development

Since 1998, IICD has worked with JCSEF as National Training Partner. In 2001, InfoServ was identified as a second training partner. Both JCSEF and InfoServ participated in the Train-the-Trainer workshop that was held in Tanzania in early 2002. So far, various capacity development activities have catered to the training needs of the project partners and other interested parties. For example, a Technical Update Seminar on e-business for 60 participants, assisted by CGEY and a follow-up seminar on database-driven websites for 70 project partners have been organised. As a follow up to the Portmore Roundtable, a Life-Long Learning Skills workshop has also been held to train the project partners involved. JCSEF and InfoServ have developed a joint-work plan for capacity development activities in 2002, which is being fine-tuned through assessments of project partners' needs.

Knowledge Sharing

In 2001, IICD and NCST agreed to promote a local Information exchange and Networking (IN) platform for sharing local knowledge, raising awareness and networking. NCST has assigned a staff member to organise focus group meetings, document lessons learned, set up a website and raise awareness on ICT for development issues through network meetings and publicity. NCST and other local partners also contributed to a workshop organised by the Caribbean Centre for Development Administration to discuss e-government in the Caribbean.

NCST and the University of Maastricht/Merit are collaborating in a research project to examine the adoption of ICTs in developing countries, using as case studies the ABIS and CSAIC projects in Jamaica and a similar project in Tanzania.

Monitoring and Evaluation

NCST, which is also IICD's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) partner, published the first M&E results on the role of IICD and the impact of ICTs, based on responses to the questionnaires and focus group meetings.

In a general report, Dr Arnoldo Ventura, adviser to the Prime Minister on Science and Technology, and member of IICD's International Advisory Board, highlighted some of the lessons learned in

applying ICTs for development. In addition, local consultants have conducted a mid-term evaluation of the ITI project, which will serve as a blueprint for future evaluations.



More information

For additional information and latest developments on the Country Programme Jamaica, please visit: www.iicd.org/countries/jamaica

IICD: www.iicd.org/

NCST: www.ncst.gov.jm/

ITI: www.jcsef.org/

GTP: www.iicd.org/globalteenager/

RADA: www.radajamaica.com.jm/

CSAIC: www.eyegrid.com/mandweekly/

Caribbeat: www.caribbeat.com.jm/

CME: www.cme.com.jm/

JCSEF: www.jcsef.org/

InfoServ: www.infoservinstitute-edu.com/

University of Maastricht/Merit:

www.edocs.unimaas.nl/general/merit.htm/

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 works with its partner organisations in selected countries, helping local stakeholders to assess the potential uses of ICTs in development. It also strengthens the capacities of local partners to formulate, implement and manage development policies and projects that make use of ICTs. IICD realises its mission through two strategic approaches. First, Country Programmes bring local organisations together in a Roundtable Process. Within this Process, they 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, Jamaica, Mali, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. Second, Thematic Networks link local and international partners working in similar areas, connecting local knowledge with global knowledge and promoting South-South and South-North exchanges. Thematic Networks focus on several sectors: education, health, and livelihood opportunities (especially agriculture). Their priority is based on local partners' needs; they are often also the focus of sector wide approaches (SWAps). While the environment sector so far has been a minor local priority, knowledge on e-governance – improved governance using ICTs – is increasingly in demand.