The role of community telecentres in helping citizens help themselves

The Egyptian Experience

Sherif El-Tokali
ICT Program Specialist
UNDP Egypt

sherif.el.tokali@undp.org

Agenda

- **Technology Access Community Center (TACC)**
- **Community Outreach**
- **TACC Achievements**
- **TACC Impact**
- **Telecenter Support Programs**
- **Conclusions**
- **Q&A**

Technology Access Community Center (TACC)

- **First telecenter pilot program in Egypt**
- **Established in the Governorate of Sharkeya in March 1998**
  - focused on providing the community with access to information technology and the skills needed for effective use of this technology to encourage sustainable development.
- **Established by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in partnership with**
  - The Egyptian Cabinet Information Decision Support,
  - The Governorate of Sharkeya
  - The Investors Association and the Sharkeya Chamber of Commerce.
- **Why Sharkeya?**
  - High illiteracy and unemployment rate
  - Need for job creation and educational development catalyst

TACC: The Model
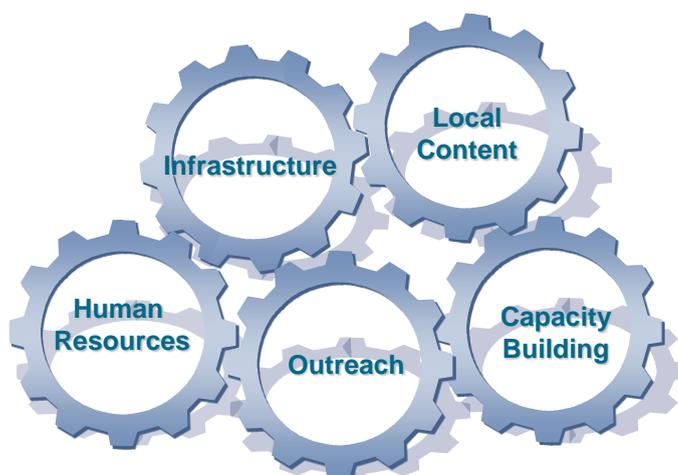
TACC Mechanisms

- **Providing the local community with access to information technology.**
- **Combining the establishment of an ICT infrastructure and the necessary human resources.**
- **Offering affordable services, and encouraging IT participation.**
- **Providing the local community with the skills needed to use IT.**
- **Providing information in the local Arabic language.**
- **Establishing effective outreach abilities**

Community Outreach

- **Major Driver of the TACC**
- **Conducted and Supported by the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) staff**
- **Focused in five thematic societal sectors evident in the Governorate**
- **Community outreach was carried out in remote villages using mobile platforms**

Outreach Thematic Areas

- **The agriculture sector**
  - Links established with the agriculture community and research bodies in Egypt through ICT
- **The Education sector**
  - Outreach activity with schools and orphanages for the purpose of sensitizing teachers and students to the uses of ICT in the field of education
  - Emphasis was placed on promoting the spread of ICT use in the field of education by encouraging teachers to communicate among themselves on ICT uses in the education field
  - Web pages were developed that provided a database of educational resources available to students in the Sharkeya Governorate and a guide to village level and e-governance information

Outreach Thematic Areas (contd...)

- **The SME sector**
  - In coordination with the Association for Developing Small and Medium-Scale Industries in the New Cities (ASMINC)
  - Promote the benefits of ICT in SMEs
  - Establish the usage of websites to increase product awareness, sales and improving the transfer of product related information
- **Civil Society Organizations**
  - Improving the efficiency of operations and of the promotion of their development functions through the use of ICT
- **The health sector**
  - Dissemination of health care related information via the Internet and by documenting health related information in Arabic

TACC Achievements

- **Increases in Resident Profits and Job Creation**
  - Observed job changes
  - Increase in resident profits and job creation
  - Evident in the agricultural, education, business and CSO sectors
- **Improvements in Sustainable Human Development**
  - Centres provided support to five thematic sectors of society
    - agriculture
    - education
    - business
    - Civil Society Organizations
    - The child sector
- **Capacity Building Programs for communities**
  - Solidified the acceptance and use of ICT in the community
  - Users became more active in involvement in their community, and in improving the quality of their lives
  - Expanded the view of the world among its users
  - Improved citizens understanding of organizations concerned with development

TACC Impact

- **The agricultural sector**
  - Farmers increased their productivity, and their level of empowerment
  - Farmers invested in fertilizers and better production methods
- **The education sector**
  - Teachers increasing their productivity and impacted the community by educating others on ICT usage
  - Used to teach basic subjects more effectively
  - Students and researchers acquired skills relevant to their university studies and augmented their studies in preparation for careers
  - Students and researchers consulted with experts in their field more efficiently

TACC Impact (contd...)

- **The business sector**
  - Improvements in the operations of business professionals and SMEs
  - SMEs were able to expand, vary and improve their product base and exposure to competitors' information
  - Adding a new dimension to the business sector by generating an Internet Café sub-sector consisting of 16 private Internet Café start-ups in the Governorate.
- **The CSO sector**
  - Promoting employee training
  - Incorporating the use of computers in the operations of SMEs
  - Promoting SMEs and their products.
- **The youth sector**
  - Furthered the education of children and supported empowerment and capacity building
  - Youth develop web pages on their own to broaden their possibilities

Telecenter Support Programs

- **The success of the TACC has encouraged MCIT to establish a nationwide telecentre programme, called IT-clubs.**
  - Currently there are over 1400 telecentres that cover most geographical locations in Egypt
- **A coordinated set of programmes has been created to support these centres**
  - Mobile ICT unit (MICTU)
  - The Community Development Portal (CDP)
  - IT for illiteracy eradication CDROM
  - Telecentres for individuals with special needs
  - ICT for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (ICT4M/SMEs)

Mobile ICT Unit

- **Vehicles specially equipped with a fully functional media lab**
- **Programme was started in 2004**
- **Service specific geographical areas and stop at schools and communities for periods as long as two weeks**
- **Enhance community outreach and exposure to ICT as a tool for development**
  - Enhancing particularly human development and encourage the communities to benefit from local telecentres
  - Offer short and focused courses in computer literacy
  - Provide internet access to communities
  - Periodically revisit areas to carry out updated training sessions

MICTU

Community Development Portal

- **Developed to promote sustainable human development and the integration of communities into the knowledge society**
- **Acts as a common entry point to information related to issues important to the citizen and socio-economic opportunities**
- **Lies at the core of the existing telecentres in Egypt**
- **Content available focused on five core sections relevant to participants**
  - Agriculture
  - Small and micro enterprises
  - Family health
  - Personal skills and career advice
  - General culture and information

Community Development Portal

IT for illiteracy Eradication

- **The use of ICT encouraged illiterate people to become literate**
- **A set of CD-ROM tutorial software designed to teach reading and writing as well as math literacy**
- **Distribution managed through the telecentres, schools, and NGOs**
- **Aims to help achieve ''primary education for all''**
- **A special emphasis on women**

IT for illiteracy Eradication

Telecentres for individuals with special needs

- **Illustrate the positive role ICT in assisting visually impaired and deaf & mute individuals become productive individuals within their communities**
- **Provides opportunities of entrepreneurship and continued education**
- **Three telecentres piloted in partnership between**
  - UNDP Egypt
  - Ministry of Communication and Information Technology
  - the UNDP regional programme ICT for Development in the Arab Region (ICTDAR)
  - Resala (an NGO)
  - Vodafone Foundation

Telecentres for individuals with special needs

ICTs for Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises

- **A collective set of tools and mechanisms for supporting M/SMEs**
- **Build capacity and provide tools within Egyptian M/SMEs to leverage ICTs to generate employment and to create efficient, better connected and more competitive enterprises**
- **Identifying new socio-economic opportunities that can be leveraged through ICT**
- **Foster the understanding of the benefits of ICTs by M/SMEs, while promoting their usage**
- **Established in partnership between**
  - UNDP Egypt
  - Ministry of Communication and Information Technology
  - International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

Conclusions

- **TACC was successful in placing a framework for the local community involvement with ICT**
- **Involvement with the different sectors of society increased impact, and addressed the possibilities for improvement and expanded its services.**
- **Ascertained of the potential to further progress sustainable human development through coordination with tools and supporting programmes**
- **Importance of inclusion, content, supporting SMEs and individuals with special needs highlighted**

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Conclusions (contd...)

- **Several initiatives to support telecentres launched aligned to integrate within a unified vision and potential to integrate both nationally and regionally**
- **Collectively these initiatives aim to maximize the utilization of telecentres within communities to aid the involvement of communities and increase their impact**
- **Through this bundle of programmes**
  - Individuals can aspire to improve their livelihoods by integration within the knowledge society
  - Individuals and communities increase the awareness of their own needs

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