

Role of Telecentres in Gender Empowerment:

*Do telecentres really work
for Women?*

Salma Abbasi, PhD ICT Researcher
Chairperson & Founder e WWG
30th August, 2007



Agenda

- Back ground
- Debates on Telecentre Failures
- Diversity of Telecentres
- Debates on Gender Issue with Telecentres
- Suggested Way forward

Back ground

What is a Telecentre?

- “a small room equipped with one or more computers and a long-distance telephone or wireless telephone”.



Rogers, E.M., Shukla, P., (2001), The role of telecenters in development communication and the digital divide. *Journal of Development Communication* 2 (12), 26-31. (http://wsispapers.choike.org/role_telecenters-development.pdf.)

History of Telecentres

- “The first telecentres were established in the early 1980s in Scandinavia (particularly Denmark) as 'social experiments' in promoting the use of advanced Information and Communications Technology”

Benjamin, P. (2001), *Does 'Telecentre' mean the centre is far away? Telecentre development in South Africa*, The Southern African Journal of Information and Communication, Vol 1, No 1

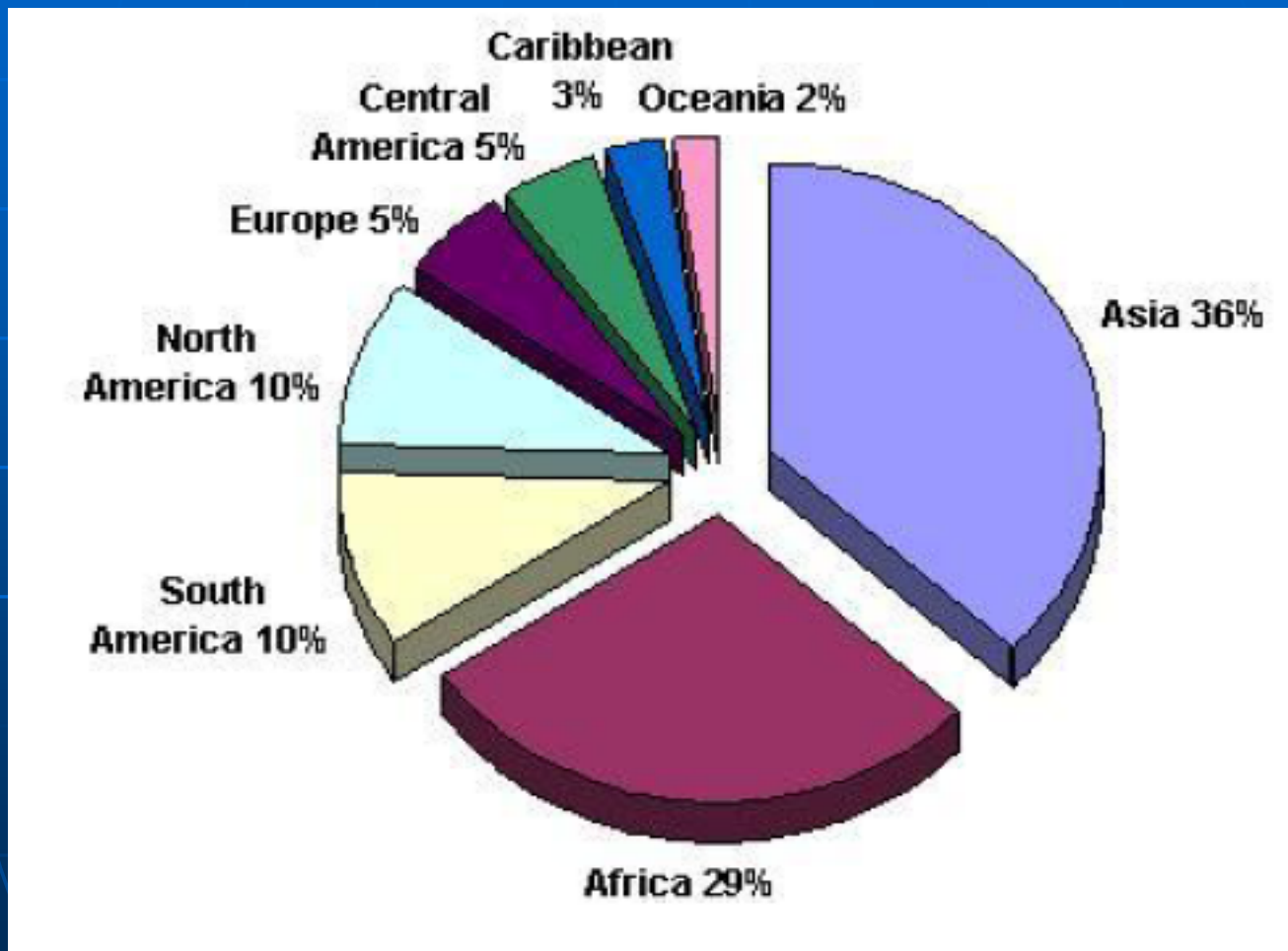
History of Telecentres

Phase 1 (1980's)		Phase 2 (1990's)		
Opportunities for Rural people in North	To become familiar with ICT's	Developing Countries	Marginalized People	Urban Slums
	To work from Home "Telework"			Rural People
	Telecottage Industry			
Urban poor, e.g. Harlem	Providing access to ICT's they couldn't otherwise afford		Excluded People	Women
				Elderly
				Disabled

Evolution Of Telecentres

1990's	Isolated pilots, primarily donor funded, often lacking long term sustainability, each trying to deal with all aspects of telemeters on its own
	Led by NGOs and development agencies
	Limited services, content, and applications
	Challenging policy and regulatory environment
2000-2010	Emergence of networks and telecentre ecosystems
	Larger-scale pilots in some countries—increased Geographical reach
	New connectivity and hardware technologies and new business and organizational models
	Increased involvement of government, the academic community, and the private sector
	Broader range of services and applications across sectors
	Improved policy and regulatory environment (in many countries)
2010-2020	Fully developed and dynamic telecentre ecosystem at national, regional, and international levels
	Large-scale capacity building
	Documented socioeconomic impacts (increased economic opportunities, access to health, education, government services, etc.)
	Self-priming pump
	Top-down delivery of connectivity and bottom-up approach to the supply and demand of relevant services
	Extensive partnerships and the unbundling of services
	An enabling policy and regulatory environment in all but a handful of countries

Telecentre initiatives launched Globally



Source: www.digitaldividend.org/ 02/2007

Debates on Telecentre Failures

Telecentres Failure

- “**only one out of every one hundred** telecentres are really useful for the local community when they have been set up, in terms of supporting development and social change”

Dagron, G. (2001), “Prometheus Riding a Cadillac? Telecentres as the promised flame of knowledge”, *Journal of Development Communication: Special Issue on Telecentres*12[2], (<http://ip.cals.cornell.edu/commdev/documents/jdc-dagron.doc>)

10 - Key Debates: Telecentre Failure

1. “North Knows the Best”

(Dagron, 2001; Gomez and Ospina, 2001; Heeks, 2002)

2. No consideration to community needs

(Dagron, 2002; Heeks, 2002; Rossener, 2006; Osborne, 2007)

3. Exclusion of marginalized

(Roman and Colle, 2002; Huyer and Sikoska, 2003; Harris et al, 2007)

4. Irrelevant information

(Heeks, 2002; Roman and Colle, 2002; Green, 2003)

5. Lack of localized content

(Heeks, 2001; Dagron, 2001; Green, 2003; Prasad and Mishra, 2006; Osborne, 2007)

10 - Key Debates: Telecentre Failure

6. Illiteracy

(Dagron, 2001; Green, 2003)

7. Inaccessibility by community

(McConnell, 2001; Roman and Colle, 2001; Proenza, 2001)

8. Insecure locations

(Jorge, 2000; Heeks, 2001; Oestmann and Dymond, 2001; Mahmood, 2005)

9. Donor funding

(Proenza, 2001; Harris et al, 2002; Green, 2003; Conroy, 2006)

10. Expensive Services

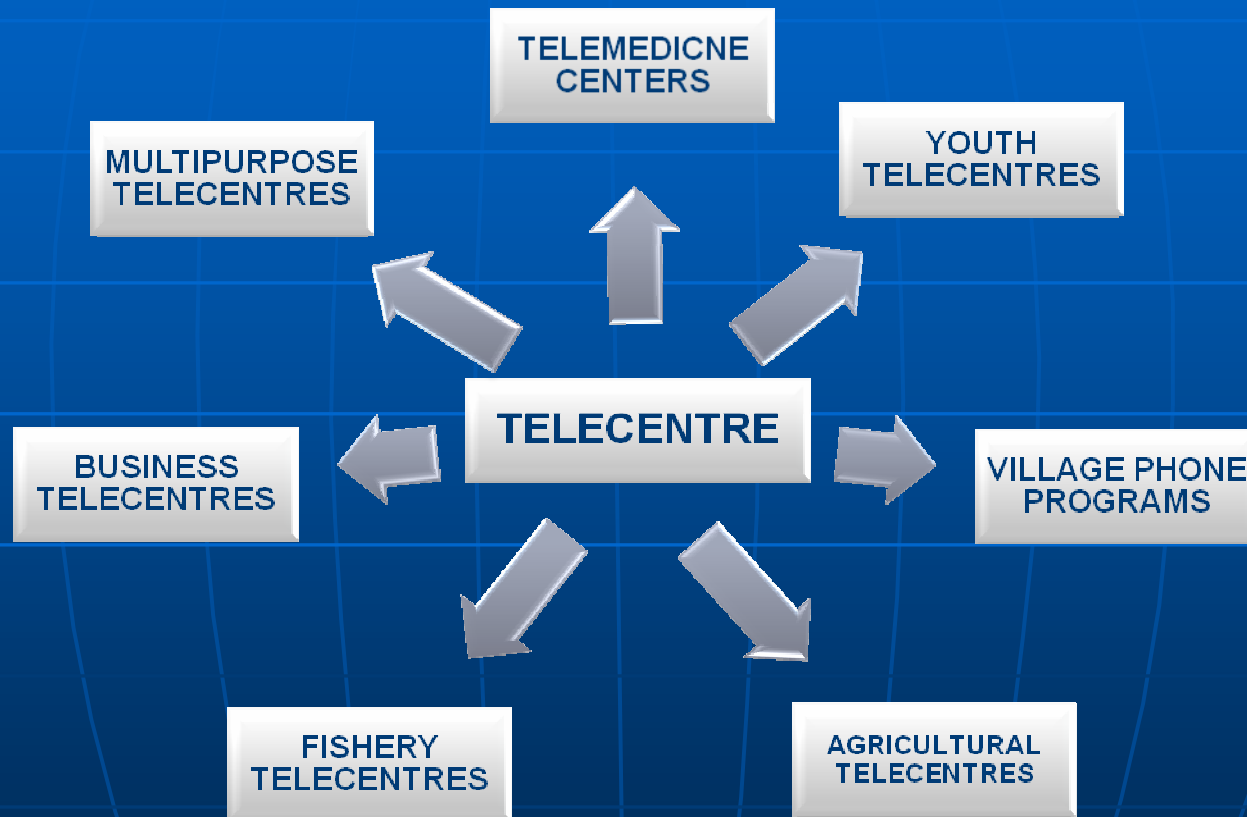
(Proenza, 2001; Roman and Colle, 2002; Conroy, 2006)

Diversity of Telecentres

Diversity of Telecentres

1. *Community Centre*
2. *Telemedicine Centres*
3. *Youth Telecentres*
4. *Village Phone programs*
5. *Agricultural Telecentres*
6. *Fishery Telecentres*
7. *Business telecentres*
8. *Multipurpose Telecentres*

Diversity of Telecentres



Debates on Gender Issues with Telecentres

8 Key Debates: Gender

1. Women are not considered in policy making

(Pichappan, 2003; Johnson, 2003; Jenson, 2006; Gurumurthy, Singh, 2006; Wanasundera, 2006; Kuga, Rinalia, Cino, 2007)

2. Illiteracy

(Huyer, 2002; Green, 2003; Wanasundera, 2006; Conroy, 2006)

3. Discrimination

(Markoff, 1989; Alper, 1993; Wanasundera, 2006; Harris, Yogeesavarani, Lee, 2007)

4. Technophobia

(Koirala, Acharya, 2005)

8 Key Debates: Gender

5. Lack of Access and Mobility

(Pichappan, 2003; Gurumurthy, 2004)

6. Social and Cultural constraint

(Huyer and Sikoska,2003; Wanasundera, 2006; Walsham et al , 2007)

7. Content and Relevancy

(Heeks, 2001; Roman and Colle, 2002; Green, 2003; Osborne, 2007)

8. Location

(McConnell. 2001; Proenza, 2001; Roman and Colle, 2001; Mahmood, 2005; Conroy, 2006)

Key Debate— Women in Policies

- “Largely because of the absence of gender-sensitive policies and design rules, many women are still **unable to harness** new technologies to redefine their roles in the increasingly interconnected world community”

Johnson K. (2003), *Telecenters and the gender dimension: an examination of how Engendered telecenters are diffused in Africa*, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences of Georgetown University, Washington, DC

Key Debate - Technophobia

- **“Girls were hesitant** to even touch the computer since they feared it will explode in case they make any mistakes. Boys on the other hand found themselves computer-friendly”

Koirala, Acharya, (2005), *from access to engagement, community access Centres*, UNESCO.

Key Debate – **IT** Illiteracy

- “Lack of computer skills is a **severe barrier** for women and girls in accessing the new ICTs”

Green L., (2003), *Gender-based Issues and Trends in ICT Applications in Education in Asia and the Pacific*

Key Debate - Illiteracy

- “When literacy became a hindrance, SEWA members found a solution. They learnt **video vocabulary**”

Green L., (2003), *Gender-based Issues and Trends in ICT Applications in Education in Asia and the Pacific*

Key Debate - Discrimination

- “Many parents tend to **encourage only their sons to attend computer** camps and are willing to spend more money to send their sons to these camps than their own daughters”

Gurer, D. , Camp, T. (2002), *Investigating the Incredible Shrinking Pipeline for Women in Computer Science*, Final Report - NSF Project 9812016, <http://women.acm.org/documents/finalreport.pdf>

Suggested Way forward

How to make Telecentres “Beneficial for Women”

Requirements to ensure women’s access to ICT’s	
1	Conduct Active Outreach
2	Ensure Financial Accessibility
3	Ensure Physical Accessibility
4	Provide Training
5	Ensure Relevance
6	Build Confidence
7	Enable Participation

Jorge, S. (2000), *Gender Perspectives on Telecentres*, ITU, Telecom Americas Telecom Development Symposium Communications: Universal Access and Community Telecenters.

Diversity of Telecentres

- MSSRF – India
 - Telemedicine
 - Online decision support system
 - Interactive farmers advisory service
 - Tele fishery
 - Weather services
 - Water management

*New Strategy:
Creating Women managers*



www.mssrf.org

Conroy, c. (2006), *TELECENTRE INITIATIVES IN RURAL INDIA: Failed Fad or the Way Forward?*, Natural Resources Institute, University of Greenwich, UK

Gender Specific Telecentres

- **E –Seva**

- Telecentre run by “Women” for “Women”

India



- **e Homemakers**

- Homepreneurship Network

Malaysia



www.esevaonline.com

www.ehomemakers.net

Gender Specific Telecentres

- **Tortas Peru**
 - Housewives confectionary

Peru, Latin America

- ICT center in Madarrasa,
New Delhi
 - **Babool-Uloom**

India



www.tortasperu.com.pe/ingles/who.php

www.seelampurmart.org

Research Direction

- More **Localized, Cultural specific** considerations are needed for the design
 - *Unique “Human consideration”*
- Relevant **“useful”** , local language, specific services and centres are needed
- More gender focused research: design, and services are needed to examine if Telecentres really make an impact to bridge the “Gender Divide”



Thank You



BACK UP MATERIAL

Evolution Of Telecentres

1990's

Isolated pilots, primarily donor funded, often lacking long term sustainability, each trying to deal with all aspects of telecenters on its own

Led by NGOs and development agencies

Limited services, content, and applications

Challenging policy and regulatory environment

Evolution Of Telecentres

2000-2010

Emergence of networks and telecenter ecosystems

Larger-scale pilots in some countries—increased Geographical reach

New connectivity and hardware technologies and new business and organizational models

Increased involvement of government, the academic community, and the private sector

Broader range of services and applications across sectors

Improved policy and regulatory environment (in many countries)

Evolution Of Telecentres

2010-2020	Fully developed and dynamic telecenter ecosystem at national, regional, and international levels
	Large-scale capacity building
	Documented socioeconomic impacts (increased economic opportunities, access to health, education, government services, etc.)
	Self-priming pump
	Top-down delivery of connectivity and bottom-up approach to the supply and demand of relevant services
	Extensive partnerships and the unbundling of services
	An enabling policy and regulatory environment in all but a handful of countries

Diversity of Telecentres

- e Health & Learning Centre
 - Telemedicine centre at Dhaka**Bangladesh**



- YSPA - Youth ICT Centre
 - “Young Power in Social Action”**Bangladesh**



www.ehealth.bham.ac.uk

www.ypsa.org/bccc.htm - southasia.oneworld.net/article/view/110047 - 26k

Diversity of Telecentres

- Grameen Telecom's Village Programme
 - Dr. Mohammad Younas
- Bangladesh**



- Telecentre for Fishermen,
Saint Louis
- Senegal**



[www.grameenfoundation.org/what we do/technology programs/villagephone/](http://www.grameenfoundation.org/what_we_do/technology_programs/villagephone/) - 14k -
<http://www1.alcatel-lucent.com/lead/makuleke.htm>

Diversity of Telecentres

- **DBIC**
- District Business Information
Centre
Uganda



- **Nabweru**
- Multipurpose Community
Telecentre
Uganda



[www.unido.org/doc/44046 - 1](http://www.unido.org/doc/44046-1)

http://www.ecomlink.org/E_incubator/Case_Studies.asp?CategoryID=97Title=A%20MultiPurpose%20Community%20Telecentre%20in%20Uganda

Diversity of Telecentres

- Agri Bazaar
 - Connecting Farmers and Buyers

Malaysia



- LINCOS
 - “Little Intelligent Communities”

Costa Rica



<http://www.iosn.net/asean3/countries/malaysia/casestudies/agribazaar/>

<http://www.interaction.org/ict/CCC.html>

Diversity of Telecentres

- Samaikya Agritech P. Ltd
-Agritech Centres,
Andhra Pradesh, India
- Keltron Information Kiosks
- information kiosks
(Telecentres)
Kerala, India



Harris, R. , Kumar, A. , Balaji, V. (2002), *Sustainable telecentres; Two Cases in India.*

Diversity of Telecentres

- e Choupal – **India**
 - Established in June 2000
 - Agriculture community access
 - Efficient supply chain to source agriculture commodities
 - Ready information in their local language on the weather & market prices
 - Disseminate knowledge on scientific farm practices



<http://www.apdip.net/resources/case/rnd06/view>

Key Debate— Women in Policies

- “The studies of on gender aspects in ICT are contributing for framing need based policies. If gender issues are not articulated in ICT policy, it is unlikely that girls and women will reap the benefits of the Information age”

Pichappan, P. (2003), *Towards optimizing mobility in ICT sector to create International Paradox and Gender balance.*

Key Debate— Women in Policies

- “No acknowledgement of gender inequalities and consequently, ICT policy has been formulated in gender neutral terms”

Wanasundera L. (2006), *Gender in the Information Society, Emerging Issue*, UNDP-APDIP ICT4D Series

Key Debate - Technophobia

- “The Malaysia report stated that some women who could access ICTs suffer from technophobia. They prefer to have their husbands or sons obtain whatever information they need from the Internet on their behalf”

Green, L., Trevor, L. (2002), *Women and ICTs for open and distance learning :some experiences and strategies from the common wealth*, The common wealth of learning.

Key Debate - Discrimination

- “The majority of lab experiments are actually conducted by male students so the females can record the results”

Gurer, D. , Camp, T. (2002), *Investigating the Incredible Shrinking Pipeline for Women in Computer Science*, Final Report - NSF Project 9812016, <http://women.acm.org/documents/finalreport.pdf>

Key Debate - Illiteracy

- “A large proportion of women may be similarly affected, and those that are able to visit may be restricted to daylight hours and particular times of day. Literacy, or lack of it, is another obvious barrier – and literacy rates among women are generally well below those of men”

Conroy, c. (2006), *TELECENTRE INITIATIVES IN RURAL INDIA: Failed Fad or the Way Forward?*, Natural Resources Institute, University of Greenwich, UK

Key Debate – Access and Mobility

- “Cultural attitudes and practices can preclude both opportunities for use of ICTs as well as training in their use, in restricting or prohibiting women's interaction with men in public and, in some areas, preclude women's travel outside the home”

Huyer,S., Mitter, S. (2002), ICTs, Globalisation and Poverty Reduction, gender Dimensions of the Knowledge Society, *Part 1 Poverty Reduction, Gender Empowerment and Knowledge Society, digital Exclusion or Digital Opportunities.*

Key Debate – Access and Mobility

- “Women have a strong ICT knowledge base, but the lack of mobility capability, leads to the failure to embody the knowledge into contribution”

Pichappan, P. (2003), Towards optimizing mobility in ICT sector to create International Paradox and Gender balance.

References

- Anupindi, R. (2003). *Going Direct to the farmers: ITC's e-Choupal initiative*, Michigan Business School and University of North Carolina Keana-Flager Business School.
- Bailur, S. (2007), *Using Stakeholder Theory to Analyze Telecenter Projects, Information Technologies and International Development, Volume 3, Number 3, The Massachusetts Institute of Technology*
- Bailur, S., Ali, M. (2006), *THE CHALLENGE OF "SUSTAINABILITY" IN ICT4D – IS BRICOLAGE THE ANSWER?*, London School of Economics, UK.
- Benjamin, P. (2001), *Does 'Telecentre' mean the centre is far away? Telecentre development in South Africa, The Southern African Journal of Information and Communication, Vol 1, No 1*

References

- *Byfield, T. (2004), Thoughts on the telecenter as a model for ICT deployment in the rural “South”, draft [02] memo for the Social Sciences Research Council.*
- *Conroy, c. (2006), TELECENTRE INITIATIVES IN RURAL INDIA: Failed Fad or the Way Forward?, Natural Resources Institute, University of Greenwich, UK*
- *Colle, R. (2003). ICTs, Telecentres and Community Development, Cornell University, USA.*
- *Colle, R. (2005), “Building ICT4D capacity in and by African universities”, International Journal of Education and Development using Information and Communication Technology (IJEDICT), 2005, Vol. 1*
- *Dagron, G. (2001), “Prometheus Riding a Cadillac? Telecentres as the promised flame of knowledge”, Journal of Development Communication: Special Issue on Telecentres 12[2], (<http://ip.cals.cornell.edu/commdev/documents/jdc-dagron.doc>)*

References

- *Fillip, B. , Foote, D. (2007), Making the Connection: SCALING TELECENTERS FOR DEVELOPMENT, Information Technology Applications Center (ITAC) of the Academy for Education Development, Washington, DC*
- *Fuchs, R. (2006), 20 Years of the Telecentre Movement (<http://community.telecentre.org/en-tc/blog/335>)*
- *Ghosh, S. (2005), JOURNEY OF TELECENTRES, The telecentre tale, (www.i4d.csdms.in)*
- *Gomez, R., Ospina, A. (2001), “The Lamp without a Genie: Using Telecentres for Development without expecting Miracles”, Journal of Development Communication: Special Issue on Telecentres 12[2], (<http://ip.cals.cornell.edu/commdev/documents/jdc-gomez.doc>)*
- *Gurung, G., Kollmair, M. (2005), Marginality: Concepts and their limitations, IP6 Working Paper No. 4, Development Study Group, Department of Geography, University of Zurich, Switzerland.*

References

- Harris, R., Yogeesvaran, K., Lee, L. (2007), *Telecentres for National e-Inclusion in Malaysia*, (http://i4donline.net/ATF/2007/fullpapers/Roger_ATF07ABS113.pdf)
- Harris, R. , Kumar, A. , Balaji, V. (2002), *Sustainable telecentres; Two Cases in India*.
- Heeks, R. (2001), *Understanding e-Governance for Development*, i-Government Working Paper Series, Paper No. 11, Institute for Development Policy and Management, University of Manchester, UK and COMNET (commonwealth Network of Information Technology for Development).
- Heeks, R. (2007), *e-Africa and m-Africa And How can ICTs deliver?*, Development Informatics Group University of Manchester, UK
- Holanda, G., Antonia, J. (2006), *An Approach for e-inclusion: Bringing illiterates and disabled people into play*, *Journal of Technology Management and Innovation*, Vol 1, Issue 3, UNIVERSIDAD DE TALCA, Brazil. (www.jotmi.org/index.php/GT/article/viewPDFInterstitial/art8/20)
- Huyer, S., Sikoska, T. (2003), *Overcoming the Gender Digital Divide: Understanding ICTs and their potential for the Empowerment of Women*, Synthesis Paper, Virtual Seminar Series on Gender and ICTs, United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) (www.schoolnet africa.net/fileadmin/resources/Synthesis_Paper_01.pdf)

References

- *McConnell, S. (2001), Telecentres Around the World: Issues to be Considered and Lessons Learned, ICT Development Group, CIDA's Canada-Thai Telecentre Project.*
- *Mahmood, K. (2005). Multipurpose Community Telecentres for Rural development in Pakistan, The Electronic Library, Vol. 23, No. 2, Emerald Group Publishing Limited.*
- *Marshall, S., Taylor, W. (2006), Using ICT to empower marginalised groups, International Journal of Education and Development using Information and Communication Technology (IJEDICT), 2006, Vol. 2, Issue 3.*
- *Osborn, D. (2007), A Survey of Localisation in African Languages, and its Prospects,
(<http://www.panafril10n.org/wikidoc/pmwiki.php/PanAfrLoc/Document>)*
- *Robinson, S. (2000), Rethinking telecentres in the Second World: Knowledge demands, remittance flows, and microbanks
(<http://www.fao.org/sd/CDdirect/CDre0055g.htm>)*

References

- *Roessner, C. (2006), Step by step towards a telecentre A telecentre process model, Fundación ChasquiNet (www.fundacionepm.org.co/punto_comun/descargas/The_telecenter_process_model_short.doc)*
- *Rogers, E.M., Shukla, P., (2001), The role of telecenters in development communication and the digital divide. Journal of Development Communication 2 (12), 26-31. (http://wsispapers.choike.org/role_telecenters-development.pdf.)*
- *Rose, J., (1999), Multipurpose Community Telecentres in Support of people Centred Development, Information and Informatics Division, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).*
- *Samaranayak, K. (2007), Sri Lanka Country report on Local Language Computing, ICT Agency, Sri Lanka.*

References

- *Simpson, R. , Hunter, A. (2001), The Internet & Regional Australia, How rural communities can address the impact of the Internet, Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) Publication No 01/087*
- *Vaughan, D. (2005). Information and Communication Technology for Development (ICT4D): An Integrated Approach for Village Communities, Partners in Micro-development Inc.*
- *Walsham, G., Robey, D., sahay, S. (2007), Foreword: Special Issue on Information Systems in Developing Countries, MIS Quarterly Vol. 31 No.2, pp 317 – 326*
(<http://www.misq.org/archivist/vol/no31/Issue2/WalshamRobey.pdf>)