

GATE/GTZ Initiatives for Adaptation, Dissemination and a Sustainable Use of Information Technologies

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Abstract

The *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH* is a government-owned corporation with activities in more than 130 partner countries. GTZ's aim is to improve the living conditions and perspectives of peoples in developing and transition countries by supporting a total of more than 2,700 development projects and programmes, chiefly under commissions from the German Federal Government.

The company is involved in a wide range of ICT activities. The focus is on an adequate and sustainable use of ICTs for development rather than the application of new high-tech tools. Included are technical capacity building, networking, e-commerce, integration of traditional media with recognition of socio-economic aspects.

GTZ concept

The GTZ and the BMZ (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development) regard ICT's as a tool to optimise development processes. The aim is to ease the distribution of information to groups and regions that have limited access to news and to knowledge. It is expected that ICT's have a positive influence on poverty reduction, the mayor development goal. Within the political framework of the DOT Force (G8 Digital Opportunity Task Force) the BMZ recently untied funds for pilot projects in order to identify strategies to meet these aims.

The main objective is foremost to make technology, information and knowledge available to developing countries. While GTZ's main focus is not to provide access to scientific publications, in certain fields (e.g. e-commerce, agriculture) specialized literature is a valuable addition. In the educational sector and in the cooperation with universities in developing countries this aspect is considered very carefully.

Activity examples

The following listing provides an overview of GTZ - ICT projects which contribute to the above described goals:

- E-learning – learning for connectivity
 - CRYSTAL - <http://www.gtz.de/crystal/en/default.asp>
 - Kabissa-Cooperation – Time to get online - <http://www.ttgo.kabissa.org/>
- Networking –
 - ecurarural - <http://www.ecuarural.gov.ec/>
 - GLOBWINET - <http://www.globwinet.org/>
 - URBANET - <http://www.gtz.de/urbanet/>
 - SHARED - <http://shared-global.collexis.net/main.asp>
 - INTI - <http://www.inti-online.org>

- Telecenters –
 - support of telecenters in Latin America
- ICT & economy – <http://www.gtz.de/themen/economic-development/english/ict-private-sector-development/>
 - Chances and Risks for SMEs: E-business in DCs - <http://www.gtz.de/e-business/english/index.asp>
 - GTZ/FAO Microbanking software - <http://www.gtz.de/themen/economic-development/english/financial-systems/services/fs-microbanking-software.htm>
 - Information Gateway about Internet Portals for Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) - <http://www.gtz.de/sme-portals/>
 - Usbekistan Export Promotion Web - <http://www.uzexport.com/>
- Knowledge on cd-roms –
 - Human Info-Cooperation – <http://www.humaninfo.org>
- World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) –
 - Support of the German position in the field of ICTs for development

Additional to these pure ICT approaches a large number of GTZ-projects have an ICT and/or knowledge management component. Their enumeration would complete the list. This shows that the GTZ activities cover a wide range of intervention levels:

- INTI network - individuals from developing countries request information on appropriate technologies
- IT support for SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises)
- high level political intervention in the context of the WSIS.

Summary

For the GTZ it appears of high importance to look at new and traditional ICTs likewise as a wide range of opportunities. For every social, cultural and financial niche the appropriate media needs to be identified, implemented and used in order to achieve the highest possible impact in the context of the overall goal of poverty reduction and the establishment of a human rights policy.

“Taking ICT to people doesn't necessarily mean that you need to put a computer into every village. What you actually need to take to is the information that can make a difference. ICT is not an end in itself, rather a tool that needs to be adapted for local use.” [1]

References

- [1] Gaurab Raj Upadhaya, Radio Sagarmatha, Kathmandu, April 2002, <http://www.radiosagarmatha.org/>