Honduras

Overview

Honduras has very high needs with regard to improving public access to ICT, and low overall readiness. CIS has concluded, however, that steady gains are possible over the coming years. Developing more capacity-building programs will be a key element of this effort. Many other issues will need to be addressed as well such as high rates of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, emigration, and health crises.

PUBLIC ACCES LANDSCAPE	
Challenges ahead	Steady gains
Needs	High
Needs (rank)	4/25
Readiness	Low
Readiness (rank)	21/25

Findings

Income is probably the most important characteristic defining public access to ICT in Honduras. People in the lower income classes can only rarely afford user fees and often cannot afford to travel to a venue. Their need to maintain their daily subsistence is of the utmost importance even if a venue is nearby. By comparison, most cybercafé users are middle class and have a certain amount of disposable income that permits them greater access to venues.

Age is also a factor. Persons under 35 years of age form the vast majority of those who use these venues. Among the users interviewed, the majority used the venue services more for communication than for information searches.

Education levels are equally important among users, and students form a high percentage of the users. Searches for information are a high priority among younger people who use the venues for their schoolwork and also to learn about job opportunities.

Although gender inequity is a long-standing cultural issue nationwide, librarians and venue operators stated that they see little overall gender imbalance among their users. However, the people who use the libraries and telecenters tend more often to be women, and cybercafés have a slightly higher percentage of male users. There were no conclusive data to explain this imbalance.

Both urban and rural venues were studied, but the initiatives that the research team observed appeared somewhat more developed in rural areas. The perception was that the initiatives were a greater need in rural areas where there were so few existing venues and the people in rural areas do not yet have as many ways to access information and ICTs as do the urban residents. There are, however, more overall sources of information in urban areas such as documentation centers, university libraries, and cybercafés.

Because of the significance of migration in Honduras, this variable was added to the scope of the study. There are no special programs or initiatives that target the needs of migrants, but there is information on foreign job opportunities as well as information guides on the topic of migration.

ACE Scores

■ Country score ■ 25-country average
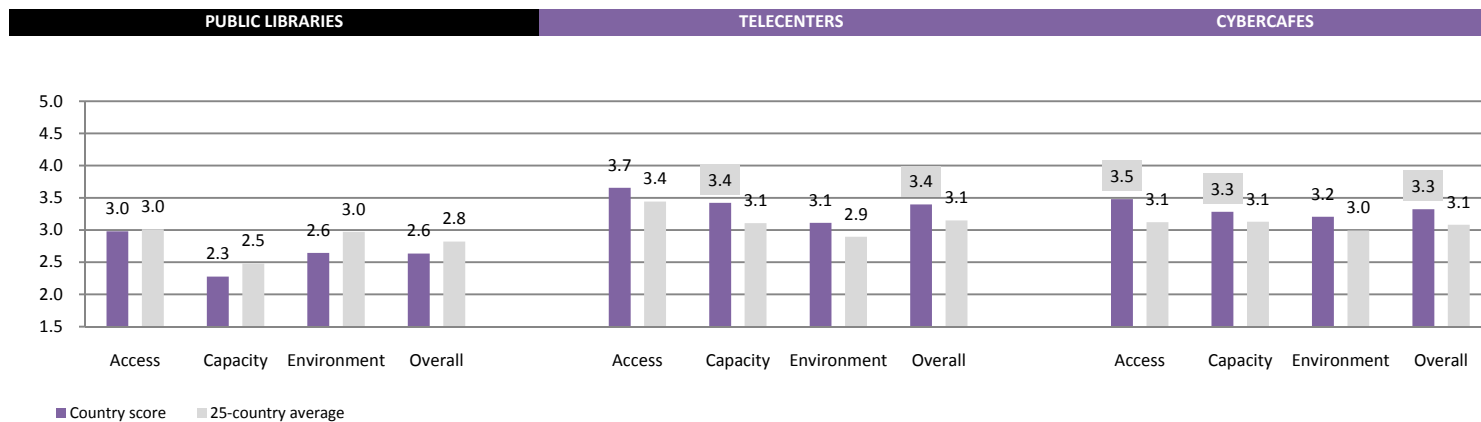
Shaded data points are outside standard deviation for 25-country set
See the last page for country-specific definitions of these venues
See the last page for a definition of the ACE scoring framework

Venue Distributions

	ALL PUBLIC ACCESS			PUBLIC LIBRARIES			TELECENTERS			CYBERCAFES			OTHER VENUES*		
	Total urban & non-urban	25-country average	25-country median	Total urban & non-urban	25-country average	25-country median	Total urban & non-urban	25-country average	25-country median	Total urban & non-urban	25-country average	25-country median	Total urban & non-urban	25-country average	25-country median
VENUES	302	10,017	5,489	128	1,111	1,062	122	1,273	366	ND	8,693	3,225	52	398	46
number with ICT	ND	9,802	5,122	67	349	96	ND	1,149	257	ND	8,507	3,251	52	146	13
% with ICT	ND	98%	87%	52%	31%	20%	ND	90%	100%	ND	98%	100%	100%	37%	92%
% OF PUBLIC VENUES	100%	100%	100%	42%	11%	20%	40%	12%	11%	ND	73%	67%	17%	4%	1%
POP. PER VENUE ('000)	23	8	5	54	93	37	57	205	68	ND	52	9	134	419	103
with ICT ('000)	ND	15	6	105	2,093	208	ND	242	119	ND	62	10	134	1,354	198

ND=No data
*See the last page for country-specific definitions of these venues. For this country, "other venues" refers to Riecken Foundation Libraries.
Data points are missing for some measures in some countries, which can result in oddities when comparing rows of data (for instance, the average number of venues with ICT appears high compared to the average number of venues). For a complete overview of comparative country data, please see the summary paper for this study.

User Profiles

		PUBLIC LIBRARIES				TELECENTERS				CYBERCAFES			
		Urban	25-country average	Non-urban	25-country average	Urban	25-country average	Non-urban	25-country average	Urban	25-country average	Non-urban	25-country average
INCOME	Low income	18%	28%	ND	35%	ND	26%	23%	24%	14%	26%	ND	24%
	Medium income	59%	54%	ND	46%	ND	56%	70%	45%	81%	56%	ND	45%
	High income	23%	7%	ND	6%	ND	9%	0%	4%	0%	9%	ND	4%
EDUCATION	No formal education	18%	3%	ND	2%	ND	5%	0%	6%	1%	5%	0%	6%
	Only elementary	36%	16%	ND	21%	ND	14%	10%	13%	12%	14%	12%	13%
	Up to high school	45%	50%	ND	36%	ND	37%	67%	32%	46%	37%	41%	32%
	College or university	0%	28%	ND	19%	ND	40%	20%	28%	41%	40%	47%	28%
AGE	14 and under	64%	12%	ND	15%	ND	9%	3%	14%	5%	9%	ND	14%
	15-35	32%	72%	ND	51%	ND	74%	97%	57%	81%	74%	ND	57%
	36-60	4%	12%	ND	23%	ND	12%	0%	8%	14%	12%	ND	8%
	61 and over	0%	2%	ND	2%	ND	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	ND	1%
GENDER	% female	55%	53%	ND	49%	ND	39%	40%	39%	33%	39%	ND	39%

ND=No data
Percentages may not add up to 100% in all cases
See the last page for country-specific definitions of these venues
Data collected through interviews conducted by research teams. See country reports for details with regard to methodology, locations, timing, and data collection issues.

The following findings emerged from this study:

- Few policies and initiatives are in effect in Honduras that support public access to information, and the few initiatives that are in place have limited support from the government.

- Information and communication access venues are affected by the political preferences of the users, venue operators, and community administrators.

- Children and young people are the most frequent users because of curriculum requirements imposed by schools.

- Cybercafés now serve as more popular information and communication access centers than telecenters, which were originally created to service these public access needs. Cybercafés also serve an important social role as training sites and social gathering places.

- Access to venues is often determined by a user's perception of a venue's social attractiveness, which motivates people and makes the existing venues more inviting.

- The decision as to what is legitimate information is determined mainly by venue operators and is based on the subjective opinions held by each operator.

- Because of the migration phenomenon, people often go to the venues to communicate with relatives abroad.

Recommendations

This study generated important expectations among the people in Honduras who were involved. Based on the results, additional work is needed to better define the nation's needs and to provide a basis for resolving the many issues that exist. Consequently, subsequent detailed studies are highly recommended.

The following key recommendations emerged:

- Establish a functional collaboration among the venues to aid resource sharing and to create improved information processes

- Implement a participatory process where people define the needs of the community and prioritize them

- Establish capacity-building programs, especially among underserved communities and groups

- Drive municipalities and local governments to play a fundamental role in integrating and defining venues

- Develop an initiative to link the work of the state public libraries with the CCCCs to connect the work of both, and

- Distribute and promote the use of Web 2.0 tools to generate local content.

Geography & Economy

Honduras is a small semi-tropical country in Central America with a modest economy based largely on agriculture. Approximately 92 percent of the population is Mestizo (defined as a mixed ethnicity of European and indigenous origins). Spanish is the official language, but five indigenous languages also are spoken.

Honduras has high levels of poverty, unemployment and illiteracy. Migration is also an issue: Each year, approximately 100,000 Hondurans leave the country, most to the United States or Spain.

In addition, Hondurans faces an ongoing struggle with HIV-AIDS and reproductive health, and has one of the highest levels of HIV-AIDS cases in the region.

The Honduran government implemented its Poverty Reduction Strategy in 2001, which has the support of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). The poverty rate in rural areas of Honduras (which holds 53% of the population) is estimated to be 85 percent.

COUNTRY PROFILE	
Total population* (millions)	7.0
Urban population* (millions)	3.3
Literacy (%)	80
E-readiness	ND
Gini coefficient	0.54

*World Bank 2006 data
ND=No data

Research Team

Kemly Camacho
Melissa Arias
Phone: 506-253-1339
506-2253-1326
E-mail: kemly@sulabatsu.com
melissa@sulabatsu.com

CIS Contact

Prof. Ricardo Gomez
Center for Information & Society (CIS)
University of Washington
4311 11th Avenue NE, Suite 400
Box 354985
Seattle, WA 98195
cisinfo@u.washington.edu
www.cis.washington.edu

About this study

CIS's Public Access Landscape Study examined how people around the world access and use information and computers in public settings such as libraries, telecenters, and cybercafes. Understanding public access is particularly important in developing countries where there is often limited private access to information and communication technologies (ICTs).

This study covered a carefully-selected sample of 25 developing countries containing over 250,000 public access settings. Local research teams surveyed over 25,000 people and conducted interviews and focus groups in order to develop a detailed picture of the public access ICT landscape in each country. CIS collected, interpreted, and analyzed these detailed county-level results, and also conducted cross-country comparative analyses to uncover common themes, challenges and opportunities.

The goal of this work is to help strengthen public access to information and ICTs around the world.

This project was conducted in two phases. During the first phase, country-based research teams prepared draft reports describing the information access landscape, presented a national assessment, and compiled a preliminary set of recommendations. In the second phase, teams identified the principal locations where people seek information: public libraries, cybercafés, telecenters, and other locations (such as private and religious libraries).

Local research teams used a combination of research methods to: (1) observe how people access information; (2) conduct surveys in information venues where they interviewed operators and users; and (3) perform secondary research and analysis of existing reports and documents using both local and international sources. Teams combined site visits and interviews to review the physical infrastructure and human resources of a variety of venues, and to determine the information content, service usage patterns, communication, and knowledge development. Additionally, teams examined the effects of environmental factors such as government policies, geography, and ethnic and linguistic differences.

Definitions

ACE scoring framework: Developed by CIS based on a modified bridges.org Real Access framework. The scale goes from zero to five, with 5 being the best possible score. ACE scores are calculated by evaluating dozens of variables having to do with ICT access, capacity and environment in public access ICT venues. "Access" includes variables such as accessibility, suitability, affordability, and the availability of technology; "capacity" includes training, relevant content and services, social appropriation, and collaboration capacity; and "environment" includes socio-cultural factors, popular support, political will, and a country's legal and regulatory framework.

Challenges ahead (from table on front page): Estimates based on combinations of ACE scores indicating difficulty in improving country's public access to ICT. From the fewest challenges to most, categories are: quick wins, steady gains, slow gains, and significant.

CIS: University of Washington Center for Information & Society (CIS)

Cybercafés/Internet cafes: Privately owned and not organized into any kind of network

E-readiness: The ability to use ICT for economic development, as determined by measures of connectivity and technology infrastructure, business environment, social and cultural environment, legal environment, government policy and vision, and consumer and business adoption. E-readiness is scored on a scale from 1 to 10. In 2008, the global e-readiness score was 6.4, with the highest levels in North America and the lowest in Africa and Asia.

Gini coefficient: Measures the inequality of income distribution. A low coefficient indicates more equal income distribution, while a high Gini coefficient indicates more unequal distribution. The global average is around 0.6; the US Gini is around 0.45.

ICTs: Information and communication technologies (especially computers and the Internet)

Needs & Readiness indexes (from table on front page)**:** The needs index is comprised of three indicators: inequality, ICT usage and ICT cost. The readiness index is also comprised of three indicators: politics, skills and ICT infrastructure. Proxies are used for all indicators. See "Information Needs & Watering Holes" on the CIS Landscape Study website (www.cis.washington.edu/landscape) for a more detailed discussion of these indexes and proxies.

NGO: Non-governmental organization

Non-urban: Commonly labeled a rural area, but definitions of rural or periurban vary by country

Public libraries: Most public libraries are organized into one institutional structure

Front photo: Riecken Library in Jacaleapa. Photo courtesy of Sula Batsu.