Edgar

Centro Comunitario Santa Fe
Evidence Narrative Worksheet

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Evidence Narratives at the Center for Information & Society

Evidence Narratives are a Center for Information and Society project designed to broaden and deepen our understanding of the impact of Information and Communication Technologies and Development (ICTD).

Our intention is to choose examples of ICTD implementations carefully and to write about them in such a way that each one, individually, illustrates important aspects of the featured settings and so that, taken together, the examples describe and reveal larger themes about core aspects of ICTD. It is our hope that by being systematic at every stage in the research process we are able to expedite the accumulation of credible and accessible information about the impact of ICTD on individuals and communities.

The ICTD field is filled with success stories extolling the benefits of access to Information Technology. As these often rhetorically powerful and memorable stories describe what can be achieved under the best of conditions, they may distort our understanding of what is achieved more typically, or may fail to describe aspects of their settings or strategies that were crucial to success.

Each setting in which ICTD projects are implemented is unique, but our experience is that with careful attention to the idiosyncrasies and commonalities across settings, patterns soon emerge which reveal more general themes about the qualities of settings, people, and programs that make a difference.

While tension may exist between an organization's desire to feature certain cases and the critical researcher's commitment to rigor, we believe that a methodology built on intensive questioning and attention to detail can yield stories that uncover and communicate an accumulation of credible evidence about why individual programs and larger strategies succeed and fail.

By crafting exemplary stories, by developing and disseminating useful methodological tools, and by promoting these techniques among NGO managers and grant makers, CIS aims to shape a research framework that can fulfill the needs of NGOs and donors, with stories that accurately represent realities in underserved communities, accumulating evidence that serves the ends of rigorous analysis while publicizing good work.

This paper is an example and an experiment in this methodological landscape. It is supported in large part by a grant from Microsoft Community Affairs. Direction, guidance and leadership has been provided by Andrew Gordon of the Daniel J. Evans School of Public Affairs at the University of Washington. Joe Sullivan, staff researcher at the Center for Information and Society, is the lead editor for this project.

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This worksheet is a template to structure evidence gathering for CIS Evidence Narratives. This sheet will be useful for complete stories. It is also a vehicle to pass the "raw elements" of an evidence-based success story to another writer, such as a Microsoft PR representative.   Researchers should use an appropriate mix of narrative, bullets, and quotations to complete the worksheet. Special attention should be paid to standards of evidence (explained in the methodology document), attribution and concise yet and rich description. The cells on the right should attribute the data to a particular source.

A. Edgar

Edgar is a graduate from the first Micro-Company course imparted by Santa Fe CC. During this course, Edgar acquired basic knowledge for setting up a business through different modules, using Microsoft programs. Course first part allowed him to learn different possible businesses using ICTs, such as: programming, web page design, equipment maintenance and repair and database management.

Edgar is the oldest of a three children family, where his father studied up to Elementary School. He has a medium superior education and has two sons. He and his family live in Jalalpa, near the Santa Fe Community Center.

Early in this year, Edgar had no job and very demotivated, searching for a job. It was then when his sister and nephew talked to him about computer courses at the Santa Fe Community Center, he thought it was interesting and when he went there to ask for information, the CDI Micro-Company course was very attractive for him. In this course, he was taught the basic aspects to start his own business. He liked very much the warm and positive environment at the Center and helped him through hard times.

Two months ago, Edgar opened a Cyber-Café at La Pila town, in the Cuajimalpa area, in a semi-urban zone of low resources; where he identified an unsatisfied connectivity demand. Cybercafé is located on main street of the town; it is a room of about 12 m2, having cement floor and five computers with Internet access, a scanner and color printer. It is opened from 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 or 10:00 p.m., seven days per week. This is a profitable business, however, it may be more successful. For this purpose, they need to win more clients. Edgar thinks that it is only a matter of time, to be well-known by the community.

Edgar says:

"I was always concerned over starting my own business, but I did not have the courage to take the chance, the course helped me to take that big step, to decide to do it. Now, I have my own business, I am happy to be working."

"Now that I am here at my Cybercafé, I feel very pleased, proud of myself, my self-esteem has improved, and I feel more capable. There still are no huge economic profits, I opened it just two months ago, but I think we can do just fine."

"Besides having my own business, I love the fact of being able to help people to not being afraid to a computer, to use all the different programs and to communicate through e-mail."

"My family is very happy and proud of me being independent."

In the researcher estimation, "Edgar is not typical of other students, in the sense that CDI is not a cybercafé incubator. He is typical however in the sense that he has concrete skills, worked on his confidence, a broader social network and greater set of tools at his disposal to improve his livelihood. He, like many others, is capitalizing on this opportunity."

(CDI Micro-Company graduate)

Story elaborated by Regina de Angoitia on June 19, 2008

B. About the Organization

1. Please describe or illustrate the sights, smells, sounds, etc. of the NGO and the community's physical surroundings.

The Santa Fe Community Center (a civil society organization), is located in Mexico City, in the Santa Fe area, in the Community of Jalalpa El Grande Segundo Reacomodo.

Initially, Santa Fe zone was composed of sand mines, waste lands, zones where homeless lived (people who do not have a household and live on waste lands) and a small medium class town). As part of Mexico City growth, this zone initiated its urbanization 20 years ago, starting with Iberoamerican University, and following with important corporate companies, malls and fashionable residential areas.

Extreme poverty is observed on this zone, a middle-class sector (people who work for companies and stores) as well as a high-class level. In the surrounding area you can find impressive social-economic contrasts. At a distance of one or two kilometers is one of the most important corporate zones in the country, where you can see modern and luxurious buildings (IBM, HP, Televisa, Ericsson, Telefónica Móviles, etc.). A residential zone with a private golf club, with high security, beside houses with roofs made of steel sheets and carton.

By entering the community center, we can appreciate a clean, white place, with fine facilities, where people who attend it are very nice; a warm and friendly environment is perceived.

 Researcher, Annual Report 2006

2. Please describe or illustrate the community development(?) context: cultural, political, economic, historical.

The center influence zone is of 4000 inhabitants, approximately, (corresponding to the Jalalpa el Grande 2do Reacomodo zone). Inhabitants belong to the PRD (left political party), they are a very active political community. This zone has a high criminality level, it is considered dangerous, if you do not belong to the community, it is not recommended to go there at night. The population of Jalalpa el Grande, an extreme urban poverty and a low social class transcending to a medium one, coexist. The population is mostly catholic; Santa Fe Community Center is located nearby a church.

Operations Director, Trainer and Annual Report 2006

3. Please describe or illustrate the distinguishing characteristics of individuals in the underserved population the NGO targets. How is their situation affected by their gender, ethnicity, religion, race, caste, physical mobility, age, wealth, language, migrant status, political affiliation, or literacy?

Generally, the population presents a middle-school level, youth have a higher scholar level than their parents. Unemployment and low salaries are everyday issues. An important percentage of women work as maids, cooks and nannies. It is common to see several families living in the same house (when children marry, they live with their parents and grandparents), it is very difficult to acquire a house of their own.

Trainer and Operations Director

4. Please describe or illustrate the ICT ecosystem. Where else do people access the internet & computers? How prevalent are cybercafés, mobile phones, public libraries, home access, etc.? Why does access matter?

There are several Internet-Cybercafés in the area, but they are expensive to the acquisition power of the population. An important part of the population has cellular telephones (pre-paid) and they use it as less as they can, because it is very expensive. They do not know the public library. For young people, access is very important for their homework.

Trainer

5. Please describe or illustrate the NGO: name, mission, history, target populations, partners.

The Santa Fe Community Center is created from the experience of the Santa María Diner, which was founded by a group of friends who wanted to help people of very low economic resources, who cannot even afford food. The diner's objective was to provide full and nutritious meals to any person with low economic resources.

The diner was well received by the community, from daily interaction, important health, education, psychosocial, food and integral development needs are detected. The Santa Fe CC was created in order to help the community to satisfy said needs. Its mission is to promote the person's dignity values and

its capacities: generating and operating social programs in marginalized zones, which collaborate to families' integral development, through a sharing between different communities.

The target population is that of Jalalpa el Grande 2do Reacomodo, Santa Fe, the center influence zone has 4,000 inhabitants. Among partners and sponsors, we can find Fundación Telmex, Carril, Microsoft, Grupo COPRI, ATCO Constructora, Banamex, Fundación Posadas, Universidad Iberoamericana, Tecnológico de Monterrey, Intel and CDI.

The center has a voluntary service and board which are very committed and active, which has established every alliance.

Trainer, Operations Director, Annual Report 2006

6. Please describe or illustrate the programs, outreach and other organizational characteristics that fit the needs of underserved populations? Why are they credible with the groups they serve? What is most remarkable about this organization?

Details which distinguish the center:
In the Center, work-shops, services and programs offered are created from actual community's needs.
The Center has a great flexibility and quick response capacity to face challenges.
It offers an integral attention for the family, where psychosocial aspect and human values are important.
It has an environment of respect for human dignity, where attended people feel comfortable.

ICTs courses give support to all groups of the community: children, youth, housewives and men. At the same time, these courses respond to different community needs, CDI 1., basic course for beginners. CDI 2., equipment maintenance course, directed to those who wish to know more about hardware and repair. CD 3., Micro-company course, directed to those who are interested in setting up a business. Intel Educar for children, and prep@net, for people who have not been able to attend to high school.

Entrance examinations to ICTs courses are closed same day owing to population strong demand.

Trainer, Operations Director, students

7. Please describe or illustrate the NGO countables. (Number of students, graduates, computers, years, any statistics or numbers that the organization can provide.)

The Santa Fe CC and the computer classroom is less than two years old, it is a young and dynamic Center, it is at a growth and institutionalization stage, on which professionalization of work is seek, as well as creating procedures, rules and impact measurements. Also, a new building construction is about to begin, where the computer area is going to be extended.

The Center is divided in 5 areas: health, education (computers), psychosocial, voluntary service and also, the Santa María Diner. In 2006, the Center supported a total of 3,329 persons.

Computer Area – IT and Citizenship School CDI has 13 Pentium IV computers, one printer, all of them with bandwidth, a cannon for presentations, 13 web cameras and one scanner.

CDI courses
All CDI courses tend to promote least-favored social community, using information and communication Technologies (ICTs) as an instrument for citizenship building and exercising. By, 1. Offering quality training for using and social appropriation of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) by community; 2. Fostering individuals' awareness process and their reflection on society and its different aspects; 3. Creating a physical space destined to discussion, participation and community action. CDI proposal is based on Paulo Freire's book "Pedagogy for the Oppressed" (1970),

CDI 1. (Basic IT), This course is objected to ICTs basic training, considering Microsoft Ilimited Potential curriculum, together with CDI citizenship training.

CDI 2 (Preventive Maintenance), This course offers equipment repair and hardware basic knowledge together with CDI proposal.

CDI 3. (Micro-Company), this course offers basic knowledge for setting up a business through different modules, using Microsoft programs. Course first part is comprised of: business selection, market awareness, finance and managing, and a section for proceedings. Course second part is comprised of several modules: it offers training on different possible businesses using ICTs, such as: programming, web page design, cybercafé, equipment maintenance and repair and database management.

Total CDI graduates = 275

Prep@net (High School On-Line, (From the University ITESM, Tecnológico de Monterrey) = 60 students are actually coursing the 5th four-month period. Regarding prep@net, on-line high school is taken with tutor's continuous advisory, as well as assessment and homework performance.

Intel Educar (Computer courses for children). It offers basic knowledge for children including games and design. They are also asked to make a reflection on their community. Total = 70 graduates.

Trainer, Edgar and Operations Director

8. Please describe or illustrate the ICT training program: courses, sequence, length, technology profile, etc.

Courses which the Center offers are those previously mentioned. Duration, sequence and contents vary from course to course. CDI courses always train in ICTs with a citizen focus. The Micro-Company course is the newest, it only has 4 graduates.

Trainer

9. Please describe or illustrate the ICT curricula. Is MSUP curriculum used? How has the NGO customized or adapted particular lessons?

At the Santa Fe CC, they find the Unlimited Potential curricula very useful, especially because of its flexibility, but they do not teach the last module of preparation for a labor world.

CDI courses are very practical and they are adapted according to the audience. Need description of CDI courses and methodology for teaching (based on Paulo Freire's "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" Learning

while promoting civic engagement

(Trainer)

10. Please describe or illustrate the benefits of training on Microsoft software for typical trainees. Why does Word or Windows familiarity (or mastery) matter? What doors are opened? Are these useful building blocks?

Windows is very useful for trainers and students, since these programs have become a known and indispensable tool in schools, universities and labor world. Being familiar to Windows gives students security, because besides knowing said tool's management, they feel integrated to a universal language.

Knowing Windows management, opens doors for a better scholar development (search for information, present and organize it), a new type of communication (chat or e-mail), get a job or a better one and even starting an own business.

Trainer

11. Please describe or illustrate the organization's relationships with employers. Does the organization coordinate job placement programs? How do employers feel about workers that are trained by the NGO?

They do not have a job placement program, they only share the information which comes to them about jobs. Information is related from companies, hotels and persons located on Santa Fe zone, which is available through voluntary service or the community council.

Trainer

RESEARCHER

Dr. Judith Mariscal has extensive research experience in Information and Communications Technologies focusing on public policy and regulatory issues. She is currently a professor of the Public Administration Department from the "Centro de Investigacion y Docencia Economica's (CIDE)", an independent research and educational institution based in Mexico City. As director of CIDE's Telecommunications program Dr. Mariscal monitors various research assignments paying special emphasis on projects dealing with pro-poor ICTs policies and information society. She also teaches graduate courses as part of CIDE's Public Administration Department faculty.

Dr. Mariscal holds a doctorate degree on Public Policy from the LBJ School of Public Affairs of the University of Texas at Austin, a Master's degree on International Economic Policy from CIDE, and a BSc in Economics from the ITAM. She has authored numerous articles on telecommunications policy and regulation, as well as the book "Unfinished Business: Telecommunications Reform in Mexico" (Praeger Press, 2002).