PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION & ICTs
PHASE II REPORT

Dominican Republic

Prepared for the University of Washington,

Center for Information & Society.

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Table of Contents

The table of contents is generated automatically. Right-click on it and select "update field" to update page numbers.

Extended Executive Summary

Many people will only read this section so make it very comprehensive, about 8 pgs long.

It should read like a continuous and stand-alone text, with full paragraphs that summarize the following points:

1.1 Research Project Overview

This research focuses on the public access to information and communication landscapes in 24 countries, with specific focus on public libraries, to understand the information needs of underserved communities, public access to information and communication venues, and the role of ICT.

Through field research in 24 countries conducted by local research partners, and cross-country comparative analyses based on common research design elements (see list of countries and research design overview in Appendix), the project aims to contribute to the knowledge in the field of information and ICT for development. Of particular interest and value are: the comparative look at key venues (libraries and other), and the mix of depth of in-country knowledge with breadth of global comparison to elicit success factors and scenarios to understand how diverse populations can and do access and use ICT to improve their lives. All outputs of this research will be broadly disseminated to interested stakeholders and placed in the public domain.

1.2 Introduction

This study provides insights on the state of public access to information venues in Dominican Republic, specifically public libraries, telecentres and cybercafés. There's a special focus on the inequities that affect the country and make Access uneven.

In the following lines the reader will find a short overview of this Caribbean country, a brief description of the methodology used, a list of the main sources used and, of course, a systematic presentation of the main results and findings.

1.3 Country Overview

Dominican Republic is a country located in the center of the Archipelago of the Antilles. Together with Haiti it conforms the island that was christened "La Española" in 1942; it borders at the West wit Haiti, at the North with the Atlantic Ocean, at the South with the Caribbean Sea and at the East with the Mona Canal, which separates it from Puerto Rico. Dominican Republic has an extension of 48, 670.82 square kilometers and is divided in 32 provinces. (ONE, 2007)

The government form is democratic and representative; it includes the presidency and three differentiated powers: Executive, Judicial and Legislative. This last one is formed by a Senate with 32 senators and a chamber of 150 legislators. The judicial power has 16 judges, 108 courts of appeal and 174 provincial courts. The presidency is elected every four years. (ONE, 2007)

According to the estimates of the National Statistics Office (ONE – Spanish acronym) the population of Dominican Republic up to 2008 is 9, 611, 787 people. Out of the total population, the larger age groups are between 0 and 34 years old.

A high percentage of the population lives in poverty, a situation that has been growing since 2002, having a significant rise in 2005 when one million and a half people descended to this condition as a result of the financial crisis of 2003-2004, stepping the numbers up from 44,9% in 2002 to 47,5% in 2005. In 2006 the percentage descended to 44,5%, which is still a very high poverty rate. (CEPAL, 2007)

The combination of high poverty and a youth concentration of the population elevates the possibility of young people being poor and hence there's a higher social vulnerability for problematic such as child labor, commercial sexual exploitation, school desertion, homelessness, addictions and sexual abuse, among others.

The situation becomes even more complex if one takes into account that these problems raise the country's poverty, in turn making more people vulnerable and becoming a cyclic relation in which the social investment on behalf of the government and other entities must each time be larger in order to be able to face them.

The percentage of unemployed population is another worrisome factor, in 2000 it represented 13,9% of the total productive population and it rose to 18% during 2004 and 2005, also related to the economic crisis in 2004. However, since 2005 there's been an improvement and the numbers have dropped to 15,6% in 2007. (CEPAL, 2007)

The Internal Gross Product has had an important evolution since the economic crisis in 2003-2004. Although the growth in 2003 reached negative numbers of -1,9, in 2005 the rate reached 9,3 and in 2006 5,5 (CEPAL, 2006)

1.4   Research Rationale, Sample, and Methods

This study is based on statistic and bibliographic data, on the systematic analysis of surveys and interviews conducted as well as observations from the research team and validation of preliminary results in a group interview with experts in the topic.

Close to 50 economic, social and statistical reports where used from international organisms, non-government organizations and government projects. Also, over 65 people were interviewed, among them: government officials, community leaders, staff of non-government organizations and research centers, as well as the operators/coordinators of the different venues.

Also, based on the model provided by the team of the Center for Information and Society of the University of Washington a survey was applied among users of all the venues studied, both urban as well as rural. Finally, the information obtained and the preliminary findings were discussed with a group of experts in a group interview. The information obtained was cross-checked with the data collected by different techniques and from different sources.

1.5   Information Needs of Underserved Communities

- Health (AIDS, STDs, Hepatitis, etc)

- Public services (electricity and water)

- Unemployment

- Migration

- Formal Education

- Entrepreneurship/Employability

- Tourism

- Agriculture

- Natural Disasters

- Teenage Pregnancy

- Domestic Violence

Source: Interview with venue operators, librarians, community leaders, academic specialists (from FLACSO) and gender specialists.

1.6   Strengths, Weaknesses, and Opportunities in Key Public Access Venues

Strengths:

- Government supports actions that tend to increase public Access to information and communication technologies (ICTs).

- There's information Access infrastructure in the main towns of the whole country.

Weaknesses:

- Absence of a collaboration system among venues of the same type and with different venues.

- Lack of relation between what the venues offer and the real information needs of underserved communities.

- Power supply/services.

- The users have diminished capacities for advanced information searches.

Opportunities:

- The rise of mobile telephones with Internet connection may favor a greater democratization of information.

- The growth of broadband connectivity and Wi-Fi zones will augment the amount of people with Internet access. With adequate guidance this growth can be channeled towards information appropriation.

- Population trained in the basic use of computers and Internet.

1.7 Salient Findings

- The amount of resources is usually larger in urban libraries than in rural ones (more updated collections and greater ICT presence).

- The role of the information manager varies in the different types of centers as well as the resources he/she has. (background, content and resources).

- Even though the resources are scarce in the public libraries of marginal and rural zones, they're still an important information access reference for the nearby community.

- The lack of a public library network and the near absence of user registry weaken the management of small libraries and the networks for sharing and collaborating.

- Some of the telecentres face sustainability issues that they must overcome by charging for trainings (i.e. CCI).

- The trainings are at an initial phase of literacy.

- Access to information is not only limited by the existing infrastructure, but mainly by elements like lack of capacities to handle the computer and do searches, to process and appropriate the information. It's also limited by the country's sever power supply issues.

- Digital literacy is seen as a rise in connectivity; the number of computers per person and the capacity to use software packages doesn't guarantee breaking away from old social problems, for example, the migration trends from agricultural zones to touristic and urban zones, and even out of the country.

- There's a significant larger presence of young women in libraries and telecentres.

- The use of libraries is closely related to the formal education system.

- In a smaller scale, this situation repeats itself in telecentres. The internet centers also play a similar role, however their social fun space is more evident.

- An important challenge for libraries, telecentres and internet centers is their sustainability and the maintenance of the technology acquired, in terms of updating, repairing and renewing equipment.

- The contents and activities of the libraries and telecentres are not always linked with the local development possibilities, especially in rural zones. There's still the need to achieve a contextualized use of the knowledge tool that publications and technology represent.

1.8 Key Recommendations

- Create a national network of libraries with real collaboration mechanisms.

- Develop strategies that allow appropriation of public access to information spaces that goes beyond formal education and have a more direct relation with the entertainment and economic aspects of the Dominican population. That is, establish the necessary mechanisms for the venues that were studied to become drivers of local development.

- Transcend the "informatics" vision of venues and provide the services necessary so that the users from the different venues can develop the capacities they need to make a real, appropriate use of the facilities available in the venues. This means that the country needs to make an effort, not only to increase connectivity, access to technology and information services, but mainly invest in its human resources.

- Think of sustainability strategies that allow the different public centers to improve their service, provide maintenance to their equipment and locales as well as invest in innovation.

- Promote the attendance of adults by providing specialized offers for this type of population.

- Promote a technical-professional profile to work as a manager and information collaborator in the different venues. The profile of a person capable of guiding people in their information searches in relation with their lives and expectations.

2 Methodology

Venue samples were selected in urban, rural, marginal urban and rural-urban settings, so that the data collected could provide insights regarding the trends of each venue according to the sector and the characteristics of the population located there, according to inequity variables.

Communities of the national district were studied, since it's the most populated and represents best the characteristics of the urban and marginal urban world. In the case of urban-rural and rural, the province of El Seibo was visited, one of the poorest of the country which was selected by United Nations as a community to monitor the Millennium Development Goals. It was also considered important to study a cybercafé located in a touristic zone, since it's one of the pillars of the Dominican economy.

2.1.1   Venues studied

	Public Libraries	Telecentres	Cybercafés
Total number in country	300*	864	ND**
A. # in urban location	98%	ND	ND
% offering ICT	ND	ND	ND
Total # of people served (annual)	ND	ND	ND
B. # in non-urban location	2%	ND	ND
% offering ICT	ND	ND	ND
Total # of people served (annual)			

Comments (comment especially on definition of urban/non urban in the country):

There are no precise data that can provide a number of how many venues are urban or rural. The definition of urban and non-urban is based in several factors: population density, type and number of services provided in the area.

1.1.1 Other experiences of public access to information that are not quite "venues"

Basic information about other experiences with potential to make a difference to the public access landscape (tea rooms, Wi-Fi hotspots, coffee houses, web information portals) although they are not quite a "public information venue" in the sense defined for this study (see research design document for definition).

Other public access experience #2: Wi-Fi Zones of the State Secretary on Youth "Hotspots SEJ"

> Description: Since two years ago, the State Secretary on Youth of Dominican Republic has been providing public zones with free wireless connection; these zones are called "Hot spots SEJ".
>
> Total number in country: 13
>
> % offering ICT access: 100%
>
> % in urban location:
>
> Comments on how it is influencing public access venues in the country:

This resource is a very important Access opportunity for Dominicans. Never the less, it's important to point out that this access is limited to people who have portable equipment, which is not frequent in the country's population. There are also limitations in terms of security, since not everyone is willing to carry their laptops around in the street.

1.1.2 Other existing public access venues, not included in this study

Basic information about other public access venues **not** included in the study (e-tuktuk, school or other private libraries not open to the public, health centers, etc), although they could play a role in public access information in the country. Indicate rationale for NOT including them in the study.

Other venue not studied #1: Laibraries of the Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo

> Total number in country: 5
>
> % offering ICT access: 100%
>
> % in urban location:

Description of the Venue:

Although the offer of university libraries is mainly targeted at satisfying the needs of their student population, in some cases they open Access for the general population. This is the case of the Pedro Mir library within the Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo. It has an infrastructure of four floors with diversified spaces: book consult rooms differentiated in each floor according to subject, also specific thematic rooms, for example, a rooms of United Nations books, a room of Pedro Mir books, a room of Dominican authors, an open-shelf room with encyclopedias and dictionaries, rooms with internet ready computers and spaces with computers to consult the library's collections, rooms for groups work, a teleconference room, two computer lab rooms, among other services.

Reason why it was not included in the study:

The reason why it was not included in the study is because the offer is not targeted specifically at general public and because the main information has a more technical specialized character that, like it was mentioned above, answers to the needs of their target population: university students.

Other venue not studied#2:

1.2 Inequity Variables

1-2 paragraphs each.

Describe how each variable affects equitable public access to information and ICT in this country, and what you did in this study to make sure each one was addressed (for example, if you visited venues in both urban and non-urban locations).

Also include additional variables of local relevance to your country, as you listed in Form 1, section 1a.

1.2.1 Socio-economic status

The socio-economic status affects directly equitable access to information and ICTs. The people with less economic resources have, in general, an education of lower quality, hence, lower capacities to make a significant use of the information available. On the other hand,

the immediate logic, that is, the need to attend needs in an immediate manner hinders having a long term vision that estimates the importance of information and communication over the search for daily bread.

how you addressed it in this study

The venues visited were in different types of zones and varying economic conditions. This allowed identification of differences in the venues –when there were- regarding types of ambience or obstacles to access services.

With the same objective, a question was added in the Venue Operator Questionnaire where people were asked to locate the different types of users that attend the venue, according to socioeconomic status. Also, local specialists on the topics were interviewed as well as people from the community to have an overview of their everyday life.

1.2.2 Educational level

Since in general terms the venues' offer is closely related with the formal education system, the educational level was clearly visible in the study. Most of the population serviced, almost all, visited the venues in search of information for homework and they were active students. It can be said that in Dominican Republic the variable related to education is more centered on whether they're active or inactive people within the formal education system, especially in the libraries.

In the telecentres it was possible to identify young adult population with low scholar levels that attended these spaces as a way of learning computer skills as an input for employment options.

In order to identify this in the study, a question was included in the user survey with the purpose of identifying the academic level and a similar question was asked to the venue operator to describe the visiting population. There were also open interviews with community leaders and specialists on the topic.

1.2.3 Age

Most of the users in all of the venues studied are children, teenagers and young adults. The offer and infrastructure design of the venues is targeted much more at this population, which excludes adults and elders.

In order to identify this in the study, a question was included in the user survey with the purpose of identifying age and a similar question was asked to the venue operator to describe the visiting population. There were also open interviews with

community leaders and specialists on the topic.

1.2.4 Gender

Most of the users in the centers were women, especially in the libraries and telecentres. In the cybercafés the trend was more equitable. There are no conclusive data to explain this difference; however there are some ideas about it. First of all, there's a larger amount of women in the formal education system (a larger percentage of the national population) and since the venues' offer is closely related with this aspect, it would only be natural to have a larger presence of females.

In second place, according to many of the users and center operators this trend could be explained by the fact that "women study more" than men. A third possible explanation could be found in the influence of non-domestic child labor that pulls an important amount of children from the educational system, hence, also from the public access to information venues.

A fourth factor could be related with gendered learning styles which are socially learned and drive women towards a more organized style, more related with signing up for courses, especially on technology topics. Since childhood men are taught to experiment in technological areas, which would explain why more men show up at the cybercafés instead of the telecentres.

In order to identify this in the study, a question was included in the user survey with the purpose of identifying gender and a similar question was asked to the venue operator to describe the visiting population. There were also open interviews with community leaders and specialists on the topic.

1.2.5 Location

This is a good place to offer further details on the urban/peri-urban/non-urban definitions and relevance in your country, among other location variables.

Evidently, there's a larger concentration of venues studied in the urban world, both in terms of quantity of centers as in quality of the infrastructure, the technology available and the services provided.

In order to identify this in the study, centers from different areas were visited: rural, province centers, peri-urban and urban. There were also open interviews with community leaders and specialists on the topic.

1.2.6 Other inequity variables

Other Inequity Variable 1: Ethnicity

This variable was included due to the strong presence of Haitian immigrants in the country. In none of the venues was there information or services adapted culturally for this population.

Structured interviews were conducted with the operators of different venues as well as open interviews with community leaders and specialists on the topic.

1.3 Data Gathering Techniques

Describe the different data gathering techniques you used to conduct this study. Provide specific examples and sample selection criteria.

1.3.1 Literature review

Describe the type and approximate number of documents reviewed. Include detailed references of the most useful ones. Include valid links for all online sources.

50 documents reviewed.

Economic, social and statistical reports by international organizations, researches of non government organizations, statistical reports and government projects.

1.3.1.1 Most useful bibliography:

1. [Indotel]. Instituto Dominicano de Telecomunicaciones. Indotel Home <page.2008http://www.indotel.gob.do>

   Accessed 2008 May 8.

2. [CNSIC] Comisión Nacional para la Sociedad de la Información y el Conocimiento. 2008. CNSIC home page.

   <http://www.cnsic.org.do/noticias/noticias-tecnologicas/internet-conocimiento-avances-sociedad-informacion.html>
   Accessd 2008 Apr 08.

3. [CEDAF]Centro para el Desarrollo Agropecuario y Forestal. Centro de Documentación

   http://www.cedaf.org.do/intranet/noticias/noticias_det.asp?not_id=32
   Accessed 2008 May 06.

4. [OPTIC] Oficina Presidencial de Tecnologías de la Información y la Comunicación. 2008.

   http://www.optic.gob.do/Estad%C3%ADsticas/tabid/152/Default.aspx
   Accessed 2008 May 05.

5. LINCOS Pequeñas Comunidades Inteligentes. 2008. http://www.lincos.net/web/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=30&Itemid=44

   Accessed 2008 May 05.

6. Presidencia de la República Dominicana. 2008. Home Page.

   http://akbar.ctc.org.do/dpd/portal-dpd/Beta/portada/node/18
   Accessed 2008 Ago 12.

7. Comisión Económica para América Latina y Caribe. **Statistical yearbook for Latin America and the Caribbean** 2008.

   http://www.eclac.org/cgi-bin/getProd.asp?xml=/publicaciones/xml/6/32606/P32606.xml&xsl=/deype/tpl-

i/p9f.xsl&base=/tpl/top-bottom.xslt

Accessed 2008 May 06.

8. [ONE] Oficina Nacional de Estadísticas. 2007.Home Page. http://www.one.gob.do/
    Accessed 2008 Apr 08.

9. Oficina Nacional de Estadísticas. 2007. República Dominicana en Cifras. República
    Dominicana.

10. [FUNGLOBE] Fundación Global Democracia y Desarrollo. 2005. Home page.
    http://www.funglode.org/FunglodeApp/ListadoMuestraAll.aspx?EntId=24 Accessed 2008
    May 28.

11. [CIPAF] Centro de Investigación para la Acción Femenina.2006. Home page.
    [http://cipaf.org.do/cipaf.html Accessed 2008 May 20](http://cipaf.org.do/cipaf.html).

    Accessed 2008 May 28.

12. Margaret Sanger Center International. **La Violencia Basada en Género y el
    VIH/SIDA** (2007). Santo Domingo, República Dominicana.

13. Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO). (2008). **Los Retos del
    Desarrollo Insular**, Wilfredo Lozano Editores, República Dominicana.

14. Secretaría de Estado de Educación. **Orden Departamental Número 16-06.** (2006)
    Dirección general de medios educativos, República Dominicana.

15. Betances,Bethania. "Vidas vividas en riesgo": Caraterizando el vínculo entre la
    Violencia Contra La Mujer y el VIH/SIDA en la República Dominicana.
    (2007)Republica Dominicana.

16. Oficina Nacional de Estadísticas (ONE), Unidad de Investigaciones. **La jefatura
    femenina de hogar en República Dominicana**. (2007) República Dominicana.

17. Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO). 2006. Migración y

Derechos Humanos. http://www.flacso.org.do/migracionyderechoshum.php

Accessed 2008 May 15.

18. Centro de Estudios Sociales y demográficos. **Encuesta Demográfica de Salud. Informe Preliminar VIH/SIDA**.(2007) Santo Domingo, República Dominicana.

19. Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (2008).**Itsmo Centroamericano y República Dominicana: Evolución económica durante el 2007 y perspectivas para el 2008.** http://firgoa.usc.es/drupal/node/37986 Accessed 2008,Jul 18.

20. PNUD Informe sobre Desarrollo Humano 2007-2008 (2008). http://firgoa.usc.es/drupal/node/37986. Accessed 2008, Jul 19.

1.3.2 Individual interviews

Describe the type and approximate number of individuals you interviewed. Include detailed contact information for the most useful ones (indicate for which topic, if appropriate). Discuss how representative is this sample of people you interviewed in relation to different opinions and perspectives in the country.

65 individuals interviewed.

Describe

Community leaders, personnel of government entities, research centers and non government organizations were interviewed, as well as operators of the different types of venues.

The list of people interviewed can be found in the Annexes or Apendix..

1.3.3 Group interviews and focus groups

Describe the type and number of group interviews or focus groups you conducted. If available, include detailed contact information for the most useful informants (indicate for which topic, if appropriate).

1 group interview or focus groups.

A group interview was conducted with 20 experts on information from the Pedro Mir Library of the Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo. In this space the preliminary results were validated. The list of participants can be found in the annexes.

1.3.4 Site visits

Describe the number and location of site visits you conducted. If available, include detailed contact information for the most useful informants (indicate for which topic, if appropriate).

37 site visits.

Among the places visited are:

- Public Access libraries, like the Villa Duarte Library, the Mendoza Library in Santo Domingo Este, the Library of the Madre Trini center, and the Madre Reina AA Library.

- University libraries, for example at the Universidad Acción Pro Educación y Cultura (APEC) and the Pedro Mir Library in the Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo.

- Telecentres: Virtual Classrooms of the State Secretary on Education, Informatics training centers of the Dominican Telecommunications Institute (Indotel) and a Community Technological Center from the First Lady's Office, Presidency.

- Cybercafés in different zones of the country.

- Government offices like the State Secretary on Culture and the State Secretary on Education, the National Statistics Office, the First Lady's Office and the National District City Hall.

- Research Centers and non government organizations, such as the Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO) and offices of World Vision and Fundación Esperanza.

- Community Media: Radio Seibo.

- Community organizations: Capotillo Development Council.

- Others: Casa Cural de Miches.

1.3.5 Surveys

Describe the location and number of respondents to surveys you conducted for this study. Indicate their relative distribution across venues (for example, 30% in telecentres, 20% in cybercafés, 50% in public libraries), and how they were selected.

Describe the venues, their locations and the sample size for each:

Public Libraries

Telecentres

Cibercafe

Venue 4

of **urban** venues surveyed

2

3

2

of **non-urban** venues surveyed

2

4

2

# of respondents in **urban** venues

31

36

21

# of respondents in **non-urban** venues

17

40

20

1.3.6 Other data gathering techniques

Other Data Gathering Technique 1: Observation

The research team visited the different venues and observed their characteristics as well as the behavior of its users.

1.3.7 Most useful contacts

List here some of the most knowledgeable and useful contacts that can provide additional information and insight, in case someone else wants to gather additional information about this topic in the country.

Paste contact details here: name, position, organization, contact info, area of expertise of knowledge.

- Eusebio De la Rosa Biblioteca Pedro Mir,

  Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo
  Supervising Librarian
  Santo Domingo
  henrydlarosa@gmail.com

- Lucero Arboleda De Roa

  Executive Director of the INTEC Library
  Santo Domingo
   lucero@mail.intec.edu.do tel: 809 567 92 71

- Dionicio de Jesús Peña

  Public Library of Villa Duarte "Juan Sánchez Lamouth"

  Santo Domingo

  bibliotecavilladuarte@gmail.com tel: 809 788 57 02

- Amparo Arango

  INDOTEL
  Telecommunications-
  aarango@indotel.net.do. Tel. 809 732 5555.

- Felix Ramírez

  State Secretary on Education
  Eucational Informatics Department

Director of Project AVE
Tel. 809 688 9700.

- Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO)
Contact:
Eddy Tejeda, Associate Researcher
Francisco Cueto, Director
Tel. 809 686 3664

- Guillermo Peña, Independent Researcher
Contacto: guillermo.pena@gmail.com

1.4 Research Trustworthiness and Credibility

2-3 paragraphs

Describe any steps you took to minimize your own bias in conducting this study, and to increase the credibility and trustworthiness of the results you are presenting.

The information obtained was cross-checked by using different techniques and the preliminary reports were discussed in a focus group with a group of experts. The information was contrasted with different sources, both from official government sources as well as social researchers and non-government organizations.

1.4.1 Research limitations

Describe important limitations you encountered in conducting this research, and limitations in drawing generalizations or broader conclusions based on the findings you report.

Perhaps one of the larger limitations of this research is related with the transparency of some government offices that didn't facilitate the research work. It's also important to point out that the state of statistics in the topics addressed represents a great limitation to obtain generalizations and conclusive data in this report.

Another limitation faced was the time available to carry out the field work and the systematic analysis of the data. There were also no community reports that would allow assessing other sources, and there were no visits to places without venues to carry out a comparative analysis.

1.4.2 Team qualifications

1 paragraph

Description of the research team and its qualifications to undertake this study.

The research team is part of the Costa Rican cooperative Sulá Batsú (www.sulabatsu.com) and it was integrated by Francia Alfaro, social psychologist and José Pablo Molina, social communicator. They're both students of the Masters in Educational Technology of the Universidad Estatal a Distancia de Costa Rica and have a broad experience on development and human rights. The research was coordinated by MSc. Kemly Camacho, anthropologist and computer systems graduate with a masters degree in Project Evaluation and currently a doctorate candidate on Information and Knowledge Society at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya.

Paulina Torres and María Isabel Victoria contributed with quantitative data processing. Translation was in charge of Margarita Salas, Ana María Mora, Daniel Ortuño, María del Rocío Vargas and Almer Murillo.

2 Country Assessment

Provide a broad picture of the public access information landscape in the country, informed by the results of this research. In 2-3 paragraphs, what is your overall assessment of public access information venues in this country?

This study is based on the analysis of three large public access information venues: public libraries, telecentres and internet centers. These three venues address access to information from two broad approaches that conceptualize information very differently. The first approach is within the formal education system that views information as a closed and finished product, that's transmitted from expert to apprentice in specific spaces and under strict behavior codes; it's mainly present in public libraries. On one hand, its informative offer answers mainly to the needs of elementary and high school students. On the other hand, the approach to information is generally intermediated by the same conditions of the educational system, such as keeping quiet and not having direct access to the materials (closed-shelf system).

The other approach conceptualizes access to information more freely and considers information an unfinished process, under constant change, that grows when it's shared. Hence, collective creation and playful learning are incentivized. This approach is more present in internet centers, since although there's a commercial service fee, the process of learning the system for information Access is freer, often learning happens while playing and in the company of others whose knowledge is also valid. The information accessed is also more varied and this affects the diversity of its uses.

Telecentres are an intermediate point between libraries and internet centers, since they promote free use of computer labs to facilitate access but they limit the type of information that can be accessed and the type of learning of the information access system (computers and internet) that they promote is more traditional.

2.2   Real Access Framework

Summarize the key findings and your assessment of each dimension in the Real Access framework used in this study. You will provide more details later.

2.2.1 Access

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of ACCESS ecosystem in the country (physical access, appropriate technology, affordability)?

The three types of venues studied in Dominican Republic have a wide coverage. Never the less, there's concentration both in numbers and in resources in the urban zone, mainly in the capital (Santo Domingo).

The information and communication technologies are rather new, especially in the case of the Informatics Training Centers of Indotel. In general, the telecentres have the support of a government organization for equipment renewal and this organization is the one in charge of establishing the places where it's strategic to place a telecentre. The public libraries have larger technological resources in the urban zones than in the rural zones, but in this case Indotel has played an important role by establishing telecentres within some libraries.

One very basic macro element that affects the use of ICTs in the venues is electricity. The different venues have to face power cuts daily (between 2 and 5 hours), which affects the overall appropriate functioning of ICTs as well as the access for users.

The use of the venues is free in most cases, except in the cybercafés that follow a more commercial logic, an issue that determines their scope and the possibilities of having updated technology.

2.2.2 Capacity

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of CAPACITY ecosystem in the country (human capacity, locally relevant content, integration into daily routines, socio-cultural factors, trust in technology, social appropriation of technology)?

The capacities, uses and appropriation of the users consulted have been developed accordingly to the offer and approach of the venues. In the libraries, these capacities are within the formal education system, having a limited result possibly caused by a lack of training for advanced information searches and by the type of contact that users can establish with the library's resources (mostly closed-shelf).

In most of the telecentres the capacity development is focused on digital literacy, which is integrated and used in educational aspects such as taking online courses, sending and receiving information, doing work and acquiring abilities that enrich the professional curriculum. On the other hand, in the internet centers the skills developed are more focused on the communicational scope.

2.2.3 Environment

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of the ENVIRONMENT ecosystem in the country (local economy, national economy, legal and regulatory framework, political will and public support, regional and international context)?

The Dominican economy is based on tourism and receiving remittances. An important part of the local economies is rather depressed since they don't have production means that provide economic solutions to their settlers, which in turn promote internal migration to the capital and tourism areas, as well as external migration mainly towards Europe and the United States. This economic panorama facilitates and promotes acquiring digital technologies and skills, not so much as a source of knowledge but like a job requirement or as a means of communication with family and friends that are abroad, an everyday fact that promotes and sustains the remittance based economy.

Currently, the political environment is favorable for the growth and improvement of initiatives related to information access. However, advances have a disperse nature and the institutional structure that would allow the continuity of political projects regardless of government changes, is not yet consolidated. On the other hand, there's little legislation that addresses the topic directly.

The country's regional and international context is mediated by the opening economy and the globalization of services. In this context there are two forces that define the importance of information for the population of a country. On one hand there's the increased value of knowledge in the development of many products and services and on the other hand, the international competition in the in-bond assembly manufacturing industry. According to the development model of each country, each tendency will have a stronger force. In the case of Dominican Republic, it seems the government is trying to have a larger approach towards promoting knowledge based products and services, specially having to face the great Chinese competition in the in-bond assembly arena.

This pressure is reflected in the digital literacy policy, which results insufficient due to the absence of mechanisms that help with the key aspects: use and appropriation of information to generate knowledge and, consequently, provide competitive advantages in the international sphere. Other international factors that are having and will have a bearing are the oil crisis and the food crisis. The increasing oil bill usually forces governments and populations to cut on expenses, usually in the areas of culture and education. The food crisis could represent an opportunity to revalue the country's agricultural knowledge.

2.3   Information Needs of Underserved Communities

Describe the specific information needs experienced by underserved populations, based on the results of your research. Who could benefit from better public access to information? This could relate to e-government services, health or agriculture information, job training, employment search, among many others. Include reference to the key inequity variables in your country.

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

(ii) Indicate the sources of data for this assessment

- According to the collected data, the information needs of underserved communities are closely related with their day to day and immediate needs they face as well as problems related to each context (urban zone, rural zone).

- Information about preventive health and how to decrease the risk of endemic infectious diseases and public health (diarrhea, cholera, dengue fever, etc.) as well as sexually transmitted diseases (AIDS and others). These problems are more relevant in areas that don't have hospitals or health centers.

- Gender issues: Domestic violence and sexual and reproductive health.

- Awareness building on the topic of migration: related issues, risks for the migrant, re-investment of remittances, etc.

- Development of entrepreneurship and female entrepreneurships to decrease de high levels of unemployment.

- Natural disasters, especially in high risk zones.

- Job pools.

- Agriculture: diversifying crops and identifying new markets.

- Development of renewable energy systems for underserved communities

    Source: interviews to operators and venue coordinators.

2.3.1   Information sources

4.2b) What are the current sources for this kind of information in the country? Are these sources adequate (current, appropriate to the population, etc.) In sum, does the locally-relevant content exist?

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

(ii) Indicate the sources of data for this assessment

It's important to point out that the relevant content that's accessible is mainly located in academic, government and NGO spaces and specifically targeted at technical specialized population linked with ICT topics.

Although there are Specialized Documentation Centers, that addresses specific issues, much of this information doesn't reach underserved communities or migrant population. It's important to highlight the existing efforts that using the oral tradition are aimed at improving the life conditions of the communities. The data is obtained by cross-checking the information.

Source: *Individual and group interviews with experts.*

2.3.2 Key barriers to accessing the information that underserved communities need

Are the people who could benefit from this information getting access to it? Why or why not (e.g. content exists but not in the right language, print media exists but has not been distributed appropriately, digital media is available but people do not have access points, etc.)?

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Two main problems were identified: the first one is that the content is usually not available for these communities and the second one is that in free Access spaces users don't usually have the training to look for relevant content adequately.

Relevant content is not abundant in public access venues or it's not in the appropriate format or circulating appropriately.

The centers (telecentres and libraries) are focused on formal education.

Other common means of consult for populations that don't have the strategies to access public information access venues and relevant content --such as radio and television—are often partial and the underserved populations don't have the adequate capacities to filter which information is trustworthy. These issues are also related with cultural forms of information appropriation, generation and transmission, as well as inequity in the political and economic participation.

Source: *Individual and group interviews with experts.*

2.3.3 Ways users experience different types of public access venues

Based on responses to the open question in user surveys, how do users experience different types of public access venues? Are there any trends or preferences for kinds of information, services or activities in one type of venue over another?

There are three basic forms of experiences that correspond to the three venues taken into account in this study.

- In the libraries –specially the smaller ones- the use trend is focused on solving school assignments.

- Given the restrictions established on Internet searches by the promoting organizations in the Telecentres and the training approach that most of them have, the same trend of the libraries repeats itself.

- In the cybercafés the experience of users is more diverse although mostly referred to the topics of communication and entertainment.

2.3.4 Inequity environment in the country

2-3 paragraphs

What does inequity look like in the country? Using the inequity variables described in section 1.2, provide a short overview of the main underserved groups, regions and/or other locally-appropriate segments of the population.

    (i)   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Inequity mainly affects rural communities and urban marginal populations located in the neighborhoods of the capital. Most services, and particularly information services, are

concentrated in the national district, the city of Santiago and the larger towns. This situation not only reflects the presence of these services but also their quality.

There's also resource concentration based on gender, where the males control the economy in the families and are also a majority in decision making positions in politics and in the Dominican enterprises. In this sense there's a contradiction between the majority use that women have of public access to information venues and their presence in the productive and political forces of the country.

2.3.5 Freedom of press and expression and the right to information

What is the overall perception of freedom of press, censorship and right to information in this country?

Regarding freedom of expression, according to the 2007 report of Journalists without Borders the situation is getting worse and they warn that there's a rebirth of violence against media.

According to the ranking of this organization, the country descended from being number 31 in 2004 to being number 72 in 2007.

On the other hand, according to the categorization of Freedom House, the country is partially free. This has to do mainly with the spirit of self-censorship present in most media, which avoid dealing with the topics that could generate conflicts with the government or the economic powers. In the case of the government, their interference has mostly to do with maintaining or withdrawing their publicity spots.

Sources:

Freedom House Dominican Republic Country Report 2007. Available at:
http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=251&year=2007

Reportiers sans Frontieres. 2007 Report. Available at:
http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=24035

2.4 Charts: Information Needs, Users, and Uses

Based on the results of your research (especially user surveys and interviews with librarians and operators), complete the required data to chart the information needs of underserved communities using the following examples. Provide any explanatory comments as needed.

2.4.1 Users, by type of venue

Users profile (estimated proportion of users in each category, %)		Public Libraries				Telecenters				Cibercafe							
		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban	
		General use	ICT use	General use	ICT () use	General use	ICT use	General Use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use
Gender	Male	12.5%	13.3%	14.5%	5.1%	8%	8.3%	22.4%	28.8%	8%	11.7%	14.5%	18.6%				
	Female	22.7%	20%	7.9%	1.7%	31.8%	23.3%	28.9%	32.2%	15.9%	21.7%	10.5%	11.9%				
Age	14 and under	18.2%	10%	11.8%	1.7%	10.2%	13.3%	28.9%	37.3%	3.4%	3.3%	2.6%	1.7%				
	15-35	15.9%	21.7%	10.5%	5.1%	29.5%	20%	21.1%	22.0%	20.5%	30%	19.7%	25.4%				
	36-60	1.1%	1.7%	0%	0%	1.1%	0%	2.6%	3.4%	0%	0%	2.6%	3.4%				
	61 and over																
Education level	No formal education	1.1%	0%			1.1%	1.7%			0%	0%						
	Only elementary	15.9%	8.3%	6.6%	1.7%	6.8%	10%	31.6%	39%	3.4%	3.3%	1.3%	0%				
	Up to high school	4.5%	6.7%	14.5%	5.1%	23.9%	18.3%	13.2%	15.3%	11.4%	16.7%	14.5%	18.6%				
	College or university	11.4%	16.7%	5.9%	0%	9.1%	3.3%	6.6%	8.5%	6.8%	10%	7.9%	10.2%				
Income bracket (approx)	High	0%	0%			2.3%	3.3%			0%	0%						
	Medium	4.5%	6.7%	1.3%	1.7%	18.2%	21.7%	9.2%	10.2%	14.8%	21.7%	13.2%	16.9%				
INGRESOS	Low	18.2%	10%	19.7%	5.1%	20.5%	8.3%	40.8%	50.8%	9.1%	11.7%	6.6%	6.8%				
Social status (approx)	High	0%	0%			3.4%	5%			0%	0%						
ESTRATO SOCIAL	Medium	4.5%	6.7%	1.3%	1.7%	9.2%	20%	20.5%	10.2%	14.8%	21.7%	13.2%	16.9%				
	Low	18.2%	10%	19.7%	5.1%	20.5%	8.3%	40.8%	50.8%	9.1%	11.7%	6.6%%	6.8%				
Caste (if appropriate)	Dominant																
	other																
NO LLENAR	other																
	other																
Ethnicity (if appropriate)	Dominant																

2.4.2 Information People Seek, by type of venue

(estimated proportion in each category, %)	Public Libraries				Telecenters				Cibercafe							
	Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban	
	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use
Education	29.5%	28.3%	18.4%	6.8%	20.5%	30%	52.6%	62.7%	18.2%	25%	17.1%	20.3%				
Health	2.3%	3.3%	0%	0%	4.5%	6.7%	7.9%	8.5%	0%	0%	2.6%	3.4%				
Agriculture	0%	0%	0%	0%	1.1%	1.7%	3.9%	5.1%	0%	0%	0%	0%				
Government services	0%	0%	0%	0%	3.4%	5%	3.9%	5.1%	3.4%	5%	3.9%	5.1%				
Entertainment																
News	0%	0%	0%	0%	10.2%	15%	19.7%	23.7%	13.6%	20%	14.5%	18.6%				
Personal	6.8%	10%	1.3%	0%	10.2%	15%	14.5%	39.3%	15.9%	23.3%	22.4%	60.7%				
Other	5.7%	60%	3.9%	0%	2.3%	40%	3.9%	18.6%	0%	0%	7.9%	28.8%				

Source: *Research Surveys*

2.4.3 Uses of ICT, by type of venue

(estimated proportion in each category, %)	Public Libraries				Telecenters				Cibercafe							
	Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban	
	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use
Email	8%		0%		11.4%		13.2%		13.6%		23.7%					
Chat	6.8%		0%		8%		11.8%		20.5%		18.4%					
Web browsing	21.6%		6.6%		18.2%		32.9%		18.2%		18.4%					
Blogs & social networking	1.1%		0%		1.1%		1.3%		11.4%		11.8%					
Commerce & business	0%		0%		2.3%		1.3%		1.1%		1.3%					
Phone or webcam	0%		0%		0%		1.3%		3.4%		2.6%					
Games	8%		1.3%		9.1%		32.9%		4.5%		2.6%					
Other	1.1%		0%		0%		2.6%		0%		7.9%					

Source: Research Surveys

2.4.4 Frequency of Use for each type of venue

(estimated proportion in each category, %)	Bibliotecas Públicas				Telecentros				Cibercafés							
	Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban	
	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	ICT use	General use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use
First visit	1.1%	1.7%			0%	0%			2.3%	3.3%						
Rarely (less than monthly)	1.1%	0%	2.6%		1.1%	1.7%	0%		0%	0%	0%					
Occasional (about once a month)	2.3%	1.7%	1.3%		2.3%	3.3%	0%		1.1%	1.7%	0%					
Regular (about 2-3 per month)	5.7%	5%	6.6%	3.4%	3.4%	5%	1.3%	1.7%	3.4%	5%	3.9%	3.4%				
Frequent (about once a week)	5.7%	1.7%	11.8%	3.4%	30.7%	18.3%	51.3%	61%	15.9%	21.7%	18.4%	23.7%				
Daily (about every day)	19.3%	23.3%	0%	0%	3.4%	5%	0%	0%	1.1%	1.7%	2.6%	3.4%				

Source: *Research surveys*

2.4.5   Barriers to use for each type of venue

(estimated proportion in each category, %)	Public Libraries				Telecenters				Cibercafe							
	Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban	
	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use
Location, distance	1.1%	1.7%	7.9%	1.7%	20.5%	23.3%	34.2%	39%	3.4%	5%	2.6%	3.4%				
Hours of Operation	9.1%	8.3%	9.2%	0%	18.2%	15%	13.2%	15.3%	13.6%	20%	9.2%	10.2%				
Cost	6.8%	6.7%	1.3%	0%	12.5%	13.3%	9.2%	8.5%	9.1%	13.3%	11.8%	15.3%				
Lack of skills / training	9.1%	11.7%	0%	0%	19.3%	16.7%	21.1%	23.7%	17%	25%	18.4%	23.7%				
Not enough services	1.1%	1.7%	6.6%	1.7%	14.8%	0%	9.2%	11.9%	1.1%	1.7%	0%	0%				
Not in right language	1.1%	1.7%	0%	0%	1.1%	1.7%	2.6%	1.7%	0%	0%	2.6%	3.4%				
Not enough content	4.5%	6.7%	9.2%	1.7%	1.1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%				
Other	6.8%	1.7%	2.6%	3.4%	9.1%	5%	18.4%	20.3%	4.5%	5%	0%	0%				

Source: Research surveys

2.4.6 Salient initiatives to help meet critical information needs by underserved communities

What are the most salient initiatives in the country (past, ongoing, or planned) that aim to meet the information needs of underserved communities in the country? How important are they? In what ways are they successful or not? Where can more information about them be found?

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

2.4.7 Past initiatives:

Lincos

The Lincos Project established telecentres that were a trailer container restored and equipped with digital equipment and Internet connectivity, usually through satellite. It started in the country at the beginning of the millennium and was installed in five rural communities. It provided access to technological infrastructure and e-health as well as space for entrepreneurial activities.

More information: www.lincos.net

Moving Libraries National System

The moving libraries are a trailer container adapted to be a library space that moved through different communities of the country. It started in 1998 and reached 2000. Between 2000 and 2004 they were fixed on the street and after that date they've been in a process of repairmen and re-insertion. They were mainly targeted at children and teenagers from marginal neighborhoods. Within the activities of the project there were reading Olympics, movie screening and plays on literary works.

More information:

Augusto Feria. Moving Libraries National System. State Secretary on Culture. Tel. 809-3620003

2.4.8 Ongoing initiatives:

- Community Technological Centers (CTC)

- Internet Training Centers (CCI)

- ICT Training Centers of the Sate Secretary on Education

- Wi-Fi Zones of the State Secretary on Youth

- Youth Information Centers

- Remodeling of some Libraries of the State Secretary on Culture

2.4.9 Historical trends and opportunities to serve information needs

Based on the above, what is the general trend in the country in relation to provision of public access information services? Are there any important upcoming opportunities (for example, upcoming regulatory changes, infrastructure enhancements, etc) that can impact public access information (include services through libraries and other public information venues)?

i.   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The development of public access to information venues has been related to the formal education system. The rise and equipment of libraries and telecentres has been closely linked to universities, elementary and secondary schools. The cybercafés also function in a large extent as complements of the educational system. These spaces have been conceived as information and knowledge repositories and there haven't necessarily been processes for users to appropriate themselves of an offer that goes beyond the needs of the education officials. There are few linkages with other aspects of everyday life, specially the labor sphere.

Currently, there's a tendency to improve the infrastructure of the larger libraries and digitalize an important part of their services. Also, the government is promoting policies towards closing the digital gap. All of this will produce an impact on the way people access information, but not necessarily on the way they use it.

It's important to take into account that there's a historic trend for government changes to affect significantly the projects that have been in implementation.

Source: self-creation based on the survey data and interviews to community leaders and experts.

2.4.10 Planned initiatives:

Reading Promotion Law Project

This Project aims to regulate the work of the country's public libraries, create a network that brings them together and promote the professionalization of the staff in charge of them. It also promotes the national publishing industry.

Reactivation National System of Moving Libraries

There's an initiative to make function again the National System of Moving Libraries, a groups of libraries built in buses and recuperated trailers that travel through communities providing activities around reading.

More information:

http://www.cultura.gob.do

Augusto Feria. National System of Moving Libraries. State Secretary on Culture. Tel. 809-3620003

2.5   Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment

2.5.1   National and local economic environment

Describe the national and local economic environment and how it affects public access to information and communication in the country.

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Dominican Republic has high poverty and unemployment indexes. This situation provokes that an important part of the population, especially the most vulnerable communities, live day to day. That is, they're most important concern is survival and the search for resources to satisfy basic needs. From this perspective, information is not always viewed as a priority.

The pillars of the country's economy are tourism and remittances. Both activities have a broad need of digital communication mechanisms, a situation that is visible in the reasons that Dominicans have to use ICT services: on one hand, communication with relatives and friends located in Europe and the United States, mainly, and on the other hand, the need to handle ICT tools as a job requirement in the touristic zones.

Trends:

The national and local economic environment will have little changes for next few years, so the situation will remain as now.

Source: Interviews with expert authorities

2.5.2   National and local policy (legal and regulatory) environment

Describe salient features of the policy and regulatory framework in the country (and if applicable, locally) that

affect delivery and access to information (e.g. censorship, Wi-Fi bandwidth regulation, etc). What is your assessment of the general trend on this matter?

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The country's regulatory framework on the topics of public Access to information is linked to the General La won Telecommunications, the law of creation of the Secretary on Culture, the constitutionally guaranteed freedom of expression and the La won Authorship Rights, that regulates intellectual property. These venues are also affected by all the legislation related to education. In the case of the cybercafés it´s important to take into consideration all the legislation that affects directly any service enterprise, as are commerce laws and taxing.

This framework allows a lot of freedom and doesn't restrict the development of these activities. However, it also doesn't provide enough institutionalism for the library's offer, which provokes disperse funding and duplicity of functions internally in the government.

Trends:

The signature of the different free trade agreements, especially DR-CAFTA, makes all the intellectual property legislation very relevant. Hence it's likely that many services will be restricted in the public access to information venues, such as photocopying, scanning and reproduction, in general, of copyrighted works.

Source: Self-creation based on interviews with specialists and readings of the different legislations.

2.5.3   Regional and international policy (legal and regulatory) environment

Describe salient features of policy and regulatory framework in the region and internationally that affect the delivery of public access to information and communication in the country. What is your assessment of the general trend on this matter?

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Trends:

The international regulatory framework is much targeted at regulating activities around intellectual property, which extends to information. The country is a signatory of different international agreements, such as the Berna Agreement.

From our point of view, the general trend is a stricter regulation, but few internal resources to enforce it.

Trends:

A stricter legislation in terms of intellectual property and a national environment each time more linked to local piracy.

Source: Interviews with specialists and reading current legislation.

44

2.6 Collaboration Practices and Opportunities across Venues

Linkages and collaboration between different types of venues was identified as a **strong emerging theme in the preliminary analysis**. Please provide as much detail as possible to help understand existing and potential collaboration opportunities and linkages among and between public access venues, and how they can improve the quality and relevance of information access to underserved communities.

i.   Include reference to existing as well as potential collaboration opportunities.

ii.   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

No linkages were identified among the cybercafés or with the rest of the venues studied. However, there are potential linkages that could be made among cybercafés, libraries and telecentres. One example would be using the physical space of the cybercafé to carry out telecentre purposes in certain time slots or also having a database of the library's titles available.

Regarding Telecentres and libraries it was possible to find some collaboration experiences among Indotel's Telecentres and small libraries. The collaboration was establishing a telecentre within the library, which complements and strengthens the libraries attention to users; this is perceivable through the diversification of populations, since the presence of computers allows university students to use the library again for their information searches.

2.7 Buzz Factor: Public and Government Perceptions About What is "Cool"

The "buzz factor", i.e., public and government perceptions about what is "cool" in relation to public access venues, where to invest resources, what places to hang out in, was identified as a **strong emerging theme in the preliminary analysis**. Please provide as much detail as possible to help understand how these perceptions about what is "cool" offer new opportunities or obstacles to strengthening public access information venues in the country.

One of the perceptions of what's "cool" is the massive placement of computers to reduce the digital gap. This action offers opportunities to the Dominican population since they have access to these resources and they could be used for the development of the country. However, a wrongly oriented use could also become an obstacle; in this sense the largest investment has been on generating access to technology and no so much on developing the capacities to identify which information is strategic and how to find it. Hence there's a big risk that this potential opportunity will be watered down.

Another "cool" area is investing in big infrastructure that's not necessarily accompanied by staff training or investment in information. For example, the building of the Pedro Mir Library in the University of Santo Domingo is impressive, it has many specialized spaces and a great amount of computers; however, the book collection and the services provided are not as updated or impressive as the building itself.

For the users it's also "cool" to have a well equipped venue, ventilated (or with air conditioning), large, with other services available like a coffee shop or a photocopying machine. There's no reference to the ambience or the customer service expected.

2.8 Legitimate Uses

The difference between "legitimate" or "non-trivial" uses of information in public access venues was identified as a **strong emerging theme in the preliminary analysis**. For example, uses of social networking spaces (Facebook and similar), blogs, chat, video games, as well as opportunities to download, install and run open source software applications in public access computers poses new challenges to traditional notions of "legitimate" information needs for development, and "trivial" uses of information for development… Please provide as much detail as possible to help understand how local definitions and restrictions based on what is "legitimate" or "non-trivial" information or communication practices offer new opportunities or barriers to public access information venues in the country.

Just like in other countries, the use of computers in libraries and telecentres is restricted around what is thought of as "research purposes" and "trivial use". Hence, the use of social networks, chat, games, "non-educational" games and podcasts are forbidden practices in many of these centers, since they're not considered "educational-research" related.

Much of this is due to the fact that the creation of libraries and telecentres is closely related to formal education processes, which to a large extent in Dominican Republic are still based on a behavioral practice and design. Forbidding the use of these tools limits public access to these centers since it disclines their use by conceiving as "relevant" only what's related with the contents of traditional learning centers.

Also, it turns off experimentation and the establishment of human networks that also tend to be sources of access to information.

2.9 Shifting Media Landscape

The ever-changing media landscape and the new opportunities brought about by new media such as mobile phones, SMS, GPS, and even renewed roles for community radio open, was a **strong emerging theme in the preliminary analysis**. Please provide as much detail as possible to help understand how these new technologies and media offer new opportunities or barriers to public access information venues in the country.

2.9.1 Mobile phones

If appropriate, describe salient uses of mobile phones, text messaging, SMS and similar technologies, in relation to public access information venues and information needs of underserved communities.

According to the data collected, the use of mobile telephony in Dominican Republic is for personal purposes and there was no experience identified related to public information access venues or the information needs of underserved communities.

2.9.2 Web 2.0 tools and use

If appropriate, describe any salient uses of Web 2.0 tools among users of ICT in public access venues. (Web 2.0 refers to evolution of web-based communities and hosted services, such as social-networking sites, wikis, blogs and others. Wikipedia).

Based on the interviews, observations and surveys applied, the use of Web 2.0 is centered on social networks, you tube to watch videos and in some cases Gmail. Wikipedia is also used, but only as an information source.

2.9.3 Combination of different media

If appropriate, describe creative ways in which different media are being combined to meet information needs of underserved communities, and the ways they affect public access venues. Different media include community radio and TV, other print media, street theatre, songs, etc.

- In some libraries there are community outreach experiences that include showing movies and videos of topics relevant to the communities.

- There are community radios that have a short scope but programs oriented at satisfying the community's specific information needs. Also often they have the role of being a communication channel, for example, when there are hurricanes they provide information about the situation of different populations.

- On T.V. and radio there are also spots that fill some information voids, for example, about Dengue fever, natural disasters, environment conservation, AIDS, etc.

- The Centro León is an innovative experience in which the person can use different physical (artistic or anthropological presentations) and digital (multimedia) resources about cultural topics.

2.9.4 Other shifting media landscape examples

If appropriate, describe other new features and practices in the media landscape that affect public information venues and information needs of underserved communities.

This would be a good place to discuss innovative practices on content creation and production of new messages, media, information and knowledge that are not described elsewhere in this report.

There's no additional information other than the one described in other parts of the report.

4 Venue-Specific Assessments

Complete one full assessment for each type of venue studied in the country.

4.1 Venue 1: Public Libraries

4.1.1 Overall venue assessment

Provide a broad picture of the public access information landscape in this venue, informed by the results of this research.

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of public access information in this type of venue?

Most public libraries in the country are designed to help public educational system. The existing collection responds, usually, to elementary and high schools.

There is also another kind of content available, but it's scarce and old. The best collections available are in the public university libraries and are supposed to be located in the two largest national libraries (both of them were being remodeled at the time of the research). There is no such thing as a national library system that allows any kind of book exchange. In general terms, books are not allowed out of the libraries.

ICT services are more common in the libraries of the capital of the country than in the urban areas and it's rare to find them in small libraries across Dominican Republic. Actually, some minor libraries are installing some kind of telecenters in their buildings, with the contribution of INDOTEL (Dominican organization that regulates and promotes telecommunications) programs.

4.1.2 Access

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of ACCESS ecosystem in this type of venue (physical access, appropriate technology, affordability)?

The studied public libraries are identified as points of public access within their own communities. In other words, they are points of public access to information. All the facilities we visited turned out to be physically accessible for being located in the centre of their target communities. However, in rural areas where the number of libraries decreases and houses are further apart, it is more difficult for communities that don't own libraries and whose public transportation system is limited to attend one.

Libraries' financial resources represent a very significant element to their access. Not only do they determine the possession of tics or lack thereof, but also the necessary conditions of the facilities

such as electricity to use the computers , for lighting, to connect fans and air conditioners; wide spaces, suitable furniture, etc. Such requirements seem basic, but blackouts –daily power failures- in Dominican Republic limit the use of computers and other kind of technology that runs on electricity and demand the purchase of inverters or generators throughout which many services are offered.

The need of specialized clerks is another reason to favour the use of technology. Once again, money is a essential to execute any task: if there is no money to pay experts, the library must refrain from offering computers for public use.

4.1.2.1 *Physical access*

Describe how accessible this venue is to various population segments, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c), especially the differences between urban and non-urban settings.

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The best libraries are located in the Distrito Nacional zone, the most urban sector of the country. However, there are small libraries located in most of the major towns in Dominican Republic counties, most of which represent a service center for the rural areas.

The venue's service offer is very important for access to information. In the facilities we visited, most of the users were students –mostly from elementary and high school. So, we wonder: Has the offer been adapted to users or is it the other way around? Is the current offer separating non-scholars from traditional public-access areas of information? Is the absence of non-scholars in libraries explained by socio cultural factors which state that libraries are dedicated only to do homework?

From any perspective, the lack of resources in small public libraries has forced them to invest on covering the needs of frequent users of school text books. In consequence, small public libraries have turned into school libraries.

Like in telecenters, women attend libraries more than men do. One of the causes might be the close relationship between public libraries and the school system, where women participation is higher. In other words, when libraries support the formal educational system, the population that embodies this system, which is mostly formed by women, will be called to participate.

The access of the low-resource population to libraries is granted because it is free of charge; the only limitation would be caused by the difficulty to get to the library.

4.1.2.2 *Appropriate technology and services*

Describe how appropriate the technologies, services and information offered in this venue are to the population, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

All of the libraries studied seem to be designed as a help for the elementary and secondary level of education, so their services respond to the logics of the national system of education. The biggest part of the collections is related to these contents.

The collections include a big part of official text books available for people who can't afford them. Some of them also include a didactic playroom.

Regarding technology, in the cases that there were computers in the building, they were almost new, running with legal Windows XP and the Encarta Encyclopedia. Depending on the connectivity of the town, the access to Internet was possible. The use of this tool is usually restricted to educational purposes. The presence of computers on libraries is growing but is still poor. On the venues visited, there were ICT services on the 50% of the cases, but the half of these cases had just one computer working without Internet access.

Usually, the content and the activities (if any) in the rural areas do not respond to the financial activities. However, whenever there are extra-curricular activities in the venue, some of them are related to other kinds of relevant content, such as health or family topics. These kinds of activities were particularly important in the libraries ran by World Vision or those that have a closer relationship with the community (like Villa Duarte).

If we focus on gender, we cannot say that services or technologies are designed for men or women. Besides of that, it's important to say that there is more appropriation of women in the venue. We think this is an important point to explore.All of the libraries studied seem to be designed as a help for the elementary and secondary level of education, so their services respond to the logics of the national system of education. The major part of the collections are related to these contents.

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If we put the focus on gender, we cannot say that services or technologies are designed for men or women. Besides of that, it's important to say that exist a female major appropiation of the venue.

We think this is an important point to explore.

4.1.2.3 *Affordability*

Describe how affordable the technologies and services offered in this venue are to the population, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

All the services in the libraries are free, so they are affordable to the population. Nevertheless, the question should be how affordable the services are to the library. Most of the rural libraries have a very limited budged, so it's a problem to renew and sustain the venue and its quality. The computers installed in most of the libraries are "donations" by the Dominican Telecommunications Institute (Indotel), but their maintenance will represent an extra charge to the libraries.

Regarding the Dominican population capacity to afford technology and services offered in libraries by themselves, this is an aspect specially linked to the socio-economic factors. Computers are affordable for middle to high class. It's common that middle-class people buy a used computer (Pentium I or II) for about US$200, but it's almost impossible for them to buy a new one.

In Dominican Republic, it is still common (but this is changing) that women remain at home while men work for money. This situation creates a financial dependence on women, since their possibilities to afford technology or any other kind of service becomes harder.All the services on the libraries are free, so they are affordable to the population. Nevertheless, the question should be how affordable are the services for the library. Most of the rural libraries has a very limited budged, so it's a problem to renew and sustain the venue and its quality. The computers installed on the major part of libraries are a "donation" of the Dominican Telecommunicatiosn Institute (Indotel), but their maintenance will another charge for the libraries.

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4.1.2.4 *Fees for services*

What fees or other requirements exist in order to access and use the information in the venues? (registration, user fees, restrictions to certain populations)

If there are fees: What do these fees buy?

2.9.4.1.1   Indicate amount in local currency 1 a 3 pesos

Equivalent in US Dollars: 0,029

Date of estimate: 22 de Julio

and local currency name: pesos

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Explain any salient differences in the services offered in different regions, sizes or other variables of significance:

On the cases we saw there were only one public library offering a more complete ICT services. It was the Villa Duarte Library in Santo Domingo (urban zone). This service included Internet Access and a Digital Encyclopedia on 10 computers. There were also another computer used as database of the book collection on the venue.

Other libraries included a limited access to ICT. For example, the Madre Trini Library, on Santa Cruz de El Seibo (rural zone), has the possibility to visit a a telecentre just a few steps ahead. Besides of that, the possibility to visit it is limited by the free space and the use of the telecentre (For example, if there are courses on it).

The Reina A.A. Library on Miches, (rural zone) also a rural zone, has 5 computers, but only one was working at the time of our visit. The library still doesn't have an Internet connection, and it only have the Encarta Digital Encyclopedia.

   The other library we visited didn't have any kind of Digital Services. It was the Mendoza Library on the Santo Domingo Este County, on a peri-urban community.On the cases we saw there were only one public library offering a more complete ICT services. It was the Villa Duarte Library in Santo Domingo (urban zone). This service included Internet Access and a Digital Encyclopedia on 10 computers. There were also another computer used as database of the book collection on the venue.

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The other library we visited didn't have any kind of Digital Services. It was the Mendoza Library

on the Santo Domingo Este County, on a peri-urban community.

4.1.2.5 *Geographic distribution*

What is the distribution of the venues in terms of their geographic location?

Complement any details not already included in section 2.1: Venue Selection.

There are usually libraries on the capital towns of some of counties of the country. Are supposed to be around 300 libraries in all country, but the 27%, 81 libraries, are located on the Distrito National, the most important urban region of Dominican Republic.There are usually libraries on the capital towns of some of counties of the country. Are suposed to be around 300 libraries in all country, but the 27%, 81 libraries, are located on the Distrito Nacional, the more importante urban region of Dominican Republic.

4.1.2.5.1 Map

If available, insert a map that displays the geographic distribution of this type of venue in the country (expand to the size you need).

Map description:

There are no available maps for this venue

4.1.2.6 *Other factors affecting access*

Other factors that affect equitable access to public information in this type of venue, not covered above?

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

- The country does not have a public-library network. This affects the establishment of contribution bonds among the different public libraries.

- Some of the projects in Dominican Republic unnecessarily double the efforts: buses deliver books to communities that own limited-resource public libraries, but those books are never donated to the library. A study of a Status Report of Public Libraries that allows capturing government, international and private resources is required for development.

4.1.3 Capacity and relevance

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of CAPACITY ecosystem in this type of venue (human capacity, locally relevant content, integration into daily routines, socio-cultural factors, trust in technology, social appropriation of technology)?

The possibility of financing constant training for their work team is tightly related to users' attendance. Old and outdated collections discourage people, so they change to other areas - depending on their possibilities- where better and updated information is available and with a better and more comfortable environment to stay longer.

4.1.3.1 *Staff size*

How many people work in a typical facility for this type of venue? (full time-equivalent employees or contractors; describe any significant variations; i.e., large, medium and small libraries in the country)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Small libraries: 1-4 people.

Medium libraries: 5-15 people

Large libraries: more than 15 peopleSmall libraries: 1-4 person.
Medium libraries: 5-15 people
Large libraries: more than 15 people

The nature of the library's administration has influence on the kind of employees and contract it has. In the event that the administration manages a foundation or a religion-oriented entity, there are more possibilities of finding voluntary workers –that do not work for money-.

4.1.3.2 Staff training

What is the overall capacity of the staff (i.e., librarians, telecentre operators) to help users access and use public access to information and communication services offered in this venue? Differentiate by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

(i)   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

(ii)   For Public Libraries, indicate if Library School training is available and/or required for librarians.

In Dominican Republic there are two universities that offer three different degrees related directly to library administration. Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo (UASD) has a licenciatura and a technical degree in Pedagogy with emphasis on library administration. Intec offers another related university degree.

Periodically, Biblioteca Nacional and the Cooperation Office of the Spain Embassy, as well as Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo offer courses directed to librarian assistants.

This training is usually not required to work at a library, especially at small ones. People who work there often receive a short training in another organization or in situ by a more experienced librarian.

ICT-training building is more often for larger libraries, such as university libraries or those managed by the Culture Ministry. Since smaller libraries rarely have ICT services, this kind of training is not offered. Younger librarians have a basic knowledge of ICT, but they learn it on their own.

4.1.3.3 Services offered

What kind of services does this type of venue offer to the public? (i.e., access to books, magazines; meeting and conference rooms; audio/video programs, computers, Internet, other). Include Digital ICT services if offered.

The following are groups of services that are offered in the libraries we visited:

1.   Study centers:

They are group study sessions led by a teacher, where concepts taken from elementary and high-school-educational-curricula concepts are reviewed. Students ask questions, clarify doubts and solve problems with the aim of reaffirm concepts that acquired in their own educational centres.

2.   **Toy Library**Error! Reference source not found.

Toy libraries are spaces within larger libraries where children play and have access to children's books (coloring and reading), educational toys, movies, etc. The purpose of this method is to lure children in a pleasant, recreational and integrated manner into reading and libraries.

The toy library in Villa Duarte library is a backup resource for mothers, so they can spend more time in the library.

3. Error! Reference source not found. **Copying**

This service consists on the duplication of documents. In the cases we observed, they charged a symbolic amount per copy to users.

4. Camps

Camps take place for several days inside and outside the library facilities. There are different activities (painting, contests, oral presentations, etc). This year, Villa Duarte library organized Campamento 2008 and the topic was Health.

5. Video Library

A projection system, a reproduction system and a video collection –that can be for children in toy libraries or educational, about different topics- are part of this service. It was found in only one medium-size urban library that, according to the government, is a model library.

6. Cartography

Cartography consists on a series of maps that can be displayed on the library walls. From there, users can find different types of information.

7. Readers Club

It is a group of children that meets twice a month. They are assigned to read books which are discussed in later meetings.

8. Lectures and Conferences

Experts are invited to the library to analyze topics that are relevant to the users.

9. Courses and Trainings

There are different kinds of courses: from handcrafts to trainings for parents.

10. Early Stimulation

The library receives children from 2 to 5 years-old who are usually neglected by the educational system. They do early-stimulation exercises in the mornings.

11. Mobile Toy Libraries: The library randomly takes toys to a community and develops game and activity programs.

12. Story Time:

After reading a story, children analyze it.

1.   **Error! Reference source not found.** Map

Error! Reference source not found.

2.   **Error! Reference source not found.**

Error! Reference source not found.

3.   **Error! Reference source not found.**

Error! Reference source not found.

4.   **Error! Reference source not found.**

Error! Reference source not found.

Explain any salient differences in the services offered in different regions, sizes or other variables of significance:

describe

4.1.3.4 *Programs for underserved communities*

Describe if this venue has programs specifically intended to reach underserved communities, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

At Villa Duarte library, we found the biggest amount of extra-curricular activities and book lending directed to underserved communities There are, for example, lectures with experts about specific topics like Karate. They also carry out yearly camps where many activities are performed inside and outside the library.

There are also reader's clubs. At least once a month, a group of young people gather and analyze books that they read; they also compete about who the fastest readier is.

Libraries, like Centro Madre Trini at El Seibo (capital of the province) offer Toy Libraries. The Toy Library at Centro Madre Trini also offers a program of early stimulation for children who cannot attend elementary school yet and whose parents cannot afford nursery school or kindergarten.

At both institutions, there are summer courses, like arts, handcrafts and music.

In other small libraries, like Municipio de Santo Domingo Este`s, in Mendoza, we found many support groups or study centers for students of the school that is next to the library. The purpose is to reinforce the knowledge they received at school. In our visit, we found a group of children that participated in a math study.

4.1.3.5 *Relevant content*

What type of locally relevant content is available? What else is needed? Who is doing it?

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Available Content:

The following are content groups that were found in the public libraries we visited to develop this study:

Health: Printed material directed to underserved communities produced by non-profit organizations, like Ce Mujer in topics such as Pap Smear, World Vision in HIV/AIDS, Haitian Women's Rights by Movement of Dominican-Haitian Women (MUDHA).

Social Problems. Printed material about social problems that Consejo Nacional de Drogas develops on topics like alcoholism, children, and teenagers, child labour and underage-people rights by UNICEF.

There are also lectures , conferences and workshops about relevant topics for the users, like sexual abuse, dental-mouth cleaning, teenage pregnancy and workshops for parents about early stimulation.

These experiences were found in the library at Centro Madre Trini -in El Seibo- and in Villa Duarte Library –in Santo Domingo-.

Educational documentation: Collections about basic subjects, exclusive of elementary and high school.

Everyday topics: Some printed topics about cooking; hair style and handcrafts have backed up people who are registered in technical courses or minors that deal with these subjects.

Dominican Literature: Novels, short stories and books about politics of Dominican authorise such as Juan Bosh.

Specific topics about ICT: In the cases when public libraries offer computer services, those computers include digital encyclopaedias, like Encarta or Oceano, that work as reference material in different areas. Users mainly employ them to do school homework.

Other type of relevant content is offered through other group modalities that require more participation, like workshops, lectures, reading camps, reading clubs.

Other Content Needed:

They also need manuals and pamphlets in everyday language -not technical language-about social problems like teenage pregnancy, Dengue fever, natural disasters, AIDS, interfamily violence,

sexual abuse, unemployment and other topics related to specific problems of each community.

Finally, it is important to consider books in Creole when offers are presented. None of the libraries have anything on this language. There is no mass media –newspapers, television news, radio programs- on Creole. Therefore, it is essential to introduce Creole in the libraries in order to guarantee the right to have information in a democratic way.

Local Initiatives to build needed content:

One of the content-construction initiatives is the recollection of materials that some of the users of Villa Duarte library have produced about their own community, like history about Villa Duarte.

Source: Interview with Villa Duarte Library administrators. source of information

4.1.3.6 *Services and information available in local languages*

Describe the availability of services and contents relevant to human development that are available in **local languages** in this type of venue? (i.e., info on health, education, government services, etc)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Most of the services and contents are in Spanish, the native language in the country. Only some of the texts are in English and we could not find relevant content in Creole –the language of Haitians who live in Dominican Republic.

4.1.3.7 *Types of uses*

What do people USE the venues for (most frequent kinds of information and services people seek in them, activities they carry out in them)?

(i)   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Refer to section 2.4 Charts: Information Needs and complement here as needed.

The most common use is book lending for homework. In most of the public libraries we visited – specially the small ones- the majority of the users are students and the information they look for is related to what they are asked for at school.

Book lending is the most frequent use of the library, and, therefore, the most constant. However, the activities diversify with more financial resources.

4.1.3.8 *Number, type, and frequency of users*

Refer to section2.4Charts: Information Needs. Complement here as needed.

Average number of users per week in visited centers: 143

Type of user:

  Age

- Under 14 years old: 54,17%

- Between 15 and 35 years old: 43,75%

- From 36 to 60 years old: 2,08%

Academia level:

- Primary school: 43,48%

- Secondary school: 32,61%

- University: 21,74%

- No formal education: 2,17%

Sex/gender:

- Female: 56,25%

- Male: 43.75%

Class:

- High: 0%

- Middle: 8,33%

- Low: 91,67

Frequency of visits to the center:

- Rarely: 6,25%

- Once in a while: 6,25%

- Regularly: 20,83%

- Frequently: 31,25%

- Daily: 35,42%

Source: data obtained through interviews given by research team and interviews with staff member of visited centers.

Explanation: it is important to highlight these surveys were passed on dates outside the school calendar, so the behavior of data does not necessarily reflect what actually happens during school time.

additional details not covered in section 4.2.3

4.1.3.9 *Users Capacity to use information and services offered*

What is the overall capacity of the users to take advantage of public access to information and communication resources, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)?

(i)   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Four factors that are closely linked would be:

- Ability to look for information

- Areas to develop that ability

- Role of information manager

- Type of available information (closed) Internet?

Those four factors take part in the user-information relationship that is developed in this type of venue throughout time. It will also determine the type of use the first one will offer the second one.

According to the seminar held with professionals in Library Science on July 19. 2008 at Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo, the library users have developed very few abilities to use the library services and to look for general information, due to the poor training on library systems that has been given at elementary and high school libraries

It is possible to identify a similar situation in public-library users, specially if we take into account their answers about reliable information in the User's Survey. Those answers reflect how userts can hardly difference between reliable and untrustworthy information and, in consequence, the lack of good training on research and library use.

On the other hand and very related to this, we must take into account that the ability to use information is related to the development of assignments and homework, since the main users are elementary and high school students. Therefore, since it is difficult for them to determine which information is appropriate, we are facing limited capabilities to use the information they have access to.

Finally, what kind of information do they have access to in this type of venue? We must remember that the collection of analyze data respond to courses of formal educational system, in other words, academic courses. These collections will be smaller in the libraries that have fewer financial resources, so the users' research possibilities will be more limited. Besides, in most of the libraries we visited, book lending goes through a manager that works according to the users' needs, like the kind of book he is borrowing, which limits the initial encounter –in the seeking step- between the user and the information. Small libraries also have collections that might be composed of a couple of shelves, which affects on the learning process of the user about information and research.describe

4.1.3.10 *Training courses for users*

Describe training courses offered to the public at this venue, and if they offer some kind of testing and

certification.

Training courses:

Examples of courses that have been offered to users:

- Early stimulation: A course directed to parents whose children participate in activities for early stimulation at the library.

- Other courses directed to the community are; teenage pregnancy, sexual abuse and artistic workshops such as origami, motivation for reading (for professionals).

- Lectures about reading, commemorative dates, like International Women's Day; dental-mouth cleaning, importance of reading.

No certificate is issued in any of the courses,

ICT specific training courses: 0

4.1.3.11 *Integration into daily routines*

How easy is it for users to integrate the information and services offered in this type of venue into their daily lives? (offer concrete solutions to their needs and problems, make it easier to solve them at this venue than in other places)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Most of the answers pointed out that the information users get at the library is mainly used when doing homework.

When there are more resources and more books that give support to technical minors and courses such as English, handcrafts, etc are offered, they have been used. Nevertheless, all of this has been possible when the library contents have coincide with the needs of the community.

4.1.3.12 *Users perceptions about the venue*

What is the general perception or opinion of the population about the venue (not necessarily its specific services, but the venue itself: i.e., what do people generally think about libraries? Are they places that are "cool" or "only for elites" etc?), differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)? This includes perception by people who do not use the venue…

(i)   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The perception of the venue by the users can be visualized as a continuum cut off by a resource issue. On one hand, there is a library full of resources and on the other hand, a library that needs them. The first case is a library with a big offer on book collection that is constantly updated, a suitable environment (good ventilation, lighting, etc), toy library, computers and cultural-extension activities and training and well-trained personnel, like Villa Duarte library which users perceived as being a good place to spend time at; this aspect goes beyond the lookup for information to do homework. In consequence, as resources turned limited, perceptions became less positive. In some cases, users mentioned problems like high temperature, lack of book renovation and lethargy due to silence.

In other words, library resources (financial and human) determine the role users give to it.

The factors that determine what's cool are: cultural-extension activities that promote group

participation, air conditioning (remember it is a hot-weather country), spacious rooms, group-discussion areas, tables for group work, game zones, among others.

4.1.1.1 Social appropriation of information and generation of new knowledge

What activities, products and services are users undertaking that exhibit new levels of social appropriation of technologies and generation of knowledge? For example, how are users generating and disseminating new knowledge, products and services through their use of this venue? (see category 13 in Real Access Framework for Social Appropriation of Technology).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The application of the venue by the users is limited by educational engagements (homework, projects), information-appropriation processes, in ICT resources and general information resources.

In some cases, when the offer is related to technical minors of local educational centres, users can vary their future professional offer, like a cooking student who attends Villa Duarte library and is constantly looking for information about new recipes.

Libraries in which the offer surpasses elementary school, high school and technical minors, the user community goes beyond the students and the type of information appropriation changes: it is integrated to everyday contexts, like the trainings parents are offered at Madre Trini Center (El Seibo) on early stimulation. They apply that knowledge on their children formal education; those children who have participated in the mouth-dental cleaning courses have applied the information they received to their everyday-personal hygiene habits.

4.1.1.2 Trust, safety, and privacy

What is the general perception or opinion of the population about the safety, security and privacy (TRUST) of the information and services offered in this venue?

Most of the surveyed users believe the information they have access to in this venue is reliable. The information they find (in printed material and Internet) about the topics they study are usually good enough.

Small-collection libraries are often criticized because books are old, not because information is outdated. However, most users are students and the information they need is for homework; in other words, it doesn't vary from one year to the next,

There is no questioning about ICT security and privacy services. Users do not think the way information is obtained might be unsafe or not very private. describe

4.1.1.3 Gaps and opportunities in information and services offered

What other information gaps and opportunities exist, which are not being met? (other information/services

people need that are not being met there and could be offered, especially through Digital ICT services)

- Libraries need to transcend the educational-system extension role. Therefore, they need to develop cultural activities that agree with the community's.

- Collection variation from the nearby-community needs, specially underserved ones

- Computers with Internet service

- Data-base research about publications stored in the computers and its availability on the Internet

- Computers with video games, etc in the library

- Printed and virtual job offers

- On-line page that includes different resources from web 2.0 to create a space for exchange and contribution between library users

- Training programs on search and use of information found on Internet

- Digital file to store community-related publications and productions

- Resource (books, videos, etc) delivery

- Open-shelf information search (users can look for books themselves)

- Gaming activities for adults who are not necessarily library users

describe

4.1.2   Enabling environment

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of the ENVIRONMENT ecosystem in this type of venue (local economy, national economy, legal and regulatory framework, political will and public support, regional and international context)?

Libraries are institutions derived the backbone of the education system, every change in it affects directly the offer and possibilities of these venues. The local and national economic environment affects the services offered by libraries according to national development project, actually based on tourism and remittances.

Poverty affects directly the assistance to school and, following this, the use and appropriation of libraries. The regulatory framework is weak and libraries don't have any central institution that works as a network between national, county and private libraries.describe

4.1.2.1 Local and national economy

Describe the local and national economic environment and how it affects public access to information and communication in this type of venue (refer to and complement economic summary in country assessment, section 2.5 Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i)   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

As it's been mentioned, libraries are, in some way, institutions derived the backbone of the education system, therefore, every change in it affects directly the offer and possibilities of these venues. The education system has for some years promoted digital education activities, which change the panorama of services needed by users, with a high trend to demand ICT services. This is shown on data collected through surveys passed to users.

These changes are related to the country's economy. It's relevant to remember that the two most important places in IGP are taken by tourism and remittances. Both of them, closely linked to the use of ICT's as a support to communication for development and the offer of services in so called smokeless industry.

Access to information is also limited by an economy that promotes basic employment only. These employers do not really care about the use that Dominicans give to information available at libraries.

Unemployment and poverty affect directly school attendance also the increase in the number of users at libraries. describe

4.1.2.2 Legal and regulatory framework

Describe the legal and regulatory framework and how it affects public access to information and communication in this type of venue (refer to and complement economic summary in country assessment, section 2.5 Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i)   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Constitutionally, the country recognizes freedom of speech and it is generally respected. In this sense, libraries are not objects of persecution or face any limitation for this reason. Currently there is no law regulating specifically libraries, although there is a project to foster reading that if passed, it would regulate some of their functions and their institution.

The current law outreaching, in some way, libraries is the law for the creation of "La Secretaría de Cultura". In this law a national libraries network is mentioned, but this project is still in an early stage.

The lack of development in the institution of a libraries network substantially inhibits the execution of laws and funding for underserved communities. As a matter of fact, there is a great dispersion of funds among different government institutions, which could cause duplicity in functions and maintaining bureaucracy more than needed.

Copyright laws also have to do with the running of libraries as it safeguards private property. This law would affect some services that are not given, but that users ask for. For example

65

photocopying.

4.1.2.3 Political will and public support

What is the level of political will and public support for this type of venue? (refer to and complement section 2.5 Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i)   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The government support to public libraries has been important. Some of the actions they have taken are.

- Current remodeling of República Dominicana Library (Santo Domingo) and Nacional (Santo Domingo).

- Remodeling of Villa Duarte Library in 200....

- Project on libraries developed by Presidency with actions such as promotion at reading clubs, stands at Feria Internacional del Libro, reading camps, among others

- Some libraries at the Distrito Nacional City Council have been supported by Indotel's Training Centers on Computer Science projects

    describe

4.1.2.4 Organization and networking

Describe if the facilities in this type of venue organized in any network, association or other collective body? (i.e., national public library system, telecentre franchise or network, etc)?

As mentioned above, there is no national library network or inter-library networking actions in any of the cases that are part of the scope of this studydescribe

4.1.2.5 Partnerships

Describe notable public-private partnerships in support of this type of venue.

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

- We have found agreements between City Council libraries and some other entity (church, non-profit organization) where the later assume the site's management while City Counsils cover part of the expenses, such as salaries or facility maintenance.

- Libraries ascribed to Culture Department have been backed up by the Country's Presidency. describe

4.1.2.6 Other environment factors

Other factors in the environment that affect access and use of information in this kind of venue, not covered above?

One factor affecting dramatically the access to services in this venue is the constant power outages or *blackouts,* which take place everyday and can last up to 8 hours. This situation becomes worse in rural areas where it has to be confronted individually by every library by purchasing power generators or *inversors.* However, these are temporary solutions as inversors cannot keep up with the amount of hours and/or they break, turning into a new cost for libraries. For some small libraries, covering this cost is impossible. describe

4.1.3   For publicly funded venues only: Revenue streams

This section is meant specifically for publicly-funded venues (public libraries, national connectivity programs, etc).

4.1.3.1   Budget

What is the total budget for this public access venue system (applies especially for libraries, answer for other venues if applicable and if available)?

Total Budget for Fiscal Year: 2008

Local currency name RD$, pesos, amount (local currency) 69 404 258,00

Approx. equivalent in USD 2 055 996, 03 based on exchange rate of 33, 7570 on January, 2008   .

These data numbers correspond to the Library services of Secretaría de Estado de Cultura. Local government, private and university libraries are all excluded.

comments

4.1.3.2   Relative size of budget

How large (or small) is this budget in relation to other funding streams? (This is a way to show, in financial terms, how much the government cares about information and public access as compared to a variety of other issues in the country).

Relative Size of Budget for same year

Total budget (local currency)

Comments

Total national budget

259 782 593 681,00

Education (Ministry of Education)

26 789 212 540,00

10,31%

Armed Forces DepartmentOther (name)

9 621 053 328,00

3,70%

Ministry of Culture

1 124 420 870,00

0,43%

Ministry of Culture Public libraries

69 404 258,00

0,027% of Total national budget

6,17% of Ministry of Culture Budget

Other Comments:

Sources: Data construction by authors from information of the Ministry of Economics, Planning and Development.describe

4.1.3.3 Sources of funding

What are the sources of funding for this public access venue system?

Information related to this point could not be obtained.

Sources of funding:

**Approximate
% of total budget**

Comments

Government sources:

**Error! Reference
source not found.**

Error! Reference source
not found.

International donors:

**Error! Reference
source not found.**

Error! Reference source
not found.

National donors:

**Error! Reference
source not found.**

Error! Reference source
not found.

User fees/services:

**Error! Reference
source not found.**

Error! Reference source
not found.

Other (name)

**Error! Reference
source not found.**

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not found.

Other (name)

**Error! Reference
source not found.**

Error! Reference source
not found.

Other (name)

**Error! Reference
source not found.**

Error! Reference source

4.1.3.4   Paths and flows of resources

How do resources get allocated and disbursed to the actual venues? For the principal funders, and especially for the public sources, what is the flow of funds? How are the funds raised (what tax stream), what path do the tax streams flow before they get to the specific venues? Who makes decisions about this funding?

According to the Culture Law (No. 41-00), the culture public expenditure should raise to at a minimum of 1% of the total public expenditure. On 2008, the Ministry of Culture budget arrived to 0,43 % of the national budget.

This law doesn't establish any specific budget for libraries. Data related to county libraries or international cooperation was not found.describe

4.1.3.5   Fees and cost recovery

Describe if there are user fees or any other type of cost recovery. How does it affect service delivery and usage?

Any kind of fees or cost recovery systems on public libraries were not found on the libraries observed.describe

4.1.3.6   Cost categories

What are the main cost categories in the operation of this kind of venue? (% of total annual budget)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Cost Categories for Operation:	Approximate % of total budget	Comments
Staff (salaries, benefits)	**Error! Reference source not found.**	**Error! Reference source not found.**
Building infrastructure	**Error! Reference source not found.**	**Error! Reference source not found.**
Utilities	**Error! Reference source not found.**	**Error! Reference source not found.**
Staff Training	**Error! Reference source not found.**	**Error! Reference source not found.**
Computers/technology	**Error! Reference source not found.**	**Error! Reference source not found.**
other (name)	**Error! Reference source not found.**	**Error! Reference source not found.**
other (name)	**Error! Reference source not found.**	

4.1.3.7   Recent changes and future trends

Describe any recent changes and anticipated future trends in the funding and revenue streams for this type of venue in the country. Have funding levels risen or decreased dramatically over the past few years? What is the outlook for the foreseeable future?

Due the poor statistics regarding all library system, it's difficult to tell any conclusions on this issue.

4.1.4   Case example for public libraries

Provide a short descriptions and commentary for each type of venue, offering a realistic sense of what the venue looks and feels like in its day to day operation, the kind of people who visit, and the kind of services they receive. Also, the case example indicates what makes the case unique or what features are commonly shared with other venues. A photo and short quotes will make it even more real.

Villa Duarte Library

Villa Duarte Library is located in the Province of Santo Domingo, in Distrito Nacional. It is currently headed by Mr. Dionicio de Jesús Peña. Its collection is quite varied: Dominican authors, magazines, video library, toy library, a computer for on-line-catalogue referencing, 10 computers with Internet access for research, 9 big and 4 small tables, 13-person staff trained on book science, cultural-extension activities and workshops on different topics.

Most of the users of this library have the following characteristics:

- They are mostly women: 65%,

- They are students.

- They are underage.

The toy libray has helped some women so they can attend the library without being concerned on their children. While the mother looks for information, the child plays and reads at the toy library.

Some of the examples of artistic activities the library makes indoors and outdoors are:

- Origami workship

- Puppet workshop

- Kite workshop

- Story dramatizations

- Bonsai workshop

- Spaces for recitation and book reading. Children from CONANI are sometimes brought to the library; they listen to a story and then paint or draw according to their perception towards the story.

- Video projection and discussion

- Karate lessons

- Summer camps

- Visits to the aquarium

- Other

As a result of the relationship between the libray and the community, some people have contributed with voluntary work. Students develop their community or social projects here and other young people work on fixing computers.

4.1.3.13 *Venue 2: Telecentros*

4.1.4   Overall venue assessment

Provide a broad picture of the public access information landscape in this venue, informed by the results of this research.

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of public access information in this type of venue?

In Dominican Republic there are several types of telecenters, but this study will only cover those that have the greatest coverage in the country. A total of three types were included, all of them supported by governmental institutions.

That said, we can list them starting with the Instituto Dominicano de Telecomunicaciones (Indotel) telecenters, called Centros de Capacitación en Informática (CCI). Indotel contributes laboratory equipment (computers, Internet, furniture and sometimes even property for the venue) which gets installed in different kinas of institutions. These institutions may take over the administration of the telecenter and its services, offering them to the general public free of charge. According to information taken from the Indotel website, there are 742 telecenters to date, making

it one of the telecenters with greatest coverage in the country.

There's also the Aulas Virtuales de la Secretaría de Estado de Educación, also known as AVES. There are 90 of these in the country. AVES are trucks turned into laboratories that are later installed in Formal Education centers, offering services to kids during the school period and to the rest of the community off school Schedule. One of the project's goals is for the community to eventually take over the management of the AVE.

Out of the three types of telecenters, these two are the ones with the greatest coverage in the country, and are located in urban areas as well as rural.

Last, there are the Centros Tecnológicos Comunitarios (CTC), of which 50 exist spread mostly in the best part, and only in rural areas. The venues are larger than the other cases, since each one incorporates a community radio broadcast and other projects, developed alongside other institutions, and also offer capacity building going beyond digital alphabetization.

Every telecenter develops digital alphabetization capacity building. In the CCI's, each organization that hosts the venue is in charge of the capacity building.

4.1.5 Access

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of ACCESS ecosystem in this type of venue (physical access, appropriate technology, affordability)?

In general, the telecenter's accessibility is very good, not only do they have good coverage –there are currently around 836 telecenters-, but prices for some services that need to be charged fit the economic situation of each community. Most telecenters are located in urban areas.

Since the majority of the centers visited are *youth projects,* equipment usually Works well, but in some cases there are damaged computers or lack maintenance, so they operate very slowly. Of importance is the fact that each of this type of telecenters is supported by a government entity that give maintenance to the laboratories. Periods of support vary in each case, for example the CTC's ascribe to the existence of the project. In the AVES case, the Secretaría de Estado de Educación hasn't yet fixed an expiration date to the support it provides, which has made the amount of responsibilities assumed by the communitarian technological committee (made up of people from the community) vary. Last, CCI's guarantee equipment maintenance for two years period, after which each host organization must become in charge of maintenance.

4.1.5.1 *Physical access*

Describe how accessible this venue is to various population segments, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c), especially the differences between urban and non-urban settings.

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

All the telecenters we visited were located in areas of limited economic resources, precisely because this are the center's target population. Telecenters are designed as democratic access ICT's.

Telecenters are installed in rural and urban areas, explicitly in high population areas broken down into categories such as urban marginal, head of province and villages or towns.

Visiting the centers we were able to observe that the majority of users are women, even though there are no specific actions aimed at increasing women participation in this type of spaces.

As far as the age of users, there are differences between administrations, for example Indotel telecenters' target population is the same as the host organization's target population. The telecenters located in the Visión Mundial Libraries target the youth, while other telecenters, because of the kind of services they offer, target users that have at least high school education.

In AVES and CTC there is a tendency towards young users (mainly teenagers) and children, this could be linked to the fact that the Aulas Virtuales are located in formal educational centers which mainly target the youth. Another reason is the presence of a generational digital gap.

Last, Dominican Republic receives an influx of immigrants from Haiti, but the telecenter we attended did not have any contents in Creole -language spoke by Haitians- nor had they taken any action to provide equitable access of information to this population.

4.1.5.2 *Appropriate technology and services*

Describe how appropriate the technologies, services and information offered in this venue are to the population, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The ICT's hardware as well as software are in relatively new condition, so they function properly.

Other factors difficult the proper operation of the telecenters, such as lack of resources. For example, some telecenters' computer laboratories are only open for capacity building and workshops, since the administrations don't have enough money to pay for a full time employee.

Another factor is that blackouts are common, especially in rural areas, sometimes lasting 4 to 6 straight hours. This forces the telecenters to have a small electric generator, but the problem arises

when the generator needs repairs but there is no budget available to do it. This limits the telecenters' hours, having to close when the power is out, or in other cases staying open as long the malfunctioning generators supply power.

En Telecenters offer mainly two kinds of services: workshops or capacity building and internet access. Concerning workshops, most telecenters have a digital alphabetization program, except the CTC's which doesn't have integration processes for local development.

Internet use mostly concerns information searches for educational purposes. This fits well with the academic focus of the host libraries.

Internet use in less formal venues such as cybercafés (online gaming, chats, social networking) showcases different learning processes (self-teaching, trial and error, collective learning, playing and learning, etc.). This kind of approach is important to technological appropriation.

4.1.5.3 *Affordability*

Describe how affordable the technologies and services offered in this venue are to the population, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Most telecenters only charge for printing, however given the different administrations present in each telecenter, we found out that some of them charge for internet access and workshops in order to sustain operations since they don't possess the necessary budget to keep them running, such is the case of the AVES.

It's important to mention that whenever fees are charged, these are accessible to the undeserved communities.

4.1.5.4 *Fees for services*

What fees or other requirements exist in order to access and use the information in the venues? (registration, user fees, restrictions to certain populations)

If there are fees: What do these fees buy?

Fees are charged for the following services:

- **Printing:** users are able to print digital documents paying per sheets.

   Indicate amount in local currency: between 5 and 10 Pesos

   Equivalent in US Dollars: between $ 0,14 and $0,29

   Date of estimate: July 22 2008

And local currency name: Pesos

- **Photocopies**: Users can duplicate documents for their personal use paying an hourly rate for photocopies. The printer doubles as photocopier.

  Indicate amount in local currency: 2 Pesos

  Equivalent in US Dollars: $0,058

  Date of estimate: July 22 2008

, And local currency name: Pesos

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Explain any salient differences in the services offered in different regions, sizes or other variables of significance:

- **Internet use:** Users can access Internet in the computer laboratory paying an hourly rate.

  Indicate amount in local currency: between 10 and 20 Pesos.

  Equivalent in US Dollars : between $0,29$ and $ 0,58

  Date of estimate: July 22 2008

  And local currency name: Pesos

- **Digitalization**: users can have their handwritten documents typed paying per sheet.

  Indicate amount in local currency: around 25 Pesos.

  Equivalent in US Dollars : $0,73

  Date of estimate: July 22 2008

  And local currency name: Pesos

- **Capacity building:** Workshops are available, mostly focused in "Ofimática" tools and Internet use.

  Indicate amount in local currency: between 100 and 150 Pesos per person, per month

  Equivalent in US Dollars : between $2,94 and $4,42 per person, per month

  Date of estimate: July 22 2008

  And local currency name: Pesos

4.1.5.5 *Geographic distribution*

What is the distribution of the venues in terms of their geographic location?

Complement any details not already included in section 2.1: Venue Selection.

Los Indotel's CCI's are distributed in the whole country, but most are located in the provinces with the highest urban development: Santo Domingo has 204 centers, equal to 29% of the total, and Santiago has 43, representing 6%.

The provinces with the least CCI's up to date are: Pedernales, Elias Piñas, Independencia, Hato Mayor, El Seibo and Samaná, with the first three located in the borders. The rest have between 10 and 34 centers per province.

The Centros Tecnológicos Comunitarios are located mostly around rural areas, and as of July, 50 CTC's were active.

 Information about the distribution of AVES was not found.

4.1.5.5.1 Map

If available, insert a map that displays the geographic distribution of this type of venue in the country (expand to the size you need).

The first map belonging to CCI's is navigable and is available at:

http://www.indotel.gob.do/external/proyectos-cci.html

The next one belong to Centros Tecnológicos Comunitarios (CTC). :

A map for Proyecto de Aulas Virtuales (AVE) is not available.

Description of map:

Centros de Capacitación de Informática Map: this map doesn't graphically represent the CCS's location, but provides the density of distribution for each type, and written addresses and contact information for each telecenter.

Centros Tecnológicos Comunitarios MAP: An icon marks the location of each CTC. Even though there are far more active telecenters nowadays than the total shown on the map, this is the only one available online. It can be viewed here:

http://www.primeradama.gob.do/images/ctc_installed.gif

4.1.5.6 *Other factors affecting access*

Other factors that affect equitable access to public information in this type of venue, not covered above?

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Users cite distance as a limitation to access.

4.1.6 Capacity and relevance

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of CAPACITY ecosystem in this type of venue (human capacity, locally relevant content, integration into daily routines, socio-cultural factors, trust in technology, social appropriation of technology)?

Since most telecenters focus on digital alphabetization, employees have the necessary level of training to fulfill user's needs. At the same time, user appropriation is as important and both have an impact on their daily lives (education and work).

Still, an existing void is the lack of other relevant content, since telecenters have focused their attention on digital alphabetization, and development of specific contents that may answer to community problems (health, unemployment, teen pregnancy, AIDS, sexual exploitation, drug addiction, sewage handling, amongst others) has been left aside.

Cultural factors influence the way workshops are handled, ascribed to the prevailing education system where a teacher gives a lesson and students follow. Also, communication applications such as chatting and social networking are prohibited, fact that contrast with the Dominican's tendency to have spaces to relate and interact, for example, chess afternoons –more frequent in rural areas- where people gather to play chess and chat; here, people share their views on many subjects. Other spaces are the *colmados,* grocery stores where people gather to Chat and listen to music. This kind of establishment is very common in both urban and rural areas.

4.1.6.1 *Staff size*

How many people work in a typical facility for this type of venue? (full time-equivalent employees or contractors; describe any significant variations, i.e., large, medium and small libraries in the country)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Equipment size seems to vary with the venue's available space, the number of users and the ability to stay economically viable and paying the employees. For example, the AVES we visited each had approximately 10 computers, 1 or 2 employees to cover day shift, and 1 to cover the night shift.

The size of Centros de Capacitación en Informática vary the most from one to the next. The Esperanza Internacional CCI in Seibo has 4 employees (an administrator and three facilitators) while the CCI in Centro Madri Trini has only one person that acts as trainer for the workshops and facilitator helping people with Internet searches.

4.1.6.2 *Staff training*

What is the overall capacity of the staff (i.e., librarians, telecenters operators) to help users access and use public access to information and communication services offered in this venue? Differentiate by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

(iii)   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

(iv)   For Public Libraries, indicate if Library School training is available and/or required for librarians.

The Secretaria de Estado de Educación required training prior to star working for the AVE telecenter employees only. The employees in the rest of the telecenters also underwent training, even though it wasn't obligatory for them.

We could also observe that the possibility of educational actualization by employees was largely determined by the amount of economic, interactive and educational resources each center has at its disposal. In the CCI's the work team is determined by the nature of the organization that oversees each center. For example, internships and voluntary work are key to low income organizations, such is the case of the Visión Mundial Library in Sabana Perdida, which has a CCI. Here, employees work in a modality called "monitors". "Monitors" work as volunteers in the library and receive in exchange training and workshops free of charge.

4.1.6.3 *Services offered*

What kind of services does this type of venue offer to the public? (i.e., access to books, magazines; meeting and conference rooms; audio/video programs, computers, Internet, other). Include Digital ICT services if offered.

There are three kind of services offered:

- Internet access.
- Access to the Encarta Encyclopedia.
- Capacity building in digital alphabetization

### 5.	Encarta Encyclopedia use.

The Centros de Capacitación en Informática as well as the Centros Tecnológicos Comunitarios de Informática, have an Encarta Encyclopedia in every computer, so that users may be able search information. Users find this feature very useful, especially in some telecenters that don't have Internet access.

### 6.	Internet use.

When not imparting workshops, telecenters offer Internet access. Users are able to check their email, search information, enroll in the university, etc.

Some centers restrict the use of Internet by prohibiting chatting and access to social networking sites (face book, Hi5, etc).

### 7.	Capacity building.

As mentioned earlier, most centers focus their capacity building efforts on digital alphabetization, teaching users the basics of computer use and Internet navigation.

Other centers like the Fundación Esperanza CCI has started giving English courses.

### 8.	Text Digitalization.

Some telecenters like the AVE located in Miches offers digitalization of handwritten texts.

### 9.	Printing

Some telecenters offer printing services

Explain any salient differences in the services offered in different regions, sizes or other variables of significance:

4.1.6.4 *Programs for underserved communities*

Describe if this venue has programs specifically intended to reach underserved communities, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Telecenters specialize in teaching computer and Internet use in communities where access to these technologies is difficult. The totality of telecenters visited are located in low income communities in urban and rural areas. Programs are targeted at undeserved communities. This may not represent the general picture, since we only visited 5 of the 724 active telecenters in the country.

An important factor is the telecenter's Schedule. Some open in the morning, afternoon and night. This help to attract a wide variety of users, for example, in both AVES and CCI's, children attend during the day while adults attend mostly during the night.

Some CCI's offered special fees to minorities, such as the Visión Mundial CCI, which has special offers for children under age.

4.1.6.5 *Relevant content*

What type of locally relevant content is available? What else is needed? Who is doing it?

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Available Content:

There is no current strategy to deal with the necessity of relevant content, which currently is in the hands of each individual's abilities doing Internet searches. In some cases, like in the El Seibo AVE, employees have detected and bookmarked certain pages that have proved useful to users, for example pages with information on agriculture.

Other Content Needed:

Telecenters should be able to offer users interactive spaces that allow them to identify strategic uses of technology to solve problems that surround them. This can be achieved through workshops aimed at local development.

Local initiatives to build needed content:

In the Visión Mundial de Sabana Perdida Library –which has a CCI-, the "monitors" or assistants have been compiling into folders printed information that users download. These folders then become part of the Library material and can be accessed by any user. This is a way to make up for the small book collection available

A CCI in El Seibo began teaching English. The center administrator hopes this could positively impact the job offer related to Tourism (main source of income in the country).

Source*: Interviews with telecenter employees.*

4.1.6.6 *Services and information available in local languages*

Describe the availability of services and contents relevant to human development that are available in **local languages** in this type of venue? (i.e., info on health, education, government services, etc)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The majority of workshops and capacity building are offered in Spanish, the native language. Users encounter limitations since most of the information available on the internet is in English.

Also, República Dominicana has an influx of Haitian immigrants who speak Creole, and information in this language is scarce. This is the case of the telecenters, none of which offer information or capacity building in Creole.

When Haitians enroll in workshops, they receive lessons in Spanish.

4.1.6.7 *Types of uses*

What do people USE the venues for (most frequent kinds of information and services people seek in them, activities they carry out in them)?

(ii)   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Refer to section 2.4 Charts: Information Needs and complement here as needed.

The main uses people give to the telecenters are: attending workshops, information search (online and in the digital encyclopedia), and academia work (homework). Other less frequent uses are online courses and online transactions.

Most f the information users search is academia, Esther students or teachers make use of the telecenters to solve homework or plan lessons. There are also two important searches: news and health related topics.

4.1.6.8 *Number, type, and frequency of users*

Refer to section 2.4 Charts: Information Needs. Complement here as needed.

Type of users:

Age:

- Under 14 years old: 42,67%

- From 15 to 35: 53,3%

- From 36 to 60: 4 %

Educational Level:

- No formal education: 1,35%

- Primary: 41,89% %

- High School: 40,54%

- University: 16,22%

Gender:

- Female: 67,12%

- Male: 32,88%

Economic Class:

- High: 4,17%

- Middle: 33,33 %

- Low: 62,50 %

Frequency of visits:

- Rarely: 1,32%

- Once in a while: 2,67 %

- Regularly: 7,89%

- Frequently: 84,21%

- Daily: 3,95%

Source: Data gathered from surveys handed to the center's employees.

4.1.6.9 *Users capacity to use information and services offered*

What is the overall capacity of the users to take advantage of public access to information and communication resources, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)?

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Information searches are mostly related to the formal educational system, so user abilities stay adhered to this modality.

It becomes evident that users need to develop advanced Internet search skills.

4.1.6.10 *Training courses for users*

Describe training courses offered to the public at this venue, and if they offer some kind of testing and certification.

Training courses: Trainings cover the basic use of computers and Internet, and "ofimática". The CTC's offer diverse trainings, such as radio communication, math, land administration, photography, English, science, and other online courses through the Instituto Tecnológico y de educación superior de Monterrey.

ICT specific training courses: Telecenters offer Basic computer and Internet use and "ofimática" tools. The CTC's offer capacity building in Micromundos and robotics.

All telecenters issue certificates alter the completition of the workshops.

4.1.6.11 *Integration into daily routines*

How easy is it for users to integrate the information and services offered in this type of venue into their daily lives? (offer concrete solutions to their needs and problems, make it easier to solve them at this venue than in other places)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Knowing that the most used services are computer and internet use and digital alphabetization capacity building, users attend the centers with academic purposes, be it students to solve homework and take online courses, or teachers to plan their lessons, integration is immediate.

Some telecenters offer workshops at night, like the Fundación Esperanza CCI in El Seibo. Among the attendants there were several professionals who were motivated to assist because they considered that they could integrate the acquired knowledge into their daily life, and help the from a work perspective.

Students in rural areas are able to keep track online of their university enrollment process through the telecenters, as well as tend to other transactions.

Other integration processes have to do with the job market, this is more evident in telecenters in rural areas, such is the case with the AVE and the CCI in El Seibo where, according to the employees, digital alphabetization allows users to send resumes and get a job in a position that required computer knowledge.

4.1.6.12 *Users perceptions about the venue*

What is the general perception or opinion of the population about the venue (not necessarily its specific services, but the venue itself: i.e., what do people generally think about libraries? Are they places that are "cool" or "only for elites" etc?), differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)? This includes perception by people who do not use the venue…

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Most users have a positive opinion of the telecenter. This has to be viewed under the context that computers and internet are in vogue. The Dominican Republic Government has set the digital gap topic as a priority in its agenda. All telecenters are supported by government institutions, this, together with the novelty aspect of the Internet generates positive comments from the users.

Complementing the survey in which users are inquired about how they perceive the telecenter's services, they were asked to mention services and resources they World like to see incorporated to the telecenters. Among the answers we can cite some related to information access: availability of scanners, compact discs and free workshops for the children. Other not related to information access were: fax service, and comfort suggestions: more computers, air conditioning, no power cuts, more hard drive memory and speed, and a bigger space. This last suggestion was quite frequent on the AVES, where the computer lab is located inside a converted truck.

From the employees' point of view, suggested modifications leaned on the subject of the telecenter's sustainability: being able to charge for some of the services, charging for Internet use, acquiring a fax and a scanner, and more computers to be able to offer more workshops.

4.1.6.13 *Social appropriation of information and generation of new knowledge*

What activities, products and services are users undertaking that exhibit new levels of social appropriation of technologies and generation of knowledge? For example, how are users generating and disseminating new knowledge, products and services through their use of this venue? (see category 13 in Real Access Framework for Social Appropriation of Technology).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Digital alphabetization represents the majority of the capacity building and Internet tends to be left on a secondary level. This varies depending on the supply and demand of services. Most use of the telecenters is for academic purposes. Generation of knowledge will be about generating documents for the educational centers.

Some employees have expressed their concern because they have witnessed students downloading entire works from the internet. This is counterproductive and in cases like this, the Internet becomes a tool against the generation of knowledge, hence the importance to rethink the strategic use of it.

4.1.6.14 *Trust, safety, and privacy*

What is the general perception or opinion of the population about the safety, security and privacy (TRUST) of the information and services offered in this venue?

Most users who were interviewed matched safe, private, reliable information with speed and quantity of information, in other words, finding trustworthy information in a phase way is enough to satisfy the needs of the users. This could be related to the kind of training currently offered at the telecenters, where users aren't advised on what kind of information is reliable, secure and private, and which isn't.

These doesn't mean capacity building are of a low quality or inappropriate, but may reflect the early stage of development of capacity building in telecenters.

4.1.6.15 *Gaps and opportunities in information and services offered*

What other information gaps and opportunities exist, which are not being met? (other information/services people need that are not being met there and could be offered, especially through Digital ICT services)

Relation between gaps and opportunities is narrow. On one hand, telecenters offer capacity building in digital alphabetization, on the other hand, this same fact has prevented the development of trainings for specific community needs. If this changes, telecenters could become production centers of relevant contents and use of ICT's to solve specific problems and help with local development, which would have a greater impact on the community, even on the telecenter itself, this because for example, people use internet to look for a job. This could ease the process given the country's unemployment rate. It could also help migrant communities stay in touch ad interact with people in the same situation, sharing subsistence strategies.

Of special note should be the subject of fortifying training on advance Internet searches, to discourage the relieve that quick searches and amount of information equal reliable information. Otherwise instead of approaching the Era of Information they run the risk of becoming misinformed, and public access to information World stop being effective.

There's a difference between Internet practices in telecenters and in cybercafés. The use of telecenters is defined by a tendency for academic information, where there's a teacher and students, while in cybercafés, access to information tends to be freer, exploration is basic and users self-taught, the use of internet tools is not supervised by a teacher. This represents the different criteria concerning knowledge distribution. On one hand it's transmitted and inherited, on the other, shared and in constant renewal.

4.1.7   Enabling environment

2 – 3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of the ENVIRONMENT ecosystem in this type of venue (local economy, national economy, legal and regulatory framework, political will and public support, regional and international context)?

Local environment is receptive of the telecenters, since one of the current government's policies is narrowing the digital gap through this kina of initiatives. At the same time, pressure from the productive sector raises the demand for this kina of services.

The regulatory frame most inherent to the development is the Ley General de Telecomunicaciones, which states that 2% of the phone bills be spent on the Contribución al Desarrollo de las Telecomunicaciones (CDT), entity that finances CCI's. The international environment also works in favor of telecenters, which can opt for development funding.

4.1.7.1   *Local and national economy*

Describe the local and national economic environment and how it affects public access to information and communication in this type of venue (refer to and complement economic summary in country assessment, section 2.5 Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i)   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The poverty level in República Dominicana reaches almost el 50% of the population, consequently, unemployment 15 % and possesses weak Basic services, like potable water supply, electricity and health. Education has experienced a considerable leap forward in terms of coverage, and the economy rose significantly after the 2003-2004 crisis.

Major income sources are Tourism and remittances. The current economic situation affects the kind of information users search, since some telecenters lean towards benefiting the labor force, allow migrants to stay in touch with their families and look for job offers inside and outside the country.

 The current economic situation has pushed some telecenters located in host organizations –CCI's- to charge for the services -even though they were initially designed to be accessible free of charge-, to be able to survive and keep functioning. Therefore a contradiction exists concerning access, since the government tries to strategically install telecenters in low income communities. Economic requirements sometimes go beyond the capacity of the host organization, therefore they need to charge for the workshops and this leaves little to no free computer time for users to practice what they learned and freely access information.

4.1.7.2 *Legal and regulatory framework*

Describe the legal and regulatory framework and how it affects public access to information and communication in this type of venue (refer to and complement economic summary in country assessment, section 2.5 Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i)   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The regulatory frame most inherent to the development is the Ley general de Teleceomunicaciones, wich states that 2% of the phone bills be spend on the Contribución al Desarrollo de las Telecomunicaciones (CDT), entity that finances CCI's.

Telecenters most adhere to legal matter concerning copyright laws, under the Ley de Derechos de Autor.

4.1.7.3 *Political will and public support*

What is the level of political will and public support for this type of venue? (refer to and complement section 2.5 Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i)   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

A great interest of this actual government to reduce the digital divide in the country can be deduced. This interest is reflected in the infrastructure and connectivity projects supported by the government through the creation of a high number of telecenters.

4.1.7.4 *Organization and networking*

Describe if the facilities in this type of venue organized in any network, association or other collective body? (i.e., national public library system, telecenter franchise or network, etc)?

Up to now, telecenters of the same category formally belong to projects that tie them as units that

share use and operative conditions. However, during the field work we could not find any networking processes linking the initiatives and products of the diverse venues.

4.1.7.5 *Partnerships*

Describe notable public-private partnerships in support of this type of venue.

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Each different type of venue have different partnership relations. In the CCI case, they are funded by Indotel (state organization). This organization coordinates the creation of the venues and receives funds from telecommunication private suppliers, and generates within every organization that hosts the telecenter (private, NGO sometimes) a legal figure that will be in charge of the administration of the center.

In the case of CTC, the Office of the First Lady develops a nexus with the community through the creation of a Management Council (civil organization) that will be in charge of the local coordination of the venues.

In the AVEs, the State Secretariat of Education generates a nexus with the community through the Communitarian Technological Commitee(civil organization) that is in charge of the venue administration (among its activities there is the generation of self-sustainability strategies).

4.1.7.6 *Other environment factors*

Other factors in the environment that affect access and use of information in this kind of venue, not covered above?

The orientation of the initiatives is more focused in the infrastructure and connectivity issues than in the strategic social uses for development.

Biggest coverage telecenter projects studied in the country focus their activities in the digital alphabetization but do not tie community problems and needs with these capacity building programs. It seems that technology is seen as an aim and not as a tool.

In the other hand it is very interesting that a country counting on 836 telecenters due to the impulse of government organizations, does not have developed a state policy to solve the serious electricity problems that affect the population. It represents a big contradiction to see that there are many so many computers that at some time of the day do not count on electricity to operate. The tendency has been to solve the problem with each telecenter means, not working on a joining initiative of different public actors in order to solve the energy crisis of the country. Telecenters have to incur major expenses in order to cover the day a day need of energy (using different types of electricity generators that need maintenance and fuel). This situation delays the capacity building programs and limits the access to the venue.

4.1.8 For publicly funded venues only: Revenue streams

This section is meant specifically for publicly-funded venues (public libraries, national connectivity programs, etc).

There is not information available about revenue streams for this venue.

4.1.8.1 *Budget*

What is the total budget for this public access venue system (applies especially for libraries, answer for other venues if applicable and if available)?

Total Budget for Fiscal Year fiscal year

Local currency name   amount (local currency)

Approx. equivalent in USD   based on exchange rate of   on date   .

comments

4.1.8.2 *Relative size of budget*

How large (or small) is this budget in relation to other funding streams? (this is a way to show, in financial terms, how much the government cares about information and public access as compared to a variety of other issues in the country).

Relative Size of Budget for same year	Total budget (local currency)	Comments
Total national budget		
Education		
Other (name)		
Public libraries		
Other		

Comments:

describe

4.1.8.3 *Sources of funding*

What are the sources of funding for this public access venue system?

Sources of funding:

**Approximate
% of total budget**

Comments

Government sources:

International donors:

National donors:

User fees/services:

Other (name)

Other (name)

Other (name)

4.1.8.4 *Paths and flows of resources*

How do resources get allocated and disbursed to the actual venues? For the principal funders, and especially for the public sources, what is the flow of funds? How are the funds raised (what tax stream), what path do the tax streams flow before they get to the specific venues? Who makes decisions about this funding?

We could only find information about the CCI project of Indotel. These venues are funded with part of the 2% of the money collected in telephone invoices and is oriented to the "Contribution for the Telecommunications Development", fund administrated by Indotel and destined to different project related with the democratization of telecommunication services.

4.1.8.5 *Fees and cost recovery*

Describe if there are user fees or any other type of cost recovery. How does it affect service delivery and usage?

In the types of venues fees and cost recovery processes are different. In the CCI, Indotel donates the labs equipment (computers and desks). In some cases, the also provide a building and during 2 years from the opening Indotel covers the equipment costs. After this period, the host organizations must take responsibility over the expenses of the venue, and even though the organizations are supposed to offer the venue services for free this has not been possible for some of them, so that they have had to start charging some of the services such as capacity building, Internet use, prints, photocopies and others.

In the CTC the Management Council establishes solidary prices for the services in order to cover some maintenance expenses.

In the virtual classrooms, the community is in charge of the expenses in fuel for the van operation. Also of the replacement of hardware and the consumable materials: paper, ink, etc. This expenses are covered with the fees charged over prints, photocopies, and in some cases Internet access and documents digitalization.

4.1.8.6 *Cost categories*

What are the main cost categories in the operation of this kind of venue? (% of total annual budget)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Cost Categories for Operation:	Approximate % of total budget	Comments
Staff (salaries, benefits)		
Building infrastructure		
Utilities		
Staff Training		
Computers/technology		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		

4.1.8.7 *Recent changes and future trends*

Describe any recent changes and anticipated future trends in the funding and revenue streams for this type of venue in the country. Have funding levels risen or decreased dramatically over the past few years? What is the outlook for the foreseeable future?

Telecenter financing has grown constantly during the last few years. This tendency may be on the short run, since the growth was able to occur upon President Leonel Fernandez's reelection, the Project was given continuity. However, due to past experiences with government transition periods, there's no certain future once Fernández steps down from power.

4.1.9   Case example for venue 2: Venue Name

Provide a short descriptions and commentary for each type of venue, offering a realistic sense of what the venue looks and feels like in its day to day operation, the kind of people who visit, and the kind of services they receive. Also, the case example indicates what makes the case unique or what features are commonly shared with other venues. A photo and short quotes will make it even more real.

The AVE Telecenter located in Miches at El Seibo province works with 10 computers placed inside a van that has been adapted to work like a computers Lab. At the moment of the visit, the center was the only one offering Internet connection within the Miches community, because the CCI that is beginning to operate in the location does not have Internet connection available yet and there are no other Internet centers around. Due to this situation, the center has special characteristics that define it: for example, in other venues visited chat and social networking sites use is forbidden, but in this specific case, and as part of the self-sustainability strategies of the center, the "Communitarian Commission" (in charge of the administration of the venue) has stipulated that these services can be accessed within the center as long as the users pay for them. Other services such as information search for academic support –as it happens in the other venues- are for free. In this sense, looking at the characteristics of other telecenters and cybercafés visited, we can conclude that this one integrates both telecenter and cybercafé rolls.

According to the administrator, this multiplicity of services has generated a segmentation between the users: in one hand, there are the students of the Institution where the AVE is hosted, which receive free services (capacity building and Internet use). This segment of users is served from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm. From 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm, other people from the community can use the venue. People attending the venue at night also visit it during Saturdays from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm. During Sundays, when the venue is open also 8:00 am to 3:00 pm, other segment of users visit the venue. This situation might be determined by the working schedules of the users in that community.

Other characteristic of the center is that capacity building processes outside the AVE have been developed within the community. For example, last year, 22 people from the local Hospital, had a capacity building process by the AVE.

5 Venue-Specific Assessments (cont.)

5.1.2 Overall venue assessment

Provide a broad picture of the public access information landscape in this venue, informed by the results of this research.

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of public access information in this type of venue?

Cybercafés in Dominican Republic represent an important access point to information, especially to digital services. Its restrictions in use are far less than in telecenters, and this is why many interviewed users agreed that cybercafés are fun and entertaining. Interviewed telecenters users instead, referred to them as being important or good.

According to data collected, cybercafés users are mostly people under 30 years old and who use these venues for studying, leisure time activities, and for communicating with peers. In may cases, relatives who live abroad. Most users considered the services are reasonably priced. Although many of these users also recognized that some other low income segments might not be able to afford such prices, even if they are low.

5.1.3 Access

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of ACCESS ecosystem in this type of venue (physical access, appropriate technology, affordability)?

The establishment of cybercafés in different regions of the country is linked to the country's progress on broadband internet connectivity. All studied regions that have this condition, offer internet services through private businesses. This condition leads to conclude that only regions meeting these requirements can offer these services; generally, urban cities and to some extend highly populated areas in the countryside.

The kind of technology used in cybercafés varies from one to others and, and it also has to do with demanded need. In touristy areas, it is common to find cutting edge technology with great capability of communication via voice and video. This also happens in call centers. The kind of technology is also related to demand of many Dominicans to communicate with relatives who live in the USA and Europe.

The fairs charged for cybercafés services do not seem to be a problem for the populations. Access is further more affected by other factors such as lack of training by staff and the poor quality of the

power supply system.

5.1.3.1 *Physical access*

Describe how accessible this venue is to various population segments, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c), especially the differences between urban and non-urban settings.

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

According to data obtained through surveys, interviews and observation, the existence of cybercafés is more frequent in urban zones and their outskirts. Also, in highly populated towns in the countryside, but once again, this condition depends really on how good the internet connectivity is in these areas. Internet connectivity has grown greatly in recent years, and so have cybercafés, but still this growth is limited to urban regions and highly populated towns.

Based on what was observed, cybercafé users are mostly middle-class and low-class citizens. This is explained by how unaffordable it is for them to acquire their own computer and also afford the internet service.

Visits to these venues by gender vary also from one place to others. Results on both genders seem very alike, but a tendency of more women visiting these spaces in urban zones, is noticeable. On the contrary, on rural areas, the tendency is more men than women, visit cybercafés.

5.1.3.2 *Appropriate technology and services*

Describe how appropriate the technologies, services and information offered in this venue are to the population, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The quality of technology in visited places varies greatly from one place to another. Nevertheless, it can be said that cybercafés with more modern equipment, are more often in urban areas, as these not only have higher performance computers, but also more adequate and better equipped spaces, particularly air conditioning. In rural areas, it is more common to see cybercafés equipped with second hand computers and no audio or video devices. It was also noticeable so see that many of these places had designated computers in closed spaces where only the one user could see what was displayed on the screen.

It is important to mention that the quality of power supply service in the country is very poor. This is why many of the cybercafés use a sort of power supply back up system called "inversor", used when the power goes out. In low-income areas, these "inversors" were rather uncommon.

It is also important to point out the role performed by the person in charge in each of the cybercafés. In urban zones, this person was normally dedicated to only charging users for the service. In rural zones, it was common to see how the person in charged was a capacity builder and also addressed technical inquiries of computer usage among people. Neither in rural nor urban zones, was the person in charge an information and knowledge facilitator.

The age range among users in visited cybercafés generally oscillated between 10 and 30 years old, with more adolescents and kids in rural areas. In urban zones, the number of adults and young adults was higher.

5.1.3.3 *Affordability*

Describe how affordable the technologies and services offered in this venue are to the population, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The cost per hour at visited cybercafés averaged 20 pesos, 0.60 USD, which seemed fair to most people interviewed. However, the perception of cost varied in urban and rural areas. For example, for users in the countryside, cost represented a factor that could affect access to this venue for some other people.

There were not important changes in perception by gender or by age.

5.1.3.4 *Fees for services*

What fees or other requirements exist in order to access and use the information in the venues? (registration, user fees, restrictions to certain populations)

If there are fees: What do these fees buy?

No membership fees in cybercafés or restrictions whatsoever were seen for segments of population.

1 hour usage of computer with internet connectivity.

Indicate amount in local currency: 20

Equivalent in US Dollars: 0,6

Date of estimate: 08/05/2008

and local currency name: pesos

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Explain any salient differences in the services offered in different regions, sizes or other variables of significance:

Regarding different types of services offered by cybercafés, it is important to highlight that a high percentage of these venues combined computer services with services of other kind in their offer. Some places sold calling cards, computer accessories, and printouts. Also, users could make international calls, could buy drinks – in some cases liquor – and could exchange money too. A wide variety of services is more common in urban places rather than in rural zones. Also, in touristy places, this variety in the offer of services was seen.

5.1.3.5 *Geographic distribution*

What is the distribution of the venues in terms of their geographic location?

Complement any details not already included in section2.1:Venue Selection

There is no an official record of the number of cybercafés in the country or of where they are located. However, when searching in the yellow pages system (www.paginasamarillas.com.do), a base number of 256 cybercafés can be obtained in the whole country.

5.1.3.5.1 Map

If available, insert a map that displays the geographic distribution of this type of venue in the country (expand to the size you need).

Description of map:

describe

5.1.3.6 *Other factors affecting access*

Other factors that affect equitable access to public information in this type of venue, not covered above?

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

One of the most important factors that prevent access to cybercafés is low quality and instability of the power supply system of the country. Constant power outages reduce considerably the possibility cybercafés have of giving good service. The constant power outages affect normally vulnerable communities more as they do not have resources to acquire appropriate technology (home based power generators or power backup systems) to confront this problem. Cybercafés in poor communities are forced to limit their offer of services because of this.

Another factor affecting access to this venue has to do with the development of skills in the use of ICT's among citizens in the country, especially people over 30 years old and with little education. Current government has launched computer education programs to reduce the affect of illiteracy (check segment on telecenters).

5.1.4 Capacity and relevance

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of CAPACITY ecosystem in this type of venue (human capacity, locally relevant content, integration into daily routines, socio-cultural factors, trust in technology, social appropriation of technology)?

In most cases studied, staff capacity consisted on basic use of computer, and charging users for services given. In some cases, especially in rural settings, the person in charge also helped with basic technical inquiries from users. However, none of these inquires had to do with essence of data processing.

The integration of cybercafés in the daily life of people is related mainly to three aspects: leisure time, interpersonal communication and academic life. Internet use is still low and there are government initiatives to increase computer literacy among the population. This situation affects the way users can access cybercafés services and appropriate the knowledge and the available

tools in them for those aspects of daily life related to economic reproduction.

5.1.4.1 *Staff size*

How many people work in a typical facility for this type of venue? (full time-equivalent employees or contractors; describe any significant variations, i.e., large, medium and small libraries in the country)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Based on collected data, it can be said that the size the staff at cybercafés is small, one full time employee per work shift. In some cases, there were 2 employees, especially in those cybercafés whose offer of services was diverse.

5.1.4.2 *Staff training*

What is the overall capacity of the staff (i.e., librarians, telecentres operators) to help users access and use public access to information and communication services offered in this venue? Differentiate by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

(v)   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

(vi)   For Public Libraries, indicate if Library School training is available and/or required for librarians.

Staff, at visited cybercafés, received training on basic computer usage. This training was not given by the employer. In other words, cybercafés did not invest on computer skill developing trainings. They only thought their staff how to operate the business, like charging users fees for the services given. Some of the staff people interviewed were the owners of the cybercafés, in which case the knowledge level was noticeably higher, many of them with specialized training and even university studies.

Nonetheless, this knowledge is not used for facilitating the access to information for users. Staff members, mainly handle the charging of fees and watch for the proper utilization of equipment. However many of these staff interviewed agreed that they supported users when they needed help with technical issues. None of them mentioned any duty tasks related to access to information and knowledge. This task is solely the responsibility of users.

5.1.4.3 *Services offered*

What kind of services does this type of venue offer to the public? (i.e., access to books, magazines; meeting and conference rooms; audio/video programs, computers, Internet, other). Include Digital ICT services if offered.

10.   Computers with Internet Access

Based on observation, this service is the main activity and it is the one that offers the most opportunities for public information access.

11.   International Phone Calls

Many of the communication needs of Dominicans are related to being able to interact with relatives and friends who live abroad, many of which send them back money. Keeping this fluent communication going is of paramount importance for the economic wellbeing of citizens. It is relevant to mention that the money sent by relatives and friends from overseas countries represents the second most important activity in the country's total Internal Gross Production.

12.   Sales of telephones and their accessories.

13.   Sales of computer accessories.

14.   Printing.

This service is important also, as it is the only way for users to carry or transport information, given the lack of their own computer equipment.

15.   Money exchange.

This service was preset at one cybercafé within a touristy zone.

16.   Beverages sales.

Of all visited cybercafés, only one of them offered this service. The place was a combination of a bar and cybercafé, with sales of alcoholic drinks, cigarettes and there was loud music on the back grown. There were about 10 computers in total.

17.   Faxing.

Some of the visited cybercafés, especially in rural or touristy settings offered this service. According to staff, this faxing service was mainly used for banking and government related matters or dealings.

5.1.4.4 *Programs for underserved communities*

Describe if this venue has programs specifically intended to reach underserved communities, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Cybercafés do not have costume designed programs for undeserved communities, their only objective is profit making. The only one program that could be considered like an undeserved community oriented plan was implemented at one cybercafé in Las Terrasas. This cybercafé charged a different price for its services, depending on the kind of customer. Prices were different for locals or tourists.

5.1.4.4.1 *Relevant content*

What type of locally relevant content is available? What else is needed? Who is doing it?

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Available Content:

Only the content available on the internet, there is no particular effort by cybercafés in this sense. There is not any development in searching guidelines, for these concrete themes.

Other Content Needed:

- Content related to requirements of formal education.

- Information about the wise use of remittances.

- Information about advantages and disadvantages of migration (whether importing or exporting countries).

- Information about starting your own business (entrepreneurs).

- Content related to the proper and adequate use of internet searches.

- Content related to the construction and innovation using available resources on the web.

- Content of health topics, especially on AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

- Content related to business and work capacity building, especially collective entrepreneurs.

Local Initiatives to build needed content:

- Technical publications of different governmental and non governmental institutions **or** organizations.

- Proposal of a new law to promote the habit of reading.

- Radio stations.

Source: information obtained through interviews and observation.

5.1.4.5 *Services and information available in local languages*

Describe the availability of services and contents relevant to human development that are available in **local languages** in this type of venue? (i.e., info on health, education, government services, etc)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

In all cybercafés visited, all users' interfaces were in Spanish. It is important to highlight that in Dominican Republic there are not native languages, only Spanish. However, the use of Creole (Haitian language) is rather common among the Haitian population that lives in the country. None of the cybercafés visited had a user interface in this language.

5.1.4.6 *Types of uses*

What do people USE the venues for (most frequent kinds of information and services people seek in them, activities they carry out in them)?

(iii)   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Refer to section 2.4 Charts: Information Needs and complement here as needed.

According to collected data, it is possible to summarize the uses in 3 main exes: support to formal education, entertainment, and interpersonal communication. Almost all users interviewed mentioned that they mainly used cybercafés to access the internet and obtain information that would help them accomplish their academic duties. In many cases, this activity implied the use of automated communications processes.

A second use obtained was related to the use of computers for gaming. Many of the users interviewed age under 14 years, visited cybercafés for computer gaming primarily.

The interpersonal communication was also mentioned by users of all ages. One of the most widespread uses is live chats and electronic email. Regarding this aspect, there seemed to be an increasing insertion of the people interviewed into social networks.

From the interviews, it was determined that the reading of news was also important, but the category of news varied greatly depending on the user. In general, this news was all related to gaming, celebrities' lives or sports.

5.1.4.7 *Number, type, and frequency of users*

Refer to section 2.4 Charts: Information Needs. Complement here as needed.

additional details not covered in section 4.2.3

Average of users at cybercafés per week: 180

Types of users:

    Age:

- Under 14 years old: 7,32%

- Between 5 and 35 years old: 87,80%

- From 36 to 60 years old: 4,88%

    Academic level:

- Primary school: 5,26 %

- Secondary school: 57,90%

- University: 36,84%

    Sex/gender:

- Female: 53,66%

- Male: 46.44%

    Class:

- High: 0%

- Middle: 62,16 %

- Low: 37,84 %

Frequency of visits to the center:

- First time: 7,32%

- Once in a while: 2,44 %

- Regularly: 12,20%

- Frequently: 70,73%

- Daily: 7,32%

Source: data obtained through surveys given by the research team and center staff.

5.1.4.8 *Users capacity to use information and services offered*

What is the overall capacity of the users to take advantage of public access to information and communication resources, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)?

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

According to conversations held with professional librarians at the Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo, one of the biggest problems of the country is related to the lack of reading, and the lack of abilities to search for information. For example, it was mentioned that the copying-pasting culture is one of the biggest challenges for the education in the country.

It can be said, based on information obtained through surveys, that the services and the information searched are related to mainly academic duties, gaming/amusement and interpersonal communication. This capacity is intimately related to the education on ICT's and people's awareness of their potentiality or their appropriation. This so called appropriation is more noticeable when cybercafés are used as a means of interacting with friends and relatives abroad.

5.1.4.9 *Training Courses for Users*

Describe training courses offered to the public at this venue, and if they offer some kind of testing and certification.

Training courses: There are not training courses at this venue.

ICT specific training courses: There are not training courses at this venue.

5.1.4.10 *Integration into daily routines*

How easy is it for users to integrate the information and services offered in this type of venue into their daily lives? (offer concrete solutions to their needs and problems, make it easier to solve them at this venue than in other places)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Based on observation, the integration of services and the information obtained in daily life at cybercafés is given in 3 factors that were mentioned previously on this document: interpersonal communication, gaming and entertainment, and formal education. This venue offers bigger possibilities –than others-for gaming and entertainment and interpersonal communication. Other venues analyzed with digital services show more complexity in the restrictions for taking these aspects to a daily life level.

Cybercafés also integrate spaces of digital education. It was observed how in many places especially those from rural settings, it was common to see more than one person at one single computer. One person teaching the others how the pc worked. Besides this aspect, it was evident that cybercafés aid formal education as almost all people interviewed agreed on the importance of this venue as a support for doing homework.

The use of computers is seen as a requisite for good or better employment. This aspect was

mentioned by users. Cybercafés are also spaces that allow communication with the overseas world. This facilitates that people stay in touch and keeps remittances coming into the country.

5.1.4.11 *Users perceptions about the venue*

What is the general perception or opinion of the population about the venue (not necessarily its specific services, but the venue itself: i.e., what do people generally think about libraries? Are they places that are "cool" or "only for elites" etc?), differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)? This includes perception by people who do not use the venue.

(i)   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

According to users interviewed at cybercafés, this venue is mainly a fun place to visit, where people can do things that are not allowed at other types of venue. Other users interviewed were concerned as many cybercafés allow pornography consumption, which is considered negative. There were not significant differences based on variables of equity of services.

5.1.4.12 *Social appropriation of information and generation of new knowledge*

What activities, products and services are users undertaking that exhibit new levels of social appropriation of technologies and generation of knowledge? For example, how are users generating and disseminating new knowledge, products and services through their use of this venue? (See category 13 in Real Access Framework for Social Appropriation of Technology).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The appropriation of information and generation of new knowledge at cybercafés face a hurdle: digital education of population, especially the adults. This is why the appropriation of digital tools available at cybercafés is more likely among youngsters, and consequently in the aspects that relate to their daily life: leisure time and school duties. This is reflected through the answers given by users when they were asked about the use they gave to computers. A big part used them for gaming and interpersonal communication and also, to comply with school duties.

It is important to point out that little effort has been placed into developing capacities to find, to process and to transform available information. Current programs are focused on digital education only, which generates inconsistency or a mismatch between the content of information available and the capability of users to take advantage of it. This problem was discussed at the group interview held with professionals on information at the Biblioteca Pedro Mir. In short, a population that does not know what to do with the information is one with fewer possibilities to generate innovation and new knowledge.

It is important to highlight the appropriation of interpersonal communication tools to meet the needs of communications with beloved ones overseas. Also, it is interesting to point out the appropriation of these technologies by some small businesses in touristy areas visited. Mainly online services via web.

5.1.4.13 *Trust, safety, and privacy*

What is the general perception or opinion of the population about the safety, security and privacy (TRUST) of the information and services offered in this venue?

The people interviewed consider the information they can find on the internet, to be good and reliable. To them it is updated and abundant. None of these users mentioned any disconformities regarding security, trust and privacy of the internet. This perception could be better understood given the literacy level of many of them.

5.1.4.14 *Gaps and opportunities in information and services offered*

What other information gaps and opportunities exist, which are not being met? (other information/services people need that are not being met there and could be offered, especially through Digital ICT services)

The main gap in the information, according to the conversation held at the Biblioteca Pedro Mir de la Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo, is more related to the lack of capacities for searching, finding and turning such information, not necessarily at their availability. Moreover, if we want to further inquire on this, one of the biggest weaknesses identified in this area, is the deficient capacity to identify their own lack of information. Cybercafés are, by nature, ICT centers and their fundamental offer is the internet connectivity. In this sense one of the opportunities they could develop is the establishment of an information mentoring program that supports users in their particular needs for information.

5.1.5 Enabling environment

2–3 Paragraphs:
What is your overall assessment of the ENVIRONMENT ecosystem in this type of venue (local economy, national economy, legal and regulatory framework, political will and public support, regional and international context)?

Cybercafés are public information access points that - unlike telecenters and libraries - are run like private businesses, and their nature or existence require making profits. From this point of view, government laws for digital education and the expansion in coverage of internet services through broadband connectivity, foster the growth in numbers of potential users and therefore, the growth of cybercafés. Especially because these potential users have low income, which prevents them from getting computers and internet connectivity at home.

An economic context based on remittances and tourism has the need of cybercafés, in order to allow both foreigners and Dominicans to communicate with relatives or friends outside the country, in a simple way and at a low cost.

The legal regulation or framework does not have much interference on this type of venue.

5.1.5.1 *Local and national economy*

Describe the local and national economic environment and how it affects public access to information and communication in this type of venue (refer to and complement economic summary in country assessment, section 2.5 Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i)   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

A difficult economic situation, essentially the lack of employment opportunities, make many Dominicans emigrate out of the country. Also, many of the new job openings for middle and low classes are related to services. The distribution of the Internal Gross Product shows how tourism and remittances are the two most important sources of production.

Both activities are intimately related to ICT's, and therefore, to cybercafés. The continuous flow of remittances implies the establishment of close relationships with beloved ones living abroad. This aspect facilitates technically and economically the ICT's.

Services that have to do with tourism also require systems of communication based on the internet and also, users capable of operating such systems. The growth of tourism has brought about and increasing demand of work staff prepared or capable of operating ICT's. This growth has also triggered the establishment of internet services in nearby towns.

The constant urban growth and improvements in the internet broadband connectivity are also important factors that have paved the way to cybercafés.

A negative factor to their growth is the constant power outages in the country.

5.1.5.2 *Legal and regulatory framework*

Describe the legal and regulatory framework and how it affects public access to information and communication in this type of venue (refer to and complement economic summary in country assessment, section 2.5 Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i)   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The laws related to running cybercafés are of a diverse variety. These centers are subject to tax legislation and regulation due to its business nature. Also, it is affected by copyright law that covers all aspects of private property. Another law that has a direct link to cybercafés is the one that regulates telecommunications across the country.

This regulatory and legal framework does not have dramatic consequences in public access to information and communication in cybercafés.

5.1.5.3 *Political will and public support*

What is the level of political will and public support for this type of venue? (refer to and complement section 2.5 Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i)   If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

One of the government goals is an increase in the level of digital education among the majority of the population. Also, the integration of ICT's in the formal education system. And finally, an increase in coverage of internet services. This support and commitment undoubtedly advocates the growth in the number of cybercafés given an increasing demand of the services they provide.

5.1.5.4 *Organization and networking*

Describe if the facilities in this type of venue organized in any network, association or other collective body? (i.e., national public library system, telecentre franchise or network, etc)?

There is not an organization or specific committee representing cybercafés.

5.1.5.5 *Partnerships*

Describe notable public-private partnerships in support of this type of venue.

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

No noticeable alliances among these kinds of venues.

5.1.5.6 *Other environment factors*

Other factors in the environment that affect access and use of information in this kind of venue, not covered above?

Poor quality of the power supply service affects negatively the operation performance of centers.

5.1.6 For publicly funded venues only: Revenue streams

This section is meant specifically for publicly-funded venues (public libraries, national connectivity programs, etc).

5.1.6.1 *Budget*

What is the total budget for this public access venue system (applies especially for libraries, answer for other venues if applicable and if available)?

Total Budget for Fiscal Year fiscal year

Local currency name   amount (local currency)

Approx. equivalent in USD   based on exchange rate of   on date   .

comments

Cybercafés are financed by private funding. Non applicable.

5.1.6.2 *Relative size of budget*

How large (or small) is this budget in relation to other funding streams? (This is a way to show, in financial terms, how much the government cares about information and public access as compared to a variety of other issues in the country).

Cybercafés are financed by private funding. Non applicable.

	Relative Size of Budget for same year	Total budget (local currency)	Comments
Total national budget			
Education			
Other (name)			
Public libraries			

Other Comments:

describe

5.1.6.3 *Sources of funding*

What are the sources of funding for this public access venue system?

Cybercafés are financed by private funding. Non applicable.

Sources of funding:

**Approximate
% of total budget**

Comments

Government sources:

International donors:

National donors:

User fees/services:

Other (name)

Other (name)

Other (name)

5.1.6.4 *Paths and flows of resources*

How do resources get allocated and disbursed to the actual venues? For the principal funders, and especially for the public sources, what is the flow of funds? How are the funds raised (what tax stream), what path do the tax streams flow before they get to the specific venues? Who makes decisions about this funding?

Cybercafés are financed by private funding. Non applicable.

5.1.6.5 *Fees and cost recovery*

Describe if there are user fees or any other type of cost recovery. How does it affect service delivery and usage?

Cybercafés are financed by private funding. Non applicable.

5.1.6.6 *Cost categories*

What are the main cost categories in the operation of this kind of venue? (% of total annual budget)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Cybercafés are financed by private funding. Non applicable.

Cost Categories for Operation:	Approximate % of total budget	Comments
Staff (salaries, benefits)		
Building infrastructure		
Utilities		
Staff Training		
Computers/technology		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		

5.1.6.7 *Recent changes and future trends*

Describe any recent changes and anticipated future trends in the funding and revenue streams for this type of venue in the country. Have funding levels risen or decreased dramatically over the past few years? What is the outlook for the foreseeable future?

Cybercafés are financed by private funding. applicable.

5.1.7 Case example for venue 3: Venue Name

Provide a short descriptions and commentary for each type of venue, offering a realistic sense of what the venue looks and feels like in its day to day operation, the kind of people who visit, and the kind of services they receive. Also, the case example indicates what makes the case unique or what features are commonly shared with other venues. A photo and short quotes will make it even more real.
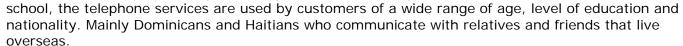
This cybercafé is located in Villa Consuelo, a community in a zone of social vulnerability in the province of Santo Domingo, in the National District. The center has been around since March, 2006 when it opened aided by a government initiative to diminish the digital gap in the population by establishing telecenters.

This internet center offers computers with internet connectivity, telephone booths for domestic and international calls, faxing, and typing of documents.

The diversity in services offered allows the center to reach different types of users, for example while computers are occupied mainly by teenagers from grade school and high school, the telephone services are used by customers of a wide range of age, level of education and nationality. Mainly Dominicans and Haitians who communicate with relatives and friends that live overseas.

On the same line of services of communication, internet is used generally for social networking; live chats, electronic email, and Youtube where users can watch videos that they send and receive one another.

One factor affecting this venue is the constant power outages called "apagones", which take place everyday and can last for 8 hours. To confront this situation, there is an "inversor", but its backup power supply will only last 5 hours, which is sometimes insufficient given the length of outages.

This cybercafé is particularly oriented to supporting education. In this sense, its owner has banned all computer game software. Also, he helps users with their information searches and addresses inquiries on the use of certain computer programs, but he does not charge them for this service. It is interesting to mention that the owner does not perceive his assistance as a service; however our interview was interrupted a few times by users who needed his help, to which he responded promptly and naturally in each case.

6 Success Factors and Strategic Recommendations

6.1 Summary of Lessons in Country

6.1.1 Information needs

What are the most critical information needs by underserved communities that are currently not being adequately met by public access to information and communication venues?

- Information about preventive health and how to decrease the risk of endemic infectious diseases and public health (diarrhea, cholera, dengue fever, etc.) as well as sexually transmitted diseases (AIDS and others).

- Domestic violence and sexual and reproductive health.

- Awareness building on the topic of migration: related issues, risks for the migrant, re-investment of remittances, etc.

- Development of entrepreneurship and female entrepreneurships to decrease de high levels of unemployment.

- Development of renewable energy systems for underserved communities.

6.1.2 Where people go

Where do people go for public access to information and communication in the country, especially underserved communities?

As a general rule, the country's behavior regarding access to information answers to the use of libraries, telecentres and cybercafés. The use is differentiated according to age, hence children and teenagers that are in the formal education system assist mainly to libraries and telecentres and the information search is related to fulfilling educational needs.

On the other hand, adults rather visit cybercafés and telecentres to access and consult updated information, receive digital literacy (in telecentres). University adults also frequent the academic libraries, where they can do specialized consults.

Among other important means of access to information are: community radios, television channels, newspapers and magazines, word of mouth communication and direct consults to specialized organisms.

6.1.3 How access, capacity, and environment affects public access

How do access, capacity and environment affect public access to information and communication venues in the country? (Refer to details under access, capacity and environment in research design document).

According to the data collected, public access to information and communication venues in Dominican Republic are concentrated in urban zones and larger towns. This is true for cybercafés, telecentres and libraries. The spaces are not always the most appropriate, which discourages users from attending. This happens in venues with or without ICTs.

The capacity of the users is another element that affects appropriation of public information. There are bad reading habits (and an important part of the relevant public information is written) and the population has low levels of digital literacy. However, the most important capacity problem detected has to do with obtaining, processing and transforming the information available.

Currently, the political environment is favorable for the growth and improvement of initiatives related to information access. However, advances have a disperse nature and the institutional structure that would allow the continuity of political projects regardless of government changes, is not yet consolidated. On the other hand, there's little legislation that addresses the topic directly.

6.1.4 Role of ICT

What is the role of ICT in public access to information and communication? What untapped opportunities exist?

The roles of ICTs in access to information are basically two. The first one has an educational nature and it's carried out in telecentres and libraries (information searches, research, etc.).

The second role is focused on the development of communicational processes and entertainment, which takes place mainly in cybercafés. However, it's important to point out that in these places the use is very diverse, since ICTs are also used for educational purposes and banking transactions, among others.

6.2 Success Factors and Recommendations

6.2.1 Where to invest resources

How could additional resources (money, people, time, knowledge) be best used to strengthen public access to information and communication venues and practices in the country? (i.e., solutions that would make it more accessible, affordable, appropriate?)

The following initiatives could be carried out to strengthen small public libraries:

- Creation of toy libraries

- Acquiring constantly new collections and audiovisual materials.

- Community outreach processes (art, health, entrepreneurship, etc).

In the case of Telecentres, the suggestions are:

- Invest in capacity building for personnel and users on strategic uses of ICTs and free open source tools. There also needs to be training on the use of ICT tools for tapping into and documenting cultural experiences and for non-formal education.

- State subsidies for the telecentres to improve their sustainability and make their services more accessible.

- Creation of data bases in each venue, based on constant surveys of the community's needs, which should include online services.

- Interconnection of the different data bases, to integrate the information of each venue.

There must be investment in the capacity building of the personnel or people in charge of the access points in general, to generate community partnerships.

6.2.2 Key success factors

What are the key success factors for public access to information and communication to meet information needs of the population, especially underserved communities, and especially through digital ICT?

The key success factors are the following:

- Community outreach activities and initiatives, with the whole community.

- Adequate space and infrastructure.

- Diverse spaces according to each population (videos, newspapers and printed material, etc).

- Spaces for a fun approach to information (toy libraries).

- Trained personnel.

- Collections related with the information needs identified by the community.

- Capacity development to generate relationships and strategic alliances within the community.

6.2.3 Role of ICT

How can public access to information and communication venues in the country be strengthened to offer more meaningful and equitable access to information, especially using digital ICT?

ICT tools for local development can be created. For example, there could be promotion of improvement initiatives in topics such as:

Agriculture: to renew and diversify crops, information about plagues and improvement of farming practices, information on climate and natural disasters.

Entrepreneurship: promotion, communication with clients, online sales, identifying new markets.

Health: information about symptoms, medicines and preventive health.

Web 2.0 can also be useful to share experiences, information and develop networks.

6.2.4 Top ten recommendations

What are the Top Ten recommendations for public access to information and communication venues in your country? Make sure you include policy recommendations as part of them.

1. Presidency and local governments: redirect resources to small public libraries, since they're recognized as public access to information venues within their communities, but they need to renew their book collections, constant training for their personnel, adequate conditions for their facilities and funds to generate activities that involve the community with the library, as well as support to access other resources.

2. Strengthening the public library system could prevent the negative impact on reading and access to information projects that government shifts have had in the past, precisely because the projects are developed aside from the public institutions.

3. State Secretary on Culture in coordination with the Municipalities: make an inventory of the resources of small libraries (human resources, information, infrastructure, etc) to identify the most urgent needs as well as create opportunities to collaborate, share experiences and good practices.

4. Library and Telecentre coordinators: seek collaboration from non government organisms to develop the capacities of the teams in the venues in two senses: strategic uses of information and communication technologies (ICTs) as tools for development, local identity and community partnerships.

5. State Secretary on Culture together with interest Departments of Bibliotecology: form a network of public libraries and create a web space that fosters sharing among them and collective creation. For this it would be

necessary to have trained human resources on the topic of generating human networks as well as online facilitation.

6. Indotel: (after the project conformation stage in which it is currently), provide the telecentres with technical equipment and training for their staff in order to diversify the roles that the telecentres have within each community, strengthening the integration of the community with the telecentre, identity wise as well as economically. For example, a community journalism project could be developed to tap into and document customs, cultural expressions, characters, history and news from the community using digital tools. These projects could in turn be integrated in the creation of an online network that allow people from the different communities to know what's happening in other parts of the country from the perspective of an alternative media.

7. Indotel: explore strategic uses of ICT tools, specially web 2.0 tools that the Dominicans are fond of and allow for new learning methodologies that integrate playful aspects and collaboration.

8. Indotel: design more flexible regulations in relation to the service charges of the telecentres with the objective of improving the sustainability of the different hosting organizations and in turn of the project as a whole.

9. Local Governments and Presidency: design specific budgets for the development of community outreach on behalf of the libraries.

10. Librarians/library coordinators: develop activities with the communities that coincide with their cultural and entertainment practices. For example, organize chess tournaments, which would let the library have a fresher front for the community and bring the community closer to reading and access to information from new spaces that are more dynamic, fun and at the same time champion the idea that the library is for everyone. For this it's necessary to have a broad reflection on the different spaces for librarians, on the issue of why adults are absent from the libraries, specially the smaller libraries and about the educational role they've achieved in the communities.

"Text95"

APPENDIX n° 1

Participants on the group interview:

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Adela Matos	adela89625@yahoo.es

APPENDIX n° 2 Complete list of interviews

Organization	City	Interview	Job	E-mail	Phone
Biblioteca del Instituto Tecnológico de Santo Domingo	Santo Domingo	Lucero Arboleda	Directora Ejecutiva de Biblioteca	lucero@mail.intec.edu.do	809 567 92 71
Biblioteca Pedro Mir, Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo	Santo Domingo	Eusebio De la Rosa	Bibliotecario Supervisor	henrydlarosa@gmail.com	809 535 8273
Biblioteca de Mendoza	Santo Domingo Este	Manuel Jiménez	Director de la Biblioteca	mljimenez0352@hotmail.com	809 488 4667
		Melania Guerrero	Supervisora General de Servicios		
		Francisco Pérez	Director de Bibliotecas del Ayuntamiento de Santo Domingo Este		
Biblioteca Villa Duarte "Juan Sánchez Lamouth"	Santo Domingo	Dionisio de Jesús Peña	Director	bibliotecavilladuarte@gmail.com	809 788 5702
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