PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION & ICTs
PHASE II REPORT

Kyrgyzstan

Note:

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1 Extended Executive Summary

1.1 Research Project Overview

1.2 Introduction

The research of the Phase II has been conducted in Kyrgyz Republic in order to analyze the available public access venues in the country, users profiles per gender, education level, income level, social status and ethnicity as well as identify what kind of information is sought by users such as: content, problems are faced, and frequency.

The research was conducted in two weeks, covering 32 different types of public access venues, interviewing 22 operators and 65 users total.

1.3 Country Overview

Kyrgyzstan became a full republic of the Soviet Union in 1936 and gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. Kyrgyzstan is a landlocked, mountainous republic situated in the center of Asia. It is the second smallest of the five Central Asian states, and is surrounded by Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and China. The capital, Bishkek, lies farther from the ocean than any other capital city in the world. International donors and agencies have been instrumental in taking ICT to the rural areas, often working in cooperation with the government.

At independence, Kyrgyzstan, like most countries of the former Soviet Union, inherited high levels of human capital. The population is largely well-educated and literate, and an established educational system and library framework is in place. Independence and the economic results of independence drastically impacted on the library service. Of the 289 libraries nationwide, interviews have revealed that approximately 20% offer digital services. These services are often the result of cooperation with national and international donors.

Kyrgyzstan is one of the poorest countries in the world, with nearly two-thirds of the country living below the national poverty line. More than half of the population of Kyrgyzstan lives in the rural areas and remains economically disadvantaged. The mountainous terrain makes hardwiring/establishing a backbone in the country extremely challenging and blocks line of sight transmission. The booming economies of Russia and Kazakhstan continue to attract large

numbers of labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan, resulting in a drain of able bodied and educated workers from the country.

In 2005, Kyrgyzstan experienced what became known as 'The Tulip Revolution'. The revolution started in the south and gathered momentum to Bishkek, where, on March 24, 2005 15,000 pro-opposition demonstrators gathered in Bishkek and called for the resignation of the then President, Askar Akayev. President Akayev had been in power since 1990, and was replaced by the current President, Kurmanbek Bakiev. Since the revolution, political instability has remained.

Corruption is rampant in Kyrgyzstan. In its 2006 report, Transparency International placed four Central Asian countries including Kyrgyzstan, among the twenty most corrupt countries in the world (Najbullah 2007). Although press censorship is officially condemned by the government, there has been increasing pressure in recent years on journalists. Kyrgyz print, radio and television have faced considerable restraints in what they can and cannot report, but the ICT regulatory framework remains comparatively liberal.

The Kyrgyz government with international donor support has continued to develop ICT strategy and access in the country. With the assistance of foreign donors, Kyrgyzstan has drafted liberal policies for Internet use and regulation. The government has also facilitated the development of Internet access points in rural areas and provided a supportive environment for donors working toward ICT development. Access to the Internet has been further aided by the emergence of numerous private and non-governmental Internet cafes. In 2003, NATO supported the development and establishment of the Virtual Silk Highway. The project connects academic and educational institutions in Central Asia through a high speed satellite network.

Seven eCenters were established in Kyrgyzstan through a project implemented by the Academy for Educational Development (AED), Openworld Company, and the Civil Initiative on Internet Policy (CIIP), and funded through USAID's dot-ORG program. The eCenters are a unique project, in which existing for profit business entities received grants to establish Internet access points that provide free of charge internet access and computer training courses to the local population. Locations selected included some of the most disadvantaged areas of the country.

The eCenters all provide free computer skills capacity training to the local population, and this allows them to make use of the digital technology available. Internet coupons for free Internet

time are given to users, and fees are later charged if applicable. These centers have supported the development of access to digital technology for the local community.

Another popular public Internet venue is the Internet Access and Training Program Centers (IATP), administered by IREX Kyrgyzstan. There are sixteen centers across the country with funding from IREX. This finished at the end of May 2008 when the IATP centers is to become self-financing. All services are offered to users at no cost. Each user is able to access the Internet for an hour at a time, twice a week for free. This makes the centers affordable to all segments of the population who live in the IATP centers based areas.

UNESCO with the Future for Information Foundation, a governmental organization, have established twelve Internet Access Centers (IAC) and one Community Multi-Media Center in the country. All of the IACs are in rural areas, including at the small village level. This provides internet access to some of the most geographically isolated segments of the population.

Kyrgyzstan leads all other Central Asian states in terms of web users per capita. In 2007, about ten percent of the five million Kyrgyz residents had permanent access to the internet (Mambetalieva, Clampdown of Kyrgyz Youth Internet Craze, 2008). However, Cybercafes and Internet centers in Kyrgyzstan remain the main Internet access points for users.

Internet users are predominantly aged between fifteen and twenty-five. Other important venues for public access include workplaces and educational institutions. There are approximately 150 public Internet access centers in the country, including cybercafes and free access centers sponsored by NGOs. Russian sites are the most visited. Computers remain unaffordable for the vast majority of the population.

Online gaming and surfing the Internet is exceedingly prevalent in Bishkek, the capital city, to such an extreme the authorities in the Kyrgyz capital have voted to ban everyone under the age of eighteen from visiting Internet centers during school hours and after seven in the evening. Gaming is cheap at 10 soms (roughtly 0.30USD) per hour, and many of the centers operate 24 hours per day (Mambetalieva, Clampdown of Kyrgyz Youth Internet Craze, 2008).

In March 2002, Kyrgyzstan declared ICT a development priority and adopted its National Strategy on Information and Communications Development Technologies. This strategy, which runs until 2010, aims to harness the potential of ICT to ensure the development of a sustainable,

democratic information society. Central to the National Strategy is e-government, e-education and e-economy.

The National ICT Council, chaired by the President of Kyrgyzstan, is the main institution responsible for the (technology) sector. Development of the internet infrastructure favors the two largest cities, Osh and Bishkek. The privatization of both telecommunications and services has led to an increasingly competitive Internet sector. This has led to lowered access fees for users.

Bandwidth for the country has also experienced rapid growth, resulting in lowered prices for users. The majority of ISPs connect by satellite to the Russian portion of the Internet. In the early 2000s, Internet use in Kyrgyzstan expanded rapidly. Between 1999 and 2005, the number of Internet subscribers increased from 3,000 to 263,000. During this time, Kyrgyzstan made use of international investment support to restructure the telecommunications system.

In 2006, the KazSat communications satellite was launched from Kazakhstan somewhat reducing the dependence of all Central Asian countries on European and US telecommunications satellites. A second KazSat launch is planned for 2009.

The telecom infrastructure of Kyrgyzstan has seen improvement since the break-up of the Soviet Union, but these efforts have done very little to improve access, especially in rural areas. Further changes to the capacity of the telecommunications network were undertaken in 2005 and completed by end of 2008 with the replacement of outdated equipment and the introduction of a digital exchange.

Four mobile phone service providers were operational in the country at the end of December 2007, and the numbers of users are steadily growing reaching over 2 million users according to the Association of the operators.

1.4   Research Rationale, Sample & Methods

The current research focused on identifying information needs of the public access venues, their strengths, weaknesses and opportunities, furthermore, it attempted to identify venue specific information on each type of venue. In addition, extensive meetings were carried out with different stakeholders from government, non-governmental organizations and private sector to address the challenges faced by the ICT sector and in particular, issues related to the public

access to information in Kyrgyzstan. (see list of the people met during research in Kyrgyzstan in Annex 6.4)

The researcher worked in Kyrgyzstan for a period of two weeks. The researcher visited public access venues of different types as well as conducted operators' and users' interviews at those venues.

The public access venues identified in the Phase I, were re-enforced and specified in the following ways:

Venue 1. Public libraries

Venue 2. eCenters

Venue 3. Internet clubs. The Internet clubs were identified in the Phase I and in-depth study was carried out in Phase II of current research.

Venue 4. Information and Resource Centers.

The selection of particular venues for detailed interviews was identified in Phase I as well as adjusted based on the findings in-country research. For example, during meeting with the CIIP representatives, they made recommendations to visit eCenters in Karakol city, Issyk Kul oblast, and in Ivanovka village, Chui Oblast. Based on those recommendations, the researcher visited those places and found additional useful pertinent information. In addition, the researcher found examples of Information and Resource Center setups with the support provided by the Community Development and Investment Agency of the Kyrgyz Republic – so called ARIS in rural and remote villages of Kyrgyzstan.

Sample

The venues selected for the sample were based on location, different types of operators and availability.

The libraries were selected based on services provided at central, regional, oblasti and village levels.

The Internet clubs were selected based on their location and providers.

The eCenters were selected based on identification in Phase I of research, recommendations of CIIP as well as based on the different types of functionalities of the eCenters.

The Information and Resource Centers were selected based on the recommendations of people knowledgeable about different types of Information and Resource Centers of Kyrgyzstan, such as policy makers, representatives of private sector and NGOs and international and donor organizations as well as findings during research in country itself.

The following are visited libraries, venues type one:

- National Library of Kyrgyzstan
- Republic Children and Youth Library by Bayalinov
- Osh oblasti library
- Central Library System
- Library No. 12 of Bishkek city
- Library of Ivanovka, Chui Oblasti
- Karakol city, Issyk Kul oblasti

Out of seven libraries visited, the researcher conducted interviews in 5 libraries. The library in Karakol city, Issyk Kul oblasti was closed and no information was obtained from Ivanovka library. The interviews were conducted with operators, but there were few and in some cases, no users interviews were conducted with available users.

The following are visited Internet clubs, venue type two:

- Internet club "Arsenal" in Bishkek
- Internet club "Fox" in Bishkek
- Internet club "High speed" in Osh oblasti
- Internet club "Vista" in Karakol, Issyk Kul oblasti
- Internet club "Ring" Sokolok village, Chui oblasti
- Internet club "Neoplanet South" in Bishkek
- Internet club "Shmel" in Bishkek
- Internet club "Skynet" in Bishkek
- Internet club at Cholpon-Ata,

All nine Internet clubs visited were open and interviews were conducted with operators of all these venues. But due to summer holidays and schools and universities closed for summer break, there were few users and in some cases no users, thus, interviews were conducted with available users.

The following are visited eCenters, venue type three:

- ➢ eCenter in Noogat village of Osh oblasti
- ➢ eCenter in Osh
- ➢ eCenter "Asia" in Karakol, Issyk Kul oblasti
- ➢ eCenter "Mir svyazi – The World of communication" in Ivanovka village, Chui oblasti
- ➢ eCenter in Barskoon,
- ➢ eCenter in Kochkor, Naryn oblasti

Out of six eCenters visited, the researcher conducted interviews in four eCenters. The eCenters in Barskoon and Kochkor were closed. They seemed operational but were closed at the time of the visit.

The following are visited Information and Resource Centers venue type four:

- ➢ Foundation for cooperation and support of legal and economic reform, Osh
- ➢ Center for legal information, Osh oblasti library
- ➢ Resource Center for Mass media, Osh
- ➢ Government Patent Technical Information Department, Bishkek,
- ➢ Public Information and Resource Center at Noogat
- ➢ Democracy Information and Resource Center at Gulchar, Osh oblasti
- ➢ Public access center in Gulchar, Osh oblasti
- ➢ IATP center at the National Public library, Bishkek
- ➢ IATP center at the Osh oblasti public library
- ➢ Center of information at the Republic Children and Youth Library by Bayalinov

Out of ten Information and Resource Centers visited, the interviews were conducted with eight operators and 12 users.

Method

The researcher and assistant visited selected samples of different venue types and conducted interviews with operators and users if available. In most of the public libraries, there were few people and not everyone was willing to be interviewed.

Information Needs of Underserved Communities

The majority interviewees have unanimously stated that there is a lack of information in Kyrgyz language. The majority of people in the rural area of Kyrgyz Republic speak Kyrgyz language more than Russian. Few users can find necessary information and resources in Kyrgyz language.

Another issue is the lack of the latest books, publications and resources in public libraries. The funding of public libraries is limited, thus the libraries mostly have books and publications received during the socialist period. Nevertheless, the library directors are attempting to address this through different means. For example, the management of Library No. 12 has introduced "Second Life for Books' initiative. This initiative allows users who have read the books and do not need them, to donate them to the libraries, and libraries to distribute them to other readers and visitors. Recently, the public libraries are focusing on introducing more literature about the culture, tradition and customs of Kyrgyz. There are 29 libraries in the Central Library system of Bishkek, and all of them are named after famous Kyrgyz people. For example, the Library No. 1 is named after Chiggis Aitmatov, famous Kyrgyz writer. Besides introducing Kyrgyz culture, the individual libraries are specializing themselves, by collecting books and publications related to a topic such as: automobiles, household keeping, maintenance and repairs, etc. So, users who are looking for books and publications related to certain topics are redirected to go to visit other libraries, which contain the specific topic. Due to limited funds, the libraries cannot afford to subscribe to the latest magazines and journals in Russian languages, because they are quite expensive.

As for eCenters and Internet clubs, people seem to find adequate information through the Internet. However, only people who have computers skills, browse through Internet and are able to find necessary information at public access venues such as eCenters and Internet clubs.

Despite availability of wide range of information in Russian language from websites and resources, the operators and users said that there is a lack of information available in Kyrgyz language.

As for operators and users of the Information and Resource Centers, it was said the Information and Resource Centers provide information only in a particular subject or area, for example, legal information, information about government services, patent information or media information. These venues were said to lack access to information and resources in other than Russian and Kyrgyz languages, on different topics, etc.

1.5 Strengths, Weaknesses and Opportunities in Key Public Access Venues

The strength, weaknesses and opportunities have been identified separately by the different types of venues, such as public libraries, eCenters, Internet clubs, and Information and Resource Centers.

Public libraries

Strengths

The major strength of the public libraries is well-established organizational structure, which has been setup during socialist system but has faltered during transition period to market economy.

Weaknesses

The major weakness of public libraries is their dependence on the government for funding. There is a law to supply one copy of newly published books to public libraries, yet the libraries lack resources to renew collections of the books, subscribe to the latest publications, improve capacities of the library staff and offer IT-based services to users. Despite that some of the library directors have shown initiatives in raising funds.

Another weakness of public libraries is insufficient qualified staff working. Most of the librarians working in the public libraries are those, who were trained and graduated from universities years ago, and they are not confident in providing information and services to the public. For example, instead of allowing users to browse through the shelves to find necessary books and publications themselves, the books and materials are delivered to users upon submission of a request form.

Opportunities

There are opportunities for public libraries to provide services to the citizens of Kyrgystan using information and communications technologies. There are already initiatives in place, such as IRBIZ – electronic catalogue of the library books installed in major libraries and "Togtom" – legal information database. Still, there are opportunities for the public libraries to expand the services offered and enhance them with the support of information and communications technologies. Public libraries could introduce training and capacity building exercises for users, such as computer skills training, working on Internet, or working with electronic resources.

eCenters

Strengths

A major strength of the eCenters is that they are run by businesses. In implementation of the Last Mile Initiative (LMI) project, the Civil Initiative on Internet Policy (CIIP) chose a tender approach for providing access to information and services through ICT for rural population of Kyrgyzstan. Instead of setting up a new eCenter, the CIIP called for proposals from existing Internet clubs, Information and Resource Centers and other ICT-based service providers to cooperate with CIIP to provide access to information and services through ICT for rural Kyrgyzstan. In the announcement, the CIIP declared its own requirements pertaining to premises, facilities, human resources and others. The grant applicants were expected to "have at least a 2-room premise with total area no less than 50 sqm., located in the central part of the area with entry from the main street, with opportunity for external advertisement, uninterrupted power supply, and high level of security. The premise had to be able to house 12 computers, which allowed training of 24 people a month and cover more than 1,000 users a month, with the help of 4 employees. "According to CIIP, there were over 50 applicants in the first round of proposals.

Another strength of eCenters is the regular support provided by the CIIP to eCenters. The CIIP support is not limited to only providing regular updates but also enables cCenters to communicate with each other on a regular basis and exchange information on services provided as well as support on introducing new services, such as IP telephony.

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Weaknesses

A weakness of the eCenters is low speed Internet connections and high cost. Within LMI project, all eCenters were provided with the Internet connection at a subsidized cost. The LMI project finished in April 2008 and since then no support has been provided to the eCenters for their Internet connections. The eCenters continue providing Internet-based services, but due to the slow connection, the eCenters have fewer users.

Opportunities

There are opportunities for eCenters particularly related to the diversification of services provided to the citizens. Considering that there are few specific information-related services in rural areas, the eCenters could provide e-services, such as access to existing legal information database of "Toktom" and/or "Adviser" patent information, and health information.

Internet clubs

Strengths

A major strength of the Internet clubs is their business model. The management of the Internet clubs provides services, which generate revenue. Thus, they will make sure to maintain high speed connections, affordable fees, necessary services and even expand it if there is a demand there.

Weaknesses

The major weakness of Internet clubs is only providing a venue for using services and no training is provided there in most of the cases.

Opportunities

The Internet clubs are for users who know how to use computers, access the Internet and are able navigate the World Wide Web. However, the number of people who posses these skills is low in the overall population of the country. Therefore, the Internet clubs could introduce other services to attract people who do not posses necessary skills. This could include basic computer skills, Internet, email and trainings as well as some incentive programs, such as discount vouchers.

Information and Resource Centers of different types

Strengths

The major strength of Information and Resource Centers is the availability of different types of information.

Weaknesses

The Information and Resource Centers are focused on providing only specialized information, such as legal information, patent, and government related information. In most of the cases, there are no links to other information resources, except to information originally designed to be delivered through Information and Resource Centers.

Opportunities

There are many opportunities for Information and Resource Centers to diversify information and services delivered to citizens. The opportunities relate to providing access to additional information resources and cooperating and coordinating their work with each other.

1.6   Salient Findings

There are 289 public libraries in Kyrgyzstan. Twenty percent of these offer digital ICT services. Libraries are found at national, regional, district, oblasti and village levels. Interviews were conducted with library representatives at all levels. The research team visited libraries at each level. In addition, the team met with the representatives of the Association of Public Libraries of Kyrgyzstan and discussed the current situation of public libraries and challenges they face.

According to unofficial statistics, there are over 6,000 Internet clubs in Kyrgyzstan. All are private businesses. The Internet clubs are mostly located in cities and oblasti centers and few are in villages. The research team visited and interviewed nine Internet clubs by location and service provider. The interviews were conducted among Internet clubs located in the big cities and in rural areas of Kyrgyzstan. In addition, the Internet clubs for research were selected because they had different service providers and were in different locations.

In addition to the findings of Phase I, during second phase, researchers identified the existence of 11 eCenters as of April, 2008.[1] Interviews were conducted with the representatives of CIIP and selected operators of eCenters as well as available users at the eCenters. The eCenters were located in Karakol, Bosteri, Naryn, Kara-Suu, Nookat, Kochkor, Osh, Talas, Ivanovka, Kochkor-Ata and Bokonbaevo. The research team visited 6 eCenters and conducted interviews in four eCenters, since two were closed at the time of visit.

The research team met with a number of people from government, private sector and non-governmental organizations, during which the team was given the list of different public access points.

According to information provided by the Public Information and Resource Center under the office of President of Kyrgyzstan, there are 18 centers of public access established at the post offices (Annex iii for list of those centers). The research team visited two of these public access centers. The research team met with the head of the post office of Osh and was told that the center in Osh was transferred to a remote village. The team visited the center in Gul'cha village, Osh oblasti. There the center was not operational, and the equipment had been distributed among the staff of post office.

The team was told, there are 44 centers with access to Internet and 23 centers of universal access (so called telephone points) established by "Foundation for Future Information" (Annex iv for list of these centers). During the search for a center in Gul'cha village of Osh Oblasti, the research team instead found "Information and Resource Center for Democracy" established with the financial support of the Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Labour of State Department of USA. Due to time constraints, the researcher team was unable extensively visit center established by the "Foundation for Future Information". The team asked the people at the "Information and Resource Center for Democracy" if they knew about the former. No one was able to confirm or deny the existence.

ARIS representatives said that they have provided support for the establishment of over 464 Information and Resource Centers in villages. The research team met with a project coordinator at ARIS and visited one of the Information and Resource Centers, supported by ARIS. The

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[1] "eCenters network, Kyrgyz Republic, Lira Samykbaeva, Civil Initiative on Internet Policy foundation, April 2008

Information and Resource Center had been established at the library of the Ivanovka village. The overall cost of the project is about 10,855 USD, which includes the contribution of the village and librarians worth about 2,200 USD**.** The Information and Resource Center has four computers connected to network and a printer. From June, 2008, the Center started introducing fee-based basic computer training.

The research team visited and met with the management of the Public Information and Resource Center under the office of the President of Kyrgyz Republic. The center is located at the National Library of Kyrgyzstan and provides information and services to citizens on government services and maintains the website www.gov.kg.

1.7   Key Recommendations

1. Support for ICT sector. This includes supports to 1) introduce public consultation through ICT on draft laws, regulations and policy documents; 2) assist further development of infrastructure in country, in particular to introduce latest technologies, such as WiFi or WiMax; 3) build capacities of ICT professionals specifically in software engineering and 3) renew training and education curriculum of the ICT specialists to meet requirements of fast growing industry.

2. Build capacities of government officials on ICT. This includes supports to 1) to implement and manage of ICT projects in government organizations and 2) integrate ICT in every work of the government officials.

3. Support for the development of on-line content, services and information resources. The support can be provided for 1) development of content for rural population of Kyrgyzstan, such as advices, consultations, forums on agricultural products; 2) development of content targeted to children and youth (this is not only game, but rather educational and knowledge building sites related to studies or of general interests); 3) introducing on-line payment systems for utility services, such as gas, heating, electricity, etc.

4. Support for the development of locally relevant contents, which are based on the needs and demands of the local people. This relates, for example, to 1) support for development of local administration and government information sites; 2) support for development of environmental, agricultural, educational, health and such related website targeted to rural population of the country; 3)

5. Conduct feasibility study on the needs and demands of the local people of information and services, which they can access and receive through ICT. The feasibility study can cover areas of 1) what particular information lacks, 2) what are barriers to access that information; 3) who can provide this information to people

and 4) recommendations on what can be done to delivery information and services to citizens. Based on findings of feasibility study, specific projects can be developed and implemented.

6. Coordinate work of existing venues of public access. It's to assist in establishment of inter-venue committee/council, when information available in libraries can be accessed in Information and Resource Centers and vice versa.

7. Cooperate with private sector and involve them in the delivery of services to underserved communities of the country.

8. Introduce universal service obligation policy to reach out to rural and remote areas of the country. The support can be provided in development of legal and regulatory environment to 1) introduce universal service obligation policy, 2) coordination and cooperation with the operators and 3) development universal service framework to reach to rural and underserved communities of the Kyrgyzstan.

9. Coordinate and cooperate with non-profit organizations, involve them in the decision making process. Since non-profit organizations (NPOs) can serve as a link between citizens and decision makers, it's essential to support to NPOs in their work, such as setting up websites and portal sites; delivering information through these channels to citizens as well as enhance skills of staff of NPOs to delivery ICT skills training, conduct workshops and serve as a facilitator for connection between citizens and government officials.

10. Implement public sector reform in the country with using ICT as a tool for delivering public information and services to citizens and introduce outsourcing of services to private sector and non-profit.

2 Methodology

2.1 Venue Selection

The venues of different types were selected based on the studies conducted in Phase I, in-country research and consultations and discussions held with different stakeholders during Phase II research.

The following venues were identified for research:

- ➤ Public libraries
- ➤ eCenters
- ➤ Internet clubs and
- ➤ Information and Resource Centers of different types

2.1.1 Venues Studied

	Public Libraries	E-centers	Internet clubs	Information and Resource Centers
Total number in country	289	11	6,000	80
A. # in Urban location	145	0	5,200	0
% offering ICT	20	100	100	100
Total # of people served (annual)	35,000	0	2,300	0
B. # in non-urban location	143	11	800	22
% offering ICT	20	100	100	100
Total # of people served (annual)		1,200		1,100

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

The venues located in the villages were identified as non-urban. The venues located in the oblasti centers, such as public libraries or Internet cafés, were identified as urban.

2.1.1 Other experiences of public access to information that are not quite "Venues"

Other Public Access experience # 1: Public Information and Resource Center under President's Administration of Kyrgyz Republic

Description :

The Public Information and Resource Center under President's Administration of Kyrgyz Republic has been established by the decree No. 228 of President of Kyrgyz Republic of July 10, 2004. The Center has been established with the following purposes:

➢ Providing citizens with rights to freely access, search, find, research, produce, transfer and disseminate information (except information of state, commercial, business, banks internal and private information)

➢ Providing citizens with access to government Internet-portal and through it to the websites of the President, government and other government organizations on the Internet, legal information databases of the Ministry of Justice of Kyrgyz Republic

➢ Providing citizens with consultation services on possible channels of getting information and about the rights of citizens on making decision, in the case no information is provided by the government organizations

➢ Realization of the National Policy in the information technology area, popularization of the usage of Kyrgyz language in electronic resources, implementation of the scientific and research work on the problems of information dissemination and computerization.

➢ Conducting training, conferences, symposiums, workshops including international level on the matters related to the development of the information and communications technologies

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> ➢ Implementation of the electronic-archiving activities, implementation of electronic and printing production (information), formulation and realization of databases and information communication products and services.

> Total number in country: 1

> % offering ICT access: 100

> % in urban location: 0

Comments on how it is influencing public access venues in the country:
The Public Information and Resource Center (PIC) under the President's Administration of Kyrgyz Republic is located at the National Library of Kyrgyz Republic and maintains conference and meeting rooms, public access center with Internet. The PIC maintains website of government information and services – www.govservices.kg.

For 2007, the Public Information and Resource Center was visited by over 6,149 visitors, out of which 74% were students, 8% were unemployed, 7.2% were government officials and the rest were teachers, NGO staff, workers, pensioners, medical workers and school pupils.

Number of users of PIC by category

- School pupils 2%
- Medical workers 0%
- Pensioners 1%
- Unemployed 8%
- Workers 1%
- Civil servants 7%
- NGO staff 2%
- Teachers 1%
- Scientific and research workers 3%
- Students 75%
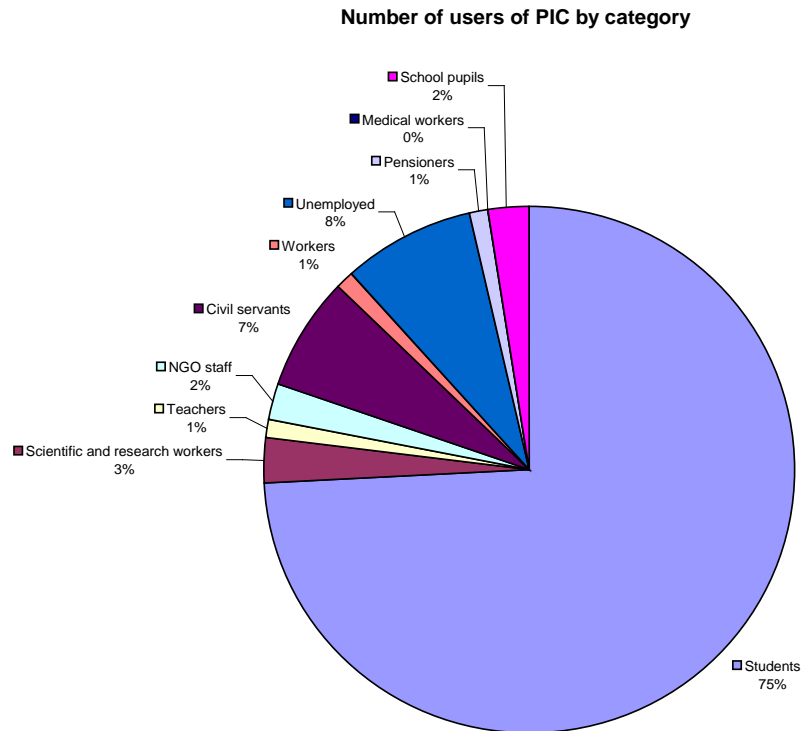
The portal of the government services www.govservices.kg has been visited by over 1.6 million visitors at the time of research. The portal site has sections for government, business and foreigners with the front page dedicated to the services offered by the government to citizens, such as how to get a passport, how to find jobs, how to register for a pension fund, how to get social welfare, how to register your land, how to buy/sell apartments, how to get admitted to universities, services offered by traffic police, postal services, and insurance. According to the statistics of the visitors to the website by end of 2007, the majority of users visited the citizens section 82%, followed by information on business – 2.7%, pension information – 2.6%, foreign citizens section – 2.6%, and national statistics – 2.5%.

How to get social welfare
Ministry of Home Affairs
Kyrgyz postal services
1%
1%
Getting passport
2%
How to get passport?
2%
National statistics
2%
Foreign citizens
3%
Pension information
3%
Business
3%

Citizens
81%
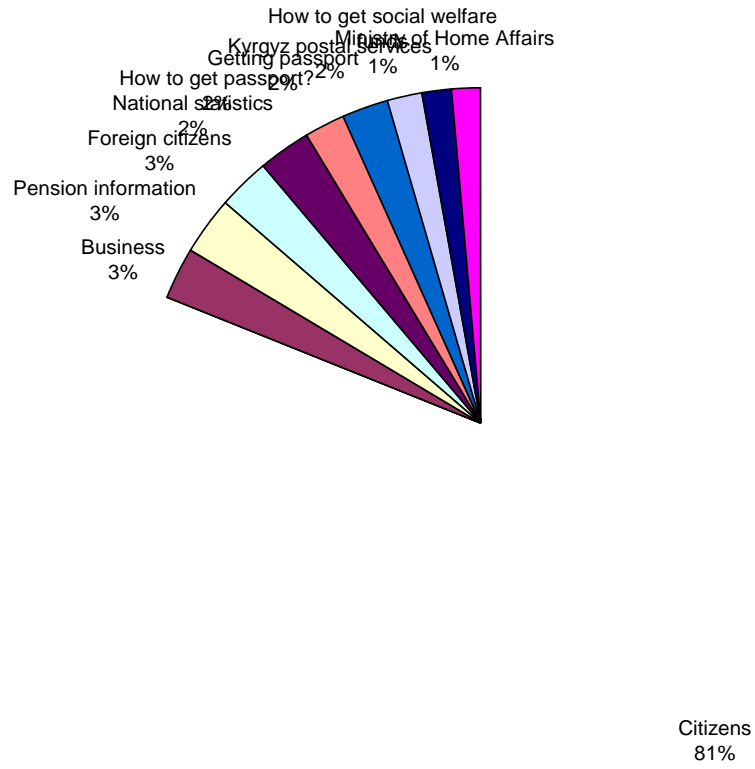
information, encourage civic engagement and activism, and foster the development of a better informed electorate through the distribution of election-related journals and voter education materials. The centers host discussion clubs on policy issues; provide meetings and training space for civic organizations and the general public; offer access to an extensive library of publications and educational videos. The Center has one computer connected to Internet with access to government services and information. The news from government is prepared and printed out for users. The center has a number of regular users, which come to read the news, newspapers and ask the staff to find some information via websites.

2.1.2 Other Existing Public Access Venues, not included in this study

Other Venue not studied # 1: Information and Resource Centers set up with the support of ARIS –

Total number in country: 464

% offering ICT access: 100

% in urban location: 100

Description of the Venue:

The Information and Resource Centers were setup with the support of the Agency for Community Development and Investment Agency of the Kyrgyz Republic (Agenstrvo Razvitija I Investirovanija Soobshestv – ARIS). One of the major requirements of ARIS is that the community decides on how they are going to better utilize available resources provided and contribute towards the overall cost of the project. The ARIS supported Information and Resource Center in Ivanovka village of Chui Oblasti was established in December 2007. The overall budget was about 10,000 USD, out of which the community and staff of the library contributed about 2,200 USD. The community and libray staff contribution included cash contribution from resources of community and staff hours, which they spent on establishing center. The center has four computers, connected to local area network, printer, and copy machine.

Reason why it was not included in the study:

Even though, the team visited one of the Information and Resource Center's setup with the support of ARIS, the Information and Resource Center in Ivanovka village was just starting to work. This is due to the fact, that Information and Resource Center was located at the library in a rural village and due to the debt of the library for electricity as well as restrictions on electricity by the Government of Kyrgyz Republic in March and April 2008, the Information and Resource Center has not been operational since it's setup in December 2007. Nevertheless, at the time of the visit to the Information and Resource Center, the staff was positive of revitalizing Information and Resource Center and providing services and information to citizens. The first batch of four people enrolled in training on computer literacy, which is a fee-based service and costs about 200 som/person (around 7.70USD) for a 2 weeks training.

2.2 Inequity Variables

2.2.1 Socio-Economic Status

Kyrgyzstan remains one of the poorest countries in the world. The official average monthly salary in Kyrgyzstan is about ninety-six American dollars, with school teachers earning between forty and seventy dollars per month (Najbullah 2007). This is outside the areas where half of the population lives in poverty.

During the in-country research, the research team visited public access venues in Kyrgyzstan in urban and rural areas and also in remote areas, such as towns and villages. The attempt was made to diversify venues between downtown and outskirts of cities. Of all 32 venues visited, there were ten venues, which were closed and non-operational, therefore it was not possible to conduct interviews at these venues. The venues were not contacted in advance and were closed for renovations, vacations during times of the visits.

Of remaining 22 public access venues visited, the majority of the venues were in urban areas – 68% and the rest 32% were in rural areas. It must be noted, that venues in oblasti centers were considered as urban type venues.

2.2.2   Educational level

In 2004, the literacy rate in Kyrgyzstan was 98.7 percent (Library of Congress Country Profile 2007). A high literacy rate is typical of a Soviet past. Under Soviet rule, and to a large degree today, the language and instruction in higher education institutions is Russian. This enables students and graduates to access materials and publications in Russian as well as Kyrgyz.

There are approximately fifty madrassas, seven Muslin institutes and one Islamic university in Kyrgyzstan. Graduates from these institutes struggle to find employment in the secular sphere, especially within the state school system. As of February 2008, there were more than 10,000 such graduates in the country. (Namatbaeva 2008).   The economic and social impact adversely affects the graduates of these institutions.

During in-country research, the operators of the public access venues stated 52% of users who use these facilities are people with a college or university education level, 35.1% are users with up to high school education level, 10.6% are users with elementary education level and 2.3% are users with no formal education.

This differs depending on types of venues. For public access libraries, 70% of users have a college or university education level, 26.75% are users have up to high school education level, 2.75% of users have elementary education level and 0.5% have no formal education.

For eCenters, 59% of users are users with a college or university degree, 24% of users have an education level up to high school diploma, 15% of users have elementary education level and 2% of users have no formal education.

In the Internet clubs, 47.8% of users have a college or university education level, 36.8% of users have up to high school education level, 11.1% have elementary education and 4.3% have no formal education.

As for Information and Resource Centers, the majority of users fell into the category with up to high school education level – 50%, 38% of users have a college or university education, 11.4% have an elementary education level and 0.6% have no formal

education.

During visits to public access venues, the research team attempted to interview people from different educational levels. The majority of users (40%)of public access venues had up to high school education level, 26% of users had a college or university degree and 9% of people had an elementary education. All peopled interviewed had some forms of formal education.

2.2.3 Age

Nearly two thirds of the country's population is between fifteen and sixty four. Older generations have had less exposure to digital technologies and information sources, and less inclined to extract information from digital sources.

According to information provided by operators, the majority of users of public access venues are male, 52.8% and 47.2% of users are female users. This differs depending on the venue. The average number of female users in public libraries is 62.5%/ This is higher than average number of male users, 37.5%. The majority of users for eCenters are male – 62%, for Internet clubs, the male users make up 52.8% and for Information and Resource Centers, the male users were 56%.

According to interviews with 65 users of public access points, 9% of users were people 14 and under, the majority of users were between 15-35 years old – 72%, 12% of users were people of 36-60 years old, while 6% of users were people aged 61 and over.

2.2.4 Gender

According to the UNFPA, women account for 50.6 percent of the population in Kyrgyzstan. The UNFPA goes on to report that the country ranks as one of the top ten nations in fulfilling commitments under the Beijing Platform of Action, an international document for the advancement of gender equality. Although Kyrgyzstan possesses the necessary legal basis for gender equality, many forms of gender inequality remain in practice. Even though women hold three quarters of all jobs in Kyrgyzstan, they earn on

average only sixty-five percent of the salary of their male counterparts for similar jobs. Compounding this is the trend for majority of working women concentrated in low-paying sectors. Women are underrepresented in public and political life.

In the in-country research, the majority of operators were male operators. According to information supplied by operators, 52.8% of users were male and 47.2% of users were female. This depends on the type of public access venue.

For public libraries, the 37.5% of users were male and 62.5% were female.

For eCenters, 62% of users were male and 38% were female.

For Internet clubs, 52.8% of users were male and 47.2% were female.

As for Information and Resource Centers, 56% of users were male and 44% were female.

The interviews taken from users identified 62% of users were male users and 38% were female.

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2.2.5   Location

Approximately half of the country's population lives in rural areas. ICT infrastructure development has traditionally favored the two largest cities, Osh and Bishkek. Remote area residents do not have computers and access to modern information technologies. There are growing numbers of internet access points in the rural areas. Each village has a public library, although these may not necessarily provide digital information services. However, the rural areas are economically disadvantaged and residents may not be financially able to utilize public information points.

The research team made sure to visit venues in different locations, both in urban and non-urban. The research team visited 32 venues in both urban and rural areas. However, the majority of venues in rural areas were closed, thus interviews were conducted with operators and users only in open venues during the time of the visit.

Overall out of 22 public access venues visited, there were fifteen venues in urban areas and 7 in rural areas. For users, 42 interviewed from urban areas and 23 from non-urban areas.

Other Inequity Variable 1: Ethnicity

Kyrgyzstan is an ethnically diverse country. Ethnic Kyrgyz account for nearly two-thirds of the population. The largest ethnic minority is Uzbek, and they are concentrated around the southwestern city of Osh, as well as Jalal-Abad and Batken. These southern areas are generally more disadvantaged than northern areas of the country, such as Bishkek and Chu province, where the Russian population is concentrated. Language barriers for the different ethnic groups may hinder their ability to access information.

During in-country research, only eight operators provide information related to the percentage of users from different ethnic groups. Two operators stated that the majority of users are of Kyrgyz nationality (50% and 57%). In addition, one of these operators stated that about 40% of users are Tatars and Russians while 3% of users are Uzbeks. One operator stated that 1% of their users are Greek, another operator stated that 20% of users are Uzbeks and 11% of users were Tatars and 11% of users were Russians. As for users' interviews, all people interviewed were Kyrgyz people.

Other Inequity Variable 2: Language spoken

Approximately two thirds of the population speaks Kyrgyz, the state language. Russian is the official language and is the primary language of commerce and higher education. Uzbek is the native language of a small group in the southwest of the country. The ability to access information in Russian increases the range of information available to users.

During in-country research, there was no problem of communicating with people in Russian. However, in some cases, especially in rural areas, there was need for translators from Kyrgyz to Russian and back. Even though, all people seemed to speak Russian, in some cases, they prefered to communicate in Kyrgyz language.

Language is another barrier for users to access information. During interviews of operators, the majority stated that the major barriers for users accessing information at venues are "not in right language". Additionally operators commented that "there is not enough content in the right

language". During group discussions, the participants of the group discussions also referred the fact that not enough information available in Kyrgyz language.

Other Inequity Variable 3: Religion

Seventy-five percent of the population is Muslim. Southern Kyrgyzstan has a stronger Islamic following, may be more conservative and experience stronger male domination. This presents a potential barrier to accessing information for women, and lower levels of female participation.

Since there were no questions in questionnaires for operators and users related to religion, during the in-country research, no data was gathered on religion.

2.3   Data Gathering Techniques

2.3.1   Literature Review

Twenty-four is the number of documents reviewed.

The document reviewed included publications, reports and web-based resources collected in Phase I enhanced with materials gathered during Phase II. In addition, it included review of websites from of government, non-governmental and private sector organizations.

2.3.1.1   *Most Useful Bibliography:*

1. Best, M., Kolko, B., Thakur, D, Aitieva, M.(2007), *Assessment of Economic Growth Impacts of the eCenters Project in Kyrgyzstan*, Submitted to AED

   Document examines economic growth impacts Assessment of eCenter project two years after implementation, and includes profiles of each of the centers.

   http://www.dot-com-

alliance.org/resourceptrdb/uploads/partnerfile/upload/447/Kyrgyzstan.eCenters.eval.Final.v2.pdf

2. McGlinchey,E. and Johnson, E. (2007) Aiding the Internet in Central Asia, *Democratizsation*, 14:2, 273 - 288.

    http://mason.gmu.edu/~emcglinc/democratization_em_ej.pdf

    This article examines the contradiction between the oppression of traditional media by Central Asian governments and diverging policies towards the internet.

3. Kyrgyzstan (2006), *Country Profiles*, OpenNet Initiative

    http://opennet.net/research/profiles/kyrgyzstan

    Country profile that highlights the internet in Kyrgyzstan, Legal and regulatory framework, and OpenNet testing results.

4. Mikosz, D (2005), *Kyrgyzstan - How to Build Open Information Societies, A collection of Best Practices and Know- How,* UNDP

    http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/UNTC/UNPAN018488.pdf

    Overview of UNDPs work in Kyrgyzstan's ICT sector

5. Kolko, B (principal investigator) (2005) *CAICT - the 2005 Briefing Book of the Central Asia ICT Project,* University of Washington

    www.com.washington.edu/program/irc/projectExamples/howard/ICT4DWeb.pdf

    Overview of the Central Asia ICT project with a country breakdown and in depth look at Kyrgyzstan.

6. National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic (2008) *Socio-Economic Situation of the Kyrgyz Republic, January -December 2007*, Government of Kyrgyzstan, Bishkek

    Socio-economic statistics for January - December 2007

7. Kolko, B., McGlinchey, E. and Spyridakis, J (2006) *Information and Communication Technology in Emerging Markets: Central Asia*, PowerPoint presentation

depts.washington.edu/caict/pdfs/CAICT_powerpoint_presentation_2006.pdf

Overview of Internet users in Central Asia, practices and cultural implications.

8. National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic (2007), *Information and Communication Technology in the Kyrgyz Republic*, Government of Kyrgyzstan, Bishkek

Compilation of information and communications technology statistics in Kyrgyzstan between 2002 and 2006.

9. Library of Congress - Federal Research Division (2007), *Country Profile: Kyrgyzstan, January 2007*

http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Kyrgyzstan.pdf

Kyrgyzstan country profile

10. World Bank, *ICT at a Glance, Kyrgyz Republic*

http://devdata.worldbank.org/ict/kgz_ict.pdf

11. www.24.kg

Kyrgyz news website with recent articles that cover ICT developments in the country.

12. http://www.internetpolicy.kg

Website of the Civil Initiative on Internet Policy, a non-governmental civil organization established in 2001 to facilitate ICT and Internet policy formulation through promotion of a decentralized, transparent Internet regulation and facilitating participation of civil society in policy making process.

13. Government Internet portal - www.gov.kg

14. Website of eCenters established through Last Mile Initiative project of USAID, Civil Initiative on Internet Policy Foundation (CIIP) and Open World - www.ecenters.kg

15. Portal of Government services - www.govservices.kg

16. http://www.telecentre.org/en/knowledge.detail/101670/

17. Information and Communications Technologies under President of Kyrgyz Republic - www.ict.gov.kg

18. Information resources of Kyrgyzstan, IREX program "Public relations in Kyrgyzstan", Bishkek, 2005

19. Community Development and Investment Agency of the Kyrgyz Republic, "Village Investment Project", Best practices handbook, Social and Infrastructure Micro-Projects, Agenstrvo Razvitija I Investirovanija Soobshestv (ARIS), 2005

20. Community Development and Investment Agency of the Kyrgyz Republic, "Village Investment, Village Investment Project, Best practice Handbook, Income Generating Micro-Projects, Part II, 2006.

21. Presentation by Lira Samykbaeva, Project Manager, Civil Initiative on Internet Public Policy Foundation (CIIP), April, 2008

22. Website of Public Information and Resource Center under President Administration of Kyrgyz Republic - www.pic.gov.kg.

23. Annual report of National Democratic Institute, 2005.

2.3.2 Individual Interviews

Number of individuals interviewed, 74.

The interviews included interviews with operators, users and different stakeholders from different organizations, such as: government organizations, non-governmental organizations, private sector and international organizations.

2.3.3 Group Interviews and Focus Groups

Four group interviews or focus groups.

There were few users in the selected public access venues both in urban and rural areas. In most cases, the maximum number of users was four users of the public access venues. Focus group interviews were conducted in three places of public access – in the library in Ivanovka, in Information and Resource Center for Democracy in Gul'cho, at Central

Library System of Bishkek city and at the Independent Information and Resource Center in Gul'cho. The discussions were mostly dominated by the people working in the public access venues. For example, the focus group discussion in the library of Ivanovka was with the librarians working there, because there were no users at the time of the visit. At the Central Library System of Bishkek city, there were also no users, thus the discussions were with the librarians working there.

Most of the information was gathered during individual interviews with stakeholders.

2.3.4 Site Visits

Number of site visits, thirty-two.

The research team worked in Bishkek during first five days and then traveled to Karakol city of Issyk Kul' oblasti for two days. The lead researcher then flew to Osh and worked in Osh city for three days and visited Nookat and Gul'cha villages of Osh Oblasti.

While working in Bishkek, the research team visited the National Library of Kyrgyz Republic, interviewed operators and users of IREX center, Public Information and Resource Center under President Administration of Kyrgyz Republic and legal Information and Resource Center located at the National Library. The meeting was held with the director and deputy director of the Republic Children and Youth Library named after Bayalinov, who relayed details about the services offered at the Republic Children and Youth Library named after Bayalinov. At the same time, the interviews of operator and users was conducted at the Development Information and Resource Center established at the Republic Children and Youth Library named after Bayalinov and supported by World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB), Department for International Development (DFID) of UK and Swiss Cooperation office in Kyrgyzstan. The interviews were conducted among operators and users of Internet clubs at different locations in Bishkek. In addition, the research team visited the Central Library System in Bishkek and one of the branches of the Central Library System, branch No. 12.

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Director

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5. **Sania Batalova**

   Director, Library and learning resources,

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   Ms. Batalova also is a director of Library consortium of Kyrgyzstan and knowledgeable about the situation with public libraries.

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6. **Rosa Kalyevna Sultangazieva**

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2.3.5 Surveys

	Public Libraries	E-centers	Internet club	Information and Resource Centers
# **urban** venues surveyed	4	4	9	5
# **non-urban** venues surveyed	4	1	7	3
# respondents in **urban** venues	13	1	23	4
# respondents in **non-urban** venues	0	10	6	8

Survey description & comments:

The survey was conducted among different types of the public access venues both in rural and urban areas of Kyrgyzstan. Due to the summer holiday in schools and universities, there were few users in the rural public access venues. In addition in some cases, some of the public access venues were closed. For example, the eCenters in Barskoon and Kochkor were closed and public libraries in Karakol, Kochkor and Barskoon were closed at the time of the visit.

Of all venues visited and interviewed during research period, the public libraries represent 18.18%, eCenters represent 18.18%, Internet clubs represent 40.91% and Information and Resource Centers represent 22.73%.

Regarding urban public access venues, the public libraries represent 26.7%, eCenters represent 6.8%, Internet clubs represent 46.7% and Information and Resource Centers represent 20%. As for non-urban public access venues, there were no libraries interviewed in non-urban environment, eCenters represent 42.8% of venues, 28.6% were

equally distributed between Internet clubs and Information and Resource Centers located in rural part of Kyrgyzstan.

In relation to the number of users, 20% of users were from public libraries, 16.92% of users were from eCenters, 44.62% of users were from Internet clubs and 18.46% of users were from Information and Resource Centers.

Regarding the users from urban public access venues, 31.71% were in libraries, 2.44% were from eCenters, 56.1% were from Internet clubs and 9.76% were from Information and Resource Centers. As for users of non-urban public access venues, there were none from rural public libraries, 41.67% of users were from eCenters, 25% of users were from Internet clubs and 33.33% of users were from Information and Resource Centers in non-urban areas.

2.3.6 Most Useful Contacts

10. **Chinara Omurkulova**

    IREX Kyrgyzstan, Director.

    Ms Omurkulova has extensive experience in development issues and broad understanding of ICT in Kyrgyzstan.

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11. **Tattu Mambetalieva**

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13. **Zlata Shramko**

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Knowledgable about the development of ICT in Kyrgyzstan as well as the socio-economic factors that impact upon this growth.

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14. **Toktombaeva Ainura Orozakunova**

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15. **Irina Nikolaevna Pak**

American University in Central Asia (AUCA) library, administrator. Ms Pak has extensive experience and knowledge about libraries in Kyrgyzstan.

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16. **Michael Tetelman**

Academy for Educational Development, dot -ORG Program Director.

Mr.Tetelman has been involved in the creation and implementation of the eCenter project.

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17. **Zamira Djusupova**

UNDP, Democratic Governance Project, Program Office in Kyrgyzstan.

Component Coordinator for ICT Development.

Ms Djusopova is knowledgeable about th ICT situation in Kyrgyzstan from a donor's perspective.

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18. **Michael Pshenichnikov**

Megacom company Head, IT specialist and consultant to the Soros Foundation.

Mr Psheninchnikov is a technical IT specialist, and is able to provide technical information about ICT in Kyrgyzstan. He also has a good understanding of the ICT donor sector.

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19. **Oleg Jerebko**

Executive Director, Communications Operators Association

Mr Jerebko is a consultant to Soros and a technical IT specialist.

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e-mail: webitday@infotel.kg

20. **Mizaeva Baktigul Mirzaevna**

Osh Oblast Library Director.

Ms Mizaeva is a professional librarian with over 20 years of experience at a regional center library. She is able to provide insight into the developments in libraries at ground level over the last five years as well as the problems facing libraries in Kyrgyzstan.

e-mail oshlid@rambler.ru

2.4 Research Trustworthiness & Credibility

Pact Mongolia commissioned an independent consultant – Lkhagvasuren Ariunaa, who is not a Kyrgyz person, but knowledgeable and experienced in the ICT field and conducting research and studies. Essentially, Ms. L. Ariunaa is a fluent Russian speaker.

The visits and interviews at the public access points were conducted independently by a research team.

2.4.1 Research Limitations

The major limitation of conducting research was that the research fell during the period when the schools and universities were closed. Considering that the major users of the public access points are students, youth and children. During the time of the visits to the public access venues, there were fewer users (1-10 users) and interviews were conducted with those users who expressed a willingness to be interviewed.

Another limitation was time. It was unfeasible to conduct research and interviews in all venue types within ten days. Therefore, during research period, the visits and interviews were only conducted in selected places. The ten day time frame was set within available budget

2.4.2 Team Qualifications

The Pact Mongolia staff and independent consultant conducted the research in Phase I and Phase II. Tracey Naughton was a project director, who generally oversees over the

successful implementation of the research project. Ondine Ullman was managing research in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Mongolia. Ullman is a project manager of the Pact Mongolia and she was managing the research for Kyrgyzstan in Phase I, conducting research on the current development of Kyrgyzstan in information and communications technology sector, identifying venues to study in depth for the Phase II, interviewing different stakeholders, etc.

The research in Kyrgyzstan was conducted by Lkhagvasuren Ariunaa. L. Ariunaa is the CEO of Intec Co. Ltd, a leading information and technology consulting firm in Mongolia. L. Ariunaa has been involved in the pre-implementation assessment, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of a number of ICT projects in Mongolia. L. Ariunaa has been involved in developing community Information and Resource Centers in rural parts of Mongolia and has done monitoring and evaluation of those centers. She was involved in conducting a number of studies such as: study among Internet cafés in Ulaanbaatar; herder telecommunications demand study, current situation of ICT in Mongolia, feasibility study of videoconferencing facility in Mongolia, and information needs. In addition, L. Ariunaa is participating in the digital review of Asia and Pacific, where she is an author for the Mongolia chapter

An assistant and driver were contracted to assist with arranging appointments, setting up meetings, and support travel in country as well as to provide necessary logistical support during research in Kyrgyzstan.

3 Country Assessment

3.1 Overall Country Assessment

There are a number of initiatives, programs and projects in the country, which are focusing on supporting establishment of public access information venues, access to information and resources. However, some of the projects are closing down and face uncertainty. For example, the IREX project finished in June 2008 and the centers established with the support of IREX projects were transferred to the local partner organizations, such as libraries. The staff who was working in the IREX and IATP centers are uncertain of what activities are to be implemented in the future, since the libraries do not posses extra funds to cover costs of the Internet connection. There is uncertainty if those centers will continue providing the same types of services - free access to Internet, training on computer and Internet literacy.

There are centers supported by ARIS, but few people are aware of them. These centers are established through the decision of self-government (ayuk mattu) and community. However, it was said that those centers are mostly not functional and are not providing adequate information and support for citizens.

During meeting with representatives of CIIP, it was mentioned that CIIP has offered to manage IREX centers since their project is finished, because of their experience setting up and operationalizing eCenters.

On other hand, the libraries are interested to have IREX those centers, but due to the lack of funding and sufficient resources, there is no intention of maintaining those centers and continues providing the same services as IREX project was. In the IREX center at the National Library, they started charging lower than commercial price for Internet connections, but still there are few users, because the Internet connection speed isslower than commercial entities such as, Internet clubs and eCenters. When the research team went to IREX center at the National Library a few days later, it was closed and no one knew what happened. The IREX center at the Osh Oblasti

library was not functioning at all at the time of the visit.

The users at Information and Resource Center for Democracy specifically asked the research team convey their message to the National Democracy Institute that the center is very important to the community and not to close center.

Therefore, even though, there are some initiatives establishing and supporting centers, sustainability plans do not appear to feature in the planning and implementation of operationalizing of the centers, which flander when program funds stop flowing.

3.2   Real Access Framework

3.2.1   Access

The existence and operation of over 6,000 Internet clubs in Kyrgyz Republic enables access to information and Internet-based resources for citizens. However, the majority of those clubs are in three major cities of Kyrgyzstan. There are initiatives to address the digital gap between rural and urban areas, such as establishment and operation of eCenters, Internet clubs being setup in smaller cities and Information and Resource Centers established in remote villages. However, there is a fear of technology and a lack of computer skills, which are not easily overcome by older people. The younger generation is technology-savvy. At the Information and Resource Center for Democracy, there were three people over 60 years old. They were reading a news digest printed out for users and when asked if they would use Internet to find necessary information, they referred to their lack of computer and Internet browsing skills.

The eCenters, Internet clubs and Information and Resource Centers charge 30 soms/hour (less than 1USD/hour) for Internet and computer usage. This is 1% of the average income stated before (96USD/month). As for public libraries, the majority of services offered are free of charge. However, some services are fee-based, such as lending popular books to read overnight, and asking the librarians to find books in advance.

According to the latest information on the .kg domain and websites, there are 2,500 sites of the secondary levels and 2,500 sites of the third levels**.** From this number, there are quite a number of websites, but as mentioned by the users and operators during the interviews, there is still a need of contents in right language and right content.

3.2.2 Capacity

When Internet came to Kyrgyzstan, it was centered in Bishkek, the capital city. It was only in last three to five years, depending on location, that Internet access, and other digital technology such as mobile phones, started to filter to rural areas. There remain areas that still do not have adequate access to these resources.

Rural citizens are not able to access the information as easily as their urban counterparts. Many cannot afford the costs associated with getting information, and may not live in areas in which electricity is regular, if available at all. Also, they may not have access to Internet centers. Most Internet users are situated in Bishkek and Osh, and, to a lesser degree, in Jalalabad. These are the three largest cities in the country.

As for staff working in the public access venues, the library directors stressed the need to build capacity of librarians' understanding and use of ICT. The need to upgrade curriculum for education of the librarians was emphasised, with the focus of introducing ICT-based and related training materials, such as learning cataloguing of books, adequate computer literacy skills and introducing service-oriented trainings.

Since the eCenters visited had different business models (one being reselling of mobile cards and units, the second focusing more on conducting training for visitors of the eCenter, the third and fourth being typical Internet club-type venues), the different capacity needs were specific to different eCenters. The manager of an eCenter, which focused on conducting trainings, mentioned the need for standardized curriculum for trainings, books, publications and training materials. The eCenter focusing on games and unit reselling mentioned the need for people with good computer and service-oriented skills.

3.2.3 Environment

The Kyrgyz government has been pro-active in making public access to information for its citizens more available. Internet access is provided to prisoners, and the state has opened free Internet centers in rural areas. E-governance projects have also been developed (McGlinchey and Johnson 2005). However, the content is not guaranteed to be appropriate or accessible to every user, given computer literacy skills and potential language barriers.

In March 2002, Kyrgyzstan declared ICT to be a development priority and adopted its National Strategy on Information and Communications Development Technologies of the Kyrgyz Republic. The strategy, which runs until 2010, aims to harness the potential of ICT to ensure the development of a sustainable, democratic information society. The National Action Plan on the realization of the National Strategy was approved in 2003. Central to the National Strategy is e-government, e-education and e-economy.

An essential role is played by the President of Kyrgyz Republic to support the development of the ICT in the country. Under the Administration of President, there is a Public Information and Resource Center, which maintains and supports portal site of government services. As was told during the visit to Public Information and Resource Center, the staff of PIC have visited almost all public access points in the country established with the support of different organizations and donors and conducted training on accessing the www.govservices.kg portal site of government services. Recently, the President of Kyrgyz Republic issued a decree from February 18, 2008 to revamp composition of National Committee on ICT. The National Committee on ICT is chaired by the President and the members of National Committee are ministers and directors of government organizations, representatives of NGOs, business people and international donors and donor organizations. The main functions of the National Committee are to coordinate government policy on ICT, to establish and development inter-governmental ICT systems, ensure participation of Kyrgyz Republic at international conferences, seminars and workshops.

According to the United Nations E-Government survey 2008, the Central Asian region has regressed the most since the 2005 survey. The study found that the region is far behind the world

average, and all the countries in this region had a lower e-government readiness index than in 2005 because they did not enhance their sites. Government sites are not always registered in search systems, and so may not be accessible. The research team found the sites virtually impossible to access; they were usually 'under repair' or simply could not be entered.

According to Salih Murzaev, an interviewee from the Kyrgyz Academy of Management, seventeen percent of state bodies utilize ICT to disseminate information, but only four percent carry out a regular dispatch of electronic publications and documents. Furthermore, the general number of state services authorised by the government, only one percent are conducted electronically.

3.3 Information Needs of Underserved Communities

Given the economic difficulties being experienced by the rural populations, information including long distance skills retraining and training courses could develop a diverse and employable skills base. Long distance training courses could also assist in updating existing skills and develop the capacity of the rural work force.

Isolated communities and rural settlements often find themselves even further from government than their geographical location may indictate. Government related information at national and local levels, as well as the opportunity to communicate with national and local representatives would aid bridging the gap between the population and the government as well as empower the people to participate more effectively. However, this research has indicated that actuall service delivery (including centers being open) is weak outside of the major cities.

The Public Information and Resource Center under Presidential Administration of Kyrgyz Republic maintains and supports the portal site of government services at www.govservices.kg. Citizens can access this portal to find information related to pension, find jobs, register for a pension fund, get social welfare insurance, register land and other necessary information for citizens.

The Legal Information and Resource Center provides access to "Toktom" and "Adviser"

database of legal documents, materials and resources. In addition, the legal consultation is provided to visitors for a range of services such as getting new passport and registration with local police.

Source: Report of Public Information and Resource Center under President Administration of Kyrgyz Republic www.govservices.kg.

Interview with operators of legal Information and Resource Center, patent technical Information and Resource Center.

3.3.1   Where is Information Available?

Research conducted for Phase II of the current study identified the existence of a number of electronic databases. These included databases of legal and regulatory information and resources "Toktom" and "Adviser" widely used by a majority of Information and Resource Centers. The National Library of Kyrgyz Republic had a website, which contained electronic catalogue of most of the books and publications available at the National Library of Kyrgyz Republic. The director of Kyrgyz Library consortium stated that the Kyrgyz Library consortium is a member of the electronic information for libraries (eIFL), an international consortium. Being a member of eIFL, Kyrgyz libraries have access to a wide range of electronic library resources, such as EBSCO – electronic bibliography of scientific journals and publications.

The Internet clubs enable access to different Internet-based resources, such as email, web browsing, education, health, government and other related information resources.

There are few online resources, a lack of the adequate content in Kyrgyz language and materials, which ought to include news and bulletin boards, and regularly maintained education related resources. From interviews and discussions held, the mail.ru – email service of Russian Internet service providers is one of the popular email services and Skype is widely used by users of Internet in Kyrgyzstan.

Source: http://www.nlkr.gov.kg/eng/index.htm

3.3.2   What are some of the Key Barriers to Access the Information that Underserved Communities Need?

The major barrier identified by almost all users met and interviewed was the cost. The cost of one hour of Internet usage is about 30 soms (0.84 USD). This is about 1% of the average monthly salary and it's quite expensive. Still users found it as one of the biggest barriers for accessing information in all types of venues. It was identified by 40% of the users. The second biggest barrier stated was lack of training offered at the different public access venues by 21.5% of the users. The types of training specified were computer literacy training and training on using electronic resources. In some cases, the location was a barrier to access information and different resources (specified by 15.4% of users), followed by inconvenient working hours (9.23%), lack of content in right language (7.7%), slow Internet connection (7.7%), and not enough content (6.2%). In particular for libraries, the slow Internet connection speed has been one of the barriers for accessing information via Internet. For Information and Resource Centers, the barrier was limited access to computers.

Regarding operators interviews, the majority of operators stated that the biggest barrier for people accessing information at those venues is that the content is not in right language (31.8%); the location, cost, lack of training, not enough services and not enough content were the other types of barriers (18.2% of users). As for barriers to ICT enabled information, the operators stated the biggest barrier is not enough content (18.2%), followed by barriers of a technical nature such as problems with Internet traffic and need to increase bandwidth (13.6%), followed by issues such as Internet cost and need for training on computer use.

Source: See results of the interview of operators and users of public access venues.

3.3.3 How do users experience different types of public access venues?

According to answers provided by users in interviews, the majority of users tend to use other Internet clubs. About 47.7% of users of public access venues stated they would go to other Internet clubs. There were 26.2% of users, which would go to the libraries, such as National Library or a university library. Some number of users stated they access Internet at work – 4.62% and computer lab of universities – 1.54%. About 7.69 % of users stated they would go to the library of a university. Another 3% of users stated they would go the school library. About 6.15% of users stated they do not use other public access venues if the preferred one is not

working.

Interviews of users showed that they go to Internet clubs in different locations which may not differ from the current one on service, but it's more convenient. One interviewee said that he used to go to a public library, when he was in school, but now does not go to public library, instead uses his own home-based library, because he has a lot of learning materials on CD about nature and environment, new technology and techniques. There is a bazaar – market place, where people can exchange those informational CDs with each other. Quite a number of users stated that they do not know any other places of similar type.

There were a number of users, who said that they go to the library of a university for information because in the oblasti library, there are many departments and it is difficult to find the necessary information.

There were a majority of users of public libraries, who said that they used to access Internet clubs in Bishkek and in other cities as well as university libraries, but at their current location, they do not go to public libraries and do not have experience using them.

Some of the users said that they used to use public libraries but do not go there now because they do not have time. The users stated that they are quite busy.

3.3.4   Inequity Environment in the Country

The research team visited as many possible different public access venues both in urban and rural areas of Kyrgyzstan and interviewed operators and users of those venues. Although 32 public access venues were visited, interviews were conducted in only 22 places, out of which 68% were in urban areas and 32% in rural areas.

There were differences in data provided between operators of public access venue and users interviewed. The information provided by operators and users correlated on the level of education of users in public access venues. The operators stated that the 52% of users of public access venues are people with college or university educational level and 53% of users stated that they have college or university educational level. 61.5% of users interviewed were male.

Of the public access venues visited and interviews conducted, 68% were urban venues, the

50

majority (40.9%) of which were in Internet clubs. In regard to the users, 63% of users interviewed were in urban public access points. The number of users interviewed in eCenters from rural public access venues accounted for 41.67% of all users surveyed.

3.3.5 Freedom of Press and Expression & Right to Information

The government does not admit to filtering Internet content or suppressing the media. However, increasing pressure in recent years has been noticed. Journalists are often fined, sometimes as the result of slander cases, and the government places great economic pressure on them.

The comparatively liberal ICT regulatory framework is contradictory to government policy towards traditional media. Kyrgyz print, radio and television have faced considerable constraints in what they are able to report. Until Freedom House opened its own printing press in 2004, the government controlled the only operating press in the country. Internet reporting has continued relatively unhampered by state intervention. (McGlinchey and Johnson, 2005).

There are over 400 media organizations officially registered, such as newspapers, magazines, TV, and radio. However, the most active number only a few dozen. There are two main government newspapers, 48 regional, 11 oblasti and 11 town newspapers.

There are a number of the legal and regulatory documents which govern the mass media sector. The "law about the mass media organizations" was adopted by Parliament on July 2, 1992, which defined general legal, economic and social backgrounds for mass media. The Constitution of Kyrgyz Republic adopted in May 1993 guarantees each citizen's rights of freedom of expression and receiving information. In November 1997, two laws were adopted related to mass media – "Law to guarantee freedom of access to information" and "Law on protecting professional activities of the journalists". In addition to these, there are other legal and regulatory policy documents, which are related to the mass media, such as "Law about advertisement" and "Law about the intellectual property right".

During in-country research of Phase II, the research team visited Media Information and Resource Center at Osh Oblasti Public Library. The center provides support for journalists and reporters. The center has a computer lab, where journalists and reporters come and work and

participate in training and seminars. Also, students and lecturers of Journalist School of Osh University can come and work along side professional journalists and reporters. According to the manager of the Media Information and Resource Center, there are no major problems for journalists covering different issues, yet the center provides legal support for journalists and reporters. The center serves as a resource and information support venue for journalists through their twelve computers with access to Internet and availability of other equipment for journalists use for free: two printers, three digital cameras, one digital voice recorder, three professional video cameras, two fax machines and two copy machines. In addition, the center regularly organizes seminars and trainings for preparing journalists, legal advice and access to information and resources such as www.monitoring.kg, www.24.kg and other media-related resources.

According to the June report of the Media center (www.monitoring.kg) , the website www.24.kg conducted a survey questionnaire, with 357 Internet participants on whether there is freedom of expression in Kyrgyzstan. Slightly more than two thirds of all participants stated that there is no freedom of expression in the country, 16.24% of respondents stated that freedom of expression is limited by the government, 7.75% of respondents stated that there was freedom of expression before, but not now and 7.38% of respondents stated that freedom of expression is only advertised. The www.24.kg also asked respondents what they think about the availability of independent media. Of all the respondents, 37.2% stated that there is still independent media in the country, but it is becoming less independent. While 10.85% of respondents stated that there is very limited number of independent mass media organizations, 9.69% of respondents stated that the independent mass media organizations are restricted to the Internet and only 3.1% of respondents stated that there is independent mass media in Kyrgyzstan. At the same time, 13.85% of respondents stated there are no such organizations in the country and 11.24% of respondents stated that independent mass media organizations do not exist in the country. Interestingly, 56.58% of respondents stated that they rely more Internet-based resources.

According to the last report of Freedom House, Kyrgyzstan is ranked 156 out of 195 countries and was included in the list of the countries, where there is no freedom of expression. Futhermore, freedom of expression weakened in 2007 in Kyrgyzstan compared to previous years.

Source: www.monitoring.kg, www.24.kg

3.4   Charts: Information Needs, Users & Uses

3.4.1.1 Users, by type of venue

Users profile (estimated proportion of users in each category, %)		Public Libraries				E-centers				Internet clubs				Information and Resource Centers			
		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
Gender	Male	46.2%				100%	100%	100%		50%	50%	66.7%	66.7%	75%		62.5%	
	Female	53.8%								50%	50%	33.3%	33.3%	25%		37.5%	
Age	14 and under	0						10%		9.1%	9.1%	50%	50%				
	15-35	100%				100%	100%	60%		81.8%	81.8%	50%	50%	100%		25%	
	36-60	0						30%		9.1%	9.1%					25%	
	61 and over	0								0	0					50%	
Education level	No formal education	0								0	0	0	0				
	Only elementary	8.3%								12.5%	12.5%	50%	50%				
	Up to high school	75%						57.1%		56.3%	56.3%	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%		33.3%	
	College or university	16.7%				100%	100%	42.9%		31.3%	31.3%	16.7%	16.7%	66.7%		66.7%	
Income bracket (approx)	High	0								0	0						
	Medium	58.3%				100%	100%	85.7%		62.5%	62.5%	16.7%	16.7%	66.7%		66.7%	
	Low	25%						14.3%		25%	25%	16.7%	16.7%			33.3%	
Social status (approx)	High															33.3%	
	Medium	66.7%				100%	100%	85.7%		81.3%	81.3%	50%	50%	66.7%		33.3%	
	Low	16.7%						14.3%		6.3%	6.3%					33.3%	

Caste (if appropriate)	Dominant								
	other								
	other								
	other								
Ethnicity (if appropriate)	Dominant	100%		100%	100%				
	other								
	other								
	other								

Source: *Analysis of interviews of operators and users.*

Comments,

1. Even though, the data for the income levels constrained to three possible answers, there were interviewees who did not answer this particular question. So the research consultant introduced additional answer of "No answer provided". There were 16.7% of users of urban public libraries, which did not answer the question on their income level. There were 12.5% of users in urban Internet clubs who did not answer the question on their income level. There were 66.7% of users in rural Internet clubs who did not answer the question on their income level. There were 33.3% of users in urban Information and Resource Centers who did not answer the question on their income level.

2. The data for social status also contained 3 possible answers, but there were interviewees who did not answer this particular question, so the research consultant introduced additional answer of "No answer provided". There were 16.7% of users of urban public libraries, which did not answer the question on their social status. There were 12.5% of users in urban Internet clubs who did not answer the question on their social status. There were 50% of users in rural Internet clubs who did not answer the question on their social status. There were 33.3% of users in urban Information and Resource Centers who did not answer the question on their social status.

3. Since there were no caste in Kyrgyzstan, no answer were provided to the question on caste.

4. There were no interviewees from the public libraries in rural areas.

5. Of all four eCenters, there was only one eCenter in urban location and since it was closed for holidays break, there was only one user.

3.4.1.2   Information People Seek, by type of venue

(estimated proportion in each category, %)	Public Libraries				E-centers				Internet clubs				Information and Resource Centers			
	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
Education	48%				100%		15.4%		34.9%				25%		17.6%	
Health	4%												12.5%		11.8%	
Agriculture															17.6%	
Government services	4%						7.7%		4.7%				37.5%		17.6%	
Entertainment	4%						15.4%		9.3%		27.3%		12.5%			
News	20%						7.7%		16.3%		18.2%				29.4%	
Personal	20%						30.8%		34.9%		54.5%		12.5%			
Other							23.1%								5.9%	

Source: *Analysis of interview of operators and users.*

Comments:

➢ Since there were no public libraries of non-urban type no data was included in the sheet.

➢ The 23.1% of "other" answers in eCenters of non-urban type specify printing resume/copying – 7.7%, game - 7.7%, Internet – 7.7%

➢ The 5.9% of "other" answer in Information and Resource Center non-urban type refers to laws, acts and decisions.

3.4.1.3 Uses of ICT, by type of venue

(estimated proportion in each category, %)	Public Libraries				E-centers				Internet clubs				Information and Resource Centers			
	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
Email	32.4%				100%		41.7%		34%		12.5%		20%		40%	
Chat	2.9%						16.7%		12%		12.5%		20%			
Web browsing	26.5%								36%		12.5%				30%	
Blogs & social networking	20.6%								4%		12.5%					
Commerce & business	14.7%						8.3%		8%							
Phone or webcam							16.7%		4%							
Games							8.3%		2%		37.5%					
Other	2.9%						8.3%				12.5%		60%		30%	

Source: *Analysis of interviews of operators and users*

Comments:

➢ The 2.9% of other in the public libraries are for news

➢ The 8.3% of "other" in the eCenters non urban means that the assistance was provided by operators on computer use.

➢ The 12.5% of "other" in the Non-urban Internet clubs refers to clips, films, programs and media.

3.4.1.4 Frequency of Use for each type of venue

(estimated proportion in each category, %)	Public Libraries				E-centers				Internet clubs				Information and Resource Centers			
	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	15.4%						10%									
Rarely (less than monthly)	7.7%						10%		9.1%		16.7%		25%			
Occasional (about once a month)									9.1%				25%			
Regular (about 2-3 per month)	15.4%						10%		22.7%		16.7%		25%			
Frequent (about once a week)	48.5%		100%				50%		45.5%		50%		25%		12.5%	
Daily (about every day)	23.1%						20%		13.6%		16.5%				87.5%	

Source: *Analysis of interviews of operators and users*

Comments:

describe

3.4.1.5 Barriers to use for each type of venue

(estimated proportion in each category, %)	Public Libraries				E-centers				Internet clubs				Information and Resource Centers			
	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
Location, distance	6.7%	18.5%					18.2%	18.2%	11.8%	11.1%	9.1%	6.7%			18.2%	12.5%
Hours of Operation	6.7%	14.8%					18.2%	9.1%	2.9%	5.6%	18.2%	6.7%				
Cost							27.3%		44.1%	31.5%	36.4%	26.7%	12.5%		18.2%	12.5%
Lack of skills / training	6.7%	3.7%						9.1%	17.6%	22.2%	27.3%	20%			27.3%	12.5%
Not enough services		14.8%					9.1%	27.3%			1.9%	20%	12.5%			
Not in right language	6.7%	2.7%					9.1%		5.9%	14.8%			12.5%	16.7%		
Not enough content	13.3%	3.7%									1.9%		25%	33.3%		25%
Other	60%	40.7%			100%		18.2%	36.4%	17.6%	11.1%	9.1%	20%	37.5%	50%	36.4%	37.5%

Source: Compiled users interviews

Comments:

➢ The answer of 60% for "other" at the Urban public libraries general use includes slow connection – 26.7%, no answer – 6.7%, limited hours of usage – 20% and standing queue – 6.7%.

➢ The answer of 40.7% for "other" at the Urban public libraries ICT use includes no answer – 7.4%, communication – 3.7%, Internet connection is slow – 11.1%, limited hours of usage – 7.4%, standing queue – 11.1%.

- The answer of 100% for "other" at he Urban eCenter means do not know the answer.

- The answer of 18.2% for "other" at the Non-urban eCenters general use refers to no barriers – 9.1% and don't have time answer – 9.1%

- The answer of 36.4% for "other" at the Non-urban eCenters ICT use refers to use to learn – 9.1%, lack of knowledge of ICT by person – 9.1% and don't know – 18.2%.

- The answer of 17.6% for "other" at the Urban Internet clubs general use refers to no barriers – 2.9%, do not know 8.8%, do not know ICT 2.9%, do not have time – 2.9%.

- The answer of 11% for "other" at the Urban Internet clubs ICT use refers to no answer – 7.4%, Internet connection slow – 1.9% and need to create more Internet clubs – 1.9%.

- The answer of 9.1% for "other" at the Non-urban Internet clubs general use refers to old computers answer.

- The answer of 20% for "other" at the Non-urban Internet clubs ICT use refers to no answer – 6.7%, Internet connection slow – 6.7% and not convenient to get content on disk – 6.7%.

- The answer of 27.5% for "other" at the Urban Information and Resource Centers general use refers to old information – 12.5%, old computers – 12.5%, slow – 12.5%.

- The answer of 50% for "other" at the Urban Information and Resource Centers ICT use refers to no answer – 33.3% and slow upload of database – 16.7%.

- The answer of 36.4% for "other" at the Non-urban Information and Resource Centers general use refers to no barriers – 9.1%, limited access to computers – 18.2% and lack of information – 9.1%.

- The answer of 37.5% for "other" at the Non-urban Information and Resource Centers ICT use refers to no Internet clubs – 25%, cannot use – 12.5%.

3.4.2 Salient Initiatives to Help Meet Critical Information Needs by Underserved Communities

3.4.2.1 Past Initiatives:

IREX – International Research Exchange Program has implemented establishment of sixteen Internet Access and Training Centers (IATP). All sixteen IATP centers were administered and financed by the IREX Kyrgyzstan, but the funding from IREX finished at the end of May 2008 and the IATP centers were transferred to the hosting and partner organizations. For example, the IATP centers located in National Library of Kyrgyzstan and Osh Oblasti Library were transferred to the budget of the those libraries.

The IATP centers were providing free-of-charge services for citizens and services included Internet access, use of computers and other ICT equipment (such as scanner and printers) and offered training courses. Each user was able to access the Internet for an hour at a time twice a week for free. This made the centers affordable to all segments of the population who live in the areas in which the IATP centers were based. The centers were also based in provincial and rural areas, home to half of the country's population, thereby allowing the rural residents information access opportunities. Furthermore, rural residents are the most economically disadvantaged in the country, and the lack of fees made the centers affordable to them.

IATP centre residents gave a number of training sessions. These included basic computer skills and computer literacy and progress to professional courses on web design, computer programming and systems administration. As with other services offered, there is no charge for these courses.

Since IATP centers were mostly located in towns and cities, the rural citizens in most cases were not able to access them.

At the time of visit of research team, the funding from IREX finished and the IATP centers were transferred to the budget of local partnering organizations. Considering that the majority of costs were borne by the IREX, the IATP centers were going through the process of deciding to

whether to providing the same services as was with IREX support or start charging for some services. The IATP center in Osh oblasti was closed for summer holiday. At the time of visit of research team, there was a new person who was repairing computers and hardware and no services were offered. The staff who previously worked in IATP center quit just before the IREX funding stopped.

More information:

www.iatp.kg

3.4.2.2 Ongoing Initiatives:

eCenters – Initiative of LMI project of USAID, CIIP and OpenWorld.

The research team visited four eCenters and was informed the eCenters will continue providing services to the public. Since it used business model, when the existing Internet clubs applied for grants for providing services for underserved communities, the eCenters were planning to continue providing the same services as planned, but with less or non-fee based services for the public. The manager of eCenter in Nookat expressed his interest to replicate this model in other neighboring villages. The idea was that the Nookat eCenter will support those new centers with methodology, consultation and if necessary funding, so that those new centers will train future users for eCenter in Nookat.

The manager of Osh eCenter was planning to expand the existing eCenter, so that they will able to offer more training programs and courses. The major business of eCenter in Karakol was selling computers and its accessories and they were also considering continuing to provide the same services to public but on a smaller scale.

Another initiative was Public Access Points established with the support of UNDP. There were seven Public Access Points established in rural Kyrgyzstan. The PAPs are housed in various locations including a provincial state library, a cultural centre, a regional education centre and a provincial state theatre. The research team visited one PAP located in the Gul'cha village of Osh oblasti. The PAP was located in the premises of the local government (ayuluk mattu) and had five computers networked and connected to Internet and printer. At the time of visit, the Democratic Governance Programme of UNDP, Public Information and Resource Center of President Administration of Kyrgyz Republic, Administration of the President Office and Local

Government of Osh Oblasti was organizing a workshop on "Introducing e-government and access to information in Kyrgyz Republic". There were no users at the PAP, who were attending the workshop. Still, the research team was able to interview four people, regular users of the PAP in Gul'cha.

According to a coordinator of ICT for development project of UNDP Democratic Governance Programme, the UNDP is planning to continue supporting those centers for another year.

More information:

www.ecenters.kg

www.undp.kg

3.4.2.3   *Historical Trends and Opportunities to Serve Information Needs*

There have been improvements to the telecom infrastructure since the break-up of the Soviet Union. However, these efforts have done little to improve access, especially in rural areas. With primary impetus coming from the World Bank and EBRD, recent development efforts have been focused on fibre optics, satellite overlay, digital radio relay and network digitization.

In 2004, the modernization of the digital radio relay network was undertaken. At the same time the framework was created for the second stem of the digital radio relay main, thereby guaranteeing additional capacity for the relay line. The total capacity of the main increased doubled, making it possible to organize new and additional inner-city and international flows both for traditional telephone and the transmission of data.

In 2004, satellite television was introduced. The National TV-Radio Company of Kyrgyzstan (NTRK) began to broadcast through the geostationary satellite Nss-6 to half of Eurasia. Between 2004 and 2005, the development of a joint stock company called "Kyrgyz telecom" facilitated the modernization of the clock synchronization system for the digital network.

In 2005, Kyrgyzistan saw changes to the capacity of the telecommunication network. Outdated equipment was replaced and a digital exchange was introduced. Digital stations were established in areas of need, and additional telephone numbers were made available for users.

As of December 2007, there were four mobile phone service providers operating in Kyrgyzstan. Under former leader Akaev, there was only one GSM mobile operator, Bitel LLC. The earnings of the four service providers are growing steadily every year, exceeding seventy million dollars in 2007. By the end of 2007, there were seven fixed line communication operators, of which the largest and most rapidly expanding company is Kyrgyz Telecom, which installed approximately half a million lines. (Telecom development in Kyrgyzstan, 1 and 2).

Kyrgyz Telecom, supported by credit received under a government guarantee, have been able to create modern digital networks, telephone density in the country during the last five years at the level of 7-8%. However a number of areas in the country still have no access to communications.

The infrastructure outside the capital and regional centres is completely funded by Kyrgyz Telecom by means of cross-subsidizing funds earned from long-distance communication, 80 % of its income at the end of 2002. Mainly inter-service cross subsidies are applied. Elimination of the long-distance call monopoly and entry of new companies affects the profit and income of Kyrgyz Telecom who are forced to maintain unprofitable communications services.

One of the important characteristics of the present situation is the occurrence of the operators that provide alternative communication services by using wireless technologies. In most of the cases, capital expenses for radio, cellular and satellite distribution are comparatively low. However, the cost of such services significantly exceeds tariffs for fixed line. Therefore, it limits capacity of the local market.

Source: Phase I report of the Public Access to Information project

3.4.2.4 Planned Initiatives:

The Plan of Action of E-government defined specific short, medium and long-term priority projects to support successful implementation of the e-government program. In particular, it specified priorities of modernizing existing legal and regulatory framework to create favourable conditions to develop e-government, to improve the level of use of ICT in the economic and social sectors of the country, government management reform, implementation and innovation management, to attract investments in ICT sector and establishment of effective partnerships. The Action Plan specifically defined the need to set up centers of public access at the levels of raions (districts).

3.5 Economic, Policy & Regulatory Environment

3.5.1 National & Local Economic Environment

Kyrgyzstan is a landlocked, central Asian country situated in the middle of Asia Only thirty percent of the country is suitable for habitation, leading to concentrated populations. According to the UNFPA in Kyrgyzstan, one third of the country's population lives in urban areas, and over sixty-four percent of the total population currently lives below the national poverty line. More than fifty percent of all rural residents live in poverty (SIDA country report, 2006).

Socio-economic status is further impacted upon by the north-south divide. The north of the country, home to the Russian minority, is the wealthier half of the country. Bishkek, the capital city, is found there. The southern sector of Kyrgyzstan is less economically well off and home to a number of ethnic minorities, such as the Uzbeks, as well as refugees from neighboring countries including Uzbekistan. The south is also troubled by regular border disputes with neighbors.

Rural residents often live in difficult to access villages. Kyrgyzstan is a mountainous country, and this isolates rural communities. In winter, many of the settlements are further isolated by heavy snowfalls and impassable roads. The rural areas often do not have the technology available to access information digitally. Many villages do not have electricity.

Residents of the rural areas often leave in search of work in the larger cities, or abroad in countries such as Russia and Kazakhstan. This economically driven migration causes a drain on the able-bodied, predominantly younger potential work force, and on a generation that is more aware of digital services and technologies. It also leaves a communication gap as those remaining behind long to talk to family and friends who have moved elsewhere.

The topography of the country, dominated by sharp mountain peaks and valleys, makes it difficult to hardwire and blocks line of sight transmission. Rural communities are often remote

and difficult to reach and without electricity and telephone lines. However, given the numbers of rural residents moving to larger cities and abroad, there is an increasing need for cheap, reliable digital communication tools. Half of the rural population lives in poverty and this impacts on their ability to access information when fees and charges are levied, as is often the case with commercial Internet centers.

In the last two years the Kyrgyz Republic's economic performance has been strong. The growth base continued to broaden towards non-gold sectors, mainly non-gold industry, construction and services, which have been developing strongly and substantially contributing to GDP growth. The average inflation rate remained low at 4.4 and 5.1 percent in 2005-2006, but went up to 10.3 in 2007, reflecting food price increase worldwide.

Trends:

Despite major achievements, the following issues still need to be addressed:

- *Reducing poverty.* With GNI per capita of $600, the Kyrgyz Republic is among the poorest countries in the world.

- *Diversifying the economy.* The agriculture, hydropower, and mining sectors are vulnerable to adverse weather conditions and natural disasters. Medium-term reforms aimed at diversifying the economy and strengthening the private sector are therefore essential.

- *Improving the business climate.* Excessive business regulation was identified as one of the major constraints for broad based and sustainable growth.

- *Strengthening governance.* Ineffective governance and corruption are serious impediments to growth and poverty reduction. Reforms in the public sector will encourage the development of the private sector and ensure that available public resources targets the most vulnerable groups in the population.

- *Human development.* Reforming the education and health sectors and more generally improving the performance of the social sectors in meeting the needs of the population today and tomorrow.

- *Increasing regional cooperation on water, energy, and trade..* This is critical to achieving sustained growth and poverty reduction as the Kyrgyz Republic is a mountainous, landlocked country with limited access to world markets.

3.5.2 National & Local Policy (legal & regulatory) Environment

Kyrgyzstan adopted its first National ICT plan in 1995. ICT development and implementation of the plan were delayed due to lack of funds. In order to secure the finances required, Kyrgyzstan approached the international community for assistance in developing the country's ICT infrastructure. Organizations and agencies such as USAID, UNDP and the Soros Foundation responded and provided technical skills, hardware and support in the draft, design and implementation of a regulatory ICT body (McGlinchey and Johnson, 2005).

The 'National Strategy for ICT for Development of the Kyrgyz Republic was approved in March 2002 and the National Action Plan for implementation of the National Strategy was approved in 2003. Both the National Strategy and the National Action Plan run until 2010.

The National Action Plan consists of three segments related to key priorities of National Strategy – e-government, e-education and e-economy. Both the National Strategy and the National Action Plan were developed with technical assistance provided by international organizations such as the UNDP. Foreign aid received has been pivotal in shaping the development of ICT in Kyrgyzstan.

There is an action plan for implementation of the National Strategy on ICT policy for 2005, which has six major components. These components are specifically related to policy and regulations:

1. Modernization and development of telecommunications network
   o Modernization of the telecommunications network of Kyrgyz Republic for the period 2005-2010
   o Optimization of management of cable networks
   o Digitalization of the metropolitan network and assigning numbers
   o Intercommunications network
   o Development of information infrastructure for villages between 2005-2010
   o Infrastructure of electronic payments
   o Technical aspects of information security

2. Development of information infrastructure of Kyrgyzstan
   o Development of architecture of the information infrastructure of Kyrgyzstan, including the development of national standards on ICT
3. Development of political support of the sector
   o System analysis
   o Distribution and utilization of the radio frequency
4. System analysis and modernization of the management of ICT
   o Formalization of logics of organizational management of ICT
   o Monitoring system for ICT field
5. Introduction of new thinking, skills and knowledge
   o Development of a system of electronic learning and improving qualifications in ICT
   o Establishment of Techno parks in the ICT sector
6. Information resources
   o Translation of archived materials into electronic form in Kyrgyzstan

The Kyrgyzstan country development strategy for 2007-2010 reviewed achievements made from the previous National ICT Strategy and outlined next phase activities.

The review concluded that the first stage of state Internet portal establishment had been implemented, that all central offices of public administration have developed their web sites and posted them on the Internet and that a network of public access to information for rural and remote areas citizens had been created.

Upon review, the analysis identified what tasks need to be completed along with policy and measures which need to be taken. These factors were used to devolop programs and projects, as well as allocate the resources needed to implement the programs and projecst and achieve the desired results.

The following programs and projects were identified:

(i) Construction of the main fiber-optic communication;

(ii) Rural communication development project (CDMA-450, Vi-MAX+VSAT);

(iii) RIU RLTR infrastructure modernization

ICT statutes in Kyrgyzstan are far more straightforward than in other Central Asian countries. Three laws – the Law on Communications, the Law on Licensing and the Law of Information – regulate the activities of ICT companies. The Ministry of Transport and Communications is the state institution responsible for the management and regulation of new ICTs in the country.

Working with donors, the state has begun to facilitate public access to ICTs. The state now provides Internet access to inmates in Kyrgyzstan prisons, and opened free internet centers in rural areas. This is particularly vital as more than half of the population lives outside of major cities. (McGlinchey and Johnson, 2005).

Opennet.net (2005) reports the number of ISPs in 2005 as having increased to thirty-eight, seven of which have external connection. The international Internet bandwidth in Kyrgyzstan is 76 Mb/s, and, as of 2006, there were 1,500 top-level domain names registered in the Kyrgyz Internet zone (Kyrgyzstan, opennet.net).

Trends:

The Government of Kyrgyzstan will focus on introducing and implementing e-government program of Kyrgyzstan. The Prime Minister's office, President Administration, ICT Council under President of Kyrgyz Republic, Ministry of Transportation and Communications, Public Information and Resource Center under President Administration of Kyrgyz Republic, UNDP, World Bank, ADB and other government and international donor organizations are working towards the implementation of the e-government program of Kyrgyzstan. However, it is quite questionable how much are government organizations are aware about the e-government program itself. Therefore, it's essential to conduct a number of the activities to improve awareness of e-government program not only for general public but also for the government officials, ensure their understanding of implications of integration of ICT in the public administration, skills required from the government officials and ability to deliver information and services through ICT tools.

During the recent round-table discussion of different stakeholders, the working groups were setup and issues were discussed and prioritized such as internetworking of networks, legal regulation, improvement of lives in villages, architecture, modernization and development of telecommunications network, digitization of the telephone network, system analysis and

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improvement of management of ICT sector.

Source: Report of Phase I and www.ict.gov.kg, www.ict.kg.

3.5.3   Regional & International Policy (legal & regulatory) Environment

NATO supported the development and establishment of the Virtual Silk Highway, which connected academic and educational institutions in 2003. The topography of the country, dominated by sharp mountain peaks and valleys, makes it difficult to hardwire and blocks line of sight transmission. Rural communities are often remote and difficult to reach, and without electricity and telephone lines. Given the numbers of rural residents moving to larger cities and abroad, there is an increasing need for cheap, reliable digital communications. Half of the rural population lives in poverty and this impacts on their ability to access information when fees and charges are levied, as is often the case with commercial Internet centers.

During Agricultural Information System for Central Asia and the Caucasus conference, the Minister of Agriculture presented a country paper which stated about existence of favorable political environment for ICT development in agriculture in Kyrgyzstan and introduced the activities of the Institute of Innovation Technologies of the Agrarian University, a focal point for the AgroWeb network in Kyrgyzstan.

The participants of the workshop raised important issues related to all countries participating in this regional initiative, which related to development of information system for Central Asia, distribution it among member countries, etc. The workshop also resulted in developing recommendations to improve the Regional Agricultural Information System, one of which included achieving a regional synthesis of all the national situations, initiatives and skills in the area of ICT for Agricultural Research and Development.

Trends:

The major trend is cooperation and coordination of works at the regional and international levels among governments of Central Asia. It's not only participation in the regional activities, rather introducing them in its own country.

Source: Report of Phase I, www.ict.gov.kg, www.pic.gov.kg.

3.6 Collaboration Practices and Opportunities across Venues

There is extensive collaboration experience between public access venues. The public libraries are united under the Kyrgyzstan Library Information Consortium Association. The Association has over 120 libraries as members, which comprised of establishments such as National Library of Kyrgyz Republic, State Patent Technical Library, libraries of tertiary institutions and different public libraries.

The field of activity of the consortium includes:

- Active progress and wide participation of libraries of Kyrgyzstan in development of the international project "Electronic information for libraries - eIFL", directed on granting the access to full-text online resources of foreign scientific periodicals.

- Automation and integration of library resources in Kyrgyzstan. Now the library community of Kyrgyzstan unites its efforts on overcoming information and technical backlog, development and introduction of modern forms of library services for the benefit of all citizens of Kyrgyzstan, and successful integration of information resources of the country in the world of information space.

- Development of normative-legal field in library affairs and participation in development of the state programs directed towards improvement of library-information service to the population.

- Increase of a professional level of library staff in Kyrgyzstan according to requirements of a modern society.

Source: http://www.bik.org.kg/en/about/

In October, 2008, the Association is planning to organize Issyk Kul International Conference on the theme of "Information infrastructure, inter-library cooperation and international collaboration"

eCenters are setup using franchise business model from the CIIP.The CIIP provides support and consultation to eCenters and keeps them updated on the latest developments as well as informs them about different initatiives. There is a website of eCenters www.eCenters.kg, but it has not been maintained since January 2007.

Source: www.eCenters.kg

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In most cases, Internet clubs are aware of the other Internet clubs. There are some clubs, such as "Shmelle" and "Neoplanet" which are part of a network of Internet clubs. For example, there are sixteen Internet clubs in the "Shmelle" Internet club's network. They use standard settings and services offered by "Shmelle" Internet clubs as well as coordinate their activities and share information within the network. There are four Internet clubs of "Neoplanet", and they are located in the four parts of Bishkek. They also have standard settings and services offered across "Neoplanet" Internet clubs.

Source: www.shmelle.kg

www.neoplanet.kg

As for Information and Resource Centers, they cooperate and coordinate their work within their own networks. For example, the Legal Information and Resource Centers in different areas coordinate and cooperate. In addition, the information and services provided through Information and Resource Centers to citizens are coordinated at the national level, in most cases by the institutions and organizations, which support the establishment of these Information and Resource Centers.

Despite the existence of collaboration within its own network of libraries, eCenters, Internet clubs and Information and Resource Centers, there are few opportunities of cooperation and coordination across different public access venues. The research team inquired into cooperation and coordination among different public access venues and discovered there is almost none. This relates to the issue of the providing necessary information and services to citizens, where eCenters are not aware of the existence of legal information database system, such as "Toktom" or "Adviser", but these are known to the Information and Resource Centers and public libraries.

3.7   Buzz Factor: Public and Government Perceptions about what is "cool"

The Government of Kyrgyz Republic is currently advancing towards introducing and implementing e-government program for the country. During the research period, the workshop

on "Implementation of e-government and access to information in Kyrgyz Republic" was organized at the Osh oblasti governor's office. The representatives of the Prime Minister's Office of the Kyrgyz Republic, Public Information and Resource Center of the President Administration of Kyrgyz Republic, UNDP Democratic Governance Program and others introduced the National strategy for development of ICT in Kyrgyz Republic, and made presentations and developed an Action Plan to implement e-government program in Kyrgyz Republic. They shared the current achievements, such as the portal of government services, portal of government organizations and support for public access centers in rural areas.

At the same time, extensive discussions were held and comments, suggestions and critical points were raised. (Since most of the discussions were in Kyrgyz language, the researcher was not able to fully follow discussion). The points were raised in relation to providing access to information and existing resources of the government by people who are living in rural parts of Kyrgyz Republic and the suggestions were made on setting up more public access centers in rural and remote areas of the country.

The UNDP, World Bank, ADB and other donor and international organizations are supporting the initiatives of the Government of Kyrgyz Republic to implement e-government program and in particular supporting projects establishing centers of public access. The public access center of Gul'cho village is one of the centers supported by the UNDP. The center is located on the local governor's premises.

The eCenters established by LMI project, CIIP and Open World in rural areas were using franchise business models, through existing Internet clubs, computer shops and other ICT-related local business, the access to information, Internet and services were provided to citizens of rural areas by distributing vouchers for a specified number of hours. The eCenters were established based on existing ICT businesses.

The "Information Future Foundation (IFF)" supported establishment of the 44 access centers to Internet and 23 centers of the Universal access were established at the telecommunications offices. In discussion with the CIIP staff, they were considering transferring "Information Future Foundation" centers to CIIP. Through National Committee of ICT under President of Kyrgyz Republic, eighteen public access centers were created at the postal offices.

The Information and Resource Center for Democracy at Gul'cha is located at the premises on the hotel.

The Legal Information and Resource Center, the Media Resource Center, Soros-funded public access centers, IREX centers, ARIS supported Information and Resource Centers and similar centers are located at public libraries.

3.8 Legitimate Uses

The public access venues were mostly used for specific information, such as education, personal, news, entertainment and government services. Through futher questioning, people informed the research team that they were looking for specific information such as information on laws, acts and decisions, looking for services such as printing, making copies, and scanning. The operators' responses correlated with the responses provided by users. However, some of the users made comments regarding information use and access. For example, a comment was that there is limited access to information, some of the sites are blocked, the access to resources is limited by time, pictures are not downloaded because of the slowness of Internet speed or not large enough collection in the libraries. In summary, the users are interested having specific information such as laws, acts and decisions, watching films and clips as well as using different software and resources, entertainment programs and media.

The Internet club "Shmelle" does not allow playing games and visiting pornographic sites in their centers. The eCenter in Osh is prioritizing in conducting training, therefore no other activities were done there because most of the time computers were used for training. There were significant number of users who rarely went to public libraries and some explained that to find information in libraries, it takes quite some time and it's easier to do it in Internet clubs. One of the users specifically stated that even though she goes to library, there is poor service and most of the time the reading halls of libraries are empty because the library does not have sufficient information resources.

3.9 Shifting Media Landscape

3.9.1   Mobile phones

According to information received from executive director of the Association of Telecom Operators and from CIIP, there are nine companies with licenses to provide telecommunications services in the country. Out of nine, six are operational. There are two operators which provide GSM services, two operators which provide CDMA services; one provides TDMA (old American standard) service and one provider supports CDMA-450. There are two companies which provide fixed telephone services.

The research team found an interesting services called "Web cassa (cash)" offered at Internet clubs, eCenters, postal offices and independently. These were quite popular in Bishkek. The main principle of this service is that the units are downloaded to mobile phones through web-cash system for additional charge 5 soms (0.08USD) for service. Considering that the pre-paid unit card costs differed depending on were they are bought, it's possible to be charged up to additional 20 soms per prepaid card of 200 units.   Hence, Web cassa service was quite cheap, fast and efficient. In one of the Internet clubs in Osh, the research team came across one of the operators, who was collecting fees for uploading units and discusseed the need of the introducing different mobile services, such as SMS-based information services, e-commerce applications and e-banking.

There are over 2 million subscribers of the mobile services. 90 percent of the users are pre-paid service users. The director of the Information Technology Department of Megacom explained there are a few initiatives on the use of SMS for other than personal communication. The mobile operators offer mobile Internet services as well as SMS-based information services, such as checking exact time and checking remaining balance of the talking units. The executive director of the Operators Association mentioned there is a problem of frequency allocation in the mobile services.

Source: www.itday.kg, www.mobilelife.kg.

3.9.2   Web 2.0 tools & use

There is some use of the social networking sites, wikis, blogs and others. According to the operators' interviews, about 2.8% of users access social networking sites, and blogs. The users' interviews showed about 13.85% of users frequently use blogs and social networking.

The major application accessed by the users for communication is Skype. Considering that Russian is the official language of Kyrgyz Republic, there are quite a number of blogs and social networking sites in Russian. There was no detailed information available as to what information is available in Kyrgyz language for blogs and social networking.

3.9.3   Combination of different media

At this stage, there are few community radio and TV in Kyrgyzstan. Although, the National Kyrgyz radio and TV and Russian radio and TV channels are broadcasted throughout territory of the Kyrgyzstan, it seemed essential to have community-based and community-run and operated radio and TV to deliver content relevant to local community, such as market price of products of local community, weather broadcast, etc.

The public access venues could play an essential role in delivering this information to citizens. However, the venues lack support coordination of their works with other types of venues, skills of staff to deliver information and services. In addition, the role of different media in building two-way communications channels between citizens and public servants has not been fully addressed. Currently, it serves as information channel, which can be expanded in the future for raising voices of citizens on different matters related to local government, community and citizens.

3.9.4   Other shifting media landscape examples

The Media Resource and Information center's representative mentioned about their initiatives targeted to children and women. The information and services provided to women are focused on preparation of women in upcoming elections, which are focused on conducting training, workshops and seminars for women to improve their skils and knowledge on election proceedings.

The club for children has been established to support children to write articles and publications. Although, it's called club for children, but it's open for all – students, pupils and adults – and they are encouraged to work with children to improve their writing skills.

3.10 Health Information Needs

3.10.1 Sources of Health Information

33.85%	7.69%	13.85%	7.69%
clinic/hospital	friend	health worker	public access venue (library, community center, etc)

Comments:

The above data does not include information on where the people find useful health information for themselves or their families. The respondents stated that they find this information through community resources: herbal medicine stores 4.62%, Internet at private locations home or friends' house– 1.54%, Internet at public locations – 13.85%, TV – 1.54%, through seminars in schools – 1.54% and ailik matatu centers (local government centers) – 1.54%.

3.10.2 Types of Health Information

33.85%	6.15%	6.15%	26.15%	1.54%
disease prevention	how to locate healthcare	child health information	remedies/drugs	Other

Comments:

The respondents specified that the following information is difficult to find, such as information on viruses – 1.54%. There are 1.54% of people, who stated that they do not know if health information is difficult to find and 3.8% of respondents stated that there is no difficulty finding any type of health information.

4 Venue-Specific Assessments

4.1 Venue # 1: Public Libraries

4.1.1 Overall Venue Assessment

The public libraries are mostly located at the center of the cities, towns or villages in sepearate building. The libraries are open to the public and generally offer access to information resources and services, such as extensive collection of books, publications and periodicals and continuing publications. There is also access to different electronic resources, such as legal information database, electronic catalogue, access to Internet and other resources through Internet centers available in those libraries.

The public libraries are joined into the Library Consortium, through which they coordinate and cooperate.

In general, the libraries receive funds from the government for operation. But those funds are limited to covering administration, management and operational expenses. Few funds are available for subscribing to the latest information resources, such as newspapers, magazines, journals and procuring latest books and publications. Despite those difficulties, the libraries are continuing to provide services to people and educating them with the different projects and initiatives, in particular related to the use and application of information and communications technologies.

4.1.2 Access

The public libraries are located in accessible areas such as downtown, center of district. They are starting to offer technology-based services to citizens. There are minimal fees charged for some selected services, but they are affordable for the general population of Kyrgyzstan.

4.1.2.1 Physical Access

The public libraries are usually located in the central locations in most cases have their own facilities. The National Library and Republic Library of Kyrgyz Republic have spacious and magnificent two- and third-stories buildings. The libraries of Central Library and village libraries have issues. The part of the building of Central Library was given to some government organizations, thus the staff and collection of the Central library were moved to the basement and books and publications were stored in conditions not meeting basic storing requirements. The library in Ivanovka was on the verge of closing a few months ago because its premises were given to a business person during liberalization of collective farms. The new owner are asking library to pay rent and at the time of visit to the library in Ivanovka, the staff said that the library had an outstanding debts for rent.

There are reading rooms of different types, cataloguing facilities, newspaper stands, and if available Information and Resource Center. The big libraries, such as National Library and Republic Library for Youth and Children have public access Information and Resource Centers established with support and assistance of different national and international donor organizations. Those centers are established to provide access to Internet, training for ICT use. The Central Library System and library No. 12 of Bishkek city does not have an Information and Resource Centers. Although they have computers, they are used for administration purposes. The library in Ivanovka village has an Information and Resource Center established with the support and funding from ARIS, local community and contribution of the librarians themselves. Due to the lack of the electricity supply during certain periods, the Ivanovka library was just beginning to provide fee-based ICT training to citizens.

Most of the services offered by public libraries are free or a minimal fee is applied for getting readers' cards or taking books home overnight, printing and other services.

The public libraries have wide range of information and resources, such as books, publications and printing materials on different topics, subjects and areas, which are available and accessible to the users of different age, education and income levels, gender, ethnicity, religion. The information and resources are available in different language. This enables public libraries efficiently serve all visitors and users who come to public libraries in the search of information

and resources.

4.1.2.2 Appropriate Technology & Services

The libraries offer traditional services to the citizens, such as a collection of books and publications, periodicals, journals, magazines, newspapers and providing access free of charge and opportunities to take books home for some minimal charges. Within the last 10 years, the libraries cooperated with the different international and donor organizations to renew their collection of the books. For example, extensive support was provided by Soros Foundation in renewing collection of Russian language books through the "Pushkin" library project. During the last five years, more activities have been carried out introducing new technology based services to users at public libraries. These include electronic cataloguing of all books and publications available in libraries, introducing free of charge access to Internet through the centers of public access hosted at public libraries. Plus, public libraries have initiated and conducted training for users on computer literacy, access to Internet and working with the different electronic resources. However, these latest services are becoming common in the centrally located libraries, but the libraries in the peripheries are still lag behind on providing technology-based services to citizens. This includes lack of computers and equipment, inadequate infrastructure and lack of skills of library staff to deliver technology-based services.

4.1.2.3 Affordability

The majority of the services offered by the public libraries are free of charge. The chargeable services included getting entry passes to the library (different fees apply for different types of passes - daily, monthly, quarterly or yearly); taking books overnight; printing, copying and printing materials from electronic resources, fines for late book returns and assistance for users in finding necessary information through specialized electronic resources such as legal information database "Toktom" or "Adviser". The Central Library System which includes 29 libraries in Bishkek has introduced a plan for fee-based services in each branch. For example, the department of literature for adult must collect 20,000 soms/year (555 USD) from their fee-

based services. The fees imposed are minimal, thus they are quite affordable for general population.

4.1.2.4 Fees for Services

Due to insufficient allocation of funds from state budget to the public libraries, the libraries are starting to introduce fee-based services. The income is used to purchase subscription of publications and contribution towards Internet connection fee. The following represents some of the fees for services. It must be noted that the fees differ at libraries.

Fee-based services	Indicate amount in local currency	Equivalent in US dollars	Date of estimate	Local currency name
Access to library card (daily, weekly, yearly)	5, 10 and 20	0.13 USD, 0.26 USD and 0.52 USD	June 18, 2008	Som
Taking books home (editions published prior to 2000 year and after)	5 and 7	0.13 USD and 0.19 USD	June 18, 2008	Som
Receiving order to get books from other libraries	50	1.30 USD	June 20, 2008	Som

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:

Fee-based services	Indicate amount in local currency	Equivalent in US dollars	Date of estimate	Local currency name
Typing documents on computer per page (in Russian, Kyrgyz and other languages)	10, 18, 18	0.26 USD 0.50 USD 0.50 USD	June 20, 2008	Som
Printing	3	0.08 USD	June 20, 2008	Som

Scanning	7	0.19 USD	June 20, 2008	Som
Thematic search in Internet (1 hour)	30	0.83 USD	June 20, 2008	Som
Use of computer (1 hour)	30	0.83 USD	June 20, 2008	Som
Computer literacy training at Ivanovka village library (2 weeks training, per person)	200	5.56 USD	June 19, 2008	Som

4.1.2.5 Geographic Distribution

There are libraries at central, regional, city, district and village levels, altogether 289 libraries exist throughout the country.

	Number of facilities in each administrative unit	Number offering Digital ICT services
Bishkek	18	9
Provincial Center	75	49*
Villages	196	0

*Note: the exact number of libraries offering ICT services at provincial level cannot be sourced. Working on existing information - that there are 289 libraries of which 20% offer ICT, and that there are nine libraries in Bishkek offering ICT, while none do so at village level, it can be estimated that fifty-one libraries offer digital ICT services at provincial level -

289 (total libraries) x 20% (% offering ICT) = 58 venues offering ICT

58 (venues offering ICT) -9 (known venues offering ICT) = 49(remaining venues offering ICT)

4.1.2.5.1 Map

Description of map:

There are libraries at central, regional, city, district and village levels, altogether 289 libraries exist throughout the country.

4.1.2.6 Other Factors affecting Access

In the phase I report, it mentioned the lack of access for the disabled users as being one of the factor affecting equitable access to public information at the public libraries.

During the research of the Phase II, the team visited Republic Library for Youth and Children, where they were shown a room dedicated to providing information and services for disabled children. There are about 40-50 disabled children who come to participate in different activities organized for them. These include games and drawing contests, consultation for parents, at home delivery of books and publications. The facility is equipped with the tape recorders, which are used for listening to music and story telling. The facility also has a computer with access to Internet, so disabled children and their parents can use it.

4.1.3 Capacity & Relevance

Depending on the location of the libraries, coverage and the number of constituencies and staff of the libraries differ. The libraries have a wide range of books, publications, periodicals and other information. Recently, the public libraries started to pay attention to building content related to the country, region or community. Considering the schools teach Kyrgyz history, culture and customs and published materials are rare, the public libraries are gathering different information and resources pertaining to these areas. In addition, there are not many publications in Kyrgyz language and public libraries want to be a main source of information.

The Information and Resource Centers established at public libraries provide access to web-based information resources in Kyrgyz language as well. For example, most of the websites of .kg domain have information both in Russian and Kyrgyz languages.

The working hours of public libraries are the same as general business hours - from 09.00 am until 06.00pm, with no lunch time. This means that it is difficult for employed people to get to the library during the week. The library is open on Sundays, and is closed on Saturdays.

4.1.3.1 Staff Size

There are 190 personnel in the National Library of Kyrgyz Republic, there are 82 staff in the Central Library System, 8 staff in the library No. 12 and the library in Ivanovka has 7 staff and 16 people were working in the branches of the Ivanovka library.

Of all these people, about 3-7% of staff, are working in Information and Resource Centers, electronic catalogue section and providing ICT services alone.

For example, the IREX center at National Library has two full-time staff and the IREX center in Osh has one full-time staff. At the Development Information and Resource Center located at the Republic Library for Youth and Children, there are three people working in the center – manager (part-time and a staff of the Republic Library) and two operators in each room of the center, who were full-time staff. At the library No. 12 of Bishkek city, there is only one computer in the library director's room, and she is the only one using it. The Information and Resource Center in Ivanovka has one person, who was working in the center and at the same time was serving as a bibliographer.

4.1.3.2 Staff Training

The library staff and management specified the need of capacity building of staff. Considering most of the staff are people, who graduated many years ago, there is a need for training. This reflects the change in the services provided by libraries as well as new trends. These include building capacity of librarians to use computers and be able to deliver ICT services to citizens, which include use of the electronic resources, e-cataloguing system, Internet-based search, working with printers, copiers and other equipment. At this stage, only staff, who are dedicated to work on ICT equipment are using them. Other librarians from different sections and

department do not use computers often.

The Central Library System representative mentioned that the free of charge trainings are conducted for the libraries' staff on bibliography, and the librarians are taking exams and getting certificates after successful completion of these trainings. The types of the courses include:

- Cataloging with 'IRBIZ' software for electronic catalogs in the National Library.

- Use of lawful Date Base "Toktom"

- Basic computer and Internet literacy

- Psychological trainings

- Management trainings

During meeting with the executive director of the Library Information Consortium, it was mentioned that the librarians need training in the modern development conditions and there is a big language barrier for them, particularly related to using on-line electronic resources, such as EBSCO. The librarians of the Ivanovka library stated that they need to be trained in computer skills and working with ICT equipment.

There is a school that trains librarians at the State University of Bishkek. However, the curriculum of the school is old and it needs to be updated to include courses related to modern technologies, approaches and even marketing and service delivery.

4.1.3.3   Services Offered

	Services Offered	Comments
1.	Access to books, publications, magazines, journals and periodicals	Depending on the type of library (central, regional, village, district, etc.) the size of the collections of books, publications, magazines, journals and periodicals varies.
2.	Meeting and conference facilities	In most cases, the reading halls, premises of Information and Resource Centers and even open space area are used for meetings, conferences, workshops, etc. It depends on the type of the library and how big are the premises of the library as well.

3.	Audio/video programs	The libraries have a good collection of old gramophone records, audio and VHF cassettes, which are still used for different events. For example, at the Republic Library for Youth and Children, there was a culture room with piano and cassette player, 3-4 shelves of the audio disks. And they were regularly used for some cultural events
4.	Computers and other services	The use of computers at public libraries are usually limited to the specially dedicated areas, such as electronic cataloguing space (4-5 computers were placed in an area at the National Library), or access to specific information resources (5 computers were at the legal Information and Resource Center at National Library). There were almost no computers for general use by users. The printing, scanning, copying are available in those centers for fee.
5.	Internet	The Internet services in the libraries were mostly provided through the Internet/information/access centers located at the premises of libraries. This refers to the Public Information and Resource Center under President Administration of Kyrgyz Republic, IREX Information Access and training centers at the National Library, Information and Resource Center at the Ivanovka village library, etc.

There are no major differences in the traditional types of services offered by public libraries of different locations. The only significant difference is on ICT-related services. The centrally located libraries are more advanced on offering ICT-related services and the rural libraries (district and village level) have few or no ICT-related service provisions.

4.1.3.4 Programs for Underserved Communities

The public libraries offer different programs specifically intended to reach underserved communities. There are many pensioners and bomjies (people without certain living places) which come to public libraries. The Republic Library for Youth and Children offer services for disabled children. The room for those children has a computer with access to Internet, which can be used by the disabled children and their parents.

The library No. 12 of Bishkek city serves about 1, 500 people, among which there are 400 pensioners.

The Central Library representative stated that the types of users has changed over the last 10 years and now the services offered target for families. For example, if one member of the family has a reading card, the other members can use it to borrow books and use facilities at the public library.

The Development Information and Resource Center at the Republic Library for Youth and Children is open to all people.

The Public Information and Resource Center under President Administration of Kyrgyz Republic provided services to 6,149 people in 2007, out of which 493 (7.2%) of them were unemployed people and 64 (1%) of them were pensioners.

4.1.3.5 Relevant Content

Available Content:

Books, publications, resource materials, periodicals such as magazines, newspapers, journals,electronic catalogue of publications and electronic resources.

Other Content Needed:

Need to have a complete electronic catalogue of publications and resources. In addition, the centralized database of resources at different libraries is required.

Local Initiatives to build needed content:

The administration and management of urban libraries are introducing called "IRBIZ" application for electronic cataloguing, but it is not available in the rural libraries. However, the rural libraries began discussing the introduction of this service in their facilities.

Source: Interviews with the librarians of the Ivanovka village and No. 12 of Bishkek.

4.1.3.6 Services & Information Available in Local Languages

According to information provided at the Republic Library for Youth and Children, the public libraries provide information for national programs, such as gender equity, health, state language

and social program. This relates to the information in local languages. For example, the curriculum of schools of Kyrgyzstan includes Kyrgyz history and language. Therefore, in order to serve secondary schools students, the Republic Library for Youth and Children had a special collection of publications of Manas and Semetei in simplified Kyrgyz language.

The Central Library of Kyrgyz Republic had a special department with collections of Kyrgyz epics, legends and stories dated back to thirteenth century.

4.1.3.7 Types of Uses

About 50% of users of public libraries come there to look for information on education, which is much higher than all users of all types of public access venues - 48%. The second and third ranked information was news and personal information – 20% each. The health, government services and entertainment information sought at the public libraries. If there were ICT enabled services offered then the visitors were looking for information on education – 32.4%, web browsing – 26.5%, blogs and social networking – 20.6%, commerce and business information – 14.7% and chat and news – 2.9%.

As for availability of local content, there were a number of visitors at public libraries, stating there is a lack of the information available in right language and right content.

4.1.3.8 Number, Type and Frequency of Users

Regarding the frequency of visits to the public libraries, the 38.5% of interviewees stated they come to public libraries frequently, 23.1% stated they come on daily basis, 15.4% stated they come regularly and 15.4% stated it was their first visit.

The above information was supported by information provided by operators, which stated that about 40% of users come to the public libraries on daily basis, 29% of users come here frequently and 26% come regularly.

4.1.3.9 Users Capacity to use information and services offered

According to information provided by the management of the Republic Library for Youth and Children, the users are quite comfortable and experienced using information and resources already available in the public libraries. However, when the ICT-based services are provided, then the concern was that the majority of users do not know how to use computers or the Internet.

4.1.3.10 Training Courses for Users

Training courses: "How to Improve Business", "Presentation of New Books", "Korean Stories"

ICT specific training courses: "Computer Lteracy", Internet training.

The above mentioned training courses were conducted at the Development Information and Resource Center at the Republic Library for Youth and Children. Operators said that the training courses were mostly offered by the partner organizations such as World Bank, ADB, DFID and Swiss Agency.

The ICT specific training courses were organized to address the demand of the users.

In other libraries, similar types of the training courses were organized and the certificates of participation were provided. For example, in IREX centers, the certificates were provided with logo of IREX.

4.1.3.11 Integration into daily routines

There is no problem of integrating information and services received in public libraries into the daily routine by users because the information received due to the demand and needs of the users. In addition, considering public libraries are located in the places convenient and known to users, there is no perceived problem of users accessing necessary information and services if they will be made available.

4.1.3.12 Users Perceptions about the Venue

Generally, the library was and continues to be a key place for the public to access information. Nowadays, the social role of the library is increasing with the use of the modern technology and increased number and types of services, which generally people cannot afford to purchase

individually to use at home. These services include photocopying, scanning, producing digital copy of the documents, and the Internet. New types of service at libraries, such as training sessions, club activities for different groups, workshops, and discussions play a large role in improving the value and user perception of the library

The users of other public access venues were asked about what other public access venues do, why they use them and what is their experience with the public libraries. Only 20.5% of respondents stated that they go to a library, such as National, district library, or regional library.

However, the users stated that the content of public libraries was old and there were too many departments at the libraries, therefore, it was hard to find information there.

4.1.3.13 Social Appropriation of Information and Generation of New Knowledge

The majority of the users of public libraries are students. They come to find information relating to their studies.

Some users and people met and interviewed explained that the information at the public libraries are in most cases outdated, and it needs to be kept updated. However this is problematic at this stage because there is limited funding available to public libraries. These funds are insufficient to subscribe to specific information periodicals and renew collections of the books. The ICT-based information and services compliment traditional information and resources provided by the public libraries. The initiatives of public libraries to setup different information and Internet access centers assisted in addressing the need of having different types of information. For example, there are three different types of centers at the National Library– Legal Information and Resource Center, Public Information and Resource Center under President Administration and IREX-funded IATP centers. This enables users to easily access information and resources on Internet or electronic databases.

4.1.3.14 Trust, Safety & Privacy

The library ensures the privacy and security of information offered in the library through its policy, procedures and systems.

4.1.3.15 Gaps and Opportunities in information & services offered

There is a social and digital divide between the rural and urban areas in Kyrgyzstan. The inhabitants of the capital have access to contemporary information resources. The inhabitants of villages have access to a limited quantity of printed publications. There is also a lack of materials in Kyrgyz language.

4.1.4 Enabling Environment

Overall, the legal and political environment is quite favorable for public libraries. Public Libraries in Kyrgyzstan are historically the only place where people could access resources to fulfill their scientific, training, professional, social, economic, cultural, and educational needs. They are well entrenched within the communities that they serve and have a broad, established network. However, they remain largely dependent on state funding and national economic factors impact on the amount of financing they receive from the government at national and local levels. Diversifying funding sources would assist the libraries in improving quality and assisting their local communities.

Nevertheless, the facts are 200,000 readers per year, over 560 activities are conducted, 500,000 books, 400 different types of media resources are used and 500,000 books read each year state. This indicates a demand for the services offered by the public library. (Republic Library for Youth and Children).

The national and international and donor organizations support public libraries through different means. For example, the World Bank, ADB, DFID and Swiss Agency supported establishment of the Development Information and Resource Center at Republic Library for Youth and Children. At the same time, the libraries are committed to further piloted projects in libraries. For example, the Legal Information and Resource Centers were setup within project, but now they are part of the public libraries.

4.1.4.1 Local & National Economy

Since the overall economic situation in Kyrgyzstan is difficult situation, there is a difficulty

financing the public libraries. The budget of public libraries is used mostly for paying the salary of staff, coverage of related expenses (heating, electricity,.) and administrative expenses. After distribution of funds allocated for these expenses, there are few funds left to cover other expenses, such as subscription to publications, Internet connection costs and training of staff.

For example, since May 2008 when IREX project finalized, their IATP centers were transferred to the National Library and Library of Osh Oblasti. The representatives of IATP centers said that the IREX paid for the Internet connection untill the end of July, and were not sure what will happen afterwards with the Internet connections.

As for libraries in villages, the situation is a bit different. The librarians of the Ivanovka village were talking about introduction of the fee-based services, such as borrowing books overnight and using computers. However, the librarians were saying there are few people, who can afford to pay for those services, even though the charge is minimal.

4.1.4.2   Legal & Regulatory Framework

The overall legal and regulatory framework is quite favourable.for public libraries in providing public access to information. There are a number of laws and regulations, which support public libraries. These include law on library, which was approved by the Parliament in October 1998, law on informatization approved by the Parliament in September 1999, law on mass media organizations approved by the Parliament in 1992, law on guarantee of access and freedom of information" approved by Parliament in 1998.

4.1.4.3   Political Will & Public Support

There is a political will and public support for venues. There are supports from government and government organizations, international donors and donor organizations. In addition, there is support at local level (ailyk maatu). The representative of Central library System shared with the research team the support provided by the local government to the public library.

4.1.4.4   Organization and Networking

There are a number of the organizations which are uniting organizations and people working in the public libraries. There are Association of Public Libraries, Public Association of Kyrgyzstan's Librarians and a Library Information Consortium Association. The Library Information Consortium Association was established in 2002. The Association has been set up to unite the efforts for the joint solution of the major professional problems, and also questions of development and perfection of information support of the country's users.

The main fields of Library Information Consortium Association are:

➢ To ensure active progress and participation of public libraries in the development of international project "Electronic information for libraries – eIFL", directed on granting on granting the access to full-text online resources of the foreign scientific periodicals.

➢ Automation and integration of libraries resources in Kyrgyzstan. Now the library community of Kyrgyzstan unites the efforts for teamwork on overcoming information and technical backlog, development and introduction of modern forms of library service for the benefit of all citizens of Kyrgyzstan, successful integration of information resources of our country in the world of information space.

➢ Development of normative-legal base in the field of library affairs, participation in development of the state programs directed to improve library-information service of the population.

➢ Increase of a professional level of library staff in Kyrgyzstan according to requirements of a modern society.

The libraries are collaborating in use of electronic resources, such as IRBIZ – electronic cataloguing system. The system is being introduced in the major public libraries of Kyrgyzstan, such as National Library, Republic Library for Youth and Children and Oblasti center libraries. However, the libraries in rural areas do not have this electronic catalogue system.

4.1.4.5 Partnerships

There are initiatives of public and private partnership in the public libraries. This is related to the introduction of electronic resources, such as "Toktom" and "Adviser". The "Toktom" and "Adviser" are databases of legal and regulatory documents, which are developed by a private

company. The Toktom was established in 1991 because of a need to possess complete documents of legal and regulatory framework. The company developed an electronic database of laws, regulations and policy documents. The database is installed and accessible for free of charge at the major libraries of the Kyrgyz Republic, and the company maintains and updateds the database based on the agreement with the libraries.

The electronic database is comprised of over 110,000 legal and regulatory documents from over 40 organizations. The organizations include government, Parliament, ministries and other agencies. Currently, this resource is used by over 2,000 organizations, such as banks, legal firms, the government, international organizations, business centers, and centers of public access.

For more information, visit www.toktom.kg, online.toktom.kg.

4.1.4.6   Other Environment Factors

describe

4.1.5   For Publicly Funded Venues only: Revenue Streams

4.1.5.1   Budget

(This information was hard to get)

Total Budget for Fiscal Year 2008: 2690.6 mln

Local currency name som   amount (local currency) 2690.6 mln

Approx. equivalent in USD 74.7mln based on exchange rate of 36 on date June 20, 2008.

This is an approximate government budget for 2008.

4.1.5.2   Relative size of budget

Relative Size of Budget for same year	Total budget (local currency)	Comments
Total national budget	2690.6 mln soms	Approximate government budget for 2008
Education	1159.1 mln soms	

Other (name)	
Public Libraries	

Other Comments:

describe

4.1.5.3 Sources of funding

Sources of funding:	Approximate % of total budget	Comments
Government sources (central and local):	98%	
International donors:		
National donors:		
User fees / services:	2%	

Other Comments:

There is support provided by international and donor organizations as well as support from users of public libraries. However, they are not included in the budget for public libraries.

4.1.5.4 Paths and Flows of resources

The main flow of resources for public libraries is from central and local government. The directors of public libraries are started initiating involvement of the community to furnish collections of books and publications at libraries. For example, the public library No. 12 has a refurbishing books initiative, when books are donated by community members to libraries and libraries include them in their collections to be read by users of public libraries.

4.1.5.5 Fees and Cost Recovery

Due to the limited fundings provided to public libraries, the management of public libraries have introduced fee-based services to somewhat cover their administrative and operational expenses. For example, the Central Library of Kyrgyz Republic was charging for 1) issuing one-time pass

to visitors; 2) weekly/monthly/yearly passes to use facilities and information and services at public libraries; 3) for photocopying, scanning and putting files on disks and 4) borrowing books and publications overnight and on weekly basis.

4.1.5.6 Cost Categories

Cost Categories for Operation:	Approximate % of total budget	Comments
Staff (salaries, benefits)		
Building Infrastructure		
Utilities		
Staff Training		
Computers / Technology		
Total	100%	

Other Comments:

describe

4.1.5.7 Recent changes and future trends

Recently it was said that the funding were provided by local government to public libraries. The local governments (town, cities, oblasti and selo) have separate budget from central government and limited fundings started to be allocated to the public libraries.

The director of public library No. 12 brought in example, when district local government allocated funds for opening a branch of public library.

4.1.6 Case Example for Public Libraries

National Library of Kyrgyz Republic

The above photo represents the National Library of Kyrgyz Republic. The library is centrally located and is spacious. There are reading halls, catalogues, different departments to serve different types of customers – adults, young people, and people in need and others.

Republic Library for Youth and Children

The Republic Library for Youth and Children is visited by over 200,000 users annually. It has a collection of 500,000 books and 400 different types of media resources. About 500,000 books and publications are ready annually.

The Republic library has nine departments.

The following photo represents the Republic Library for Youth and Children from outside and inside.

One of the reading rooms of the Republic Library for Youth and Children named after Bayalinov.

Cataloguing section at the Republic Library.

Small reading room.

Meeting space for users.

Special room for workshops and seminars with pictures showing life of Manas – epic of Kyrgyzstan.

Deputy director of Republic library for Youth and children – Abdulaeva Kamila introducing to services and information available at the library.

Children's corner in front of the Children's reading room. The exhibit of "Skilled hands" shows drawings and toys made by children.

Part of the Children's reading room.

Children's playing room. There is a puppet theater and toys.

One of the reading rooms of library.

Cataloguing section with tables and chairs, where users can sit for searching books and publications.

Books and publications cataloguing section of the library.

Small confortable reading part at the upper floor of the library.

View of the main reading room of library from upper floor.

Osh Oblasti Library

The Osh Oblasti Library

Main entrance of Osh Oblasti public library.

The photo with director of the Osh oblasti public library Baktigul Mirzaevna and director of legal information center – Valentina Ivanovna.

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A stand dedicated to the famous Kyrgyz writer – Chingiz Aitmatov

Section of the legal information department of library.

A person is searching for information in the database "Toktom" at the Osh Oblasti library.

The following photo represents one of the reading rooms at the Osh oblasti library.

The following photo represents collections of publications in Kyrgyz language– books, journals,

magazines.

The following photo shows the children's section of the Library.

Library in Ivanovka village

The Library in Ivanovka village was established in 1978 and celebrated its 30 year anniversary.

There are seven people in the Library in Ivanovka and 16 people working in the branch libraries located in selo.

There is a main branch, children's branch and 16 branches included in the library. There are 13,400 books and publications in children's library, 42,600 in the catalogue. Each branch has between 8-10,000 books in their collections.

The following photo represents the library from outside and inside.

This photo is the library in Ivanovka. It is one story building.

The following photo has been taken in one of the main reading rooms of the Ivanovka library.

The following photos were taken in the children's reading rooms.

The following photos represent the collections of the Ivanovka library and librarians working there.

Central Library System

There are 29 libraries in the Central library system and it was established in 1979. The library has an unique collection of books, publications and resources.

There are children, students, pensioners, workers and bomji (people without certain living

conditions).

There is a focus on scientific and popular publications. There are 28 newspapers subscribed to.

The support is provided by the local government of Bishkek city.

The following photo represents building from outside and people –librarians working in the Central library System.

This is a photo of main entrance to Centralized library system.

These are photos of staff of the Centralized library system. On a first photo, it can be seen that the library is located in the basement – small windows. On second photon, behind staff, you can see

the collections of the books, publications and printing materials of the library.

4.2   Venue # 2: eCenters

4.2.1   Overall Venue Assessment

The eCenters in Kyrgyz Republic initially were established through Last Mile Initiative (LMI project) of USAID to test the eCenter concept, a network of community telecenters that offer Internet and voice connectivity, computer and application training, as well as basic business services to the communities. Considering that the eCenters were placed in remote areas of Kyrgyzstan, the services offered by eCenters are for the rural citizens.

The eCenters were initially established in six locations in 2006 and expanded in 2007-2008 to include five more additional centers. The number of eCenters has reached eleven in Kyrgyzstan. The CIIP announced a tender among Internet clubs and training centers in rural areas of Kyrgyzstan. Over 50 applications applied and only five were selected in the first round of eCenters.

The need of sustaining those centers in the future after completion of the project is essential. Thus, the franchisee business model was introduced when calls for proposals were announced and existing information technology businesses applied for grants to enhance their services with the Internet connection and providing services for citizens, such as training, capacity building, access to Internet and its services as well as other additional services, such as consultation and support. The CIIP receives a franchisee fee of 200 USD per year from each eCenters and provides the following support to eCenters – organize training courses on computer literacy with award of certificates, national promotion campaign for the eCenters network (TV, press, radio and other mass media), technical consultation, legal and accounting consulting, formation of a range of proposed activities and goods, providing with elements of the firm's style, design and support, opportunity to connect to Internet, equipment and consumables at discount prices 15% lower than the market prices, providing access to services free-of-charge email with the doman xxx@ecenter.kg, as well as hosting of the web-site center with the third level domain www.ecenters.kg.

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Each of these eCenters is enhanced with the 256kbps of DSL connection.

As of April 2008, there were eleven eCenters in Kyrgyzstan and two eCenters were established in Tadjikistan using the same business model with the plan of expanding it by two additional eCenters.

4.2.2 Access

The eCenters were established in rural areas, where there is limited telecommunications services offered to citizens. They are located in the central locations, which are easy to access by citizens.

Within LMI project, the voucher system was introduced for eCenters, so that the citizens will be provided services free-of-charge, such as training or access to Internet. The services offered by eCenters were divided into compulsory and additional. The compulsory services are as following: computer rent, Internet access, copying, printing, lamination, IP telephony, computer literacy and other trainings, sale of office supplies, dealer services for mobile operators, sale of mobile handsets and SIM cards, photographs for passport/ digital photo, printing color pictures and documents, CD/DVD recording, faxing and filling cartridges . The additional services included repair and maintenance of computers and accessories, video shooting and offset printing, web-design and desktop publishing and DVD-cinema.

During LMI project, the voucher system was introduced in eCenters, they provide services for citizens free-of-charge and are billed to the LMI project for services rendered.

The CIIP representatives mentioned that they are planning to introduce additional IT-based services such as distant training, exchange of agricultural products called on-line agricultural stock exchange, online health services in remote areas and micro crediting.

According to Nookat eCenter representatives, they have trained over 2,000 children during the LMI project. The Karakol center has trained 45 people a month and 170 people accessed the Internet free-of-charge while the center was implementing LMI project.

4.2.2.1 Physical Access

According to information provided by CIIP representatives, the majority of users of eCenters are young aged between 15-35 years old. Users of eCenters are aged between 15-25 - 74%, 15% are aged between 26-35 and 11% are aged 36 or over.

The majority of users – 55% are male users. Students make up 45% of users, 25% of users are state administrators, 14% of users are entrepreneurs, 14% of users are school kids and 4% are unemployed people.

According to the interviews conducted with users, 100% of interviewed people were male, 10% of users interviewed were of age under 14 years old, 60% of users were between 15-35 years old, 30% of users were between 36 and 60 years old.

About 14.3% of users identified themselves as people with low income level and the rest of 85.7% of users stated that their level of income in the middle range. As for social status, the situation is the same – 14.3% of users stated that their status is low and 85.7% of users stated that their level of social status is middle.

About 50% of interviewed users stated that they come to this venue frequently, 20% of users stated that they come to this venue on a daily basis and remaining users stated that they came to this venue first time, or rarely and regularly. (each 10%).

4.2.2.2   Appropriate Technology & Services

The eCenters focused 100% on delivery of technology-based services to citizens, which includes access to computers and Internet.

The majority of users (30.8%) stated they came to look for personal information. Of the users 15.4% stated that they came here looking for entertainment, 15.4% of users stated they came to this venue to look for education information. The people who were looking for government services, news, printing resumes, making copies, gaming and using Internet were 7.7% each.

As for ICT services, 41.7% of users stated that they came to this venue to email, 16.7% of users stated they came to chat and use the phone/web-cam, 8.3% of each of the following stated that they came to do commerce and business and play games. 8.3% of users stated that they came here to get assistance from an operator of the eCenters.

4.2.2.3 Affordability

The eCenters and Internet clubs offer fee-based services in most cases. Exemptions are when eCenters were conducting trainings and courses on computer literacy for general public (targeting for underserved part of population) through LMI project. The eCenters were issuing vouchers for five hours of free access to Internet and one hour of training, which were distributed to citizens. The vouchers were redeemed at the LMI project or eCenters after certain types of the services were offered.

After completion of the eCenters projects, the eCenters are still consider themselves as part of eCenters network, cooperate with each other and coordinate their work with CIIP. However, the services offered at eCenters are now fee-based.

4.2.2.4 Fees for Services

The eCenters charge fees for their services. The fees are setup depending on the need of those services and the citizens' ability to pay for those services.

Training course – 2 hours/day on computer literacy, operating system, Internet, Word, Excel and others .

Indicate amount in local currency 200   (in some places 300-500 a month, or 30 per person)

Equivalent in US Dollars: **5.6 USD**

Date of estimate June 23, 2008

and local currency name som

Internet access (per hour)

Indicate amount in local currency 25 (in some places 30)

Equivalent in US Dollars: 0.69 USD

Date of estimate June 23, 2008

and local currency name som

E-mail (per hour)l

Indicate amount in local currency 10

Equivalent in US Dollars: 0.27 USD

Date of estimate June 23, 2008

and local currency name som

Typing a 1 page document

Indicate amount in local currency 10

Equivalent in US Dollars: 0.27 USD

Date of estimate June 23, 2008

and local currency name som

Scanning a 1 page document

Indicate amount in local currency 5

Equivalent in US Dollars: 0.14 USD

Date of estimate June 23, 2008

and local currency name som

Computer games (1 hour)

Indicate amount in local currency 20

Equivalent in US Dollars: 0.54 USD

Date of estimate June 23, 2008

and local currency name som

Receiving and sending 1 page of fax document

Indicate amount in local currency 30

Equivalent in US Dollars: 0.08 USD

Date of estimate June 23, 2008

and local currency name som

4.2.2.5 Geographic Distribution

The eCenters are disbursed geographically in remote locations of Kyrgyz Republic. There are two eCenters located in oblasti center – Karakol and Osh. The others are located in villages and

small towns.

The eCenter manager in Nookat shared his idea to reach neighbouring selo – small villages.

Description of map:

1. Karakol
2. Bosteri
3. Naryn
4. Kara-Suu
5. Nookat

6. Kochkor
7. Osh
8. Talas
9. Ivanovka
10. Kochkor-Ata
11. Bokonbaevo

4.2.2.6 Other Factors affecting Access

As it was expressed by the manager of eCenter in Osh, there is a need for certified computer training programs. Currently, the training conducted in eCenters have issued certificates from CIIP, but they are not certified officially at the Ministry of Education or with any other institutions.

4.2.3 Capacity & Relevance

Expressed by each of interviewed operators of eCenters, there is a dedicated staff at each center. However, the concern was raised that the capacity of staff is limited to providing services for citizens and they are not proficient in providing ICT-related services. Limited staff is able to conduct ICT-related training or specified training on different software and applications. Therefore, the eCenters hire teachers from neighbouring schools or universities or knowledgeable people in thesoftware and applications and pay them for conducting training.

In addition, there is an issue related to the availability of resources used for conducting training. This mainly relates to the training on special software and applications. Although extensive number of free and downloadable manuals and user guides are available on Internet in Russian languages, there are no materials in Kyrgyz language.

Furthermore, some of the eCenters stopped providing IP telephone services, because Kyrgyz Telecom and mobile operators started offering cheaper phone calls services.

One of the eCenters – Osh eCenter – is located in the Children's Center. Since the children center is mandated to conduct computer literacy training for children, the eCenter cooperates with them to conduct those trainings. The most demanded training is a computer literacy training.

The CIIP has conducted a demand study on the training needs among the 790 users of eCenters in November 2006. According to this, the majority of users (90%) expressed their interest to have on-line basic computer skills training. Another highly demanded service was for English as Second Language training courses on-line (90%). About 20% of users participating in the survey stated their interest in basic accounting and business management.

4.2.3.1 Staff Size

On average, there are 3-4 people working in eCenters. These include a manager, operators (usually one or two depending on hours and days of operations) and an accountant. In eCenter in Nookat, there is a software developer, who maintains software for web-cash services for mobile operators. The trainers/teachers are usually part-time staff, who are called to conduct training.

In eCenter in Nookat, there is a lawyer who is working part-time to provide consultation for immigration documents for Kyrgyz people working in other countries.

4.2.3.2 Staff Training

In most cases, the eCenters employ people from the community where they operate. The eCenters train their staff, especially those who conduct training for users. The CIIP supports eCenters with documents concerning the work the staff must undertake, information about operation of the eCenter and with a set of design printed products and brand-books. These materials are used by the managers of the eCenters to train their staff.

4.2.3.3 Services Offered

Services Offered	Comments
6. Internet access	CIIP supports eCenters to have access to Internet of 256kbps through Kyrgyz Telecom. During implementation of LMI project, the voucher for 5

		hours of free access to Internet was distributed to citizens.
7.	Rent of computers	This service depends on the need of the particular clientele of eCenters
8.	Copying/printing/scanning of documents	These services are fee-based services with a charge between 5-10 soms, depending on the affordability of these services by local community
9.	Typing of documents	This service is fee-based service, with a charge of about 10 soms/page roughly. (USD???)
10.	IP telephony	The service is fee-based and KyrgyzTelecom rates apply
11.	Computer literacy training	Depending on location of eCenters, different rates apply. Roughly, it's about 200-300 soms/month of 2 hours/day training. During implementation of LMI project, the vouchers for one hour free training was distributed.
12.	Printing of color documents and files	This service is fee-based.
13.	Writing on CD/DVD-ROMs	This service is fee-based and about 1- 5 soms/disk is charged depending on location. This does not include cost of the CD/DVD disks. (USD???)
14.	Computer games	About 20 soms/hour charged for this service (USD???)
15.	Sending/receiving fax documents	About 5 soms/hour charged for this service. (USD???)

The eCenters differ from each other on the focus of their services. The eCenter in Osh focuses more on conducting training, the eCenter in Nookat focuses more on providing training and mobile cards sales, the eCenter in Karakol has a computer and accessories shop next to it, which is one of the major revenue for the business there. Depending on the location, the service fees and services differ.

4.2.3.4   Programs for Underserved Communities

During implementation of the LMI project, the eCenters offered services for underserved communities – children, elderly people, women/men, non-educated and unemployed people of the communities.

The free vouchers for one hour of computer training and five hours of Internet access were distributed to underserved representatives of the community. Over 2,000 children were trained in Nookat's eCenter. Now, 30 of those trained are employed in different organizations. In addition, the manager of Nookar's eCenter expressed his interest to open similar type centers in selo (small villages) to create a demand at selo level. The negotiations are underway with two neighbouring selos.

The eCenter in Osh is located at the Children Center. Since Children Center is mandated to conduct computer literacy training for children, the eCenter cooperates with Children Center to conduct the trainings.

The eCenter in Karakol conducts training for underserved population for a minimal fee (lower than the market price) and are planning to do trainings due to the fact the techer ws ill, the eCenter postponed it for a later date.

4.2.3.5   Relevant Content

Available Content:

Documents for the staff's work, technologies of operation of the eCenter and a set of design printed products, and brand books from CIIP.

The eCenters serves as a service provider for users and provides access to information and content available on World Wide Web. No local content is developed by them.

Other Content Needed:

As per feedbacks of users' interviews, there is a need of broader information and content to be available through eCenters. These include content of legal and regulatory documents of other countries; education and health related information, etc.

Local Initiatives to build needed content:

No local initiatives were specified on building necessary content and information.

4.2.3.6 Services & Information Available in Local Languages

According to the interview with a manager from Nookat eCenter, the eCenter is visited by many medical workers and students and they cannot find necessary information on .kg domain. Therefore, they use .ru domain and other sites. It was reported the .kg email sites are not stable, so people prefer to use .ru email and other email sites.

According to interview with operators of eCenters, about 40% of users seek information on education, 23.3% seek information of personal nature, 20% of users search for entertainment, 14.5% of users seek information related to health, 11% of users search for news, 10% search of other types of information (such as projects, juridical, business, networking, etc), and 7.3% of users search for information on government services.

From users' interviews, 30.8% of users search for personal information, 15.4% of users look for education information and entertainment, 7.7% of users search for government services, news, printing resume and making copies and games.

In addition, there is very limited information about Kyrgyzstan on the World Wide Web.

4.2.3.7 Types of Uses

According to operators, 52.5% of users come to eCenters to use email services, 23.75% to chat, 13.7% to use webcam services, 25% to play games, 10.3% to blog and social network as well as 10% browse the Internet and 4% to commerce and do business.

As for interviews from users, 41.7% interviewed at eCenters stated they come to use email, 16.7% come to chat or use phone/webcam, 8.3% come to do commerce/business, games and get assistance from operators.

4.2.3.8 Number, Type and Frequency of Users

Operators of eCenters reported 62% of users are female. About 59% of users are people with the college and/or university level of education, 24% of users are people with up to high school level

of education, 15% of users have an elementary education level and 2% of users do not have any formal education. Reviewing answers provided by users, 57.1% of users were users with up to high school education level and 42.9% were users with college and university level of education.

According to operators, about 35% of users come to eCenters frequently, 30% come regularly, 29% come on daily basis, 4 % come occasionally or rarely. The research team introduced a new measurement here as more frequent visitors to eCenters – twice or three times a week, which was not in the original interview sheet. According to operators, about 50% of users come to eCentes twice or three times a week.

According to users interviewed, about 50% of users stated they come to eCenters frequently, 20% come on daily basis, and the rest come rarely, occasionally or regularly (10% each).

4.2.3.9 Users Capacity to use information and services offered

Overall, the users are limited in their capacity to use services offered at the eCenters, expressed by operators of the eCenters.

The manager of eCenter in Osh mentioned there were many people, who expressed a willingness to learn how to use computers and applications. Thus they have opened additional classrooms with computers to train people how to use computers, applications, access to Internet and find information on the Internet. It was reported the majority of their users are children and the children learn quickly.

4.2.3.10 Training Courses for Users

Training courses: Accounting. This training is offered at the eCenter in Nookat, where quite a number of people were interested to have basic accounting skills.

ICT specific training courses: Computer literacy, distance training of English language, training on specialized software and applications, such as Corel draw, Accounting software, etc.

The most interested or enrolled courses are computer literacy courses. This was emphasized by the all managers and operators of eCenters.

Most of the training courses issue a certificate from CIIP. However, the manager of eCenter in Osh stressed the need for certified training from Ministry of Education or organization which is

recognized by all organizations.

The eCenter in Osh offers on-line training, for which they charge 250 USD.

4.2.3.11 Integration into daily routines

The users and operators stated that the information and services offered at eCenters are important to the local community and need to meet the needs of people living around the eCenters.

The manager of eCenter of Osh reported they have trained over 2,000 children and now about 30 of thos children are employed in training. The manager of eCenter brought one person, who learned how to use computers and basics in their center. This person is currently working in Moscow and looks after 200 computers.

The manager of eCenter in Nookat discussed one specific service, which is offered in their center. They provide certification of legal documents for citizens who live in other countries. They can request necessary local documents send to them. So the center receives a request, gets the documents from local authorities, scans them, certifies the scanned document and sends it to the person.

4.2.3.12 Users Perceptions about the Venue

The users of eCenters emphasized the importance of having centers in the rural part of the country. The research team witnessed two people coming to eCenter in Karakol and requesting typing and printing of their resume, so they can use it to apply for job. When asked how often they came to this center, the people said they came to do this kind of service – asking operators to type resume and printing it. Nevertheless, they said that since they do not know how to use computers and equipment, they are happy that there is a facility which can provide these kinds of services for them.

On a question, whether the users would go to other venues (public libraries, Information and Resource Centers, or Internet clubs) if the current eCenter was closed, some users mentioned there are no other places like that in this location.

4.2.3.13 Social Appropriation of Information and Generation of New Knowledge

In the eCenters, the services and information offered at those centers are of appropriation of technologies and facilitates generation of knowledge among people living in the areas where eCenters are located. The information and services received in eCenters and knowledge gained at the eCenters are used for getting new jobs and new opportunities. The truck drivers get their resumes printed and show them to potential employers. The children who studied in the computer literacy courses were getting jobs as trainers. The research team witnessed the use of the IP telephone for elderly women who were talking to their children living and working in other areas. The eCenters were setup using existing information technology businesses provided for community. The enhancement of these eCenters with access to Internet enabled eCenters to provide services demanded by people of rural areas.

4.2.3.14 Trust, Safety & Privacy

Only once did the matter of trust, safety and privacy issue come into an interview with Nookat eCenter's manager. The eCenter in Nookat offers a legal document transfer service for people living and working in other regions or countries. The center receives request, gets the documents from local authorities, scans them, certifies the scanned document and sends it to the person. In providing these kinds of services, the eCenter bears responsibility for truthfulness of the documents, ensures that the information provided is of personal nature, thus privacy is ensured.

4.2.3.15 Gaps and Opportunities in information & services offered

The managers of eCenters noted the need for additional opportunities in the future.

They identified making the offered courses certifiable as important. This move would further assist the users in economic development by broadening their opportunities for employment. They also highlighted online courses for satellite centers that are located in more rural or outlying villages (Best, Kolko, Thakur and Aitieva, 2007).

The managers of eCenter in Nookat and in Karakol mentioned that there are many medical workers and students. They come and they cannot find necessary information and services. The

center is planning to implement a telemedicine project – medical training for family doctors.

In the interview with the CIIP representative, the representative declared they are planning to expand the services offered through eCenters and discussions and negotiations are underway to introduce on-line health services, agricultural stock exchange, distance training and micro-crediting projects in the future.

4.2.4 Enabling Environment

The eCenters is favourable for providing information and services. All of the eCenters are private businesses, thus they are taxable according to the laws and regulations of the Kyrgyz Republic.

The eCenters managers mentioned that the CIIP provides regular support and assistance to them and proposes to introduce new services, which will meet the needs and demands of the local communities.

However, there are some problems faced by eCenters, especially those located in rural areas. These include interruptions with electricity, high-cost of Internet connection, lack of information and resources in the local language.

The eCenter in Osh stated that they need to attract new clients to their center, and conduct different types of training (i.e. management training).

4.2.4.1 Local & National Economy

There are about 220,000 people in Nookat, out of which 50,000 people live in areas surrounding the eCenter. There are 52 government organizations, 9 private enterprises, 108 schools (out of which 9 are located near the eCenter), the branch of the Osh Pedagogical College and about 3,500 private entrepreneurs in Nookat.

As for Karakol eCenter, it is located in center of Karakol, close to the University of Issyk Kul' with over 60,000 students (of which 10,000 are part-time students). According to managers of those two centers, all people living around eCenters require fast, quality and cheap means of communication.

4.2.4.2 Legal & Regulatory Framework

The eCenters follow legal and regulatory framework, which applies to the information and communications technology development in Kyrgyzstan.

4.2.4.3 Political Will & Public Support

National and international and donor organizations established supports for eCenter type venues in rural areas of Kyrgyzstan. The representative of the Public Information and Resource Center under President Administration of Kyrgyz Republic stated at the Osh Oblast administration organized e-government seminar, the need of establishing more centers of public access. In the discussion with the representative of the Association of Operators, the centers of public access are an important means of providing services to citizens who are in remote and rural areas. Therefore, there is political understanding of the need to have these centers.

4.2.4.4 Organization and Networking

The Civil Initiative for Internet Policy Foundation (CIIP) maintains and supports the network of the eCenters, which were established through LMI project. The CIIP provides support to eCenters through transferring rights to organize training courses on computer literacy with award of certificates, national promotion campaign for the eCenters network (through TV, press, radio and other mass media), technical consultation and support, legal and accounting consulting, formation of a range of the proposed services and goods, providing the elements of the firm's style, design support, opportunity to purchase Internet connection, equipment and consumables at 15% discount than market prices, providing access to free-of-charge email, as well as hosting the centers' website.

The information about the eCenters posted at www.ecenters.kg includes detailed reports on each eCenter's activities in the past, number of users served and types of services offered to the local community.

The eCenters' managers mentioned the regular communications with CIIP. The

communiciations include offers of new services, information opportunities and opportunities, to participate in various types of projects and programs.

4.2.4.5 Partnerships.

The eCenters uses a public-private partnership model to deliver information and services to citizens. The eCenters were established by using existing businesses that are operating in rural areas of Kyrgyzstan to provide information technology services and enhancing the Internet connection. The CIIP cooperated with eCenters to deliver information and services to rural and remote areas via an initiative of the Government of Kyrgyzstan and also supported by international and donor organizations (in this case by USAID). The private sector contributed their own funding for premises, staff and operation of eCenters. While the public sector, not-for-profit organizations – CIIP, AED and financial support from USAID donated the money to ensure delivery of services to underserved citizens of rural and remote areas of Kyrgyzstan.

4.2.4.6 Other Environment Factors

The research team came across a center of public access located at the postal service of Nookat. According to information provided by the Public Information and Resource Center under President Administration of Kyrgyz Republic, there are 44 centers of the public access established by the Foundation for Information Future. Moreover, there were 16 centers of Internet Access and Training Program established with the support and assistance of IREX. There were seven public access points (PAPs) established with the support and assistance of UNDP. And there were a number of other initiatives.

Based on above information, there are a number of initiatives creating access points centers throughout Kygyzstan. However, there is little coordination among access centers as well as utilization of existing resources in access centers.

4.2.1 For Publicly Funded Venues only: Revenue Streams

4.2.1.1 Budget

Total Budget for Fiscal Year fiscal year

Local currency name	amount (local currency)	
Approx. equivalent in USD	based on exchange rate of	on date .

No information was specified to the budget of eCenters, because they were private entities.

4.2.1.2 Relative size of budget

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

Other Comments:

There is no information available as to the overall investment of the private businesses into the eCenters, but LMI project allocated 25,000 USD for each of the initial six eCenters. On the www.ecenters.kg, the allocation for eCenter was about 20,000 USD (saved 5,000 USD for each center).

4.2.1.3 Sources of funding

Sources of funding:	Approximate % of total budget	Comments
Government sources:		
International donors:	120,000 USD	The total amount of support provided for six centers (20,000USD each)
National donors:		
User fees / services:	120,000 USD	All funds were allocated for providing access to Internet and participation in training for citizens.
Other (name)		
Other (name)		

Other (name)		

Other Comments:

The eCenters issued and distributed free coupons for one hour of computer training and five hours of Internet access. At of end of December 2006, there were 1,941 people who received subsidized computer literacy training and 8,593 five hour Internet access coupons distributed. Internet coupons were distributed to people in the training courses as well as people who came to the eCenter solely for Internet access. Since the project finished, no stipends were distributed for access to Internet and no free computer literacy trainings were conducted.

4.2.1.4 Paths and Flows of resources

AED channeled 120,000 USD to CIIP and was further distributed to six eCenters upon presentation of the vouchers for access to Internet and computer literacy training.

USAID funded these resources, therefore they were tax exempt in Kyrgyzstan. An expert committee, comprised from representatives of CIIP, AED and USAID, decided about the funding.

4.2.1.5 Fees and Cost Recovery

The funds were allocated quarterly and schedule for one year. The first two quarters, access to the Internet and computer trainings were fully subsidized by the LMI project. From the 3rd quarter, the subsidies were reduced and certain portions of the fees were charged to the citizens. Intially the fees were 60% from project funding and 40% paid by citizens. From the 4th quarter, the fee structure changed to 40% from project funding and 60% covered by the citizens. After the 1st year of operation, the eCenters should provide access to Internet and computer literacy training, however, these services would be fee based.

4.2.1.6 Cost Categories

Cost Categories for Operation:	Approximate % of total budget	Comments
Staff (salaries, benefits)	520 USD	Taken on the example of

		the Nookat eCenter. The cost is on monthly basis
Building Infrastructure	91 USD	
Utilities	55 USD	
Staff Training		This cost was not included in the example of Nookat eCenter.
Computers / Technology		This cost was not included in the example of Nookat eCenter.
Marketing expenses	2,944 USD	
Total	100%	

Other Comments:

The costs were taken from the Nookat eCenter's business plan submitted to CIIP when they applied for funding to deliver services to the local community through LMI project. The costs were estimates of how much would be required to deliver services for Internet access and providing computer literacy trainings. The costs differ from eCenter to eCenter, depending on the needs and demands of a particular venue.

4.2.1.7 Recent changes and future trends

Since the project finished at the end of 2006, the eCenters were providing their usual services to the community – Internet access and computer literacy trainings along with their own previously conducted services. At the time of the visits, the eCenters in Karakol, Ivanovka and Nookat were providing their services for fees to the community. The eCenter in Osh was closed for summer holiday and renovations in the building, but the team met the manager.

During the discussion with a representative of CIIP and eCenters managers, there are plans to introduce distance learning and telemedicine projects using existing eCenters' capacity. The eCenters managers stated they are planning to providing services as they have been for last two years.

4.2.2 Case Example for Venue # 2: eCenters

eCenter in Ivanovka.

The eCenter in Ivanovka is located in the former utility services building on the 1st floor. The cente[r] occupies three rooms. In the entrance, the operator sells units for mobile phones, enables access t[o] Internet/computer use and sells phones. In the 2nd room (which is in a picture), there is a computer cente[r] with eight computers and a facility for IP telephone. The young people in the photo were regular customer[s] of eCenters. At the time of eCenter visit in Ivanovka, there were 3-4 people coming to use IP telephone, tw[o] people were using Internet and at least ten people came to upload units to their mobile phones.

The entrance to eCenter in Ivanovka village.

These were users at eCenter in Ivanovka.

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eCenter in Karakol.

The eCenter in Karakol is called the Asia Center and is located in close proximity to the University of Issy

Kul. The center occupies 4 rooms which provide different services – one room is sells computers an

uploads units, second room is computers networked and accessed to Internet, and third room is production

The first photo below represents main entrance to the "Asia Center" and sign outside of the eCenter. Th

second room is a room with computers for public use and access to Internet.

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<u>*eCenter in Barskoon.*</u>

The eCenter in Barskoon is located on a main road from Karakol to Bishkek. It was closed at the time of th

visit and was unable to contact manager of eCenter because her phone was disconnected. The photo is th
sign on the front side of the local center (club).

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eCenter in Kochkor.

The eCenter in Kochkor is located in the streets of Kochkor, off the main road. It also was closed at the tim
of visit.

eCenter in Osh.

The eCenter in Osh is located at the Children's Center. The eCenter was not working at the time of visit, however, the manager of the eCenter came for a meeting with the research team. The photo represents computer room, where trainings are conducted and users can have access to Internet. The manager of eCenter in Osh said he is planning to continue conducting trainings, but design them for specialized computer and software applications to train future software developers.

Since the eCenter was being renovating, there was only one person at the eCenter.

Jamil is interviewing the only one user at the eCenter.

eCenter in Nookat.

The eCenter in Nookat was working. Nookat is a village located about 40-50 kms from Osh. The eCenter i

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located on the second floor of the IT center. The first floor was occupied by a business selling phone, unit[...] for mobile phones and accessories for mobile phones. The eCenter at the time of visit was quite busy wit[...] women calling their children working in Russia. The photo represents this. The manager has his own roo[...] which he is planning to install more computers.

Manager of eCenter in Nookat.

Nookat eCenter is located on the second floor of the busy business building.

4.3 Venue # 3: Internet clubs

4.3.1 Overall Venue Assessment

According to an unofficial source, there are over 6,000 Internet clubs in Kyrgyzstan. The Internet clubs are all private businesses and provide access to Internet

The Internet clubs are operational in all big cities of Kyrgyzstan and in some villages. There are few in selo levels.

The Internet clubs are one of the popular public access venues. The usual services offered by Internet clubs are Internet access, printing/copying/scanning, copying files/music/movies to CDs/DVDs, IP telephone and unit uploading.

4.3.2 Access

The Internet clubs are located in easy access places. On average, an Internet center has between 8-25 computers, a printer/copier/scanner. Some of Internet clubs are equipped with webcams.

Internet clubs' operating hours are usually from 9:00am-7:00pm. However, there are some Internet clubs open 24 hours.

The Internet clubs usually have a DSL connection. They charge between 30-40 soms/hour (**USD)** during day time and some offer a fee of 60-70 soms (1.67-1.94USD) for Internet access between 10:00pm-7:00am (+- 1 hour).

4.3.2.1 Physical Access

Because Internet clubs are businesses, they are operational in urban and non-urban areas of Kyrgyzstan as long as there is a business opportunity. The Internet clubs provide services to people who can use computers and equipment, while access to Internet is 30 soms/hour (0.83USD).

The rates are fixed rates at Internet clubs.

4.3.2.2 Appropriate Technology & Services

The technologies at Internet clubs are the latest technologies. They offer information and services demanded by the population and charged to generate income for the Internet clubs' business.

All services offered by Internet clubs are 100% digital ICT services. Since most of the Internet Service Providers charge for traffic, rather than for bandwidth, the Internet clubs use different technologies to manage the situation. For example, the Direct PC technology is widely used in Kyrgyzstan as explained by the Executive director of Association of Operators.

4.3.2.3 Affordability

The cost is about 20 soms/hour (0.56USD) to use a computer, the cost for Internet clubs is about 30 soms/ hour (0.83USD). The majority of users of Internet clubs are students and school children. Since the visit of research team came at end of June, schools and universities were closed for holidays, so there were fewer users than usual.

4.3.2.4 Fees for Services

Access to Internet

Indicate amount in local currency 30

Equivalent in US Dollars: 0.83 USD

Date of estimate June 21, 2008

and local currency name som

Use of computer

Indicate amount in local currency 20

Equivalent in US Dollars: 0.56 USD

Date of estimate June 21, 2008

and local currency name som

Uploading units for mobile services

Indicate amount in local currency 5 soms extra-charge for each unit uploading transaction

Equivalent in US Dollars: 0.14 USD

Date of estimate June 21, 2008

and local currency name som

IP telephony

Indicate amount in local currency 2.5 – 10 soums (depending on the country calling)

Equivalent in US Dollars: 0.07 – 0/28 USD

Date of estimate June 21, 2008

and local currency name som

Assistance to users on finding some information from Internet (some Internet clubs offer this service)

Indicate amount in local currency 15 – 50 soums (depending on how long does it take to search for information)

Equivalent in US Dollars: 0.42 – 1.40 USD

Date of estimate June 21, 2008

and local currency name som

There are some minor differences in prices offered by Internet clubs in rural and urban areas. if they have latest computers (new or recently purchased) or if their Internet connection speed is much higher thenInternet clubs charge more than 30 soms/hour (0.83USD).

4.3.2.5 Geographic Distribution

Most of the Internet clubs are located in major cities and in some villages. This depends on the possibility of having Internet connections established through Kyrgyz Telecom, the only provider at this stage of Internet service in rural area. Recently, the mobile operators are starting to provide mobile services and access to Internet in some rural areas.

4.3.2.5.1   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).

Impossible to provide map of locations of Internet clubs, because they are not licensed and there is no record of Internet clubs in the country.

4.3.2.6   Other Factors affecting Access

The main factor affecting access to public information is the state of the overall infrastructure in the country. The Kyrgyz Telecom, the main telecommunications service companym owns the network backbone of the Kyrgyz Republic and most of its coverage is analogue. The Kyrgyz Telecom is upgrading their network to digital, but it does not cover the whole country. Therefore, there are few possibilities of businesses to establish Internet clubs in rural and remote areas of Kyrgyzstan.

4.3.3   Capacity & Relevance

There are usually 2-3 people working in Internet clubs.

The main functions of operators are to open up the computers for users, upload units for mobile phones and bill customers for services provided. In some cases, the operators assist the users in finding information or fixing equipment or software related minor problems. There is no need for special training to provide services at Internet clubs, because the majority of the users are people with computers skills and few come who require assistance.

4.3.3.1   Staff Size

On average, the Internet club is operated by 2-3 people. One is a manager and the other two are operators who rotate shifts during nights operation. When the research team visited one of the Internet clubs in Osh, it was found the operators are mostly students who are working during their summer holidays.

It was seen that the staff size differs based on the size of Internet club. In larger Internet clubs with over 20 computers, there were 4-5 people working there.

4.3.3.2   Staff Training

The staff of Internet clubs open up computer for access, upload units for mobile phones and bill

customers. The staff assist users in finding access to information and communications services. Their assistance is offered when the computer hangs or freezes, minor network problems and problems with software and applications. Therefore, no specialized training is required for operators in Internet clubs.

4.3.3.3 Services Offered

	Services Offered	Comments
1.	Internet access	All Internet clubs offer Internet access
2.	Computer use	Typing of documents, working on essays, dissertation.
3.	Printing/copying/scanning of documents	This service depends of availability of equipment at Internet clubs.
4.	IP telephone	This differs by Internet clubs, some Internet clubs may not offer this service
5.	Payment for upload units for mobile services	There is a special software through which the operators upload units for mobile phones
6.	Assistance to users on finding information on Internet	The "Neoplanet" Internet club offers this kind of service and charges some fees for this service.
7.	Internet usage between 21-00 till 7-00am	Some Internet clubs offer this kind of service.
8.	Operators download to disk and flash disks information downloaded from Internet	Some Internet clubs offer this kind of service.

The salient difference relate to fees, which are charged by Internet clubs. This depends on speed of connection, equipment used and on how far the Internet club is located from Bishkek, the Internet club' fees differ, but only by about an additional 5 soms/hour.

4.3.3.4 Programs for Underserved Communities

Due to the fact Internet clubs are businesses, there are few programs offered at these venues for underserved communities. This relates to the services offered mostly for children.

4.3.3.5   Relevant Content

Available Content:

The available content is what is available on Internet

Other Content Needed:

Content on local language and locally relevant content.

Local Initiatives to build needed content:

Not known

Source*: Interview of Internet clubs operators*

4.3.3.6   Services & Information Available in Local Languages

The interviewed operators stated there is not enough content and the content which is available is not in the right language.

Apart of costs, lack of training and location of Internet clubs are the principal barriers for accessing information and services in these venues. The users specified that there is insufficient content in right languages (5.9%).

4.3.3.7   Types of Uses

According to interview of operators of Internet clubs, the majority of users (40%) search for information on education, followed by personal information (35%), entertainment (21.7%), news (11%) and information on government services (10%).

In the users' interview, it was also stated that 34.9% of users search for educational and personal information, followed by news (16.4%), entertainment (9.3%) and information on government services (4.7%).

There are no major deviations between users and operator responses.

4.3.3.8   Number, Type and Frequency of Users

Operators reported 52.8% of users are male.

About 45% of users come to the Internet centers on daily basis, 25% come frequently, 18.3% come regularly, 12.5% come occasionally and 9.2% of users come rarely.

Of all users at Internet clubs, there were equal number males and females interviewed. Users between 15-35 years old make up 81.8% and 9.1% of users are either up to 14 years old or between 36-60 years old. There are no users over 60 years old.

According users' interviews, the majority of users come to the center frequently (45.5%), regularly (22.7%), on daily basis (13.6%) and 9.1% of users come to Internet clubs occasionally or rarely.

4.3.3.9 Users Capacity to use information and services offered

According to operators, 47.8% of users are people with college/university level of education, 36.8% are people with up to high school education level, 11.1% of users had elementary education and 4.3% had no formal education.

Of interviews conducted, 56.3% of users had up to high school education level, 31.3% of users had college/university education level and 12.5% had elementary level of education.

4.3.3.10 Training Courses for Users

Training courses: No

ICT specific training courses: No

4.3.3.11 Integration into daily routines

The users of Internet clubs look for information on education, personal and news and they can easily integrate information and knowledge received through Internet clubs into their daily routine.

4.3.3.12 Users Perceptions about the Venue

Users have positive perception about Internet clubs. The Internet clubs offer services which are demanded by the public. However, as ascertained from users' interviews, the principal barrier of

accessing information at Internet clubs is cost – 42.2%. There is perceived lack of the training at Internet clubs, 20% of users stated.

Users will go to the Internet clubs in most of the cases, unless those venues are not working or fully booked which was ascertain from The interviews held with users of Information and Resource Centers, eCenters and public libraries. The users of the Internet clubs said if their preferred Internet club is not operational; they would rather go to other Internet club.

4.3.3.13 Social Appropriation of Information and Generation of New Knowledge

According to interview of operators, the majority of the users of Internet clubs are students and school children (50% of users are users with up to high school education level, 27.3% are users with college/university education level and 22.7% are users with elementary only education level). They usually look for thesis or dissertation references or subjects they are studying for their course work or thesis.

In addition, students and school children come to Internet clubs to print out their presentations, course work and other school/university related work.

4.3.3.14 Trust, Safety & Privacy

Since the Internet clubs only provide access to Internet, the safety, security and privacy of the information and services received in those venues depends on application and software

The Internet club "Shmelle" does not allow games to play or accessing restricted sites. Since they have digital cameras installed, they can monitor if users are playing games or accessing restricted sites.

4.3.3.15 Gaps and Opportunities in information & services offered

According to user surveys of Internet clubs, 21.7% of users stated there is a lack of training in these venues. While 11.8% of users stated there is a lack of content offered in the right language and 5.8% stated that the Internet clubs do not offer sufficient services.

Considering, there are some Kyrgyz language, such as www.govservices.kg or the database of legal and regulatory documents at www.toktom.kg. The Internet clubs could make a list of the

commonly used websites and post it, or if possible offer basics training on Internet browsing.

4.3.4   Enabling Environment

The overall environment for operation of Internet clubs is favourable in cities, such as Bishkek, Osh and Jalalabad. However, there is a challenge to open Internet club in rural areas, such as villages and selo because the existing infrastructure is poor quality. It is mostly analogue and difficult to access the Internet.

The Government of Kyrgyzstan is paying attention to delivering information and communications technologies to rural parts of the country. At this stage, the access to information and services using communications technologies are offered through public access centers established with the support and assistance of the international and donor organizations.

4.3.4.1   Local & National Economy

Kyrgyzstan is considered one of the poorest countries in the world. Thus, the cost of access to information and communications are relatively high, therefore, not many people can use these services.

In addition, there are many people who are not familiar with the information and communications technologies and do not have sufficient skills and knowledge to benefit from it. The fact that Internet clubs do not provide any training for users, it is only accessed by people who know how to use it. Thus restricting the number of users. The older generations seldom use these facilities as extroplated from the age of users in the surveys.

4.3.4.2   Legal & Regulatory Framework

The Internet clubs follow legal and regulatory framework of information and communications technology in Kyrgyzstan. Still, there is no information on how many Internet clubs are operational in the country. Considering they do not need to get a license for operation from regulators, the only measn of receiving information about the number of Internet clubs are via tax forms. In addition the executive director of the Association of Operators explained each of the Internet Service Providers and mobile operators work independently and they have their own

gateway for Internet traffic. Thus, the cost of the connection to Internet is quite high for end-user. Moreover, the cost of Internet is not for bandwidth, rather it is for traffic. Therefore, the more websites the user access, the more costly the access.

4.3.4.3 Political Will & Public Support

The Government of Kyrgyzstan is currently focusing on implementation of the e-government program and providing access to government services on-line. The Public Information and Resource Center under the President Administration of the Kyrgyz Republic is maintaining and providing support for www.govservices.kg – a portal site to the government services online. If Internet clubs work together with the government to serve as access venues to information and services, the Government will support them.

A number of the users in rural areas expressed a need more Internet clubs. So, the citizens of the rural areas are interested in accessing information and services offered by the Internet clubs and realize the importance of Internet clubs' contribution to the reducing digital divide between rural and urban parts of population.

4.3.4.4 Organization and Networking

There is no formal organization or networking among all Internet clubs. However, there are a number of clubs which were setup as branches. For example, the "Shmelle" and "Neoplanet" are part of the network of "Shmelle" and "Neoplanet" businesses, which use the same structure.

4.3.4.5 Partnerships

All Internet clubs are business type models.

4.3.4.6 Other Environment Factors

describe

4.3.1 For Publicly Funded Venues only: Revenue Streams

154

4.3.1.1 Budget

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

4.3.1.2 Relative size of budget

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

Other Comments:

describe

4.3.1.3 Sources of funding

Sources of funding:	Approximate % of total budget	Comments
Government sources:		
International donors:		
National donors:		
User fees / services:	100%	
Private investment	100%	
Other (name)		
Other (name)		

Other Comments:

Since all Internet clubs are private businesses, their revenue stream comes from the services provided for fee to citizens.

4.3.1.4 Paths and Flows of resources

All Internet clubs are private businesses, thus their resources are investment of individuals.

4.3.1.5 Fees and Cost Recovery

Since all Internet clubs are private businesses, they recover cost on the fees for services provided to users.

4.3.1.6 Cost Categories

Cost Categories for Operation:	Approximate % of total budget	Comments
Staff (salaries, benefits)	20%	
Building Infrastructure	10%	
Utilities	10%	
Staff Training		
Computers / Technology	20%	
Internet connection	40%	
Total	100%	

Other Comments:

The above information was impossible to receive since the Internet clubs operator's whom the research team interviewed did not have knowledge and information about the budgeting of the Internet clubs. Therefore, the inserted numbers are estimates of allocation of budget.

4.3.1.7 Recent changes and future trends

The recent tendency of Internet clubs is to start providing services in rural areas.

4.3.2 Case Example for Venue # 3: Internet club in Karakol

The research team visited an Internet club in Karakol located across the street from the University of Issyk Kul'.

The first photo is a sign outside of Internet club, which provides Internet, IP telephone, library, copying and coffee shop.

The second photo shows that there are 12 computers, scanner and a display that sells CDs.

The third photo is a photo of an operator, who is billing customer. He also has his own computer that he enables to access computers and writes CDs/DVDs.

The fourth photo is a coffee-shop part, where they sell beverages and it has very high quality copy machine.

There is no picture taken of the IP telephone. These are two booths with the telephones where users can use and speak privately.

At the time of visit, there were four people (including two German tourists using the Internet club and two ladies were using IP telephone.
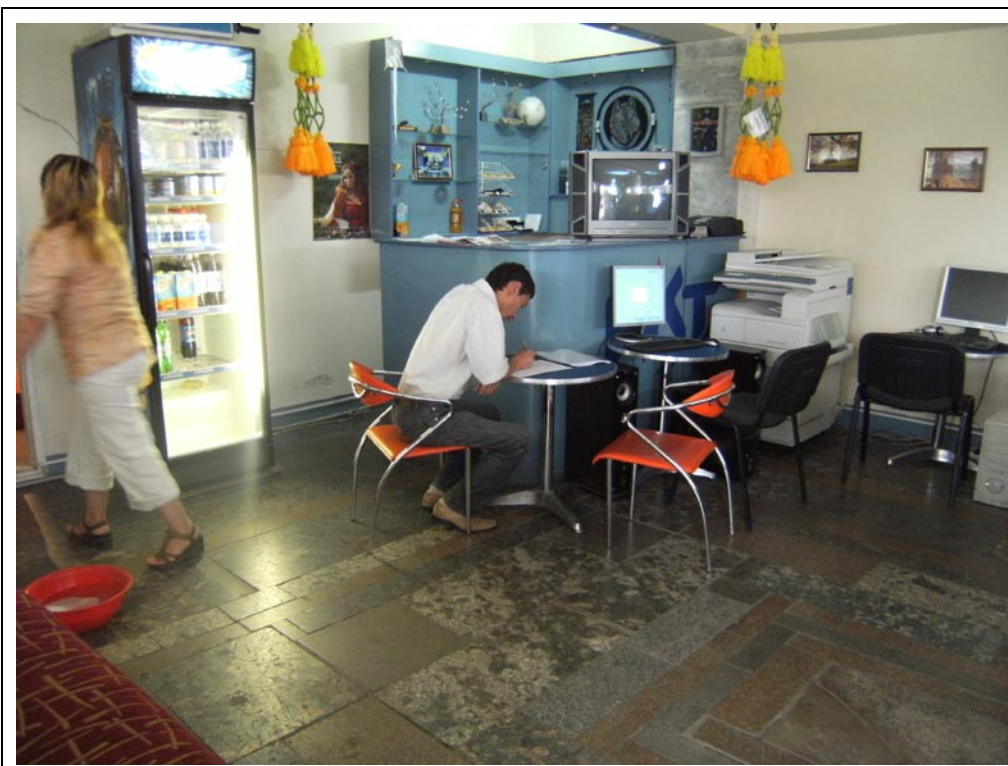

Logo outside of Internet club in Karakol.

Facilities and users at Internet club.

The user is paying for his time at Internet club.

Director of Internet club filling out the questionnaire. Behind him, there is a snack bar and small coffee making stand.

4.4 Venue # 4: Information and Resource Centers

4.4.1 Overall Venue Assessment

During Phase I and II, the research team investigated different venues identified as Information and Resource Centers. These venues provide information of specific nature, such as legal information and patent information. In addition, they provide access to Internet for less than market price. The fourth venue of public access to information was defined those centers in a common description of Information and Resource Centers.

4.4.2 Access

The Information and Resource Centers are usually equipped with 3 to 5 computers, connected to Internet, have printer/copier/scanner and a library of books, journals, magazines, newspapers and publications that are mostly topics related to the agenda of the Information and Resource Centers. These centers are usually open from 9:00am-6:00pm.

The majority of Information and Resource Centers have "Toktom", a database of legal and regulatory documents of Kyrgyz Republic, that is provided for free-of-charge or subsidized fees. Therefore, the information and services offered by the Information and Resource Centers are affordable for the population.

4.4.2.1 Physical Access

The access to "Toktom" at the Legal Information Center located at the National Library is free-of-charge for anyone.

The Center of Foundation for the Cooperation and Support of Legal and Economic Reform in Kyrgystan offers access to "Toktom" for a fee of 50 soms/hour **(USD)**. However, legal and judicial workers have a grant for free access to "Toktom".

The Osh Media resource center provides services free of charge for journalists, reporters,

students and teachers of Journalism School of the Osh University.

The Government Patent of Technical Information Department of differential information services' provides free access to services offered at the Government Patent of Technical Information Center. The services include access to "Toktom", electronic juridical dictionary, database of "analytic signatures and articles" (this database gives annotations on articles) and electronic cataloguing software "IRBIZ", used in 11 libraries.

4.4.2.2 Appropriate Technology & Services

The Information and Resource Centers usually offer access to a database of resources and through access to Internet to resources on-line.

4.4.2.3 Affordability

Considering some of the Information and Resource Centers are free of charge and others provide services for subsidized fees, the services offered at these venues are affordable for the general public, especially lower income, lower social status and lower education level.

4.4.2.4 Fees for Services

Depending on the type of Information and Resource Centers, some of them charge fees for services, some do not. For example, the Legal Information and Resource Centers at the National Library of Kyrgyzstan and in Osh Oblasti Library were free of charge. The center setup by the Foundation for Cooperation and Support of Legal and Economic Reform of Kyrgyzstan provides fee-based services with the fees lower than the market price.

Access to databases

Indicate amount in local currency 50
Equivalent in US Dollars: 1.40 USD
Date of estimate June 24, 2008
and local currency name som
Access to Internet

Indicate amount in local currency 20

Equivalent in US Dollars: 0.56 USD

Date of estimate June 24, 2008

and local currency name som

Access to databases for legal and judicial workers

Indicate amount in local currency free

Equivalent in US Dollars: free

Date of estimate June 24, 2008

and local currency name som

Access to database "Toktom, electronic judicial dictionary, database "analytic signatures and articles" and electronic cataloguing software "IRBIZ"

Indicate amount in local currency free

Equivalent in US Dollars: free

Date of estimate June 25, 2008

and local currency name som

The Information and Resource Centers with similar specializations vary little from centers in different region. The Legal Information and Resource Center in National Library and Osh Oblasti Library provide the same services– access to "Toktom" and/or "Adviser" database of legal and regulatory documents of Kyrgyz Republic.

The Government Patent of Technical Information and Resource Center under the Department of Differential Information Services has "Toktom", an electronic juridical dictionary and a database of "analytic signatures and articles". The latter database gives annotations on articles. They also have electronic catalogue of books and publications "IRBIZ", used in 11 libraries of Kyrgyzstan.

4.4.2.5 Geographic Distribution

The Information and Resource Centers includes a wide range of Information and Resource Centers setup in the different locations of Kyrgyz Republic.

The research team found Legal Information and Resource Centers in Osh Oblasti Library and National Library of Kyrgyzstan.

There is one Government Patent of Technical Information and Resource Center under the Department of Differential Information Services.

A center setup by Foundation for the Cooperation and Support of Legal and Economic Reform in Kyrgystan located in Osh oblasti center.

There was an Information and Resource Center for Democracy established by the Bureau on Democracy, Human Rights and Labour of State Secretariat of USA,, located in the Gul'cha village.

There was an UNDP funded public access point in Gul'cha village.

There are 470 centers that are supported by Community Development and Investment Agency of Kyrgyz Republic (ARIS) and the research team visited one center, located in the Ivanovka village.

There are 44 public access centers supported by the Foundation for Information Future.

There are 18 centers of public access at the postal offices in raions and villages.

There was a media resource centers in Osh Oblasti Library setup by Regional Representatives office of UNESCO and USIS of USA Embassy in Kyrgyzstan. There is a branch of Osh Media Resource Center in Jalalabad.

There is a Public Information and Resource Center under President Administration of the Kyrgyz Republic established with the support of Soros Foundation, UNDP and President Administration located at the National Library of Kyrgyz Republic.

4.4.2.5.1 Map

Description of map:

4.4.2.6 Other Factors affecting Access

A factor affecting access at the Information and Resource Centers is the services offered at certain centers are designated for specialists. These include lawyers, legal and judicial workers, journalists and reporters, students studying at journalism schools, teachers teaching at the journalism schools, technical staff, and citizens of rural communities.

4.4.3 Capacity & Relevance

The content provided by the Information and Resource Centers is relevant and actual to the citizens. They can easily obtain information and services from those centers. For example, the journalists and reporters use this facility for information sharing, networking as well as a resource center for writing their articles and publications. The resources of legal information centers are designated for the legal and judicial workers to benefit from accessing laws, regulations, orders, degrees and other policy documents issued by President, Prime Minister, government, Parliament or other stakeholders.

Since most of the resources are computer-based resources, any person may search through a range of documents and find necessary documents quickly. In addition, the necessary documents can be printed out and make copies.

4.4.3.1 Staff Size

The Information and Resource Centers are usually operated by 1-2 people – manager and operator. The managers are usually trained in management of the centers, services it can offer, book keeping and other matters, such as operation of legal information database "Toktom".

The operators are trained in accessing available information and providing services.

The research team discovered a person, who was working as volunteer in the Information Center for Democracy in Gul'cha village. He is a young man about 20 years old. He was an assisting operator finding necessary information from Internet and assisting in preparation of the digests for the regular users.

The media resource center has a staff of four people because their center has more equipment

and larger facilities. These include a resource and information center with 12 computers connected to Internet, two printers, three digital cameras, one digital voice recorder, three professional video cameras, two fax machines and two copy machines. In addition, the center has a telephone with the inter-state connection, access to Internet and a library of over 300 books and publications in Russian, Kyrgyz, English and Uzbek languages. This center conducted training and education for journalists and reports. Moreover, the legal adviser was working part-time at this center to assist journalist in dealing with judicial and administrative processes,.

4.4.3.2 Staff Training

The staff of Information and Resource Centers are trained in retrieving information and providing services. The Information Center for Democracy in Gul'cha, the operator regularly participates in the trainings organized by the National Democratic Institute, that implemented a project of establishing Information Centers for Democracy. The trainings are conducted 3 to 4 times per year and it is an opportunity for Information Centers for Democracy to share information, experiences and knowledge as well as introducing the new services offered for all Information Centers for Democracy.

Due to the fact the centers are equipped with computer and access to Internet, operators communicate with each other and discuss problems and issues and learn from each other experiences.

4.4.3.3 Services Offered

Services Offered	Comments
1. Access to computers	All Information and Resource Centers have 3-5 computers
2. Access to Internet	All Information and Resource Centers have access to Internet
3. Access to "Toktom" – database of legal and regulatory documents	Almost all Information and Resource Centers have "Toktom" database subscription
4. Access to books, magazines, journals, newspapers and other	All Information and Resource Centers have a small library

		publications
5.	Access to equipment (printers, scanners, copiers, etc.)	All Information and Resource Centers are equipment with this equipment
6.	Access to digital camera, digital video camera, voice recorder, etc.	Media resource center has this equipment and allows to use them free of charge by journalists, reports, students, teachers and visitors to Media resource center
7.	Access to digests of government information and services	Government information and services are available on-line, so every user of Information and Resource Centers can access it. Nevertheless, the Information Center for Democracy makes a digest for reading.
8.	Access to training, seminars and workshops	The Media Information center provides free education and training activities for media workers. The other centers also have facility to host seminars and workshops.
9.	Access to legal adviser's assistance	The Media Information center provides free access to lawyer, who assists journalists in court and administrative processes.

The Information and Resource Centers provide similar types of information and services, but differs from each other on the specifics of clientele depending on if they are legal and judicial workers, lawyers, media workers, technical people, civil servants, students, orteachers.

4.4.3.4 Programs for Underserved Communities

Since most of the information, services and facilities offered by Information and Resource Centers are for free or of reduced rates, they are designed to provide services for people who cannot afford to access a computer, Internet or database at the regular public access venues.

According to the Information and Resource Centers operators' interviews, the majority of users at these centers are peopled of medium level income – 67.8%, 19.6% are people with low level of income and 12.6% are people with high level of income. About 50% of users are people with up to high school education level, 38% are people with college or university education level, 11.4% are people with an elementary education and 0.6% are people with no formal education.

Available Content:

"Toktom" database of legal and regulatory documents.

Other Content Needed:

Access to legal and regulatory documents of other countries

Local Initiatives to build needed content:

"Toktom" database has been developed by "Toktom" company of Kyrgyz Republic. It started development of "Toktom" database in 1992. Currently, it is the first non-governmental archive of legal and regulatory documents useful for everyday work of lawyers, auditors, accountants, people working in banks and financial organizations, managers of enterprises and government decision makers. The "Toktom" company supplies and installs the "Toktom" database, and also updates contents of the database on a monthly basis. The "Toktom" database is currently used by over 2,000 clients and customers from private, public and non-governmental organizations. The online "Toktom" database contains about 114,224 documents and materials in Russian language and 36,570 resources in Kyrgyz language.

Source*: www.toktom.kg, http:online.toktom.kg.*

4.4.3.6   Services & Information Available in Local Languages

The "Toktom" database is available both in English and Kyrgyz languages. The content of the "Toktom" database is searchable by text, key words, rubrics and by requests.

4.4.3.7   Types of Uses

According to information provided by Information and Resource Centers operators, 36% of users seek information related to education, 20% look for information on government services, 16% search for information on judicial practices, 12% look for personal information and 10% look for news.

The users' interviews at Information and Resource Centers were conducted among 24% of users who seek information related to government services, 20% look for information related to education and news and 12% search for information related to health and agriculture.

4.4.3.8 Number, Type and Frequency of Users

About 56% of users of Information and Resource Centers are male. Users come to these centers frequently - 34%, 20% come on daily basis, 17% come regularly, 15% come rarely and 14% come occasionally to the Information and Resource Centers.

People with medium level of income make up 67.8% of users, 19.6% are people with low income level and 12.6% are people with high income levels. The interviews were conducted with 36.4% beimg medium level of income, 9.1% were low level income and 54.5% did not answer this question.

4.4.3.9 Users Capacity to use information and services offered

According to operators' interviews, 50% of users are people with up to high school education level, 38% are people with college or university level, 11.4% are people with elementary education and 0.6% have with no formal education.

Of all interviewed users of the Information and Resource Centers, 66.7% of users were college/university level and 33.3% were users with high school education level.

4.4.3.10 Training Courses for Users

Different training courses are offered at different Information and Resource Centers.

Training courses at media resource center use modern standards of journalism, writing, publications on separate themes (ethical issues, issues of border town, medical, economic.), trainings on legal issues, trainings in Kyrgyz and Uzbek languages for raion newspaper journalists,

ICT specific training courses use computers, access Internet, use equipment (digital camera, digital video camera, and digital voice recorder.)

Training courses at legal information centers access and use of "Toktom" database, conduct

searchs of the documents and materials from "Toktom".

4.4.3.11 Integration into daily routines

Since Information and Resource Centers offer services, the users of those services can integrate information and services obtained from information centers into their daily routines. For example, the users of media resource center can prepare their reports at the center and publish them.

The Information Center for Democracy users share information and services received from the center with other citizens of Gul'cha village and discuss it among their friends, colleagues and acquaintances.

The Public Information Center of President Administration of Kyrgyz Republic users can find answers to questions on how to get passports extended, how to get social insurance, and any updates on the pension funds, job opportunities, etc.

The Legal Information Center users have access to a database of legal and regulatory document and can ask for assistance from a lawyer of the center on specific matters related to citizen issues.

4.4.3.12 Users Perceptions about the Venue

About 33.3% of users interviewed stated that there is not enough content at the Information and Resource Centers, about 11.1% said that the computers are old, there is a slow upload of databases, and there is a limited hours of usage of computers at those venues. In some cases, it was mentioned that the users are allowed to work 1-2 hours and must vacate workstation if there is a queue of people to use this facilty.

When users are asked, where they would go to for information, only 1 to 2 users stated the name of the Information and Resource Centers located nearby.

After completing users' interviews at the Information Center for Democracy, the research team asked interviewed users about other in the village of Gul'cho. However, only one user out of three users present was able to name the neighbouring Information and Resource Center.

Not many people are aware about the existence of other types of venues.

4.4.3.13 Social Appropriation of Information and Generation of New Knowledge

The information and services offered at Information and Resource Centers were appropriate and provided opportunities for users to learn new skills and get necessary information and use it in their everyday life.

4.4.3.14 Trust, Safety & Privacy

There is full trust from users on information and services received from Information and Resource Centers.

4.4.3.15 Gaps and Opportunities in information & services offered

As stated by users, there is a lack of content in these Information and Resource Centers. Some users stressed the need of conducting trainings for users.

4.4.4 Enabling Environment

The Government of Kyrgyzstan and international and donor organization identified access to information as one of the issues to address. Although there is no legal and regulatory framework for Information and Resource Centers, a number of Information and Resource Centers with the support and assistance of the international and donor organizations,were established to satisfy the need of the citizens of rural areas to have access to information and adequate services. There is a strong cooperation between the Government of Kyrgyzstan and international donor organizations to address the need of providing access to information. Thus the majority of the Information and Resource Centers were setup with the support and assistance of these organizations.

There is a political will to support these initiatives expressed by the director of the Public

Information Center during the workshop on e-government and access to information at the Osh Oblasti center administration.

At the same time, there is good public support from local community for these venues. The research team was asked by elderly people in Gul'cha tell the National Democratic Institute not to close the Information Center for Democracy because it was serving their needs, and the people were getting necessary information and services through this center.

4.4.4.1 Local & National Economy

The information and services offered by Information and Resource Centers meet the needs and demands of the people. Considering Kyrgyzstan is one of the poorest countries in the world and few people are able to pay for such information and services, these centers provide information and services for community free of charge.

There were three elderly people in Information Center for Democracy in Gul'cho village, who were satisfied with the information and services received in the center. One of them comes from a neightbouring selo this center to read digest that is prepared by the operator of the center. (the selo is located about 10 kms from Gul'cho village).

4.4.4.2 Legal & Regulatory Framework

The "Toktom" database was established based on the development of program for information exchange with the government organizations. The main purpose of this program was development of an unified database of legal documents and receiving legal and regulatory documents and materials. The participants and users of this program are the Parliament, President Administration, Administration of Government, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Finance, National Bank and others. There are over 40 government and state organizations that participate in this program from the Parliament of Kyrgyz Republic and to the local government.

As for Osh Media Resource Center, it has over 205 members, who cooperate through media resource center. The members include television channels, radio stations, magazines, journals, newspapers and others.

4.4.4.3 Political Will & Public Support

There is a political will from decision makers and public support for these types of centers and contents provided at Information and Resource Centers.

4.4.4.4 Organization and Networking

There is no formal organization which unites Information and Resource Centers. However, in line of their specific services offered to clientele, there are organizations that allow networking, cooperation and coordination of work.

For example, the Osh Media Center is an organization, which unites over 200 media organizations, providing them with the resource, information and services, conducting trainings, workshops, seminars, assisting media organizations with the legal advise and consultations as well as enabling them to have access to information and services.

There are 17 Information Centers for Democracy established throughout the territory of Kyrgyzstan. The centers meet every 2-3 months.

4.4.4.5 Partnerships

There is no public-private partnership model used in the Information and Resource Centers. It is rather public-non-profit partnership because most of the Information and Resource Centers are operated by the non-profit organizations and are supported by public organizations and international and donor organizations.

4.4.4.6 Other Environment Factors

describe

4.4.1 For Publicly Funded Venues only: Revenue Streams

4.4.1.1 Budget

Total Budget for Fiscal Year fiscal year

172

Local currency name   amount (local currency)

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

comments

4.4.1.2 Relative size of budget

Relative Size of Budget for same year	Total budget (local currency)	Comments
Total national budget		
Education		
International and donor organizations		
Public Libraries		

Other Comments:

There was no information provided by operators of Information and Resource Centers on the budget. It was said the main income for budget are grants and projects. The Osh Media Resource Center charges 800 soms/year (equivalent to 22 USD) for its members. (There are over 200 members)

4.4.1.3 Sources of funding

Sources of funding:	Approximate % of total budget	Comments
Government sources:		
International donors:	98%	
National donors:		
User fees / services:	2%	
Other (name)		
Other (name)		
Other (name)		

Other Comments:

Above figures are overall estimates for Information and Resource Centers.

4.4.1.4 Paths and Flows of resources

In most cases, the Information and Resource Centers' projects are supported and financed by international and donor organizations because those centers are operated by not-profit organizations. There is no flow of funds from public sources.

4.4.1.5 Fees and Cost Recovery

The majority of the information and services offered by the Information and Resource Centers are free-of-charge. All the services at the Osh Media Resource Center are free of charge.

Fees apply in some cases. For example, the use of "Toktom" database of legal and regulatory documents is 50 soms/hour (1.39USD) at the legal information center. Access to Internet is 20 soms/hour (10 soms less than in Internet clubs). (0.56USD)

The Information Center for Democracy, Public Information Center of President Administration of Kyrgyz Republic, public access points and public access centers provide information and services free of charge.

4.4.1.6 Cost Categories

Cost Categories for Operation:	Approximate % of total budget	Comments
Staff (salaries, benefits)	50%	
Building Infrastructure	10%	
Utilities	15%	
Staff Training	10%	
Computers / Technology	10%	This includes subscriptions to the databases
Internet connection fee	5%	

Total	100%

Other Comments:

The above figures are overall average estimates for Information and Resource Centers.

4.4.1.7   Recent changes and future trends

Some of the projects are finishing and further sustainability of Information and Resource Centers is becoming an issue. Although in most cases, upon completion of the projects, the capacity built within project is transferred to the local government and community, but there is not adequate funding available in the local government and community. Thus, the serious concerns are about the future of the centers. This was explicitly expressed by the operator and users of the Information Center for Democracy at Gul'cho village.

However, those centers which funding still remains, there is no concern yet at this stage.

4.4.2   Case Example for Venue # 4: Information and Resource Centers

Public Information Center of President Administration of Kyrgyz Republic.

The Public Information Center of President Administration of Kyrgyz Republic was established in 2005 as a separate independent entity. There are 14-16 people working at the PIC. The PIC was established with the support of UNICEF, Soros Foundation and other international and donor organizations.

The following photo represents Internet access center of PIC. There are about ten computers at the Internet access center.

The following is a photo of Director of the center.

These are staff of the Center, who manage www.govservices.kg websit and work with centers of public access.

Information center for democracy at Gul'cha

The Information Center for Democracy at Gul'cha village working for two years. The following photo represents the center.

These are aksakals who come to this center everyday.

Hot discussion with Janil about the education system of Kyrgyzstan.

One of the frequent users of center.

"We really need this center, so please tell to managers back in Bishkek – don't close this center".

Manager of center – "I just started working 6 months ago and I think, it's very important to have such center in our selo".

"We come here to read periodicals regularly".

Osh Media Resource Center

Manager of Osh Media Resource center.

5 SUCCESS FACTORS & STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Lessons in country

5.1.1 Information Needs

The most critical information needed by the underserved communities is information on the education services, government services, and news.

5.1.2 Where people go

The majority of people go to the public libraries, Internet clubs, Information and Resource Centers and eCenters if available.

5.1.3 Access, Capacity & Environment affect Public Access

There are limited access opportunities to information and services for people, apart from eCenters or Information and Resource Centers. The capacity of people is still inadequate and requires an extensive number of capacity building exercises, especially targeted at underserved communities.

5.1.4 Role of ICT

The ICT can play one of the leading roles in public access to information and communications. More Information and Resource Centers are required in rural and remote areas of Kyrgyzstan. There is a lack of the locally relevant content available and the content is not in the right language. Therefore, there is a need for providing extensive support for development of these areas.

The mobile phones are means of communications, but no information is disseminated through those means. Therefore, it is essential to look into the feasibility of developing mobile content and introducing it to rural communities.

There is a minimal usage of e-commerce and e-business applications except of uploading units on mobile phones. People in rural of Kyrgyz Republic can be empowered with the

development of on-line services, such as on-line shops. Considering the banking system is developing fast and soon on-line banking services will be offered, it is possible that the people will start doing on-line shopping.

Extensive attention needs to be paid to delivery of on-line government services. At this stage, through www.govservices.kg portal site citizens can have access to government information and get answers to their questions, related to health, pension, social security, etc. However, there is no government services delivered online, such as renewing pension cards online, getting drivers license' information updated, etc. This can include introduction of services such as getting passport extension sticker issued on-line, getting driver license information updated and getting an actual driver license, checking the status of social services such as social insurance or pension fund.

5.2   Success Factors & Recommendations

5.2.1   Where to Invest Resources

It is best to invest in building capacity of information and communications technology sector – building infrastructure, capacity building of staff, support for the development of locally relevant contents and even on-line services.

The resources can be invested into the soft components, such as training of users, promoting them to use ICT and make it an every day necessity and development of local content.

The resources can be invested into policy and regulatory environment to support development of ICT.

5.2.2   Key Success Factors

The key success factors is not in the number of users served, but rather in the number of people who benefit from the services provided through ICT such as getting jobs on-site and off-site and getting an education on-line,

5.2.3   Role of ICT

The ICT can play on the leading roles as facilitator to access to information and services.

It's essential, that support must be provided for the development of more of locally relevant information, such as agricultural products market price, telemedicine projects, opportunities to improve education and knowledge, development of knowledge-building sites. fragment

5.2.4   Top Ten Recommendations

1. Support for ICT sector. This includes supports to 1) introduce public consultation through ICT on draft laws, regulations and policy documents; 2) assist further development of infrastructure in country, in particular to introduce latest technologies, such as WiFi or WiMax; 3) build capacities of ICT professionals specifically in software engineering and 3) renew training and education curriculum of the ICT specialists to meet requirements of fast growing industry.

2. Build capacities of government officials on ICT. This includes supports to 1) to implement and manage of ICT projects in government organizations and 2) integrate ICT in every work of the government officials.

3. Support for the development of on-line content, services and information resources. The support can be provided for 1) development of content for rural population of Kyrgyzstan, such as advices, consultations, forums on agricultural products; 2) development of content targeted to children and youth (this is not only game, but rather educational and knowledge building sites related to studies or of general interests); 3) introducing on-line payment systems for utility services, such as gas, heating, electricity, etc.

4. Support for the development of locally relevant contents, which are based on the needs and demands of the local people. This relates, for example, to 1) support for development of local administration and government information sites; 2) support for development of environmental, agricultural, educational, health and such related website targeted to rural population of the country; 3)

5. Conduct feasibility study on the needs and demands of the local people of information and services, which they can access and receive through ICT. The feasibility study can cover areas of 1) what particular information lacks, 2) what are barriers to access that information; 3) who can provide this information to people and 4) recommendations on what can be done to delivery information and services to citizens. Based on findings of feasibility study, specific projects can be developed and implemented.

6. Coordinate work of existing venues of public access. It's to assist in establishment of inter-venue committee/council, when information available in libraries can be accessed in Information and Resource Centers and vice versa.

7. Cooperate with private sector and involve them in the delivery of services to

underserved communities of the country.

8. Introduce universal service obligation policy to reach out to rural and remote areas of the country. The support can be provided in development of legal and regulatory environment to 1) introduce universal service obligation policy, 2) coordination and cooperation with the operators and 3) development universal service framework to reach to rural and underserved communities of the Kyrgyzstan.

9. Coordinate and cooperate with non-profit organizations, involve them in the decision making process. Since non-profit organizations (NPOs) can serve as a link between citizens and decision makers, it's essential to support to NPOs in their work, such as setting up websites and portal sites; delivering information through these channels to citizens as well as enhance skills of staff of NPOs to delivery ICT skills training, conduct workshops and serve as a facilitator for connection between citizens and government officials.

10. Implement public sector reform in the country with using ICT as a tool for delivering public information and services to citizens and introduce outsourcing of services to private sector and non-profit.

6 APPENDICES

Please attach on the next pages any other relevant information, resources or materials that can help understand public access information venues in the country.

6.1 List of Countries included in Research

Algeria
Argentina
Bangladesh
Brazil
Colombia
Costa Rica
Dominican Republic
Ecuador
Egypt
Georgia
Honduras
Indonesia
Kazakhstan
Kyrgyzstan
Moldova
Mongolia
Namibia
Nepal
Peru
Philippines
South Africa
Sri Lanka
Turkey
Uganda

6.2   Overview of Research Design

The Center for Information & Society (CIS), in partnership with the Information School of the University of Washington, has as part of its core mission the investigation of how inequities in our global society can be reduced through improved access to information and communication technologies (ICT). As part of its research activities, CIS has brought together interdisciplinary teams of researchers to examine the needs, readiness and success factors for public access to information & communication venues through digital ICTs in 24 countries around the world.

Project Goal:

- Understand information needs, and opportunities to strengthen institutions that offer public access to information & communication, especially to underserved communities, and especially through the use of digital ICT: What are the needs, barriers, opportunities & success factors for public access to information and communication to help human development in countries around the world? For the purpose of this study, research is primarily focused on Libraries and Other institutional venues for which access to information has a significant role. This research includes understanding venues where digital ICT is currently offered, *and* also where ICT is not currently offered but there is potential and strong institutional support to include ICT (for example, some public libraries where digital ICT services are currently not offered, but there would be strong interest in offering them).

   Libraries include public libraries and other types of libraries that are open to the public. **Other venues** include national initiatives that offer public access to information, either with ICTs (telecentres, cybercafés and the like) or without ICTs (post offices, community centers and similar) and are of significant importance in local contexts.

Project Purpose:

- Inform policy & funding decisions: Inform funders and government decision makers about future program direction and funding allocations

- Contribute to public knowledge: Disseminate results of in-depth country and comparative analyses, including research design & analytical models

To inform project design, CIS adapted the Real Access framework (Bridges.org), analyzing public access to information & communication through a total of 14 research categories grouped under the dimensions of **Access**, **Capacity & Relevance** and **Enabling Environments**. Adaptation was done in consultation with research partners around the world for the purposes of this study.

The implementation of this project is organized as a two-phase process:

Phase 1:   Nov 07 – Feb 15, 2008

During Phase 1, a **Draft Country Report** will be prepared by local research teams in each country. The Draft Country Report includes a Country Profile, a Country Assessment and an early draft of Lessons & Recommendations.

The *Country Profile* is a collection of 50 general descriptive data points drawn from readily accessible sources; CIS pre-populates the reports for each country, and offers them for validation and comments by local teams. Country Profiles provide primarily statistical data that is intended to offer a quick snapshot of each country, including geography, political environment, demographics, economy, education and ICT infrastructure.

Using a common approach to define research processes, local teams will conduct initial fieldwork to inform a *Country Assessment*. The Country Assessment includes both a scan of information needs, especially for underserved communities; and an assessment of public access to information &

communication venues (with or without digital ICT services) and their environment, resulting in a better understanding of gaps, opportunities, and readiness of public access to information initiatives in each country.

During Phase 1, each country team will also complete an early draft of *Success Factors and Recommendations* focused on strengthening public access to information in the country, and identify potential themes and issues for further study in Phase 2.

Phase 1b: Feb 15-Mar 15, 2008

During this period, CIS will conduct a preliminary comparative analysis based on the Draft Country Reports from all participating countries, and suggest feedback and guidance for Phase 2 of the study. The comparative analysis will look for salient trends, emergent themes, patterns, and threads across regions. During this period, next steps will be determined for in-depth country research for Phase 2.

Phase 2: March 2008 – August 15, 2008

Phase 2 will involve a deeper assessment of public access to information and ICTs across all 24 countries. In particular, CIS is interested in deeper probing of the emerging themes and scenarios identified in Phase 1.   A **Final Country Report** will include high level analysis, success factors and recommendations to strengthen public access to information and ICTs in each country. Final comparative analysis across countries, with analytical models and scenarios, will be completed by CIS after receiving the Final Country Reports.

Findings will be disseminated publically through reports, academic publications, conferences and consortiums. Each country team is expected to produce at least one publishable paper on their research and findings, plus additional papers emerging out of the comparative analysis and global findings. Publications will be part of the public domain, with the CIS web site, partners' sites, and other publication channels to be identified.

6.3 Annotated Country Profile (form 2)

Attach here an updated copy of the annotated Country Profile (Form 2).

6.4   List of people met during research in Kyrgyzstan.

1. **Zlata Shramko**

Civil Initiative on Internet Policy, training coordinator.

2. **Zamira Djusupova**

UNDP, Democratic Governance Project, Program Office in Kyrgyzstan.

Component Coordinator for ICT Development.

3. **Michael Pshenichnikov**

Megacom company Head, IT specialist and consultant to the Soros Foundation.

4. **Oleg Jerebko**

Executive Director, Association of IT providers.

5. **Mizaeva Baktigul Mirzaevna**

Osh Oblast Library Director.

6. **Saniya Batalova**, Director, Association of public and resource libraries

7. **Nimat** Director, E-center in Nookat

8. **Bolot**   Director, E-center in Osh

9. **Nazgul**, Internet club "High Speed", operator

10. **Maxim**, Foundation for cooperation and support of legal and economic reform, manager of center, operator

11. **Nurbek Imakeev**, manager, ARIS

12. **Suleiman**, Internet club "Arsenal", operator

13. **Alexei**, Internet club "Fox", operator

14. Valentina Ivanovna Kuchmasova,

Director, Center for legal information, Osh Oblasti Library

15. **Bermet**   ,

Manager, Osh Resource Center for Mass media organizations,

Osh Oblasti library,

16. Chyngyz,

system administrator, IREX Center, Osh Oblasti library

17. Alymkulova Aigul,

Government Patent technical information Department of differential information services

18. **Azamat Baskuliev**, Internet center "Vista" at Karakol

19. **Nikolaeva Alina**, "Shmel" Internet club

20. **Kozobaev Ismailbek Emilovich**, Neo planet "South" – Internet club

21. **Barinova Oksana Vladimirovna**, Skynet Internet club

22. **Mamasheva Nargiza**, Ring club – Internet club

6.5 List of Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AED	Academy for Educational Development
ARIS	Agency for Community Development and Investment Agency of the Kyrgyz Republic (Agenstrvo Razvitija I Investirovanija Soobshestv)
AUCA	American University in Central Asia
CIIP	Civil Initiative on Internet Policy
DFID	Department for International Development
EBSCO	electronic bibliography of scientific journals and publications
eIFL	electronic information for libraries
GNI	Gross National Income
IAC	Internet Access Center
IATP	Internet Access and Training Program Centers
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IFF	Information Future Foundation
IRBIZ	electronic catalogue of the library books installed in major libraries
IREX	International Research Exchange Program
ISP	Internet Service Provider
KAZ Sat	Kazakh satellite
LMI	Last Mile Initiative
NATO	North American Treaty Organization
NGO	non-governmental organization
NTRK	The National TV-Radio Company of Kyrgyzstan
PAP	Public Access Points
PIC	Public Information and Resource Center
Soms	name of local currency
USAID	United States Agency for International Development IFF
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
USIS	United States Invesigation Services