
PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION & ICTs
PHASE II REPORT

Malaysia

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1 Extended Executive Summary

1.1 Research Project Overview

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

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

1.2 Introduction

In the past several years, the issue of providing equitable access to information has received a significant attention by various governments in order to bridge the digital gap in their countries and also use the information access as an important tool for reaching development goals. This report presents issues related to public access to information in Malaysia with angles on ICT and how the underserved communities benefit from various services offered in country.

Malaysia seems to be a good example of a developing country taking the ICT as an important factor for development. In the last few development plans, the country placed a significant emphasis on investing in ICT and benefiting from the returns as a major contribution for the economic development. This emphasis has been at the core of development strategies and is received more attention than agriculture or manufacturing. As ICT is considered as a key enabler for development various projects have been developed in support of this. These projects constitute high level ICT based services and products that promote ICT investments and use in business and daily life. Good examples include multi-media super corridor, various eTransformation and eGovernment projects, and investments in making electronic commerce part of the commercial activities. These projects are also aimed at making ICT widely available in all parts of the country and be used by the members of the population. A number of successful examples exist. Some of these are:

- providing ICT based education available to many via investing in ICT and education,
- the enhancements of libraries in terms of distribution in the country, especially in rural areas and in terms of additional ICT based provisions

- Creating telecenters especially in rural and remote areas of the country in order to bridge the digital divide and in so doing increase the capacity of users and enable them to adopt various ICT services to conduct their normal daily lives.

This report examines a number of initiatives making ICT available to citizens in all parts of the country and enabling them access to information for improving their lives. These initiatives are examined in terms of information access venues opened in the country in last decade or so. One of them is about libraries and the other one is iCommunity centers – basically telecenters that operate especially in the rural areas of the country. After presenting a country overview in terms of economical and political context, ICT investments, and issues related to the underserved citizens, the report presents a venue based analysis of information access in the country in terms of capacity, environment and potential uses. The report concludes with a summary of various findings, success factors and a number of recommendations.

1.3 Country Overview

Malaysia is located in Southeastern Asia and is a peninsula bordering Thailand and northern one-third of the island of Borneo bordering Indonesia. The country has some mountains, rivers and tropical forests. The population is around 27m and most of which live in urban areas (non-urban population is around 40 percent). There are three major ethnic groups where majority is Malays and followed by Chinese and Indians respectively.

The economic outlook has been improving favorably except the crisis in 90s but it is picking up. There is a significant emphasis on ICT based investments and the role of the ICT is placed as a key enabler in the economic development. This creates a favorable environment in terms of economical, political and legal initiatives in order to provide equitable access to information in the country.

The major efforts in establishing and making ICT based information access venues are supported by the political strategies and they aim to create a highly skilled information society. While these efforts often aim to the mainstream first, underserved communities are also in the agenda as a big concern. The country's underserved are typically those living in the rural areas, women, unemployed, aged and those with little or no formal education. While there are significant efforts to prevent ethnic based inequalities in the country, some minorities especially indigenous groups may also fall short of these efforts and remain to be an important part of the underserved in the country.

The government has been very active in creating a desired information society and bridging the digital divide in the country via establishing a number of iCommunity centers and rural internet projects. These projects aim to support women, poor, young unemployed, senior citizens, indigenous and small business owners in rural areas. There are currently a couple of major and influential implementations in this regard. One is making libraries and ICT services in libraries available to those who are living in rural areas and to

those who regularly use the library services. These efforts result in opening ICT based venues as supporting the libraries (there 1326 public libraries) via new telecenters or Community Service and Knowledge Centre (CSKC) (in Malay: Pusat Perkhidmatan dan Ilmu Komuniti (PPIK)). The other initiative is to establish icommunity centers in the rural areas. Two of the largest projects are called rural internet project (Pusat Internet Deasa – PID, there are 42 of them currently) led by the ministry of energy, water and communication, and Medan Info Desa (MID) launched by ministry of rural and regional development. As MID and PID are very similar in nature and as PIDs seems to be influential, in this report PID and libraries (PPIKs) are being examined.

With the strong support from the government, these venues not only aim to provide trivial ICT skills and Internet services but rather aim to be cornerstone of building information society via creating able citizens who can adopt ICT for their daily and business lives. The country invested in since the 90s via various projects and in the current plan the country aims to reach to be a developed country by 2020 via its investments in ICT and related technologies and services.

Overall the environment and the economic outlook is favorable for providing facilities for the equitable access in the country. There are significant efforts in achieving a knowledge society by provision of initiatives such as “one home one PC” and distributing ICT resources to the rural areas. The country however is still in need of facing challenges such as poverty reduction, improving standard of living for marginalized groups, and strengthening human capital. There are persistent socio-economic inequalities in the country, which needs to be over-come via fighting against poverty and unemployment, improving income distribution and reducing the regional disparities. There is also concern whether the ICT investments will bring the required foreign investment for the development of high-tech ICT sectors.

1.4 Research Rationale, Sample, and Methods

The research aims to explore the information access landscape in Malaysia. There is special focus on how free information access venues and facilities are provided to the citizens and underserved groups and how are these offering being utilized by the same. The research also aims to identify key success factors, challenges and opportunities in building an equitable information access landscape in the country. The report is carried out using information collected via secondary resources, and primary information sources. The data is collected from government reports, online resources such as news and articles, and simple survey of the venues and interviews with the experts in the field, who are from academia and government organizations.

In order to understand the information access landscape a number of issues researched including an overall assessment of the country, the underserved communities and initiatives for serving these communities in order for them to have free access to information. Two major information access venues were examined: libraries and iCommunity centers (PIDs). The venue operators were surveyed from a random sampling

out of all venues distributed in the country. For libraries 16 and for PIDs 18 venues were surveyed. The survey aimed to understand the demographic characteristics of the venue users and the way the venues are being used. The survey is conducted via email and phone conversations a follow up. Although the survey did not aim to collect data to make strong claims about the information access landscape in Malaysia, it was sufficient to shed a light on research issues raised.

1.5 Information Needs of Underserved Communities

As the 9th Malaysia plan delivers strategy to provide equitable access to information using ICTs with significant importance, the government aims to bring ICT services to the rural areas where most underserved reside. The need of these citizens range from using ICTs for communication purposes to using them for enhancing their lives and businesses.

Those who are already in formal education needs to be supported via ICT based information access opportunities in order to increase quality of learning and raise the human capital of the country. Those who have no formal education need to be able to use the ICTs and benefit at least in terms of communicating to friends and relatives and communicating for their businesses. The unemployed needs to access job data. The women needs to be empowered to have their equitable status in the society. In order for these groups to be successful in reaching what they need, both local and other relevant information must be provided via the venues or the access facilities that the venues provide.

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

The venues that are being opened in the country are well planned. Unlike some other developing countries, there is a conscious effort in making sure that the venues will be able serve the local communities in the way they are intended. Though there are few exceptions, the venues in the country closely follow the centrally determined requirements for training and providing information access, which help to make sure that efforts are not forgone.

There is strong environment and political support for making the information access initiatives a success. This creates a good leadership and ensures a sustainable model for the venues to reach what they aim for not only in the short term but also in the long run.

The venues are often equipped with good technological infrastructure that needed. What is most important is that there is a qualified, centrally trained operator (especially for PIDs) that is responsible from maintenance of the venues and also training of the users to improve their capacity. There are also local programs to train new trainers.

The venues aim not only to provide information access facilities for trivial use but also to support businesses and provide complicated information services such as job search or government information.

The venues are generally well received and there is a growing interest in rural communities to be able to use the information access facilities.

PPIKs are well positioned to serve primarily those who are in formal education and PIDs are well positioned to offer services to those living in rural areas, adults, SME owners and those who have no or little formal education.

Major weaknesses about the venues are lack of awareness by the users as to how they enable them and improve their lives. This especially true for PIDs and their relations with underserved communities. Also, there are rare cases where the operators do not have necessary skills to support the users.

The government would like to create opportunities for building an information society via these venues. The venues can be key in bridging the digital divide and supporting overall ICT investment and developed services in the country. Without such support the government's aim to be a developed country by 2020 via the exploitation of ICT investments may not be realized.

1.7 Salient Findings

Examining the information landscape and its use in Malaysia shed light into two important issues which shows why public access to information may lead to positive results. One is the determination and provisions of the government to exploit the ICTs as a strong support for the economic development. This creates a good favorable environment for the venues to exist and operate.

Another important finding is related to the fact that these information access venues are implemented as part of a well devised plan with a long term views on ripping the benefits. Unlike some other countries, the venues are not viewed as a quick fix and built and leave operation. The importance of the venues as a long term investment in the society is well recognized. In parallel to this the venues are provided resources in terms of money and skills to operate for sometime into future.

1.8 Key Recommendations

In general the creation and implementation of public access venues in Malaysia seem to follow a successful path and there are perhaps a few significant issues which can add value to these venues:

- When appropriate the venues will aim to extreme groups in underserved communities and move away from being a mainstream solution.
- The venues could have been more influential if awareness and local participation is improved.

- The venues especially PPIKs provide local content in Bahasa and English. Perhaps it will be inclusive if the venues aim at other ethnic groups and languages.
- The local content needs to be improved to serve increasing members of the underserved and the content should be more varied and relevant to the local users.

2 Methodology

2.1 Venue Selection

2 paragraphs

Brief description of the selection process: how you selected the types of venues to be studied, why they were included, why others were left out.

Note: this data collection template is designed to capture info about 4 venue types. If you study in detail more than 4 venue types in the country, include a full description of the 5th one as an appendix, using the same set of questions.

In Malaysia, the current efforts in making ICT based information venues available to the public show three major streams. The first effort is having iCommunity centers in rural areas. This can be either independent as in MIDs or in conjunction with post offices as PIDs. The third effort is supporting the libraries via new telecenters or Community Service and Knowledge Centre (CSKC) (in Malay: Pusat Perkhidmatan dan Ilmu Komuniti (PPIK)).

As there are great similarities between MID and PID, we chose PIDs to study because they have more information available, are larger in size and are better organized. As libraries are core part of this research CSKC were directly chosen.

As the third venue we chose wireless access to information via hot spots available in various parts of cities, cafes and public places. This is new and interesting trend.

2.1.1 Venues studied

Enter the details to complete the table based on the venues studied in this country (more details will be filled in other sections):

	Public Libraries	iCommunity centers	Venue 3	Venue 4
Total number in country	1326	42	n/a	
A. # in urban location				
% offering ICT				
Total # of people served (annual)				
B. # in non-urban location	250	42	n/a	
% offering ICT	100	100	100	

Total # of people served (annual)					
--------------------------------------	--	--	--	--	--

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

The libraries are being supported by new telecenters opened either in or next to the libraries. There are currently 250 of such centers and more than 500 are planned.

All ICT based venues in Malaysia are opened with idea of bridging the digital divide and serving the rural areas. We considered all of these being opened in non-urban areas despite a few in the urban locations.

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

Other public access experience #1: Name of Experience

Description :

text

Total number in country:

% offering ICT access:

% in urban location:

Comments on how it is influencing public access venues in the country:

text

Other public access experience #2: Name of Experience

Description :

text

Total number in country:

% offering ICT access:

% in urban location:

Comments on how it is influencing public access venues in the country:

text

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

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

Other venue not studied #1: cybercafes

Total number in country: not known

% offering ICT access: 100

% in urban location: n/a

Description of the Venue:

Commercial venues offering Internet and related services to the public.

Reason why it was not included in the study:

Commercial and mostly exist in cities.

Other venue not studied#2: Type of Venue (if needed)

Total number in country:

% offering ICT access:

% in urban location:

Description of the Venue:

text

Reason why it was not included in the study:

text

2.2 Inequity Variables

1-2 paragraphs each.

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

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

2.2.1 Socio-economic status

Malaysia GDP has been steady around 5 percent consistently over past several years. The country is becoming increasingly service and industry oriented and agriculture is becoming smaller and smaller (around 8% of the GDP for 2007 figures). The economic outlook seem to be positive however there is a discrepancy between the earnings of the rural population (around 30% percent) and that of urban population. Compared other south Asian countries Malaysia has a higher disparity of income distribution among the population members. Despite, in terms of infrastructures, almost 100 percent of the population has an access to quality water and education.

In terms of access to information, the socio-economic factors affect mostly those living in rural areas with low income, perhaps no job or working as farmers and the venues seem to be established in a way to make it easy to reach out to them.

2.2.2 Educational level

In general, Malaysia has very low illiteracy and almost all of the population has attended primary and perhaps secondary school. The primary and secondary formal education shows a successful enrolment levels. Both for female and male members of the population, primary school enrollment rate is almost 100 percent. The location and general socio economic status mau have an impact on who can go to universities and who cannot. The underserved in terms of education are more often perhaps in the remote and rural areas of the country, where the PIDs offer these members of the society an invaluable opportunity via ICT based information access venues.

2.2.3 Age

According to year 2008 estimates the distribution of Mlaysiaian population ti different age groups is as follows:

0-14 years: 31.8% (male 4,135,013/female 3,898,761)

15-64 years: 63.3% (male 8,026,755/female 7,965,332)

65 years and over: 4.9% (male 548,970/female 699,302)

The distribution of age groups shows that there is a relatively large young population in Malaysia. However, the number of senior citizens in Malaysia almost doubled over the twenty years from 1970-1991. The numbers have increased by another 35 per cent over the next 10 years to the year 2000. Based on population projections, the number of senior citizens is likely to more than double to 3.4 million in the next twenty years. As larger numbers of the elderly population move into the old-old category, there will consequently be a greater need for facilities and care of the aged.

It has generally been recognized that even among the elderly, different age groups display different characteristics and are not homogenous in their needs. The PPIKs are generally designed to serve the younger population in the rural areas where as the PIDs are more for adults – farmers and SME owners. The projects aiming develop information access venues are aimed to bridge the digital divide not only in terms of location and provision of services and but also in terms age groups – to help adults and seniors to perform better in their daily lives and also to help young, unemployed living in rural areas.

Source: <http://www.ancsdaap.org/cencon2003/Papers/Malaysia/Malaysia.pdf>
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/print/my.html>

2.2.4 Gender

According to the world bank facts data (2008 estimate) the population's gender demographics and ratios look as follow in Malaysia:

at birth: 1.07 male(s)/female

under 15 years: 1.06 male(s)/female

15-64 years: 1.01 male(s)/female

65 years and over: 0.78 male(s)/female

total population: 1.01 male(s)/female

According to the 2007 Global Gender Gap Index – an index measuring economic participation and opportunity, political empowerment, education attainment and health and survival -, Malaysia was ranked 92nd out of 128 countries (the status of women dropped 20 places compared with 2006). This behind behind other Asean countries such as Philippines (6th), Vietnam (42nd), Thailand (52nd), Singapore (77th) and Indonesia (81st).

Malaysian women, though well motivated, still to arrive at a state of truly achieving gender equality. Women make up about ¼ th of the top positions in the public

sector and the female to male ratio of students in the country's tertiary education is just over 2 to 1. The government aims to achieve a 30% quota of women at all levels of decision-making in the country as set in the Ninth Malaysia Plan.

Women in Malaysia are generally earn much smaller wages than their male counterpart There earning differences according to gender and this differs depending on the occupation. Women makes more in clerical and office work in relation to men but higher - within women salaries – for other jobs where men are predominantly employed such as sales and engineering.

On the positive side, Malaysian government continues to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Source:

<http://pkukmweb.ukm.my/~penerbit/jp19-06.html>

http://www.malaysianbar.org.my/opinions/comments/bridging_the_gender_gap.html

http://www.undp.org/rbap/Country_Office/CP/CP_MAL_2008-2012.pdf

2.2.5 Location

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

Malaysia is viewed as two distinct part: peninsular Malaysia (west) and northern part of Borneo Island (east), separated by sea. Total land area of Malaysia is 329,847 km². The land is covered by some mountains and tropical forests. The peninsular Malaysia more populated (around 80 percent) than East Malaysia. There are only two states in East Malaysia. More than 60 percent live in urban areas and mostly in the West Malaysia.

The information access venues, whether they are libraries or PIDs, are all aimed primarily at bridging the digital divide between urban population and rural population. Therefore most of the venues are set up in rural or less developed part of the urban areas to provide services living in these areas. The venues are conveniently located either close to post offices, health clinics or libraries so that the community can access them easily. In this study we considered all venues studied as rural area though there were very few exceptions.

In 2004, The ministry of water, energy and communication identified a total of 89 districts which need special attention in terms of their underserved communities. These districts are distributed as follows: Kedah (5 new districts), Perak (2), Selangor (4), Negeri Sembilan (1), Melaka (2), Johor (3), Pahang (8), Terengganu (6), Kelantan (9), Sarawak (25) and Sabah (21).

<http://www.jmg.gov.my/files/MALAYSIA&ASEAN/Msia-Geography.htm>

[http://www.skmm.gov.my/what we do/usp/pdf/keynote.pdf](http://www.skmm.gov.my/what_we_do/usp/pdf/keynote.pdf)

2.2.6 Other inequity variables

Other Inequity Variable 1: Inequity Variable (if needed)

describe

how you addressed it in this study

Other Inequity Variable 2: Inequity Variable (if needed)

describe

how you addressed it in this study

Other Inequity Variable 3: Inequity Variable (if needed)

describe

how you addressed it in this study

Other Sources for inequity in Malaysia: Malaysia at a Glance,

http://devdata.worldbank.org/AAG/mys_aag.pdf

<http://www.aliran.com/oldsite/monthly/2005b/8h.html>

[http://www.infernalramblings.com/articles/Malaysian Economy/471/](http://www.infernalramblings.com/articles/Malaysian_Economy/471/)

2.3 Data Gathering Techniques

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

2.3.1 Literature review

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

Around 40 number of documents reviewed.

The literature review was based on official reports from the Malaysian ministries and economic planning and various online reports, news, and articles from the Internet.

2.3.1.1 *Most useful bibliography:*

<http://www.epu.jpm.my/RM9/html/english.htm>

<http://www.ktak.gov.my/>

[http://www.skmm.gov.my/what we do/usp/pdf/keynote.pdf](http://www.skmm.gov.my/what_we_do/usp/pdf/keynote.pdf)

<http://www.pid.net.my/>

<http://www.ktaktelecentre.my/>

<http://www.gov.my/MyGov/BI/Directory/Citizen/Home.htm>

http://www.statistics.gov.my/eng/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=50:population&catid=38:kaystats&Itemid=11

<http://www.ikmas.ukm.my/v1/?q=node/297>

<http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/treg/Events/Seminars/2002/china/pdf/11-doc4-1hamid.pdf>

<http://www.epu.jpm.my/New%20Folder/development%20policies/cont%20key%20policies/vision.htm>

<http://www.epu.gov.my/mtr-rm9/english/overview.pdf>

ITU, Multimedia Malaysia: Internet Case Study, March 2002, p.33.

http://www.malaysianbar.org.my/opinions/comments/bridging_the_gender_gap.html

http://www.undp.org/rbap/Country_Office/CP/CP_MAL_2008-2012.pdf

<http://www.jmg.gov.my/files/MALAYSIA&ASEAN/Msia-Geography.htm>

http://devdata.worldbank.org/AAG/mys_aag.pdf

<http://www.ktaktelecentre.my/>

<http://www.reuters.com/article/pressRelease/idUS96785+14-Jul-2008+BW20080714>

<http://www.dosite.go.jp/e/differ/tel/PusatIDjp.html>

2.3.2 Individual interviews

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

In the first instance 3 persons were interviewed by the central and then an additional two individuals interviewed by the local group in Malaysia.

The major contribution was done by Mr. Azul (Zulfikar Mochamad Rachman Head of Department Telecentre Excellence Warisan Global Sdn Bhd Kuala Lumpur) who works at the company which builds telecenters and PIDs in Malaysia. Ms. Imai from the national Library was also very helpful. There was a number of academics from different universities.

2.3.3 Group interviews and focus groups

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

no number of group interviews or focus groups.

2.3.4 Site visits

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

number of site visits.

describe

2.3.5 Surveys

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

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

	Public Libraries	Venue 2	Venue 3	Venue 4
# of urban venues surveyed				
# of non-urban venues surveyed	16	18		
# of respondents in urban venues				
# of respondents in non-urban venues				

Survey description and comments:

The venues were surveyed via the operators of the venue. The survey has been done is considered to be in the non-urban areas as these venues are constructed in rural parts of the country. The surveys was mostly via email and phone follow up to the operator. The table below whows the list of locations for both venues.

Location of Surveys Conducted	
List of PID locations :	List of PPIK locations :
1.Bandar Seri Jempol	1.Ayer Hitam , Negeri Sembilan
2.Bandar Tun Razak PAHANG	2.Bintangor, SARAWAK
3.Bandar Penawar KOTTO TINGGI JOHOR	3.Marang, TERRENGANU
4.BERENANG	4.Kota Samarahan,SARAWAK
5.BETONG	5.KG Sunsuron, Tambunah, SABAH
6.KUALA BESUT	6.Kualo Krai, KELENTAN
7.LABIS	7.Lurah Bilut,PAHANG
8.Marang TERENGGANU	

	<p>9.MUKAH</p> <p>10.Pagoh MUAR JOHOR</p> <p>12.Parit PERAK</p> <p>12.Selema PERAK</p> <p>13.Sungai KOYAN</p> <p>14.Sungai Pelek Sepang SELENGOR</p> <p>15.SONG</p> <p>16.TENOM</p> <p>18.TG Sepat SELENGOR</p>	<p>8.Pasir Puteh KELANTAN</p> <p>9.PD Chiku KELANTAN</p> <p>10.PERLIS</p> <p>11.Pekan Menumbok SABAH</p> <p>12.Kuala Perlis</p> <p>13.Miri SARAWAK</p> <p>14.Paya Kerchut KEDAH</p> <p>15.Titi Gajah KEDAH</p> <p>16.Sipitang SABAH</p>	
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2.3.6 Other data gathering techniques

Other Data Gathering Technique 1: Data Gathering Technique

describe

Other Data Gathering Technique 2: Data Gathering Technique

describe

Other Data Gathering Technique 3: Data Gathering Technique

describe

2.3.7 Most useful contacts

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

Zulfikar Mochamad Rachman, Head of Department Telecentre Excellence Warisan Global Sdn Bhd Kuala Lumpur.

Faudziah binti Mohd Amin, Ministry of Water Energy and Communications
Ahmad Amin Asa, Ministry of Water Energy and Communications
Abdul Halim Razak, Ministry of Water Energy and Communications
Ms. Ima Imran, National Library

2.4 Research Trustworthiness and Credibility

2-3 paragraphs

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

Making this research on Malaysia proved to be very difficult as there was a constraint to have a permission from government authorities when doing a research in Malaysia even working with a local team. The survey was done via one of the leading company in building telecenters in Malaysia based on an informal permission from secretary general at the ministry of water, energy and communication.

The operators of the venues were responsive and provided data related to users and venues voluntarily and mostly in good order. The team preparing the report is experienced and used various sources, including secondary, to create this report.

2.4.1 Research limitations

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

In some of the questionnaires the operators seem not to have understood the questions and therefore some answers to questions did not make much sense. These were considered as missing (shown in yellow in the data file provided separately) and did not interfere with the overall results of the survey.

2.4.2 Team qualifications

1 paragraph

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

The overall research was managed by the lead researcher. There were several teams working in this report but due to difficulties on getting research permission from the Malaysian authorities the teams had to be re-set a few times. The lead researcher and his team is experienced in doing field surveys and writing reports on the surveys. The final support was from a leading practitioner from the company establishing the telecenters in Malaysia. He is well experienced and knowledgeable about the Telecenters. The

organizing team had two assistant part-time researchers with masters degrees in IS or related subjects.

To continue to Section 3 (Country Assessment) go to the file "Phase II Template - Part 2 - Country Assessment.doc".

This section contains Section 4.1 (Venue 1 – Public Libraries) and follows Section 3 (Country Assessment) from the file “Phase II Template - Part 2 - Country Assessment.doc”.

3 Venue-Specific Assessments

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

3.1 Venue 1: Public Libraries

3.1.1 Overall venue assessment

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

2–3 Paragraphs:

What is your overall assessment of public access information in this type of venue?

Supported by Malaysia's Ministry of Unity, Culture, Arts and Heritage, the country's main information hub lies in the National Library located in the urban centre of Kuala Lumpur. With fourteen state libraries interconnected under the main arm, the objective of these venues is to ensure that all Malaysians, regardless of their status, have equal access to library services and facilities and most importantly, have the capability to utilize the country's intellectual heritage through integrated knowledge infrastructure of electronic libraries throughout the nation.

With a push towards PC culture as one of the main core strategies, there are several ongoing digital initiatives within the public library network which hopes to acclimatize the public on a more techno savvy note and at the same time provide local information to jumpstart mindsets on the breath on knowledge available through the Internet.

These initiatives are:

- 1) Yang di-Pertuan Agong: This portal was established in 2004 in order to education the public on the royal ruling system in Malaysia. The objective of the site is to bridge the communication divide between ruler and public. The portal can be accessed at www.malaysiamonarcy.org.my.
- 2) International Islamic Digital Library: Developed in 2004, the knowledge portal contains digital contents from books, manuscripts, magazine articles, conference papers and Islamic artifacts in 3 dimensional presentations. The aim of this portal is mainly to educate the public on the accessibility of worldwide knowledge through the Internet. The portal can be accessed at www.iidl.net.
- 3) E-library user education: An educational portal developed by the National Library and UNESCO to educate new users through a self-learning course on the benefits of the

Internet. Using interactive media, the module has a self-tutorial concept for the public to access in libraries across the country.

- 4) Local digital content: A list of varied subjects have been provided for public access in order to educate users on current events or important historical information on the country.
- 5) MyLib: MyLib is the pilot project for the larger National Digital Library Initiative launched in 2000. As part of the MSC initiative, it is intended to promote the economical and efficient delivery of information and knowledge to all levels of the Malaysian society in line with an aim to be knowledge based society. Most importantly, this portal aims to provide more local content on the Internet. MyLib is a part of sistem PERDANA where it acts as a portal or medium to market all Malaysian Libraries' local contents and databases via a website.

Thus with these initiatives launched throughout the years, Malaysia hopes to draw the attention of the public by providing motivating types of information, as well as a free venue in which the public can access information.

The analysis here will mostly be focused on new PPIKs opened as part of the libraries are still being opened in the rural areas.

3.1.2 Access

2–3 Paragraphs:

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

The main emphasis of these public libraries is to further enhance Internet knowledge within urban areas. The libraries present in each state are situated within urban centers. Thus it is fair to say the main target group for these venues is centered towards Malaysian's who already have some knowledge of ICT.

The PPIKs are generally geared towards the library users and often are used by the students.

3.1.2.1 Physical access

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

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

The main state libraries within the country are equipped with Internet access, while the smaller libraries located throughout non-urban areas are still cater to the traditional concept. However, with the presence of main state libraries, it has made access to the Internet easier than in the past. The public is offered a variety of nationally interconnected information, as well as a venue to educate one's self on the benefits of ICT.

With the new initiatives under USP, there are efforts to equip all rural libraries with PPIKs.

Currently, a large number of them are being opened (around 250) close to rural libraries and 500 more being planned to cover the most of the areas where underserved reside in rural areas.

3.1.2.2 *Appropriate technology and services*

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

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

The National Library is equipped with a room of 30 networked computers and a laser printer. While other state libraries are often equipped with 10 or less network computers and a laser printer for users to access local content, surf the Internet, chat or check their emails.

At the end of March 2004, all the selected 174 rural libraries are equipped with ICT facilities and with addition of the new PPIKs each center may typically have the followings:

- a basic communication system.
- Computer system, with at least
 - At least 2 Personal computers with internet facilities
 - 1 Scanner
 - 1 Laser printer
 - 2 Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS)
 - Telephone and data wiring, etc.

At the these venues the technology is designed for the students in general as the libraries are also set very close to the schools.

Source: News from the National Library of Malaysia

www.ndl.go.jp/en/publication/cdnlao/050/504.html

3.1.2.3 *Affordability*

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

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

The services provided by the public libraries throughout Malaysia are free of charge, pending a startup membership fee. However, few of them apply membership fees starting from RM1.00 up

to RM5.00.

3.1.2.4 *Fees for services*

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

If there are fees: What do these fees buy?

Membership fees: Borrowing and

Adult of 21 years old and above : RM5

Teenagers aged 13 to 21 year –old: RM 3

Children aged 12 year-old and below: RM1

Indicate amount in local currency 3

Equivalent in US Dollars: 0.85

Date of estimate 23/10/2008

and local currency name Ringgits

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:

3.1.2.5 *Geographic distribution*

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

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

Malaysia is a federation of 13 states. Eleven states are located on the Malay Peninsula, while two are on the island of Borneo. There are two state libraries allocated for the urban state, Selangor, while one library has been allocated for the rest of the twelve states.

The map below shows and explains the PPIKs connected to the libraries.

3.1.2.5.1 *Map*

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

Description of map:

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

This map shows the geographic distribution of Malaysia. Most of the completed telecenters by 2008 build as part of the public libraries in the non-urban areas under the scope of USP project. They are mostly placed in the Malay Peninsula. There are a few in the Borneo island – Sarawak and Sabah states. With initiatives of USP, new PPIKs are added to existing rural libraries and sometimes new libraries are being opened together with PPIKs in small villages where there was no library before.

3.1.2.6 *Other factors affecting access*

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

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

describe

3.1.3 Capacity and relevance

2–3 Paragraphs:

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

Embedded within a myriad of resources to access information, Internet access in public libraries are important for those seeking information as well for a growing number of users who are

seeking free access to ICT services. Although the placement of these venues is not completely comprehensive through out the country as a whole, they serve to push those living around urban centers to have a thirst for knowledge and know-how.

Interconnected with an efficient public transportation system; these venues are easily accessible in each state. Each library is funded and maintained by the state under its jurisdiction.

The PPIKs are often build either in or next to the libraries making it convenient for the library users to access. Each PPIk has at least one operator who is centrally trained by the government to have the skills to support the users. The users are often students and are in need of good internet connection and access to educational sources, which are generally well provided at these venues.

3.1.3.1 *Staff size*

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

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

The conventional services of libraries are provided by professional librarians, who are numbered according to the sizes of the libraries. For the PPIKs there is at least one trained operator who can sometimes be the library coordinator or assistant.

Source: <http://www.ktakelecentre.my/>

3.1.3.2 *Staff training*

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

- (i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.
- (ii) For Public Libraries, indicate if Library School training is available and/or required for librarians.

The libraries normally employ professional librarians who either have professional qualifications or are trained by the National Library. The operators at the PPIKs are normally trained centrally. Under the USP scheme, the national library of Malaysia organizes programs known as *Cyberfolks Camp* open to the staff to enable them learn or improve ICT skills and be able to educate the users. There is also training for building local content.

The Source: <http://www.ndl.go.jp/en/publication/cdnlao/050/504.html>

3.1.3.3 *Services offered*

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

Services Offered

Comments

1. Access to books, magazines
2. Meeting rooms
3. Audio/video programs
4. Computers connected to the Internet
5. Printing
6. Photocopying
7. Scanner
8. Inter library borrowing services
9. Computer usage practice and computer application program lessons
10. Courses for adults, competitions for children (drawing, coloring, story-telling etc..) and other activities

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

The National Library offers a longer list of comprehensive services than other libraries throughout the country. Other locations offer basic services, such as access to books, magazines and Internet access. The other differences are according to sizes of the library or PPIK. The smaller they are the less varied are the services offered.

3.1.3.4 *Programs for underserved communities*

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

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

Although the library based PPIKs are open to the public, they are mostly used by the students and, therefore, are a little short of particular programs for the underserved.

3.1.3.5 *Relevant content*

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

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

Available Content:

There are currently over a hundred PPIK websites properly built which is organized as (1) content on local area and related information such as history, agriculture, products, health and education. Under this there is an option to obtain info on the PPIK itself. As the content development is currently progressing, the info on PPIKs are brief.

Other Content Needed:

Some web sites are a relatively more comprehensive than others in terms of details provided about the regions of libraries or PPIKs. There is a need to develop more PPIK specific content that can be useful for the users. The users often need content on educational sources and job search. Currently, these are not adequately tied in with a number of venues online resources.

Local Initiatives to build needed content:

PPIKs are either library or centrally managed and mostly directed to provide educational and informative services. One idea may be to involve the local population more and develop content for their needs such as content for government services, e-commerce and content for local small businesses and craftsmen.

Source: <http://www.ktakelecentre.my/>

3.1.3.6 *Services and information available in local languages*

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

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

The web sites and the content are being prepared in Bahasa Melayu and in English.

3.1.3.7 *Types of uses*

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

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

Refer to section **Error! Reference source not found. Error! Reference source not found.** and complement here as needed.

Apart from conventional library services:

- Students use internet facilities to apply online in order to further their studies at institutes of higher learning or they use as a tool for applying jobs. Moreover, students are using other equipment to perform their school projects and help with their assignments.
- Villagers, though not so often, have utilized the internet to get the latest news either local or overseas. Therefore they use the venue mainly to get beneficial information and as a communication tool.
- Women and children do not often use the ICT facilities as much but developing social and creative skills by attending library activities and appropriate courses.

3.1.3.8 *Number, type, and frequency of users*

Refer to section **Error! Reference source not found. Error! Reference source not found.**. Complement here as needed.

additional details not covered in section 4.2.3

Each library has an adults, teenagers and children sections and each library has around 30 visitors on the average however, some of them may get up to 100 visitors .

Type of users varies depending on the location and the activities held by the library. Majority of the users are students, children and teenagers on a daily basis.

3.1.3.9 *Users Capacity to use information and services offered*

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

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

For the conventional library services, in general, the library staff has a good capacity to support the users. The libraries have special training programs for the staff so that they can be more supportive of the users.

PPIKs are new and yet to be widely available in the country. The users don't know much about their existence and how to use them. The operators of PPIKs are centrally trained and supportive in supporting and teaching the users. However, these are not yet to the level of improving user capacity drastically.

3.1.3.10 *Training courses for users*

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

Training courses: English Language, Literacy, specific courses for children such as story telling, coloring, drawing, poems and poetry reading, courses within ' Reading Activity Program'; although rare, cooking lessons for women

ICT specific training courses: Computer usage practice, computer application programs, learning courses on the Internet, Microsoft Words and Excel, web designing

3.1.3.11 *Integration into daily routines*

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

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

As the library close to a few schools and residential area of the villages , it becomes suitable place for students and villagers to obtain knowledge as well as searching for information. Particularly, ICT services offered by these libraries attracted more visitors. In addition to this, daily activities held by libraries facilitate users integration.

3.1.3.12 *Users perceptions about the venue*

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

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

The libraries in general are positively seen in the eyes of the users but are believed to be used by the students. PPIKs in the rural areas are new and yet to build a good awareness in the local community, though, students are already tuned in to the services of the venues.

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

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

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

The libraries provide conventional services but the real motivation regarding the new libraries and PPIKs in the rural areas is related to bridging the digital divide

3.1.3.14 *Trust, safety, and privacy*

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

The general perception of these venues is that they are safe, secure and so far there is not much concern about privacy issues.

3.1.3.15 *Gaps and opportunities in information and services offered*

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

As mentioned before there are opportunities to extend the services in these venues to the local population rather than serving mainly the students.

3.1.4 *Enabling environment*

2–3 Paragraphs:

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

Most of the information presented in the country assessment apply to these venues as they are part of the concentrated effort of the development initiatives of the government via ICT investments.

3.1.4.1 *Local and national economy*

Describe the local and national economic environment and how it affects public access to information and communication in this type of venue (refer to and complement economic summary in country assessment, section **Error! Reference source not found. Error! Reference source not found.**, calling out what is specific to this venue)

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

Same as provided in the country assessment.

3.1.4.2 *Legal and regulatory framework*

Describe the legal and regulatory framework and how it affects public access to information and communication in this type of venue (refer to and complement economic summary in country assessment, section **Error! Reference source not found. Error! Reference source not found.**, calling out what is specific to this venue)

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

The PPIKs and new libraries in the rural areas are initiated via USP provisions. The other issues related to legal and regulatory framework is the same as described in the country assessment chapter.

3.1.4.3 *Political will and public support*

What is the level of political will and public support for this type of venue? (refer to and complement section **Error! Reference source not found. Error! Reference source not found.**, calling out what is specific to this venue)

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

Same as provided in the country assessment.

3.1.4.4 *Organization and networking*

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

The PPIKs are part of the library systems and are centrally connected to the National Library. There is close link with the schools. In some rare occasions the health clinics are also connected.

3.1.4.5 *Partnerships*

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

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

The program is mainly funded by the ministry of water, communication and the energy.

3.1.4.6 *Other environment factors*

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

n/a

3.1.5 For publicly funded venues only: Revenue streams

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

3.1.5.1 *Budget*

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

Total Budget for Fiscal Year fiscal year

Local currency name amount (local currency)

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

The actual data on libraries and new PPIKs are not available. However, this project mainly initiated and supported from part of the USP funds. In 2008, 1.5 billion Ringgit (close to 425 M USD) has been allocated to finance the community broadband projects.

3.1.5.2 *Relative size of budget*

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

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

Other Comments:

describe

3.1.5.3 *Sources of funding*

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

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

Other Comments:

3.1.5.4 *Paths and flows of resources*

How do resources get allocated and disbursed to the actual venues? For the principal funders, and especially for the public sources, what is the flow of funds? How are the funds raised (what tax stream), what path do

the tax streams flow before they get to the specific venues? Who makes decisions about this funding?

n/a

3.1.5.5 *Fees and cost recovery*

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

No fees are charged.

3.1.5.6 *Cost categories*

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

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

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

Other Comments:

As the PPIKs are new we do not really have breakdown of the figures.

3.1.5.7 *Recent changes and future trends*

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

There is a significant determination on the part of the government to enable these venues to help bridge the digital divide and support the economic development. It is very clear that these efforts and funding will be allocated to these venues unless an unlikely major change occur in the government strategies.

3.1.6 Case example for public libraries

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

Insert Case Example and Photo here.

To continue to Section 4.2 (Venue 2) go to the file "Phase II Template - Part 3b - Venue 2 - VENUE NAME.doc".

This section contains Section 4.2 (Venue 2) and follows Section 4.1 (Venue 1 – Public Libraries) from the file “Phase II Template - Part 3a – Venue 1 – Public Libraries.doc”.

4 Venue-Specific Assessments

4.2 Venue 2: iCommunity Centers (Program Internet (info) Desa)

4.2.1 Overall venue assessment

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

2–3 Paragraphs:

What is your overall assessment of public access information in this type of venue?

iCommunity centers are developed under the name of the rural Internet project, a national IT policy to bring ICT into rural areas. It has been established in order

- (1) to primarily improve the level of ICT literacy and awareness among the targeted rural and underserved communities
- (2) to compensate for traditionally low PC and Internet penetration, especially in rural areas, and
- (3) to provide opportunity to the rural community to use digital technologies in improvig quality of their lives.

Developed under the leadership of Malaysian Ministry of Energy, Water, and Communication, this project has been veru innovative and example to many telecenters developments in other parts of the world. The basic model involves a balanced three way development: provision of resources and infrastructure, capacity building and content building.

The project was started in 2001 with 14 venues established and now has reached to 42 venues, mainly established at the post offices, covering majority of rural areas in the country.

iCommunity is essentially a community development project, run by by local community leaders and volunteers. It aims to empower primarily most underserved in country: women, young -uneducated, and senior citizens. It aims to provide information related to education, agriculture and supports small to medium enterprises in the rural areas of the country.

Note: There is a very similar project called Madan Info Desa (Rural Information program) under Ministry of Rural and Regional Development. They both serve the same purpose but Medan Info Desa is more oriented to content building and connection creation among the rural community centers. Medan Info Desa and Program Info Desa are now being unified under a new project titan digital where the emphasis I more content building and

connecting. In this report we evaluated program info desa but the objectives, centers and the issues seem to be very similar.

4.2.2 Access

2–3 Paragraphs:

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

One of the strengths of the iCommunity project is bringing the ICT technologies to the rural communities country-wide via physical presence. Existing 42 venues are well-distributed in the country as annexes to the post offices, though most of them are in Peninsular Malaysia and Malaysian Borneo also has them in key locations.

This is well planned community based project and involves the local community in the administration and in the activities in this way, the members of the community feels part of the initiative increasing the accessibility.

4.2.2.1 *Physical access*

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

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

The Project has a sound planning in almost every aspects including the selection of locations. There is good distribution in both East and west Malaysia and mainly located in the non-urban areas in line with its objectives. As primarily driven by the community – young, women and seniors – the accessibility does not seem to be a problem because the target groups of the users are already involved in the project.

However, majority of the Malaysian live in Rural areas – around 70 percent of the population. Who are at the lower end of income and have no regular income. The places they live may be so remote that accessibility, water services, electricity and other basic amenities may not be easily available. The iCommunity center project encourage these rural population to be part of ICT learning programs, and entrepreneurship programs and aims to make the programs and services offered accessible to them.

4.2.2.2 *Appropriate technology and services*

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

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

The physical ICT infrastructure at the venues include 6-9 networked computers, scanner, color/B&W printers, and a digital camera. These are used both learning new ICT skills but

also in building content that the community needs.

The services are used for awareness and teaching basic ICT skills especially for those who have no formal education ICT or otherwise. Then, in some successful centers, there are advanced training and workshops for exploiting ICT better for work and advanced information needs such connecting to other content in the country, blogging and developing new content.

4.2.2.3 *Affordability*

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

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

In addition to capacity and content development centers also provide typical internet café services with a minimal fee. This may still be not affordable for the very poor. There are free ICT training courses from time to time.

4.2.2.4 *Fees for services*

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

If there are fees: What do these fees buy?

n/a

Indicate amount in local currency

Equivalent in US Dollars:

Date of estimate

and local currency name

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:

n/a

4.2.2.5 *Geographic distribution*

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

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

They are well distributed in the country, 7 of them are in the East Malaysia and the rest are in West Malaysia

4.2.2.5.1 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).



Description of map:

The stars in the map show the location of PIDs (source: PID's official web site <http://www.pid.net.my/>)

4.2.2.6 Other factors affecting access

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

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

describe

4.2.3 Capacity and relevance

2–3 Paragraphs:

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

iCommunity centers are probably one of the most successful telecenters for rural community building in relation to other parts of the world. When they were planned they were planned with a great care not to just open them and not to think about its sustainability. Rather, the centers are planned to provide typical cyber-café activities, but also are serious in user capacity building via ICT courses and in training the trainers.

The centers are manned by an operator but the local community also gets involved. Each center is managed by a committee: there is a chair and supervisor and then representation from local NGO, Youth, Post office, Women, seniors, entrepreneurs, community leaders, in addition to those from the educational, social, health and agricultural sectors. This helps creating a strong center both in terms of involvement and building a capacity to satisfy the

needs of stakeholders.

4.2.3.1 *Staff size*

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

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

It can be different depending on the venue. There is one government employee and then a number of community workers.

4.2.3.2 *Staff training*

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

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

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

iCommunity centers are very serious in training the staff working at the centers. Normally, the centers are run by a few trained staff via central government resources. Then there are programs for “training the trainers”. As the centers are run by the community, and as the aim is to empower them in basic and ICT skills, a number of workshops are also run in meeting demands of the community workers at the center.

Committee members training – by the ministry include orientation on responsibility of committee members, management of centers, promotion & marketing of the center, local content development, sustainability, finance, and the business model. The supervisor training includes those on the software and hardware, monitoring system, content development and maintenance of the center. Training programs for the trainers are extensive and the include : training design and preparation, techniques and methodologies for effective training, teaching someone how to use a computer and the internet.

4.2.3.3 *Services offered*

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

Services Offered

Comments

11. Typical internet cafe services

12. ICT use and training

13. Scanning printing photocopy

14. Content development

15. eGovernment services

16. Web and graphic design

17. Communications

18. Business services and eCommerce

19.

20.

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

Some centers are small and not effective in terms of community involvement or management.

4.2.3.4 *Programs for underserved communities*

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

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

The iCommunity centers or the rural internet program is specifically designed to serve the underserved in the non-urban areas where there are minimal education and job opportunities, and most of the members of the population are farmers or without a regular income. The programs developed target specifically the young and unemployed, women, seniors and those who can develop small to medium businesses. The programs range from free basic ICT skills to building content and eCommerce for business.

4.2.3.5 *Relevant content*

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

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

Available Content:

The centers promote involvement of the community by providing content related to education, agriculture and business related. These are basic content required by the youth, women or seniors. There is also opportunity to connect to other community web sites and government services.

The centers also make available a rural portal which allows users to connect to other rural internet centers, develop local content and news.

There are also opportunities to be part of the rural web site promoting the local

community, activities, products and news. This also allows opportunity to develop local content.

Other Content Needed:

Some the centers are working on the web based community development via creating content which relevant to the local area or city. These need to be more seriously taken care of.

Rather than new content, one big challenges is the quality maintenance of existing content.

Local Initiatives to build needed content:

The centers are run by the local community but this is not sufficient for designing and building sustainable content.

Source: source of information

4.2.3.6 Services and information available in local languages

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

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

The services are offered in Bahasa ad in some cases English.

4.2.3.7 Types of uses

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

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

Refer to section **Error! Reference source not found. Error! Reference source not found.** and complement here as needed.

Typical cyber café activities such as web surfing and search, email, chat and other communication activities are very common. Then comes local content development and training.

4.2.3.8 Number, type, and frequency of users

Refer to section **Error! Reference source not found. Error! Reference source not found.** Complement here as needed.

additional details not covered in section 4.2.3

4.2.3.9 Users capacity to use information and services offered

What is the overall capacity of the users to take advantage of public access to information and

communication resources, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)?

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

There are a range of users from first-timers to advanced level ICT skilled. In general the users are either first time users, who undergo training, or beginners and who would like to improve their skills and use the ICTs.

4.2.3.10 *Training courses for users*

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

Training courses:

ICT specific training courses: Basic courses on Introduction to PC, Internet Surfing, E-mail, Web development, and Intermediate courses on Word processing, Spreadsheet, Presentation Software

4.2.3.11 *Integration into daily routines*

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

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

The centers have been instrumental in helping the farmers to access information and the owners of the small to medium businesses to be able to use eCommerce facilities. The free ICT course helps the youth in finding jobs. After attending the more advanced ICT skill courses, such as, Computer Maintenance and Repair Courses, they can find jobs in companies serving similar services.

4.2.3.12 *Users perceptions about the venue*

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

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

The locals have been very receptive to the services offered and there has been increasing demand in the recent years, especially to the basic services. There seems to be a different demand to the advanced and creative services.

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

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

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

One of the basic aim of the project was to build centers which empowers the local communities in the rural area of Malaysia. The centers seem to be very successful in doing this. There is a great demand to the basic ICT training and a growing interest on the services which can enable the locals to be entrepreneurs by promoting their crafts and other products.

The centers are also creating bonding among the local people via local content and also keeps them connected to the rest of country via connecting to the other centers web site and communities.

4.2.3.14 *Trust, safety, and privacy*

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

There seem no problem regarding security, trust or privacy issues.

4.2.3.15 *Gaps and opportunities in information and services offered*

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

The centers would like to be a one-stop ICT center by creating sub work areas providing efficient and effective services on eGovernment, eLearning and eCommerce.

There are also ideas towards creating community certification programs.

The centers also recognize the required evolution of the program in line with new developments in the ICT for development and to keep up with the changing technologies.

4.2.4 *Enabling environment*

2 – 3 Paragraphs:

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

The environment issues were described in the country assessment and that there is a favorable environment supported by the government.

4.2.4.1 *Local and national economy*

Describe the local and national economic environment and how it affects public access to information and communication in this type of venue (refer to and complement economic summary in country assessment, section **Error! Reference source not found. Error! Reference source not found.**, calling out what is

<p>specific to this venue)</p> <p>(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.</p>
<p>As described in the country assessment.</p>
<p>4.2.4.2 <i>Legal and regulatory framework</i></p> <p>Describe the legal and regulatory framework and how it affects public access to information and communication in this type of venue (refer to and complement economic summary in country assessment, section Error! Reference source not found. Error! Reference source not found., calling out what is specific to this venue)</p> <p>(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.</p>
<p>As described in the country assessment.</p>
<p>4.2.4.3 <i>Political will and public support</i></p> <p>What is the level of political will and public support for this type of venue? (refer to and complement section Error! Reference source not found. Error! Reference source not found., calling out what is specific to this venue)</p> <p>(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.</p>
<p>The iCommunity centers are apart of the national IT strategy and there is a determination in the recent national plan to increase the number of these centers.</p>
<p>4.2.4.4 <i>Organization and networking</i></p> <p>Describe if the facilities in this type of venue organized in any network, association or other collective body? (i.e., national public library system, telecentre franchise or network, etc)?</p>
<p>The centers are all connected to each other via portals of the program. Each center is also connected to othe eGovernment services sites. There is plan to connect all centers under one portal of “digital divide”.</p>
<p>4.2.4.5 <i>Partnerships</i></p> <p>Describe notable public-private partnerships in support of this type of venue.</p> <p>If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.</p>
<p>The rural Internet project is the program of ministry of energy, water of communication. The program is run and maintained in collaboration with post offices and the local community. There is also a close work with Rural and Regional Development Ministry to increase the numbers of the centers and to create a country-wide network connecting resources and the web-content. Tehse new initiative to go under the “digital divide” plan.</p>
<p>4.2.4.6 <i>Other environment factors</i></p> <p>Other factors in the environment that affect access and use of information in this kind of venue, not covered above?</p>

describe

4.2.5 For publicly funded venues only: Revenue streams

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

4.2.5.1 Budget

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

Total Budget for Fiscal Year 2003-2004

Local currency name amount (local currency)

Approx. equivalent in USD 2.03 million based on exchange rate of on date .

Cost for creating 40 telecenters (2003-2004):

Construction of buildings: \$740,000

Personnel: \$470,000

Hardware: \$450,000

Software: \$160,000

Training: \$210,000

Total: \$2.03 million

4.2.5.2 Relative size of budget

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

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

Other Comments:

describe

4.2.5.3 Sources of funding

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

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

Other Comments:

We do not know the percentages but the first phase was funded by businesses and the second phase by JICA (a donor of Japan). The final phase is funded by Malaysian government and public sector organizations.

4.2.5.4 Paths and flows of resources

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

Ministry of Energy Water and communication provides IT infrastructure and free internet access and appoints the supervisors. The Malaysian postal services provide premises. They are often annexes to post office buildings.

4.2.5.5 Fees and cost recovery

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

describe

4.2.5.6 Cost categories

What are the main cost categories in the operation of this kind of venue? (% of total annual budget)
If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Cost Categories for Operation:	Approximate % of total budget	Comments
Staff (salaries, benefits)	25	
Building infrastructure	35	
Utilities		
Staff Training	10	

Computers/technology	30
other (name)	
other (name)	
other (name)	
other (name)	
other (name)	
other (name)	
other (name)	
Total	100%

Other Comments:

According to 2004-2005 figures

4.2.5.7 Recent changes and future trends

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

describe

4.2.6 Case example for venue 2: Venue Name

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

Insert Case Example and Photo here.

To continue to Section 4.3 (Venue 3) go to the file "Phase II Template - Part 3c - Venue 3 - VENUE NAME.doc".

This section contains Sections 5 and 5 (Recommendations and Appendices, respectively) and follows Section 4.4 (Venue 4) from the file "Phase II Template - Part 3d – Venue 4 – VENUE NAME.doc".

5 Success Factors and Strategic Recommendations

5.1 Summary of Lessons in Country

5.1.1 Information needs

What are the most critical information needs by underserved communities that are currently not being adequately met by public access to information and communication venues?

Malaysia with its around 27 million population is composed of multi-ethnic groups and varying human and physical geographical outlook. The population is mostly Malays and then follows Chinese, Indians and indigenous Bumiputras. Ethnically, much effort is spent to create equalities and though Malays politically lead, there is a reasonable harmony in the country.

Geographically the country is divided into two parts: a peninsular (West) Malaysia and north of Borneo Island (East Malaysia). West Malaysia is relatively more developed and contains most of the states out of total of 13 states.

Around 40 percent of the population live in rural areas. The need of the underserved communities such as aged, women, unemployed, small business owners in rural areas and the indigenous communities are considered as providing equal access to ICT resources in terms of helping their daily lives (educational resources and business related resources for the craftsmen), finding jobs and accessing communication tools. In some cases there are advanced examples where the user capacity building initiatives are being taken to enable them to create their own resources for meeting their own needs. These are typically enabling local communities to create small groups for job search and promoting small businesses via Internet and eBusiness technologies.

Information needs satisfaction in Malaysia are primarily directed to those who live in rural areas and who are either ethnic minority or have insufficient resources to reach to an basic resources. Satisfying those needs is in the heart of the political power as ICT efforts are taken seriously to support economic development.

5.1.2 Where people go

Where do people go for public access to information and communication in the country, especially underserved communities?

Malaysia is relatively small and well developed in ICT infrastructure. Internet cafes are well spread out except remote rural areas. Those who are able to access and utilize information (i.e. literate at ICT or otherwise) are currently served via libraries and internet cafes. There is still, however, problem of increasing awareness among the underserved that there are opportunities for them to access and utilize information at the already existing

venues iCommunity centers and PIDs.

5.1.3 How access, capacity, and environment affects public access

How do access, capacity and environment affect public access to information and communication venues in the country? (Refer to details under access, capacity and environment in research design document).

Having a relatively well recovering economy in the South East Asia and putting the ICT in the core efforts of development, Malaysia seems to have created a fairly well environment for supporting access to information. Especially, with recent USP driven initiatives to bridge the digital divide, the efforts are fast moving into rural and remote areas of the country. As a result of these efforts, whether they are PPIKs via libraries or PIDs as community centers via post offices, all information access venues that are already opened or to be opened soon seem to be well organized and planned in building capacity as a whole in the country. This creates a favorable context for various levels access to information sources.

IT seems that there are mainly two streams of creating an impact in improving access to information in Malaysia. One is via supporting formal educational channels and libraries that are closely connected to the formal education. Here the awareness, knowledge and capacity of those who are already in formal education are created or enhanced with respect to information sources, venues, tools and technologies. The other one is via reaching out those living in rural and remote areas of the country and those who are not necessarily in a formal education. This is supported via creating community based activities in projects such as PIDs, which meets and sometimes enhances needs of the users in making their lives better. The activities in these venues include teaching ICT skills to those adults or young, enabling small business owners to utilities ICT technologies for their businesses, and providing content on government services or locally relevant issues.

In general, the access, capacity and the environment seems to be favorable both in terms of existing efforts and the efforts that the government is closely following to bring to those who need. This is particularly true in much needed political will and support but there is yet much to be done in terms of capacity building.

5.1.4 Role of ICT

What is the role of ICT in public access to information and communication? What untapped opportunities exist?

As mentioned previously, the Malaysian government aims to develop the country's economy having ICT at the heart of its activities. The ICT and related industry and services are seen as key enablers and much has been achieved in past decade that such an approach prove to be working. The evidences can be found in creation and utilization of the multi media super corridor, investments in establishing ICT enhanced schools and bringing the ICT to the rural areas via a number of telecenter projects.

As the country places such a key role on ICT in overall development, the role of ICT for information access inevitably follows. This is realized in country's ninth development plan and therefore initiated a number of successful telecenter projects: PPIks and PIDs. So far the

venues, especially PIDs, seem to be successful in serving the purpose by enabling the users to benefit from ICTs and the information accessed.

5.2 Success Factors and Recommendations

5.2.1 Where to invest resources

How could additional resources (money, people, time, knowledge) be best used to strengthen public access to information and communication venues and practices in the country? (i.e., solutions that would make it more accessible, affordable, appropriate?)

It seems that all efforts put into PPIKs and PIDs seems to be well planned from opening the venue and how it will be utilized and benefited by the local communities. Most of the success can be attributed to the government keenness in achieving ICT based economic development via the creation of a knowledge society. While there is naturally favorably environment in this respect, there is still much needed investment in building awareness and capacity building in the remote areas of the country, especially among the underserved. These efforts require further investments in making them not only a mainstream solution but a solution that can reach out the underserved communities. In order to achieve this, perhaps some resources may be directed deliberately towards promotion of the venues, special ICT skills training who are yet unaware of the venues, live in the remote parts of the country, who are uneducated, women, unemployed or poor.

5.2.2 Key success factors

What are the key success factors for public access to information and communication to meet information needs of the population, especially underserved communities, and especially through digital ICT?

A number of key success factors can be summarized as follows:

1. There is devotion on the government side to make ICT work for the countries overall welfare.
2. The projects related to the information access venues are reasonably well planned. Whether they are PIDs or PPIKs the reasons for establishing the venue and the ways of utilization of the resources aim to reach out and improve the skills of the users.
3. The venues are reasonably well distributed in the country and rural areas next to post offices or libraries or health clinics - places where local communities can access them easily.
4. The operators of the venues are centrally trained (or training for trainers) and directed in making the venues successful.
5. Especially for PIDs, there are programs for ICT skills trainings and community building to make the venues pleasurable places to attend.

5.2.3 Role of ICT

How can public access to information and communication venues in the country be strengthened to offer more meaningful and equitable access to information, especially using digital ICT?

The ongoing and planned projects in the country seems to be doing the work via utilization of ICTs all around the country with a great motivation to provide equitable access to ICT resources and information.

5.2.4 Top ten recommendations

What are the Top Ten recommendations for public access to information and communication venues in your country? Make sure you include policy recommendations as part of them.

1. The creation and running of the venues seem to be reasonably successful as mainstream operation. However, these venues and the services offered must be directed more to those members of the society who actually need them.
2. There should be more efforts in increasing awareness and improving local community participation, especially for PIDs and especially from every segment of the local users – young, old, male – female.
3. The venues may be more active in serving various ethnic communities, especially those who cannot speak English or Bahasa.
4. In some venues (PIDs or PPIKs) there is a need for local content that is directed towards the needs of the local users and underserved communities.
5. There is a need for creation of wider selection and variety of local content to appeal to the users (especially for PIDs). The users of the venues should also be encouraged in the creation of such content.
6. The numbers of PPIKs are planned to increase and perhaps the same should be followed for increasing numbers of the PIDs so that there is wider coverage and the coverage includes remote corners in the country to facilitate physical access.
7. Most of the efforts in building these telecenters (PIDs or PPIKs) are coming from the governmental sources. A public –private partnership may prove to be successful.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

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 the Research

Algeria
Argentina
Bangladesh
Brazil
Colombia
Costa Rica
Dominican Republic
Ecuador
Egypt
Georgia
Honduras
Indonesia
Kazakhstan
Kyrgyzstan
Malaysia
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 and 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 and communication, especially to underserved communities, and especially through the use of digital ICT: What are the needs, barriers, opportunities and 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 and 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 and analytical models

To inform project design, CIS adapted the Real Access framework (Bridges.org), analyzing public access to information and 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 and

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 Other Appendices

Attach other appendices here, as needed.

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Tables and Data

Table 1. Globalization Relative to Other Selected Countries in 2004

Ranking in 2004 from the Least to the Most Globalised	Economic Integration	Personal Integration	Political Integration	Technological Integration	Total Integration
India	61	53	57	55	61
Indonesia	47	61	53	51	59
China	37	59	56	49	57
Bangladesh	62	43	35	62	56
Philippines	32	20	51	47	33
Sri Lanka	41	34	60	56	51
Thailand	28	48	58	40	48
Pakistan	55	36	34	59	46
Malaysia	8	14	46	26	20
Australia	26	28	13	5	13
USA	56	35	28	1	7

Singapore	2	3	40	10	2
Ireland	1	2	11	14	1

Source: Kearney, A. T. (2004) 'Foreign Policy Globalisation Index', *Foreign Policy Magazine*, March-April 2004, at <<http://www.foreignpolicy.com>>.