



IT
for
Change

Annual Report 2010-2011



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Editorial support	Chloé Zollman Deepika Khatri Madhavi Jha Nandini C.
Design	K. Krupa Thimmaiah and Chloé Zollman
<i>Photographs</i>	
Front Cover	One of the <i>kishoris</i>
Back Cover	K. Krupa Thimmaiah and Sindhu Ghanti
Printed by	National Printing Press, Bengaluru

Front Cover: *Kishoris* learning to use video technology, Attiguppe village, Mysore district, India

This report has been created in-house by using Scribus and Inkscape public software digital publishing tools.



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Acronyms

ANM	Auxiliary Nurse Midwife
APC	Association for Progressive Communications
APWLD	Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development
AWAKE	Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Karnataka
AWID	Association for Women's Rights in Development
BEO	Block Education Office
BRC	Block Resource Centre
CABE	Central Advisory Board of Education
CDL	Communication for Development and Learning
CeTIT	Citizens Empowerment Through Information Technology
CITIGEN	Gender and Citizenship in the Information Society
CKC	Community Knowledge Centre
CoPs	Community of Practitioners
CSC	Common Service Centre
CSTD	Commission on Science and Technology for Development
DFID	Department for International Development
DIET	District Institute of Education and Training
DIT	Department of Information Technology
DoPT	Department of Personnel and Training
DSERT	Department of State Educational Research and Training
DTE	Department of Technical Education
DU	Delhi University
EADI	European Association of Development, Research and Training Institutes
EDS	Electronic Delivery of Services
EIS	Euro-India Spirit Project
EPSI	European Public Sector Information
EU	European Union
FLOSS	Free/Libre/Open Source Software
FOSSCOMM	Free and Open Source Software Community Network
GoI	Government of India
IBSA	India, Brazil and South Africa
ICTD	Information and Communication Technology for Development
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
IG	Internet Governance
IGC	Internet Governance Caucus
IGF	Internet Governance Forum
IGNOU	Indira Gandhi National Open University
IIT	Indian Institute of Technology

IKME	Information and Knowledge Management Emergent
ITfC	IT for Change
JRM	Joint Review Mission
KBW	Knowledge Building Workshop
KC	Karnataka Community
KKC	Karnataka Knowledge Commission
KMKN	Knowledge Management and Knowledge Networking
KNP+	Karnataka Network of Positive People
MC	Managing Committee
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MHRD	Ministry of Human Resource Development
MK4D	Mobilising Knowledge for Development
MKSS	<i>Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan</i>
MM	<i>Mahiti Manthana</i>
MS	<i>Mahila Samakhya</i>
MS Kendra	<i>Mahila Shikshana Kendra</i>
MSK	<i>Mahila Samakhya</i> Karnataka
NeGP	National e-Governance Programme
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NMK	<i>Namma Mahiti Kendra</i>
NMEICT	National Mission on Education through ICTs
ONI	Open Net Initiative
PLHIV	People Living with HIV/AIDS
PPCP	Public-Private Community Partnership
PPU	Policy Planning Unit
PSSA	Public Sector Software Architecture
RMSA	<i>Rashtriya Madhyamika Shikshana Abhiyan</i>
RRCE	Regional Resource Centre for Education
RTE	Right to Education
RTI	Right to Information
SOA	State of the Art
SSA	<i>Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan</i>
TCoL	Teachers Communities of Learning
TLM	Teaching-Learning Material
TMK	<i>Taluk Mahiti Kendra</i>
TPD	Teacher Professional Development
UID	Unique Identification Number
UN-Solex	United Nations Solution Exchange
UNDAW	United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USRN	University State Resource Network
WE-IT	Women's Enterprise and Information Technology
WSIS	World Summit on the Information Society

Some Reflections on our Strategic Directions

To take recourse to the comfort of clichés, it can be easily said that we live in extremely interesting times. If there is one thing here that the spot light must not miss, it is how the sweeping winds of technological change have brought with them the expanding 'oligarchic nucleus' of democracy, the control of politics and governance by the elite, and in particular, corporate capital. The Human Rights Law Foundation (HRLF) has filed a suit against Cisco in a United States (US) Federal District Court accusing the company of helping the Chinese government to censor the Internet and keep tabs on dissidents, including members of the banned religious group, Falun Gong. At one point, Falun Gong adherents were estimated to be at over 70 million, exceeding the total membership of the Chinese Communist Party (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Falun_Gong).

Contemporary oligarchic power structures of political control seem to bear close resemblance to pre-democratic times, but the resemblance stops there. Political configurations that define our existence in the techno-social reality are post-democratic in that they erode the centrality and dismiss the relevance of the 'public' – a notion that represents the discourses, struggles and contested space of democracy; and in doing so, they are ingenuously sophisticated.

Dominant network society logic deployed through digital technologies renders history, ethics and place/context defunct. Consider the informational state; e-governance is a way to destabilise the identity of citizens in very problematic ways. Very little is publicly debated as the Government of India (GoI) is embarking on privatising governance through e-governance, in the name of path-breaking innovations in service delivery that amount to nothing more than the commercialisation of citizen-state interactions.

The trends – big and small – also concern the way the decentralising propensities of digital technologies are being outsmarted by the forces that seek to 'capitalise' their totalising power. The anarchist's dream of self-organising and self-governance may originate in the network society's possibilities for collaborative and distributed ecologies of creation and production, but these very sites are also the factory shop floor for a new form of bottom-up, distributed capitalism in the emerging network architectures. The peer-to-peer theorist Michel Bauwens uses the term 'netarchical capitalism' to describe the emerging way in which digital ecologies are characterised by "the emergence of a new segment of the capitalist class, which is no longer dependent on the ownership of intellectual property rights nor on the control of the media vectors but rather on the development and control of participatory platforms". It may take us new ways of looking at things, but look we must, at the public in digital and digitally enabled ecologies, and how it is produced through the monetisation of the commons; as Bauwens asserts, "corporates who own Web 2.0 platforms are dangerous trustees of commons-favourable protocols" (http://p2pfoundation.net/Netarchical_Capitalism).

Meanwhile, most liberal actors would much rather ignore the erosion of the public, ostensibly because State intervention in the free space of digital ecologies is anathema to the 'rights' of the netizen-user. Contestation around the rights and principles scaffolding the emerging global public is buried in the political economy of post-democratic politics, and the design of necessary global governance arrangements appropriate to the global character of the network society is not surprisingly, suitably ambiguous. While corporates in the network society are brazen in their opportunism and expediency, developing countries are not yet clear on the public policy regime surrounding the Internet. Google recently agreed to pay a fine of USD 500 million to the US government for allowing Canadian pharmacies to place advertisements on its website that resulted in prescription drugs being imported from Canada to the US, unlawfully. What India may want to or could do about similar violations contravening its domestic law, is a moot point.

The unfolding picture of the digital era needs a compelling theoretical framework that can be uniquely Southern; not only do we need explanations for the many contradictions arising from the rearrangement of social norms and practices in the digital era, but also constructive pathways for an agenda of transformation that is contemporary. The recasting of the public requires us to grapple with 'advanced

capitalism' in the digital age. The modus operandi of global capital in digital ecologies is to reformulate the structures and processes of production only for newer avenues of private gain (as in the case of peer-based platforms mentioned above that use 'community' labour). The very markers of material reality like gender seem to disappear as the labour of women from the South is co-opted by the immaterial 'knowledge' economy in the name of participation in the global work force. If indeed, lurking in the very nature of the beast, there is a promise for transformative change, a credible theory must account for history, location and ethics. It cannot be unhinged from reality as it is embedded and embodied; it cannot present a dematerialised notion of global citizenship; it must correspond to the narrative of global justice. These thoughts have informed our work as we have worked on a wide canvas this year and as we hone our vision and plans for the coming years. While the assault of jargon and new literature from various disciplinary inquiries into the digital seem to overwhelm the more bounded space of development thinking, we believe that it is only by plunging into these emerging knowledges and categories that we can create and rewrite a development-centric and equity-oriented epistemology of digital technologies. Sitting on the peripheries or hobnobbing with the familiar will not do; the times call for much more.

You will read in this report about our work on feminist frameworks building; our efforts to politicise the access-centric discourse around gender and digital technology by arguing the need for a structural-institutional approach to interpret the interests and rights of the marginal, female 'citizen' in emerging digital ecologies. The humble wisdom that comes from the work of our field centre (now christened '*Prakriye* – Centre for Community Informatics and Development'), continues to lend us the courage of conviction needed for long term organisational sustainability in these times of complex challenges. The *Kishori Chitrapata* project with young, out-of-school *dalit* girls has not only designed experiences that have left a never-the-same-again imprint on their lives, but helped us explore feminist intervention differently. *Prakriye's* work with *dalit* women's collectives continues to demonstrate technology-supported empowerment models that go beyond the generation of counter-cultures. As mentioned already, we are convinced that new concepts must inform development theory and practice; a mandate that we also gave ourselves through the Public Software Centre that seeks to work with non-governmental organisations (NGOs), academic institutions and government departments, to extend the politics of the 'freedom to produce and share' espoused by the free software movement, to encompass a 'public ownership' perspective.

We want our work to resonate more with the debates in the global justice arena. Internet Governance (IG) is one area we have sought to shape – more or less as lone crusaders espousing political economy perspectives – through multiple entry points, including significantly the India, Brazil, South Africa (IBSA) inter-governmental platform. Walking the talk to re-engineer institutions through new technologies requires a committed engagement with the government and faith in the role of public institutional regimes. This painstaking art of the necessary – 'doing' technology for transformative, systemic change – has been our strategy in the partnership with the public education system in Karnataka state, as also with the state Knowledge Commission. At the national level, our advocacy in the governance arena has gathered substantial momentum. We have held that any attempt to strengthen governance through digital technologies, whether in public service delivery or in the design of new information infrastructures like village level telecentres, or Right to Information (RTI) related proactive disclosure, must go with an explicit emphasis on deepening democracy.

Understanding the oligarchic alignments of contemporary structures, the privatised publics that the dominant digital represents, is non-negotiable for social change actors. Equally important is to know how a new reinvented town hall/village *gram sabha* can be constructed through and by the contemporary and radical community constellations – the 'network publics' – that the digital makes possible. This is what captures our imagination and action. We hope to find the appropriate institutional methods to inform the wider development effort around us committed to social justice and equity with these two mandates.

Directors
IT for Change

Exploring Techno-Pedagogy

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) programmes in development (including education) have had a similar trajectory as they have had in the business sector where they first made an impact. First generation programmes have been driven by technology enthusiasts while people working in education have largely regarded ICTs as a peripheral phenomenon or as something with a purely negative potential for teaching-learning. Hence, 'first generation' ICT programmes in education have been stand-alone programmes with little connection to the mainstream teaching-learning processes in the school. The curriculum has been limited to basic computer literacy (focusing on operating system and office suite which have little pedagogical relevance), transacted by 'computer teachers', thus bypassing the regular teaching staff in the school. Fortunately, educationists have been involved in designing second generation ICT programmes. Here, ICTs serve to achieve larger educational goals, rather than being an end in themselves, curriculum pertains to regular mainstream subjects, transacted by regular school teachers and teacher educators. We formally studied one such programme, the University State Resource Network (USRN), during this year. Based on our learnings, we launched the 'Teachers Communities of Learning' (TCoL) programme this year to serve as a demonstration project. We also continued our capacity building work for teachers and teacher educators on 'techno-pedagogical' applications of ICTs in education. Our focus, thus, has been to help policy makers migrate programme design from first generation to second generation models and our work has continued at four levels:

1. Conducting research for gathering evidence regarding the design and implementation of different models of ICTs in education
2. Using the learnings from research for the capacity building of educators and policy makers in alternative, progressive, ICTs in education models that focus on empowering teachers and strengthening the public education system
3. Taking up demonstration projects, which display the suitability of such alternative models at a systemic level. The demonstration projects act as action research to test hypotheses relating to the potential of ICTs to support educational aims and to build a body of knowledge based on such practice.
4. Using learnings from our research, capacity building and programme work for our policy advocacy with education policy makers

Research

One important research study this year was on the USRN, a significantly digitally-enabled Teacher Professional Development (TPD) programme of the Regional Resource Centre for Education (RRCE), Delhi University (DU). This programme is collaboratively designed and implemented by leading academic institutions in India (Jawaharlal Nehru University and DU), along with one District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) in Delhi, and select government and private schools.

The USRN project aims to strengthen teachers' identities as professionals, support the use of

ICTs for the self-directed professional growth of teachers, and build a (real and virtual) network amongst teachers and teacher educators in different institutions working in education. It

Web portal www.ElEdu.net

The screenshot shows the ElEdu.net web portal. At the top, there is a search bar and navigation links. The main content area is divided into three columns: 'Communicate', 'Share', and 'Network'. The 'Communicate' section has a sub-heading 'Participate in discussion forums on various concerns and issues in elementary education, read, comment, rate posts, all these and more in English and Hindi.' The 'Share' section has a sub-heading 'Post and Share resources on elementary education, including books, research papers, journal articles, research study reports, children's literature, teaching-learning materials, policy documents and curriculum-templates.' The 'Network' section has a sub-heading 'Connect with teachers across schools, teacher-educators, other practitioners and academic community by creating your professional profile and making change-in-curriculum, pedagogic, policy concerns in your discussion group, blog and by participating in events.' On the right side, there is a 'Log In' section with fields for 'Username or Email' and 'Password', and a 'Log In' button. Below the 'Log In' section, there are links for 'Forgot Password?' and 'Not a Member? Register'. At the bottom, there is an 'About Us' section and a 'Notice Board' section. The 'About Us' section states: 'The University School Resource Network (USRN) is a network of institutions that are concerned with school education and have resources and expertise that they wish to bring to address issues of quality and equity in education.' The 'Notice Board' section lists: '• Bhashini Family Foundation Centenary Scholarships for students from India' and '• 15 day residential course in Hindi on Gender & Education (ongoing) - Noida and CE'.

also aims to contribute to academic resources, especially in Hindi, and bring multi-disciplinary expertise in universities to engage with school education. The project portal (www.ElEdu.net) has facilities for teachers to access resources, participate in discussions and upload their own work. We have borrowed elements of

Teachers at the 'Photography as a teaching-learning medium' workshop (Bengaluru, India)



well as virtual networks to allow teachers be in regular contact with one another and with teacher educators, is perhaps the best application of ICTs in education. The digital medium also has the capacity to enable local knowledge construction in text, audio and video formats. However, in order to be effective, such programmes need to be firmly anchored by educationists and grounded in educational aims, philosophies and contexts.

Capacity Building

Along with the Policy Planning Unit (PPU) of the Education Department (Government of Karnataka), ITfC organised workshops to develop the capacities of 120 teacher educators from DIETs and Block Resource Centres (BRCs) of Karnataka as 'Master trainers on public educational software tools' in mathematics, science and social science. The initiative was supported by *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA) and the Azim Premji Foundation, with infrastructure support from the R.V. College of Engineering and faculty support from the R.V. Educational Consortium. The workshop aimed to integrate ICT educational tools for teaching regular subjects and encourage teachers to see computers as pedagogical devices rather than sophisticated typewriters.

We also conducted workshops for the SSA state office staff on using OpenOffice and Ubuntu at the SSA Bengaluru laboratory. In addition, we introduced them to educational tools in mathematics, science and social sciences.

Bindu Thirumalai from ITfC also gave a talk for principals of Diploma of Education (D.Ed.) institutions which train teachers about the potential of ICTs to enhance teachers' training and professional experience in the classroom and amongst colleagues through networks. The presentation aimed at diffusing a higher level understanding of the ways in which ICTs can be used at different levels of the education system.

We also conducted a series of awareness cum capacity building workshops for NGOs working in the area of education to introduce them to the possibilities of digital technologies in the teaching-learning process.

In Gujarat, we are part of a committee to evaluate proposals for creating digital learning

this programme for our own demonstration project, discussed later. (Our report is available at www.ITforChange.net/RRCE).

Our report from another study of ICTs in education programmes in the district of Yadgir, one of the most backward districts of Karnataka (India), which we concluded this year is available at www.ITforChange.net/Yadgir ICT. This study discusses the issues and implications of first generation computer programmes in schools.

Based on our research studies, we wrote a policy brief (available at www.ITforChange.net/Note_teacher_prof_dvp) on how ICTs are best used for supporting teacher professional development. The biggest challenge in implementing the Right to Education (RTE), arguably, is to develop the professional abilities of a very large number of teachers across India. Conventional teacher training models, which are designed in a top-down/centralised manner and which rely on point in time workshops (compared to long-term and continuous facilitation) have largely not had the desired impact. Using digital methods, including educational software tools as

The trainer did not undermine the chalk-talk method used in classrooms, but rather encouraged the use of ICTs as an additional tool for teaching-learning.

Ria, an observer from the Sir Ratan Tata Trust, India, at our workshop on mathematics educational tools

resources for schools. We are also a member of the technical committee for supporting an evaluation of ICT@Schools – phase 1 and phase 2 projects (ICT programmes for high schools in Karnataka) and a member of a resource group for DSERT.

Higher Education

We participated in the process of revising the curriculum for polytechnic courses of the Department of Technical Education (DTE) for the fifth and sixth semesters. We have provided inputs to include public software educational tools as an alternative to popular proprietary software applications used in engineering. A list of such tools is available on <http://public-software.in/PS-tools-HigherEducation>.

Demonstration Project and Action Research

Our TCoL project focused on two critical components: firstly, building a network of government school teachers in one block in Bengaluru, focusing on their professional developmental and affiliation needs; and secondly, the collaborative design and development of digital learning resources, using public software educational tools. Creating an online community of teachers enables them to network, share resources, seek assistance and voice their opinions on education policies and day-to-day school transactions. Ultimately, the goal is to enable teachers to grasp the advantages of peer networking, break away from working in isolation and become active participants in the public education system. The project also aimed to introduce teachers to possible ways of effectively integrating ICTs in their everyday classroom transactions to enhance the quality of the teaching-learning process by making the lessons more engaging, active and connected to real life.

Through this project, we have been working directly with thirty teachers in twenty schools. The teachers have prepared lesson plans using digital tools, such as Geogebra in mathematics, Kalzium in science and KGeography in geography. They were also trained on web tools, to be able to access useful resources from relevant sites on education, and to blog about their lesson plans and discuss subject-oriented issues on the web-portal

<http://bangalore.karnatakaeducation.org.in>. We have also created subject-wise resource groups in mathematics, science and English, where teachers can interact, share ideas and learn from each other. Teachers from the community have also successfully showcased their work at the block level Teaching-Learning Material (TLM) event. A *Bala Meta* (children's fair) was also organised to introduce children to different digital tools. A recognition function for teachers was held at the end of the academic year to recognise the efforts and the work done by the teachers through the programme, where they spoke about their learnings and future needs. The videos of teachers are available on the web-portal mentioned above.

In July 2010, student teachers from the Netherlands came to visit the TCoL project through the Edukans Education Experience Programme. The TCoL team presented the project, the role of ICTs in education and its possibilities for the future.

Advocacy and Networking

Based on our advocacy work relating to the National Policy on ICTs in school education, which we have described in detail in our previous annual report, the issue of 'vendor driven ICT programmes' was discussed at the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE), an advisory body to the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), and a sub-committee was setup to study the issue. IT for Change (ITfC) was asked to make a presentation at a meeting of this committee. The presentation discussed the need

Mary Anita Angel, a teacher from Akkitimanahalli higher primary school, demonstrating KHangMan to another teacher at the Teaching-Learning Material Mela



After learning more advanced functions in Geogebra, I understood the power of the tool. It made me realise how I must focus on the conceptual understanding and not only on the process or methods in my mathematics classes

Radha, mathematics teacher,
as part of the TCoL project,
Bengaluru, India



Children exploring Childsplay, a public software educational tool targeting children aged 5-7

Looking Ahead

Our learnings from the Bengaluru demonstration project and the USRN research study will help us provide inputs to policy makers on how ICTs can support teachers professional development efforts, a priority area in school education. From our research, it is evident that the potential of ICT tools to support information sharing, as well as collaborative work among teachers, is immense, but programmes need to be driven by clear educational perspectives and a strong focus on local contexts and priorities. Keeping these principles in mind, we will be working with the *Rashtriya Madhyamika Shikshana Abhiyaan* (RMSA) to create 'Subject Teacher Forums' among government high school teachers in mathematics, science and social sciences. These forums would link teachers and teacher educators for each of these subjects across schools in twelve districts of the state. The forum would also support teachers to create digital learning resources in these subjects and make these available on a portal (<http://RMSA.KarnatakaEducation.org.in>).

We will be working with DTE and select polytechnics to build their capacities to use public educational software tools in their teaching-learning processes as well as to create digital resources for engineering drawing, numerical computing, mathematics, science, computer programming. We will also work for the National Mission on ICTs in Education (NMEICT) programme of MHRD along with the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Mumbai, to create videos (called 'spoken tutorials') on these tools, to both learn how to use them, as well as to engage them to promote learning in the relevant subjects.

We will continue to participate and strengthen the ICT-Education-India³, FOSS Community Network (FOSSCOMM)⁴, public software⁵ mailing lists and the teachers communities we have helped establish this year.

to move from a technological perspective/vendor driven first generation programmes to second generation programmes and provided specific inputs on policy and programmatic aspects. For a copy of the presentation, visit [www.ITforChange.net/CABE Meeting March2011](http://www.ITforChange.net/CABE_Meeting_March2011).

We conducted several capacity building workshops for government departments and NGOs on using public educational software applications for creating digital resources and for networking. The underlying philosophical reasons for adopting public software to create an environment of collaboration and unrestricted access and use of digital resources was always the starting point of these workshops, which served as a useful process of advocacy for the 'digital public' and for networking amongst these organisations. The table in Annexure 1 provides a list of the workshops, as an information resource for organisations who may be interested in the workshops conducted.

We created two 'learning networks' during the year, one for our TCoL teachers (tcobangalore@karnatakaeducation.org.in) and a second for a group of teacher educators working in DIETs and BRCs in Karnataka (kalikabalaga@googlegroups.com).

I am very excited to see where we are at the end of one year of the TCoL project. When we started, we were all individual teachers. We were here for a technology training that we could use for our children. Today, I see ourselves transformed into a community of teachers who have taken responsibility for their own professional development. The design of technology use in TCoL has opened many possibilities for teaching and learning.

Getzi Joel, Programme Officer, Development Focus, Bengaluru, India

1 ict-education-india@googlegroups.com.

2 Network@lists.fosscm.in.

3 public-software@lists.public-software.in.

Feminist Frameworks in the Information Society

We seem to be seeing a marked shift in the perception of Southern feminists about technology with a keener interest amongst them to make sense of the phenomenon of the network society as a paradigm of social interaction and institutional change. This has been bolstered inter alia, by a series of events across the globe such as in the Arab world where the popular interest in the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for mobilisation and organising have unpeeled new meanings of technology – beyond their use as tools – as harbingers of social and institutional change. Closer home, it seems that feminist practitioners and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working on women's empowerment are less sceptical and more eager to know how exactly there may be a socio-politically aware way by which their objectives can be guided by digital technologies. Also, there is a clear movement to be informed about the pros and cons of how technology implicates citizenship, in relation to governmental policies and programmes like the Unique Identification Number (UID).

This shift in perception has facilitated our work considerably in terms of the goodwill it has generated from a community of scholars and activists keen to be with us in the exploration around and dialogues about digital technologies and gender. Our attempt through the 'Gender and Citizenship in the Information Society' (CITIGEN) research programme has been to incorporate in this early period of deep scrutiny of the network society, the concerns of marginalised women, especially from the South. In addition, we aim to build alternate frameworks of their participation in this evolving paradigm of the information society that are rooted in feminist ethics. We are also hopeful that our presence in the field of social change itself is a force, albeit small, that adds power to feminist critical reflection about and active engagement with the techno-social.

This year has seen three major efforts in the domain of gender. The CITIGEN research project was established and has traversed a journey more or less spontaneously, adapting its vision to opportunities that presented themselves. We have also explored the discourse around economic policy, gender and ICTs through a study in Kerala and Karnataka – the Women's Enterprise and Information Technology (WE-IT) research project. Our field intervention, *Mahiti Manthana* (MM), has now completed six years and recognising the uniqueness of the endeavour, we wanted to embark on two efforts, both of which are ongoing – an impact assessment study and a capturing of the experiment through personalised narratives of the team that implemented the project. Additionally, we have, through publications, papers, seminars and conferences, hoped to enrich and support, local and global networks in the sector.

Research

Gender and Citizenship in the Information Society Research Programme

In 2010, IT for Change (ITfC), with support from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), started a two-year small grants programme to support creative research projects across Asia. The CITIGEN programme aims to explore how the concept of citizenship may be useful to study the gendered context of the emerging techno-social paradigm. It was felt

that the opportunities and challenges for women's equality and empowerment in the emerging context needed to be framed in a nuanced way, juxtaposing the analysis of gender relations with the broader questions of development, participation and power. The programme is thus an attempt to build a theoretical framework and generate policy directions from the standpoint of marginalised women in the region (although the CITIGEN space has welcomed cross-regional dialogues, and its contention is that what is relevant for Asia may be very useful for explorations elsewhere). It will broaden the conceptual

It has been a fascinating experience to be involved in the CITIGEN programme. I have learnt an enormous amount from the research, and from the exciting discussions that we had in Delhi when we came together to consider emerging themes and issues arising from the research projects. It has made me all the more aware of the complexities of activist engagement with new media, as well as opening up a world of new possibilities and experiences. The programme has achieved a lot. I look forward to seeing the work move towards completion, and to the insights and lessons that will undoubtedly come out of it.

Andrea Cornwall, Professor,
University of Sussex,
United Kingdom

IT for Change treads on areas that have few established pathways. The firm conviction of the founders in feminism, belief that IT-enabled communication is a powerful tool and their commitment to transparency and accountability has led them to take on ambitious interventions in which the community, and women in particular, remain centre stage.

Jahnvi Andharia, Senior
Programme Officer, Sir
Dorabji Tata Trust and
Founding Member,
ANANDI, India

horizon about gender and ICTs towards a politicisation and radicalisation of the 'access-centred' discourse so that the core feminist question about power, justice and equity can be addressed in its complexity.

The previous year saw the fine tuning of the proposal to IDRC and the designing of the contours of the programme. Processes and structures were set up to launch the programme and we undertook scoping visits in selected Asian countries. By June 2010, after a call for proposals, an advisory group consisting of Andrea Cornwall (Professor, University of Sussex), Lisa McLaughlin (Associate Professor, Miami University, USA), Srilatha Batliwala (Association for Women's Rights in Development, India), and Parminder Jeet Singh (Executive Director, ITfC), assisted by Anita Gurumurthy, coordinator of the programme, selected seven projects, out of 34 submissions, that met the different criteria adequately, representing different but complementary research issues. The seven potential partners were then invited to a workshop in July 2010 to discuss the substance and methodology of the proposed research programme, kickstart the process, and clarify the values and assumptions informing ITfC's orientation to this process. The workshop report is available at: www.gender-is-citizenship.net/resources/Workshop%20report_final.pdf.

Fully developed proposals were then solicited and contracts were signed with six partners – the Women and Media Centre – Sri Lanka (principal researcher – Sepali Kottegoda), Hong Kong Inmedia – Hong Kong (principal researcher – Ip Iam Chong), Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD) – Thailand (principal researcher – Hsiao Chuan Hsia), Likhuan – Philippines (principal researcher – Sylvia Estrada Claudio), the Indian Institute of Technology Madras – India (principal researcher – Binitha Thampi) and D.Net – Bangladesh (principal researcher – Ananya Raihan). The network has emerged as a unique discursive space for two reasons; all the teams are in active engagement with techno-social practices either through action research or through ongoing dialogue with feminist organisations and groups. The State of the Art (SOA) papers, the first scoping documents which map the gendered context pertaining to the research, are now available on www.gender-is-citizenship.net/SOA. The second reason is that CITIGEN has become

a space for feminist leaders and scholars not only from Asia, but also from other parts of the world, to elaborate the issues around gender, network society and power, through their own unique and varied theoretical legacies and methodological orientations. To accommodate this eclecticism to enrich the research programme, we also decided to make room for think pieces – shorter works to complement the empirical research.

Prominent scholars and practitioners have joined the network as think piece authors. Farida Shaheed (Director of Research in Shirkat Gah – Women's Resource Centre, Pakistan), Supinya Klangnarong (vice-chair of the Campaign for Popular Media Reform, Thailand), Margarita Salas (independent consultant, Costa Rica), Heike Jensen (independent gender researcher and consultant, Germany) and Desiree Lewis (Associate Professor, University of the Western Cape, South Africa) are studying the intersections between the micro-context of community information ecologies and macro socio-political phenomena. We are happy that two think pieces are now published. They raise pertinent questions around both the neoliberal and patriarchal structures mediating power in the information society. You can find them at <http://gender-is-citizenship.net/thinkpieces>.

In April 2011, we organised a three-day Review Workshop in New Delhi, to take stock of the CITIGEN process. The workshop's objective was to facilitate the articulation of emerging concepts and tentative theories from the ongoing work in CITIGEN. We also felt that it would be good to have a few external scholars to debate with us on the larger questions of democratic structures and institutions, and their shifting meanings for marginalised women's participation in the information society as equal citizens. The workshop report, a knowledge in itself, is available at: www.gender-is-citizenship.net/sites/default/files/citigen/CITIGEN_Workshop%20Report.pdf.

We are keen that CITIGEN should be instrumental in informing both feminist debates at the global policy level, and strategies at the local level. By the end of 2011, research partners will submit their final research reports, and we hope to close the project by early 2012, hopefully having sown the seeds for the different constituent endeavours of the programme to proceed on their respective pathways.

Mahiti Manthana Research

Prakriye – Centre for Community Informatics and Development, the field unit of ITfC, has taken forward the MM – literally translated as 'information churning' – project, even after funding support from the Government of India (GoI) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had ended. The MM project attempts to harness the potential of ICTs in furthering the impact of an existing women's empowerment intervention, *Mahila Samakhyā* Karnataka (MSK), an ongoing pan-Indian government programme working towards mobilising women from disadvantaged sections in rural areas through village level *sanghas* (collectives). In the long run, MSK hopes to move these collectives towards greater autonomy by gradually withdrawing programmatic resource support. MM seeks to contribute to MSK's goals by deploying ICTs to strengthen the existing information and communication processes of MSK. The project has three main components: a weekly radio programme, video-based learning platforms and *sangha*-managed telecentres in the villages.

In order to ensure that MM's ways of understanding, interpreting and 'doing' technology can be theorised, and as a means of revisiting the impact of the project through robust research methods, we initiated a research study on the MM project. The research study had two main objectives: assessing the impact of MM on the organisational structure and processes of MSK; and generating insights for building a theoretical framework to map the inter-relationships between development, community informatics and gender dynamics. Between October 2010 and March 2011, we completed the field work which comprised extensive interviews with women members of MSK *sanghas* in the geographical areas covered by the MM project, and conducted interviews with the team/employees of MSK. The interviewees were selected through a judgement sampling process and included three categories – women with no exposure or knowledge of the three components of the project (community radio, video and telecentres); women who were exposed only to the radio and video components introduced by the MM project; and finally, women who were exposed to all the three components.



The CITIGEN network at the Review Workshop (New Delhi, India)

The MM project has managed to carve out a local public sphere that is an alternative to the dominant public sphere where the voices of marginalised women can be heard, even if to a limited extent. Amongst *sangha* women, processes of peer-to-peer and self-determined learning, as well as of confidence in engaging with officials, have been generated over a period of time. The impact study hopes to systematically examine the extent to which these experiential impressions are indeed a fair reflection of the reality on the ground. This year, we look forward to analysing the findings of the research.

MM has been a special journey for us and has been the foundation stone of our received wisdom on undertaking development activity through community informatics. The team that has been part of this process has authored their reflections in the continuing journey to use and be led by digital possibilities. These reflections are currently being compiled as diaries that we feel will be of immense value to teachers and students of media, women's studies, as well as development studies, and to practitioners and scholars.

Women's Enterprise and Information Technology

The possibility of a research project on Women's Enterprise and Information Technology (WE-IT), in partnership with Dr. Lisa McLaughlin from Miami University, Ohio (United States), was flagged in last year's annual report. The research has progressed at a steady pace in the last one year. Broadly, the study aims at exploring the structural-institutional facets of the relationship between women entrepreneurs

The CITIGEN project is an extremely holistic programme that goes beyond research, including elements that considerably raise the impact of the research: especially the updated website, the regular bulletins, and a live network. The think pieces have been excellent contributions to the global contemporary feminist debate. These ideas need to be widely circulated, including in mainstream circles. The project makes critical interventions in three neglected areas: it links work on the ground with theory, bringing local experiences into theoretical frameworks; it builds a strong body of work from across Asia and the global South; and finally, it pushes feminists of different generations to engage with and respond to the concerns of the information age.

Manjima Bhattacharya,
Jagori, India

From early 2010 to the present, it has been my great fortune to collaborate with IT for Change in working on two gender and information society projects: as an advisor for the Gender and Citizenship in the Information Society programme, and as a research collaborator in the Women Enterprise and Information Technology project. Critically, each of these programmes engages with the experiences of women who most often have been treated as 'targets', rather than 'subjects', of development. I have no doubt that both projects will yield results that have a ripple effect in influencing perspectives and practices oriented to enhancing gender equity and social justice beyond their respective research scopes.

Dr. Lisa McLaughlin,
Associate Professor, Miami
University–Ohio,
United States

and ICTs, examining them from the perspective of a Southern feminist. The two sites selected for the research – Karnataka and Kerala – represent two contrasting ICT eco-systems. While in Karnataka, the IT hub of India, conversations around ICTs have been largely led by big private players, Kerala has been running its ICT-related education and governance programmes as a State 'mission'.

This qualitative research study brings the voices of different actors in the ICT and women's enterprise eco-system, captured through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, together, to construct the discourse of women's economic empowerment through and in relation to ICTs. Research participants in Karnataka constituted women entrepreneurs who had been trained in ICT use by the Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Karnataka (AWAKE), an NGO that has been supporting women entrepreneurs for the past two decades. In Kerala, we interviewed women entrepreneurs who have been trained under various state-led programmes for e-literacy and entrepreneurship, like the famous *Akshaya* programme. In both states, the views of government representatives from the departments of information technology and women's development were collected. These views, both in their articulation and silence, helped us uncover the State discourse.

The field work was completed by November 2010 and since then, the data has been translated and subject to analysis. This research has enabled us to take a critical look at the role of women's organisations, as well as the State, in the particular context of the digital age.

IT for Change at the seminar on 'Logging into (In)security: A Seminar on ICT and Gender Violence' (Chennai, India)



Advocacy and Networking

This year, we have continued our efforts in building alliances with feminist actors, at the local, national and global level.

Our collaboration with Vimochana, a Bengaluru-based feminist group, continued with a contribution to their collection of essays about the challenges for feminism. We wrote about the digitally transformed world, examining violence against women. This essay has also attracted attention from other groups, and we have been able to support their local awareness building efforts through our understanding of critical feminist and media theories in their contemporariness. The essay is available at www.ITforChange.net/Understanding_gender.

We have also strengthened our network with feminist scholars and activists from around the world. During Dr. Lisa McLaughlin's stay in India for the WE-IT research, we organised a talk by her about the gendered ties that bind the 'new global governance' to the 'new information economy', with a focus on women, work, and ICTs (www.ITforChange.net/Locating_Gender_Politics_Lisa). We also engaged with academic institutions, bringing perspectives from our work to different forums, such as at the 'Expert Brainstorm Workshop on Gender Stereotypes' organised by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS, Brighton, United Kingdom) for a United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW) supported process. We took part in an international conference organised by the Latin American School of Social Sciences (FLACSO) dedicated to 'Gender Equity Policies – New Scenarios, Actors and Articulations' in Buenos Aires (Argentina), bringing to the table epistemological questions about production/reproduction, public/private and global/local. Our contribution is available at www.ITforChange.net/Flacso_gender_equality_knowledge. This will be part of a collection of essays coordinated by the organisers of the conference. For the tenth anniversary issue of *Feminist Media Studies*, Anita Gurumurthy discussed the degree of impact that feminism and feminist media studies have had, can have, and should have, in the global South. The article reflects the importance of investigating the local, while simultaneously acknowledging

global shifts in knowledge production and distribution (see www.ITforChange.net/FMS_Negotiating_local-global).

At events we have organised through the year, especially when we invited feminist scholars and activists, we have persistently shared our writings; to go more than half way to provoke discussions around the exciting and emerging field of gender justice and information society. For instance, an essay that we wrote about the learnings of the MM project, has been shared with partners in the CITIGEN network, and submitted to *Women in Action* (ISIS International). It has been affirming that CITIGEN's work has been further disseminated by other forums, like the Association for Progressive Communications (APC) Gender-IT initiative, as well as by discussion groups such as the online dialogue organised by the Latin American group of APC, which chose the think piece on Central America, commissioned by the CITIGEN programme, to be part of the discussion on gender and ICTs in the Latin American and Caribbean region.

Mahila Samakhya (MS) is a national programme for women's empowerment of the Department of Education (Ministry of Human Resource Development, GoI) working in eleven states. The programme is funded by the GoI with additional external funding by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID). It provides for monitoring mechanisms, including the provision of an annual Joint Review Mission (JRM). ITfC was invited by the Ministry to lead the JRM this year, at a time where the review is expected to guide the overall direction of the core idea of MS in the coming five year Plan period. The MS programme has been running for two decades, and seeks to address the needs and interests of socially and economically marginalised women, using an 'education-for-empowerment' approach, where education is interpreted in its broadest sense of a journey towards full citizenship. Our participation in the review was also a means to shape the idea of a 'resource strategy' for the programme. As it expands and deepens its impact, it would be necessary to optimise the programme's efforts by developing appropriate



Panel presentation at the CITIGEN Review Workshop (New Delhi, India), left to right: Anita Gurumurthy, Andrea Cornwall, Ramata Molo Thioune and Lisa McLaughlin

information, knowledge and communications processes and systems. The final report of the review therefore included an ICT-enabled information, knowledge and communication strategy for the programme. We hope that our perspectives will make their way into the 12th Five Year Plan to influence what is by far one of India's most important women's empowerment interventions.

Looking Ahead

The upcoming year will be a time to take the results of our analysis into deeper synthesis – writing and taking our work into wider spheres of influence. In the months ahead, we hope to complete the MM research analysis and publish the report. MM is perhaps one of the few instances of ICT interventions that have adopted a feminist information society framework, and we need to spell out what its constituent elements are and invite a wider critique from engaged feminists. As for the WE-IT research, the emerging perspectives will inform our future advocacy efforts at the national level. We hope to be able to sustain the momentum around CITIGEN – the global interest it has generated among progressive feminist scholars and practitioners in the issues of membership and marginality, participation and exclusion, as the network age reshapes gender power. Perhaps we will be able to make a dent in the way global policy bodies and significant donor agencies like UNWomen think about women's empowerment in the digital era. Keeping ourselves relevant to the immediate neighbourhood will also be important, and so we would like to pursue our growing engagement with feminist practitioners and NGOs in Karnataka.

Deepening Democracy, Strengthening Governance

One of the key elements of sustained and equitable development is governance reform. In this context, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) contain the potential to bring about significant institutional and structural reform, rather than being used exclusively for management and efficiency considerations. Our efforts in this arena have therefore concentrated on studying the following questions: Do ICTs offer new possibilities in bringing about governance reform? Can they underpin structural reform of governance institutions towards greater democracy, equity and social justice? What are the requirements of such structural reform using ICTs? What policies and programmatic models are required in the Indian context? IT for Change (ITfC) believes that it is imperative to address both deepening democracy and strengthening governance as two strands of a single spiral.

Most current e-governance regimes almost exclusively look at improving efficiency through remote IT-based controls and rationalising work-flows. This, however, is just one side of the equation. The other, equally if not more important side, is to provide the means for closer engagement of the community and citizens with processes of democracy and governance. Unfortunately, this aspect of e-governance has remained neglected.

Two areas have been our focus this year. The first, an ICT-enabled village level institution that can become the focus of community participation in social, political, cultural and economic realms. Second, how public information systems can get recast in the information society to increase community participation in and ownership of governance processes. In the area of a new ICT-enabled village institution, we conducted field research on a number of such initiatives across India, including government-led large scale programmes like the Common Service Centre (CSC) scheme of the Government of India (GoI). We also held a national level workshop on this issue. A study is also being undertaken for the Karnataka Knowledge Commission (KKC) for looking at possible institutional models for setting up Community Knowledge Centres (CKCs) in the state of Karnataka. On the issue of public information systems, we are a member of the Task Force set up by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) of GoI for the effective implementation of the proactive disclosure provisions of the Right to Information (RTI) Act. We are facilitating the sub-group on the information technology aspects of proactive disclosure.

Research

Our 'ICTs for Governance Reform' project supported by Ford Foundation, saw field research being conducted to examine the implementation of the CSC scheme under the National e-Governance Programme (NeGP). The goal of this primary research was to study what impact these programmes are having on the Indian governance system and rural communities, especially with respect to larger structural implications, and possible outcomes for the future.

In our visits to the field, we have been observing the progress of CSCs in the states of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh and

Jharkhand. While the experience of each state is very different, on the whole, our findings reinforce initial observations that CSCs are facing a number of challenges. These challenges are not merely related to infrastructure and the provision of government-to-citizen services, but larger systemic issues related to the public-private partnership management on which the scheme is based. Our research raises the question of whether a corporate/franchisee-based system for delivering public services can achieve the stated goals of this scheme, namely enabling community participation and effecting collective action for social change. Findings so far reveal that there is a complete lack of recognition and understanding amongst the involved private companies on this

aspect, with the focus instead on building a successful business. In this latter pursuit too these companies have largely failed, leading to the withdrawal of many of them from the CSC scheme. There is also no accountability of the CSCs to the local governance system, the *panchayats*, which is a clear aberration. Further, there is a significant mismatch between the expectations of the various actors (the community, franchisee, intermediary corporate body and government officials), which cannot make for a viable institutional model. It is increasingly obvious that strong course correction measures are needed for the CSC scheme.

We also undertook a research study of the Mission Convergence programme of the Government of Delhi as part of our efforts to critically examine existing governance plans in India, especially with regard to community interfacing strategies. The rationale behind the programme is to converge the social welfare schemes and services of government departments so that benefits can reach the underprivileged through a single window delivery system based in the community and managed by civil society organisations. The programme has adopted a Public-Private Community Partnership (PPCP) model to make the system responsive to the needs of citizens, while also maintaining a simultaneous focus on empowering women through health initiatives, legal awareness, vocational skills training and the formation of self help groups. In addition, ITfC also conducted a study on the *Abhiyan* network in Bhuj, Gujarat, India, which has created a bottom-up ICT network where good governance and deepening democracy are intertwined. This is in sharp contrast to a large

A worker at a field centre of the Mission Convergence programme in Delhi verifies data collected by community workers to determine vulnerable groups



number of rural ICT initiatives which develop techno-managerial systems that seem inclined to subvert, rather than serve, democracy. The use of ICTs in *Abhiyan* is oriented primarily towards making governments more open and participatory, in pursuance of the agenda of greater equity and social justice, in close association with *panchayats*.

We are also conducting a research study on CKCs for KKC. CKCs are envisaged not merely as service delivery or even as information kiosks; but as the loci for a new set of community-based processes which would facilitate extensive horizontal and vertical knowledge linkages within the community, in a context-specific manner, by tapping into the possibilities offered by new ICTs. The research study is to help in developing an institutional model for the CKCs, based on community level assessments of information and knowledge processes, and a critical evaluation of existing information and knowledge interventions at the last mile.

The scope of our research study involves:

1. Assessing the information needs as well as the knowledge dynamics of village communities at the grassroots level
2. Studying the effectiveness of the existing institutional framework in addressing the information and knowledge needs of the community
3. Developing and analysing case studies of similar initiatives by other state governments and voluntary organisations in the country, in order to understand:
 - a. the difficulties in reconciling service delivery functions and knowledge development objectives while setting up ICT-enabled community level centres
 - b. the trade-offs between standardisation and contextualisation of knowledge in the development of knowledge systems
 - c. examining the possibility of the convergence of the many ICT-enabled centres that



Khavda village in Bhuj (Gujarat, India): Panchayat members use Skype to communicate with other villages on local development plans

IT for Change is committed to using technology to make governance processes more democratic and accountable in India. It straddles many activities: knowledge creation, experiments on the ground, citizen mobilisation, networking and advocacy. It also successfully connects the local, national, regional and global in ways that enhance its efficacy and outreach as an advocacy organisation.

Prof. Bishnu N. Mohapatra,
Visiting Senior Fellow,
National University of
Singapore, Singapore

already exist at the community level, which were set up by various development organisations and government agencies.

Advocacy and Networking

Workshop on 'Community Information and Service Centres'

ITfC organised a two-day national workshop in May 2011 on 'Community Information and Service Centres: A New Village Institution for Governance and Democracy' which brought together interested actors from the government, academia and civil society organisations. This included Shankar Aggarwal, the Additional Secretary of the Department of Information Technology (DIT), GoI, Professor M. K. Sridhar, the Executive Director of KKC and Nikhil Dey, social activist from Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS). The rationale behind bringing in a mixed group of actors was that the area of ICTs and governance reform needs to transcend a narrow technology-focus and encompass larger questions of governance and democracy.

The aim of the workshop was to examine the experiences of various initiatives that have worked towards setting up village level information and service centres using ICTs. In addition, the workshop aimed to conduct an appraisal of what we really want to achieve from telecentres and from the governance and community development processes and structures being built around them. ITfC also sought to develop a group of interested actors – both within governments and from civil society – who feel that this has become an important area of governance and development work, and would like to collaborate on shaping perspectives and advocacy positions for positive changes in this area.

A major point of debate during the workshop was vis-à-vis the multiple expectations hoisted on the idea of a telecentre; it is expected to be a service delivery centre, a hub for the information economy and also function as an anchor for knowledge processes. The resulting tensions created by overloading the centre with a multiplicity of roles, and the risk it presents of not being able to do any of these tasks properly, were examined. In this regard, the question of

possible ways to separate service needs, local governance needs and information/knowledge needs, as requiring different institutional systems, was raised. It was found necessary to study existing state and community institutions that can cater to these requirements and capture the existing gaps. Another underlying point of discussion was regarding the politics of information; whether information reflects what people want or if it is merely a top-down flow of information. Issues of accessibility, sustainability and the operational challenges faced by CSCs were prominently discussed. One of the propositions that emerged was of the need for a system that would address the informational and knowledge needs of rural communities, rather than merging everything into a single model, as the CSC scheme seeks to do. The other side of the debate, however, was about whether there is enough 'demand' in rural areas to open multiple centres, which connects to the issue of sustainability.

Consultation Meeting on Proactive Disclosures under the Right to Information Act

ITfC organised a one-day consultation meeting in Bengaluru in June 2011 on 'Guidelines for Digital Publication under RTI supporting Proactive Disclosure of Information'. This consultation was organised as part of ITfC's role in facilitating the information technology sub-group of a Task Force set up by the DoPT of GoI for the effective implementation of the proactive disclosure provisions of the RTI Act. The aim of this meeting was to gather inputs from RTI actors in Bengaluru for the report of the Task Force.

Some of the main recommendations that emerged point to the need for putting extensive information on the websites at all levels of government, especially the ones which most concern citizens. It was also felt that the information should be presented in a form legible to lay persons, through open technical standards and in reusable forms. Proactive disclosure also requires proactive monitoring, whereby the websites of all government levels should be proactively monitored vis-à-vis agreed disclosure norms. For this purpose, appropriate indicators and benchmarks should be developed. It was

The team at IT for Change come across as true professionals and I have seen them go beyond the role which is typically taken up by NGOs in the arena of information technology. [...] IT for Change presents a balanced view point on most technological issues and their reports on various topical issues are well researched and analysed. We have benefited from our interactions with them on issues like Common Services Centres, IT Policy and the Electronic Service Delivery Bill.

Abhishek Singh, Director of Department of Information Technology, Government of India

also felt that the monitoring and enforcement functions should take place from the Information Commissioner's office and that efforts should be made to ensure that information kiosks are set up in or close to all communities so that they can use digitally published public information. Other important issues like the information audit of government websites and monitoring of proactive disclosure by district, block and village level information councils, also came up.

Other Engagements

In November 2010, ITfC facilitated the Information Technology track of the Regional Conference on 'Delivering Social Protection to Unorganised Workers' organised by the Department of Labour (Government of Karnataka) and GTZ (Germany) in Bengaluru. A policy brief was prepared for the conference which examined the typical tendency of using ICTs in an unstrategic piece-meal manner and to implant governance models that are market-oriented, without an examination of the essentially political rather than technical choices. The paper is available at: www.ITforChange.net/Social_Protection_Systems.

In May 2010, ITfC was part of a study tour to Brazil and Chile with members of DIT, GoI, with the aim to learn and share the experiences in ICTs for development. The study tour was planned by the department and supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Delhi. Since India is in the process of implementing a strategy to reach out to far-flung areas in rural India and set-up last mile connectivity, and Chile is also planning similar initiatives in hilly territories, it was felt that interactions and exposure to systems of implementation would be useful.

As part of our e-governance efforts, we participated in the OpenNet Initiative (ONI) 2010 Global Summit on 'Should Cyberspace be Secured as an Open Commons?', in June 2010 in Ottawa (Canada). This event featured three high-level panels of experts and practitioners on prominent topics related to cyberspace governance, security, and advocacy. Gurumurthy Kasinathan was a panelist in the session: 'What is to be done? A Conversation with the OpenNet Initiative's Global Partners'. While the focus of the discussions was

on governmental controls over cyberspace through surveillance and censorship, ITfC highlighted the danger to cyberspace from the privatised governance imposed by large multinationals that dominate cyberspace.

During the year, the policy on open standards in e-governance was notified by the GoI. ITfC played an active role in advocating for its adoption and had engaged both with RTI networks in the country and with the DIT, details of which are available in last years report. The Secretary of Information Technology, GoI, wrote to ITfC commending and thanking us for the role we played in preparing the open standards in e-governance policy.

We were invited by Manipal University to make a presentation on e-governance, the CSC programme and ITfC's work in these areas in November 2010. The presentation sought to set out the context and objectives of e-governance in India, and called for developing necessary policies. It also examined the need for re-configuring ICTs for development in a more community-centric manner. The presentation is available at: www.ITforChange.net/Gurumurthy%27s_intervention_at_Manipal_University.

ITfC has also been interacting with DIT, GoI, as part of its advocacy efforts to share its findings from the CSC field research and propose recommendations to the scheme before the second phase of implementation commences this year. We also sent comments to DIT on the draft Electronic Delivery of Services (EDS) Bill. The Bill is a positive move in many ways and proposes that digital means can be used to deliver services in a completely transparent, accountable and efficient way. However, the assumption that all public services can be delivered online entirely is open to question. We also provided inputs to the draft of the E-District Guidelines, which appear to be the operationalising framework for EDS. We find the setting up of a privatised mechanism for EDS a very problematic move. We feel that at the least, such drastic changes to India's governance system should be subject to thorough political scrutiny.

ITfC made a presentation at the workshop on 'Public Sector Information Online: Democratic, Social and Economic Potentials' organised by

The last conference organised by IT for Change on governance reform was extremely useful. The high quality of participation and discussions was evidently due to the care taken by the organisers to invite a mix of relevant stakeholders, including practitioners, experts, and civil society activists. [...] My engagement with IT for Change has also been over the course of ongoing discussions on the Mission Convergence programme in Delhi. [...] The team of resource persons/experts involved in the study have done a good analysis of the programme through interactive sessions and field work.

Rashmi Singh, Executive Director, National Resource Centre for Women, National Mission for Empowerment of Women, Ministry of Women and Child Development, GoI

The workshop on governance reform [...] was an informative and knowledge gaining experience of how basic information could be disseminated to the rural masses through effective large scale telecentre initiatives. What made this workshop so special was the sharing of grassroots experiences, beyond mere paper presentations.

Lakshmi Krishnan,
Chairperson, Society for the
Promotion of Women and
Child Welfare,
New Delhi, India

Working with IT for Change was a good experience particularly in how to use ICTs for public service and information delivery.

Y. G. Muralidharan, Director
of Consumer Rights
Education and Awareness
Trust (CREAT),
Bengaluru, India

the European Public Sector Information (EPSI) platform at the annual meeting of the UN Internet Governance Forum (IGF) in Vilnius (Lithuania) in September 2010. We presented the general situation/ issues/ developments in India on (1) the issue of copyright licenses for development related information/content produced by government agencies in India and (2) non-governmental initiatives to repackage public information for better and more useful access by citizens. We continue to work with the EPSI platform and will also be participating in their workshop on 'Public Sector Information Online: Towards a Global Policy Framework' at the 2011 meeting of the UN IGF.

Looking Ahead

In the coming year, we plan to focus on building awareness on the positive and negative potential of ICTs in relation to governance actors in the larger domain of governance and democracy. We expect to be able to build up a constituency that will be able to push for a more progressive community-centric application of ICTs and governance, and resist attempts of the wholesale privatisation of governance systems in India, under the pretext of promoting e-governance. At the same time, we plan to increase our interactions with IT departments of central and state governments, to help make changes from within. Often, the problem is the non-availability of alternative models of thinking and practice that progressive officials can support and adopt, and we are making good progress in being able to provide these. While working at the policy level, we plan to intensify field-level work on building community ICT systems that can provide the required models for the next generation of ICTs in governance and ICTs for development approaches in India. We expect to find strong institutional partners from within governments to work on these demonstration projects, for which plans will be finalised over the next few months.

During the coming year, we also plan to complete the research study on CKCs for KKC. The research study will follow a qualitative design involving community level assessments of information, learning and knowledge processes. It will also involve an institutional mapping of existing state interventions that try to influence information, learning and knowledge processes at the community level. Further, it will build upon our research study on CSCs and other telecentre initiatives to identify new institutional possibilities for setting up a community level knowledge intervention.

In the area of participatory public information systems, the demonstration models we propose to undertake will also present new possibilities in this regard. We will seek to work with governments on promoting proactive disclosure through the Internet. We would like to promote the concept of RTI as a key design principle for business process re-engineering involved in the EDS, which is expected to proceed at a good pace after the expected adoption of the EDS legislation over the next year. We are already in contact with the DoPT (which is the nodal department for RTI) and DIT, GoI, in this regard, and hope to be able to provide detailed guidelines to operationalise this principle.

A Village Level Entrepreneur collects payment for an electricity bill in West Bengal, one of the few states where some government-to-citizen services are available at the CSC, India



Promoting the 'Public' in Digital Architectures

The Internet is a key phenomenon behind the paradigmatic social changes that we are witnessing today. Shaping the Internet is therefore an important determinant of the direction of social change. It is no longer a simple technical platform about which scientists and technical experts are best placed to take all the important decisions. The question thus becomes important: who decides the direction in which the Internet is evolving? A common response is that the Internet is a dynamic platform which responds to user needs. User determination of the trajectory of the Internet's evolution is today largely a myth, though some oases of alternative practices amongst committed techies or perhaps even among some ordinary 'power users', do exist. Yet, to the extent the user has a role, it is largely in his capacity as a consumer. Largely, it is the corporatist and statist powers that play an overwhelming driving role. Other than in authoritarian countries, it is global corporate power, often with strong support from governments, especially those of the North, that is the major determinant of the direction that the Internet is taking. The Internet being a major force in our shifting social configurations, it should not be difficult to see what this means for our future, especially for people and communities that are already marginalised.

In order to address the issue of the global corporatist stranglehold on the Internet, which is increasingly curtailing most of its egalitarian potential which was much vaunted till a few years ago, IT for Change (ITfC) has been working both at global and national levels. At the global level, our principal effort has been towards seeking globally democratic institutions for Internet Governance (IG), strengthening the progressive global civil society in the IG arena, and also establishing South-South cooperation in technical governance practices. At the national level, we have been trying to advocate progressive IG positions with the Indian government, and to get a national level IG dialogue underway. We have also been associating with the government on framing open standards in e-governance. We have been promoting the concept of public software and working with many government and non-governmental agencies for them to adopt and promote public software.

Global Level

Seeking Globally Democratic Internet Governance Institutions

The last year was most significant in the manner in which we were able to work closely with developing country governments, especially India, Brazil and South Africa (the IBSA countries), in developing momentum towards seeking IG institutional alternatives at the global level. In May 2010, we were invited to be present at the proceedings of the annual session of the United Nations (UN) Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) in Geneva. In our statement to the Commission, for the first time, we called for a recognition of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) mandated

process of 'Enhanced Cooperation' as a process that is 'distinct but complementary' to the open, discursive platform of the UN Internet Governance Forum (IGF). Many developed countries have been trying to posit that the new institutional development mandate from WSIS has been exhausted since the IGF was established. This served to help maintain the institutional gap in global IG which has been used by governments and corporates of the North, often in cahoots, to dictate the direction of the development of the Internet and the information society, as per their partisan interest. The phrase 'distinct but complementary', which was inscribed in the relevant resolution of the UN General Assembly, has provided a clear space for a new global institution and was very effective in developing country advocacy in this regard. It

I have been reading your inputs for the meeting on enhanced cooperation more than four times now, and each time, I find valuable new ideas and thoughts. I commend your personal concern and devotion to this as well as your courage to say many things that many others would not dare to even approach.

Yasser Hassan, Counsellor,
Permanent Mission of Egypt
to the United Nations,
Geneva

I believe IT for Change's written contribution inspired us a lot or at least, confirmed some of our perceptions: the importance of network neutrality, the idea of a CSTD Working Group and not closing the door to the possibility of a new institution for Internet Governance. Our talks along this year were also very important. In my point of view, IT for Change's work is one of the examples that proves the viability and necessity of the multi-stakeholder approach on Internet Governance.

Alvaro Galvani, Head of the
Division for the Information
Society, Ministry of External
Relations, Brazil

was also used by the UN Deputy Secretary General during the UN Consultations on 'Enhanced Cooperation' in December 2010.

It was after ITfC's statement to CSTD that the call for an open consultation to chart the way forward for the process of 'Enhanced Cooperation' was made. Subsequently, the UN did call for such an open consultation in New York in December 2010, which marks an important stepping stone towards a more democratic global IG platform or institution. ITfC made a written contribution to the mentioned UN consultations, which was followed widely, and was among the few which proposed a clear institutional option. Importantly, IBSA countries, for the first time, made a joint statement on an IG issue on a global stage. It identified some key global IG issues, and called for setting up a new platform or institution to address global Internet-related policy issues. The start of such close cooperation among IBSA countries was partly triggered by a meeting among IBSA government and civil society representatives that ITfC proposed and helped organise on the sidelines of the CSTD.

The Commission also set up a Working Group on IGF improvements. Earlier, when there was a stalemate on the composition of the Working Group during CSTD's inter-sessional meeting in December 2010, especially with regard to the status of the non-governmental members of the Working Group, ITfC intervened actively and helped solve the issue by suggesting that non-governmental members be called 'invited participants'. This is an important innovation in the UN system and perhaps for the first time a substantive working group of the UN Standing Commission has had such non-governmental participation. ITfC is among the five civil society participants of the Working Group.

ITfC submitted numerous written and oral contributions to the Working Group on IGF improvements. We were also able to work closely with many developing country governments and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to considerably influence their inputs to the Working Group. In the two face-to-face meetings of the Working Group in Switzerland in February and May 2011, we were one of the most active participants, coordinating our positions closely with civil society and developing country government participants.

Partly due to these efforts, developing countries, especially India, were able to take a leadership role at the Working Group meetings. India's proposal to the Working Group was the key document around which the discussions revolved. This is unlike most other times when developing countries were left responding to the substantive agenda set by the North. What was particularly important with regard to what came to be known as the 'India Proposal' is that, while developing countries have mostly been blamed for being against multi-stakeholderism in the global IG arena, a very clear and nuanced position of how India saw multi-stakeholderism was able to be put up. It was emphasised that multi-stakeholderism should clearly be designed for getting those voices into policy making spaces, which are otherwise marginalised. It should not be used to give disproportionate voice to those who may already be over-represented.

The Working Group could not come up with proposals for IGF improvements and therefore its mandate was extended by one year, during the May meeting of CSTD. The 'India Proposal' to the Working Group has been referred to at many forums, for instance at the Council of Europe's 'Internet Freedom Conference – From Principles to Global Treaty Law' in April 2011. A workshop is being organised to specifically discuss this proposal at the 6th annual meeting of the UN IGF in Nairobi in September 2011.

ITfC was one of the few panelists invited from outside Europe in the above mentioned 'Internet Freedom Conference – From Principles to Global Treaty Law'. We were asked to present our views on multi-stakeholderism in the IG arena. We insisted that multi-stakeholderism must be a process within and subsidiary to the institution of democracy. We further added that it should not be presented as a post-democratic political system as there is a tendency to present it as such in the IG arena. A few senior government officials of European countries congratulated us after the meeting on taking such a clear and firm stand on the relationship between multi-stakeholderism and democracy.

Engagement with Global Civil Society

We continued to exercise a leadership position on the Civil Society Internet Governance

Caucus (IGC), the premier global civil society group in the IG arena. The numerous e-discussions in the group were directed at emphasising the need for democratising IG, moving towards some clear global IG institutions, and shaping a development agenda in IG. We also took the lead on most of the initiatives during the year taken up by the IGC. First, we initiated the process of writing a letter to the UN Secretary General, protesting against not taking up the 'open' consultations on 'Enhanced Cooperation' in a full multi-stakeholder manner by limiting civil society participation. Subsequent to our interventions, some changes in the format of the consultation were made. Later, when the e-G8 forum was planned in Paris, with almost no civil society participation, we again led the IGC initiative to write to the French government against such an exclusion. Our letter was widely published, including in the mainstream media. Subsequent to this protest, some limited efforts were made to increase civil society participation in the meeting.

ITfC played an important part in finalising the Charter on Internet Rights and Principles prepared by the IGF Dynamic Coalition on Internet Rights and Principles, of which ITfC is a founding member. This Charter was officially taken note of by the Council of Europe in its documents and the Council plans to keep working with us on it. Our contributions to the Charter were especially on positive rights, chiefly on the right to access the Internet and the right to equality vis-à-vis the architecture of the Internet, for which the term 'Net Equality', proposed by us, was used in the Charter. These contributions were made after long and rich debates on the e-list about the issue of positive rights and the development agenda vis-à-vis the Internet. Apart from the specific outcomes in terms of the Charter language, these discussions have had a significant role in shaping the global civil society discourse. In this discourse, issues have not yet been framed, nor has the required vocabulary developed, from a developing country perspective. It is in this regard that our interventions and issue-framing have been pioneering. The Charter on Internet Rights and Principles was presented at the IGF meeting in September 2010 in Vilnius (Lithuania). Later in 2011, we again contributed

significantly in framing '10 Internet Rights and Principles', a short and impactful document which has got even more visibility than the main Charter and has been translated into many languages. Our contributions to it consisted of highlighting social justice, along with human rights, as the key determinant on how the Internet should be governed; seeking a clear right of association over and through the Internet; and once again, framing prominently the 'Net Equality' issue.

It must be underscored that with regard to both the major civil society e-discussion spaces mentioned above, these lists are subscribed to by a very large number of influential global IG actors, and are thus major spaces for advocacy. ITfC is in the advisory group of the Network of Networks Project of the Association for Progressive Communications (APC). Two members of ITfC attended the meeting of the Network in Italy in July 2010. The meeting comprised a small group of intense discussions on various global IG issues. The tensions between a dominant civil and political rights based agenda and a more holistic alternative which proceeded from the realities of marginalised groups was palpable during the discussions. We strongly argued for the need to look at the structural impacts of social, economic, political and cultural flows that are being globally reconfigured because of the Internet, and to place civil society advocacy positions in these structural realities.

ITfC is also in the Advisory Group of Diplo Foundation's global IG work, and we were consulted on how they shape their online IG courses. We have been in talks for sometime now on how to give a greater development agenda orientation to the global IG discourse.

South – South Cooperation

We have mentioned how a high-level of cooperation on IG issues has begun among IBSA countries since May 2010, and our role in it. For sometime now, ITfC has been advocating a meeting among IBSA countries, including their civil society organisations, to brainstorm on what would constitute a development agenda for global IG. This was important to be able to have an appropriate substantive agenda at global forums where

[IT for Change] certainly contributes a lot to the running of the Internet Governance Forum from what I observed in Vilnius – I liked your ad hoc style in your interventions as opposed to the more detailed written interventions.

Christopher Corbin,
independent researcher,
referring to IT for
Change's presence at the
Internet Governance
Forum meeting in
Vilnius, Lithuania

developing countries are for the most part left with reacting to agendas set by others (for instance, multi-stakeholderism, in the global IG space). It is difficult to argue for a new global institution for IG without making a clear and strong statement of all the key issues that are required to be addressed by the proposed organisation. This year, the Government of Brazil and the Brazilian Internet Steering Committee agreed to host the meeting that we have been advocating for. This IBSA Seminar of Global Internet Governance will be held in Rio de Janeiro in September 2011. ITfC is closely associated with doing background work for, and organising this seminar. We are working with our Brazilian civil society partner, the Centre for Technology and Society in Rio de Janeiro.

We arranged a meeting with Martin Khor, the head of the inter-governmental organisation, South Centre, with a mandate of promoting South-South cooperation in May 2011, along with the Centre for Technology and Society of Brazil. We discussed how it is important to shape a development agenda in the IG space. The South Centre completely agreed with the imperative, and we have planned meetings in Geneva between development country diplomats, in this regard. We have also invited the South Centre to be a part of the referred IBSA Seminar on Global Internet Governance.

National Level

Internet Governance

Our engagement at the national level in the area of IG has still mostly been in influencing India's perspective and positions vis-à-vis global IG issues. However, this has helped us influence domestic IG also in progressive directions. As with other IT areas, due to many structural reasons, chiefly the larger-than-life image of India's IT industry, national IG perspectives have for the large part, been influenced by an industry perspective, with very little involvement of progressive civil society actors. We have been trying to build a civil society constituency in this area, and we did make considerable progress in this regard in 2010-11. Many important civil society actors are now much more ready to be engaged with these issues, and see it as important to development and democracy.

We have been a part of the advisory group of the planned India IGF. We are also on the advisory group of the IG scholarships programme of the Department of Information Technology (DIT), Government of India (GoI), and the National Internet Exchange. We also advised the DIT supported 'Global Internet Governance Advocacy' project of Nalsar Law School, Hyderabad.

Public Software

Public institutions (government schools and colleges, government administrative departments, as well as NGOs and community-based organisations) support the public ownership of resources since that is essential for enabling equity and social justice. Software is an important digital resource, and has a central role in the new 'digital society' being created. Hence, public ownership over software resources that are essential to participate in the digital world is crucial. Public institutions should therefore adopt and promote such 'public software' to create an eco-system of universal access to basic software, as well as community participation in its creation and modification.

As in the case of public education or public health, public institutions are responsible to ensure universal access to public software, as well as support public participation in its creation and sharing. Software developed for public service has a unique context and objectives deriving from those of public service; with its imperative of providing public goods and ensuring equity and social justice. It is well known that private and commercial actions have very different contexts, motives and considerations than public actions. For instance, the largest possible reach and diffusion, as well as transparency of action, are basic to public service, which are not necessarily values espoused by private and commercial players. Thus, public software would cater to the requirements of universal access, transparency and participation. ITfC participated in co-organising an international conference on 'Software in the Public Sector, with focus on Public Education' with the UNESCO/UN Solution Exchange ICTD unit and the IT@School Project of the Government of Kerala in May 2010 in Kochi

For us, adopting public software is strengthening our vision of a just society. [...] So far, I have been a mere consumer of software without understanding that software should be a public resource, one made available to all. The idea of 'digital khadi' is appealing.

Shantakumari, Indian National Science Academy, New Delhi, India

(India). The workshop encouraged practitioners and policy makers to frame 'Public Sector Software Architecture (PSSA)' that can help integrate computerisation projects in public sector institutions in a manner that aligns with the public sector ethos.

The Kochi Declaration, an important output of this conference, recognises that the unique context of public software and its objectives of ensuring equity and social justice has implications for ensuring universal access to such software, as well as transparency and participation by the citizens in its design and use, and urges public institutions in these countries to adopt and promote public software.

The 'Guiding principles for the policy on software for the public sector', that emerged from the South India Regional Workshop in Bengaluru in February 2010, were also finalised in the Kochi conference. More details about this conference and its proceedings can be found here: www.public-software.in/Kochi_Conference. With support from UNESCO, ITfC has established a 'Public Software Centre' (PSC) to help public institutions in adopting and promoting public software.

ITfC, as a member of the FLOSSInclude¹ consortium, attended the project's final workshop held in Brussels (Belgium) in June 2010 and presented our pilot work in Karnataka.

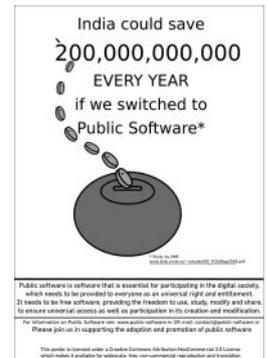
A Knowledge Building Workshop (KBW) was organised by the Karnataka Community (KC) of the United Nations Solution Exchange, (UN-Solex) in Bengaluru in June 2010, to engage in a dialogue amongst the Community of Practitioners (CoPs). The workshop focused on the role of 'knowledge sharing' to support the dissemination of knowledge, experiences and perspectives to support CoPs work, and bring about greater synergy and congruence. ITfC spoke about the necessity to support the 'free and open sharing' of knowledge to meet the goals of development and the power of using information and communication technology (ICTs) for creating and managing knowledge, and networking for the dissemination of knowledge.

From this workshop emerged the 'Knowledge Management and Knowledge Networking' (KMKN) project. The rationale is to encourage the use of ICTs as an important organisational resource for KMKN processes within the development sector. In addition, the aim is to popularise the idea of public software within the development sector and integrate ICTs within organisations in a more meaningful way. Capacity building workshops for development sector organisations working in the area of child rights and education, across the Bengaluru and Mysore divisions, were organised by the PSC, with the UN-Solex – Karnataka Community and support from UNICEF.

Organisations willing to adopt public software were given support in terms of hand holding and building internal capacities, post the workshop. A public software wiki (http://public-software.in/PSwiki/index.php/Frequently_Asked_Questions) has been created that has frequently asked questions (FAQs) about public software and its adoption. To popularise the idea of public software among public institutions, posters were designed in both English and Kannada (<http://www.public-software.in/posters>). The PSC has created a few models for NGOs to adopt public software for KMKN and organisations interested in adopting public software could contact the PSC. Networks of NGOs can especially benefit from the KMKN tools and processes for strengthening their research, programmatic and advocacy activities.

ITfC participated in CeTIT 2010 (Citizens Empowerment Through Information Technology), the second edition of the Conference-Cum-Exhibition on e-governance in July 2010, organised by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), DIT, Government of Tamil Nadu, the Electronics Corporation of Tamil Nadu Limited (ELCOT) and the Tamil Nadu eGovernance Agency (TNeGA) in Chennai, and spoke on 'Public Software for Public Institutions – Rethinking e-Governance'.

The year 2010-11 ended on a positive note. The term public software was a contested term



4 The FLOSSInclude project (<http://www.flossinclude.org>) is a project funded by the European Commission (EC) which aimed to conduct research on Free/Libre/Open Source Software (FLOSS) in developing countries.

The Catalyst Group strongly believes in the ideology of public software. Given its number of clients and varied types of work, the full adoption of public software is gradual, with a number of challenges. However, we have successfully utilised public software applications, such as Kdenlive (video-editing), Thunderbird (email client) and Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox (Internet browsers). We now explore public software options for our new software needs. We thank the Public Software Centre for their support in helping us optimise the use of public software in our work.

Siddhi Mankad, Catalyst Group, Bengaluru, India⁵

amongst free software followers, who felt it was a distraction from the concept and philosophy of free software. However, after several rounds of discussion with the Free Software Foundation, Richard Stallman, the father of the free software movement, recognised the term 'public software', suggesting a slightly revised definition which can be found on: www.public-software.in/Public-software. As per this revised definition, public software is always free software, and refers to basic software that all need to engage with the digital society. Public software needs to be universally accessible and for this, public investment and support is essential. Such support can be in the form of collaboration between public institutions and free software communities to create and support the required applications.

Looking Ahead

It is not difficult to see that almost all our activities in the area of technology governance are a work-in-progress which will be carried on, and intensified, as appropriate, in the coming year. We expect the next year to be an important one for the global IG space. We would like to be able to contribute in important ways to the UN IGF, through our membership in the UN Working Group on IGF Improvements. We also look forward to help implement these improvements. At the same time, in 2011, momentum is building on how to

manage the global IG, with many organisations coming out with IG principles, and we hope to direct this momentum in the direction of seeking democratic global IG spaces and institutions. We expect to be able to help strengthen the IBSA platforms and initiatives in the IG arena, and will also work with other developing countries closely in this regard. We would like to work closely with the South Centre to develop an observatory, a newsletter and an e-discussion space on the development agenda in IG.

While keeping up our engagement with mainstream global civil society groups we are already involved with, we plan to focus more on creating specific coalitions around progressive agendas in the global IG. We plan to be able to set up a global civil society platform with the involvement of interested governmental actors on development and democratic aspects of global IG.

We plan to pay special attention to developing a national level interest group among civil society organisations on the implications of the Internet, and therefore of IG, to various areas of development and democracy. We would also like to focus on the anti-competitive practices of many global Internet companies with the Competition Commission. This would also be a good way to attract the attention of civil society groups to key issues that are involved.

We recognise that contributing to shaping alternative practices vis-à-vis the global and national digital architecture is as important as engaging with policy levels. We will further extend our engagements with Brazil, and perhaps with South Africa as well, on the public software work. The effort is to shape alternatives to the dominant North-centric corporatist model in a major scaled up manner, which requires wider global support, including of governments and the domestic digital industry. Such a network of engagements and outcomes will be sought to be shaped.

In addition, at the local level, the PSC aims to further our work in three defined areas:

1. With *Rashtriya Madhyamika Shikshana Abhiyan* (RMSA), Karnataka, and our

Website of the Public Software Centre launched by Davide Sorti (UNESCO Paris) at the International Conference on 'Software in the Public Sector, with focus on Public Education' (Kochi, India)



⁵ More quotes on public software migration from NGOs are available at: www.public-software.in/Testimonials.

demonstration project 'Teachers Communities of Learning' (TCoL) in Bengaluru, to incorporate public educational software tools in schools

2. With the Department of Technical Education (DTE) in order to build capacities to use public educational tools in polytechnics, replacing proprietary tools
3. With NGOs and networks of NGOs under our KMKN programme to help them use a variety of techno-social processes for supporting their work.

One NGO network is the Karnataka Network of Positive People (KNP+) which works with People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV). During the coming year, the PSC will be working with Communication for Development and Learning (CDL) and KNP+, to strengthen the network through two KMKN processes, providing video training for PLHIVs, and helping them to create and manage their own website <http://www.redribbonkarnataka.org> through periodic workshops, on-site support and hand-holding to ensure the adoption of the new techno-social processes.

A similar approach will characterise our public software work in all the three areas. The PSC will also work on identifying and adopting public

software applications in areas such as statistical analyses for research and financial accounting in which proprietary tools are largely used. A list of all public software tools in the different domains that the PSC works in, is available at www.public-software.in/FOSS-applications.



Sri M.A. Baby, Education Minister of Kerala (India), addressing the participants of the International Conference of "Software in the Public Sector, with focus on Public Education" (Kochi, India)

Prakriye – Centre for Community Informatics and Development

Working for progressive social change in the information society ecosystem entails action at two different levels. On the one hand, development actors need to engage with the governance issues of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) at the macro-level, engaging with governments and policy-makers. On the other hand, they have to work at the local level towards empowering communities through the creation of innovative systems that demonstrate new pathways or show how alternatives to dominant models can be envisioned.

Prakriye – Centre for Community Informatics and Development, IT for Change's (ITfC) field centre in Mysore, works with community-based organisations involved with a broad development agenda, from women's empowerment to livelihood issues. Prakriye explores ways in which new information and communication systems can enable more participatory and effective community development processes, through the capacity building of local partner organisations. The learnings gained from projects are used to both diffuse knowledge about our work and advocate towards community-centric and empowerment-oriented Information and Communication Technology for Development (ICTD) policies.

This year has seen the continuation of our work in the areas of community radio, community video and community computing in our demonstration project among *Mahila Samakhya* Karnataka's (MSK), women's collectives (*sanghas*), initiated through the *Mahiti Manthana* (MM) project in Mysore district, Karnataka. Our work in the area of community informatics and education has been taken forward through the *Kishori Chitrapata* (Images by adolescent girls) project.

Community Radio

During the year 2010-2011, *Kelu Sakhi* (Listen, O Friend!), the '*sangha* radio', explored new formats, campaigns, production processes and ways of engaging with communities.

Until last year, radio programmes were not set up in any defined physical location, but after three years of broadcasting, physical space and time were included in the scenarios, enabling stories to include unusual characters (e.g. men or singing mosquitoes) and to take place across the country. This new process enabled us to 'glamorise' women's mobility as some scenarios were set in the Mysore *Dasara* festival, in the future or at a fair on the top of Malai Madeshvara hill. The campaigns undertaken, such as the *gram panchayat* election, recharging ground water or women's health, were presented through different aspects and formats, in order to engage the audience in diverse ways. The scope of the

Sangha dhvani slot, dedicated to success stories of *sangha* women and *Mahila Samakhya* (MS) personnel, was expanded, and the focus shifted from grand achievements to successes which, however small, have impacted patriarchal structures in subtle and long-lasting ways. The testimonials have since included both techniques to climb trees wearing a *sari* and challenges encountered in becoming a *sangha* member. Additionally, the *kishoris* from the *Kishori Chitrapata* project were given space to voice their reflections and concerns on the radio.

The fourth anniversary broadcast of *Kelu Sakhi* celebrated women in the public sphere, and was well received. Women asked for a repeat broadcast of the programme. Furthermore, the scope for feedback has increased, and we have observed a higher number of responses to our broadcasts from a secondary layer of listeners, i.e. non-MSK *sangha* men and women. Feedback is collected in two ways. At the end of each

broadcast, a mobile number is announced to which women are asked to give a missed call to share their feedback. MSK functionaries also collect feedback during their meetings.

We have shared our experience of community radio, and its possibilities for women's empowerment with different audiences and actors. At the general body meeting of the MSK *Sangha* Federation, we sold radios at a low cost to promote collective listening among *sangha* women. We also facilitated a 'Capacity Building Workshop for Community Radio' organised by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India (GoI) and the Community Radio Forum of India. Breakthrough, a Mangalore-based organisation, visited the project to learn about the sector, and a researcher from the London School of Economics (LSE) chose to study *Kelu Sakhi* for a paper to be published shortly.

We have continued to build the capacities of our partners, including MS personnel about radio production, and *Vikasana*, about the design of a radio strategy. *Vikasana* is a Mandya-based grassroots organisation working with marginalised and minority communities for natural resource management, savings, organic farming and livelihood options. We have also negotiated a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) to create broadcast platforms on the Mysore and Bengaluru *Gyanvani* radio channel for community radio programmes of these organisations for two half-hour slots, one of which will soon be used by *Vikasana*. This MoU marks a formal agreement with the largest open university in the world, recognising the potential and power of community radio for women's empowerment.

Community Video

This year, we shifted our focus to increase the collective viewing of MM videos. With the addition of six new videos, our video content bank now has a total of 22 videos (see Annexure 2 for a list of the videos). Collective video screenings have taken place in various ways. For instance, the Hosavaranchi *Namma Mahiti Kendra* (NMK) *sakhi* organised 29 screenings, which were attended by women from a number of *sanghas*. Community screenings are

organised by *sangha* women and the *Prakriye* team and target the entire community. Over the last year, six community screenings have taken place, and each of them was attended by the majority of people in the villages.

At the general body meeting of the MSK federation, we sold 98 video kits, a number which shows the motivation of *sangha* women to organise collective viewing. This initiative enabled us to reach new blocks of the Mysore district, approaching thereby 53 new *sanghas* and 1,060 new *sangha* women. Watching these videos has had several positive impacts on *sangha* women, as for instance the Heggadalli *sangha* women who vowed not to get their daughters married at an early age after watching 'Do I like the groom?', a video where adolescent girls enacted a role-play about the repercussions of early marriage.

The *Prakriye* team has also instituted the 'Friday forum', an initiative where the team explores the finer nuances of film making, to understand the possibilities and strengths of the craft by experimenting with different formats. The forum has created a simple yet valuable understanding of the video medium, evidenced by the articulation of the team.

Community Computing

The *Prakriye* team has continued its work with three village level community telecentres called *Namma Mahiti Kendras* (NMK) (Our Information Centres), at Attiguppe, Hosavaranchi and Bannikuppe villages, and *Taluk Mahiti Kendras* (TMK), at Hunsur and H.D. Kote block centres. NMK and TMK share the same basic guiding principles and NMKs are the foundation on which TMKs have been built.

At the block level, TMKs work at building and maintaining linkages between the community and frontline government departments. This democratic facilitating role has been recognised by a number of government departments, such as the Horticulture Department, Agriculture Department, Fisheries Department and Food and Civil Supplies Department, whose representatives have come to the centres to orient women about available schemes and opportunities. Furthermore, the Hunsur TMK *sakhi*, supported by the *Prakriye* team, has been invited to be a part of the block level committee

In other radio programmes, information is about the world, but in *Kelu Sakhi*, we listen to our information.

Devamma, *sangha* woman from Attiguppe village, Mysore district, India

Vidiyal has been collaborating with IT for Change since 2008. We have had a great experience learning from the Mahiti Manthana project, in using ICTs for rural development in collaboration with local people, especially women. We learnt the technologies and strategies adopted in involving the community and their participation. Vidiyal's experience with IT for Change has been very useful.

K. Kamaraj, founder of Vidiyal, Madurai, India

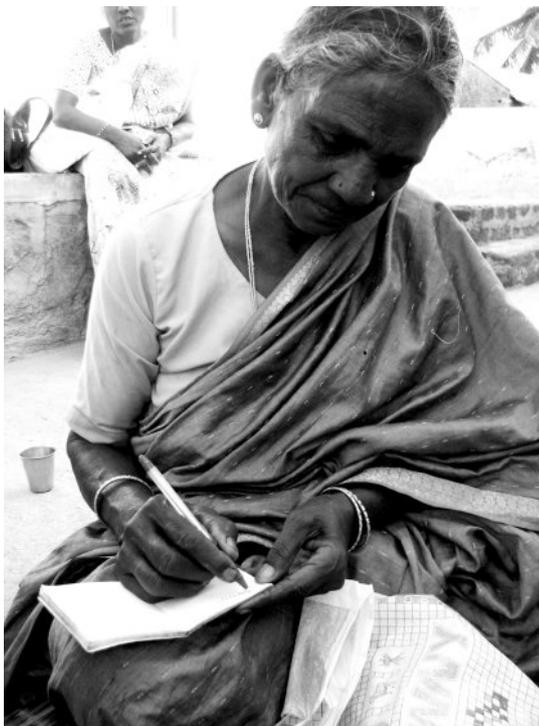
Thanks to the video on the literacy camp in my kit, I was able to motivate all the 16 villages I handle to organise literacy camps. I am very proud to share that all my sangha women are literate.

Ramamani, Cluster Resource Person (Mahila Samakhya Karnataka)

formed by the block education office (BEO) to review the status of education in the block. The Hunsur TMK *sakhis* were successful in convincing the representatives of the Agriculture Department to give free seeds to women even when the land was not registered in their name. Apart from negotiating with the government on behalf of the community, TMKs have also been instrumental in facilitating information access, and the TMK *sakhi* has helped people obtain certificates and other entitlements. The *sakhis* have, on occasion, also been able to assist people beyond their basic informational needs.

At the village level, the NMKs act as community information centres, owned and run by women, and working for women's empowerment. They aim at creating more equitable ways and processes for information access and sharing for the community by changing the existing information and communication architecture.

At the MSK general body meeting, Puttamma from Masage village (Mysore district, India) signs her name instead of using her thumb-print following her training at the literacy camp



Communities that NMKs cater to are the NMK villages and 4-5 outreach villages, which are within walking distance of the *sakhi* (2-3 kilometres). During 2010-11, the *sakhis'* visits to village households to ask people about their information needs, became monthly. This increased frequency opened up new requests and

increased the number of people visiting the centres. The process was piloted in the NMK villages, but it has now spread to outreach villages. To maximise the *sakhis'* visits in outreach villages and publicise the NMK outreach programme, *Prakriye* initiated a mapping process through which a *sakhi*, helped by local youth, drew a map of the village, including information such as common resources, infrastructure and caste break-up. A growing number of women, men, adolescents girls and boys, as well as Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM) from the local primary health centre, come to the centre for their various information needs (see Annexure 3 for statistics about the visitors to NMKs). Further, the *sakhi* from Hosavaranchi has started a mobile-based service where outreach community members get a missed call when the *sakhi* has relevant information for them. The *sakhis'* efficiency is affected by external actors, and indifferent officials can sometimes delay the provision of information.

Community Information and Education

During 2010-11, our intensive engagement with out-of-school adolescent girls in the villages of Attiguppe and Hosavaranchi for the *Kishori Chitrapata* project grew into a fulfilling journey for both us, as facilitators of change, and the *kishoris*, as participants in a learning sphere that encouraged not just individual understanding but also the building of a spirited collective.

Supported by UNICEF, the project started in 2009, in partnership with MSK and *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA). Through innovative uses of video, radio and computing technologies, the *kishoris* are encouraged, individually and collectively, to explore, question and redefine their social and cultural context. Through this process, they are also encouraged to achieve the larger purpose of education – the ability to creatively negotiate one's life in order to fulfil one's potential and aspirations. Two learning nodes were established at the two villages where MSK *sangha* women were successfully managing the NMKs. The Managing Committee (MC) of the NMKs, consisting of *sangha* women representatives from many *sanghas* in the village, agreed to take up the responsibility of supporting and nurturing the *kishoris*. They were equally crucial in negotiating with the parents of

interested *kishoris* and campaigning for the training itself. In both villages, the NMK *sakhis* did a baseline survey of all the adolescent girls in the village, after which we met each of them, their parents and the village elders, and community leaders to get a go-ahead for the training. The technology learning started with photography and the digital camera, through which the girls explored their village.

Technology and Social Training

The photography training ended with an exhibition of the best photographs of the *kishoris* for the village communities, which the *sangha* women helped organise. Men, women and children came together and were impressed by how beautifully their villages were represented. Even though some were sceptical, parents of *kishoris* were proud of their daughters' skills. The exhibition was a celebration and an occasion for *kishoris* from the two villages to interact. In Attiguppe, the exhibition was followed by the screening of a film which captured the *kishoris'* experience of learning photography and exploring their village life through the camera lens. Following the photography training, video camera training commenced. New *kishoris* were trained and mentored by older participants and within a few months, all the girls had learnt basic photo and video skills, from interview and audio-recording techniques to team work and production processes, proving the effectiveness of peer learning processes which positively impact the self-esteem of both learners and teachers. Many of the programmes they recorded were broadcast on the *Kelu Sakhi* programme. They then learnt computer basics with great enthusiasm.

Along with the technology training, a central objective of the project was curriculum building, in order to enable the *kishoris* to learn and explore subjects and issues that directly contribute to their empowerment. This was undertaken with a gender sensitive approach geared towards self and peer learning, local context and emphasising the power of participatory technology. The finalised curriculum themes included the strength of the collective, identity, patriarchy, livelihood options for *kishoris*, knowing your village, *gram panchayat*, marriage and the ideal school from the *kishoris'* point of view. Other key subjects



The kishoris dressed in saris for the Kishori Habba, a festival they wished to organise to launch the second part of the trainings (Halevaranchi village, Mysore district, India)

were also introduced, such as articulating the body image in their minds and being aware of the influences that condition it, understanding adolescence, facing challenges and informed problem solving and decision making.

This new stage of training started with the *Kishori Habba* (*kishori* festival), a celebration the girls themselves asked for, during which both *kishoris* and the project team were dressed in *saris*. After drawing a coloured *rangoli* in front of the centre, singing and dancing, we shared a meal of assorted sweets and snacks from the *kishoris'* homes. The team then enacted short role-plays about the imagined ideal future of each of the *kishoris* in five years, after which the *kishoris* took an oath to enthusiastically participate in the training. Such small festive events go a long way in keeping the group spirit alive.

In order for *kishoris* from the two project villages to interact, and for us to conduct intensive training sessions on important subjects, we organised three visits to Mysore city, where *Prakriye* is located. The girls had a chance to tour the city, and discuss, during the training sessions, the challenges faced by adolescent girls in various cultures, from Afghanistan to South Africa, and the initiatives undertaken across the world to empower adolescent girls during the training sessions. Negotiating with *kishoris'* parents was at first difficult but became easier for subsequent visits as parents saw the positive effects on

I never thought that I am beautiful till today because I compared myself with the ones [women] on television. I am going to look at myself in the mirror differently from now on.

Asha, one of our *kishoris*

Strength of the collective

This training module introduced the *kishoris* of the *Kishori Chitrapata* (Images by adolescent girls) project, to the concept of a collective, generating reflections about why people form collectives, the advantages of forming/being part of a collective, the achievements of collectives in their own villages, as well as the challenges faced and ways to overcome them.

"Why must we interview the men about sanghas, what do they know about it?"

After interviewing three men from different castes, the *kishoris* were pleasantly surprised to find out that the men in the village knew of the women's collective and had a very positive impression of them.

"I never knew that the sangha women were responsible for getting the bus to our village. I always assumed it must be the village leader or the panchayat president"

By the end of the training, the *kishoris* realised the many achievements of the *sanghas*, such as covering an old well to prevent accidents, getting garbage removed from the school, and building drains in two of the village streets. The *kishoris* researched, scripted, enacted, shot and directed a play based on the *sangha's* achievement of getting a bus to the village.

The *kishoris* also explored and identified the elements of an ideal *sangha*, as well as the various challenges a *sangha* faces, imagining and articulating hypothetical creative solutions.

The Friday classes have helped a lot in increasing the confidence levels of the girls. The girls are usually very inhibited in other classes. If the Kishori Chitrapata project had not happened, only five girls would have achieved an appreciable confidence level.

Bhavya, Mahila Shikshana Kendra teacher, Hunsur block, Mysore district, India, in an interview conducted by researchers from UNICEF

their daughters. As Reeta's mother said when her daughter brought back gifts for the family: "My daughter is a different person now. She not only managed to bring gifts for everyone with the money I gave her, but brought back some of the money unspent as well".

Mahila Shikshana Kendra

Acting on a suggestion by SSA and UNICEF, we opened a third node in Hunsur block (Mysore district) in the *Mahila Shikshana Kendra* (MS Kendra). This residential bridge school for out-of-school adolescent girls is managed and run by MSK. Training modules were redesigned for larger groups and the girls successfully learnt the basics of photography, digital camera and video camera through constructivist learning exercises. In November 2010, the students of MS Kendra participated in the *kishori mela* organised by MSK at Periyapatna block (Mysore district) where the *kishoris'* photos and video skills were much admired.

Successes and Challenges

Throughout the project, we were reminded of the vulnerability of the group we were working with. The *kishoris* are located in a social context that is marred by caste, violence against women and the confinement of young girls to the home for several reasons, for assisting in household chores to matters of reputation. We have had to continually devise creative ways by which to fend off these threats and work towards empowerment and learning. Added to these socio-cultural and patriarchal concerns is the additional element of adolescent emotionalities. Older *kishoris* missed training sessions because of a sense of rejection; they felt attention was diverted to new *kishoris*.

The *sangha* has proven to be a robust support system in designing strategies to combat the various challenges, with the NMK *sakhi* being a positive and supporting role model for the *kishoris*, and because of the project staff's sensitivity to the local context. When drop-out rates increased because the girls were getting married early, the MC members of the NMK acted as local anchors of the project by campaigning among the parents of outreach villages, conducting meetings and taking responsibility for their daughters' safety. Unfortunately, for different reasons, some challenges were not overcome – for instance, the training at the Attiguppe node had to be halted as our negotiations could not achieve new enrolments.

However, there have been enough positive indicators to keep us motivated, as the stories below reflect.

- When she first came into training, Pallavi (Attiguppe village) hardly spoke and told us that she had a low perception of herself. As the training progressed, she grew into a self-confident and cheerful girl who found a job at Hunsur, which required her to photograph people coming to get their identity/ration cards.
- Gowri (Halevaranchi village) managed to negotiate with her family and her groom to postpone her wedding by four months, which has enabled her to continue attending the training.
- Reeta (Hosavaranchi village) could not easily read or write as she had dropped out of school after seventh standard. Today, she

makes an effort to read and regularly volunteers to write, requesting others to correct her.

- Tara, the NMK *sakhi* of Hosavaranchi village, had to get married to a school teacher in North Karnataka. Through negotiations with her family and her groom, she stayed at her mother's house to complete the training and keep her job as a *sakhi*, before joining her husband.
- Even though it was peak agricultural labour season, Kavita (Halevaranchi village) convinced her mother to let her go to the training and said she would then happily help her the rest of the week, without complaining. Her mother let her go.

During the year, a number of resources were created. The *kishoris* from the three learning nodes have produced many short video clips and audio recordings, covering topics as diverse as folk songs, women's work, *gram panchayat* elections, intelligent ways of negotiating, the age of marriage and the strength of the collective. Most of these programmes have been aired on the *Kelu Sakhi* radio programme. Through two films, *Camera Kannalli Nan Kanasu* (My dream in the eye of the camera) and *Camera, Naavu, Nammooru* (We, Our village and the Camera), the *Prakriye* team tried to capture the Attiguppe and Hosavaranchi *kishoris'* experiences of learning to use the digital camera and explore their village through photography. The training manuals of each module on the basics of digital photography, video and audio are available in Kannada, as are training videos about the basics of photography.

Technologies, such as audio recording and video shooting, have allowed for the creation of a comfortable space for discussion and reflection. Due to their technology skills and training, the *kishoris* have been able to ask *sangha* women about the history and achievements of their collective; family and friends about themselves, their expectations, likes and dislikes, as well as many villagers about topics ranging from the importance of forests to their impressions about *sanghas*. Video role-plays have proven to be very effective in enabling the *kishoris* to act out the desired outcomes of their life situations, engaging with complex reflections linking their own experiences to the issues discussed. Stories, games and role-

playing have been very effective in conveying complex messages. We had the opportunity to share our experiences and learnings from the project in response to a call for papers from UNESCO and Plan India for the South Asian Conference on 'Responding to the

Needs of Out of School Adolescents – Experiences of South Asian Countries'. Our paper is accessible on www.ITforChange.net/SolEx_gender_KC. In order to collaboratively create and share the learnings from the project, we also created a wiki page: www.public-software.in/KCwiki/index.php/KC-Learnings:Community_portal.

Looking Ahead

Prakriye is in the process of consolidating the learning generated and thus re-envisioning its role as a one-of-its-kind link between organisations and their development goals at the district, state and national level. The coming year will see the hand-holding of the *Vikasana* radio broadcast for the communities *Vikasana* works with. We will also continue the work with the *kishoris* on curriculum development. With continued strategic and creative interventions, we intend to focus on documenting the learnings and insights from the *Kishori Chitrapata* project, as well as editing the videos shot by the *kishoris*, which will be screened in the villages. The *Kishori Chitrapata* project engages with a combination of important issues – an empowered women's collective nurturing young adolescents to become the next generation of empowered women; contextualised learning through technologies; and a sensitive visual media that captures all these experiences. We hope to find ways and means to sustain this experiment, while developing different models based on project learnings for up-scaling pilots within the domain of education.



Starting the Kishori Habba by drawing a colourful rangoli (Halevaranchi village, Mysore district, India)

My most memorable moment was when on the first day of training, I thought to myself that I cannot take photos; it is not something I can easily learn. And, the very next moment, they put a camera in my hands. I took photos of a rose and my friends that day.

Shalini, a 10th standard student of Mahila Shikshana Kendra, Hunsur block, Mysore district, India

Influencing Development Discourse

Over the years, we have consistently emphasised the need for a political economy perspective on the information society to inform emergent development theories. Mainstream digital space is constructed in and through neo-liberal, capitalist logic. Further, global development policies recommending the adoption of new technologies for addressing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and such, in their vision and conviction, seek to squeeze in developing country policies and local development efforts into frameworks informed by this dominant logic. This may be quite unsurprising given that the digital phenomenon, almost autonomously, seems to be realigning the axes of power, and much is at stake for powerful economic and political interests on the local-global continuum as the margins acquire a new identity.

Our perspective, informed by our engagement with local communities and interactions in the global political arena, strongly privileges analytical frames that capture the structural antecedents of exclusion in the information society. We feel that making sense of the political economy underscoring techno-social phenomena to reinterpret the future of development in its basic principles as well as strategic directions, is critical. A new era of development jargon seems to be taking birth, and these notions are worthwhile unpacking; for example, 'openness' in the 'network' society is being discussed in the Information and Communication Technology for Development (ICTD) space, and we have thought it important to seek conceptual clarity around what this means for how development itself may be visualised and practised. We have sought to claim and reformulate the concepts of 'public' and 'citizen' to ground the new ways of thinking about, and doing, development in the 'open' and 'networked' reality of contemporary life.

Political Economy of the Information Society

The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) invited us in May 2010 to be part of a public panel on 'The Potential of Open Development for Canada and Abroad'. We think it important to do some hair-splitting on this theme of 'open development', a notion that is increasingly gaining currency along with its variants – open data, open government, etc. – for examining the assumptions it carries about the content and goals of development. A shift towards openness, unless anchored in equity and social justice, can have negative implications for institutions in the public sphere, democracy and development, as well as those of economic production and distribution. We are contributing an essay to IDRC's proposed book, undertaking a critical analysis of the elements of openness, with empirical evidence from the fields of ICTD and Internet Governance (IG), and arguing the potential exclusionary impact of 'openness', where it may supersede the idea of 'public'.

At the ICTD 2010 Conference in London, we shared our perspectives on open development in a panel focusing on this issue (www.ITforChange.net/sites/default/files/ITfC/ICTD%202010_Open%20Development_0.pdf).

We were also part of an opening panel dedicated to practitioners' perspectives (www.ITforChange.net/sites/default/files/ITfC/ICTD%202010_open%20plenary.pdf), as well as the panels titled 'How can ICT Research better Inform and Communicate Theories of Development and Globalisation? New Challenges and Promising Directions' and 'Conceptions of Accountability in Policy and Practice'.

Our presentation at the Second Harvard Forum on Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and Development was published in *Information Technologies & International Development* (Volume 6, Special edition 2010 – Harvard Forum II Essays). The paper, titled 'From social enterprises to mobiles – Seeking a peg to hang a premeditated ICTD theory', offers a macro-structural critique that derives from an analysis of policy texts,

as well as from our first-hand experience (www.ITforChange.net/HarvardForumITID).

Continuing our efforts to reflect on the macro-structural implications of development, we will be organising a panel on 'How are digital technologies transforming development?' at the 2011 European Association of Development, Research and Training Institutes (EADI) conference on 'Rethinking Development in an Age of Scarcity and Uncertainty – New Values, Voices and Alliances for Increased Resilience'. This forum will enable us to interact with a larger European audience. We will examine the ideas and broad ideologies that ICTs have brought to the development sector, looking at the challenges in relation to new possibilities for development around the central question – what frameworks capture the impact of ICTs on the development sector?

This year we have also participated actively in the Euro-India Spirit Project (EIS), a governmental effort between India and the European Union (EU), as a member of the Working Group on 'ICT Addressing Societal Challenges'. The EIS Project aims at creating a shared ground for research on policies in the field of ICTs in India and the EU. We have, in the past year, intervened in the Working Group discussions, talking about the techno-social and the need for research on 'public technologies'. We look forward to reiterating this perspective at the EIS Copenhagen meeting, where the focus of the discussion will be inclusion, e-health and collaborative content creation.

Our articulations have also begun to have a direct impact. For instance, we have received feedback from IDRC about the way our work on the Information Society for the South programme has influenced their thinking for the 2011-2016 prospectus on the theme of Information and Networks. Such an impact is equally discernible in general with academic, civil society and governmental initiatives that seek our experiences and insights to nuance their interventions across different domains, a fact that reading the different chapters in this annual report will testify.

Political Economy of Knowledge

We have been involved with the Information and Knowledge Management Emergent (IKME)

research programme by being part of the sub-group focused on technology artefacts. We are also part of the team evaluating IKME's effort, along with Chris Mowles (Red Kite Partners). IKME is a network which gathers development researchers and practitioners exploring the concept of 'multiple knowledges' as a philosophy for effective development practice, as well as policies, especially at global levels. Our participation in the IKME network has helped us develop an understanding of the issues linked to technology architecture and their connection to local knowledge. The final report of the programme evaluation still has to be published, but being participant-evaluators has enabled us to become more comfortable with interpretations of contextual and nuanced changes and the lenses offered by complexity theory for development sector evaluation. Visiting *Sula Batsu* in Costa Rica was part of this learning; the organisation has worked with citizen reporters at the community level as well as with local school children, creating wide ripples of change through this process around how local knowledge is perceived, validated and valued. Furthermore, working with the IKME programme has given us access to a niche global community of thinkers, whose work reflects forward thinking in an area that is bound to have implications for the future of development.

We also participated in the IKME workshop titled 'Linked Open Information: Potential Opportunities and Pitfalls for International Development', held in Oxford (United Kingdom), in November 2010. We presented our perspective from the vantage point of the 'local' on the issue of the directions that linked data should take. The presentation critically examined the information behaviour in local communities, bringing in the issue of policies that influence technology and hence, linked data flows. In the general discussion on 'What are the powers and limitations of transforming linked data with visualisation tools?', our work with illiterate women and girls was cited.

We are a member of the advisory group of the Mobilising Knowledge for Development (MK4D) initiative, a project of the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), University of Sussex, Brighton (United Kingdom). This project aims at restructuring IDS' approach on sharing

Given the rapidly changing nature of technology in a dynamic and multicultural society such as India, it is a matter of great urgency to have organisations which can reflect on the nature and uses of technology by drawing on different disciplinary perspectives as well as having a deep commitment and empathy to ordinary citizens. I do not know of any organisation that does this as effectively as IT for Change.

Sundar Sarukkai, Professor and Director, Manipal Centre for Philosophy and Humanities, Manipal University, India

knowledge for development to support informed decision making by those in a position to influence change towards poverty reduction and justice. By being part of the advisory group, we bring our perspectives on co-creation and Southern partnerships to a reputable institution and its emerging knowledge systems and processes.

We have been in continuous dialogue with scholars at IDS – working along with them on new proposals and providing complementary expertise to their research on ICTs. For instance, we were asked to comment on the final report of the research project 'Mediating Voices and Communicating Realities – Using Information Crowd-sourcing Tools, Open Data Initiatives and Digital Media to Support and Protect the Vulnerable and Marginalised' by Evangelia Berdou, research fellow at IDS. Our commentary on this work can be accessed at www.ITforChange.net/Commentary_Evangelia.

Networking with the Academic World

IT for Change (ITfC) delivered two lectures at the Fifth Summer School on Philosophy for the Social Sciences and Humanities, at the Manipal Centre for Philosophy and Humanities, Manipal University (India). Anita Gurumurthy used a gender perspective to analyse the information society in her talk 'Fat-free ice cream, alcohol-free beer and feminism without women - How to make sense of gender discourse in the information society?'. Parminder Jeet Singh discussed the adequacy of current political systems with respect to the context and needs of an emerging information society, in his talk 'Political action in the brave new digital world'. We have been actively seeking conversations with academia, inviting them to our policy advocacy workshops and also making presentations and delivering lectures in educational spaces. This link is also rather important, especially to build bridges with the student community, engaging whom is vital to our relevance as an organisation.

Recognising ITfC as an important voice in the sector of community radio, the Department of

Communication (Sarojini Naidu School of Arts and Communication, University of Hyderabad, India) invited us to be a part of the advisory board of its quarterly e-newsletter, CR News – Tracking Community Radio in India.

The CITIGEN programme, described in the section on Feminist Frameworks, and our work on Democracy and Governance have also been instrumental in opening up relationships with academic institutions in India and the global South.

Looking Ahead

Moving on from the Information Society for the South framework, which sought to use the conceptual tools of 'public' and 'citizen' as cornerstone precepts for a development discourse around ICTs, we feel that our work needs a renewed emphasis on learning by doing and committed political advocacy. What network age development comprises is something we still know little about; the indications we have of possible breakthroughs in governance, education or empowerment are still nascent. We feel that pilots to support local development ecologies at a systemic level are an area we must explore. However, it is not easy to find the funds to pursue new methodologies where donors are getting more and more niche and limited to the 'concrete', in their support, and less appreciative of work at normative and experimental levels. Our engagement with governments at the national and sub-national level – more or less to keep reinstating what alternative frameworks are made of that use the 'information' or 'network' society opportunity – will of course continue, both through direct engagement in advisory bodies, as well as through research to bring convincing evidence on to the table. Globally, joining the fight for social justice and equity is vital; the IG arena is emerging as significant in global spaces, including in inter-governmental cooperation such as the IBSA (India, Brazil, South Africa countries) framework. Aligning with such platforms and also saying what needs to be in others is part of our discourse shaping agenda in the year to come.

Knowledge and Communication for Development

In order to increase our visibility in both online and physical spaces, we reinforced our efforts this year to develop a coherent yet diversified communication strategy. This process included initiatives to reach out to a broader audience, from both traditional development and Information and Communication Technology for Development (ICTD) sectors, as well as the government.

This year saw a renewed emphasis on enhancing our presence in a variety of spaces. We have revamped our websites using Drupal, a public software content management system, which enabled us to make the website more aesthetic and user-friendly.

Our communications strategy has also included the production of both online and print material to disseminate our work in a more diversified way. We decided to revisit some of our research efforts that lacked visibility because they had not been published in formats suitable for a wider audience. The first round of this ongoing process included case studies, policy briefs, notes from the field and think pieces about our work in gender, education and governance.

These publications have been posted on relevant websites, such as the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) and Zunia, in order to participate in initiatives aiming at knowledge exchange in the development sector. We deepened this effort by contributing regularly to e-lists, including to the Gender Community, Education Community and the ICT for Development Community of the United Nations Solution Exchange (UN-Solex) initiative, a knowledge-sharing project that connects development practitioners across India, as well as to mailing lists dedicated to community informatics and governance issues. Interacting in such spaces is crucial to our work as we are keen to encourage the adoption of an information society perspective in all development initiatives, and simultaneously inform technology-related discussions with a grounded development ethos. We also publish four news bulletins dedicated to our projects and activities – the IT for Change bulletin, the Gender and Information Society bulletin, the Public Software bulletin and the CITIGEN

bulletin (all our bulletins are available at www.ITforChange.net/bulletins). Sending these bulletins enables us to interact with diverse audiences about different aspects of our work. IT for Change (ITfC) members have regularly blogged on our website, sharing their research, training and advocacy efforts from the perspective of the practitioner. We have also created posters on public software, both in English and Kannada, in order to communicate our work in a pithy manner with a broader audience across work sectors.

Our efforts in our research and advocacy work have spoken for themselves and people from varied sectors have been in touch with us on possible collaborations.

Looking Ahead

Our efforts to be more visible will be taken forward by targeting specific online and physical spaces and events, and producing material accessible to a broader audience. Simultaneously, we will reinforce our online presence by taking an active role in multiple e-lists and forums. Our websites dedicated to specific areas of our work are also being revamped, following a process similar to the one we undertook for our main website, and we hope it will enable a wider public to access information on our work, while spreading information about the criticality of incorporating a rights-based information society lens in the development sector.



Some of our publications and the revamped version of www.ITforChange.net



Financial Report

IT for Change – Consolidated Balance Sheet as on 31 March 2011

2009-10	Liabilities	2010-11	% of total	2009-10	Asset	2010-11	% of total
Rs.				Rs.			
1,967,079	General Fund	3,229,448	14	188,684	Fixed Assets	683,724	3
1,853,653	Organisation Stabilisation Fund	3,489,578	15	18,548,384	Current Assets Loans and Advances	19,234,978	83
799,325	Asset Fund	683,725	3	972,464	Receivables	3,119,482	14
14,440,185	Advance Account	14,123,220	61				-
649,290	Sundry Payables	1,512,213	7				-
19,709,532	Total	23,038,184	100	19,709,532	Total	23,038,184	100

IT for Change – Consolidated Income and Expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2011

2009-10	Expenditure	2010-11	% of total	2009-10	Income	2010-11	% of total
Rs.				Rs.			
7,353,372	Personnel Costs	7,885,820	43	10,425,183	Funds received	17,066,240	94
1,714,509	Operating Costs	6,053,337	33	496,182	Other Income	885,044	5
1,385,577	Administration Costs	1,600,720	9	87,636	Excess of Expenditure over Income – transferred to receivable from UNICEF	-	-
175,807	Depreciation	364,849	2	82,930	Excess of Expenditure over Income – UNICEF depreciation transferred to Asset Fund	250,172	1
462,666	Excess of Income over Expenditure	1,321,610	7				-
-	Appropriation towards Organisational Expenses	975,120	5				-
11,091,931	Total	18,201,456	100	11,091,931	Total	18,201,456	100

Schedule of Funds Received and Utilised during the year 2010-11						
Project	Funder – Country	Opening Balance	Funds Received	Funds Utilised	% of Funds Utilised	Closing Balance
ICTs for Participatory Local Development	United Nation Development Programme – New York, USA	577,960	-	-	-	577,960
Information Society for the South Project	FORD Foundation – New York, USA	50,301	3,286,030	705,373	4.3	2,630,958
Information Society for the South Project	International Development Research Centre – Canada	765,110	4,042,195	4,225,781	26.0	581,524
Information Society for the South Project	Humanist Institute for Co-operation with Developing Countries – Netherlands	1,229,523	1,219,579	1,558,650	9.6	890,452
Public Software Centre	United Nation's Children's fund – India	-	363,400	363,400	2.2	-
Free/Libre/Open Source Software in Public Sector	European Union – Belgium	60,242	-	60,242	0.4	-
Open Net Initiative	International Development Research Centre – Canada	86,046	68,478	17,542	0.1	136,982
Teachers Communities of Learning	Edukans Foundation – Netherlands	1,635,781	-	939,927	5.8	695,854
Gender IS Citizenship	International Development Research Centre – Canada	10,035,222	5,369,691	6,795,423	41.8	8,609,490
<i>Kishori Chitrapata</i>	United Nation's Children's fund – India	-	1,579,575	1,579,575	9.7	-
Total		14,440,185	15,928,948	16,245,913	100	14,123,220

Annexures

Annexure 1. Workshops conducted on education and public software

Workshop Title	Objective	Date	Participants
Teachers Communities of Learning			
Orientation	Introduction to the programme	March 2010	Bengaluru South 3 block government school teachers
Introduction to computer aided learning and Web 2.0 basics	Understand the meaning of computer aided learning, the role of the teacher in this process and basics of how to use the Internet for communication.	June 2010	Bengaluru South 3 block government school teachers
Science – Computer aided learning	Introduction to the computer as a Teaching Learning Material (TLM) – Basics science computer aided tools	August 2010	Bengaluru South 3 block government school science teachers
English – Computer aided learning	Introduction to the computer as a TLM – Basics English computer aided tools	August 2010	Bengaluru South 3 block government school science teachers
Mathematics – Computer aided learning	Introduction to the computer as a TLM – Basics mathematics computer aided tools	August 2010	Bengaluru South 3 block government school science teachers
Right to Education (RTE) Act and hardware troubleshooting	To understand the RTE Act from experts, To be able to do basic hardware troubleshooting.	September 2010	Bengaluru South 3 block government school science teachers
Web 2.0 tools (advanced)	Advanced use of search engines, email, blogs and discussion forums	October 2010	Bengaluru South 3 block government school science teachers
Science – Computer aided learning	Use and create digital TLMs – Advanced English computer aided tools	November 2010	Bengaluru South 3 block government school science teachers
English – Computer aided learning	Use and create digital TLMs – Advanced mathematics computer aided tools	November 2010	Bengaluru South 3 block government school science teachers
Mathematics – Computer aided learning	Use and create digital TLMs - Advanced science computer aided tools	December 2010	Bengaluru South 3 block government school science teachers
Digital Camera as a TLM	How to use a digital camera to create subject-based TLMs	February 2011	Bengaluru South 3 block government school science teachers
Yadgir, Karnataka			
Orientation	Introduction to the digital world and understanding its impact in education	September 2010	Government school teachers from the block
Surpur, Karnataka			
Orientation	Introduction to the digital world and understanding its impact in education	September 2010	Government school teachers at the Surpur resource centre
Knowledge Management and Knowledge Networking (KMKN)			
Capacity Building Workshop	Knowledge Management and Knowledge Networking	December 2010	NGOs of the Bengaluru division
Capacity Building Workshop	Knowledge Management and Knowledge Networking	February 2011	NGOs of the Mysore division
District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs)			
Kumta	Introduction to techno-pedagogy and collaboration tools	March 2011	Teacher trainers from the DIET and the surrounding block resource centre
Kalika balaga (Learning community)			
ICTs and Education Batch 1 and 2	Strengthen the participant's capacity to use the Internet as a means of communication to enable peer learning, share resources and see the advantages of peer-networking.	January 2011	Management Development Programmes – C-LAMPS
ICTs and Education	Refresher and advanced collaboration tools such as video conferencing, etc.	May 2011	Management Development Programmes – C-LAMPS

State Master Trainers			
Batch 1	Public software philosophy and Computer Aided Learning Tools, Web 2.0 and Computer as a TLM	August 2010	Government school teacher educators, subject inspectors, teachers from all the districts of Karnataka
Batch 2	Public software philosophy and Computer Aided Learning Tools, Web 2.0 and Computer as a TLM	August 2010	Government school teacher educators, subject inspectors, teachers from all the districts of Karnataka
Batch 3	Public software philosophy and Computer Aided Learning Tools, Web 2.0 and Computer as a TLM	August 2010	Government school teacher educators, subject inspectors, teachers from all the districts of Karnataka
Physics-Chemistry-Mathematics (PCM) batch	Public software philosophy and Computer Aided Learning Tools, Web 2.0 and Computer as a TLM	November 2010	Government school mathematics and science teachers across Karnataka
Rashtriya Vidyalaya Educational Consortium (RVEC)			
ICTs and Education	Understanding the emerging digital society and the role of educators and teachers in it	September 2010	D. Ed. Principals from private colleges across Karnataka
ICTs and Education – Computer Aided Learning	Understanding the emerging digital society and the role of educators and teachers within it, Introduction to computer aided learning	July 2011	Bengaluru D. Ed. College lecturers
Azim Premji Foundation (APF)			
ICTs and Education	ICTs and education: Introduction to the educational tools available on Ubuntu	October 2010	APF Team from Mandya
Ubuntu educational tools	Introduction to the educational tools available on Ubuntu	November 2010	APF Team from Chhatissgarh and Puducherry
Higher education			
Curriculum revision	Introduction to public software educational tools in the polytechnic curriculum	January 2011	Polytechnic college lecturers from all over Karnataka who were part of the curriculum revision team
Workshop on GNU/Linux for the Department of Technical Education (DTE)	Orienting DTE towards public software	February 2011	Polytechnic college lecturers
Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)			
Ubuntu and educational tools	Migration of SSA to public software	July 2010	SSA employees

Annexure 2. Videos by the *Prakriye* team

Sl. No	Type and title of the video	Comments
<i>To strengthen Mahila Samakhya Karnataka's (MSK) information and communication needs</i>		
1	General body meeting – A best practice documentation	This video explains the importance of participation in the general body meeting. It is aimed at motivating women to understand the above and come forward to take a leadership role in it.
2	<i>Sangha mane</i> – A space of our own (Collectively owned building)	This video talks about the process involved in availing of the ' <i>Sangha mane</i> ' scheme from MSK and the rationale behind owning their own space.
3	<i>Arogya sakhi</i> – Our health assistant	<i>Arogya sakhi</i> is an MSK health committee initiative which motivates women to volunteer and take charge of their health requirements, as well as the needs of women around them.
4	<i>Sabala Sangha Saakshara</i> – Showcasing the literacy camp	Literacy is one of the activities of MSK and this video highlights the relevance and importance of being literate and how simple it can be to achieve.
5	Many roads to education – Featuring the initiatives of <i>Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan</i> for increasing the education levels of the girl child	This video features all the schemes available for the education of the girl child as well as the institutions which work in this area.
6	Bank linkage – Financial support for the collective	Linking <i>sanghas</i> to the bank to avail of substantial financial support, is one of the activities of MSK. This video gives clarity about the entire process along with showcasing <i>sanghas</i> which utilised the money for their own development needs.
7	<i>Gram panchayat</i> standing committees – Relevance of their role in the development of the community	This video gives information about each standing committee, its role in enhancing citizenship and how to make of use of it.
<i>To create dialogue around gender and patriarchy</i>		
8	Through the eyes of children	What are the gendered notions children pick up from us? Why is it so? How does it shape their future aspirations? These are the questions this video raises through interviews of boys and girls.
9	Do I like the groom? - Role plays by <i>kishoris</i>	This video sheds light on the pressures of early marriage and the scenarios which play out due to societal pressure. It focuses on creating a debate around the powerless position that adolescent girls are forced in to.
10	Overcoming gender stereotypes – Case studies	Women ploughing the agricultural field, driving a bullock cart, chopping tree trunks for firewood, etc. are showcased in this video. They also share why they do so, how it is perceived and what happens when they push the boundaries.
11	Women in politics – Challenges and successes of elected <i>panchayat</i> representatives	Women who contested for <i>gram panchayat</i> elections and stood their ground amidst all the challenges they faced, share their journey and why they believe they have to be in politics.
<i>Citizenship enhancement videos</i>		
12	Govt. department profile 01: Horticulture department	It provides detailed information on the relevance of this department, available schemes and services for people and general information on horticulture.
13	Govt. department profile 02: Agriculture department	It provides detailed information on the relevance of this department, available schemes and services for people and general information on agriculture.
14	Govt. department profile 03: Forest department	It provides detailed information on the relevance of this department, available schemes and services for people and general information on forestry.
15	Govt. department profile 04: Social welfare department	It provides detailed information on the relevance of this department, available schemes and services for people and general information on social welfare.
16	Govt. department profile 05: Sericulture department	It provides detailed information on the relevance of this department, available schemes and services for people and general information on sericulture.
17	Govt. department profile 06: Department of fisheries	It provides detailed information on the relevance of this department, available schemes and services for people and general information on fisheries.
18	Govt. department profile 07: Post office	It provides detailed information on the relevance of this department, available schemes and services for people and general information on the post office.
<i>Other videos</i>		
19	Collective listening – <i>Kelu sakhi</i> is our radio	This video focuses on the rationale behind collective listening and motivates <i>sanghas</i> to do the same.
20	Health in our hands – Organising blood tests	<i>Namma Mahiti Kendra</i> (NMK) women in Attiguppe village initiated a blood test camp at their NMK. They spoke about how such a camp can be organised and why is it important for women to know their blood type and hemoglobin level.
21	From the village to Delhi – Video diary of a woman	A <i>sangha</i> woman who went to New Delhi to participate in an MSK event, learnt how to use a video camera and captured her experience of traveling so far through video.
22	Expanding the horizons – Capturing different models of telecentres	This video documents three models of telecentres run by various NGOs.

Annexure 3. Statistics from the *Namma Mahiti Kendras*

Sl. No	Department/NGO/Other	What are the services provided?	How many people availed of benefits?
1	Horticulture	Free pesticide	7
2		Sapota saplings, mango saplings and seeds for vegetables	4
3	Agriculture	Organic manure	3
4		Subsidised plough	1
5		Paddy and jowar seeds	11
6		Spare kit	4
7	Social welfare/Scheduled Casts and Scheduled Tribes Corporation	Applications for subsidised loans	40
8	<i>Taluk panchayat</i>	Old age and widow pension	2
9	Road transport	Bus pass	11
10	Rotary, Lions and other clubs	Eye check-up and free operation plus spectacles	27
11	Prerana community welfare hospital for women's health	Check-ups and free medicines	19
12		Free operation (would have cost Rs. 25,000 otherwise)	1
13	RUDSET – Rural Development Livelihood Skill Development Institute	Tractor repair course	2
14		Tailoring	16
15		Computers	5
16	<i>Namma Mahiti Kendra (NMK)</i>	Digital photo/printing/xerox	245
17	Gas agency at Husnur	Gas connection	14
18	NMK	Online assistance for job applications (such as the police, nurse and <i>panchayat</i> development officer)	8
19	NMK	Online browsing help – results	50
20	NMK	Basic computer course	8 (7 girls and 1 boy)

IT for Change Team

Bengaluru		Mysore	
Name	Designation	Name	Designation
Parminder Jeet Singh	Executive Director	Aparna Kalley	Project Coordinator
Anita Gurumurthy	Executive Director	Chinmayi Arakali	Senior Project Associate
Gurumurthy Kasinathan	Director	K. Krupa Thimmaiah	Senior Project Associate
Bindu Thirumalai	Programme Associate	Manoj Kumar B.	Videographer
Arpita Joshi	Research Associate	Chethana M.G.	Field Associate, Prakriye
Deepika Khatri	Research Associate	Guru Prasad	Field Associate, Prakriye
Krittika Vishwanath	Research Associate	Harisha N.	Field Associate, Prakriye
Nandini C.	Research Associate	Mangalamma	Field Associate, Prakriye
Madhavi Jha	Research Assistant	Prabha G.R.	Field Associate, Prakriye
Shivani Kaul	Research Assistant	Saptami	Field Associate, Prakriye
Gabriela Goulart Mora	Communication and Publications Officer	Shivamma N.	Field Associate, Prakriye
Chloé Zollman	Knowledge and Communication Associate	Shreeja.K	Field Associate, Prakriye
Pablo Grandjean	Communication and Publications Intern	Shabharisha M.	Technical Support
Anupama Joshi	Technical Project Associate	Rehmat Unnisa	Accounts and Administration Assistant
Leena Mulye	Technical Project Associate	Tilak Rajkumar	Driver and Administration Support
Shariff K. Mulla	Technical Project Assistant		
Sindhu Ghanti	Technology Intern		
Mala. R.	Accounts Officer		
Shines Mathew	Office Administrator cum Secretary		
Prasanna Kumar B.K.	Office Assistant		

Bengaluru team



Mysore team



About IT for Change

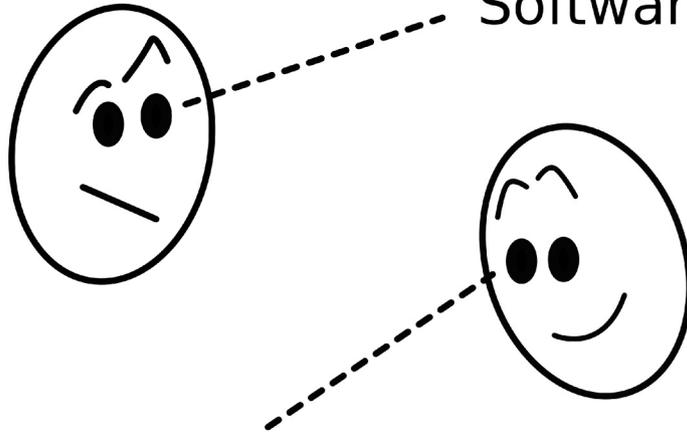
IT for Change is an India-based NGO working on information society theory and practice from the standpoint of equity and social justice. Through our research, advocacy and field projects, we seek to challenge approaches that fail to address structural exclusions in the emerging information society. We also propose alternative models that are participatory and equitable. Our work spans a range of development arenas – gender, education, community media and governance.

IT for Change is in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.



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