ICTs and Social Inclusion

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ICT Opportunities

ICT – Information and Communication Technologies

• Devices: computers, tablets, smartphones, cellphones
• Platforms: Web, social media, SMS, Apps
• buzzwords: e-governance, crowdsourcing, open data, community mapping

Opportunities

Advances in personal communication technologies have expanded the possibilities for reaching the most vulnerable groups of society.

Social Accountability measures and actions need no longer be limited by time and space constraints, and the associated costs.
ICT and Social Accountability

Given the current limitations and challenges, What are the entry points? How to catalyze interaction?

Community → Local Governments
ICT tools to open channels of communication for as many people as possible.

Local Governments → Community
ICT tools to share open data to increase transparency and make the public aware of LG activity.

Two-way feedback is needed, and there are opportunities to strengthen both directions of the exchange.
ICT and Social Inclusion

‘There is a realization that people, who are usually described at the ‘target group’, are a major unharnessed resource that can be tapped to become part of the solution rather than the problem to be solved.’


GOAL:
To identify mechanisms that can lead to service improvements by enabling marginalized communities to effectively communicate the deficiencies in services they are facing, and facilitate their acknowledgement at the local government level.

• Platforms that empower vulnerable groups to voice their needs and concerns.

• Potential solutions and actions that can assist municipalities to ensure that their policies, strategies and programs, are meeting their intended aims among vulnerable communities and groups.

• Make information on services available in an accessible and timely manner through their websites or engage with intermediary NGOs to provide information relevant to vulnerable groups.
ICT Use in the 5 Cities

**Skopje:**
8.9 % increase in home internet access from home from 2010 to 2011. 96.6% of students used the internet.4

**Banja Luka:**
Free wi-fi access points are expected to be introduced by 2015 in accordance with the City Development Strategy.1

**Prishtina:**
National indicators: 94% penetration rate for mobile phones.3

**Durres:**
As of June 2012, almost 50% of the population in Albania used Facebook.5

**Sarajevo:**
Raising popularity of social media sites, particularly, Facebook, for social causes, information dissemination and awareness raising campaigns of public interest.2

Sources:
1. FGDs
Digital Divide According to FGDs

Use of ICT among vulnerable groups

In general, the youth, NGO activist, and the higher-educated FG participants seemed more familiar with using the Internet.

→ Youth as a key target group

Women especially rely on social ties (family, friends, neighbors) as sources of information.

→ Potential to expand this network though Social Media

Other groups either did not have access to computers or did not know how to use them.

→ Free wi-fi spots and computer labs, ICT trainings can provide access to those who cannot afford it.

However, some groups will still not be able to access the Internet regularly.

→ Interventions should include multiple media channels (esp. mobile phones and SMS-based technology)
Elements that strengthen SA-ICT programs

Open to all
To ensure the inclusion of marginalized groups

Support mechanisms
To bridge and facilitate dialogue at each step

Youth engagement
To tap into the energy and technology-readiness of this sector of the population

Links to decision-making
To give institutional weight to citizen input

A salient issue
To address what is most important to citizens

Political buy-in
To make the conversation two-sided

Regional Best Practices

- E-Government in Moldova and Pula, Croatia
- System 48 in Indjija, Serbia and Strumica, Macedonia