

**An approach for the sustainability of ICT centres
implemented by Technikon SA in Southern Africa**

by

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ABSTRACT

Title: An approach for the sustainability of ICT centres implemented by Technikon SA in Southern Africa

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The study primarily described and analysed the attempts made through the former Technikon SA at the implementation of ICT centres in Southern Africa over a period of six years. Based on some contemporary theory, the study suggested an approach for the implementation of ICT centres in developing regions.

In the introduction, the study deals with the problems of technology transfer to developing regions and refers to the impact of globalisation on third world economies. In particular, the study highlights the barriers to technology transfer with specific emphasis on the peculiarities that are unique to each region. The study further analysed the approach that was used by the former Technikon SA for the deployment of ICT centres especially as ICT centres were considered by many as an ideal manner for the transfer of technology.

In order to contextualise the understand and findings of the research, the study relied on the fact that the research was based on a longitudinal study. The advantages of this longitudinal study meant it was possible to observe and record the life of an ICT centre over a significant period of time. Not only was it evident that there was little regard for the respective communities needs and the that there was no indication of these ICT centres being successful, but that the same mistakes were being repeated.

At national level, an enormous amount of effort and money had been channelled into the roll out of ICT centres with little guarantee of success. International symposiums suggested that through technology, third world economies could make the quantum leap into the information age and that the deployment of ICT centres was one of the ways in which this could be achieved at the local level. There was little evidence to suggest that any significant success had been achieved through the many attempts at ICT centre deployment.

Through the study, a research instrument was developed that was used to assess and measure the success of each of the centres. The approach for ICT deployment suggested in the study, was based on the research instrument as well as on models developed by certain theorists (Heeks, Van Ardenhoven and Snyman).

The study in the end analysed the nature and impact of implementing ICT centres without considering the critical elements that were identified as critical success factors for ICT centre success. Critical success factors that include role players from government to the community, local, ownership, identification of local needs, local knowledge, an understanding of the local conditions, support structures and partnerships were shown to be key to the success of and ensuring sustainability of ICT centres. The study also provides a perspective on the conflict that arose between the implementer of ICT centres and the communities.

KEY WORDS/SEARCH TERMS

ICT centres

Information age

Technology/barriers

Communities/ownership

Research instrument

National initiatives/telecentres

Hidden agendas

Landscape audit

Community participation

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Table of Contents

CHAPTER ONE -Introduction

1.1	Introduction.....	1
1.2	Research problem	2
1.2.1	Main objective of research.....	2
1.2.2	Research objective.....	2
1.2.3	Sub-aims.....	3
1.3	Demarcation of research.....	3
1.3.1	Research location.....	3
1.3.2	The role of the researcher within TSA and the ICT centers	4
1.4	Definitions of terms	4
1.4.1	ICT centers	4
1.4.2	Information Technology	5
1.4.3	Landscape audit	5
1.4.4	Abbreviations used throughout the text	5
1.5	Value of the research	5
1.6	Literature review	6
1.7	Research approach	8
1.7.1	Action research	8
1.7.2	Use of case studies	11
1.7.3	Data collection methods	11
1.7.4	Sampling	12
1.8	Overview of dissertation	12
1.8.1	Chapter one – Introduction	12
1.8.2	Chapter two – Literature review	12
1.8.3	Chapter three – Research methodology.....	13
1.8.4	Chapter four – Case studies.....	13
1.8.5	Chapter five – Findings and Discussions.....	13
1.8.6	Chapter six – Summary and Conclusions.....	13
1.8.7	Chapter seven – Recommendations.....	13
1.9	Summary	14

CHAPTER TWO – Literature review

2.1	Introduction.....	15
2.2	ICT for Development	15
2.2.1	Harnessing ICT for development	19
2.3	Technology transfer.....	21
2.4	Barriers to technology transfer.....	24
2.4.1	Environmental factors.....	25
2.4.1.1	Economy and competition.....	25
2.4.1.2	Legislation and policies.....	27
2.4.1.3	Physical considerations.....	29
2.4.2	Organisational factors.....	30

2.4.2.1	Cultural factors.....	30
2.4.2.2	Community involvement.....	34
2.4.2.3	Project management.....	36
2.5	Measuring the effectiveness of technology transfer.....	37
2.6	ICT centres.....	40
2.6.1	ICT Sustainability	45
2.6.2	ICT Centre management	49
2.7	Lessons learned in ICT centre deployment.....	50
2.8	An approach for ICT centre deployment.....	59
2.9	Conclusion	62

CHAPTER THREE - Research Design

3.1	Introduction	64
3.2	Research strategy	64
3.3	Research approach	65
3.3.1	Action research	65
3.3.2	Methods of data collection	66
3.3.2.1	Participant observation	66
3.3.2.2	Interviews	68
3.3.2.3	Document analysis	68
3.4	Case studies	69
3.5	Research instrument	71
3.5.1	Conceptualisation phase	72
3.5.1.1	Site selection	72
3.5.1.2	Role players	72
3.5.1.3	Community needs	73
3.5.1.4	Business plan	73
3.5.2	Implementation phase	74
3.5.2.1	Selection of centre staff	75
3.5.2.2	Implementation process	75
3.5.2.3	IT suppliers and IT support	75
3.5.2.4	Identification of community leaders	75
3.5.2.5	Other support structures	76
3.5.3	Evaluation and adjustment phase	76
3.5.3.1	Centre usage	77
3.5.3.2	Centre reliability	77
3.5.3.3	Assessment of user perceptions of centre	77
3.5.3.4	Income generation and expenditure	77
3.5.4	Sustainability	79
3.6	Conclusion	79

CHAPTER FOUR – Case Studies

4.1	Introduction	81
4.2	The role of TSA in the implementation of the ICT centers	81
4.3	Information and Communication Technology Centre one – ICT1 ...	82
4.3.1	Background	82
4.3.2	Infrastructure of ICT1	83
4.3.3	Services offered by ICT1	83
4.3.4	Application of the research instrument	84
4.3.4.1	Conceptualisation phase	84
4.3.4.1.1	Site selection	84
4.3.4.1.2	Role players	84
4.3.4.1.3	Community needs	84
4.3.4.1.4	Business plan	85
4.3.4.2	Implementation phase	85
4.3.4.2.1	Selection of centre management	85
4.3.4.2.2	Third party support	86
4.3.4.2.3	Implementation process	87
4.3.4.3	Evaluation and adjustment phase	87
4.3.4.3.1	First site visit	87
4.3.4.3.2	Second site visit	90
4.3.4.3.3	Third site visit	92
4.3.4.4	Sustainability phase	92
4.4	Information and Communication Technology Centre two –ICT2 ...	93
4.4.1	Background	93
4.4.2	Infrastructure of ICT2	93
4.4.3	Services offered by ICT2	94
4.4.4	Application of the instrument	95
4.4.4.1	Conceptualisation phase	95
4.4.4.1.1	Site selection	95
4.4.4.1.2	Role players	95
4.4.4.1.3	Community needs	96
4.4.4.1.4	Business plan	96
4.4.4.2	Implementation phase	97
4.4.4.2.1	Selection of centre management	97
4.4.4.2.2	Third party support	97
4.4.4.3	Evaluation and adjustment phase	98
4.4.4.3.1	First site visit	98
4.4.4.3.2	Second site visit	101
4.4.4.3.3	Third site visit	103
4.3.4.4	Sustainability phase	104
4.5	Information and Communication Technology Centre three – ICT3 .	104
4.5.1	Background	104
4.5.2	Infrastructure of ICT3	105
4.5.3	Services offered	105
4.5.4	Application of the instrument	106



4.5.4.1	Conceptualisation phase	106
4.5.4.1.1	Site selection	106
4.5.4.1.2	Role players	106
4.5.4.1.3	Community needs	107
4.5.4.1.4	Business plan	107
4.5.4.2	Evaluation and adjustment phase	108
4.5.4.2.1	Second site visit	108
4.5.4.2.2	Third site visit	109
4.5.4.3	Sustainability phase	110
4.6	Information and Communication Technology Centre four –ICT4 ...	110
4.6.1	Background of ICT4	110
4.6.2	Infrastructure of ICT4	110
4.6.3	Services offered at ICT4	111
4.6.4	Application of the instrument	111
4.6.4.1	Conceptualisation phase	111
4.6.4.1.1	Site selection	111
4.6.4.1.2	Role players	112
4.6.4.1.3	Community needs	112
4.6.4.1.4	Business plan	112
4.6.4.2	Evaluation and adjustment phase	113
4.6.4.2.1	First site visit to the initial site for ICT4	114
4.6.4.2.2	Second site visit	114
4.6.4.2.3	Third site visit	116
4.6.5	Sustainability of ICT4	116
4.7	Information and Communication Technology Centre five – ICT5 ...	117
4.7.1	Background of ICT5	117
4.7.2	Infrastructure of ICT5’s environment	117
4.7.3	Services offered	118
4.7.4	Application of the instrument	118
4.7.4.1	Conceptualisation phase	118
4.7.4.1.1	Site selection	118
4.7.4.1.2	Role players	119
4.7.4.1.3	Community needs	119
4.7.4.1.4	Business plan	120
4.7.4.2	Implementation phase of ICT5	121
4.7.4.2.1	Selection of centre management	121
4.7.4.2.2	Third party support	121
4.7.4.2.3	Implementation process	122
4.7.4.3	Evaluation and adjustment phase	122
4.7.4.3.1	First site visit	122
4.7.4.3.2	Second site visit	123
4.7.4.3.3	Third site visit	124
4.7.5	Sustainability of ICT5	124
4.8	Information and Communication Technology Centre six –ICT6	124
4.8.1	Background	124
4.8.2	Infrastructure of ICT6’s environment	125



4.8.3	Services offered by ICT6	126
4.8.4	Application of the instrument	126
4.8.4.1	Conceptualisation phase	126
4.8.4.1.1	Site selection	127
4.8.4.1.2	Role players	127
4.8.4.1.3	Community needs	127
4.8.4.1.4	Business plan	127
4.8.4.2	Implementation phase	128
4.8.4.2.1	Selection of centre management	128
4.8.4.2.2	Third party support	128
4.8.4.3	Evaluation and adjustment phase	128
4.8.4.3.1	First site visit	129
4.8.4.3.2	Second site visit	129
4.8.4.3.3	Third site visit	130
4.8.5	Sustainability	131
4.9	Conclusion	131

CHAPTER FIVE – Findings and Discussions

5.1	Introduction	132
5.2	ICT1	132
5.2.1	Analysis of data	132
5.2.1.1	Conceptualisation	132
5.2.1.2	Implementation	133
5.2.1.3	Adjustment	133
5.2.1.4	Sustainability	133
5.2.2	Factors for success or failure	134
5.2.3	Conclusion	134
5.3	ICT2	135
5.3.1	Analysis of data	135
5.3.1.1	Conceptualisation	135
5.3.1.2	Implementation	136
5.3.1.3	Adjustment	136
5.3.1.4	Sustainability	136
5.3.2	Factors for success or failure	137
5.3.3	Conclusion	137
5.4	ICT3	138
5.4.1	Analysis of data	138
5.4.1.1	Conceptualisation	138
5.4.1.2	Implementation	138
5.4.1.3	Adjustment	139
5.4.1.4	Sustainability	139
5.4.2	Factors for success and failure	139
5.4.3	Conclusion	140



5.5	ICT4	140
5.5.1	Analysis of data	140
5.5.1.1	Conceptualisation	140
5.5.1.2	Implementation	141
5.5.1.3	Adjustment	141
5.5.1.4	Sustainability	141
5.5.2	Factors for success and failure	142
5.5.3	Conclusion	142
5.6	ICT5	143
5.6.1	Analysis of data	143
5.6.1.1	Conceptualisation	143
5.6.1.2	Implementation	143
5.6.1.3	Adjustment	143
5.6.1.4	Sustainability	144
5.6.2	Factors for success and failure	144
5.6.3	Conclusion	144
5.7	ICT6	144
5.7.1	Analysis of data	144
5.7.1.1	Conceptualisation	145
5.7.1.2	Implementation	145
5.7.1.3	Adjustment	145
5.7.1.4	Sustainability	145
5.7.2	Factors for success and failure	145
5.7.3	Conclusion	146
5.8	Overall conclusions for all six ICT centers studied	146
5.8.1	Factors for success	147
5.8.2	Factors for failure	147
5.9	Conclusion	148

CHAPTER SIX – Summary and Conclusions

6.1	Introduction	149
6.2	Addressing the research question and research sub-aims	149
6.2.1	Sub-aim one	149
6.2.2	Sub-aim two	150
6.2.3	Sub-aim three	151
6.2.3.1	Needs analysis and landscape audit.....	152
6.2.3.2	Local ownership and the formation of partnerships.....	153
6.2.4	Sub-aim four	154
6.2.5	Sub-aim five	154
6.2.6	Sub-aim six	154
6.3	Conclusion	155

CHAPTER SEVEN – Recommendations

7.1	Introduction.....	156
7.2	The recommended model	156
7.2.1	Community involvement	159
7.2.2	Community needs	162
7.2.3	Environmental factors	164
7.2.4	Selection of technology and training	166
7.2.5	Implementation, operations and evaluation	168
7.2.6	Conclusion to the recommended model	170
7.3	Limitations of the research	171
7.4	Opportunities for further research	172
7.5	Conclusion	172

LIST OF FIGURES

1.1	The research process applied to ICT centres.....	10
2.1	Technology transfer model for countries with uncertain or biased policies.	29
2.2	Prescriptive framework for the transfer of the appropriate..... technology	32
2.3	The conceptual model for measuring the impact and effectiveness of IT for developing economies	39
2.4	Participation model applied in Western Australia for ICT centre deployment	52
2.5	The information chain.....	60
2.6	The Onion Ring model.....	61
3.1	Research process.....	70
7.1	The Heeks Model.....	157
7.2	Recommended model adapted from the Heek’s Model.....	159
7.3	Process of ensuring community involvement.....	161
7.4	Process of identifying community needs.....	163
7.5	Process of carrying out the landscape audit.....	166
7.6	Process of procuring technology and training.....	168
7.7	The CSIR Information Economy Model.....	169

LIST OF TABLES

2.1	Kirkman’s factors for the creation of an environment conducive to ICT centres	48
3.1	Conceptualisation phase of the research instrument.....	74

3.2	Implementation phase of the research instrument.....	76
3.3	Evaluation and adjustment phase of the research instrument.....	78
3.4	Sustainability phase of the research instrument.....	79
4.1	Summary of interview with ICT1's centre manager regarding the management of ICT1	86
4.2	Summary of recommendations after first visit to ICT1.....	90
4.3	Summary of recommendations after first visit to ICT2.....	101
4.4	Summary of recommendations.....	109
4.5	Outcomes of recommendations suggested for the improvement of ICT3	109
4.6	Summary of recommendations ICT2.....	123
4.7	Summary of recommendations ICT6.....	129

LIST OF IMAGES

4-1	A view from ICT1 to the North.....	82
4-2	The small petrol generator.....	83
4-3	A view of the school showing some of the classrooms.....	105
4-4	The community centre in the original location for ICT 4.....	115
4-5	ICT5 students busy with a course.....	118
4-6	Some of the senior pupils making use of the centre.....	126

Appendix