

Main Theme: Financial and Economic Crisis and Poverty Eradication

The topic of panel discussion: Solutions Salon - Financial and Economic Crisis and Poverty Eradication

Moderator: *Mr. Roberto Villareal*, Chief, Socio-Economic Governance and Management Branch, Division for Public Administration and Development Management, UNDESA

Introduction to the discussion topic:

Assessing the role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as regards poverty eradication in the context of the financial and economic crisis requires both a holistic view and a segmented approach. The intent of the discussion is to explore some of the following questions.

What are the effects of the Global Financial and Economic Crisis on poverty?

Aside from the abridged flow of assistance and capital, shifting tendencies and policies need to be tracked and evaluated. Furthermore, it is widely known that the crisis most impacts those with the fewest resources. What are lessons learned and how does that influence the role of ICT4D?

What can ICT do to help eradicate poverty? How can your organization help?

ICT can have a broad impact on poverty, and its applications range from direct impact on poverty, such as maximizing arable land, to indirect impact, such as education. The broad range of how ICT can impact poverty necessitates an exploration into the different approaches required for the various potential solutions.

What are some of the guiding principles for ICT4D projects? What is your organizational experience?

Although ICT4D-related potential solutions span the gamut of development activities, there are nevertheless several over-arching principles that must guide these efforts. Examples include maximizing return on investment and ensuring human resource development.

What are the roles of the public and private sectors? Can you highlight lessons and good models in your experience?

Especially in the telecom and ICT arena, this question takes on particular importance. The question encompasses not only their individual roles in ensuring that ICT is leveraged towards poverty eradication, but also how they work together in the ICT arena.

While examining issues of policy, the 'digital divide' merits exploration, as well as the distinction between absolute poverty and relative poverty, and how policy should address both.

Though the Global Financial and Economic Crisis has had many negative consequences, does it in any way present opportunities that the GAID community should recognize at this time?

In light of the above, please try to answer at least some of these questions. You can make your arguments from your own perspective, and give some practical examples about how these questions have been answered in practise.