

# Leading Innovations on Gender Responsive Service Delivery

UN Women

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What information and communications technologies can do for **gender responsive** service delivery

Anita Gurumurthy  
IT for Change





## *Case Study 1*

# *The Centre for Community Informatics and Development*

- Embedding digital technologies within women's ongoing struggles for claims and rights
- Community computing, collective viewing (video) and collective listening (radio)
- Creating a groundswell for active citizenship and claims-making
- Women-owned community informatics centres facilitating action around a spectrum of socio-political concerns
- Video cameras in the hands of women and adolescent girls – challenging patriarchal norms and structures



# Kelu Sakhi

9 p.m. Monday  
9 a.m. Tuesday (repeat)

106.5 FM

# *Using Public Airwaves*

- Claiming space for women from local collectives on radio through the open university's spectrum
- Platform for information sharing, debate and framing developmental agenda – a space
- Info on new services and schemes, stories of claims-making, narratives of exposés (mobilisation around institutional failures)
- Not just to share information about governance but rights-based, gender equality perspectives and experiences in decoding the governance sudoku.





# *Community Computing*

- Women's collectives manage the centre as empowered agents of local change
- Linkages through the centre with frontline departments; centre womanned by a young girl
- Telecentre as a village level institution for a new information and communication architecture
- Structural shift towards equitable information availability and access and effective use by marginalised women



# *Community Computing – what it does*

- Emphasises the publicness of information
- Community generated information architectures along with government / departmental information
- Conduit for entitlements and schemes
- Embedded within the local governance / institutional ecology
- Outreach and door to door visits

# *Collective Viewing*

- Films as a means to redefine identity, catalyse collective discussion and encourage collective action
- A new trope or cultural device
  - enabling 'new ascriptions' / peer role models
  - Democratising relevant information which enhances citizenship
- Video kits, digital libraries, community screenings
- clip

# *Impacts*

- More women make their presence felt in the public forums (gram sabhas) mandated by local governance legislation; reporting back for follow-up action
- Increased accountability of front line departments through persuasion from collectives
- Government departments see telecentres as their outreach points
- Women's collectives gain legitimacy in the local context
- Horizontalisation of development ; creation of deliberative democracies

Gender debates become public agenda





# *What is the meaning of innovation for gender responsive governance?*

- Rights based frameworks for technology appropriation - **emphasis on women's citizenship and deepening democracy**
- A new agora for agenda setting and democratic debate that is inclusive and equitable – **politics and governance not just for men**
- New institutional mechanisms – **subverting the dysfunctional old with a digitally mediated new that puts women at the centre**
- Working with deep structures – **changing gender norms and creating new informational cultures – shifts in identity and legitimacy**

## *Case Study 2*

# *The CITIGEN research program*

- 6 action research sites in Asia
- Citizen journalist platforms in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh using mobiles
- Linking women in local politics in Kerala, India, across space through a digital platform
- Active advocacy around reproductive health and rights in Manila, through citizen blogs by poor women
- Focus on a gender-sensitive and rights based pedagogy, ownership of the techno-social platforms

• *Some are born connected, others achieve connection, still others have connectedness thrust upon them....we shape our networks and then our networks shape us*

*In liberal democracy there is a nexus between the spontaneous creativity of the masses and the fascist rigid bureaucratic processes of democracy. It would seem that it is the in-between that is made more obvious by the openness and spontaneity of the new systems of communication. Here again, the ability of new technologies to subvert landscapes that encapsulate these identities holds out interesting opportunities.*

**Sylvia Estrada Claudio, CITIGEN network**

# *Understanding information society theory and politics*

- Beyond technologies as tools, **networks as the organising principle**
- Understanding new gatekeepers in the information space – **privatised publics**
- Emerging discourses around techno-determinism – eg. open data
  - implicit model of political behaviour as an individual interacting directly with the individual representative.
  - No role for collectives to represent their issues or marginalised citizens to amplify their aggregated voices



# *Changes to the governance landscape*

- ICTs used to push neo-liberal models that privatise public services, endangering long-fought battles for rights – EDS bill in India undermines law on decentralised governance
- Myopic vision in design of PPPs
  - a threat to state-citizen and market-citizen equations,
  - taking community control over development away towards techno-managerial governance
  - marketising local development through creation of ready made channels for easy access to MNCs.
  - Legitimising an entrepreneurial culture in governance

# *Changes to the governance landscape*

- Perpetuation of the myth of high costs of digitisation
- Using women as governable subjects rather than rights-bearing citizens

# *An agenda for bringing back the public in public services*

- Tweaking network society propensities
  - Understanding peripheries (Castells)
  - Privileging the local, a rich horizontal digital culture
- Capitalising the disruptive and transformative potential
  - Translating public information transparency into accountability gains
  - Community data bases for contestation
- Need to empower women's **associational**, **communicative** and **informational** rights.

*Thank you*

*Read more at*

*[www.ITforChange.net](http://www.ITforChange.net)*

*[www.gender-IS-citizenship.net](http://www.gender-IS-citizenship.net)*

