digitalGREEN

Workshop on
Effectiveness of ICT for Rural Development:
Building a Digital Green Learning Community
New Delhi, March 6-7, 2014

1. Introduction

Our experience at Digital Green in introducing ICT in development offers new insights. To make ICTs work for rural communities, it seems essential that ICT tools are demystified and blended in social and cultural ethos of the communities we work with. This also means a grounded understanding of specific socio-cultural dynamics and nuances with an ability to see the world from their perspective. Once this is done in a structured and sensitive manner, we could select or design ICT tools that are simple, easy to handle and offer tangible benefits to the community. We have also learned that communities tend to adopt technologies or good practices if these reach them through their peers. Ultimately, it the power of user friendly tools and effective social mobilization demonstrating tangible outcomes that makes technology work for the communities.

Digital Green leverages information and communication technology to amplify the effectiveness of development efforts. It builds upon existing systems and institutions as well as inherent capabilities of communities to create and share knowledge in an effective and efficient manner. Digital Green empowers local communities to produce participatory videos on locally relevant practices featuring local farmers, and share them with other members using handheld battery operated pico projectors. While videos stimulate excitement and serve as a focal point for dialogue, it is the engagement and empowerment of people and social dynamics which makes the approach a success. Enthusiasm for new technology and innovation in general, and the thrill of appearing on video or seeing fellow community members on video, motivates individuals to participate. The power of positive identification with peers is leveraged to minimize the distance between teacher and learner, and to maximize the uptake of practices or behaviors being exchanged. In a controlled evaluation, the Digital Green approach was found to increase the uptake of agricultural practices seven-fold and to improve the cost-effectiveness of a conventional extension system by a factor of ten per dollar spent.

Incubated in Microsoft Research India in 2006 as a research project, Digital Green spun off into a non-profit in 2008. In India, Digital Green has partnered with the National Rural Livelihood Mission of the Government of India and several other organizations to extend its approach to over 2,400 villages. Till date, over 2,900 videos in 20 different languages have been produced on topics ranging from institution building to sustainable agriculture to animal husbandry. All of the videos are publically available on a web-based library (http://digitalgreen.org/discover/) along with analytics data (http://analytics.digitalgreen.org) and a geo-located view into the histories of the groups and individual community members involved in this process via a platform called Farmer book (http://farmerbook.digitalgreen.org). Digital Green has also developed Connect Online Connect Offline (COCO), an open-source technology tool to manage data in locations with limited or intermittent connectivity.

This workshop will share Digital Green approach using ICT for rural communities across different domains such as agriculture, livelihoods, health and nutrition, and in different geographies in India and Africa, specially Ethiopia and Ghana. The workshop will discuss the projects that Digital Green is currently involved in with various partners and how promising the initial results are and collaboratively work towards creating communities of practice.

2. Objectives of the Workshops

The workshop aims to learn from the experiences on the use of the Digital Green approach in a variety of domains and geographies and to build a community of learning among researchers and practioners involved in co-creating the approach.

Specific outputs of the workshop will be:

1. To share experiences and lessons in using the Digital Green approach in India, Ethiopia and Ghana

2. To assess the potential and challenges of the Digital Green approach and discuss promising ways to roll it out in the future

3. To explore opportunities in linking agriculture / nutrition and health through the video-based approach

4. To identify common issues and themes that could be explored through communities of practice and a learning network

5. To develop a vision for continuous learning, knowledge exchange, and co-development in extensions of the Digital Green approach

3. Anticipated Overview Programme

Overview Programme		
	Thursday March 6	***Friday March 7***
9:00 Session 1 10:30	**OPENING & SETTING THE SCENE:** **Inaugural session: Welcome, opening remarks from special invitees and partners** **Getting to know each other, clarifying objectives and programme**	**Working on challenges and solutions**
	Coffee/Tea Break	Coffee/ Tea Break
11:00 Session 2 13:00	**SHARING OF EXPERIENCES:** **Presentation on the evolution of the Digital Green approach** **Analysis of experiences and lessons (group work)**	**Working on challenges and solutions**
	Lunch	Lunch
14:00 Session 3 15:30	**Synthesis of lessons and challenges**	**Way forward towards learning together Communities of practice**
	Coffee / Tea Break	Coffee/Tea Break
16:00 Session 4 17:30	**Open space for participant presentations and discussions**	**Outlook and next steps Closing**
17:30 Session 5 19:00	**Open space for participant presentations and discussions** **COCKTAILS**	

4. Workshop Format and Facilitation

4.1. The facilitator

The workshop will be facilitated by Dr. Jürgen Hagmann - professional facilitator from the *Institute for People, Innovation and Change in Organisations* (PICOTEAM) in South Africa.

4.2. The interaction process

The process will build fully on the open, lively interaction and debate among participants in a least formal way in order to create the most fruitful learning atmosphere. Therefore maximum time is given to

discussions in plenary and working groups to thresh out issues in depth and to advance the conceptual thinking and share practical know-how.

The workshop depends fully on the commitment of the participants with their experience and knowledge. As long presentation sessions would defeat the purpose of the workshop to develop joint strategies in interaction among the participants, we will keep presentations at an absolute minimum and enhance interaction after each presentation through small buzzing groups in order to increase the opportunities of everyone to articulate and contribute effectively.

During the open space session, however, there will be opportunities for participants to share specific learnings, studies or analyses.

5. Expectations from Participants

5.1. *Sharing of materials*

5.1.1. Information market and display of interesting materials

We would like to encourage participants to bring along interesting materials, reports, brochures and posters which can be shared through an *'information market'*. Posters can be put up throughout the workshop. In addition, there will be room for *display of interesting materials and publications*.

6. Venue and Date

The Claridges Hotel, 12 Aurangzeb Road, New Delhi – 110001
http://www.claridges.com/the-claridges-newdelhi/overview.asp

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