ICT4D POLICY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION: A FRAMEWORK FOR EVALUATING POLICY OUTOMES

PART 3 – CASE COMPARISON

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Introduction

The goal of national ICT policy in developing countries has until recently focused on access. There is however, a growing movement towards social inclusion as a targeted outcome. This has implications for the way in which ICT policy is measured and evaluated as well as the policy process and actual policy itself.

This series of short articles, explores the link between social inclusion and ICT both in developed and developing countries.
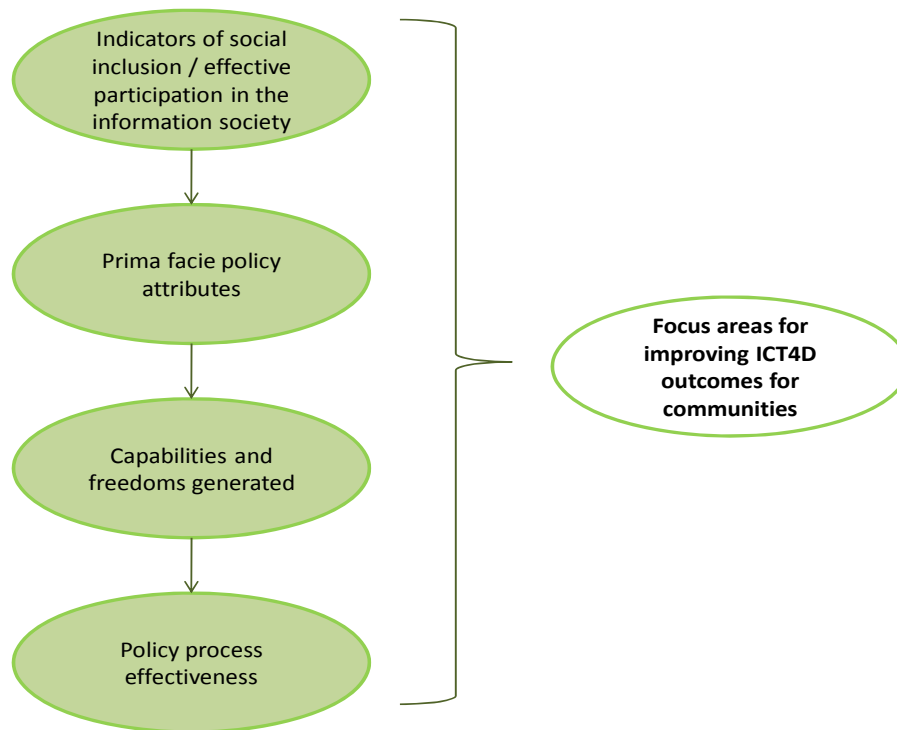
In Part 1, the case for social inclusion as an ICT policy goal was examined. In Part 2, I outlined a framework for evaluating ICT policy based on a criterion of social inclusion. In this final Part 3 I apply the framework to two hypothetical cases loosely based on actual country policies to illustrate the application of the framework.

Recapping from Part2, the policy evaluation framework has four components of steps:

1. Using participation in the information society as a proxy for social inclusion as it relates to ICT, a set of indicators are defined for assessing *whether policy is effective* at a community level.

2. At a policy level, prima facie *attributes of a socially inclusive policy* are defined so that a prima facie evaluation of national ICT policy based on these attributes can be made.

3. Policy is then examined in depth through the lens of Sen's (1999) capabilities based theory of development in order to determine the *effectiveness of the policy in relation to development outcomes*.

4. Lastly the political context is analysed and policy process theory is applied to understand the factors influencing *the development and evolution of the policy*.

The results of this four stage analysis are then brought together in the conclusion as illustrated below:

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Policy Analysis Structure

Indicators of social inclusion / effective participation in the information society

Prima facie policy attributes

Capabilities and freedoms generated

Policy process effectiveness

Focus areas for improving ICT4D outcomes for communities

Application of Framework

	Hypothetical Case A – Developing Country with national ICT capacity building programme	Hypothetical Case B –Addressing severe deprivation in Indigenous communities
Policy effectiveness at a community level in terms of participation in the information society	Country A has embarked on a broad program of ICT initiatives without a formal policy. The community focused programmes funded jointly by donors and Government allow for both community initiated and Government initiated projects. In either case, the project may be based within an existing community institution (school or religious) or setup as an independent operation. There is a strong emphasis on awareness raising and community skills development and training. Community applications are also	Country B has no over-arching strategy or program for ICT for development of Indigenous communities. Part of the reason is the assumption that mainstream sectoral policies and programs (education, health, etc.) for the majority population will also address the needs of Indigenous communities. Policy has therefore been focused on access, specifically telecommunications services subsidies and a range of grant programs that communities can access. However the grant programs do not relate specifically to ICT and

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	encouraged but are less prominent.	are not widely accessed for this purpose. Most community ICT initiatives are based in libraries or community centres and initiated by non-profit organisations for example, community telecentres, traditional knowledge capture projects, community health. Coverage in any of these scenarios, and consequently participation, is therefore random and by no means comprehensive.
Attributes of a socially inclusive policy	The main challenge for community based initiatives is to achieve a balance between social and commercial objectives which is sustainable. Government programmes provide funding for a limited period	Where community organisations apply for funding for an initiative under program grants, there is a presumption that they will be responsible for ongoing sustainability. However they are not necessarily required

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	calculated to allow projects to become self-sufficient and financially sustainable. However, this initial funding period is constrained by finite resources and this model applies equally (but with different seed funding periods) to non-profit, commercial, and even school based projects. All of these projects have both social and commercial objectives, that is, they aim to provide a service to the community that builds capacity as well as generating sufficient income to cover operating expenses, upgrades and growth. In reality Government financial resources are limited	to operate on a commercial basis. The Government simply seeks assurance that they will not continue to draw on Government resources for operational expenses. How they meet those costs, and costs of expansion on an ongoing basis is up to them. This allows communities and community organisations to set their own social / commercial balance and draw on their networks of support in the private sector and civil society. This compares with Country A which explicitly monitors progress of community initiatives to ensure that sustainability is being addressed and promotes

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	and so priority has been given to coverage (full inclusion) over sustainability where a trade-off is necessary. In other words, sustainability is ultimately up to the community.	entrepreneurship to ensure financial sustainability.
Capability development / development outcome effectiveness	Community programs in this case are first and foremost about awareness raising relating to ICT, access and basic skills development. Applications which build capabilities for development are intended to flow from this foundation, initiated primarily by communities themselves and with some financial support from Government as well as NGOs.	Capability development is not a policy goal for ICT. However the Government does have a range of other social policies which are aimed at capability development. What is lacking is an ICT element within these policies and/or an ICT policy for capability development. Capability development through ICT is quite limited.

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Policy process drivers	A key driver for policy and programs is funding given the reliance on donor funding common to most developing countries in relation to ICT. Implementing agencies/departments must often steer a careful course between political agendas and donor views on appropriate strategies and priorities. However, the main implementing agency does oversee all policy and programs with mainstream sectoral agencies playing a sub-ordinate role.	A key driver in this case is the politics surrounding Indigenous communities and their development, and the model of representation by the communities themselves in the process. Compared to Country A the mainstream sectoral agencies / departments in Country B own policy for their area including use of ICT. This may operate against effective policy and use of ICT for development.
Conclusion	In summary, in the above hypothetical case the overall programme is broadly inclusive but stops short of investing in capabilities limiting itself to skills and	In summary, this model tends to under-state the role of ICT in development for Indigenous communities specifically with regard to increased participation and

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	access as foundational resources. The policy process and actors constrain the programme at this foundational stage. The key challenge is to develop a policy and then supporting programmes that go beyond awareness, access and skills and to begin to invest in capabilities for development and/or stimulate and facilitate community initiatives to achieve the same.	social inclusion. The question to be addressed is whether a more intentional focus on ICT is best achieved within each mainstream sector or through a separate agency / department as for Country A.

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Conclusion

The above simple application of the framework to two hypothetical policy scenarios illustrates how issues and opportunities can be identified for improving the inclusiveness of Government ICT4D policy. The major constraint on most policy makers is resources, especially financial resources, however, as can be seen above the way in which programs are designed and the involvement of a range of actors in the policy process, can also play a significant role.

Bibliography

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