

# The Global Alliance for ICT and Development (GAID) at Two

A process evaluation<sup>i</sup>

## Executive Summary

After two years of operation, the Global Alliance for Information and Communication Technologies and Development (GAID) has shown significant results in implementing its mission. Its global activities have been particularly successful in leveraging its position as a United Nations-related organization to keep ICT for development on the global agenda. It has also been successful in supporting a number of constituent partnerships. Most of the partnerships have also demonstrated an ability to achieve results, even though for some it is a start-up period. Some problems and areas for improvement have been identified, particularly in terms of the linkages between GAID central and the partnerships. These include resource limitations, difficulties in establishing and maintaining networks and problems determining how best to link individual partnerships with GAID. Based on the analysis, recommendations include improving GAID's planning, strengthening resource mobilization through developing bankable projects and setting up clearer means of linking the global with the partnership networks.

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## Introduction

The Global Alliance for Information and Communication Technologies and Development (GAID), an initiative approved by the United Nations Secretary-General in 2006, was launched after comprehensive worldwide consultations with governments, the private sector, civil society, the technical and Internet communities and academia. A principal distinguishing feature of the Alliance, and its key value added, is in providing a multi-stakeholder cross-sectoral platform and forum that will bring together all stakeholders representing relevant constituencies (for example, in governments - development cooperation, foreign policy, finance, social, sectoral (health, education) and regulatory agencies; in the private sector - industry and workers associations, producers and consumers of ICT, the media; in civil society – NGOs, CSOs, foundations, scientific, academic and ICT communities and individuals providing advocacy and oversight on Information Society issues and implementing programs addressing MDGs). Its first business plan covering the period 2006-2007 was adopted in December 2006.

The Plan specified that “An external evaluation will be conducted in mid-2008 to provide a comprehensive assessment of activities undertaken by the Alliance in accordance with its areas of focus and the Business Plan, and their value added. The results of this evaluation will provide the basis for decision making on activities of the Global Alliance during the period of 2009-2010. Subsequent evaluations, every two years, will be undertaken systematically to assess progress and impact and to ensure that the Alliance continues to add value to overall ICTD work.”

The Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs of Syracuse University, through a graduate seminar on evaluation of international programs and projects directed by Professor John Mathiason, agreed to undertake the evaluation on behalf of GAID, in order to provide initial information on results to the Steering Committee and Strategy Council of GAID at their meetings in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in May 2008.

The purpose of the evaluation is to identify the initial results obtained by GAID and its partners in the Alliance, suggest approaches that have been particularly successful and provide a basis for planning for the period 2009-2010. In order to focus, the evaluation took as the intended outcomes for the period being evaluated both the global mission statement and the results promised in the business plan that was adopted in 2006.

### **Main Questions for the Evaluation**

1. The extent to which GAID as an organization has been successful in:
  - a. Mainstreaming of the global ICT agenda into the broader

- b. Bringing together key organizations involved in ICT for development (ICT4D) to enhance their collaboration and effectiveness for achieving the internationally agreed development goals ;
  - c. Raising awareness of policy makers on ICT4D policy issues;
  - d. Facilitating identification of technological solutions for specific development goals and pertinent partnerships ;
  - e. Creating an enabling environment and innovative business models for pro-poor investment and growth and for empowering people living in poverty;
  - f. Acting as a "think-tank" on ICT4D-related issues and as an advisory group to the Secretary-General.
2. The extent to which the partners, including all flagship initiatives, a sample of communities of expertise and of regional networks, have begun their activities;
  3. Initial results obtained by the partners and lessons learned from them;
  4. The extent to which planning has been effective and how this might be improved; and
  5. Lessons learned from the start-up phase.

The evaluation focused on the global level of activities for GAID, and on the activities of a sample of partners. For the latter, the evaluation used the business plan adopted in 2006. A total of fifteen partnerships were selected for examination. They included all of the five flagship initiatives, nine communities of expertise and two regional networks. The focal points for each of these were contacted and information about results and the relationship between the partner and the GAID Secretariat was solicited. With only a few exceptions, the partnerships provided information that has been used for this evaluation.

For the global level, the evaluation looked at the events organized during 2007-2008, received information from persons on the GAID discussion list and interviewed a number of persons with knowledge of the workings of GAID.

Initial findings were discussed with the Executive Coordinator, who came to Syracuse University to meet with the students who had obtained information. On the basis of this discussion additional information was obtained to clarify points.

## **I. Findings**

### ***A. Global Level***

The Global Alliance made good use of its position as an entity affiliated with the United Nations to bring together a diverse group of people to deal with issues of ICT and Development. During 2006-2008, the Global Alliance organized, usually in cooperation with another organization or institution, a total of 13 events.

Three of the meetings were of the GAID Steering Committee and Strategy Council and can be considered internal management meetings. The remaining ten meetings were targeted for a wider audience. In these ten meetings the Alliance was exercising the leverage that being part of the United Nations. The ten events shown in Table 1 were intended to address outcomes 1a-c and f.

| Meeting   | Location                   |
|---|----------------------------|
| (1) Inaugural meeting of the Global Alliance for ICT and Development, and First meetings of the Strategy Council and Steering Committee, Kuala Lumpur, 19-20 June 2006                    | Kuala Lumpur               |
| (3) Our Common Humanity in the Information Age: Principles and Values for Development, United Nations Headquarters, New York, 29 November 2006  | New York                   |
| (4) "UN Meets the Silicon Valley", Second GAID Strategy Council Meeting and Third GAID Steering Committee Meeting, Silicon Valley, California, 27-28 February 2007                        | Silicon Valley, California |
| (5) "ICT for Development - A follow up to the World Summit on the Information Society", Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland, 22 May 2007  | Geneva                     |
| (6) Panel Discussion on "Information Society: New Perspectives for Post-WSIS Scenarios?" Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland, 5 July 2007   | Geneva                     |
| (7) "Building a knowledge society for all: The role of science, technology and innovation and the importance of creating trust to foster partnerships", Geneva, Switzerland, 19 July 2007 | Geneva                     |
| (9) Global Forum on Youth and ICT for Development, Geneva, Switzerland, 24-26 September 2007  | Geneva                     |
| (10) Connect Africa Summit, Kigali, Rwanda, 29-30 October 2007  | Rwanda                     |
| (10) International Consumer Electronics Show, Las Vegas, 8-9 January 2008   | Las Vegas                  |
| (11) United Nations Meets Web 2.0 - New Media, New Entrepreneurs and New ICT Opportunities in Emerging Markets, United Nations Headquarters, New York, 25-26 March 2008                   | New York                   |

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| (12) Joint ITU and G3ict Global Forum, Geneva, Switzerland, 21 April , 2008                                   | Geneva   |
| (13) Sustainable Urbanization in the Information Age, United Nations Headquarters, New York, 23-24 April 2008 | New York |

Most of the meetings were held at United Nations headquarters in New York and Geneva. Four were held in conjunction with larger United Nations meetings and served the purpose of highlighting ITC in those contexts (the General Assembly for meeting 3, the UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development for meeting 5, the Economic and Social Council for meetings 6 and 7). The result documents for these meetings, as well as interviews, indicate that the meetings influenced the meetings to which they were attached. The participants in these meetings were primarily the governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations that are customarily involved in intergovernmental deliberations.

The remaining meetings were organized specifically by GAID with partners to engage a wider audience than is usually present at formal United Nations meetings. To examine the extent to which this was successful, the evaluation analyzed the participants in a number of the meetings. The first was the inaugural meeting of GAID in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in February 2006. The participation by region and type of stakeholder is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Participants in the Inaugural Meeting, Kuala Lumpur, February 2006, by Region and Stakeholder Group

| Regional Group              | Stakeholder Group |               |                |                             |          | Total |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------------------|----------|-------|
|                             | Government        | Civil Society | Private Sector | International Organizations | Academic |       |
| Africa                      | 17%               | 9%            | 0%             | 17%                         | 11%      | 10%   |
| Asia and the Pacific        | 43%               | 45%           | 70%            | 33%                         | 47%      | 48%   |
| Eastern Europe              | 6%                | 2%            | 0%             | 0%                          | 0%       | 1%    |
| Latin America and Caribbean | 6%                | 0%            | 0%             | 0%                          | 0%       | 1%    |
| Western European and Other  | 29%               | 45%           | 30%            | 50%                         | 42%      | 41%   |

|        |     |     |     |     |     |      |
|--------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| TOTAL  | 10% | 26% | 19% | 20% | 26% | 100% |
| Number | 35  | 94  | 69  | 72  | 95  | 365  |

GAID was successful in obtaining a varied participation in its initial meeting, although the location clearly favored some regions. The proportion of participants from the private sector and academia was much higher than would be normal for United Nations meetings.

A similar pattern was observed in the subsequent meetings for which participant lists were maintained (Table 3).

| Meeting             | Region                          | TOTAL | Stakeholder Group | TOTAL |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|-------|-------------------|-------|
| Santa Clara         |                                 |       |                   |       |
| (253 participants)  | United States                   | 64%   | Academic          | 18%   |
| February 2007       | Latin America and the Caribbean | 6%    | Civil Society     | 45%   |
|                     | Asia and the Pacific            | 10%   | Government        | 12%   |
|                     | Africa                          | 4%    | Private Sector    | 25%   |
|                     | Europe and Other                | 15%   |                   |       |
| Geneva              |                                 |       |                   |       |
| (1033 participants) | United States                   | 3%    | Academic          | 21%   |
| September 2007      | Latin America and the Caribbean | 6%    | Civil Society     | 45%   |
|                     | Asia and the Pacific            | 15%   | Government        | 12%   |
|                     | Africa                          | 66%   | Private Sector    | 23%   |
|                     | Europe and Other                | 9%    |                   |       |
| New York            |                                 |       |                   |       |
| (125 participants)  | United States                   | 72%   | Academic          | 2%    |

|            |                                 |     |                |     |
|------------|---------------------------------|-----|----------------|-----|
| March 2008 | Latin America and the Caribbean |     | Civil Society  | 12% |
|            | Asia and the Pacific            | 17% | Government     | 22% |
|            | Africa                          | 6%  | Private Sector | 63% |
|            | Europe and Other                | 6%  |                |     |

The table shows that the events have been successful in attracting the participation of civil society and the private sector, as well as academia. However, as might be expected in meetings where physical presence is required, the meetings, with the exception of the youth meeting in Geneva in September 2007, tended to attract participants from the region in which the meetings were being held. Several respondents to questionnaires noted that, while the meetings were successful, they did not always feed into broader United Nations processes and that planning of events could take these broader processes, such as the UN Commission on Science and Development, into account.

With regard to outcome 1f, “Acting as a ‘think-tank’ on ICT4D-related issues and as an advisory group to the Secretary-General” a question was posed to the GAID discussion list to which considerable responses were received. The question asked whether and how GAID had been successful in this effort. The consensus of the replies was that this could be strengthened, by building a focused discussion of issues into the annual session of GAID.

### ***B. Partnership level***

In addition to GAID’s work at the global level, the various partnerships that were associated with GAID were supposed to bring ICT for development to the practical country level through a number of means. They included “flagship initiatives” that were considered important enough that they would be highlighted. They also included “communities of expertise” that would be innovative approaches to networking, and regional networks. They also had cross-cutting initiatives like gender. Each of them produced a business plan for 2006-2008 that was made available on the GAID website. In preparing the evaluation, all of the flagship initiatives was chosen, along with at least one community of expertise for each subject grouping, two of the regional networks and one cross-cutting partnership.

## **1. Flagship initiatives**

### ***a. Better Connectivity with Broadband to Africa***

The Better Connectivity flagship partnership pre-existed GAID and was led by the International Telecommunications Union and the World Bank. In terms of formal long-term linkages with GAID, the flagship showed only a few hyperlinks with the GAID websites and did not feature GAID prominently in its website that is maintained by the World Bank.

The GAID relationship, however, was important to the flagship in that GAID helped organize the 2007 Connect Africa Summit, in Kigali, Rwanda in October 2007 that served to energize the flagship. The evaluation analyzed the meeting minutes for the Summit and determined that 1,036 representatives from 54 countries, 20 industrial partners and 16 financial institutions were in attendance. The World Bank and ITU websites referred to this and acknowledged 77 project funding commitments exceeding \$56 billion have been advanced by 49 partners for the 2008-2014 time periods. The follow-up summit will be held May 11-13, 2008 with updates expected

### ***b. Telecentre.org***

Telecentre.org also pre-existed GAID, but agreed to be one of the flagship initiatives. For the evaluation, the Managing Director of Telecentre.org was interviewed and the documents relating to the initiative were reviewed. The evaluation found that the partnership between GAID and telecentre.org, GAID has successfully facilitated a partnership between the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and telecentre.org — an unlikely outcome in GAID's absence. More generally, GAID has proven to be a valuable asset to telecentre.org when it comes to the mainstreaming and creating of telecentre networks. In addition, GAID has introduced telecentre.org to some audiences of interest. Finally, it is important to note that GAID would have made an even greater contribution to telecentre.org if the New Dehli Telecentre Academy had been established, as previously anticipated.

Despite the advantages GAID has provided for telecentre.org, at present there are concerns about the reciprocity of the partnership. First, to date, telecentre.org has had intermittent and limited communication with GAID. Second, telecentre.org has failed to establish any substantial linkages to other GAID initiatives. Third, telecentre.org has not established a notable number of new relationships to non-GAID initiatives. Finally, and perhaps most alarmingly, there are virtually no references/links to GAID on the telecentre.org webpage — this is in stark contrast to the numerous



references/linkages (direct and indirect) to telecentre.org present on the GAID website.

Even though there have been some achievements in the telecentre.org and GAID partnership the results do not fulfill the initial and current expectations. The evaluation showed that there is a lack of communication that could hinder the possibilities to exploit the opportunities of this partnership. The linkage between telecentre.org and GAID is hardly visible to the public and is currently suboptimal in promoting telecentre.org's initiatives through the GAID platform.

### ***c. Cyber Development Corps***

The Cyber Development Corps (CDC) is a new initiative led by the Government of Malaysia that was expected to create a CDC portal, set up CDC centers and train persons who would help promote IC4D in their communities. The evaluation contacted the CDC and reviewed the resources on relevant websites. During the period, the start-up of the CDC has been slower than expected in the business plan. The website linkages with GAID are not extensive. A secretariat has been set up and work has continued on the CDC portal. A planning meeting on next steps is scheduled for May 2008.

This flagship initiative has not had sufficient progress to determine the extent to which it is achieving its objectives and, while GAID secretariat staff are aware of its progress, this is not as visible as it could be.

### ***d. Free Access for all Schools to the Net***

The Free Access flagship is the successor to an initiative presented initially to GAID's predecessor, the UN ICT Task Force. It was proposed to the GAID Strategy Council in 2007, and was to involve the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the ITU and Global e-Schools and Communities Initiative (GeSCI), a non-governmental organization based in Ireland. To evaluate the initiative, the partners were contacted and the various websites were also examined.

There was a lack of clarity about the main purpose of the initiative, whether it was focused on global policies or the practical issues of access. From the interviews it is clear that at this point, GAID and SDC are more concerned with policy and advocacy level results rather than concrete measurable results in schools. The initiative was represented at the Kigali Summit, in which the issue of access was addressed.

Who should take the lead in the initiative was also unresolved. While SDC had proposed the initiative, it was reluctant to take the lead, since it is a funding agency. According to SDC, they are working with ITU (outside, but complementary to the realm of GAID) to place an

expert/focal point at ITU for three years to promote the idea of creative Public-Private Partnerships between telecom companies and governmental counterparts. Meanwhile, GeSCI reported that despite advocating the sharing of national models of connectivity at the GAID Strategic Council, interest in Kigali and general responsiveness had seemed to wane.

This initiative is at a pause while the organizational details are being worked out, but over recent months communication among the partners has been improving.

### ***e. Global Initiative for Inclusive Technologies***

The Global Initiative for Inclusive Technologies (G3ICT) was set up as a direct consequence of GAID. It reflected a concern of a number of non-governmental organizations with maintaining ICT accessible for persons with disabilities. It was also motivated by the desire to ensure that the entry into force of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which included norms of IT accessibility, would lead to more policies and programs for inclusiveness. The evaluation of this initiative was based on a content analysis of the websites and publications of G3ICT as well as a questionnaire to the lead organizations.

The evaluation found that the initiative had been both active and linked with GAID, and is clearly one of the success stories of the start-up phase of GAID. Specifically, the evaluation found that

- There were visible links to GAID on the G3ICT homepage and 'Partners' section, indicating a strong commitment to being part of GAID;
- There had been 30 participants in working groups representing policy makers, NGOs and the private sector attended initial global forum to present findings;
- The initiative had a steering committee composed of 55 members including: GAID, United Nations International Organizations, NGOs, academia and the private sector;
- Attendees at regional forums and plenary sessions in Italy, Ecuador, Paris, Moscow, London, Brussels and China ranged from 150 to 500 policy makers, NGO leaders and government representatives;
- The minutes of regional forums made available to public via G3ICT.com site representing an unusual level of transparency;
- Eleven blog entries since G3ICT.com site launch featuring international experts on ICT accessibility;

- G3ICT had obtained sponsorship from seven corporations: Samsung, IBM, Internet Speech, Air France, NIIT, Vemics, The Wireless Internet Institute;
- It had entered into various Partnerships: Cifal Atlanta, GAID, Inter-parliamentary union (IPU), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Politecnico di Milano, UN Enable, and UNITAR;
- There was international representation of experts in G3ICT Expert Zones;
- Regional forums had been organized in Ecuador, Chicago, Qatar, and Korea hosted by the local partner organizations, academia, governments, NGOs and international institutions (ITU and UN Agencies) ;
- Accessibility Imperative, event presentations available on the web in DAISY format for disabled readers;
- G3ICT has developed a ranking of ICT options and devices that were circulated through presentation panels.

The G3ICT initiative suggests a number of valuable lessons for other partnerships, existing or future.

## **2. Communities of Expertise**

According to the GAID Progress Report of April 2008, “Thematic CoEs are web-based networks, which bring together motivated and capable actors to address specific, well-defined ICTD problems in a results-oriented manner and to identify and disseminate good practice. An open call for proposals for CoEs was met with impressive worldwide response and, on 31 March 2007, 17 had begun operation within the four GAID focus areas and four cross-cutting themes (gender, youth, local content and rural development). The evaluation looked at eight of these. It found that the results were mixed. Some of the networks were vibrant and functioning, a few existed but were not linked well to GAID and at least one had ceased to function.

### ***a. Entrepreneurship***

The area of entrepreneurship had a number of communities of expertise (CoE). The evaluation examined two, Extending Financial Services to the Unbanked and ICT Policy and Finance. For both a combination of content analysis of website and interviews and questionnaires was used to obtain information. The lead organization for the first was Intel, while for the second it was the Association for Progressive Communication (APC), which was added late in the process.

GAID was successful in getting the partnerships started. Both CoE networks produced work plans, setting goals and objectives for the execution of their initiatives. However, they have not been successful in sustaining these initiatives and producing output. However, approximately eight months after submitting its May report to GAID, the Unbanked initiative was in jeopardy—reporting low levels of interest from partners, lack of funding, and lack of support and interest from GAID. This CoE was, as a result, disbanded during the course of this evaluation.

One of the global events was directly relevant to the entrepreneurship CoE's. This was the "UN Meets Web 2.0" meeting, held in New York City on April 2008. As noted above, this meeting was successful in bringing together a large number of different stakeholders, particularly from the private sector. However, only a few of the listed partners in the two CoE's participated.

This CoE indicates some of the problems of maintaining a connection between the partnerships and the global level. In the case of the Unbanked initiative, the lead partner did not have the knowledge of networks that was necessary for success and expected assistance from the GAID secretariat that was clearly not resourced for that purpose.

### ***b. ICT for Country Health Information***

The CoE on e-Health is led by the World Health Organization. Like several others, it pre-dated GAID, but saw an advantage in becoming a partner. To evaluate its contribution, an analysis was made of its websites and interviews were made with its program manager. The evaluation shows that although GAID (in partnership with WHO) has taken important steps toward the accomplishment of its e-health specific goals to lay the foundation, there is a need to push through with the remainder of their objectives based on the knowledge that they collected. The main accomplishment of e-Health by WHO has been the completion of 192 separate national assessments. Within these assessments, WHO has evaluated the major health concerns within each nation as well as their current ICT capabilities. These will serve as a solid foundation in future GAID-linked actions as the collection of this information ensures that regionally-specific actions can be tailored as dictated by present conditions.

The connection between GAID and e-Health is less solid. GAID did not have a clear link on its website to WHO and vice versa. However, it was possible to find information on programmes that GAID has been involved with on the WHO's website using the WHO search engine.

The overall business plan of the CoE is somewhat vague about expected outcomes. According to the business plan, the aim for this

year was to create and strengthen alliances. GAID has accomplished this goal and, although it is difficult to quantifiably analyze, it is clear that alliances have been formed and the organization is progressing.

### ***c. E-Agriculture***

Unlike e-Health, the CoE on e-Agriculture was created after GAID and is run by the FAO, a specialized agency of the United Nations. In response to WSIS, FAO hosted the first e-Agriculture workshop in June 2006, and conducted open survey in October 2006. 4,101 people visited the web site survey, and a total of 3,433 (84%) participated in the survey from 135 countries. The official website was created in 28 February 2007 and officially launched on 23 May 2007. The evaluation reviewed the websites maintained by FAO and received a response to a questionnaire.

FAO considers GAID to be one of its stakeholders. It stated that the success of the e-Agriculture Community of Expertise depends to a great extent on the active engagement of a wide range of stakeholders, including the UN GAID. FAO currently serves as the Secretary and Facilitator for the community, and coordinates between the global bodies, including UNGAID, World Summit on the Information Society Secretariat, the United Nations Group on the Information Society (UNGIS) and the community-at-large. FAO is also managing the development, editorial content, and maintenance of the web-based platform, as well as the coordination of face-to-face events. The UN GAID continues to promote the e-agriculture Community activities, and to give e-agriculture.org Community opportunities to network and engage other UN GAID members, and the International Community at large.

The level of cooperation has been episodic. FAO has attended several global events sponsored by GAID and considers that GAID has helped ensure that agriculture and rural development issues have been kept in mind when ICT for development is discussed. Early in the evaluation, no mention of GAID was found on the FAO website, but by the end of the period links had been added in the FAO's partners pages.

### ***d. e-Governance***

The CoE on e-Governance is based on the United Nations Public Administration Network (UNPAN), which pre-existed GAID. This is one of the major United Nations efforts to use the Internet as part of substantive activities. The evaluation looked at the UNPAN websites and interviewed the official in charge.

After a somewhat uneven start, during which GAID and UNPAN

activities were poorly coordinated, the situation is now improving. A major contributor to this is that, as of August 2007, GAID's E-Governance activities are now officially a part of UNPAN, though GAID will retain its own character and "brand-name." As GAID has been integrated into UNPAN, GAID will focus on concrete products such as capacity building and developing useful tools for e-governance.

UNPAN is the lead organization in all e-Governance projects. GAID's role at present is storage and dissemination of the information generated by these projects.

### ***e. Gender, Development and Information Society Policies***

The Gender Development and Information Society Policies CoE is one of the two cross-cutting networks. It is led by IT for Change, an NGO located in India. To evaluate the partnership, the websites of the CoE and IT for Change were analyzed. In addition, a questionnaire was sent to the NGO and later it was completed.

IT for Change (ITfC) in their responses to the questionnaire explained that they do mention GAID in all workshops reports and in the webpage. However, to the knowledge of the evaluation team the IT for change website has no mention of GAID, or links to GAID webpage, or any UN webpage, and GAID is not mentioned in the reviewed IT for Change reports or in the handbook on gender and IT published in 2007,

IT for Change in the questionnaire responses also highlighted the commonalities of goals with GAID and described the relationship as "a partnership towards common goals of a development oriented, people centric ... with a special emphasis in gender equality". According to ITfC GAID fostered some contacts with other organizations working in gender issues. In order to fortify the alliance between GAID and ITfC the latter suggests the organization of a policy advice forum at national and global level on information communication technology and development. ITfC would like to have GAID's economic support to participate in their activities.

### ***f. Youth Social Technopreneurship***

The CoE on youth is the second cross-cutting network. In contrast to gender, this network has been very successful. The CoE on Youth is coordinated by the leading organization Philippine Resources Sustainable Development (PRSD) in collaboration with 13 member agencies. The means used to evaluate the Community of Expertise (CoE) on Youth consist of a set of questionnaires sent to the PRSD, a total of three partner organizations and a number of trainees who

enjoyed the trainings in 2007.

The CoE was strongly supported by September 2007 the workshop 'Global Forum on Youth and ICT for Development: Youth and ICT as Agents of Change' in Geneva that was noted under the global program. Two of the partners, although not the lead organization, were present and additional CoE's have begun to be formed as a result.

The main result of this specific partnership has been training programs organized through a close partnership between PRSD and the Korean Agency for Digital Promotion and Opportunities (KADO). Although the latter is playing an active role in conducting the IT trainings on the ground (by means of [1] one-month deployments of young Korean IT specialists and [2] indirect financial support and subsidies for local expenses), KADO is not a member of the CoE. As of April 2008, three community level training courses have been held in Burundi, Nigeria, and Uganda.

The major obstacle facing the CoE on Youth is related to budgetary constraints. So far, no funding is secured from GAID; therefore CoE has no actual budget. Additionally, due to the lack of funding, developing an open website—as CoE's deliverables specify—has become unachievable. As a means for overcoming the hindrance regarding the financing of the CoE's projects, PRSD covers CoE operations using its own internally generated funds and looks into continuing the current partnership with KADO.

### ***g. Beyond Distance Learning Alliance***

Evaluation of Beyond Distance Learning Alliance (BDRA) was established at the University of Leicester, UK in order to increase capacity for research and development into information, communication and learning technologies and to bring together teachers and researchers, interested in the field of innovation in teaching and learning, from any discipline or level of education) The evaluation is based upon information obtained from BDRA and GAID's websites, and questionnaires to the lead partner.

BDRA has a variety of projects, such as ELKS(E-Learning & Knowledge Sharing) Community, IMPALA(Informal Mobile Podcasting And Learning Adaptation), SEAL(Second Environment Advanced Learning), ADELIE(Advanced Design for E-Learning: Institutional Embedding). These, however, were not formally linked, as measured by hyperlinks, to GAID and the primary focus seemed to be within the university community in the United Kingdom.

## **Global Alliance for Enhancing Access to and Application of Scientific Data in Developing Countries (e-SDDC)**

This is a CoE recently joined GAID. It had begun in 2002 under the leadership of the Global Change Information and Research Center, Institute of Geography and Natural Resources, Chinese Academy of Sciences and ICSU/CODATA Task Group on Preservation of and Access to S&T Data in Developing Countries. It has a large number of members and maintains a website, has run workshops and seminars. e-SDDC is one of the CoE's that gives prominence to its relationship with GAID and has a well-articulated program.

It has participated in global GAID meetings and GAID staff participate in its meetings. It is one of the successful efforts.

### **3. Regional Networks**

#### ***a. Africa Regional Network***

The Africa Regional Network has been built on a pre-existing program managed by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). The evaluation analyzed the relevant websites and documents and received information via a questionnaire from UNECA. The regional network was one of the sponsors of the Connect Africa Summit, mentioned earlier. Subsequent to the Summit, GAID and UNECA worked jointly to produce a document entitled "Capacity building, applications and services." Africa's participation in the global Internet Governance debate was hindered by its lack of capacity to negotiate Internet Governance issues during the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) process. It was in this context that a training course on Internet Governance was organized in Kigali from 24 - 28 October 2007 to impart to African policymakers the skills and knowledge required to participate meaningfully in the global debate at various Internet Governance fora and in the use and exploitation of the Internet to achieve the MDGs

Subsequent progress has been slow, if steady. The Africa network's website, [www.un-gaid-africa.org](http://www.un-gaid-africa.org), is not yet operational. According to documents prepared by the steering committee, the GAID Africa Secretariat is to be responsible for creating and maintaining the website, which is meant to be a source of information on the network's activities as well as containing electronic discussion groups for the network's members. Despite the fact that the website is not operational, there are two Internet forums where network members and experts can meet to discuss issues and priorities of the Africa Regional Network, and since the network has only physically met twice



back in 2007, this makes it difficult for members and stakeholders to communicate with each other.

A GAID Africa Promotional Plan was proposed by the GAID Africa Steering Committee and is currently under discussion for implementation. Its main objective is to identify all innovative events (underway or planned) in the field of ICTs in the near future in Africa in order to facilitate the integration of GAID components and activities. The Promotion Plan identifies target actors, messages to be delivered, means of communications and type of material to be disseminated, frequency of dissemination, budget and person/institution responsible for preparing or/and disseminating the information.

### ***b. Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Network***

The Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Network is led by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and has been relatively successful in achieving its initial outcomes. Evaluation was done by contacting the lead and several cooperating organizations as well as reviewing documents.

One of the major reasons for the networks relatively quick success seems to be the diversity of stakeholders that are being consulted. The launch seminar in February in San Salvador, for example, included 14 individuals from the private sector, 36 from the public sector, 17 from Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) and 3 from other areas. To foster partnerships as well as for a better dissemination of information, the Network is scheduled to launch its own website during the week of April 21, 2008. Furthermore, apart from participating at the GAID Annual Meeting in Kuala Lumpur, LAC has been discussing a proposal from UNESCO to organize a forum on ICT and education for later this year.

While the LAC Regional Network has made rapid progress toward GAID's stated mission, there are a few areas that need to be addressed. For example, the incorporation of GAID or LAC into UN resolutions and documents of other international organizations is not clear. In addition, there seem to be some confusion among our respondents in terms of the job scope of the LAC Regional Network. For example, when asked if LAC had developed—or disseminated—any business models to promote usage of ICT in development in the region, one of the contacts responded, it hadn't, while another stated that the job of LAC was only to disseminate existing knowledge, not create new models.

Much of the success of the LAC Regional Network so far can be attributed to two factors, namely (i) the central role GAID has played in

facilitating the formation as well as the initial activities of the network and (ii) the diversity of interest that the network has been able to embrace since its inception, most notably during its launch seminar.

## **II. Conclusions**

GAID has shown positive results at both the global and partnership levels, although the evaluation has identified a number of weaknesses in some areas. The results at the global level are particularly striking and several of the partnerships that comprise the Alliance have shown strong progress. There have been significant connections between results at the global level and successes in some of the partnerships. Other partnerships have experienced problems during their start-up phase or in connecting pre-existing networks with GAID.

### ***A. Global Level***

GAID has been very successful in leveraging its position to bring ICT considerations into the mainstream of intergovernmental discussions. It has also been successful in engaging participation from stakeholders that are not always present in international forums, particularly the private sector and academia. This suggests that GAID can continue successfully with this part of its work. One conclusion of the analysis of the process is that who participates in events is influenced by where they take place. Although some of the events have been webcast and GAID has used list-serve based forums for some events, GAID has not made full use of real-time interactive distance collaboration techniques that can make better use of the Internet.

At the same time, the themes for meetings are often a result of opportunity rather than plan. To an extent, that is natural, since GAID, given its resource constraints, has found partners for activities. It would, however, be good for GAID to do advance planning of those issues on which it plans to undertake “think tank” functions since these require advance planning. The subjects could be based on the themes being taken up as priority within the bodies that GAID seeks to influence (like the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly and the bodies charged with following up the World Summit on the Information Society).

There is a general consensus that GAID is under-resourced for what it expects to accomplish. This was a point made in responses to questionnaires as well as comments from the partnerships. This has limited the ability of GAID to provide consistent facilitation and support.

### ***B. Partnership Level***

The results in terms of the fifteen partnerships studied are mixed.

Many of them pre-existed the formation of GAID and have merely agreed to be associated with the Alliance, but have not made strong use of the linkage. A few were developed as a consequence of GAID, and several of these have been quite successful.

Most of the pre-existing partnerships have continued to function on their own with less connection to or support by GAID than would be desirable. Few of the pre-existing partnerships provide a very visible linkage with GAID, as measured by hyperlinks in their websites. A few have become almost inactive. On the other hand, several have received a significant boost as a result of using GAID to organize meetings. This is particularly true of the Better Connectivity with Broadband to Africa flagship initiative, which was materially helped, as was the African Regional Network, by the Connect Africa Summit organized in Kigali, Rwanda in October 2007. Similarly, the Latin American and Caribbean network was energized by the meeting sponsored by GAID in San Salvador in February 2008, which also provided a forum to helping the governments of the Latin American and Caribbean Region adopt a plan for ICT for the region.

Similar successes include the Global Initiative for Inclusive Technologies and the Youth entrepreneurship community of expertise. The first has been given prominence because of its connection with GAID, which it uses to mobilize support. The youth CoE was energized by the Geneva meeting organized by GAID.

Several of the partnerships have had difficulties in establishing networks beyond their current partners. Partly this is a function of resource limitations, particularly in those networks built on developing country lead partners. Partly it is a lack of knowledge and information about how to expand networks. In some cases, the expectations of the partnerships about the extent to which GAID centrally can either mobilize resources or facilitate networking have been unrealistic, given GAID's own resource situation. The GAID secretariat is funded from voluntary sources that are episodic and often insecure. This makes longer-term planning and expansion difficult.

### **III. Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusions of the evaluation, a number of recommendations can be made.

1. GAID should engage in longer-term planning, with a time horizon related to its end-point in 2015. The planning should include determining those events that GAID should sponsor that will allow it to perform its "thinktank" function, as well as those that will help strengthen key partnerships. This should be built into the biennial business plan (or, better, operational plan). This

should include, especially, events connected to larger meetings concerned with WSIS follow-up and the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals including the Economic and Social Council, the UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development and the UN General Assembly.

2. In preparing for events that can be planned in advance, GAID should try to organize pre-event meetings and other preparatory activities that can involve GAID partnerships as well as interested institutions and individuals.
3. To strengthen support by GAID centrally to partnerships, primarily through facilitation of networks as well as the use of events, GAID should consider bundling these as projects that can be funded from bilateral, multilateral or private sources. In some cases, they could be built as components of larger projects. These projects should also be used to help mobilize resources for partnerships in the developing countries.
4. GAID supporters should consider making multi-year commitments to create stable, if lean, CORE funding for the GAID secretariat.
5. In order to expand the access to global events, GAID should expand its use of Internet-based interactive distance collaboration tools. To do this, it may wish to enter into partnerships with private sector or academic institutions that are knowledgeable about and skilled in the use of these technologies in the context of large meetings. These techniques can be applied to organizing preparatory activities to the events noted in recommendation 2.
6. In order to ensure that partnerships maintain a clear linkage with GAID, the secretariat should develop guidelines defining what a partnership implies including preparing input into GAID's planning that will specify how the partner's activities will contribute to GAID's overall results, establishing hyperlinks with GAID and maintaining GAID informed about news and activities. Partnerships that are unable to do this should be encouraged to de-link from GAID.
7. GAID centrally should develop and publish on its website a directory of GAID-related partners and networks, as a one-stop shop for persons or institutions interested in collaborating on ICT for development.

<sup>i</sup> The evaluation was undertaken during February-April 2008 by the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs of Syracuse University by students in the graduate seminar on evaluation of international projects and programs under the direction of Professor John Mathiason.