

The Community Telecentre Management

- **1. Introduction**
- information and communication technologies help people in their struggle for education, democracy, and economic and social development.
- Telecentres may be used to:
- provide access to distance education, employment opportunities, training and business enterprise.

- allow entrepreneurs and business people to plan and prepare their arrangements and to;
- communicate with partners and potential clients from a distance.

- **2. WHAT IS A TELECENTRE?**

- Telecentres may be independent individual agencies or enterprises, or perhaps a project of a national agency.
- All Telecentres aim to stimulate and respond to the demand for information and communication services.
- yet each Telecentre is likely to have its own unique qualities that match the needs of the community.

- An important indicator of the success of any Telecentre is the degree to which it becomes an integral part of the community it serves.
- Telecentres often start out small and expand their services in response to demand.
- Sharing the expense of equipment, skills and access amongst an ever-increasing number of users helps to cut costs and make these services viable in remote areas.

- If the usage and responsibility are shared, the potential for long-term sustainability will be increased, and it will contribute to realizing Universal Service Objectives.
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- **3. START- UP A COMMUNITY TELECENTRE**

- To ensure that the Telecentre is sustainable, you must make sure that it starts off correctly.
- The following explains the basic steps to be followed so that the Telecentre will be of greatest benefit to the community:
- First set up a core group of people who will be responsible for guiding the continuous development of the Telecentre.

- Then a public meeting must be held to assess the community's information and communication needs. This will help to define the type of Telecentre and services that will be established.
- Next, premises must be found and a business plan must be developed.
- Once this has been done, the funds will have to be raised.
- Finally, when the schedule has been finalised, a telecentre can begin!

- **The minimum requirements for setting up a Telecentre are:**
- Customers/users;
- Start-up finance;
- A business plan;
- Suitable premises;
- Electricity and telephone connections;
- Capacity to meet the legal requirements;
- Tools (hardware and software) and furniture

- A Co-coordinator/Manager and a Steering Committee (or governing body).

- **3.1 SETTING UP THE GROUP RESPONSIBLE FOR THE TELECENTRE**

- The first step in setting up a Telecentre is to appoint a permanent Steering Committee.
- It will be responsible for guiding the whole process of starting the Telecentre.
- It will be responsible, on a long-term basis, for ensuring its continued success and development.
- A Steering Committee will normally consist of members of the community who have a keen interest in starting a Telecentre.

- One of the Steering Committee's first tasks is to identify the information and communication needs of the community and to appoint a Management Committee.
- A management committee will be more, involved in the start-up and day-to-day running of the Telecentre.

- **The difference between a Steering Committee and a Management Committee?**
- The Steering Committee appoints a Management Committee for the Telecentre.
- The Management Committee is normally a smaller group comprising some members of the Steering Committee, some Telecentre staff members, and others with special skills.
- The Management Committee is accountable to the Steering Committee and usually appoints a single person as the organizer responsible for the Telecentre.

- It is usually not possible for a Telecentre organizer to have all the skills and experience necessary to set up a Telecentre on her or his own.
- A good organizer must be able to select and recruit people who have the skills that are needed to plan, establish and guide the operations of the Telecentre.

- **The Steering Committee should consist of at least:**
- The Telecentre organizer.
- Representatives from the target group (or the broader community).
- Representatives from the local business sector.
- Representatives from the education community.
- One or more other professionals, preferably people with technology expertise, experience in finance and marketing, and legal expertise.

- **What kind of people will be on a Telecentre's Steering Committee?**
- Steering Committee members can help the Telecentre in different ways if they have the right mix of skills:
- **1. The Organizer**
- The Organizer is often the person who had the idea to establish a Telecentre.
- The Organizer may come from any sector of the community.
- He or she may become the Telecentre Director or Manager.

- **2. Community representatives**
- A Telecentre must serve the residents of the immediate or surrounding community, so community voices need to be heard on the Steering Committee from the beginning.
- This is very important, not only for identifying the most appropriate services, but also for generating a sense of ownership of the Telecentre from the beginning.
- Community representatives may be from school governing bodies, local NGOs or religious institutions, community service agencies or street committees.

- **4. Professionals**
- **A technician** who can solve technical problems, especially with computers, and can assist with equipment maintenance and upgrades.
- **An accountant** will be needed to set up an accounting system for the Telecentre.
- You need accurate accounting records to make sure that the Telecentre keeps within its budget and plans properly to cover expected and unexpected costs.

- Only a full set of accounts will make it possible to set the prices for services to ensure that they are sustainable.
- The tracking and reporting of income and expenses will also be expected by any agency that provides a grant to a Telecentre.
- **An attorney** will be needed to establish the Telecentre according to the laws of the country; to advise on the terms and conditions of contracts and subcontracts with partners; to review a Telecentre's lease; and to advise on insurance policies.

- **A marketing or public relations professional**, He or she will be able to assist with writing press releases, proposals and articles for magazines, and advise on how to approach local radio and television broadcasters.
- **5. Representative from the educational community**
- Representatives from the educational community are important, as this sector is often one of the biggest potential customers of Telecentre services.
- Representatives may come from local schools; community colleges; universities; libraries, museums; or adult education programmes.

- Steering Committee members from the educational community will offer an understanding of how this sector works and what the possibilities are.
- They may also be able to identify volunteer trainers for the Telecentre.
- **6. Other Steering Committee members**
- After a few months, the Steering Committee may decide that other skills are needed.
- These may be fundraising skills or knowledge of equipment and the best equipment suppliers. You may also need people with the skills to help renovate or adapt the Telecentre premises.

• **What does the Steering Committee do?**

- Set the directions, guidelines and strategies for the Telecentre.
- Help to obtain and secure start-up and on-going funding for the Telecentre.
- Seek new directions for the Telecentre, where possible.
- Develop policies and procedures relating to membership, usage, data collection, financial management and other operations.

- Observe legal requirements.
- Provide specialist advice.
- Appoint the Management Committee.

- **3. *Business community representative***
- Representatives from the local business community may be able to offer special skills and expertise, and also possibly other business support.
- A local technology manufacturer may be able to offer knowledge about computer hardware and software.
- A representative from a human resources company may be able to help with recruiting staff and developing staff training programmes.
- A representative from an employment agency may be able to help with planning a job preparation and placement programme.

- **What does the Management Committee do?**

- Managing the Telecentre in accordance with its stated objectives.
- Providing on-going support to the Telecentre staff where needed.
- The most successful Telecentres are those that have a good working partnership between their Management Committee and the Co-ordinator. They work as a team.

- The Management Committee is responsible for the on-going operational changes of the Telecentre.
- The Co-ordinator is responsible for its day-to-day operations.
- **Responsibilities of the Management Committee:**
 - 1. It has a legal responsibility to the Telecentre.
 - It must develop an understanding of the structure of the Telecommunications and Internet sectors in the country;
 - Develop the Telecentre's constitution and ensure that it is adhered to;

- Take responsibility for any agreements with funders and ensure that the Telecentre adheres to local and national laws.
- **2. It has a responsibility as an employer**
- This includes signing contracts with the Co-ordinator or other staff members;
- Ensuring that tax deductions are made;
- Negotiating arrangements with fund schemes;
- Ensuring that staff are treated fairly and in accordance with legislation.

- Unfair dismissal procedures, etc.
- **3. It has a responsibility to the community as a service provider.**
- It must provide safe conditions for public access to the Telecentre;
- Maintain insurance policies on the Telecentre's building and equipment;
- **4. It has a responsibility to the community**
- It must ensure that there are proper accounting processes, that annual budgets are met and an annual audited statement is prepared.

- It must also ensure that a cash flow chart is maintained by the Telecentre staff and that monthly, quarterly and annual financial reports are prepared.
- **5. It is responsible for ensuring the on-going evaluation and monitoring of the Telecentre.**
- To make sure that the Telecentre continues to be sustainable and provide for and anticipate the needs of the community, there must be an on-going process of monitoring and evaluation.
- Agencies providing grant funds or donations will require this.

- **3.2 LINKING THE TELECENTRE TO THE COMMUNITY**
- The next step in forming a Telecentre is to develop its links with the local community.
- this means making the community aware of the Telecentre and getting the community's support so that they can help define what sort of Telecentre is required.
- **3.2.1 HOLDING A PUBLIC MEETING**
- The purpose is to determine the nature of the Telecentre and to ensure that everyone supports the project.

- The Steering Committee might at first decide to invite representatives from the educational sector or the agricultural sector, or some other major sector in the community to a meeting.
- At this meeting members of the Steering Committee will explain what a Telecentre is, what types of equipment and services can be offered and the potential benefits to the community. The following advantages should also be highlighted:
 - Local and 'distance' employment might be generated.
 - Educational and training opportunities will be expanded.

- Local businesses will be able to compete with city companies.
- Communication with distant regions and friends or relatives abroad will be possible.
- Social opportunities will be expanded.
- The Telecentre will be able to provide access to on-line information services for weather, market prices, news, banking, medical advice, business advice, marketing information, travel arrangements, etc.
- Community members may ask many questions at this meeting. Here is a list of possible questions and answers:

- **Possible Questions and Answers**
- **Question: WHAT EQUIPMENT IS USED?**
- **Answer:** Telephones, computers, printers, modems and fax machines will be used. Video and audio equipment is used to communicate voice, picture and written text electronically.
- **Question: HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?**
- **Answer:** The cost of establishing a Telecentre will depend on the services provided and the possibilities of obtaining financial support. The cost of using the Telecentre services will be as low as sustainable possible to ensure that the maximum number of people will be able to make use of them.

- **Question: DO TELECENTRES REALLY WORK?**
- **Answer:** Where there is community support and involvement, most Telecentres are successful.
- The Telecentre will be guided by the Steering Committee and a Co-ordinator will be appointed to help members of the community to use the equipment.

- **3.2.2 TARGET GROUPS**

- The public meeting will help you to start determining what type of Telecentre and services are needed by the community.
- You can do this by identifying potential **Target Groups** in the area and matching them to the services they require.
- A Telecentre's target groups will normally include a number of **the following**:

- Individuals (local community members, tourists and passing professionals such as truck drivers and engineers).
- Small businesses.
- Schools.
- Youth.
- Disabled people.
- Farmers.
- Women's groups.
- Clinics, hospitals and healthcare workers.
- Police.
- NGOs.

- Trade unions.
- Civic organizations
- Political parties.
- Government departments.
- Sports clubs.
- The Telecentre is likely to focus on a few priority sectors at first and then expand its focus as it develops.
- A good Telecentre Co-ordinator (or Manager) will always have his or her finger on the pulse of the community and be looking out for new target groups or activities that need Telecentre services.

- **3.3 DEVELOPING THE BUSINESS PLAN**

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- 3.3.1 THE COMMUNITY AUDIT
- 3.3.2 CHOOSING THE INITIAL TELECENTRE SERVICES TO BE OFFERED
- 3.3.3 FINDING THE BEST LOCATION FOR A TELECENTRE
- 3.3.4 MARKETING THE TELECENTRE

- **3.3 DEVELOPING THE BUSINESS PLAN**
- Once the public meeting has been held and general support for the project has been established, you will need to draw up a list of objectives and develop the whole process and strategy for establishing the service.
- This will describe in detail the aims of the initiative, its long-term viability, start-up requirements and the process for establishing the Telecentre.
- The business plan should be reviewed by the Steering Committee every year to accommodate new developments and new ideas.

- **A Business Plan has on-going value:**
- It is a guide to setting up and running the Telecentre.
- It explains to partners and funders why the Telecentre needs their help.
- It is used to raise funds for the Telecentre.
- It acts as background material for staff and volunteers.
- It sets the Telecentre's on-going operational budget.

- A business plan describes everything about the Telecentre.
- It is a detailed statement of the objectives of the Telecentre and the strategies for achieving the objectives.
- It explains how progress will be assessed on an on-going basis.
- The Telecentre business plan is vital in raising the funds and obtaining other kinds of support needed to start the operation.

- A funder will need to know that they are making a good investment. They will ask questions like this:
- What services will the Telecentre offer?
- How will the services be provided?
- Who will the Telecentre's user groups be?
- How will the Telecentre's services be marketed?
- What does the Telecentre's budget look like?
- Can the Telecentre be financially sustainable?

- Some people have a very good vision for a Telecentre but they have difficulty communicating it to funders and influential people in the community.
- You will not be able to raise start-up capital unless you can convey your vision clearly and logically.
- Funders, in particular, are impressed by a coherent and concise proposal.

- **Establishing the objectives of the Telecentre**
- Every Telecentre is established with the main objective of providing members of a community with access to computer and telecommunications technology.
- A Telecentre cannot be viable unless it fine-tunes this broad objective to suit the needs of specific community groups.
- This process is one of the critical roles of the Telecentre's Steering Committee.
- A community audit and identifying possible target or focus groups for Telecentre services.

- **Initially, objectives will be determined by the answers to questions such as:**
- What are the needs of the community?
- Approximately how many people are going to use the Telecentre?
- Which is the key target group?
- What services will be offered?
- What networks or partnerships with other organizations exist or can be developed?

- How much money is available for running the Telecentre?
- How many paid staff will there be?
- How will staff be recruited?
- How many volunteers can be relied upon?
- How many hours of the day will the Telecentre be open?

- **Some important considerations**
- The information you will gain through the *Community Audit* described below, will provide you with an indication of how to ensure the sustainability of the Telecentre in your community.
- So that you can match the type of Telecentre and its operations with the community more clearly, **you should pay special attention to the following:**

- **Relationships with organizations in the area**
- Telecentres are more likely to thrive if they are located in communities where existing organizations are supportive and prepared to make a contribution.
- If a community organization or a local business offer free premises, volunteer workers, or perhaps even to pay the Co-ordinator's salary for the first year of operation, this indicates that the community is willing to support the Telecentre and the start-up costs required will be reduced.

The range of services offered

- Your analysis of the information provided through interviews and your survey will give you a clearer idea of the number of potential paying users (whether individuals or organizations), and the kinds of services in demand.
- You should also get an idea of how much people in the community can afford to pay to use the Telecentre services and which services to capitalize on.
- All of this information must be included under the marketing strategy in your Business Plan.

- If you are sensitive to the needs expressed by the community, the Telecentre is more likely to be supported by the community.
- Sometimes a co-operative relationship with other organizations might influence the range of services provided, especially if the costs of providing services are shared.

The distance between Telecentres

- A Telecentre is likely to be required by a community if there are no similar facilities within half an hour's walking distance.
- The Universal Service Agency in South Africa uses the half-hour's walking distance as a guideline.
- The guide that is often used is a distance of 3 to 5 kilometers.
- Other factors will also need to be taken into account such as the type of services required as compared with services offered elsewhere and the density of the population.

Starting with a pilot programme

- The Steering Committee might decide to test a programme by first offering a limited number of public access hours to see whether it has made the right decision of giving priority to a specific sector.
- Suppose the results of your interviews and your survey indicate that a large number of adults in the community are looking for literacy training, or that there are a number of young people wanting to enroll in distance education courses.
- It might then be worth running a small pilot to better understand the information needs of these sectors of the community.

- A pilot programme can be as small as three computers based in a local community centre, a church hall, or the entrance to a public library or local police station.
- It can be supervised by volunteers. After six months or so you **will be able to see:**
- The demand for services
- whether users would be interested in any additional services
- what the favoured operating times are

- what the favoured operating times are
- what kind of marketing and outreach strategies are needed
- the number of local organisations that are likely to bring classes or groups to the Telecentre, and the size of those groups.

Assessing community income levels

- In some communities where there are very high levels of unemployment and little income, a full-service Telecentre may not be able to cover its start-up and operational costs unless it has a very clear focus and;
- is connected to an existing organization which is strongly needed in the community and which receives on-going donor funding.
- It might be possible to establish a Telecentre in partnership with such an organization.

- Each of the sections below describes the various areas that will have to be researched in order to produce the information needed for the Business Plan:
- the community needs,
- the services to be provided,
- the computer and telecommunications software and hardware, and;
- the location and premises of the Telecentre.

3.3.1 THE COMMUNITY AUDIT

- The first step in developing a business plan for the Telecentre is to carry out a more detailed assessment of the level of demand for the various Telecentre services and the various options for obtaining the required equipment and services to get it started.
- A community audit is needed to:
- Determine the size and needs of the Telecentre's target market.
- Create awareness and involve the target market in the process of building local ownership.

- Learn about competing or related initiatives;
- Establish who are the key people, institutions or projects in the community that can participate in the development of the Telecentre;
- Establish which development and educational projects exist that can benefit from information and communication services.
- Find out if there are any local investors or other sources of funding.

- **A community Audit Involves the following:**
- **STEP 1:** List all the local institutions and organizations which are most likely to be interested in the Telecentre;
- **STEP 2:** Conduct interviews;
- **STEP 3:** Review existing resources.
- The Telecentre's Steering Committee will need as much information about the community as possible in order to determine the nature of the programmes to be offered by the Telecentre.

- The success of Telecentre services will largely depend on how well it complements existing activities within the community, and addresses the interests and needs of the community which are currently not being met. You will need **the following type of information:**
- The size and density of the targeted population.
- The distance to the nearest public phones or other Telecentre.
- The nature of the population, i.e. a breakdown by age, sex, ethnic background, educational background, language of choice, etc.

- The proportion of employed to unemployed people, the average income levels, the predominant types of employment or occupation.
- You can get information from:
 - Official statistics from local government departments, housing authorities, the local police, or educational institutions.
 - Community surveys conducted by NGOs or other agencies in the community.

- Steering Committee members may, because of their positions in local organizations, be able to get access to surveys conducted by municipal or civic organizations.
- Representatives of local government agencies may have knowledge of data sources through reports submitted to their offices.
- Key community leaders and the directors of other community service organizations may be able to provide useful information.

- Various groups in the community may be able to give useful information, such as pensioners' groups, trade unions, unemployed peoples' groupings, school governing bodies, women's co-operatives, etc.
- The point of getting this information is to give you a good idea of how many people there are in the community, what organizations, how much space the Telecentre needs, what services to focus on and for which target group, and where the Telecentre should be placed so that it is easy to reach for the target group.

3.3.2 CHOOSING THE INITIAL TELECENTRE SERVICES TO BE OFFERED

- Telecentre Services are determined by community needs:
- A Telecentre should be capable of providing most of the information and communication requirements of the local population.
- Telecentres can serve as information and communication learning centres for:
- farmers, students, professionals, entrepreneurs, NGOs, community leaders and other members of the community, including disabled people.

- It is advisable for a Telecentre to develop an initial focus, it is more than likely that as the Telecentre expands, focus areas may change or broaden.

3.3.3 FINDING THE BEST LOCATION FOR A TELECENTRE

- **3.3.3.1 PREMISES**
- Ideally the community should provide a Telecentre's premises rent-free and maintenance free. If this is not possible, an organisation might be able to provide the space or pay the rent as part of their contribution to the Telecentre, at least until it becomes viable.
- **3.3.3.2 ELECTRICITY**
- Although it is possible to run a Telecentre on solar power, this will push up the start-up costs substantially, so it is better to be connected to the national power grid. Even then, back-up facilities such as a generator or batteries are needed in areas where the power supply is intermittent.

3.3.4 MARKETING THE TELECENTRE

- Every Telecentre will need to think of ways to generate public interest in its activities and achievements.
- Marketing is critically important to develop support for the Telecentre, including on-going financial support.
- The details of the marketing plan will need to be included in the Business Plan.
- There are four stages in a marketing process:
- Stage 1: selling the idea
- Stage 2: marketing analysis

- Stage 3: establishing the Telecentre
- Stage 4: maintaining growth.
- Marketing of the Telecentre begins before the first public meeting to discuss whether or not a Telecentre is viable in a particular community.
- Once the decision has been made to establish a Telecentre, the Telecentre should try to publicise every activity and accomplishment as widely as possible.
- This is when the second stage of marketing begins.

- The goals of a new Telecentre's marketing strategy should be to:
- Introduce itself to the community;
- Become a familiar organisation in the community;
- Broaden its participant base;
- Generate interest in its activities.

- One way to develop a marketing plan is like this:
- **WHAT**, you will list everything that will help to market the establishment of the Telecentre, for example:
- The list of services the Telecentre will be offering.
- The Telecentre premises.
- The members of the Steering Committee.
- The appointment of the Management Committee.

- The appointment of the Co-ordinator.
- Grants received.
- In-kind contributions from community members.
- The opening event.
- **HOW**, list the best ways to market each of the items listed. For example:
- Radio.
- Newspaper articles.
- Bill boards at the police station, the local shopping centre, and the community centre.

- Speak to community groups.
- Distribute a one-page promotional letter from the Steering Committee.
- Advertise on the Internet.
- **WHERE**, you can give more detail. For example, **which** radio programme should be targeted.
- **ACTION**, you will list the name of the Steering Committee or Management Committee representative who will take responsibility for following up this particular course of action.

3.3.5 BUDGETING

- A list of all the costs and income sources should be made up so that a budget can be developed.
- There are two parts to the budget:
- **A start-up budget** gives details of the one-time costs of setting up a Telecentre.
- **An operating budget** gives details of the on-going costs of running the Telecentre.
- **Start-up Expenses** include the cost of getting everything ready before you actually open the Telecentre.

- **There are two kinds of start-up expenses:**
- Capital expenses and one-time expenses such as renovations to the premises, purchase of equipment, furniture and furnishings and deposits to suppliers of electricity, telephone connections, etc.
- Expenses that will continue once the Telecentre is operational such as salaries, rental, equipment maintenance and replacement, insurance, software and computer supplies, marketing costs, telecommunications costs, educational materials, stationery and cleaning materials, etc.

- **Income projection**
- Here you may consider the income the Telecentre will receive from:
 - Telecentre users;
 - The business community;
 - Government subsidies;
 - Grants from local organisations or funding agencies;
 - Special fundraising events;
 - Others.

3.3.6 FINALISING THE BUSINESS PLAN

- This section will assist you to put together all the information gathered in the previous sections in order to come up with the final business plan.
- **You should now be able to answer the following questions:**
- What voluntary and paid staff do you intend to employ and under what conditions?
- What hours of business do you envisage?
- What skills training courses will be offered?

- What provisions will you make for repairs and servicing?
- What relationships do you have with other structures or organizations in the community?
- Are you aware of the legal requirements for setting up a Telecentre?
- How do you intend to acquire capital items needed for the Telecentre?
- How do you propose to manage the finances of the Telecentre?

- What promotional and marketing plans do you have for the Telecentre?
- How and when will you review the effectiveness of the Telecentre according to the proposed objectives?

3.3.6.1 HOW TO STRUCTURE A BUSINESS PLAN

- **This section should:**
- Define the community to be served (for example: general members of the community; students; small business people, etc.);
- Describe the steps the Steering Committee has taken to find out what the community needs are (obtaining demographic information; focus groups; interviews with members of the community; developing partnerships with other organisations in the community, etc.).
- Give a clear summary of the findings of the research.

3.3.6.1.1 Description of the Telecentre's services and programmes

- This section will answer the question: How will the Telecentre's services meet community.
- If this question is answered well, it will give an idea of:
- The different alternatives that the Telecentre has considered.
- How other community resources have been taken into consideration.
- Why the chosen services meet the needs of the community.

- For special programmes, this section of the plan should also give the following details:
- **The name of the programme.** (For example, Job Preparation Programme; Teachers' Programme, etc.).
- **A detailed description of the programme.** (What it will involve; What the participants will do; What the programme will achieve).
- **The hours when the programme will be offered.** (For example, the Teachers' Programme might be an afternoon or an evening programme).

- **The paid and volunteer staff who will supervise the programme.** (For example, the Job Preparation Programme might be offered by a retired volunteer human resources manager from the community).
- **The anticipated outcomes of the programme.** (For example, the Job Preparation Programme will aim to equip unemployed members of the community to find jobs).

3.3.6.1.2 Community partners

- Some examples of partnerships that are essential for a Telecentre's ability to become self-sustainable:
- A partner may offer free premises to the Telecentre, or premises at very low rent.
- A partner may offer second-hand hardware at low cost.
- A partner may offer software, furniture or renovations and low cost or no cost.
- Partners are the skilled people on the Steering Committee who contribute their expertise to the Telecentre at no charge because of their commitment.

3.3.6.1.3 User projections

- In this section of the Plan you will need to consider the following questions:
- How many people will use each of the Telecentre's different services and programmes?
- How will this increase as the Telecentre becomes better known?
- What will a weekly or monthly schedule for the Telecentre look like?

- How will the schedule change at different times of the year? For example, during school holidays there will be more school students attending programmes during the day. In holiday seasons or over Christmas, there might be more tourists visiting the area, etc.
- When a Telecentre starts out, it is difficult to work out how the number of users will increase precisely.
- After a Telecentre has been operating for a while, there will be a much clearer picture of user patterns and user numbers.

3.3.6.1.4 Start-up needs

- This includes all items, services and expenses that need to be acquired and paid for before the Telecentre opens its doors.
- Including costs relating to the Telecentre premises, staff, equipment, supplies, salaries, software, hardware, cleaning materials, stationery, etc.

3.3.6.1.5 On-going needs

- Here is a summary of what you need:
- Premises (rent, utilities, security, insurance, maintenance, rubbish removal, etc.).
- Staff (including salaries, benefits and perks for volunteers).
- Marketing and promotion.
- Equipment and furniture (including replacement and repair costs).
- Software (including purchases, upgrading and replacements).

- Computer and office supplies.
- On-line services and Internet accounts.
- Publications and reference materials.
- Budget for special events (such as the launch of the Telecentre or an open day where refreshments are provided, etc.).

3.3.6.1.6 Marketing the Telecentre

- How will you inform the community of the services that you offer?
- The questions to be answered here include:
- What media will be used?
- What promotional materials do you plan to produce?
- What meetings are you planning for special presentations?
- How will community partners assist with promoting the Telecentre?
- How will you market the Telecentre to people who cannot read or write, or to disabled people, etc.?

3.3.6.1.7 Evaluation of Telecentre services

- This is to evaluate whether the Telecentre is meeting its objectives.
- Evaluation methods in detail could include:
- Signing in/signing out procedures that give a record of who uses the Telecentre and for how long.
- Teacher/instructor logs which include plans for classes as well as follow-up notes.
- Volunteer logs to record tasks undertaken by volunteers, difficulties encountered and suggestions for improvements.

- A comments box for Telecentre users to place their comments, suggestions and criticisms.

3.3.6.1.8 Possible problems

- A list of potential problems:
- Not enough participants/customers, or too many.
- The schedule is not appropriate to meet the needs of key user groups.
- Anticipated funds may be delayed or may not be forthcoming at all.
- Volunteers might be unreliable.
- The Telecentre premises may be too small, too hot or too cold.

- There may not be sufficient staff to sustain all the Telecentre's programmes.
- Telecentre staff may not be skilled in dealing with customers.
- Telecommunications connections are unreliable.
- Students may refuse to obey the rules.

3.3.6.1.9 Budget and financial planning

- In this section you will have to show that the Telecentre is able to raise sufficient funds to start its operations and to keep running.
- You will need to present a summary of projected start-up expenses and costs and a cash flow worksheet describing on-going expenses and revenue for the first year of the Telecentre's life.
- You will require the assistance of an accountant for this section of the Business Plan.

- If the cash flow statement indicates negative cash flow in some areas, you will need to give concrete suggestions on how you intend to address the problems.

4 MANAGEMENT AND START-UP STRATEGIES

- Most of the important management issues for ensuring a viable and vibrant Telecentre are covered in the sections above, and should be further detailed in your Business Plan.
- This section gives additional information and suggestions for when you take your Telecentre from a project on paper to a fully operational and sustainable entity.
- The proper management practices must be applied right from start-up of the Telecentre to ensure that they are continued and enhanced.

4.1 RECRUITING A CO-ORDINATOR (MANAGER)

- Finding a good Co-ordinator is probably the most important factor to ensure that the Telecentre achieves its goals.
- The Co-ordinator takes responsibility for the day-to-day management of the Telecentre.
- He or she is usually somebody from the community; somebody who is liked and respected;
- Somebody who understands the community and can create the kind of atmosphere in the Telecentre which will make it an important asset to the community.

- A good Co-ordinator will have a **vision** that incorporates his or her community.
- A good Co-ordinator needs to develop a sense of the value of networking, and the value of sharing information across boundaries and borders!
- The Co-ordinator must account to the Management Committee of the Telecentre.

- But it is essential that they work as a team, with the Management Committee playing a hands-on role in providing the overall direction for the Telecentre and for the Co-ordinator.
- A Telecentre can collapse very quickly if the Co-ordinator does not have the right qualities for the job.

4.1.1 WHAT DOES A TELECENTRE CO-ORDINATOR DO?

- Manage the day-to-day operations of the Telecentre.
- Assist the Management Committee in activities to meet the objectives of the Business Plan.
- Show users and other staff how to use all of the Telecentre's equipment.
- Assist users who wish to enrol for distance education courses.
- Liaise with educational organizations and other organizations in the community.

- Maintain suitable records for the Telecentre.
- Be responsible for the management, supervision and appraisal of any staff, and ensure that staff undertake their duties in accordance with their job descriptions, or as specified by the Management Committee.
- Keep up to date with all new developments in the community concerning education, training, technology, communication, information and business enterprise.

- Together with the Management committee, formulate, develop and review policies and procedures relating to membership of the Telecentre, usage, data collection, financial management, and other operations of the Telecentre.
- Ensure that all policies and procedures are implemented and adhered to.
- Plan and co-ordinate activities to increase the number of Telecentre users.

- Advertise the services offered by the Telecentre.
- Identify and develop a network of users or potential users of the Telecentre.
- Keep the community informed of the activities of the Telecentre.
- Purchase appropriate hardware and software for the Telecentre in consultation with the Management Committee.
- Ensure that the facilities of the Telecentre are maintained in good working order.

- Advise the Management Committee of any future equipment and service requirements.
- Develop and maintain a database of potential funders of the Telecentre.
- Initiate and maintain revenue generating (money earning) programmes to achieve self-sufficiency for the Telecentre.
- Take responsibility for the administration of any money that is paid into the Telecentre on a day-to-day basis.

- Provide written reports to the Management Committee, funders, and others, as required.
- Together with the Telecentre Management Committee, be responsible for the on-going evaluation of the Telecentre.
- Attend Management Committee meetings and present monthly reports on the activities, usage and outcomes of the Telecentre and the activities and outcomes of the Co-ordinator's position.
- Undertake additional tasks of benefit to the Telecentre as directed by the Management Committee.

4.2 DAY-TO-DAY MANAGEMENT ISSUES

• 4.2.1 MONTHLY REPORTS

- Monthly reports should cover the following general categories:
- Services rendered;
- Revenues and expenses, specifying the different service categories;
- Overall financial statement.
- Consolidation of complaints and the way complaints have been handled.

- Consolidation of faults and the way fault handling has been done.
- Status of premises and equipment.
- Any other relevant incidents and developments.
- You must make up the monthly report from the daily reports, which you submit, to the Management Committee.
- In addition to standard information on finances and problems, the Management Committee is expected to indicate the progress that is being made by the Telecentre:

- Whether and to what extent the Telecentre helps to improve the livelihood of the people it serves, or whether it causes more problems.