

**The Fourth Session of the Web for Development Conference
Nairobi, Kenya, November 28-30, 2007**

1. **Title of Workshop:** The Community Opportunity
2. **Date, Time and Location:** 29 November 2007, C-13, 14 – 16 Hours
3. **Number of Participants:** 15

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Case study - Kibera Community Broadband Network Project

The project seeks to develop internet cafes and training, community portal and wireless network. It works through local organisations and addresses local needs. It uses the cooperative model that has worked in the United Kingdom and other European countries. The idea is that communities organize themselves to provide and manage internet services that improve the well being of the communities in a way that is economically sustainable.

Lessons learnt – what went right and wrong

The business model is based on cooperative structures so as to retain economic benefits for the local members, strengthen local economy, democratic strategy and control and encourage longer term view as well as environmentally and socially sustainable ethos. There has to be a viable business model that provides a set of basic services to the community and additional local services, creating an “US” feeling. The community communication is essential, and so are customer care and quality network

Communities should benefit from family business model so as to think through challenges, gain consensus for improvement and define projects to take them there. Only then should one look at IT to help.

A community technology plan has to come from within and community involvement is essential. The local approach requires that the handover to the community is essential, and so is linking to other projects and encouraging evangelism. Further lessons are to ensure processes to identify opportunities and engage authorities. Local IT projects need to engage people, and IT is only useful if it serves a purpose such as local services based on local needs.

Challenges of using the Internet for the broader development area

Funding for the initial pilot phase lacks seed capital

Recommendations

Joint fundraising strategies with UNHABITAT

Key actors

Community Broadband Network, UN-HABITAT, local residents and cooperative banks.
Communities in other cities in the region – for future projects

Way forward Suggest the next steps (moderator or the chair)

Local people will run the project while external support will only advise and guide. Over the next three years the project will build 10 sustainable social enterprises.