



Tropentag 2011
University of Bonn, October 5 - 7, 2011

Conference on International Research on Food Security, Natural Resource
Management and Rural Development

Information and Communication Technologies directed to the Local Development and Social Empowerment

Conceição^a, Ariane F; Rosa^b, Rosane

a Programa de Pós-Graduação em Extensão Rural da Universidade Federal de Santa Maria – UFSM. E-mail:
arianeeuzinha@yahoo.com.

b Programa de Pós-Graduação em Comunicação Midiática da Universidade Federal de Santa Maria- UFSM. E-mail:
rosane.rosa@terra.com.br

Introduction

We have seen a great evolution in the concept and application of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Consequently, there is a growing search for new mechanisms to promote culture and the development of society of information. It has proposing a new strategic vision, both for business and for social relations. According to Castells (2000), the Society of Information is a term used to describe a society and an economy that makes the best use of ICTs in order to deal with the information and takes this as a central element of all human activity.

In this scenario, the individual's interaction with technology and it has triggered transformations in him and in the world around mainly through the use of the Internet that connects with "glocal" reality. Glocal reality means that the people now can have news from around the world and from your local space.

The network provides an expansion with respect to access to multicultural communication and obtaining information "glocal." Add to this that allows increased access of populations to different materials, such as information about new products and production techniques, allowing improvements to farmers and greater efficiency in their daily practices.

ICTs play a key role in any area that needs innovation with efficient and effective strategies that lead to sustainable economic, social and environmental processes. In addition, represent an alternative to the participation of citizens excluded from political decision-making, since they do not have enough knowledge to perform the process of informed decision-making or are subjected to paternalism are influenced to appropriate of the opinion of influent people. According Albagli (2006:21), "information and knowledge are socially shaped and are important elements in the binomial inclusion-exclusion." However, the author warns (2006:21)

[...] At the same time that new technical means, [...] allow a larger and faster exchange of information, it also imposes new barriers to political, economic and institutional integration of marginalized social sectors and regions to the new standard.

Therefore, is pertinent to study the local development through democratized access to ICTs, especially regarding the internet turned into a public policy. Following that thinking, the objective is to reflect on the process of implementing the project of digital inclusion in rural areas in the city of Concordia, Santa Catarina, Brazil, in other words, understand what the contribution of ICTs in local development.

The experience of participatory budgeting in Concordia - SC

The city of Concordia is located in western of Santa Catarina, in the micro region of the Upper Uruguay. The city's economy rests on agribusiness, pig farming, poultry farming, livestock, milk, crops, food industry and agribusiness. The main feature is a rural activity, made up mainly of small farms.

The municipal administration revolves around participatory budgeting, which is well established, since it was established 10 years ago. According Paise (*cited* Genro and Souza, 2001:94), it is an innovative public management grounded in citizen participation. Assuming "a government with the people and for the people," as stated in the bylaws of the participatory budget, the methodology in Concordia is executed through meetings in the first half of the year in which communities and neighborhoods are divided into regions according to geographical location.

Are held around 50 meetings a year where occur in the municipal accountability and election of regional delegates. The group of ten participants may elect a delegate for urban neighborhood or rural community. These members of the local population, voluntarily, will represent their neighborhoods or communities and will be responsible for cast and defend the priorities identified and defined in the "Regional Public Hearings."

These delegates, representatives from each region, meet in public hearings with their respective regional communities and define their priorities, ie, the works and actions that local government should develop over the next year in their respective regions. For this, the community should mobilize and develop the participatory budget. The demands, as digital inclusion extended to rural areas will arise from the desires of the community focused on local development.

According to the Bylaws of the City Council, the participatory budget "is an organ of direct community participation, which aims to propose, monitor and act on matters relating to recipes and expenses budget of the City of Concord" (2010, p.9) .

Local development is a process that is effective from the base as an answer for the real needs of the communities involved. In this sense, Albagli (2006:20) emphasizes that:

The community should be able to have its own strategy and to exercise control over the dynamics of local processing, ensuring that the territory don't become as a mere passive receptor of the strategies and interests of outside organizations.[...] Knowledge gestated from the reality and local needs is relevant to gain a competitive advantage, transforming the characteristics and specific attributes to each territory in economic appreciation and also to promote more sustainable patterns of development in terms sociopolitical, economic and environmental.

For this type of development occurs is necessary that the various actors and institutions involved are linked to each other, stimulating the construction of a sense of collective and social participation. In the view of Roman (2002:5), "empowerment is a perspective that puts people excluded from the prevailing development and power in the center of the process." So, act proactively in order, moreover, it is a decentralization of decision-making and action:

Empowerment happens when the power to take action is earned and distributed among many. But is not the mere performance of tasks that define empowerment but the action is connected to a sense of responsibility for the work. It needs acquire knowledge and the ability to make changes from it (Mill Forum of Dreams, 2009).

In this process, the residents elect the needs of their community and then the city passes the resources to the association or governing body, which will seek the implementation of the priority elected. Before the bid is made public and the company offering the best price that performs the service. Upon completion of the service, there is accountability to the

community. With these features of participatory budgeting have been and are being carried out various works, purchased equipment and made improvements to the communities.

In recent years, with the dissemination and popularization of the Internet and computer, the population began to have their interest focused on digital inclusion in rural areas also. Thus, some rural communities have used the appeal of participatory budgeting to take advantage of Internet connection that enables communication empowerment of rural producers.

Focusing on socio-cultural and political dimensions of local development, refers to the concept of social capital Marteleto (2004:44), which defines it as "the norms, values, institutions and relationships that allow shared cooperation within or between different groups social." Already, Matos (2009:137) reminds us that ICTs, especially the Internet, "would transform the capital to restore a sense of community because friends connect and provide a source of information about a wide variety of subjects."

For Santos (2003:2), "The digital exclusion is a facet of economic and social exclusion." The new forms of social exclusion that have beset the contemporary, from the perspective of Lent (2009:1), have showing that in the globalized world, "social relations took complex dimensions." Freire (1984:67), points that communication may be an alternative

"Overcome the contradictions and differences that mark not only the relations among social classes, as well as those established among countries that are part of capitalist industrial society and Western culture."

These changes and the contemporary contradictions arising from the process of industrialization, modernization and advancement of ICTs also reached the rural areas by promoting changes in social relationships and work. ICTs, as Silva says (*quoted* in Robinson & Call, 2007:3), "They do not only ended the isolation of the field, but also causes a major change in daily life and imagination of people in the field."

Concluding Remarks

The present study in rural areas indicated that the new Information and Communication Technologies can bring many benefits such as easy access by farmers to information on weather, prices, the circuitry of the land market, survey results, among others.

When used effectively, ICTs offer the potential to help rural people to overcome obstacles imposed isolation of the field, contributing to an innovative development. Moreover, ICTs can contribute to strengthen the Community vehicles and encourage communication and the different cultures and local, regional, national and global economies. They emerge as an alternative to the participation of citizens who were outside the process of decision making, but also to reduce the obstacles to development.

Thus, it appears that communication, enhanced by technology, becomes an important ally in the construction and promotion of capital used as a form of exercise of citizenship. So that brings together and develops the communication links that enable cooperation between multicultural groups, establishing communicative links can broaden the public debate on issues of collective interest.

From this study, there is a dichotomy of interest with regard to access to new technologies. On the one hand, there is advantage with regard to building a society with values of solidarity, participation, responsibility and social justice from the time when everyone is included culturally and technologically. But on the other hand, because Brazil is a developing country, the use of new technologies can lead to a deepening regarding the social and economic inequality, creating new forms of exclusion of marginalized populations. In this sense, it is important to the state, as in our case, provide this access through social policies.

The current study briefly the case of participatory budgeting in the city of Concordia, Santa Catarina, as a public policy of digital inclusion, provided the internet access in rural areas of the city. Despite the consolidation of this instrument that allows popular participation in collective decisions and contributes to local development, along this work, it is considered an important receiving study with farmers users of Internet in order to understand and deepen to the process of understanding , use and appropriation of ICTs available.

Referências Bibliográficas

- ALBAGLI, Sarita ; MACIEL, M. L. Informação e conhecimento na inovação e no desenvolvimento local *In: Ciência da Informação* Ci. Inf. v.33 n.3 Brasília set./dez. 2004
- _____. Conhecimento, inclusão social e desenvolvimento local. *In: Inclusão Social*. Vol. 1, No 2, 2006.
- BAUMAN, Zygmunt. **Identidade**. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar, 2005.
- CASTELLS, Manuel. A era da informação: economia, sociedade e cultura. *In: A Sociedade em rede*. São Paulo : Paz e Terra, v. 1, 2000
- FREIRE, I.M. Comunicação de informações tecnológicas para o meio rural. *In: Ciência da Informação*, 13(1): 67-71, jan./jun. 1984.
- FÓRUM ENGENHO DOS SONHOS. Empoderamento e Participação Comunitária. Disponível em: < <http://www.ufrn.br/sites/engenhodesonhos/frame.html>> . Acesso em: 15 de agosto de 2009.
- MACHADO, E. P ; PINHO, J. B. Limites e possibilidades das tecnologias da informação e comunicação na extensão rural. *In: Intercom – revista Brasileira de Ciências da Comunicação*. São Paulo, v.30, n.2, p.103 – 121, jul./dez. 2007
- MARTELETO, Regina Maria ; SILVA, A.B.O. Redes e capital social: o enfoque da informação para o desenvolvimento local. *In: Ciência da Informação*, Brasília, v.33, n3, p.41-49, set./dez. 2004.
- MATOS, H. *Capital Social e Comunicação – interfaces e articulações*. São Paulo, Ed. Summus, 2009.
- _____. TIC, internet e capital social. *LÍBERO* Ano X nº 20 Dez 2007.
- QUARESMA, F. S. Desenvolvimento Local: a Comunicação Rural e os Desafios Contemporâneos do Processo de Desenvolvimento no Brasil. Disponível em: [http://encipecom.metodista.br/mediawiki/index.php/Desenvolvimento Local: a Comunicac%C3%A7%C3%A3o Rural e os Desafios Contempor%C3%A2neos do Processo de Desenvolvimento no Brasil](http://encipecom.metodista.br/mediawiki/index.php/Desenvolvimento_Local:_a_Comunicac%C3%A7%C3%A3o_Rural_e_os_Desafios_Contempor%C3%A2neos_do_Processo_de_Desenvolvimento_no_Brasil) Acesso em:13 de agosto de 2009.
- RODRIGUES, M.C.V ; CALLOU, A.B.F. Estratégias de Comunicação Rural para o Desenvolvimento Local: O Caso do Conselho Municipal de Turismo na Cidade do Conde, Bahia. Disponível em: www.eca.usp.br/alaic/.../margarita%20rodrigues.doc Acesso em: 20 de agosto de 2009.
- ROMANO, Jorge O. Empoderamento: enfrentamos primeiro a questão do poder para combater juntos a pobreza. Documento de apoio apresentado no *International Workshop Empowerment and Rights Based Approach in Fighting Poverty Together* Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brasil. Ago. 2002
- SANTOS, A. Q. Inclusão digital e desenvolvimento local no Brasil Brasília,DF, Brasil. Julho, 2003. *VIII Congreso Internacional del CLAD sobre la Reforma del Estado y de la Administración Pública*, Panamá, 28-31 Oct. 2003.
- SANTOS, Boaventura de Souza. *Renovar a Teoria Crítica e Reinventar a emancipação Social*. São Paulo: Boitempo, 2007.
- SILVA, MJA & BRANDIM, MRL. *Multiculturalismo e educação:em defesa da diversidade cultural* Diversa : Ano I - nº 1 : 51-66 : jan./jun. 2008.