# Communications and it technology and its impact on poverty

Science, Social Science

The Impact of Information and Communication Technologies on Poverty Reduction Global social insecurity and poverty have been exacerbated by, among other factors, armed conflict, climate change, state corruption, the global financial crisis, and food insecurity. According to a World Bank report, sub-Saharan Africa has the highest poverty incidence in the world with over half of its population living below $2 a day (UNCTD 22). With states around the world rushing to fulfill pledges made under the MDG targets in 2015, many experts have been urging for a focus on ICTs to reduce social inequalities and tackle extreme poverty. ICTs possess the potential to act as tools in support of poverty reduction because of their flexibility, addressing issues in education, healthcare, banking, and livelihoods. They can also empower people locally and strengthen promotion of human rights, which makes them an increasingly essential presence in emerging economies (UNCTD 94). By basing these economies around information and technology, governments in emerging economies could potentially enhance the livelihoods of their citizens, while also creating new livelihoods.

Technology can help reduce poverty in rural areas of emerging economies through lending support to agriculture activities. An example is the Israeli state-owned Techno-Agriculture Program that seeks to shore up food security in sub-Saharan Africa and already boasts successful initiatives in Niger, as well as South Africa (Chilimo & Ngulube 98). By partnering with NGOs in these countries, such as World Vision and Green Senegal, the program has also been successfully introduced in Senegal. These programs make information better available to farmers in rural areas about best practices, especially when there is drought. ICT can also create employment

opportunities directly through manufacture of hardware and indirectly by increasing their productivity, for example, through improving market information access and decreasing costs of transaction for poor traders and farmers. E-commerce programs can also help artisans in rural areas bypass exploitative middlemen, as well as corrupt governance, to market their products directly to the market (Chilimo & Ngulube 98). In addition, ICT provides multimedia applications for use in schools, thus enhancing skills and knowledge. This will provide students with knowledge required to become employers and skilled or semi-skilled employees.

Overall ICT implementation is also a potential contributor to national GDP since a highly skilled, well informed, and skilled workforce will strengthen and complement multi-sectoral efforts aimed at poverty reduction (Chilimo & Ngulube 100). ICT creates jobs and opportunities, for example, in the nascent application and software sector. Local entrepreneurs can be supported to create local business solutions through ICT, growing and expanding the ICT sector. One of the reasons for extreme poverty in developing countries is the lack of affordable healthcare. ICT can be used to inform the masses about healthier living (Chilimo & Ngulube 100), exposing them to routines of healthcare, and giving counseling services for patients.

However, there are various factors that prevent the potential of ICT in poverty alleviation from being fully realized. One of them is lack of ICT knowledge among a large population in developing countries (Chilimo & Ngulube 106). This will necessitate that various components of ICT are kept practical and simple to make them more usable. In addition, the shortage of skilled and qualified ICT experts and personnel affects the uptake of new

technologies in developing countries. The focus, therefore, must be on training and long-term capacity building to ensure sustainability and long-term success. Finally, a lack of follow up to ICT projects by international NGOs prevents the scaling and replication of successful programs in other areas (Chilimo & Ngulube 109). This limits the potential effects of ICT in poverty alleviation.

Works Cited

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