DIGITAL INCLUSION: FUNDAMENTALS OF ECENTRE MANAGEMENT TRAINING PROGRAMME (2012) A WRITTEN ANALYSIS ON COMMUNITY NEEDS; AND EXPERIENCES OF eCENTRE MANAGERS (WESTERN CAPE)

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Abstract

This research report reflects on the experiences of the Digital Inclusion eCentre Management Training Programme delivered in 2012 - to 62 participants from 34 eCentres situated in the Western Cape. This roll-out was a result of a successful pilot which was delivered in 2011 - to 18 participants from 10 eCentres in the Western and Northern Cape regions. The Centre for Innovative Educational and Communication Technologies (CIECT), situated at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), South Africa designed, developed, localised and facilitated the programme.

CIECT, as a stakeholder within the Western Cape Knowledge Production and Coordination Hub (WCKPCH) focuses on Digital Inclusion and Social Innovation within Western Cape and Northern Cape communities (rural, deep-rural, urban and peri-urban). The WCKPCH's main objective is; to produce knowledge and coordinate innovation, existing and complex digital inclusion eSkills initiatives as part of a response to the South African National e-Skills Plan of Action; and aligned to the National Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF).

CIECT registered the programme through the South African Quality Authority (National Qualifications Framework/NQF Level 6). The Centre continuously monitors the Programme through research and internal evaluation. This is done in order to report on the impact, lessons learnt and to provide recommendations for further local and national delivery. The programme targeted eCentre Managers and other key role players at the community eCentres such as administrators; and even board members. Participants underwent relevant eSkills training to capacitate and enhance existing skills and knowledge. One of the main goals of the Programme was to capacitate participants to engage in ICT train-the-trainer interventions within their communities.

A case study approach was conducted to report on the 2012 Programme and experiences of the selected 62 eCentre Managers across 34 Western Cape eCentres (rural, deep-rural, urban and peri-urban). Since the aim of the Programme research was to identify community needs in relation to eSkills, the report will discuss findings and provide some recommendations. These findings include: a need for reliable infrastructure; limited time allocated for usage of eCentre services; more efforts needed toward empowering communities; certification of training Projects offered by community eCentres. This research report informs the impact of delivery to eCentres in the Western and Northern Cape; and for national scalability.

Keywords: eLearning, eSkills, digital inclusion, community eCentre, impact.

1 INTRODUCTION

The Western Cape Knowledge Production and Coordination Hub was established with a focus on Digital Inclusion and Social Integration within Western Cape and Northern Cape communities (rural, deep-rural, urban and peri-urban). The main objective of the Western Cape eSkills Hub is to produce knowledge and coordinate innovative, existing and complex digital inclusion eSkills initiatives as part of a response to the South African National e-Skills Plan of Action; and aligned to the Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF). Detailed information can be found in recent published work by the CIECT director (Stoltenkamp, 2011:6).

There are high expectations for quality training and support with regards to the implementation of eSkills initiatives in South Africa (Stoltenkamp, 2011:5). The Western Cape eSkills Hub specifically aims to contribute to the standardisation, implementation and evaluation of integrated blended ICT and ePedagogy training programmes which are able to inform policy development in relation to Digital

Inclusion and Social Innovation. More specifically, the Western Cape eSkills Hub focuses on the Digital Inclusion of eCentre Managers across the Western and Northern Cape regions in order for them to deliver effective programmes within their communities, making use of appropriate eSkills attained (Stoltenkamp, 2011:1). It should be highlighted that an overall number of 80 participants (representing 44 eCentres) – engaged in the Digital Inclusion eCentre Management Programme for the period 2011- 2012. The selected participants held various positions, namely: eCentre Managers, eCentre facilitators, Chair Persons, Deputy Chairperson, Secretaries, Diversity Chairperson, Development Managers, and Administrative Assistants.

2   PROGRAMME BACKGROUND AND FOCUS

The Centre for Innovative Educational and Communication Technologies (CIECT), University of the Western Cape designed, and developed a new, innovative Digital Inclusion: eCentre Management Training Programme. The CIECT team, having designed, localised, developed and implemented, went on to register the programme at NQF Level 6. The objective of the entire programme is based on theory, models, best practices and personal knowledge and experiences; and is aligned to the MTSF goals. Strategic Priority 4 of the MTSF is a key component as it seeks to highlight: "Ensuring that training and skills development initiatives in the country respond to the requirements of the economy, rural development challenges and social integration" (Stoltenkamp, 2011: Report, October 2011(v1.0): 6].

In 2011, the Digital Inclusion: eCentre Management Pilot Training Programme was offered to 18 participants, representing 10 eCentres. Participants came from the Western and Northern Cape provinces (rural, deep-rural, urban and peri-urban). The programme focused on different areas of the Instructional Design and the development of a blended training initiative, namely: (i) Analysis: Access; (ii) Design: Socialisation and Familiarisation; (iii) Development: Information exchange; (iv) Implementation: Maintaining substantive communication; and (v) Evaluation: Develop as a knowledge builder. The final impact and outcome of the pilot Programme was to deliver a successful Digital Inclusion Programme across the two selected provinces. It was indicated as a successful pilot Programme as an overall pass rate of 70% was achieved [Stoltenkamp, 2011: Report, October 2011(v1.0)].

For the purpose of this research report, the researchers will focus on the roll-out of the Programme in 2012, targeted at 62 eCentre Managers (representing 34 Western Cape eCentres in rural, deep rural and peri-urban. The programme was divided into three (3) training cohorts (March, August and October, 2012). [Refer to Appendix 2: Four (4) Training Cohorts, 2011- 2012]. The participants engaged in various assessment tasks which successfully constituted an overall pass rate of 61%.

3   RELATED RESEARCH

eCentres are also referred to as telecentres which is a general term. Others may refer to it by different terms or names depending on the type and its use, such as Multipurpose Community Telecentres; Community Tele Services Centres; Community Information Centres; Telekiosk; Community Access Points; and Telecottages among others. These different terminologies are often used interchangeably (Ariyabandu, 2009:10). Therefore, whichever terminology is used in relation to eCentres, the researchers can conclude that the notion or aspect of community and information has been incorporated or considered. In this research, the term eCentres will be applied throughout the research report.

The roles played by eCentres are none questionable. It is a shared community facility for those who cannot acquire ICT services due to challenges such as affordability and access; specifically developing marginalised communities. eCentres are not just a place to access ICT services, but also regarded as one of the tools which foster economic development. This implies that ICTs play key roles in improving peoples' lives as it offers services for social and economic development (APCICT, 2010; Ariyabandu, 2009; Bailey, 2009).

On the other hand, eCentres are not easy to implement and sustain due to the demand for resources and continuous support. Harris, Kumar, and Balaji, (2003) supports this argument by indicating that, "the sustainability of telecentres has emerged as a key issue in the debate surrounding the use of ICTs for development". Due to such demands its operations have for a long time faced a lot of challenges across the globe and in particular in poor nations.

Further research has supported the above argument on challenges faced by eCentres. McConnell (2001:10-11) provides a list of numerous challenges that face operations of eCentres such as: the need to build the independence of communities so as not to rely on outside support; how to overcome illiteracy as a barrier in utilisation of ICT services rendered by eCentres; public awareness education on roles of eCentres at poor communities; meeting the community's training needs, considering their different cultural aspects; and providing up to date services and infrastructure. These challenges are similar to the ones identified during the delivery of this particular Programme discussed under research findings and challenges (refer to section 5).

South Africa is not an exception when it comes to the implementation of eCentres, as numerous challenges are encountered. Most challenges have resulted within poor communities in South Africa, not linked to better resourced communities across the cities. Therefore, efforts are being made by the government to deliver eSkills in such communities as it recognises that "e-Skills are fundamental to addressing societal challenges and better positioning itself within the Information Society and Knowledge Economy" (Skills Summit, 2010: 2). Accordingly, eCentres in South Africa have been established across communities so as to ensure access to ICT services creating a community that is skilled, knowledgeable and thus improving personal lives.

A previous report based on the pilot Programme implemented by CIECT in 2011 indicated that eCentre Managers who received eSkills training enabled them to seek better opportunities elsewhere. Following, this left a gap within respective eCentres. In this case, certain efforts are being considered, whereby administrators, board members, secretaries among others are also selected to engage in the Programme, hoping for applicable transferral of skills. Further efforts to encourage community members to volunteer at the eCentres, so as to avoid losing all key skilled personnel are also being made.

The researchers argue that there is a need to conduct more research related to the retention of capacitated eCentre Managers, by possibly improving salaries; and moreover upgrading the infrastructure at the eCentres. This would curb such migrations. Consequently, reducing the shortage of skilled workers within needy communities, would at the same time reduce the documented shortages of eSkills across the world as cited by eSEW, 2010 in (Mitrovic, Sharif, Taylor, & Wesso, 2012; McConnell, 2001).

4   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used a case study approach. A total of 62 eCentre Managers from 34 eCentres across Western Cape communities (rural, deep-rural, urban and peri-urban) were selected for the 2012 Programme which was divided in to 3 cohorts as indicated in Appendix 2. A qualitative research design was applied, and questionnaires were administered. In addition observation during a face-to-face workshop was conducted; and feedback from discussion forums were analysed.

Before embarking on the face-to-face training, a learner profile questionnaire was distributed as a pre-requisite to the 62 participants. It should be noted that all participants completed the questionnaire, which was analysed. This questionnaire focused on detailed prior knowledge of the participants, which included the following areas: access to resources; resource and time management; skills/eSkills, competencies and attitudes and team work. Such information on participants before they embarked on online and offline environments was relevant as it enabled facilitators and coordinators to collate a comprehensive analysis.

During the face-to-face phase, the researchers used a mixed method approach to compile information and to establish the pedagogical value of the training course; and its subsequent impact on eCentre Managers' performance at their respective eCentres. Firstly, the researchers observed participants – during a face-to-face facilitation week (specifically, cohort3, 2012). Whilst engaging in the face-to-face presentations, the participants were expected to present on the benefits of the eTools provided to market their eCentres; as well as the pedagogical value they would be expecting to derive from specific eTools to enable them to develop new training programmes for their communities.

Lastly, there was an analysis of the feedback from discussion forums. Sixty-two (62) of the participants had been given a task to design and distribute questionnaires in their communities, with the aim of finding out the relevance of their specific eCentres in the community, and some of the pressing needs the communities wanted addressed. Furthermore, participants were to inquire from their community members if they would be willing to volunteer at the eCentres and if so, why?

5   RESEARCH FINDINGS

Below were the most detectable themes highlighted through the responses which have been linked to literature on eCentres and its impact on communities. These themes are of importance to the stakeholders in the eCentres.

Such themes ranged from: (i) improved eSkills and confidence levels of eCentre Managers and community members; (ii) community members willing to volunteer at eCentres; (iii) practical exposure and pedagogical value of eTools; (iv) relevance of the eCentres to the communities; (v) course expectations ; (vi) time management; (vii) reading, writing and computer literacy skills; (viii) importance of face-to-face interaction and team work; (ix) access to resources and need for reliable infrastructure; (x) public awareness to empower communities; (xi) appropriate eSkills enhances self-directed learning; and (xii) certification of community members for specific training programmes.

5.1   Improved eSkills and confidence levels of eCentre managers and community members

The training Programme brought with it value to participants by seeking to enhance their images as motivated, skilled and dedicated eCentre Managers. In addition, the training Programme also improved their confidence levels as eSkills improved throughout the entire Programme.

As the eCentre Manager becomes skilled and more confident, they would be able to market the importance of community development. Hence, the training Programme reiterated the critical importance of local communities becoming active participants, rather than passive recipients of services. Moreover, the researchers found that the community members had expressed their interest as volunteers to assist with eCentre services.

5.2   Community members willing to volunteer at eCentres

A major challenge reported that impacted on the operations of the eCentres under study, was the shortage of staff. The Coordinator of the Programme requested that two eCentre staff members from each eCentre attend the Programme. This was important for sustainability and the transferral of skills. However, this request could not be met due to staff shortages. One way of dealing with this challenge could be through encouraging community members to volunteer at the eCentres.

Respondents in the community, who were interviewed by the eCentre Managers indicated that they would be willing to volunteer at the eCentres. Even though only a few members indicated the need for a stipend, the majority were willing to work for free, as they would expect to attain eSkills and management skills within the respective eCentres. This would capacitate them to become change agents in their communities.

Furthermore, potential school learner volunteers requested that they be allowed to volunteer during weekends in order to attain eSkills. This would enable them to transfer skills to the communities; and more importantly assist them to become more employable. This links with work of Razak (2009:225) who indicated that, the major objectives of telecentre's in countries like "Malaysia among others are to upgrade the community Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) literacy level, and to provide access to Internet''.

5.3   Practical exposure and pedagogical value of eTools

This training session proved to be of much interest to most participants because of the practical, hands-on aspects. The facilitation methodology used, was 'show-tell-and-do'; thus the participants were exposed to discussions around eTools; related content and the actual creation of digital posters, digital stories, video narrated PowerPoint presentations, podcasts; the use of video editing tools to enhance marketing material; social media; and the use of communication tools for collaborative writing and networking.

At the end of the face-to-face session, participants were expected to present on the value of the training Programme, and specifically the use and benefits of the eTools to enhance their eSkills; overall marketing approaches; and the various uses of communication eTools to interact in communities of practice for networking and sharing. Moreover, the interactive Programme enhanced participants' creativity and innovation.

5.4 Relevance of the eCentres to the communities

To identify the needs of a community, research indicates that a needs assessment must be conducted. Such an exercise should also involve the participation of key role players such as policy makers, service providers and community members. Identifying community needs helps to determine the survival of community members (Sharma, Lanum, & Suarez-Balazar, 2002; Miller, 2005). In this research report, the identification of community needs helped to determine some of the issues that needed attention.

Research on the relevance of eCentres for communities is not new, as telecentre's in developed countries offer more services as compared to poor nations. For example, "telecentre's in the United States of America may provide resources and technical facilities for self or guided study and for video conference, e-mail and talk-back TV access to specialist tutors" (Brooks,1999). So far none of the participants in this study mentioned such advanced services. The researchers can therefore conclude that these South African eCentres generally need to improve their services.

The respondents, who were community members, indicated that the eCentres were of enormous benefit in meeting their community needs. They maintained that some of the core services offered by the eCentres focused on: printing, free email, free internet, research for school programmes, general research, and free access to government services, informal training, formal training and laminating documents. Such services empower them in different ways. However, despite these services the majority of eCentres indicated that they are not in a position to meet the demands of the community at large.

5.5 Course expectations

"When learners and teachers meet for the first time, they may bring with them different expectations concerning not only the learning process in general, but also concerning what will be learned in a particular course and how it will be learned" (Brindley, 1984 as cited in Russell, 2009). Learner expectations guide the facilitators on some of the issues they need to pay attention to when designing a course; and even during the actual facilitation. Below is a summary of some of the expectations as shared by the participants:

- to hear other participants' opinions;

- to be empowered by learning new ideas and be able to utilise the acquired skills/eSkills so as to improve their eCentre services;

- to acquire specific eSkills, making use of computers;

- to better the understanding of organisations so as to meet organisational goals;

- to be able to plough back gained skills at eCentres/community for efficient management;

- to gain in-depth knowledge on eCentre Management and training-of-trainer skills;

- to have a strong team leader so as to be able to support and encourage team; and

- to learn more technical computer skills (such as trouble-shooting).

5.6 Time management

For the purpose of measuring their commitment to learning, the participants were asked to provide how they would classify themselves on time management aspect. The majority of the respondents (95%) indicated that they are "always ahead of schedule"; while the remaining 5% indicated that they needed reminders to get things done before the deadline. Another aspect addressed the need for time related to personal studies. The majority of the participants indicated that they had more than 8 hours a week for personal study, while others had between 4-3 hours. This question was important as it guided the course facilitators on the design and development of assessment tasks; and submission dates. Research indicates that student learners need to have time management skills in order to succeed. This can be achieved by learning "to self-monitor your commitments and how much time you spend on them" (Johnson, 2011:7).

5.7 Reading, writing and computer literacy skills

Reading ability determines understanding and performance of any individual (Beare, undated). According to York University (2009), every learner must acknowledge that reading is part and parcel of one's "approach to learning". This implies that one must be able to read on their own without seeking help, this eventually indicates self-dependence in completion of specific course of study. This will lead to achieving personal set objectives of a particular course. In this research the majority of the participants' (99%) indicated that they had good reading skills, while the rest indicated they could rate themselves as fair readers.

Participants were requested to rate their word processing skills which was important as they would be expected to make use of such basic eSkills. The majority rated themselves as good, while others indicated themselves as fairly good. It was noted that most participants stated that they had basic computer literacy skills, namely, copying and pasting text. However, the majority of them indicated that they required more advanced eSkills such as trouble-shooting

Participants were asked to rate their writing skills; and 99% indicated that they were fairly good writers. Writing as well as reading skills are key elements for every individual who receives any form of training. Any learner should be able to articulate, conceptualise and understand instructions and key points. The researchers noted that with the 2012 cohorts, the participants coped well with reading and understanding instructions. However, in the pilot group (2011) some participants who had made claims of competent computer skills, struggled during the face-to-face training week; and could not cope with basic tasks such as copying and pasting. Hence facilitators had to give certain participants extensive support as the tasks became more advanced and demanding (e.g. creation of digital stories, podcasts and digital posters). Moreover, facilitators would have time to engage in deeper discussions, rather than focusing on basic literacy skills.

5.8 Importance of face-to-face interaction and team work

Face-to-face communication has been there since time immemorial. Ninety-nine (99%) percent of the participants indicated in the learner profiles, that they did not consider face-to-face interaction as important. This analysis should have enabled the facilitators to prepare accordingly; however these findings contradicted the actual experiences of participants during the face-to-face and online phases. The participants needed continuous support as they were exposed to the effective use of various eTools. Research indicates that face-to-face should never be taken for granted even when we "are aware of the notion that most of the information we get in a face-to-face communication is NOT from the words themselves, but rather from body language, facial expression, and tone of voice" (Tarsiero, 2006).

Since the face-to-face training may entail team work, participants were tested on how they would feel about working in a group set-up. Majority (above 95%) of the respondents indicated that they prefer working independently. The rest indicated that they learn well in groups, as well as pay attention to lecturers' as they take class notes. Team work facilitates and enables participants/students to learn most effectively as it allows interactions with others (Oakley; Hanna; Kuzmyn & Felder, 2007:270). The researchers noted during the face-to-face interventions that the participants actively engaged in team tasks; even though the learner profiles indicated their preference for individual tasks.

5.9 Access to resources and need for reliable infrastructure

There is need to always understand who makes use of eCentres as this enables the accurate allocation of relevant resources where needed. This brings about good service delivery ethics as communities are well served; and enables the identification of ways to reach out to those not aware of such available resources in their communities in order to maximise the benefits of access (Gomez & Camacho, Undated).

In this research study, community members indicated that they had no challenges when it comes to accessing the eCentres services. Access to the eCentres means that there is no discrimination and services are available to everyone. Users are treated in the same manner. The only limitation they indicated in this regard, was that time allocated to each individual was not enough to carry out their intended activities. This shows that eCentres are very crucial to communities and the services are very relevant in tackling ICT shortages in the communities.

Furthermore, eCentre Managers and community members indicated that they needed sufficient and reliable infrastructure. They complained about the lack of adequate computers; poor internet connection; and space (i.e. in the specific eCentre) - to accommodate the users is limited. This theme was further supported by the World Bank report which states that: "infrastructure is agreeably the core of Telecentre operations. Telecentre infrastructure is the nerve of its services therefore must be reliable and effective at all times'' (Mayanja, Undated). Failure to improve on infrastructure may result in eCentres not meeting their set objectives. The policy makers need to consider how to tackle the infrastructure issues.

Some respondents further suggested that in order to make the eCentres more effective and reliable, more services can be incorporated such as: increased computer-literacy skills training; eMarketing training; extended operating hours during the weekends. Hence they suggested that volunteers could work during weekends. On the other hand, this might not be as easy as expected. Shakeel et al., 2001[cited in Abbott and Yoong (2005:430)], noted that ensuring adequate infrastructure can be challenging due to decision-makers not having the necessary access to financial resources and expertise required.

5.10 Public awareness to empower communities

eCentre's exist for the benefit of the communities as their common focus is on the use of digital technologies to support communities, in areas such as "economic, educational, and social development; reducing isolation, bridging the digital divide, promoting health issues, and creating economic opportunities" (Aji, Yusof, Osman & Yusop (2010:72). In poor countries like Tanzania, eCentres are being used as "an avenue for providing basic training in computer skills, like word processing" (Esselaar and Associates, 2001), cited in Twaakyondo, Bhalalusesa & Ndalichako (2002:1). In this research report, even though the eCentre Managers may ensure that community members who lack skills still receive the services they require, for example:-typing CVs for them; searching for information to complete assignments; research for business purposes; and sending emails. The respondents indicated they were receiving all necessary support, but require more capacity building training Programmes. A participant stated: "I want to be able to do things for myself". Thus participants would be enabled to be competent when looking for employment; or when making use of ICTs, as such skills are relevant in all employment sectors.

Recent research showed that in South Africa, "some communities using eCentres are not very aware of what ICTs can offer, although the youth generally tend to be more aware (Rothschild, 2008:27)". This therefore gives an indication that communities need more public awareness campaigns. This argument was supported by respondents who requested the need for public awareness across the communities related to the relevance of the eCentres. This is one way of ensuring development within communities with right information, as some of them may not be aware of the eCentres. Rothschild (2008) further indicates that eCentres are regarded as tools of development.

5.11 Appropriate eSkills enhances self-directed learning

There are many scholarly interpretations of the term self-directed learning. Hiemstra (1994:1) indicates that self-directed learning can be regarded as any "study form in which individuals have primary responsibility for planning, implementing, and even evaluating the effort". Brefi Group (undated) argues that self-directed learners individually take responsibility for decisions about their learning and may sometimes accept to work with others when need be so, as to achieve set objectives. Therefore it is about commitment in this regards.

Besides, "self-directed learning does not necessarily mean all learning will take place in isolation from others" as the learners may seek help when necessary (Hiemstra, 1994:1). Possessing the right skills facilitates self-directed learning. This was demonstrated by respondents who took part in the research. Those who had ICT skills reported it was easy for them to carry their activities at the eCentres without relying on Managers and their teams. On the other hand, those with no skills expressed their frustration as they had to always seek help. As a result they hope every community member, who is interested can receive relevant eSkills - as this will empower them to become self-directed users. In this research report it means that, individual learners can become capacitated to "take increasingly more responsibility for various decisions associated with" their learning endeavors as indicated by Hiemstra (1994:1).

5.12 Certification of community members for specific training programmes

It is generally accepted that people are motivated by rewards. Nelson (1994) indicates that rewarding participants with certificates motivates and at the same time participants feel recognised for their efforts engaged in the course or Programme. Tom (2008) agrees with this argument, but also cites that there are other ways to motivate learners, such as: making sure that your course has value to the students; ensuring that learners receive relevant support and setting clear expectations on the course. These two arguments are in line with this programme, as clear goals were set from the beginning as provided in the background section. The participants were aware of the Programme and learners also had necessary support through all phases. Moreover, they were provided Certificates of Attendance and Competence (NQF, Level 6).

The majority of the respondents at the community level, who were interviewed by the eCentre Managers, indicated that they would like to receive certificates on any training received at their respective eCentres. At the time of this research report, not all eCentres had implemented processes for certification.

Participants indicated that certification is one way of empowering communities as they are able to seek better opportunities. One of the respondents said, "I can use my certificate to look for employment". The researchers recommend that efforts be made by those eCentre Managers who currently do not have implementation plans. Community members also indicated that certification would attract more people to engage and complete training programmes.

6   REPORTED CHALLENGES

This research report discussed the challenges which were reported by participants and facilitators. Such issues need be addressed so as to enable the Programme to meet its objectives [Refer to Stoltenkamp, 2011: Report, October 2011(v1.0): 29].

6.1   Challenges faced by participants (eCentre managers)

Most challenges cited by different participants made reference to their respective eCentres. Some of the prevalent challenges cited included outdated infrastructure, technology (hardware and software), unstable internet connections, regular power outages, limited office space, short time allocated for the use of resources, lack of eSkills (for both the eCentre Managers and the community members), and need for public awareness on eCentres.

In addition to these challenges participants highlighted the issue of "political interference (infringement)". This was demonstrated in group discussions during the face-to-face sessions where selected eCentre Managers and Development Managers questioned the selection certain board members and chairpersons. They felt that these selected members were not linked to the daily operations; and would not be able to create new Programmes and transfer skills.

The major question on how best to tackle the issues above is directed to all stakeholders and especially those responsible to ensure reliable infrastructure. The Programme's objectives will not be met if these issues are not addressed; and moreover will not impact community development.

6.2   Challenges faced by facilitators

It is vital that all stakeholders commit to the selection process of eCentre Managers (participants). Currently the CIECT team has to go through tedious processes of contacting stakeholders. Thus far, only Cape Access, City of Cape Town and USAASA have been assisting with the selection of participants. Stakeholders need to be involved at all levels, so as to understand the objectives of the Programme. A major challenge for the facilitators of the Programme was the last minute (day before) changes that stakeholders expected. These included wanting to select more attendees; and even change and select new members. This was not allowed as it would impact the extensive teaching and administrative processes (accommodation, travelling, catering, venues and facilitation) - conducted in advance for the delivery of the Programme.

Another major challenge is the lack of available training computer facilities at the hub (situate at the University of the Western Cape). It should be noted that the available venues are being use for teaching-and-learning purposes.

7   RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

The research report has reflected on the impact and lessons learnt of the Programme. It highlights the need for eSkills training and its relevance to the community. Communities are empowered and some respondents even indicated that they would be able to get employment once they have attained eSkills. Hence, the researchers will conduct follow-up research related to the retention of eCentre Managers at specific eCentres after the completion of the Programme. The Programme has impacted on the attainment and effective use of eSkills by the eCentre Managers. Thus follow-up research would also be conducted to review the implementation and the actual transferral of skills to other eCentre Managers and community members, which should inevitable lead to the development of the community.

There is a need for more investment in reliable infrastructure and more time allocated for community members (users) within the specific eCentre. Hence, there is a need for follow-up research related to the infrastructure within the eCentres (specifically those who had already been selected to engage in the Programme). The majority of the community respondents expressed the need for more eSkills training projects offered by the eCentres. Further research about the attainment of skills by volunteers at these eCentres and how they could contribute to the development of more eSkills training projects should be conducted.

This research report reflected on the 2012 Training Programme, Digital Inclusion: Fundamentals of eCentre Management and specifically on the attainment of eSkills, facilitation skills, eCentre Management skills in order to enhance creativity, communication and innovation within the eCentres. This Programme is part of the Digital Inclusion and Social Innovation track of the WCKPCH. Only when change occurs in these dedicated eCentre Managers who we envisage will eventually be able to deliver programmes within their own eCentres; will we begin to have conversations around community transformation; transformed eCentres; and self-directed citizens (Stoltenkamp, 2011: Report, October 2011(v1.0): 32).

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