

REALISING POLITICAL STABILITY IN NIGERIA THROUGH ICT-TRANSFORMED GOVERNMENT AT GRASSROOTS

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ABSTRACT

Political processes are undergoing profound changes due to the challenges imposed by globalization processes to the legitimacy of policy actors and to the effectiveness of policy-making. *Political stability* emerges from the perceptions of the likelihood that the government will not be destabilized or overthrown by unconstitutional or violent means, including domestic violence and terrorism. Civil conflicts can lead to the destruction of limited resources, economic infrastructure, institutions of political stability and governance, and ethnic and social fabric. Public services are failing the poor in most countries making building public confidence in e-Government remain an agenda item for the countries. Nigerian Governments have been consistently facing challenges to reposition, reinvent, and realign themselves in light of increasing expectations for demonstrable results and enhanced responsiveness for a more cost effective, citizen-centric, and networked government evidenced by several incessant conflicts arising from marginalization of grassroots communities. Access to primary and authentic source of information at the grassroots is key to transparent and responsive government. The ICTs support for traditional governance is thus an effort aimed at building the capacity of indigenous political institutions, to participate in modern governance, have access to information and knowledge as well as to share experiences among themselves and with other stakeholders. This paper examines challenges and opportunities for transforming government and building an information-rich society. It provides strategies to digitize local government administration as a panacea to gaining access to authentic and reliable demographic data/information for meaningful decision-making processes towards attaining political stability from the grassroots level of governance using Nigeria's Ondo State Local Government Areas as case study. It concludes by advocating the adoption and implementation of an "EATING" model, a bottom-up to participatory community engagement and development towards achieving political stability.

Keywords: ICT-transformed, local government, political stability, responsiveness, transparency

1. INTRODUCTION

Governance refers to the relationship between those who govern and those who are governed. Local government plays an increasing role in our lives and has faced up to many new challenges. Principally revolving around the need to provide quality services as economically as possible, against a background of greater accountability and new

forms of political governance. Real positive change in the quest for a sustainable world begins at the local level, on the ground. Yet the prospect of participating in building sustainable communities can be daunting for community groups and the person on the street, as well as for professionals not used to dealing with public participation. In any government context, trust plays a vital role in helping citizens overcome perceived risks.

Trust makes citizens comfortable sharing personal information, make online government transaction, and acting on Government advices. Thus, trust is a significant notion that should be critically investigated to help both researchers and practitioners to understand citizens' acceptance to Government. Collaboration with a repressive or autocratic regime has the potential to exacerbate community tensions. Introduction of new technologies could adversely affect the traditional livelihood of the community as well as the collective resources and healthy environment commonly held by the people. Income disparity resulting from investment could also lead to domestic inequities leading to social unrest. Civil conflicts can lead to the destruction of limited resources, economic infrastructure, institutions of political stability and governance, and ethnic and social fabric. The international community has recognised that humanitarian assistance cannot substitute for the broad participation by civil society in the management of its own political, economic and social development (**RIPA, 2008**).

New information technologies are being applied swiftly to all levels of government service: local, county, regional and even national and international. Information technology (IT) is being used to improve data management and data sharing, planning and decision support, service delivery, and more. Application areas affected by government mandates to improve e-government service include healthcare and safety; law enforcement, security, and justice; education; land use; and many others. Information technology is being used to increase public access to information, to provide more convenient and timely transaction services, and to increase citizen participation in the establishment of government regulations and other processes. Social, public, and legal issues (such as privacy, confidentiality, trust and security) are evolving from governments' new ways of doing business (**Chen et al. 2007**). All departments and agencies are under pressure to improve governance and management, set standards for performance, be more transparent and accessible and win public trust and confidence by demonstrating the effective and efficient management of public services. Consequently, governments around the world have been subjected to pressure from

globalisation, fiscal demands, evolving societies, citizen expectations, international institutions, etc. A combination of economic, political, strategic business and technical advances has positioned the public sector to transform the way it orchestrates the business of government. Good governance has become the guiding principle for transforming and revitalising public services in order to ensure their effective, efficient and transparent delivery.

Access to information is key to transparent government. Without it, those in power cannot be held accountable for their actions and decisions whilst citizens cannot measure the effectiveness of specific policies and programmes or engage in informed debate. Hence, access to primary and authentic source of information at the grassroots is key to transparent and responsive government. Integrating information and communication technologies (ICTs) into governance processes can greatly enhance the delivery of public services to all citizens. ICT integration will not only improve the performance of governance systems, it will also transform relationships amongst stakeholders, thereby influencing policymaking processes and regulatory frameworks. As e-government becomes more widespread, it is the government's aim to allow citizens and businesses to monitor the progress of their own cases via the Internet, and to be able to receive information on case procedures, decisions and case processing times. The responsiveness of government is not only based on the creation of a more open and transparent administration, but also on the active involvement and consultation of citizens and users. The ICTs support for traditional governance is thus an effort aimed at building the capacity of indigenous political institutions, to participate in modern governance, have access to information and knowledge as well as to share experiences among themselves and with other stakeholders. The reasons underpinning this paper are the overall constraints in terms of local economic development and the cultural traditions, and especially the nature of the transmission of indigenous knowledge, based on oral tradition, personal observation and experience, which leaves room for argument and disputes leading sometimes to litigation, armed conflict, death and destruction.

International politics has traditionally been characterized by secrecy of information and limited accessibility to communicative structures such as intergovernmental organizations; as well as by exclusive diplomatic rituals, behind-closed-doors decision-making processes, hierarchies among actors and centralization of power resources (**Hockings, 2006**). New technologies, among other factors, are challenging this situation through a number of inherently built potentialities: easier and more affordable access to information leads to higher expectations in terms of transparency, for instance through electronic forums and consultations. This, in turns, translates into broader opportunities for participation, and raises demands for more open and democratic decision-making processes. These transformations suggest that a more explicit scholarly attention to processes of communication in the supra-national/trans-national space is timely: as technologies are transforming political communication within state boundaries (**Blumler & Coleman, 2001**), we believe it is no longer possible to keep under-estimating the reality and relevance of political communication beyond “the national”. In looking at contemporary political processes, characterized by diversity, dynamics and complexity, it is necessary to adopt a comprehensive approach to communication modalities, one which is able to combine and properly weight the different modes through which communication creates and nurtures world politics: languages and frames, off-line and on-line interactions, innovation in processes through societal learning (**Padovani and Pavan, 2009**).

1.1 An ICT-Transformed Government and Society

The information and communication technology (ICT) revolution is shaping our world, public and private. It has created a new playing field for worldwide competition with an increasing premium for knowledge, learning, agility, and connectedness. It has made it possible to capture and deploy information and knowledge for all kinds of activity. It has also put innovation and ICT more than ever at the heart of smart development. Can the transformative power of the ICT revolution be harnessed to generate sustainable growth, empower the poor, and

extend public, health, and educational services beyond the richest markets? Can ICT accelerate productivity, innovation, and learning in government and poor communities as it has been doing in business? Can ICT become the platform for state modernization and economic inclusion? Information technology promises to be the catalyst for an unprecedented productivity surge, provided that investment in the technology is complemented by investment in organizational capital, processes, and culture (**Brynolfsson, 2009**). But for the majority of mainstream development practitioners, ICT, e-government, and e-society applications remain a specialist domain with very limited influence on their own development thinking and practice (**Hanna, 2010**).

2. BACKGROUND

Governance refers to the relationship between those who govern and those who are governed. On a political level it is the relationship between the government and its citizens and includes three requirements: (1) to know the present state, (2) to know where it needs to go, and (3) to know how it is progressing in the journey—somewhat analogous to what consultants call a gap analysis. It also involves three areas of decision making: who is governing, who is being governed, and what resources/assets are to be deployed in the process. Creating information rich societies is a key element of poverty reduction and sustainable development. Giving voice to the poor and helping them apply their knowledge is a key element of combating poverty. Increasingly, governments are making use of electronic methods to deliver public services. Governments are therefore expected to be responsive to social change, address public concerns, deliver effective government programmes, manage public funds efficiently, implement the principles of good governance, etc. Critical interfacing and purposeful implementation of governance-related cultural issues of concern, namely: democracy; accountability and transparency; collective responsibility for peace, security and stability; indigenous knowledge; intellectual property rights; cultural preservation as well as the mandatory involvement and active participation of civil society in development process would achieve political stability. In the

developing world, however, the potential of ICTs for effective governance remains largely unexplored and unexploited (**Misuraca, 2007**).

In spite of the democratic progress and economic growth, several nations face considerable challenges that could threaten political stability, including persistent poverty, violent guerrilla conflicts, autocratic leaders, drug trafficking, increasing crime, and the rise of radical populism in several countries. In most countries, weaknesses remain in the state's ability to deliver public services, ensure accountability and transparency, and advance the rule of law to control corruption. Governance is broadly defined by the World Bank as *the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised*. The individual measures of governance perceptions were assigned to six categories capturing key dimensions of governance: **1. Voice and accountability:** the extent to which a country's citizens are able to participate in selecting their government, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of association, and free media. **2. Political stability and absence of violence:** perceptions of the likelihood that the government will not be destabilized or overthrown by unconstitutional or violent means, including domestic violence and terrorism. **3. Government effectiveness:** the quality of public services, the quality of the civil service and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government's commitment to such policies. **4. Regulatory quality:** the ability of the government to formulate and implement sound policies and regulations that permit and promote private sector development. **5. Rule of law:** the extent to which agents have confidence in and abide by the rules of society, and in particular the quality of contract enforcement, the police, and the courts, as well as the likelihood of crime and violence. **6. Control of corruption:** the extent to which public power is kept from being exercised for private gain, including both petty and grand forms of corruption, as well as capture of the state by elites and private interests (**Fabiano, 2008**).

Finally, a major ICT challenge stems from threats to the democratization process that are associated with the potential for government systems and firm data systems to

be compromised (**Hinson, 2005**). Indeed with reports of increasing Internet fraud, identity theft scams and hackers breaking into the data systems of such technologically advanced sites as major multi-national corporations that spend millions of dollars on Internet security and firewalls, and the Pentagon in the United States, the threat of compromised security for developing countries such as Ghana is very real.

2.1 Trust and Openness

Building public confidence in e-Government remains an agenda item for most countries. Achieving this is a gradual process as businesses and citizens gain increasing exposure to, and experience with, electronic interactions through e-commerce, e-banking and e-Government. The provision of online information relating to government activities and performance is widespread across all the countries. This new channel has enabled governments to become more transparent as it provides a cost-effective method of disseminating information. For example all the studied countries make most legislative information and policies freely available online, and businesses can more easily access relevant company legislation and guidance through government portals. Many countries have enacted freedom of information legislation. This gives citizens rights to access all non-confidential information held by public authorities. This legislation has increased demand for information and ICT is helping government to meet this demand efficiently. To date e-democracy has been a much smaller part of national programmes than some initial visions of e-Government suggested. E-consultation is being increasingly used, though usually on an ad hoc and local basis. A few e-voting pilot trials have been conducted in countries such as the USA, France and Germany. However, while trials and small scale use of live e-voting continue, concerns over security and the potential for fraud remain. These barriers must be overcome if we are to see more widespread use.

According to Ann **Macintosh** (2008) in *"E-Democracy and E-Participation Research in Europe"*, numerous political theorists agree that decision-making processes are democratically inadequate, even spurious, unless they are combined with relatively equal and extensive opportunities for citizens,

communities, and groups to help shape decision-making agendas. During 2004 to 2005 the UK government funded the national project on local e-democracy as part of a £80 million National Project Program aiming to help drive the modernization of local government services. The e-democracy project had the following five high-level objectives:

1. to encourage all local authorities to consider the ways in which they can use e-democracy tools to enhance local democracy and to develop locally appropriate strategies for implementing such tools where relevant.
2. to ensure that the knowledge and experience of e-democracy that already exists is systematically exposed and shared across local government to the benefit of all.
3. to develop new tools that support or enhance local democratic practice both within local government and beyond.
4. to provide a focal point for democratic innovation and the dissemination of best practice.
5. to begin a sustainable process of electronically enabled participation and engagement that complements existing democratic structures and processes.

This resulted in two main e-Participation strands based on top-down government-led e-Participation initiatives and ground-up citizen-led e-Participation initiatives.

2.2 Government and Politics

Good Governance has consequently become the defining governance mechanism (the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented) of modern times. Significant financial, intellectual and physical resources have been committed to enabling good governance to become better established transnationally, nationally and sub-nationally, especially where international financial assistance is involved. The UN states that good governance has eight major characteristics: "It is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. It assures that corruption is minimised, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of society" (RIPA, 2008). The Internet has connected the world from east to west, north to south. The

whole world is a global village where there is no constraint of time or geography. There are people in the networked world who are trying to build systems for various business and social goals, including governments that are building systems for good governance and help people to do things better.

The outbreak of civil conflict leading to violence can be traced, in part, to the interaction of economic motives and opportunities with long-standing grievances over poor economic governance, inequitable distribution of economic resources, exclusionary and repressive political systems, inter-ethnic disputes, and the inability of states to provide internal and territorial security. Increased awareness, concern and responsibility for issues which include: "corrupt practices, respect for human rights, violence and security, conflict prevention, access to resources and services, distribution of wealth and benefits, and environmental damage" will contribute positively to management of conflicts and enhance relations between corporations and the community. Issues that need to be looked at include the history, if any, of armed resistance and insurgency in the region against governments, and the history, if any, of violent crime and/or widespread use of private security firms or unaccountable security forces. An examination of the environment and the community needs to ascertain whether or not environmental degradation in the area affects the traditional livelihood of the community, and what has been the experience, if any, of the community's past experience with the environmental damage attributed to private sector activities. Multi-stakeholderism as has been defined by authorities: "processes which aim to bring together all major stakeholders in a new form of communication and decision-finding (and possibly decision-making) structure on a particular issue; are based on the recognition of the importance of achieving equity and accountability in communication between stakeholders; involve equitable representation of three or more stakeholder groups and their views; are based on democratic principles of transparency and participation; aim to develop partnerships and strengthen networks between and among stakeholders" would go a long way at ensuring political stability.

2.3 Transforming Government: Vision and Journey

Most governments face budget pressures and shortfalls, caused by increased demand for services combined with insufficient tax revenues. In higher and middle income countries, aging populations add a huge burden to health, pension, and other support systems. In poorer developing countries, budget pressures are much higher and caused by additional factors such as fast-growing populations, nascent social protection systems to compensate for the volatility of the global economy, global competition for FDI through tax reductions, and the drying of some traditional sources of revenues such as tariffs on international trade. New programs are introduced when economic outlooks look promising, then when cyclical budget shortfalls occur, politicians are reluctant to cut programs—particularly when faced with a huge backlog of unmet social and popular demands. Many governments face the combination of increasing costs of public services and rising demand of these services. Governments are also facing rising expectations for demonstrable results and enhanced responsiveness, from citizens and businesses. Their clients and employees understand how business enterprises constantly improve services, and they have come to expect and even demand similar information, services, and support from government. This is particularly the case for middle income developing countries where e-business has been spreading. Moreover, multinationals are setting the standards for service through their global services, client support, as well as their own service requirements from local governments. Citizens are increasingly mobile and they are expected to be connected to government information, services, and assistance anytime and everywhere. These developments make government clients in developing countries even more impatient in dealing with slow and multiple bureaucracies, even for simple services. There are also the challenges of rising income inequality and asymmetric access to information, knowledge, and opportunities. In many poor countries, public services are exclusively available to the wealthy and middle class in the major urban areas, if at all. Public services are failing the poor in most countries. Whatever services are

provided, they are poor quality, provided inefficiently and at high costs, and are a major source for bribery and corruption. As new technologies are implemented, governments face the further challenge of making public services accessible to all citizens through multiple channels. A digital divide may further reinforce the service divide by reducing the pressure from the well-served classes for reforming and improving public services across the board. And the digital divide is not only about access to ICT, but also relates to the associated skills to deal with Internet-based information and e-services (**Hanna, 2010**).

3. GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA

Nigeria is a constitutional democracy and operates a federal system of government. Nigeria, with a population of more than 150 million, is a highly populated country with a wide diversity of peoples. The population is made up of about 374 distinct ethnic groups. Three of them, Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba are the major groups and constitute over 40 per cent of the population. In fact, about 10 ethnic linguistic groups constitute more than 80% of the population: the other large groups are Ijaw, Tiv, Ibibio, Kanuri, Nupe, Gwari, Igala, Jukun, Idoma, Fulani, Edo, and Urhobo. The gender divide of Nigeria's population, as indicated by the last census in 2006, reflects an unusual imbalance in favour of male dominance; 51% male: 49% female (**Osaisai, 2009**).

3.1 Nigerian Constitution

The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (**1999**) provides for the operation of three tiers of government, at the Federal, State and Local levels. As at today (2010), the Nigerian federation consists of a Federal Government at the apex and thirty-six states, and the Federal Capital territory which includes the administrative capital, Abuja. There are also 774 Municipal Councils or Local Government Areas in the federation. The Federal Government has the exclusive responsibility for foreign policy, national security, defense, monetary policy and national planning. Nigeria operates a presidential system of government similar to the American system. At the federal or national level, there is an Executive President elected popularly on the platform of a political party. The president forms a government of Ministers (Secretaries). The federal legislature

consists of the Senate and House of Representatives of elected members. Each state has an elected Executive Governor and members of the State House of Assembly while the Local Governments elect a Chairman and councilors. The three-tiers of government share revenues and allocate responsibilities according to the provisions of the Constitution. The official currency is the Naira (N1 = 100 Kobo). The functions of a Local Government Council are specified in the Fourth Schedule of the Nigeria's 1999 Constitution.

The traditional authorities, as custodians of the land and other natural resources, play a critical role in the economic activities of the people, such as farming, mining, construction, etc. Traditional leaders, as guardians of the history and culture of the people, are thus regarded as one of the crucial echelons of leadership through which the Ondo State Government development agenda of poverty reduction and wealth creation could be achieved.

Bottom-up policymaking and the participation of citizens and civil society have been strongly advocated. This preference is derived from such concepts as participatory democracy, bottom-up policymaking, and decentralization. The central issue here is 'the re-instatement of participatory planning and policy instruments, which stimulate local participation/community empowerment and foster the transparency of good practice and learning'. Participation is a feature of local planning processes. Self-regulation opens the door for the active participation of citizens in all kinds of associations – as consumers, parents, inhabitants of a neighbourhood – in the way all kinds of societal problems are defined, solutions are pursued and the outcomes are accomplished.

3.2 Ondo State Government Of Nigeria

Ondo State is one the states in Nigeria and its capital in Akure. It contains eighteen Local Government Areas, the major ones being Akoko, Akure, Okitipupa, Ondo and Owo. The majority of the state's citizens live in urban centers. The ethnic composition of Ondo State is largely from the Yoruba subgroups of Akoko, Akure, Ikare, Ilaje, Ondo city and Owo. Ondo State contains the largest number of public schools in Nigeria – over 880 primary schools and 190 secondary schools. Over the past decade, good

governance has become the guiding principle for transforming and revitalising public services in order to ensure their effective, efficient and transparent delivery. A global desire to promote effective and accountable government is now at the forefront of the public service reform agenda. Considering the fact that the identity of the people of Ondo State is rooted in their cultural heritage, traditional governance would find a niche in the general governance structure of the people of the State.

It has become desirable to look at the introduction, adoption, and utilization of ICTs at the community level. In various contexts – geographical, technological, socioeconomic, cultural, and institutional – this paper explores the questions of community participation. It looks at how communities in Nigeria have reacted to the changes brought about by the introduction of these new ICTs and, in detail, presents both the opportunities and the challenges that ICTs present for community development.

Increasingly, governments are making use of electronic methods to deliver public services. Governments are therefore expected to be responsive to social change, address public concerns, deliver effective government programmes, manage public funds efficiently, implement the principles of good governance, etc. The dissemination and institutional building efforts to be provided would culminate in an enhancement of the awareness and capacity of the Traditional Leadership institutions and their staff with regard to the potential and use of ICTs to manage their daily activities and, in particular, to preserve records and data. The importance of records of the Traditional Leadership institutions is evident for a nation which could have avoided a considerable number of conflicts, associated with traditional governance disputes, if records had been kept properly for posterity. The digitisation and public availability of data will help to create a "memory heritage" from which information can be extracted and used as and when needed. Moreover, it will help to devise and standardise customary tradition and law.

In this discussion, we seek to find answers to several questions: When local governments are charged with new responsibilities and provided with new resources, how are new policy and program agendas set and carried out? How is local

governance affected by the dynamics of political competition, the capacity of leaders to mobilize resources for change, the modernization of public administration, the demands and participation of civil society? What is the meaning of decentralization for democratic governance? To find answers to these questions, we use data from a random sample of eighteen local government areas of

Ondo State (Nigeria), measure their performance as units of government, and seek to explain why they perform as they do. A local government area information stored as a database might allow all the water construction and rehabilitation projects that were completed in a particular year to be selected by one program arranged by community name alphabetically.

Table 1 SPECIMEN: YEARLY CAPITAL EXPENDITURE BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA 1995/ 1999

<u>SPECIMEN: YEARLY CAPITAL EXPENDITURE BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA 1995/1999</u>							
<u>LOCAL GOVT. AREA</u>	<u>SECRETARIAT</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>Total</u>
1 AKO KO NORTH –EAST	IKARE	1,643,000	1,372,000	1,436,000	1,494,000	8,517,580	14,462,580
2 AKO KO NORTH –WEST	OKEAGBE	1,646,000	1,242,000	1,032,000	1,013,000	7,800,000	12,733,000
3 AKO KO SOUTH –EAST	ISUA	2,030,000	1,720,000	1,800,000	2,320,000	2,090,000	9,960,000
4 AKO KO SOUTH –WEST	OKA	8,632,000	7,691,000	8,606,000	9,700,000	9,326,000	43,955,000
5 AKURE NORTH	ITAO GBOLU	25,500,000	36,700,000	26,900,000	20,000,000	21,700,000	130,800,000
6 AKURE SOUTH	AKURE	3,660,000	3,650,000	3,820,000	2,180,000	2,670,000	15,980,000
7 ESE-ODO	IGBEKEBO	1,452,632	2,568,954	4,785,692	5,478,596	6,582,475	20,868,349
8 IDANRE	OWENNA	2,484,000	2,113,000	2,335,000	1,344,000	1,194,000	9,470,000
9 IFEDORE	IGBARA-OKE	1,037,000	649,000	633,000	625,000	436,000	3,380,000
10 ILAJE	IGBOKODA	31,222,000	26,136,000	23,743,000	23,087,000	21,434,000	125,622,000
11 ILE-OLUJIO KEIGBO	ILE-OLUJI	808,000	827,000	434,000	369,000	241,000	2,679,000
12 IRELE	IRELE	1,333,000	871,000	637,000	625,000	411,000	3,877,000
13 ODIGBO	ORE	6,995,000	7,384,000	7,022,000	5,302,000	4,281,000	30,984,000
14 OKITIIPUPA	OKITIIPUPA	1,921,000	1,597,000	1,327,000	1,275,000	2,984,000	9,104,000
15 ONDO EAST	BO LORUND'RO	6,211,000	5,067,000	4,246,000	2,930,000	2,793,000	21,247,000
16 ONDO WEST	ONDO	7,114,000	5,225,000	4,440,000	3,812,000	2,750,000	23,341,000
17 OSE	IFON	2,670,000	3,310,000	2,820,000	2,190,000	1,840,000	12,830,000
18 OWO	OWO	3,729,000	3,363,000	3,406,000	2,370,000	1,346,000	14,214,000
TOTAL		110,087,632	111,485,954	99,422,692	86,114,596	98,396,055	505,506,929

Table 2 TOWNS, VILLAGES AND HAMLETS BY POPULATION - 1999 CENSUS - SAMPLE ONLY

<u>SPECIMEN: AKO KO SOUTH-WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT STATISTICS</u>							
<u>TOWNS, VILLAGES AND HAMLETS BY POPULATION - 1999 CENSUS - SAMPLE ONLY</u>							
TOWN	POPULATION			Some Statistical Functions on the Sample Data			
ID NAME	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MEDIAN	MAX	BINOMDIST	PERCENTILE
1 Supare	200,000	160,000	360,000	180,000	200,000	0.896484375	170,000
2 Akungba	165,000	175,000	340,000	170,000	175,000	0.984375	167,500
3 Oka	195,000	500,000	695,000	347,500	500,000	0.999023438	271,250
4 Ikun	155,000	100,000	255,000	127,500	155,000	0.237304688	113,750
5 Oba	180,000	200,000	380,000	190,000	200,000	0.6328125	185,000
6 Grand Total	895,000	1,135,000	2,030,000	1,015,000	1,135,000	0.237304688	955,000

Table 3 NUMBER OF SOCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS BY TYPE AND TOWNS
SPECIMEN: AKO KO SOUTH-WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT STATISTICS
NUMBER OF SOCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS BY TYPE AND TOWNS

ID	NAME	Coop. Org. Regd	Clubs/ Societies	Sport Clubs	Hotels	Museum/ Antiquities	Police Stations	Post Offices	Others	Total
1	Supare	2	5	3	5	0	1	1	0	17
2	Akungha	3	6	4	2	0	2	2	1	20
3	Oka	4	8	8	10	1	3	2	1	37
4	Ikun	0	2	3	2	0	1	1	0	9
5	Oba	5	6	2	3	0	1	1	0	18
6	Grand Total	14	27	20	22	1	8	7	2	101

Table 4 SPECIMEN: CAPITAL EXPENDITURE BY MONTH (NAIRA) FOR 1999
SPECIMEN: CAPITAL EXPENDITURE BY MONTH (NAIRA) FOR 1999
AKO KO SOUTH-WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL

MONTH	ECONOMIC	SOC. SERV	AREA DEV.	ADMIN.	OTHERS	TOTAL
JAN.	15,000	582,555	65,859	47,852	458,725	1,169,991
FEB.	13,500	589,547	58,596	58,942	526,983	1,247,568
MARCH	59,674	78,965	89,562	79,562	258,406	566,169
APRIL	78,970	95,800	84,852	85,459	658,032	1,003,113
MAY	55,500	28,352	25,986	155,782	39,878	305,498
JUNE	45,263	48,597	85,756	165,478	46,958	392,052
JULY	45,825	39,857	99,852	178,256	57,859	421,649
AUGUST	14,785	96,582	89,568	254,055	59,826	514,816
SEPT.	58,963	147,852	257,859	268,459	78,569	811,702
OCTOBER	47,859	48,152	98,756	275,489	68,525	538,781
NOVEM.	78,638	254,632	77,852	387,598	145,256	943,976
DEC.	115,452	258,965	165,589	395,423	475,256	1,410,685
TOTAL	629,429	2,269,856	1,200,087	2,352,355	2,874,273	9,326,000

Considering that the proliferation of telecommunications centres and cyber cafes, that providing computer and Internet facilities have resulted in the provision of public access to those who do not have access to private ownership due to infrastructural and financial constraints, there is an even more urgent need to acquire basic ICTs skills in order to be part of the long path to follow before Ondo State can become a true information and knowledge society. Joint efforts are needed building on what is already in place. Therefore, the challenge for Ondo State is to find a way to rely on the institutional arrangements for leadership and collective action with which communities feel most comfortable, while adopting universally accepted concepts of good governance. Within this framework it is necessary, as part of the overall efforts of integrating tradition and posterity, to blend indigenous and modern forms of governance and to document (in both text and video) salient and positive elements of traditional culture. These will be used as inputs for codifying acknowledged positive patterns of

values, ideas, principles and behaviour into written standard rules and practices for constitutional and legislative reforms. They will also serve to prepare policy guidelines for regulating roles, responsibilities, rights and obligations.

4. REALIZATION OF A SOCIETY FULL OF DIGITAL OPPORTUNITIES

ICTs are key building blocks for our societies and are remarkable tools for empowering communities. They are increasingly seen not as ends in themselves but rather as enablers in the development process. But in spite of the growing recognition of their potential, there is still much debate regarding how and to what extent the effective application of ICT fosters the achievement of social goals and economic growth. We need to develop mechanisms and instruments for providing the evidence on the socioeconomic impact of ICT and their contributions to the implementation of the MDGs. But in order to be effective ICT has to be relevantly used with the right policies, in

the appropriate and pertinent programs and with focused objectives (Piaggese, 2005).

Good governance is not simply a function of the structure of intergovernmental relationships. It is, rather, the consequence of new opportunities and resources, the impact of leadership motivation and choices, the influence of civic history, and the effect of institutions that constrain and facilitate innovation. Good governance is, to some extent, a function of accountability. A local government may be coping with a devolved education system that continues to vest authority over standards and testing in a national ministry; a deconcentrated health system that requires local governments to be responsible only for the maintenance of local clinics; the full delegation of property tax collection; and the devolution of responsibility over sanitation within norms set by national or provincial governments. Each of these activities involves local officials in redefined relationships with other levels of government, at the same time that it prescribes particular roles for local government. The new wave of decentralization assigned less humble functions to local governments—education, public health, environmental management, crime prevention and control, local economic development, water supply. Such undertakings had significant ramifications in terms of the opportunities available to poor and middle-income households for social and economic mobility. Structural change meant that local interactions between citizens and the state became more important and more critical to the present life conditions and future opportunities of millions of citizens.

Civil society activism. A possible way to explain variations in the performance of local government is the extent to which local citizens are mobilized to participate and demand accountability. Thus, according to this perspective, social groups in the local community exert pressure on the public sector to provide better services or more opportunities for participating in policy processes. These groups not only demand good performance, they can also provide models of how improvements can be made, participate in decision making and implementation activities, and take an active role in monitoring the performance of elected and administrative officials—and sanctioning and rewarding them at election time. Through

extension of this argument, localities without active civil societies are less likely to take on difficult tasks of providing better services, innovating in their activities, or being responsive to local needs. Innovations in local governance were widespread and public officials took the lead in introducing these improvements; yet their successful introduction was often marred by the failure to sustain them beyond the three year tenure of political administrations. Decentralization can contribute to improved performance of local government; it can provide new opportunities for responsiveness to local needs; it can mean that governance improves; it can mean that citizens hold public officials and agencies more accountable. (Grindle, 2007).

4.1 Grassroots Innovation for the Information Society

A key challenge of the 21st century is the increased risk to the poor and poor countries from a globalized knowledge economy spurred by the ongoing ICT revolution. This revolution has provoked intense hopes and fears in countries at all levels of development. The hope is to leapfrog to a fast-paced, knowledge-based, innovation-driven, networked economy. The fear of many poor countries is to be kept out of the knowledge and learning loop, fail to surf the wave of change, and perhaps to be left irremediably behind. Some of the most promising uses of ICT for development are to empower poor communities through access to local and global knowledge, building local capacity and partnerships, and enabling broad participation, grassroots innovation, social learning, and social accountability. The distribution of the communicative and information resources in society is a central issue to empowerment, social justice, governance, democracy, and development more generally. Widely shared public information and e-literacy are also essential to participation in the digital economy and having access to digitally mediated public services. The design and delivery of e-government services often produce new forms of exclusion. ICT networks give rise to new patterns of dialog, information flows, and political power. New ICTs can support a two-way dialog between citizens and their government. But as much as ICT can enable new forms of participatory development and democracy, it raises the issue of whether

citizens should be entitled to acquire capabilities that would enable them to be informed and heard (Mansel et al., 2007). e-Society is concerned with these distributional issues and with helping poor communities to appropriate ICT to enhance their abilities to solve local development problems, to mobilize their local information and knowledge, to innovate new ICT applications, and to adapt these general-purpose technologies to local conditions.

There are several motivations to promote innovation and capacity building for broad-based economic growth and inclusive information society. In developed countries, e-society is synonymous with information society programs and e-inclusion or avoiding a digital divide. It may include applications for e-participation and e-democracy. At times it is associated with redefining the role of the state, to rely on partnerships with civil society organizations and the private sector as service providers. It is reinforced by other trends and movements: citizen empowerment, participatory democracy, open source, and user-driven innovation.

However, there is increasing awareness of the crucial potential role of ICT for expanding choice, empowering communities, and reducing poverty. Some of these efforts are beginning to bear fruit at the policy and strategic level. There is growing consensus that the digital divide is less about ICT equipment and connectivity than about relevant content, social applications, and the ability of local communities to create and derive value from ICT use. Digital inclusion is about using ICT to increase the efficiency with which development communities will pursue all the MDGs through social, economic, and political empowerment. An ICT-enabled development strategy cannot leave this link to chance. A prerequisite of successful appropriation of ICT for socio-economic development is that stakeholders be aware of the possibilities that ICT offers in all development sectors: education, health, environment, etc. ICT can also address poverty reduction through off-farm employment, small enterprise development, microfinance, and other means to leverage the resources and improve livelihood opportunities. But the locus for awareness and capabilities must be primarily located at the grassroots levels to enable communities and NGOs to discover and

innovate with ICT and to integrate the new tools into local development efforts. ICT has the potential of bringing ideas, information, and knowledge to even the most isolated, opening them to the world outside their village. Much of the relevant development experience, best practices and practical innovations reside locally, but are seldom shared within the country or even within a community. ICT allows people to share their experience with the rest of the country, if not the world. It also empowers citizens and communities to participate in political institutions and policy making of their communities and to aggregate their voices at the national level. ICT is proving to be a vital tool for mobilizing people for reforms. Meaningful integration of ICT into local development requires local capabilities to link ICT potential to local resources and development priorities. Local institutions have to “discover” ICT potential and harness this potential to address specific local conditions and challenges. The potential contribution of ICT cannot be identified and realized through sole reliance on top-down mechanisms. Financing mechanisms should aim to build awareness, knowledge, and capabilities at the grassroots levels to use ICT for empowerment and social development.

The lack of access to ICT services in rural areas can be a significant penalty for base of economic pyramid BOP population—one that keeps rural people disconnected from markets and broader information resources and thus reinforces rural isolation and poverty. ICT represents a general-purpose enabler to meeting many other needs of the BOP population. Not only are the poor deprived of access to ICT, but they also lack ICT products, services, and applications suited to their needs and to empower them to meet many non-ICT needs such as access to microfinance, learning opportunities, agricultural extension, market information, and remittance transfers (Hanna, 2010).

5. HOW CAN ICT USE AND E-GOVERNMENT HELP THE POOR?

A strategy needs to be developed to align e-government to the needs of the poor and develop models of delivery that can be cost effective in rural areas. Figure 1 indicates that the poor can be helped by ICT in a variety of

ways: by reducing the cost of inputs for their economic activities, enabling them to get better prices for their produce and by fulfilling their social needs which may otherwise not be met. Both the private and public sectors are currently engaged with the poor in their day-to-day life activities. Since the main reason for high cost of servicing rural client is the lack of basic infrastructure, it is the business of the government to ensure that the poor are not put to a great disadvantage even in the case of ICT infrastructure.

strategies such as ensuring property rights, connecting the poor to markets and lowering transaction costs can be made more effective through ICTs. The poor can also be helped more directly. ICTs are seen as a tool for life long learning for citizens, enabling knowledgeable workers to improve skills and their capacity to innovate by accessing knowledge via the Internet from the public domain. ICTs should be able to play a similar role for the rural and the poor to help them participate in the emerging knowledge society.

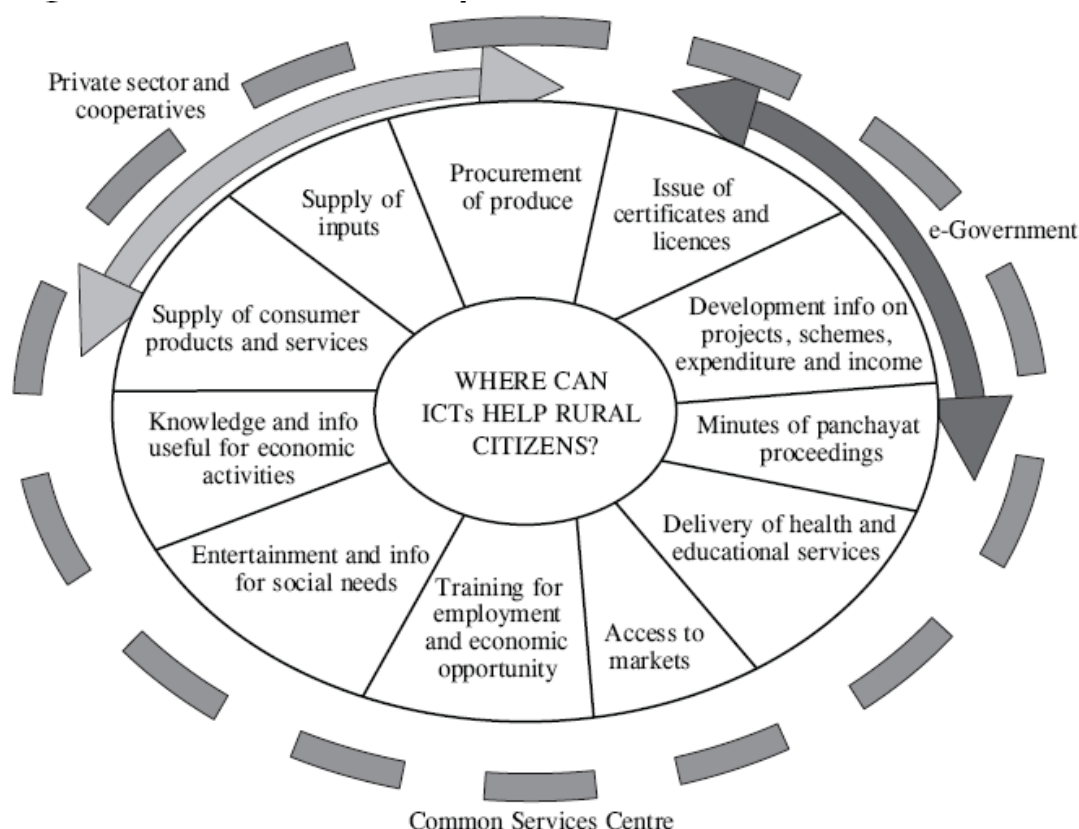


Figure 1 Where can ICTs help rural citizens? (Source: Bhatnagar, 2009)

The poor can be helped indirectly if organizations serving them become more efficient. In the last three decades, ICTs have enabled private sector organizations in developing countries to become globally competitive (**Glinskaya and Narayan, 2007**). Government organizations have used ICTs for internal efficiency and improved delivery of services. A few experiments have demonstrated that many pro-poor growth

Creation of multi-functional telecentres in the rural areas can provide avenues for employment become a means of training in new vocations and a source of information for key economic and social activity of the community. The use of ICTs within government systems can improve the delivery of services to the poor and empower them to participate in decisions on resource allocations that affect them. Transparency and accountability can also be increased. The real challenge lies in the inclusion of rural populations (**Bhatnagar, 2009**).

5.1 EATING Model

A model to achieve political stability follows the adoption and implementation of **Sarkissian and Hofer (2008)**'s bottom-up approach to participatory community engagement and development, referred to as EATING, which consists of 6 components: Education, Action, Trust/Openness, Inclusion, Nurturing and Governance. This approach develops community's ability to participate and gives would-be leaders (politicians) the knowledge, vocabulary, tools and confidence to engage in bringing sustainability to the forefront of community planning and development.

5.1.1 The EATING approach:

- a. **Education:** state-of-the art environmental education processes that underpin a community-based, participatory approach to growing local knowledge about sustainability and how this relates to building communities.
- a. **Action:** acceptance of action-based and activist approaches that lead to tangible results and allow local people to take immediate action on matters that concern them and to contribute to actions on a wider scale and with longer time frames.
- b. **Trust:** community engagement approaches that tackle issues of trust in sophisticated ways, finding ways for communities, proponents, developers and governments to form trusting relationships with each other across difference, including nurturing collaborative working relationships and using the model of a trust to engender sharing, networked communities that build alliances and common understandings.
- c. **Inclusion:** "listening across difference": the critical role of Inclusion to ensure that everyone sitting at the table can speak and be heard with respect for diversity and difference and the realization of everyone's knowledge as valid and valuable.
- d. **Nurturing:** exploring the potential of human-centered and creative ways to engage with and build community understanding of sustainability, while

allowing strong emotions to be expressed in positive ways in safe forums. Nurturing also means nurturing the desire to learn and building self-confidence and self-esteem.

- e. **Governance:** exploring new approaches to governance and decision-making, ensuring that specific forums are available for the voices of the community to be heard and that governance structures are in place to support ongoing community engagement and influence.

6. CONCLUSION

In any government context, trust plays a vital role in helping citizens overcome perceived risks. Trust makes citizens comfortable sharing personal information, make online government transaction, and acting on Government advices. In spite of the democratic progress and economic growth, several nations including Nigeria face considerable challenges that could threaten political stability including persistent poverty, violent guerrilla conflicts, autocratic leaders, drug trafficking, increasing crime, and the rise of radical populism. For lasting results, challenges in regards to human capital, technological infrastructure, governmental cognitive mindset, cultural norms, and financial resources must be addressed purposefully. Indeed the success of e-government initiatives with respect to the sustainable democratization process relies on ICT having the appropriate infrastructure to provide high-quality information that is relevant to the citizenry. For reliable demography, we need to define a set of key indicators of ICT shared internationally as a basis for the construction of a database of statistics on local governments; improve the capacity of the national statistical offices of Nigeria, in particular by strengthening knowledge on statistics related to ICT; and develop a comprehensive database on indicators of ICT by making it available on the Internet. The responsiveness of government is not only based on the creation of a more open and transparent administration, but also on the active involvement and consultation of citizens and users. Political stability would be achieved and sustained by providing and applying ICT infrastructure to the democratic decision making processes in reaching a wider audience

to enable broader participation, supporting participation through a range of technologies to cater for the diverse technical and communicative skills of citizens, providing relevant information in a format that is both more accessible and more understandable to the target audience to enable more informed contributions, and engaging with a wider audience to enable deeper contributions and support deliberation. An adoption and implementation of the EATING model, a bottom-up approach that develops a community's ability to participate and also gives would-be leaders (politicians) the knowledge, vocabulary, tools and confidence to engage in bringing sustainability to the forefront of community planning and development would go a long way at ensuring political stability, even in Nigeria.

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