THE ASSOCIATION FOR PROGRESSIVE COMMUNICATIONS' MISSION
IS TO EMPOWER AND SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS, SOCIAL MOVEMENTS
AND INDIVIDUALS IN AND THROUGH THE USE OF INFORMATION AND
COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES TO BUILD STRATEGIC COMMUNITIES AND
INITIATIVES FOR THE PURPOSE OF MAKING MEANINGFUL CONTRIBUTIONS
TO EQUITABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, SOCIAL JUSTICE, PARTICIPATORY
POLITICAL PROCESSES AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY.

APC ANNUAL REPORT 2001

INTERNET AND ICTs FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT

Annual Report 2001
Association for Progressive Communications (APC)

Table of Contents

Introduction to the APC Annual Report 2001

Anriette Esterhuysen, APC Executive Director

In 2000, APC responded to the shifting and expanding terrain of information and communication technologies, and their impact on civil society, by prioritising three areas of engagement: Internet Rights for Civil Society; Mobilising Participation; and Building Information Communities.

In identifying these "Action Areas," APC continued its tradition of being innovative and visionary in its context. For example, the paranoia that followed the events of September 11 2001 made desperately urgent the need (already identified by APC in the late 1990s) to secure the Internet as a space that citizens and organisations can use safely and freely.

Much of the work done during 2001 reflected these action priorities; concrete activities and achievements are described in this report. APC also addressed internal challenges in 2001, particularly in relation to the need to retain a clear focus in an expanding "ICT for justice and development" universe, ensure long-term sustainability and cope with growth in membership and project activity.

To ensure that we retain our focus as our membership and project activities expand, APC adopted a new vision statement at the November 2001 Council Meeting in Uruguay: "APC works to achieve a world in which all people have easy, equal and affordable access to the creative potential of ICTs to improve their lives and create more democratic and egalitarian societies."
The membership application procedure was revised to streamline the process of approving and incorporating new members. And to ensure that growth in membership reinforces rather than undermines APC's strong historical identity, members affirmed APC as a network of locally-owned and -rooted ICT service providers for civil society and development organisations.

The Learning and Practitioners Network, an ambitious initiative to explore the long-term sustainability of APC's work to promote and facilitate the strategic use of ICTs by civil society organisations, started in the second half of the year.

To address the management challenges presented by our increasing membership and our expanding number and range of projects, APC invested in strengthening our management systems, including media and promotions.

We hope you find this report informative. It reflects the work of APC and its members, and the many partnerships we form with like-minded organisations through our projects and campaigns.

-- Anriette Esterhuysen, APC Executive Director

Message from the APC Chair

Stefan Hackenthal, APC Chair

Not long ago, I gave an interview about the evolution over the last several years of APC's work and organisational structure. The Austrian journalist interviewing me was quite astonished to learn how well-organised APC is, and how well it functions as a worldwide, de-centralised group. In my daily work within APC, I think of these features as "normal," but APC is special in many ways.

It is good to look back at certain times and celebrate this "specialness"; the annual report provides an opportunity to do so.

Internally, the organisation thrives and membership is growing. APC's outreach has become much better and broader. We have been getting new applications for membership all year, and the Membership Working Group has worked hard to review the applicants' activities and prepare the field for APC's member representatives to approve new members. A vision statement was crafted that articulates the goals of APC in easily accessible language. The "historical" *Annual Report 2000* celebrating APC's achievements since 1990 was a testament to our vision and productivity.

"It is a mystery," an outsider says when s/he sees how the distributed workspaces in APC function: worldwide working groups, a physically dispersed staff, online meetings, a living intranet. I won't say that everything works absolutely perfectly, but in general, the systems do work very well.

But even a virtual organisation needs face-to-face time. The Council meeting in November 2001 in Uruguay was a productive and empowering international encounter; fortunately, most members were able to send representatives. We use these meetings to power ourselves up, share experiences, get to know the human beings behind the emails, and inspire them for another period of hard work in the field.

In the world out there, 2001 saw the turning point for the "new economy" and the crash of Internet hype. In some ways, this made life easier for APC members, as public recognition of sustainable work in our field grew again. The public became wary of technological pipe

dreams and phoney business plans and left us free to concentrate on the goals of our work. We no longer need to constantly justify our moderate growth rate as Internet-based businesses.

The challenge of how to survive economically and politically in a globalising economy of super-multinationals remains. Most commercial Internet businesses still burn money, offering services for a discount. APC members cannot do that, but we can respond to the needs of our users. Our strengths are that we are regionally and locally centred; we know our special customers much better than anyone else; and we have access to APC's international framework. It's hard work, but it works. Proof of this is the longevity and diversity of APC members, some of whom have been in the business of providing online technologies to civil society for fifteen years.
-- Stefan Hackenthal, APC Chair

About Membership in 2001

APC has been operating as an international, membership-based organisation since 1990. Our strong mixture of Southern and Northern organisations, and their combined knowledge and experience of promoting and using ICTs at local, national and regional levels, differentiates our network and its activities from many others.

In November 2001, APC's Council of member representatives affirmed[1] APC's identity as a network of members involved in the delivery of services that promote the strategic use of ICTs by social movements and civil society. APC's membership is relatively small but is spread across the globe.

MEMBERSHIP GROWTH

Six new member organisations from four regions and six different countries joined APC during 2001.

- Africa: Fantsuam Foundation, Nigeria
- Asia: Jinbonet, South Korea
- Caribbean: Ace Suares' Internet Consultancy, Curaçao
- Europe: ChangeNet, Slovakia; BRIDGE, United Kingdom
- South America: TAU, Argentina

This brought APC to twenty-seven members in twenty-four countries around the world by December 2001. There is an APC presence on every continent.

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[1] From "Membership criteria recommendations by Council," November 2001; APC internal document.

APC MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA REFINED

In 2001, APC refined its membership criteria to place central importance on our mission and recently articulated values.

APC member organisations agree with and work to further APC's mission - they work actively with civil society and social movements in using ICTs to empower and support others to build strategic communities and initiatives that contribute to equitable human development, social justice, participatory political processes and environmental sustainability.

1. APC's values

One aspect of APC that has not changed significantly since its inception is its values. It is these values that inspired our founders, and that still keep us together. They include:

- Local initiative and ownership
- Open content: sharing of materials and resources in the public domain
- Open source application development: sharing tools in the public domain
- Social equality and gender equality
- Peer support and community, and working in partnership
- Collaborative work and shared learning
- Inclusiveness and diversity
- Strengthening creativity and capacity
- Democratic, accountable and transparent governance
- ICT solutions should be appropriate and affordable
- Freedom of communications and information
- Sustainable ICT solutions

2. Demonstrable impact

APC members can employ a variety of methods of using ICTs for development and social and environmental justice, such as working as Internet service providers, producing online content, offering training or providing consultancy services or technical support to others.

What is essential is that applicants demonstrate that they make a positive impact on the level and quality of ICT use by the organisations and communities they serve.

3. Geographic diversity

Our recruitment efforts in 2002-3 will emphasise that we want APC membership to:

- reflect the diversity of locally rooted organisations involved in supporting ICTs for development and social and environmental justice, particularly from parts of the world struggling for digital inclusion;
- include more members from regions where we currently have few or no members: the Middle East, Asia, Africa and the Caribbean.

Of the six new members we added in 2001, half came from these currently underrepresented regions.

4. Institutional capacity

The APC Council is the governing body that establishes APC's policy and work area priorities. Each APC member currently appoints one official representative to the Council.

Organisations must have sufficient institutional capacity to enable them to participate in APC governance and workspaces, and to pay the annual membership fee. APC accepts both small and large organisations as members. More important than size, however, is the applicant's stability, track record and strategic positioning in relation to local or regional civil society and social movements.

5. Legal identity

Applicants must have a legal identity as a not-for-profit, voluntary association or a cooperative. They must demonstrate that their activities promote the realisation of APC's mission.

For-profit applicants need to demonstrate that in spite of being for-profit, their primary objective is to provide services that promote the realisation of the APC mission.

APC Members in 2001

North America and the Caribbean

Web Networks, Canada
www.web.net

Ace Suares' Internet
Consultancy, Curaçao
www.suares.com

Institute for Global
Communications, USA
www.igc.org

LaborNet, USA
www.labornet.org

Latin America

TAU, Argentina
www.tau.org.ar

Wamani, Argentina
www.wamani.apc.org

Colnodo, Colombia
www.colnodo.apc.org

INTERCOM Nodo Ecuanex,
Ecuador
www.ecuanex.net.ec

LaNeta, Mexico
www.laneta.apc.org

CRIES, Nicaragua
www.cries.org

Instituto del Tercer
Mundo/Chasque, Uruguay
www.item.org.uy

Europe

BlueLink Information
Network, Bulgaria
www.bluelink.net

BRIDGE, United Kingdom
www.ids.ac.uk/bridge

ChangeNet, Slovakia
www.changenet.sk

ComLink, Germany
www.comlink.org

Econnect, Czech Republic
www.ecn.cz

GLUK (GlasNet Ukraine),
Ukraine
www.gluk.apc.org

GreenNet, United Kingdom
www.gn.apc.org

Green Spider, Hungary
www.zpok.hu

Pangea, Spain
www.pangea.org

StrawberryNet, Romania
www.sbnet.ro

Africa

Enda-Tiers Monde, Senegal
www.enda.sn

Fantsuam Foundation,
Nigeria
www.fantsuam.com

SANGONeT, South Africa
sn.apc.org

Asia-Pacific

Community Communications
Online (c2o), Australia
www.c2o.org

JCA-NET, Japan
www.jca.apc.org

Jinbonet, South Korea
www.jinbo.net

New Members in 2001

JINBONET, SOUTH KOREA: ASIAN FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACTIVISTS JOINED APC

Jinbonet, which was founded in November 1998 and is based in Seoul, South Korea, joined APC in November 2001. Jinbo means "progressive" in Korean, and Jinbonet provides online communication infrastructure including web hosting, an online portal news centre, and training, especially for progressive organisations.

"Since capital and state have staked their claims in computer-mediated communications, a positive future is not guaranteed for progressive social movements in South Korea," Jinbonet director Oh Byoung-il told APC. "We've joined APC because we realise that grassroots must organise beyond our own frontiers if we are to keep the hope of a censorship-free communications environment alive."

To encourage solidarity internationally, Jinbonet has created BASE21 (Building A Solidarity Electronically in the 21st Century), an English-language website that provides alternative news coverage on events in South Korea that affect civil society and nongovernmental organisations. "The national press doesn't regard grassroots movements as a valid source of news," said Oh Byoung-il. "BASE21 provides an insight into the social justice struggles taking place in South Korea from our grassroots perspective."

Jinbonet: http://www.jinbo.net joined APC in November 2001.

ACE SUARES' INTERNET CONSULTANCY, CURAÇAO: SMALL FOR-PROFIT ORGANISATION WITH YEARS OF COMMITMENT TO SERVING CIVIL SOCIETY TAKES APC INTO THE CARIBBEAN

Ace Suares' Internet Consultancy and Training is a small company that originated in the Netherlands and has now relocated to Curaçao in the Caribbean. The consultancy builds tools that facilitate Internet services (such as database-driven websites, email managers and web mail), and it provides services, support and training to civil society organisations. "I like advising people who are looking for answers to their network problems," company director Ace told APC. "I'd rather set up a network on old computers than work with the latest technology. Nowadays it's hard to find any network specialist that doesn't say 'buy a Pentium IV with 1600 MHz and 512 MB RAM with $2000 USD of software' when it's possible to do exactly the same thing using a bargain bin Pentium 166."

Ace and his team have worked closely with APC over the last years, and Ace spent nearly a year working at APC's London member, GreenNet. This membership is unique in APC, as the company is individually owned. However, Ace Suares' Consultancy has demonstrated significant commitment to working with NGOs, and Ace himself is committed to skills-sharing and capacity-building activities. APC is delighted that this is our first member organisation based in the Caribbean. "This is where I was born," Ace said, explaining his decision to relocate at the beginning of 2002 to the small island community of Curaçao, "and it was time for me to return to see if I can help to change the downwards-heading economy by teaching young people LINUX and network management."

Ace Suares' Internet Consultancy: http://www.suares.com joined APC in December 2001.

LABORNET, USA: EDUCATING WORKERS ON HOW TO USE COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT THEIR STRUGGLES FOR HEALTH, SAFETY AND JUSTICE IN THE WORKPLACE

LaborNet was founded in 1991 to build a democratic communication network for the labour movement by linking up workers on the Internet to build solidarity, internationalism and democracy. LaborNet educates workers on how to use communication technology to support their struggles for health, safety and justice in the workplace, including through its close support of LaborTech conferences around the world.

The first regular Labor News web page in the United States was created by LaborNet in the early 1990s. Since then, LaborNet has continued to work at building labour solidarity online not only in the United States but internationally, through the APC and with independent labour communicators on the Internet. LaborNet US has supported the developments of LaborNets in Korea, Austria and most recently Japan.

LaborNet supports the right to communicate as a key element of democracy; it has played an important role in defending trade unionists and non-unionised workers in the US and around the world who are using websites to defend their rights.

LaborNet: http://www.labornet.org/ joined APC in June 2001.

FANTSUAM FOUNDATION, NIGERIA: ICT SERVICES IMPROVE CONDITIONS FOR COMMUNITIES AND WOMEN IN RURAL NIGERIA

Fantsuam Foundation, founded in 1996, is the only NGO that provides ICT services to rural communities in Nigeria, where seventy percent of the nation's 120 million people live. "It is a daunting task," said project director John Dada, "and membership in APC will be an invaluable networking and learning resource for us."

Fantsuam's mission is to alleviate poverty through a multi-sectoral approach, starting with providing micro-credit to organised women's groups in rural communities. From this basis,

the Foundation moves into health promotion, the integration of indigenous knowledge and skills, and the establishment of community-initiated learning centres, to facilitate building a comprehensive rural primary healthcare system.

The first mobile community telecentre extends access to ICTs into even more remote areas. The telecentre van travels a circuit between rural health clinics and health training institutes, offering a variety of ICT services, training and distance education. Fantsuam's goal is to provide clinic managers - almost exclusively women - with the ability to communicate, update their skills, receive current public health and medical information and enhance the offerings of local health training institutes.

The Bayanloco Community Learning Centre serves rural women who want to use part of their micro-credit to get training in computing.

Another of the Fantsuam Foundation initiatives - the Bayanloco Community Learning Centre - was the winner of the APC Africa Hafkin Communications Prize in 2001. The prize was awarded to women-inspired, women-run projects. "We work mainly with women to seek answers to the problem of poverty through empowerment and status-improving projects," explained Dada, "because women are the catalysts and most reliable agents of sustainable development in Nigerian rural communities."

Fantsuam Foundation: http://www.fantsuam.com joined APC in September 2001.

BRIDGE, UNITED KINGDOM: MAKING GENDER INFORMATION AVAILABLE IN FRIENDLY, ACCESSIBLE ONLINE SPACES

BRIDGE (Briefings on Development and Gender), founded in 1992, is committed to promoting gender equality in on- and offline spaces.

"Despite the ostensible access to and availability of technology in the UK, it is not being embraced or utilised to a large extent in development organisations," noted then BRIDGE information and network coordinator Sonja Boezak.

BRIDGE is producing a three-year Gender Knowledge Programme involving the development of two web resources: Siyanda, a gender mainstreaming gateway; and a resource of gender materials generated and financed by development funding agencies.

"We believe that we will be able to learn from the participatory practices, capacity building, experience sharing and networking that APC is known for," said Boezak. "BRIDGE membership in APC will help us further our mission to form part of, as well as build, sustainable partnerships, and to embed lessons learned through these experiences in our work outputs." BRIDGE is based at the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, UK.

BRIDGE: http://www.ids.ac.uk/bridge joined APC in September 2001.

CHANGENET, SLOVAKIA: STIMULATING PUBLIC INTEREST IN GROUPS WORKING FOR SOCIAL CHANGE IN CENTRAL EUROPE

ChangeNet was established as a not-for-profit association in 1996 by a group of NGO activists who saw the Internet as a way to stimulate communication between NGOs. They set up ChangeNet as a unit that would provide NGOs with the technical infrastructure, training and information services they would need in order to work better together online.

ChangeNet supports effective and efficient communication and information sharing amongst nongovernmental non-profit organisations, citizens' groups and individuals who are trying to introduce social change in the fields of environmental protection, human rights, culture, historical preservation, peace movements, charity and other areas of public good.

ChangeNet http://www.changenet.sk joined APC in November 2001.

TAU, ARGENTINA: TRAINING AND SUPPORTING MARGINALISED URBAN COMMUNITIES IN ICTs

TAU is a registered non-profit founded in October 1995. It began as an initiative of a Franciscan group that encouraged community-based organisations to use ICTs in their work. TAU's mission is to bring information and communication technologies to individuals and organisations working to combat exclusion, poverty and discrimination.

TAU provides connectivity, training and support to the NGO and trade union sectors and to individuals. It was operated by volunteers and financed by contributions from its members and users until 2001, when it received substantial funding from a Swiss foundation to develop "Enredando," a 27-month, three-stage project aimed at capacity building in ICTs for marginalised communities and youth, and the groups that work in and with them.

TAU: http://www.tau.org.ar is based in Rosario, Argentina and joined APC in November 2001.

APC Programmes and Action Areas: An Introduction

APC's thematic programme areas were developed in 1997 to enhance communication and cooperation online between people and groups working in the social justice community and to provide a framework for the diverse range of work APC and members were engaged in. Together with the three action areas that were identified in 2000 by APC's members, the programmes and action areas function as two dimensions for organising and assessing the scale, scope and impact of APC's work.

The APC programmes in 2001 were:

- Strategic use of ICTs
- Information, content and tools
- Network development
- Communications policy awareness
- Women's networking support (WNSP)
- The Africa programme

In Hungary in May 2000, APC member and partner representatives from over twenty countries and five continents defined three action areas in which to concentrate APC's efforts to mobilise the potential of information and communication technologies for development and social justice. Those action areas are:

- Internet rights for civil society
- Building information community
- Mobilising participation

The action areas reflect a careful analysis of the needs and priorities of the constituencies with which APC works, particularly those in the South; they were reaffirmed as the basis of APC's work plan until 2003 by the APC Council at the face-to-face meeting in November 2001.

APC Action Areas: Major Achievements and Challenges during 2001

Action Area: Ensuring Internet Rights for Civil Society

The Internet is increasingly subject to the same concentration of ownership and control that has already occurred in other mass media. Freedom of expression and the right to access for

all people are not the primary concerns of the new generation of companies attempting to define the medium and the mechanisms that manage it. By prioritising action on Internet rights, APC defends people's right to use the global network to exchange information and opinions freely, and we will advocate for regulatory and policy environments that extend effective and affordable access to poor and oppressed communities throughout the world.

The primary goal of our work has been to provide the resources and tools necessary to defend and expand the space and opportunities for social campaigning work on the Internet against the emerging threats to it, especially following the events of September 11.

APC Monitors Internet Rights and Civil Liberties in the context of the events of September 11 2001

As part of our Internet Rights work, in the immediate aftermath of the attacks in the US on September 11, APC created the Internet Rights and Civil Liberties Monitor – a collaborative website that documented the impact of these events on regulation and legislation that specifically affect Internet freedoms. The Monitor included multilingual media coverage of Internet and civil liberties issues as well as updates on legislative developments since September 11 on a country-by-country basis. The news monitor is no longer available publicly.

Defending Internet Rights in Europe

Much of APC's work in raising awareness concerning civil society Internet rights has been concentrated in Europe, where Internet regulation was already entrenched.

The European project[2] developed tools, information resources (such as policy primers and "how-to's") and strategies to support and facilitate the transmission of censored voices and material, and prepare NGO communities to safely and strategically use the Internet for social campaigning.

In planning and implementing the European project, APC members and partners all over the world found that, in many cases, Internet regulation similar to that in Europe was underway in their own regions. For example, the anti-privacy Regulation of Investigative Powers (RIP) Act in the UK legalised state interception and scrutiny of private email and monitoring of individuals' activity online. Not long afterwards, similar measures were passed in New Zealand, Zimbabwe, Malaysia, Russia and Singapore. The European project has functioned as a model for APC's Internet Rights projects elsewhere.

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2 European Civil Society Internet Rights Project, 2000-2, funded by the Open Society Institute and Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust.

APC's Europe Internet Rights initiative brought together communications activists to keep the Internet a secure and accessible tool for social justice

"Leave the Internet alone." This was the core message addressed to governments and big business by a group of lawyers, computer programmers, academics and communications activists from East and West Europe who gathered in Prague February 18-22, 2001 to plan a defence of the Internet for social justice work during a workshop[3] organised by APC's Europe Internet Rights project.

The workshop participants reached broad consensus that protecting Internet rights is as much a defence of human rights as it is of people's right to communicate regardless of where they live or their social status, sex or political or religious beliefs.

APC launched a new Internet Rights website - with a special focus on Europe[4]

The Prague workshop saw the presentation of draft reports by local communications workers, computer experts and lawyers commissioned by APC to research the state of Internet Rights (IR) in their nations.

The first reports from the APC Europe Civil Society Internet Rights project (APC IR Europe) started to go online in April on a new IR website on offered by APC. By the end of 2001, a total of twenty reports had been made available to website visitors, including reports on the state of IR in the Czech Republic, Finland, Hungary, Macedonia, Albania, the Netherlands, Ukraine and Yugoslavia. Some findings were extraordinary.

The Europe initiative funded a series of specially commissioned Internet censorship case studies from around the world – including, for example, a study of Belgrade's Radio B92, whose servers were shut down by the Serbian government in 1998.[5]

The Rapid Response Network: defending online social campaigning

In the past, APC members and partners defended website content that had been threatened by unreasonable government and commercial interests in South Korea, South Africa, the UK

Estonia has more computers per capita than France and Italy combined

Estonia is among the first of Eastern Europe's transition economies that is deemed to have the potential to enter into the European Union. The country has concentrated on economic reforms and providing public Internet access for its 1.4 million citizens.

Programmes such as "Tiger Leap" began as a way of providing ICT for schools but have been expanded to help create an open and democratic Estonian information society. More than one in 10 Estonians are now on-line including residents on remote islands in the Baltic Sea. Estonia ranks among the top 15 countries in Europe in computers per capita, ahead of France and Italy.

- from the APC report on Internet Rights in Estonia[1]

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[3] http://www.apc.org/english/news/index.shtml?x=4977

[4] http://europe.rights.apc.org

[5] http://www.apc.org/english/rights/censorship/cases

and Spain. Participants at the Prague conference discussed various strategies for responding to these threats, including improving the Rapid Response Network (RRN).[6]

The RRN is a secure communications strategy developed for communications networks and civil society organisations to defend and expand the space and opportunities for social campaigning work on the Internet against emerging threats. The RRN software "mirrors" - or automatically replicates - threatened website content on diverse collaborating computer servers all over the Internet within 24 hours. In many of the censorship case studies highlighted on the APC website,[7] the simultaneous mirroring of threatened online material on many servers around the world played a vital role in defending threatened websites.

Rapid Response Network Success: A corporate effort to censor a parody site set up by sacked workers was defeated in the courts.

Seoul, South Korea – On July 23, the Seoul District Court found in favour of the Anti-POSCO website - a parody site modelled on the POSCO site – affirming the right of its creators to express their claims and publicize their plight.

In early 1997, POSCO, a South Korean multinational, bought part of the Sammi Specialty Steel Co., ignoring a collective agreement to rehire Sammi workers and forcing 2,000 out of a total workforce of 2,342 onto the street.

The Anti-POSCO website was a tool of the workers' campaign for reinstatement; however, POSCO tried to halt the online protest through costly legal action, claiming that the Anti-POSCO website violated intellectual property rights.

Source: *APCNews* No. 21 2001

APC has been instrumental in mirroring over the last several years; by 2001, it was clear that there was a need to standardise and streamline the procedure to ensure its efficiency and responsiveness. The software that was later developed has been released as open source software. This permits other groups that need a similar defence system to use the software as the basis for their strategy.

Documentation of the RRN formed an essential part of the resource kit of plain-language educational material. Three lawyers, from Italy, Sweden and Denmark, advised APC on the RRN at the Prague workshop. "It was a new experience for me, as a lawyer, to have such an interested audience," quipped Andrea Monti, an Italian lawyer and President of Electronic Frontiers Italy, "and to see that APC, by forming these innovative coalitions, is working to create serious, viable solutions to counter threats to an open Internet."

Partnerships built around Internet Rights in Europe

Initial work on the country and case study reports succeeded in bringing together a range of people to work with APC on Internet Rights. In Europe, the project aligned APC members (GreenNet, BlueLink, Pangea, Econnect, StrawberryNet, Green Spider, GLUK and ChangeNet); lawyers (from Sweden, Denmark and Italy); academic researchers (from Finland, Spain and France); women's advocates (from the APC Women's Networking Support Programme); and activist groups and organisations (including Internodium and Radio B92

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[6] http://www.apc.org/english/rights/action/rrn.shtml

[7] http://www.apc.org/english/rights/censorship/cases

from Yugoslavia, Bulgarian ISOC, Privacy International, the Anti-Scientologists and the E-hippies Collective).

The APC Europe IR initiative also began building international virtual teams to work on the policy research, technical and legal issues involved in IR. APC established a number of mailing list communities to bring together people working on or sympathetic to the project. At the same time, we continued our earlier work of building coalitions with other civil society organisations on issues such as the right to communicate,[8] and ICANN (where APC was instrumental in providing an international civil society perspective on the negotiations around the new management of the .org domain).

Other organisations APC worked with included the Foundation for Information Policy Research (Britain), Article 19 (Britain), ISOC (Switzerland and Britain), Community Media Network (Ireland), Electronic Privacy Information Center (USA), Center for Democracy & Technology (USA), Center for Law, and Commerce & Technology (USA).[9]

Engaging Internet Rights issues at the European Union level

Because most Internet advocacy takes place at the national level, most of APC's research was carried out on a country-by-country basis. However, the power of the European Union to determine policy at the national level in most European nations demands attention.

The project produced a report on the state of Internet Rights in the European Union,[10] which included information specific to social NGOs.[11] Guidelines to "Key Internet Rights Issues in Europe" and "How the European Union works and how to influence its policies" were produced.

In April, the initiative sent a representative to the European Internet Service Providers (ISPs) conference to find out more about EU developments and positions concerning Internet Rights issues;[12] speakers from both the European Commission and the European Parliament gave presentations.

"Lobbying starts by knowing exactly what you want to achieve.

Therefore the more upstream information you can get, the better. Monitoring carefully the activities of the [European] Commission … provides most of the clues to act early. Simply reacting to a European Union decision might often be too late," advises the guide on influencing policy in the European Union.[1]

With this in mind, a small team of APC communications activists attended several EU events in Brussels, which led to an invitation to carry out a demonstration on surveillance at the European Parliament in February.

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[8] For example, APC, Latin American Information Agency (ALAI) and WomenAction offered a workshop on Communication and Citizenship attended by social and citizens' organisations and journalists at the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil in January 2001.
http://www.apc.org/english/news/index.shtml?x=4963
[9] Full list of project partners: www.apc.org/english/rights/europe/contact.html#euro
[10] Authored by Martine Paulet and Chris Bailey, specialists in European politics and public policy.
[11] http://www.apc.org/english/rights/europe/eu.html and
    http://www.apc.org/english/rights/europe/coe.html
[12] http://www.apc.org/english/news/fulltext.shtml?sh_itm=4b338281bc801d56be208bf54fde307b

In May, the APC Europe Internet Rights Initiative welcomed the European Parliament Draft Report on Echelon. The report, published by the European parliament, removed any lingering doubt that Echelon, a US-led worldwide electronic spying network, was a reality. APC had worked to expose Echelon the previous year with presentations in Japan and South Korea. The vice chair of the Echelon parliamentary committee advised that "People should treat their emails like seaside postcards; that is to say put anything you like on them but don't be surprised if someone else reads them." APC issued a strong declaration of support for the European Parliament's work.[13]

Monitoring ICT Policy across Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean

The ICT Policy Monitors, funded by IDRC and Hivos Netherlands, collect and interpret Internet-related policy information. Depending on the region, the Monitor projects research, organise, analyse and monitor ICT policy in a selection of countries in each region, and track policy developments at global, regional, national and local levels.

In Africa, the project looks at how ICT policy affects the ability of developing countries and marginalised communities to benefit from the information revolution; with the participation of civil society actors, it is developing checklists and guidelines that will promote and support enabling, equitable ICT policies. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the focus of the project is to ensure that the needs and demands of civil society in the region are taken into account at the time that ICT policies are crafted - especially policies related to access and the appropriation of ICTs as a basic human right.

APC Latin America and Caribbean ICT Policy Monitor

An online regional consultation involving a diverse group of more than 120 representatives from almost all of the LAC countries took place from April 24 to May 11, at which the project's focus and objectives were presented. Input from the group determined the themes to be researched throughout the project, and identified some of the countries chosen for national ICT policy studies (similar to case studies that were going online at the time in the APC Europe IR initiative).

Priority areas for the project that emerged strongly from the consultation included the need to analyse the influence of ICT policy on citizen participation; to develop skills for making strategic use of the Internet (beyond mere connectivity); to develop virtual communities; and to strengthen of societal networks by electronic means. Universal access to the Internet and the development of local content were also prioritised.

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[13] http://www.apc.org/english/press/archive/apc_p016.shtml

In response, APC commissioned research on telecentres, e-commerce, virtual communities, gender and ICTs and free software, as well as national research on ICT policy in five countries - Mexico, Costa Rica, Cuba, Colombia and Argentina.[14]

In November, over 45 representatives from ICT practitioner groups to development think-tanks in the Latin American and Caribbean region came together in the South American coastal city of Montevideo to build common understanding and awareness of critical and emerging trends in Internet Rights in the LAC region, and to identify ICT policy needs and strategies for engaging civil society in response to these trends.[15]

Participants at the workshop on "Guaranteeing Citizen Participation in the Digital Age: Public Policy and Internet Rights in Latin America and the Caribbean" examined current trends in ICT policy in the region, received an updated overview of the ICT situation in Latin America (particularly regarding access, availability and use of ICTs by civil society), and discussed proposals for public policies for ICT (with special focus on the Mercosur countries) as well as ways to promote cooperation amongst the region's civil society organisations in order to influence public policy on ICTs.

Mobilising African civil society around the importance of ICT policy for the development of the continent

The Africa ICT Policy Monitor is one of three regional APC initiatives around the world that aim to catalyse and support the engagement of civil society organisations in local, regional and international ICT policy initiatives.

The objectives of the ICT Policy Monitor in Africa include:

Raising awareness: Engaging civil society members who have not necessarily been aware of, or involved in advocating for, equitable ICT policy issues by disseminating tools and information on ICT rights via the Internet and in public fora and workshops.
Building an online ICT policy clearinghouse: Monitoring and analysing African ICT policy with particular emphasis on global, regional, national and local policy developments that affect the ability of developing countries and marginalised communities to benefit from the information revolution.
Developing checklists and guidelines: Developing the tools that will enable civil society actors to recognise good policy and form coalitions to advocate for it.
Network building: Catalysing and supporting a civil society network of organisations and individuals interested in taking action on ICT policy issues, including through active monitoring of existing policy implementation.

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[14] The reports can be found online: http://lac.derchos.apc.org/
[15] http://www.apc.org/english/news/index.shtml?x=5032

Getting started monitoring African ICT policy

The Africa ICT Policy Monitor website was conceived as an African ICT policy clearinghouse that African civil society organisations can use in pressing for equitable policy. The site will include a detailed bibliography on ICT resources grouped by country and theme (e.g., telecommunications policy in Kenya) and an annotated directory of organisations and initiatives active in ICT policy in Africa, as well as statistics, a glossary and a calendar of relevant activities.

Data collection and classification began for six countries: South Africa, Kenya, Uganda, Mozambique, Morocco and Senegal; and initial content for the Africa Policy Monitor website was drafted.[16] The project received strong interest and support from many actors in African ICT policy work, and an advisory group of leaders in Africa ICT policy issues was convened.

APC made presentations on the project in response to invitations from UNECA; the International Telecommunications Union's Telecom Africa; OSI's Damn the Digital Divide; the Society for International Development's Women on the Net; and others.

Internet Rights work initiated in Asia, thanks to members and partners

Following the success of the APC Europe Internet Rights conference held in Prague in February, APC's Asian members, led by JCA-NET in Japan and JinboNet in South

Asian Internet Rights conference took place in Seoul in November.
Photo: Jinbonet

Korea, met in Seoul to strategize around facilitating civil society organisations' response to developments that threaten their ability and right to use the Internet for social justice work. The Asia Internet Rights Conference[17] was the starting point for APC's IR work in Asia.

Action Area: Building information communities

Knowledge is only powerful if it is linked to practice and action. In 2000-2001, APC aimed to build new information communities, to link and support existing communities that are using

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[16] http://africa.rights.apc.org/

[17] http://asia-ir.jinbo.net/english/

and promoting new technologies effectively, and to advance successful examples that can be replicated. Building Information Communities (BIC), a key activity area in APC's Action Plan for 2000-2002, emerged in response to the strong interest expressed by APC member organisations for the APC to work with them to develop information resources that would serve the particular needs of civil society organisations.

Consultation on "Building Information Communities"

The goals of the consultation, which took place in February-March 2001, were to bring together online information workers from all APC member organisations and interested partner organisations, along with specialists from the international community, to discuss what is really involved in building online information communities, consider new areas for engagement, and examine opportunities for APC to facilitate synergy and collaboration amongst members working locally. The APC community identified significant information projects that respond to their own and their users' needs. Later in 2001, member representatives developed project proposals. The knowledge generated in the consultation has formed the basis of many subsequent proposals and decisions in our BIC work.

Collecting online resources for learners and trainers in the development community: APC's Online Resource Centre and ItrainOnline

Although the World Wide Web offers many Internet and ICT-related training materials, it is often difficult to find relevant, high-quality resources targeted at NGOs, development organisations and other civil society groups. APC's Online Resource Centre project supports the creation of an interactive, multilingual website of Internet training materials to support and promote the strategic use of ICTs for development and social justice.

Starting in May, APC spent just over half of 2001 building an interactive, global "clearinghouse" website of ICT training materials and a documentation centre of ICT support resources.

An online consultation with APC members identified the training activities in which they were involved; the materials they would be willing to make public; and their future needs.

At the same time that work was commencing on the ORC, APC began to explore a partnership, later called ItrainOnline (ITO), with five other organisations that were also planning online resource centre development. APC's Online Resource Centre website was intended to provide a single access point to training materials developed by APC members, while the ItrainOnline site was intended to provide a similar single entry point to partner resources. Because the aims and structures of the two sites were almost identical, we agreed to merge them to amplify the impact of our resources.

The ItrainOnline partners include six organisations with extensive experience in training in a development context:

- APC
- Bellanet
- International Network for the Advancement of Scientific Publication (INASP)
- International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)
- International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD)
- OneWorld

Drawing on the extensive training experience of APC members and the other ItrainOnline partners, the ItrainOnline website offers materials and annotated links to high-quality resources in English, Spanish and other languages, on topics ranging from computer and Internet basics to highly technical information and the ways that civil society and development organisations can increase their impact using these tools. APC's member in Argentina, Wamani, created the Spanish version of the ItrainOnline site.

The site was launched on November 29 at a meeting of the APC Council held in Piriapolis, Uruguay and also attended by a partnership representative from OneWorld. Development continues, and a French ITO site and a women's site were added by APC members and partners from Senegal and South Africa in 2002.
ItrainOnline: http://www.itrainonline.org

Making it easier to build online information communities using APC's free software: the APC ActionApps

The APC ActionApps were developed by APC to offer a low-cost solution for content sharing that both increases the functionality of not-for-profit and NGO websites and facilitates the creation of portal sites, improving the visibility of civil society information. APC ActionApps provide NGOs with simple cut-and-paste publishing for their own websites and increased publicity through the aggregation of information onto issue-oriented web-based portals.

The APC ActionApps have been used for a variety of website projects by APC, its members and non-APC organisations. In 2001, APC websites that used the APC ActionApps to organise their content included the Betinho Prize website, the APC website and ItrainOnline. Numerous other groups, including APC members in the Czech Republic, Canada, Colombia, Argentina, Mexico, the Slovak Republic, Ecuador and Romania, provided their civil society clients with ActionApps-driven websites.

Building information communities also involves protecting Internet diversity

In 2001, the World Bank planned to launch a major new Internet initiative, the Development Gateway, which, according to the Bretton Woods Project, "aims to be a supersite on all development issues, covering a range of material drawn from diverse organisations and attracting millions of site visitors per month. Unlike the Bank's own website, the Gateway will appear independent and neutral, but this independence is only being granted once the Bank has taken most of the key decisions."[18]

A number of civil society groups, including many in the APC network, had followed the Bank's Gateway plans since details first emerged in 2000. Many fed their comments and criticisms into the Bank's plans. The Bretton Woods Project, a London-based group working with NGOs to monitor the World Bank, published a report[19] that set out the key problems with the Gateway, drawing on comments from a number of civil society representatives working on ICT, including Roberto Bissio of Uruguay APC member ITeM,[20] and Anriette Esterhuysen, Executive Director of APC.

Action Area: Mobilising participation

APC believes that it is important for individuals and organisations that mobilise information and communication technologies for development and social justice to join forces, learn from one another and advocate together for policies and practices that will extend Internet access to the many people who are being left along the wayside of the "Information Highway." The stronger the membership, the more meaningful the support to the communities and organisations that interact with APC locally, regionally and globally.

Building our Membership

APC has a strong Latin American and Central and Eastern European presence. In 2001, we focused our membership recruitment efforts on encouraging new membership from Asia, Africa, the Middle East and the Caribbean – areas where we had few or no members.

Six new member organisations from four regions and six different countries joined APC during the year. Three of those organisations came from Africa, Asia and the Caribbean.[21] APC's Council also affirmed membership criteria, with the aim of solidifying APC's identity as a network of members involved in the delivery of services that promote the strategic use of ICTs by social movements and civil society.[22]

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[18] Alex Wilks, "A Tower of Babel on the internet? The World Bank's Development Gateway," 2001. http://www.brettonwoodsproject.org/topic/knowledgebank/k2301_babel.html
[19] Wilks, "A Tower of Babel."
[20] Later in the year, ITeM directors Roberto Bissio and Carlos Abin filed fraud and corruption claims against the World Bank, alleging "irregularities" in the way the Bank is establishing its Development Gateway portal.
[21] See "New members in 2001."
[22] See also "About membership in 2001."

The APC Prizes: recognising the use of ICTs for social justice around the world

For over ten years, APC has been working with all sectors of civil society to harness information and communication technologies in ways that support development and social justice. The APC Betinho and Hafkin Communications Prizes recognise and document outstanding examples of efforts to use the Internet to make a real difference to the world's communities today.

The APC Africa Hafkin Communications Prize in 2001: recognising women-led, women-informed, women-inspired initiatives

The $7500 Hafkin Prize affirms and inspires African initiatives; it also documents African creativity in the area of ICTs for development and social and economic justice. The theme for the Hafkin Prize will change every year it is awarded. In 2001, the inaugural year for the prize, the theme was women-led, women-informed, women-inspired initiatives.

Nominations were judged by an all-women African jury according to four main criteria:

1. Utilising ICTs, especially the Internet
2. Mobilising awareness and participation and building capacity
3. Africa-driven and developing Africa
4. Women-led, women-informed, women-inspired

The 2001 Africa Hafkin Prize Winner: The Bayanloco Community Learning Centre trains women in rural Nigeria to use information technology for peace and poverty alleviation

The first APC Africa Hafkin Communications Prize in recognition of outstanding and creative uses of information and communication technologies was awarded at the African Communications & Technology (ACT) Summit to the Bayanloco Community Learning Centre (CLC) in Kaduna State, Nigeria. Bayanloco CLC is an initiative of the Fantsuam Foundation, which was founded and led by Kazanka Comfort.

Kazanka Comfort, founder of the Bayanloco CLC.

Photo: Fantsuam Foundation

The Foundation supports community-based, community-sustained computer centres as part of their microcredit and poverty alleviation scheme. The first centre was set up through the disbursement of loans to women of the Bechechet Bayinring clan of Kpunyai village with Ms. Comfort providing basic computer literacy classes. Users pay fees, sometimes in-kind, to train and use the facilities.

"The most amazing aspect of the Bayanloco Community Learning Centre," said Nancy Hafkin, "is that it managed to come into existence at all."[23] Ms. Hafkin, for whom the APC prize was named, should know. As a pioneer of networking and development information and communications in Africa, over the course of a twenty-three year career she has seen even promising ICT initiatives fail. In contrast, the Bayanloco Centre had to overcome multiple obstacles, including the initial opposition of an all-male Board of Trustees, technophobia amongst the rural women who would be beneficiaries of the project, low literacy levels, initial lack of Internet access, no phone and no regular supply of electricity.

"I never dreamt that what we were doing at Bayanloco would get heard even in Nigeria's capital city, and now we are getting solidarity greetings from all over the world. Your thoughtful consideration and recognition have strengthened my knees, and especially coming from fellow women," Ms. Comfort wrote to APC upon receiving news of the award.

For more about the Hafkin Prize:
http://www.apc.org/english/hafkin

APC Africa Hafkin Prize Finalists: Other women-led, women-informed, women-inspired initiatives

Cyber-Training: Reporting on HIV/AIDS and Women in Africa, Africa Women's Media Centre (Senegal)

Since AWMC was established in 1997, its training of journalists has played a significant role in promoting HIV prevention and reducing the stigma associated with the virus in Africa. www.awmc.com/News/Dec00/hiv.htm

NairoBits (Kenya)

An entirely women-led initiative, NairoBits teaches web design as a livelihood and a means of self-expression to Kenyans aged 17-20 from Mathare, Nairobi's largest slum. www.nairobits.org

Slums Information Development And Resource Centres SIDAREC (Kenya)

The SIDAREC telecentre has become a popular hang-out and educational forum for young people in Majengo/Pumwani. The opportunity to discuss the often life-endangering challenges they face, using information obtained from the Internet, empowers many of these young people to change their lives. www.sidarec.or.ke

Society For Women & AIDS In Africa (SWAAN) (Nigeria chapter)

Through the Africa-wide HIV/AIDS research database, SWAAN has built an electronic community of civil society organisations across the region that share the goal of enhancing the development of their stakeholders, including poor women, journalists and sex workers. No website.

The APC Herbet de Souza Betinho Communications Prize in 2001: recognising the use of the Internet for social justice

The US$7,500 Betinho Prize is designed to recognise and document outstanding efforts to use the Internet to make a real difference for the world's communities today.

The prize is open to NGOs, community-based groups, coalitions, working groups or social movements anywhere in the world that have successfully used information and communication technologies (ICTs) as an essential ingredient in their social justice and development work.

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[23] http://www.apc.org/english/hafkin/2001/haf_hafkin_speech.txt

In 2001, the events of September 11 coincided with the nomination deadline. Nevertheless, over 80 inspiring projects were documented from Brazil, Cuba, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Colombia, Zimbabwe, Peru, the USA and South Africa.

The 2001 Betinho Prize Winner: a video initiative that gives women living in poverty a voice in public policy making in Kenya

Redeemed Village and Mathare 3B are two huge slums surrounding Nairobi. Poorly constructed shelters crowd twisted, narrow lanes, which serve as open drains. Water and electricity are scarce. Residents are seriously affected by violent crime, drugs and alcohol, HIV/AIDS and unemployment.

"Women's Voices,"[24] a project of the Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG), set out to talk to the women living in these neighbourhoods to ask them how they felt they could most effectively participate in the public policy debate on poverty. The women decided that learning scripting, shooting and editing techniques to film and disseminate their community experiences could lead to direct contact with political representatives.

Younger women involved in "Women's Voices" have found a new career.

Photo: ITDG

Actual impacts include increased participation by the entire community in the political process, including sustained contact with those in control of civic services. The women have also secured a contract with a local TV network to regularly supply short news briefs from their villages. The footage they have produced has been transferred to CD-ROM, shown around the world, and posted on ITDG's Sustainable Livelihood website.

Some 2001 APC Betinho Communications Prize Finalists

Agro-technical information in the Upper Vilcanota River (Peru)

A multimedia telecentre in this high Andean area provides the local Kamayoq people with access to information that informs their work as farmers training farmers, and uses multimedia equipment to facilitate training sessions that cannot be held in the field. It is also developing a solid library base of non-local resources. The organisation currently has no website.

Behind the Mask (South Africa)

The struggle of gays and lesbians in Africa is part of a broader struggle for democracy and good governance. *Behind the Mask*, a website magazine on gay and lesbian affairs in Africa, was born out of a desire to give a face to homosexuality and homosexuals - a repressed minority in various African nations - and to build alliances between the gay rights movement and other human rights movements. www.mask.org.za

CDISP - Comite para Democratizaçao da Informatica Sao Paulo (Brazil)

Fifty Sao Paulo communities have come together to learn how ICTs can improve their lives and the local community itself. Word processing students write letters to their local government while desk-top publishing classes produce neighbourhood newspapers. www.cdisp.org.br

"'Women's Voices' represents exactly the type of grassroots communication initiative that Betinho would have supported," said Carlos Afonso, a Brazilian

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[24] www.livelihoodtechnology.org

mentor of civil society social movements and long-time friend of Betinho. "Betinho himself was a master at bringing NGOs' work to the mainstream media and believed it was a strategic and even 'natural' alliance. Today, several years after his death, Betinho's Campaign Against Hunger is stronger than ever and even runs advertising on prime-time television."

As Betinho Prize winner for 2001, "Women's Voices" appeared in national newspapers and magazines and on television in Kenya. Internationally, the initiative was featured by BBC Online[25] and a host of other websites.

For more about the Betinho Prize: http://www.apc.org/english/betinho

The Learning and Practitioners Network: supporting strategic integration of ICTs into development and social justice work

In November 2001, with the support of the Open Society Institute, the APC initiated a needs assessment, pilots and a feasibility study for a project called "Building a Learning and Practitioners Network to Support Strategic Integration of ICTs in Development and Social Justice Work."

Known as L&P for short, this initiative's overall long-term goal is to build a strong network of professionals who will improve and build the capacity of the ICTs-for-development practitioner community, thereby facilitating the use of ICTs for broader and more structural development impact.

During the project's first phase, which ran from November 2001 through September 2002, APC:
- conducted a needs assessment for the network with potential users and participants
- explored the long-term sustainability of such a network both as a means to promote strategic use of ICTs and as a mechanism to provide support to our members and other practitioners in the field
- implemented a pilot network of information workers based on the consultation held with members in February 2001
- facilitated a process whereby active APC ActionApps users can collectively engage in ongoing development of the ActionApps to meet the needs of online content workers
- integrated and expanded the Online Resource Centre project
- worked with the APC WNSP on a pilot project for practitioners working with women and ICTs

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[25] http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/sci/tech/newsid_1697000/1697588.stm
and webcast at:
http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/technology/newsid_1478000/1478157.stm

APC ActionApps allow anyone to publish online without knowing any programming or learning specialised software

As part of our effort to build capacity, APC recently released a free, collaborative web publishing software programme for not-for-profits.

APC developed the ActionApps to offer a low-cost solution for content sharing that both increases the functionality of not-for-profit and NGO websites and facilitates the creation of portal sites, improving the visibility of civil society information. The APC ActionApps development process began in 1999, with the software finally being launched under a GNU/GPL free software licence in mid-2001.

APC ActionApps is an online content management system (CMS). All CMSs allow authorised users to update the content of a website easily, using just a web browser such as Netscape Navigator or Internet Explorer. It's easy to add, remove or edit website information anytime, from anywhere, with no HTML skills needed.

Using the APC ActionApps website, administrators can automate publication of press releases, job listings, events and other types of information. But the real power of APC ActionApps comes at the level of collective publishing and aggregation. Each news item or resource added to an individual organisation's site can be automatically fed to a community-wide portal. Coalitions of organisations that are geographically dispersed can quickly put together a campaign site. The result is greater and faster outreach to a wider audience.

APC's commitment to open source or free software

APC demonstrated our commitment to the free and open source software movement by releasing the ActionApps as free software. The open source movement encourages not only free sharing of software but also a collaborative, evolutionary approach to software development. Anyone can download the software and install it on their server; however, the defining characteristic of open source software is that once a programmer makes useful changes to the code (so that the software can be used to do something different or additional to what it could do before), he or she must integrate the changes back into the main code base. The GPL license - the free software licence APC ActionApps uses - requires any programmer to do this, and the programmer agrees to this condition automatically when they install GPL-licensed software.

A mailing list of interested technicians and developers was established on SourceForge, a popular technical support website, to provide a common work space. List members come from all over the world – Chile, Hungary, Canada, Australia and Japan, to name a few places – and the list is very active.

APC technicians travelled to a number of APC members to provide ActionApps training and support, or installed the software remotely on member servers. During an unrelated APC meeting in Prague, one techie used his free time to install the software at six organisations!

The beauty of releasing the APC ActionApps to the free software community is that programmers from around the world, from inside and outside of APC, are working on the ActionApps software, adding new features, working out bugs or errors and translating the interface into different languages.

Promoting the free software community in Latin America

APC presented the APC ActionApps at the first Latin American Workshop on Open Software for Education, Science, Culture and Society, which was held in Cuba in June, sponsored by UNESCO and organised by the Cuban Information for Development Agency. At the three-day conference, organisations and individuals discussed a variety of proposed policies to assist the development of free software. Roberto Roggiero, APC's Latin American Internet Rights coordinator, presented a paper on the strategic importance of open source software for Latin American civil society. Recently developed tools such as a Spanish language version of the APC ActionApps and free community telecentre access registration software[26] were demonstrated by APC's Colombian member, Colnodo.

Multilingual software for a multinational civil society

Because the APC ActionApps are being developed and adopted all around the world by APC members and others, the administrative interface has been translated into English, Spanish, Czech, Slovak, Hungarian, Romanian, Japanese and German.

APC has translated the interface and a user manual into Spanish. As the software develops (thanks to the APC and the free software community), the process continues. APC has also created a website to provide interested users with basic marketing information and to support developers. It includes a live demonstration version of the ActionApps for public use and experimentation. The site is available in English and Spanish at http://www.apc.org/actionapps.

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[26] http://www.apc.org/english/news/index.shtml?x=4988

A face-to-face capacity building opportunity for our members

Much of APC's value and uniqueness comes from the experiences and learning we gain through interaction amongst our members. At the APC Council meeting, an event attended by representatives from more than twenty APC

APC Council and staff members met face-to-face in November 2001

member organisations from five continents, participants presented and workshopped a variety of different subjects. In 2001, many members were involved in portal development and the promotion and use of APC's free database-to-web software (the APC ActionApps) to build information communities and generate revenue to sustain their ICTs-for-development/social justice work. Representatives proposed and selected workshop themes several months before the event took place. The ensuing exchange of experiences amongst members and other professionals was invaluable.

Workshop themes included:

APC ActionApps: generating revenue and building information community

This workshop included presentations of client case studies from Web Networks, Canada and from Colnodo, Colombia on how ActionApps are helping users to maintain their information systems.

Managing information portals and building online community

Many of APC's members run diverse portals (or gateway sites). This workshop drew on APC member case studies and examined the building blocks of an effective portal. Presentations were made by guest speaker Pete Cranston of OneWorld International; Chasque/Instituto del Tercer Mundo (IteM) on their hugely successful national general interest portal, UruguayTotal; ChangeNet, Slovakia on building and managing ChangeNet.sk, which is one of the most frequently visited news portals in the Slovak republic and cooperates with mainstream media; BlueLink, Bulgaria on the use of campaigns to generate content; and SANGONeT/Women'sNet, South Africa, on Women'sNet strategies for developing relevant content and building a growing community of users focusing on human rights and gender activism.

Evaluation and impact assessment of ICT work: APC Women's Programme Gender Evaluation Methodology

The blueprint for the APC WNSP's groundbreaking Gender and ICT evaluation toolkit was unveiled. The workshop was aimed at building understanding of the challenges involved in evaluation of ICT for justice and development work.

Online information work and intellectual property

Inputs on "open content" and copyright in an online environment provided a context for discussion of the political and legal issues involved in running portals.

APC Women's Programme: Achievements in 2001

Information and Communication Technologies are powerful tools - tools that can help build social networks and contribute towards progressive, social change. However, as access to these tools is not equal, social, ethnic and gender inequities exist. And these inequities are more pronounced for women in general, and particularly for women from the South. The APC Women's Networking Support Programme (APC WNSP) facilitates the strategic use of ICTs in support of women's actions and agendas, to bring more attention to issues of concern to women, reinforce solidarity campaigns, enhance traditional women's networking activities and defend the rights of women to participate equally in civil and public life.

Building Strong Internet Based Women's Networks: Lessons Learned

In 1997, as a contribution to the Global Knowledge conference held in Toronto, the APC WNSP began an evaluation of its own research activities to contribute to the development of a generic ICT audit tool designed to learn more about the role and impact of ICTs on development projects. APC-WNSP saw that more comprehensive tools and criteria were needed when evaluating the role and use of ICTs from a gender perspective. Women also really want to see good examples of what can be done with ICTs.

In 2001, the WNSP Lessons Learned "Building Strong Internet based women's networks" initiative, funded by IDRC, produced the following fruits:

Women In Sync: Inspiring women to network online

After eight years of incubating women's networking projects and working together online, in February 2001, APC-WNSP published "Women in Sync"[27], a three-part collection of stories and experiences of the women and organisations who have become a part of the APC-WNSP network, aimed at inspiring women to network online. "Women in Sync" is a reflection on the lessons learned by women, groups and organisations working in the field of gender and ICT and women's networking support, and an acknowledgement of the challenges faced in a world increasingly transformed by ICTs.

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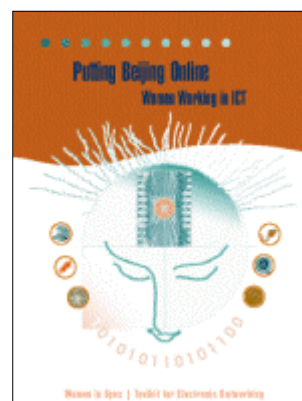
[27] Women in Sync: www.apcwomen.org/netsupport/sync/sync.html

Seed money to support national women's networking

The Lessons Learned project supported three national networking initiatives as part of the "Lessons Learned Small Grants" fund. This fund-leveraging strategy provided seed funds for consultations, workshops, website development and staff time to build a strong programme, as well as to attract further funds from additional sources. Projects supported include a Czech and Slovak language women's information and networking portal[28] and WomensHub[29], an online Filipino women's community website.

Models of best practice

Models, stories and case studies that demonstrate successful methodologies and strategies that respond to the two strategic objectives of Section J, the Women and Media section of the Beijing Platform for Action, were identified and documented in "Women and Media for Social Change: Communications Initiatives Worldwide", a book co-edited by APC WNSP and WomenAction[30]. The book was funded by Hivos through the WomenAction consortium.

A GEM for ICT Initiatives: Evaluating how ICTs work for women

Emerging from the work in the Lessons Learned project, the Gender Evaluation Methodology (GEM) for ICT initiatives and ICT evaluation is an innovative gender analysis tool-in-development produced by APC WNSP for practitioners who share a commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment in ICTs. The first draft of GEM went online in 2001[31]. Field-testing and refining GEM in a series of regional activities in Latin America, Africa, Asia, Europe and North America began in 2002 and GEM is the WNSP's major area of work until 2004.

APC-Africa-Women in 2001

The Africa regional programme of APC WNSP, APC-Africa-Women[32], gathers and works together with women and women's organisations in Africa and all over the world, focusing on African women's empowerment through Information Facilitation, Regional Support, Policy and Advocacy, Training and Research in the field of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). In 2001, APC-Africa-Women developed a series of activities around the World Conference against Racism, Xenophobia and other related intolerance (WCAR). Activities included developing an online conference and supporting Website[33] on race, xenophobia, gender and exclusion in relation to ICTs in Africa. The outcomes were presented during the WCAR in Johannesburg in September. This work was possible thanks to Hivos.

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[28] www.feminismus.cz
[29] www.womenshub.net
[30] http://www.womenaction.org/women_media available in hardcopy, in English, Spanish and French versions, and online.
[31] www.apcwomen.org/gem
[32] http://www.apcafricawomen.org
[33] http://www.apc.org/intersections/

Highlights from APC Members in 2001

APC's original members were often the first providers of Internet in their countries. Today, we continue to pioneer practical and relevant uses of ICTs for civil society, especially in developing countries. APC is an international facilitator of civil society's engagement with ICTs and related concerns, in both policy and practice.

APC's value and uniqueness comes from the local perspectives and contact with grassroots organisations that we gain through interactions with and amongst our members. In 2001, our network of members included organisations from Argentina, Australia, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Curaçao, the Czech Republic, Ecuador, Germany, Hungary, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Romania, Senegal, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Ukraine, UK, Uruguay and the USA.

Many of our members regularly send us news of their work promoting ICTs for social justice and development in their countries and regions – work that we feature in our regular monthly newsletter *APCNews* and its sister Spanish version *APCNoticias*. Others sent us information about significant achievements to include in this report.[34] What follows are some of the outstanding stories from APC members around the world in 2001.

BLUELINK, BULGARIA: INTERNET TEAHOUSE DURING THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF BULGARIAN ENVIRONMENTALISTS

At the December 2001 National Conference of Environmental Civil Society Organisations, BlueLink (an APC member in Sofia) invited all participants, guests, donors and journalists for a cup of aromatic herbal tea and free Internet access. The participants were also offered the opportunity to prepare and print materials needed for the conference.

A cup of aromatic herbal tea and free Internet access for visitors to the BlueLink Internet Teahouse
Photo: BlueLink

The BlueLink team used the opportunity to train local activists in attendance on how to use the services offered by BlueLink to facilitate electronic networking amongst Bulgarian environmental civil society organisations.

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[34] Information about the 2001 activities of several APC members – ComLink, GLUK, IGC, Nicarao and Wamani – was not available.

"The Internet Training course for environmental NGOs that we also offered at the teahouse was created to respond directly to our constituents' needs," said BlueLink staff, "and was received with great enthusiasm by the participants. In comparison to previous years, Bulgarian environmental activists seemed to have many more skills and a lot more knowledge about the Internet. They are now really refining their skills as they use the Internet for research [and] look at the possibilities of finding partners via Internet and online cooperation." BlueLink http://www.bluelink.net

BRIDGE, UNITED KINGDOM: ONLINE RESOURCE HELPS MAKE GENDER EQUALITY CONCERNS PART OF EVERY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Siyanda - a broad Internet-based resource that supports practitioners in implementing gender programmes and mainstreaming concerns about gender equality into all programmes and projects – was launched by BRIDGE in 2001. Siyanda features summaries and links to 700 resources (including some in French and Spanish); a Knowledge Team of gender specialists from around the world contribute directly to the growth of the site. BRIDGE also launched another of their flagship resources in 2001: Genie, a fast route to resources from donor agencies for work in mainstreaming gender concerns. Currently, Genie provides summaries and links to over 400 resources sites, 475 gender consultants and 39 gender country profiles. The BRIDGE website now features all BRIDGE reports free online, and a September 11th feature has been added to the site. BRIDGE: http://www.ids.ac.uk/bridge Siyanda: http://www.siyanda.org and Genie: http://www.genie.ids.ac.uk

CHANGENET, SLOVAKIA: MENTORING RUSSIAN ECO-NGO ON HOW TO BUILD ITS REPUTATION AS A RELIABLE NEWS SOURCE

In mid-2001, the Socio-Ecological Union (SEU) visited Slovakia to learn from ChangeNet how to harness the information services of Russian ecology groups in order to provide the national, international and regional mass media and the general public with regular access to information on environmental issues.

In a country where the system of environmental management and control has been almost entirely destroyed, nongovernmental organisations are now the only watchdogs protecting the right to a healthy and safe environment for people and wildlife. For this reason, it is crucial that they get their message out to a wide audience. Yet green campaigners have come under systematic attack in the traditional Russian press, which makes the fight to get that information out even more complex.

ChangeNet provided SEU with the technical expertise to set up a dynamic news content and exchange site that automatically collects information from several thematic or regional sites (maintained by their member NGOs) using the free APC ActionApps web publishing software. In return, ChangeNet was able to begin offering news produced by SEU to its readers in the

CIS region. ChangeNet receives the news in English, and the content is then translated into Slovak and published on ChangeNet's site. The exchange allows ChangeNet to offer its readers – who include a wide range of civil society groups as well as many members of the press - a broad range of environmental information from new sources never before published outside of Russia. SEU also publishes news from Slovakia in its news service. ChangeNet: http://www.changenet.sk

COLNODO, COLOMBIA: NEW SOFTWARE MEASURES THE IMPACT OF COMMUNITY TELECENTRES; ANOTHER E-MAPS LOCAL BOGOTÁ NEIGHBOURHOODS TO HELP COMMUNITIES ORGANISE

Colnodo, APC´s member in Colombia, helped grassroots groups and communities literally map their problem areas on a computer screen. The geo-referencing maps look just like common street plans.[35] The difference is that these maps are available online and are annotated by the members of the communities themselves, allowing them to plot the locations of neighbourhood factories, schools, rivers, etc. The maps can then be analysed: by drawing on information already in the database, and using the results, neighbours can plan informed campaigns - often in collaboration with other local groups they identify through the digital maps.

Colnodo is committed to developing free software that is suitable for low-tech computers and slow Internet connections. Often information is provided on CD-ROM to circumvent the need for a good Internet connection. Colnodo developed this project – which it is promoting in community telecentres - in such a way that mapping can be carried out at low cost on older, slower machines.

In 2001, Colnodo also developed a low-cost, easy-to-use electronic registration system that allows the capture of information to measure and assess the use and impact of public telecentres that are based in urban/marginal zones and are used for development purposes (such as education, democracy and citizen participation, human rights, conflict resolution, environmental protection, etc.).[36] The system, which was made public for the first time at the end of May, facilitates the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data, which can then be applied according to various impact evaluation methodologies, at any stage of the project process. This marks a break-through for telecentre owners, evaluators, donors and researchers in Latin America. Colnodo: http://www.colnodo.apc.org

C2O, AUSTRALIA: 2001 TAIPEI INTERNATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL OPENED WITH MULTIMEDIA SHOW FROM TOY SATELLITE, C2O AND PARTNERS

"When is an all-night dance party not a rave?" asked the *Taipei Times*. Answer: "When it's the lead event for the 2001 Taipei International Arts Festival." On Saturday April 7, the

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[35] www.apc.org/english/news/fulltext.shtml?sh_itm=7208fa55989312c051c4e05a01805725

[36] www.apc.org/english/news/fulltext.shtml?sh_itm=cb1ae55cfcc785161ce99609edcc3bf5

opening night of the festival, DJs and VJs[37] from c2o partners, Toy Satellite, and their Taiwanese counterparts presented "Undercurrents," a multimedia show drawing from contemporary Australian electronic arts practice, and integrating the shared concerns of the Australian and Taiwanese artists participating - particularly ecological values and cultural identity.

Toy Satellite is a multimedia group from Melbourne whose members have been working in the avant-garde of Australian electronic music and media arts for several decades. In 2001, the group merged with c2o, a non-profit member of APC that specialises in web publishing and hosting. "Undercurrents" was produced at the invitation of the Taipei Arts International Association with the assistance of the Australian Commerce and Industry Office, Taipei. c2o: http://www.c2o.org Undercurrents: http://www.toysatellite.org/undercurrents/

Member anniversaries in 2001

GreenNet
15 years dedicated to defending and extending the rights of those who use the Internet for social campaigning in the UK and around the world (March)

Econnect
10 years of helping nonprofits in the Czech Republic get online (January)

LaborNet
10 years building a democratic communication network for the labour movement in the USA and internationally (December)

ECONNECT, CZECH REPUBLIC: HIGH-QUALITY ONLINE JOURNALISM AND WEB DEVELOPMENT IMPROVED THE PERCEPTION OF VOLUNTEERISM IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Econnect develops comprehensive portal "theme sites" on issues that are of major interest to civil society organisations but have not yet filtered into the mainstream. Their interest is not just in provoking debate within and providing resources and information to the non-profit sector, but in building bridges between the interests of nonprofits and the broader public as well. "On every one of our thematic portals, we cooperate with the most progressive organisations from particular sectors," says Econnect's "social area" coordinator Karel Novotny, "and in 2001, we decided to focus on the issue of volunteers and volunteer work."

In co-operation with two partner organisations that focus on volunteer work - Jahoda and Hestia - Econnect launched Dobrovolnik.cz, a pilot project on volunteer work, which has served as a model for how Econnect wants to facilitate the use of ICTs by Czech nonprofits in the future. Econnect produced the portal and hired journalists to work on content development. The portal's high quality and success is a result of the combination of Econnect's expertise in technology and online content and its partners' experience in working professionally with volunteers.

Covering real-life situations, the portal demonstrates the many fields in which volunteers work, and what they gain while they serve others. It covers the history of volunteering in the Czech Republic and internationally, and provides examples of how volunteers are respected and encouraged in developed societies. Soon after it launched, the portal was attracting 1,000 visitors each month and capturing the attention of the mainstream media, raising

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[37] DJs who integrate visual elements into their performances.

awareness in the Czech public regarding the very real impact of voluntary work in NGOs and state institutions and garnering support for the development of the voluntary sector.
Econnect: http://www.ecn.cz and Czech Volunteer Portal: http://dobrovolnictvi.ecn.cz

ENDA TIERS MONDE, SENEGAL: USING ICTS TO SUPPORT GENDER EQUALITY IN SENEGAL

The Senegalese Family Code, which was considered innovative when it was enacted in 1972, features some stipulations that discriminate against women and run counter to the principles stated in the country's new Constitution. These stipulations also contravene the principles contained in various international treaties signed by Senegal that protect women's rights. Husbands' power over their wives and fathers' power over their children are seen as the primary sources of prejudice and injustice suffered by women, their children and their relatives.

ENDA Third-World, APC's member in Dakar, in partnership with Siggil Jigeen, launched a project on ICTs supporting women's gender equality programmes in Senegal. The project was aimed at raising public awareness of the need to replace the notions of "husband power" and "fathers' power" with ideas of "joint parenting" and "joint responsibility for the family." This consciousness-raising effort is conducted through research, content production, information and communication, training and lobbying - using the many tools offered by the Internet. The project is run by ENDA Third World's SYNFEV (Synergy Gender and Development) team.
ENDA: http://www.enda.sn and Parenté conjointe:
http://www.famafrique.org/parenteconjointe/accueil.html

GREENNET, UNITED KINGDOM: INTERNET RIGHTS CAMPAIGN TO ENSURE THAT THE INTERNET REMAINS A SECURE PLACE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND DEMOCRACY ADVOCACY

GreenNet's campaign on Civil Society Internet Rights in the UK provided information, resources and tools for civil society organisations to safely and productively use the Internet as a means of increasing democracy and promoting social justice. A number of important briefings for civil society groups were produced, including:

- Civil rights and Internet legislation
- Campaigning online
- Privacy and surveillance
- Encryption and electronic signatures
- Interception capabilities
- Media regulation and convergence

In addition, GreenNet coordinated APC's European Internet Rights (IR) work. In 2001, *Ethical Consumer* magazine, a guide to environmentally and socially aware consumption, selected

GreenNet as the "best buy" for those looking for an ethical Internet Service Provider (ISP) in the United Kingdom.[38]

GreenNet: http://www.gn.apc.org and Internet Rights UK: http://www.internetrights.org.uk/

GREEN SPIDER, HUNGARY: A YEAR OF CONSOLIDATION FOR INTERNET SERVICE AND TOOLS PROVIDER SERVING ECOLOGISTS

2001 was a year of consolidation and renewal for Green Spider. Despite a stormy period which included several changes in the Board, administrative difficulties, near-dissolution and staff reductions, Green Spider fought to maintain their provision of basic technical services to the ecology movement in Hungary. Email and web services never went down – even for a minute – despite the fact that, at times, Green Spider wasn't sure how they were going to pay the server connection.

To turn themselves around, Green Spider developed a new strategy to respond to the changing situation both within the organisation and in the larger Internet marketplace. Turning to their users, Green Spider asked them to show their support in the form of regular contributions. They also created desperately needed billing and collection services, and developed and improved service packages. In the face of tough competition from commercial Internet service providers, Green Spider capitalized on the strength of their longstanding values – online tools and services with flexibility, personal contact and accessible pricing.

Green Spider realised that they needed to make significant improvements to their content development and management. They installed and started testing the APC ActionApps, and began demonstrating them to their community with very positive feedback.

Does this story have a happy ending? It's too early to say, according to Green Spider personnel, but their feeling is that the foundation has been laid for a more stable, more productive future providing ICTs to the Hungarian environmental community.

INSTITUTO DEL TERCER MUNDO (ITEM), URUGUAY: SOCIAL WATCH REPORT 2001 LAUNCHED AT UN HEADQUARTERS

The Third World Institute (ITeM) launched one of their major products - the Social Watch Report 2001 - before the international community at the UN headquarters in New York on May 4th, during a discussion panel on "Social Priorities in Financing for Development."

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[38] www.apc.org/english/news/fulltext.shtml?sh_itm=233f6674571ac7176f87c2da81a78d28

The yearly reports from Social Watch hold governments, the UN system and international organisations accountable for the fulfilment of national, regional and international commitments to eradicate poverty and achieve gender equality. The reports, produced by the Third World Institute since 1996, promote debates that provide a mechanism for civil society to formulate proposals about how the commitments should be implemented in each country. The Social Watch Report 2001, which includes inputs from civil society organisations from some 50 countries, illustrated cases of conflict between commitments and social development priorities and the pressure derived from economic globalisation.

John Langmore introduced the Social Watch initiative to the audience and described the influence of the network and the report on international negotiations on social development issues. Langmore highlighted the key role that Social Watch played in critiquing the "Better World for All" report published by the OECD, the World Bank, the IMF and the UN Secretary General.

ITeM: http://www.item.org.uy

Social Watch: http://www.socialwatch.org/

INTERCOM, ECUADOR: INFODESARROLLO.ORG - A SPANISH-LANGUAGE PORTAL TO SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION AND COLLABORATION

APC's member in Quito, INTERCOM, launched a Spanish-language portal linking Internet users to a wide range of website and online resources related to development. "We want to make it easy for NGOs, grassroots groups, cooperation agencies and networks to find up-to-date information on a wide variety of development themes," said Johana Beltran, then coordinator of Infodesarrollo. The site development followed naturally from the success of the Infodesarrollo mailing list, a development list with a strong Latin American orientation.


The portal uses APC's new free database-to-web software - APC ActionApps – to facilitate decentralized feeding of content to the site via a team of editors from a variety of civil society sectors.

INTERCOM: http://www.ecuanex.net.ec and Infodesarrollo: http://www.infodesarrollo.org

JINBONET, SOUTH KOREA: SIXTY-DAY HUNGER STRIKE AGAINST INTERNET CENSORSHIP IN SOUTH KOREA

In 2000, the Korean Ministry of Information & Communication (MIC) attempted to pass a Communications Decency Act that included an Internet content rating system which would

block access to websites that the Korean government considered to be "harmful to minors." Websites selected for blocking included mainstream lesbian and gay websites; protests from progressive groups prompted the removal of the clauses related to content rating.
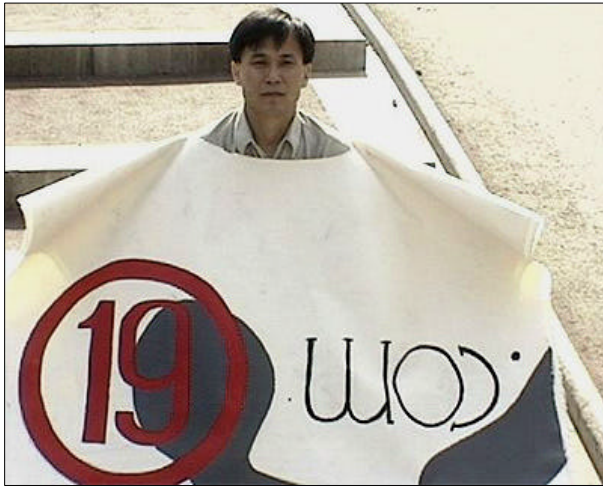
The enforcement of an Internet content rating system led progressive groups to mount a sixty-day hunger strike. Jinbonet Chair Lee Jong-hoi was one of the protesters.   Photo: Jinbonet

However, in 2001, the MIC announced that they would indeed implement an Internet content rating system from July 1st. Activists from social and civic organisations including Jinbonet responded with a 60-day hunger strike at the Myongdong Cathedral, a traditional site of protest in Korea. By giving itself the sole authority to define the "immorality" of content, protestors argued, the Korean administration was able to restrict access to over 100,000 websites it deemed "indecent," including a number produced by progressive organisations - especially gay and lesbian groups, who have historically been denied a voice in Korean civil society.

Hunger strike participants and many Internet users insisted that the purpose of the Internet content rating system is not to protect minors, as the government claims, but in fact to facilitate greater government censorship and control of the Internet.
Jinbonet: http://www.jinbo.net
Anti-censorship campaign: http://base21.org/base21hot/anticensorship.html

JCA-NET, JAPAN: THE LAUNCH OF LABORNET JAPAN

Following successful efforts in the US, UK and South Korea to network workers online, LaborNet Japan, a portal for the Japanese labour movement, was launched on February 10. Groups involved included Zenkowan Union, a Japanese dockers' union that organised solidarity actions with Liverpool workers during the mid-1990s.

The launch presentation, at Hosei University, was attended by 70 labour activists, researchers and media activists. Panel discussion topics centred on good strategic uses of the Internet by labour groups, including presentations by LaborNet South Korea (an initiative of APC member Jinbonet) on how the Internet has been appropriated by workers as an effective organising and campaigning tool. Japan's labour movement had already been using the Internet for some time; LaborNet Japan is expected to expand this use dramatically and play an important role in enhancing international solidarity in the labour movement. Technical support for the portal is provided by JCA-NET.
JCA-NET: http://www.jca.ax.apc.org and http://www.labornetjp.org

LABORNET US, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: LABOUR AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE

How are corporations using media and information technologies against working people? How can working people put these technologies to their own use to organise in the United States and internationally? LaborTech 2001, coordinated by APC member LaborNet, addressed those questions at the University of San Francisco, USA in December.

The LaborTech International Conferences have been held each year since 1990 in San Francisco, Minneapolis and Madison in the US; in Vancouver, Canada; and in Russia. These conferences play a key educational role, and also develop labour communication media and technology awareness for workers and unions. They have contributed to the formation of LaborNets (Internet-networked labour communities) in the US, UK, South Korea, Germany, Austria and Japan, which have played an important role in building international solidarity in the Liverpool Dockers strike in the UK, the Korean general workers' strike and other labour struggles around the world.

LaborNet: http://www.labornet.org

LANETA, MEXICO: TOXIC SUBSTANCES AND THE RIGHT TO ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION IN MEXICO

Are we being poisoned? LaNeta spent several months in 2001 creating a citizens' guide to toxic substances and the right to environmental information in Mexico in association with citizens' groups around the country that are working to clean up the environment. Production of the guide was very much a collaborative venture involving an intensive period of field trips, compilation of materials, analysis of information and an online exchange with dozens of environmental groups. The guide covers information related to the effects of inappropriately used toxic substances in industry, agriculture and in the home, and the accompanying health and environmental issues. Central themes that run throughout the guide include citizens' right to receive information about the environment, and the need for a compulsory Mexican emissions and pollution register.

LaNeta: http://www.laneta.apc.org and Emisiones: http://www.laneta.apc.org/emis/carpeta/

PANGEA, SPAIN: INTERACTIVE EVENTS CALENDARS ARE APPROPRIATED BY THE ACTIVIST COMMUNITY

In 2001, Catalonian APC member Pangea began offering online calendars to their clients - organisations and people using the Internet to work for social justice and change. Some calendars are interactive tools that are used by groups that share a common goal or interest, while others are public and the content is updated by the community. The action calendar on

Catalonian events is maintained entirely by readers, the ecology calendar is maintained by two environmental groups, and the feminist calendar is supported by participants in the Spanish women's movement.

Using Pangea's dynamic open source software, the dates and details of upcoming community events for each calendar are fed directly into the database, where they can be consulted by the public. A sample of events can be found at:
http://www.pangea.org/agenda.php

SANGONET, SOUTH AFRICA: A YEAR OF CHANGE AND LAYING FOUNDATIONS

For SANGONeT, 2001 was a year when the organisation took stock of how it was positioned in the development sector, asking difficult questions about its successes and failures, what sort of organisation it was, and what sort of organisation it could be. Through this process of introspection, it began laying the foundations for future work.

The fledgling Information Services Department – now significantly strengthened and focused – joined a collaboration with the UK-based Fahamu and the Washington-based Kabissa on *Pambazuka News*, a weekly electronic newsletter for social justice and development in Africa. *Pambazuka News* has around 10,000 subscribers. At the same time, the Africa Pulse portal, a complementary development media project, was being developed through its second phase. Although the new portal was not to be launched until 2002, some interesting partnerships were being built around the project, both within South Africa and across the region. A regional workshop in November 2001, funded by the Open Society Institute of Southern Africa, included participants from as far afield as Tanzania and Mauritius, as well as from Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Zambia. During the same period, the Information Services Department received seed funding from USAID for Thusanang, an online fundraising facility. This inaugurated the department's expanding focus and consolidation in the sector.
SANGONeT: http://www.sn.apc.org
Pambazuka News: http://www.pambazuka.org and Africa Pulse: http://www.africapulse.org

STRAWBERRYNET, ROMANIA: DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORKING IN ROMANIA

The project "The Environment and Us," finalised in 2001, represented an important milestone for the StrawberryNet Foundation. It marked the end of the transition phase from connectivity services towards content-oriented activities like web page design and hosting, mailing list hosting and facilitation, and the development of thematic websites and online databases.

The project facilitated environmental information exchange between nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) and the Ministry of Water and Environmental Protection, in order to improve access to information and public participation in line with the Aarhus Convention adopted by Romania. It also produced an environmental information website which included

a citizens' environmental guide, an NGO directory, and information on nature conservation, sustainable transport and energy efficiency.

StrawberryNet: http://www.ngo.ro

The Environment and Us: http://mediu.ngo.ro

TAU, ARGENTINA: BUILDING MARKETABLE TECHNOLOGY AND BUSINESS SKILLS AMONGST YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE FORMER INDUSTRIAL HEARTLAND

Training young people to run and maintain a telecentre independently. A TAU coordinator facilitates a workshop discussion.

Photo: TAU

Based in Rosario, Argentina's second city and former industrial powerhouse, Nodo TAU, a small team of networking enthusiasts, had been providing marginalised communities and trade unions with Internet connectivity and training since 1995. In 2001, TAU was granted funding that would allow three of their former volunteers to dedicate half their professional time to expanding TAU's work on the implementation of "Enredando" (a play on words which means both "weaving webs" and "I'm part of a network"), a 27-month, three-stage project aimed at capacity building in ICTs for marginalised communities and youth, and the groups that work within them.

TAU works in communities where under- and unemployment often reach levels much higher than the 30% regularly cited for Rosario and its satellites. "One of the most frustrating limitations we faced before we received the funding was that when we were working purely voluntarily, we had limited time for training. Many young people from the *villas* (shanties) attended our short workshops under the illusion that they would learn enough skills [there] to get a job…but they were kids who had never even touched a keyboard before, and of course the short-term workshops could never give them that level of training," said Danilo Lujambio, one of TAU's coordinators. "Now we will be able to devote sufficient time and resources to training. Enredando involves building the technical capacity of young people so that they will be able to run and maintain a telecentre independently. They will be learning valuable - and marketable – skills as well as providing a much-needed service in their community." This is an approach to ICT training that has worked with great success in the *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro through the Community for Democracy in Information Technology (CDI) project, and TAU, following visits to Brazil, has high hopes of replicating their success in Rosario. TAU: http://www.tau.org.ar

WEB NETWORKS, CANADA: DYNAMIC SITES FOR CANADIAN NONPROFITS AND
TRADE UNIONS USING APC ACTIONAPPS

In 2001, Canadian APC member Web Networks began to market its "Action Page" products -
based on the APC ActionApps online database tools – to a wide range of non-profit clients. It
built several large sites, such as the Canadian Labour Congress website, which - with over 75
bilingual Action Pages – allows for decentralized website production; and a bilingual news
site for the New Democratic Party of Canada. Web Networks also designed a new logo for the
party. Small sites the organisation built allowed local trade unions to get online.

Web Networks also developed a simple tool that makes it easy for organisations to receive
secure donations and sell memberships, registrations and products through their websites.
Greenpeace Canada uses this tool. Web Networks: http://www.web.ca

Changes in APC Governance and Organisational Development

APC members define APC's direction, policies and agendas. Each APC member organisation
appoints a representative to the APC Council, the governing body that establishes APC's
policy and priorities. The Council meets regularly online; periodically, APC Council members
meet for a face-to-face conference in one of the member countries. In 2001, the APC Council
met twice online and once face-to-face in Piriapolis, Uruguay.

The Council elects an Executive Board that provides financial and operational oversight, and
works with the Executive Director and staff to implement APC action plans.

The start of rethinking governance within the APC

In 2001, six new organisations became APC members, which significantly increased APC's
membership. APC members generally become very interested and involved in the direction of
APC's activities. However, current requirements place a lot of responsibility with Council
members, without there being a great deal of accompanying accountability. This led to a
proposal that would allocate greater responsibility in decision-making to APC's Executive
Board, a smaller, more easily-convened group of representatives. Based on input from the
Council, this proposal was modified and the following amended motion was approved.

Motion for the APC Council Meeting 2001 (Uruguay)

"The current change of APC to an organisation with broader outreach and more members makes it necessary to rethink the details of governance of the APC. With this motion we aim to improve the work and the output of APC without harming the member representation and their right to determine the direction of the organisation.

We propose a (small) *change in the division of responsibilities* between Council and Executive Board. The change will enable the EB to follow the development of the organisation much better and support the staff in implementing the Actions Plans decided by Council. It will relieve the Council from work and make it possible to concentrate on the whole organisation and its development."

	Representation	Elected by	Responsibilities
Council	1-2 representatives per member organisation	Member	Approve Mission Approve overall strategy Approve Action Plan Approve Bylaws and Constitution Appoint and remove Executive Board members Accept and remove members
Executive Board	4-7 members from Council	Council	Approve and supervise Executive Director Ensure sound financial management Meet statutory obligations Accept members (working with the MWG) NEW: Oversee and implement the strategic lines of action decided by Council

Developments in APC's staff capacity

APC's core management systems staff – executive director, projects and programmes manager, and finance and communications managers – remains small. However, 2001 saw a significant expansion in our capacity to handle projects as we took on project managers and regional and thematic project staff.

In Internet Rights (IR), APC contracted coordinators for the ICT policy monitoring projects in Africa and in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). The LAC monitor also hired a website and information coordinator. The European IR project was run by GreenNet of London, an APC member organisation active in the area.

A training specialist was hired to manage the Online Resource Centre project and to build content partnerships; and a Learning and Practitioners Networking (L&P) coordinator was taken on for Phase I at the end of the year.

The Women's Programme (WNSP) hired a coordinator for the "Lessons Learned: Building Strong Internet-based women's networks" initiative and later the Gender Evaluation Methodology (GEM), which produced publications, began preparing for the development of a gender evaluation methodology for ICT initiatives and ICT evaluation, and supported three national networking initiatives as part of the Lessons Learned Small Grants fund.

As usual, the APC team continued to work almost entirely online, taking advantage of occasional international meetings for some face-to-face time. The team members were physically based in Canada, South Africa, Uruguay, Ecuador, Kenya, the Philippines, Spain, the USA and the United Kingdom.

DIRECTORY: GOVERNANCE AND STAFF

Board members in 2001

November 2001 – May 2003 (incoming)	May 2000 - November 2001 (outgoing)
Stefan Hackenthal (Chair)	Stefan Hackenthal (Chair)
Chris Nicol	Karen Banks
David Barnard	Magela Sigillito
Julián Casasbuenas	Julián Casasbuenas
Magela Sigillito	
Pavel Antonov	
Toshimaru Ogura	

Council Representatives (in December 2001)

AFRICA

ENDA (Senegal): Youba Sokona, Marie-Helene Mottin-Sylla
Fantsuam Foundation (Nigeria): John Dada, Kazanka Comfort
SANGONeT, (South Africa): David Barnard, Natasha Primo

ASIA PACIFIC

c2o (Australia): Bruce Morrison, Leigh Blackall
JCA-NET (Japan): Toshimaru Ogura, Tomoya Inyaku
Jinbonet (South Korea): Oh Byoung-il, PatchA

EUROPE

BlueLink (Bulgaria): Pavel Antonov
BRIDGE (UK): Susie Jolly, Emma Bell
ChangeNet (Slovakia): Norbert Brazda, Juraj Rizman
ComLink (Germany): Stefan Hackenthal
Econnect (Czech Republic): Vaclav Klinkera, Katerina Fialova
GLUK (Ukraine): Nick Makovsky, Volodymyr Tykhyy
GreenNet (UK): Karen Banks, Joanne Doyle
Green Spider (Hungary): Ágoston Nagy, Robert Fidrich
Pangea (Spain): Chris Nicol
StrawberryNet (Romania): Mihaly Bako

LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN

Ace Suares' Internet Consultancy (Curaçao): Ace Suares, Rolf Kleef
Colnodo (Colombia): Julián Casasbuenas, Ariel Barbosa
CRIES/Nicarao (Nicaragua): Diego Ferreyra
INTERCOM (Ecuador): Rodrigo Barahona
ITeM (Uruguay): Magela Sigillito
LaNeta (Mexico): Jacques Lefevre, Olinca Marino
TAU (Argentina): Danilo Lujambio
Wamani (Argentina): Carlos Alvarez

NORTH AMERICA (not including Mexico)

IGC (USA): Mark Graham
LaborNet (USA): Steve Zeltzer, Erika Zweig
Web Networks (Canada): Oliver Zielke, Alan Dixon

Staff and Project Team
The APC staff, led by South African-based Executive Director Anriette Esterhuysen, carries out the organisation's operational work. APC also employs project coordinators.

Posts in 2001 were:

Management Systems

- Executive Director: Anriette Esterhuysen (South Africa)
- Programmes and Projects Manager: Maureen James (Canada)
- Communications Manager: Karen Higgs (Uruguay)
- Finance Manager: Maya Sooka (South Africa)
- Technical Consultant: Josep Turró Mauri (Colombia)

Policy Programme

- Africa ICT Policy Monitor Coordinator: Emmanuel Njenga Njuguna (South Africa)
- Africa ICT Policy Monitor Researcher: Delia Innocenti (intern) (South Africa)
- Latin America and the Caribbean ICT Policy Monitor Coordinator: Roberto Roggiero (Ecuador)
- Latin America and the Caribbean ICT Policy Monitor Website Content Coordinator: Valeria Betancourt (Ecuador)
- Europe Internet Rights Initiative, and Global Internet Rights coordination: Karen Banks (UK)

Strategic Uses Programme

- Online Resource Centre Coordinator: Ann Tothill (South Africa)
- Learning & Practitioners Network Coordinator: Michael de Beer (USA)

Women's Programme

- APC Women's Programme Coordinator: Karen Banks (UK)
- Lessons Learned Project Manager: Chat Garcia Ramilo (Philippines)

APC Community Face to Face: Events that saw an APC Presence in 2001

Some of the events that saw representatives of APC giving keynote addresses, participating in workshops and roundtables and serving on organising committees included:

January 25-30: 1st World Social Forum, Communications and Citizenship workshop (Porto Alegre, Brazil)

March 1-3: Mistica/Olistica meeting, FUNREDES (Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic)

March 30-31: UNESCO Chair Symposium: Gender Equality / Equity through ICTs (Seoul, Korea)

March 22-23: Annual Meeting of the Global Knowledge Partnership (Geneva, Switzerland)

April 6-9: Society for International Development Women on the Net Workshop (Nanyuki, Kenya)

May 16-17: "Comunicación, Internet y Sociedad en América Latina." FLACSO-IDRC (Quito, Ecuador)

May 18-19: SADC Regional Conference on Information Sharing and Exchange (Harare, Zimbabwe)

May 22-27: Sustainable Development Web Communications Initiative Workshop (Vancouver, Canada)

June 1-18: "Participación social en la Era Digital" (Social participation in the Digital Age): workshops in Buenos Aires (Argentina), Montevideo (Uruguay) and Sao Paulo (Brazil), Frederich Ebert Siftung Foundation.

June 9-11: 1st meeting of the International Advisory Committee of the World Social Forum (Sao Paulo, Brazil)

June 18: Launch of the book *Women and Media for Social Change: Communications Initiatives Worldwide* (Montreal, Canada)

June 22- 25: International Planning Committee, AWID Forum (Ottawa, Canada)

June 25: Presentation by the WNSP for the Canadian International Development Agency programming staff (Ottawa, Canada)

June 25-27: 1st Latin American Workshop on the Promotion of Open Software in Education, Science, Culture, AID-UNESCO (Havana, Cuba)

July 2 - 8 2001 Asian Women's Electronic Network Training (WENT2001) (Seoul, Korea)

July 3-7: World Association for Christian Communications Congress (Netherlands)

July 30-2 August: African Computing & Telecommunications (ACT) Summit (Pretoria, South Africa)

August 19-23: Civicus Assembly (Vancouver, Canada)

August 21 – September 7: World conference Against Racism (Durban, South Africa)

September 5-6: 3rd Annual Conference on World Wide Web Applications (Johannesburg, South Africa)

September 7-8: PICTA (Partners for ICT in Africa) meeting (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)

September 11: Highway Africa 2001 conference, "The Digital Gender Divide in Africa" (Grahamstown, South Africa)

September 9-12: "Rowing Upstream: Snapshots of Pioneers of the Information Age in Africa" workshop, Ford Foundation (Mombasa, Kenya)

September 27-28: International Telecommunications Union Gender Task Force (Geneva, Switzerland)

October 26-29: ITU Regional Symposium on Gender Equality in ICTs (Seoul, Korea)

November 5-6: Roundtable on Information Technology at the SADC (Southern African Development Community) Electoral Commissions Forum

November 8-12: African Connection, Conference and workshop about content development in Africa (Johannesburg, South Africa)

November 10-14: International Telecommunications Union (ITU) Africa Telecommunications Event for 2001 (Johannesburg, South Africa)

November 12-15: Open Society Initiative Southern Africa (OSISA) conference on civil society and its role in bridging the digital divide (Johannesburg, South Africa)

November 12-16: UNESCO Workshop on Online Learning for Women: Asia-Pacific Women ICT Trainers' Exchange (Seoul, Korea)

November 16-17: Feminist Spaces in the Internet: Discourses, Visions, Communities (Berlin, Germany)

November 19-20: United Nations ICT Task Force (New York, USA)

December 4-7: 2nd World Congress of Citizens Networks (Buenos Aires, Argentina)

December 18-19: UNESCAP Expert Group Meeting to Review ICT Policy from a Gender Perspective (Bangkok, Thailand)

APC COMMUNITY FACE TO FACE: EVENTS ORGANISED BY APC IN 2001

January:
WNSP Gender Evaluation workshop (Manila, Philippines)

February:

APC Central and Eastern European Regional meeting (Prague, Czech Republic)

Europe Internet Rights workshop (Prague, Czech Republic)

APC Staff meeting (Prague, Czech Republic)

April:

WNSP Lesson Learned workshop (Manila, Philippines)

September:

APC Staff meeting (Johannesburg, South Africa)

November:

Asian Internet Rights conference (Seoul, South Korea)

Asian Women ICT Trainers workshop (WNSP/APCWINC) (Seoul, South Korea)

Latin American and Caribbean ICT Policy Monitor workshop (Montevideo, Uruguay)

Launch of ItrainOnline (Piriapolis, Uruguay)

APC Executive Board face-to-face meeting (Piriapolis, Uruguay)

Face-to-face APC Council meeting (Piriapolis, Uruguay)

Changing the Face of APC: The New Logo

Too many civil society organisations find the idea of technology intimidating and unfriendly. The logo, with its festive design and earthy, natural colours, aims to celebrate APC's unique union of ICT service providers across the world and the potential of ICTs for civil society groups. The APC logo, created by Indonesian artist and activist Nani Buntarian, was launched in late 2001.

SHELL IS
ANY OF THE SPACES
OCCUPIED BY THE ORBITS
OF A GROUP OF ELECTRONS
OF APPROXIMATELY
EQUAL ENERGY
SURROUNDING
THE NUCLEUS OF
AN ATOM
[MERRIAM-WEBSTER DICTIONARY]
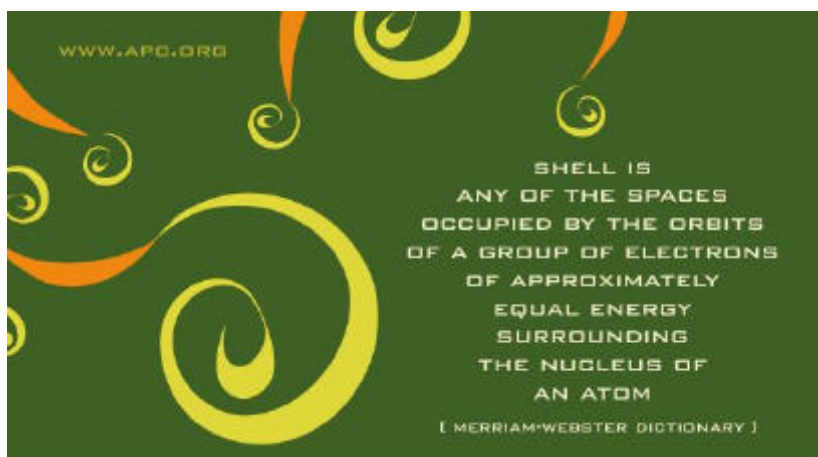
The dictionary definition of "shell" seemed to capture the essence of APC – a technology organisation driven by its members, all of whom have an equal representation, whether they are big or small.

Annual Financial Statements for 2001

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITORS

To the members
ASSOCIATION FOR PROGRESSIVE COMMUNICATIONS

We have audited the financial statements of Association for Progressive Communications set out on pages 2 to 9 for the year ended 31 December 2001. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Executive Board, while our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

Scope

We conducted our audit in accordance with statements of International Auditing Standards which require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.

Audit opinion

In our opinion, the financial statements fairly present, in all material respects, the financial position of the association at 31 December 2001 and the results of its operations for the year then ended in accordance with International Accounting Standards.

Douglas & Velcich
Chartered Accountants (S.A.)
Registered Accountants and Auditors   *Johannesburg, 13 September 2002*

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2001

Your Executive Board presents its report, together with the audited financial statements of the Association for the year ended 31 December 2001.

General

The principal object of the association is to empower and support organisations, social movements and individuals in and through the use of information and communication technologies to build strategic communities and initiatives for the purpose of making meaningful contributions to equitable human development, social justice, participatory political processes and environmental sustainability.

Statements of responsibility

The Executive Board is responsible for the maintenance of adequate accounting records, the preparation and integrity of the financial statements and related information. The auditors are responsible to report on the fair presentation of the financial statements. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting practice.

The Executive Board is also responsible for the association's systems of internal control. These are designed to provide reasonable, but not absolute assurance as to the reliability of the financial statements, and to adequately safeguard, verify and maintain accountability of assets, and to prevent and detect misstatement and loss. Nothing has come to the attention of the Executive Board to indicate that any material breakdown in the functioning of these controls, procedures and systems has occurred during the year under review.

The financial statements have been prepared on the going concern basis, since the Executive Board has every reason to believe that the association has adequate resources in place to continue in operation for the foreseeable future.

Results for the year

The results of operations for the year are fully disclosed in the following financial statements.

BALANCE SHEET AT 31 DECEMBER 2001

	2001 USD	2000 USD
ASSETS	**563,114**	**403,574**
Non-current assets	**3,576**	**6,195**
Equipment	3,576	6,195
Current assets	**559,538**	**397,379**
Accounts receivable	13,587	31,076
Accrued grant income	-	24,854
Cash and cash equivalents	545,951	341,449
TOTAL ASSETS	**563,114**	**403,574**
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES	**563,114**	**403,574**
Equity and reserves	**86,441**	**33,211**
MS Reserve fund	52,212	-
Accumulated surplus	34,229	33,211
Current liabilities	**476,673**	**370,363**
Accounts payable	49,050	15,882
Deferred grant income	427,623	354,481
TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES	**563,114**	**403,574**

INCOME STATEMENTS

	2001 USD	2000 USD
Income	**780,704**	**667,838**
Grants received	590,892	494,431
Administration fees	35,927	80,310
Membership fees	22,697	51,897
Project income	58,500	24,287
Consulting revenue from MS services	63,750	1,387
Interest	8,938	15,526
Expenditure	**727,474**	**673,268**
Accounting fees	83	156
Annual report	2,000	2,366
Auditors' remuneration	3,000	4,500
Bank charges	964	123
Bad debts written off	14,822	11,404
Charitable contributions and memberships	-	205
Conference registration fees	-	35
Depreciation	2,937	7,020
General expenses	-	1,500
Meetings	43,669	68,081
Office expenses	5,989	7,167
Rental	1,200	1,200
Promotional materials and printing	4,500	565
Programme and project expenses	482,014	395,566
Postage	516	803
Repairs and maintenance	574	299
Salaries and contributions	156,151	166,251
Software expenses	-	894
Staff training	547	97
Technical services by IGC	500	-
Telephone and fax	1,313	1,298
Translation services	1,521	3,366
Travel, accommodation and per diems	4,572	372
Website	602	-
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR	**53,230**	**(5,430)**
Transfer to the Management Systems (MS) reserve fund	**(52,212)**	**-**
BALANCE AT BEGINNING OF YEAR	**33,211**	**38,641**
BALANCE AT END OF YEAR	**34,229**	**33,211**

Acknowledgments