



# **GRACE: Gender Research in Africa into ICTs for Empowerment**

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# Gender Research in Africa into ICTs for Empowerment

## 1. Executive Summary

This project aims to explore the ways in which women in Africa use ICTs to empower themselves, the external, structural barriers as well as the internal factors which prevent them from using ICTs to their advantage, and the strategies they employ to overcome these impediments. The project comprises 15 sub-projects, reflecting 14 research sites in 12 countries and one meta research sub project. While coherent with the general aim of the overall research initiative, the sub-projects differ from each other greatly in terms of target group and research focus. Furthermore, the concepts of gender and empowerment which frame the project's general direction and commitment, may not have unequivocal meaning within the sub-projects.

The project therefore also aims to contribute to the debates focusing on women empowerment and ICTs through finding its own understandings of what "empowerment" and "gender" may mean in the African ICT context. The lessons learnt will be shared with policy makers and educators in the form of contextualized and local-specific recommendations.

An important focus of the overall project is capacity building. Researchers will be given the opportunities to develop research capacity as well as capacity to use ICTs effectively. The project has made provision for intensive training and ongoing mentoring and support. It intends to integrate the research and the ICT aspects into a holistic capacity building experience for the participants. There are also longer term objectives:

- A research network will be formed that can do ongoing gender and ICT research in Africa.

- A research base will be formed in various institutions throughout Africa that can contribute to the debates around gender and ICT issues.

- The knowledge which will be generated will influence policy at local, national and regional/global levels.

The project process is outlined in the workplan (section 15). It will commence with a literature review that gathers research and material relevant to each sub-project. Mentoring and capacity building will take place throughout the project, with the capacity building workshop in early 2005 a specific milestone. At this workshop women will consolidate their methodological approaches, learn how to use a qualitative analysis ICT tool (Nvivo), gain other advanced ICT and knowledge networking skills, learn how to use digital cameras and recorders and how to edit sound and images using their computers. Site visits will be made by the Research Director, and the project coordinator will work closely with each researcher to design and implement their individual research strategies. User friendly online collaboration platforms will be developed and supported. Results will be documented in a professionally edited online and printed publication.

From the planning phase of the project the network's broader policy transformation goals will be considered and linkages formed with national and regional policy initiatives.

This 2-year project will be implemented by the APC, located in the APC women's programme which is managed by Chat Garcia Ramilo. Jenny Radloff, coordinator of APC-Africa-Women will design online communications platforms for networking support and capacity building. The project's leader will be Chat Garcia Ramilo and the Research Director will be Ineke Buskens, a qualitative research methodologist and trainer identified by the IDRC. A full time ~~project~~ research coordinator with qualitative research and research education expertise will be contracted to complete the project management team.

## 2. Background

This proposal emerges from a workshop, "Finding the GEM in the haystack"<sup>1</sup>, that was jointly organized by APC-Africa-Women (AAW) and IDRC and funded by the IDRC (portion of RSP #101982) held in Johannesburg at the end of March 2004. The workshop brought together 14 academics and activists from 10 different countries in Africa to discuss the possibility of developing a research proposal for consideration by the IDRC. Find the workshop report attached.

Through AAW's work on the continent on gender and ICTs we were able to assist in identifying many of the participants. Sara Longwe had worked with APC Women's Networking Support Programme on the Gender Evaluation Methodology (GEM) tool and was invited to present her women's empowerment framework. Sara, along with seven other GRACE researchers are members of APC-Africa-Women, thus ensuring active linkages between GRACE and other work, e.g. policy advocacy, that APC-Africa-Women will be involved in the next few years.

While the participants decided to limit participation in the network to workshop participants only for the research phase, it was later decided that members for Senegal's research team be found (Ramata Thioune, IDRC WARO). A further member was added, Buhle Mbambo, who had recently completed a PhD on women and the use of the internet in Botswana. Buhle is based at the University of Zimbabwe.

The function of the overall research paper with a theoretical framework and particular methodological approach was to create enabling opportunities for the researchers from the workshop to submit initial proposals without commentary at this stage. APC-Africa-Women developed a list-serve and the participants were asked to refine their concept research proposals for submission to the IDRC. Ineke Buskens, who had been appointed facilitator of the workshop, was invited to collaborate with APC to provide the research leadership and capacity building to the project. The sub-proposals were submitted to Ineke, who in August 2004 submitted a proposal spelling out the theoretical and methodological approach, as well as the training she would provide to support the researchers in developing qualitative research tools to enable them to tackle their research topics.

APC was asked to compile the budget while Ineke Buskens prepared the research aspects, both theory and methodology, and capacity building required for the research aspects of the proposal. APC was then requested to combine into the same proposal the knowledge networking and ICT capacity building components of the project as well as the integration of the project into their management structures.

## 3. Research Problem and Justification

This project aims to explore the ways in which women in Africa use ICTs to empower themselves, the external, structural barriers as well as the internal factors which prevent them from using ICTs to their advantage, and the strategies they employ to overcome these impediments. The project comprises 15 sub-projects. Fourteen of these are empirical research studies located in 12 countries and one is a meta sub proposal. While coherent with the general aim of the overall research initiative, the sub-projects differ from each other greatly in terms of target group and research focus. Furthermore, the concepts of gender and empowerment which frame the project's general direction and commitment, may not have unequivocal meaning within the sub-projects.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://web.idrc.ca/en/ev-57567-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html](http://web.idrc.ca/en/ev-57567-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html)

The project therefore also aims to contribute to the debates focusing on women empowerment and ICTs through finding its own understandings of what "empowerment" and "gender" may mean in the African ICT context. The lessons learnt will be shared with policy makers and educators in the form of contextualized and local-specific recommendations.

### **Information and Communication Technologies - ICTs**

The concept "ICTs" covers internet service provision, telecommunications equipment and services, media and broadcasting, libraries and documentation centers, commercial information providers, network-based information services, and other related information and communication activities, according to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (Adeya: 13). Adeya states that the term ICTs, which actually refers to three separate entities, namely information, communication and technologies could theoretically be separated into its three components but that this is difficult to do practically, judging from the literature (Adeya: 69). Certain publications discuss the three in an overlapping manner or refer to ICTs when the focus is on only one area "as would be the case in referring to the telephone in relation to communication" (idem). While this is problematic because the three parts should be appreciated as three separate entities, Adeya deems the synergy between them and the relevance of the whole ICTs concept more critical (idem).

The term ICT does not only refer to the three parts of information, communication and technologies, it is also used to refer to a whole range of different "technologies". The Association for Progressive Communication defines ICTs as "a group of technologies that are key to enabling information gathering and sharing/dissemination and communicating and that facilitate communication and the processing and transmission of information by electronic means". From a communication theoretical point of view, categorizing "ICTs" such as for instance the internet and the telephone together, makes sense. Both these ICTs address the communication aspect.

They are also to a certain degree interdependent: the internet depends on the existence of a telephone line for its functioning. At the same time, however, the differences between these ICTs should not be glossed over. Many of the problems linked to the "new" ICTs such as internet use, like illiteracy and costly infrastructure for instance, do not apply to the older ones such as radio and telephone in the same degree. Furthermore, because different commercial interests might be involved with each ICT, national governments often respond with different policies and approaches.

### **ICT-User-perspective**

In reference to this study, the term ICT and ICTs are approached from a user-perspective. Regardless of the fact that the various ICTs serve similar purposes, the actual use of them, will entail a different reality for users in terms of access, maintenance, control and use. For most users, the categorical concept of ICT may not make any sense at all. The researchers in this project will have to be able to bridge the world of the African women research respondents and their lived realities with the world of policymakers and commercial interests. From this perspective, this multi country proposal is especially pertinent and timely. The 15 sub-project investigations focus on a wide spread of ICTs and involve a wide variety of different women users who face very different challenges and opportunities. Explicating the specific nature of each ICT under investigation, the specific nature of the women engaging this ICT, and the way this relationship develops and evolves, will enable us to speak to the problem of the interaction between gender and ICTs in a concrete, specific and in-depth way.

## **ICTs for Development**

While there seems not to be much clear gender disaggregated statistical data available from Africa there is enough evidence to state that African women are not benefiting from the Information Revolution in the same way as men do (UNESCO: 13). There is furthermore anecdotal evidence from all over Africa that disadvantaged women use ICTs in innovative ways to empower themselves (Hafkin: 13 and Netgains<sup>2</sup>). This would counter voices that dispute the fact that ICTs can contribute effectively to development in general and women's development in particular. It is therefore pertinent and crucial to try and understand at this stage of the ICT development efforts on the African Continent how gender and ICTs impact on each other.

### **Need for an African ICT-gender perspective**

While it has been argued that, especially in this time of increasing poverty and the challenge of HIV/AIDS, Africa faces more serious development problems than women's lack of ICT use and participation in the Information Society, Africa's recent development history would caution us to take such a stance. Because ICTs enable governments and development agencies to deliver their services more effectively and efficiently, ICTs have been identified as among the most important factors in general development and poverty eradication efforts. ICT policy is currently being made and implemented all over the continent. Unfortunately this is happening mostly in absence of clear knowledge about the ways gender and ICTs are impacting on each other. Men's and women's attitudes, needs and perspectives on ICTs are likely to differ (Rathgeber: 18). Gender "neutral" policies tend to favor men because of their implicit and unexamined male-centric focus.

Earlier development efforts in Africa, especially in the agricultural sector, which did not entertain a gender perspective, have actively contributed to the deterioration of women's position and hence of the economic situation of households. Warnings to this regard, which were already flagged in the seventies and eighties, were not heeded and the general ramifications of this phenomenon were only acknowledged after they had become clearly visible on a grand scale. By that time, most of these developments had also unfortunately become irreversible.

Currently, policymakers and researchers in the ICT field find themselves in a similar situation of having to enter an arena of development which has generated already complex unintended effects and may even generate more and different ones. Policymakers and development agencies may now, just as then, have similar blind spots. By being alert to a gender dimension in ICT developments at an early stage of the information revolution, we may be able to prevent greater scaled undesirable effects in the future.

## **4. Project Objectives**

### **4.1 Research Question and Research Objectives**

The overall research question binds all the projects together:

**"How do women in Africa use ICTs for empowerment?"**

Within that broad scope, special focus will be on the following objectives:

- To identify current and emerging practices of women in Africa on the innovative use of ICTs.

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<sup>2</sup> For a survey of African women's organisations use of ICTs refer to 'Netgains', a research study undertaken by the Association for Progressive Communications Africa Women's Programme and Femnet in 1999/2000, <http://www.apcafricawomen.org/netgains.htm>

- Identifying external factors that inhibit women’s use and appropriation of ICTs for their advancement within the knowledge society.
- Identifying the internal factors that prevent women from making optimal use of ICTs for their advancement.
- Identifying strategies that women are using to overcome the above mentioned barriers.
- Identifying the ways in which women contribute themselves to maintaining those barriers.

Each of the sub-projects articulate a research question that will contribute to achieving these objectives:

- ~ How is the traditional view of e-commerce an empowering tool for African micro entrepreneurs? Project Leader: Gisele Yitamben, Cameroon.
- ~ Can information and communication technologies (ICTs) improve the livelihoods of Egyptian women artisans? Project Leader: Leila Hassanin, Egypt.
- ~ The Impact of ICT on women’s’ career progression and networking in Kenya. Project Leader: Okwach Abagi, Kenya.
- ~ Has mobile telephony contributed to enhancing women’s socio-economic empowerment in Kenya? Project Leader: Wamuyu Gatheru/Alice Munyua, Kenya.
- ~ Women’s use of ICTs in rural areas of Mozambique: a tool for empowerment? Project Leaders: Esselina Macome, Polly Gaster, Mozambique.
- ~ How do women who have experienced gender-based violence and the juridical centers for these women, use the new technologies for information and communication? Project Leader: Mina Tafnout, Morocco.
- ~ Gender Disparity in access to and use of GSM/VOIP (Global System for Mobile Communications/Voice Over Internet Protocol) in rural Nigeria. Project Leader: Kazanka Comfort, Nigeria.
- ~ Women and ICTs in Senegal: Appropriation of mobile telephones by Senegalese women Project Leaders: Ibou Sane and Mamadou Balla Traore, Senegal.
- ~ How have women entrepreneurs experienced the uptake of ICTs and what impact has it had on their perceptions of their own empowerment with reference to their socio-economic well-being as well as the cultural and power relations with other women and men in their physical and social locations? Project Leader: Natasha Primo, South Africa.
- ~ The Effects of ICTs on the Socio-Economic Condition of Women Entrepreneurs. Project Leader: Ruth Meena, Tanzania.
- ~ Uptake and Impact of the CD-ROM “Rural Women in Africa: Ideas for Earning Money” on Grassroots Women Entrepreneurs in Uganda. Project Leader: Angela Nakafeero, Uganda.
- ~ ICT Liberalization in Uganda: The impact of mobile phones on women’s empowerment. Project Leader: Grace Bantebya Kyomuhendo, Uganda.
- ~ Cell Phones and Women’s Advancement in Zambia. Project Leader: Sara Longwe, Zambia.
- ~ To what extent have ICTs benefited women learners in higher education in Zimbabwe: a focus on the University of Zimbabwe? Project Leader: Buhle Mbambo, Botswana.
- ~ How women in Africa use ICTs as networking tools. Project Leader: Jennifer Radloff, South Africa.

See Appendix 1 for short summaries of each of the sub-projects. Longer versions of the draft sub-project proposals will also be attached to the proposal package.

## **4.2 Network Focus and Network Objectives**

Through the GRACE Network, capacity building of multi-disciplinary research teams will take place and researchers will be personally empowered in qualitative research methodology. This will mean specifically that

- A research network will be formed that can do ongoing gender and ICT research in Africa.
- A research base will be formed in various institutions throughout Africa that can contribute to the debates around gender and ICT issues.
- The knowledge which will be generated will influence policy at local, national and regional/global levels through:
  - o Broadening researchers' capacities to influence policy
  - o Expanding policy makers' knowledge of ICT and gender issues
  - o Influencing formal policy regimes (i.e. documents and processes)

Furthermore, it is envisaged that the network, which will be grounded in, and existing for the purpose of research will generate opportunities to:

- Contribute to the knowledge of how researchers functioning in networks use ICTs in their knowledge construction processes.
- Contribute to the methodological debates on the quality of qualitative research processes and research education processes in ICT-based networks.

## **5. Theoretical and Methodological Framework**

### **5.1 Women's Devaluation and Oppression**

We as humans walk the earth in the form of women and men. This difference in sex has not only been associated with appreciation, wonderment, complementarity and offspring but also with devaluation, discrimination and exploitation. Personally, socially, culturally, politically and in matters of religion, women have experienced being devalued in comparison to men. The grand narratives have failed us in our attempts to understand why the human race has needed and still needs to devalue its women so.

The dynamics that underlie and maintain the processes of this devaluation of women are intertwined with mechanisms of oppression. Women have experienced devaluation and oppression because they are women through the hands of men and women alike.

Women's devaluation and oppression are located in the thought patterns that define global, national and local structures, agreements and alliances, which are created, maintained and re-created by women and by men. Women's devaluation and oppression are also located in relationships, the relationships between women and men, the relationships between men and the relationships between women.

Women and men have internalized the (often culturally specific) images and myths of male superiority and female inferiority. Many have accepted these myths unquestioningly and many still do. Influencing and defining the way women and men construct their perceptions, emotions and thought patterns, these images not only lay the foundation for sexist attitudes, they also serve to justify those. While male sexism has received a fair share of attention in women and gender studies, female sexism (women being sexist towards other women) has

entered mainstream feminist discourse only recently (Chesler, P., 2003). In a study of 5 continents and 19 countries, the four nations with the highest mean sexism rate included three African countries (Nigeria, Botswana, South Africa). Female sexism seems to be related to a country's mean sexism rate. Women, relative to men endorsed "benevolent sexism" in these three countries significantly more than men did. Benevolent sexism would "elicit women's cooperation in their own subordination" by idealizing traditional female stereotyped images (Glick and Fiske as quoted in Chesler, P. 2003: 138).<sup>3</sup>

Women's devaluation and oppression are furthermore located in the relationship women have with themselves. Steve Biko, the famous South African liberation fighter and proponent of the Black Consciousness Movement stated that the greatest weapon in the hands of the oppressor would be the mind of the oppressed. This analysis would transfer to the field of women's devaluation and oppression as the insight that the struggle for liberation and empowerment would start in and with a woman's mind.

## **5.2 Empowerment, women and ICTs**

The perspective on empowerment, which every GRACE sub-project will have to develop individually, will be a function of that sub-project's focus on a specific aspect of women's oppression. In the same way, the meaning ICTs can have for a sub-project's target group in terms of empowerment, will be a function of this focus. ICTs are technical devices that facilitate human information and communication processes. While ICTs may not in and of themselves be either tools of oppression or of empowerment, studying their use can throw new light on both women's oppression and women's attempts for empowerment. Studying the ways ICTs are used will reveal which interests are served, who would be in the position to have their interests served and how these interests would be served. This may bring certain aspects of women's oppression and desire for empowerment to the foreground which while not new in themselves, could appear new to the eyes which could have noticed them before had they not become blind because of familiarity.

The overall research question "How do women in Africa use ICTs for empowerment?" offers the parameters for the subprojects' research processes and provides a shared space for the overall GRACE research effort. Asking the question what empowerment could mean for GRACE research respondents in the light of the variety of the subprojects' proposals, three main answer categories come to the fore:

- 1) Women could be so oppressed that they could not even imagine what they could wish for in terms of empowerment. They would be so accepting of the cultural genderised myths that they could for instance not wish to have or be what men have and are. They would not be able to question the status quo, let alone challenge it, because they would be completely identified with it.
- 2) There would be women who would express their perspectives on empowerment in the form of what men have and are because that would be their main frame of reference. Going against the trends of unquestioned acceptance of the status quo, these women would challenge mainstream thinking and could suffer the consequences for the way they would aspire for change.
- 3) There would be women who would want to define their ideal of empowerment not in terms of what men have and are but according to their own emerging design. These women would challenge the status quo, not because they would fight existing images and conventions, but through becoming who they really want to be.

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<sup>3</sup> Glick, P. et al. (2000). Beyond prejudice as simple antipathy: *Hostile and benevolent sexism across cultures*. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 70 (5).

### **5.3 Theoretical and methodological convergence**

Steve Biko's analysis (realizing that the greatest weapon in the hands of the oppressor would be the mind of the oppressed) would transfer to the field of women's devaluation and oppression as the insight that the struggle for liberation and empowerment would start in and with a woman's mind. In acknowledging women's structural oppression while asserting that the struggle for liberation would have to start in them and with them, would lay the convergence between the GRACE project's theoretical position and its methodological position.

Research based in and inspired by the Critical Emancipatory Paradigm considers and treats research respondents as actors and emancipators and not as research subjects or objects. The distinction between the three paradigms: the empirical analytical, the hermeneutic interpretive and the critical emancipatory paradigm is based in Habermas' conceptualization of the knowledge interests served in and through social research (Habermas, J. 1972). While generally paradigms are under-determined by methods and methods under-determined by paradigms, there is a convergence of sorts between paradigm and main method with the critical emancipatory paradigm displaying the greatest paradigmatic freedom (Smaling, A., 1994).

The way the research respondents are framed in the critical emancipatory paradigm seems paradoxical in the light of the fact that the social analysis, which motivated the creation of the research question and the action agenda, acknowledges the fact that the research respondents experience structural inequality, disempowerment and lack of social justice. How can one treat victims as if they have the power to change the situation they are victimized by? The commitment however to produce practical, functional knowledge, the type of knowledge that can lead to change necessitates this stance. Only the ones who would have to do the actual changing would be able to lead others (and themselves) to the understandings of what that "changing" would entail (Buskens, I.: 2002). Approaching research respondents in their sovereignty and not in their victimization will lead to the type of reflective awareness in respondents that will enable the researchers to construct the type of knowledge needed to understand the specific and localized context and dynamics of the change process. This will also be the type of knowledge that could be transferred to benefit other situations than the actual research context in the form of reflections, interventions or policy recommendations.

### **5.4 Virtual Action Research**

GRACE is not an action research project. The majority of research planned by the various site teams is qualitative and exploratory in nature. While the researchers intend to eventually facilitate adoption of the research recommendations by policy makers, actions and interventions as such are not part of the research process and will not be subjected to the reflective cycle characteristic of typical action research (Mash, R.J. & Meulenberg-Buskens, I.: 2001).

The researchers' commitment to women empowerment however forces GRACE to position itself within the Critical Emancipatory paradigm. As such GRACE will have to position itself as a "virtual" action research project. This would mean in daily research reality that women are treated as actors and emancipators and not as powerless victims. It would also mean that the researchers have to realize that empowerment may mean different things for different women, that empowerment even may mean different things for their respondents than what it would mean to them. This would not mean that researchers would not be able to entertain their own analysis of what empowerment in the context of their research project would mean. On the contrary, having one's own conceptualizations conscious and clearly formulated facilitates the dialogues which are necessary to discern what approach would contribute most to the construction of practical and functional knowledge.

## **5.5 Conceptual and theoretical framework**

As stated before, this project aims to explore the ways in which women in Africa use ICTs to empower themselves, the external, structural barriers as well as the internal factors which prevent them from using ICTs to their advantage and the strategies they employ to overcome impediments. The name GRACE itself has been inspired by this focus: "Gender Research in Africa into ICTs for Empowerment".

During the workshop in Johannesburg, South Africa in March 2004: "Finding the GEM in the Haystack", the participants were given the freedom to formulate their research question and develop their research proposals in response to their personal research interest. This theoretical and methodological freedom has resulted in a collection of very specific proposals.

It has also created certain limitations for the overall project in terms of the creation of a coherent project design. While the emphasis on gender and empowerment informs the overall GRACE focus, it is thus at this stage of the development of the GRACE Network, too early to be more specific than this in terms of definitions. Every project will have to engage these debates in its own way. During the first project meeting, the Research Director and Research Coordinator will canvass the GRACE members' explicit and implicit theoretical and methodological understandings. These understandings will guide the project literature review the coordinating team will undertake and they will be used as a forum and a container for future group discussions.

## **5.6 Exploratory Qualitative Research**

The GRACE Research network is not set up as an action research project; it is based on the premise of exploratory qualitative research. That does not mean that our commitment to the purpose of empowerment would be less pertinent. It does mean that while this focus does not need to be operationalised in every research decision, it will inform every research decision and be considered at all relevant research moments. GRACE aims to contribute to the empowerment of many women in Africa by raising the issues of gender and ICTs in the context of development and the growing digital gender divide.

While our focus on gender and empowerment makes a completely inductive approach impossible (inductive meaning that all the categories that cluster meaning would be generated from the data), this does not imply that as a project we have chosen an analytic framework already. We envisage that the concepts to give meaning to women's experiences may be constructed during the research process itself. The analytical tools of Gender Evaluation Methodology and Sarah Longwe's empowerment framework which were presented during the workshop in Johannesburg would be appropriate for some of the projects but not for all (Longwe, S., 1991, GEM website<sup>4</sup>). Some researchers may find inspiration in the various traditions of women's studies / gender studies and / or within the ethnographic and ethnomethodological research traditions.

## **5.7 Methods**

While our general gender perspective has informed our choice of exploratory, mainly qualitative research methods because we want to understand women and their lived realities on their own terms, this does not mean that we are adverse to using surveys or statistical evidence when this enhances our understanding.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.apcwomen.org/gem>

### **5.7.1 Main data sources**

The main target group for the empirical aspect of the research are the women and where relevant the men who are using (or not using) ICTs in relation to the specific projects' main research questions. Other people who can offer a perspective or who are in the position to influence the lived realities and perspectives of the main target groups will also be studied. To understand the various contexts which impact on the main target groups and the various research sites, theoretical and research literature reviews will be done, the relevant demographics of each research site will be gathered and the political and policy factors impacting on the target groups and the research sites will be monitored continuously through documents, newspapers, media reports etc.

### **5.7.2 Main methods**

Main methods will be grounded in the exploratory and iterative cycles of qualitative research. This means that participant observation; observation and informal interviewing will be employed, next to depth interviews. Certain researchers may employ semi-structured questionnaires and access user-records of telephone companies. All researchers will do their own literature review, specific to their project, while the coordinating team will engage a literature review that would reflect the space the GRACE Network holds as an overall project.

### **5.7.3 Data Analysis**

Because the research projects are as a whole inductive in design while maintaining the focus of gender and empowerment, the Nvivo qualitative data package will be used to assist the researchers in their data analysis.<sup>5</sup> The Nvivo package will allow the researchers to introduce external theoretical concepts as well as stimulate inductive theory construction. The use of one analysis package by all researchers will enable us to compile sub data sets pertaining to issues which cut across the various projects. Furthermore, when all the data is captured with Nvivo, secondary analyses by other researchers may be done in the future. Given the fact that the data will be of a rich and detailed nature, it can be foreseen that the researchers' first analysis, which will be guided by the specific focus of the greater project, will not exhaust the data. Capturing the data in such a form that other researchers who might have a different purpose and theoretical framework can access it is an effective way to ensure that the researchers' efforts are put to use optimally.

### **5.7.4 Research Participants**

In terms of the target groups, the various sub-projects represent the main options, which can be used in research with women (Maynard, M. & Purvis, J., 1994: 15-18).

- 1) Pre-eminent concern with women alone. In this case the research question often reflects women's oppression so clearly that exclusive focus on women is not only warranted but crucial.
- 2) Women in relation and relationship to men, although examined from a women's perspective while trying to understand how women's experiences in a male world are structured.
- 3) Women who experience apart from gender other forms of oppression based on such factors as for instance ethnicity (race), rural descent, class (education), and age.
- 4) The fourth perspective, focusing on women in relation and in relationship to other women, within the dynamics of patriarchy may yet arise due to the focus in some of the projects and the involved and intensive nature of the qualitative research process (Chesler, P. 2003).

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<sup>5</sup> [www.qsrinternational.com](http://www.qsrinternational.com)

The mix of respondent groups will inevitably create a forum for discussion within GRACE. The understandings about research with women which will result from this discussion may provide the project with exciting opportunities to contribute to the research debates in gender studies and feminist research.

## **6. Striving Towards Quality**

In the striving towards quality in qualitative research, certain capacities are key. While these capacities have a skill aspect to them, they are often also qualities of "being". The most prominent of these is the researcher's capacity to be reflexive (Mason, J. 1996; Meulenberg-Buskens, I. 1997). Role-taking, empathising without identifying in an unreflected way is another important aspect of a successful research attitude. Open-mindedness and open-heartedness when converging in dialogical openness form the foundation of successful communication (Smaling, A., 1998, 1995).

By triangulating data sources and methods, researchers can accomplish a higher level of validity and reliability (Mason, J. 1996; Smaling, A., 1987).

Important in the striving towards research quality will also be the communication between the researchers. Dialogical inter-subjectivity is an important methodological norm in qualitative and participatory research (Buskens, I., 2002; Meulenberg-Buskens, I., 1997). Grounded in Habermas' concept of communicative symmetry, it presupposes a research dialogue that would be as democratic as possible and where nobody uses a power position to influence the dialogue. In other words, extraneous influences or an ulterior motive or an external agenda would be kept out. It would be the coordinating team's task to guard this space to hold it as "symmetrical in communication" as possible while keeping themselves accountable for this management towards all network members.

To this end, the Research Director intends to document the research dialogue (between the researchers and between the researchers and the coordinating team) and offer her reflections at regular intervals for discussion to the researchers. When the GRACE members would give their permission, the Research Director plans to write about this in order to contribute to the debates on the striving towards quality in qualitative research and qualitative research education. As a methodologist this area reflects the research director's basic scientific research interest.

## **7. Ethical Considerations**

At all times the commitment that no harm should come to respondents in and through the nature of the research process will be adhered to. Consent forms will be designed which will be subjected to scrutiny by an established research institution. Identities will be kept confidential if that would be the respondents' wish or when the researchers can foresee that harm could arise in the future from divulging these. When research respondents want to be acknowledged this will also be accommodated.

## **8. Research Capacity Building and Support**

### ***8.1 Capacity Building Workshop***

An intensive two-week capacity building workshop aims to lay the foundation for the GRACE-members' continued learning process. The workshop will comprise research as well as ICT capacity building elements which will be integrated into one coherent design.

The research training modules will emphasise practice of research skills, building of theoretical and methodological reflective and creative capacity, the integration of outcome mapping methodology into the research design, the practice of outcome mapping process skills and the establishment of a sustainable practice of researcher self-care.

The workshop will also function as an opportunity to establish the Grace Management regimen. In consultation with the project director and the research coordinator, the researchers will refine and rework their sub project proposals into operational research designs. These research designs will be the basis for the contract between the researchers and the Grace Project, whereby the project director and the research coordinator will act as the project's representatives. Furthermore, the researchers will, in consultation with the project director and research coordinator, design their own researcher-development and self-management plans. These plans will be added as addenda to their personal contract.

### **8.1. 1 Methodological and Theoretical Reflection**

Qualitative research challenges researchers to be reflexive. Research with women furthermore requires of researchers not only to be reflexive but to be methodologically innovative as well. In order to get data that is "less culturally edited" and more "true" to women's lived and experienced realities, ideally researchers should be able to design, when necessary, their own research techniques (Anderson, K. & Jack, D.C., 1998; Buskens, I., 2003). This capacity for methodological innovation is grounded in a thorough insight into interpersonal communication and knowledge construction processes. Finally, the majority of Grace researchers will share not only gender but also ethnic background with their research respondents. Doing research as a "native anthropologist" will demand that researchers make an effort to make the familiar "anthropologically strange" while not falling into the trap of "othering" their research respondents (Rodriguez, C., 2001). As it is very tempting to assume meanings before they have been established, the capacity to prevent premature closure of the processes of perception and data-analysis will be trained throughout the workshop in various ways.

### **8.1. 2 Research Skills**

In terms of research skills, the following techniques will be practiced:

- ~ Anthropological fieldwork methods such as participant observation, observation, informal interviewing, writing field notes, constructing time-budgets, keeping diaries, constructing a situational and context specific analysis.
- ~ Sociological depth interviewing techniques with emphasis on clarifying, summarising, probing, interpreting and confronting.
- ~ Focus group discussions with an emphasis on awareness of group dynamics and non-verbal communication.
- ~ Nvivo training: computer-aided qualitative data-analysis whereby researchers will practice with their own data.
- ~ Writing skills, which imply the skills to construct data by writing and the skills to represent data through writing.

### **8.1. 3 Outcome Mapping Methodology**

Outcome mapping methodology poses challenges of management and knowledge construction to practitioners.

Like the facilitation of focus group discussions, outcome mapping methodology processes require that facilitators possess the capacity to listen well, to assess power dynamics and to hold a shared group space where diversity can unfold. The facilitation of outcome mapping processes requires additional capacities: facilitators must be able to create the space and provide the structure for consistent and continuous alignment with the project's purpose;

stimulate group consensus and assist a group in translating their dream into practical outcomes. During the workshop, these types of group management skills will be grounded in task and self management exercises.

In terms of knowledge construction skills, outcome mapping involves the construction of propositional knowledge that reflects the participants' practical knowledge acquired in the action process, is informed by the participants' experiential knowledge constructed by being in the world and by engaging the action process and finally requires the participants' skill to present knowledge. This multi-layered knowledge construction capacity will be practiced in the workshop through various reflection and writing exercises.

#### **8.1.4 Researcher Self Development**

All qualitative researchers are forever engaged in a process of ongoing learning and self-development. Because not all Grace researchers have the type of research experience which is required for this particular project, the Grace project poses specific challenges in this regard. It will be obvious that the two week workshop will not be able to transform novice researchers into experienced qualitative researchers. However, it will be possible for the participants to get a grasp of the various capacities and skills they would need and like to master and set out on a journey of self development. To this end, the researchers will design their self-development plans during the workshop in consultation with the project director and the research coordinator. It can be foreseen that their plans will have to be adapted through the course of the research project once the researchers develop more insight into their particular research process and into their personal capacities.

#### **8.1.5 Researcher Self Care**

Maintaining a reflexive attitude, which in itself is change-stimulating, can be very demanding and anxiety provoking for researchers. Commitment to this attitude of reflexivity is however crucial in the striving towards quality in qualitative research. In order to make this attitude feasible and sustainable in daily research reality, researchers have to learn how to embed it in a general practice of self-care (Foucault, M., 1995; Buskens, I., 2002). Because the Grace project will speak to the researchers in many ways, involving aspects which are integral to their identities, it can be envisaged that the researchers will change through the research process. It can also be assumed that this process of change may evoke stress.

Throughout the workshop, the researchers will be given the tools and the time to practice self care. They will also be given the space to discover what self-care would mean individually for them in the context of their specific research project. As the researchers are unique individuals and their projects differ widely from each other, the researchers will have to construct a self care discipline which will suit them and their specific reality. Their self-management plans will be tied into their self-development plans and will be discussed with the research coordinator and project director during the workshop. It can be foreseen that the self management plans will change through the course of the research project to follow the researchers' progress and challenges.

### **8.2 *Ongoing research capacity building and support***

Ongoing capacity building during the research process will take place in several ways:

- Researchers will engage their personal development and self-care plans;
- Researchers will send in field notes every two weeks;
- Researchers will send in a progress report every month;
- Researchers will receive feedback from the project director and project manager on their field notes and progress reports;
- Researchers will be given the opportunity to engage the project director and the research coordinator in a personal, individualised research dialogue;

- Researchers will have the opportunity to engage in an open research dialogue online which will be facilitated by the project coordination team. In this open research dialogue, research decisions, experiences and process learning as well as the content of the data will be shared and discussed.

### **8.3 Research Sharing and Writing Workshop**

After the data collection process is completed, a second research workshop will be held. This workshop comprises two parts: During the first part of this workshop the researchers will present their data in the form of a paper and in addition, in any other way they would find suitable such as through visual or audio-visual means. A number of resource persons will be invited to give feedback with the intent to stimulate debate and inspiration towards further dissemination of the research results in various ways. During the second part of the workshop, the researchers will advance their research writing skills. A writer and an editor will facilitate an experiential creative writing workshop where the researchers will work with their own material. It is envisaged that the researchers leave this workshop with at least an outline for a chapter and/ or article. Furthermore, it is expected that during this period certain shared interests and research foci will emerge amongst the researchers and that ideas for new research projects will be developed.

## **9. ICT Capacity Building and Support**

The knowledge sharing and ICT support and capacity building component of GRACE will have 2 main components:

- ~ Supporting the research process and research capacity building
- ~ Building the ICT skills and capacity of participants

### **9.1 Supporting the research process and research capacity building**

#### **Project management and research process support**

Project management communication and information needs will be surveyed before online workspaces are designed and established. Based on previous experience with similar projects we anticipate that tools and platforms that would be of value could include:

- online discussion forums / mailing lists / d-groups
- a web based interactive project management tool
- online chat
- internet telephony

We will also work with the project team to set up regular interactive routines such as online meetings, yahoo chats for those whose connectivity allow this, and voice conversations using VOIP.

The research process, and the growing of the research network could benefit from:

- collaborative research platforms that facilitate reviewing, editing, resource sharing
- 'story telling' and experience sharing tools such as blogs/online journals
- contact management tools
- digital image, audio and video tools such as image and audio recording and editing

Preference will be given to free and open source software tools.

### **9.2 Building participant's capacity to use ICTs strategically**

The sub-text of this entire project is capacity building. Participants will learn how to use new tools in the course of the research and network building process. To ensure that the learning

process and the tools used resonates with each individual participant the ICT contexts of everyone involved in the project will be assessed.

Information will be gathered about:

#### Physical infrastructure

- internet access (speed, frequency, how etc.)
- email programmes
- other software programmes used
- PC's/laptops used (e.g. CD readers/writers etc.)
- other hardware e.g. digital cameras, palms, cellphones etc.

#### Skills and comfort with ICT tools

- using the web to find information
- advanced word processing, particularly editing and managing large files (e.g. creating tables of contents)
- newer tools such as blogs and wikis
- email and document management
- working in collaborative online workspaces

The results of this assessment will inform both the ICT capacity building to be undertaken during the methodology training workshop and the ways in which we customize the knowledge network infrastructure and provide ongoing support.

#### **Learning encounters**

During the methodology training workshop time will be dedicated to ICT and knowledge management training. Participants will learn how to use digital cameras and digital audio recorders for use in their research. They will learn how to edit audio and images on their computers using freely available open source software.

The use of these tools will enhance the final research product and build a valuable digital photo and voice archive for the GRACE.net website and future exhibitions.

Other skills transfer will depend on the outcome of the skills and needs assessment but could potentially include:

- document management
- advanced word-processing
- online journals
- writing for the web

If a second workshop opportunity arises it could be very effective to collaborate with Bellanet to have a knowledge management workshop. This could be done in tandem with another APC Africa Women activity such as the next APC-Africa-Women WENT (Women's Electronic Networking Training).

### **9.3 Knowledge networking platforms: implementation process**

- 1.) needs assessment based on surveying information and communication needs of everyone involved in the project (including the IDRC)
- 2.) system design and feedback
- 3.) installation and customisation of knowledge networking platforms
- 4.) training project staff in maintaining and facilitating these spaces
- 5.) training and orientation of project participants at methodology workshop
- 6.) ongoing support
- 7.) leveraging other training opportunities

## 10. Evaluation, Learning and Advocacy

At the methodology workshop early in 2005 the project management team will present a proposal to the researchers regarding using outcome mapping methodology<sup>6</sup> as a monitoring and evaluation framework to contribute to drawing out learning across the different sub-projects. While outcome mapping is designed as a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation method for development programs, it can function within and complement research designs based in the critical emancipatory paradigm very well. Outcome mapping and critical emancipatory research designs share important paradigmatic dimensions and process perspectives. These research designs can accommodate all steps and aspects of outcome mapping methodology coherently and congruently. The Grace Project with its commitment to women's empowerment, has definite resonance with the critical emancipatory paradigm. Outcome mapping will give the Grace researchers the scope, the concepts and the tools to engage reflection, monitoring and maybe even evaluation of the research outcomes in consultation with their stakeholders (boundary partners). Using outcome mapping will thus make the research design more coherent with the critical emancipatory paradigm. Furthermore, the outcome mapping processes will enable the researchers to involve stakeholders from the onset of their research effort. Building these relationships at an early stage will facilitate advocacy of the research recommendations when this will become relevant. Using outcome mapping will also enable the Grace project to map the convergences and divergences among the researchers' visions of the policy and social transformation they would like to make a contribution to.

GRACE will also give researchers the opportunity to explore whether GEM (gender evaluation methodology) would be appropriate for their particular research projects. As the developers of GEM and of outcome mapping have on many occasions expressed an interest in using the two methodologies in an integrated manner, GRACE could become a learning ground for deepening this discussion.

And, as GRACE is an opportunity for exploration of a variety of approaches to gender analysis we believe it can make a significant contribution to enriching this dimension of GEM.

## 11. Project Outputs and Dissemination

### **Research and policy advocacy**

One of the primary outputs of the project is to provide rigorous research results that can reinforce and be used in efforts to advocate for gender awareness in ICT policy development and implementation. GRACE will not only produce such research, it will also build the capacity of a group of women ICT champions to participate in national and international ICT policy dialogues.

APC is already intensively engaged in ICT policy advocacy in Africa and have started a process of training women as ICT policy advocates. Some of these women are already part of the GRACE network. Linkages with our policy research/transformation initiatives will be maintained, for example with Research ICT Africa (RIA)<sup>7</sup>, an initiative of the Link Centre at the University of the Witwatersrand, and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa's researchers network. The household survey currently being done by RIA will provide invaluable gender-disaggregated data

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<sup>6</sup> [http://web.idrc.ca/en/ev-9330-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html](http://web.idrc.ca/en/ev-9330-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html)

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.researchictafrica.net/>

APC will make its policy advocacy expertise and materials available to the women in the GRACE network

Research influences policy in complex ways. The influence is mediated by the individuals that promote and present the research, the timing and venues of the presentation of the research, and the nature of the policymaking processes one is trying to influence.

In an interview<sup>8</sup> in September 2003 with Stephen Dale, Carol Weiss, talking about the IDRC's study of the public policy impact of its projects, using a framework developed by Evert Lindquist, relates her understanding of the hypothesis developed by one of the participants in the workshop where this study was discussed. She identifies issues that it would be critical for GRACE to tackle in the planning phase of the project:

The confluence of 5 things would be necessary for research to successfully influence policy:

- a) There has to be a clear intent to influence policy
- b) There has to be a partnership where the local partners have authority to set the direction, take the leadership and have the administrative capabilities to do that.
- c) There have to be champions on both the IDRC and the partner side
- d) There should be good interpersonal relationships based on respect and trust
- e) The IDRC should be persistent in its focus and commitment. (Carol Weiss)

As soon as possible in the research process, contacts will be made with local and regional policy makers so that when the projects have reached the stage of dissemination, the channels for this to happen are already created.

### **Dissemination**

The dissemination strategy will be finalized early in the second year for the project. The dissemination will aim at national-level engagement through dialogue with policy makers as well as with the private sector commercial interests, which may be operating on both national and international level. APC will be responsible for securing a Creative Commons license for the knowledge produced from the GRACE research.

### **The project aims to deliver the following outputs:**

- ~ Sub-project research reports (15)
- ~ An overall report
- ~ Policy briefs (national)
- ~ Mailing lists/d-groups (archived)
- ~ GRACE network
- ~ An edited book (Sage)
- ~ A website: online dissemination
- ~ Training material
- ~ CD with photos, interviews and text

The key players in the process of dissemination will be publishers, distributors, journals, peer reviewers, policy makers, community based organizations, non-governmental organizations, universities, national and international donors.

### **The Potential Barriers to Output Dissemination as foreseen at this moment are:**

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<sup>8</sup> [http://web.idrc.ca/en/ev-43607-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html](http://web.idrc.ca/en/ev-43607-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html)

- ~ The researchers could perform less and less well than foreseen.
- ~ The lack of experience of the individual researchers in using qualitative methods and a gender focus may be too great a barrier within the time-frame of the project to accomplish excellence.
- ~ Political opposition could play a role because this research questions status quo and this could especially limit the policy influence the project intends to have.
- ~ The articles and papers could lack the quality to be accepted for publication.

## 12. Project Management

The main coordination challenge facing this pan African project will be to hold a constructive and creative tension between the forces of convergence and those of divergence. As the overall research design has to honor the exploratory nature of the projects and given the fact that the various countries have methodological and theoretical sovereignty in their research, the coordination will have to create such a space and provide such a structure that dialogue between the countries retains the potential for mutual recognition and thus will foster learning, sharing and network building.

The second challenge will be research capacity building. Promoting the striving for research quality amidst a network of ICT activists and academics whose experience with empirical social research experience in general and iterative exploratory qualitative research in particular varies greatly, may require innovative and creative solutions.

The third challenge will be that coordination and research capacity building will have to happen mainly through the use of ICTs. Face to face communication will be limited. The Research Director will visit all projects only once and there will be one intensive methodology workshop at the start of the project. As research coordination and capacity building of this nature has not often been done yet at such a scale in Africa, the learning from this endeavor will be beneficial for other projects that have similar coordination, research capacity building and networking objectives.

The fourth challenge refers to the language diversity within the network. As the research director understands and reads French and Portuguese, while commanding English fully, the individual communication between the researchers and the research coordinating team will not be a problem. Translators are available when group discussions will take place during the two workshops. It is foreseen that we will use the "whispering technique" as used in the "Finding the GEM in the Haystack workshop. We could also explore the possibility of doing this when we need to speak together on-line.

The following measures are meant to ensure the quality of the research and the integrity of the network:

- ~ The contracts with the sub-projects will contain milestones of performance: during the phases of data collection and data analysis the researchers will send a site progress report to the Project Coordinator every month and personal field notes every 2 weeks.
- ~ The researchers will get clear guidelines pertaining to their research attitude and research engagement.
- ~ Clear criteria for continued involvement within the network as well as grounds for termination will be developed.
- ~ The relation between the GRACE network and the GRACE research project is relatively straightforward and simple for the first two years. The ultimate purpose of the GRACE Network will be to maximally and optimally contribute to the coordination of the research process and to the facilitation of research capacity building. After the first two years, the network must be re-assessed and a different purpose may have to be formulated.
- ~ The network support platforms and process will be led by the needs of the research coordination and research capacity building process.
- ~ The research director is responsible for the process of facilitating the researchers on their research journeys and for holding the space in which they can do their research and develop themselves. The research director is furthermore responsible

for the best possible research capacity building process which is feasible and viable in the context of this project.

- ~ Rules for the type of communication that will be aligned to the project's purpose will be defined in a process, which will be facilitated by the project leader and the research director working closely with others in the project management team.

### 12.1 Project Management Team

Project Leader	APC Women's Programme Manager, Chat Garcia Ramilo	(part time as needed)
Research Director	Ineke Buskens	.5 FTE
Research Coordinator	to be appointed	1 FTE
ICT and Knowledge Networking Advisor	Jennifer Radloff, APC-Africa-Women Coordinator	.2 FTE for the first year and .1 FTE for the second year

The **Project Management Committee** will consist of the Research Director, Project Leader and Executive Director of APC. The role and responsibilities of this group will be determined in consultation between the Project Leader and the Research Director.

The **Project Team** will consist of the Project Leader, Research Director, ICT Knowledge Networking Advisor and the Research Coordinator.

**External Reference Group:** To assist the Project Management Team, a group of people, all well-versed in research, gender and the Information Society in Africa will be invited to provide external input into the process.

The constitution of this group, and its terms of reference will be lead by the Research Director and approved by the Project Management Committee.

**NOTE: The principles on which project management is based are contained in the report of the mediation discussion (attached) that took place on 23 November 2004. We propose that the project management committee reviews the management structure and procedure before the end of the first 6 months of implementation to assess whether any changes are required.**

#### Responsibilities of the 4 coordinating team members:

The **Project Leader** will maintain overall responsibility for the project management of GRACE, and integrating the research aspects to be undertaken by the Research Director and the researchers with the possibility of a network of gender researchers in ICTs in the future. She will also be responsible for facilitating the process of APC providing input where appropriate into the research methodology and research process.

The **Research Director** and **Research Coordinator** as a team are responsible for ensuring that the project meets all its deliverables and that the research outputs are of high quality and value. Overall project management includes:

- co-facilitating the research dialogue
- following every project's research decisions and communicates with the researchers about those decisions.
- providing the researchers with online /or e-mail assistance in planning and implementing their research projects
- Research Coordinator to work with the ICT and Knowledge Networking Advisor and build capacity to eventually facilitate the online workspaces of the research network
- ensuring the online information sharing platforms (public and private) are up to date

- providing researchers with assistance in using online workspaces ensuring that the project is operated according to budget
- authorizing payments
- managing contracts with researchers
- reporting
- liaising with related initiatives/research networks
- supporting the researchers in completing their proposals

The **ICT and Knowledge Networking Advisor** will report to the Research Director. This person is responsible for:

- assessment of project knowledge sharing and networking needs and individual researchers' ICT capacity building and support needs
- knowledge networking and ICT support systems design and implementation
- ensuring that these platforms are functional at all times
- work with the Research Director and Research Coordinator to ensure that these platforms meet the needs of the research process
- capacity building and training of project team members to use and support project knowledge sharing and networking platforms
- seek guidance from the project management committee to approve the final proposals for the networking and knowledge sharing platforms
- ensuring synergy and mentoring the Research Coordinator to build her capacity to enable her to facilitate the online workspaces and support platforms
- organizing capacity building of researchers in ICTs and knowledge networking
- reporting on ICT capacity building and knowledge sharing and networking components of the project

#### **Reporting**

The **Research Director** will report to the **Project Leader**.

The **Research Coordinator** and **ICT Knowledge Networking Advisor** will report to the **Research Director**.

#### **Internal capacity building**

It would be important to ensure that the Research Coordinator is able to benefit from the mentoring and skills transfer provided by the Research Director and the ICT and Knowledge and Networking Advisor. The hope is that this person will continue to be involved in gender research and ICTs for women's empowerment beyond the life of this research project.

### ***12.2 Financial administration and logistical support***

Maya Sooka, APC Finance Manager, [mayas@apc.org](mailto:mayas@apc.org)

Vanessa Purper, Events and Logistics Coordinator, [vanessa@apc.org](mailto:vanessa@apc.org)

Karen Higgs, APC Communications Manager, [khiggs@apc.org](mailto:khiggs@apc.org)

Fatima Bhyat, APC Technical Support, [fbhyat@apc.org](mailto:fbhyat@apc.org)

## **13. Project Work Plan**

The following work plan comprises the activities of the research coordinating team on the basis of a qualitative multi site study protocol that would be congruent with the overall focus of GRACE. A more detailed workplan suggested by the Research Director will be discussed during the first methodology workshop and is attached as an appendix. The Grace Researchers would determine whether and how their specific research designs would fit within that protocol

### **Year 1 – First 6 months**

#### **Preparation, Capacity Building and Data Collection**

<b>Persons</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>Task</b>
Project Director	In first month	Appointment of research coordinator
Research Coordinator and Project Director.	In first month	Investigating Grace members' capacity building needs through studying the proposals and the conducting of subsequent individual dialogues by e-mail or telephone. This investigation will inform the compilation of the Grace methodology workshop reader and the design of the methodology workshop.
Research Coordinator	In first month	Organizing the workshop
Research Coordinator and Project Director.	In tenth week	The reader will be finalized within the first ten weeks and will be sent to all the Grace members two weeks before the workshop takes place.
Research Coordinator and Project Director	In 12 <sup>th</sup> week	Methodology workshop takes place.
Research Coordinator and Project Director	In 14 <sup>th</sup> week	Draft outline for the project literature review is finalized.
Project Director	In first 6 months	Country field visits are scheduled, organised and undertaken.
Project Director	In first 6 months	Visit to Johannesburg IDRC office
Research Coordinator and Project Director	In first 6 months	Continuous dialogue with Grace members about their research.

### **Year 1: Last 6 Months**

#### **Data-analysis and start of writing process**

	In 7 <sup>th</sup> month	The fifth and last batch of progress reports are received from the researchers and returned with feedback.
Research Coordinator and Project Director	In 9 <sup>th</sup> and 10 <sup>th</sup> month	The sub project reports are received and returned with feedback. In certain cases, the researchers may have to gather additional data.
Research Coordinator and Project Director	In 11 <sup>th</sup> month	Coordinating team starts to compile overall themes from the data.
Research Director and Project Coordinator	In 12 <sup>th</sup> month	The Grace WSIS presentation is finished.

### **Year 2: First 6 Months**

#### **Writing of the sub project reports and the Grace report**

Research Director and Project Coordinator	In first 6 months	The individual research reports are finalized by the researchers, assisted by the coordinating team.
Research Director and Project Coordinator	In first 6 months	The overall Grace report is finalized

**Year 2: Last 6 months**  
**The dissemination process**

	In month 6	The Research Sharing and Writing Workshop will be held.
Research Director and Project Coordinator	From month 6 to month 9	Coordinating team starts to engage the researchers on writing their chapter / article.
Research Director and Project Coordinator	From month 6 to month 9	Presentations for dissemination of the results to policy makers being prepared.
	In 9 <sup>th</sup> month	Results are presented to policy makers. The proceedings and process during these occasions can, if researchers so choose, be used as data. The coordinating team will assist them in this.
Research Director and Project Coordinator	In 12 <sup>th</sup> month	The coordinating team finalizes a publication that describes the ways Grace researchers have engaged communication within the network in their striving towards research quality. The publication will be based on the methodology chapter of the overall Grace report and aims to contribute to the methodological debates on the quality of qualitative research and research education processes.

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# Appendix 1: Participating Countries and Projects

## 1. *Cameroon*

### ***How is the traditional view of e-commerce an empowering tool for African micro entrepreneurs?***

Project Leader: Gisele Yitamben.

The project aims to determine whether the existing systems make it possible for e-commerce to be effective and whether e-commerce has created real opportunities for micro-enterprises owned by women. The project aims to influence Cameroonian officials who have the task to develop e-commerce and agencies tasked with promoting female entrepreneurship.

## 2. *Egypt*

### ***Can information and communication technologies (ICTs) improve the livelihoods of Egyptian women artisans?***

Project Leader: Leila Hassanin.

The project aims to determine the current status and the potential for Egyptian women involved in crafts to use ICTs for:

- ~ increased income opportunities;
- ~ to gain more power in the family; and,
- ~ to become educated producers aware of the global challenges facing their economic niche.

The results of the research are meant to guide the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MCIT) and relevant governmental agencies in their planned e-payment and internet diffusion strategies. The research results will shed light on the realistic possibilities of e-commerce transactions to facilitate international orders (trade) successfully. The research results shall be used in income generating projects for women in Egypt.

## 3. *Kenya*

### ***The Impact of ICT on women's' career progression and networking in Kenya.***

Project Leader: Okwach Abagi.

The project aims to assess what kind of ICT opportunities are available in the public sector for men and women workers to map out how women have taken advantage of the ICT environment to appropriate ICT for their career progression. It will:

- ~ analyze and describe how women have progressed career-wise and at the workplace because of the acquisition and appropriation of ICT, and
- ~ analyze and document what kind of ICT is more empowering for career women in Kenya.

### ***Has mobile telephony contributed to enhancing women's socio-economic empowerment in Kenya?***

Project Leader: Wamuyu Gatheru/Alice Munyua

The study aims to find out whether the appropriation of ICTs by women in Kenya has contributed to their socio-economic development and empowerment, as well as help understand the challenges they face.

#### **4. Mozambique**

##### ***Women's use of ICTs in rural areas of Mozambique: a tool for empowerment?***

Project Leaders: Esselina Macome, Polly Gaster

The project aims to verify the ways in which ICT access and use is or is not providing tools that enable poor rural women (directly or indirectly) to make advances towards economic and social empowerment. It will seek to understand women's behavior with regard to ICTs, and to identify the gender issues involved. The results of the study will be disseminated nationally through workshops and presentations, both locally at the study sites and nationally.

#### **5. Morocco**

##### ***How do women who have experienced gender-based violence and the juridical centers for these women, use the new technologies for information and communication?***

Project Leader: Mina Tafnout

The project aims to:

- ~ examine the existing ICT infrastructure in the juridical centers;
- ~ analyze how women access and use the ICTs; and,
- ~ analyze how the centers access and use ICTs.

It will investigate the differences and similarities between the various centers and between women in terms of ICT access and use. Areas for improvement will be noted and recommendations made as to how they can be actualized.

#### **6. Nigeria**

##### ***Gender Disparity in access to and use of GSM/VOIP (Global System for Mobile Communications/Voice Over Internet Protocol) in rural Nigeria.***

Project Leader: Kazanka Comfort.

Given the strategic role women in rural communities play in the survival of their children and men, the project aims to investigate why their access to and use of GSM/VOIP communication appears so limited when compared to men's access and use. The study seeks furthermore to:

- ~ assess teledensity within the research area;
- ~ the costs pertaining to owning and operating a mobile phone kiosk;
- ~ the skills rural women would need in order to successfully access, use and own such facilities; and,
- ~ the cultural influences which would facilitate or hinder women's acceptance and access to GSM/VOIP.

## **7. Senegal**

### ***Women and ICTs in Senegal: Appropriation of mobile telephones by Senegalese women***

Project Leaders: Ibou Sane and Mamadou Balla Traore

The project aims to investigate the role mobile telephony plays in the economic activities of Senegalese women. More particularly the study will:

- ~ identify the factors which bear on women's appropriation of cell phones
- ~ identify the constraints linked to appropriation of cell phones and to specific cultural traits in Senegal, and,
- ~ evaluate the meaning and importance of ICTs for women.

## **8. South Africa**

### ***How have women entrepreneurs experienced the uptake of ICTs and what impact has it had on their perceptions of their own empowerment with reference to their socio-economic well-being as well as the cultural and power relations with other women and men in their physical and social locations?***

Project Leader: Natasha Primo

Targeting women entrepreneurs who use ICTs as tools that enhance business practice and performance as well as women who see and use ICTs as a source of income generation, the project aims to investigate:

- ~ these women's reasons behind the uptake of these technologies
- ~ the processes by which they came to learn of the opportunities the technologies offer
- ~ the processes by which they accessed the opportunities
- ~ their dreams for using ICTs in different ways, and.
- ~ the barriers they experience in terms of accessing and using ICTs in new ways.

## **9. Tanzania**

### ***The Effects of ICTs on the Socio-Economic Condition of Women Entrepreneurs.***

Project Leader: Ruth Meena

The project aims to explore the extent to which women that have access as well as control of ICT services have been able to transform their socio-economic positions in their society. The study will document some of the factors which have either provided opportunities or constraints for women in accessing, and controlling ICT. Such factors will include:

- ~ the legal and regulatory environment;
- ~ policy context;
- ~ geographical location;
- ~ access to credit; and
- ~ educational level.

The result of the study will contribute to ongoing discourses on gender and ICT, as well as provide policy recommendations for improving access, control and use of ICT as a tool for the liberation of women from poverty and exploitation.

## **10. Uganda**

### ***Uptake and Impact of the CD-ROM "Rural Women in Africa: Ideas for Earning Money" on Grassroots Women Entrepreneurs in Uganda.***

Project Leader: Dorothy Okello and Angela Nakafeero

The project aims to examine:

- ~ how the CD-ROM "Rural Women in Africa: Ideas for Earning Money" has been used by grassroots women entrepreneurs;
- ~ assess the factors that have facilitated their uptake of the CD-ROM;
- ~ examine how the use of the CD-ROM has empowered their livelihoods; and
- ~ generate ideas on the information requirements for rural women and how appropriately this information should be packaged.

The CD-Rom was distributed in Uganda 3 years ago.

### ***ICT Liberalization in Uganda: The impact of mobile phones on women's empowerment.***

Project Leader: Grace Bantebya Kyomuhendo.

The project aims to:

- ~ assess levels of access and the challenges of using mobile telephones by women in Uganda;
- ~ document the different ways they are using mobile phones; and
- ~ analyze the effects of women's adoption of mobile telephones in terms of improving their livelihoods and gender relations.

## **11. Zambia**

### ***Cell Phones and Women's Advancement in Zambia***

Project Leader: Sara Longwe

The study aims to:

- ~ investigate gender differentials in cell phone usage divided by class and occupational group;
- ~ investigate how cell phone usage can contribute to women's increased personal advancement and collective empowerment;
- ~ identify strategies for the optimum use of cell phones in women's mobilization for more control in gender relations, economic empowerment, and political participation; and
- ~ use the findings to make recommendations to cell phone providers and women's organizations.

While cell phone usage is very limited in Zambia and coverage is restricted to urban areas, an examination of gender differentials in cell phone use may reveal important lessons and strategies in the struggle for women's emancipation.

## **12. Zimbabwe**

### ***To what extent have ICTs benefited women learners in higher education in Zimbabwe: a focus on the University of Zimbabwe?***

Project Leader: Buhle Mbambo

While the University of Zimbabwe has invested in ICT infrastructure by providing a campus wide network, and networked classrooms and laboratories for teaching and learning, it seems that the majority of students at work at the PC's are largely male. The project aims to explore the extent to which ICT benefit women learners at universities, by investigating:

- ~ what ratios of female (to male) students are voluntarily using the internet and PC's for learning;
- ~ what the issues are around access to ICTs;
- ~ how female students' learning relates to online sources; and
- ~ what female students understand to be the role of internet-based resources in their learning.

### **13. GRACE Meta Research**

#### ***How women in Africa use ICTs as networking tools.***

Project Leader: Jennifer Radloff

The project aims to explore the use of ICTs in building and sustaining networks among women in Africa. It will use the APC-Africa-Women network as the main network to be researched. Other networks to be explored (to a lesser degree) will be the GRACE network and the Gender in Africa Information Network (GAIN). GEM will be used as the methodological tool.

It will look at several levels. ICTs as

- ~ an information gathering medium,
- ~ as a source of access to opportunities and resources,
- ~ a social network and relationship building tool; and
- ~ a peer network and shared learning platform.

The research will try to determine what the use of these tools brings to the building and sustaining of networks, and also how they may limit the process; what capacities this requires in terms of human and financial resources, what forms of interaction or learning they enable or exclude. The project also aims to explore the effectiveness of online collaboration as a capacity building tool and how this is or is not enhanced by face-to-face meetings and collaboration.