Little steps to lofty goals: keys to successful community learning for civil society development

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Introduction

> *And in the sweetness of friendship, let there be laughter and the sharing of pleasures. For in the dew of little things the heart finds its morning and is refreshed.* (Gibran 1923)

Post-Soviet Armenia is a land in the midst of change. In every sector, national identity, infrastructure and politics are being rebuilt. New ideas are everywhere, along with fear and resistance. How can Armenian citizens help shape change to address their needs and desires? How can learning with and from each other help support positive change? Lofty goals indeed but little things can give context and support lofty goals. The Armenian School Connectivity Programme has demonstrated this by helping create a connected social fabric through learning communities across the country to help people build their own futures and change their country into what they want it to be.

Change is rooted in learning new things, discovering new ways and infusing them across a group. E. M. Rogers' classic literature on diffusion of innovation suggests that 'getting a new idea adopted, even when it has obvious advantages, is very difficult' (Rogers 1995, p1). This is true in Armenia because of the scale of changes in the post-Soviet era. Learning to change means far more than rebuilding decrepit educational systems. It means changing the way communities identify and meet their common needs and rebuild their civic identities. The authors believe learning is at the heart of change. However, the learners are often not in the same place. When the need to learn transcends their geographic confines, the promise of distributed learning communities begins to dawn. Learning together as a distributed group suggests a focus on technology or complicated processes. One needs tools and connectivity, but these alone do not create learning in a group: they are simply the substrate. Content plays a role, but without the context for social learning, it too, lies inert. Learning as a group requires human interaction based on purpose, grounded in the social fabric of relationships, and shared in a manner that makes sense to the members of the group. Compared to the enormous challenge of wiring a nation to access the Internet, these might be considered 'little things'. Yet it is through these little things that a group crystallizes and learns together. Outreach and relationship building create connections that stimulate community learning for development and change. Support from funders and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) helps, but real forward momentum comes in the confluence of community-determined purpose, technique, and the 'little things [in which] the heart finds its morning and is refreshed.'

These many factors, woven together in an organic process, constitute the basis for sustainable impact.

Roots of learning: the Internet Community Development in the Caucasus (ICD) Programme

Project Harmony's Armenia School Connectivity Programme (ASCP) (http://www.projectharmony.am) has roots deep in a smaller project, the Internet Community Development in the Caucasus (ICD) Programme in Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia, three post-Soviet republics in the Southern Caucasus region.[i] Roots hold context, experience, relationship and trust, and create momentum and guidance for the learning journey. In this case they were central to the success of ASCP. It was through reflection on these roots that the ASCP project started to fully appreciate and be able to share the lessons gleaned through their successful community development initiatives.

The ICD Programme was designed to promote the use of the Internet as a democracy-building and community-organizing tool for professionals fostering the development of business support, refugee issues, and assistance to internally displaced persons. The program's goals were to develop two distinct online communities serving the development of small businesses and organizations that aid refugees and internally displaced persons. The first objective was to identify information needs and strategies for making better use of existing Internet access and technology. The second was to promote dialogue between those building the Internet infrastructure and community leaders in the small business and humanitarian NGO sectors.

The ICD Programme started by exploring 'online communities' as a concept and then sought to understand how to apply them to local project goals. First the participating NGO and small/medium enterprise organizations needed to learn how to do this 'online stuff', from understanding tools to techniques of online interaction. This initial learning phase was done across groups and organizations. Staff and ten key community members were trained in online interaction through a two-week online workshop. They built a basic set of skills, and became a confident core of targeted early adopters of online tools. The first set of relationships was established between Project Harmony, community organizations and the trainer.

A month later, a five-day face-to-face (F2F) workshop for ten participants from each of the three republics introduced the same online interaction concepts along with a series of application-related topics (marketing, job development, etc.). Local professional capacity was built to use and create multilingual online resources such as online newsletters, discussion lists, interactive websites, and web chats.

Seeds of community
Two things became clear. First, it was found that in learning to 'do' online communities, the seeds of actual communities were planted. Initially, many questioned that there could be collaboration across three politically tense national groups in the Southern Caucasus,

yet the network did form across political lines. Second, the blend of online and F2F was instrumental. The F2F affirmed that the online connections created viable relationships. The online work accelerated learning and formation of relationships, allowing deeper work to occur F2F. Each experience supported the other.

People found it essential to learn together in order to achieve their goals. And to learn with and from each other, they had to connect in some way, to form short and long-term affiliations that could stretch over the geographical, cultural and political boundaries of the region. Theory was quickly turned in to practice. The ICD Programme raised awareness of the Internet's potential for more than simple information exchange.

After the training phase, three formal online events were structured around community and organizational issues. This approach focused first on the technology, which had meaning for a single sector of the community, commonly referred to as the technology 'early adopters'. The training stimulated the early adopters to think more widely about online interaction as a tool for achieving their organizational or community purposes – an important shift which later allowed the easier inclusion of those less interested in the technology and more on meeting community needs.

Explicit learning from the ICD Programme

The importance of being able to talk about online communications and community

- **Move from theory to practice** - Talking about online communication in real concrete ways is difficult. The more concrete local examples one can use, the easier it is to start discussion practice and application.
- **Check for understanding across languages and culture** - Find and use good local language examples. Use graphics and screen shots and have handouts with example sites and URLs. Translate terminology and build a glossary.
- **From the start, involve local people who have some online experience** - Local experience makes a big difference when trying to explain the process of online communication. If it's not there, build it.
- **Articulate the purpose and values** - Underlying the application of online tools, both to inform the design process and to show the value of the application. This moves from 'tools as cool' to strategic tool application.
- **Keep it human** – Don't lose sight of the human/facilitation aspects of online interaction. It is not just about technology.

The ICD Programme ended in June of 2001. The concepts needed more practice and application to take firm root. But the exposure was sufficient to plant the seeds. Participants from the 2001 online and offline training continued to build cross-national relationships in the Southern Caucasus. An online conference on prevention of domestic violence (http://www.fullcirc.com/community/phdvconferencereportfull.htm) in Georgia,

organized by Polina Makievsky (then Project Harmony Georgia Country Director) in 2002, showed that an online event provided advocates, new and experienced, with an opportunity to learn from one another and improve their activities to benefit their communities. Makievsky later took the concept to a domestic violence prevention effort in the USA and used an online conference to share experiences with a global community of prevention experts. Some unanticipated capacity building side benefits emerged and became instrumental to ASCP later success. Project Harmony staff themselves adopted the tools and practices to support their own work. So the story grows as we move forward to 2003, to Yerevan, Armenia.

Armenia School Connectivity Programme

Armenia is a small country bordering Turkey, Georgia and Iran, which re-emerged after the end of the Soviet era in 1991. It has a tradition of scientific excellence and valuing education. Facing a weak economy and political uncertainty, as in other former Soviet republics, Armenia was left with a well-educated and highly skilled workforce, a valued but dilapidated education system, and a nation eager for the benefits expected from independence. The communications infrastructure was in a state of disrepair and the existing government telecommunications monopoly offered minimal improvement. The American Government provides significant aid to support Armenia's economic development and political stability. One ambitious initiative was the ASCP. The ASCP and the ICD Programme are both programmes of the US Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), implemented by Project Harmony with online facilitation and event planning training components conducted by Full Circle Associates.

While the ICD Programme focused on building online communities, ASCP focused on the big and little steps needed to reach the lofty goal of 'supporting the integration of educational technologies to strengthen democracy and support civil society and cultural understanding.' Clearly it would be impossible to integrate educational technologies if no such technologies existed. Technology had to be made available. So the first big step was to build a network of online schools. Classrooms with computers and Internet connections, staffed by trained educators, were established and became the foundations of a unified network of over 250 Armenian schools covering all 11 *marz* (regions).[ii] This grounded the project by establishing hardware and connectivity.

Layered approach to training
Hardware does not create learning communities. As the infrastructure was put in place, the programme moved beyond hardware and Internet connectivity. Site staff (those responsible for maintaining the centre, school website, and all training for the centre) received extensive free training at school-based ASCP classrooms together with students and teachers of the host and neighbouring schools. The training reflected a conscious decision to build local capacity and quick self-sufficiency in the basics of administering local networks. Self-sufficiency was seen as a first step towards sustainability. The training equipped future site staff with four types of skills: computer use, basic Internet use, web design, and network administration. The first three were intended as Training of

Trainer courses for site staff to take back to their students, teachers, and community members. Network administration was designed to train advanced network administrators, but due to the low initial experience levels, the course was more successful in offering exposure and some basic troubleshooting procedures.

As the programme moved into more remote areas, it was challenging to find staff with exposure to technology beyond limited experience with outdated and broken machines. Eventually there emerged a basic course for training future staff before sending them to the four standard trainings. It became clear that the trainings needed to be layered to address diverse needs and experiences. Training may have been a big thing, but the subtle little thing was finding the right mix in each situation.

Building confidence among educators

Skills had to be grounded in confidence and applied to 'real work.' Teachers would not integrate any technology components into their lesson planning until they gained some confidence in their basic skills. Through practice with site staff, teachers reached a comfort level, developing the ability to team with the site staff in conducting learning activities in the classroom as well as a genuine interest in integrating technology into their lessons. Little victories built confidence.

Support and nurturing of teacher and staff skills provided another form of context. School principal support was critical. Until the school principal voiced encouragement for teachers to prioritize computer trainings as part of their own professional development, and recognized how this was integral to improving the overall education offered in the school, teachers rarely displayed eagerness. In one case, it was the experience of going to another country to see first hand different educational approaches that transformed a principal into a strong supporter of teacher development and educational reform within his school. This subsequently raised the profile of the principal in the community, garnering further support for his school.

Blending and practice

This exchange of ideas and experience was also the context for ASCP virtual exchanges and collaborative projects. These online experiences offered early exposure to boundary-spanning collaboration with minimal cost and greater time flexibility. Online collaborative projects teamed US and Armenian schools and brought students and teachers together within a structured environment for cultural and educational exchange. Teachers had the opportunity to plan and teach together, through virtual partnerships, and students gained exposure to other cultures and mindsets. Virtual collaboration brought the practice of including of diverse ideas; another 'little thing' enabled by Internet technology.

In addition to the virtual exchanges, Project Harmony began to complement traditional physical exchanges with online forums between Armenian and American educators. The blend of F2F and virtual, a key learning from the ICD Programme, was taken to the next level. The additional online time offered greater depth and time for reflection compared

to just the standard one or two-day pre-departure orientation. Exchange participants and hosts were virtually introduced to begin building context and relationships and prepare for the exchange. During the exchanges, participants shared their experiences with their colleagues and students 'back home' and for support. Upon return, participants used the online space to apply new approaches, stay in touch with other returnees and reflect more deeply on their experiences.

Moving towards community learning
From the first two years of experiencing the 'big things' of building infrastructure, and the subtler, 'little things', such as layered skills, blending online and offline relationships, confidence and practice, Project Harmony built the context for the final stage of the project: community learning facilitated by educational technology integration for a civil society.

Project Harmony hypothesized that organizing online events to mobilize communities to meet their self-identified needs would support community development, which would, in turn, support national development. Using online interaction processes and technology, the power of shared need and motivation could form a bridge between individuals and small, isolated communities, nurturing a sense of community empowerment. The early ICD experiments showed that introducing the concepts of online group interaction to a diverse set of participants attracted early adopters and stimulated relationships through shared learning opportunities that endured beyond the event. However the focus on new technologies was not the only way in to supporting learning communities. Focusing on community needs and purposes was another.

ASCP had the advantage of having developed strong ties to participant communities in the first two years. Recognizing that these activities had to be community-driven for effectiveness and sustainability, ASCP embarked on community outreach, building on relationships formed during the school connectivity and training phases.

The Regional Field Coordination (RFC) structure within ASCP devised working teams within each region. RFC teams are composed of a Senior Regional Education Coordinator, 1-2 Regional Technical Coordinators, 1 Regional Community Developer, and a variable number of Junior Regional Education Coordinators. RFCs now total over 60 individuals working within their region for their region. The RFC structure ensured that ASCP was tapped into local communities. The RFCs took the lead in developing community initiatives integrating technology towards a common goal with sustainable impact.

Project Harmony focused on having three types of partners in each online learning community event: *early adopters* who offered experience with the technology and tools and who understood how the tools could be effectively used; *motivated learning community members* who gained confidence from the early adopters; and, as needed, *experts/consultants* who brought the topical expertise to be 'learned' and applied within the community of participants.

Each event needed to include four aspects:
- A clear purpose: establishing linkages, ownership and shared understanding around issues of concern.
- Focused action: an outcome of a local action plan.
- Attention to the little things: relationship, conviviality, culture and how we 'talk about online stuff', initiated through F2F orientations.
- A way to bring learning forward: extracting and staying aware of learning and lessons learned.

Meaningful shared issues
Local communities need to determine and prioritize their needs. Project Harmony based its activities on the belief that community learning events are a key to facilitating this entire process. By connecting geographically dispersed learners (or for that matter those with conflicting schedules) through the Internet, the process is strengthened by linking those with common goals. For example, people concerned in one *marz* about childhood health could be more effective and influential if linked to people with the same concern in another *marz*. This reflects research that has shown the usefulness of online health support groups:

> *Talking to other patients can be comforting and reassuring in a way that talking to even the most skilful and communicative physician may not be. Patients share many common experiences and can relate to each other's problems … "they have been there". Empathy is strong amongst those with similar or shared experiences (Ickes, 1997). In addition it is usually possible for patients to get opinions from more people than in local support groups, which enables patients to get a broader understanding of their problems and empowers them to ask more focused questions when next talking to their physician.* (Preece, 1998)

Due to the current economic and social conditions, despite Armenia's small size, there is minimal interaction across the *marzes*. More subtly, in challenging times, sharing of goals and needs across community boundaries builds a sense of being "in it together," offering encouragement and balanced development (e.g. not leaving any region behind). Project Harmony RFCs identified shared issues between communities and created the linkages across regions. Initial topics were identified for the pilot round of ten Cross Marz Online Community Development Projects. These topics became the driving purpose behind the formation of the learning communities.

Actionable outcomes

For every online community learning event, common understanding was supported both through clear purpose statements for each instance of online interaction, reinforced through question and answer sessions at initial face to face orientations and cemented in actionable outcomes.

An example was the 'Job Market in Armenia' online project. Armenians are concerned

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KM4D Journal 1(1): 23-40
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with the issues of employment and professional development. It was the priority in three regions and expected to draw participants despite the anticipated hesitance towards technology. In Yerevan, the market is extremely competitive; in Tavush young professionals are isolated from most opportunities; in Shirak the effects of the 1988 earthquake continue to dominate life including employment opportunities. This online event exposed 18 participants from the three regions to current trends in the Armenian job market, highlighted professionalism and provided practical skills such as successful interviewing and resume and cover-letter writing. Those seeking employment learned from the experience of employed participants and together explored common expectations of six participating employers (see the full report at http://projects.ascp.am/community/job/docs/report_eng.doc). It had an actionable outcome of helping participants shape their resumes and launch their job search. Some issues were new to the country and had to be introduced. Catalysts and early adopters had to be cultivated to share a sense of vision for the purpose and to gain expertise in the supporting technology: activism is triggered by a small group of interested people suggesting and modelling possibility. Online Trainer Anna Martirosyan conducted the first nationwide Online Community Development Project, focusing on community service. Volunteerism has little context in the post-Soviet republics, yet offers a potential engine for change. In the past, 'community service' was basically organized by party officials and was mandatory. However, there are foundations for volunteerism in Armenian culture including a strong sense of responsibility to extended family and neighbours, community strength in the face of distress, and national pride.

More than 15 leaders and active members of international and local NGOs from across Armenia gathered together online to create the first community for discussing community service. As an actionable outcome, they designed and prepared eleven volunteer events in all the regions to begin community service development in Armenia.

Community learning has to be more than online conversations: a conversation must be catalyzed into action and driven with community energy. A youth volunteer corps project exemplified how members co-develop action plans. Project Harmony brought US Peace Corps Volunteers together online with local community leaders to lead youngsters in activities to practice volunteerism. The adults were supposed to teach the youth, but as they taught, they learned from the youth about their needs and the realities of their communities, and sharpened their own skills for motivating others to join in community service activities. The youth's perspectives on their communities and needs influenced the community service activities. They co-developed the plan to generate community interest in the cause.

Extending reach and depth of learning through technology
The medium – technology – also influenced the learning process. What at first seemed less personal eventually was seen as offering greater access to individuals. After the initial online training, the participants implemented offline volunteer activities, and then returned online to reflect on progress, an opportunity that would not have been possible in a limited time F2F setting. The online space enabled sharing of materials, recorded the interactions of both students and teachers (members of this particular community of

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practice took turns in the roles of students and teachers) and enabled a reflective review.

What was envisioned as a pilot online event has successfully integrated online and offline interaction to equip local communities with the knowledge and support to meet their community needs through ongoing voluntary initiatives. The online component accelerated the results of this focused purpose. It could have happened offline – but online was a more efficient opportunity in an environment where travel is difficult, time consuming and, for local youth, unrealistic. It extended both the reach and the depth of the interaction and allowed for the development of more community context for sustainability.

The little things
When first experimenting with online events to serve local needs, the ASCP staff noticed that many people were unfamiliar with, and even reticent about, the use of technology. They were motivated by the idea of meeting local needs, but there was a 'fear factor' (Romm and Clarke 1995). No one wanted to look incompetent but few had much experience or confidence. For some, the idea was completely foreign. To take advantage of the fantastic motivation that existed around purpose and the desire for tangible action there needed to be a bridge with the technology. There also needed to be relationship-building between people to encourage trust. So the first of the many 'little things' the team discovered were F2F orientations that clarified purpose, process and technique through hands-on demonstration of the technology. In some cases, sub-groups can meet F2F and convene online as part of a larger group, even if the full group cannot meet.

Technical training was critical. Most participants in the community online projects came with zero computer skills, so site staff trained them in basic computer and typing skills at the ASCP classrooms. Hands-on practice, easy initial postings and online games built confidence.

The 'little things' also show up in online and offline group processes which honour the wisdom of local communities, and include social interactions which build relationships and social fabric organically. The local culture places great significance on personal relationships and face-to-face interaction. It is widely accepted that a meeting in person will get one far further than a phone call or written correspondence. As such, there are inherent challenges in the Southern Caucasus' culture of local communities that required special attention. At the F2F orientations, a genuinely warm and caring staff paid great attention to facilitation details. Relationship building was encouraged over orientation and tea.

Introductions among the participants, both offline and online, were always an early priority. The offline interaction enabled everyone involved to associate 'voice' with the posts as well. Pictures of each person attached to each of their online posts made people feel they were interacting with other people, not other computers. Social spaces supported the social fabric, creating trust for the project-oriented online conversations. Such social time, necessary in any work environment (comparable to the water cooler or coffee pot in the morning at the office), provided an outlet as well as bonding opportunity. Participants

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used the social spaces to share more about themselves and their lives, a lot like the
Caucasus tradition of grandfathers gathering around a game of backgammon.

Facilitation skills were cultivated in the staff and encouraged in the communities. Online
facilitation requires a slightly different set of skills than offline facilitation, and staff was
trained and coached. As they worked with community groups, they modelled and actively
coached community members in these skills. Because there is no body language and tone
of voice online, attention to how people experience an online interaction can be a
defining element of success or failure. Understanding why someone is not participating
by calling them, taking the time to restate something in a more neutral tone, or raising
questions when there might be confusion are examples of little acts of facilitation that
helped groups move forward.

Paying attention to how the staff and leaders talked about online communications and
interaction as a tool for community development was another key factor, both from a
content and process perspective. Once staff got used to the idea of online interaction, it
was easy to forget the experience of a first time user. It was important to avoid jargon and
fully explain concepts. Framing the interaction around community needs, not the online
environment itself, was significant. The use of local images, stories and context greatly
accelerated the participants' interests and sense of ownership. Visuals added depth and
context.

Learning how to talk about the projects was not always easy. Staff did practice sessions
describing their online event purposes at a training, which developed confidence and
clarity. It reinforced the idea that practice is a critical learning activity and worth the time
and effort, even in a time-scarce environment.

Bringing learning forward
Finally, learning needs a spotlight. Sometimes we are too close to what we are doing and
fail to recognize its value, or we forget to share it more widely with our community,
losing some of the potential impact. With the ASCP project, this was particularly
relevant. The staff was working long hours and often missed the time for and value of
reflection, so the group instituted a process of ongoing reflection through storytelling and
the technique known as the After Action Review (AAR) (US Department of the Army,
1993). The Bellanet KM for Development community has a useful guide for this process
in the NGO setting. [iii] This process, taking place both F2F and online, helped the project
staff and participants surface key learning and make iterative improvements.

It was at one of the storytelling sessions that the story of online interaction for
community development came full circle, back to the ICD project. Finally, the
importance of the ICD learning became visible. The ASCP staff had gathered to start to
tell their stories of their online projects. The stories started to flow, most of them related
to current work, until it came to the turn of Siranush (Sirik) Vardanyan, who recalled the
project's roots with ICD, and with ICD's director, Paul Lawrence. Sirik said: 'I
remember what I learned from Paul and I am using it now.' A little thing, perhaps, but
profoundly significant, because Sirik has gone on to become a driving practice leader for

her learning community and those communities spawning across Armenia. Sirik 'got it' from the ICD project and carried it to ASCP.

Significance and perspectives towards the future

Creating change through community learning is an iterative process, embedded in local, regional, and national context. By blending online interaction tools and practices, Project Harmony has opened up a new set of possibilities to support community learning for local and national development. Through attention to both the larger goals and the little things, Project Harmony is accelerating local change.

Impact on communities
Early gains can be seen through the initial pilot projects. Training and practice have built capacity. People are starting to suggest and run their own projects. Early projects are bearing fruit. From a child health event, children who would not otherwise have been seen by a doctor have been seen and treated. The participating doctors, so happy to connect with other practitioners, have met F2F and have formed an Armenian Pediatric Society.

The volunteer programmes are taking root in schools and communities in areas such as environmental improvement and local culture. Teachers who have gone on exchanges to the USA are staying connected with each other online to deepen their learning and apply them to their daily work.

Connectivity is still an issue: the efforts are reaching a tiny percentage of Armenia's population. But they offer the possibility of uplift – of change driven by local individuals and communities.

Impact on Project Harmony
The work has also impacted Project Harmony as an organization. As a result of these successes, Project Harmony in Armenia has become a 'hot' partner organization. Project Harmony has put the learning and action in the community – in community hands. There is also a growing recognition that Project Harmony can work with diverse communities. With content support from consultants who are topic specialists, they can support more diverse themes. There has been an accumulation of skill and experience. Project Harmony is gaining a solid reputation for doing good, making a concrete difference, and understanding the communities. Project Harmony models the learning itself, surfacing its own lessons along the way... and implementing change where it can.

Potential significance for international community development initiatives
Applying online community interactions allows groups to deepen and extend their interactions and learning. It allows a process for capturing, reflecting on and learning from experience in an iterative manner. Online events can draw on isolated communities and distributed skills and assets from both within and without a community. New ties can encourage groups to achieve challenging goals, knowing they are not alone. Ongoing

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conversations deepen the ability to talk about things in ways that make sense to community members. This is learning in action.

What comes next?
How are these practices refined and embedded in the community and how can they do some of this without help? Sustainability is always on the agenda. Events are like the early nurturing stage of a garden. First the ground is ploughed, soil is built and seeds are planted. Seedlings are protected till they are strong and then grow on their own. Events are a bridge to community capacity and sustainability. Project Harmony estimates that they will need to continue doing fully supported online events for at least another six months. They will also need to build on current projects so that this is not a one-time experience, but rather becomes a common approach and toolset.

It is essential to focus on building community leadership and ownership to continue the work these online events began. RFCs are working to identify and build this capacity. The early successes have created 'membership'. With continued focus on purpose and action-driven interaction, Project Harmony anticipates that membership will grow into ownership.

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Abstract
This is a story about the things that came together in Armenia, beyond the availability of technology, to bridge time and distance. It is a case history of Project Harmony's Armenia School Connectivity Programme that attempts to highlight the little things and their weaving together to form a fabric of community learning for sustainable civil development. The story affirms the importance of community and organizational context

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in the success of the project. It identifies some key aspects for catalyzing distributed learning communities for development, including confidence-building through layered training, relationships, attention to how we talk about learning and community needs, and close attention to people before technology.

Although this paper highlights some approaches for areas of low Internet penetration, the process lessons presented here are relevant across a wider variety of settings. And of course, this story pays attention to those little human nuances that support connection – and eventually learning – across a community.

About the authors

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Endnotes

[i] For the full story of ICD, please see http://www.fullcirc.com/Project Harmony/changinglenses.htm

[ii] ECA funding has been provided to connect a network of 350 schools by Autumn 2004. Initially 24 schools independently connected were adopted into a network with 35 newly established online schools in 2001. Supplemental funding expanded the network to 120 schools and the final expansion targeted a network of 350 schools. Online collaborative projects are also conducted within the Azerbaijan School Connectivity Program, funded by the US Department of State ECA and implemented by Project Harmony. The 2002-2003 academic year collaborative projects are a partnership between Project Harmony and

Connected Minds (www.connectedminds.org). For more information on collaborative projects see
http://www.projectharmony.am/news.html?l=en and
http://www.ascp.am/en/collaborative.html?PHPSESSID=171c4dc05267a07eb5ce013160829e3c. Some of
the initial stories can be accessed at
http://www.ascp.am/en/community.html?PHPSESSID=541e237ac4e3eab57f997ede1002f74e
[iii] For a guide to AAR in the NGO sector see http://mail.bellanet.org/kmdir/upload/TearFund_Learn.doc