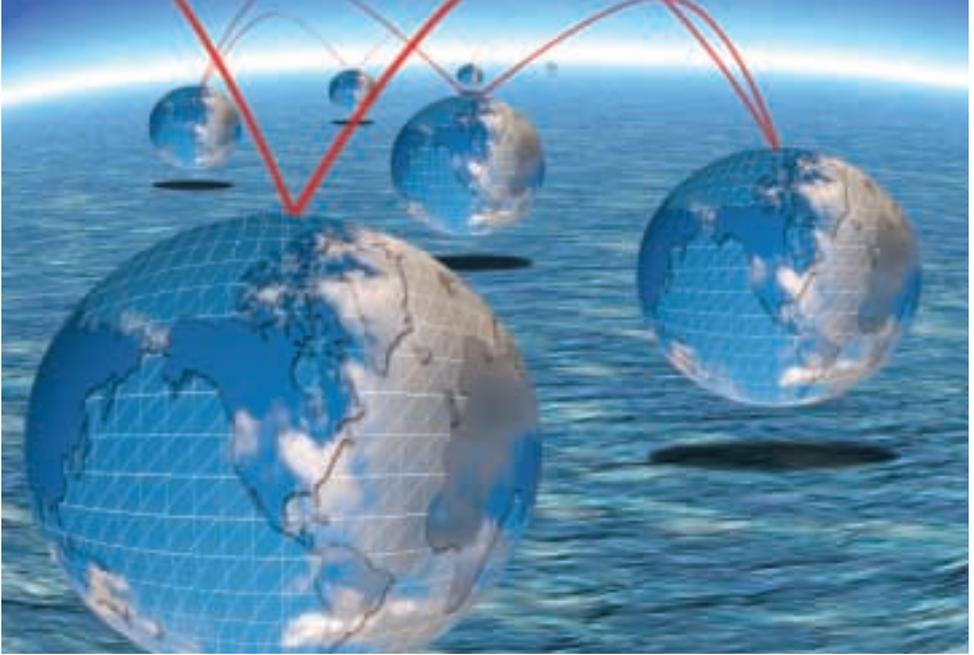


NTCA International

Connecting Rural Communities Around the World



In this age of the global village, telecom and ICT (information and communications technology) services provide vital links that connect communities to the world. These services spur small business development, job creation, income generation, agricultural processing and marketing, and improved health, education and social welfare.

OUR VISION ...

is an improved quality of life in rural and underserved communities within developing and newly democratized countries. We realize this vision by helping communities develop strong, locally owned and managed telecom systems and telecenters tailored to local needs and, where appropriate, make use of related information technologies.

Fundamental to the program are the principles of partnership, self-help and long-term sustainability.

NTCA's International Program works with governments, communities and other stakeholders to enhance economic development in rural and underserved areas by expanding universal access to telecom and ICT (information and communications technology) services. We work at the local level to help communities develop strong and sustainable telecom systems and telecenters. We also work at the national level to address universal service and access issues, such as privatization, interconnection and the reorganization of regulatory and legal environments.

NTCA's staff and members provide training and technical assistance to communities, telecommunications companies and national policy-makers in such areas as regulatory reform, technical and engineering support, and planning and organizational development.





Program Areas

Policy Assistance for Universal Service and Universal Access Issues

Expanding access to telecommunications services is one of the critical challenges facing many countries as they seek to close the digital divide—especially the divide between urban and rural service availability. NTCA carries out extensive policy work with telecom policy-makers and other government leaders committed to finding ways to serve their rural residents.

Nigeria—NTCA served as the principal technical adviser to the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) in developing a nationwide universal access initiative. After conducting onsite assessments of the telecommunications needs, priorities and capacities of communities in 15 Nigerian states, NTCA developed a comprehensive strategy for meeting the telecom needs of rural and underserved areas, as well as a market-oriented approach to facilitate public-private partnerships and public participation. The NCC incorporated our extensive recommendations on policy, financing options, management structures, operations and evaluation mechanisms into its sector reform program.

South Africa—Since 1995 NTCA has worked closely with local stakeholders, nongovernmental organizations and the private sector, as well as with the quasi-governmental Universal Service Agency, to allow for the creation of community-owned telecommunications cooperatives in rural areas. In 2001, the South African Department Of Communications ruled that such licenses would be issued.

Training

NTCA provides training for policy-makers and the employees of operating telecommunications systems. For policy-makers, NTCA has designed training modules focusing on regulatory policies and technologies, improving the legal and regulatory climates for ICTs and universal service/access. Attendees have included representatives from Brazil, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Georgia, Ghana, Hong Kong, Jordan, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Moldova, Morocco, Mozambique, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Uganda and Zambia.

Rural Telecommunications Systems Development

NTCA works to help expand access to ICTs (information and communications technologies), preferably through community-owned telecom systems and telecenters.

Poland—NTCA created six locally owned rural telecom systems—the first independent telephone companies in all of Eastern Europe. Two of the systems are owned cooperatively by their members and four are owned by investors. The systems are fully self-sustaining, serve approximately 40,000 access lines and offer state-of-the-art digital technology, including Internet service.

South Africa—NTCA, the Diocese of St. John's and the people of Dumrana have established the Dumrana Community Health and Development Center in a severely impoverished rural area of the Eastern Cape. The Center's focus is community HIV/AIDS prevention, support to home health care givers, and agricultural/microenterprise training for small-scale farmers.

Ukraine—NTCA is establishing a network of locally owned and operated business Internet centers in underserved communities throughout Ukraine. The project aims to strengthen the small- and medium-enterprise sector by delivering publicly accessible business consulting, training and ICT services in selected small towns.

U.S. Tribal Lands—NTCA and its local partner, a member telecommunications cooperative, established a community technology center (CTC) in one of the poorest areas of the United States—Eagle Butte, S.D., home of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe. The CTC provides computer and business training to unemployed adults seeking job skills and incorporates a health application.



ICT Feasibility Assessments/Studies

Uganda—NTCA designed a system to provide real-time price information over mobile telephones to local farmers, fisher-folk, processors and buyers.

Tanzania—NTCA carried out an extensive assessment of the feasibility of private-sector investment in rural telecommunications systems in northern Tanzania.

Philippines—NTCA designed a project that called for surveying 46 barangays, or villages, in Mindanao where NTCA was creating a telecommunications cooperative. The study determined residents' demand for service and their ability to pay over a five-year period.

Worldwide—NTCA conducted a seminal study that identifies obstacles to private sector participation in telecenter development, how to overcome them, and regulatory approaches that can facilitate achieving universal service/access through telecenter expansion.



NTCA has nearly 50 years of experience in promoting rural universal service issues in the United States and worldwide, both at the national and local levels.

Established in 1954, NTCA is a not-for-profit association representing more than 550 rural cooperative and commercially owned telecommunications systems, more than 100 cable and cellular subsidiaries, and over 300 manufacturers, suppliers and consultants to the rural telecom industry. In addition to its domestic members, NTCA has member companies in Argentina, Canada, Mexico, Micronesia, Palau, the Philippines and the United Kingdom.

Beginning in 1990, with support from the United States Agency for International Development, NTCA's International Division has worked to expand access to information and communications technology in rural areas worldwide.

NTCA 

NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION

The Voice of Rural Telecommunications

www.ntca.org