Profile area:
ICT for Development, ICT4D

To strengthen democratic processes and improve the quality of lives

There has been a long tradition of ICT4D-related projects at DSV. DSV is also host to the Spider centre, which has a vast international network. This profile area brings structure and focus for the many projects now spread across different units. It is a way of mobilising our efforts in ICT4D more strategically. It will make our activities more visible and facilitate the systematic build-up of long-term international partnerships. Also, the world has changed. Now the IT-infrastructure has reached a complete new level worldwide, and when hardware is there, let’s make use of it!

We will coordinate current research activities at the department and create a community of researchers in this field. The ICT4D activities are today mutual in the sense that research, services and products developed “here” could be utilized “there” and vice versa. It is no longer a top down or one-sided approach in development projects.

Sustainability and new business models are essential for long-term impact. Some of the best ICT4D initiatives are research-based innovations, which generate increased quality of life and durable job opportunities.

We will look into joint ventures with multiparty stakeholders. In accordance with Sida policy, the ICT4D R&D should be result based. That is both academic results in the form of peer-reviewed scientific publications as well as real change for the target groups. It is research and development with a purpose. A participatory research approach involving all stakeholders is inevitable, both in terms of ethics and validity. In particular we will focus our research in ICT4D to strengthen democratic processes, increase educational opportunities, improve healthcare, empower girls and women, create jobs and reduce poverty. Broad collaboration with governments, NGOs and communities are essential.

New business opportunities and life quality improvements will arise in the often over-looked areas of tourism, sport, art and music. We will approach our ICT4D research projects with thorough in depth pre-studies, establish the necessary networks and associate with key local organisations and people.

Communication is key. Currently we are investigating our in-house language skills. It is estimated that more than 40 languages are spoken at the department. Neil Armstrong said in 1969 when stepping out on the moon: “That’s one small step for [a] man, one giant leap for mankind.” Let’s take some small ICT4D-steps on Earth and make a giant leap for mankind!

Contact
If you wish to learn more or discuss future cooperations please contact:
Henrik Hansson, coordinator
Henrik.Hansson@dsv.su.se

Management
Henrik Hansson, coordinator ICT4D profile area
Roland Burger, coordinator of funding activities, R&D applications, external partnerships
Matti Tedre, Research design support
Naghmeh Aghaee, information manager

Center
SPIDER (Swedish Program for ICT in Developing Regions)

www.dsv.su.se/ict4d
A multidisciplinary field with many practical uses

ICT4D (Information and Communication Technology for Development) is a relatively new and highly dynamic field of development intervention. ICT covers a whole range of technologies to access, process and distribute information (text, sound, images etc.), but is most commonly used in reference to computers, Internet and mobile phones. ICT4D is not just about technology, but about helping poor and marginalised communities around the world to benefit from technological developments to improve the quality of their lives.

Using participatory action research, IT products, services and models are developed, tested and evaluated in order to improve livelihoods, increase access to education, improve health care, enhance participatory democracy and combat corruption. DSV is engaged in ICT4D projects in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Several projects are funded by Sida, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency. Researchers and graduate students from partner countries are involved in many projects and our projects are coordinated with other stakeholders such as donors, NGOs and research centres.

Working in the field of ICT4D is an ongoing learning process involving many actors contributing their knowledge and experience. ICT4D is by nature multidisciplinary, and interventions require a multi-stakeholder approach, not least to keep abreast with rapid technological developments.

Open and transparent sharing of information and knowledge among different actors is a necessity in ICT4D, which is why knowledge brokering is one of the main functions of Spider. This is why we make this effort to share information on who is doing what in ICT4D.

Spider (Swedish Program for ICT in Developing Regions)
The Spider centre specializes in multidisciplinary ICT4D research in democracy, education and health. Researchers at Spider investigate ICT in relation to gender, culture, democracy, corruption, education, health, and partnership. Spider also supports ICT4D research at Swedish partner universities and in partner countries.