

KaR Programme on Disability and Healthcare Technology

Project No. P1-C28 Final Report

Information Technology for Health and Development: electronic publication and distribution of educational and training materials for health

Objectives of the Project

To provide improved health care for poor communities in the South through:

1. Free access to up-to-date and appropriate health information and training materials for health workers in the South.
2. A method for the exchange of ideas and information between health workers.
3. A low cost and more effective means for health workers and NGOs working in the field of health, North and South, to distribute health information and training resources.
4. Distribute information which is copyright free and distributed on CD-ROM to the growing number of health workers in the South who have access to computers
5. The production of CD-ROMs which will include search engines to enable easy location of the required information and the potential for interactive use for training purposes
6. Increase in health workers' knowledge and skills both in health matters and in computer literacy.

Summary of work carried out

1. Employment and training of staff to carry out the project. Six full-time and part-time staff have been employed in the project. 2 people attended a course in Dream weaver software application. In house training was also carried out by the technical officer of the project.

2. Establishment of technical hardware and software, to enable the production of the Health Development CD-ROMs. The office is now fully equipped with computer facilities for producing SD-ROM masters we have also purchased a CD-ROM copies for small production runs, while outsourcing the work for bulk production.

3. Set up a computer database of users of the CD-ROM.

A database of users has been set up and all CD-ROMs sent out include a registration card that users must fill in and return in order to receive future copies. There are two reasons for this:

- a. It encourages only those who can make use of the CD-ROM to apply for it on a regular basis.
- b. It requires users to provide details of their position (health worker, doctor, Nurse etc.) and the type of work/activity they are involved with. The database allows us to keep track of both numbers and countries where the users are located.

4. On going development of partnerships with other NGOs and organisations, working in the field of health, who provide information for the CD-ROM. We have established partnerships with some 35 Organisations so

far, including: UGANDA continuing Medical Education, World Health Organisation, Handicap International, AfriAfya – Kenya, Developing Countries Farm Radio Network, ID21, South African Health Review and International HIV/AIDS Alliance to name a few.

5. Set up distribution facilities to send the CD-ROMs out to health workers in the South. Distribution to users on the database and to new requests are carried out with the help of volunteers at the TALC office.

6. Set up a database of registered users of the CD-ROM to receive future editions.

We have achieved the objective of setting up a functioning facility for the production and distribution of health information and training material on CD-ROM for users in the South. We have set up partnerships with a variety of NGOs and organisations that are providing copyright free, essential up to date health information that we now distribute at very low cost to thousands of health worker in the South (see below).

To date 4 issues of the e-talc Health Development CD-ROM have been produced and distributed as follows. Material for issue 5 has been collected and the CD-ROM will be ready for distribution in January

CD-ROM Issue 1 – produced July 2002,	5,500 distributed
CD-ROM Issue 2 – produced December 2002.	7,000 distributed
CD-ROM Issue 3 – produced April 2003	6,000 distributed
CD-ROM Issue 4 – produced October 2003	10,000 distributed
CD-ROM Issue 5 - due January 2004	10,000 to be distributed

Distribution has been very extensive and we now reach health workers throughout the world. This includes 74 developing (of which 30 are in Africa) and Eastern European countries.

Results of findings obtained by the project

After initial promotion of the CD-ROM, awareness of it has grown quickly. From the growing demand and from feedback received from users we are aware that many health workers have access to a computer and can make use of this material.

Users have made a particular point of stating that this format is much more useful than the internet; most either have no access to the Internet or find accessing it very difficult and costly – a situation that is unlikely to change for a long time.

A survey of users found the following: more than 75 % said they had access to a computer less than 5 years old. Over 95% found all or some of the material of direct benefit. More than 90 % said the CD-ROM was very easy to load and the instructions for use easy to follow. A similar proportion said the search engine facility was also useful and easy to use. Over 90% printed off some of the material for reference purposes. More than 75% share the CD-ROM with colleagues.

Feedback has been extremely positive and users have stated that the content is meeting a need (see appendix I for examples of feedback).

The CD-ROMs are being used by a wide variety of health workers in a wide variety of fields including the following:

HIV/AIDS workers, doctors, surgeons, community health workers, pharmacists, physiotherapists and occupational therapists, lecturers and teachers, nurses and midwives, medical and nursing students, clinical officers, medical laboratory technicians, environmental health officers, paediatricians.

Fields of interest of the users include:

TB and HIV/AIDS, women and child health, surgery, anaesthetics, community health, teaching, pharmacology, research, midwifery, water and sanitation, disaster relief, nutrition. (See appendix II for a complete list of subjects covered by the e-talc CD-ROM to date).

Implications of the results of findings for achieving the objectives of the project:

CD-ROMs are clearly an effective and appropriate means of distributing important information and overcome for many, the problem of lack of Internet access and the lack of up-to-date medical/health textbooks and journals. The e-talc project is helping to fill the vacuum of health information that health workers operate within, in the South. There is a desire by many NGOs north and south to distribute health information as widely as possible to those who can use it, without cost or restriction. TALC is now making this possible.

Future plans arising from the success of the project so far.

TALC will continue to build partnerships with organisations that produce useful health information, We actively search for such information and vet all material that is sent to us for consideration.

TALC needs raise the necessary funds to ensure this programme continues. We will maintain existing and develop new partnerships.

TALC has begun to promote its CD-ROM making capacity, as a fundraising mechanism for the e-TALC project. We have successfully carried out a number of contracts to produce specific one off CD-ROMs for other organisations (e.g. CD-ROM for World Anaesthesia 'Anaesthesia Resource' and ILEP 'ILA Technical Forum, and HIF-Net Directory) and this has produced a limited amount of funds for the future of the project. However, more funds will be required and we continue to look into other sources.

Priority tasks for follow-up

- Continue to develop new sources of funds for the programme.
- Continue to produce regular editions of the health-development CD-ROM.
- Research and develop new partnerships with health NGOs and organisations for provision of information particularly from organisations based in the South.
- Research new material in other fields of interest indicated by users for future CD-ROMS
- Maintain and add to the user database as necessary.
- Encourage further feedback on the content and use of the CD-ROM to evaluate its effectiveness and improve it.

Summary of financial expenditure

	Total	Total	
	Expenditure	Expenditure	Total
	Yr1	Yr2	
Salaries	12814.72	15388.28	28203
Inputting	2467.5	27801.57	30269.07
Overheads	2957.38	11777.67	14735.05
Equipment	8085.47	1000	9085.47
Training		969.38	969.38
Other			
Registration		494.21	
CD-ROM Produc		10882.27	
Distribution		16798.55	
Total		28175.03	28175.03
Total	<u>26,325.07</u>	<u>85111.93</u>	<u>111437</u>

Name and signature of author of the report

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