



REPORT OF FINDINGS

ICT SURVEY

Lambeth Voluntary and Community Organisations

May 2006

The Community Technology Project

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Introduction

Community Technology is a Lambeth charity whose main objective is to empower people through technology. After identifying a significant need for ICT services in Lambeth in 1998, Community Technology started to carry out a variety of ICT related services and projects such as ICT training, ICT work placements, ICT recycling and creative ICT projects. However, changes in funding meant that by 2005, Community Technology was operating primarily as an ICT recycling and networking/ support organisation, providing cost-priced ICT services for a limited number of organisations in the sector.

In early 2006, the Lambeth Voluntary Action Council completed a mapping exercise of the borough which identified voluntary and community groups still had substantial ICT needs which were not being met. Meetings with other key groups such as Lambeth e-government and Lambeth e-learning also supported these findings. At present there is no designated ICT group for Lambeth voluntary and community organisations.

Community Technology consequently carried out a more in depth survey about ICT needs in May 2006 to further establish the scope of this need in Lambeth.

1.2 Summary of Recommendations

A needs analysis has revealed that although vital to operations, 70% of Lambeth voluntary and community organisations have ICT needs which are currently not being met. There is no designated ICT group for Lambeth voluntary and community organisations. The major ICT requirements identified are:

- the need for better ICT resources
- the need for efficient and reliable ICT support
- the need for in-house ICT skills

Analysis reveals that a local, sustainable approach is required for Lambeth's voluntary and community sector.

Evidence in the survey reveals that a combined approach of in-house ICT networking/ troubleshooting skills would significantly address both capacity and support needs, with 63% of organisations indicating that a skilled networking/ support member of staff would be of benefit. Boosting this capacity could be achieved by training staff in networking/ support skills and providing support for these skills to be practically applied on an ongoing basis.

Sharing knowledge and resources through an ICT group or forum would be additional ongoing support to organisations with limited or developing resources, skills and support.

72% of organisations are in need of additional ICT resources, primarily faster or more machines. The requirements of database/ internet ready machines could be met by using refurbished equipment obtained through reuse schemes within the local area.

2. SURVEY

2.1 Purpose

The aim of this survey was to ascertain the level of existing ICT equipment resources, ICT skills, ICT networking and support, the importance of this to operations and to identify needs for additional ICT services.

Community Technology defined ICT for the purposes of the survey as; *“the technology we use to store and manipulate information. This includes not only computers, but other communication devices like phones and faxes.”*

Additional information surveyed included organisations' area/s of operations and number/ type of beneficiaries and number of employees.

2.2 Methods

The Lambeth voluntary and community sector were sent surveys by mail. The sample size used was 15% of the sector's organisations. The survey was divided into six major sections;

- **Your organisation's ICT** (day to day resources and importance of ICT)
- **About your organisation's ICT resources** (internet connection, obtaining equipment, licensing)
- **ICT support** (support, its costs and effectiveness)
- **Skills and training** (internal ICT skills/ the need for training)
- **General comments** (comments about ICT/ ICT needs)
- **About your organisation** (organisations' contact details, activities, beneficiaries, number of employees)

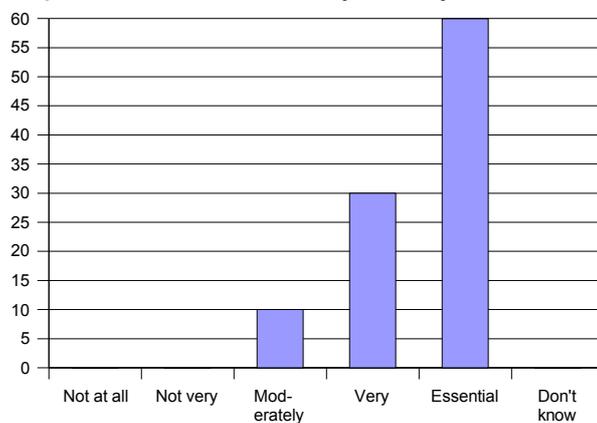
To encourage return of surveys, respondents were entered in a draw for a refurbished pentium 3 computer.

3. FINDINGS

3.1 'Your organisation's ICT'

All respondents had ICT in their organisation including at least one computer. The average number of computers per organisation was 11. 90% of respondents said ICT was either very important or essential to their day to day functioning yet almost 50% of respondents said their computers and printers were completely unreliable, very unreliable or only moderately reliable. When asked why ICT was important to day-to-day functioning, the most common answers were using databases and the internet/ email.

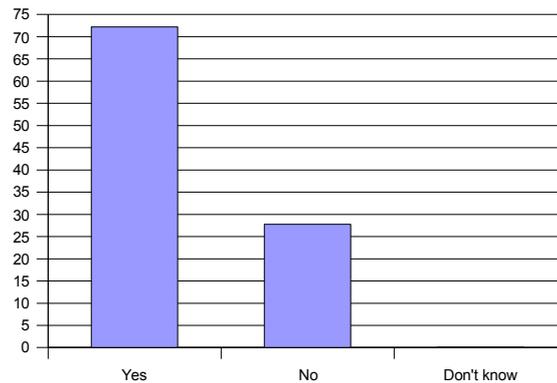
Importance of ICT to day-to-day functioning



3.2 'About your organisation's ICT resources'

68% of organisations had new ICT, whilst 32% had second hand equipment, the latter was in most cases donated. Software licensing was an issue for around 26% of organisations with another 26% responding they 'didn't know' if software licensing was an issue. Of the respondents who had an issue related to licensing, the most often stated reasons were that they could not afford new licenses and they still used old operating systems (Windows 95) which is no longer supported. Internet connections were mostly very reliable, although 37% of organisations found their connection only moderately reliable. 72% of organisations said that they needed to improve their ICT resources, with the most common needs being more computers, faster computers and more up to date applications.

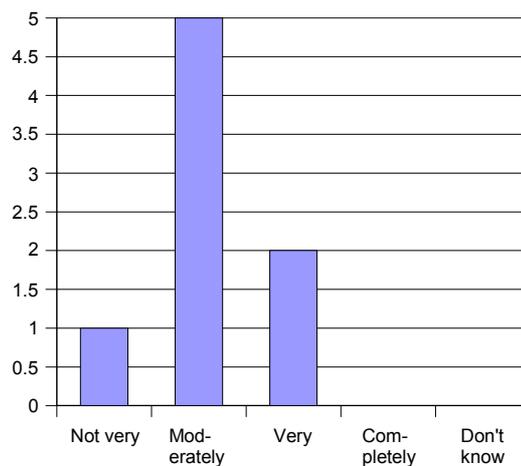
Need to improve ICT resources



3.3 'ICT support'

74% of organisations had a designated person or organisation who supplied ICT support and 86% of these organisations paid for their ICT support. Yet 50% of the organisations who paid for their support found it only moderately reliable and effective. Problems with support included slow response time, reliability and the fact that support was not local/ internal. and a similar number of groups surveyed said that cheaper or free support would be of benefit to their organisations. Of those who rated their support as only moderately effective or lower, a recurring comment was that branch organisations who received support from a central office found this support unsatisfactory and would prefer local or in-house support.

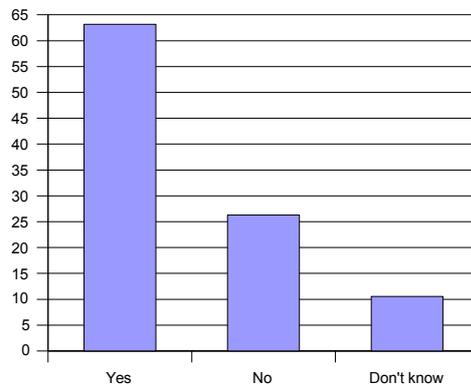
Effectiveness and reliability of paid support



3.4 'Skills and training'

50% of organisations said their staff would benefit from training in basic IT and word processing, 40% would benefit from internet use and email training and 60% would benefit from spreadsheet training. Only 37% of respondents had someone within the organisation who had networking/ IT support skills and 63% of organisations said it would be of benefit to have someone within the organisation that had networking/ IT support skills.

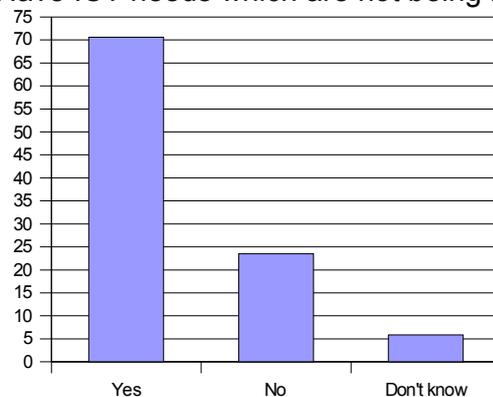
Would be of benefit to have staff with ICT networking/ support skills



3.5 'General Comments'

Over 70% of organisations said they had ICT needs which are not currently being met. The reasons for this were a combination of inadequate ICT equipment, inadequate ICT support and inadequate in-house ICT skills. Funding of ICT was also raised as a concern as was specialist ICT needs for disabled people.

Have ICT needs which are not being met



3.6 'About your organisation'

The organisations who responded covered a broad range of operations, beneficiaries and sizes. The types of groups included black and ethnic minority groups, disability support and other social inclusion, residents' groups, human rights, drug and alcohol support. Smaller groups had 2 staff members and often had part-time staff, whilst larger groups had 20-25 employees.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Needs analysis has revealed there are significant ICT needs amongst voluntary and community organisations in Lambeth. The statistics show that ICT is extremely important to Lambeth voluntary and community organisations' operations, with 90% of organisations rating ICT as either very important or essential to day-to-day functioning, yet 70% of organisations surveyed that they had ICT needs which are not being met. Significantly, there is no designated ICT group within Lambeth for community and voluntary groups.

The major needs identified are as follows:

- **The need for improved ICT resources;** faster equipment, more computers, faster internet connection, new software

(72% of organisations responded that they needed to improve their ICT resources)

- **The need for better ICT support;** support for those without support, less costly, more rapid, effective and local/ in-house support for those who already have support

(50% of those who paid for support found it only moderately reliable and effective)

- **The need for in-house ICT skills;** networking and support and basic ICT

(63% of organisations said a staff member with networking/ support skills would be of benefit)

A local, sustainable approach is needed for the borough's voluntary and community organisations. Evidence from the survey suggests that capacity building and resource sharing would encourage the most effective and sustainable use of ICT within the

borough. This includes local or in-house networking skills and support; ICT support schemes which integrate training and user involvement would have the greatest ongoing benefits for organisations.

ICT resources also need to be boosted, primarily more or faster machines and the facility of support on older operating systems, or the potential to upgrade operating systems. Hardware and corresponding software upgrades on the oldest systems could be achieved through ICT reuse schemes within the borough.

Information and advice on available ICT support and infrastructure options within the borough also needs to be boosted. Support infrastructure such as a Lambeth ICT group or an online forum whereby Lambeth organisations could share knowledge and experience would be of continuing benefit to organisations and their beneficiaries.