

Funding Of Internet Cafes

While Cybermissions recommends the Business As Mission approach of running Internet cafes as small businesses this is not compulsory. Some donors may want you to offer the services for free for instance. Here are the three main possible funding models:

1. PAID - Business As Mission, customers pay for Internet access and services at normal commercial rates and the computer center fits into the community as a normal small business in the area.
2. FREE – the computer center offers its services for free and is supported by donors such as an aid agency, church or mission. It fits into the community as an NGO / community service.
3. CLUB – users purchase a club membership and can use the computer center for free from then on. Club membership may be set at a nominal rate to pay for electricity and Internet access but does not cover wages and computer replacement costs. Fits into the community as a Cyber Club – much like a sports club, chess club etc. Is supported mainly by donors.

Other possible models

4. CORPORATE SERVICE - a large company may provide the Internet café as a service to its employees particularly companies employing large amounts of migrant labor or labor from overseas. This fits into the community as a corporate service which you contract for, similar to supplying a corporate gymnasium.
5. GOVERNMENT SERVICE – the computer center is funded by the government as a service to indigent communities, in order to bridge the digital divide. In this case the computer center fits into the community as a government service like a library. It may even be in a library.

If you are going to offer Internet cafes to corporate or government entities you will need to have a highly professional package that offers them some advantage over just buying the computers themselves. You might emphasize trained staff, filtering software, secure networks and customized add –on services such as video cameras, funds transfer cards, VOIP services which would make it highly attractive.