

Section IV

Communication with migrants

While the gateway and networking initiatives described in this book build on expanding the reach of the Internet through traditional and geographically defined communities, the configuration and location of communities is also changing, creating new needs and opportunities. Radio and the Internet are playing a role here, as well. With an estimated 75 million short and medium term international migrant workers and their dependants in the world today, international migration is both a consequence and a driving force of globalisation. Most of these workers retain, or would like to retain close ties with families and communities in their countries of origin. These ties, enhanced and supported by the use of ICTs, make a significant contribution to development in a number of important ways. The two chapters in this section show how the radio/Internet combination is enabling migrants to connect with their home communities to the benefit of both.



In rural areas, where there are no telephones, broadcast radio is often used to deliver personal messages between community members. People listen to the radio not only to hear news and music, but also because it is a community bulletin board and an electronic post office, where they can pick up what José Ramos and Ángel Díez call “airwave mail”. *Blending Old and New Technologies: Mexico’s indigenous radio service messages*, looks at how this service is being enhanced and extended by the Internet, allowing people to receive broadcast messages from friends and families thousands of kilometres away.

Callos and Guatitas: *Radio and Migration in Ecuador and Spain*, by Luís Dávila and José Manuel López, describes a situation in which radio and ICTs are being used to connect Ecuadorian migrants in Spain with their home communities. The chapter demonstrates that the connection means much more than keeping families in touch, since in the year 2000 Ecuadorians living abroad sent almost \$1.5 billion to their friends and relatives back home – making them the country’s second-largest source of foreign income.