

ICT4Dem

Newsletter

August 2013



Supported by



Strength in Diversity

By: ICT4Dem Network Facilitator

The ICT4Democracy in East Africa Network recognises that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has the potential to increase citizens' participation in decision-making processes, thus strengthening democratisation. The possibilities are as varied as the options and this diversity is reflected in the work of the ICT4Dem network partners, Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET), Toro Development Network (ToroDev), Transparency International – Uganda (TIU), Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRAAG), Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC), Collaboration on International ICT Policy in East and Southern Africa (CIPESA) and iHub Research. The network has been in place since 2011 and is evaluating its progress so far as it goes through a transition phase.

WOUGNET working with communities in Northern Uganda under a project especially empowering women to use ICTs for improved service delivery, have found that the communities are prepared to continue the project activities, because they realize the benefit of the project. During the project evaluation exercise, the beneficiaries noted new found courage to challenge the local leadership, which has resulted in reduced corruption and improved services. However, they are still faced

with the challenge of access to the technology and while they believe they are committed to continue monitoring service delivery in their community beyond the project, they may not be as active without its support.

On the other hand, one of the communities in Kabarole district working with ToroDev under the Converging ICT Tools to promote Service Delivery in the Rwenzori region of Western Uganda has gone a step further. Rather than remain a loose community gathering, they have organized themselves into a formally registered community based organization (Peoples' Rights and Forum for Development) to lead the fight for respect of human rights, good governance and service delivery in their sub county of Mugusu. Their primary challenge at the moment now is how to get the necessary ICT and entrepreneurial skills to ensure the sustainability of the organization.

For its part, TI-Uganda established a call centre in Northern Uganda to address service delivery issues in the health sector for the Lango region. This has been widely accepted and not only is the centre addressing health issues beyond the intended target region, its addressing all manner of complaints ranging from complaints about corruption in the police to domestic disputes, which are then referred to the relevant authorities.

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CHRRAGG is also using telephony to address citizens' complaints by deploying an SMS system to receive and manage reports of human rights violations in Tanzania and Zanzibar. While the system is still in its infancy, the potential and interest within the community is clear to see. Ironically, it was a greater challenge to get management support for the project, than to get citizen acceptance. However, with management recognizing the value of the project and backing it up with human and financial resources, this is a project that has the potential to change the citizen-government communication dynamic.

Also addressing human rights issues is KHRC, which is building the capacity and providing technical support for community-lead human rights networks, such as the Citizen Land Network in Kibwezi. They are committed to carrying on their work even without KHRC support and have demonstrated this by building a community centre with funds generated within the community. They have expanded their outreach to more than just land issues, but also addressing other human rights issues. However, they are concerned about their limited influence when the issue at hand goes beyond the authority or jurisdiction of the local leadership. For this, they rely on partnerships with organizations such as

KHRC to address this extra dimension.

CIPESA has been working with communities in Northern and Western Uganda, one of whom is the e-Society centre. This is a local government information centre for Kasese district, receiving both technical and financial support from the CIPESA iParticipate project. They are then able to train district staff to use various ICT tools and applications; carry out computer literacy trainings for district workers and members of the public; capture community service delivery stories; managing and updating district online services; and offer desktop support and ICT consultancy to the district among other services.

iHub Research has been looking at the application of mobile technology in managing water resources in Kenya. They have studied a number of options currently available and worked with developers and local communities during testing of these applications. One of these applications is called Mmaji and is currently used in the Kibera slum of Nairobi. Clean, piped water is only available at designated public access points managed


by individuals or institutions registered with the Nairobi Water Company that installs the infrastructure and supplies the water. The mobile app was developed to inform the slum dwellers about the location and current price of water, which is especially handy in times of shortages.

Water management by Umande Trust has also created an opportunity for diversified services through multi-purpose bio centers, which provide access to clean water, public toilets, generation of bio gas sold to the community for cooking and one of the structures includes a community centre with internet access.

Often a multi-partner, multi-national project will be trying to implement the same activities in different locations to obtain a uniform result, however, the ICT4Dem in East Africa allows the different partners to address their individual challenges, in their own unique ways of citizen empowerment.■



The Commission for human rights takes sms to the citizens



Ass.Professor Paula Uimonen Director of Spider (middle) official launching the SMS for Human Rights system, watching from right is Wilfred Warioba, Commission's Head of ICT, and left is Prof. Louise Yngström witnessing the launch

By: CHRAGG

The Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRAGG) officially launched the SMS for human right system to complement other methods/medium of submitting complaints to the Commission, in a bid to boost efficiency in receiving and conducting investigations of human rights abuse cases.

The system was launched On 27th June 2013 by Ass. Prof. Paula Uimonen PhD, Director of the Swedish program for ICT in Developing Regions - Spider at the House of Culture in Dar es Salaam.

The Commission has begun to recognise the true value of Mobile technologies for Development (M4D) as a key role on service delivery for a just and equitable society which observes and respects human rights and principles of good governance.

Speaking at the launch, Paula commended CHRAGG for being able to complete the project as planned despite several challenges that rose during the development and implementation stages, she appealed to the CHRAGG to

conduct the awareness campaign for the citizens in the country especially for those who live in the remote areas. The SMS for human rights system was developed with support from the Swedish Program for ICT in Developing Regions (Spider).

Warioba who is the project coordinator said the new system has started to be accepted and the trends show that the number of people who use the system is on the increase. The new development shows that many complainants use it as a whistle blower tool. When several complaints are received requiring urgent responses, this imposes another challenge for the Commission and it might lead to the formation of a new unit that deals with urgent issues.

The SMS for human rights system has started to yield some results already, for instance, the average number of complaints received daily has increased

from 4-5 to 18 complaints a day. The new system is expected to increase the average complaints received in a month from 80 to 200.

Warioba added that the use of SMS system will reduce the amount of time, inconveniences and cost that complainants used to incur especial for those who live in the remote areas when submitting complaints before



Director for Spider, Ass.prof Paula Uimonen, from left Director for human right Francis Nzuki, Senior Investigation officer Vincent Mbombo, and Head of ICT Wilfred Warioba



Senior Investigation officer Mbarouk (right), introducing SMS for Human right system to the citizens in Stone Town, Zanzibar . On the left is Mr. Milton Aineruhanga, ICT4Dem Network facilitator.

the Commission and also during the time when one wants to follow up the progress/status of his/her complaints. It has to be remembered that previously one would have to leave their activities and travel to one of our offices in Dar es salaam, Zanzibar or in one of the zonal offices.

According to Warioba, the Commission has started to prepare a team that will receive and process complaints that are received from SMS and which requires prompt response. With the use of a case management system, it is believed that this will assist to fast track the processing of complaints without jeopardizing the procedures in dealing/processing complaints.

SMS for human rights system has started to speed up communication between the Commission and the complainants, showing the advantage of this system over other medium that are used by the Commission such as letters sent through the post and replies that take more than five days to be received, or where some letters went missing or delayed, because some complainants did not have

proper communication addresses.

Warioba added that any citizen can open a new complaint whenever their rights are infringed upon or the principle of good governance violated, by sending a message using an ordinary mobile phone to 0754 460 259. Then the complainant will receive an automated acknowledgement. The new system not only gives the complainant the assurance that the complaint has been

received by the Commission, but also enable them to follow up the status of their complaints.

Acting director for Public Education Alexander Hassan said the challenge ahead is to make sure that the SMS for human rights system is known to the general public, the work of the Commission is to ensure that this system is known and becomes the main tool for complaint submission to the Commission. The Commission has printed and distributed 2000 flyers in various public meetings and visits. The Director however also noted that it is important for the general public to be aware that the Commission continues to receive complaints using tradition methods such as submitting the complaints by visiting the Commission offices, writing letters, email or sending a fax.

The Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRAGG) is an independent government department, established as the national focal point institution for the promotion and

protection of human rights and duties as well as good governance in Tanzania. CHRAGG was established under Article 129(1) of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania of 1977 as amended by Act No. 3 of 2000. Its work ethic is based on the Paris Principles established in the 1991 global meeting of National Human Rights Institution and the same principles have been adopted by the UN.

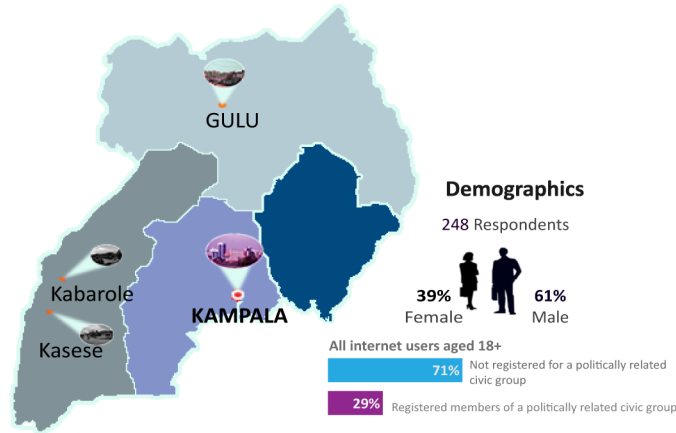
The Commission has expansive mandated functions that range from human rights publicity and advocacy, research, receiving complaints, conducting investigations on issues of human rights violation, mould ministration and mismanagement, inspecting prisons and similar places of detention, advising the government on issues of Human Rights and Good Governance and monitoring the ratification of International Conventions that relate to Human Rights and to collaborate with Regional and International Organizations on the human rights and good governance related issues.■



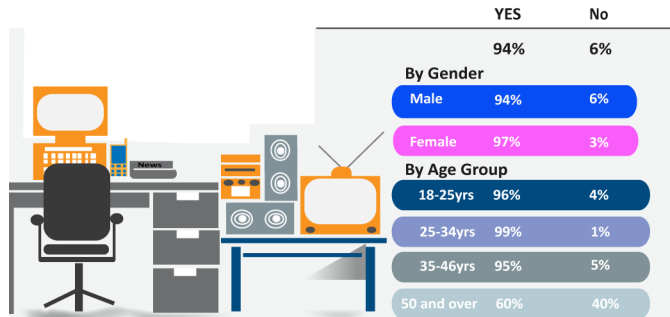
Wilfred Warioba (right), Hussein Mbarouk Senior Investigation Officer from the Commission introducing the SMS for human right system to the people in the former slave market in Stone Town, Zanzibar

Uganda: User and non-user profiles and their [de] motivations for Utilizing ICTs in Citizen Participation and Monitoring of Democracy

During 2012, the Collaboration on International ICT Policy in East and Southern Africa (CIPESA) conducted surveys to identify the knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAPs) and the needs of Ugandan citizens on the utility, effectiveness, and security of ICTs in citizen participation and monitoring of democracy.

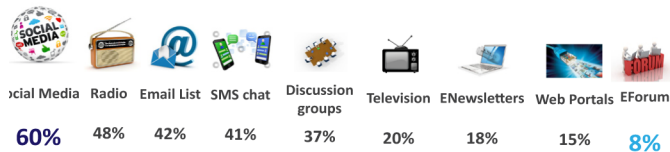


Awareness of ICT-based tools for participation



The internet was the most well known ICT based tool for participation, followed by the mobile phone. Print and broadcast media were perceived as 'non-ICT-based'.

Use of ICT-based tools to participate



Most frequently engaged in online participative activities

- Looking for political information on the web
- Visiting a political organisation's website
- Discussing politics in a chat group
- Joining an email discussion about politics
- Sending an email to a politician or a political organisation



Least engaged in online participative activities

- Donating funds
- Volunteering with a political cause
- Signing an online petition

The importance of participating in civic matters was widely acknowledged and there is a strong belief that ICT based tools can enhance democracy in the country

Importance of participating in civic matters.....

ICT based tools enhance democracy.....

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Neutral				2%	3%
Important	1%		1%	20%	8%
Very important	1%	2%	6%	19%	36%

eParticipation tools are mostly used for...

Activity	Yes	No
Participation/discussion in debate	40%	60%
Demand accountability and transparency in the conduct of public affairs	36%	64%
Demand for better Services	54%	46%
Contact an elected official, politician/political organisation	20%	80%
Communicate with other citizens and Interest groups	56%	43%
Register for services, download forms	35%	65%
Look for information (download documents, speeches, meeting agendas)	52%	48%
Sign petitions	7%	93%
Participate in polls/surveys	28%	72%
Follow up on political debates and decisions	33%	67%
Campaign for a political party/candidate	15%	85%
Report electoral malpractice	21%	79%

Sharing of information on civic matters obtained from eParticipation tools with others: spouse, neighbour, workmate, friends

6% No

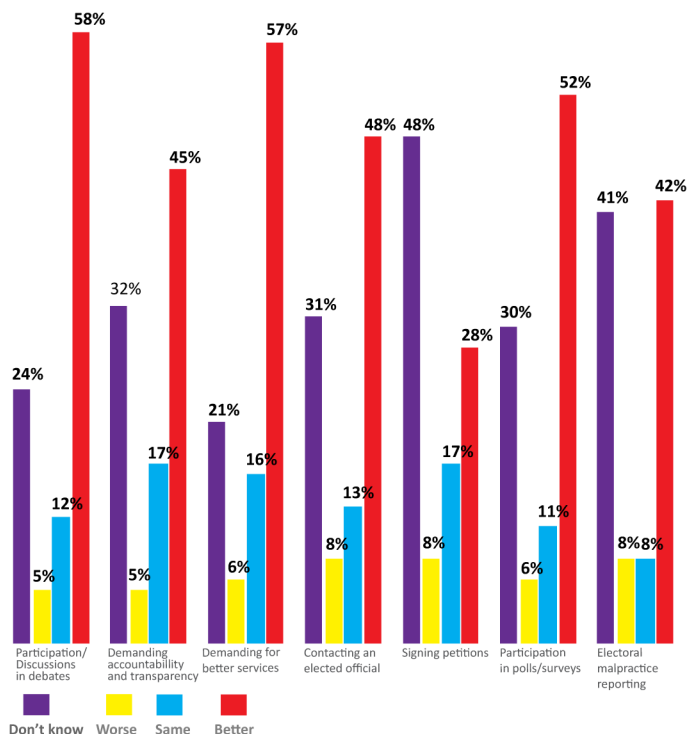


94% Yes

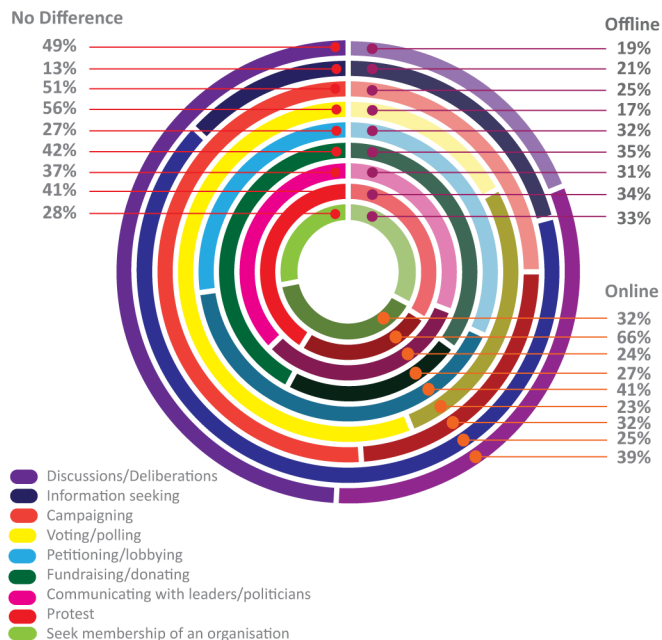
ICT based participation tools are easy to use...



Comparison of participation via ICT based tools to the same activities physically (non ICT based)



Sphere preference of engaging in particular activities (online or offline)



Factors that facilitate use of ICTs for participation

- Literacy
- Gender
- Costs
- [lack of] awareness
- Security Concerns

This study was undertaken in the context of CIPESA's iParticipate Uganda project. The project is supported by the Swedish Program for ICT in Developing Regions (Spider) and the Indigo Trust.

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M-Governance: Water Stakeholders – Information Ecosystem in Kenya

By: Anne Salim

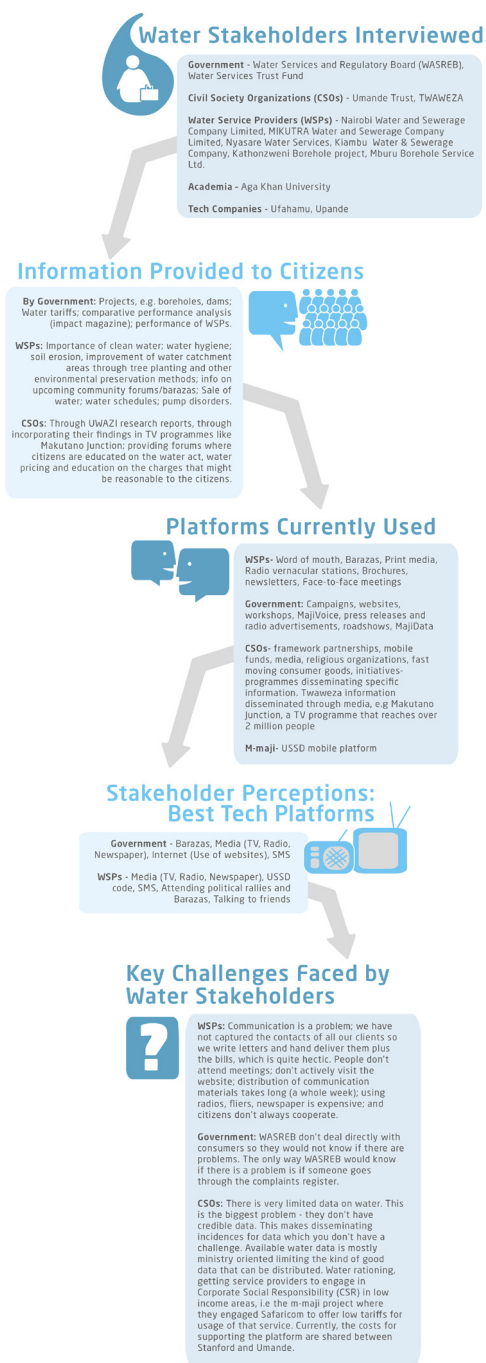
There are different stakeholders in the water sector whose role affects the overall decision-making cycle. “Stakeholder” refers to a person or group that has an investment, share, or interest in something, as a business or industry (Dictionary.com). They include Government, Private Sector companies providing water services, Academia, Civil Society Organizations, NGOs and Media.

USAID reports that about 13 million Kenyans lacking access to improved water supply. This number results in one asking the question “What action are the authorities in charge are taking to resolve that water problem?” iHub Research has been carrying out an m-Governance study looking into the potential of mobile technology to enhance transparency in the water governance sector for over 18 months. The study has concentrated on the thematic area of water and has since been looking at the structure of the water governance sector in Kenya, technology use in the water governance sector and finally the perceptions of citizens in using tech platforms like USSD, SMS and Internet to receive and query water information. This next report “Role of technology in promoting transparency with local

stakeholders in the water governance sector” covers the challenges the stakeholders face, some technology tools they have been using to provide water information and the perceptions they have on how technology can be used to enhance transparency in the water sector.

Many citizens interviewed in our research have indicated that they do not have access to water information that they particularly desire and this results in the citizens suffering silently when they cannot access this crucial resource. Speaking to several organizations in the water sector covering different spectrum of Government, Civil Society, Water Service Providers (like water kiosks & large water companies) and Academia, the story from the perspective of these stakeholders indicates that despite them providing water information to citizens using their regular channels, it is not reaching the intended target group as they desire.

This following infographic summarizes the current information ecosystem in the Kenyan water sector as per the findings of our research to give an overview of the entire process and the challenges faced by the water stakeholders in Kenya.■



By: Simon Peter Ogwang

Years after the end of rebel insurgency, Northern Uganda continues to face challenges in healthcare service delivery and accessibility. Health workers' absenteeism which is caused by many factors remains the key cause of poor health service delivery in the region. According to World Bank, health workers in Uganda operate under demotivating conditions characterized by low pay and poor working conditions, resulting in either migration to other countries for better pay or absconding from duty to attend to their private clinics/businesses. Other organizations like WHO attributed absenteeism to inadequate number of qualified health staff. TI Uganda's response to these challenges was to empower, unite and engage different stakeholders towards improving health systems and service delivery mainly focusing on Lira and Oyam as pilot districts.

With support from SPIDER, TI Uganda worked hand in hand with Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET), CIPESA, Lira NGO Forum, Justice and Peace center Lira among others and promoted transparency and accountability in health service delivery through ICT thereby reducing the rates of absenteeism of health workers, empowering communities in monitoring service delivery and engaging local government

in improving service delivery in the target health centers.

Increased community participation in demanding social accountability of health workers was achieved through building good relationship between service providers and service users. In a bid to realize lasting solutions to the poor health service delivery it was very important that TI Uganda worked hand in hand with respective district Local government in ensuring improved health service delivery in both Oyam and Lira districts.

The toll free call center (0800200188) is providing a great deal of community engagement and participation towards sustainable development. Throughout the first phase of the project it was noticed that women are affected more by challenges in healthcare accessibility compared to men and if women were to be organized and empowered to demand for social accountability in service delivery, they would be more willing and effective in monitoring and demanding for positive change in what affects them most; for future collaboration and partnerships, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) need to closely work with women organizations like WOUGNET to share their niche expertise in empowering and engaging women in community development. The call center in recent months received



Left: Health Center III In Charge of Agulurude Signing development before community members. Right: A midwife at Amach Health Center IV committed in providing pre and postnatal healthcare

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President of Segeju Survival Movement and member of Kwale Hurinet Athman Kibada (with crutches) briefing members of Mrima Welfare Association in Kwale regarding the activities of Cortec Kenya, a mining company whose license was recently revoked by the government. It had been prospecting for niobium and rare earths in Mrima, Lunga-Lunga Constituency without much transparency in the deal.

Empowering Rural Communities Through ICTs

How technology has transformed human rights advocacy in Kwale, Kenya

It is not easy to be online on a daily basis at minimum costs anywhere in the developing world, more so in rural set ups. In Kwale County however, the Human Rights Network (Hurinet) enjoys a virtually unlimited access to internet six days a week thanks to ICT4Democracy, an initiative of Spider which is being implemented by Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC) since early 2012.

Located in the coast region of Kenya, Kwale boasts availability of numerous natural resources giving it potential social and economic advantages including tourist attractions and precious minerals. Despite this, the county is characterized with

monumental challenges ranging from economic, socio-cultural to political. Poverty levels remain extremely high while outdated cultural practices such as forceful marriage of underage girls to men as old as their fathers – a practice that has terribly affected the girl-child education in parts of the county. Water scarcity is one of the major challenges as girls and women trek long distances to find it. The few schools available are distances apart and children as young as five years old walk up to 12 kilometres to and from schools. In Nguluku, Maumba and Fingirika areas of Msambweni Constituency, parents have to

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a new twist of calls where people called to seek medical consultation, reporting police corruption and seeking legal advice in settling community disputes; this shows how much the technology can do for the community beyond reporting health service delivery challenges.

The community has greatly adapted to technological approach of improving service delivery which was realized through their participation in radio talk shows and calling the toll free line, some have even gone to the extent of requesting that the project intervention be replicated in their districts and community. Funding still remains a greater challenge for the project to cover the entire Northern Uganda; the intervention proved to be vital for improving health service delivery, it's therefore a great desire of both the communities and TI Uganda that the project intervention is replicated in the entire Uganda and East Africa at large.

CSOs share a great deal of forming and joining organization networks like ICT for Democracy in East Africa to enrich their knowledge sharing, good partnerships and collaborations for collective effort in developing East Africa, something that other CSOs can share best practices from ICT for democracy in East Africa. Development partners cross the globe need to put more focus in using innovative ICT platforms that empower and engage people in demanding and promoting human rights, transparency and accountability and promoting all other components of democratic governance and with all this TI Uganda's greatest desire is to partner and work together with anyone who shares a common goal of making Uganda a country free of corruption.■

accompany the children to school for fear of being attacked by wild animals. Cases of defilement are also on the rise. Despite the available land laws, there are still wrangles among various parties concerning land ownership. A sizeable number of residents are yet to acquaint themselves with the opportunities that come with a devolved system of government under the constitutional dispensation.

But following the introduction of ICT4Democracy, substantial change is evident. Kwale Hurinet for example has exploited the ICT4Democracy facilities to intervene promptly to numerous challenges facing the Kwale communities. Since inception, the Hurinet has used the ICT facilities available to establish strong networks not only locally, but also regionally and nationally. The Hurinet has for instance, opened e-mail accounts for all members who own phones as well as face-book accounts. The Hurinet too has its own twitter handle, a face-book account as well as a crowd-map. Apart from KHRC who are the main partners, Hurinet has been able to collaborate with several other like-minded organizations and institutions- thanks to ICT4Democracy.

Access to information& awareness creation: One of the biggest benefits that the project has brought about is access to information. Currently, the Hurinet has in its possession invaluable information on land, child rights, devolution and several other constitutional and legislative journals which are downloadable from the internet. Previously, it was not easy to access these documents in print from various government departments. These materials have been of significant use in undertaking awareness programmes on



A section of women who turned up for training on land rights in Msambweni

various subjects in the community. For example, the Hurinet has now been able to train community members on their rights such as land rights.

Hurinet members in various thematic committees are conversant with relevant laws which have made it possible to intervene or refer complex cases to other partners. Notable committees are those of gender and child rights that have been able to assist victims to report and file cases in good time. This is not to mention Communications committee which has been able to gather information complete with photos and videos, some of which we have shared through Youtube and Mizizi ya Haki, a community advocacy newspaper produced by the KHRC.

The Hurinet has also been able to better document its work and provide evidence of their interventions. Recently, the Hurinet assisted members of the community to file complaints against a high court judge who irregularly handled their case. The complaint was done online, was submitted to the Judges and Advocates Vetting Board which has since acknowledged receipt

of the communication. Similarly, since October 2012 to date, the Hurinet has assisted about thirty hotel workers to engage their employers following illegal dismissals.

However, all this has not been without challenges. Given the vastness of the county and its poor terrains, there is some information we receive using ICT but still needs physical movement to reach out to the affected persons. These include cases of eviction, defilement or during the campaign rallies, when we needed to be present at the venues and record the proceedings verbatim. Financial sustainability is also an issue we hope to address so that we can have our own secure office rather than shared space in someone's business premises.■



Cases of child labour and teenage pregnancy among school girls are on the rise in Kwale County (previously reported via crowdmap)

Are ICTs Promoting Social Responsibility? Ushahidi online platform helps a patient get medical care.

By Amanyia Sheila and Kogere Recheal

A local citizen from Kasese district, western Uganda, Mr. Enos Masereka, was able to raise funds out of social responsibility and attention from doctors to go for further treatment at Mulago National Referral Hospital in Kampala after his illness story was published on the online Ushahidi Platform in March 2013 by a radio mentor trained by ToroDev in online advocacy and public accountability broadcasting. More on the story follow this link <http://www.wougnet.org/ushahidi/reports/view/365> . “I have gone to several government hospitals including Bwera, Kagando and Mbarara and the doctors say they cannot diagnose and establish what the disease is and have referred me to Mulago Hospital,” said Enos Masereka. The twenty seven year old Masereka from Ihandiro Sub County – Kasese District got the strange disease in 2010 and has received several medications but without relief.

The story was posted on the WOUGNET/ ToroDev Ushahidi platform by the radio mentor, who also doubles as the news editor of radio Messiah in Kasese, Mr. John Baptist Nzinjah. After publishing it on the Ushahidi platform, Nzinjah encouraged other journalists from the Rwenzori Journalist Forum (RJF) to pick it



Enos Masereka showing the Strange Disease

and broadcast it for improved advocacy and mobilization for support. Rwenzori Journalists picked the story on Ushahidi and aired it on radio including, Thembo Kawunge of Guide Radio FM who broadcasted it, attracting government medical doctors to diagnose the disease. Journalists from Voice of Bundibugyo

also read the story on Ushahidi platform and broadcasted it, which attracted more government medical doctors to share the issue and diagnose the strange disease.

The author of the story also had a meeting with the local doctors and further radio



ToroDev-Radio Journalist Mr. John Nzinjah of UBC FM, Kasese narrating story to Racheal Kogere of ToroDev in Kasese Municipality

discussions were conducted on local FM radios by the district health officials sensitizing the local communities on issues concerning the management of such strange diseases. Unfortunately the doctors from the local hospitals didn't have the equipment to diagnose the disease, but referred the patient to Mulago National Referral Hospital. "As journalist of Guide radio we read a story published on Ushahidi platform, which was a serious case that we followed and talked to the health workers of Kasese, we even invited the health officers on radio to come and talk to the people about the strange disease. We even allowed local citizens to call-in and ask questions and contribute their ideas, this helped the doctors to meet the patient and take samples to test the disease." said Kahughe Thembo, Guide Radio FM in Kasese.

To get to Mulago, the patient needed funds for maintenance and other medical expenses. Radio discussions were used

to mobilize local communities to raise funds to cater for the patient's maintenance and other medical expenses. Enough money was collected by the local communities in Kasese district to send the patient to Mulago Hospital in April, 2013 for further treatment. "The local citizens who did not access the story on Ushahidi platform got to know about

the man on radio news, talkshows and discussions. The residents of Kasese started collecting money to send the man to Mulago Hospital in Kampala for further treatment and tests were carried out to identify the disease. The Mulago doctors sent the samples abroad and everyone is waiting for the news." said Nzinjah.

Local citizens are very hopeful that the Ushahidi platform and other ICT/online media platforms will help improve community development broadcasting, "the Ushahidi platform has helped the journalists to share information which is broadcast on radio stations all over the Rwenzori Region and a lot of news run on our local radio stations is picked from the Ushahidi platform." said Howard Tumwine, Voice of Bundibugyo FM.

Since 2012, ToroDev has been training local citizens and radio journalists in online/Web 2.0 tools to collect, document and disseminate online public accountability for improved serviced delivery issues. They were particularly oriented on how to interact with the Ushahidi and other relevant online platforms like facebook, Skype, twitter, etc. This particular case study of posts on the Ushahidi platform not only reveals the potentiality of ICT tools to motivate leaders to account for service delivery, but also mobilizing and motivating local citizens to be responsible for the social welfare of their own colleagues.■



ToroDev-Staff Kogere Recheal Meeting Guide FM Journalists who picked the story on Ushahidi and broadcasted it

Fostering community empowerment through ICTs for service delivery and community participation



WOUGNET VSAC members in Otwee- Florence Akot, pumps clean, fresh water while, Joyce Atto, watched water coming from the newly installed borehole by NUDEIL at Amoikoma community school – NUSAF Apprentice primary school

By: Kubere Information Centre Staff

Through SPIDER support, Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET) empowered the local communities in the five districts of Amuru, Gulu, Apac, Oyam and Kole in northern Uganda to use ICT innovatively and strategically to monitor, document and report for improved service delivery and also to demand and advocate for accountability and transparency in use of public services. The WOUGNET program aimed at ensuring that local people in the target districts have their capacity built to use ICTs to break the silence on poor service delivery and fight corruption. Under the project, specific emphasis on the roles of the rural women in promoting local governance, fighting corruption and

enhancing improved service delivery was fully addressed. Women formed a greater percentage of the Voluntary Social Accountability Committee (VSAC) members. The VSACs were supported with ICT tools that included digital cameras to capture, document and report poor service delivery in their communities.

SPIDER project registered improvement in service delivery processes in the five target districts according to VSACs members in the last two years (2011 - 2013) of its implementation. In Amuru, the VSACs reported improvement in the health sector. There was repair of a borehole and maintenance by the water users, local involvement in monitoring public programs and women's

involvement in local governance among others. The VSACs that participated in the evaluation exercise also reported that the project has instilled awareness on the roles of the citizen in improving service delivery in their communities.

Amoikoma VSAC members during June 2013 quarterly meeting shared how WOUGNET initiative helped them to get a new borehole for the community primary school (Amoikoma NUSAF Apprentice primary school). According to VSAC members, the primary school has been in operation for 3 years without any safe drinking water and pupils moved long distances to collect water. The concern was reported to the district but nothing much was done yet it was among priority areas

to be addressed in the financial year 2010/2011 and 2011/2012. However, the committee under the leadership of Joyce Atto decided to approach one of the development agencies – Northern Uganda Development of Enhanced Local Government Infrastructure and Livelihood (NUDEIL) working in Amuru to support local government's ability to deliver services at the community level through rehabilitation of public infrastructure to support their request.

The committee noted that the WOUGNET training helped them to use their mobile phone to contact and convince to give their primary school and community living around the school a new borehole. Indeed, Amoikoma determination and courage impressed NUDEIL, and as a result pupils of the primary school and community of Amoikoma are finally accessing safe, clean and fresh drinking water.

In Pamuca, Amuru sub-county, Pamuca VSAC is praised by Labongogali health centre III staff for the commendable work the committee did in transforming the attitude of the community towards the health centre. Labongogali is the only health centre in Pamuca and reports indicate that the health centre users do not take their time to interact with the health workers to find out how the health centre is running.

However, as a result of WOUGNET intervention, Labongogali In-charge articulated his excitement on the effort

made by Pamuca VSAC which is changing the attitude and opening the eyes of Labongogali health centre users. The community is visiting the health center, while others are contacting health workers using their mobile phones to seek medical help as well as find out how the health center is operating. The community members freely interact with health workers without fear and they are demanding for records of how drugs stocked at the health centre are being used.

Besides working closely with the health centre staff, Pamuca VSAC members

under the supervision of the chairperson, Ms. Josa Akello mobilized health center users to help in the general cleaning of health centre premises.

As a result of the WOUGNET project in all 5 districts, local people now feel they are empowered and they are actively involved in monitoring service delivery in their area. The local people are now able to report their concern to their leaders without fear. The VSACs are creating awareness and are encouraging communities to hold their leaders accountable.■



Pamuca VSAC members and some community members cleaning Labongogali health centre

ICT4Democracy EastAfrica Network

The ICT4Democracy in East Africa Network is premised on the recognition that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) enhances communication and the right to freedom of expression, as well as the right to seek, receive and impart information. We recognise the potential of ICT to increase citizens' participation in decision-making processes and holding leaders accountable, thus strengthening democratisation and improving service delivery.

The Network is active in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda through a network of 7 partners. (1) The Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC), which defends human rights and advocates for political reforms in Kenya. (2) iHub Research, the research arm of iHub, an innovation hub in Nairobi that embraces open technology. (3) The Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRAGG) that plays the dual role of an ombudsman and a human rights commission for the protection and promotion of human rights as well as good governance in Tanzania. (4) The Collaboration on International ICT Policy in East and Southern Africa (CIPESA), based in Uganda, focuses on decision-making that facilitates the use of ICT in support of development and poverty reduction across East and Southern Africa. (5) Toro Development Network (ToroDev) works to mobilise communities, sensitise and train marginalised groups in strategic use of ICT for development tools for maximum resources utilisation for self sustainability. (6) Transparency International (TI) Uganda that is involved in mobilising the citizenry and other civic groups to engage in the anti-corruption agenda. (7) Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET) is a NGO started by several women's organisations in Uganda to develop the use of ICT among women as tools to share information and address gender issues collectively.

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For details visit; www.ict4democracy.org and twitter.com/ICTDemEA or facebook.com/pages/ICT-for-Democracy-in-East-Africa

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