ICT4DEMOCRACY IN EAST AFRICA

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ICT4DEMOCRACY EAST AFRICA NEWSLETTER

October 2012

Leveraging Use Of ICTs In East Africa To Enhancing Civic Empowerment And Improving Governance

Introduction

The ICT4Democracy Network East Africa is based on the premise that ICT enhances communication and the right freedom of expression.

Across East Africa, the Network partners are leveraging ICT use to enhance our different programs. The utilized technologies include crowd sourcing platforms like Ushahidi; social media platforms like YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter; and digital and traditional media like websites and radio.

The ICT4Democracy in East Africa Network has seed funding from the Swedish Program for ICT in Developing Regions (SPIDER) and aims to encourage collaboration between democracy actors in the three countries with a view to catalyzing the role ICTs can play in enhancing civic empowerment and improving governance.

This October newsletter provides updates on partner activities and events.

CIPESA

The Collaboration on International ICT Policy in East and Southern Africa (CIPESA) is one of two centers established under the Catalyzing Access to Information and Communications Technologies in Africa (CATIA). Based in Kampala, Uganda, CIPESA works across East and Southern Africa, informing policy-making, and stirring debate and convening productive gatherings.

CIPESA undertook citizen journalism training in partnership with BROSDI community access center in Mayuge district. About 20 citizen journalists were trained. Since then, an active Facebook page was set up (https://www.facebook.com/Pearlwriters4dev/info)to encourage community members to write about ongoing events in their community. With 11 active contributors to the site, posts from citizen journalists can be accessed on the blog site: http://pearlwriters4dev.wordpress.com/

WOUGNET

The Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET) is a non-government organization started in 2000 by several women's organizations in Uganda to develop the use of ICT among women as tools to share information and address gender issues collectively. WOUGNET provides information access to human rights, health, agriculture, democracy and other areas that promote women development in Uganda.

In October 2012, WOUGNET held the monthly Voluntary Social Accountability (VSAC) Meetings and through this forum bad governance issues were raised and reported.

TI UGANDA

Transparency International (TI) Uganda established in 1993, has been involved in mobilizing the citizenry and other civic groups to engage in the anti-corruption agenda. In an effort to address the problem of inadequate social accountability in the health sector, TIU has embarked on a project "Empowering communities through ICT to demand for better health service delivery."

TI Uganda set up call centres where Community health users from different parts of Lango region (northern Uganda) have called the toll free line to report health care challenges at their health centers.

Interesting to note, calls are being received beyond project geographical area where callers are giving reference to ongoing radio program, which is empowering a wider community towards improved engagement and participation in health service delivery monitoring.

Call Our Toll Free Line ON
0800200188
Visit and Report Healthcare Service Delivery Challenges at Government Health Centers in Lira and Oyam District (Northern Uganda)
Stop Health Workers' Absenteeism   Transparency International Uganda.

To enhance this initiative, radio programs that take place every Wednesday from 8.00pm to 9.00pm include content tailored towards improving health service delivery. During the talk show a presentation is always done and the listeners are given 15 minutes of calling in, to contribute and participate. To keep up with TI Uganda's initiative, visit theirFacebook page: www.facebook.com/StopAbsenteeism.

ICT4Democracy Network Updates

The facilitation is being co-managed by CIPESA and iHub Research.

The Network Partners will be meeting for a Workshop in December from the 5-6th 2012 in Dar es Salaam Tanzania to review progress made by the partners and also plan on the action points for 2013.

WOUGNET has also been training its beneficiaries on using ICTs to monitor service delivery in their area. They taught skills ranging from computer use to usage of digital cameras, mobile phones, and case reporting on the Ushahidi platform. These reports can be viewed on the link:http://www.wougnet.org/ushahidi.

TORODEV

Established in 2006, Toro Development Network (ToroDev) works to mobilize communities and sensitize and train marginalized groups (rural women and youth) in strategic use of ICT for Development tools for maximum resources utilization for self sustainability.

ToroDev has conducted trainings including the following:

a) Using 2 rural monitors training residential workshops in online documentation & advocacy for improved service delivery. The training was held at ToroDev Resource Center and was attended by 20 participants (women and youth) from Kabarole, Kyenjojo and Ntoroko districts.

b) Conducted one accountability workshop in partnership with Mugusu Forum for Development which attracted 60 participants.

Torodev has managed to train 20 rural women and youth skills that guide them in using Web 2.0 tools. These tools include Ushahidi, Twitter, monitoring service delivery, blogging, online documentation and report writing, Facebook, Skype,online advocacy and lobbying.

CHRAGG

The Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRAGG) was established in 2001. CHRAGG has initiated a project that will enhance the complaint handling mechanism with SMS capabilities for

public use in Tanzania by expanding the current system for filing complaints and tracking of cases with a web/mobile platform that will save many people in rural areas costly trips to CHRAGG offices.

In October 2012, the updating of files into Complaint handling system was completed. The testing of the system to internal staff has continued, with a total of 815 text messages having beenreceived.

The IT staff has started to prepare simple instruction manual that will be used for educational purposes.

IHUB RESEARCH

In September 2012,iHub Research conducted fieldwork where the research team interviewed about 900 citizens and stakeholders in the Kenyan water sector. During the month of October, extensive data analysis began and the team plans to release a report entitled "Use of mobile technology in promoting transparency in water governance.

The main objectives of the research were:

1. To investigate what kind of water information the citizens would like to have;
2. To understand the gaps faced by the different stakeholders in accessing water;
3. To identify what medium the citizens would prefer to use to receive water information (sms, calling/ ussd/ website info); and
4. To evaluate how mobile Technology can be used as a tool in improving the gaps faced by the different stakeholders in the access of water (how it is currently being used and how it can be used to solve the gaps in water access).

The research team conducted the fieldwork in three areas, Migori Constituency, Makueni Constituency and Kiambu Constituency and will release a report later this year with the findings.

KHRC

The Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC), which was founded in 1994, defends human rights and advocates for political reforms in Kenya.In order to ensure the implementation and realization of the new constitution, KHRC, through ICTs, has been monitoring and updating all stakeholders on activities in the run up-to and during the election period of 2011. Issues of concern include, among others, human rights violations, voter registrations, leadership standards, as well as ethics and integrity as enshrined in the constitution. Hate speech in the media is also currently being monitored.

During the month of October, there was an increase in usage on KHRC's social media platforms by the public to report violations. Some highlighted issues include:

a) Land grabbing cases in the coastal town of Malindi reported on Facebook;
b) Violations of students' rights in Kisii town in western Kenya;
c) Elections related violence, reported on You Tube and Facebook after a political rally in Kisumu city, western Kenya;
d) Monitoring of hate speech on social media, especially Twitter during the religion inspired violence in the coastal town of Mombasa end of August and early September where two churches were burned down, three others destroyed and three people including police officers killed by rioting Muslim youth protesting the killing of a Muslim cleric who has been associated with terrorism activities.

From the reported hatespeech and incitement to violence reports, KHRC is following up the issue with key government officers and has since written to the state internal security departments including the Minister for Internal Security and the National Cohesion and Integration Commission as well as the Communications Commission of Kenya to take action against such individuals.

KHRC is also actively training HURINETS (Human rights networks) into the use of new media for monitoring and reporting human rights violations. The HURINETS are beginning to use the platforms like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to increase their capacity of reporting.