SPIDER STORIES 2011

SPIDER

Stockholm University

Spider Stories 2011

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Printed by Universitetsservice US-AB, Stockholm

Cover photo: Wajukuu wa Mwalimu Event. National Museum of Tanzania and House of Culture. Photo by: Edgar Chatanda.

This publication can be downloaded from www.spidercenter.org/publications

Foreword

- Our vision is an interconnected world built in the spirit of digital solidarity for future generations.

What difference does ICT4D make? And what difference does Spider make in ICT4D? In this publication, we hope to give you a better idea of some of our activities during 2011. This report is not exhaustive, nor particularly detailed; it is not scientific, nor bureaucratic. Those who wish to read a more formal account of our activities in 2011 are welcome to read the *Spider Annual Report 2011*, which is freely available on our web site. This publication aims to give you a different insight into our work, and especially the efforts of our collaborating partners who are using their time and effort to build a better future with the help of ICT.

We have chosen 'stories' as a narrative format to capture the voices of our *project partners* as well as the ultimate beneficiaries of their ICT4D efforts: ordinary people in different social settings. When asked to report on their projects for Spider, we have encouraged our partners to complement their formal reports with stories in their own words, and it is a selection of these stories we wish to share with you here. These stories are told through words and photos, to describe, reflect upon, and communicate experiences, knowledge, and lessons learned.

We have also included the story of a *Junior ICT Expert*, a young ICT graduate from Sweden who spent some time in Rwanda, sharing his skills, while getting hands-on professional experience. There is also a story by a *junior researcher*, who shares his reflections on the 2011 IPID conference, an annual event for a network of postgraduate students in ICT4D that

Spider has supported since its inception.

And there is a story to be told of our *Democrazy* workshop held in Stockholm in June 2011, bringing together experts and practitioners from different countries to discuss the benefits and pitfalls of ICT for democracy. The workshop also signaled the start of *ICT4Democracy in East Africa Network*, a collaborative network of projects supported by Spider that has done remarkably well in the past year.

At Spider we believe in verbal and visual storytelling as a form of knowledge production. Stories help people reflect on their own experiences from different angles. Through stories, people can also share their knowledge more effectively. The creative process of storytelling is amplified when words are combined with images. This format enables people to tell their stories more freely, drawing on different modes of expression to communicate their experiences.

We hope you enjoy these stories and we thank all the storytellers who made this publication possible.

Paula Uimonen
Director of Spider

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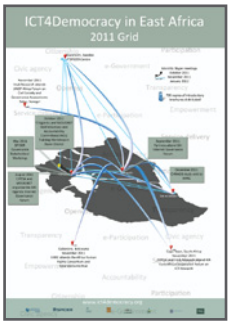

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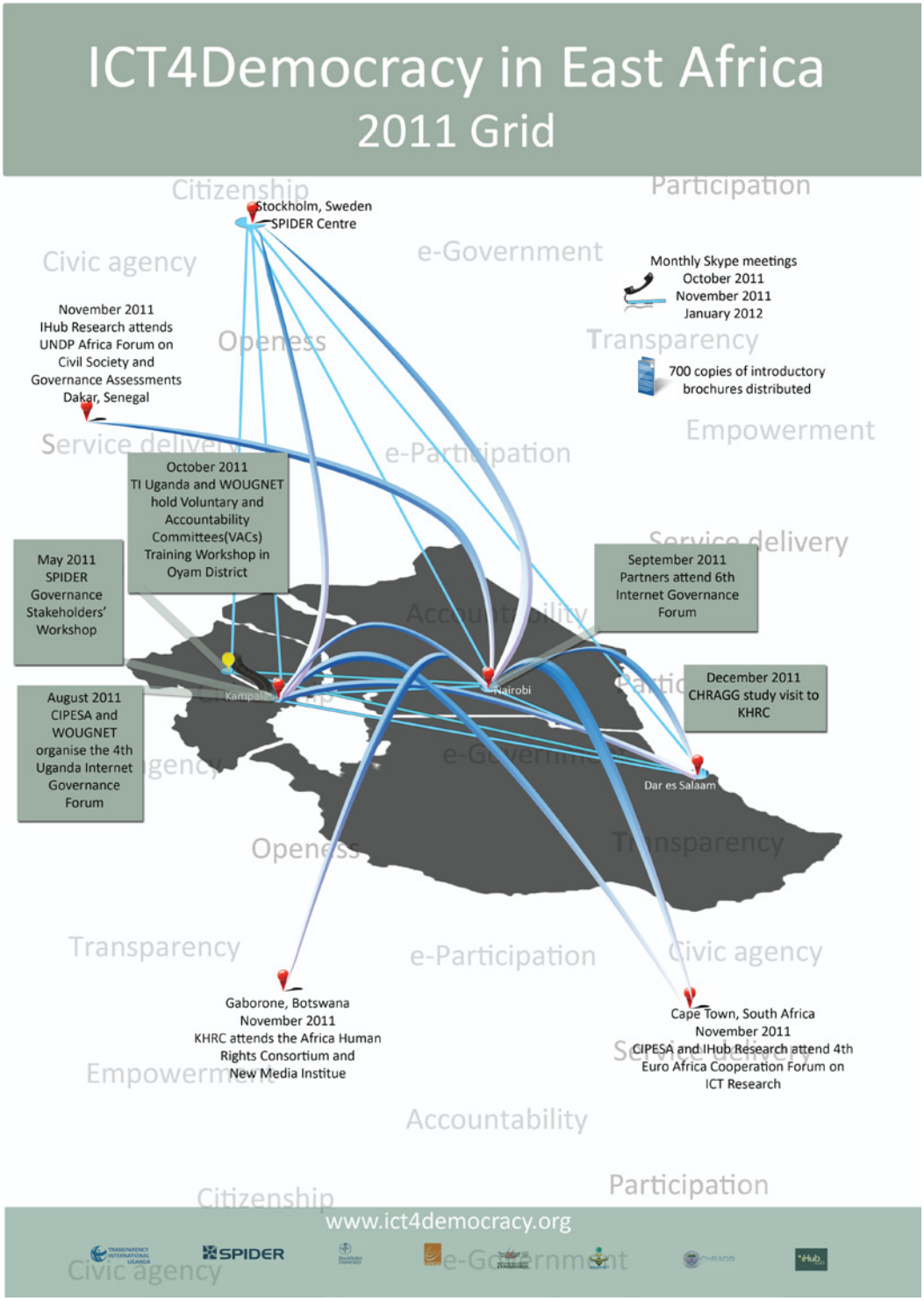
ICT4DEMOCRACY IN EAST AFRICA NETWORK

MAPPING THE NETWORK AND ITS ACTIVITIES

Launched in June 2011, the history of the East Africa ICT4Democracy network formulation goes back to November 2010 during a mapping conference in Kampala, organized by Association of Progressive Communications (APC) and Spider. Promoting and espousing regional collaboration, the organizations in the network, embarked on a number of activities, during the first six months of the network, to increase their visibility, as well as strengthen the internal synergies and relationships within the network. The grid on the next page offers a visual summary of the network's efforts undertaken by individual organizations in the network as well as the network as a whole, towards achieving these goals. The network consists of Collaboration on International ICT Policy in East and Southern Africa (CIPESA), iHub Research, Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC), The Tanzania Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRAGG), Transparency International Uganda (TIU), and Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET).

www.ict4democracy.org



Grid by regional facilitator - CIPESA

SMS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND GOOD GOVERNANCE (CHRAGG)

The Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRAGG) have recently developed a system to handle the submitted complaints of abuses. This project will develop an SMS system to enable citizens to file reports with CHRAGG and track their processing. An SMS web based reporting tool will be used to capture data though SMS stock count messages on a secure reporting website. This system will also be used to send feedback to the complainants and it will have a public area selected information can be viewed.

http://chragg.go.tz

The development work started in November 2011. At present, the CHRAGG project team is preparing system specifications. The first mission was to see whether it was worth putting an effort into developing the system in terms of availability of technology, and moreover to explore Short Message Service (SMS) readiness among the citizens. The development team had to gather information from users, and surprisingly the outcome was what most of the team members did not expect: we came to find out that mobile phones and their main service, SMS, is widely accepted and widely used among Tanzanians. A good number of people we interviewed said they use

SMS for normal communication such as greeting relatives and friends, and a few of them used it for business communications.

Our interest also was to know how many big mobile phone companies were available in the remote areas of the country, as this could give us indications of preferences. In all districts that we visited we noticed a good network from three mobile phone companies, Airtel, Vodafone and Tigo, and in other areas we noticed the presence of Zantel mobile operator. Additionally, the cost of SMS service is going down. Now most citizens have an option to receive 100 messages for the cost of five hundred shilling. This might be the reason for SMS being so popular, especially with the younger generation – which is our target population.

The SMS technology for Tanzanians is something which came fast and has had a major impact on our lives. One participant in one of our workshops put it this way: "Mobile phones and SMS have changed the way we live and interact."

Wilfred Warioba from CHRAGG with Vinton Cerf (right)

"During an IGF meeting in Nairobi in September 2011, I had the great pleasure of meeting with one of the founders of the Internet, Vinton Cerf, who created the protocols on which the Internet still functions. I was glad to talk with him. He is a great man with vast knowledge in the ICT industry and has a lot to share in the world of ICT and the Internet. I shared a few ideas with him about SMS for Human Rights, which CHRAGG is working on. He had some advice to share, including taking into consideration changing formats."

"... it was interesting to learn that students are now more knowledgeable and they have more confidence speaking on the subject of human rights"

Students from two schools in the Lindi region who participated in the feasibility study on the development of the SMS for human rights system.

"For the Commission it is a lesson learned that knowledge for system design can also come from the intended users and not only from the system designers."

"The team received open and honest suggestions from participants, especially students."

For us, it was interesting to learn that students are now more knowledgeable and they have more confidence speaking on the subject of human rights, and according to participants of the project and project workshops, the biggest challenge is how to lodge complaints before the Commission.

The team received open and honest suggestions from participants, especially students. In one meeting we conducted in a remote area, a young woman expressed her thoughts on how she thinks the system should function. Her contributions concerned specifications of the system; she brought attention to developing a system in Swahili, the language widely spoken in Tanzania, if we were attempting to develop a system that was to also be accessible for citizens who live in the more remote areas of the country. She moreover cautioned that if we want the system to be taken seriously, there should be no advertisements or any other promotional services run from the number that will be used for reporting human rights abuse and violations of good governance principles.

The team was challenged to take citizens with learning and hearing disabilities into consideration, including illiterate people. Several other suggestions were also collected, as they are all valid.

We were thankful to Spider for financing the feasibility study.

Not only were we able to meet some of the intended users of the SMS system, but it was great to see that they are participating in the development of the system that they are going to use.

For the Commission it is a lesson learned that knowledge for system design can also come from the intended users and not only from the system designers.

Story and images: CHRAGG

UNCHARTED WATERS

-ICTS IN HUMAN RIGHTS

KENYA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (KHRC)

Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC) is a pioneer and one of the oldest human rights organizations in Kenya and indeed a premier human rights body. The organization has often taken on difficult human rights initiatives mainly in the first generation rights of civil and political rights. Some of these initiatives include transitional justice such as detention without trial, torture, unexplained disappearances and assassinations. All of the KHRC's human rights and democracy work has been carried out through various innovative strategies and methods. These include advocacy and policy influencing, documentation, mass media, publications and materials production. In the Project "Reforms through citizen participation and government accountability" KHRC through its support with the human rights networks across Kenya, is tapping into the potential of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) to increase citizen participation, monitor human rights violations, monitor the electoral processes, monitor government fulfillment of promises, carry out campaigns and also inform and educate its constituents and the public on various human rights and governance issues.

www.krhc.or.ke; see also www.ict4democracy.org

One of the earliest and easiest platforms that the project deployed was social media. While the KHRC already had Facebook, Twitter and YouTube accounts, they had not really been well utilized. However, since the commencement of the project, things have been turned around so that information published on the website now reaches further by also being transmitted through Facebook and Twitter.

For instance, in August 2011, KHRC published a book on corruption and impunity for past injustices. The book, titled *Lest We Forget: The Faces of Impunity in Kenya*, was launched through the traditional mass media and was sold out. The online copy hit a record of 1,000 downloads on the day it was first uploaded and 13,780 downloads in the first month. There was a Facebook link created for it as well, which helped to further push the publication as well as draw public interest in dialogue. It is a document the public can use to evaluate who should or should not be eligible for elections based on corruption records. The book is available here: http://www.khrc.or.ke/resources/publications/cat_view/37-downloads/38-civil-a-political-rights.html.

KHRC has also been sharing documentary videos through YouTube as part of educating the public on human rights and governance issues. Recently, during the celebrations of the 2012 International Human Rights Day (IHRD), the KHRC held a series of community outreaches in Nairobi which included public forums and legal aid clinics. This culminated in the Annual Human Rights Lecture, whose theme was: "Judiciary, a Bastion for Constitutionalism." Clips of the event were uploaded

Wilfred Warioba, (centre) Head of ICTs at CHRAGG together with his colleagues pay close attention as George Mburu, bulk SMS service provider, demonstrates how the system works.

on YouTube with the hope that it would stir up conversations about the implementation of the Constitution of Kenya 2010, a process which is currently under siege from anti-reform forces in and outside the government. One clip features judicial and legal experts as well as some human rights activists while the other features the views of the participants during the question and answer session. The video clips are available on http://t.co/LMWiNpmv and http://t.co/LMWiNpmv .

Finally, KHRC was privileged to host a team from the Commission on Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRAGG), which is the national human rights institute of Tanzania. The team from Tanzania visited in order to learn how the bulk SMS system works. The KHRC system is not yet up; however, we were able to have our service provider conduct a demo for the Tanzanian team. This was a shared learning experience for the two organizations, as it was a challenge for the KHRC to ensure its own deployment in order to be able to share with CHRAGG how the system works.

"If you are not on these platforms (social media and other web tools), where are you?"

-Ally Khan Sachu, a Nairobi Economist, commenting during a TV interview on reports that Kenya leads in use of Twitter, only second to South Africa.

The Learning Curve

Since the beginning, the project has been an exciting journey of learning experiences. It is also interesting to note that there are quite a number of individuals and organizations interested in the project, affording the KHRC an opportunity to showcase this new area of work, should it succeed. The KHRC has learned a lot during implementation. For an organization which is not technologically oriented, the project required quite a bit of research in order to find out what technologies to deploy. This has been through workshops and bi-lateral cooperation with other organizations and individuals.

One key area of learning has been in the area of policy development. Any organization venturing into ICT as a tool for engaging with the public ought to have an ICT or social media policy. This is crucial because the dynamic of how one runs an individual's own account is different from how one manages an organization's online presence. A simple mistake can have a seri-

ous impact on how the organization deals with its public.

For instance, there are all sorts of people using these avenues and when an organization joins any social media platform, one should be prepared for all manner of responses and attacks from people, where some speak from ignorance while others are just outright rude, arrogant or malicious. It is imperative that the organization has a policy that provides guidelines for online behavior of the staff managing its platforms. Otherwise it is easy to be drawn into unnecessary exchanges that can give the organization a negative image.

Since ICT4D is a relatively new area of work for most civil society organizations, there needs to be a lot of information sharing within the civil society so that the sector can embrace the changing engagement landscape. Besides information sharing amongst the CSOs it is also important to have multi-sectoral forums which include developers, CSOs (on the user side), development partners and beneficiaries in order to identify and discuss gaps and best practices.

Hurinet regional Mizizi Ya Haki editors planning for the next edition in Nairobi at the National editorial meeting. Through ICT, the community newspaper will find a wider audience than it currently does.

As an organization, we have learned, too, that when utilized well, ICT4D can complement the traditional methodologies and cascade its work. A case in point is using YouTube to share videos, where we have learned that it helps drive traffic to our website and vice-versa. However, we have also learned that lengthy videos take a long time to download, thus not too many people watch them, especially if they are not necessarily entertaining. Thus we are working on getting shorter versions of key messages even though it is not easy to reduce complex human rights issues on documentaries to two-minute versions.

Finally, we look forward to having all our platforms up and running soon, at which time we expect more public dialogue to take place. For example, the citizen participation website, once complete, will further help the public debate issues that the human rights networks raise in a community paper called *Mizizi*

Ya Haki (Roots of Rights) which now will be uploaded on the site. This is indeed very exciting as now much of what we do shall be scaled up to reach an audience not reached before, and it emphasizes that we must exploit every opportunity it has afforded us.

Story and images: KHRC

THE JOURNEY
IN SEARCH OF PEOPLE TO WORK WITH

COASTAL OCEANS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE INDIAN OCEAN (CORDIO)

This project focuses on youth in coastal Kenya and builds on a local application of the Swedish Folkbildning concept of participatory adult education. Study circles will be tailored to the needs of youth groups and will focus on income generating activities that are environmentally sustainable, help youth to improve the resilience of their livelihoods. ICT tools will be integrated into the curriculum and will also facilitate access to other sources of information relevant to the youth and the sustainability of their livelihoods.

http://www.cordioea.org

Group assessment at Ng'ombeni Development group. Photo: B. Mibei

The project team had the initial activity of trying to identify the potential groups for consideration for the project work. We had no advance information about the groups, their identity, locality and other details. Therefore a visit to the relevant government offices was a priority to obtain vital information about them. This took the team to the two areas of the Kwale and Msambweni Districts. Although the offices had records of the groups, getting the information from the files in the drawers was an uphill task, a clear sign that making government operations IT compliant is a key requirement for enhancing service delivery to the people in developing countries such as Kenya.

The next step for the team was to run an assessment of the groups to determine which of the groups could be involved in the project. This was done through a questionnaire developed to capture project objectives.

One of the groups that met the assessment requirement had

Adult class session at Mtakuja. Photo: H. Maro

Topic identification, Tiwi Massive group. Photo: R. Owino

a suspect name tag: "Tiwi Massive." The name looked synonymous with a group involved with drug abuse, and the group also included some Rastafarians who we thought could be difficult to work with to achieve project objectives. To our a amazement the youth turned out to be cooperative and had amazing projects, including a fish farming pond, a horticultural produce farm and water project which generates income by selling water to the community. We were told the group is also composed of

Topic identification at Msambweni TCG. Photo: B. Mibei

Topic prioritization, Ng'ombeni Development group. Photo: J. Nyanapah

female members who were, however, not present during the two meetings we have had so far.

After the assessment we expressed our earlier reservations about them and why we first thought they would not be a suitable group for the project. Some of the members did confirm that they had been involved in drug abuse and other forms of crime, but decided to transform themselves into a group and return to normal life after rehabilitation. They indicated that they have faced some challenges with some members relapsing into drug use, but on the whole their activities made them busier and discouraged them from returning to drugs and crime.

The team also undertook household surveys, to understand the community issues in detail, specifically in the areas of literacy levels, ICT use and access, as well as livelihood options. Walking through the village we observed a high proportion of women and wondered where the men were. Inquiring into that, we were informed that "men fend for their families in that community- the Digo." As that raised more questions than answers in our minds, we opted not to pursue that discussion.

Later, we came across a woman who claimed to be 100 years old. She indicated that she had no interest in the study circles as she was "tired and has seen much in life." She had been married to a man from the central part of the country and traveled in

most of the country while younger. She narrated how one time, her husband lied that he was from the coastal region in order to avoid being taken to the detention camps during the colonial era. After narrating many stories about the process of Kenya becoming a nation, she informed us that her young daughter - 50 years of age! - was a member of the study circle in the village.

After visiting other groups we formed a completely different impression of the "Tiwi massive" group. It turned out to be one of those with the highest ranking, proving right the old saying: *Do not judge a book by its cover.*

Story: CORDIO

A GREATER CALLING

TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL UGANDA (TIU)

Transparency International the Ugandan chapter (TIU) is contributing to the improvement of health service delivery in Northern Uganda. The project "Promoting Social Accountability in the Health Sector in Northern Uganda through ICT" works together with health users, media, local leaders, Civil Society Organization partners and health workers to promote social accountability of health workers. TIU greatly values community empowerment through ICT. Once it reaches its goals, ICT will be viewed as a great catalyst for development.

www.tiuganda.org; see also www.ict4democracy.org

It was yet another beautiful day after heavy downfall. The question ringing in Simon's mind was whether or not he could go for health center visits, imagining the road conditions. From nowhere, he found strength to move and visit the health centers. It was 9 a.m. when he reached Amach Health Center IV in Northern Uganda. Even though he reached this health center, he still felt something missing: "Oh my, what is this that I feel; someone else needs me to listen to their cry somewhere other than where I am."

Surprisingly, when Simon reached his destination, there were over twenty patients waiting for health workers, who were nowhere to be seen. This was an opportunity for him to take advantage of the situation and he went ahead to interact with and sensitize the community health users. There were more women than men.

Simon started taking photographs. The patients were wondering what this handsome young man was doing.

"Is he a journalist, photographer, or does he just loves taking photographs?" someone wondered.

"I always see him coming around this health center, it seems he is concerned with monitoring this facility," another patient responded.

It was a moment they had long been waiting for. Simon stepped up and greeted the gathering of patients, who, by 10:15 a.m., had reached the number of seventy eight. Yet no service delivery had started. Simon greeted them: "Ibutu wuno aberr," meaning 'good morning to you all.'

"Hey, he even speaks our language," one patient exclaimed.

"I know most of you are wondering who I am and what I am here to do. Well, my name is Simon Peter Ogwang. I work with Transparency International Uganda," Simon said. "I am here

Patients awaiting health service delivery. Agulurude Health Center III, Oyam district, Northern Uganda.

Simon Peter Ogwang TIU Spider project coordinator

A woman at the maternity ward.

to work together with you to monitor health service delivery at this very health center, since you stay near this facility."

"But how will you help us? These health workers are always absent, they report late and even start working late. We have been here for nearly two and a half hours and no one has attended to any of us. For sure we are disappointed."

"I believe now you realize the importance of working together to improve health services. We can make it happen because we are stronger as a community to send our voices out, to demand that best practice is put in place, and that our rights are not violated."

It was amazing that health workers who were around eavesdropping mobilized their other colleagues to start working.

The next and final visit of that great day was Barr Health Center III. There was a large number of patients waiting to be attended to. Three health workers who were supposed to be on duty were attending a workshop and the other two were in for a meeting at the health center.

"You tell us you are improving service delivery, but as a matter of fact what is happening today happens here most of the

“Indeed this was the greater calling that Simon had heard that morning: an interactive and participatory dialogue for change, for feeling empowered and being involved in health service monitoring.”

time. What can we do? We are helpless, our pain can’t wait, our patience is running out and our voices can never be hard,” said Apio, one of the community women. Apio continued by saying that women had many other responsibilities besides being at the health center without being attended to.

“Why can’t you leave some of the activities to your spouse?” Simon asked.

“Hah, don’t even ask about that, do you really think these men want to support us? They only know making babies. Once we conceive, they are nowhere to be seen,” Molly said.

“It is not our job to bring our wives to the hospital, we have much bigger concerns,” Ogwal responded.

This was the call from Simon: “Whether or not everybody agrees that family responsibilities are for everyone, let us all share the responsibility and ensure that we support women and children in accessing health service delivery, send and support women’s voices at local council community meetings, and call for all men to start supporting their spouses in accessing health care.” And he continued: “We are going to provide you with a toll-free telephone line so that you can call in and report chal-

lenges you are facing in accessing health care services. The situation demands of us that we work together for the good of our community."

"Oh yes, I think this will work out, our voices need to be heard and we also need to actively participate in health care center monitoring. Together we can do this," Grace said.

Indeed this was the greater calling that Simon had heard that morning: an interactive and participatory dialogue for change, for feeling empowered and being involved in health service monitoring. There is always a greater calling somewhere.

Story and images: TIU

WHEN CITIZEN JOURNALISTS IN KASESE INVESTIGATED WHY TAPS HAD GONE DRY

COLLABORATION ON INTERNATIONAL ICT POLICY IN EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA (CIPESA)

Working with grass root organizations, CIPESA's project "Catalysing Civic Participation and Democracy Monitoring Using ICTs" is empowering more citizens to effectively use ICT tools in support of democratic governance. Another goal in their work is to use the media because through the various interventions, reports on democracy and governance will be better informed. Throughout this process CIPESA plans on defining, documenting the needs, knowledge, attitudes and practices of users of ICT tools, which will enable the development and implementation of ICT for democracy programs to have a higher chance of achieving their objectives.

www.cipesa.org; see also www.ict4democracy.org

Equipped with a digital camera and utilizing citizen journalism training provided by CIPESA, staff of the e-Society Resource Centre in Kasese in December 2011 investigated water supply shortages in the Mpondwe-Lhubiriha town council, and prompted authorities to take action.

Situated at the border of the Democratic Republic of Conga (DRC) and Uganda, this is one of the new town councils in the Kasese District. In the early 1990s, the Karambi and Bwera sub-counties, which now formed the new town council, lacked clean water supply. In 1995, with a grant from WaterAid Danida, they were connected to piped water tapped from River Lhubiriha on the Rwenzori Mountains. Residents and the local community were asked to pay up to UGX 400 (17 US cents) per month for the water system maintenance. However, in 2005 the community started experiencing irregularities in water flow. The infrastructure remained in place, but water simply wasn't flowing.

Because of water shortages, area residents resorted to drawing water from River Lhubiriha and a small stream called River Kyabilho, also flowing along the Uganda-Congo border, for both commercial and domestic use. It is believed that in the 1990s, the two natural water sources were clean and served an estimated 100 households. At the time the taps ran dry, they served more than 2,000 Ugandan and Congolese households. There were no policies governing water usage in either country.

A dry Amaizi Marungi water point in Mpondwe-Lhubiriha Town council

Congolse nationals washing clothes in River Ihubiriha

Some of the taps which did not produce a single drop for years as citizens made do with dirty water

From conversations with locals fetching water, it became evident that the majority drank the water without boiling it.

In 2009, the government of Uganda introduced *Amaizi Marungi*, a separate programme intended to provide safe drinking water. However, there were delays in laying the pipes, in addition to challenges such as demands for bribes by those in charge of making connections to the piped water system. Strangely, the dry water points built by WaterAid Danida are now referred to as "decorations" in the community.

Lack of access to clean water made surrounding areas vulnerable to waterborne diseases. The investigation by the Kasese centre staff, exclusively conducted in Mpondwe and its surroundings, left the team wondering what neighbouring areas of Rusese, Mundongo, and Karambi – located farther away from the river – could be experiencing.

A report produced by the Kasese citizen journalists sparked an interesting conversation on the Kasese electronic discussion group (http://www.dgroups.org/iicd/kasese), with debaters suggesting ways to address the problem. One discussant stirred a debate about cholera in the region, stating the following: "Leaders concerned, both politicians and civil servants, have to take the necessary procedures to save the situation. Otherwise peo-

"...these staff brought the matter to the attention of district officials in charge of water – with photos from the field as proof... The water officials responded, and had by early January 2012 restored water supply in some of the affected areas"

ple will continue perishing with cholera at the border." Another discussant suggested: "There can't be an end to the problem of cholera in Kasese district unless there is increased civilisation of the communities living along the water sources (River lhubiriha) in both countries, i.e., Conga and Uganda. I have been to this river and I realised that on top of washing dirty clothes or bathing in the river, even the containers they use to fetch water can contaminate it. So, a lot of primary health education is quickly needed in this area."

Through the use of ICT, Kasese citizens are starting to have a raised awareness about poor service delivery and to demand better from public officials. Following online discussions of the findings of the e-Society citizen journalism work, these staff brought the matter to the attention of district officials in charge of water – with photos from the field as proof, and the discussions as further evidence of citizens' worry about the state of affairs in Mpondwe-Lhubiriha. The water officials responded, and had by early January 2012 restored water supply in some of the affected areas, although e-Society staff were planning a verification mission to the area.

The Kasese centre is one of the two pilot centres working in partnership with CIPESA under the *Catalysing Civic Participa-*

tion and Democracy Monitoring through Use of ICT project funded by the Swedish programme for ICTs in Developing Regions (Spider). The centre has so far received two desktop computers, a digital camera, a monetary contribution towards its Internet connectivity, and training of its staff in using social media to promote accountability and participation.

The Kasese centre runs an online library to which district officials regularly contribute documents from the offices. It also runs a resource centre that offers basic computer training and Internet access. Encouraging greater use of its e-services (which also include a dgroup and Facebook page) by both citizens and district leaders would very much improve its work. And, for CIPESA, we see a great need to train citizen reporters in the districts, and wish we could arm these not only with knowledge but with gadgets as well.

These reporters would then replicate the Kasese water story across the education, health, and service delivery sectors, and in local government, helping to create a whole new buzz and action arenas that would improve governance in numerous ways.

Story: CIPESA

*This story contains information from an article written by Samuel Mumbere Mkamba, a staff member at the Kasese E-Society Resource Centre. Credit for all pictures in this story is his.

Photo: Jonathan Kalan

iHUB RESEARCH

EXPLORING CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL MOBILE-GOVERNANCE (M-GOVERNANCE) IN KENYA

The main objective of the M-Governance research that is being carried out by iHub's Research arm is to identify, describe, and produce an analysis of how mobile phone applications can be used to improve Kenyan governance, especially service delivery and citizen-government communication. One key aspect of the research will comprise of usability testing of the various existing Kenyan governance platforms (mobile and web-based) with the aim of improving their user experience and delivering lessons learned and recommendations for current and future governance applications.

www.ihub.co.ke; see also www.ict4democracy.org

Photo: Jonathan Kalan

When it comes to the issue of bad governance, we all have a story to tell. For me, it is often the long queues that I am forced to wait in while waiting for a government official to attend to me. For someone else, it may be the poor customer care he or she receives when buying a product or service from a government institution. Another may complain of the empty promises made by our inefficient and corrupt leaders. The tales are regular, endless, and sadly, a staple in our daily conversations.

Listed below are some of the directly translated quotations gathered during iHub Research's explanatory survey investigating Kenyan citizens' opinions of governance and current challenges that the citizens face. Each of these statements tells a story. A story that is not uncommon to our ears.

"Government is for the rich people only; the poor have no say."

"We still pay for so-called 'free' services, so what is so free about them?"

"We are not recognized. The leaders are the bosses and we cannot reach them or influence them."

"As for now, the government does what it wants."

"Free education and health do not really exist; we still pay for

services that have been deemed free."

"How do you reach the government? They are too far. It is especially difficult if you do not know anyone. We only see our leaders at election time and then they disappear."

"The government right now is better and more democratic than in previous regimes, everybody has a say. It is good."

"I don't like the queues. I often wait for three hours and I'm still not served."

"The government is of no use. I don't know where to get services or information."

"There are no services for ordinary people because of corruption."

"Our complaints don't reach the government because of corruption."

"There are barriers to raising complaints, even to MPs, except during election time."

"No good. At Kenyatta National Hospital, someone almost died because of inconsiderate staff who were late and couldn't diagnose an emergency."

"How do we communicate with the government? I don't know."
"No one bothers. I just stand there and am not helped."

"Poor services. Good services are only for those who can afford them. Nepotism – you have to know someone, rude officials, not serving the citizens."

"Bureaucratic, it relies on nepotism and know-who, not know-how. Shortages in supplies such as documents, protocol takes a long time, can frustrate you."

"Who will you complain to? The government is like a big elephant, it can kick you!"

"No proper channels of communication. You might be victimized."

"We elect leaders who are going to represent us. But they do not help us, once they get the money, they forget all about us."

"I do not know what communication channel to use."

"No need to raise complaints. We are used to being taken around and suffering. It is a culture."

"This simple mobile device is changing the face of business, religion, relationships, and learning. It is about time it changed the face of governance in Kenya."

Mary Njoki, a seventy-two year old woman living alone in a small village in Nyeri, owns a mobile phone. She does two basic things with that phone: she keeps in touch with her dispersed family and communicates with her doctor to ensure she's correctly taking her medicine. She wishes to get news feeds on what her MP or leaders are doing in the village, but that is still just a wish. Currently, she only hears about her Member of Parliament through the radio during election time, when a scandal is being reported or when a new regulation is being implemented.

Mary once had the late Prof. Muta Wangari Maathai as her Member of Parliament. The only thing she knew then, and that she detested so much, was that she was not allowed to collect firewood from forests or to cut down trees. As a result of this, she would constantly suffer from lack of firewood and adequate food. Everyone else in the village had the same resentment towards this seemingly harsh rule. The rule was, looking back, unquestionably sound and fore-sighted; it only needed to be simply and clearly explained to the people in a manner that appealed and made sense to them. Because she wasn't able to send that critical piece of information to her constituents, the late Prof. Wangaari Maathai, who was undoubtedly great by all standards, was not re-elected as MP. Why? Simply because she was "too far away from the people." Effective use of the mobile

phone would have brought her much closer to them.

Some of our leaders are embracing this new way of doing things and are successfully gathering a large crowd of supporters. They realize that communication is key. This simple mobile device is changing the face of business, religion, relationships, and learning. It is about time it changed the face of governance in Kenya.

Story: iHUB Research

RESEARCH ON CUSTOMIZED ECONOMICAL E-HEALTH SERVICES IN THE RURAL AFRICAN GREAT LAKES REGION

KIGALI INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (KIST)

In many countries around Lake Victoria the optical fiber infrastructure is available throughout the country. However, even when optical fibers pass through rural communities, this connectivity is rarely availed of by rural health centers. The project aims to connect a few rural health centers and hospitals in Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda to the existing infrastructure which will enable numerous e-Health services. This connectivity may be extended to cover schools, and local administration offices in proximity of the connected rural hospitals and health centers.

Kyonza Health Post. Photo by: Biniam Mekonnen

Although the project is to cover the Great Lakes Region, this story covers only some activities in Rwanda. Nevertheless, the conditions in other states in the region are more or less similar. This is the reason why we expect the project to have a similar impact in all countries. In this story, I will tell about a few activities which have been conducted in Rwanda in relation to the project.

Rwanda is a small country with a surface area of 26,338 square kilometers and a population of about 11 million inhabitants. The Government of Rwanda is dedicated to a strong and

Team visiting a mast. Photo by: Biniam Mekonnen

Patients visiting a health center in Nyaruguru. Photo by: Elis Kullberg

Research team at a health center. Photo by: Elis Kullberg

A student taking measurements. Photo by: Elis Kullberg

enduring economic climate for the country, focusing on poverty reduction, infrastructure development, privatization of government-owned assets, expansion of the export base, and trade liberalization. Nevertheless, some rural communities will not benefit from the government programs immediately, and there are some developmental activities that will take a while longer to reach them. For instance, the government has just completed an ambitious project of laying a national fiber-optic cable backbone, covering all districts in the country, and mainly targeting key institutions like hospitals, schools, etc., but the majority of the rural areas are not served.

In the initial stages, our project is targeting rural sites close to neighboring countries to allow easy cross-border interactions. We now have two pilot sites, in the Kirehe district, close to the Tanzanian border, and the Nyaruguru district, close to the Burundi border. Each has a district hospital. Kirehe Hospital is in the Kirehe district, and Munini Hospital is in the Nyaruguru district. These district hospitals provide support to an average of 15 health centers each. Fiber reaches Kirehe Hospital, but not Munini Hospital, from which it is separated by10 km. Other conditions are similar: Rwanda is generally a hilly country, which makes reaching these health centers and transferring patients by means of road transport a daunting challenge to district hospital staff.

This project's main goal is to reduce reliance on road transport for every purpose. We hope that the Internet connection, once it is available between the hospital and the health centers, will enable timely information and appropriate interventions. The project is also considering providing some eHealth applications for these health facilities to deliver services more efficiently.

For instance, each hospital has to prepare daily visit schedules, similar to the one in Fig. 2. We feel these visits are a big challenge, and a hassle which we want to render unnecessary

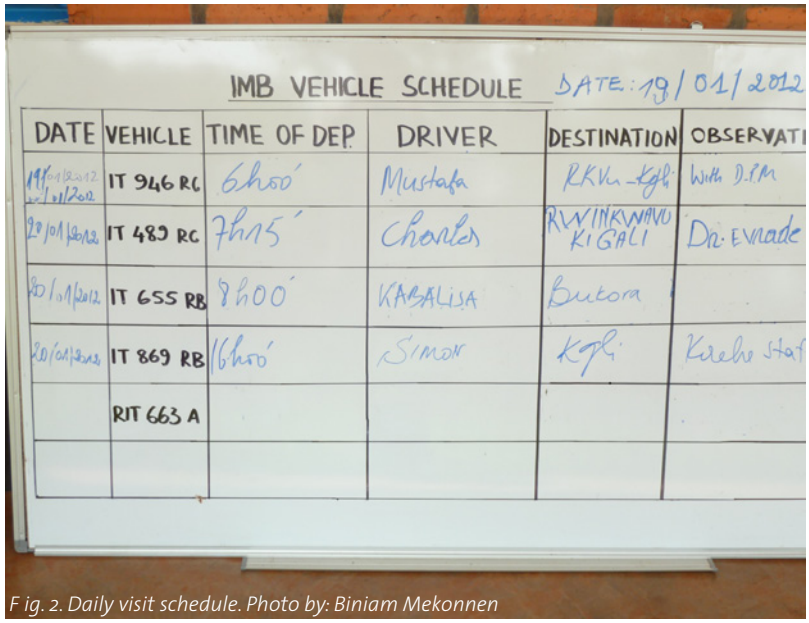


Fig. 2. Daily visit schedule. Photo by: Biniam Mekonnen

through easier ways of communication. The project is working on setting up a wireless communication infrastructure to link the hospitals to the respective health centers. Then road transport visits would be made only when it is absolutely necessary.

Presently we are discussing with the Rwanda Utility & Regulatory Agency (RURA) and MTN, Rwanda's major telecommunication company which owns the majority of the telecommunication towers across the countries, to allow our project equipment to be mounted on their towers. We are approaching RURA to assist in licensing issues relating to operating the wireless networks.

Clearly, this initiative will not only benefit the communities in the area of health, but also rural schools, because more often than not there are schools in the neighborhood of these health facilities.

In some cases, the health centers already have some infrastructure and equipment, such as VSAT equipment, solar facilities, etc., that were supplied by some NGOs to serve specific purposes. Rarely are these for Internet access. At the moment, we're compiling a list of needed equipment for building wireless networks for the districts of Kirehe, in the eastern part of Rwanda, and Nyarurguru, in southern Rwanda, so that the procurement process can start. There will be two lists: One for wireless networks, and the other for e-Health applications for the hospitals and health centers. We plan to start the process soon.

Story compiled by Dr. Donart Ngarambe

IMPROVING REPRODUCTIVE AND CHILD HEALTH SERVICES THROUGH ICT INTERVENTION (E-RCH4BC)

INVENTION AND TECHNOLOGICAL IDEAS DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION (ITIDO)

The project e-Reproduction and Child Health for Better Care (e-RCH4BC) is a pilot project in the rural coastal area Rufiji district in southern Tanzania aims to improve reproductive and child healthcare system through ICT interventions. The project aims to the realization of Millennium Development Goals four and five, reducing the mortality rate for children under five and improving maternal health. The project will develop an sms system to alleviate an inadequate record keeping, information and communication between community health workers, traditional birth attendants and mothers.

www.itido.or.tz

Buisness analysis meeting

Information and communication technology (ICT) has the potential to impact almost every aspect of the health sector. In public health, information management and communication processes are pivotal, and are facilitated or limited by available ICT. In addition, beyond the formal health sector, the ability of impoverished communities to access services and engage with and demand a health sector that responds to their priorities and needs, is very much influenced by wider information and communication processes, mediated by ICT. The use of ICT in the health sector aims to improve the opportunities for citizens and health professionals to utilize digital technologies to simplify health delivery services.

A consortium of four partners has been established to implement a 14-month pilot project with the aim of improving the reproductive and child health care system through ICT intervention in the Rufiji district coastal region. The formulated project which is known as "eRCH for better care" (e-RCH4BC) contributes to the national initiatives to reduce the maternal and child mortality rate and addresses Millennium Development

goals 4 and 5 in reducing both maternal and under five children morbidity and mortality rates in the Rufiji district. Moreover, the project has also taken into account the current situation whereby Tanzania has a remarkable maternal and under five mortality rate for the past few years, estimated to be 790 cases per 100,000 and 108 cases per 1000 live births respectively, according to the WHO report of 2008.

Dr. Makamba Mbega, the acting District Medical Officer of Rufiji district, says: "The geographical area of Rufiji where the Project is implemented is very much scattered and its infrastructures are poor. The distance from one health facility to another is 20 kilometres and above, and a person from this remote area can spend two to three hours reaching a facility. Due to this situation most pregnant mothers fail to attend a clinic and some of them deliver at home which is not safe."

Presenting the project to the district implementation team, Mr. Jacob Mtalitinya said the project will try to address the problem facing RCH, such as adequate record keeping of antenatal visits by pregnant mothers attending the clinic, as well as visits by children of less than five years of age; low interactive peer to peer education between pregnant mothers; and the delivery of health-related information by community health workers and traditional birth attendants.

Mr. Jacob indicated that the project therefore has multiple aims: to improve access to more reliable maternal and child health data by designing an electronic system for collecting and keeping records; to deliver first-line support through tele-maternal care services; to improve health services in the health facility; and to provide health education between clients and health workers as well as among health workers themselves. The project is designing a website and will use mobile systems for recording and tracking reproductive and child health information with the aim of reducing morbidity rates by early identification of risks. The website will also provide an improved reproductive and child health referral system between the facilities as well as serve as a focal point in training health workers and community.

Since the establishment of the project in 2011, a number of activities have been carried out which are regarded as achievements. These activities include formulation of the district implementation team which supports the project and identification of the health facilities which are involved in the project. The facilities identified include UTETE District Hospital, Mchukwi Hos-

CHW Identification Meeting

pital, Ikwiriri and Muhoro health center, Chumbi and Mariam Consolata Dispensary.

Other achievements include the conducting of awareness sessions to district-created team; the establishment of baseline data in relation to RCH services and its impact on the project site; and training of identified community health workers (CHWs). Due to the geographical areas and poor infrastructure where the health facilities are located, the project has decided to use CHWs to bridge the health care gap to make sure that cases and dangerous situations are identified quickly.

During awareness sessions, the identified implementation team indicated that the e-RCH project is unique and does not replicate other projects they are working with. Additionally, they said that "Tele-maternal" was part of the technology that will be used will help health staff, especially doctors, to enhance their skills. They will be communicating often to share experiences and knowledge in the RCH area and other health-related

CHW Training

issues.

Doctor Mbega added that one of the areas that faces critical health care situations for mothers is Muhoro, due to its geographical area. He indicated that Muhoro is surrounded by scattered villages. One of them is Delta, which is an island in the Indian Ocean and boats are the means of transport, and their ability to reach the Muhoro health centre is dependent on weather conditions. The initiation of the use of CHWs and "Tele-maternal" will help to reduce the mortality rate of these mothers, because doctors will able to communicate easily and the CHWs will provide information about mothers who are at the risk. Phone alerts will also hasten the process.

After project orientation and awareness, a manual register for woman and children was designed and distributed to CHWs as a working tool to help enrollment, to identify women and children, and to identify danger signs so that they can advise them to go to nearby health facilities for more professional care.

The involved partners in this project are Invention and Technological Ideas Development Organization (ITIDO), Christian Social Services Commission (CSSC), National e-Learning Support Centre (NeSC) and SoftMed. The Project is funded by the Swedish program for ICT in developing regions (Spider).

Story and images: ITIDO

EMPOWERING LOCAL PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES THROUGH ICTS

WOMEN OF UGANDA NETWORK (WOUGNET)

Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET) is a non-governmental organization that was initiated in May 2000 by several women's organizations in Uganda to develop the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) among women as tools to share information and address issues collectively. In the project titled "Empowering local people and communities to monitor districts' services delivery through ICTs " WOUGNET is working with grass root populations – empowering them with information that they can use to demand better services from their leadership. In particular, the project targets mostly women, through their community based organizations and women groups, to monitor service delivery in their districts and to fight corruption through exposure of poor service delivery.

www.wougnet.org; see also www.ict4democracy.org

ARE ICTS OF ANY RELEVANCE TO THE POOR WOMEN AND MEN IN RURAL AREAS?

ICT is often viewed as a luxury to be utilized by the educated and the wealthy, and mainly accessed by people living in urban areas. This view is especially true for women, due to the high illiteracy level, lack of opportunities to access training, and the work burden that deprives them of free time to acquire new skills and knowledge needed to make use of ICTs. Women are often restricted to the domestic sphere which further limits their opportunities to acquire new knowledge and skills that could be of relevance to them.

The majority of people in rural areas have very limited access to ICTs due to the reasons listed below.

They have more pressing needs, such as the need for clean water and access to basic education and health services. These vital needs make them feel that attempting to acquire ICT skills would be a waste of resources. In other words, the rural person focuses on what brings food to his/her table, and not on spending their hard-earned money on ICT.

The high illiteracy level among rural people hinders access to ICT. Most of the applications and instructions are in the English language, which most of them cannot read or write.

The absence of basic infrastructure is another obstacle to ICT access by the rural person.

There is also a lack of demonstrated benefit of ICT in addressing development challenges.

Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET), under the Spider project, "Empowering local people and communities to monitor districts' services delivery through ICTs," is attempting to address the ICT gap between people living in rural and urban areas. It is also attempting to make known the relevance

"Our request to governments is to create a favorable environment for both men and women to easily access and make good use of ICTs if we are to have a comfortable Uganda to live in"

of ICTs to the rural man and woman. The question is how?

WOUGNET had awareness-raising workshops on good governance and effective services delivery, as well as ICT capacity-building workshops in the Kole and Apac districts from the 13th to 16th December 2011. The purpose of these workshops were to equip the rural woman and man to use computers, the Internet, mobile phones, radios, digital cameras, and print media to amplify their voices on issues of bad governance and poor service delivery in their different parishes so that the duty bearers are forced to respond appropriately.

The workshop targeted participants in a ratio of 70:30 women to men. These participants were composed of Sub-County and Parish Chiefs, Local Council III Chairpersons, female Councillors, and female representatives in the Parish Development, School, Health Unit and Water Management committees. Other participants included members of women's groups, Local Council I from the selected parishes, and the Members of Parliament from the selected constituencies.

The participants were taken through a number of presentations. First the Spider project was introduced to them, followed

"In the long run, we hope that service delivery will improve since the community will be aware of their human rights and will demand efficient and effective service delivery in their communities."

by presentations on good governance, the importance of monitoring their district's service delivery, community empowerment, advocacy, networking and civic engagement. The participants were also given some basic skills on a number of ICTs, such as mobile phones, computers, the Internet, Ushahidi platform, radios, and some print media, that they can use to expose bad governance and poor service delivery in their respective communities.

At first, the participants received the project with mixed feelings, especially by the women who expressed worry since they had not had the chance to go far with education. They made comments that they were not learned and would not be in a position to use ICTs. However, as the ICT capacity-building workshop progressed, the women became enthused and showed a lot of interest in learning more. Many of them said that they felt empowered and would share their newly acquired knowledge and skills with their friends who had attended the workshops.

One old woman said, "I had never dreamt of touching a camera because I have no access to it." She said she was so grateful to WOUGNET for having given her the opportunity to touch one and even be shown how to take photographs with it. Other women had the opportunity to type their names on the laptops. Many of these project beneficiaries were excited about having their voices captured from their monthly meeting and have it played on the different radio stations.

It is strongly believed that through naming and shaming of corrupt officials, this will act as a lesson to others who have not

been caught or others who are planning to engage in corrupt acts. We also believe that there will be increased respect for the citizens by those holding public offices, that absenteeism in public offices without strong reasons will be minimized, and that the community members will stand up to safeguard their rights through reporting cases of bad governance. In the long run, we hope that service delivery will improve since the community will be aware of their human rights and will demand efficient and effective service delivery in their communities.

Transparency and accountability should not be left to those holding public offices only. We as citizens should also be transparent and accountable for our actions. For example, there is a group in Akokoro Sub-county in the Apac district which benefited from the National Agricultural Advisory Services' (NAADs) programme and was given pigs. However, these group members decided to sell off the pigs and used the money to meet their own individual needs. However, when a follow-up was made to find out how their project was doing, these people said that the project had not benefited them since the pigs had all died. The truth was later found out and these people were handled appropriately. Another example was from Bala Sub-county in the Kole district where by a group benefited from The Northen Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF II). However, the Secretary and Treasurer secretly went to the bank, withdrew the money and used it to buy personal things. These people have been ordered to refund the money. These are just a few case studies among so many others.

Despite the different perceptions that many people have of ICTs, they are so important. ICTs can help developing countries in improving good governance and enhancing effective services delivery. The most important factor is one's interest to learn and make the best use of the skills and knowledge attained. Our request to governments is to create a favorable environment for both men and women to easily access and make good use of ICTs if we are to have a comfortable Uganda to live in.

Story and images: WOUGNET

CHANJO: CAMPAIGN AGAINST CORRUPTION THROUGH MUSIC, MOBILES AND SOCIAL MEDIA

JUA ARTS FOUNDATION FOR THE CHILDREN

Chanjo is Swahili for "vaccination" and the campaign aims to combat corruption, selfishness and laziness through music, mobile phones and social media. The project entails a tour of Tanzania by the local music collaboration between Vitalis Maembe and the Spirits with songs that focus on corruption, laziness and greed. The tour is combined with free distribution of music through mobile phones and Internet. Each performance will be followed by open public debate, to give people a voice on the problems of corruption and a chance to identify solutions. The tour is documented with photo and video as well as through a blog, Facebook, and other media.

http://chanjoyarushwa.blogspot.com

Corruption has been a big challenge to sustainable development in most African countries. Many people try to tackle it from different angles. These include activists, donors and even government bureaus of corruption, each one of them seeking to improve the lives of the masses, be it through education, health or good governance.

The idea of reaching all Tanzanians through music, discussions and social media was started by Jua Arts Foundation for Children and Vitali Maembe & The Spirits Band and supported by Spider. Chanjo was initially started by Vitalis Maembe who walked alone with his guitar around Bagamoyo and Dar Es Salaam performing his album. Later he was joined in by his two other friends Lewis Mnong'one and Msamiru Kaabuka with whom he toured even further to Morogoro and Dodoma. Other people helped them by donating money and equipment. With the support of Spider, Chanjo has overnight turned into a big success that has gone beyond our expectations.

"Our biggest success is to have reached about 10,980 people at 32 performances in 13 regions between early October and mid December 2011. These people come from all walks of life: farmers, pastoralists, students, teachers and business men, to mention just a few."

"We now know people or institutions we can work with in the future... Now we have people who can share any news about corruption they come across."

Our biggest success is to have reached about 10,980 people at 32 performances in 13 regions between early October and mid December 2011. These people come from all walks of life: farmers, pastoralists, students, teachers and business men, to mention just a few. We are content that they received us well by listening to the music and engaging themselves in the discussions afterwards.

We are proud to have used Music For Development, a methodology which is not common in Tanzania. Most social campaigns on health, democracy and human rights are usually Theatre For Development (TFD). It was amazing how people were keen to follow and felt free to address corruption. This was contrary to

Follow the Chanjo tour and keep posted about Chanjo, visit www.chanjoyarushwa.blogspot.com.

how people perceive music as some activity for hooligans and less serious people. We did have one problem, however, when some of the government officers in Nzega, Tabora, fearing this awareness-building, ordered an arrest of the tour leaders with no allegations.

Having noted how positively people have received Music For Development, it is worth stating here that we have built a big network of friends, fans, institutions and some government officers. We have met and cooperated with many people at their own will and increased understanding of Chanjo. We now know people or institutions we can work with in the future and from whom to expect the best. For instance not even once have we had problems with the police, instead they looked excited about Chanjo and gave permits right away. Now we have people who can share any news about corruption they come across.

We are also proud of our achievement with this project on corruption which cuts across all the aspects of life and touches

each individual in Tanzania. Everyone who spoke at the discussions admitted that corruption was a problem. It is not just a problem; it is an instant and sometimes slow killer. It is done by top officials down to the last ones in the ranks. To our knowledge it has never been addressed well to the public as we have done. We do not mock attempts by the government and NGOs. However, we are glad to have done all this work by use of our own talents, will, and resources with no direct support from the government.

We are grateful to Spider that with the music instruments we have now, the members of the Jua arts class have had the privilege of full-time rehearsals. Now they are able to stand and perform on their own, something they would not do earlier. They are also growing to be respectful, responsible and social worker musicians, as most have participated in Chanjo.

Our own involvement in the use of ICT has increased along with our knowledge of ICT. Now most of us can read mails regularly, post on the Internet and truck Chanjo through the blog. We are now able to communicate with a wider audience and a bigger network of people all over the world.

In winding up we must again admit that all the success was a lot more than we anticipated. We are happy that Spider recognized our ability and trusted our commitment to have funded the Chanjo project.

Story and images: CHANJO

ICT FOR PUBLIC ACCESS TO CULTURAL RESOURCES

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF TANZANIA AND HOUSE OF CULTURE

The House of Culture and National Museum of Tanzania is a museum and a public space for cultural performances and exhibitions. The House of Culture will be equipped with public computers, an audio recording studio and photo and video cameras to allow children, youth and the general public to familiarize themselves and use modern multimedia and communication technologies for experimentation. Documentation and creativity.

www.houseofculture.or.tz

Wajukuu wa Mwalimu event.
Photo by Rashid Njechele.

Since the handing-over of the National Museum and House of Culture facilities by the contractor in September 2011 and their official launching in December 2011, we have witnessed an increase in the number of children, youth and public programs and events held or planned to be held there.

Visitors have been impressed by the architectural design of the buildings and the facilities therein. Many indeed are surprised to see such facilities in Dar-es-Salaam and especially at a museum. Among the facilities which have completely changed the public's perception of a museum are a theatre, a story-telling room, a recording studio and multi-media centre, conference facilities and the newly installed exhibits on Human Origins and Rock Art of Africa.

Wajukuu wa Mwalimu Event. Photo by: Edgar Chatanda.

"the facilities... have completely changed the public's perception of a museum"

For instance, Professor T. A. Satta (Deputy Principal; Institute of Finance Management) and his family, before their visit to the National Museum and House of Culture, had an impression that museums were places where old things were kept. But after paying a visit to the House of Culture in January 2012, he confessed, "Now I will make sure my students and foreign guests visit the National Museum and House of Culture." At the launching ceremony of the House of Culture, His Excellency Dr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, made the following declaration: "Artists, now you

Wajukuu wa Mwalimu Event.
Photo by: Edgar Chatanda.

Wajukuu wa Mwalimu Program.
Photo by: Sixmund Bagashe

Music concert event.
Photo by Sixmund Bagashe

Lounge of House of Culture event.
Photo by: Sixmund Bagashe

have no reason to complain about lacking facilities to record and produce quality works that sells and markets Tanzania."

However, there are others who have raised serious concerns about the sustainability of the House of Culture facilities. This is based on their experiences on similar projects implemented elsewhere which had failed to live up to project objectives. Still a few others I have encountered after the House of Culture facilities was launched, who in my opinion are just too arrogant and/or ignorant, believe that, as Africans, and without their assistance, we are incapable of managing projects sustainably! To me, such people are just too insulting by continuing to harbor this colonial mentality. Failure of a project to live up to its initial objectives is often attributed to lack of a business plan

for the facilities so developed and sometimes to interventions undertaken by either the governing body or management of an institution without due consideration to project objectives and its sustainability.

Fortunately, the management of the National Museum and House of Culture has developed a business plan. It is in the process of recruiting a facilities maintenance manager and is implementing its marketing strategy. But, the present practice of centralizing revenue generated by all museums to the National Museum of Tanzania headquarters and thereafter re-distributing the revenue could impact House of Culture's project sustainability if necessary measures are not taken in a timely manner to address this anomaly. As a project manager, I have taken the initiative to inform all key actors (Tanzania Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism and Embassy of Sweden/Sida) in the House of Culture project on this risk. It is my sincere hope that through dialogue, involving the key actors and stakeholders, we will see that the House of Culture facilities including the multimedia centre and the recording studios is sustainably managed.

Story: Paul Msemwa
Project Leader

JUNIOR ICT

Spider's Junior ICT Expert program places ICT graduates from Swedish universities at Spider-supported organizations in partner countries. The program is sponsored by Spider and administrated by AIESEC-Sweden. This program gives opportunities to graduates in ICT to support Spider project partners in the deployment and use of ICT. The placements are based on expressed demands from our project partners. Biniam Mekonnen *was a successful applicant for the Junior ICT placement at Kigali's Institute of Technology (KIST) in Rwanda from March 2011 until March 2012. This is his story of his time at KIST.*

Rwanda is a small landlocked country located in the east-central part of Africa with a surface area of 26,338 square kilometers. It borders Tanzania, Uganda, Burundi and DRC and has an approximate population size of 8.2 million. Even though Rwanda still remains an agrarian-based economy with more than 60% of the population living under the poverty line, it has made significant progress since the 1994 genocide.

The severe shortage of professionals hinders the development strategy of all sectors. To alleviate these problems the government of Rwanda has set an ambitious national goal for the country to attain a middle-income economy by 2020. Science and technology is one of the cross-cutting areas necessary to achieve the goals set by vision 2020, mainly using Information and Communication Technology for Development (ICT4D). ICT4D is of paramount importance to increasing efficiency of public services through the application of e-government, e-health and e-learning principles, as stated in the NICI plans of Rwanda since 1998.

For the last couple of years Rwanda has made significant progress in regard to ICT and has managed to become an ICT hotspot for the region. A number of telecom companies have deployed mobile and broadband access covering major cities of the country. It was a great pleasure for me to join this ICT hotspot region to apply experiences gained from school. I have been working as a junior ICT expert for the last year at Kigali Institute of Science and Technology (KIST), in Kigali, Rwanda, which was sponsored by Spider and administered by AIESEC.

The ICT expert is a pioneer for ICT-based activities. The ICT expert must anticipate and prepare ICT solutions with better quality of service by finding new, innovative, and better ways of accomplishing existing tasks. In this regard, I had the main responsibility to establish and maintain the network infrastructure that connects Internet users of KIST to local resources and the Internet. This task includes building a reliable network infrastructure with a possible uptime of 99.999 %, and building servers which meet the service requirements of the users.

Me administering a network

I found the task to be more interesting due to the fact that I had the chance to first analyze the service needs of users, and then come up with an engineering design, then implement the solution and then make it productive. This helped me master how to deal with real world problems and see things from different perspectives. The equipment I was working on came from a wide range of vendors which gave me the chance to compare their features. Alcatel, Huwauie, Cisco, and HP were some of the network equipment I worked with.

The system I built addresses the latest technologies currently in use in the market and ensures its cost-effectiveness through virtualization while providing uninterruptable service. Bringing new technologies and ideas that helped to facilitate manually handled tasks was always my main concern. Transferring knowledge to local IT professionals was also one of my main tasks, and I think I was successful with this. Even though I had achieved a number of outstanding results, I had a setback when all the systems I built went down due to a direct hit lightning

“Bringing new technologies and ideas that helped to facilitate manually handled tasks was always my main concern.”

strike. The downtime the lightning strike brought could not extend longer than a week due to the fact that I had a disaster recovery system which performed a backup of the whole system every evening. Even though the lightning backup system was installed and maintained by another department on the campus, it taught me not to simply expect that such tasks will be covered by others. I found this to be the greatest lesson I had so far and it gave me the challenge of practicing full responsibility.

KIST Campus

I had the chance to participate in a number of projects besides my main task at KIST. The first project I was involved in was Rwandan Education and Research Network(RwEdNet) which aims to create a dedicated high-performance data network connecting all research and high learning institutions in Rwanda through a dark fiber. I couldn’t make much progress in this regard due to logistical issues which were under discussion with the RwEdNet director and high learning institution rectors.

My other main focus while in Rwanda was the AGLARBRI(African Great Lakes Rural Broadband Research Infrastructure) project, which is exploring the reproducibility, scalability and extensibility of selected technical methods and/or results from the Tanzania ICT4D project to the very rural

Working with KIST staff

districts of Rwanda. In this regard, I designed a wireless system to facilitate the communication between one of the district hospitals and its thirteen health centers. This helped me a lot to boost my wireless networking skills.

The ICT expert position is a good fit for one who is looking for a very challenging opportunity in his/her career. The expectations are very high. I believe, upon completing my one-year internship, that it went really well. I have found out more about this career and what is involved in most areas of ICT services which helped me to get a feel for the world of work. The time I have spent at KIST also helped me make decisions about my future career options over the next few months and beyond.

Finally, I would like to express my deep and sincere gratitude to Spider and AIESEC International for creating this opportunity for ICT graduates to be valuable assets to ICT-based sectors.

Story: Biniam Mekonnen

DEMOCRAZY?
– ICT AS A CATALYST IN DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES

In June 2011 Spider organized the workshop Democrazy? ICT as a catalyst in democratic processes. The workshop convened over 40 representatives from government agencies, NGOs, CSOs, the private sector and academia to discuss the role of ICT in democratic processes. Discussions were held within the areas of e-governance, e-government and empowerment and aimed to share knowledge of ongoing and potential initiatives in the area of ICT4Democracy and identify possible and plausible directions for future work.

Each panel consisted of one representative from the government, one from civil society and one from the private sector or academia bringing together three different perspectives in each area of discussion.

The keynote speaker, Vasilis Koulolias (Gov2U), opened the workshop by pointing out that social media revolutions are not only happening in North Africa but are a pervasive trend the world over. However, it is important to remember that "technology is only a tool, an enabler, and that social and cultural issues must always be taken into account when looking at social processes involving technology." This key point reverberated throughout the day, as did the point that it is crucial to look beyond the crowds and the grass roots movements, political will and a mandate to include ICTs in democratic processes is prerequisite for success. "The entire system needs to be re-thought bottom up."

Vasilis Koulolias (Gov2U)

Panel 1: Empowerment

While ICT is crucial in the effort to hold leaders accountable to citizens, it is also important to remember the social, economic and cultural context, reminding everyone that what ICT in one place is very different from what it is in another. Discussions of ICT and democracy needs to take into consideration what the most accessible technologies are in a given setting and that the use of technology requires a certain level of proficiency among the users. First and foremost there is the requirement of literacy, sometimes even in several languages. There also needs to be a keen awareness of how access and use of technology differs between various groups, social strata, age and gender. Finally, one needs to remember that there are risks with technology.

While access to ICTs and ways of communicating with the government is the first crucial aspect of Empowerment, this is only one side of the process, what happens at the other end is just as important, if not even more so. If the government makes itself open to input and criticism from the citizens, something needs to be done with this information, there needs to be a response. The 24/7 government entails a considerable work-load and requires a different frame of mind on the side of the government. There needs to be a feedback loop from the government to the citizens to communicate what is being done. Here there is a strong need for the structuring of information, the presence of

information brokers who will make relevant information accessible to various groups.

"If technology is to become an important tool for social accountability an important question to ask is who will pay for this technology? In essence who will pay for democracy?"

Panel 2: e-Governance

The panel focused on access to Internet or, as it is in some cases, the constraint or lack thereof. There has been a lot of controversy over governments shutting down Internet access to contain the flow of information both within and across its borders. At the same time, cutting off the Internet the government sometimes forces people out into the streets. Cutting off Internet access does not always work to silence people, it may as well work the other way around.

Curtailment, or blocking of Internet access is not solely something negative. Under particular circumstances, it may even be judicious to block certain Internet content, as when websites spread hatred and propaganda aimed at marginalized groups.

"Governments ask for input and gather information and opinions from the public, but further steps need to be taken. There is a tendency to create policy upon policy, to gather opinions and data about what is wrong, but how do we move to doing something about the actual problems?"

Panel 3: e-Governance

There are numerous examples of various recent projects aimed to make government services more available, placing them, as it were, in the pocket of the citizens. Two examples from Sweden are the 'Social service lady Online', a project that enabled people to seek advice from social workers anonymously, and an application from Work Environment Agency (Arbetsmiljöverket) that displays the sound level of your immediate environment,

Panel 1: Empowerment. David Isaksson (moderator), Karin Seydlitz (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden), Dorothy Okello (WOUGNET), and Heli Haapkylä (Manager, Nokia).

which not only makes people aware of their surroundings and gives them empirical data, but it also makes them aware of their rights as it clearly shows when sound levels that are too high.

"If technology is to become an important tool for social accountability an important question to ask is who will pay for this technology? In essence who will pay for democracy?"

Transparency is a core component of democracy, however it is also quite ambiguous. It is assumed that transparency will breed trust as people will be able to see what is going on. At the same time it is also the insight into affairs that can undermine trust, as mistrust towards the government has, if anything, increased in the past years in tandem with the increased public insight into the work of governmental bodies and the numerous scandals.

The last and perhaps most dramatic contribution was from the representative from the organization Corruption combatants. To disguise the identity, ethnicity and gender of the representative entered the stage fully masked, in a dark suit and tie and wearing gloves. To maintain this secrecy fully the statement from Corruption Combatants was read by Johan Hellström from Spider. The width, depth and the proliferation of corruption in many African societies affects all levels of government and eve-

ryday life. The organization also presented a possible path for improvement: to establish a mobile/web platform where people can report incidents of corruption, collect recorded evidence that could ultimately, in certain solid cases, lead to prosecution. Such a controversial project raised questions of how does one engage the government or other bodies, who might become targets, into such a controversial but necessary campaign? How do you move from the tension-filled label of a whistle blower to an actively engaged citizen? The relationship between change and technical and social innovation involves a multitude of factors as well as close collaborations the private sector and the government, a collaboration that is oftentimes both complex and complicated.

Story and images: Dr. Katja Sarajeva
Project officer at Spider

*Edited footage from the workshop is available on the Spider Vimeo channel: http://vimeo.com/spidercenter.

IPID ICT4D ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM 2011

- EXPERIENCES OF A TRAVEL GRANT RECIPIENT

The International Network for Postgraduate Students in the area of ICT4D (IPID) is a network of postgraduate students doing research in ICT4D. IPID operates through inter alia support to doctoral as well as master students and increased visibility at international conferences. The network is administered by the School of Business (Informatics) at Örebro University and funded by Spider/ Sida.

I had one of my most interesting and rewarding experiences as a participant at the 2011 IPID conference held at the Università della Svizzera italiana in Lugano, Switzerland from September 12 to 13th. As a master's student and a junior researcher attending the ICT4D conference for the first time, I expected it would be more of a formal forum that would involve long presentations with little time for participants to exchange views. The conference, however, turned out to be informal and interactive. I had a chance to interact with most participants and by the time I made my presentation, I had a totally different perspective of my research.

The participants, who are accomplished scholars, researchers, students and practitioners from different countries, have diverse research interests as well as experience in the ICT4D field. During the conference I had the chance to share my research ideas as well as learn from their different experiences and expertise. The presentations during the conference were very enlightening. They addressed various research approaches and methods that are very useful to me as a junior researcher. Most participants shared their personal experiences and challenges, especially during their field work. Some presentations such as that of PhD candidate Caitlin Bentley ("Developing a Layered Conceptual Framework: Challenges for the Multi-Disciplinary ICT4D Pracademic") gave a personal account on how to build a focused and coherent study amidst the confusion that a multi-disciplinary field presents.

A very inspirational presentation by Professor Lorenzo Cantoni of the Università della Svizzera italiana set the tone for the conference. Prof Lorenzo gave very useful tips on succeeding in the process of research and "completing a PhD dissertation". He ended his presentation with this advice for the participants:

Participants at the symposium.

"Don't become a monster, there is a full world outside your PhD, take responsibility… there is life after it – run!"

During my presentation I was encouraged by the positive comments I received in the Q and A session. Other comments, posted by the participants on the IPID2011 website and based on their assessment of my presentation and research, were later sent to me. What was the most fulfilling during this process was the chance to be critiqued and exposed to new perspectives of my research.

At the end of the conference, I was confident that I had learnt how to express academic ideas articulately, appreciate academic arguments and improve my presentation skills. I have also been able to establish contacts with postgraduate students, scholars and practitioners whom I interacted with during the conference. These contacts will hopefully be useful in establishing a valuable network in my future work as a researcher.

Story: David Cheruiyot
Image credit: Local host of IPID Annual Symposium 2011

SPIDER

Spider Stories 2011

In this publication, we hope to give you a better idea of some of Spider's activities during 2011. We hope to give you a different insight into our work, and especially the efforts of our collaborating partners who are using their time and effort to build a better future with the help of ICT. We have encouraged our partners to complement their formal reports to Spider with stories in their own words, and it is a selection of these stories we wish to share with you here. We hope you will enjoy the stories and we thank all the storytellers who made this publication possible.

Spider is a resource center for ICT for Development (ICT4D) at Stockholm University, Department of Computer and Systems Sciences (DSV). Our aim is to support the innovative use of ICT for poverty reduction and development, while serving as a knowledge broker through networks and partnerships. Our vision is an interconnected world built in the spirit of digital solidarity.

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