



ICT for Rural Development Workshop, Standard Hotel, Kabale, 3rd April 2006

Background

The importance of Information and Communication Technologies in facilitating and accelerating the process of reducing poverty across the globe is continuously growing. It has become a fact that without the usage of ICTs, a society will fall behind in the path of development. Governments, donors, NGOs and other stakeholders alike, are realizing this, which further contributes to the impact. ICT is being used for policy advocacy, local governance and educational development, and in Uganda several initiatives have already been established.

DENIVA and I-Network's interest hereby remains to further strengthen their member organisations capacities through utilization of ICTs while also benefiting others at large in the process of knowledge sharing. Together they carried out a one-day workshop for members of both organizations from the western region of Uganda. The workshop was the first in a total of 5 workshops, which will be held this year (2006) in Mbale, Kalangala, Kampala, Apac and probably Arua.

I-network participated mainly in coordinating and developing content for the workshop with 2 representatives from the Expertise Team along with the Program Manager. DENIVA paid all expenses and participated in coordinating and developing content for the workshop with one presenter who happens to be their ICT Advisor.

Workshop Objectives:

- Create More awareness about the use of ICTs to DENIVA / I-Network Members and partners
- Attract more members and enlighten them about I-Network and DENIVA activities
- Introduce the I-Network Expertise team and encourage members to make use of their services
- Create awareness on the use of ICTs in the Rural regions
- Get feedback from the Rural projects on the use of ICT mediums
- Provide possible solutions for the challenges faced by Rural ICT projects

Participants Expectations:

- Acquire new knowledge in computer and get training on different programs
- More knowledge on IN and DENIVA Activities
- Information sourcing methods and knowledge sharing
- Community awareness
- Benefits of Rural communities from the use of ICTs
- Acquire presentation skills
- Possibilities of Computer donations and access to ICT tools
- How one can equitably tap the use of ICTs for social and economic benefits
- Knowledge to help disadvantaged groups

Members Present:

Name	Organisation
Timbiimirwa Sylvester	Mbarara District L.G
Turyamureeba David	Mbarara District Network Project
Mugisha Alex	KADIVDO Network
Serumamga Felista	Western Uganda Deita Network Association
Nsaba Grace	Busanza Women Credit Association
Nasuuna Hajarah	Rushooka Orphans Center
Alex Akankwasa	Voice of Kigezi Fm
Basheija Rolland	Rubirizi Secondary School
Rubaganjana Christopher	Kigezi high school ICT department
Lwanga N.Kulumum	ICT maintenance faculty for rural Uganda HID
Katabuka Maidah	KTC -ICT
Akankwasa John	Rukungiri PTC
Ntegyereize Kedres	Kyangendo Orphans and Widow care
Tumuheime Florence	Kyabuhangwa
Rwakatugu Cleb	KACSIE
Ahimbibwe B	Rubanda Kiizi SACCO
Omella Hilda	F.A.O.C
Arinaitwe Ass	UCC
Arinetwe Phiona	BUSSEBUKA
Christie Became	Kiziga CDC
Ariho Julius	Kebisoni Sub-county LcIII
Tumusesegye Amply	Radio Kabale
Nshelco	Nyamasiizi ilashongat Farmer
Beingana Patrick	Kambuga S.S.S
Katusiime David	Ntungamo NGO Forum
Rutagonya Vincent	DENIVA
Komuhangi Sarah	SHEEMA ACE
Busingye H.M	KDLG
Taremwa Albert	V.O.K
Tukamubona	PCYP/KADIVIDO

Workshop Content:

At the workshop three presentations were made, one was on the use of ICT for development and advocacy presented by Søren Jegindø, the other was making ICT work for the poor presented by Mr. John Silco and then the challenges of implementing ICT in Uganda by Richard Okuti. Ms. Natalie Kimbugwe program Manager I-Network Uganda gave the opening remarks introduced the program for the day, went through the expectations of the workshop with the participants and highlighted the objectives hence moderating the entire session. Members at the start were asked to introduce themselves and give brief introductions about their organisations and like we see above there were a wide range of participants from all sectors i.e. NGOs, Media, Schools, etc

Ms. Natalie and Mr. Søren also gave brief presentations about I-Network and DENIVA respectively and these were coupled with documentation from both organisations such as brochures, newsletters etc.

The presentations were very participatory for at the end of each, participants would give contributions or make inquires and discussions would go on for about 20 min. most of the participants were influential in their organisations and they had at least an idea of ICTs and were in one way or the other using ICTs in their organisations although of course being rural projects there were a lot of challenges being faced such as electricity, maintenance, equipment costs, skilled personnel, training opportunities, project sustainability and so on.

In the afternoon the participants broke into groups to discuss key ICT questions that would help both the facilitators and the participants to understand better the issues at hand and how to go about them and these were: -

- What type of information can contribute most to rural development? Give reasons.
- What form of ICTs communicates best information, targeting rural development, list them in order of priority
- How can your organisation utilise ICT for development and advocacy (if there were no boundaries)
- What policies / programmes could be put in place to promote the use of ICT
- What are the biggest challenges faced when using ICTs

These topics were then presented by one member from each group as you shall see below: -

Group Discussions:**Group 1**

What type of information can contribute most to rural development? Give reasons

- Market prices and marketing locations of Agricultural products
 - Dependency on farming by rural communities
 - Under payment by middlemen.
 - Low Bargaining power
- Health Related information
 - Awareness of the current diseases
 - HIV/AIDS being a big threat
- Information on small scale technology
 - Simple methods yet high in productivity
 - Reduction in Production workload
 - Create employment

- Educational (Formal and Informal)
 - Reduce illiteracy levels
 - Improved services
 - Skills development and empowerment
 - Knowledge on family planning
- Gender related issues
 - Divisor of labour
 - Gender roles
 - Unprogressive social –cultural beliefs e.g. widowhood and inheritance
- Government policies and programmes.
 - To plan for the future accordingly

Group 2

What form of ICTs communicates best information, targeting rural development? List them in order of priority.

1. Radio
2. Music dance and Drama
3. I.E.C information Materials
4. Telephones
5. Videos and films
6. Press
7. DSTV
8. Televisions
9. Computers

The idea here was that radios are the best communication tool in the rural region because they are affordable and easy to use, more so because they can be used by the locals in their local languages unlike computers which were listed last because they are hard to maintain and they are very costly and they are also difficult to use if you don't speak English.

Group 3

How can your organisation utilise ICT for development and advocacy (if there where no boundaries)

- Discovering
- Marketing their products
- Education / Training
- Research
- Improve transparency and accessibility of information
- Advertising

Group 4

What policies / programmes could be put in place to promote the use of ICTs?

- To introduce ICT programs at all levels of education
- Subside/Reduce taxes on ICT equipment
- Develop the statement as a unit of measurement for one to qualify as an ICT Vender.
- Get other alternatives sources of power and make them affordable i.e. solar, generators.
- Languages used in ICT should be customized in the local languages.

This was more or less direct though members said that for this to happen policy members should be put on board at such gatherings, for this gathering there were about four government workers.

Group 5

What are the biggest challenges faced when using ICTs?

- They are urban based and hardly accessed by the rural communities
- Few people knew how to use them.
- High costs of installation and maintenance
- Poor Infrastructure i.e.
 - Transportation in Rural areas
 - Storage
 - Security for the machines
 - Electric power to run them
- Packaging of information
- Inferiority-people are not sensitized.
- Language barriers
- Quality of equipment and Marketing
- Moral degeneration.

Out of these discussions facilitators got relevant information and feed back from the participants to be used for the next workshops.

Evaluation:

No negative feedback was received – and almost all of the expectations stated by the participants at the beginning of the workshop were fulfilled by the end of the session. Participants also felt that the quality of the presentations was rich and very useful to their organisations. However the venue needs to be improved for the other seminars because Standard Hotel was not user friendly and the facilitators promised to look into this for the next seminars.

Conclusion:

The workshop was surely a success and was represented by a good number of people who stayed throughout the day; the partnership between I-network and DENIVA worked out well, and enabled both organizations to reach a larger audience, participants emails were recorded and they were all included on the I-Network and DENIVA databases and mailing lists, copies of presentations were also sent to them for further references.

Report was compiled by,

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