



Uganda

PUBLIC ACCESS LANDSCAPE STUDY SUMMARY



Overview

Uganda has the highest needs of any country in this study with regard to improving public access to ICT, and also one of the lowest readiness rankings. It faces significant challenges in this area. The government's current efforts to improve the public access landscape are weak, literacy is low, the general public's familiarity with computers is low, and many of the country's recognized languages still operate with an oral and not written tradition. Also, most of the population lives in rural areas (and rural electrification rates are low), making access a major barrier.

PUBLIC ACCES LANDSCAPE	
Challenges ahead	Significant
Needs	High
Needs (rank)	1/25
Readiness	Low
Readiness (rank)	23/25

Findings

With 48 tribal groups speaking 40 recognized languages, Uganda's diversity represents a challenging (but not altogether unique) case for delivering information equitably, particularly via public access ICT. Many of the country's 40 languages are spoken only with no written tradition, and while English is the official language the literacy rate is low.

Still, an opportunity exists for public access venues with ICTs to address the needs of these diverse groups while preserving their cultural and social values. Current national programs are unified through English and Swahili making it easier to achieve harmony in capacity- building efforts.

This study revealed a public access landscape in Uganda that is driven largely by the private sector and where the government is only involved in public libraries and creating an enabling environment. Public access ICT venues that do exist are poorly documented, and there are no dependable statistics to confirm the condition of these venues nationwide.

Nationwide, the public's capacity to use these centers is low. This is due to a number of factors, including a lack of coordination and collaboration among the venues, low literacy rates, and service offerings which do not match community needs.

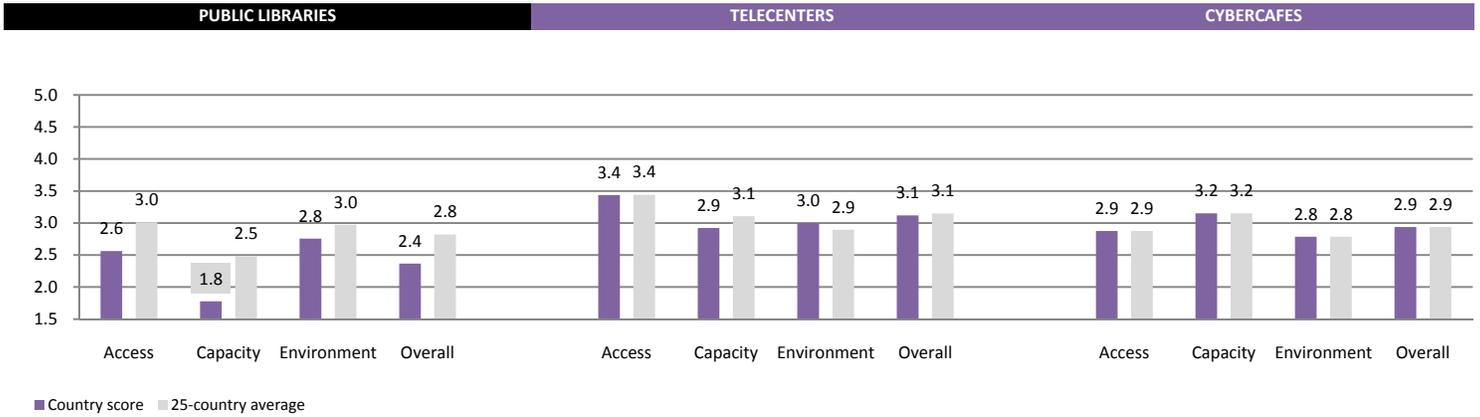
Furthermore, many good policies and efforts in both the public and private sectors have fallen short because of inadequate funds.

Recommendations

Public access ICT centers are useful, but the most successful ones have services that meet community needs, and are built and operated in partnership with multiple stakeholders. They focus on a key customer base, make strategic community outreach efforts, and have good management. Also, centers that have both ICT and radio broadcast components perform far better in Uganda than those with only Internet.

More research is needed to understand the actual numbers of public access venues in this country, and it is equally

ACE Scores



Shaded data points are outside standard deviation for 25-country set
 See the last page for country-specific definitions of these venues
 See the last page for a definition of the ACE scoring framework

Venue Distributions

	ALL PUBLIC ACCESS			PUBLIC LIBRARIES			TELECENTERS			CYBERCAFES			OTHER VENUES*		
	Total urban & non-urban	25-country average	25-country median	Total urban & non-urban	25-country average	25-country median	Total urban & non-urban	25-country average	25-country median	Total urban & non-urban	25-country average	25-country median	Total urban & non-urban	25-country average	25-country median
VENUES	25,610	10,017	5,489	30	1,111	1,062	144	1,273	366	25,400	8,693	3,225	36	398	46
number with ICT	ND	9,802	5,122	3	349	96	144	1,149	257	ND	8,507	3,251	5	146	13
% with ICT	ND	98%	87%	10%	31%	20%	100%	90%	100%	ND	98%	100%	15%	37%	92%
% OF PUBLIC VENUES	100%	100%	100%	14%	11%	20%	69%	12%	11%	ND	73%	67%	17%	4%	1%
POP. PER VENUE ('000)	1	8	5	997	93	37	208	205	68	1	52	9	831	419	103
with ICT ('000)	ND	15	6	9,967	2,093	208	208	242	119	ND	62	10	5,537	1,354	198

ND=Not data

*See the last page for country-specific definitions of these venues. For this country, other venues refers to community libraries.

Data points are missing for some measures in some countries, which can result in oddities when comparing rows of data (for instance, the average number of venues with ICT appears to be greater than the average number of venues). For a complete overview of comparative country data, please see the summary paper for this study.

User Profiles

		PUBLIC LIBRARIES				TELECENTERS				CYBERCAFES			
		Urban	25-country average	Non-urban	25-country average	Urban	25-country average	Non-urban	25-country average	Urban	25-country average	Non-urban	25-country average
INCOME	Low income	47%	28%	ND	35%	11%	26%	57%	24%	ND	26%	ND	24%
	Medium income	45%	54%	ND	46%	16%	56%	27%	45%	ND	56%	ND	45%
	High income	8%	7%	ND	6%	3%	9%	13%	4%	ND	9%	ND	4%
EDUCATION	No formal education	3%	3%	ND	2%	3%	5%	0%	6%	ND	5%	ND	6%
	Only elementary	23%	16%	ND	21%	3%	14%	27%	13%	ND	14%	ND	13%
	Up to high school	46%	50%	ND	36%	26%	37%	26%	32%	ND	37%	ND	32%
	College or university	28%	28%	ND	19%	26%	40%	47%	28%	ND	40%	ND	28%
AGE	14 and under	12%	12%	ND	15%	0%	9%	5%	14%	ND	9%	ND	14%
	15-35	62%	72%	ND	51%	45%	74%	62%	57%	ND	74%	ND	57%
	36-60	24%	12%	ND	23%	12%	12%	30%	8%	ND	12%	ND	8%
	61 and over	2%	2%	ND	2%	0%	0%	0%	1%	ND	0%	ND	1%
GENDER	% female	29%	53%	ND	49%	22%	39%	ND	39%	ND	39%	ND	39%

ND=No data

Percentages may not add up to 100% in all cases

See the last page for country-specific definitions of these venues

Data collected through interviews conducted by research teams. See country reports for details with regard to methodology, locations, timing, and data collection issues.

important to conduct studies in content development and management areas.

The following specific initiatives are needed:

- Provide effective public awareness campaigns and capacity-building initiatives.
- Revisit the national ICT policy and the National Libraries Act to ensure that issues of e-services, e-content, and public venue and ICT access and use are strongly addressed.
- Support a public access survey that covers all five of Uganda's main public access ICT venues (public libraries, community libraries, telecenters, cybercafés, and post offices) to strengthen the content and service development and distribution processes.
- Establish a functional and nationally-coordinated venue network with the power to increase the number of public access venues and improve the quality of services offered. This effort should be coupled with partnerships, networking, and collaboration among the venues, key non-government organizations (NGOs), and civil society organizations.
- Encourage and support continuous training for librarians and other information management professionals, taking advantage of diverse new modalities such as e-learning, online communities, and e-forums without neglecting face-to-face meetings and workshops.
- Support infrastructure development efforts, especially rural electrification, optical fiber installation, and public libraries in rural and remote communities. There is a need to step-up the rural electrification program and to encourage the use of ICTs in non-urban areas because alternative power sources are not affordable.
- The government should strengthen its role of encouraging districts to establish new libraries in the ever-increasing new districts.
- Digitize government services and key NGO services that will help in strategic development and the delivery of e-services to disadvantaged groups. This will promote ICT-based content and service availability.
- Support local organizations and NGOs in developing local content.
- Establish wireless networks at public access centers to improve the physical presence of the centers within the communities they serve.
- Establish a community radio presence at each public library in each district.
- Implement the decentralization policy aimed at extending services nearer to the underserved. The government should ensure that its funds remitted through the National Library of Uganda are allocated as a priority to fund libraries.

Geography & Economy

Uganda is a landlocked nation in central equatorial Africa with a landscape that ranges from tropical rainforest to mountains reaching over 16,000 feet. One-third of the country is covered by lakes; Lake Victoria (the world's largest tropical lake and source of the Nile) by itself covers 20 percent of the country.

For many years Uganda has experienced political, social, and economic turmoil. The area was a British colony from 1894 until gaining its independence in 1962. Since its independence the country has experienced violent conflicts and government shifts marked most prominently by the horrific reign of Idi Amin who was ousted in 1980. Throughout its history, epidemics and health issues have devastated the population and Uganda still faces major problems with HIV-AIDS and sleeping sickness. Outbreaks of Ebola have killed untold numbers of people.

Uganda's 31.3 million residents represent 48 tribal groups with 40 recognized languages, although English is the official language. Eighty percent of the population lives in rural areas and most rely on family-based agriculture. Coffee is the country's primary export.

COUNTRY PROFILE	
Total population* (millions)	29.9
Urban population* (millions)	3.8
Literacy (%)**	67
E-readiness	ND
Gini coefficient	0.43

*World Bank 2006 data

**CIA Factbook

ND=No data

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About this study

CIS's Public Access Landscape Study examined how people around the world access and use information and computers in public settings such as libraries, telecenters, and cybercafes. Understanding public access is particularly important in developing countries where there is often limited private access to information and communication technologies (ICTs).

This study covered a carefully-selected sample of 25 developing countries containing over 250,000 public access settings. Local research teams surveyed over 25,000 people and conducted interviews and focus groups in order to develop a detailed picture of the public access ICT landscape in each country. CIS collected, interpreted, and analyzed these detailed county-level results, and also conducted cross-country comparative analyses to uncover common themes, challenges and opportunities.

The goal of this work is to help strengthen public access to information and ICTs around the world.

This project was conducted in two phases. During the first phase, country-based research teams prepared draft reports describing the information access landscape, presented a national assessment, and compiled a preliminary set of recommendations. In the second phase, teams identified the principal locations where people seek information: public libraries, cybercafés, telecenters, and other locations (such as private and religious libraries).

Local research teams used a combination of research methods to: (1) observe how people access information; (2) conduct surveys in information venues where they interviewed operators and users; and (3) perform secondary research and analysis of existing reports and documents using both local and international sources. Teams combined site visits and interviews to review the physical infrastructure and human resources of a variety of venues, and to determine the information content, service usage patterns, communication, and knowledge development. Additionally, teams examined the effects of environmental factors such as government policies, geography, and ethnic and linguistic differences.

Definitions

ACE scoring framework: Developed by CIS based on a modified bridges.org Real Access framework. The scale goes from zero to five, with 5 being the best possible score. ACE scores are calculated by evaluating dozens of variables having to do with ICT access, capacity and environment in public access ICT venues. "Access" includes variables such as accessibility, suitability, affordability, and the availability of technology; "capacity" includes training, relevant content and services, social appropriation, and collaboration capacity; and "environment" includes socio-cultural factors, popular support, political will, and a country's legal and regulatory framework.

Challenges ahead (from table on front page): Estimates based on combinations of ACE scores indicating difficulty in improving country's public access to ICT. From the fewest challenges to most, categories are: quick wins, steady gains, slow gains, and significant.

CIS: University of Washington Center for Information & Society (CIS)

Community libraries: Created by and for a local population and usually not supported with government funds; may be organized by a school, church or community group, but service the needs of the community at-large

E-readiness: The ability to use ICT for economic development, as determined by measures of connectivity and technology infrastructure, business environment, social and cultural environment, legal environment, government policy and vision, and consumer and business adoption. E-readiness is scored on a scale from 1 to 10. In 2008, the global e-readiness score was 6.4, with the highest levels in North America and the lowest in Africa and Asia.

Gini coefficient: Measures the inequality of income distribution. A low coefficient indicates more equal income distribution, while a high Gini coefficient indicates more unequal distribution. The global average is around 0.6; the US Gini is around 0.45.

ICTs: Information and communication technologies (especially computers and the Internet)

Needs & Readiness indexes (from table on front page): The needs index is comprised of three indicators: inequality, ICT usage and ICT cost. The readiness index is also comprised of three indicators: politics, skills and ICT infrastructure. Proxies are used for all indicators. See "Information Needs & Watering Holes" on the CIS Landscape Study website (www.cis.washington.edu/landscape) for a more detailed discussion of these indexes and proxies.

NGO: Non-governmental organization

Non-urban: Commonly labeled a rural area, but definitions of rural or periurban vary by country

Public libraries: Open for all, but accessibility is not for all. The nature of content and services unintentionally targets educated members of the community.

Telecenters: Public access points mostly located in rural or semi urban areas; provide public access to ICT. Most offer internet services, photocopying, telephony, printer, photocopier and IT applications training, however, many have recently innovated to include community outreach programs in livelihood issues.

Front photo: Kampala Road in Kampala, Uganda. Photo from Wikipedia (no source).