

Public Access Centres in Uganda: The Past, Present and Future

Ndaula Sulah
UgaBYTES Initiative

Email: ndaulasula@ugabytes.org

4 – September – 2008

The paper is based on the findings of Public access study conducted in Uganda as part of the broader study in 24 countries. It summarizes the methodology of the research, bringing out key findings with success factors and recommendations. It describes the country overview detailing its geography, political and geographic divisions, and demographic factors providing conclusions on the effects of each on Public Access. It provides a broader shape of the Public Access venues and centres in the country before focusing on the three main venues that target disadvantaged societies. It strategically examines Public Access venues from three angles; access, capacity and environment, which formed the framework of the study. The venues assessed include; community libraries, public libraries and multipurpose Community telecentre. The paper provides key recommendations, strategic areas for investment and direction for future research. It also highlights perceptions and changing media landscape especially with the introduction of ICTs.

Key word:

Public access venues, Access, capacity, environment and inequity

University of Washington
Center for Information & Society
4311 11th Avenue NE, Suite 400
Box354985
Seattle, WA 98195 USA
www.cis.washington.edu
cisinfo@u.washington.edu

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Recommended citation:

Ndaula, S. (2008). Public access to information & ICTs: Uganda. Public Access Landscape Study final report, presented to University of Washington Center for Information & Society (CIS), Seattle.

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Extended Executive Summary

Research Project Overview

This research focuses on the public access to information and communication landscapes in 24 countries, with specific focus on public libraries, to understand the information needs of underserved communities, public access to information and communication venues, and the role of ICT. Through field research in 24 countries conducted by local research partners, and cross-country comparative analyses based on common research design elements (see list of countries and research design overview in Appendix), the project aims to contribute to the knowledge in the field of information and ICT for development. Of particular interest and value are: the comparative look at key venues (libraries and other), and the mix of depth of in-country knowledge with breadth of global comparison to elicit success factors and scenarios to understand how diverse populations can and do access and use ICT to improve their lives. All outputs of this research will be broadly disseminated to interested stakeholders and placed in the public domain.

Introduction

This research; an undertaking of CIS, UW has been conducted in 24 countries, Uganda inclusive, to capture an understanding of the information needs, and opportunities to strengthen institutions that offer public access to information and communication, especially to underserved communities and especially through the use of digital ICT. According to the study, the Public Access Centre (PAC) sector is currently under rapid growth as ICTs shape out as supplementary tools for resources, collaborative learning and socio-economic interaction enhancement and bridging of geographical barriers between south to south and south-north expertise. They are gradually opening up new roles for Public access Centres (PACs). However, the emergence of ICTs as support tools to PAC comes at a time when the real community needs are high with commitments to address ICTs as enablers to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). According to the national libraries policy 2006, Ugandan people need information to acquire skills to improve their livelihoods, know their rights to demand for services and actively participate in governance, prevent diseases and support educational programmes through widening education and learning opportunities in order to address poverty. Similarly, the rural communication development program emphasizes the need to jump-start rural communities into the information community through providing an enabling environment and incentive funds for the private investors in rural communities. The policy approach was informed by the eight pilot telecentre projects initiated by International Development Research Centre (IDRC), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), United Nations Education Science and Culture organization (UNESCO) and public and private local partners in Uganda. The pilots that were implemented in late 1990s are equally catalytic for about 25,400 cybercafé and 144 telecentre growth by the private and civil society sector in the country. But the growth is expected to rise with the rapid increase of internet users and internet penetration within the country. According to the Uganda Internet usage and Telecommunication report, between 2007 and 2008 internet users raised from 750,000 to 2,000,000 causing the internet penetration to grow from 2.5% to 6.4%.

PAC in Uganda and as incorporated in the study fall under four major venues; public library, community library and Multipurpose community telecentres. The about 25,400 cybercafés, although not considered within the study, form a reason backbone of PAC access especially in urban areas while post offices are only offering postal boxes with plans to establish ICT centres

at each of these 300 post office countrywide. There are 30 public libraries in the country situated at district level. Most of the public libraries offer reading materials to a non specific target group with a general focus to educate user groups. Community libraries are currently about 36. Unlike public libraries they are not run on public funds. They are also more open to disadvantaged groups. Multipurpose Community Telecentres (MCTs) unlike Community Library (CL) and Public Library (PL) have a wide range of ICT tools with more integration with multimedia and online resources. There are about 144 multipurpose telecentres in the Uganda. However, CL, PL and MCTs are all purposively established to provide information to disadvantaged groups through public access. They have played the role of an inspirer, interactor, educator, empowerer and connector of communities.

Country Overview

Officially, the republic of Uganda, is a country in East Africa. It shares borders with; Kenya in the east, Sudan in the North, DRC in the west, Rwanda in the southwest and Tanzania in the South. The southern portion of the country includes a substantial part of Lake Victoria, within which it shares borders with Kenya and Tanzania. Uganda takes its name from the centrally located Buganda Kingdom, which was central in colonial administration. It encompasses a portion of the south of the country including the capital, Kampala. Uganda is a unitary republic. The President, currently Yoweri Museveni, is the head of state and is elected for a five year term of which he is free to stand for as many times as the electorate can bring him in power. The parliament consists of 309 members, 215 of which are elected by universal suffrage; the remainder represent special interest groups, including the army, women, workers, youth, and the disabled.

The total land size of the country is 236,040 sq km with a population density of 133 persons per sq km with the total population of 31,367,972 million people. 86.7% of the population lives in non-urban area, living mainly on agrarian activities and 13.3% urban of which 0-14 years: 50.2% (male 7,646,619/female 7,538,137), 15-64 years: 47.6% (male 7,231,196/female 7,185,058), and 65 years and over: 2.2% (male 281,317/female 380,283). The country has got 69 districts with ten more in formation. Its top five cities include; Kampala, 1.18, Mbarara 1.08; Wakiso 0.9; Arua 0.83; Mukono 0.79.

Research Rationale, Sample, and Methods

This research focuses on the public access to information and communication landscapes in 24 countries, with specific focus on the information needs of underserved communities, public access to information and communication venues, and the role of ICT. We examine the physical infrastructure and human resources of a variety of such venues, information content and service usage patterns, communication & knowledge production, as well as environmental factors such as governmental policies, geography, ethnic and linguistic differences etc. For the purposes of this research, we have identified the following venues: public libraries, community libraries and Multipurpose Community telecentres due to the orientation of these PAC to social responsibility of disadvantaged groups. Post and cybercafés have been left out of the scope of the study for the same reason but they are recognized as potential PACs within the economy.

3.1 Venue Selection

3.1a Public libraries

In a bid to improve the literacy levels in the country, the East Africa Literature Bureau established libraries with a purpose of publishing and distributing suitable books in local languages and establishing library services throughout East Africa. Development of library services in Uganda was one of the projects under the second five year plan 1966/67 – 1970/1971. Under this plan a special fund was put in place to establish a library in each district supplemented by mobile library services. Public libraries don't have a specific target audience and cater for the general public. There are 30 public libraries in 30 of the 69 districts in the country, which are found in the old districts. Plans are underway to establish libraries in the new districts where three districts will be considered annually. There are efforts albeit deliberate ones to reach out to the rural community. Most of these have come in the form of library extension at sub county level and community libraries and book box facilities. 10% of the total number of public libraries in the country offer ICT services that were introduced with support from the American Embassy. Public libraries are coordinated, monitor and supported by the National Library of Uganda (NLU), which is the umbrella body of all public libraries in the country. NLU provided information on the status of public libraries in the country prior to our site visits. For specific information on each of the public libraries, we visited public libraries in Central, Eastern, West Nile and Western Uganda. This was to get a feel of the social appropriation of each of the venues into the community's life and the social value attached to each of the venues in the community.

Public Libraries in the country are currently under the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD). The ministry was our key target especially as an implementing body and a policy making body as regards public libraries in Uganda.

3.1b Community libraries

In areas where the government has not established public libraries or where there is need for supplementation of the services already offered by the public library, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and other agencies like embassies have established community libraries. Most of these libraries are community based with materials and resources targeting particular sections of the community depending on where they are located. Additionally, they offer extension services that target specific people in the community including women, farmers, youths and students. According to Uganda Community Libraries Association there are 35 registered community libraries in the country. Depending on their location and availability of electricity, most community libraries offer ICT services to the community. Those that are operated together with a telecentre do have the ICT component while only a few of those that are not in telecentres offer ICT. Of these about 16% offer ICT services. For information on community libraries, the team visited the Uganda Community Libraries Association (UgCLA) which is a network of all community libraries in the country. This network helps community libraries access funds, trains community librarians and provides small grants for book stocking.

For specific information on each of the community libraries, the team visited each of the community libraries to find out their value to the community and the social value people attach to the facility. The National library of Uganda too provided an insight on community libraries in the country.

3.1c Multipurpose telecentres

Multipurpose telecentres are public access points mostly located in the rural or semi urban areas and provide the public with access to ICT. Most community telecentres popularly offer internet services, photocopying, telephony, printer, photocopier and IT applications training. However, many have recently innovated to include community outreach programs in livelihood issues. There about 144 telecentres in the country and of these 97.8% offer ICT services. Multipurpose Telecentres included, Community Multimedia Centres, Business development centers, For purposes of this study, the team utilized records from UgaBYTES initiative and the Rural communication development program of Uganda Communication Commission. UgaBYTES is the leading telecentre support network in the East African region. Most of the data came from progressive reports and the directory of the National ICT Directory. The visited a sample of community telecentres in each of the regions of the country including, central, western, eastern, Northern and west Nile.

Other Interesting Venues in Uganda

Postal services in Uganda began in 1895, when Rev. Earnest Miller of the Church Missionary Society designed the first postage stamp on his typewriter. Since then the post and telecommunication industry has undergone evolutionary growth. There are currently 300 post offices in the country so far in all the major towns. Services provided include letter and parcel conveyance, express courier services, local and international money transfers, philately services, Direct Mail, affordable public transportation by the Post bus as well as being an agent for telecommunications providers.

ICT services are planned to be introduced in 11 post offices including; Arua, Fort Portal, Gulu, Hoima, Jinja, Kabale, Masaka, Mbale, Mbarara and Soroti. The initiative of government is aimed at installing ICT services at all the major post offices in the country through Rural Communication Development Fund (RCDF).

For purposes of this study, the research team visited the Main post office in Kampala, Uganda which is in charge of monitoring all the other postal branches in the country and the specific facilities in the Eastern, Western and Central Uganda to get a feel of each facility and the services offered. The contact was done during phase I, of which it was determined that this type of venue could not fit within the study.

Cyber cafes

Cyber café use demonstrates a tremendous future for the Internet society in Uganda. The potential for meeting user needs in Uganda is high. However, this venue was not included in this study due to shortage of statistical data about their numerous in the country. It should be noted, however, all cyber cafés in Uganda are business oriented but many charge lower access fees per minute per person than MCTs because they have a higher user turnover, with a more broad customer base.

Information Needs of Underserved Communities

Strategically there is need to explore in depth how PAC can be transformed to address livelihood needs as articulated by the United Nations MDGs. The opportunity to widen education opportunities to developing world, increase of access and usage of online resources on health, education, and jobs as well as connecting south to south and north to south market needs can not be over emphasized especially as 89% lives in rural areas and only 11% are found in urban centres (Ministry of Finance Planning & Economic Development, [MFPED] 1998).

Majority of the respondents underscored the need for information on women empowerment, HIV and AIDS, Agricultural production and marketing information, food security, employment, weather forecast and entrepreneurship. They also reiterated the need for education materials. The respondents at PAC called for the need for multimedia local content.

Strengths, Weaknesses, and Opportunities in Key Public Access Venues

Multipurpose Telecentre, Public and community libraries are one of the most supported venues in the country by government. However, a more structured support systems exists for public library than in any PAC. This is largely attributable to the fact that the idea started with the government but until now the coordination of public libraries is still very poor. Multipurpose telecentres on the other hand demonstrate that PAC centres can roll out impactful by private sector if an enabling environment is created. The experiences of MCTs since 1996 demonstrate the power internet connectivity in reducing social divide as as such the government has build the Rural Communication Development Fund to even make the environment better for rural investors. However, like Public Libraries, MCTs lack a clear coordination and due to wider ownership they even present a harder opportunity to coordinate than Public Libraries.

Salient Findings

text The Public Access Centre industry in Uganda is old but still underdeveloped. There are very few public access centres in the country for all types of venues save for cybercafés. The actual number of PAC for all venues remains unknown and undocumented save for Public Libraries. However, within public library venue a lot of progress in crafting legal frameworks and an enabling environment has been done although it is still reported that librarians are still disorganized without any strong network that can lobby the government for good support. Additionally, the wider ownership of multipurpose telecentres in the country is reflected in the diversity of the services and hardship in coordinating this type of venue.

Community Libraries and Public libraries have very limited or no ICT application services. Only Community libraries shouldered by telecentres have a component of ICTs and e-books. Community and Public libraries have very low sensitization programs. All public venues are widely affected by their location. They are assumed to serve a wider area that even if centrally located there would never be such a good location to all its target audience. Additionally, most users don't access PACs largely due to limited services and content. This offers out as the most prohibitive factor for PAC access and usage. However, the problem is less prominent in MCTs. Community libraries and MCTs mainly recruit under skilled staffs that are trained on job while public libraries are quite keen on a degree in librarianship.

Additionally, there is very limited deliberate efforts to integrate the PACs into the daily livelihood of the communities they serve. Materials and resources are stocked with less focus to

the needs of the communities. Policies concerning PAC remain unimplemented due to lack of sufficient funds.

Key Recommendations

The connection between PAC venues is poor despite existing major similarities in operation. The marriage of livelihood integration and PAC linkage will equally need intensified use of ICTs. On the other hand, there is need to pressure government from bottom-up and up-bottom to pass the long awaited national libraries policy. It should be emphasized that harmonization of sector policies, acts and mandated body programs that govern different parts of PAC should be underscored. For example the ICT policy, national libraries act, national libraries policy, the RCDF Uganda Communication Commission policy and the different sectoral bodies need to explore working relations and interdependences.

Strategically there is need to explore in depth how PAC can be transformed to address livelihood needs as articulated by the United Nations MDGs. There opportunity to widen education opportunities to developing world, increase of access and usage of online resources on health, education, and jobs as well as connecting south to south and north to south markets needs grounded understanding. The connection between PAC venues is also poor despite existing major similarities in operation. The marriage of livelihood integration and PAC linkage will equally need intensified use of ICTs.

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On the other hand majority of the respondents from vulnerable group support organizations noted that communities need information on women empowerment, HIV and AIDS, Agricultural production and marketing information, food security, employment, weather forecast and entrepreneurship. They also reiterated the need for education materials. The respondents at PAC called for the need for multimedia local content.

Abaseline survey should be conducted to determine the number of PACs and venue types in the country. This will help to upgrade the services offered by the PACs so that they can adequately apply to the lives of the community.

Methodology

Venue Selection

2 paragraphs

Brief description of the selection process: how you selected the types of venues to be studied, why they were included, why others were left out.

Note: this data collection template is designed to capture info about 4 venue types. If you study in detail more than 4 venue types in the country, include a full description of the 5th one as an appendix, using the same set of questions.

There are 5 major types of venues offering public access to information in Uganda. They are all spread over the country and include Multipurpose Telecentre, Public library, Community Library, Post office and Cybercafé. The scope of this study covered; Multipurpose Telecentre, Public library and community libraries. These venues are largely involved in activities aimed at providing access to information to the community with a very strong social angle to the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. Secondly the three categories of access enjoy good public recognition as infrastructures that are strengthening access to information for all. Cybercafés and post offices on the other hand were left out for the same reason. Cybercafés were also left out because they lack any coordination and as such a close approximation of the numbers of cybercafés in town with their list could not be got although estimation puts the number to 25,400 centres in the country. However, before eliminating these venues random visits were done during phase I of the research to facilities in each of the 5 types of venues. This preliminary research aimed at gaining an informed ground on which the venues will be ranked with or outside the scope of the study. During this preliminary study 4 multipurpose Telecentre, 7 public library, 3 community library, 3 post office and 4 cybercafe facilities were visited across the country. It is from the outcome of this study that Community telecentre, Community library and public library were selected and cybercafé and post office rejected as venues under study.

When selecting the venues we visited: public libraries, community libraries and telecentres, we used multi stage cluster sampling technique as the research covered the whole of Uganda. We employed this technique to enable us get a good representation of the sample and also depending on the degree of accuracy required in the analysis, time and the urgency of the findings. A map of Uganda divided into regions was used as our primary sampling units such that all regions in the country were equally represented. From the regions we listed all districts which we used as our sampling units then a final sample was picked from the districts. Twenty one districts were randomly selected which included: Arua, Wakiso, Jinja, Kabale, Kabarole, Kamuli, Lira, Masaka, Mbale, Mbarara and Mubende. Others included were: Kampala, Nebbi, Tororo, Mpigi, Nakaseke, Mayuge, Mukono, Kayunga, Mityana and Apac.

However, for security reasons in the Northern region of the country we purposively omitted some districts from the sample. For instance Gulu, Moroto, Pader, Abim, Kaabong, Nakapiripirit, Kotido, Amuru, and Kitgum districts were not included in the sampling unit. In the

selected districts we interviewed all existing venues; public libraries, telecentres and community libraries. While in the process of data collection we identified new venues and only managed to include one community library in the sample called Kitabilo found in Masaka in the Southern part of the country. Other community libraries were quite far from the venues we selected in the sample. Also identified during data collection was KEEP a telecentre found in Nateete Central region is also having a branch in Lukaya in the Southern part of the country. It was also to be included in the sample but there was misguidance of the location of the telecentre in Lukaya hence; we missed collecting data on the same.

Venues studied

Enter the details to complete the table based on the venues studied in this country (more details will be filled in other sections):

	Public Libraries	Community Library	Multipurpose telecentre	Venue 4
Total number in country	30	36	144	
A. # in urban location	30	5	10	
% offering ICT	10%	15%	100%	
Total # of people served (annual)	-	-	-	
B. # in non-urban location	-	30	134	
% offering ICT	-	5%	100%	
Total # of people served (annual)	-	-	-	

Comments (comment especially on definition of urban/non urban in the country):

text It should be noted that all public libraries in Uganda are located in urban areas and are managed by their respective local governments. Some Public libraries records the number of its users daily but ultimately there is no proper documentation on the number of users by the NLU which is the monitoring body of all public libraries in the country. There is a discrepancy in the overall number of public libraries given to us by the NLU and the actual Libraries listed. The list given in the NLU 2007-2008 annual report does not add up to the total figure of 30 libraries as indicated in the same report.

There is no body or ministry in the country responsible for registration of telecentres hence, making it extremely difficult to know their total number. The Ministry of ICT with all its mandate has to date completely failed to come up with proper procedure of registration and documentation on existing telecentres which role seems to be entirely left to whoever is interested. Their concern is solely on the RCDF project of implementing business communication centres, public pay phones among others. To date Telecentres neither have a network nor operate under a single umbrella authority that would have taken on the onus of registering and creating a data base of all Telecentres in the country. UgaBYTES is a telecentre support network that only supports existing telecentres to promote rural access to ICTs. Due to the above reasons, it has proved difficult to know the total number of Telecentres in the country.

The community libraries reported are those registered under the Uganda community Libraries Association (UGCLA) and those that were later discovered during the process of data collection.

Other experiences of public access to information that are not quite “venues”

Basic information about other experiences with potential to make a difference to the public access landscape (tea rooms, Wi-Fi hotspots, coffee houses, web information portals) although they are not quite a “public information venue” in the sense defined for this study (see research design document for definition).

Other public access experience #1: post office

Description :

Post office started as a mail postage service in 1895 but currently has got services like letter and parcel conveyance, express courier services, local and international money transfers, internet services, philately services, Direct Mail, affordable public transportation by the Post bus as well as being an agent for telecommunications providers. Post offices in the country are ranked in Head post offices, which are regional, departmental post offices, which are in main urban centres in the country and sub-post offices, which are largely located in rural community.

The post services are provided by Post Uganda, a network of 300 post offices in the country with over 70,000 personal boxes.

Total number in country: 300

% offering ICT access: 1%

% in urban location: 29%

Comments on how it is influencing public access venues in the country:

Post offices, have been the main connection of the community to the outside world until the coming of ICTs. On the other hand while ICTs can offer postal services quite cheaply many people still use the postal services. There is an opportunity, therefore, of integrating the two in order to complement each other. Already plans are completed in which most post offices will be installed with ICT centres. The move will be tested in 11 sites under the funding of RCDF before fully rolled out in the 300 sites. It should be emphasized however, that post services have been declining over the previous 3 year. However, the multiplex of services offered through post office networking including banking services makes it a complementary system to the entire ICT PAC system in the country.

Since they are business oriented, Post offices target the whole population. Their main mission is to effectively deliver the above named services with the aim of making profits. With this, bigger commercial aspect of them, they cease to be PACs relative to our study.

Other public access experience #2: cybercafé

Description :

Cybercafés are not older than 10 years ago in Uganda. Many that have been established borrowed and are stilling borrowing service definition from community telecentres. However, their operation is largely commercial and as such user numbers and areas that have adequate and cheap supplies determines where investors locate the cybercafé. Most cybercafés are thus located in major urban centres or institutions like hospitals, universities that have good numbers of users. Estimates put the number of cybercafés to 25,400 centres across the country.

Total number in country: 25,400

% offering ICT access: 100%

% in urban location: 90%

Comments on how it is influencing public access venues in the country:

Although at inception, cybercafés had picked internet connectivity services from the community telecentres; many are progressively building a social angle within their services. There are also more open to emerging e-services that would increase their service from sell of internet access time to sell of services through internet. Cybercafés account for more than 60% internet usage in the country. Occasionally the 40% user from office and homes uses cybercafés.

Other existing public access venues, not included in this study

Basic information about other public access venues **not** included in the study (e-tuktuk, school or other private libraries not open to the public, health centers, etc), although they could play a role in public access information in the country. Indicate rationale for NOT including them in the study.

Other venue not studied #1: University main and department libraries

Total number in country: 56%

% offering ICT access: 60%

% in urban location: N/A

Description of the Venue:

These are resource centers established by Universities and tutiary institutions to support pedagogical processes. Most are only open to the the university members, students and affiliates. Most resource centres have opened up e-libraries and Internet.

Reason why it was not included in the study:

Other venue not studied#2: Type of Venue (if needed)

Total number in country:

% offering ICT access:

% in urban location:

Description of the Venue:

Reason why it was not included in the study:

For reasons of restricted access to the general public this venue was left out the student.

Inequity Variables

1-2 paragraphs each.

Describe how each variable affects equitable public access to information and ICT in this country, and what you did in this study to make sure each one was addressed (for example, if you visited venues in both urban and non-urban locations).

Also include additional variables of local relevance to your country, as you listed in Form 1, section 1a.

Socio-economic status

The Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) (2005/2006) indicates that 37.7% of the population lives below poverty line with 3.1% unemployment for person aged between 15 and 64. However, over 85% of the population lives on less than a dollar a day, due to season employment for a bigger percentage of the community, thus majority are poor and can barely afford the basic necessities of life.

This means most people can't afford good education yet most of the information in the PACs is in English thus excluding the illiterates by default. Due to the diversity in languages, cultures and norms in the country, making it difficult to have a common conduit for information dissemination. The fact that most public access venues charge for accessing information means majority of the population is left out because they cannot afford.

During this study, focus group discussion were held at each of the sites to cover the interesting feed back of the socially disadvantaged groups. This discussion was made quite informal to allow free discussion about the key issue of public access. Similarly, during data collection, the interviewers were purposively selected based on their ability to translate onsite each question within the questionnaire during the interview. Interviewers were also assigned sites depending on their sociological ability to blend with the interviewees easily. The sample sites were broken

down by region that is north, west, Central, south, east and west Nile.

Educational level

Education levels in Uganda have been categorized into three; the highly educated, the medium educated, the low educated and the illiterates. The highly educated category includes university and tertiary institution graduates who mostly occupy the white collar jobs. These can afford access to information at all costs. They have a higher chance of accessing ICTs by nature of their exposure and position they occupy in society. The medium educated are secondary school dropouts who can fluently read and write. They are in a better position in accessing ICTs because they are literate but this is affected by their income levels. Most of this category comprises unemployed and underemployed persons. The low educated category includes people who have basic education. This category of people cannot competently utilize ICT tools because they can hardly read and write. UBOS 2005/2006 states that 31% of the population is illiterate most of whom living in rural areas. This segment of the population cannot read or write. Since all the ICT services are offered in English, they are excluded by default. These variations in education levels greatly affect the use and access to ICT services provided by the venues.

During this study, focus group discussion were held at each of the sites to cover the interesting feed back of all people; users and none user. This discussion was made quite informal to allow free discussion about the key issue of public access. Similarly, during data collection, the interviewers were purposively selected based on their ability to translate onsite each question within the questionnaire during the interview. Interviewers were also assigned sites depending on their ability to blend with the interviewees easily. The sample sites were broken down by region that is north, west, Central, south, east and west Nile to allow representative feedback from this inequity variable classes of people across the country.

Age

Age has been categorized as youth (18 – 30), adult (between 18 and 60) and elderly (over 60). The ability of the population to access information at the venues has been largely affected with the differences in age of individuals. The information age and the available information favors the youths who are energetic, literate, are average earners who by nature of their age are targeted by most facilities offering ICT services. The adult population in Uganda constitutes majority of the illiterates who have not benefited from the Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Universal Secondary Education (USE) government initiatives. Most campaigns about ICT usage has not focused on this category of the population as most of them are school oriented thus excluding them. This category constitutes majority of the working class which has to divide their time between work and family. This leaves little time for ICT adventure. By virtue of their age, this category has been excluded from ICT usage given the fact that majority cannot read and write. Their use of PACs is basically for social purposes. The ICT campaign targets the youth more than it does with the other groups.

During this study, focus group discussions were held at each of the sites to cover the interesting

feed back of all people; users and none user. This discussion was made quite informal to allow free discussion about the key issue of public access. The constitution of the groups had at least representatives from each of the inequitable variable. Where it was deemed useful, the focus group was conducted that focuses only to the inequity variable. Similarly, during data collection, the interviewers were purposively selected based on their ability to translate onsite each question within the questionnaire during the interview. Interviewers were also assigned sites depending on their ability to blend with the interviewees easily. The sample sites were broken down by region that is north, west, Central, south, east and west Nile to allow representative feedback from these inequity variable classes of people across the country.

Gender

Cultural barriers have rendered women sidelined to the kitchen than to the boardroom. Thus majority of the illiterate adults are women. This has thus left them with little chance of ICT access and usage. For purpose of this study, women organizations and key informants supporting ICT centres were interviewed. Equally focus group discussions that specifically focus on women were formed and interviewed. To equally control gender biases throughout the process of the research the research team and the interviewees were both male and female. Depending on the condition of the interview environment women interviewers were selected to conduct the interview.

Location

This is a good place to offer further details on the urban/peri-urban/non-urban definitions and relevance in your country, among other location variables.

Research findings indicate that most PACs especially those with ICT services are located in the urban or semi urban centres. This leaves out the bigger population that stays in rural areas who have to travel long distances to access the ICTs. According to http://earthtrends.wri.org/pdf_library/country_profiles/pop_cou_800.pdf

“**Urban** and **Rural** areas are defined by parameters that vary slightly from country to country. Many countries define an urban area by the total number of inhabitants in a population agglomeration. Typically the threshold for considering a region urban is between 1,000 and 10,000 inhabitants. Any person not inhabiting an area classified as urban is counted in the rural population”.

It should also be noted that most communities that are ranked as urban are actually rural in the broader sense depending on their relative position to the capital Kampala and availability of social services. However, for purposes of this research the government’s definition of urban was taken, which presumes any main city of a district as urban. During this research sites to be visited were selected strategically to include facilities in each of the venue that are operating in the regions of; west, central, east, north, west Nile and south. This was purposively down to control the biases that can be introduced into the study results due to the wide definition of the urban and rural.

Other inequity variables

Other Inequity Variable 1: Inequity Variable (if needed)

Other Inequity Variable 2: Inequity Variable (if needed)

Other Inequity Variable 3: Inequity Variable (if needed)

Data Gathering Techniques

Describe the different data gathering techniques you used to conduct this study. Provide specific examples and sample selection criteria.

Literature review

Describe the type and approximate number of documents reviewed. Include detailed references of the most useful ones. Include valid links for all online sources.

60 numbers of documents reviewed.

The documents that were reviewed included, reports on public library and telecentres, PAC policy documents and laws in the country, previous researches conducted by the National bureau and the regulatory bodies, and useful website reports and articles.

Most useful bibliography:

Sarah Parknison, Telecentre Access and Development, Experience and Lessons from Uganda and South Africa (2005), (ITDG publishers Buorton hall, Bourton –on-Dunshomore, Warwickshire CV239QVZ, UK) Fountain

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Government of Uganda. Local Government Act, 1997. Kampala: Law Development Centre LDC, 1997. Part 1**

Government of Uganda. Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (2001)

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Ikoja-Odongo, J.R. (2002) A study of information needs and uses of the informal sector of

Ikoja-Odongo, J.R. (2...) Use of ICTs in African public library

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Board, Report on Evaluation of the Functional Adult Literacy
Programme in Uganda.(1999)**

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Parvyn-Wamahiu*
CODESRIA/IDRC 2003**

http://earthtrends.wri.org/pdf_library/country_profiles/pop_cou_800.pdf

Access to information Act

Records and Archive Act

Uganda Vision 20-25

The Local Governments Act 1997

copy right Act

E- policy

E- government

The East African Bureau

www.ubos.org

<http://naads.org.ug>

www.idrc.ca/ Sarah Parkinson, Telecentre Access and Development, Experience and Lessons from Uganda and South Africa (2005),

<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/EDIS-7BSR93?OpenDocument>

www.jobs.co.ug

<http://www.ucc.co.ug/rcdf/default/php>

http://www.nlu.go.ug/nlu_act.pdf

<http://easlis.mak.ac.ug/projects/strategicplan.pdf>

www.ugabytes.org

Individual interviews

Describe the type and approximate number of individuals you interviewed. Include detailed contact information for the most useful ones (indicate for which topic, if appropriate). Discuss how representative is this sample of people you interviewed in relation to different opinions and perspectives in the country.

241 Phase II and 69 Phase I; number of individuals interviewed.

Describe

The interviews include key informants, experts, PAC users and non users and managers, policy makers and focused Inequity NGO leaders. The sampled cover about

Group interviews and focus groups

Describe the type and number of group interviews or focus groups you conducted. If available, include detailed contact information for the most useful informants (indicate for which topic, if appropriate).

30 number of group interviews or focus groups.

FGDs were conducted most of the views especially during the first phase of the research. The FGDs were done to obtain feed back from inequity groups and groups that were more homogenous. The group discussions had 8 to 12 members.

Site visits

Describe the number and location of site visits you conducted. If available, include detailed contact information for the most useful informants (indicate for which topic, if appropriate).

76 that is 35 in Phase II and 21 phase I and 20 Key informant interviews number of site visits.

The sites mainly included telecentre, community library and public library facilities. In addition visits were made to regulatory bodies including the public libraries board, NGO parent organizations to PACs and those dealing with inequity variables, Uganda Communication Commission, UNESCO national commission, Ministry of Gender, Makerere university faculty of Information and librarianship, and networks supporting the PACs.

Surveys

Describe the location and number of respondents to surveys you conducted for this study. Indicate their relative distribution across venues (for example, 30% in telecentres, 20% in cybercafés, 50% in public libraries), and how they were selected.

Describe the venues, their locations and the sample size for each:

	Public Libraries	Telecentres	Community Libraries	Venue 4
# of urban venues surveyed	13	6	2	
# of non-urban venues surveyed	Nil	5	9	
# of respondents in urban venues	138	24	12	
# of respondents in non-urban venues		26	41	

Survey description and comments:

The survey represents Phase II research only. During the survey process, some PACs were visited at hours when the users where still working outs in there fields. And because the interviewers could not wait for another day; they had to visit the users from their hours.

Other data gathering techniques

Other Data Gathering Technique 1: Questionnaires

The research covered the whole country Uganda; we conducted a survey in the first phase of the research covering regions; Central, Southern, Western, Eastern and some parts of Northern region of the country trying to identify information needs of the underserved people in the communities, public access to information and communication venues and the role of ICT in Uganda. The research was conducted in two phases; each phase required designing data collection instruments targeting specific categories of people.

The instruments were designed following the required structure in the report. Three sets of questionnaires were developed, targeting three different categories of people. One set of questionnaires targeted key informants, people knowledgeable in ICT from the Government and organizations with ICT initiatives. Another set of questionnaires targeted telecentres and public library staffs, the last set of questionnaires targeted users of the venues. This technique provided us with a clear picture of information needs of the underserved in the community, an overall environment of PACs and the role of ICT in the community.

Other Data Gathering Technique 2: Observation

This tool was used in the time of data collection when we observed the usability of the venues we visited during the time. One could tell which category of people accessed information from the venues, the type of information most accessed and frequency of visits. An observatory checklist was developed which was used to collect information. It was also helpful in putting up the case story for each venue.

Other Data Gathering Technique 3: Unobtrusive method of data collection

We used this method of data collection to enable us go through public, community libraries and telecentre records to find out the number and frequency of people accessing information in the venues, the category of people utilizing the venues and the type of information most accessed in case such information was fully recorded.

Most useful contacts

List here some of the most knowledgeable and useful contacts that can provide additional information and insight, in case someone else wants to gather additional information about this topic in the country.

Robert Lugolobi
Uganda National Commission for UNESCO
Program officer/ information and communication
2nd floor Embassy House
King George VI way
P.o box 4962, Uganda

Professor Ikoja-Odongo, J.R.

East African School of Library & Information Science

Makerere University

Kampala, Uganda

E-Mail: Robert_ikoja@yahoo.com

Kate Parry

Chairperson Uganda Community Library Association

Founder Kitenges community Library

Bob lyazi

Director Rural Communications Development Fund

Uganda Communications Commission

blyazi@ucc.co.ug

Stella Bossa Nekuusa

Principal Librarian

National library of Uganda

Buganda Road

P.o.Box 4262

Kampala-Uganda

E-mail: library@imul.com

Peter Balaba

General Manager

Nakaseke community multimedia centre and Library

Muhangi Benard

Kabarole public library

Kabarole public library

+256-782-404960

Kijura Rural community library

Tibenderana Betty

Librarian

+256-755/782-324857

Rita Mijumbi Epodoi

Executive Director

UDS

mmijunbi@yahoo.com

Research Trustworthiness and Credibility

2-3 paragraphs

Describe any steps you took to minimize your own bias in conducting this study, and to increase the credibility and trustworthiness of the results you are presenting.

We had already identified the types of venues in the country where the research was to be conducted we then divided them according to regions for selections. Then the team was divided according to regions: Central, Southern, Western, Eastern and Northern parts of the country, so that the data that was to be collected reflected the feelings and entire state of Public Access to Information in Uganda.

When selecting the venues we visited: public libraries, community libraries and telecentres, we used multi stage cluster sampling technique as the research covered the whole of Uganda. We employed this technique to enable us get a good representation of the sample and also depending on the degree of accuracy required in the analysis, time and the urgency of the findings. A map of Uganda divided into regions was used as our primary sampling units such that all regions in the country were equally represented. From the regions we listed all districts which we used as our sampling units then a final sample was picked from the districts. Twenty one districts were randomly selected which included: Arua, Wakiso, Jinja, Kabale, Kabarole, Kamuli, Lira, Masaka, Mbale, Mbarara and Mubende. Others included were: Kampala, Nebbi, Tororo, Mpigi, Nakaseke, Mayuge, Mukono, Kayunga, Mityana and Apac.

However, for security reasons in the Northern region of the country we purposively omitted some districts from the sample. For instance Gulu, Moroto, Pader, Abim, Kaabong, Nakapiripirit, Kotido, Amuru, and Kitgum districts were not included in the sampling unit.

Research limitations

Describe important limitations you encountered in conducting this research, and limitations in drawing generalizations or broader conclusions based on the findings you report.

During time of data collection; we encountered different problems. It was a rainy season where we had to move in the field yet again wait for the respondents who were very few in the venues we visited. We had to wait and spent a whole day in one centre before proceeding to the next venues. Our connections to the next venues were mostly done in the evenings to enable us start conducting interviews early in the opening hours of the next day as most venues were apart a distance of 60 to 80kms and more. This came with an inconvenience of traveling late in the night.

Some venues were closed during the time of data collection for instance Buwama and Kawolo MCTs; we had to make phone calls every time and again until the operators came later in the day, this meant that also the respondents were interviewed later in the day while some of the

respondents were interviewed from their homes. Whereas most venues had very few respondents which made us spend the whole days in one centre. Some operators were non respondents; they deliberately refused to let out information. We had to make revisits three times until they completely refused to respond to the questionnaires.

It was a tricky environment, some respondents hoped to get facilitated in cash before they responded to the questionnaires. It was after we thoroughly explained to them about how the research would ultimately benefit their centres through identifying their information needs and the role ICT could play in their community that they responded. However, in some venues the operators were either sick or had sick relatives they were attending to. We had to phone call them for proper directions to enable us meet them in the exact places they were located. It's worth mentioning that some venues had no proper directions and could not be easily accessed, for instance BROSDI telecentre in Mayuge district could not be traced because the people in the town centre did not know of its existence.

For security reasons in the Northern region of the country we purposively omitted some districts from the sample. For instance Gulu, Moroto, Pader, Abim, Kaabong, Nakapiripirit, Kotido, Amuru, and Kitgum districts were not included in the sampling unit.

Team qualifications

Ndaula Sulah was the primary project contact. A 32-year management and rural communication specialist, has rich experience working for and promoting rural public access in East Africa and beyond. He started telecentre work in 1998/9 as a content development researcher for UNESCO established telecentres in Uganda, were after he helped to co-found UgaBYTES, a not for profit telecentre support network, in 2000. Since then he has served as the portfolio coordinator and Executive Director of the network. His tenure at the top job, since 2005, has initiated and directed five major ICT4D research works worth over US\$ 600,000. He has conceptualized and directed; the online English telecentre helpdesk and support centre (3-year research project, *six months to complete*), the integration of community based organizations in the activities of telecentre programs (1 year research project, *completed*), Catalyzing Online Collaboration and Information Exchanges across the Telecentre Community (2-year partnership research project between telecentre.org and UgaBYTES, *six month to complete*). He has lead several monitoring and evaluation processes, ICT readiness studies and content development processes in Uganda.

He has also initiated, mentored and facilitated the establishment of Kenya Network of Telecentres - KenTel, Rwanda Telecentre Network - RTN, Tanzania Telecentre Network - TTN and the Telecentre Times, a global telecentre newspaper. He has been key in organizing several East African, African and global telecentre gatherings with the responsibility of teaming up for setting the agenda, selection of participants and initiating and facilitating pre-event e-discussions. This has given him extensive presentation on a number of telecentre subjects including; sustainability, management, performance improvement, content generation, stakeholder management, connectivity, knowledge sharing and conflict resolution.

He has developed special skills in partnership development and developing quick lists and

functional synergies of key informants, NGOs and government departments involved in ICT4D. He has strong interviewing and guided observatory skills involving key informants and site audit, Focus group discussions and observatory checklists and managing data from qualitative and quantitative sources. He equally has proficiency working with English language including writing, editing, listening and spoken. He is competent in coordinating, facilitating and mentoring cross board, formal and informal groups using face-to-face and online methods.

He holds a Masters degree in management studies, Postgraduate diploma in project planning and management of Uganda Management Institute and Bachelors of Science Degree in Agriculture, majoring in rural communication of Makerere University.

Other key research team members

Nasikye Esther, research teammate. A 26- year, communication and human resource specialist, has rich experience supporting telecentres and conducting different research. She is quite handy in interviewing and impact case analysis. Her main area of specialist in the telecentre movement is knowledge sharing an orientation that has given her experience handling and dealing with people within the Telecentre movement. She has organic application of web 2.0 tools within the telecentre movement. She has perennial experience working with ICT tools for development ranging from main stream newspaper and commercial radio as reporter and editor, to community radio and telecentres as a researcher, editor and trainer. Since inception, she has been the lead editor of the Telecentre Times. She is the Community Content Facilitator for a parallel partnership research project between telecentre.org and UgaBYTES that aims to strengthen the telecentre movement in East, Central and Southern Africa by promoting, encouraging and engaging them, to access, utilize, collaborate and share content and knowledge resources through the use of a vibrant community web site consisting of Web 2.0 tools, resources and social networks amongst the telecentre communities at global, continental, regional and national level. She is also key in the online English helpdesk and support centre research project.

She holds a post Graduate Diploma in Human Resources Management of Uganda Management Institute and Bachelor of Science in Mass Communication of the Islamic University in Uganda. She has special communication skills; writing for communication, Public Relations, broadcast and photo journalism and communication skills. She is also a team player with partnership development strength.

Sarah Nalwoga, research team. A 37-year sociologist and a management specialist is a decade of building and maintaining relationships with PAC within Uganda and East Africa as a researcher at UgaBYTES. Her natural interest as a trainer and applied researcher has helped several telecentres pick up their performance to success. She has been core in the success of the online English helpdesk and support centre project and several content development processes and the ongoing M&E processes.

She has strength in using Gender Evaluation Methodology tools, Participatory Project Identification and Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, Lobbying and Mobilization of Interests, Participatory Research Methodologies including interviewing, FGDs and observatory means, Report Writing and Environment management.

She holds a Post Graduate Diploma in Project Planning and Management of Uganda Management Institute and Bachelor of Arts degree majoring in Sociology and Religious Studies of Makerere University.

Others included; Robert Kibirango Social Scientist and researcher and Lwanga Kulsum ICT engineer with experience working in telecentre management. These were instrumental during literature review and data collection processes.

Country Assessment

Overall Country Assessment

Provide a broad picture of the public access information landscape in the country, informed by the results of this research. In 2-3 paragraphs, what is your overall assessment of public access information venues in this country?

According to the National Libraries Policy 2006, Ugandan people need information to acquire skills to improve their livelihoods, know their rights to demand for services and actively participate in governance, prevent diseases and support educational programmes through widening education and learning opportunities in order to address poverty. On the other hand majority of the respondents from vulnerable group support organizations noted that communities need information on women empowerment, HIV and AIDS, Agricultural production and marketing information, food security, employment, weather forecast and entrepreneurship. They also reiterated the need for education materials. The respondents at PACs called for the need for multimedia local content. PACs in Uganda as incorporated in the study fall under three major categories: Public libraries (PLs), Community libraries (LCs) and Multipurpose Community Telecentres (MCTs).

There are 30 public libraries in the country situated at district level all initiatives of the Government. They were started to promote research and education with a target of the whole community. Community libraries are currently about 36. ICTs in this venue, its still new and the only 10% of the facilities have adopted the tools. Unlike public libraries they are not run on public funds. They are mainly individual initiatives or funder's initiative. They are also more open to disadvantaged groups at community level and their main aim is to focus on the challenges faced in the community.

Multi-Purpose telecentres are about 144 in number and unlike CL and PL they have a wider range of ICT tools with more integration into multimedia resources including online resources. They are mainly rural based originally initiatives of the community but with time are supported by different groups like; The Government through Rural Communication Development Fund (RCDF) and Foreign funding through respective NGOs. However, CL, PL and MCTs were all purposively established to provide information to disadvantaged groups; the ones that don't find ease in accessing the general information as a whole on their own. They have played the role of an inspirer, interactor, educator, empowerer and connector of communities to those few that are aware of them. "With all this need Government support is mushrooming but it has had a bad reception from the Librarians who seem not to have a joint voice for their needs", J.R. Ikoja-Odongo

Real Access Framework

Summarize the key findings and your assessment of each dimension in the Real Access framework used in this study. You will provide more details later.

Access

What is your overall assessment of ACCESS ecosystem in the country (physical access, appropriate technology, affordability)?

The government and policy makers have had tireless efforts to close this gap by promoting the expansion of Telecommunication and technical services throughout the country through the use of Private sector. Challenges like electricity, bad roads, connectivity costs and the poor economic status of many remain a big obstacle to real access. It should be noted, however, that internet use and penetration is still very poor at less than 7%. Technological appropriateness is just average with very limited integration of the technology with the needs of the clients and the communities.

The government has been in efforts to see that the whole country accesses the necessary facilities like radio, phone, and television networks, electricity and resource centers. The usage and access of technology is still limited to highly literate groups in the community. Technology services and equipment costs are still high starting from the purchasing, maintenance, running and even usage. Although, the government waived taxation on any computer importation most people still think the taxation waiver is limited and does not covered the accessories. Connectivity still relies on satellite solutions which are expensive especially during lifecycle costing. High cost of the technology and services provided by the venues was highlighted as the most critical limitation to access and usage of ICTs.

Capacity

What is your overall assessment of CAPACITY ecosystem in the country (human capacity, locally relevant content, integration into daily routines, socio-cultural factors, trust in technology, social appropriation of technology)?

Trained human Capacity is inadequate and insufficient with the increasing discoveries of what available technology can support every other day. Labour mobility from non urban to urban for developed skills is also high making consistent technical support for all the venues a major obstacle to technology use .The public seeks technology only when its considered to benefit their lives directly and the bigger percentage of people are not yet aware of the need to use ICTs.

The locally relevant content which is technologically supported is not yet up date and the thirst to see many venues implementing such is felt. Other than MCTs that have community radios where a big impact of information sharing is felt on a magnificent level, other venue types have not yet inverted any technology aspect to effectively touch the lives of the community. With no much success to use technology based material to suit the local needs, this has seen to the use of other paper materials to satisfactorily deliver community needs.

People are appreciating the need to see technology in PACs. The upcoming cafes, radio-television usage, data based managements in hospitals and organizations, computerized bank services and government entities are seen as daily integration of technology into the daily routines. This appreciation has yielded to the promoting of technology to the disadvantaged communities through these venues.

In Uganda, the social cultural factors have resulted in unequal adaptation of different sex to Technology access and usage. The old believe they are for the young and women being occupied with house hold

demands and not allowed to experience some aspects like studying technical studies which are regarded to be manly.

Trust in technology varies widely especially with the nature of the users. Confidence for Technology equipments and usage has not been so high for new users as they believe that it is easy for a third party to access their information online and those machines affect their health. A big number, especially in non urban, has shunned from ICT tools and they believe they affect their eyes and thinking, which is the aim of the white man in manufacturing them. On the other hand the managers in some public libraries believe that ICTs have diverted users from the use of public libraries. However, overall, Public Access centres are trusted venues for accessing information especially with the reality that non urban places have got no alternative source of information.

When the communities transform to appreciate the abilities of networking, emailing, improved modern agriculture, digitized information, blogs and wikis, we can start to experience the social appropriation of the technology available. Though more sensitization of the community is still needed to build the critical mass of users.

Environment

What is your overall assessment of the ENVIRONMENT ecosystem in the country (local economy, national economy, legal and regulatory framework, political will and public support, regional and international context)?

Uganda's large population, about 87%, lives in rural areas and all depending on agrarian activities for earning. Over 37.7% lives below national poverty line and 3.2% completely unemployed. The total government income is US\$ 1.758 billion with an expenditure of US\$ 1.984 billions. Economically many communities are unable to access ICTs on their own. Additionally, the electricity and phone sectors are still poor at only 8.9% of the populations connected to electricity and 0.36% to landline telephony. Local governments are unable to support ICTs especially with the scraping off of graduated tax, which used to be the major source of income to most local councils.

PAC is influenced by a number of environment factors especially with the broader framework of venues under study. There are well developed laws within the public and community libraries in the country that regulate the use of public libraries. However, presently the National Library does not have an ICT strategy or policy. But an ICT policy within the context of the National Library Policy, under the Social Sector Development Plan, is being developed. The policy will guide the deployment of ICTs and ICT services with the National Library facilities. Additionally, laws like the Journalist statue, copy right Act, Access to information Act, Records and Archive Act, E- policy, E- government are in place to regulate the deployment, usage and flow of information in the country. The National ICT policy has for long not been passed, upto date it is still at the cabinet. However, some sectors have already developed the sector policies using the draft policy. The Rural Communication development program is one such policy fund managed by Uganda Communication Commission (UCC) to improve the working environment for private investors in rural communities. Uganda enjoy good political will for the use of ICTs for economic enhancement. The president has been central in all the processes, which inspired him to institute both state minister and full minister of ICTs. Through his involvement and belief in ICTs he waived the taxation on importation of computers about three years ago and this commitment has been sustained in subsequent financial years. At regional level, the country has collaborated with the governments of the Eastern African region to build the underground cable that is anticipated to bring down connectivity costs in the country. Already the national terrestrial cable framework has been

constructed in a bigger part of the country. Other international initiatives including ITU, IDRC, World bank, NEPAD and many others have supported in-part the roll out of ICTs for development.

Uganda is one country that believes that ICTs is one way of closing the digital gap between the poor and the higher social class. The campaign to motivate the usage and introduction of ICTs has seen the country through different blends of success in different sectors.

Information Needs of Underserved Communities

Describe the specific information needs experienced by underserved populations, based on the results of your research. Who could benefit from better public access to information? This could relate to e-government services, health or agriculture information, job training, employment search, among many others. Include reference to the key inequity variables in your country.

- (i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.
- (ii) Indicate the sources of data for this assessment

Ugandan people basically need information to acquire skills to improve their livelihoods, know their rights to demand for services and actively participate in governance, prevent diseases and support educational programmes. The information falls under several major areas, which are important for national development and equitable inclusion.

Agriculture

Over 70% of Uganda's population depends on agriculture (UNHS report 2006/2007 page 31). Of these the Uganda population and housing census report (2002) states that 67.9% are involved in subsistence farming. In all the venues visited, agricultural information was ranked first among the information that the above named groups in the community would need. The government has put a lot of emphasis in developing the agricultural industry however it is allocated only 3% of the annual budget. Respondents envisaged that agricultural information if accessed will go a long way in helping the farmers and improving the economy of the country which also depends on the same. Most public information venues visited however did not have sufficient information on agriculture and most of what existed was in English. There was very little or no information at all in the local dialect. Respondents especially in public and Community libraries and telecentres noted that this leaves out most farmers who are rural based and cannot read and write. Even less was in digital form.

Women empowerment

Respondents noted that for women to be uplifted in society, they need information that can help in their empowerment. This could be economically to improve their income levels or socially to uplift their status in the society. The study findings indicate that there is need for women to be provided with information that they can use to empower themselves and improve their income, status, and social security. This could range from information on budgeting, opening up self help projects, HIV and AIDS, domestic violence, agriculture.

HIV and AIDS

Uganda has over 6.7% of the population infected by HIV and AIDS. There are also many people affected by the pandemic. As a result, the government through the Ministry of Health has tried to raise awareness through promoting publications in public libraries, telecentres and other public access

centers. However, most of the information available is in English with very little in local languages despite the fact that most of the population can not read and write. However, unless one goes to the health centers, they cannot get this information anywhere and even less information is available in digital form. Respondents said a lot more information needs to be availed in digital form.

Food security

According to <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/EDIS-7BSR93?OpenDocument>, households in Northern Uganda are moderately food insecure. The most affected districts are Amuria, Katakwi, and Lira districts, where flooding in 2007 damaged first-season crops and prevented a second-season harvest. The same reports quotes that about 30,000 households (200,000 people) will require food assistance between January and June/July 2008. However, respondents noted that information on food security is of paramount importance if the nation is to avoid such issues as hunger and famine and also in improving the social security of women. Whereas 80% of the country is food secure currently, there is need for more information on food security to avoid any disasters like hunger and famine. Respondents said there is need for improved dissemination of the information if it is to reach the targeted population.

Employment search

The Government of Uganda developed the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) with the overall objective of reducing extreme poverty to less than 10% by the year 2017. The extent of the employment problem has long been recognized as a serious issue in the country's efforts to reduce poverty according to the Uganda National Household Survey (UNHS) 2005/06 (page 25). The same survey indicates that about 97% of the population is employed, but still people cannot afford ICT services because most of them engage in activities because they are poor and they have to work to earn a living even if it means earning less than one dollar a day. PACs have very limited information on job opportunities and most of the opportunities available are only those in urban areas and very little is locale specific. Thus with ICT services availed, there is hope for people to search and access better employment opportunities far and beyond their community and region. Most of would be targeted population doesn't have access to it because they cannot afford newspapers on a daily basis.

Education

According to the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), education is a key component of human capital quality that is essential for higher incomes and sustainable economic growth. It is also recognized as an essential ingredient in poverty eradication. The Uganda Population and Housing census (2002), states that education is not only fundamental for well-being, but also a fundamental human right. Education is crucial for poverty eradication, as it equips the population with the information and the ability to make informed choices. The government has put in place mechanisms to ensure Ugandans attain education. Since the establishment of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1997, enrollment in primary schools has drastically risen from around three million pupils in 1997 to about 7.5 million in 2003 and over 7.6 million in 2005/06 according to UNHS survey (2005/06). The government also sponsors about 2000 students every year to the university and for over a year it has implemented the universal secondary education. However, the teacher to pupil ratio remains very low while the secondary school presence and penetration remains very poor especially for rural communities. This offers an opportunity for designing online schools that can allow learners access tutors, resources and mentors online but in national curriculum thus ICT support to Uganda's pedagogical system remain a real need.

Weather forecast

With over 70% of the population employed in the agricultural sector (UNHS 2005/2006), respondents underscored the importance of weather forecasts to the population. Respondents noted that usually the targeted population misses out on the information. Most of the broadcasts are also made in English and on national media, whose reach is still inadequate. The study findings indicate that there is a need for the government's metrological centre to put more effort in distributing information on the weather forecasts through all information access points in the country.

Entertainment

Respondents noted that there are limited and yet costly recreational activities throughout the country. This has left majority of the population redundant and thus engaged in activities that may be detrimental to their health especially social vices including prostitution, drug abuse among others. Most of the respondents hoped that with access to better entertainment activities through computers and provision of leisure reading materials in libraries, this could help to reduce the social vices.

Entrepreneurship

According to Uganda Investment Authority, Uganda's investment culture is still low. Information on investment opportunities in the country is largely for the foreign investors. The few people who access computers and internet have benefited from it but it excludes majority of the population.

Source: Key informants, Literature review, Users and managers interviews, site observations and the internet.

Information sources

4.2b) What are the current sources for this kind of information in the country? Are these sources adequate (current, appropriate to the population, etc.) In sum, does the locally-relevant content exist?

- (i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.
- (ii) Indicate the sources of data for this assessment

Agriculture

Currently the source of information on agriculture is from the Ministry of Agriculture which puts some of the information at the district and sub-country headquarters where it is envisaged that the general public can access it. There are NGOs that are specifically involved in developing content on agriculture, which include CTA, Environmental alert, [Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns \(VEDCO\)](#) and many others.

Women empowerment

Currently such information is obtained from the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD). Whereas there are many NGO's targeting the empowerment of women, respondents noted that they don't send information at the grassroots.

HIV and AIDS

Nongovernmental organizations like The Aids Support Organization (TASO) have been very instrumental in creating awareness through producing publications that are circulated at all district Aids

Information Centres(AIC). These are the most common sources of information on HIV and AIDS. The Ministry of Health (MoH), Straight Talk and TASO, and other governmental departments have circulated the above information at hospitals and health centers in the rural areas. USAID and American mission has been quite instrumental in packaging and disseminating HIV and AIDS information.

Food security

Currently there is a limited source for this information. The available sources currently are: the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries. Most of this information is English. A few publications on Food security were found in libraries while community telecentres had no information related to the subject.

Employment search

Also a government website www.jobs.co.ug is dedicated to publishing job opportunities in the country. Whereas public libraries offer free access to newspapers, they are located in the urban centers meaning rural people have to travel long distances to access the information. Leading newspapers also have the information posted on their websites but respondents noted that only a small segment of the population can access the internet. The current internet penetration is put at less than 7% of the population.

Education

Whereas over 30 libraries are scattered in different districts in Uganda, few schools have libraries to support the government's initiatives on Universal Primary and Secondary Education. So the main source of information remains the teachers who also have few areas from where to carry out their research. The Ministry of Education has tried to equip school libraries with books but these are not sufficient enough to cover the growing number of enrolled students. Public and community libraries need to be equipped with relevant books to cover the deficit.

Weather forecasts

The current source of this information is the Metrological centre which distributes information through radio and television stations. However, most of these cover only a small radius in the country.

Entertainment

Currently very little information on entertainment is accessible to the population. Most of this comes through the media.

Entrepreneurship

The current sources for information on entrepreneurship are the Uganda Investment Authority and NGOs.

Source: Key informants, Literature review, Users and managers interviews, site observations and the internet.

Key barriers to accessing the information that underserved communities need

Are the people who could benefit from this information getting access to it? Why or why not (e.g. content exists but not in the right language, print media exists but has not been distributed appropriately, digital media is available but people do not have access points, etc.)?

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The challenges facing Ugandans in trying to access information at the centers are many and every other day more of them develop. Some challenges are not individual based but are a result of the complications at the centres. And according to government policy (White Paper on Education 1992), rural communities are supposed to use school libraries where they exist. This policy runs into trouble as most of these schools don't have library facilities and the few which have them lack adequate materials.

“But in addition a larger percentage of the population is not enthusiastic about reading and there is a general apathy towards (and lack of awareness of) the role of information in development and a poor information infrastructure (Ikoja-Odongo 2002).”

General challenges

- Distance from the center
- The material is western oriented
- The local publishing industry not fulfilling the requirement of depositing papers with the Library
- Funds to help in promoting the needs of the venues for smooth running not enough.
- Lack of marketing the libraries and community engagement activities
- There is no reading culture in the whole country.
- Poverty of the community influences most of the decisions of the would be users.
- Multi- lingual affect the flow of information to the grassroots levels where its needed most.

ICT challenges

- Diffusion is low
- Skills for the employees almost non existence
- lack infrastructure to take ICTs to villages
- maintenance costs
- Consumables are expensive
- Information illiteracy
- Information consciousness

Source: Key informants, Literature review, Users and managers interviews, site observations and the internet.

Ways users experience different types of public access venues

Based on responses to the open question in user surveys, how do users experience different types of public access venues? Are there any trends or preferences for kinds of information, services or activities in one type of venue over another?

Most users noted that internet cafés are more organized compared to libraries although on the other hand libraries have more references. Most respondents also noted that community libraries lack books and most of the available resources don't adequately address school needs. Especially as compared to school libraries and public libraries. Respondent also preferred internet cafes over telecentres with a specific reflection on connectivity speed, space and reliability in opening and use of a generator when power goes off.

Inequity environment in the country

2-3 paragraphs

What does inequity look like in the country? Using the inequity variables described in section **Error! Reference source not found.**, provide a short overview of the main underserved groups, regions and/or other locally-appropriate segments of the population.

- (i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Disabled

The Uganda National Household Survey 2005/2006 (page 130) states that generally Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) are vulnerable by virtue of their impairment and negative societal attitudes arising from fear, ignorance and lack of awareness. Accessing mainstream programmes remains a challenge for PWDs, as a result of negative attitudes which often lead to social exclusion and marginalization.

According to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) and statistics carried out by the National Union of Disabled Persons (NUDIPU) the Western region had the highest proportion of people with difficulty with arms (10.4 percent). The Northern region had the highest percentage of cases with serious problems with the back spine, hearing problems, epilepsy and rheumatism. The Eastern region had the highest proportion of cases with sight problems while the Central region had the highest proportion of persons with difficulty with legs and persons with mental problems.

As regard digital ICT services, NUDIPU notes that people with disabilities especially those with visual impairment find a lot of difficulties in accessing ICT. For example, many of the internet cafes do not provide computer with JAWs software or Dolphin Pen that enables the blind to use the computers. These software are still expensive and may not be managed by individual PWDs thus deepening inequity condition.

Elderly

The Uganda National Household Survey report, 2005/06 (p.128) defines an older person in Uganda, as one who is aged 60 years and above. According to the same report, in Uganda, older persons are generally too weak to perform productive work and are economically dependent on others, i.e. children, relatives and neighbors to survive. Some of them are faced with challenges of looking after grandchildren especially orphans. Programs and policies for older persons are enshrined in the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (article 32) which states that "the state shall make reasonable

provision for the welfare and maintenance of the elderly”. Despite this effort, there is no explicit and comprehensive National Policy for the older persons to date to guide and ensure their sustainable protection and care, welfare and inclusion of older persons, in the national development process. Respondents noted the lack of proper social security systems as one of the main challenges that leaves the elderly vulnerable.

However, there is no available data on which region is most affected under this category. However, UNHS (2006/07) report states that one in every ten older persons lives in urban areas. Education characteristics show that more than half of the older persons had never been to school. Most public access centers visited had programs for the elderly but these included very little use of ICT services. Most elderly people come to PAC mostly for social interaction. This means they are still excluded from ICTs even at community level.

Women

According to the Uganda National Household Survey 2005/06 (page 113) differences in opportunities between men and women arise due to differences in education, work skills, ownership of assets, exposure, bargaining power and other characteristics. Women tend to be disadvantaged due to lack of the above mentioned qualities which sometimes are socially made. The research findings highlighted women as a disadvantaged group in the community. A respondent in Kamuli one of the most impoverished districts in the country noted that “even a poor man has a wife who is most likely poorer than him”.

A survey by MSF shows that 62% of disadvantaged women are found in Northern Uganda. In the venues visited, respondents noted that most women would not access information as they have to take care of the household chores, leaving them with little or no time to visit public access venues for information. Hence they continue being poor. UNHS report (2002) reports that education enables women to take advantage of gainful employment, participate in decision making, acquire information required to advance their rights and improve their health and well-being. Education equips women with the tools to take charge of their lives, without which, women can only dream of their emancipation. However this report notes that 63 percent of the persons who had never been to school were females meaning women still remain vulnerable. It is upon this backdrop that women are rated among the vulnerable group in the community.

Farmers

The Uganda National Household Survey 2005/06 (page 31) reports that over 70% of the working age population are engaged in agriculture and of these, 85% are found in the rural areas and are subsistence farmers. As such the government of Uganda has put up many initiatives like the Plan for modernization of Agriculture, National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) to support the growth of the agricultural sector, Poverty Eradication Action Plan to support the agricultural industry. However, respondents in the venues visited, noted that farmers are not able to access this information due to illiteracy challenges. Most of the materials available in the public and community access centres are in English. Since majority of the farmers are in the rural areas, it means they remain disadvantaged with or without ICT access.

Illiterates

Findings from the Uganda National Household Survey 2005/06 (page 19) indicate that overall, 20

percent of the population aged 15 years and above had never had any formal education. Most of these are found in the rural areas. The Northern region is the most affected because of a 20 year old civil war which has left many out of school. The Millennium Development Goal (MDG5) on Education is to achieve 100 percent enrollment of children 6–12 years by 2015. The government of Uganda has since 1997 thus come up with Universal primary and Universal Secondary Education Programmes to tackle the illiteracy issues. According to the UNHS survey, there has been an increase in the number of children enrolled in primary schools. Pupils enrolled in primary schools in 2005/06 were estimated at 7.6 million. Meaning the illiteracy issues have been tackled but this doesn't cater for the older population which has already been affected. There are few adult learning classes or centers. Respondents gave the above reasons to justify why they think illiterates are disadvantaged in the community. Meaning even with the availability of information access points and ICTs, they cannot still access the information because they cannot read and write.

The Poor

According to the UNHS survey (2005/2006), comparisons among different wealth groupings indicated that the richer people were more likely to be literate than the poor. From the venues we visited, some of the services like access to reading rooms and information is free however, taking materials from the venue requires one to pay a small amount. Also the venues are mostly located in urban areas meaning poor people in the rural areas have to travel long distances to access information and ICTs. They are completely left out as far as access to the internet is concerned because all venues charge fees for one to access computers and the internet.

Youths

Youths aged 1-30 years constitute 22% of the population according to the Uganda Population and Housing Census Report (2002), school attendance is very important in empowering and or building the young persons' capacity and increasing their participation and involvement in decision making, leadership, community based and other development Programmes.

However the percentage of those who had never attended school was highest (17 percent) among the Youth (18 – 30 years). This could be partly attributed to the fact that the majority in this age group never benefited from the Universal Primary Education programme. Respondents noted that most of these youths are idle and have no income generating activities that they engage in. They continue to be dependants on parents, majority of whom poor. This leads them into social vices including drugs, theft and prostitution. However, respondents noted that the information revolution which is attracting youths would assist them in making them better citizens. But once the access fees continue to be high as they are, then the youths remain disadvantaged.

Children

The constitution of the Republic of Uganda defines a child as any person under 18 years. According to the Uganda Population and Housing report (2002), a total of 3.2 million children were vulnerable at the time of the census. Thirteen percent of the children were orphans. About 7 percent of the children aged 5 – 17 years were child laborers. The report also shows that out of the 13.4 million children, 3.3 million (24 percent) were vulnerable, with minor variations by sex and residence. The variations by regions reveal that Moroto in Northern Uganda (60 percent) exhibited the highest proportion of vulnerable children followed by Nakapiripirit still in Northern Uganda (58 percent). Kapchorwa in Eastern Uganda had the lowest proportion with 15 percent of the children aged 0-17 years being vulnerable.

Respondents in the venues visited noted that children are dependants until the age of 18. But given the fact that they depend on poor parents who can hardly afford the necessities of life means they are most likely more disadvantaged. Also some of the Information access venues don't have information targeting children in particular. Most public libraries have sections for children, while others don't have the space specifically for them. Meaning as regards to access to information, children are still disadvantaged.

Internally displaced persons

The Northern part of the country has experienced a 20 year old civil war that has left many people displaced and living in concentration camps. According to the UNHS report (2005/2006), there were 114 camps in four districts namely: Pader, Kitgum, Gulu and Lira which make up the larger part of Northern Uganda. The total population resident in Internally Displaced Person (IDP) camps in 2005 was estimated to be about 1.4 million people in 294,994 households. Respondents in the Northern part of the country where these camps exist highlighted this group as a disadvantaged group that has barely access to the necessities let alone information. The lack of information has led to large majority of this segment to use mosquito nets as wedding gowns because they don't know their use as one respondent said.

Orphans

According to Uganda Population and Housing Census report (2002), an orphan is any child below 18 years who has lost one or both parents. The 1991 Census estimated the number of orphans to be 1.04 million, which was 11.6 percent of the total children's population. This has increased to 1.8 million in 2002 which was 13.1 percent of the total children in Uganda. Of all the orphaned children, about 345,000 (20 percent) had lost both parents (double orphans). The report indicates that the percentage of orphaned children was highest in the Central region (24 percent) as compared to the other regions.

Respondents noted that such children are forced into child labour to earn a living. But they also said that the availability of information in public access venues especially on self help projects would help this segment of the population into becoming self enterprising people. But respondents noted that most of these children drop out of school at an early age with no qualification. They remain illiterate and can barely afford fees to access information or ICTs at public access venues.

Freedom of press and expression and the right to information

What is the overall perception of freedom of press, censorship and right to information in this country?

There is a contrast in Uganda between a vocal and diverse press and the regular arrests and prosecutions of leading media figures. This results in part, the press laws which remain in the books, despite the constitutionally guaranteed right to freedom of the press. Respondents were caught in between as most noted that there have been numerous arrests of pressmen in the recent past. In 1995, the Press and Journalists Law came in effect after its adoption by the non elected National Resistance Council. The law requires all journalists to be licensed, and provides for a media council which monitors and disciplines journalists and editors.

While the media council is empowered to arbitrate disputes between the media and the State, to discipline journalists, and to regulate the conduct and promote good ethical standards and discipline of journalists, the government rarely resorts to the Council for the resolution of disputes with the media,

preferring to rely on criminal sanctions instead. The Press and Journalists Law of 1995 and the various criminal statutes such as sedition and criminal libel which are used against journalists are vigorously opposed by journalists as a limit on the freedom of the press.

Despite such policies and statutes as the Broadcasting policy, the Press and Journalist Statute, the Electronic Media Statute (1996) respondents noted that there are more journalists in the courtrooms than ever before.

Charts: Information Needs, Users, and Uses

Based on the results of your research (especially user surveys and interviews with librarians and operators), complete the required data to chart the information needs of underserved communities using the following examples. Provide any explanatory comments as needed.

Ethnicity (if appropriate)	Dominant	16.6	23.1	-	-	5.1	13.5	45.5	27.8	0.6	0	27.8	18.2		
	Basoga	10.8	1	-	-	4.5	13.5	4.5	1.9	3.8	0	1.9	0		
	Itesots	7.0	3.8	-	-	1.3	3.8	0	0	0	0	0	4.5		
	Ankole	5.7	5.8	-	-	0	0	9.1	3.7	0	0	3.7	0		

Source: survey

Comments, including comments on other inequity variables.

Caste was eliminated because social set up in Uganda are not arranged by castes.

Information People Seek, by type of venue

(estimated proportion in each category, %)	Public Libraries				Telecentres				Community Libraries				Venue 4			
	Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban	
	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	ICT use	General use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use
Education	66.1	36.8	-	-	11.3	29.8	29.6	23.0	6.5	7.0	41.0	25.9				
Health	5.4	5.3	-	-	1.8	5.3	14.8	6.6	1.8	1.8	11.5	7.4				
Agriculture	7.1	3.5	-	-	4.2	12.3	11.1	8.2	1.2	1.8	11.5	3.7				
Government services	6.0	1.8	-	-	1.2	3.5	7.4	3.3	0	0	0	0				
Entertainment	9.5	5.3	-	-	3.0	8.8	25.9	11.5	1.8	0	9.8	11.1				
News	41.7	28.1	-	-	8.3	22.8	14.8	13.1	4.2	7.0	23.0	22.2				
Personal	19.0	17.5	-	-	3.0	8.8	25.9	11.5	1.8	3.5	8.2	3.7				
Other			-	-												

Source: survey

Comments: (Include description of “other”. Suggested headings based on frequently reported topics in other research and may vary across countries).

describe

Uses of ICT, by type of venue

(estimated proportion in each category, %)	Public Libraries				Telecentres				Community Libraries				Venue 4			
	Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban	
	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	ICT use	General use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use
Email	10.7	31.6	-	-	10.1	31.6	37.0	16.4	1.8	5.3	9.8	22.2				
Chat	2.4	7.0	-	-	3.6	12.3	7.4	3.3	0.6	1.8	0	0				
Web browsing	5.4	19.3	-	-	6.5	21.1	7.4	3.3	2.4	7.0	3.3	7.4				
Blogs & social networking	1.2	3.5	-	-	1.2	3.5	0	0	0	0	1.6	3.7				
Commerce & business	2.4	7.0	-	-	5.4	15.8	18.5	8.2	0	0	8.2	18.5				
Phone or webcam	0	0	-	-	3.0	8.8	0	0	0	0	3.3	7.4				
Games	3.0	8.8	-	-	1.8	5.3	14.8	6.6	1.2	3.5	3.3	7.4				
Other																

Source: survey

Comments: (Include description of "other". Suggested headings not exhaustive, based on frequently reported topics in other research and may vary across countries).

describe

Frequency of Use for each type of venue

(estimated proportion in each category, %)	Public Libraries				Telecentres				Community Libraries				Venue 4			
	Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban	
	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	ICT use	General use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use
First visit	1.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Rarely (less than monthly)	3.0	1.8	0	0	0.6	1.8	3.7	1.6	0.6	0	3.3	0				
Occasional (about once a month)	4.8	3.5	0	0	1.2	5.3	7.4	4.9	0.6	0	3.3	0				
Regular (about 2-3 per month)	11.9	1.8	0	0	1.2	3.5	7.4	3.3	0	0	13.1	3.7				
Frequent (about once a week)	24.4	17.5	0	0	4.2	12.3	18.5	13.1	1.2	3.5	21.3	18.5				
Daily (about every day)	32.7	26.3	0	0	7.7	19.3	22.2	14.8	4.8	3.5	21.3	18.5				

Source: survey

Comments:

describe

Barriers to use for each type of venue

(estimated proportion in each category, %)	Public Libraries				Telecentres				Community Libraries				Venue 4			
	Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban		Urban		Non-urban	
	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	ICT use	General use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use	General use	ICT use
Location, distance	0.6	0	0	0	0.6	1.8	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Hours of Operation	1.2	0	0	0	0	0	3.7	3.4	0	0	0	0				
Cost	0	0	0	0	0.6	0	0	0	0	0	1.7	3.7				
Lack of skills/training	4.2	1.8	0	0	1.8	7.1	7.4	3.4	0.6	0	1.7	3.7				
Not enough services	10.2	16.1	0	0	5.4	14.1	18.5	13.8	0.6	0	20.7	18.5				
Not in right language	1.8	0	0	0	0	0	3.7	3.4	0.6	1.8	5.2	3.7				
Not enough content	35.9	10.4	0	0	1.2	3.6	0	0	1.8	1.8	8.6	0				
Other	24.0	21.4	0	0	5.4	16.1	25.9	15.5	3.6	3.6	22.4	11.1				

Source: survey

Comments: (Include description of “other”. Suggested headings not exhaustive, based on frequently reported topics in other research and may vary across countries).

Most categories under others included; No time, Congestion, Limited space, no seats, load shedding, noisy environment, outdated reading materials, lack of interest, no professional books, stopped by elders and no ICT services while that are related to ICTs noted; computer viruses, stopped by elders, load shedding, unreliable internet connections, congestion, limited time.

Salient initiatives to help meet critical information needs by underserved communities

What are the most salient initiatives in the country (past, ongoing, or planned) that aim to meet the information needs of underserved communities in the country? How important are they? In what ways are they successful or not? Where can more information about them be found?

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Past initiatives:

The starting point in the politics of public library in Uganda is traceable to the colonial times.

Uganda was a British protectorate from 1890s to 1962 when the country became independent.

During the British management of the Uganda affairs, it was established that there was a big problem of illiteracy. Policies could not be understood in a situation where people do not understand what they are supposed to do for lack of ability to read and write, and do some counting. The colonial government representatives who at that time regarded reading to be a stepping stone to civilization, which to them was a very important culture to introduce to the colonies, started public library services in Uganda.

The first public library in Uganda was set up in 1923 in Entebbe, first capital of Uganda, to provide reading services to expatriates. This status quo remained the same till the 1940's when the colonial government for the first time took positive recognition and responsibility to establish libraries nationwide. This action resulted from the growing feeling that rapid modernization of the territory largely depended upon an enlightened and educated population. So in 1944, Mrs. Elspeth Huxley was sent to East Africa to tour and recommend what the East African governments should do to improve the provision of books and magazines for the African reading public. Her report, published in 1945, became the basis for the establishment of public libraries in Uganda. This report recommended the setting up of the East African Literature Bureau.

More information:

Public library Politics: the Ugandan perspective, Ikoja-Odongo, J.R. ,2004

Ongoing initiatives:

(Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995) , The National Resistance Movement (NRM) government triggered off decentralization process in Uganda. The main objects of decentralization are to build a more democratic government that is responsive and accountable to the public, promote capacity building at the local level, and introduce local choice to the delivery of services, fostering a sense of local ownership. It is in that spirit that the Republic of Uganda Constitution 1995 provides under its national objectives and directive principles of state policy that: "Uganda shall be guided by the principles of decentralization and devolution of government functions and powers to the people at appropriate levels where they can best manage and direct their own affairs

More information:

The constitutional laws including; the constitution of Uganda 1995, the decentralization Act, National Libraries policy.

Historical trends and opportunities to serve information needs

Based on the above, what is the general trend in the country in relation to provision of public access information services? Are there any important upcoming opportunities (for example, upcoming regulatory changes, infrastructure enhancements, etc) that can impact public access information (include services through libraries and other public information venues)?

- i. If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

According to the National Library of Uganda, the trends in the delivery of public access to information services in Uganda have improved in the last five years as people are increasingly becoming aware of library operations. Most of the awareness has been created through Book Week festivals, workshops and debates. Every day the community becomes aware of what information they can acquire at public libraries and therefore their use as public libraries information delivery points in the country.

Initially there were few government schools in the country. With more private schools opening up with limited library services, the use of public libraries has become more popular. The decentralization of public libraries in the last five years has seen more the opening of sub branches at the sub county level which are the smallest political units than the district level.

Respondents from Community Multimedia telecentres underscored the importance of the campaign by nongovernmental organizations and the government to utilize facilities in the last five years which has led to the increase in the number of users. In the last five years, there has been increased use of ICT tools and the community has become more sensitized about ICTs.

The government, as the research findings indicate, has been very instrumental in ensuring improved delivery of information especially through ICTs. The creation of the Ministry of ICT in 2006 is just one step to fulfill this. However the Rural Communications Development Fund was put in place to ensure sustainable investments in the telecommunications sector which has led to improved access and delivery of information

Source: respondents, key informants, Government documentations.

Planned initiatives:

Community Multimedia telecentres, project that with the creation of the ICT ministry, more lobbying and advocating on usage of CMCs will lead to an increase in users. Respondents noted that if ICT and internet facilities are introduced at every library to supplement the existing services, it will go a long way in improving information delivery and access for Ugandans. With the RCDF program and policy in place, most respondents projected more ICT facilities opened at grassroots level.

The Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) report (2002) on the status of ICTs in Uganda states that the move towards globalization requires a fundamental shift in thinking about the methodology of education and underscores the importance of adopting ICT in the education sector.

Most important, transformation in education and learning requires a shift from the traditional methods where one confronts many learners with a textbook to a system where students learn through the use of various media such as: Computers, the Internet, videos, radios, newspapers, entertainment etc

The report projects that introduction of modern technologies to the education system in the country for example will create the opportunity for the best minds to exchange information across the world. Examples of innovative technologies used in the education process in developed and some developing countries include: Video conferencing and Multimedia applications

There was a general belief among the respondents that information service delivery will become more high-tech. With government scrapping off taxes on imported computers, respondents felt computers will be affordable for everyone to access. The Uganda Communications Commission and the Uganda Investment Authority (UIA) are wooing more investors in the virgin telecommunication sector. This is hoped to increase the number of service providers and lessen the cost of connectivity. With this in mind, respondents hoped that there will be more people accessing the internet. Research findings indicated that more people now have ICT skills meaning the number will have improved tremendously than it is now.

More information:

(UNCST) report (2002)

Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment

National and local economic environment

Describe the national and local economic environment and how it affects public access to information and communication in the country.

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The link between social change and communication has in the recent years become extremely prominent. PACs in Uganda are few and the initiative of the government to support them in this era is still new and just growing. The few projects in the selected venues by local and International funders boomed at a time of their installation but their performance declined when the funding closed.

The sustainability of technology at a community level are almost not there and the economic policies at the national level that affect wide spread taking of Technology in the country are just upcoming.

Trends:

The government is progressively succeeding at transforming the economy from being a public led to private sector led. Once this is achieved the government's role will remain that of creating good investment environment. The approach has already succeeded in sectors like education, partly health, telecommunication and banking.

Source: Literature review

National and local policy (legal and regulatory) environment

Describe salient features of the policy and regulatory framework in the country (and if applicable, locally) that affect delivery and access to information (e.g. censorship, Wi-Fi bandwidth regulation, etc). What is your assessment of the general trend on this matter?

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The National Information and Communication Technology Policy (2003)

This aims at facilitating a comprehensive and coordinated development of Uganda's ICT sector. The scope of the ICT Policy covers information as a resource for development, mechanisms for accessing information, and ICT as an industry, including e-business, software development and manufacturing. The policy looks at various categories of information from different sectors and is essentially aimed at empowering people to improve their living conditions. Some of the fundamental policy objectives under the ICT policy include:

- (a) To sensitize and create awareness among the general public and all stakeholders about the role of ICT in Uganda's development process.
- (b) To promote and enable the building and establishment of an appropriate infrastructure that supports ICT development and at the same time, achieve Universal Access in Uganda.
- (c) To promote fair competition and private investment in the ICT sector with particular emphasis on development and encouragement of local participation including specific incentives for investing in ICT.
- (d) To facilitate the broadest possible access to public domain information.
- (e) To provide for establishment of an enabling and desirable legal and regulatory framework that, among other things, takes into account the convergence of technologies.
- (f) To encourage and support Research and Development in ICT.

This policy has enabled the liberalization of the telecommunications sector which in turn has led to improved use of ICTs. UNHS (2005/2006) reports that nationally, close to half of the Communities reported having access to telephone as compared to one telephone for every 5000 people five years ago. The policy gives chance to more people to access information through information access points including libraries, post offices, and community telecentres among others.

Uganda Vision 20-25

The Uganda Vision 2025 provides the framework for planning the economic and social development needs for 25 years starting in 2000. It sets the long-term strategies and policy options derived from the National Long Term Perspective Studies (NLTPS) implemented through the various sectors.

The long term aspirations envision that by the year 2025 Uganda should; have attained a conducive macroeconomic environment; be a science and technology driven country; be a society that recognizes information as a national resource; have coordinated network of information sources, systems and services; and a modern, adequate and sustainable infrastructure among others.

It should be noted that Vision 20-25 does not have any specific focus on ICT, and the needs to support Vision targets are inferred rather than taken from the Vision 20-25 document. It is expected that Vision 2035 will take more specific cognizance of ICT both as an enabling sector and also as a specific economic sector.

The Big Push Strategy

Government identified Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as a crucial sector in Uganda's economic development when formulating the Big Push Strategy along with its associated

incentives in 2000. This led Government to declare ICT in 2001 as one of the eight sectors that were eligible for State intervention support to generate export revenues; The Strategic Export Program (SEP). Subsequently in 2002, VAT on computers was removed and in 2003, Cabinet approved the ICT Policy, which were some of the Big Bush Strategy recommendations. Other ICT activities under the SEP have included;

ICT outbound Missions to South Africa and the Silicon Valley California, organized for purposes of securing joint ventures, partnership, market support and industry matchmaking for Ugandan companies; Uganda Investment Authority has set in motion arrangements to set up an ICT Incubation Center to support the development of this industry;

As a result, more computers are imported into the country. Despite this, prices are still high. Explaining why according to the Uganda Communications Commission report on the Uganda Telecommunications Sector Policy Review report, only 3.5% of the population own personal computers.

The Rural Communications Development Fund policy

The Rural Communications Development Fund (RCDF) is Uganda's approach to implementing a Universal Access, which is a mechanism to motivate and mobilize the private sector to invest in Information and Communications Technologies within rural areas. The RCDF was established under the Rural Communications Development Policy 2001 and was officially inaugurated by the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) in 2003.

The RCDF is expected to harness the energies and interest of private telecommunications operators already active in the country to compete with one another, as well as to encourage new interested entrants to participate in the extension of services to poor rural areas. RCDF is a means of intervention to ensure that basic communications services of acceptable quality are accessible at affordable prices and at reasonable distances by all people in Uganda. It is meant to assist in areas where provision of commercial services is not feasible; to provide basic universal access; and to promote competition among operators. To implement the program, telecommunication service providers contribute 1% of their annual income to leverage investment rather than provide all the solutions. Projects supported by the RCDF include the district portals, multipurpose community telecentres, and public telephone booths. So far, two multipurpose telecentres, 53 internet cafes, 12 telecentres, three public pay phones and 53 ICT training centers have been established through this program <http://www.ucc.co.ug/rcdf/default/php>.

National library Act 2003

The National Library Act is an act to provide for the establishment of the National Library of Uganda, the depositing and preservation of publications, the setting up of an information referral Service and library co-ordination and to provide for other related matters.

The National Library of Uganda was established by the act of Parliament in 2003. The Act also decentralized public libraries hitherto run by the former Public Libraries Board to local governments, and left the responsibility of coordinating their development to the National Library of Uganda. It also repealed the National Library Act, 1964. The National Library of Uganda is responsible for policy formulation for public libraries in the country. The policy for library development in Uganda is that the National Library should be the apex of all libraries and public libraries should be developed at district

and sub county headquarters while communities can establish libraries wherever they feel there is need.

Library services cater for all members of the community including disadvantaged such as women, internally displaced persons, and persons with disabilities such as the blind and those confined in places for various reasons such as hospitals and prisons. The policy is to use all types of media to disseminate information in the libraries such as books, CD ROMs. Computers, videos, etc and encourage libraries to provide information materials that cater for those needs.

Libraries are generally accepted as good disseminators of public information. The only problem is that the majorities are located in urban centers at the moment and rural areas have very few library services. Mobile or book box library services that would cater for the rural areas are not available. The services provided are therefore generally inadequate due to lack of resources. Information services offered are open and easily accessible. The policy states that ICT services could be provided at libraries if there is collaboration and support from the ministry of ICT and the Uganda Communications Commission. It is for this reason that the American Embassy has decided to open up American corners in different public libraries throughout the country http://www.nlu.go.ug/nlu_act.pdf

Trends:

The Local Governments Act 1997, charges local governments with the responsibility of establishing and managing public libraries at the district. Although several bodies and individuals have established MCTs for their communities, the majority have no libraries.

The major problems facing these libraries is lack of adequate funds, lack of support from local government and trained staff to run the libraries

Most librarians noted that since the libraries are based at local government level, usually they are not allowed to operate beyond their areas of jurisdiction for example beyond the central division yet at the higher level it is assumed they cover the entire district.

Source: Literature review and survey

Regional and international policy (legal and regulatory) environment

Describe salient features of policy and regulatory framework in the region and internationally that affect the delivery of public access to information and communication in the country. What is your assessment of the general trend on this matter?

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The COMESA ICT Policy

The COMESA ICT policy was developed to service as a policy model for the harmonious development and application of ICT within member states with a view of turning the COMESA into information society. The policy framework addresses the following objectives:

- Affordable, ubiquitous and high quality services
- Building a competitive regional ICT sector

- Creating an enabling environment for sustainable ICT diffusion and development.

In order to achieve the above objectives, member states which include Uganda are encouraged to adopt new approaches that can enable interconnectivity between all operators and service providers within the region, promote universal service/ access, encourage competition in the sector through the removal of barriers to entry, and establish an appropriate licensing regime that is transparent and conducive to investment in the sector. The regional framework however does not provide guidelines and approaches for broadcasting, Internet and postal services as well as the sectoral linkage of ICT usage and applications such as e-commerce, e-education, e-government, e-agriculture, e-health.

The East African Community (EAC) Initiatives

The EAC Secretariat instituted a study on regional communications strategy which recommended:

- Countries to revisit their ICT Policies and subject them to a task force review in order to achieve a harmonized ICT policy for the region and include gender and youth issues as well as a common definition of ICTs is desirable.
- Creation of a ministry or a body to foresee the implementation of ICT policy
- Promote early ICT in training

On infrastructure development, the study recommends; Resurrect the implementation of a high capacity link of Erstwhile EAC Digital, Transmission Project, Support the Submarine cable: East Africa Submarine project and Licensing of regional links.

As a result of this, Uganda put in place the Ministry of ICT which is spearheading the improvement in information access especially through ICTs.

ICT development initiatives that are supported under the EAC include the

Eastern Africa Submarine System (EASSy) cable project, which will establish a fiber optic undersea cable system connecting the region with the rest of the world. The project is driven by 15 telecommunications entities from 12 countries namely; South Africa, Mozambique, Madagascar, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Malawi, Botswana, Djibouti, Ethiopia and Somalia.

EASSy will link to the global submarine cable network through other regional undersea systems including SAT3, SAFE, SEA-ME-WE 3 and SEA-ME-WE 4 and encircle Africa by high capacity optic fiber telecommunications networks. NEPAD has identified EASSy as a priority project for the enhancement of ICT infrastructure in the region and World Bank/IFC, French Development Agency and Development Bank of South Africa have extended a grant for the detailed feasibility study.

The EASSy project once complete is envisaged to lower the connection costs meaning more people could be able to access the internet and ICTs.

Trends:

According to trends optional fibers will be finished by 2010, which progress is seen to help reduce connectivity costs. At the same time many companies are investing in content opportunities to get prepared for the opportunities that will be created by the completion of the EASSy and terrestrial fiber installation. The government is also investing in rural electrification efforts, which will see the creation of power dams in regions like the north, which currently lack

electricity. The investment in alternative power sources is also increasing.

Source: secondary data review, key informants interviews.

Collaboration Practices and Opportunities Across Venues

Linkages and collaboration between different types of venues was identified as a **strong emerging theme in the preliminary analysis**. Please provide as much detail as possible to help understand existing and potential collaboration opportunities and linkages among and between public access venues, and how they can improve the quality and relevance of information access to underserved communities.

- i. Include reference to existing as well as potential collaboration opportunities.
- ii. If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

National Library of Uganda

This is the body mandated to oversee public libraries in the country. The national library works as a link for donors, NGOs and other bodies interested in partnering with public libraries in the country. The policy for library development in Uganda is that the National Library should be the apex of all libraries and public libraries should be developed at district and sub county headquarters while communities can establish libraries wherever they feel there is need. All stakeholders in the publication industry, can access information on public libraries through the National Library of Uganda. The association envisages that with more funding from government and Non Governmental organizations, a network for public libraries may be born. This is hoped to also decrease the gap on accessibility and information sharing.

Uganda library and information association (ULIA)

The Uganda Library and Information Association (ULIA) is a professional organization that articulates the interests of the Library and Information profession in Uganda. The association was founded in 1972 as an offshoot from the East African Library Association (EALA) founded in 1957.

In 2000, ULIA launched its first strategic plan that transformed it into a dominant force in addressing such issues as book development including the development of a reading culture; interventions into national, public and school library development; Information and Communication technology adoption and use by library and information networks; LIS curriculum development issues; continuing professional and career development for LIS professionals; engagement of government, civil society organizations and the media on issues affecting the development of the Library and Information profession <http://easlis.mak.ac.ug/projects/strategicplan.pdf>.

Uganda Community Libraries association

The mission of the Uganda Community Libraries Association (UgCLA) is to complement the education system of Uganda and promote the development of productive literacy practices by encouraging and supporting the growth of community libraries. UgCLA to carry out its mission, helps in publicizing of the existence and importance of community libraries both in Uganda and abroad; raise funds for the purpose of supporting such libraries; invite community libraries and individuals interested in promoting them to become members; organizes workshops and other capacity building activities for substantive and prospective managers of such libraries; as part of capacity building include instruction and practice in writing proposals for community library projects; invites community libraries to submit applications for grants, supported by proposals; distributes grants in response to these applications on the basis of their merit; arranges visits to libraries; maintains a databank of all community libraries in the country and helps community library managers to establish and maintain contact with one another. The

association so far has about registered members.

UgaBYTES Initiative

UgaBYTES Initiative is a not-for profit telecentre support network, established since 2000. It facilitates telecentres to increase their capacity by sharing knowledge and e-discussions to create an impact to the grassroots development. The organization is also involved in building capacities of telecentre practitioners in management and technical aspects and carries out lobby and advocacy roles. UgaBYTES has become the most influential telecentre support network in the East Africa region using online and offline support services. Its mission is to promote rural access to ICT for development through strengthening telecentre community in East and Central Africa. www.ugabytes.org

Friends of African Village Libraries

Friends of African Village Libraries (FAVL) is a network of individuals and donors committed to long-term support for small community libraries in rural Africa. FAVL funding is currently limited to supporting libraries within their network. Basically, FAVL looks for long-term supporters of community libraries, rather than look for communities needing long-term support.

FAVL works in a way that village libraries are established by a donor who is willing to make a long-term commitment to support a library. Communities in their program area establish a local management committee and provide a building or a building site for the library. FAVL then helps to hire a librarian and purchase books. FAVL helps train library staff to implement reading programs. In Uganda, FAVL has helped create the Uganda Community Libraries Association (UgCLA).

Buzz Factor: Public and Government Perceptions About What is “Cool”

The “buzz factor”, i.e., public and government perceptions about what is “cool” in relation to public access venues, where to invest resources, what places to hang out in, was identified as a **strong emerging theme in the preliminary analysis**. Please provide as much detail as possible to help understand how these perceptions about what is “cool” offer new opportunities or obstacles to strengthening public access information venues in the country.

The illiterates think that libraries are “only for elites” and they are irrelevant to them. To the educated people especially researchers and students they are okay with the libraries but they think most of the infrastructures are out-dated. The youth think that libraries are old fashioned with the coming of computer based information but the youths the researchers talked to said with the introduction of ICT services at such venues, they will be of more value to the community. However, some library managers think the ICTs are just a waste of time and a bigger diverting factor for the library users.

Legitimate Uses

The difference between “legitimate” or “non-trivial” uses of information in public access venues was identified as a **strong emerging theme in the preliminary analysis**. For example, uses of social networking spaces (Facebook and similar), blogs, chat, video games, as well as opportunities to download, install and run open source software applications in public access computers poses new challenges to traditional notions of “legitimate” information needs for development, and “trivial” uses of information for development... Please provide as much detail as possible to help understand how local definitions and restrictions based on what is “legitimate” or “non-trivial” information or communication practices offer new opportunities or barriers to public access information venues in the country.

According to the youth, the use of yahoo, skype, online sms and other chat site has enable them make more friends and interact with their peers within and outside the country. But this is mainly within the urban areas. The use of chats is low in the non urban areas. Telecentre managers believe that the chats,

games and music have help introduce the users to computer, which they later use for more serious work like typing assignments and communicating to friends. However, some public library managers think the ICTs have done nothing than diverting serious users to none serious time consuming activities like chats, music and games. On the other hand elderly members of the community are more concerned with the exposure ICTs have given to the youngsters to nude and fraudulent sites. To many this non controlled access to the internet will lead to moral degeneration.

Overall perceptions over what is legitimate and not are divided with the urban generally more open than the non urban while the elderly are more concerned with moral and cultural protection. On the other hand many professionals who are less introduced to ICTs if some activities are time consuming and diversionary to the young generation to serious engagement.

Shifting Media Landscape

The ever-changing media landscape and the new opportunities brought about by new media such as mobile phones, SMS, GPS, and even renewed roles for community radio open, was a **strong emerging theme in the preliminary analysis**. Please provide as much detail as possible to help understand how these new technologies and media offer new opportunities or barriers to public access information venues in the country.

Mobile phones

If appropriate, describe salient uses of mobile phones, text messaging, SMS and similar technologies, in relation to public access information venues and information needs of underserved communities.

Mobile telephone has had a rapid free growth within the country since it was first introduced by Celtel in 1995. Currently the mobile operators have grown to include; MTN, Utl, Warid, Celtel and two other minor operators. As the operators have been emerging so has the use of the mobile phone for development activities. In the same interest MTN and Utl have deployed over 10,000 village phones altogether in rural Uganda. Currently the most popular service use in public access venue is the updates to meteorological information and agricultural market information to the farmers. The SMS system gives the farmers in Uganda an opportunity to sale their produce from an informed point of view. It also empowers the farmers with weather information to avoid planting late. Similarly women organizations use SMS system to inform women about different issues concerning women empowerment. Over 10 private companies have opened up free web to mobile phone SMS system and cost services if they are sent to group phones. This a realization of the power of SMS to support public access to information.

Web 2.0 tools and use

If appropriate, describe any salient uses of Web 2.0 tools among users of ICT in public access venues. (Web 2.0 refers to evolution of web-based communities and hosted services, such as social-networking sites, wikis, blogs and others. [Wikipedia](#)).

Social networking spaces are just taking root with very few people familiar about them, however, most development websites are developed using web 2.0 tools especially the ability to do blogs, wiki pages and online live chats. Wikis have been used by researchers within the country.

Combination of different media

If appropriate, describe creative ways in which different media are being combined to meet information needs of underserved communities, and the ways they affect public access venues. Different media include community radio and TV, other print media, street theatre, songs, etc.

Community radios have been a powerful tool of increasing information and content generation at

community level. In all place where radios have been installed, community involvement and participation has happen naturally. Many have build partnership with the private, civil and public sectors to channel information through the community radios. However, due to the coolness of the radio PACs with community radios tend to neglect the telecentre and library components. On the other hand UgaBYTES uses a combination of web 2.0 tools and print media to promote networking and collaboration among telecentre operators and researchers. The quarter print and electronic Telecentre Times coments this relations developed through the use of the mailing list, web site and supportcentre.

Other shifting media landscape examples

If appropriate, describe other new features and practices in the media landscape that affect public information venues and information needs of underserved communities.

This would be a good place to discuss innovative practices on content creation and production of new messages, media, information and knowledge that are not described elsewhere in this report.

Health Information Needs

This is an extra contribution to other research on health information needs going on at the University of Washington, based on willing respondents to last two questions on user surveys at the public access venues.

Sources of health information

Where are people most successful at locating useful health information for themselves or their family (% of respondents across all venues):

66.8 clinic/hospital	4.0 Friend	11.9 health worker	13.3 public access venue (library, community center, etc)
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Comments:

Types of health information

What types of health information do they have the most difficulty finding (% of respondents across all venues)?

11.6 disease prevention	13.7 locate healthcare	8.7 child health information	38.6 remedies/drugs	10.1 Other
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Comments:

Venue-Specific Assessments

Complete one full assessment for each type of venue studied in the country.

Venue 1: Public Libraries

Overall venue assessment

Provide a broad picture of the public access information landscape in this venue, informed by the results of this research.

2–3 Paragraphs:

What is your overall assessment of public access information in this type of venue?

Initially Public libraries were managed and their activities supervised by the central government but with the enactment of the Local Government Act (1997), all central authorities were compelled to hand over the running of institutions and provision of services to local authorities under what was known as the devolution and decentralization of powers. Among the many institutions that fell under this arrangement was the public library service.

Additionally, with the enactment of the Local Government Act, (Local Government act, No.11997), it ceased to be responsibility of the Public libraries board to establish, manage, equip, and maintain public libraries in Uganda, but the function of decentralized districts. This act among other things decentralized Public library services to urban or district authorities. Libraries were handed over between 1997-1999. However, the Central Government in all aspects retained the role of making National plans, standard setting, technical support and inspections through the National library of Uganda.

The decentralization of Public Libraries was eventually accomplished in early 2000 by the Public Libraries Board which later reconstituted itself into the National library Board. Therefore all operations and activities of Public Libraries are controlled and monitored by the National Library of Uganda.

Currently, only 30 out of the 80 districts in Uganda have Public libraries. A plan is in the pipeline to provide the remaining districts with public libraries with two districts to be considered every year. Therefore all Public libraries are located in urban areas.

Access

2–3 Paragraphs:

What is your overall assessment of ACCESS ecosystem in this type of venue (physical access, appropriate technology, affordability)?

Access eco-system in public libraries mainly differs with the area in which they are situated. All public libraries visited are located in major towns, making it accessible to all categories of people save the rural disadvantaged groups. Respondents equally noted that the facilities were accessible to everyone. However, noted by respondents was that, all libraries serve larger districts making it difficult for people coming from within a radius of 5 Kms to access the facility.

Physical access

Describe how accessible this venue is to various population segments, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c), especially the differences between urban and non-urban settings.

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Though they are open for all, accessibility is not for all. The reasons may be individual but the content they provide unintentionally targets a biased group. That is only researchers and students. Content that would increase accessibility by women youth and the uneducated is minimal. The few content offered limits the various type of users that would have loved to access it.

Programs targeting the disabled are low. At Mbarara Public library in the western part of the country; they have disabled people who usually visit and find problems entering the library, especially to those moving in wheel chairs. Services have always been provided to them outside the library at their own convenience. The library though has a program of constructing a ramp for them to ease access to the library in the near future.

Libraries that offer ICT have seen tremendous increase in the number of people accessing the libraries. Though still minimal, the number of youth and students in the holidays remains a big challenge to the Library management in libraries that do possess smaller facilities.

In all public library venues majority of users were students, researchers and children; some libraries visited had children sections.

Appropriate technology and services

Describe how appropriate the technologies, services and information offered in this venue are to the population, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The services offered by Public Library (PL) are appropriate though they offer them in an old fashioned way. It was easy to note that the appropriateness of the services and information in Public Libraries (PLs) is not fair as it mainly satisfies the needs of a small group in the community that is students and researchers. Most libraries have left out the information that targets the uneducated and has only concentrated on the literate part of the community.

There is more information for students than information targeting the improvements in the livelihoods of different people in the community. Public libraries have for long not focused on the technology and are just initiating the Programs with initial support from the American Embassy.

Affordability

Describe how affordable the technologies and services offered in this venue are to the population, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Public libraries target everyone and offer services at a cheaper rate ranging from community to community. Some have free services to all with the user only required to present a proper and valid identifications. Suffice it to say that all libraries had no charges for reading rooms and accessing books,

the only charges were to intending outside borrowers; borrowing out books.

Additionally, the ICT services, though, still minimal are affordable to use. A small fee is attached to the service. But for many users who find them inappropriate lack training and are biased with their functionality. A library manager for Kabarole Public Library noted “Those computers are spoiling the use of the Library as people are wasting time on them instead of using the book facilities. They are unnecessary and are diverting the community's attention from the library.”

Fees for services

What fees or other requirements exist in order to access and use the information in the venues? (registration, user fees, restrictions to certain populations)

If there are fees: What do these fees buy?

Accessing information is not charged, though outside borrowing there is a fee of 1,500/= charged per annum as at February 11th 2008. However, Mbale Public Library offers various options to its users. It costs its services differently to its users, students in secondary schools pay annual readership development fee 2,000/= for accessing up to date educational pamphlets and adults pay annual membership fee 5,000/= to access materials on reference section. The only exception with high charges is at the National Library of Uganda; an umbrella for all public libraries in Uganda, where 10,000/= is charged per year and 1,000/= per day as at February 11th 2008. The reason was to make better use of the library other than becoming a meeting place for many people.

In the southern and western Uganda; they have no charges for users to access the library. However, users are required to present a valid and proper identification during outside borrowing.

Through the American Corners, internet surfing is at 30/= per minute. However, at the National Library, it costs 1000/= for a whole days access to the internet. Computer training varies between 20.000 and 100.000/= depending on the package.

Other than fees and limitations to some public libraries access are not officially there but may be invented depending on the capacity of the user's ability to access the Library.

Indicate amount in local currency

Equivalent in US Dollars: US\$1

Date of estimate 15/07/08

local currency name 1620 Uganda shilling.

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Explain any salient differences in the services offered in different regions, sizes or other variables of significance:

There is no significant difference in the services offered by the facilities visited; the facilities services mostly have been limited by location, age and space. However, the extent of service delivery lay in the existing infrastructure around the facilities. All public libraries that are situated in the middle of major towns have much bigger reading rooms compared to the ones in non-urban. The existing infrastructure also influenced the number of book shelves, number of books, reading tables and chairs and the readership number. Public libraries close to schools and tertiary institutions were proposing extension of closure time to even cater for the working group however, that implied increment of staff salaries or

more manpower which had not yet been budgeted for.

Geographic distribution

What is the distribution of the venues in terms of their geographic location?

Complement any details not already included in section **Error! Reference source not found.: Venue Selection.**

The geographical distribution of venues in the country is largely varied within Central, East, West, North and Southern Uganda. Currently the distribution is not even and in the respective regions but a selection of different districts in the regions depending on the population and demand of the district.

Map

If available, insert a map that displays the geographic distribution of this type of venue in the country (expand to the size you need).



Description of map:

Other factors affecting access

Other factors that affect equitable access to public information in this type of venue, not covered above?

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

- Operating time; Libraries close early at 5:00pm so the working group and some students cannot access information after school hours
- Poor reading culture- this was quoted everywhere; people don't want to read literature
- Poor education system; the education system does not encourage reading. Teachers do the research and students are spoon fed.
- Fewer people attach value to information- they want tangible stuff
- Location of the library also affects people's access to information. They are located in urban centers implying that rural community's are left out
- Most of the time people spend it in agriculture and economic services and rarely find time to visit the venues thinking the services are only for young people.

- Lack of facilitation like transport, materials to run outreach programs for the communities and also to buy particular books needed by users
- Few or lack of computers and access to internet
- There is lack of funding from partners.

Capacity and relevance

2–3 Paragraphs:

What is your overall assessment of CAPACITY ecosystem in this type of venue (human capacity, locally relevant content, integration into daily routines, socio-cultural factors, trust in technology, social appropriation of technology)?

“The decentralization of public libraries up to district level impacted the management and recruitment of public libraries. Hitherto the national libraries board recruited and managed staff through a national budget”, explains the *assistant librarian, Kabarole Public library*.

According to Stella Bbosa the principal librarian at the National Library of Uganda, the trend is negatively linked to the differences in infrastructure and social economic conditions of the workplace at facility level for those located in urban and rural.

The capacity of locally relevant content is low and user's ability to integrate information into their daily lives is scarcely monitored which makes social appropriation of technology to be determined only by the sequence of individual visits to the library in a given time. The social-cultural factors affect mainly the women and the elderly who would have wanted to be regular users of the facilities; but they are limited by illiteracy levels and household demands.

Staff size

How many people work in a typical facility for this type of venue? (full time-equivalent employees or contractors; describe any significant variations; i.e., large, medium and small libraries in the country)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

But as the transformations handed libraries in the hands of poorly financed districts whose administrators don't really value library services, staffing soured. The number of workers and staff support services decreased significantly for a typical facility under library. According to the survey, at average a typical facility has 3-7 salaried workers with help from 2-3 interns who are solely doing voluntarily work but this was mainly experienced in bigger libraries.

Staff training

What is the overall capacity of the staff (i.e., librarians, telecentres operators) to help users access and use public access to information and communication services offered in this venue? Differentiate by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

(ii) For Public Libraries, indicate if Library School training is available and/or required for librarians.

Libraries that are more in urban areas recorded an average of three qualified staff compared to those which are semi-urban that had an average of one person.

Public libraries phased out on job training for at least a minimum of certificate in librarianship depending on the management of the library. However, most of the libraries currently have a degree holder staff mainly in Bachelors degrees in Librarianship and Information (BLISS). This didn't qualify the use students on internship. The three Libraries with ICT services have one personnel in charge with a minimum qualification of an ordinary diploma in information technology.

Services offered

What kind of services does this type of venue offer to the public? (i.e., access to books, magazines; meeting and conference rooms; audio/video programs, computers, Internet, other). Include Digital ICT services if offered.

<i>Services Offered</i>	<i>Comments</i>
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

Explain any salient differences in the services offered in different regions, sizes or other variables of significance:

The National Library of Uganda helps in the restocking of public libraries. The books are donations from charity, others are purchased using donor funds under different projects e.g. Local Book Purchase project, Intra-Africa Book Support Scheme and the Book Trade project, all funded by Book Aid International.

Staff from public libraries have been trained and oriented to running of their libraries. Workshops have been organized to give them skills in how to market and run the libraries better.

The authorities have been issued with guidelines on how to start community libraries, and also a manual

on how to run a public library has been issued. In addition, these are also rendered:

- Book lending- lending out books
- The library also provides and coordinates national and international inter-library loan services and document supply
- Book referencing- Documents in this section consist of encyclopedias, dictionaries, directories, yearbooks, atlases and other materials of introductory nature to various subjects.
- Access to books
- Information resource sharing- with other libraries or schools with libraries
- Reading rooms
- Discussion tables
- Provide text books to schools

ICT services but limited to only three Libraries

- Audio-visual programs – this service is provided by most libraries.
- Computer training
- Internet access
- Scanning
- Photocopying

Only three public libraries offer digital ICT services through the American corner initiative. Many community members mostly used the library for current affairs by reading newspapers and doing research related works.

Programs for underserved communities

Describe if this venue has programs specifically intended to reach underserved communities, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Most schools in Uganda lack library facilities and supplementary reading materials. The National Library of Uganda promotes reading beyond the textbook by donating books to fifty (50) primary schools every year to assist them start their own school libraries. Prior to the donation, teachers responsible for reading/ libraries are trained in; how to encourage reading and how to handle books for children. The funding worth US \$8500 is a grant from the Swedish International Development Agency, (SIDA) and Book Aid International through the East African Book Development Association. (http://www.nlu.go.ug/s_lib_dev.htm)

National Library of Uganda arranged book box facilities for schools, the book week festivals which are

rotated in all districts one at a time in a year targeting all those interested in reading. Some public libraries have opened small mini-libraries at each of the sub county in their respective districts. This was seen mainly at Soroti public library in Eastern Uganda.

Relevant content

What type of locally relevant content is available? What else is needed? Who is doing it?

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Available Content:

With increasing organizations both government and non governmental, the surge for information has increased. Most of this info is targeting the local community. The organizations have ended up translating some and leaving the other. But through there struggles to disseminate it; Public libraries become a better conduit for it with their complexity. Such information includes:-

Newspapers, magazine and other publications' banks

Modern agriculture methods, disease prevention and other health matters

Family planning, Immunization updates, Government announcements and materials produced in Uganda

United Nations publications

However, the ICT packages materials are only available in small quantities although illiteracy level dictates that multimedia like audio-visaul, information packaging (CD-Roms, DVDs) be used if resources have to be of use to the wider community in rural areas.

Other Content Needed:

Content for the blind and the illiterate is missing and its needed. Further more content focusing on the social developments like in agriculture, health, updated educational materials is still needed. The use of modern technology to organize and retrieve content in Public Libraries is something that many users and managers look forward to. More of mobile internet and library services are required.

Local Initiatives to build needed content:

Information sharing has become a necessity and a big requirement for both policy makers and other bodies; information that targets the local community and leaves an impact. This has left a big concern to the development partners and government parastetals involved in content development processes.

Source: NAADS, TASO,NARO, ministry of Health, Public Service ministry, Local Publishers,

Local and International NGOs.

Services and information available in local languages

Describe the availability of services and contents relevant to human development that are available in **local languages** in this type of venue? (i.e., info on health, education, government services, etc)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

For a long time all content and services have been available only in English as people thought that it was only the literate that required information. Urban placed venues have less local content and services than rural placed venues.

The increase in information related to livelihood, relates to the steady growth and expansion of NGO thinking and work in the Country. Most NGOs develop locally relevant information in local languages and distribute it through public access centers. Materials on HIV and AIDS from specialist bodies and agricultural materials developed by NAADS and National Agricultural research centre's CD-Rom project are explicit examples.

These bodies package their info in text books, CDs, DVDs, pamphlets, brochures among others.

The World book day 2007, advocated for local language content in libraries for upcountry. To the effect the main national library packages information on health, agriculture, government, education, sports entertainment, nutrition, religious, and general news and distributes it through the library backbone.

The use of ICT to this effect is not yet common but to a lesser extent audio-visual equipments have been used to some Public libraries and even the mobile Library before its break down.

Types of uses

What do people USE the venues for (most frequent kinds of information and services people seek in them, activities they carry out in them)?

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Refer to section **Error! Reference source not found. Charts: Information Needs** and complement here as needed.

The frequency of use of the venues vary depending on where they are situated. There was no clear documentation differentiating by applicable equity of service variables but through the interviews it was clear that most users seek research related information in all fields like health, law, agriculture and e-governance.

However, research findings indicate that 42% of users visit public libraries daily, 30.5% are frequent visitors (visit the facility at least once a week) and 15.9% were regular visitors (users with a record of about 2-3 visits per month).

The percentage of users in the age category of 5-35 years was 80.4% while users between 36-60 years were 10.9%.The use and frequency of seeking information and services in the venues largely depends on the type of users, but on a daily basis users seeking information from the past and current newspapers

are increasing.

Number, type, and frequency of users

Refer to section **Error! Reference source not found. Charts: Information Needs.** Complement here as needed.

Monitoring the frequency of use by the venues has been done on a weekly basis but only for individual facilities while others didn't consider it as a necessity. The venues that had any kind of documentation didn't differentiate the users by any variable. For all the venues the number of users increased especially during holidays than school days. The frequency of use also varied with the size of the infrastructure. But most venues pointed out that the educated, the youth and the average income earners, the average in terms of social status are the most frequent users of the venues.

Users Capacity to use information and services offered

What is the overall capacity of the users to take advantage of public access to information and communication resources, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)?

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The services of a public library are provided on the basis of equality of access for all, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language or social status. The research findings indicate that the capacity of users to utilize library facilities depends solely on the literate levels since almost all the content is in English therefore all users who access the venue have the capacity to use the facilities. The youth who mostly are students and have benefited from such government programs as Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Universal Secondary Education (USE) easily take advantage of the available services in the venues. During the survey upcountry Libraries indicated having a big number of elderly users accessing Newspapers.

The ability to use ICT often depends on possession of other assets - money, mobility to get to an access point, literacy or, in case of internet use, the ability to understand any other major world language.

The illiterate depend on the staff at the venue to help them access information through ICT. The elderly do not find it easy or even necessary to use ICT related information as its regarded as wasting time and for the young generation.

Training courses for users

Describe training courses offered to the public at this venue, and if they offer some kind of testing and certification.

Training courses: A few facilities that offer training do so at a low, non regular scale. The trend is largely due to fluctuating trainees who normally come during school holidays while many facilities have limited resources and infrastructure to offer the service. Some Public libraries train upcoming librarians and offer internships from the university graduates doing BLIS of which they test and give certification. But most of these are urban libraries.

ICT specific training courses: Growth of ICT training is gradually gaining interest in libraries. Of the

three pilot ICT corners two offer training courses in computer application, where upon passing a local test, a certificate of completion is awarded.

Integration into daily routines

How easy is it for users to integrate the information and services offered in this type of venue into their daily lives? (offer concrete solutions to their needs and problems, make it easier to solve them at this venue than in other places)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Public libraries don't have documented proof of integration of services in livelihoods of users. However, analysis indicates that they are relevant as year to year clients have kept visiting the facility for newspapers, reading space and book borrowing. Additionally, many businesses are opening up to offer public access to information at a fee. These include cybercafé, book, DVD, CD-Rom, and resource borrowing shops, which have integrated in the community with more effective and efficient services to the community.

National leaders identified ICT as a potential tool to support their national development objectives. In 1997, President Museveni attended the Global Knowledge Conference in Toronto, Canada, and requested the global community to assist Uganda in developing ICT capacities that could improve the lives of its rural and disadvantaged communities. A number of other ministers and high-level politicians championed the cause of ICT as potential tools for national development (Office, 2002).

Many individuals have used ICT related tools and the trend in integrating the information and services offered in this type of venue into their daily lives is increasing. many people have started using digital cameras, mobile phones, flash disks, printers, photocopiers, computers for typing, internet (for research, news, advertisement, and entertainment) and many other digital services.

Users perceptions about the venue

What is the general perception or opinion of the population about the venue (not necessarily its specific services, but the venue itself: i.e., what do people generally think about libraries? Are they places that are "cool" or "only for elites" etc?), differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)? This includes perception by people who do not use the venue...

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The illiterates think that libraries are "only for elites" and they are irrelevant to them. To the educated, especially researchers and students they are okay with the libraries but they think most of the infrastructures are out-dated. The youth think that libraries are old fashioned with the coming of computer based information. But the youths, researchers talked to, said with the introduction of ICT services at such venues, they will be of more value to the community. Other users think that PACs are not well funded and there is no governing body in support of what they offer. If recreational centers were created to be part of the venue services, Public Access Centres (PACs) would be places with

warmth and love as some of the users noted.

“I have been coming to the Jinja public library for 10 years now. It was very useful as a primary student. But now as an undergraduate student at the university, most of the materials available are obsolete so there is need for internet services to cover the existing information gaps least the facility will only be useful to offer reading space,” explains a long time user who is currently a student at Makerere University.

The general opinion of the population about the venues is that if ICT related equipments were put into the venues, the atmosphere would be cooler and warmer with a lot of life in them. However, the managers do not seem to have same thinking as the users. A library manager at Kabarole Public Library noted “Those computers are spoiling the use of the Library as people are wasting time on them instead of using the book facilities. They are unnecessary and are diverting the community's attention from the library.” This reflects the divergent views of the users and the managers in what is considered good and bad.

Social appropriation of information and generation of new knowledge

What activities, products and services are users undertaking that exhibit new levels of social appropriation of technologies and generation of knowledge? For example, how are users generating and disseminating new knowledge, products and services through their use of this venue? (see category 13 in Real Access Framework for Social Appropriation of Technology).

If relevant, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Overall public awareness of public libraries appeared low, even amongst those living nearby. Through National Library of Uganda (NLU), events have been arranged to exhibit the communities efforts to benefit from the Library services and some have been documented in

<http://www.nlu.go.ug/bkwkfestival.htm>

One exciting feature of these events is the involvement of Functional Adult Literacy (FAL) groups. Much as the events involve exhibition of library and information products, FAL groups also exhibit handcrafts and farm outputs as benefits of their training in adult literacy programs and of their newly acquired reading abilities. FAL groups also present plays that depict their achievements.

The festival opens up new relationships between the library and the community it serves. It creates awareness of the treasures of knowledge and information available in the library and books available on the local market, prompting the community to join library membership or even buy books for themselves. The children enjoy the books in a free environment with no fear of any restriction and it helps teachers and parents realize that it is necessary to provide the children with books particularly story books to read at leisure.

Formerly information that was obtained from the centre didn't have much effect to the social life of the community and apart from academic researchers who had to write reports; questions still remain if they were of any help to the public especially the vulnerable groups. But as the number of literates increased, there is a direct increase of users especially for educational purposes.

Trust, safety, and privacy

What is the general perception or opinion of the population about the safety, security and privacy (TRUST) of the information and services offered in this venue?

Respondents in all the venues strongly agree that the safety and privacy of the information and services is high. Reason being that since the bodies that package and distribute the information are well established, the degree of their trust is unquestionable. Since almost all public libraries are government oriented and government entities, most users find them safe and secure.

Gaps and opportunities in information and services offered

What other information gaps and opportunities exist, which are not being met? (other information/services people need that are not being met there and could be offered, especially through Digital ICT services)

Respondents pointed out information and service gaps in; weather forecast information, absence of local publications, mobile library, food security, computer training and access to internet and outreach programs aimed at improving livelihoods.

Enabling environment

2–3 Paragraphs:

What is your overall assessment of the ENVIRONMENT ecosystem in this type of venue (local economy, national economy, legal and regulatory framework, political will and public support, regional and international context)?

Generally all the stakeholders said that the national environment is not very supportive of their services to the community. Though the government has been campaigning for the use of PACs, it has not offered adequate practical support for the venues.

“The environment for offering library services is unfair due to inadequate support from those who should be providing resources for library development,” explains Charles Endra the assistant director national library of Uganda. “Even when there are already existing PACs in place the government is not giving any support. Every time the issue is brought on board, they claim that funds to provide tools are not there,” *Senior Information Scientists, UNESCO – Uganda*

Local and national economy

Describe the local and national economic environment and how it affects public access to information and communication in this type of venue (refer to and complement economic summary in country assessment, section **Error! Reference source not found. Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment**, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Poor reading culture was identified as a factor in all venues visited. Whereas the government has put in the place the UPE and USE to tackle the illiteracy issue, students have been accustomed to spoon feeding with little encouragement in individual research. Majority of the children are not encouraged to read from an early age. This has gone a long way to affect access and use of information in public libraries.

There is lack of public awareness related to the use of PACs. The NLU is charged with coordinating and monitoring the public libraries but they have not gone a long way to market the services provided at these venues. Less people in the community know what services they could gain from the public libraries. This has affected access and use of information in this venue.

Few people attach value to information and prefer tangible stuff. Less people in the community look at information as a resource. Majority of the people prefer tangible stuff with immediate results. This is not in the same category as information explaining why it affects access and use of information in this venue.

The problem of accessibility of electricity and internet coverage to all the areas in Uganda is a main factor that is largely affecting the use of ICT in PACs. Only 3% of the population is connected to the national grid. Even those connected, electricity is irregular and it affects the public library operations that could have even opted to give off peak services.

Legal and regulatory framework

Describe the legal and regulatory framework and how it affects public access to information and communication in this type of venue (refer to and complement economic summary in country assessment, section **Error! Reference source not found. Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment**, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The regulatory frame work is the Local Government Act, No.1, 1997) which decentralized library services to urban or district authorities though the central government retained the duty of making national plans and monitoring of public libraries under the NLU(National Library ACT, 2003). This development has negatively affected many libraries as many district authorities do not fully comprehend the role of public libraries in the development of the communities. Public libraries heavily depend on donor support to meet the informational demands of the users in terms of books, reading tents among others and in some libraries they are provided with ICT from the American Embassy.

Other legal frame works under which public libraries operate are: Access to information act 2005. http://www.freedominfo.org/documents/uganda_ati_act_2005.pdf ,ICT Policy, The Education Policy and various policies on persons with disabilities. However, there is no collaboration and support from ICT ministry and Uganda communication commission which would have introduced ICT in public libraries.

Political will and public support

What is the level of political will and public support for this type of venue? (refer to and complement section **Error! Reference source not found. Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment**, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Though public libraries were decentralized, government still offers some supports to libraries through the NLU. Financial support to urban districts was estimated at 370 million Uganda shillings for the financial year 2007/2008 (NLU 2007/2008 Report).

According to Bbosa Nekusa of NLU, Local districts also provide support to libraries in their respective areas.

Organization and networking

Describe if the facilities in this type of venue organized in any network, association or other collective body? (i.e., national public library system, telecentre franchise or network, etc)?

The NLU works as a collective body for all the other public libraries. It was mandated by the National Library Act, 2003 where it repealed the Public Libraries Act, 1964 which had established the Public Libraries Board. The Board had been charged with the responsibility of establishing, equipping, managing and maintaining libraries in Uganda. Following the enactment of the Local Governments Act, 1997, this responsibility was decentralized to the local governments. The Public Libraries Board and later the National Library of Uganda retained the responsibility of laying down national policies in regard to these libraries, giving advice, issuing standards, norms, guidelines and work manuals, providing technical and professional advisory services and coordinating and carrying out advocacy for these libraries at local and international levels. (National Library Act, 2003.)

Partnerships

Describe notable public-private partnerships in support of this type of venue.

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Partnerships have been attracted largely from international bodies. The few local partnerships built are not for funding purposes.

<http://www.nlu.go.ug/partners.htm>

The National Library of Uganda works closely with various individuals and Organizations in the book as well as information sector. They include the Booksellers Association, the Publishers Association, Other libraries, government Ministries and departments, Non-Governmental Organizations, and development Partners. Several development partners have been constantly supporting the NLU throughout the years. They include:

Book Aid International (UK)

Book Aid International started supporting the NLU (then the Public Libraries Board) in 1992 by donating books, which were then passed on to the various public libraries in the country. This

assistance has been instrumental in improving the stock of Public and Community libraries, and has greatly attracted more library users.

A Swedish based NGO SIDA through NABTU gives money to national library to buy reading books and tents. But the few local public-private partners like TASO, FIDA, Straight talk, Red Cross, YMCA and many others help them by providing materials for users.

Public- private partnerships have been established which are in favor of ICT related information and services.

American embassy established a project that has created American corners which are mainly focusing on providing ICT access and technology in three public libraries

The NLU has participated in programs relating to dissemination of information services-including festivals, conferences, seminars and other policy making forum. It has also participated in functional adult literacy campaigns organized by the ministry of gender labor and social development. It's also involved in UNESCO sponsored activities such as the development of the national policy of Uganda. It has strong linkages with UNESCO, World books of USA that provides books and other assistances.

Other environment factors

Other factors in the environment that affect access and use of information in this kind of venue, not covered above?

UBOS (2005/06) notes that the literacy levels are at 69%. However, majority of would be beneficiaries of public libraries are illiterate. Most libraries were targeting the rural people most of whom are illiterate. This affects access and use of information in this venue. Additionally, illiterate communities are largely oral and as such acquire information through the word of mouthy.

For publicly funded venues only: Revenue streams

This section is meant specifically for publicly-funded venues (public libraries, national connectivity programs, etc).

Sources of funding:	Approximate % of total budget	Comments
Government sources:	100%	
International donors:	0%	
National donors:	0%	
User fees/services:	0%	just covers small operational costs

Case example for public libraries

Provide a short descriptions and commentary for each type of venue, offering a realistic sense of what the venue looks and feels like in its day to day operation, the kind of people who visit, and the kind of services they receive. Also, the case example indicates what makes the case unique or what features are commonly shared with other venues. A photo and short quotes will make it even more real.

Public libraries changing the lives of many Ugandans

The exceptional diversity of different physical features ranging from extensive plains with undulating hills to snow capped mountains, waterfalls, meandering rivers and spectacular floral and fauna reflects the fertility and the country's beauty. With the area of 241547.6 square kilometers, Uganda is relatively close to the size of Great Britain.

The earlier days of the 70's and the 80's placed the country in economic, social and political exclusions to which it's yet to recover. The trip through the country shows the efforts of the civil society, organizations, private and public sector aimed at reducing this exclusion.

The National Library of Uganda (NLU) is the government body established to implement policy, govern, monitor and evaluate Public libraries (PLs) and community libraries in the country. It over sees the establishing of public libraries in each of the 80 districts although 30 are operational.



Back as in the 40's the only formal source of public information were Public libraries. Traversing across the country, P Ls are urban situated housed near or within the district administrative buildings and under the district administration. It's easily noticeable that they have been maintained in the same old small buildings they were in when they started operating. Their central location at the urban places leaves out the rural community who would have loved to use them.

P Ls offer a range of services and information including educational, social, economical, health and political programs. Specific services like news paper banks, book access, book lending, reading rooms, research materials, audio-visual materials and access to computer related services are available but with a small variations depending on the area.

ICT tools/services in Public libraries are rare but the American embassy three years ago, initiated a program to introduce American corners at the libraries. The American Corner refers to a section in the library that offers internet, faxing, scanning services, computer lessons, photocopying, printing and book collections especially on America and Americans. Although this has been seen as a formal partnership between the embassy and host country but its an initiative that is changing the lives and atmosphere of the libraries and causing a lot of excitement in the communities.

The typical days for a librarian stretches from 8:30am to 6:00pm for week days, from 9:00am to 1:00pm for Saturdays and remain closed for Sundays and public holidays.



P Ls are places designed to address needs for the whole community but the only common users are: students, the elite (non working and working), the farmers and lawyers (In search of backup for their cases). Researchers of different categories have turned them into offices and libraries with ICTs are running out of space.

An American corner at Kabarole P L

“I never forget to tell my students to visit the library since my school does not have a library yet. And it is from the same books in the library that I managed to excel in my studies. Currently as a social worker, I visit the library for research purposes. It is my second home,” Wataka explains.

“I took silence in the Jinja Municipal library where I find self help books that I can read. I usually read materials relating to management. I now own a Nongovernmental Organization that targets the youth in the community,” Felix Nabeta

Great changes in the educational performances of individuals and poor schools without well equipped libraries are readily available. Schools with no or poor libraries are benefiting from the Public library at a small convenient fee. Felix Nabeta could not afford fees in other universities and he ended up resorting to the library.

In Jinja district 75kms from Kampala, Jinja public library housed in one of the old buildings has become a home for many of its users. Through the information availed, Sarah Nabeta an undergraduate student of agricultural engineering searched for projects to raise some money. Currently, she manages her own farm. “Its a dream come true”, she laughs. While *Mutahigwa Damyano*, another user explains, “I am 66 years old. I have been a frequent user of the library since 1966. I love reading to keep my reasoning capacity high and up to date. My love for politics has turned me into a daily visitor to the library. I find fun in democracy books and newspapers. Through Makerere University' s distance learning programs at the library, up grading from a diploma to a degree and later to a post graduate in procurement has become a walk over for me. I am proud to be associated with the library.”

“I am 62years old and a veterinary journalist. I have been using the library since 1962. Reporting to the library every day especially to read newspapers makes me proud. I have been the chairman media house for the last 30 years. Being a member of Toro adult literacy Association and a chairman for people with the diabetes in the region I find it very useful to be updated with information. I attribute my success to the library welfare. I am a better manager in my home because of my constant reading of newspapers articles on family management,” explains Baranga John



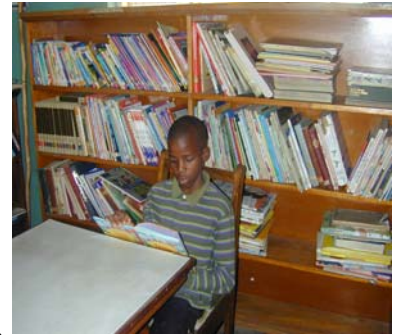
Seeing the brightness and pride on the faces of two old men at a public library in western Uganda(Kabarole P L) every day gives pride to the librarian. They not only love the books but their dream of having a recreational center is yet to be achieved. They have won the public esteem because of their being informed.

Mutahigwa Damyano & Baranga John at the library

“when I was young, my mother would encourage me to use the library. I have been visiting it since I was 6. It improved my vocabulary as well as my written English. I cant imagine I got aggregate 6 in my primary leaving examinations and I am joining one of the best secondary schools in the country and that is St. Mary’s college Kisubi. With my school background that is one great academic achievement.” , *Explains Makuma Timothy, Green Circle Primary school.*

One wonders why Timothy visits the library even in his vacation. You could easily be convinced how the old generation is influenced, but how the new one is picking a lot of interest remains a great pride to the Public library stakeholders.

For the young ones, public libraries are promising a brighter future through reading. The hope of having recreational centers and ICTs affiliated to this type of Public access center is rather a comforting one. Though they are regarded as quiet and boring places, with technology we are yet to see the contrary.



Venue-Specific Assessments

Complete one full assessment for each type of venue studied in the country.

Venue 1: Public Libraries

Overall venue assessment

Provide a broad picture of the public access information landscape in this venue, informed by the results of this research.

2–3 Paragraphs:

What is your overall assessment of public access information in this type of venue?

The Multipurpose telecentres have undergone rapid change since 1997 when United Nations Education Science and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) together with the Government of Uganda entered into partnership to establish the first generation of telecentres in Uganda. Many new actors in the private, public, and civil society sectors are establishing different types of telecentres at an estimated total growth rate of 175% per year. The new breeds of telecentre, however, focus on offering key services like commodity market access, pedagogical enhancement, in addition to traditional services like internet access, photocopying, printing and telephony and fax, which are becoming rear services. The new generation of telecentres is built on services rather than merely providing a platform and space of communication. The telecentre community in Uganda is thus characterized with new names like Commodity Change Points, Business Development Centres while those with wifi connectivity to the community are fighting with names like Internet Service Providers (ISP), Local ISP, and Access Internet service Providers.

However, apart from WIFI regenerating telecentres, most multipurpose telecentres remain big giants whose expected geographical coverage and content delivery is ambitiously thought. As a result the location of the telecentres and clarity of the services and content offered through this type of venues remains a major problem. The managers are caught in between doing everything for everybody, spreading efforts too thinly in the end. The private sector has; however, picked business opportunities from the telecentre concept and run along side the telecentres. Many times out competing telecentres on these services including in rural communities.

Key actors in this type of venue include; the UNESCO under ministry of Education and sports, Rural Communication development fund under Uganda Communication Commission, UNIDO, ConnectED, IDRC, Worldlinks, and some new content players like Technical Centre for agricultural and rural development (CTA), National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO), National agricultural advisory Services (NAADS), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and many civil society organization including National and community organizations. UgaBYTES continues to act as the networking platform for this venue.

Access

2–3 Paragraphs:

What is your overall assessment of ACCESS ecosystem in this type of venue (physical access, appropriate technology, affordability)?

Generally, the location of the telecentre is prohibitive especially with the wider telecentre geographical scope. All the telecentres serve a very ambitious geographical area that even if centrally located, location would remain a prohibitive factor to users. It has been noted throughout this research that users for this venue travel above 10 kilometers to access the telecentre, many without any clear means of transport to connect to the telecentre. Strategically cases in this venue indicate an extension of telecentre services to the users; the book box services and the introduction of the wifi connectivity in the telecentre vicinity through the telecentre is typical in this venue.

Most telecentres offer arrange of technology; including radio, telephony, internet, sharing and reading space, IT application training and other pseudo services like photocopying. However, these technologies are still less linked to the needs of the community and many believe they are currently used mainly by the already bettered members of the community. But must users agree that the technologies are generally appropriate for community development although they require orientation before usage. Many believe mobile phony technology integration within the technologies used at the telecentre could increase the appropriateness of the technology to a broader spectrum of the population. The general analyses also reveal that lifecycle costing for some technologies especially connectivity makes technologies un appropriate. The telecentre pays for the expensive VSAT connectivity brackets beyond what the community can be able to consume late alone pay for, thus most of the times facilities under this venue don't have connectivity even when they have the backbone technology.

Increasingly, telecentres are becoming less affordable to all segments within the community they serve. The desire to sustain running costs and lifecycle technology costs like VSAT puts lots of pressure on the management to pass over the costs to the end user. However the communities lack the significant mass to keep the unit cost per person lower than in urban areas thus the higher service charges for services like internet than in urban regions. It is phenomenon for this venue to exclude the poor segment from most of the services. However, graduating from facility to facility there are services that are introduced to carter for special groups including the poor, women and children. Multipurpose Telecentres have partnered with development organizations like Council for Economic Empowerment of women in Africa (CEEWA) to repay for community access to internet and ICT training programs. The initiative has eliminated affordability challenges especially to women user groups. Special days and special computer points have been established for this interest group.

Physical access

Describe how accessible this venue is to various population segments, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c), especially the differences between urban and non-urban settings.

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Multipurpose telecentres offered segmented services to respond the wider audience they anticipate to reach. The main focus is largely vulnerable groups including women, children, farmers, rural nurses and

teachers and the poor whose can not enter the technology movement on their own. Varying by facility multipurpose telecentres integrate the different segments of the community on the management committee to address special interest groups better by designing better services. Most Multipurpose community telecentres involve farmers to articulate farmer needs better for example at many telecentre communities had problems of marketing their produce, but through ICT they get market prices for their products and updated information they need. The computer application skills provided to youths [students] and the community creates them chances of getting jobs, and they are empowered to ably use the computers to surf internet for information that best applies to their own problems also, information dissemination is made easier. According to telecentre Manager Nakaseke, “Experience has shown that women are more responsive to new skills than men and are willing to adapt to the new technologies, and also pass them to their children.”

However, while the groups have integrated the vulnerable communities into their operation, most of the telecentres are rather silent to the needs of people with disabilities. Most telecentres are also less responsive to the changing needs of the community due to limited logistics and expertise to track needs changes within the community. Consequently, most of the services are less oriented to the needs of the community. It should be emphasized that most telecentres are rural but those in urban areas are less focused to Agriculture. They have been successful by merely providing access to the platforms of communication and access to information. Unlike non urban telecentres, they are less involved in outreach programs. Overall, most services in both urban and non urban apply to the youth, men and educated than to elderly, women and illiterates.

Appropriate technology and services

Describe how appropriate the technologies, services and information offered in this venue are to the population, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The appropriateness of technology, services and information offered has been positively seen through the upcoming business and more public awareness that has been created in the telecentre circle of influence. Many of the services provided to specific people in the community; the farmers, business people, students [youths] and women, have created varying levels of impact.

In the Northern part of the country, CPAR set up a small satellite centre of 50 km radius from the telecentre to be accessed by vulnerable groups. They prepare brochures, newsletters, posters, videos and basic IT lessons that help the resettlement of the returning Internal Displaced Persons. At Buwama Multipurpose Community Telecentre in the central region; they use ICT to provide content on modern

farming, translated in Luganda language with demonstration pictures to the farmers, which is pinned on the notice board for community easy viewing. The computer lessons provided aimed at empowering and directing different groups to relevant information sources and websites that are directly related to their problems and survival needs.

34 farmers and the community at Busoga Rural Open source Development Initiative (BROSDI) telecentre had problems of marketing their produce before, but through ICTs (mobile phone services and the internet) they get market price and information updates that have informed their marketing decisions. The system has grown from one telecentre facility to becoming a national platform for the telecentre farming community.

The computer application skills provided to youths [students] and the community creates them chances of getting jobs easily, and they are empowered to competently use them. Many after training have established own secretarial bureaus to serve the business community at commercial rates.

Affordability

Describe how affordable the technologies and services offered in this venue are to the population, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Telecentre services are cost to recover most third party (service providers') costs and the operational costs. But the number of users in non urban telecentres is lower to make this cost cheaper than its comparative cost for urban telecentres. The difference in costs ranges between 50 to 150% higher for non urban telecentres services. This in principle excludes the poor with many of them women and children who lack self income generating activities.

However, some development partners and development organizations pay for community access to internet and ICT training programs. The initiative has eliminated affordability challenges especially to women user groups, who are part of the special target groups for this program. Under the arrangement special days and special computer points have been established for these interest groups. Comparatively urban telecentres charge less per services than non urban telecentres especially for the ICT services. It is, however, urged that the actual cost for services in non urban telecentres is still low if the end user was to computer in the costs of transport, feeding, accommodation, and inconveniency to go out of the community to access similar services from the nearest urban centre where it is offered cheaper.

Fees for services

What fees or other requirements exist in order to access and use the information in the venues? (registration, user fees, restrictions to certain populations)

If there are fees: What do these fees buy?

A typical facility under this venue charges; internet cost of 30 to 55 UGX, 1,000 UGX for printing, 100 to 200 UGX for photocopying, 10,000 to 25,000UGX for basic IT computer application and 2,000 UGX for radio announcements by the time of this research. The exchange rate by may 2008 was 1 US\$ equaling to 1600 UGX. Most of these services are more costly in non urban communities than urban.

The fees are mainly used to pay for internet connectivity and the operational fees like security, staff salaries, toner, paper and electricity. But for non urban facilities this fee is not adequate.

Indicate amount in local currency

Equivalent in US Dollars:

Date of estimate

and local currency name Uganda Shillings.

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Explain any salient differences in the services offered in different regions, sizes or other variables of significance:

Generally, telecentres offer similar services; internet access, IT computer application training, Photocopying, printing, telephony, reading space and mini libraries, counseling services, outreach services, development video and television shows, business development and consultancy services and a few with community library and radio. However salient different exist by region and ownership.

The urban facilities have concentrated on offering the traditional telecentre services in additional to business and management consultancy. Many have emphasized on introducing only services that can be sustainable rather than services that are going to be offered for free. On contrary non urban telecentres have a lot of out reach services to the community included some that are developed to address specific user groups. They develop partnerships and strategic alliances with Community based organizations and networks to delivery key information to the community through the telecentre.

Overall the non urban telecentres are bigger than the urban telecentres in terms of infrastructure and staffing. It is in non urban telecentres that community radio components and community library components have been introduce with many having well developed power supply backup system and solar energy as an alternative power supply as seen in Nakaseke telecentre. Also the non urban telecentre worry most of the time about the language in which the service is offered than the urban facilities.

Geographic distribution

What is the distribution of the venues in terms of their geographic location?

Complement any details not already included in section **Error! Reference source not found.: Venue Selection**.

Telecentres are not evenly distributed in each district. But most Multipurpose Community Telecentres (MCTs) are found in the non-urban areas of the country. Apart from knowing the names and districts in which they are located, their geographical distribution remains a mystery to the researchers. According to Uganda Communication Commission (UCCO, the number and distribution of Telecentres is not known.

Map

If available, insert a map that displays the geographic distribution of this type of venue in the country (expand to the size you need).



Description of map:

The above location of the telecentres does not represent the actual location of the centre on the GIS system. However, the placement has been based on district by district allocation. All telecentres have been indicated by a point marked in red.

Other factors affecting access

Other factors that affect equitable access to public information in this type of venue, not covered above?

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

- High staff turnover due to labor mobility for highly skill staff and volunteers.
- Limited ability to track and incorporate new and emerging community needs into telecentre services.
- Poor reading culture; this was quoted everywhere; people don't want to read literature. Few people attach value to written information- they want tangible stuff more of audio- visual. Most of the time people spend it in agriculture and economic services and rarely find time to visit the

venues thinking the services are only for young people.

- Limited logistic for outreach programs and for buying resources and materials needed by the end users.
- Limited computers, computer skill of users and irregular internet connectivity.
- High cost of internet connectivity making it prohibitive to extend the services to a wider base within the community.
- There is lack of funding from partners.
- Irregular electricity supply
- Computer technicians and photocopier experts are located very far from the center
- The community radio radius need to be extended to at least cover 30 miles [100Watts transmitters] for some telecentres.
- Financial sustainability needs to be uplifted through offering fee based services.

Capacity and relevance

2–3 Paragraphs:

What is your overall assessment of CAPACITY ecosystem in this type of venue (human capacity, locally relevant content, integration into daily routines, socio-cultural factors, trust in technology, social appropriation of technology)?

Overall this venue depends on volunteers and less paid staff. Most facilities have in-designed programs that address specific community needs and special group needs. Services are designed to fit the daily livelihood and social cultural needs of the community, with interest in farming, governance, production, education and life long skills issues. Women and youth have been specifically target too by most telecentres. The outreach program has increased the number of individuals benefiting from most telecentre services offered under this venue.

The volunteer system, however, roots the telecentre into the community. It gives the telecentre an opportunity to understand and to be understood better within the community. It has increased the integration of the telecentre into the socio-cultural and daily routine of the communities they serve.

Staff size

How many people work in a typical facility for this type of venue? (full time-equivalent employees or contractors; describe any significant variations; i.e., large, medium and small libraries in the country)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

According to the survey, the average number of staff in a typical multipurpose telecentre is 1-3 salaried workers. Additionally, most telecentres have 20 to 35 Volunteers in order to compensate for their financial inabilities to support a big staff and to fill the need to integrate the facilities within the community. The volunteers survive on minimal wage. The urban facilities have less volunteers than non urban facilities and are largely managed by an average of a team of 2 staff. Probably urban facilities

have less social development angle than the non urban facilities and the examine most of the processes with a strong financial implication analysis. There is insignificant usage of contracted staff. Of all the centres visited only one case were reported at Uganda Development Service (UDS) multipurpose community telecentre.

Staff training

What is the overall capacity of the staff (i.e., librarians, telecentres operators) to help users access and use public access to information and communication services offered in this venue? Differentiate by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

(iii) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

(iv) For Public Libraries, indicate if Library School training is available and/or required for librarians.

MCTs largely have only one degree holder staff and the rest are either non educated or school dropout volunteers. The volunteers are by far on job trained. Multipurpose telecentres have ICT or IT knowledgeable staff but the number ranges from 2-4.

Services offered

What kind of services does this type of venue offer to the public? (i.e., access to books, magazines; meeting and conference rooms; audio/video programs, computers, Internet, other). Include Digital ICT services if offered.

Services Offered

Comments

- 11. Poultry keeping
- 12. Health updates
- 13. Agricultural information
- 14. Entrepreneurship skills
- 15. Adult literacy classes
- 16. Computer trainings
- 17. Internet access
- 18. Photocopying
- 19. Radio programs
- 20. Audio Video
- 21. Radio news and advertisements

22. Phones Charging

23. Printing

Explain any salient differences in the services offered in different regions, sizes or other variables of significance:

Power irregularity in the country affects service delivery. Some centres visited had damaged computers due to power failure. This affected the success of IT services.

Programs for underserved communities

Describe if this venue has programs specifically intended to reach underserved communities, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Multipurpose telecentre have specific services provided to specific people in the community, i.e. the farmers, business people, students [youths] and women. This is mainly differentiated in the way content is packaged, how information is delivered and mode of payment for the services.

In the Northern part of the country, Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief (CPAR) set up a small satellite center of 50 km radius from the telecentre to be accessed by vulnerable groups, who can not travel to the centre. They prepare brochures, newsletters, posters, videos and basic IT lessons for the IDP within the area. Most of the facilities have initiated outreach programs in agricultural, IT training and audio listening clubs in order to reach out to disadvantaged groups. Audio information has been developed mainly for the illiterates who can not read. The tapes are rent out to allow them access the information on their own. However, the same information is run in the listeners clubs that are established within target groups and in facilities with community radios they are played over the radio.

Most facilities have developed strategic partnerships to address interest groups. CEEWA Uganda for example provides IT training and Internet access to women groups in different facilities of this venue. The organization pays the telecentre facility to allow women access the IT and internet services of the community. At the same time National Agricultural research Central and CTA provide agricultural information to the rural poor through most facilities. The information has helped the farmers' special group to improve its income levels. Some facilities have gone ahead to translate the resources into local languages that are commonly understood by the target audience. Print materials are pinned on the notice boards for community viewing.

Most facilities have also developed services to reach out the schools and community user who for different reasons are unable to travel to the telecentres. Typical the managers carry the computers to the schools, CBOs and special groups and train them for a fee in IT application. According to Nakaseke the manager, "the audience for outreach programmes is big but the equipment to carry out limited for most telecentres".

Relevant content

What type of locally relevant content is available? What else is needed? Who is doing it?

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Available Content:

MCTs give out CD-ROMs, DVDs, Video and audio tape content in livelihood local content, mainly in Agriculture production and markets, HIV and AIDS, education, human rights, business management. However, the ICT packaged materials are only available in small quantities despite the factor that the current illiteracy level require content developed in multimedia like audio-visual in order to address their information needs effectively. MCTs also run local content based programs on the community radio for those which have them.

Additional useful content is available from NGOs dealing in HIV and AIDS, Agricultural extension organizations and bodies like NAADS and National Agricultural research centre, CTA and GTZ.

Other Content Needed:

Goretta *Zavuga, Wougnet* explains that, "telecentres work but people need to be assured and trained. They also need relevant content. There's a need for seed money in rural areas to grow demand'. Parkinson (2005 p.73)

More content on disease prevention before out breaks is needed. Since the Ugandan community is economically supported by agriculture, there is still lack of enough agriculture content in local languages.

Content on how to apply ICT usage to speed up information dissemination and appropriateness in the millennium world is pertinent. However, many organizations still do not address the agricultural marketing information and input cycle, which is necessary to address the needs of the non urban communities. It is also possible that e-learning opportunities developed around the national curriculum could reduce poor grades due to lack of teachers and poor infrastructure.

Local Initiatives to build needed content:

The initiatives of different NGOs in wanting their content to capture the grassroot community has constrained them to interpreted information into local; languages and package it appropriately.

Source: NGOs(NAADS, TASO, e.t.c), Government bodies, International organisations(Ministry of health, Uganda Communication commission), community individuals and local community.

Services and information available in local languages

Describe the availability of services and contents relevant to human development that are available in **local languages** in this type of venue? (i.e., info on health, education, government services, etc)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

For a long time all content and services have been available only in English as people thought that it was only the literate that required information. Urban placed venues have less local content and services than rural placed venues. The increase in information related to livelihood relates to the steady growth and

expansion of NGO thinking and work in the Country. Most NGOs develop locally relevant information in local languages and distribute it through public access centers. Overall, all development sectors have information translated in the most popular local language; Luganda.

Information on health, agriculture, government, education, sports entertainment, nutrition, religious, and general news interpreted in various local languages and distributed to different telecentres to disseminate it to the community. So far, the availability of e-info and ICT related information is still minimal although materials in voice, video and print are available in local languages.

Types of uses

What do people USE the venues for (most frequent kinds of information and services people seek in them, activities they carry out in them)?

(ii) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Refer to section **Error! Reference source not found. Charts: Information Needs** and complement here as needed.

Frequent users of MCTs seek information on market places and prices. The rural based MCTs and community libraries frequently get users seeking information on modern farming methods and health. But the main users are students in search of academic knowledge at all venues.

Number, type, and frequency of users

Refer to section **Error! Reference source not found. Charts: Information Needs**. Complement here as needed.

67.9% of telecentre users are between the age of 15 and 35 and 30.2% are between the age of 36 and 60 years. Of the total users 46.9% are daily users while 30.6% are frequent users.

Users Capacity to use information and services offered

What is the overall capacity of the users to take advantage of public access to information and communication resources, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)?

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

MCTs offer a range of services. However, in principle they tend to focus on one or two popular services, neglecting the others. In part this is due to end user inability to utilize the services and information in formats in which the services and the information are packaged. Overall the introduction of Universal Primary and Secondary education has generally reduced illiteracy level thus increasing the ability of most communities to take advantage of the resources in telecentres. However, people with disability don't have any special arrangement to take advantage of the information and communication resources.

Most telecentres progressively build the ability and capacity of the community to access information and communication resources. The strategy of constituting user clubs and also having all the vulnerable groups including women, traders, politician, farmers and others on the management committee improves the capacity of the community to utilize the resources in the telecentres. But information management is still poorly done to allow easy access of the user to information. There is no clear sorting of the available information by tags or categories to allow the manager or the user easily find out information of the areas of interest. Most information still exists in print with little information in multimedia and local languages. The packaging of the information is less informed by the real needs of the community

for most telecentres facilities. This reduces the capacity of the community to utilize the information. The study indicates that woman in rural areas have little capacity to use the information since their time is divided up with family chores though they have better enthusiasm than men. However, some facilities have utilized women group to improve women access to information. For example women at Nakaseke telecentre through Nakaseke Women's development Association (NAWODA) have formed a women's desk where they meet and share about their day to day challenges and collectively try to gather solutions. Fridays and Wednesday evening are regarded as telecentres days to them. Other facility communities have introduced open hours to special groups like women, children, and nurses.

The youth and the men have all the time to themselves but the capacity of use generally depends on individual interest. The low income earners don't have the means to access information from the MCTs venues as services have a fee attached. But the library and the community radio are open to the community for free.

Training courses for users

Describe training courses offered to the public at this venue, and if they offer some kind of testing and certification.

Training courses: Training courses: Most Telecentres don't offer training courses. The few facilities that offer training do so at a low, non regular scale. The trend is largely due to fluctuating trainees who normally come during school holidays while many facilities under different telecentres have limited resources and infrastructure to offer the service. Mostly, agriculture related courses are offered like: poultry farming, coffee management, and non- formal adult education. There are a few facilities under MCTs that have signed MoUs with academic institutions for certification of courses offered.

ICT specific training courses: Majority of the MCTs offer ICT training ranging from computer usage to radio programming for all the MCT facilities that have community radio section. Some MCTs have community outreach training programs to nearby schools. Most of the MCTs offer non- regular IT computer application training courses in Ms word, spreadsheet, publisher, power point, and introduction to computers, Internet for research and markets. The courses are hands on skills development, which are non tested but a certificate of completion is issued for most facilities. Bwindi telecentre is an outstanding story of a telecentre offering tested and certified course in partnership with Makerere University. The telecentre facility offers certificates of Makerere university to the graduates.

Integration into daily routines

How easy is it for users to integrate the information and services offered in this type of venue into their daily lives? (offer concrete solutions to their needs and problems, make it easier to solve them at this venue than in other places)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The integration of services and information by the users into their daily lives is visible in the improvements in the economical and social status of the areas. Most users find the telecentre facilities as their only source of information about their community, the country and the region. People then share the information acquired to about 6 more people who can not access the telecentre for different reasons. Problems like market prices in various country markets, proper agricultural methods and better ways of addressing hygienic challenges have received better approach from using telecentres.

Muwanga Siraj, a resident of Nakaseke proudly notes, “having stopped studies in S.1, I have been trying to make a living out of farming. I started at subsistence level, which was a horrible experience. My diary farm returns for a long time were not enough to cover my basic need costs. As family, we owned 50 acres of land which were not effectively put to use. Through listening to NAADS and NARO agricultural programmes on the community radio at Nakaseke MCT, I gained knowledge and information on acquiring a loan from Poverty alleviation Programme(PAP), which I put to use over the last three years. Currently I own a model farm of banana and coffee, poultry, goats and trees. My income and status in the community have improved.”

National leaders identified ICTs as a potential tool to support their national development objectives. In 1997, President Museveni attended the Global Knowledge Conference in Toronto, Canada, and requested the global community to assist Uganda in developing ICT capacities that could improve the lives of its rural and disadvantaged communities. A number of other ministers and high-level politicians championed the cause of ICTs as potential tools for national development (Office, 2002).

Many individuals have used ICT related tools and the trend in integrating the information and services offered in this type of venue into their daily lives is just increasing. The start to use digital cameras, mobile phones, flash disks, printers, photocopiers, computers for typing, internet (for research, news, advertisement, entertainment ,e.t.c) and many other digital services in related communities is one confession of users integrating ICT services into their daily lives.

Users perceptions about the venue

What is the general perception or opinion of the population about the venue (not necessarily its specific services, but the venue itself: i.e., what do people generally think about libraries? Are they places that are “cool” or “only for elites” etc?), differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)? This includes perception by people who do not use the venue...

- (i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Generally the communities' perception of MCTs varies from one telecentre to the other. Telecentres which are more in the urban have a bit modernized and the population thinks of them as unique places for the low income to have a sense of belonging. The educated regard them as just places for a quick stop in case of emergency but not serious places for research.

Most non users think telecentre facilities have had a strong impact on community development through stimulating information sharing and accessing national, regional and global contacts and markets. But both non users and users are cautious about the way ICTs are spreading online crime and immorality through nude sites. The responds were also concerned about the e-worst management challenge, which is already catching up with most communities especially with the wide importation of refurbished used computer and the clone machines from Asian countries. The general opinion of the population about the venues is that if ICTs related equipments were put into the venues, the atmosphere would be cool and warm with a lot of life in them.

Social appropriation of information and generation of new knowledge

What activities, products and services are users undertaking that exhibit new levels of social appropriation of

technologies and generation of knowledge? For example, how are users generating and disseminating new knowledge, products and services through their use of this venue? (see category 13 in Real Access Framework for Social Appropriation of Technology).

If relevant, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

“I joined the computer club because the computer is important; without it one can't make a better study [in other school subjects]. I can get extra material via Internet and get connect to friends outside,” *explains a student at Lango College, Lira. (Sarah Parkinson, 2005 p.42)*

“A Ugandan farmer near the northern shore of Lake Victoria previously produced ten 100 kg sacks of maize per acre on his farm. When he learned how to use manure as fertilizer, he increased the productivity of his farm to twenty sacks per acre.”

“Another Ugandan maize farmer used to broadcast his seeds in the spring planting. When he learned to plant in straight lines and space his seeds, his productivity went from two bags per acre to ten bags or more.”

“In a rural market in northern Uganda, a buyer offered a maize farmer 5,000 UGX per 100 kg sack. Because he knew the going market price through price update system, the farmer refused the offer and was able to get 5,700 UGX per sack. With the difference he was able to purchase sheet metal for a roof on his house”, explains farmer.

“Another farmer was offered 4,800 UGX per 20 kg basket of her peas. Because she knew the market price she was able to negotiate 7,200 UGX per basket”, explains farmer.

A resident of Nakaseke proudly notes, “having stopped studies in S.1, I have been trying to make a living out of farming. I started at subsistence level, which was a horrible experience. My diary farm returns for a long time were not enough to cover my basic need costs. As family, we owned 50 acres of land which were not effectively put to use. Through listening to NAADS and NARO agricultural programmes on the community radio at Nakaseke MCT, I gained knowledge and information on acquiring a loan from Poverty alleviation Programme(PAP), which I put to use over the last three years. Currently I own a model farm of banana and coffee, poultry, goats and trees. My income and status in the community have improved.”

One local artisan in the Nabweru community got linked to Koreans doing related works through browsing the internet at Nabweru Community Multipurpose Telecentre. They interacted using the internet but eventually made personal contact. The Korean visited Uganda and helped the artisan to access funds to attain training in making knives and spears in Korea and to purchase modern equipment and tools for his business.

“Before I attained computer lessons at the Nakaseke telecentre, I was using the freehand style to design school badges, banners and signposts. This was taking a lot of time and was not very neat. When the telecentre opened, I enrolled for computer lessons in Word processing, Excel and other packages. Computer knowledge has helped me improve on the quality of my work, making it faster and easier,” explains a telecentre user.

Access to information has improved farming methods in many MCTs community. The use of public pay phones and mobile phones has tremendously improved farmer connectivity to the market especially through SMEs. Many farmers have multiplied production through NAADs demand led agricultural extension services of which most are through telecentres thus helping to create effective demand for the kind of services that telecentres provide.

Trust, safety, and privacy

What is the general perception or opinion of the population about the safety, security and privacy (TRUST) of the information and services offered in this venue?

All respondents in all the venues strongly agree that the safety and privacy of the information and services is high. Reason being that since the bodies that package and distribute the information are well established, the degree of their trust is unquestionable. One respondent notes that “the telecentre is the only source of information and connectivity to the outside community, we trust the information from there”. However, according to Etta and Parvyn (2003), indicate that there is very little privacy in this type of PAC.

Gaps and opportunities in information and services offered

What other information gaps and opportunities exist, which are not being met? (other information/services people need that are not being met there and could be offered, especially through Digital ICT services)

Respondents from MCTs pointed out information and service gaps in:

Weather forecast information, absence of local publications, mobile library, food security, computer training, access to internet, disease prevention methods and outreach programs aimed at improving livelihoods. They emphasized the need to have more or any ICT programmes and especially those that target the uneducated community. However, key informants articulate that ICT services can serve a more strategic role that root within the core challenges of the users. They can facilitate marketing and input supply direct connection; crashing completely the middle men. But within the education sector they can complement the current national education system through offering online tutoring within national basic education curriculum.

Enabling environment

2–3 Paragraphs:

What is your overall assessment of the ENVIRONMENT ecosystem in this type of venue (local economy, national economy, legal and regulatory framework, political will and public support, regional and international context)?

Overall there is willingness from the government to provide access and usage to ICT through creating an enabling environment. The national ICT policy has been formulated together with sector policies to support its implementation. Additionally the parliament passed the Rural Communication Development Program/ Fund (RCDP/F) to enhance the telecentre movement development sector that is lead by the private sector. Many efforts at regional level including Eastern African Submarine Cable system (EASsy) undertaking that aims at reducing connectivity cost and increase bandwidth in the region and NEPAD e-school initiative have been taken up by the government to ensure the country’s position in the

region. At local level the community has offered space to house many facilities in this venue; volunteer continue to form the biggest source of staffing.

The Deputy Executive Chairperson for NEPAD e-Africa Commission noted, “It is through such partnerships that we shall be able to impart modern ICT skills and knowledge to the youth, to enable them face the challenges of the ever changing information society and global economy.” While the president of Uganda at the launch of NEPAD e-schools noted, “NEPAD initiative is welcome and should be applauded as it is in line with our goals of reducing illiteracy and poverty. Computers store data, fasten communications and work. With modern ICTs, one can communicate or work in a remote place such as Bugulumbya with a person, say in California, USA. This project will not only benefit the people of Bugulumbya but the whole nation”.¹

“Looking at school-based telecentres, they're so much easier. They have security, management, more opportunities. Community-based telecentres have a kind of rigidity because of the low capacity and limited outlook of the management. Local government hasn't been that supportive,” explains *former manager of Nakaseke Telecentre*. Many respondents believe that the policy processes are not reflected into the actions of the government. Telecentre are not supported by the government neither has the government attempted to digitize its resources and services so that they can be access through telecentres. One respondent at Nakaseke telecentre noted, “The government neglects MCTs such that in case of health outbreaks like Ebola they don't update the community in time”. While the government largely liberalized the economy, to take a “rolling rather than a steering role”, community members feel the government is doing less to ensure that the country just-starts into the information community.

Local and national economy

Describe the local and national economic environment and how it affects public access to information and communication in this type of venue (refer to and complement economic summary in country assessment, section **Error! Reference source not found. Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment**, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

UNHS (2007) states that most prices are stable, with the annual headline inflation rates for the year ending 2007 at 5.5%. Whereas the inflation rate is stable with relatively stable prices, according to UBOS key economic indicators (2006/07) 37% live below the poverty line.

The national and local economic environment is fluctuating with the support they offer to the general community. Meaning majority of the population cannot afford access to information and communication technologies.

Legal and regulatory framework

Describe the legal and regulatory framework and how it affects public access to information and communication in this type of venue (refer to and complement economic summary in country assessment, section **Error! Reference source not found. Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment**, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

¹ <http://www.nepad.org/2005/news/wmprint.php?ArtID=35>

The Rural Communications Development Policy, 2001 “The main objective of the policy is to provide access to basic communication services within reasonable distance to all people in Uganda”

The Rural Communications Development Fund (RCDF) is Uganda’s approach to implementing a Universal Access, which is a mechanism to motivate and mobilize the private sector to invest in Information and Communications Technologies within rural areas. The RCDF is expected to harness the energies and interest of private telecommunications operators already active in the country to compete with one another, as well as to encourage new interested entrants to participate in the extension of services to poor rural areas. RCDF is a means of intervention to ensure that basic communications services of acceptable quality are accessible at affordable prices and at reasonable distances by all people in Uganda. It is meant to assist in areas where provision of commercial services is not feasible; to provide basic universal access; and to promote competition among operators. To implement the program, telecommunication service providers contribute 1% of their annual income to leverage investment rather than provide all the solutions. Projects supported by the RCDF include the district portals, multipurpose community telecentres, and public telephone booths.

Overall, there is no legal guideline for the establishment of a telecentre centre. Interested individuals, communities or organizations can open up a telecentre facility without seeking and legal consent from any authority.

Political will and public support

What is the level of political will and public support for this type of venue? (refer to and complement section **Error! Reference source not found. Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment**, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Telecentres in the country lack any legitimate kind of organisation into a network. UgaBYTES initiative remains the only support organization, which has developed an opportunity for the telecentres to network and share information, resources and opportunities. However, the network is largely now seen as a regional force at its work thus weakening its levels of impact at national level. Additionally, the network is not based on subscription but on support services, which make the interactions between the members and the nodes quite informal. Individual telecentres remain in a small network under the funding organizations or any other body that brings in support.

Organization and networking

Describe if the facilities in this type of venue organized in any network, association or other collective body? (i.e., national public library system, telecentre franchise or network, etc)?

Public- private partnerships have been established which are in favour of ICT related information and services. All telecentres with ICT services, are initiatives by different NGOs or a parent organization of some kind. The first generation of telecentres was established with support from local government, UNESCO, IDRC and ITU. While the foreign partners have already retracted support, local governments continue to form the biggest support organs of the telecentres. They provide financial and management support to day to day operation and the telecentres facilities continue to operation within local council buildings. However, new partnerships have also emerged; for example the CTA, National Agricultural

Research Organization (NARO) and National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) distribute audio, video and print materials through several telecentres. Other partnerships include Council for Economic Empowerment of Women in Africa (CEEWA), distribute women economic opportunities through the telecentres. It also pays for ICT and IT training time for women. This has given an opportunity to many women to start using ICT on their own.

At the same time there are individual cases of private engagement with telecentres especially with the telecom operators. MTN and Uganda Telecommunication Limited (Utl) have supported some telecentres in different activities that ensure increased access to information by the community. However these partnerships are rather fewer although many opportunities are available especially with NGOs and companies that are potential content providers.

Partnerships

Describe notable public-private partnerships in support of this type of venue.

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The diversity of the MCTs has not led to several significant public-private partnerships. However, UCC and the first MCTs under the funding of IDRC, ITU and UNESCO demonstrate that this kind of partnership is possible. Under the UNESCO, ITU and IDRC arrangement the donor institutions provided the seed grant the kickstart the telecentres while the government of Uganda through local government provided buildings that housed the telecentres. It also committed to continue supporting the telecentres once the project support terminated. In the same arrangement UTL provided connectivity solutions at subsidized prices. But the arrangement made by UCC is a bit different; in this arrangement government, through taxing mobile phone operators, accesses funds to private investor in rural communities. The seed grants provides for the main operating requires that would make the investor unable to deploy on his own into the rural community due to local purchasing force in such areas. Over 70 telecentres and training centres have been established in rural Uganda through this arrangement.

Other environment factors

Other factors in the environment that affect access and use of information in this kind of venue, not covered above?

Poor reading culture was identified as a factor in all venues visited. Whereas the government has put in the place the UPE and USE to tackle the illiteracy issue, students have been accustomed to spoon feeding with little encouragement in research. Majority of the children are not encouraged to read from an early age. This has gone a long way to affect access and use of information in public libraries.

Telecentre serve a very wide geographical area which makes them less focused and less successful. In most facilities the catchment area is seen as the entire district normally with over 4 sub counties thus in principle many still remain unreached. However, the introduction of wifi connectivity may address this problem.

Few people attach value to information and prefer tangible stuff. Less people in the community look at information as a resource, which indeed should be free. There is need to innovate value with the information service to be able to address community needs like markets, production financing, financial saving through online services rather than continuing to put forward information as the commodity.

The problem of accessibility of electricity and internet coverage to all the areas in Uganda is a main factor that is largely affecting the use of PACs. Only 3% of the population is connected to the national grid, which is quite irregular Electricity in the country.

For publicly funded venues only: Revenue streams

This section is meant specifically for publicly-funded venues (public libraries, national connectivity programs, etc).

Budget

What is the total budget for this public access venue system (applies especially for libraries, answer for other venues if applicable and if available)?

Total Budget for Fiscal Year

Local currency name amount (local currency)

Approx. equivalent in USD based on exchange rate of on date .

Relative size of budget

How large (or small) is this budget in relation to other funding streams? (this is a way to show, in financial terms, how much the government cares about information and public access as compared to a variety of other issues in the country).

Relative Size of Budget for same year	Total budget (local currency)	Comments
Total national budget		
Education		
Other (name)		
Public libraries		

Other Comments:

Sources of funding

What are the sources of funding for this public access venue system?

Sources of funding:	Approximate % of total budget	Comments
Government sources:		
International donors:		
National donors:		
User fees/services:		
Other (name)		
Other (name)		
Other (name)		

Other Comments:

Paths and flows of resources

How do resources get allocated and disbursed to the actual venues? For the principal funders, and especially for the public sources, what is the flow of funds? How are the funds raised (what tax stream), what path do the tax streams flow before they get to the specific venues? Who makes decisions about this funding?

Fees and cost recovery

Describe if there are user fees or any other type of cost recovery. How does it affect service delivery and usage?

Cost categories

What are the main cost categories in the operation of this kind of venue? (% of total annual budget)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Cost Categories for Operation:	Approximate % of total budget	Comments
Staff (salaries, benefits)		
Building infrastructure		
Utilities		
Staff Training		
Computers/technology		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		
Total	100%	

Other Comments:

Recent changes and future trends

Describe any recent changes and anticipated future trends in the funding and revenue streams for this type of venue in the country. Have funding levels risen or decreased dramatically over the past few years? What is the outlook for the foreseeable future?

Case example for public libraries

Provide a short descriptions and commentary for each type of venue, offering a realistic sense of what the venue looks and feels like in its day to day operation, the kind of people who visit, and the kind of services they receive. Also, the case example indicates what makes the case unique or what features are commonly shared with other venues. A photo and short quotes will make it even more real.

Telecentres Improving lives and empowering communities

Britain's World war II Prime Minister, Sir Winston Churchill proclaimed Uganda the "Pearl of Africa" during his visit in 1908. He was attracted to the magnificent landscape, wildlife, friendly natives and culture of this landlocked country. Over the years, civil wars, pandemics like HIV and AIDS, disease and poverty have done a lot to taint this 'pearl'. Over 80% of Uganda's thirty million people live in the rural areas. 70% of the population is engaged in subsistence agriculture as the major economic earner. This has rendered majority of the people poor and can hardly afford access to ICTs. They have been left behind in terms of technology advancement. But with the start of telecentres in 1999, the digital divide is narrowing as evidenced by the rapid growth of internet in Uganda Internet usage and Telecommunications report (<http://www.internetworldstats.com/af/ug.htm>)

Figure 1An adult learners' class at the Nakaseke Community Telecentre



Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and UNESCO partnered to establish the first wave of telecentres in Uganda to give the rural population a chance to access ICTs.

As a result, four telecentres were established; Nakaseke Community telecentre and Nabweru Community telecentre in Central Uganda, Buwama Community telecentre South East and Kachekano Community telecentre in Western Uganda.

Building on the experience of this first wave of telecentres has led to the development of over 144 telecentres. Most of these have been established by private business people, Non Governmental Organizations and other donor agencies

according to UgaBYTES Initiative, one of the biggest telecentre support networks in the East Africa region.

The target population of these telecentres includes teachers, students, health workers, business people, farmers, women, children and the community at large. Most of the telecentre services include computer training, email and internet, scanning, photocopying, library, typesetting, video recording and development of local content that addresses community information needs. Only the four UNESCO and IDRC founded telecentres have the community radio component. When the first donors were quitting after the pilot stage, the telecentres were handed over to the local councils. As telecentres continue to develop and grow, the success stories as a result of their impact have been flowing in hordes.

One local artisan in the Nabweru community got linked to Koreans doing related works through browsing the internet at Nabweru Community Multipurpose Telecentre. They interacted using the internet but eventually made personal contact. The Korean visited Uganda and helped the artisan to access funds to attain training in making knives and spears in Korea and to purchase modern equipment and tools for his business.

In Nakaseke, a rural area located 64 kilometers north of the Ugandan capital Kampala, the telecentre has greatly changed the way of life of people in this community. This area was greatly affected by a civil war in the early 1980s. “Before I attained computer lessons at the Nakaseke telecentre, I was using the freehand style to design school badges, banners and signposts. This was taking a lot of time and was not very neat. When the telecentre opened, I enrolled for computer lessons in Word processing, Excel and other packages. Computer knowledge has helped me improve on the quality of my work, making it faster and easier,” explains Joyce Namayanja a local designer. This increased on her clientele and profits subsequently.

Figure 2 A Community radio presenter at Nakaseke Community Telecentre



But the telephony services provided by these telecentres have also helped the communities. In Nakaseke the telephony services have helped to improve the health services provided at the local hospital. The local doctors use the telephone to communicate to the main referral hospital in the city where most of the specialists are found. While in Eastern Uganda, the Uganda Development Services telecentre located about 140 kilometers from the capital has done a lot in supporting farmers. Started by UDS friends in the UK in 2001, the telecentre has changed the lives of farmers in this impoverished district.

“Since inception, UDS telecentre has reached over 568 farmers in the villages. Volunteers chosen by their communities obtain appropriate information from the UDS Centre through browsing the internet then visit, teach and mentor the farmers. They also set up demonstration plots,” explains UDS Director, Rita Mijumbi.

Mulopa of Buganja village a few kilometers away from the UDS telecentre has improved the sustainable ways of farming through surfing the internet and using the information he gets from www.ugandadev.com. He was at first a peasant subsistence farmer but is now a model farmer in the village. From his income, he is able to pay his children’s fees and has improved his standard of living.

In Mpigi district located 68KM South East of Kampala, a large notice board displaying agricultural information welcomes you to Buwama telecentre. The telecentre offers agricultural information in Luganda the most widely spoken local language and English. The information is got through partnership with Council for Economic Empowerment of Women for Africa (CEEWA). Through this partnership, they have provided information to the farmers and formed women groups aimed at empowering them economically.

“Through membership with CEEWA I have got involved in making passion fruit syrups, learnt better methods of goat rearing and banana plantation as opposed to the tradition way I used to do things,” explains Lugalama one of the users at Buwama telecentre.

Kiwanuka Yudaya a beneficiary of Nabweru telecentre explains, “I previously used to be a subsistence

farmer but through taking advantage of the telecentre, I was introduced to modern farming methods and can now feed my family and have some more to sale which has improved my income.”

Whereas the telecentres are increasingly becoming popular for the internet services and local content provided, sustainability has remained a great challenge.

They can barely make money as they are located in the rural areas where majority of the population can hardly afford a dollar a day. Other challenges these telecentres face include donor dependence, sporadic power, lack of locally relevant content, high connectivity fees which means most of them are without internet for most part of the year.

UgaBYTES Initiative, a telecentre support network has been at the forefront of ensuring these telecentres remain sustainable. With the emergence of such telecentre support networks, these challenges will soon be history. Maybe telecentres will help Uganda regain its tainted ‘pearl’.

Venue-Specific Assessments (cont.)

Venue 3: Community Library

Overall venue assessment

Provide a broad picture of the public access information landscape in this venue, informed by the results of this research.

2–3 Paragraphs:

What is your overall assessment of public access information in this type of venue?

There are 35 community libraries in the country registered with the Uganda Community Libraries Association. The association though is not obliged to know the total number of community libraries in the country; they only acknowledge which ever community library that registers with the association. Community libraries in the country are a result of individuals, communities and NGO initiatives aimed at developing communities through access to information. They differ from public libraries in that they are created by and for a local population and usually are not supported with government funds. They may be organized by a school, church or community group, but the needs of the community at- large are of the utmost importance and the collection and services of the library represent those needs. These libraries also often provide informal educational services, such as literacy instruction (Raseroka 1994). There are other ways that community libraries differ from public libraries, including the role of the librarian. Stilwell (1991) discusses the function of librarians in community libraries. The community librarian is one who lives in the community and has close personal relationships with the users. The community librarian can identify the needs of the community and how to provide for those needs in a way that is best suited to the user. Further, she states that, “community librarianship aims at information provision in the crucial areas of people’s lives and at those who have limited access to other sources of help” (Stilwell 1991, 20).

Majority of community libraries are situated in non urban centres where access to power poses a great challenge to the services provided through ICT hence, the number of community libraries offering ICT services is not readily available. However, all community libraries located at MCTs offer ICT services as they offer a wide range of services. Kagan (1982) suggests that the rural library has three functions: to provide information to those individuals responsible for rural development programs; support rural education programs and rural schools; and serve as centers for community, education and culture. In their publication, *Adult Education Handbook*, the Dar es Salaam University Institute of Adult Education; Malya,S (1974, 249–269) contended that rural libraries had the potential to “check any relapse into illiteracy, introduce a reading environment, and become a center for social change in the community”. Mwasha (1980) provided additional justification for the need for rural village libraries. The majority of villages he surveyed for his research had what he described as an “absence of a literary environment.” This absence was indicated by a lack of detailed signage, street names, few newspapers, advertisements or written announcements/flyers for local activities.

Information on the distribution of community libraries in the country is not well documented. This created room for the research team to ask for any existing community library in the regions we visited;

to identify which were not covered in the research. Not surprising though during the time of data collection; we uncovered some community libraries that were not initially included in the study. In the Southern and Western regions of the country, each region had one community library identified during the survey. This implied though that there is lack of proper documentation of community libraries in the country.

Access

2-3 Paragraphs:

What is your overall assessment of ACCESS ecosystem in this type of venue (physical access, appropriate technology, affordability)?

Community libraries located in Multipurpose Community Telecentres (MCT) are part of the program of effective access to information and ICTs by all communities. They are strategically positioned in sub county headquarters while others are in urban centres of regional districts. In the Eastern part of the country; Uganda Development Services (UDS) community library is in a community telecentre, located in the urban centre of Kamuli district. The library is strategically located to cater for various categories of people. It provides easy access to students, youths, women and farmers. They always remain relevant to the community they serve. However, it is difficult to separate a community library service to that of a telecentre especially for community telecentres with libraries.

Community libraries have accessibility problems due to location and poor sensitization programs. In the Southern region Masaka district; the library is located within Kitengesa Comprehensive secondary school. Accessibility of this library is largely influenced by literacy levels. Majority of community members consider the library to be targeting students only, due to its location. The library is surrounded by a number of primary and secondary schools which are frequent users. In the neighborhood, community members were not informed of the facilities available in the library for them to take advantage of, however, the service commonly known to the community is phone charging because many people in the villages have mobile phones and have no where to charge their mobile phones besides the community library. The area lacks electricity making it only accessible in the community library which uses a solar panel.

Ugandans lack the culture of reading books, this was a complaint everywhere. Though Kijura community library in the western region like any community library basically aimed at developing the community through access to information; the librarian all the time was de-motivated for no community members accessing the library. The library is strategically positioned in the non urban part of Fort portal district surrounded by primary and secondary schools which are the main users however, readership is still very low. Community libraries (CLs) have out reach programs specifically targeting schools. They have a book box program which started in Nakaseke telecentre in the Central region and copied by other community libraries. It is a mobile library where books on syllabus are taken to schools at a small fee. All community libraries have a small annual fee of 2,000/= UGX as at February 12 2008. Community libraries based at telecentres offer ICTs whereas there are only a few community libraries outside telecentre that offer ICTs, an example of this is Kitengesa community library. Although some libraries have electricity, like Kijura community library, their management have no immediate plans of introducing ICTs in the library, making majority of community members move about 14kms to Fort portal town for simple services of photocopying and typing.

Physical access

Describe how accessible this venue is to various population segments, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c), especially the differences between urban and non-urban settings.

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Community libraries were established to develop communities irrespective of gender, religion and age. While they are located in non urban areas and most of them in the heart of small business centres in the villages, majority are easily accessible. However, practice seems to cut off some category of people especially by age. Many programs designed do not cater for the elderly though some of them would have loved to take advantage of the facilities. In the Southern part of the country, One old man in his late sixties, said he uses the library for only phone charging but was not aware of the other services targeting the community specifically in his local language, Luganda. During the interview he was excited knowing that he could also benefit from other library services irrespective of his age. “Am the one to thank you because from tomorrow I will start going to the library to read my local Newspaper and find out any more local language text books I can take advantage of. Most of the time I sit home idle which makes me sick,” he noted. Also an old woman in her early sixties recognized the importance of the library to the community and to students in particular. “I have never utilized the library due to visual problems although I always encourage my grandchildren to utilize the facilities. I only teach my grandchildren what I mastered in my head but cannot read anything at all,” she noted.

Location of some community libraries affects community access. Community managers claimed to have made a lot of sensitization campaigns but it was surprising that in the immediate neighborhood of the libraries people were not sensitized at all about the services offered by the libraries especially targeting the communities. This was noted at Kitengesa and Kachwekano community library in the Western region of the country. Kachwekano is isolated in the mountains of Kabale district; their immediate neighbors are centered in one direction of the slope of the mountain, yet again in the mountains making it harder for the community to climb the mountain every time and again. None of the community member was aware of the services offered in the telecentre besides a community radio where they could tune in for information and entertainment. The centre is largely utilized by National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO) staffs as it is conveniently located in their compound. Surprisingly though the library is not in use at all. “No one accesses the library, we even lost the key three months ago but no one ever comes to press us for the services, to force us break the door.” said Geraldine Nishemerirwe, the centre manager. The librarian of Kitengesa Lucy Namwanje also admitted that they needed to frequently carry out sensitization programs about the availability of services in the library to increase community usability of the facility. This also applies to Zigoti community library. The library is under the same roof with a Music/video hall that makes a lot of noise, having a poor reading environment that never suite serious readers.

Libraries in Uganda are largely seen by majority to be targeting only the elite community. This phobia has affected majority of rural illiterate women, men and youths. In the Western part of Uganda, the illiterate women, men and youths interviewed expressed no interest at all using the library not even wanting to listen about its existence in the community. Their business is making local brew and gossiping which consumes a lot of their time. They even feared to speak out making references to which people we could speak to working in Kabale town; it was after probing for several times that they managed to speak out. However, some women took advantage of the library and formed a developmental group called Lwanunda Women Group in Kitengesa community.

Appropriate technology and services

Describe how appropriate the technologies, services and information offered in this venue are to the population, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

It is very difficult to separate the services of a community library with a telecentre especially with telecentres having community libraries, their services are blended within the entire telecentre program. However, community libraries endeavor to extend suitable services to community needs. The libraries are basically in the non urban centers where majority of the population are agro, animal and poultry farmers hence, most of the literature in such libraries is agriculture. The libraries partner with National Agricultural advisory Service (NAADS) where they collect a lot of literature on modernizing agriculture in Uganda. The information is always selected and packaged in the languages of the community however they also have such literature in English. They also package information on health issues which in most cases is pinned on the walls of the libraries.

Libraries with out ICTs have literature books which are accessible to anybody wanting to use. However, the main problem affecting such libraries is poor sensitization programs and bigger number of illiterate people in the communities. Libraries have literature which is never accessed however good it may be for community development. Hence majority of library users are schools going youths, children, teachers and researchers.

Libraries may also play a role in development. Aboyade (1984) makes a compelling case for access to information and the link to development in still developing nations. The author contends that national development and rural development are inextricably linked, and that rural community members, many of whom are illiterate, need to be considered since they make up a greater percentage of the community. Aboyade further states that since these community members cannot benefit from more modern or conventional methods of information transfer such as new media, rural libraries play an increasingly important role by providing reading materials and interaction between community members and information.

During the RUDIS study (Rural Development Information System Research) conducted over the course of many years starting in 1981, the author observed the information-seeking habits of villagers at a small experimental library in the rural village of Badeku in Nigeria. The study found that community members made requests for information in the following areas: health related matters, problems of daily existence, occupational concerns, government operations, education, religious matters and recreational matters. The author also noted that community members were very interested in being read to. This was a new experience for them, and was greatly appreciated. Aboyade concludes by asserting that the role of the rural community library goes far beyond just the provision of reading material; these libraries hold great potential to serve those non-literate community members who may not have any other means of obtaining information. It is important to note that each of the areas in which Badeku community members requested information were more likely than not to intersect with local development at some point, in some way – for instance, information about better farming methods helping community members increase their productivity and income over time, thus supporting local economy.

Affordability

Describe how affordable the technologies and services offered in this venue are to the population, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

All the services are affordable to the community. Community libraries endeavor to remain relevant to the communities they serve hence, stocking relevant literature in agriculture and health. They even have text books for school going youths, children and researchers, the only problem faced is lack of enough text books on syllabus for students hence, majority look out for another option in various libraries close to community libraries. Some use school libraries, public libraries due to various reasons ranging from location, limited reading space, lack of ICTs and poor reading environment of community libraries.

Fees for services

What fees or other requirements exist in order to access and use the information in the venues? (registration, user fees, restrictions to certain populations)

If there are fees: What do these fees buy?

Based in non urban centres, community libraries charge a small fee 2,000/= per annum as at February 12 2008. The fee is for facilitation of library staff and library maintenance. However, accessing books is free only outside borrowing is charged. The fee is aimed at enhancing community access to books and information in the libraries. Though the fee is low the turn up is commonly for school going youths, children and researchers, very few women and men from the community make good use of the library. Commonly accessed by the business community is current news through reading daily News papers above all community readership was still very low. In the Western part of the country, access to information in the library was free but community readership was still low.

Another condition to access the library is presentation of a valid identity card or driving permit and or a passport for intending outside borrowers. This is aimed at securing library books, to have guaranteed borrowers who would return the books after use.

Indicate amount in local currency **2,000**

Equivalent in US Dollars: **1.10 USD**

Date of estimate **February 12 2008**

and local currency name Shilling

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Explain any salient differences in the services offered in different regions, sizes or other variables of significance:

Majority of community libraries are located in non urban centres in the country while others are in the urban centres of regional districts. They all target the community; majority of which are farmers, students and researchers. The salient difference in community libraries lies in location. Community libraries located in MCTs offer variety of services and try to pull a bigger number of library users when users look out for particular services they find out other services offered in the library than community libraries with no ICTs.

Also location of the library largely affects community users. It was noted that isolated community

libraries and those located in particular areas for instance school campus have an intimidating environment to the readers. For instance schools have rules and regulations of strictly forbidding anyhow community access to school campus; this hampers intending community users for fear of breaking school rules and regulations.

The environments where community libraries are located determine how the services are delivered. Community libraries surrounded by primary and secondary schools have devised ways of extending services to schools. An outreach program started by Nakaseke MCT of book box borrowing has extended to other community libraries of UDS, Kijura community library and many others. This service is done at a small fee where schools are provided with text books on syllabus and they in turn pay community libraries for the service. Also UDS has extended modern farming methods to 20 farmer groups in the Eastern Uganda as an outreach program. Associations like Kamuli Parish Integrated Development Association (KAPIDA) in Eastern Uganda have strengthened animal and fish farming methods to improve livelihoods they also try to document their indigenous knowledge in herbal medicine, and making soap aimed at earning the association and its members an income. They utilized UDS community library where they initially got the idea of establishing the association; majority of members in the association are women and few men from within the community.

Kitengesa community library has Lwanunda women group formed after utilizing the library. The aim of the group is to improve women livelihood through providing entrepreneurship skills. The library provides them with meeting room to facilitate their activities. The library has books on agriculture for instance where there is no Veterinary doctor which was used by the group to improve their animal production. Kitengesa community library also has an Granary machine, a digital library used to capture online data for later use. Information is disseminated in workshops conducted in assistance with area LC chairman, nurses and teachers. The library has no direct ICT services but provides the services indirectly to the community. The only ICT services available are for administrative purposes.

Geographic distribution

What is the distribution of the venues in terms of their geographic location?

Complement any details not already included in section 2.1: Venue Selection.

Map

If available, insert a map that displays the geographic distribution of this type of venue in the country (expand to the size you need).



Description of map:

Other factors affecting access

Other factors that affect equitable access to public information in this type of venue, not covered above?

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

- Limited relevant resources; Lack of relevant materials and reliability of services.
- Operating time; Libraries close early at 5:00pm so the working group and some students cannot access information after school hours
- Poor reading culture- this was quoted everywhere; people don't want to read literature
- Poor education system; the education system does not encourage reading. Teachers do the research and students are spoon fed.
- Few people attach value to information- they want tangible stuff
- Most of time people spend it in agriculture and economic services and rarely find time to visit the venues thinking the services are only for young people. Majority of women are engaged in housework and agriculture so they relatively find little/no time to access the libraries.
- Lack of facilitation like transport, materials to run outreach programs for the communities and also to buy particular books on syllabus needed by users
- Lack of computers and access to internet
- There is lack of funding from partners
- The rural electrification program is so slow to spread to the rest of the country. In places where there is electricity it is not regular all the time. This slows the use of ICTs in community libraries or any venue

Capacity and relevance

2-3 Paragraphs:

What is your overall assessment of CAPACITY ecosystem in this type of venue (human capacity, locally relevant content, integration into daily routines, socio-cultural factors, trust in technology, social appropriation of technology)?

Human capacity in community libraries was generally poorly developed. Most staff to community libraries stopped at Advanced level education and underwent on-job training. The on job training is dependent on registration with the Uganda Community Libraries Association (UgaCLA) and National Library of Uganda (NLU). The association and NLU provide almost the same services of monitoring and training library staff however, the Uganda Community library Association's target group are only community libraries in Uganda whereas NLU targets all libraries in Uganda irrespective of community, public, institutional, and NGO established libraries.

Uganda's economy is predominantly agrarian; 36% of the GDP, 81% of the employed labor force, and 31% of export earnings are derived from the agricultural sector. A total of 6,810,000 ha (16,828,000 acres), or one-third of the land area, is under cultivation. Subsistence production remains the pattern; 70% of the area under cultivation is used to produce locally consumed food crops. Women provide over half of agricultural labor, traditionally focusing on food rather than cash crop production.

<http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Uganda-AGRICULTURE.html>. Serving mainly the rural communities in Uganda where agriculture is the main activity; community libraries look out for agricultural literature from NAADS, and some partner with existing CBOs and NGOs on how to develop local content that suits the communities. For instance UDS and Busoga Rural Open Source Development Initiative (BROSDI) in the Eastern region and K.I.C in the Northern region partnered with UgaBYTES to help telecentres and community Based Organizations (CBOs) on how to develop local content for the communities. The content is directly integrated into the activities of the community because it directly affects their activities. However, other literature on modernization of agriculture is just brought in the libraries because of the national program of Plan for Modernization of Agriculture implemented by NAADS hence benefiting all agriculturists in the country.

Staff size

How many people work in a typical facility for this type of venue? (full time-equivalent employees or contractors; describe any significant variations, i.e., large, medium and small libraries in the country)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Overall Community libraries have two full time employees, who have been trained on-job. This trend generally cut across all community libraries in the country.

Staff training

What is the overall capacity of the staff (i.e., librarians, telecentres operators) to help users access and use public access to information and communication services offered in this venue? Differentiate by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

(v) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

(vi) For Public Libraries, indicate if Library School training is available and/or required for librarians.

Although community libraries have no qualified staffs; the on job trainings and workshops conducted by NLU and the Uganda Community Library Association provided them with confidence in their routine work. Their operation is more equivalent to that of the fully qualified staffs; they always assist whoever needs help in the library. Some community libraries provide scholarships to user to train in library manager or to learn on-job. The users compliment the services of librarians.

Services offered

What kind of services does this type of venue offer to the public? (i.e., access to books, magazines; meeting and conference rooms; audio/video programs, computers, Internet, other). Include Digital ICT services if offered.

Services Offered

Comments

24. Access to books and novels

25. Reading rooms

26. Book lending

27. Access to Newspapers

28. Meeting/workshop rooms

Some community libraries provide meeting/workshop rooms to students and organized community members. Students coming from different secondary schools meet in such libraries to discuss their academic programs where they share knowledge amongst different schools.

29. Book box facilities

30. Audio/video programs

31. Games week targeting children and students/youths

The audio/video programs are only offered in community libraries located in MCTs. Such libraries have access to ICTs and internet, all ICT services are largely offered in such libraries.

32. Sensitization workshops

33. Computer trainings

34. Access to internet

35. Photocopying

36. Phone charging

37. Typing

Explain any salient differences in the services offered in different regions, sizes or other variables of significance:

All libraries claimed to have made sensitization workshops however, more sensitization programs need to be carried out to increase community usability of such libraries.

Programs for underserved communities

Describe if this venue has programs specifically intended to reach underserved communities, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The Community libraries have programs which target particular groups in the community like farmers, women and youths. Some of them have outreach programs targeting farmers who could have little time of accessing the library. For example through the outreach program, UDS has extended modern farming methods to twenty farmer groups. They also partnered with an organization in the United Kingdom which buys agricultural products from the farmers. This partnership though helps all parties involved; the farmers are the most beneficiaries out of the deal. UDS is a broker in the partnership, the organization buys the products they need from the farmers' and the farmers' produce their crops with assured markets. Associations like KAPIDA in the Eastern region have specialized in animal and fish farming methods which improved women financial status as they are the majority in the association. This association was established after utilizing UDS community library.

At Kitengesa community library Lwanunda women group was formed after utilizing the library. This is a women organization aimed at improving women livelihood through providing entrepreneurship skills. The library provides them with a meeting room to facilitate their activities. Majority of the women in the group are farmers. They utilize the resources in the library to improve their farming methods. One of the members used a book "where there is no veterinary doctor" to assist her cow deliver normally; then she shared the information and skills with the group and they all applied the methodology. The library also uses an e Granary machine, a digital library that stores online data for later dissemination to the community through workshops, where there is no connectivity.

Kitengesa Community library has a section for children, every Saturday of the week they hold children's day. This program is aimed at creating awareness and sensitizing children at an early age about the importance of the library. The library has another program for students/youths also aimed at creating interest among students/youths at the school, Kitengesa Comprehensive Secondary School. The school provides seven scholarships to students commonly referred to "library scholars" who work on a voluntary basis but are partly paid their school fees. The students are provided with on job trainings and later complement the work of the librarians.

It should be noted however that all community libraries are based in the non urban centres in the country; while very few are in the small towns of regional districts. All of them specifically serve the agricultural communities; agriculture being Uganda's backbone economy, a lot of literature in such libraries are targeting farmers irrespective of women, men and or youths hence, some libraries target the entire community.

Relevant content

What type of locally relevant content is available? What else is needed? Who is doing it?

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Available Content:

The World book day 2007, advocated for up country community libraries to develop local language content. To the effect the NLU packaged information on health, agriculture, government, education, sports entertainment, nutrition, religious, and general news and distributed it through the library backbone. However, the NLU distributes resources to only the libraries that registered/s with them; they are recognized once they register. Community libraries also partner with NAADS where they get agricultural information to assist farmers providing them with modern agricultural methods, NAADS implement a national program of Modernization of Agriculture. Libraries also have specific pictorial

information distributed on the walls in some libraries for instance information on HIV and AIDS, proper Breast Feeding, fighting malaria disease, how to prevent epidemic diseases like Ebola, Cholera, agricultural and e.t.c. Such information send quick messages to even the illiterate community, they are so effectively transmitted.

Other Content Needed:

Many complaints were raised especially from students' users of community libraries on the relevancy of the available books in the libraries. Majority of such libraries had very old books, not on syllabus; they never had pamphlets for students hence, using some of the libraries for specifically revision and discussions with their colleagues from other secondary schools. Some preferred borrowing out books from other libraries and use them in other spaces. For instance in Kitabilo community library in the Southern part of the country; students who borrowed out books from Masaka public library went to Kitabilo community library because of its convenience for serious readers. It is slightly isolated in the hills with a very quiet environment for serious readers.

Local Initiatives to build needed content:

Some of the community libraries approached were not informed of the advantages of registering with NLU. However some of them had registered and held the week book festival seasons for example Kitengensa Community Library and shared with other public libraries which had direct support of the NLU. The NLU head of department, inspectorate of research and extension services Mrs. Stell B. Nekuusa said, they only support libraries that register with them by providing books, monitoring and trainings to the librarians. Majority of community libraries sought of lobbying the NLU for text books to add value to their libraries for student users and the community. The librarians said, the little annual fee payable is also meant to contribute to buying relevant literature needed by the community and students.

Source: Survey

Services and information available in local languages

Describe the availability of services and contents relevant to human development that are available in **local languages** in this type of venue? (i.e., info on health, education, government services, etc)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

For a long time all content and services have been available only in English literature because people thought that English was the only literate with required information. The increased need of information related to improving livelihood, relates to the steady growth and expansion of NGO thinking and their work in the Country. Many NGOs develop locally relevant information in local languages and distribute it through public access centers. Materials on HIV and AIDS from specialized Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and agricultural materials developed by NAADS and National Agricultural research centre's CD-Rom project are explicit examples.

The World book day 2007, advocated for developing local language content in libraries for upcountry. To the effect the NLU packaged information on health, agriculture, government, education, sports, entertainment, nutrition, religious, and general news and distributes it through the library backbone. Also UDS and BROSDI in the Eastern region and Kubera Information Centre (K.I.C) in the Northern region partnered with UgaBYTES to help telecentres and CBOs on how to develop local content for the communities. The content is directly integrated into the activities of the community because it directly

affects their activities. The content was purely developed in local languages of the telecentres, in Lusoga and Luo respectively. However, translating all the content in local languages requires a lot of money; this has been difficult with some community libraries which have content on health and agriculture yet still in English literature.

Types of uses

What do people USE the venues for (most frequent kinds of information and services people seek in them, activities they carry out in them)?

(iii) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Refer to section 3.4 Charts: Information Needs and complement here as needed.

There hasn't been any close monitoring of the usability of community libraries however, all librarians noted of the busy holiday seasons when libraries fill to capacity. Majority of users around the time are students who use the libraries for their academic research and revisions. They also use the facilities for discussions with their colleagues from different schools when they share and discuss their notes. Very few community members especially from the business community access the libraries for current affairs by reading daily News Papers available in the libraries.

Also organized community members use the facilities for meetings and workshops. Some community libraries have organized games for children and students where they build their skills in various games. Community libraries with ICTs have common services of photocopying and typing services for the community irrespective of students or community members.

Number, type, and frequency of users

Refer to section 3.4 Charts: Information Needs. Complement here as needed.

Users capacity to use information and services offered

What is the overall capacity of the users to take advantage of public access to information and communication resources, differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)?

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The illiterate have an inherent phobia for accessing information looking at them as facilities for the learned. This leads to majority of library users to be students, teachers, children and researchers. This was evidenced during the first phase of data collection when it was not yet holiday season; wherever we went all libraries were empty prompting librarians to say their libraries only fill up to capacity during holiday seasons. However, community libraries get community readers of daily Newspapers and none of them requests for assistance. In some few instances some users would need assistance of where to locate the books of their choice that is where librarians provide assistance as well. The librarians are trained to comfortably serve the people in case they need assistance.

The ability to use ICTs often depends on possession of other assets - money, mobility to get to an access point, literacy or, in case of internet use, the ability to understand any other major world languages. The illiterate depend on the staff at the venue to help them access information through ICTs. The youth who mostly are students and have benefited from such government programs as Universal Primary Education

(UPE) and Universal Secondary Education (USE) easily take advantage of the available services in the venues.

Training Courses for Users

Describe training courses offered to the public at this venue, and if they offer some kind of testing and certification.

Training courses: Training courses: Most venues don't offer training courses. The few facilities that offer training do so at a low, non regular scale. Hence there are no recognized certificates issued at the end of such courses, some of them offer certificates of attendance while others design certificates which are only recognized by the training centre. The trend is largely due to fluctuating trainees who normally come during school holidays while many facilities under different venues have limited resources and infrastructure to offer the service. Such basic trainings are offered in community libraries located at MCTs that offer ICT services. However, it is very difficult to separate the services of the community libraries with telecentres especially with community libraries located in MCTs as their services are blended within the entire telecentre program.

ICT specific training courses: ICT related trainings are only offer by telecentres that have community libraries. By large this service is considered telecentre service but not community library service.

Integration into daily routines

How easy is it for users to integrate the information and services offered in this type of venue into their daily lives? (offer concrete solutions to their needs and problems, make it easier to solve them at this venue than in other places)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

A lot of information on health and agriculture have benefited majority of users of community libraries, and they have integrated such information into their daily activities/lives. For instance Lwanunda Women Group accessed information from Kitengesa community library and integrates veterinary information directly on their dairy farms to improve their farming methods. KAPIDA used information from UDS community library to start up fish and animal farming which have improved women livelihood since they are the majority members; they also managed to get contacts of how they started up their businesses.

Many individuals have used ICT related tools and the trend in integrating the information and services offered into their daily lives is increasing. many people have started using digital cameras, mobile phones, flash disks, printers, photocopiers, computers for typing, internet (for research, news, advertisement, entertainment ,e.t.c) and many other digital services, this is common in MCTs.

Users perceptions about the venue

What is the general perception or opinion of the population about the venue (not necessarily its specific services, but the venue itself: i.e., what do people generally think about libraries? Are they places that are "cool" or "only for elites" etc?), differentiating by applicable Equity of Service variables (Form 1c)? This includes perception by people who do not use the venue.

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

The illiterates completely had no idea about how libraries could improve their lives through access to information hence, they thought libraries were “only for elites” and they were irrelevant to them. During the data collection phase; we tried to talk to such category of people. The main interest was to find out the reasons behind the different categories of people who never access libraries at all to those who access them. The illiterates introverted away from any such questions concerning libraries. It was none of their business as some of them said they only found time to cultivate their crops, others it was evidently seen the activities they engaged in was making local brews and gossiping that was a day for the majority. However, there were community libraries where some of the community members with minimal education background of Ordinary level and Advanced levels loved accessing the library to specifically read current affairs news from the daily Newspaper.

The educated people especially researchers, teachers and students were comfortable with accessing the libraries; they said libraries provide information anybody could need. However; they thought most of the infrastructures were out-dated, having also out dated books. The youth thought that libraries were old fashioned with the coming of computers and internet, they said if ICT services were added to the libraries they would increase more value to the community. While other respondents loved to see the introduction of recreational centres which would also add value to the libraries especially when they are off peak.

The general opinion of the students’, majority of whom are youths said, if ICTs were introduced in the libraries; they would mitigate the old stocks and the off syllabus books available in the libraries. They said they spend most of their time during holidays revising and discussing their academics, hence having little/no time to look out for internet cafés which most of them are none existent in their home areas.

“I have been coming to the Jinja public library for 10 years now. It was very useful as a primary student. But now as an undergraduate student at the university, most of the materials available are obsolete so there is need for internet services to cover the existing information gaps lest the facility will only be useful to offer reading space,” explains Charles Katooko a student at Makerere University.

Social appropriation of information and generation of new knowledge

What activities, products and services are users undertaking that exhibit new levels of social appropriation of technologies and generation of knowledge? For example, how are users generating and disseminating new knowledge, products and services through their use of this venue? (see category 13 in Real Access Framework for Social Appropriation of Technology).

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

There many activities done after people generated knowledge from the libraries that helped them improve their lives. “We formed Lwanunda women group after reading using Kitengesa library. Our group aims at up lifting women’s livelihoods through providing entrepreneurship skills. In the library I found a book “where there is no veterinary doctor” I had a lot of interest reading the book because I own a small farm. The information helped me to assist my cow to deliver normally.” said Mrs. Walugembe a member of Lwanunda women group and a user of Kitengesa community library.

Access to information has improved farming methods in many facilities under public, community library and MCTs. The use of public pay phones and mobile phones has tremendously improved farmer

connectivity to the market especially through SMS. Many farmers have multiplied production through NAADS demand led agricultural extension services thus helping to create effective demand for the kind of services that telecentres provide.

Uganda is an agrarian economy and a lot of agricultural information from NAADS about Plan for Modernization of Agriculture is shared in all libraries. Majority of community libraries are based in non urban centers where agriculture consumes the biggest activity hence; the available literature is appropriated to suite the communities. There is however a concern of poor open markets for farmers produces. They engage in seasonal agricultural products which are promoted by the government; in the end the market gets flooded with the same products and they loose lots of money. One respondent gave an example, that the government encouraged farmers to engage in the production of vanilla, pineapple, aloe vela, and clonal coffee e.t.c. after knowing that the products had good open markets in the rest of the world. During harvesting the government could not help out and the farmers struggled individually to look out for markets of their produces where the process ended with loosing lots of money because many of farmers had secured bank loans. One bad incident with clonal coffee, some farmers secured loans from the banks however, planting the brand on the entire plantation just dried up ending into severe losses. Also some of the farmers who mixed clonal coffee in their traditional coffee plantations carried the same disease destroying their entire plantations.

Another chance yet again saturated around the same time when the government encouraged farmers to engage in specific produces; unveiled this time from NAADS about rearing of goats. There was open market for the goats however, in the end their sale ended in the local markets. And the promotion of raring rabbits by the government never yielded any better results for the farmers as well. This inconsistence from the government and her institutions made farmers more skeptical about government programs especially regarding farming. However, a lot of encouragement has been to assist telecentres [MCTs] to develop local content that would be relevant to the communities. NGOs have partnered with CBOs to learn how to gather and document local content such that public access information centres remain relevant to the communities. UgaBYTES started working with UDS and BROSDI in the Eastern region and K.I.C in the Northern region to help telecentres learn how to gather and document local content for the communities; such that there is increased usability in the centres by the communities they serve. Council for Economic Empowerment of Women in Africa (CEEWA) is another NGO which helps telecentres organize women groups where they could share modern preservation methods of their agricultural produces. The program started with Buwama MCT in the southern region and in their telecentre CIPA in the Northern region of the country and has helped women and some few men who joined the group to learn better farming methods yet again modern preservations of their produces.

Trust, safety, and privacy

What is the general perception or opinion of the population about the safety, security and privacy (TRUST) of the information and services offered in this venue?

All respondents strongly agreed that the safety and privacy of the information and services was high. Reason being that the libraries had authentic materials and books. However, some community libraries were poorly located in very noisy environments that weren't good for serious readers while majority of them had very outdated books and not on syllabus for students. Some community libraries like Zigoti and Kijura community libraries never had enough space for open discussions. No complaints though about the service providers; the librarians they all delivered their services to who where accessed the

libraries.

Gaps and opportunities in information and services offered

What other information gaps and opportunities exist, which are not being met? (other information/services people need that are not being met there and could be offered, especially through Digital ICT services)

Respondents from Community libraries said information and service gaps existed in; weather forecast information, absence of local publications, lack of enough literature in local languages, and information on food security, introduction of computers and computer trainings, access to internet and outreach programs aimed at improving livelihoods. Also identified was the introduction of recreation centres in community libraries.

Enabling environment

2–3 Paragraphs:

What is your overall assessment of the ENVIRONMENT ecosystem in this type of venue (local economy, national economy, legal and regulatory framework, political will and public support, regional and international context)?

In the African Regional Conference for WSIS, Accra, Ghana, 28th January – 1 February, 2005. Mr. Patrick Mwesigwa, a technical Manager with Uganda Communication Commission (UCC), presented a paper on Uganda’s approach to universal access. During the reform process of the communications industry, the Uganda government was cognizant of the fact that; special measures would be required to extend services in rural areas, over 80% of the population lived in rural areas and they knew that improvement in communications services would play a catalytic role in social, economic and technical development. To affect this UCC developed a communications development policy in July 2001 whose mission was “To support the development of communications infrastructure in rural Uganda, while ensuring reasonable and affordable access...” The objective of the policy was to provide access to basic communications services within a reasonable distance, ensure effective utilization of the RCDF and promote ICT usage. Through RCDF the government will establish 30 ICT training centres, 20 internet cafés and develop IT content for 56 districts among others www.dip.go.ug.

Generally all the stake holders said that the national environment is not very supportive of their services to the community. Though the government has been campaigning for the use of PACs, it has not offered adequate practical support for the venues. “The environment for offering library services is fair due to inadequate support from those who should be providing resources for library development,” explains Charles Endra the assistant director NLU.

“Even when there are already existing PACs in place the government is not giving any support. Every time the issue is brought on board, they claim that funds to provide tools are not there,” *Senior Information Scientists, UNESCO – Uganda*

Local and national economy

Describe the local and national economic environment and how it affects public access to information and

communication in this type of venue (refer to and complement economic summary in country assessment, section 3.5 Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Uganda is an agrarian economy and a lot of agricultural information from NAADS about Plan for Modernization of Agriculture is shared in all libraries. Majority of community libraries are based in non urban centers where agriculture consumes the biggest activity hence; the available literature is appropriated to suite the communities.

Ugandans want tangible results, as majority of agricultural population is in rural areas, they in most cases literally find no time to visit the resource centres, however, once called upon for any issue by their area local councils to address their problems they do not hesitate. This is the particular time issues of concern are always communicated to the communities.

Legal and regulatory framework

Describe the legal and regulatory framework and how it affects public access to information and communication in this type of venue (refer to and complement economic summary in country assessment, section 3.5 Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

UBOS (2005/06) notes that the literacy levels are at 69% making, majority of would be beneficiaries of community libraries are illiterate. Most libraries were targeting the rural people most of whom are illiterate. This affects access and use of information in this venue.

Poor reading culture was identified as a factor in all venues visited. Whereas the government has put in the place the UPE and USE to tackle the illiteracy issue, students have been accustomed to spoon feeding with little encouragement in research. Majority of the children are not encouraged to read from an early age. This has gone a long way to affect access and use of information in public libraries.

There is lack of public awareness related to the use of Public Access Centres (PACs). The NLU is charged with coordinating and monitoring the public libraries but they have not gone a long way to market the services provided at these venues. Less people in the community know what services they could gain from the community libraries. This has affected access and use of information in this venue.

Few people attach value to information and prefer tangible stuff. Less people in the community look at information as a resource. Majority of the people prefer tangible stuff with immediate results. This is not in the same category as information explaining why it affects access and use of information in this venue.

The problem of accessibility of electricity and internet coverage to all the areas in Uganda is a main factor that is largely affecting the use of PACs. Only 3% of the population is connected to the national grid. Electricity in Uganda is irregular and this affects the community library operations especially those offering ICT services. Uganda's electrified area is 8.9% in the whole of the country; indicating the slow level of ICT usage in the whole country, Uganda Bureau of statistics (UBOS) statistics.

Political will and public support

What is the level of political will and public support for this type of venue? (refer to and complement section 3.5 Economic, Policy, and Regulatory Environment, calling out what is specific to this venue)

(i) If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Organization and networking

Describe if the facilities in this type of venue organized in any network, association or other collective body? (i.e., national public library system, telecentre franchise or network, etc)?

Community libraries in Uganda are organized under an umbrella called Uganda Community Libraries Association. The association though has not been effective to address the problems faced by community libraries. Reason being lack resources to implement their work as the association is also growing. The association only registers community libraries that approach their offices for registration; they have not moved out to identify the total number of community libraries in the country.

Partnerships

Describe notable public-private partnerships in support of this type of venue.

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

There are partners like Book Aid International that donates 20,000 books per year. Each book valued at \$15 and 33 million for local book purchase project (literature books), a Swedish based NGO, SIDA through NABTU gives money to national library to buy books. Some community libraries are members of the NLU where all members access all the benefits.

But the few local public-private partners like The AIDS Support Organization (TASO), The Association of Women Lawyers (FIDA), Straight talk, Red Cross, Young Men Christian association (YMCA) and many others help them by providing materials for users especially those focus on specific subjects.

Public-private partnerships have been established which are in favor of ICT related information and services. All community libraries located in telecentres where ICT services are offered are initiatives by different NGOs. As it is difficult to separate community libraries with telecentre services; telecentres strive to provide relevant information to the communities. For instance Nabweru and Buwama MCTs both partnered with CEEWA to subsidize their connectivity to make it affordable to the community and provided relevant ICT content to the agricultural communities respectively.

Other environment factors

Other factors in the environment that affect access and use of information in this kind of venue, not covered above?

Uganda is an agrarian economy where majority of whom are based in rural areas. Majority of community libraries are also based in rural areas whereas others are also in urban centres of remote

districts. In the rural setting the population is basically illiterate whose main activity is agriculture.

Ugandans with a poor reading culture always find it difficult to access the library even when they know they were established for community access; all they want is someone to give them practical ideas they could apply on their gardens/farms. The librarians we visited noted that if it is not students holiday season; they spend most of their days without serving anyone in the libraries which makes them idle all the time. The high illiteracy rate and agrarian economy have made the communities largely oral. It has been noted by UBOS that 65% of Ugandans access information through mouth to mouth system.

For publicly funded venues only: Revenue streams

This section is meant specifically for publicly-funded venues (public libraries, national connectivity programs, etc).

Budget

What is the total budget for this public access venue system (applies especially for libraries, answer for other venues if applicable and if available)?

Total Budget for Fiscal Year

Local currency name amount (local currency)

Approx. equivalent in USD based on exchange rate of on date .

Relative size of budget

How large (or small) is this budget in relation to other funding streams? (this is a way to show, in financial terms, how much the government cares about information and public access as compared to a variety of other issues in the country).

Relative Size of Budget for same year	Total budget (local currency)	Comments
Total national budget		
Education		
Other (name)		
Public libraries		

Other Comments:

Sources of funding

What are the sources of funding for this public access venue system?

Sources of funding:	Approximate % of total budget	Comments
Government sources:		
International donors:		
National donors:		
User fees/services:		
Other (name)		
Other (name)		
Other (name)		

Other Comments:

Paths and flows of resources

How do resources get allocated and disbursed to the actual venues? For the principal funders, and especially for the public sources, what is the flow of funds? How are the funds raised (what tax stream), what path do the tax streams flow before they get to the specific venues? Who makes decisions about this funding?

Fees and cost recovery

Describe if there are user fees or any other type of cost recovery. How does it affect service delivery and usage?

Cost categories

What are the main cost categories in the operation of this kind of venue? (% of total annual budget)

If appropriate, indicate any specifics that apply to Digital ICT services alone.

Cost Categories for Operation:	Approximate % of total budget	Comments
Staff (salaries, benefits)		
Building infrastructure		
Utilities		
Staff Training		
Computers/technology		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		
other (name)		
Total	100%	

Other Comments:

Recent changes and future trends

Describe any recent changes and anticipated future trends in the funding and revenue streams for this type of venue in the country. Have funding levels risen or decreased dramatically over the past few years? What is the outlook for the foreseeable future?

Case example for venue 3: Venue Name

Provide a short descriptions and commentary for each type of venue, offering a realistic sense of what the venue looks and feels like in its day to day operation, the kind of people who visit, and the kind of services they receive. Also, the

case example indicates what makes the case unique or what features are commonly shared with other venues. A photo and short quotes will make it even more real.

IMPACT OF COMMUNITY LIBRARIES IN UGANDA

Uganda is situated in the Eastern part of Africa. As a landlocked country, it is bordered with Kenya in the East, Tanzania in the South, Rwanda in the South West, Democratic Republic of Congo in the West and Sudan in the North.

Community libraries have helped to complement public libraries. However, a large number of them being established by individuals, International Bodies and Civil Society with the aim of developing communities through access to and sharing information. According to the Community Library Association in Uganda, to-date there are thirty five registered with the Network.

Traditionally, Community Libraries are seen as accessible to pupils, students, scholars, researchers and academicians, the libraries though, have a variety of services targeting different sections of people in the community like women, youths, teachers, children and business people. But many awareness campaigns through workshops have been conducted by community libraries aimed at highlighting the advantages of making good use of libraries.

While in the Southern part of the country 170kms from Kampala to Masaka District, is situated Kitengesa community library in the Western part of the district. The library is located inside the school premises, but having its own building, big enough for both students and community users. However, it gives an impression to majority of community members, that the library only targets students. In trying to increase the number of community members accessing the library; a new building is under construction at the periphery of the school campus, hoping to house the library, Computer laboratory and a community hall. The library though is accessible with a good road network from Masaka town.

Kitengesa Community library represents a typical community library in Uganda. However, Community libraries located at MCTs have a stronger component of ICTs compared to those without. Community libraries have a variety of services targeting different groups of people in the community like; youths, women, children, teachers and business people. They have thus contributed to the education and socio-economic growth in the communities of their location.

A number of schools lack access to good libraries. Even teachers use the library for preparation of their lessons.

"The library is a centre of information on my research in different areas of education. It provided me with computer skills the time they had foreign researchers. This has helped improve with my lesson preparations. I also visit it every day to read newspapers of Bukedde; a Luganda publication, New Vision and Monitor for current affairs." Mr. Kiwalabye Livingstone, a Primary school teacher in Kitengesa says.

Isaac Kaggwa, a student of Masaka Secondary School says, *"The library helped me pass my Ordinary level examinations, I utilized it in the evenings and during holidays. Because I couldn't always get back to my school for preparations in the evenings and then back at home every day. I managed to pass and take on science subjects at Advanced level in the same school. I want to become a doctor and serve the community back at home. To-date the library is still useful for my studies."*

The library also has a scholarship program for Kitengesa Comprehensive Students that is aimed at increasing the usefulness of the library to students. Among the criteria used for one to qualify is; one must have an interest in the library, able to pass the exams, must have spent at least a year in the school and must be a needy student. Nassaka Oliver a student of Kitengesa comprehensive says,

“My parents always failed to raise my school fees on time but, I was lucky to be chosen among the beneficiaries of the scholarship after maintaining my performance among the best ten in class and showing interest in the use of the library.”

The Straight Talk program is established to provide students and youths with HIV and AIDS information. It is done by promoting sharing space after disaggregating students by gender to allow them freedom of expression on all sexual issues. Then engage in question and answer sessions among peers and councilors.

Kitengesa Community library once had visiting researchers from the USA who trained residents' computer packages using their laptops. Overwhelmed with the response of the trainees, three laptops were left behind for the library to conduct further trainings to the community after their research was concluded. However, they now have only one laptop which is functional and is only been used by the librarian Mr. Dan Ahimbisibwe and his assistant Ms. Lucy Namwanje whereas the rest are faulty. This prompted the school administration to start a new construction hoping to also include a computer laboratory where computer trainings and services would be offered.

A solar panel that provides electricity to evening readers is already in place to keep the library open till 9:00pm. To further extend the services nearer to the community they do phone charging at a reasonable fee of UGX 500/= as the area has no access to electricity thereby saving them transport and time of going to Masaka town to access the same services hence, facilitating communication.

The route to the Eastern part of Uganda, 143kms from Kampala is situated Uganda Development Services [UDS], in Kamuli town. The distance covers duration of three hours and half.

Sharing the success stories of the library; was Samuel Bandobera who had dropped out of school due to lack of school fees. But in 2004 when Uganda Development Services {UDS} opened up a community library, Bandobera utilized the library. He later managed to sit the final examinations emerging the best in the impoverished Kamuli district. He is currently studying pharmacy at Makerere University; the oldest University in the country. The library has up to date books and pamphlets for students.



While in the Western part of the country, 278kms from Kampala, on a dusty but smooth road West of Kabarole town, is situated Kijura community library. The village of Kijura is located in the valley of small volcanic mountain. Majority of community members are famers; on large scale faming especially in tea growing and banana. The library is situated right opposite a tea farm, across a small air strip. It is housed in two small rooms.

Another impact, brought about by community libraries,

Richard Mwine a 30 year old gentleman who never had a defined social status now lives a better life. He has since 2004 been constantly using the library though he lives 4kms away from the library. He picked interest in kids' related books and was inspired when he later started a nursery school as its director. The nursery uses the library as its school library and book borrowing is done anytime.

Entrepreneurship skills are provided by such libraries to community members through access to Newspapers and Books. It is common that traders visit the libraries to read business and current affairs.

James, who owns a small clinic, is enjoying the profits of his drug shop. His passion for medicine developed due to the health and entrepreneurship skills he acquired from the library books. He has become a key informant on health matters because of the knowledge he acquired from the library.

Sebwana Charles a shop attendant at Kitengesa trading centre said, *"I usually visit the library for business issues; reading news papers and helping me learn to account in my businesses."* He says this with a lot of joy on his face and emphasizing that the library has significantly changed his life. The library has a website; www.kitengesalibrary.org

Community libraries provide space for meetings, socialization and sharing to the community. Lwanunda women group formed after taking advantage of the library holds meetings and workshops at the premises of Kitengesa community library. The library has benefited them through providing relevant books on farming, environment, homecare and health. Such books like, "where there is no veterinary doctor" and "where there is no medical doctor" have largely been used by the group to improve their families' health and farming methods. A member of Lwanunda women group Mrs. Walugembe Margaret says, *"I helped my cow deliver normally after reading the book where there is no veterinary."* It is believed that since they always meet, they are able to share such information in cases of health emergencies which improves their farming skills and income.

At Uganda Development Services [UDS] Kamuli in Eastern Uganda, students use the available space inside and outside the library for discussions to improve their academic standards, through sharing knowledge with students of different schools.

Children are never left out; with the aim of sensitizing the community about the importance of libraries, through nurturing children at their earliest age, there are activities organized for children such as games and paintings on every Saturday of the week, referred to children's day. This is a social gathering for all primary schools in Buwunga Sub County, Masaka District.

With the need to provide ICT services to the community, and faced with the challenge of lack of electricity, Kitengesa community library devised means of providing ICT information to the communities. Though they don't directly have access to ICTS all the time, the library uses an e Granary machine; a digital library which helps them capture online data for later use. They disseminate information through coordinating with the area local council chairmen, and through mobilization and sensitization campaigns.

Success factors and Strategic Recommendations

5.1 Summary of lessons in the country

5.1.1: Information needs

The research reveals that Ugandan people need information on; Agriculture, Women empowerment, HIV and AIDS, Food security, Employment and employability, Education, Weather forecast, Entertainment and Entrepreneurship. It is equally inferred that market information for rural produce is a priority. The rapid usage of SMS market systems has been a phenomenon. Expert input provides that Public Access Centres (PACs) are places that can be more. They have the ability to offer training especially in rural communities. Nevertheless, poor transference of needs into services and content is related to the most hindrance to PAC usage and access.

5.1.2: Where people go

It is indicatively clear that there is not any one place, which satisfies the information needs of the community. Most information providers concentrate on specific areas of interest but again at a non-comprehensive level. For instance National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) provides part of the Agricultural information while the rest remains scattered over different Non Government Organizations (NGOs), Government departments and private enterprises. For all the different segments of information needs of the community, information remains scattered. Very little utilization of online content coordination exists.

5.1.3: How access, capacity and environment affect public access

The government and policy makers have had tireless efforts to close this gap by promoting the expansion of Telecommunication and technical services throughout the country through the use of Private sector. But it has been revealed by this research that several access, capacity and environment issues contribute to the success and failure of PACs in the country.

Access

Location and limited services were the biggest impediment to access in all PACs. But additionally public libraries have very limited content. These three factors widely influence the access and usage of PACs. Public access centres serve a very wide audience. This leaves location an avoidable factor determining access. There can never be a location that is adequate under the currently size of operation.

Additionally most PACs were established with the view of providing space for learning and sharing but situations now call for offering of services in the centres that reflect into community needs. But most facilities have not yet responded. Most services are packaged in English, which is unpopular to most rural communities due to high illiteracy. The situation is worsened by the fewer members of staff at the venues who influence service and content availability especially that which addresses the needs of the poor,

women, people with disabilities and the illiterates. For example PACs can not provide training due to stretched staff and lack of funding.

However, PACs utilize user clubs and outreach programs to reduce the impact of the location and poor services. The clubs are used to increase participation and sharing even if one member of the community is the only one who periodically accesses the services of the centre. The book box program and mobile IT services are one of the outreach services that bring the services closer to the users. But this being limited by costs, staff and availability of support infrastructure like Computers, electricity and connectivity, some telecentres have emerged a wireless connectivity solution that creates community nodes that reduce inappropriate distance. The Multipurpose Community Telecentres (MCTs) are more advanced in those solutions than Community Library (CL) and Public Library (PL) respectively. Other physical access challenges include electricity, bad roads, connectivity costs and the poor economic status.

There is limited Technological appropriateness with limited technology integration with the needs of the clients and the communities. This has meant that cheaper ways of availing information and content to the communities can not be used. Private sector has significantly improved radio, mobile phone, and television networks presence in the country. But the use of radio remains in very few multipurpose telecentres. Although the usage and access of technology is still limited to highly literate groups in the community, community radios have cut through this barrier wherever they exist. The SMS system has also addressed the needs of the rural farmers by providing Market information updates. Technology services and equipment costs are still high although, the government waived taxation on any computer importation. Most people think the taxation waiver is limited as it does not cover the accessories. Connectivity still relies on satellite solutions which are expensive. High cost of the technology and services provided by the venues hinder technology appropriation.

Capacity

Trained human Capacity is inadequate and insufficient with the increasing discoveries of what available technology can support every other day. PACs are under staffed with most of them especially MCTs and CL depending on volunteers. But labor mobility from non urban to urban for developed skills is also high making consistent technical support for all the venues a major obstacle to technology use.

The locally relevant content which is technologically supported is not up-to-date and the thirst to see many venues implementing such is felt. Other than MCTs that have community radios where a big impact of information sharing is felt on a magnificent level, other venue types have not yet inverted any technology aspect to effectively touch the lives of the community thus reverting to print materials.

The social cultural factors have resulted in unequal adaptation to Technology access and usage. The age group between 15 and 35 is the most frequent users. The old believe they are for the young. It was identified during the survey that the underserved groups in Uganda included: the disabled, elderly, women, farmers, illiterates and the Poor. These form the biggest real target of PACs even if very few really focus their services to these groups. Others underserved groups include; youths, children, internally displaced persons and orphans. All the identified categories of people were affected differently. The reasons for exclusion included; distance from the center, most materials are western oriented, the local publishing industry cannot evenly distribute publications across the country and inadequate funds to promote smooth running of venues. Others included: Lack of marketing the libraries and community engagement activities, lack of reading culture in the whole country, poverty of the community influences most of the decisions of the would be users and multi- lingual affect the flow of information to the grassroots levels where it's needed most.

Environment

Uganda's large population, about 87%, lives in rural areas and all depending on agrarian activities for earning. Over 37.7% lives below national poverty line and 3.2% completely unemployed. The total government income is US\$ 1.758 billion with an expenditure of US\$ 1.984 billions. Economically many communities are unable to access ICTs on their own. Additionally, the electricity and phone sectors are still poor at only 8.9% of the populations connected to electricity and 0.36% to landline telephony and with less than 7% able to access internet. Local governments are unable to support ICTs and PACs with out funding especially with the scraping off of graduated tax, which used to be the major source of revenue to most local councils.

There are well developed laws within the public and community libraries in the country that regulate the use of public libraries. However, presently the National Library does not have an ICT strategy or policy. But an ICT policy within the context of the National Library Policy, under the Social Sector Development Plan, is being developed. Additionally, laws like the Journalist statue, copy right Act, Access to information Act, Records and Archive Act, E- policy, E- government are in place to regulate the deployment, usage and flow of information in the country.

The Rural Communication Development Fund (RCDF), the National Library Act, National ICT policy and ICT ministry are a good gesture for government support for MCTs. But PACs in the country lack a clear and very organized coordination body that can support PACs and advocate for improvement.

The country enjoys collaboration at region level. Through those collaborations the Eastern African region is building the underground cable that is anticipated to bring down connectivity costs in the country. Already the national terrestrial cable framework has been constructed in a bigger part of the country. Other international initiatives including ITU, IDRC, IICD World bank, New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and many others have supported in-part the roll out of ICTs for development and PACs.

5.1.4: Role of ICTs

It was generally accepted that ICT plays a crucial role to development. However the research identified that many venues lacked the use of ICT due to various reasons; the skills for the employees to use and apply ICT was almost non existent, lack of infrastructure to take ICTs including electricity, connectivity and computers, maintenance costs of ICT is high and diffusion of ICT usage is still so low.

However, SMS systems have helped farmers to improve their income while radio programs have demonstrated a very fast way of sharing, generating, sharing and engaging the community closer to its needs. It is strongly agreed by the government that ICTs are an enabler to development.

5.2: Success Factors and Recommendations

5.2.1: Where to invest Resources

The transformation of PACs in Uganda needs a combination of efforts. There are issues that need to be resolved at policy development and implementation, content and service development and management, professional development, and collaboration strengthening. But there is also need to increase the number of public centres in country, which calls for both policy implementation and enabling environment.

Environment:

There is need to invest adequate resources in creating an enabling environment and policy implementation. The key areas recommended for investment include;

1. Revisiting the National ICT policy and the National Libraries act to ensure that issues of e-services, e-content, PAC venue cohesion and ICT access and usage are strongly addressed.
2. Supporting policy implementation and administration processes
3. Supporting the establishment of a functional and nationally coordinated PAC venues' network with super powers to increase the number of PACs and quality of services offered.
4. Supporting PACs population survey that covers all the five venues; Public Libraries, community libraries, Multipurpose Telecentres, Cybercafés and post offices.
5. Supporting infrastructure development efforts especially rural electrification, optical fiber installation and PL roll out to the remaining districts

Capacity

PACs have capacity to do many activities. But there are areas once supported the potential of PACs to support development could multiply by several folds. These priority investment areas cover;

1. Packaging and delivery of key services like e-education and e-marketing through public access centres.
2. PACs staff and volunteer strategic training programs
3. Digitalization of government services and key NGO services that strategically and deliberately address community needs
4. Promoting regional and national collaborations, partnerships and networking among PACs
5. Training of staff in wireless mesh networks at PACs to increase the physical presence of the PACs within the communities they serve.
6. Facilitating internet infrastructure development in PACs and mainly PL

Access

Access is the main barrier to public access. It presented in all forms including location, services and content and technological deficiency at most PACs. But there good cases that indicated an improvement if up-scaled. These form the key investment priorities;

1. Establishment of wireless mesh networks at PACs to increase the physical presence of the PACs within the communities they serve through mini-PACs.
2. Facilitating and promoting ICTs based content and services that is shared through the national coordination body of PAC and a common local server.
3. Support local organizations and NGOs involve in support local content development for community development
4. Promoting strategic establishment of a community radio at every PL facility per district and to promote the establishment of a public library for all the districts that have not yet got once
5. Sensitization and promotion campaigns for both urban and non urban PAC venues.

5.2.2: Key Success Factors

PACs success in totality has not yet been achieved, according to this research and previous studies. Admittedly different fallibilities have been hit by several failures. But accumulative demonstrated and observed cases point at notable key success factors forming the basis for future investment. These are noted below:

Services reflecting community needs;

Most of MCTs had programs entirely for the communities; they extended agricultural programs to the farmers, provided market prices for their produce while introducing food security programs aimed at

uplifting farmers' standards of lives. They reflected true appropriation of the PACs to community development.

Partnerships and multi-stakeholder involvement; PACs that integrated several stakeholders and partners be it at grassroots, regional, national or international built their service base rapidly. They offered more services and had support in most key requirements. For example NGOs provide content and services through the PACs addressing the inequity gaps more strategically while others subsidized service costs like connectivity costs on behalf of the community.

Service base; It is worth noting that PACs have majority of their users as students/youths. All libraries provide an environment that is conducive for serious readers. This created a first and clearer entry point within the community on which other customers built on. More over some parents depend on the information brought by their children because they are illiterate.

Community outreach and Radio; PACs that have community outreach and/ or community radio had more impact to the community. In fact some PACs that had no radio have started purchasing airtime on commercial radios for the same reason. This builds on the reality that majority of Ugandan communities are oral and over 64% of the population acquires information through the word of mouth (UBOS, 2005).

Management and strategic manager; It goes without say that most success as been made mainly through good management and strategic PAC managers. Most success factors were harvested from PACs, which had good management and strategic leaders. It is key in innovative thinking and adapting to change.

5.2.3: Role of ICTs

PACs that had internet were more successful than those that had either no or irregular ICT support functions and services. The ICTs that were found in PACs centers included community radio, video sets, Computers, internet, telephone, photocopiers, and SMS. For all the centres that had any or all of these services social appropriation raised especially depending on the how strategic ICT services were applied. Profoundly the radio, internet and SMS demonstrate high impact.

It was found out that ICT were important for empowering the community through access to a wide resource base of information. But radio was relevant in reaching users in their homes, with the right information and using people familiar to users. It was a tool that broke into the wider problem of content and language. The community accessed internet for web browsing and emailing to their friends and relatives. They also used for internet reading, learning, typing, reading internet news, search for music and notes, games and commerce

It is worth noting that in areas where ICT were offered, they were faced with a lot of challenges which included; cost of ICT usage was so high, network inconsistency for internet use, few computers were available for the users, the available content is not enough yet again not in right language, not enough services, hours of operation never favored some of the users- majority claimed that in holiday season most venues close earlier than the normal time, location of the venues were not good to some, congestion and irregular power supply were highly commented on some venues used generators which alternatively generated a lot of inconveniences to the readers.

5.2.4: Top ten Recommendations

1. More sensitization and awareness campaigns should be conducted. This will increase community access and usage of the facilities. They will also help in facilitating feedback.

2. Revisiting the National ICT policy and the National Libraries act to ensure that issues of e-services, e-content, PAC venue cohesion and ICT access and usage are strongly addressed. This should be complemented with support for policy implementation, administration processes and extensions of ICT access centres to all districts but building from the existing ones and other PACs; this would leverage social appropriation.
3. Supporting PACs population survey that covers all the five venues; public libraries, community libraries, telecentres, cybercafés and post offices in order to strengthen the content and service development and distribution processes.
4. Supporting the establishment of a functional and nationally coordinated PAC venues' network with powers to increase the number of PACs and quality of services offered. It should be coupled with partnerships, networking and collaboration among PACs, key NGOs and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).
5. 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.
6. Supporting infrastructure development efforts especially rural electrification, optical fiber installation and Public Library (PL) roll out in the remaining districts. There is need to step up the rural electrification program to encourage the use of ICT in non urban areas since alternative power sources are not affordable. The government should strengthen its role of encouraging districts to establish community libraries and also step up its efforts to set up new public libraries in the ever increasing new districts and these libraries should be fully supported.
7. Digitalization of government services and key Non Governmental Organizations (NGO) services that could help in strategic development and delivery of e-services to disadvantaged groups. This will facilitate and promote ICTs based content and services availability. Complementary support for local organizations and NGOs involve in local content development for community development to increase social appropriation.
8. Establishment of wireless mesh networks at Public Access Centres (PACs) to increase the physical presence of the PACs within the communities they serve through mini-PACs.
9. Promoting strategic establishment of a community radio at every Public Library (PL) facility per district and to promote the establishment of a public for all the districts that have not yet got once.
10. The decentralization policy aimed at extending services nearer to the underserved should be strengthened to achieve its reality. The government should ensure that its funds remitted through National Library of Uganda (NLU) should trickle down to public libraries. Government should also fund libraries as one of its priorities.

List of Acronyms

1. BROSDI – Busoga Rural Open Source Development Initiative
2. CBOs – Community based Organizations
3. CEEWA – Council for Economic Empowerment of Women in Africa
4. CIA – Central Intelligence Agency
5. CIS – Centre for Information Studies
6. CLs – Community Libraries
7. CMC – Community Multimedia Centres
8. COMESA – Common Markets for Eastern and Southern Africa
9. CPAR – Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief
10. CSO – Civil Society Organization
11. CSOs – Civil Society Organizations
12. CTA – Technical Centre for Agriculture and Rural cooperation
13. DRC – Democratic Republic of Congo
14. EAC – East African Commission
15. EACSO - East African Common Services Organization
16. EALA - East African Library Association
17. EALB - East African Literature Bureau
18. EASSy - Eastern Africa Submarine System
19. FAVL - Friends of African Village Libraries
20. FGDs – Focus Group Discussions
21. FIDA – The Association of Uganda Female Lawyers
22. ICT4D – Information Communication Technology for Development
23. ICTs – Information Communication Technologies
24. IDPs – Internally Displaced Persons

25. IDRC – International Development Research Centre
26. IICD – International Institute for Communication and Development
27. ITU – International Telecommunication Union
28. KAPIDA – Kamuli Parish Integrated Development Association
29. LDC – Law Development Centre
30. LIS – Library Information Society
31. MCT – Multipurpose Community Telecentres
32. MGLSD – Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
33. MoES – Ministry of Education and Sports
34. MoH – Ministry of Health
35. MTN – Mobile Telecommunication Network
36. NAADS – National Agricultural Advisory Services
37. NARO – National Agricultural Research Organization
38. NEPAD - New Partnership for Africa's Development
39. NGO – Non Governmental Organizations
40. NLTPS - National Long Term Perspective Studies
41. NLU – National Libraries of Uganda
42. NLU – National Library of Uganda
43. NRM – National Resistance Movement
44. NUDIPU – National Union of Disabled Persons
45. PA – Public Access
46. PAC – Public Access Centre
47. PL – Public Library
48. PLs – Public Libraries
49. PWDs – People With Disabilities
50. RCDP/F - Rural Communication Development Program/Fund policy
51. SEP - Strategic Export Program
52. SIDA – Swedish International Development Agency

53. TASO – The Aids Support Organization
54. UBOS – Uganda Bureau of Statistics
55. UCC - Uganda Communications Commission
56. UDS – Uganda Development Service
57. UgCLA - Uganda Community Libraries Association
58. UIA – Uganda Investment Authority
59. ULIA - Uganda library and information association
60. UNCST – Uganda National Council for Science and Technology
61. UNESCO – United Nations Education Science and Cultural Organization
62. UNHS – Uganda National Household Survey
63. UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund
64. UNIDO – United Nations Industrial Development Organization
65. UPE – Universal Primary Education
66. USE – Universal Secondary Education
67. Utl –Uganda Telecom Limited
68. VAT – Value Added Tax
69. VEDCO - Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns
70. YMCA – Young Men Christian Association