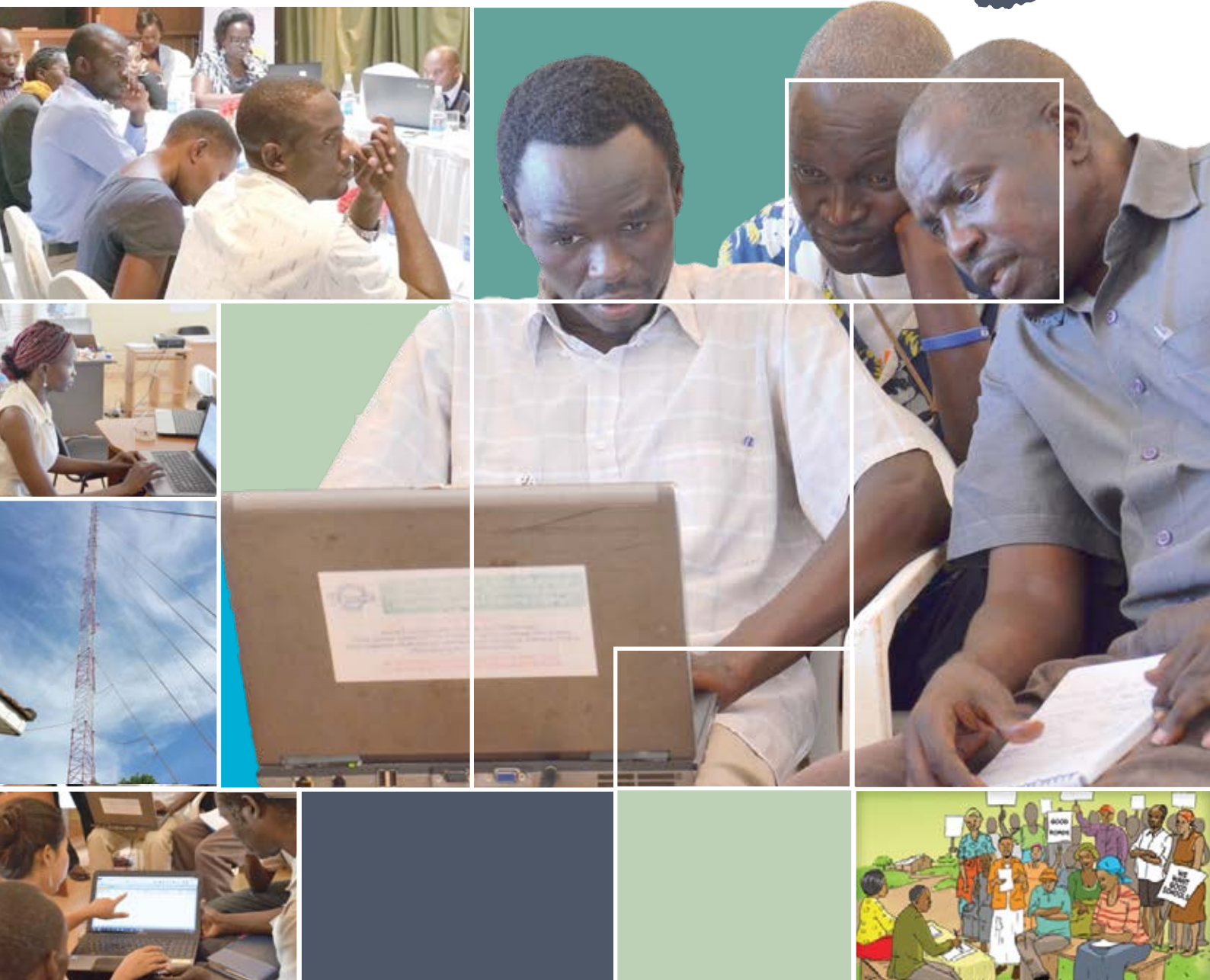


# ICT4Democracy in East Africa

A Year In Review  
2015



# Content

## 1. Introduction

page 3



<b>2.</b>	<b>About ICT4Democracy in East Africa Network</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Socio-economic and legal landscape in the region</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Network Activity Highlights In 2015</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>More Tanzania Citizens Vocal on Human Rights Violations</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Shifting Local Leadership Attitudes To Service Delivery in Western Uganda</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>Connecting ICT Policy to Practice</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Mainstreaming Women's Participation in Governance through ICT use in Northern Uganda</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>9.</b>	<b>Addressing Public Health Gaps a Call at a Time</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>10.</b>	<b>Increasing Human Rights Defenders' Capacity in Rural Kenya</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Understanding ICT-Based Interactions for Service Delivery in East Africa</b>	<b>23</b>



## 1. Introduction

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The intersection of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and civic engagement continues to gain popularity as more citizens adopt the use of tools to engage with each other, and with civic organisations and the state. While empirical evidence suggests that the rate at which this is happening remains debatable, the ICT4Democracy in East Africa network is using various forms of ICT tools to promote civic participation in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda and working to overcome challenges such as gender and geographical disparity in use of ICT.

We thus present highlights of our work in catalysing the use of ICT in civic processes over the course of 2015, which includes rural communities demanding improved service delivery, reporting human rights violations, corruption alleviation, and improved monitoring and accountability of duty bearers. The report narrates how partners have worked with side-lined and detached communities such as women, the rural poor and youth, into sparking interest in becoming active citizens that connect and engage with other citizens and with leaders, and play a role in local decision-making.

Comprised of seven partners working across Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, the network leverages on both traditional and modern ICT tools and platforms including mobile phones, radio, digital cameras, SMS platforms, geographic-mapping software, toll free lines, polling platforms, blogs, crowd mapping platforms and social media platforms including Facebook and Twitter.

Over the course of the year, network partners faced challenges but recorded many successes too. The challenges included a deteriorating legal environment and limited access to ICT tools for a large number of citizens in East Africa. However, there was less resistance by duty bearers to participate in dialogue with citizens. Further, in 2015, more women actively participated in the network's activities, reflecting the shifting attitudes on the role that women play in advocating for transparency and accountability in governance in rural communities. The network's target is to have women constitute at least 40% of participants in all our activities. However, achieving this ratio remains a challenge due to socio-cultural and economic dynamics which still influence the extent to which women participate in community affairs.

The network awareness and advocacy efforts leverage platforms including broadcast media, participation at relevant meetings, and social media. Further, research produced by the network has been cited in publications looking to understand the cross points of ICT and human interactions in democratic spaces in Africa.

The network as a whole has increased visibility among like-minded organisations at both regional and international levels, and we continue to play a pivotal role in network building, learning and knowledge exchange for both partners and members of the wider ICT for Democracy community in the region. Our work has also featured in academic journals and conferences such as the Conference on e-Democracy & Open Governance (CEDEM) for 2014 and 2015.

As part of the annual network meeting, in September 2015, partners participated in week-long capacity building training to reinforce their skills in adopting and integrating human rights in their project implementation and results monitoring. The knowledge and skills acquired will inform strategies for the network's onward activities. We remain grateful for the support of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the Swedish Programme for ICTs in Developing Regions (Spider).

## 2. About the ICT4Democracy in East Africa Network

The ICT4Democracy in East Africa network ([www.ict4democracy.org](http://www.ict4democracy.org)) is composed of seven partners: Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET), Transparency International Uganda, the Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPESA), iHub Research (Kenya), the Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC), the Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRAGG, Tanzania), and Toro Development Network (ToroDev). CIPESA is the coordinator of the network.

The network was formed in 2011 with the aim of leveraging ICT to turn more East Africans, including side-lined and detached communities such as women, the rural poor and youth, into active citizens that connect and engage with other citizens and with leaders, and play a role in local decision-making. Core to the network is the development of relationships which enable the transfer and development of skills to promote increased civic participation in democratic processes. These include building the capacity of citizens to utilise various ICT tools to demand accountability from leaders and to exercise their rights to freedom of expression and to access information.

Across the three East African countries, partners use ICT toward:

- Promoting access and dissemination of information for improved government openness and better service delivery;
- Growing the capacity of civic groups, including Human Rights Networks, Voluntary Social Accountability Committees (VSAC), and citizen journalists, to use ICT to foster free speech, human rights, access to information, and open governance;
- Engaging policy makers and duty bearers on the need to provide regular and timely information on service delivery, human rights and governance to the citizenry using a range of ICT and non-ICT means;
- Gender mainstreaming in civil knowledge, ICT skills and participation in governance processes. This includes advocacy for gender sensitive ICT and governance policies across the region.



*Gladys Oroma of the Northern Uganda Media Club during a training session*

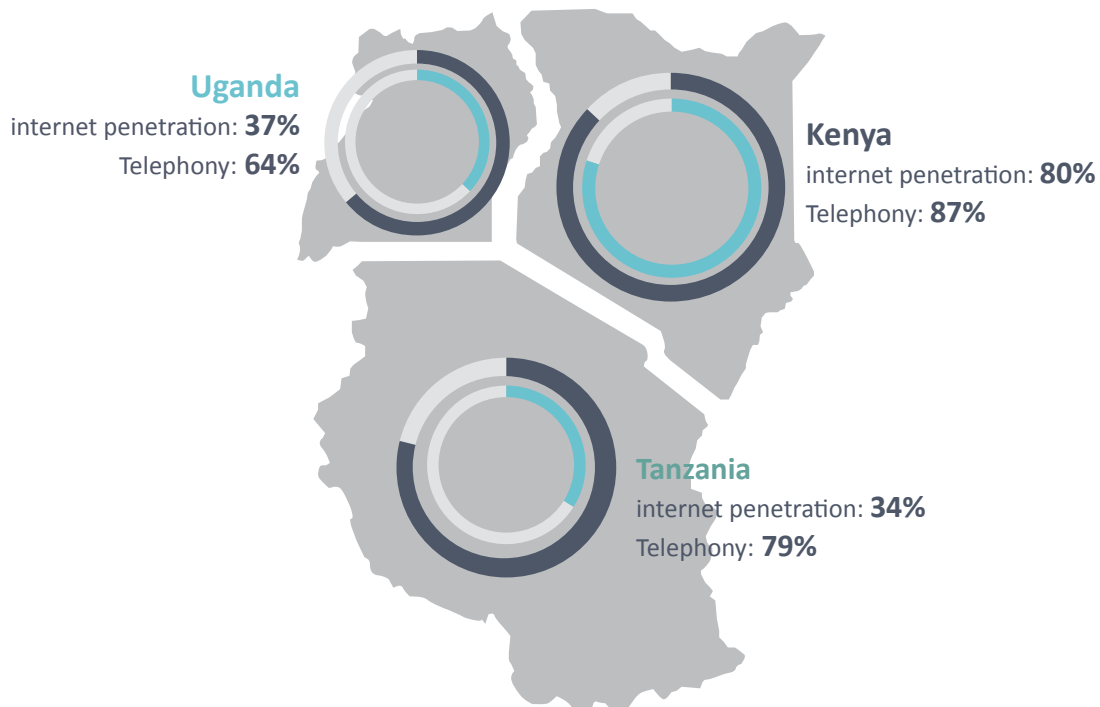
### 3. Socio-Economic and Legal Landscape in the Region

The year 2015 was a season of electioneering in the region, with some changes in the political landscape, including Tanzania's October 2015 elections that saw John Magufuli take over the presidential seat from Jakaya Kikwete in a relatively peaceful election. However, the run up to Uganda's February 2016 election witnessed a crackdown on social media "abusers" as tensions mounted after the country's former Prime Minister and the secretary general of the ruling party announced his bid for the presidency, with some social media commentators getting arrested over content shared on social media. President Yoweri Museveni, in power since 1986, got re-elected amidst protest from the opposition which claimed the poll was rigged. There were various incidents of violations of media freedom, arrests of leading opposition figures, and blockage of social media in the aftermath of the elections.

Kenya holds its elections in August 2017, and opposition-led protests over the composition of the elections body have recently rocked parts of the country, including the capital

Nairobi. In late 2014, the International Criminal Court (ICC) dropped charges against president Uhuru Kenyatta related to the 2007-2008 post-election violence. However, proceedings against his deputy, Willam Ruto, continued through 2015 before being terminated in early 2016.

Access to ICT continues to grow in the three countries, all of which have universal access funds that are helping to extend modern communications infrastructure and services to rural and under-served areas. Increased capital expenditure by telecom service providers, as well as declining access and usage costs, are also aiding the growth in penetration. However, internet access costs remain high. Despite this, the number of citizens accessing the internet continues to grow. As of 2015, Kenya had an internet penetration of over 80% while Uganda and Tanzania had internet penetrations of 37% and 34% respectively. Mobile phone use is considerably higher than internet use across the three countries, with Kenya having a penetration rate of 87%, while Tanzania and Uganda register rates of 79% and 64% respectively.



In the three countries, ICT tools are gaining popularity in tracking and reporting on the misappropriation of public funds and corruption which remains rife. Meanwhile, at a national level, movement towards the use of open data platforms is growing and so is the need for governments to increasingly release public information so as to promote transparency and accountability – particularly as citizens gain the confidence to demand public information in the hands of the state.

A growing number of Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) in the three countries are improving their use of ICT to provide information and to get feedback from citizens. However, some have yet to adopt the consistent use of ICT for the release of information, often citing "national security concerns" and "state secrets" as reasons not to provide information. Others are simply non-responsive to requests for information, and a large number of MDAs do not provide updated information on their online platforms.

Although all East African states are party to international treaties and conventions that promote access to information and protect freedom of expression, increasingly, civil society and the media practitioners have come under threat by governments seeking to restrict citizen voices critical of state operations.

During 2015, Tanzania enacted laws that shrink civic space, thwart online freedom of expression, and restrict the role of independent media in advancing greater transparency and access to information. The country passed the Cybercrimes Act and the Statistics Act, and it attempted to rush through parliament the Media Services Bill and the Right to Information Bill without allowing any input from either citizens or stakeholders including media and civil society. The Cybercrime Act (2015) has been criticised for disregarding press freedom and freedom of expression, and instead granting excessive powers to police while limiting the protections afforded to ordinary citizens.

In Kenya, the Security Amendment Act (2014), the Kenya Information and Communications (Amendment) Act 2013 and the Media Council Act (2013), which subjects violators to heavy fines and asserts undue state control over media practice, have been criticised for shrinking the space of civil actors, by placing restrictions on media freedom and general freedom of expression. In 2015, these Acts were used against journalists and bloggers. The Kenya Access to Information Bill (2007) made little progress, while Tanzania released the draft Access to Information Bill in 2015.

In November 2015, the Ugandan parliament passed the much criticised Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) Act which the President assented to in early 2016. The Act creates an NGO board with the power to revoke an organisation's permit if it deems it to be engaging in "any act, which is prejudicial to the interest of Uganda and the dignity of the people of Uganda" and creates various offences and penalties for NGO workers. The law echoes the proposed amendments to Kenya's Public Benefits Organisation (PBO) Act (2013), which would curtail the ability of CSOs to engage in advocacy work, bar the registration of organisations that have purposes that are "not aligned with Kenyan culture", limit foreign funding to CSOs, and have government appointees rather than independent persons on the NGO regulatory bodies.

The decision by Tanzania to table the Access to Information Bill was a welcome move in support of the right to information. However, the bill has some restrictive clauses. On a positive note, the election of President Magufuli has seen the new government focus on addressing corruption and the misuse of national funds.

## 4. Network Activity Highlights In 2015

### Gender mainstreaming in skills and knowledge



- In the Northern Uganda districts of Apac, Kole, Oyam, Amuru, Lira and Gulu more women are using ICT and engaging leaders to demand for improved service delivery through Voluntary Social Accountability Committees (VSACs) supported by WOUGNET and TIU. Female VSAC members are also increasingly taking up leadership positions that were originally dominated by males such as chairperson of Local Councils, Area Member of Parliament, Council speakers, among others. Nonetheless there remains a gap due to illiteracy levels, domestic burdens, and other socially defined gender roles for women.
- In Tanzania, human rights engagements recorded the highest level of women participation, averaging 53%.
- Overall, in 2015, women participation in project activities averaged at 46%, up from 43% in 2014.

### Reporting human rights violations and service delivery failures through ICT

- **Tanzania:** 2,159 verified human rights violation reports received through the SMS for Human Rights System in 2015 out of 28,307 complaints received. This comes after the reporting system operated by CHRAGG was upgraded for efficient handling of human rights violations.
- **Kenya:** In 2015, 775 cases were reported through a mix of online and offline platforms.
- **Uganda:** A toll free call centre for reporting gaps in public health systems in Northern Uganda registered 394 calls in 2015 up from 226 in 2014.



### Information and knowledge sharing through evidence based research



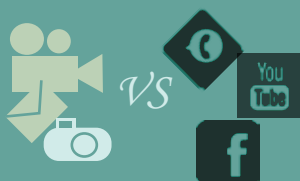
- 26,000 copies of various IEC materials on human rights, citizen participation and mechanisms for reporting violations and service delivery concerns distributed by network partners.

### Community Capacity Building

- Nearly 2,000 individuals comprising mainly voluntary accountability committees (VSACs and VACs), rural monitors, local government officials, Human Rights Networks (HURINETs) and civil society organisations participated in physical dialogue and community outreach meetings on human rights and service delivery monitoring in the three focus countries.



### Traditional and new media interactions



- Partners maintained relationships with nine national television stations and 21 radio stations. The network has seven main Facebook accounts maintained by each partner and a further 12 Facebook accounts started by grassroots level communities.
- More than 2,400 SMS were sent on the topic of human rights.
- Combined, these interventions by the ICT4Democracy in East Africa network reached over 20 million viewers through both traditional and new media forms.

## Research reports published

- ICT in Civic Participation and Democracy in Uganda: Citizens' Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices**

*The research sought to fill the knowledge gap in the use of ICT in democratic processes and what needs to be done for more citizens, the media, civil society and government departments to embrace the use of ICT for participatory democracy in Uganda.*
- The state of Right to Information in East Africa**

*An overview of the laws and policies which have shaped the Right to information in East Africa with reference to laws enacted in the 1960s through to contemporary laws in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.*
- ICT in Governance – Policies and Practice(Tanzania)**

*A review of government and non-government Information and Communication Technology (ICT) initiatives in Tanzania, and examination of how ICT-related policies and other legislation affect citizen participation and democratic governance.*
- ICT in Governance – Policies and Practice (Kenya)**

*A review of government and non-government Information and Communication Technology (ICT) initiatives in Kenya, and examination of how ICT-related policies and other legislation affect citizen participation and democratic governance.*
- ICT in Governance – Policies and Practice (Uganda)**

*A review of government and non-government Information and Communication Technology (ICT) initiatives in Uganda, and examination of how ICT-related policies and other legislation affect citizen participation and democratic governance.*
- Assessment Report : Monitoring Good governance using ICTs in Northern Uganda with a Gender lens**

*This report is an evaluation of the gender dynamics in relation to the overall outcomes, impact, relevance and sustainability of the WOUGNET project aimed at empowering and strengthening the capacity of local grassroots women through Voluntary Social Accountability Committee's (VSAC) to monitor service delivery using ICT.*
- A Step by Step Guide to using E-governance and Community Participation to Address Pertinent Issues in Rural Communities**

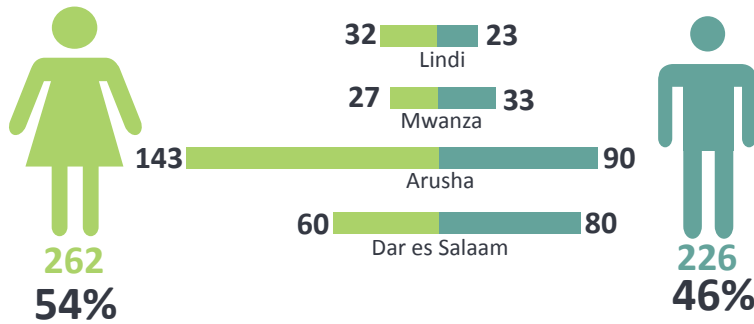
*A prototype envisioned to guide local governments in Eastern Uganda on the use of ICT as an enabler of community participation, cohesive education strategies, local government and community communication as well as cooperation in the Education sector.*



## 5 More Tanzania Citizens Vocal on Human Rights Violations

The Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRAGG) continues to promote the use of Short Message Service (SMS) as a key tool in addressing human rights challenges in Tanzania. To date, CHRAGG has contributed to more ordinary citizens being aware of their human rights and actively seeking out avenues to report violations to the commission, through its popular SMS for Human Rights platform.

Over the course of 2015, the commission conducted various exercises to increase awareness of the platform, with a focus on rural communities. This was accomplished through training sessions, public meetings and media campaigns. The regions of Arusha, Dar es Salaam, Mwanza and Lindi formed the focus of direct engagements through which CHRAGG reached 488 representatives from academia, civil society, government and focal persons within the community.



Breakdown of participants who attended CHRAGG capacity building and awareness engagements during 2015

Engagements such as these resulted in an increase in the number of complaints and whistle blower reports received through the SMS for Human Rights System with a record 28,307 reports submitted to the Commission. However, less than 10% of the overall number of reports received have been validated, with the greater majority being repeat or junk messages. To combat the influx of junk reports, CHRAGG undertook various upgrades to their hardware and software to improve the capacity to receive, verify and track the progress of complaints. This has contributed to improved project operational standards, delivery standards and violation reporting processes. The upgrade has also enabled the blocking promotions and adverts which accounted for over 10,000 of the total number of reports received during 2015.

“The SMS for Human Rights System is a platform which enables citizens to use a mobile phone to submit human rights violations to the Commission using the number 0754460259. A confirmation of receipt is sent following which a team vets the submission and pursues the necessary action thereafter.”



Validated human rights violations reported through the SMS for human rights system 2013-2015

Further, more citizens are reaching out to CHRAGG to follow up on the status of their reports, indicating that citizens are increasingly taking ownership of the protection of their rights. This, however, means that the Commission faces the challenge of addressing each investigation quickly due to the sheer amount of violations that are reported.

Meanwhile, human rights education campaigns and promotion of the SMS for Human Rights platform have also been widely undertaken through broadcast media. The Commission aired radio and television jingles on various stations including Radio Free Africa, Radio France Internationale (RFI), Tanzania Broadcasting Channel, ITV and Channel Ten on abuse of power, early marriages and excessive corporal punishments, among others. In addition, 12,000 flyers were distributed across the country to increase awareness about the reporting system and the commission's work.

Furthermore, CHRAGG engaged with various stakeholders at relevant events including the Public Service workers' week in June 2015, the UNESCO training on protecting the rights of people with albinism, and a meeting with parliamentarians on indigenous people.

Despite gaining recognition by citizens due to mass publicity efforts, the system still faces technical and logistical challenges, such as addressing complaints in a timely fashion. This is primarily due to the limited internal capacity to investigate the large volume of complaints received.

Towards addressing this, CHRAGG has issued new internal guidelines stipulating investigation and resolution of complaints within 60 working days. Previous guidelines provided for 90 working days. On another positive note, the server upgrades have helped to sort and flag repeated submissions. In addition, a new member was appointed to the team to help fast-track responses to citizens' reports.

The commission is seeking new avenues for education campaigns and awareness of the mechanisms for reporting violations, with social media and bulk SMS among the platforms being considered.



Source: Spider ICT4D documentaries

More citizens are using their mobile phones to report human rights violations in Tanzania. The SMS for Human Rights system allows CHRAGG to receive complaints, verify and follow up on them.

## 6 Shifting Local Leadership Attitudes To Service Delivery in Western Uganda

The Toro Development Network (ToroDev) works to promote public accountability and democratic engagement in the Rwenzori region of Western Uganda using multiple forms of ICT. The organisation’s work is contributing towards a change in the attitudes of duty bearers, making them more participatory and responsive to queries from citizens and the media on issues of local service delivery. This responsiveness has in turn strengthened the confidence of citizens, including rural women, to be more vocal on raising their concerns on poor service delivery in the community.

Through the combination of ICT tools including SMS, online platforms like the polling system TracFM, blogs and social media which contribute content to radio shows and community debates, ToroDev has created a simple formula that brings together local leadership and communities to collaboratively agree solutions to service delivery gaps.



2,000 copies of the citizens’ advocacy model were published and distributed together with other IEC materials by ToroDev

Key to the success of this formula has been the cementing of relationships with 15 Rural Advocacy Forums. The Forums are composed primarily of journalists, rural women and youth totalling 300 individuals who are information intermediaries between the local leadership and community needs. They utilise ICT to disseminate information beyond their immediate communities, escalate service delivery grievances and directly engage with local duty bearers.

To ensure an ongoing capacity to play this key function in the community, in March and June 2015, 69 leaders and coordinators of the rural advocacy forums convened to discuss methods of strengthening institutional capacity, including the ICT capacities of the forum leaders and rural monitors in demanding and advocating for improved service delivery.

This capacity is necessary as it works to close the gap between communities with limited access to online platforms and consequently to the wider online community. It is these platforms that advocacy forum members are becoming deft in using to generate awareness of what is happening in their communities and to reach local media.

Since project inception, ToroDev has facilitated the creation of 11 Facebook pages amongst the forums that provide content to a regional Facebook Group called "[State of Service Delivery in the Rwenzori Region](#)". Advocacy forum members have been equipped with the skills to create and maintain their Facebook accounts and blogs to continue advocacy efforts in their communities. This has seen an increase in the number of online advocacy posts from an average of 25 per month in 2014 to 35 per month in 2015.

*"The issues we put on Facebook are read by so many people especially the journalists who have contacted us from different radio stations asking us more about the issues we post. The stories are picked by the journalists from Facebook and broadcasted on radios and concerned leaders hear the issues on radio, which has helped in service delivery,"* Gilbert Rwaheru, leader of Kichwamba Forum, Kabarole District, Uganda.

However, some forums still lack some of the tools required, even though they have been up skilled in the use of ICT. *"Sometimes we have information that requires backing up with photos for evidence but sometimes we do not have the cameras or voice recorders and we fail to get real evidence to share with our leaders,"* noted Wilson Monday, coordinator Nkoma advocacy forum in Kamwenge district.

Despite such challenges, members of the advocacy forums remain determined to document service delivery failures and maintain active participation at forum meetings and community engagements. These activities led by ToroDev have contributed to a consistency in participation of citizens and duty bearers in monthly community accountability meetings during which Rural Advocacy Forum members and the wider community interacted with duty bearers on service delivery challenges in local communities. Of the 1,330 participants in the accountability meetings, 37% were women. In 2014, accountability meetings were organised as sub-county level while in 2015, they were moved a level lower to parishes. This has enabled more participation by women and local leaders given that there are no transport challenges because of proximity to residences.



Participation levels in monthly accountability meetings in Western Uganda

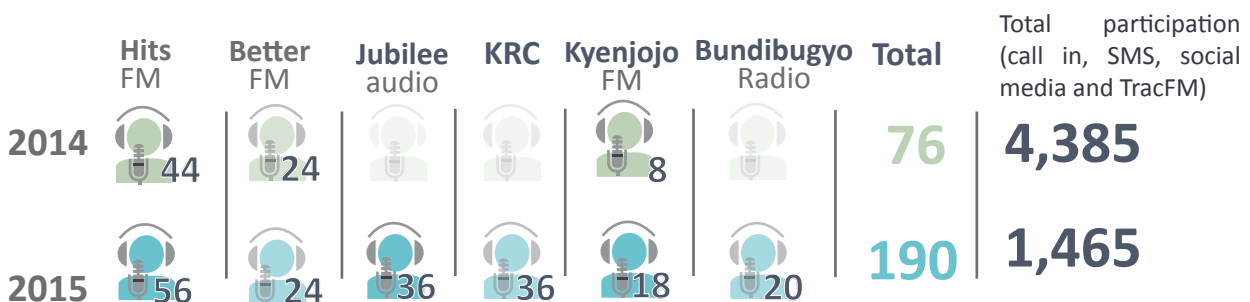
*"As a result of facilitating the 15 advocacy forums on a monthly basis, more tangible outcomes are seen on ground e.g. gravity water schemes extended in Magunga in Mugusu sub county and Kibate in Katebwa sub-county, two classroom blocks put in place in Bufunjo Seed school and in Kichwamba -Nyankuku community road, Katooke sub-counties, Munjeru-Kitoro Road have been worked as a result of advocacy forums and radio talks,"* said Andrew Tumwesigye, the leader of Bufunjo People's Forum, Kyenjojo District, during a panel discussion on the performance of advocacy forums in the region.

ToroDev maintains a vital relationship with media in the region. In July, it engaged with the media on issues of service delivery during a two-day workshop in Fort Portal town. In attendance were 60 journalists from 15 local radio stations and print media. The workshop focused on the electioneering process, effective coverage and citizen engagement in the run up to the February 2016 General Elections. Journalists were encouraged to highlight more service delivery issues in their reporting and to demand transparency and accountability in the lead up to the elections.



ToroDev Executive Director Baguma Johnstone Kumaraki gives remarks during a training session

In partnership with six local radio stations, live monthly radio talks were conducted, during which members of advocacy forums and local citizens actively engaged in discussions on social accountability. During the 190 live talk shows conducted over the course of the year, an average of 120 citizens called in each month during the talk shows (at least 20% of them women), while at least 15 listeners sent SMS per radio station per show.



Overview of radio engagements in Rwenzori region

Closely linked to radio engagements is the use of TracFM -an online polling platform. However, there was a reduction in participation of citizens through the various ICT platforms. The decline was due to the TracFM platform running on one radio station whereas previously it was run on three radio stations. The platform enables radio talk show hosts to get poll results on questions which arise out of on-air discussions and debates.

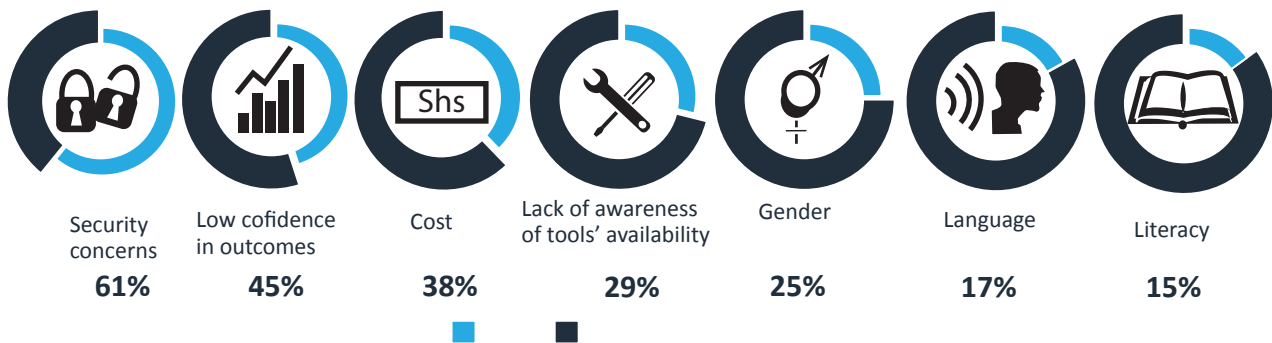
The commitment to action of local leaders is often put to the test by both radio show hosts and listeners who follow up on whether pledges made on air are attended to. "The political leaders come for talk shows and make promises to improve services in health sectors, education, road, etc., but they don't fulfil these promise. But thanks to the good work of the talk shows which helps us to go back and remind them," Tibenda Stephen, a caller into one of the talk shows.

To amplify the voices and concerns of rural women and youth from very hard to reach communities on to FM radio platforms, five rural debates were held in Kyegegwa, Ntoroko and Kyenjojo districts. Each debate was attended by at least 100 people. The concerns of the attendees were recorded and later played on radio stations. The project is also working to improve communication and collaboration between civil society organisations and district local governments.

*“CSO-District local governments’ forums are important for information and other resources sharing and planning together. If cultivated it is a platform that is very promising with merits such as planning together, avoiding duplication and sharing limited resources to promote transparency, accountability and eventually improve service delivery.”*  
ToroDev M&E officer.

## 7. Connecting ICT Policy to Practice

Over the course of 2015, CIPESA's iParticipate Uganda project sought to understand citizens' online behaviour in their use of ICT tools for civic engagement. A [report](#) on research conducted during 2014 on Uganda Citizens' Knowledge and Practices of ICT Use in Governance was published, with insightful findings on what influences citizens' decisions in civic participation and democratic processes. Some of the findings on what limits citizens from utilising ICT to engage with duty bearers included security concerns, mistrust of duty bearers and therefore low confidence on the outcomes of engaging. The research resulted in a series of recommendations to help policy makers, civil society and tech developers make informed decisions in their interventions.



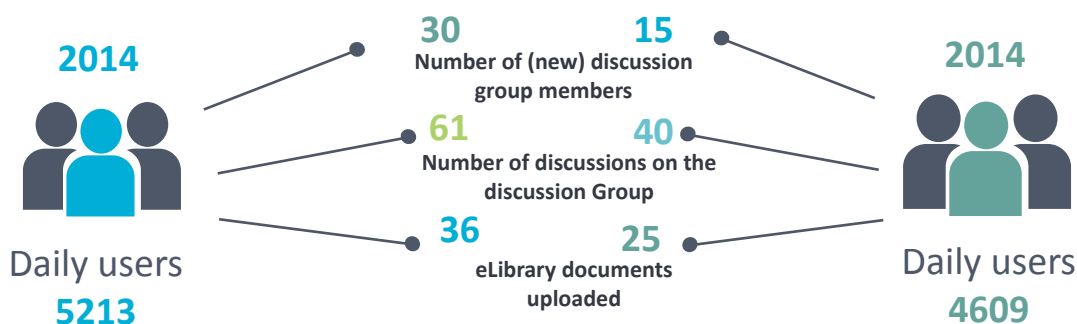
Extracted from the *ICT in Civic Participation and Democracy in Uganda: Citizens Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices report*

In separate studies on government and non-government ICT initiatives, and how ICT-related policies and other legislation affected citizen participation and democratic governance in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, almost similar findings were recorded. These reports indicate that a number of ICT initiatives both government and citizen-led are being implemented to enable social accountability and citizen participation in monitoring transparency and accountability in government operations. The initiatives are supported by a number of laws and policy frameworks such as the Access to information law in Uganda, National ICT policies, e-government strategies and universal service funds in all three countries.

The reports also note the low level of awareness and implementation of the enabling laws within ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) and among citizens, as well as a lack of interactivity of several government websites. The reports recommend for governments to create awareness of the laws among citizens and MDAs, the repeal and amendment of repressive laws that negate free speech and right to information, the immediate enactment of data protection and privacy laws, and the enactment of right to information law in Kenya and Tanzania.<sup>1</sup>

In the run up to the general elections in Tanzania and Uganda, CIPESA also sought to document citizens' and media engagements online and offline. In the lead up to the October (2015) Tanzania election, a total of 40 journalists and editors (13 women and 27 men) from Geita, Mara, Mwanza and Dar es Salaam were equipped with knowledge and skills on how to access relevant information, cover and report factually and responsibly during the election. The training also focused on creating awareness about existing and proposed legislation that had direct implications to freedom of expression and access to information. These included the [Cybercrime Act](#) (2015), [Statistics Act](#) (2015), Access to information Bill (2015), Media Services Act (2015) and the 2015 Election Broadcasting Code.

CIPESA also continued supporting its grassroots partners through technical skills capacity and knowledge development around use of ICT for governance. The Kasese-based eSociety Resource Centre recorded an average of 1,000 monthly users (half of them female), including local government officials, students and the general public. The local government ICT platforms maintained by the centre including the district website, discussion group and eLibrary remained crucial in availing citizens with information and enabling engagement between local leaders and citizens.



Kasese eSociety Resource Center =Usage statistics

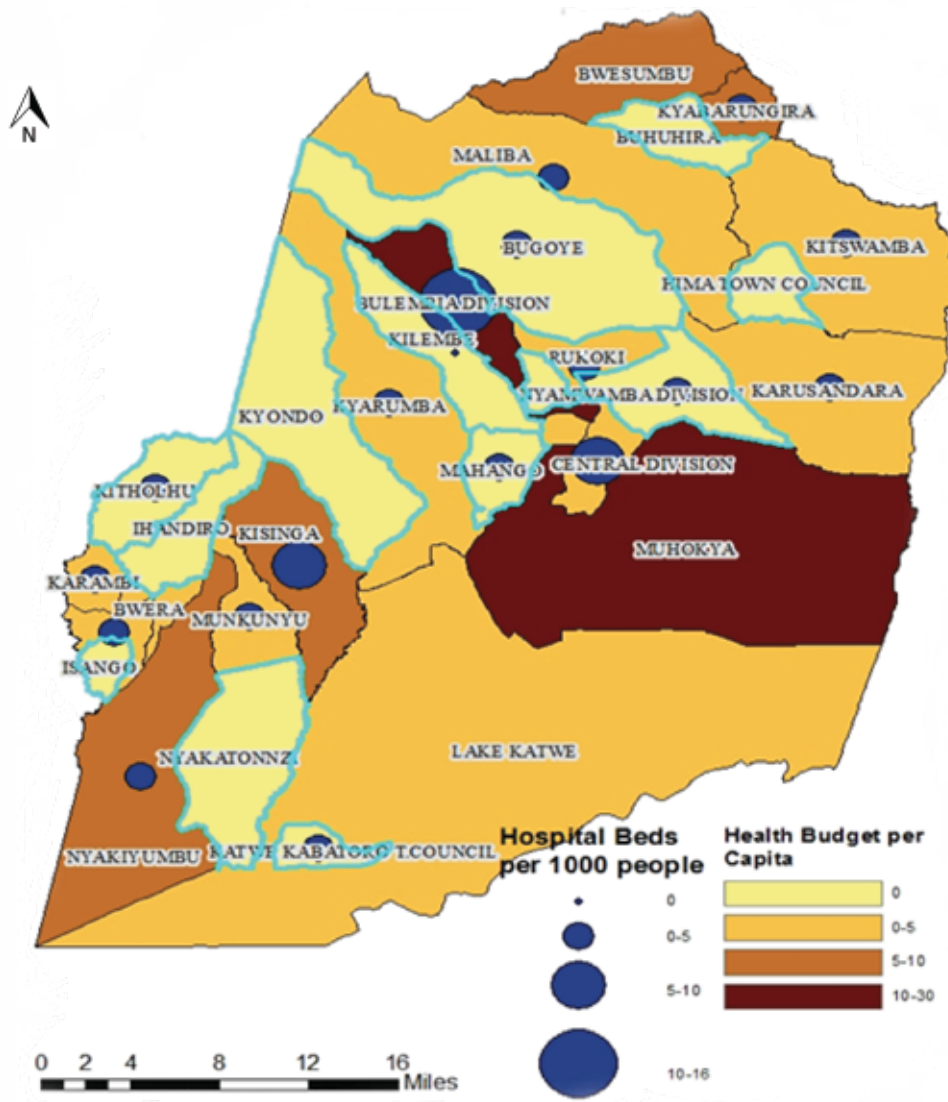
<sup>1</sup> CIPESA ICT Research Series, ICT in Governance – Policies and Practice, Tanzania, [http://www.cipesa.org/?wpfb\\_dl=205](http://www.cipesa.org/?wpfb_dl=205), Kenya, [http://www.cipesa.org/?wpfb\\_dl=200](http://www.cipesa.org/?wpfb_dl=200), Uganda, [http://www.cipesa.org/?wpfb\\_dl=199](http://www.cipesa.org/?wpfb_dl=199)

Two trainings on the use of geocoded data for service delivery planning and monitoring, and on the use of ICT to promote right to information in Uganda were conducted at the Northern Uganda Media Club (NUMEC) in Gulu and the e-society resource centre in Kasese. In Kasese, the training exercise attended by 38 participants (32 men and six women) with representatives including the Assistant District Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), district planning unit, sub-county officials, media, civil society organisations and students, involved presentation and discussion of a series of geo-coded maps reflecting budget analysis for both the education and health sector with data extracted from the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS).

For the health sector analysis, focus was on mapping health clinics, Health Centres and general hospitals to identify the populations with limited access to health facilities. Similarly, hospital beds available in the health facilities in each sub-county were mapped to identify the sub-counties without hospital beds. This mapped data was compared against the budgetary allocations to the sub-counties for education and health sectors.

The maps illustrated that areas with large populations had limited facilities for public health and education, while some areas received limited funding aimed at improving public health and education facilities. This highlighted the need for more cross-sectional sharing of information at all levels to enable more evidence-based decision making at both local and national level particularly as the number of sub-counties in the country has increased. "If we can embark upon sharing information at the local level, we can reduce these challenges at District planning," said Lillian Kisembo, the Kasese Assistant Town Clerk.

### Health Budget Per Capita - 2014/15



Geocoded health budget allocations for the financial year 2014/2015 for Kasese District in Western Uganda.

At NUMEC in Gulu, Northern Uganda, 16 journalists benefited from a similar training with a focus on visualizing data to report on the Peace Recovery and Development Programme (PRDP). A prototype of a Gulu PRDP reporting story map was created which visually represented the areas receiving media coverage related to PRDP.

During the workshop journalists indicated that most reporting focuses on infrastructure such as roads, schools and hospital developments at the cost of related issues such as family dislocation and mental health. They further added that the tool can help indicate which geographical areas require additional reporting in respect to tracking PRDP progress or stagnation.

*“I did not know geocoding but now I am able to do it perfectly well as I can tag my stories and also share it online. I learnt how to upload my stories on the map so that any one searching for my work can easily get it,”* said Livingstone Okumu, a freelance reporter for the online news publication Black Star News.

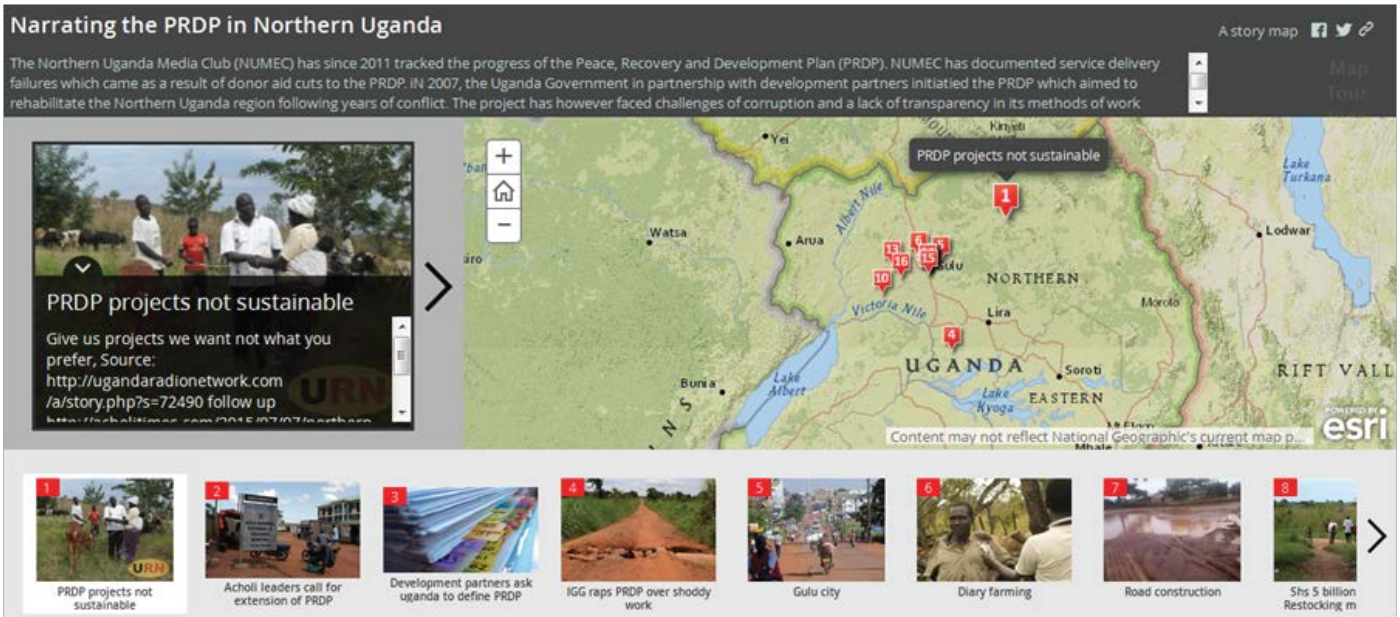


Image: A screenshot of the prototype storymap illustrating which areas receive PRDP coverage in Northern Uganda. It illustrates that most stories are close to the town of Gulu with the bulk of the region receiving almost no coverage



AidData fellow Aroob Syedah Iqbal takes NUMEC journalists through the use of geo-coding software Arch GIS



## 8. Mainstreaming Women's Participation in Governance through ICT use in Northern Uganda

The Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET) works to empower community-based organisations, particularly women's groups, to monitor governance and service delivery through ICT in the Northern Uganda districts of Apac, Kole, Oyam, Gulu and Amuru. It works through up skilling community members who form groups called Voluntary Social Accountability Committees (VSACS) who go on to use their ICT skills in citizen journalism to collect, package and disseminate information on corruption and poor public service delivery from their localities to the wider public.

Over the course of the year, WOUGNET conducted 15 training sessions for VSACs with three taking place in each of the five districts WOUGNET works in, and reaching a total of 375 VSAC members. This served to strengthen both new and existing VSAC members' knowledge on practical citizen journalism, civic participation and democracy, as well as the use of ICT to report poor service delivery.

These workshops resulted in an increase in the use of ICT such as digital cameras and mobile phones to report governance issues and the status of service delivery in their community. A total of 70 cases were reported on the Ushahidi crowd sourcing platform. A further 37 articles were shared on the various WOUGNET online platforms including blogs and social media.

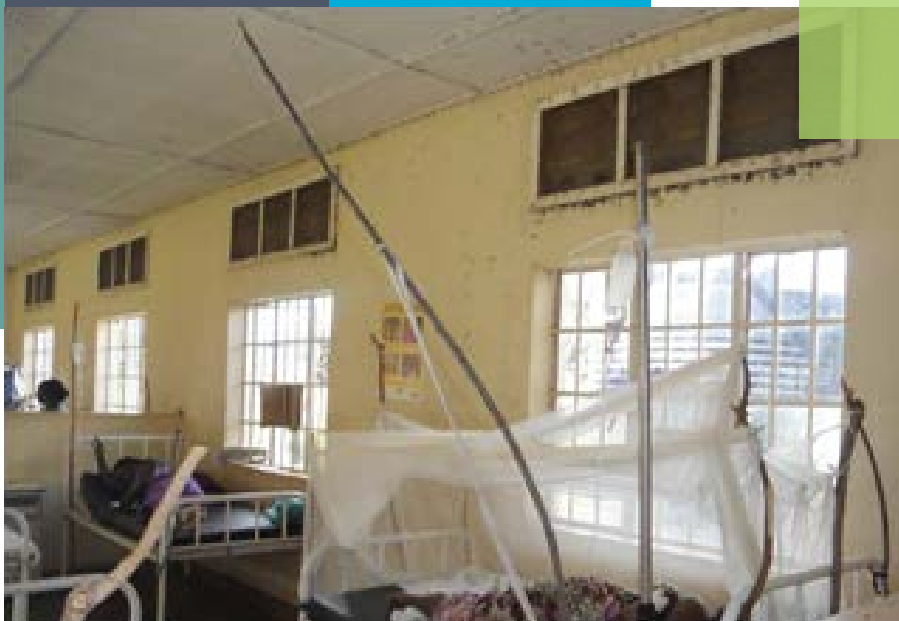
There was also direct engagement with communities through field visits during which the cases reported were verified and documented through Youtube for wider dissemination. This intervention sparked conversations in community meetings and on radio, which required the presence of local duty bearers to explain the status of service delivery in their constituencies.

A stronger relationship between VSACs and duty bearers has contributed towards the project's goal of increasing the number of duty bearers providing regular and timely information on service delivery cases, primarily through ICT.

Radio has proven to be a popular avenue for both community members and local duty bearers who increased participation in live talk shows by calling in or being present in studio at Radio Apac and on Mega FM over the course of the year. Six talk shows were aired on the stations. Copies of radio scripts were produced and distributed to the respective VSACs in all the five project districts to serve as a record and reference point for future talk shows.

The positive stance towards social accountability was also present at 15 district community meetings during which VSACs shared their findings on poor service delivery in their respective communities to district officials. At the meetings, leaders present clarified and educated the VSACs on government programs and budgets. Discussions from these meetings were also shared online to ensure transparency and accountability at district level as well. Participants at the engagement meetings agreed to document issues raised and periodically present them to Resident District Commissioners in order to ensure they are communicated to the respective departments for redress.

Although the adoption of ICT platforms - other than radio - by VSACs and duty bearers remains low, continuous capacity building will aim to grow the number of community members who use ICT to interact with duty bearers and to monitor the status of service delivery in their locales.



Poor management of Health Centre facilities is common in rural communities. This Health Centre in Akokoro sub county, Apac District shows how sticks are used to hold up mosquito net in a ward.

#### Interventions by VSACs have resulted in the following;

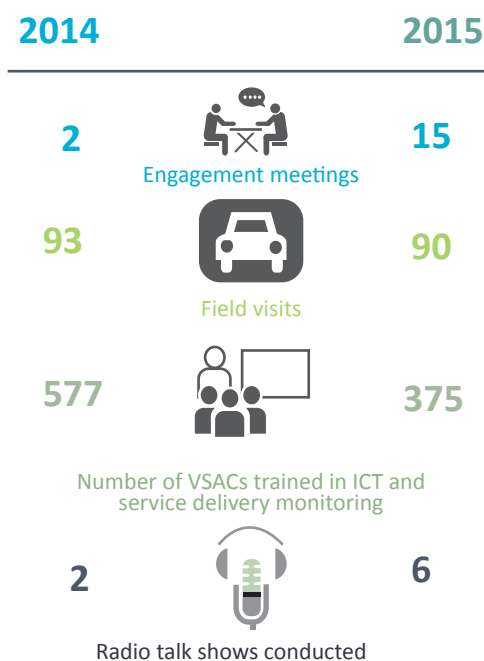
- In all five districts, 12 boreholes have been repaired. Apac district registered the highest number of boreholes repaired as a result of VSACs' involvement.
- Two schools have established new School Management Committees (SMC) following VSACs' intervention – a model likely to be replicated by other schools.
- Eight borehole sources were fenced off for safety and security purposes (2 in Gulu, 3 in Apac, 1 in Oyam, 1 in Amuru and 1 in Kole) following engagement with the borehole users and local leaders. A parish chief in Apac was also forced to refund monies meant to repair a borehole which remained un-attended to.
- Four health centre facilities were improved through the building of staff housing and the connection of electricity at a maternity ward.

WOUGNET also conducted an assessment among VSACs on how men and women are using ICT and engaging leaders to demand for improved service delivery. The results show that female VSAC members are increasingly taking up leadership positions that were originally dominated by men in the districts. These include Chairperson of Local Councils, Area Member of Parliament, and Council Speakers, among others. Further, the report indicated that at least 60% of males and 54% of female VSACs were able to use ICT to monitor good governance while on average, 10% male and 14% female had used social media to report governance issues.

Respondents noted that women were more vigilant and committed to the needs of the community and have the potential if given the opportunity to further an enabling environment. The report cited the need to address gaps like increasing the level of access and ownership of ICT as well as shifting the attitudes of the communities to one which is more embracing of the role ICT can play in service delivery improvement.

At various civil society events at district and national levels, WOUGNET shared its experiences and the findings of the assessment towards increasing gender knowledge among practitioners.

Like the Forums in western Uganda, the VSACs in the north are faced with challenges such as limited access to ICT tools. WOUGNET has recognised a need to setup ICT access points especially at sub-county level to allow continuous application of ICT skills acquired by capacity building beneficiaries while also enabling accessibility to resources such as district websites, the project's crowd sourcing platforms and social media pages. Yet still, communications network coverage in some of the rural areas remains poor, pointing to the need for lobbying telecommunications service providers to extend services to under-served areas. WOUGNET is also seeking to involve the media more in its activities to promote visibility and wider awareness.



## 9. Addressing Public Health Gaps A Call At A Time

The use of a popular toll free line by Voluntary Accountability Committees (VACs) to report gaps in public health service delivery is improving the quality of life of communities in the Northern Uganda districts of Lira and Oyam. Complemented by capacity building exercises, physical stakeholder meetings and radio programmes, the initiative by Transparency International Uganda (TIU) is also promoting access and dissemination of information, and community participation in governance of the region's health sector.

Through the call centre, radio talk shows, verification and follow up visits, TIU has built a working relationship between duty bearers and citizens in demanding social accountability of health workers and service providers. The bulk of reports received by TIU through the call centre related to staff absenteeism, late arrival to work and drug theft at health centres. Other non-health related issues reported included the misappropriation of education funds in the district; malpractice in community livelihood programmes; and continued enquiries on family planning advice.

During the year, TIU carried out 52 on the spot health centre visits which saw direct engagement with district health officials to explain and respond to the reports received over the toll free number and those identified during the visits. At district level, TIU convened quarterly stakeholder review meetings with local government officials, the VACs and other stakeholders to share experiences from the field visits, challenges faced and achievements made. The review meetings were attended by 184 participants (27% of them female).

Such meetings, including follow up meetings in which district health officials, sub-county officials and health centre leadership are present, have seen an increase of more than 70% in reports received at the toll free call centre in 2015 compared to 2014. In 2014, the centre received 226 calls. In 2015, 394 calls were registered.



*Statistics of the toll free call centre which forms the heart of the TIU project*

Many of the issues discussed at the meetings received attention on radio talk shows which focused a spotlight on them and the concerned duty bearers, resulting in steps taken towards addressing them. Radio stations – a popular awareness avenue in the region - have provided free airtime to TIU to create further awareness of the work that VACs are doing and the issues that they are identifying. These on-air engagements also serve as opportunities for duty bearers to explain service delivery failures and to also highlight areas of success especially as listeners are given the opportunity to engage on air. The talk shows were also supported by the airing of jingles to promote awareness about the toll free call centre. The jingles aired in English and local language Luo.

In the past the feedback gap between citizens, district health management officials and civil society actors was one of the major challenges that TIU desired to address. Previously, the district and sub-county leaders believed that TIU's work was aimed at "witch hunting" and were not very forthcoming with necessary information such as health sector budget plans. However, with frequent involvement and engagement of the district and sub-county leaders in project activities, duty bearers have become more willing to get involved to ensure that the gaps in service delivery are bridged.

Meanwhile, in the target sub-counties, the VACs are now being recognised for the work they are doing, they are being invited to participate in council meetings and take part in decision making at the sub-counties and health centres on behalf of the community members. Whenever drugs are supplied to the health centres, the VACs are called upon to witness the drugs opening and counting. "We are now participating in council meetings, our services are now being demanded even outside health. Schools are also calling upon us to go help and rescue them, and our voices are now being heard," stated one VAC member.

The efforts by TIU have resulted in reduced absenteeism; the demotion or termination of health centre staff due to absenteeism and late arrival for work; reduced cases of drug theft; the construction of staff housing at health centres; repair of a broken bridge hampering access to a health centre; availability of solar power in some health facilities; repair of water access points at health centres; recruitment of additional staff for understaffed facilities; and improvement of security at some health centres.

*TIU has initiated a district Integrity Promotion Forums in Lira district to ensure commitments to action plans and joint social accountability monitoring. The forum membership includes district heads of department, CSOs, Resident District Commissioner (RDC) and Office of the Inspectorate of Government Lira district.*

*“Previously I would see so many challenges in the health centre and keep quiet because I did not know where to report and what actions would be taken if I report. I would also fear that if I report, my identity will be revealed but now with this technology (toll free line), I am able to monitor and report for free because I know that actions will be taken, am protected and there is confidentiality when I report,”* said a community member, Lucy Okello.

The work by TIU has built the confidence of community members to report health service issues. This is due in part to the creation of the District Integrity Forum, which has created an avenue to demand for rights, transparency and accountability.



## 10. Increasing Human Rights Defenders Capacity in Rural Kenya

The Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC) is working with 10 Human Rights Networks (HURINETs) to document and report on human rights violation incidents through mobile and social media platforms. While not all HURINETs have access to the necessary tools and infrastructure, KHRC has provided technical and logistical support to aid their advocacy work. Additionally, ICT advocacy skills building exercises were conducted to build the HURINETs' capacity to advocate through online media.

The increased capacity of the HURINETs and popularity of human rights issues in remote and rural areas where the HURINETs are based has seen more issues brought to the table of both the local and national government primarily through social media. The Midrift HURINET in Nakuru County started the #UwajibikajiMashinani "AccountabilityInRuRaAreas" online campaign to get more citizens to deliberate on issues of accountability in the county, while the Kwale HURINET started #OkoaKwaleInitiative and "#SaveKwaleInitiative" campaigns that sought to create further awareness online and to ask Kwale county government leaders not to allow personal differences to influence community decisions.

According to Moses Chavene, an officer at the Midrift HURINET, "More people are opening up to us - men, women and youth in Nakuru county report to us on how they have faced various human rights violations." Further, ICT support provided to the HURINETs led to the setting up of a Frontline SMS platform to facilitate cheaper means of reporting human rights violations for those who have no access to social media.

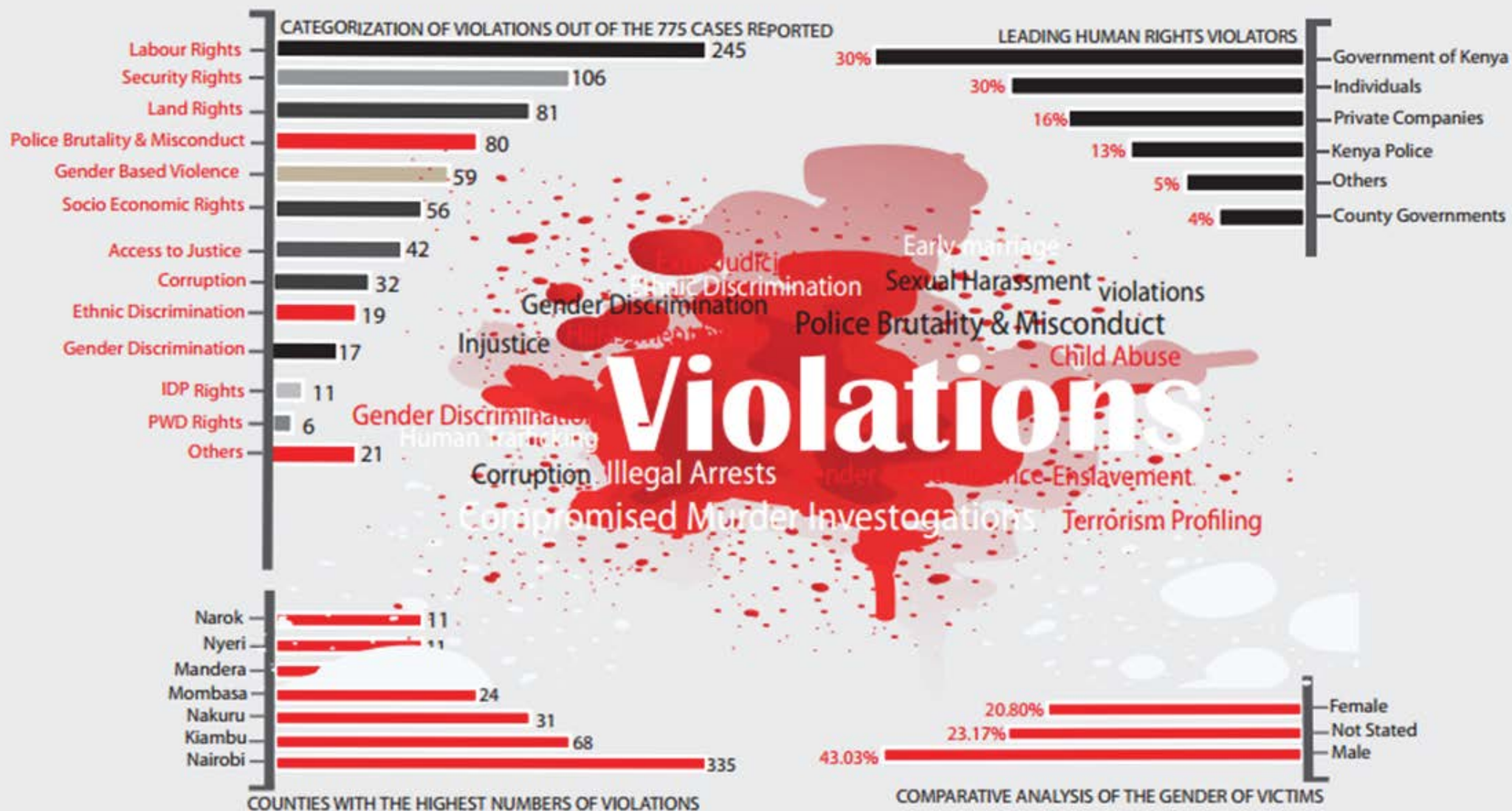
"The computer has made it easy for us to monitor reports on a daily basis. We also use the platform for sending out bulk SMS a month to our 200 members, majority of who are women and youth, regarding our activities," said Chavene. To aid quicker reporting, response time and communication between HURINETs and county government, as well as collate information on violations, Kwale and Midrift HURINETs have also gone on to utilise the popular texting platform, Whatsapp, to aid in their on-going efforts.

Three of the 10 HURINETs sensitised on the Africa Declaration on Internet Rights and Freedoms have endorsed the declaration and continue to utilise its print copies during field engagements with communities. Meanwhile, human rights issues gathered through the 10 HURINETs have formed the basis of content in the biannual Msizi ya Haki newsletter which is disseminated locally and nationally online and in print. Infographics on prevailing human rights issues in Kenya are the evidence base of national advocacy, and wider public mobilization and awareness campaigns. These include the ongoing Green Amendment Campaign which calls for Constitutional amendment in order to ensure gender equality in public bodies.

For its monitoring part, KHRC received 775 cases through its various reporting platforms. Of these, 418 cases were received through the legal aid platform, while the SMS platform received a total of 156 cases. Cases reported through other media were 201. The Commission notes that its SMS reporting platform has enabled quicker response time to cases reported; it responds to an average of 15 cases of violations each month. Cases have been escalated and victims of the abuse have received legal assistance.

The commission complemented its efforts with a bulk SMS campaign which saw 500 messages sent out monthly during the year. The messages were advocating for human rights protection in Kenya. In 2016, KHRC is set to pilot a mobile reporting line to ease the process of verification of reports and reduce junk messages. Besides, the Commission is exploring avenues for online real time mapping of violations using a mobile app. The online mapping would particularly be useful for election monitoring work.

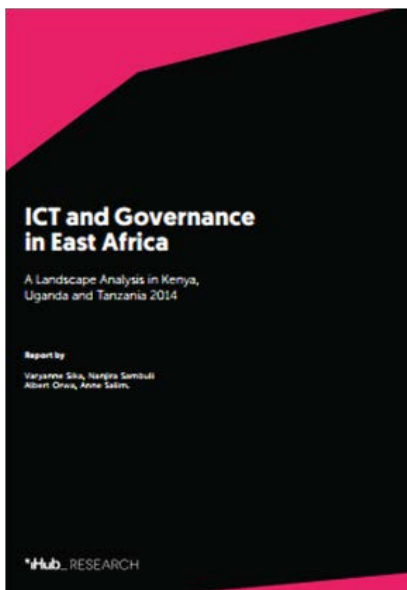
The combined experiences of KHRC and the HURINETs through direct engagements, SMS and increased online social interactions helped feed into a series of infographics which give insights on the types of human rights abuse experienced in Kenya during the year.



Between January 1, 2015 and September 30, 2015, there were a total of 574 cases received by KHRC through its legal aid and SMS platforms. The legal aid platform received a total of 418 cases, while the SMS platform received a total of 156 cases. Different fora of media was 201, bringing the total cases analyzed to 775.

Sources: Local and international media accounts and reports from other independent sources

## 5.7 Understanding ICT based interactions for service delivery in East Africa



Information and Communication Technologies have changed the ways in which local, regional and national government authorities communicate within themselves, with each other and with the citizens. Following on from research carried out in 2014, over the course of 2015, [iHub Research](#) disseminated its findings on the nature of online interactions between governments and citizens through ICT tools in support of civic participation, service delivery, transparency, accountability and access to information in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

iHub Research's 18 month study assessed how ICT tools are being used by citizens and government entities with the aim of bridging the research and insights gap on ICT use in East Africa. It identified the ICT tools being used, how they are used, and what successes and challenges exist in the use of these tools. The findings were compiled into a report titled [ICT and Governance in East Africa: A Landscape Analysis in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania 2014](#).

The study was conducted in Nairobi and Nakuru in Kenya, Mwanza and Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, Kampala, Apac and Lira in Uganda. A total of 34 Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and seven Government bodies implementing ICT and Governance initiatives were interviewed. In addition, seven developers were interviewed and 104 citizens participated in the study's focus group discussions.

iHub Research has worked to ensure that the findings are shared through a series of dissemination forums amongst participants of the survey, ICT enthusiasts and civil society organisations and to-date has engaged on the recommendations of the study across all three countries with nearly 100 people in attendance at each presentation. Further, the forums have included the four stakeholders in governance - citizens, government, civil society and the private sector.

Dissemination forums took place in [Kampala](#), [Dar es Salaam](#) and Nairobi. The final dissemination forum took place in [Nakuru](#) in September. iHub Research also presented the findings at the October 2015 GovTech conference which drew public servants from South Africa and other African countries.

During the dissemination forums, CSOs have been the most eager to learn often asking similar questions, "What are we doing wrong?" and "Why can't we get sustained interaction on our Facebook pages?" This illustrates an interest and need for knowledge amongst CSO on what works and what does not work in the ICT and Governance sphere. The research report illustrates the conditions under which ICT tools can successfully facilitate interaction between government and citizens, and between citizens and citizens. It also explores how ICT can gainfully aid access to information and service delivery monitoring to stem corruption and increase transparency.



Image: Participants at the Nakuru dissemination meeting in September 2015

Some of the notable findings include:

- When citizens use ICT tools to interact with government, they are motivated by the ease of interaction (they don't have to go to an office) and affordability. Citizens are also motivated by a perceived sense of anonymity provided by ICT tools in cases of reporting corruption.
- Successful uses of ICT in governance were found in cases where non-internet based tools such as radio, and mobile phones (feature phones particularly) are used, and where forums exist for citizens to physically meet to follow up on issues raised using ICT.
- Mobile and web applications, which are created mostly in tech hubs and tech competitions such as hackathons, are popular and hyped only among people who are particularly interested in technology and applications.
- There exist numerous ICT tools for governance such as websites, mobile phones, radio, and web applications which are not used by citizens and government as often as developers expected. This is because governance needs are not comprehensively assessed before the creation/deployment of these ICT tools.
- Citizens are not optimistic about action being taken on the issues they raise, thus limiting their use of the applications.

**The report has been received with enthusiasm at all forums, especially by those participants who contributed towards the research phase. An interactive report webpage – [www.ihub.co.ke/ict4gov](http://www.ihub.co.ke/ict4gov) - as well as a mini documentary, were also produced.**



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**Web:** [www.ict4democracy.org](http://www.ict4democracy.org)  
**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/ict4dem](http://www.facebook.com/ict4dem)  
**Twitter:** @ICT4DemEA  
**Email:** [info@ict4democracy.org](mailto:info@ict4democracy.org)

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### Regional Coordination

The Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPESA)



Plot 156-158 Mutesa II Road, Ntinda, P.O. Box 4365, Kampala, Uganda  
**Tel:** +256 414 289 502 | **Email:** [programmes@cipesa.org](mailto:programmes@cipesa.org)  
**Website:** [www.cipesa.org](http://www.cipesa.org)  
**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/cipesaug](http://www.facebook.com/cipesaug)  
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