

# ICT4Democracy in East Africa

**TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL UGANDA**

**CHRAGG**

**WOUNGNET**

**KENYA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

**CIPESA**

**\*R@Hub**

**SPIDER**  
THE SWEDISH PROGRAM FOR ICT IN DEVELOPING REGIONS

**Stockholm University**

**www.ict4democracy.org**

## INTRODUCTION

The launch of the 'ICT4Democracy in East Africa' project in June 2011 was premised on the recognition that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) enhances communication and the right to freedom of expression, as well as the right to seek, receive and impart information. In this respect, ICT has the potential to increase citizens' participation in decision-making processes, thus strengthening democratisation.

In Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, where this initiative is active, some organisations are leveraging on ICT to hold leaders accountable to citizens, as well as to fight corruption, monitor service delivery, and contribute to building a democratic culture. As in many other parts of the world, in East Africa ICTs are being used for networking, monitoring of elections, reporting violations of human rights, and tracking corruption. With lower costs and broader accessibility, mobile phones are increasing flows of information and facilitating communication, thus enhancing people's capacity to act and participate in democratic processes.

The ICT4Democracy in East Africa' project, which has seed funding from the Swedish Program for ICT in Developing Regions (SPIDER), is encouraging collaboration between democracy actors in the three countries with a view to catalysing the role ICTs can play in enhancing civic empowerment and improving governance. Organisations participating in the project include the Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance (Tanzania), The Collaboration on International ICT Policy in East and Southern Africa, or CIPESA (Uganda), iHub (Kenya), The Kenya Human Rights Commission, Transparency International Uganda, and Women of Uganda Network (WOUNGNET).

Table 1: Country population, mobile and internet access statistics

Country	Population	Adult Literacy (%)	Mobile phone subscribers	Teledensity (per 100 inhabitants)	Internet users (%)
Kenya	41 m	85.1	24.9 m	63.2	26
Uganda	34 m	67	10.5 m	33.5	10
Tanzania	45 m	72.6	21.2 m	46.8	11

## SMS for Human Rights

The Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRAGG) is Tanzania's national focal point for the promotion and protection of human rights and good governance. Established in 2001, it is in fulfillment of the 13th Amendment of the country's Constitution, 1977.

CHRAGG has its headquarters in Dar es Salaam and three regional offices where individuals physically file their complaints or submit cases. Due to the travel implications of this for the average Tanzanian, citizens often cannot afford to file a complaint or follow up on the status of a complaint being processed. CHRAGG's 'SMS for Human Rights' project is creating a system to enable individuals file complaints, check the status of previously filed complaints and receive feedback through a web/mobile platform.

### Project objectives

To develop and implement a short messaging system (SMS) feature to the current Complaint Handling System to enable citizens instantly report human rights violations and bad governance to CHRAGG.

**Activities:** Technology improvement and rural outreach in collaboration with other NGOs.

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## Catalysing Civic Participation and Democracy Monitoring Using ICTs



The Collaboration on International ICT Policy in East and Southern Africa (CIPESA) is one of two centres established under the Catalysing Access to Information and Communications Technologies in Africa (CATIA) initiative, which was funded by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) in 2004. CIPESA focuses on decision-making that facilitates the use of ICT in support of development and poverty reduction. CIPESA works with networks, individuals, organisations (private sector, government, academic, civil society) across East and Southern Africa informing policy making aimed at improving the inclusiveness of the Information Society.

Few Ugandans participate in civic matters, thereby undermining efforts to promote and monitor democracy and transparency in the conduct of public affairs. For various reasons, a large number of Ugandans never take part in any community activities or debates on governance, and a great number do not register to vote. Many who are registered voters often never cast their votes. CIPESA has realised the potential of ICTs to enhance citizen advocacy and engagement, and to increase government transparency and accountability.

### Project objectives and activities

- Establish how ICT tools are being used to improve democracy monitoring and civic engagement in Uganda
- Understand the knowledge, attitudes, and the needs of citizen groups and local governments regarding the use of ICTs in citizen participation and monitoring of democracy
- Map innovative and successful ways in which citizens, citizens' groups and local governments can use ICTs to improve participation transparency, and accountability
- Examine how the current policies (and practices) enhance eDemocracy, and make recommendations on how government policies could be more supportive of the use of ICTs in governance and civic participation
- Promote awareness and develop capacity among citizens' groups, local government, and the media, on how ICT tools can be used in monitoring democracy and enabling greater citizens' engagement
- Facilitate the development of a network of civil society organizations, media, citizens' groups and local government that use and promote the use of ICTs in governance.

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## Empowering Local People and Communities to Monitor Districts' Service Delivery Through ICTs



The Women of Uganda Network (WOUNGNET) is a non-government organisation started in 2000 by several women's organisations in Uganda to develop the use of ICT among women to share information and address gender issues.

Rural communities, particularly women, are prone to poor service delivery and corruption due to lack of awareness about government functions and service delivery. Through the strategic use of FM radio stations, mobile phones and capacity building workshops, WOUNGNET aims to improve access to public services, increase efficiency, transparency and accountability of government and political processes in Northern Uganda. Women will be contacted through their community based organisations and women groups with support in order to enable them monitor service delivery in their districts and fight corruption through exposure of poor service delivery.

### Project objectives and activities

- To create awareness on the need to have good governance and service delivery among the grass-root communities and local Community Based Organizations (CBOs) in the five districts
- To build capacity in ICT skills among the communities and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) to enable them collect, package and disseminate information on corruption and poor public service delivery from their localities to the wider public.
- To document and disseminate voices of the grassroots communities so as to raise awareness on corruption and poor service delivery in five districts of Uganda so that the public can generate debate and cause change.

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## Promoting Social Accountability in the Health Sector in Northern Uganda



Since 1993, Transparency International (TI) Uganda has been involved in the anti-corruption campaign in Uganda. TI Uganda has mobilised and built the capacity of citizenry, civil society and the private sector and published documentation aimed at building the knowledge of activists.

Despite the end of the rebel insurgency, Northern Uganda continues to face challenges in health service delivery. The high health worker absenteeism rates hamper the capacity of the already limited health centres. Through radio, a toll free call centre, mobile phones and a web-based application, TI Uganda has embarked on a project to address the problem of corruption and inadequate social accountability in the health sector in Northern Uganda.

### Project objectives and activities

By embarking on work with existing structures like Village Health Teams (VHT), health management committees and creating and empowering Voluntary Accountability Communities (VACs), TI Uganda aims to:

- Reduce the rates of absenteeism of health workers;
- Increase community participation in monitoring of the functionality of health centres;
- Advocate for policies to improve health service delivery; and
- Deploy a 'service pact' between service providers and the community.

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## M-Governance: Exploring conditions for successful Mobile Governance in Kenya



iHub is an open technology community space where creative designers, developers, researchers, investors and venture capitalists meet, share ideas and collaborate. An initiative of Ushahidi, a Kenyan tech company that develops free and open source software for information collection, visualisation and interactive mapping, iHub is Nairobi's innovation hub. iHub's research arm among others, aims to build local research capacity by conducting exploratory and applied research to advance the development of new technologies.

The quality and access gap of Kenya's public services is hampering the country's development. The Kenyan government is not only slow in providing public services for its citizens but even when such services are provided,

corruption is a constant challenge. Mobile phone applications have the potential to increase citizen demand for and government's delivery of faster and more effective services. This more direct platform offers a direct channel that reduces corruption opportunities and allows citizens to voice their concerns.

Given Kenya's high mobile phone penetration, iHub is conducting research to explore the conditions under which mobile phones can successfully facilitate a two-way interaction between government and citizens, thereby reducing the costs of delivering public services, stemming corruption, and increasing transparency.

### Project objectives and activities

The project aims to identify, describe and produce an analysis of:

- The areas of [dis]satisfaction with government services in order to define a clear role for mobiles delivery of government services;
- Where government citizen feedback and participation is desired;
- Current mobile applications for democratising information based on feasibility of use by government agencies and Kenyan ministries' opinions on the use of mobile phones for citizen feedback and service delivery; and
- Applicable lessons learned by Ushahidi.

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## Reforms through Citizen Participation and Government Accountability



The Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC) founded in 1994 defends human rights and advocates for political reforms in Kenya. Over the years, Kenya's democracy has suffered impunity, indifference to corruption, tribalism and apathy, evidently so in the post-election violence of 2007-2008.

The country's new constitution, the Constitution of Kenya 2010, is a pro-citizen and progressive constitution that holds some promise. The previously centralised government system is to be devolved into decentralised levels of authority and accountability and allow for greater public participation. However, for the new constitution to be effectively implemented and have citizens fully realise their rights and have the skills to claim them, citizen participation in demanding for accountable governance must extend from the grassroots level all the way to the highest level of government across all social classes.

In the run-up to and during the August 2012 national elections, KHRC through ICTs will monitor and update stakeholders on the pre-campaign and campaign activities. This will include human rights violations, voter registration, leadership standards, ethics and integrity as enshrined in the Constitution.

### Project objectives and activities

- Encourage citizens in dialogue and establishing the rule of law in the context of democratic governance to ensure a decline in human rights violations
- Increase government accountability through monitoring service delivery at local level in the devolved government.
- Improve grass roots based organisations' and their memberships' understanding of the commitment to building a human rights state and society
- Meet the logistical and capacity challenges of community based human rights networks to enable them to take advantage of social networking platforms

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