

Promoting Democracy and Human Rights through ICTs



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Partner Profiles

Promoting Democracy and Human Rights through ICTs

The ICT4Democracy in East Africa network is a partnership of organisations which are actively involved in enhancing civic empowerment for improved governance, accountability and engagement with leadership. Founded in 2011, with seed funding from the Swedish Program for ICTs in Developing Regions (Spider), the network brings together organisations in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. Partners in each country have embarked upon projects that aim to build democracy through the use of ICTs in enhancing communication, access to information and the right to freedom of expression. These projects are driven by the shared vision of the immense potential that Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have in increasing citizens' participation in decision-making processes and strengthening democratisation.

In 2013, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) provided support to further the work of the network during 2014 and 2015. The partners in the network are: the Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET), Transparency International Uganda (TIU), the Collaboration on International ICT Policy in East and Southern Africa (CIPESA), iHub Research (Kenya), the Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC), the Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance (Tanzania), Toro Development Network (ToroDev), and Spider. CIPESA is the regional network coordinator.

Our objectives

The overall aim of the network is to increase civic participation and its role in strengthening democracy, transparency and governance through the use of ICTs in the East African region. The individual partner projects tackle issues such as corruption, service delivery, respect for human rights, and freedom of expression through the use of mobile short message services (SMS), toll free call centre, FM radio, social media like Facebook and Twitter, crowd sourcing platforms as well as direct community engagement.

Each partner has formulated their own approach towards the use of ICTs in democracy built upon four shared goals:

- Promoting access and dissemination of information for improved government openness, transparency, accountability and service delivery
- Up-skilling the capacity of civic groups, including human rights networks, voluntary social accountability committees (VSACs), and citizen journalists on how to best 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 platforms
- Gender mainstreaming in civil knowledge, ICT skills and in governance process participation

Across the three countries, the partners, consisting of human rights and gender rights advocates, researchers and community based practitioners are leveraging on each other's expertise and experience to facilitate the development of a borderless network of civil society organisations, media, and citizen groups that use ICTs towards improved democracy, human rights, transparency and service delivery. Knowledge, information, successes and challenges are shared through spaces such as a google group (<https://groups.google.com/group/ICT4Dem?hl=>), a mailing list (ICT4Dem@googlegroups.com) and a facebook page (<http://facebook.com/ict4dem>).

COLLABORATION ON INTERNATIONAL ICT POLICY IN EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA



Established in 2004, the Collaboration on International ICT Policy in East and Southern Africa (CIPESA) is a leading centre for the research and analysis of ICT related policy and information. Through its work, policy makers and various stakeholders are better informed in decision making related to ICT. CIPESA also sparks dialogue on ICT related topics in the region, thereby facilitating the use of ICT in support of development and poverty reduction.

CIPESA initiated the iParticipate Uganda project in 2011. The initiative is aimed at catalysing the role of ICTs in citizens' engagement and participation in governance. Under the current phase, CIPESA is: documenting and publicising the benefits of open governance to citizens and the media; training media and civil society in the use of ICT tools to promote citizen participation; and providing support to grassroots public ICT access centres in Uganda. The research component of CIPESA's activities involves analysing ICT related policies in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda and researching on the knowledge, attitudes and practices of citizens in ICTs and governance. There is also a component of research dissemination and advocacy to raise the engagement of public officials and other duty bearers in ICT-for-democracy processes.

Website: www.cipesa.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/cipesaug

Twitter: @cipesaug

CIPESA's Grassroots Partners

- Busoga Rural Open Source Development Initiative (**BROSDI**)
- eSociety Kasese
- Northern Uganda Media Club (**Numec**)

COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND GOOD GOVERNANCE (CHRAGG)



The Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRAGG) works to strengthen the adherence to good governance and the observation of human rights by both the state and citizens in Tanzania. The Commission was established in 2001 and serves the dual role of a human rights commission and an ombudsman for the promotion and protection of human rights.

CHRAGG has deployed a Short Messaging Services (SMS) platform enabling citizens to use their mobile phones to lodge human rights violations and complaints in a manner which is quicker, more accessible and increasingly cheaper than utilising postal services or physically visiting CHRAGG offices.

With a specific focus on youth, women and minority groups, CHRAGG works with a network of local civil society organisations (CSOs) and learning institutions to conduct public awareness campaigns that advocate for human rights and the reporting of violations through the toll free SMS service. Campaigns have resulted into increased awareness of human rights in the country and encouraged citizens to use their mobile phones to take a stand for their rights.

Website: www.chragg.go.tz

Facebook: www.facebook.com/chragg

Twitter: #chragg

Tanzanian citizens can lodge human rights violations by texting 'REPORT' or 'TAARIFA' to +255 (0) 754 460 259

iHUB RESEARCH



iHub is a Kenyan tech-based organisation that pursues innovation and entrepreneurship. It provides a facility in Nairobi that is open to start-ups, technologists, investors, tech companies and hackers. It is also involved in value added

services to the tech community through which it provides consultancy on technology services and systems.

iHub's research arm has expertise in qualitative and quantitative research in technology use and capacity in the East African region. Their main areas of research include governance and technology; innovation and entrepreneurship and lastly mobile and web research. Their work is tailored around developing African solutions specific to the needs of various audiences.

Under the ICT4Democracy network, iHub is exploring the interaction between governments and citizens using ICT tools in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania through a series of field studies, focus group discussions, surveys and literature reviews. This is towards a better understanding of how innovative ICTs are being used to help reduce the cost of delivering services, stemming corruption and increasing transparency.

Website: www.ihub.co.ke

Facebook: www.facebook.com/ihubNairobi

Twitter: @ihub

KENYA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (KHRC)



The founders of the Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC) were at the forefront of the struggle for human rights and democratic reform in Kenya. Founded in 1991, KHRC is driven by its mission of fostering human rights, democratic values, human dignity and social justice. These are built around the core values of fairness and social justice; participation and empowerment; liberty and human dignity; accountability and transparency; equal protection and non-discrimination. KHRC works both at a policy development and community engagement level where it engages with Human Rights Networks (HURINETS) across the country.

The organisation engages with the public primarily through free and open source web tools such as the website, intranet, SMS, social media, blogs and crowdmaps. KHRC's project under the network framework includes mentoring 10 HURINET partners to increase their capacity to use ICTs effectively in their advocacy work and to increase their understanding of building and promoting human rights. In addition, KHRC holds occasional community reflection meetings on human rights issues and events.

The project, however, is not only limited to HURINETS as university students, youth out of school, teachers and small-scale farmers are also beneficiaries being empowered to articulate their concerns to the wider society from the local level through to the national and international levels.

Website: www.khrc.or.ke

Facebook: www.facebook.com/thekhrc

Twitter: @thekhrc

TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL UGANDA



Transparency International Uganda (TIU) is the national chapter of the global anti-corruption movement Transparency International (TI). The Ugandan chapter was founded in 1993 and works to create a country in which the daily lives of people are free of corruption in the areas of health, education, water, private sector,

extractive industries, and politics.

TIU is an active contributor to the TI strategic goals, namely promotion of national anti-corruption reform through concrete research and action, increasing the understanding of the link between corruption and poverty, empowering communities to demand accountable governance and promoting continual institutional development.

TIU uses a toll free call centre, social media and FM radio programmes to empower and promote community participation in monitoring health service delivery at health centres in northern Uganda. The project also empowers citizens, primarily Voluntary Accountability Committees (VACs), to demand social accountability of health workers. Social media is used as a platform to share and inform regarding project findings, results and experiences. TIU's project works in collaboration with local governments in Oyam and Lira districts.

Through a toll free line (0800 200 188) VACs and the community at large can report health service delivery challenges. Reports are verified through field visits and evidence gathering before being raised with the respective authorities for remedial action.

Website: www.tiuganda.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/tiuganda
Twitter: @TransparencyUga

Toll Free Call Centre
Report Health Worker Absenteeism and
Service Delivery Challenges in Northern
Uganda
0800 200 188

TORO DEVELOPMENT NETWORK (ToroDev)



The Toro Development Network (ToroDev) was established in 2005 to mobilise, sensitise and train marginalised communities in Uganda including rural women and youth in the strategic use of ICTs as tools for self-sustainability. The organisation has three key areas of focus which are ICT enabled public accountability and democratic engagement for improved service delivery; the promotion of innovation and entrepreneurship development; and public policy analysis and advocacy.

ToroDev aims for improved service delivery through monitoring public accountability and engagement in the communities where it works. It does this by pursuing public policy analysis and advocacy while also encouraging financial literacy, innovation and entrepreneurship at a grassroots level. The organisation works in partnership with 15 rural advocacy forums and the Rwenzori Journalists Forum (both ToroDev initiatives) to motivate citizen activism and encourage leaders to embrace the concepts of transparency and accountability.

ToroDev has partnered with 13 local FM radio stations in western Uganda as hubs for information and knowledge sharing sourced through the internet (social media) and mobile phones (SMS). Regular talk shows and content are designed to empower media practitioners and local citizens to advocate for and to monitor service delivery. Through these platforms, democratic engagement with leaders for development planning and budgeting is also pursued.

Website: www.torodev.co.ug
Blog: www.torodev.blogspot.co.uk
Facebook: www.facebook.com/torodev
Twitter: @torodev1



WOMEN OF UGANDA NETWORK (WOUGNET)



The Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET) was established by a group of womens' organisations in 2000 with the aim of promoting the use of ICTs by women and women organisations in Uganda so that opportunities presented by ICTs can be used to effectively address national and local issues of sustainable development, governance and service delivery.

For the ICT4Democracy initiative, WOUGNET has primarily focused on Northern Uganda where it empowers communities to monitor good governance and service delivery through the use of radio stations, digital cameras, mobile phones, Facebook, Twitter, blogs and the crowd sourcing platform Ushahidi.

The project is being implemented under the gender and ICT policy advocacy program and emphasises the participation of women through their Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and women groups. They are trained and receive support to monitor service delivery and to fight corruption through exposure of service delivery failures in the districts of Apac, Kole, Oyam, Amuru and Gulu.

Through the initiative, WOUGNET anticipates to increase external pressure to the leaders by empowering local citizens to expose corruption within their districts through use of ICTs and the mass media platforms, thus causing a positive change in their districts' governance and service delivery performance.

Website: www.wougnet.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/womenofuganda

Twitter: @wougnet



ICT4Democracy in East Africa

In proud partnership with
The Swedish Program for ICT in Developing Regions (SPIDER)
and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)



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Regional Coordination

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