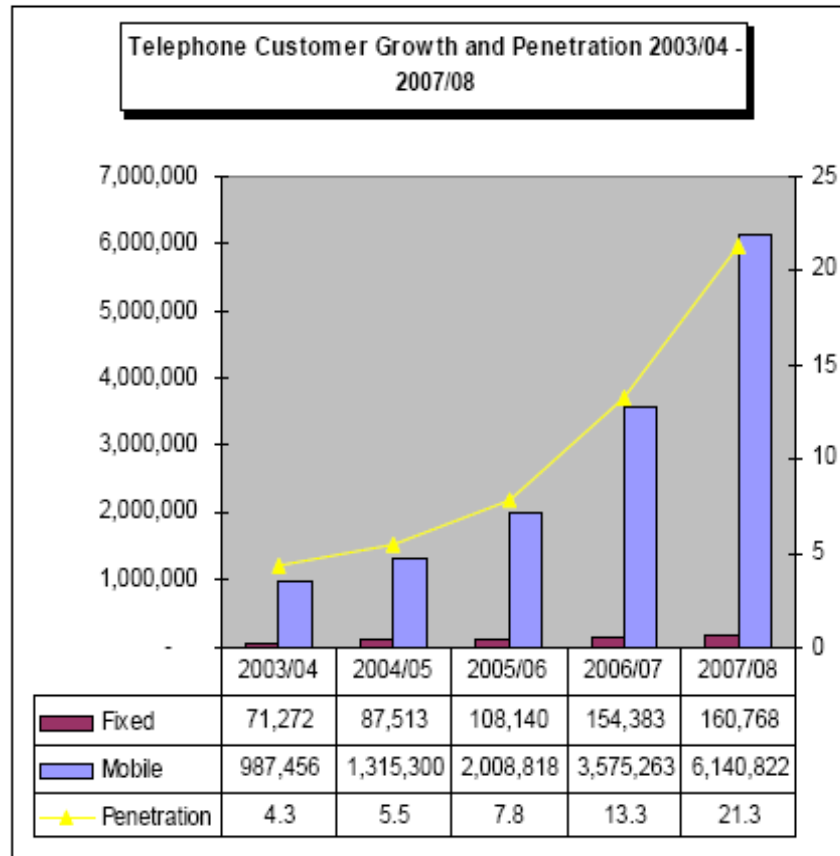


ICTs for participatory Local development: Exploring a Systemic Approach

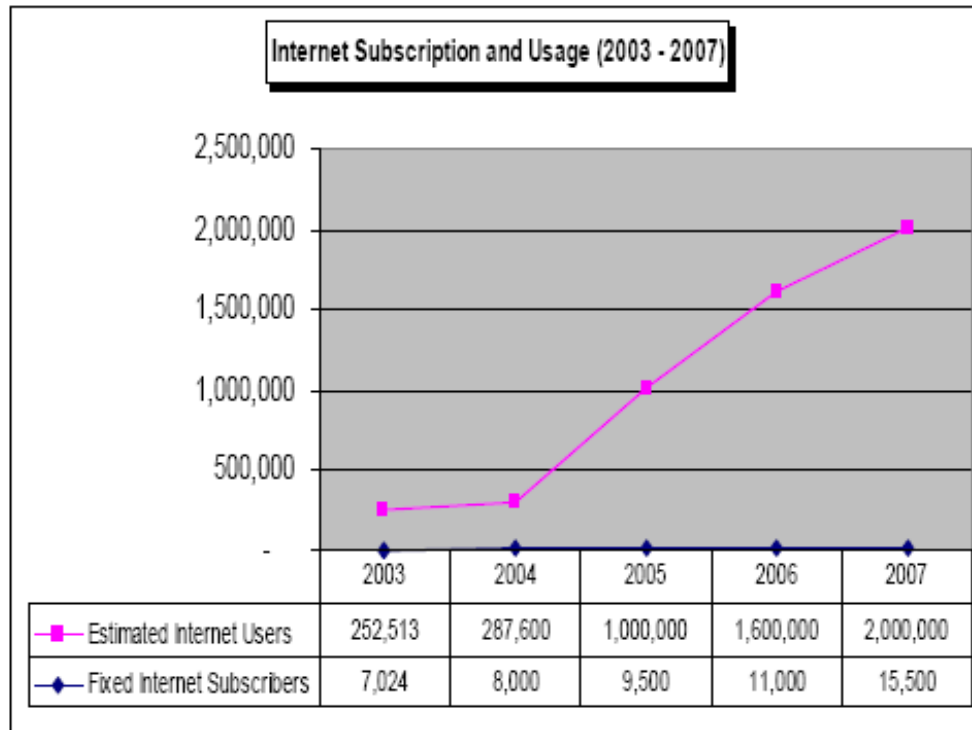
Uganda Country Overview and Case Studies

Wairagala Wakabi
wakabi@cipesa.org

Telephone Customer Growth and penetration 2003/04 – 2007/08



Growth in internet access in Uganda



Uganda basic facts

- ❑ Low per capita income USD300
- ❑ Liberalised telecoms 4 mobile operators, 22% teledensity
- ❑ Wireless driving internet access but

The Universal Access Fund

- ❑ Among first in Africa, formed in 2001
- ❑ Funds phone booths, internet cafes, internet Points of Presence, information and communications technology (ICT) training centres, and websites for districts
- ❑ Does not fund broadband

ICTs IN GOVERNMENT

- ❑ New ministry spearheading ICT use in government
- ❑ Most programmes stand-alone
- ❑ Little e services, little public service info on government websites
- ❑ Drawbacks to e in government: Limited ICT infrastructure, energy shortages, low affordability, limited awareness, and inadequate human resource capacity for ICT application.

The decentralization programme

- ❑ Implemented since 1987, aims to enhance citizen participation in decision-making and service delivery process. Central government divested itself of some powers and responsibilities of administration, planning and finance
- ❑ This setting makes it prudent to use ICTs to enhance the speed of delivery, effectiveness and reach of government information and services.
- ❑ Critics say central government has been unable to overcome resistance to decentralisation, and that it left central government with limited powers to intervene in bad management
- ❑ Monitoring, checks and balances dependent on central government capacity, which is often lacking. Lack of effective information system management, absence of local level data hinder effective service delivery. Little capacity at either the local or central level to submit and systematically use quarterly budget reports.

The Apac e-Society programme

- ❑ Aim: improve service delivery and community participation by promoting collaboration between civil society, private sector and local government through use of databases to share development plans, budgets, work plans, & provide development info to communities.
- ❑ Has improved communication between district council, sub-counties and CSOs through use of community information centres, internet and radio.
- ❑ Target groups are alerted to services offered by the project through flyers, radio announcements and meetings; ICT centres also used for career guidance, ICT training, livelihood skills training.
- ❑ Well equipped open access e-Library of local government plans and budgets has been established; NGO plans and budgets being added.
- ❑ A publicly accessible Financial Management Information System shows inflow of government, donor grants and tax income. There's a District Monitoring Information System that shows progress of development projects in the district.
- ❑ Efforts made to repackage some content for consumption by the semi-literate, particularly by use of community radio programmes. Sensitization and community mobilisation to use and access CICs is on-going.

Collecting and Exchange of Local Agriculture Content (CELAC)

- ❑ CELAC aims to improve rural farmers livelihoods and food security through engaging farmers, government and civil society in knowledge sharing and information management of mainly local content using ICTs.
- ❑ Operates in all regions of Uganda and enables collection of indigenous farming knowledge and its dissemination among diverse farming communities by employing various ICTs.
- ❑ Village Knowledge Brokers (VKBs) ensure local communities/ farmers involved. These are information vanguards of village they represent. Knowledge is processed and repackaged by CELAC then disseminated back to the VKBs who pass it on to members in respective villages.
- ❑ Employs knowledge sharing forums, SMS, radio, DVDs and radio cassettes,, brochures and website (www.celac.or.ug) to disseminate info.

Case Study DistrictNet

Has since 2002 supported decentralisation programmes in 4 districts through ICT use. Run by local govt ministry and civil society groups, supported by IICD and DfID

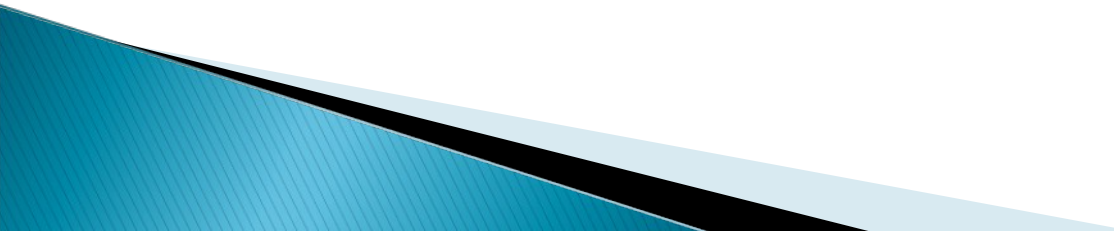
Designed to as an egov programme at local level aimed to engender efficient, transparent and accountable local governance. It aimed to improve internal information flows, and promote transparency.

Has improved communication between districts and lower local govts, enhanced cross-sector communication in districts, enabled better record keeping, data processing for needs assessment, planning, budgeting, accountability and transparency, as well as improved access to ICT skills in local governments.

What DistrictNet seeks to address:

- ▶ Lack of convenient mode of communication between the different sectors/directors in the districts local governments;
- ▶ Cumbersome, paper-based record keeping of a variety of data and information, including council minutes and statistical data
- ▶ Financial records maintained and processed manually, often inaccurate and not up to date, leading to low transparency and accountability;
- ▶ Limited access to information on government policies, planned and ongoing projects/programmes by government, donors and NGOs, and general development information on sectors such as agriculture and health
- ▶ *Note:* Uganda is a strongly decentralised country, which is a “disadvantage” for implementing e-services in that most governmental information services (e.g. business licenses, tax forms and information) are already available to citizens in hard-copy form at the sub-county level.

Lessons / recommendations

- ▶ **Local buy-in and participation:** Connecting citizens to programme is a big challenge. Programmes that meaningfully involve local communities in conceptualisation, set up, and management, have higher chances of acceptability within the community.
 - ▶ It is also useful to establish service and information needs of the community to be served, and to develop the project with the local community so that there is a sense of ownership.
 - ▶ **Support community development programmes goals:** use of ICT for development and for PR works better if harmonised with and embedded in other devt programmes that seek to reduce poverty as they're specifically targeted to some of the critical development sectors in rural areas, such as agriculture, education and health.
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- ▶ **Build technological capacity, apply appropriate technologies:** CELAC has community knowledge brokers who receive SMS weekly on 'how to' guides in their local languages and pass it on. Mobile works coz it's ubiquitous; email would struggle.
- ▶ Combine technologies/mediums where possible. Use of community radio a complement: creates awareness, enables participation. Posters too.
- ▶ Educate beneficiaries on value of prog: However much we have connectivity when people do not realise value of using ICT, the *issues* will persist
- ▶ **Needs assessment:** Ascertaining the needs of the beneficiary communities is crucial. There was evidence to suggest that the profiled projects (esp CELAC, e-APAC) involved the communities in determining their needs were.
- ▶ Development of **applications and content** needed to support these projects. Apac e-Society and CELAC have components of developing local content, including local language content.
- ▶ That energy thing...
- ▶ And then, well - yes! - infrastructure

THANK YOU!