Report on Open Governance Network building in Uganda[1]

Association for Progressive Communications (APC) and The Collaboration on international ICT policy in East and Southern Africa (CIPESA)

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Introduction

Between January and April 2012, CIPESA conducted two studies on open governance in Uganda under the APC's Action Research Network supported by the International Development Research Centre of Canada (IDRC). The Uganda Open Government Data (OGD) readiness study primarily engaged senior government officials, mid-level public servants, members of the media, academia, private sector, and donor agencies, and assessed the status of Uganda on a number of issues that would affect the ability to undertake an OGD programme. The second study captured citizens' perceptions on open governance in Uganda, with a view to making prospective open governance initiatives in the country responsive to the needs and aspirations of citizens.

The citizens' perceptions assessment made clear indications of what departments and ministries should open up their data as a priority, and also identified various forms of data that citizens need to have greater access to. In addition, it showed that the level of openness in government departments is severely low, even though there are laws that call for openness, and despite having clear examples of how increased openness results into public good. On the other hand, the OGD readiness study showed that there was a critical mass to drive demand and usage of open government data, to conduct awareness-raising on the need for increased openness by government and for citizens to use this data.

These studies were intended to form the basis of awareness-raising, advocacy and network building activities. Between January and April 2012, when this research was carried out, some initial work network building was undertaken, albeit limited by time and logistics.

But because of the brief period over which this work was carried out, and the logistical limitations, it was not possible to do much in terms of awareness raising and advocacy. Nonetheless, the work already done should serve as a springboard for future possible activities to advocate for open governance, to build a network of actors that steadily raise awareness and advocate for Open governance, and who make use of open government data. The network building should also reinforce advocacy work to make government open up data to the public.

Advocacy and awareness raising

Meetings and interviews: During the open government data readiness assessment, CIPESA researchers spoke to more than 30 individuals, of whom more than 20 gave in-depth interviews to the researchers (see annex 1). Prior to every interview meeting, respondents were sent reading materials and a list of questions on open governance. This exercise was meant to inform the stakeholders about the relevance of open governance in Uganda, hence increasing the quality of the responses gathered from them. Apart from informing them about open governance, the exercise was part of our advocacy campaign targeted at the key government and non-government officials interviewed. It was meant to bring to their attention the importance of open governance in Uganda as well as pointing them to relevant case studies where open governance had been practiced and why the Uganda government needed to open up its data to the public. The individuals we spoke to were drawn from the top executive level of government, the mid level of public service, academia, the media, and applications developers, among others.

Besides the officials interviewed for the readiness assessment, CIPESA also reached out to several individuals to take part in the survey of citizens' perceptions on open governance. The survey attracted 68 respondents, with 71 per cent male and 29 per cent female. All respondents were 18 years and above, with the majority (54 per cent) between 25 and 34 years of age. But besides those who responded the survey, we reached out to many more individuals about the work we were doing and the need for Uganda to embrace open governance.

Use of mailing lists and social media: Awareness about open governance was created through distributing our study instruments on a number of mailing lists in Uganda. Although the main objective of this exercise was to gather responses from citizens' perceptions on open governance in Uganda, the urgency for the need of open governance was instigated among the members of these lists. The two lists used are I-Network run by the knowledge-sharing organisation Information Network Uganda and WIU-Forum which is run Women of Uganda Network. These two are the main ICT mailing lists in Uganda, and together have more than 1,000 members – some of them in Kenya and Tanzania. Additionally, the survey instrument was shared on twitter, CIPESA Facebook page[2] and selected Facebook pages[3] that attract Ugandan citizens. Further, the findings of these exercises will be shared among all interviewed personnel and organisations and on mailing lists like the I-Network and the WSIS Forum - Uganda as a way of awareness creation.

Dissemination and advocacy for OGD: On June 28, 2012 CIPESA in partnership with the Women of Uganda Network organised a one day conference on Promoting Good Governance and Accountability through use of ICTs in Uganda. The main objectives of this event were to share research findings from the two organisations' projects and discuss strategies on promoting governance and accountability in Uganda through use of ICTs and discuss strategies. CIPESA presented its findings from the Open Government Data study. The event attracted various stakeholders including local government officials and civil society organizations, media and academia. Over 60 copies of the report were disseminated to participants.

At the closing of the event, an official from the Ministry of Local Government reiterated that government efforts were underway to increase openness. He urged NGOs and donor organizations not only to advocate for OGD in public affairs but to contribute to the open data culture by opening up information on ongoing projects to the government and beneficiaries.

Network development: As part of the wider advocacy campaign, CIPESA has identified key organisations that would form the wider Uganda OGD network. These are organisations that were approached during the research either to offer interviews or as part of information sharing and are involved in lobbying for transparency and accountability in government service delivery. A number of them have interest or capacity to re-use open data. The network's mission is to introduce Uganda government to civil society groups; private companies with experience, skill sets, and technology that can assist in conceptualising and implementing best practice in open governance. This network will comprise both a learning community and a Community of Practice, with systematic interaction between groups allowing for knowledge exchanges and further network cooperation in advocacy and awareness creation. Many of these organisations (listed below) took

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[2] CIPESA Facebook page: www.facebook.com/pages/Collaboration-on-International-ICT-Policy-in-East-and-Southern-Africa/198777903496484,

[3] Sanyu Breakfast Facebook page; https://www.facebook.com/groups/sanyfmbreakfast/, Activists for Change Facebook page; www.facebook.com/groups/activists4change/, ICT for Democracy Network; www.facebook.com/pages/ICT-for-Democracy-in-East-Africa/156798324412061

part in the studies conducted by CIPESA. Many of these organisations may not need open government data but are involved in lobbying for increased transparency in government.

Subsequent to the dissemination of the study findings, the study has served as a springboard for advocacy campaigns and raised awareness amongst a wide range of stakeholders both local and international. CIPESA has been approached by three organisations – Development Initiatives and iHub Research both based in Nairobi Kenya and Development Research and Training Uganda for collaborative OGD activities in the region. For Development Initiatives[4]; and Development Research and Training[5], discussions are underway between these two organisations and CIPESA to devise a programme area on open data and the role it can play in poverty eradication Africa. Besides, iHub Research which is a regional partner in the ICT4Democracy network – of which CIPESA is also a member are due to embark on a Kenya Open Data research programme at local government level. They have sought CIPESA's support and collaboration in ensuring that open data is promoted not only nationally but for the entire East African region.

Additionally, in early June, CIPESA participated in an eGovernance Research Collaborators meeting organised by IdeaCorpPhil, an ICT4Development organisation based in the Philippines. The meeting brought together researchers based in India, Bangladesh, Brazil and South Africa to discuss a research prospectus on 'Collective Action and Open Governance in a Network Society.' The refined research prospectus is to be presented to the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) for funding consideration under its Networks, Democracy and Governance programme. IdeaCorpPhil has recently concluded an Asia-wide research on eGovernance (www.PANeGOV.net) funded by IDRC.

To further the OGD cause and in relation to CIPESA's wider ICT for Democracy process work, CIPESA has been awarded a grant by Indigo Trust to implement a project on monitoring service delivery in Northern Uganda. The project will be based on data available on the government's Peace, Recovery and Development Programme (PRDP).[6] The grant will compliment CIPESA's iParticipate project activities in Northern Uganda. A multimedia Ushahidi-style platform will be set up and populated with information on health programmes being implemented in the Amuru, Gulu and Pader districts to enable citizens monitor health service delivery.[7]

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[4] www.devinit.org/

[5] www.drt-ug.org/

[6] In October 2007, the Uganda Government launched the Peace, Recovery and Development Programme (PRDP), which is partly a response to immediate post-conflict-specific issues of Northern Uganda, but also aims to eliminate the great discrepancies in the development of the northern region relative to the southern part of the country. However, there is a lack of platforms for engagement of communities in northern Uganda so they can monitor and put to task those with the responsibility of ensuring they get basic social services needs under PRDR and other programmes run by the central and local governments.
[7] indigotrust.wordpress.com/2012/06/21/grant-awarded-to-cipesa/

Profiles of organisations interviewed

Organisation	Bio	URL
Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE)	Registered as a NGO in 1999, ACODE through evidence-based policy research and analysis, creates knowledge to support pro-people national and regional development policies and expand the range of policy options available to confront challenging and controversial public policy problems. Through advocacy and capacity building, it empowers people to shape public policies so that they are just and equitable to support sustainable development.	www.acode-u.org/
Action for Development (ACFODE)	Since its inception 25 years ago, ACFODE has programs advocating for women's effective participation in politics and decision making, empowering local council women leaders at district level to engage in multi-party politics as well as monitoring institutions mandated to promote democracy and good governance from a gender perspective	www.acfode.org
Africa Innovations Institute	AfrII's mission is to undertake innovative research and consulting services that transform the lives and income of smallholder farmers while ensuring food security and environmental sustainability.	www.afrii.org
African Youth Development Link	The African Youth Development Link seeks to involve youth in development policy as a means to eliminating poverty and achieving the millennium development goals (MDGs). It has youth-led community development forums across Uganda on human rights and good governance.	www.aydl.org
Centre for Women in Governance (CEWIGO)	Established in 2006, CEWIGO works at national and district level to promote effective and inclusive participation of sexes in decision making.	www.cewigo.org
Development Network of Indigenous Voluntary Associations (DENIVA)	DENIVA is a Ugandan network of Non-Governmental and Community Based Organisations providing a platform for collective action and a voice to voluntary local associations to advocate for creation of more opportunities for people and CSO participation in the development of Uganda.	www.deniva.org
e-Health Society of Uganda	Established in 2010, eHSU promotes the use of ICTs for health and development in Uganda toward improved health and quality of living especially in the hard to reach communities of the country.	www.ehealthsociety.ug
The Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI)	FHRI is an independent, non-governmental, human rights advocacy organisation established in December 1991. It seeks to remove impediments to democratic development and meaningful enjoyment of the fundamental freedoms.	www.fhri.or.ug/
Forum for Women in Democracy	FOWODE provides women in leadership positions a platform to learn, network, share experiences and	www.fowode.org

(FOWODE)	advocate for gender equality in the decision making process.	
Grameen Foundation/AppLab	Grameen Foundation uses microfinance and innovative technology to fight global poverty and bring opportunities to the world's poorest people. Their applications laboratory (AppLab) in Uganda works to test, develop and scale mobile applications that improve livelihoods of underserved communities.	www.grameenfoundation.org
Kibo Foundation	The Kibo Foundation works to alleviate poverty/economic empowerment in East Africa through promoting self-sustaining initiatives in education using technology and focusing on the youth.	www.kibofoundation.com
National Association of Women Organisations in Uganda	An umbrella organisation for women organisations in Uganda	www.nawouganda.org
Refugee Law Project, School of Law – Makerere University	The RLP seeks to ensure fundamental human rights of all asylum seekers, refugees and internally displaced persons in Uganda.	www.refugeelawproject.org
Road Barrier Women Development Foundation (RWODF)	RWODF is a social livelihood and economic empowerment organisation that trains women in social economic development and human rights.	
Text to Change	Since 2008, Text to Change has used mobile phone technology to send out and receive information (SMS, MMS and other data campaigns) to educate, engage and empower people on wellbeing related issues.	www.texttochange.org
Transparency International Uganda	Transparency International (TI) Uganda established in 1993, has been involved in mobilising the citizenry and other civic groups to engage in the anti-corruption agenda. Critical to this was the formation of the Anti-Corruption Coalition Uganda (AACU). In 2006, the organisation formed and spearheaded the Coalition for Election Finance Monitoring (CEFIM), which monitored campaign financing and abuse of public resources by incumbent candidates.	www.tiuganda.org
Twaweza	Twaweza is an independent East African initiative established in 2009 in Tanzania. It derives its name from the Swahili term 'We can make it happen'. Twaweza's approach and its policies, systems and procedures reflect a set of values around effective and transparent governance.	www.twaweza.org
Uganda Debt Network (UDN)	UDN was established in 1996 to promote the full participation of poor people in influencing poverty-focused policies, monitoring the utilisation of public resources and ensuring that borrowed and national resources are prudently managed in an open, accountable and transparent manner.	www.udn.or.ug
Uganda National NGO Forum	A platform for knowledge and experience sharing for NGOs to influence governance.	www.ngoforum.or.ug

War Child Holland	War Child Holland works to empower children and young people in war-affected areas through community based programs.	www.warchildholland.org
Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET)	WOUGNET was started in 2000 by several women's organisations in Uganda to develop the use of ICT among women as tools to share information and address gender issues collectively.	www.wougnet.org
Donors		
British Council		www.britishcouncil.org
UK Department for International Development (DFiD)		www.dfid.gov.uk
European Union Uganda		www.deluga.ec.europa.eu
International Monetary Fund (IMF)		www.imf.org
Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency		www.sida.se
UNDP (Millennium Villages Project)	The UNDP supports Uganda to achieve the millennium development goals through villages that demonstrate what it take to meet the eight millennium development goals in rural areas.	www.ugandavillageproject.org
UNICEF (Tech4Development)	UNICEF works for children's, mothers' and youth rights, their survival, development and protection across the globe.	www.unicef.org
USAID		www.usaid.org
World Bank		www.worldbank.org
Media Organisations		
East African Business Week	Print media	www.busiweek.com
The East African		www.theeastafrican.co.ke
The Observer Media LTD		www.observer.ug
African Centre for Media Excellence (ACME)	ACME is a Kampala-based independent, non-governmental, organisation working with African journalists to achieve excellence as well as improving journalism and mass communication in Africa.	www.acme-ug.org
Africa Freedom Information Centre (AFIC)	AFIC is a pan-African NGO and resource centre that promotes the right of access to information through research, regional advocacy, facilitating information-	www.africafoicentre.org

	sharing and capacity building.	
The Northern Uganda Media Club (NUMEC)	NUMEC is an independent organisation formed by journalists and media professionals working in conflict-affected northern Uganda. It was conceived to revitalise the media terrain within the post-conflict northern Uganda region and to help catalyse the reconciliation, resettlement and recovery.	www.numec.ug
PC Tech Magazine	PC Tech Magazine is a technology magazine published monthly.	www.pctechmagazine.com
Technology Organisations		
Digital Solutions	A software development company	www.dsmagic.com
DMark Mobile	A wireless application service provider and content development house offering value added services to telecommunications subscribers in Uganda.	www.dmarkmobile.com
Enterprise Technologies / ICT Creatives	ICT Creatives offers technology consulting services and solutions.	www.ictcreatives.com
Google Uganda	Internet and Software corporation	www.google.com
HiveColab	The Hive is a community-owned, co-working space for young tech entrepreneurs with projects that they're looking to get off the ground. It aims to help nurture new tech start-ups, facilitate networking, stimulate entrepreneurial spirit and contribute to economic growth of the community.	
Mobile Monday Kampala	Formed in 2010, Mobile Monday Kampala (MoMoKla) is a community of mobile industry visionaries, developers and influentials fostering cooperation and cross-border business development through virtual and live networking events to share ideas, best practices and trends from global markets.	www.momokla.ug
Mountbatten	Founded in 2005, Mountbatten is an ICT and organisational development firm	www.mountbatten.net
SMS Media	A value added SMS services provider in East and Central Africa	www.smsmedia.info
Yo! Uganda	An ICT solutions development company	www.yo.co.ug
Mailing lists		
I-Network Uganda	The I-Network Dgroup is an ICT for Development organisation that doubles as an ICT knowledge sharing platform in Uganda.	www.i-network.or.ug
WSIS Forum– Uganda	The WSIS –Forum Uganda run by the Women of Uganda Network is a workspace for discussion on Gender & ICT issues in Uganda, in relation to the World Summit on the Information Society - WSIS. The WIU forum began in 2005 as an online forum discussion in preparation for	www.pamoya.com/node/10

	the WSIS. It has stayed on to become a place for discussion and information sharing on issues related to Gender and ICTs in Uganda.	
Grass roots based organisations		
Busoga Rural Open Source and Development Initiative (BROSDI)	BROSDI is a grassroots based centre for working to improve livelihoods through agricultural, health and education programs.	www.brosdi.or.ug
Kabarole Research and Resource Centre (KRC)	Under its Human Rights and Good governance thematic areas, KRC which is based in western Uganda focuses on civil education, accountability, rights promotion, empowerment and governance issues.	www.krc.or.ug
Rwenzori Association of Parents of Children with Disabilities (RAPCD)	Founded in 2004, RAPCD is a organisation through which parents/guardians and families of children with disabilities create a unified voice for the disabled in Kasese district. The organisation sensitises the community on the rights and opportunities of the disabled.	www.betterplace.org/en/organisations/rapcd
Rwenzori Information Centres Network (RIC-NET)	RIC-NET is a network of information centres in the Rwenzori region of western Uganda.	www.ricnet.info
Regional networks		
ICT4Democracy in East Africa	ICT4Democracy in East Africa is a network of organisations collaboratively leveraging on ICT to enhance communication and the right to freedom of expression, as well as the right to seek, receive and impart information to enhance civic empowerment and improve governance. The network is active in Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya.	www.ict4democracy.org

Annex 1: Respondents to the Uganda OGD Readiness Study

Top layer: this comprises organisations/departments/individuals responsible for policy formulation and decision making at the political/administrative level for the government.

-John Muwanga, Auditor General, Office of Auditor General

-James Saaka, Executive Director, NITA-U

The Auditor-General is an independent authority whose powers, duties and responsibilities derive from the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, the Public Finance and Accountability Act 2003 and the Local Authorities Act 1997. Its vision is "to audit and report to parliament and thereby making an effective contribution to improving public accountability and value for money spent."

Middle layer: Skilled government bureaucrats/agency heads

-Julius Torach, Director e-Governance, NITA-U

-Mukooyo Humphrey, Acting Assistant Commissioner, Communication and Information Management; Ministry of Education and Sports.

-Sam Muhanguzi, eGovernment Manager, NITA-U

-Caroline Kyozira, Principal Biostatistician, Ministry of Health

The National Information Technology Authority – Uganda (NITA-U) was established under the NITA –U Act 2009, to coordinate and regulate information technology services in both government and the nation. NITA –U is under the general supervision of the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology.[8]

The civil society layer: The civil society/academia/donor agencies/media/ICT companies/entrepreneurs

Academia

Drake Mirembe, Head, Center for Innovations and Professional Skills Development, Makerere College of Computing and Information Science, Makerere University

Dr. John Quinn, senior Lecturer/Researcher, Makerere University College of Computing and Information Science

Donor

-Sean Blaschke, UNICEF

-Edward Anderson, ICT Policy Specialist, World Bank Uganda

Media/civil society

-Gilbert Sendugwa, Coordinator, Africa Freedom of Information Centre[9]:

-Grace Natabaalo, Program Associate, Africa Centre for Media Excellence (ACME).

-Mark Brough, Research Officer, Publish What You Fund

Africa Freedom of Information Centre is a pan-African NGO and resource centre that promotes the right of access to Information through comparative research, coordinating regional advocacy, facilitating information–sharing and capacity building. Meanwhile, ACME is a Kampala-based non-profit organisation that helps journalists to seek and achieve excellence and improve journalism.

Private sector

-Daniel Stern, Director, Hive Colab

-Ali Ndiwalana, Research Lead, Grameen Foundation/ AppLab Uganda

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[8] NITA- U: www.nita.go.ug
[9] Africa Freedom of Information Centre: www.africafoicenter.org

-Reineir Battenberg, Director, Mountbatten

ICT entrepreneurs

-Patrick Adengo, Business Technology Consultant, Stalworth Group

-James Wire Lungabho, ICT Consultant, Linux Solutions

Kenya Open Data Initiative: Besides the above Uganda-based stakeholders, this study also benefited from conversations with Linet Kwamboka, the lead on the Open Data initiative at the Kenya ICT Board. Kenya is a leader in Africa as far as OGD is concerned, and being a neighbour to Uganda with nearly a year's experience of implementing OGD, it was only natural that Uganda should learn from Kenya in rolling out OGD.