THE EAST AFRICAN

TELECENTRE LEADERS FORUM

October 5-7 2006

Organised by

Supported By

Funded by

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11/1/2006
**Introduction**

The telecentre movement is steadily gaining momentum across the East African region. In spite of this vibrancy, there are many telecentres on the brink of closedown while others are very successful either socially, fiscally or both. In the ever-changing world of information, knowledge sharing is the best weapon to success. It is upon this backdrop that UgaBYTES Initiative organized the East African telecentre leaders forum from October 5-7 2006 to allow telecentre managers, enthusiasts, researchers, practitioners and policy makers to meet, share and learn from each other’s experiences. The forum was organized under the broader telecentre.org framework of facilitating online support services in the East African region. The purpose of the forum was to:

- Find alternative ways of integrating our telecentres with other stakeholders within the communities.
- Discuss ways of building telecentre networks and how they can be used to improve telecentres.
- Explore learning and sharing platforms for telecentre practitioners in the sub region
- Commonly learn how the online support centre can be better utilized.
- Explore the opportunity for investing in content collection, documentation and dissemination processes

The forum attracted participation from over 90 telecentre practitioners from Rwanda, Kenya, Burundi, Tanzania, Canada, USA and the UK.

**Methodology**

The forum was guided by broad questions, which were supported by practitioner stories, decisions points and experiences. Participants often broke into groups to discuss the questions. Using the market place, world cafe and speed geek methodology, every participant was either a learner or teacher at one point.

**DAY ONE: Activities**

**Activity 1: Workshop Expectations**

Participants wrote their expectations for the forum on small square cards, which they mask-tapped around the room. Some of their sentiments have been captured below:
To learn how to establish a telecentre network and how they can be used to make telecentres succeed
To see how different issues of sustainability can be handled in our telecentres
Networking: identifying and linking with potential partners and devise future collaboration means
Sustainability: learn some solutions to the challenges we face as telecentre managers, learning how to sustain our telecentre amidst high competition, Learn how to sustain telecentres after the pilot phase
Online support centre: Learn how best the online support centre can boost telecentre activities, learn online troubleshooting skills
Hear and share successful stories from other telecentres in the region, best practices, types of projects, delivery methods for ICT among others and learn best managerial skills from successful telecentre managers, how best we can sustain connectivity
Content development: Learn how best we can develop content that can meet our community needs
How open access can be applied in the telecentre model
Follow up on the May 15 2006 East African Telecentre Leaders Forum
Learn from telecentre.org and usage of the wireless communication

Activity 2: Why telecentre networks?
Mark Surman, managing director of telecentre.org noted that ICTs if used with a purpose could be very meaningful to the world. Since the telecentre movement started about 20 years ago, people have only been loosely connected. telecentre.org aims at networking and building stronger connections in the telecentre movement with the hope that a lot can be reaped from such synergies. In this activity, Mark asked three fundamental questions. Through a continuum scale, telecentre practitioners and stakeholders either; strongly agreed, agreed, were neutral, not sure or strongly disagreed. He asked participants standing at whatever level along the scale to explain why they chose their position and the outcome was interesting. The sentiments were summarized in the table below: -

**Question 1. A telecentre is the most important tool for development**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Telecentres provide important information to the community</td>
<td>Most rural people can’t use computers which are the most important tools in a telecentre thus reducing their importance</td>
<td>Development involves many things including infrastructure etc all of which work with telecentres in development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telecentres are very close to the people. They help to solve the core problems of our communities</td>
<td>Infrastructure and connectivity are still a big challenge</td>
<td>Sustainability is still a big challenge. Thus reducing their importance visa vie development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11/1/2006
You can access all types of information; social, education, agriculture, health etc at a telecentre

Social development involves a lot more complex issues i.e connectivity, roads etc than just telecentres alone. Though they work hand in hand in development

MOST is an extreme word. Whereas it is important, it is not the most important as other factors are essential in development

The environment must be enabled so people can access and use telecentres better. If such matters are not looked upon, it reduces its impact in development

Helps different people share information easily

The environment must be enabled so people can access and use telecentres better. If such matters are not looked upon, it reduces its impact in development

They are helping to bridge the digital gap since the world is becoming a digital village

The environment must be enabled so people can access and use telecentres better. If such matters are not looked upon, it reduces its impact in development

Communication is very important in any society. Telecentres are important tools in communication which make them important

The environment must be enabled so people can access and use telecentres better. If such matters are not looked upon, it reduces its impact in development

Information is very important in development and that is what telecentres are about

The environment must be enabled so people can access and use telecentres better. If such matters are not looked upon, it reduces its impact in development

Qn 2. Good connectivity is essential for successful telecentres

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connectivity adds information and eases research about topical issues</td>
<td><strong>ABSOLUTELY</strong> is an extreme word. Connectivity is important but not <strong>ABSOLUTELY</strong>. Other factors like having relevant content play a big role in the success of telecentres</td>
<td>We shouldn’t rely on internet alone. There must be mixed models in the telecentre</td>
<td>Connectivity may not be good but one can pass information through other ways other than through the internet e.g. through the Open Knowledge Network etc</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Connectivity | A lot can still be | Even without internet |

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may be beyond internet alone. It includes social connectivity etc which are all very important. done without connectivity. Such as offline sharing and networking through face to face connectivity, you can still have offline networking and sustain a telecentre.

There are so many issues that help in the success of telecentre which are covered through online platforms. I believe scarcity is the mother of inventions. So without connectivity, other issues play a big role in the success of telecentres.

Social connectivity is very important if telecentres are to succeed not Internet alone.

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**Qn 3. Our Telecentre Is Thriving**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whereas we face many challenges, we look at the positive side instead. Through our school based telecentre, the students reach the community and teach them about what they learnt from the telecentre.</td>
<td>We have been able to impact peoples lives through the trainings we undertake despite the challenges.</td>
<td>There are no adequate resources in terms of manpower though we continue to give out information on some community issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Though we have very little resources, I can say the telecentre is thriving because it has impacted many people through the computer training</td>
<td></td>
<td>Internet has been decentralized. So we face a stiff competition from internet cafes etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At my telecentre in FADECO, we have just introduced the Wi-Fi connection. We have</td>
<td></td>
<td>Location is affecting its performance. My telecentre is located at the sub county.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11/1/2006
been able to connect near by schools of over 1000 students. headquarters, which are also home to the county court, and police headquarters. People are scared of coming here lest they break the law. It is affecting its performance greatly.

We lack technical and skilled labour to do most of the programs we would wish to undertake in the telecentre

War. My telecentre is located in Northern Uganda, which is a war torn area. People are preoccupied with running up and down for their dear lives

Activity 3: World Café: conversations about key telecentre issues

Participants broke into small groups to discuss some of the fundamental issues in the telecentre movement. Using the world café methodology, which was guided by six questions, participants walked through the six groups giving them an opportunity to discuss or learn their experiences about all the questions. The outcome of the sessions have been summarized below:

Qn 1: Why Is A Telecentre Important?

A telecentre was defined as a one-stop centre for information in the community. Some of the answers that came through include;

1. Links community to information through technology.
2. Acts as a library to the community and schools therein through the book centers.
3. Is a community voice especially through the community radio
4. The information acquired is used to empower people for example the business community, prices for farmers etc. People can make informed decisions
5. Is a source of entertainment
6. Is a tool for development
7. Platform for the development of content for local communities especially where the content is translated into the indigenous languages
8. Is a platform for advocacy especially for government programs for example elections, immunization campaigns etc.
9. Is a magnet for development by acting as a source for other services for example electricity, health etc
10. It’s an access point
11. Is a dissemination point for different materials for example newspapers
12. Helps to bridge the digital divide

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13. Place for creating partnerships and networking
14. Voice for the underprivileged and the vulnerable people in society
15. Is a learning and experimental place
16. Source of employment, entertainment and income to community members
17. Training centre; training can range from ICT skills training to demonstration farms for farmers

Qn. 2: Who Are The Stakeholders? How Do We Engage Them?

Stakeholders are people who directly or indirectly benefit and/or affect the running of telecentres. They include government, NGOs and CBOs within the community, users, community members, donors, telecentre staff, interns and management committee members, knowledge owners extension workers for example agricultural officers and politicians.

How do we engage them?
1. Keep communication lines open
2. Inform them about what is taking place in the telecentre
3. Lobby so they can get involved in telecentre work
4. Invite extension workers for talk shows on community radio stations
5. Inform them about what you want from partnering with them. It should be a win-win situation
6. Documentation of information from stakeholders
7. Identify who is who and their roles in community development
8. Asking donors to fund and provide technical support.
9. Asking successful telecentre operators to share their experiences
10. Lobbying and advocacy
11. Encourage the users to contribute content
12. Involving stakeholders in decision making
13. Involving stakeholders in priority setting
14. Engage institutions in research
15. Document what these people do

Qn 3: What Challenges Do Telecentre Managers Face?

Managers are very important in the success of a telecentres. Many of the telecentres are struggling because managers are not exercising their powers to the full potential. This group sought to find the challenges managers face in their work at the telecentres: The feedback of the session is summarized below:

1. Their powers are limited. The management committees don’t give them all the powers they deserve to make decisions in a telecentre.
2. Financial resources are limited
3. They are not skilled enough to run all the issues in the telecentre; accounts keeping etc
4. Political interventions

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5. Ownership question. Who owns the telecentre? Community ownership means everyone owns it. So it's everyone’s business
6. Poor financial motivations or incentives
7. Lack of concentration on telecentre work because of other commitments elsewhere
8. No guidance for telecentre managers in their daily work
9. Complexity of changing needs of the community. Telecentre managers are most times not able to ascertain what the communities needs are exactly.

**Qn 5: What Role Does Content Play In A Successful Telecentre?**

Participants defined content as “relevant and appropriate information packaged and repackaged to suit the needs of the community.” It must be repackaged because community needs are not static. So content needs to be packaged and repackaged to suit the demand shifts. Content may take the form of agricultural, health, poverty alleviation, conflict resolution etc.

There are two types of content; Local/indigenous content – which is content, collected from within the community. Out Sourced content – Content got from outside the community. It may come from subject experts, researchers etc.

**Role of content**
1. Identifying the needs of the community is easy. People tell you when their needs shift. Community needs are never static.
2. Increases the relevance of the telecentre to the community
3. Improves the services offered by the telecentre according to the demand shifts of the community
4. Solves the ownership question as the community finds the telecentre useful and takes it as its own.
5. Increases the popularity of the telecentre within the community and therefore social sustainability may be achieved.
6. Leads to skills development within the community
7. Keeps the community well-informed on the day today issues
8. Increases the financial sustainability since people are always willing to pay for information they find useful.

**Qn 6: What Are The Biggest Sustainability Challenges And Opportunities?**

**Challenges**
1. Irrelevance of services provided
2. Stiff competition from internet cafes
3. Poor management
4. High connectivity rates
5. Poor initial planning through incorrect information from the baseline surveys
6. Poor power supply and lack of grid power in rural areas.
7. Ownership problems especially after the pilot phase. Who owns the telecentre?
8. Political wrangles especially for telecentres owned by the local councils

**Opportunities**
1. There is government support especially in the East African region through the ministry of ICTs.
2. Opportunity to offer value added services even in the midst of stiff competition.
3. Community members are willing to pay for relevant services offered by telecentres.
4. Communities members should be taught basic troubleshooting procedures.
5. Donors should continue offering some support even after the expiry of the pilot stage.

**Activity 4: Telecentre Models In East Africa: Grassroots Experiences**

Using the speed geek methodology, participants heard from different telecentre managers about the different models in the East African region.

**Showcase one: Sengerema Telecentre**

Located in Mwanza Tanzania, Sengerema CMC was started in 2001 by the Tanzanian government with help from UNESCO. Initially, its services were computer training, Internet, secretarial services, video shooting among others. In 2003, the telecentre started a community radio. Sengerema has won numerous awards from The American Embassy in Tanzania in recognition for their contribution especially for women emancipation in the country.

**Achievements**
1. Trained over 2500 people including old men in basic computer skills.
2. Offers special services to promote women issues.

**Challenges**
1. Limited manpower to train community people in computer skills.
2. No proper accounts keeping. It’s difficult to know how much the telecentre makes daily or monthly.
5. Unstable and unreliable power with no option for solar power or generator.

**Showcase Two: Slum Information Development and Resource Centre (SIDAREC)**

SIDAREC focuses on helping the slum youth in Nairobi, Kenya. It is strategically located in two slums of Mukuru and Bumwani that have a population of 800,000. The telecentre was established to curb escalating social vices like prostitution and pet theft in the slum.
It began as a youth group in 1996 focusing on theater as a source of employment. It was registered as an NGO in 1997. Most of their activities are coated with an entertainment aspect to create an impact especially among the rural folks. It gives an opportunity to slum youths to more descent employment, and wealth creation through ICTs. SIDAREC is trying to reduce the digital divide in the country by incorporating the ICTs in their programmes. Young people frequently use the computers. SIDAREC’s biggest challenge however is lack of government support. Unlike Uganda and Tanzania, Kenya is yet to come up with a clear ICT policy. Government does not support most ICT initiatives in the country.

Currently, SIDAREC owns a small soundproof recording and playback studio where youths record their music and drama and in turn sell to the public at a small fee. The centre recently acquired its license for a community radio that they hope to start running soon.

**Challenges**

1. The government is reluctant to encourage use of ICTs in Kenya meaning most of the initiatives are not supported.
2. The ever-changing community needs makes content creation and packaging difficult.
3. Lack of technical support
4. It is difficult to incorporate all the community ideas in ICTs since it is a new concept

**Showcase Three: Maraba Vision Telecentre Rwanda**

The telecentre was established in July 2006 as a pilot project between the Maraba coffee cooperative under the umbrella of Abahuzamugambi, a joint team of local aid workers and the three student volunteers from Washington State University (WSU), sponsored by the US development agency USAID. The telecentre is to support the cooperative’s move towards direct customer relationship management using Internet technology. It aims at connecting all coffee sites in Rwanda.

The telecentre management team, consisting of members of the cooperative’s management and of individuals from the local community, offer in their new telecentre operation not only technology services such as Internet browsing and Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) telephony, but also organize film screenings and newspaper sales.

**Challenges**

1. Illiteracy. The telecentre aims at helping farmers in the region but most of them can barely read or write.

**Opportunities**

1. Has a lot of support from the rural community of coffee farmers
2. USAID promised to support the telecentre for six months.
3. The students trained local people to handle the technical issues in the telecentre. And through the use of DeepFreeze technique, all unnecessary information is lost when the computer is restarted, hence pre-emptively solving technical issues.

**Showcase Four: Canadian Physicians for Aid Relief (CPAR)**

CPAR is based in the war-ravaged part of Northern Uganda. It is implementing a three-year project by IDRC to strengthen the productive capacities of youths in war torn areas in Northern Uganda. Currently, the telecentre has five computers, which are connected to Internet.

People are grouped according to different activities; Chicken farming, Livestock farming, Music dance and drama, among others. The telecentre managers get content from the Ministry of health and agriculture, which they in turn distribute, to the various groups. These groups learn from the on hand demonstrations at the telecentre and through demonstration videos.

**Challenges**

1. Location in a war zone means people are preoccupied with saving their lives than accessing information for empowerment.
2. Packaging and repackaging information in the local languages is still a great challenge.

**Showcase Five: Nyamata telecentre**

Nyamata telecentre is located in the heart of Nyamata, a small village situated about 30 km from Kigali, Rwanda. The telecentre provides ICT services such as computer training, Internet services, small business consultancy services and other ICT related services to the population. The telecentre was established in October 2005 by Paul Barera a private entrepreneur through the support of academy for Educational development, a USAID funded project. Initially, the populace did not know what Internet was and what it could do for them. The telecentre has expanded to become one of the leading telecentres in Rwanda. Since the Rwandan Government now provides some input, the telecentre provides services at a subsided rate.

“I started from zero teaching people the importance of Internet and how it could change their lives drastically. There were so many misconceptions and stereotypes. Currently, the number of people who are computer literate is growing. Many people both young and old visit the telecentre daily to read emails, send messages or surf for whatever they need to know,” Paul Barera, manager Nyamata telecentre

**Challenges**

1. High illiteracy levels among the population

**Opportunities**

1. A lot of support from the Rwandan government
Showcase Six: FADECO
In many parts of Africa, efforts to bridge the digital divide seem far-off. But in Tanzania, the Family Alliance for Development Cooperation (FADECO) a local NGO is making this dream a reality. Established in 1993, FADECO addresses community information needs in Karagwe by encouraging sharing of information through ICTs. FADECO aims to alleviate poverty, enhance household food and nutrition security, improve livelihood standards, enhance household incomes, sustainable utilization of the natural resources.

Challenges
1. High bandwidth costs
2. Old computers, P1s, that can not support latest programs which take up much hard disk space & memory
3. Inconsistent power
4. High power bills

Opportunities
1. Distance learning brought close to the community from having Internet
2. Computer training
3. Getting latest market prices for produce, coffee, pineapples, etc
4. Providing computer support other centers in Tanzania

Activity 5: Content And Partnerships For Telecentres
Content is a determinant factor in the success of telecentres. Participants broke into five groups depending on the participating countries, which included Rwanda and Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. Because there were many participants from Uganda, they broke into three groups; two groups from the community multimedia centers and one group from the school based telecentres (SBTs).

Discussion Centre One: Community based organization
Taking an example of a telecentre within the community that is trying to access information for farmers in the rural areas. This group noted that a community-based telecentre could work with Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and other key stakeholders in the agricultural field for example National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO) and National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) for the case of Uganda. They noted that such a telecentre could work with international agencies in terms of funding and other technical support. It could also work with specialized user groups like women, youth groups, within the community. Other people would include Internet Service Providers.

Recommendations
1. Use technocrats in packaging information
2. Government should support telecentres for content development
3. Advocate for open access to information at all levels
4. Promote online services for information access
5. Encourage schools to access information from telecentres

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6. Telecentre networks should help to integrate telecentres within the community

**Discussion Centre Two: Electronic delivery of agricultural content for telecentres; Case study: Nabweru telecentre in Uganda**

This group took the case of Nabweru telecentre in Uganda. Through the support of IDRC they implemented a project on electronic delivery of agricultural content for telecentres. They used local NGOs to disseminate information. They trained information officers who identify key organizations within the community who could help in the development and dissemination of the content to the right end users.

The extension workers like District Veterinary officers, District agricultural officer in the various districts they helped in simplifying the information and in translating it to different languages. They developed CDs, radio cassettes, flyers, and brochures with the information, which they in turn distributed to the end users.

**Challenges:**
Dissemination of the information was difficult, facilitating the extension staff was also another challenge as they asked for allowances that were way above what the telecentres could afford.

**Recommendations**
1. Community members should be involved in content generation.
2. Websites should be developed to upload content from different centres to allow knowledge sharing

**Discussion Centre Three: FADECO- Tanzania**

FADECO an NGO based in Tanzania runs a question an Answer service for local farmers. When a farmer sends a question to FADECO, they in turn send it to Maruku Research centre (the biggest agricultural research centre in the country). If the question needs follow up, FADECO documents whatever the farmer is asking about. It could be a pest or disease. The question can be sent to the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) who in turn send it to subject matter specialists. They can also send the information to the ministry of education. They have networked with a series of agricultural organizations to help them handle farmers’ queries.

**Challenges:**
Agricultural experts ask to be paid before handling farmers questions which discourages farmers from accessing their services.

**Discussion Centre Four: Rwanda, Burundi - Case Study Butare Telecentre**

A telecentre that targets mostly Rwandan youths.

**Challenges:**
Need for storage space for materials got from donors
Poor reading culture amongst the youth. Most of the materials are under utilized.

**Recommendations**
1. Need Internet connectivity
2. Develop a website to upload information regularly
3. Need for government support in dissemination and acquisition of information
4. Need for a national telecentre network for capacity building
5. Research organizations should freely share their information

**Discussion Centre Five: Kenya; Case study: One-stop Telecentre**
One stop telecentre in Nairobi, Kenya targets youths aged between 15-24. They put emphasis on reproductive health. They get information from the ministry of youth affairs, Kenya council of Norway, Cooperative for workers association.

**Challenges:**
There is poor reading culture among the youths rendering most information useless.

**Recommendations**
1. Need a website to upload the information.
2. Need a telecentre network to enable telecentres to share information and other resources
3. Need for Internet connectivity since most youths are interested in reading information online

**Discussion Centre Six: School Based Telecentres- Uganda**
Stakeholders: NGOs, Parents, Ministry of education, Development partners like World Bank and UNICEF, Internet Service Providers and communities around the school, Africa Based Foundation.

**Activity 6: Summary and what’s next?**

**Facilitation and expectations met at the end of day one**
Most participants agreed that their expectations were met but with a few considerations:
1. Not enough time for people to learn during the group sessions
2. Have more time to ask questions
3. Its good as far as participation is concerned. Everyone is a learner at one moment
4. We need to have a timekeeper if we are to cover a lot of worker.

**Lessons Drawn From Day One**
1. Community discussions- participants enjoyed the market place and speed geek systems, as everyone was a facilitator or a learner at one point. Most participants emphasized that it allows various ideas to be heard.

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2. Networking has been ignored yet telecentre managers could do it as it is very important in the success of telecentres.
3. Even telecentres that are not thriving are still important to the community because they are hubs of information.
4. It is possible to create many telecentre networks to enable telecentres to succeed.
5. Telecentres are not for profit development enterprises therefore it is important to continue in operations even when they are not profitable.
6. Such forums are important because they enable us to share information from across the region. What we have learnt today is priceless.
7. Sustainable models of telecentres are coming from within us in the East African region not elsewhere.
8. Bring in new services in telecentres to create income.
9. We lack marketing strategies for our telecentres otherwise they would be sustainable.
10. There are different ways available to make telecentres sustainable. We need to share that knowledge.
11. Integration of more services including computers and internet is very important in telecentres.
12. It is the manager's responsibility and mindset that will help telecentres to thrive.
13. Unskilled managers are the reason most telecentres are failing.
14. Knowledge sharing through any platform is very important in solving telecentre challenges.
15. Diversification of telecentre models can help telecentres thrive. We could include the business model etc.
16. Am amazed at how much sharing goes on in so many different languages.
17. How different services can be a component of telecentre sustainability and I have learnt about telecentre activities in the East African region.
18. Orientation should be done so people know what telecentres are about. It could start with the young people in the community.
19. Whereas we face many challenges in telecentres, we can still work upon them in the quest for sustainability.
20. Networking with Community Based Organisations (CBOs) is very important in the success of telecentres.
21. UgaBYTES should include the government in such initiatives so that our opinions can be heard at a higher level.

11/1/2006
DAY 2: Activities

Activity 1: What Role Do Networks Play In The Telecentre Movement? How Can They Be Bettered?

The different telecentre network champions in the different countries chaired this session. Sulah Ndaula talked about the UgaBYTES Initiative (Uganda), Paul Barera – Rwanda Telecentre Network (Rwanda), Joseph Sekiku (Tanzania) and Chelimo Kenneth (Tanzania). However, Kenya and Tanzania basically identified their leaders as the networks are still in the conceptual stage. Rwanda and Uganda had considerable input, which has been documented below.

Rwanda - Rwanda Telecentre Network (RTN)

The Rwandan efforts are being championed by Paul Barera of Nyamata telecentre. He expects RTN to have at least 200 member telecentres by the end of 2007. Apparently Rwanda Information Technology Authority (RITA) has pledged to start 30 telecentres by the end of next year. Another project Rocket 2020, will soon help in the development of over 100 telecentres to be spread throughout the country as Rwanda is aiming at becoming technology hub. In his discussion, he noted the following as he roles of the Rwanda Telecentre Network

1. Provide Technical support
2. To network telecentres and help them integrate in communities
3. Help telecentres write meaningful proposals
4. Will act as a platform for researchers to collect and disseminate information
5. Help telecentres ensure their sustainability
6. Help in the development of best practices for telecentres
7. Help in the development of relevant content for telecentres

11/1/2006
UGANDA - UgaBYTES Telecentre Network (www.ugabytes.org)
As a telecentre support network in the East African region, UgaBYTES activities have been summarized in the tables below:

**Lobby and Advocacy:**
This is done through
- e-conference
- Telecentre times

**Recommendations**
- Telecentre manager’s problems at telecentre level should be advocated for at higher levels

**Knowledge sharing:**
Under this category the organization uses
- Mailing List
- Quarterly Telecentre Times
- NewsBYTE
- Web blogs
- Directory

**Recommendation:**
- Add Wiki’s and Blogs

**Technical support:**
UgaBYTES offers insight training to telecentres including: Computer maintenance, Networking in addition to offering quarterly visits.

**Issues raised**
- How do we reach far telecentres
- Why not empower telecentre managers
- Are you going beyond Uganda?
- Creation of Server for sharing solutions e.g. anti viruses

**Capacity Building**
It includes training telecentre practitioners in:
- Management, planning and marketing
- Content generation
- Online Support Centre
- Month long e-conference
- On site workshops

**Recommendations**
Documentation of best practices
Develop a template, video, audio etc
Handle Sustainability issues mainly focusing on strategic plans/ business plans (capacity building)

**Operation and Management**
This was an area that participants thought should be included in our activities; it would encompass
- Awareness of telecentre services
- Purchase of equipment
- How can the network reach non connected telecentres
- How will the network be sustained
- Engage in research to establish the needs of the telecentres in new diversity

**Community integration**
CBOs, End users, NGOs, Donor agencies

**Recommendation**
Much time should be taken into this area because it determines many telecentre success issues; including content, sustainability and knowledge

**Activity 2: Knowledge Sharing Platforms**
Knowledge sharing platforms in the telecentre movement are still limited. But even then, those that are available are not optimally utilized. It is from this background that Participants were asked whether sharing platforms like the Mailing lists and Telecentre Times are important. And if so, how can they be bettered? Using a Open Space facilitation, participants were told to stand along the X,Y axis according to their degree of preference following two questions; 1) The Mailing list and Telecentre Times are important platforms in the telecentre movement! 2) I have ideas to improve the mailing list and the Telecentre Times!.

The outcomes of the session have been captured below:

11/1/2006
Qn. 1: Both the mailing list and the Telecentre Times are important

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Telecentre Times: Low Mailing List</th>
<th>High Telecentre Times: High Mailing List</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) I can keep the telecentre times and refer back whenever I wish</td>
<td>1) Since they are both knowledge-sharing platforms, work as perfect substitutes and can complement each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Since we have connectivity problems, the Telecentre Times is a better knowledge-sharing platform for me</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) The pictures show success and failures and also have great stories from other telecentre people on the globe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Easy Reference: I keep it for reference in future since the information does not expire</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Even people who are not connected to the internet can get information from the Telecentre Times.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) I never knew telecentre networks could work. I got the information from the telecentre Times. Now we are establishing a telecentre network in Kenya</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Telecentre Times: Low Mailing List</th>
<th>High Mailing List: Low Telecentre Times</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) I don’t have comprehensive evidence of how each of the two platforms have worked. May be after understanding I can be able to move any of the three other boxes.</td>
<td>1) It is an instant communication channel where I can get response to my challenges or any information I want instantly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) The Telecentre Times being quarterly is not a good source of information. The mailing list is more timely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3) It is faster in sending or receiving information as opposed to a quarterly telecentre Times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4) Distribution of the Telecentre Times is still on a small scale. It means people get information late making the Mailing list better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5) Once you are on the mailing list, you are sure there is someone willing to answer you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6) The Telecentre Times is only in English which means most people are not catered for</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Most practitioners were skewed to either the mailing list and Telecentre Times with two practitioners taking the position of low for the Times and mailing list.

**How can the Telecentre Times be improved?**

1. Publish it monthly or weekly instead of quarterly
2. Translate it into different languages
3. Networks need a soft copy for easy translation into other languages
4. A page must be allocated to different telecentre networks
5. More grassroots stories should be included
6. Include upcoming or changing words, new vocabularies in the telecentre movement
7. Attract adverts to cover the printing costs

11/1/2006
8. Send the draft to different practitioners just before printing

**How can the mailing list be bettered?**

1. Have a footer about how to subscribe to the list for every input that goes to the mailing list
2. Have more thematic discussions in addition to the month long e-conference
3. Expand the list to include more telecentre practitioners
4. Have a central server so that we can upload or for reference in other centers
5. Have an archive for easy reference

**Activity 3: What Is The Online Support Centre? How Does It Work?**

The online support centre is a project of telecentre.org that is implemented by UgaBYTES Initiative. Its purpose is to provide quick and comprehensive information and resource support to telecentre practitioners on issues that affect them everyday.

It links to a rich knowledge base of telecentre practitioners and experts around the world through e-mail, telephone and extensive use of information resources. It is built on open source software; supports open standards like openXML and encourage collaborative knowledge development and sharing across telecentre community

**How it works**

When questions are asked by phone, chat or emailed to expertlist@ugabytes.org, the responsible person at UgaBYTES replies directly to the person especially, if a right answer is available. Otherwise he/she will have to search the database or contact online support teams via e-mail or phone and promise an appropriate response time (not more than 36 hours). Online support teams contacted for backup on a question may respond to the practitioner directly or send response to UgaBYTES. In all cases, would have to copy UgaBYTES who will categorize and post to the database.

The system displays questions in archive in three ways;

**Top 5** – displays according to the most visited

**Most recent** – displays the five most recently posted questions

**Category** – displays questions according to the category. There are four categories;

- Telecentre technical management
- Telecentre resource management
- Telecentre content management
- Telecentre marketing and marketing of telecentre services

**Search feature** – Using this feature, one can find resources using any key word or phrase.

11/1/2006
Activity 6: Way forward and closing remarks

After two intense days of sharing and learning, participants gave their commitment that is believed to be a landmark in mapping the future of the telecentre movement in the sub region. Apart of the out standing commitments included:

1. Development of networks for the region
2. Solicit for support from UgaBYTES in establishing our telecentre network in Kenya
3. I will provide my time in the development of the Rwanda Telecentre Network
4. UgaBYTES and telecentre.org help us in the establishment of the Kenya Telecentre Network
5. I will work individually to keep INTEL engaged in telecentre work and look for technologies that can help our communities in their development
6. Help to map all telecentres in Tanzania so we can know who is who and where they are in Tanzania
7. UgaBYTES should help us develop our technical team
8. Establish a national network in Kenya. I promise all my time and I won’t let people down
9. I will coordinate with other people in the development of a telecentre network in Burundi
10. Help telecentre movement in the development of content
11. Make the support centre a better place to use and solve telecentre problems daily
12. CPAR will lead in the development of a regional telecentre network in Northern Uganda
13. The Rwandan government will work together with RTN to develop a telecentre network for Rwanda. We pledge our time and resources
14. Encourage women and young girls to join the technology movement i.e. use telecentres as voice
15. RITA will assist Paul Barera to be understood by the central and local government as he struggles to establish a network
16. I will work hard to ensure telecentres are sustainable and work together
17. I will continue to speak for the people here at Microsoft and see what Microsoft can continue offering telecentre people
18. Continue the conversation of short documents and I encourage everyone to read what I send
19. NAADS and NARO pledges to continue developing content for telecentres people, farmers etc. qas@kari.go.ug
20. I pledge to stand behind everybody in the telecentre movement through lifting up leaders in the telecentre movement who can work with us. The telecentre movement in the East African region is thriving. As telecentre.org, we shall work with people who support telecentre people through networks
DAY THREE: Field Trip

After two days of intensive discussions, on the third day, the forum participants got a chance to experience what they had learnt from the workshop. We visited three telecentres: Kayita Family Alliance for Development, Nabweru telecentre and Nakaseke telecentre. It gave participants hands-on experience of a typical Ugandan telecentre as well as providing insights about the challenges of the sustainability. This was evidence in the post workshop practitioner initiated discussion on the role of management in the telecentre sustainability with the case in point of Nakaseke.

Field Stop Point one: Kiyita Family Alliance for Development (KIFAD)
Located in the garage of a small family home, KIFAD has come a long way. It started as a small memorial resource centre for one of the community members whose main interests were in helping women and orphans. Currently, the resource centre is helping over 60 women organizations, children and youths. With no Internet connection, the manager of the resource centre, Bob Bongole Robert downloads information from the nearest Internet café. He in turn keeps the information in the small library where every community member can easily access it. KIFAD has also successfully networked with other organizations like UNICEF, UNAIDS, The AIDS Support Organization (TASO) Christian Children’s Fund (CCF) etc. Such organizations give them information on HIV/AIDS, women, children and other issues that affect them such as poverty etc. The resource centre now boasts of five computers all of which are donations from friends around the world and voluntary funding from the community. Community members utilize the computers at a small fee.

Field Stop Point Two: Nabweru telecentre CMC
Nabweru is one of the six telecentre that were started by UNESCO in 1999. Currently, the telecentre is facing so many challenges that it is fighting to stay afloat. Located in a semi urban area, the telecentre faces stiff competition from private providers offering the same services; photocopy, Internet services among others. Despite all these challenges, the telecentre has managed to develop agricultural talent for farmers and women groups. However dissemination of the information proved a challenge.

The community radio was established to help in the dissemination of this content not only to farmers but also to other interest groups within the community. The telecentre has also managed to integrate Community Based Organizations within their programs; VEDICO (Which provides agricultural market price information), The AIDS Support Organization (Which provides support and information on HIV/AIDS), Environmental Alert (Which provides information on weather forecasts) among others. Some organizations Like Council for the Economic Empowerment of Women of Africa (CEEWA) are using the telecentre facilities to train women in computer applications. The little money that is generated from such initiatives is what is used to sustain the Internet though payment of utility bills is still such a challenge. UgaBYTES provides much needed technical support to the telecentre whose five computers breakdown from time to time. UgaBYTES technical officers have however
managed to train the telecentre manager in basic troubleshooting skills in addition to offering the CMC regular telecentre visits.

Ownership of the telecentre also poses such a great challenge. After the pilot phrase, UNESCO handed over the telecentre to the district officials. The political wrangles have to some extent contributed in tearing the telecentre apart.

**Field Stop Point Three: Nakaseke telecentre CMC**

It is a one and half hour journey from Kampala to Nakaseke telecentre located in the depth of Luwero district. Nakaseke multipurpose community telecentre is a part of initiatives that aimed to introduce, test, disseminate and assess the impact and viability of multipurpose community telecentre (MCT) in Africa. The IDRC, UNESCO, and ITU agreed to join efforts in partnering with National and local organizations in this process and to plan and support pilot telecentres.

Currently, the successes at Nakaseke indicate that sustainability in reach. The telecentre provides telecommunication and information services (Telephone, fax, Library, Internet, Education video, daily newspapers, photocopying) and several others including electronic delivery of Agricultural information from National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO). The telecentre also does computer applications training in primary schools and institutions of higher learning around the telecentre.

With the national grid being unstable and unreliable, the telecentre got a grant from the IDRC to develop a 75 million solar power project. Currently, all the telecentre equipment including the community radio runs on solar power, which has greatly reduced expenditure on utility bills. Through the book box facility, the telecentre lends out books to neighboring schools and institutions at a fee, which helps to close the sustainability gap.

**Field Visit Digest: Feedback From The Field Trip**

1. It was a good experience for us Rwandans. What we have learnt here, we shall replicate in our country
2. Partnership is the way to go especially in generating content for our telecentres.
3. The successes at Nakaseke pose a big challenge for most of our struggling telecentres. The big question is “How do we make it.” I think networking is the way to go.
4. The sustainability that is being realized by Nakaseke gives hope to most of our telecentres whose future looks bleak.
5. From the experiences I got at KIFAD resource centre, I imagine I can also make it. Grip

11/1/2006
### Names of the Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Telecentre</th>
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<td>Mulindwa Mukasa</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Ndawula Mahmood</td>
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<td>Joyce B. Mutagwaba</td>
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<td>Charles Ng’atigwa</td>
<td>NAFRAC Shinyanga - Tanzania</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ngatigwa@yahoo.com">ngatigwa@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin Karinu</td>
<td>Arid lands Information Network [EA] Kenya</td>
<td><a href="mailto:info@alin.or.ke">info@alin.or.ke</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiki Alfred Camara</td>
<td>CPAR - Uganda Lira</td>
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<td>O.J. Okee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maureen Ouma</td>
<td>Makerere University Kampala</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mouma@cit.mak.ac.ug">mouma@cit.mak.ac.ug</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kibirige Ivan</td>
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<td>Lutaakome Fred</td>
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<td>Mayanja Meddie</td>
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<td>Pete Cranston</td>
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<td>Jiuuko Edward</td>
<td>Babweru CMC Kampala</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mark Surman</td>
<td>Telecentre.org IDRC Canada</td>
<td><a href="mailto:msurman@idrc.ca">msurman@idrc.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kikomeko Geoffrey</td>
<td>Nabweru Telecentre CMC Kampala</td>
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11/1/2006
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Email</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kakungulu J. Alex</td>
<td>Shimoni Resource Centre Kampala</td>
<td><a href="mailto:waga2115@yahoo.com">waga2115@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kisala Robert</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:akisalama@yahoo.co.uk">akisalama@yahoo.co.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matovu Richard</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:rkmatrich@yahoo.com">rkmatrich@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bwana Simba E</td>
<td>ARIS - NARO</td>
<td><a href="mailto:gas@kari.go.ug">gas@kari.go.ug</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kasule Joseph</td>
<td>NARO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kigoizi Edward</td>
<td>Bishop S.S.S Telecentre Mukono</td>
<td><a href="mailto:eddiekigozi@gmail.com">eddiekigozi@gmail.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mukasa Henry Musenze</td>
<td>Mission Harvest Uganda Community Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dorothy Okello</td>
<td>WOUGNET Kubere Information Centre [KIC] Kampala</td>
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<td>Kyamba Ader</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lucy Orech</td>
<td>Kubere Information Centre [KIC] Apac</td>
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<td>Libby Lin</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nsubuga A. Nicholas</td>
<td>Makindye MTC III Kampala</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owe’k T.K. Malokweza</td>
<td>Buganda Kingdom Telecentre Kasangati – Kampala</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wangwa Deborah</td>
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<td>Tuhairwe Sam</td>
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<td>Kiyita family Alliance for Development</td>
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<td>Matovu Charles</td>
<td>AKIMTEEC</td>
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<td>Mugabi Dennis</td>
<td>BROSDI</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kalule D. Samuel</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Victor Ndiege</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karamagi Edna</td>
<td>BROSDI Telecentre</td>
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11/1/2006
Nakirya Mary  
BROSDI

Kasule Joseph  
ARIS - NARU

Sentamu Geoffrey  
Uganda Development Service [UDS]  
Kampala

Atwine Abel  
NARU  
Kawanda

Byamukama J.  
Makerere University  
Kampala

Tebandekke Hakim  
Fotogenix  
Kampala

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**UgaBYTES EAST AFRICAN TELECENTRE LEADERS FORUM (EA-TLF), OCTOBER 5 – 7 PROGRAM**

The schedule below is a tentative time management plan for the EA-TLF activities. It will evolve over the course of the three days.

**Meeting Goals**

Explore the meaning and identity of telecentres
Share skills in management, content, partnership, etc.
Provide support for emerging national networks in East Africa

**DAY ONE 4/10/06**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>METHODOLOGY</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>FACILITATOR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant Registration</td>
<td>Filling in of register</td>
<td>8:30 - 9:00</td>
<td>Mrs. Sarah Mpagi N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introductory remark</td>
<td>Speech</td>
<td>9:00 - 9:05</td>
<td>Mr. Sulah Ndaula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction of participants and EA-TLF expectations</td>
<td>Opening circle and posting</td>
<td>9:05 - 9:45</td>
<td>Miss Ester Nasikye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why telecentre networks?</td>
<td>Speech and participatory exercise</td>
<td>9:45 – 10:15</td>
<td>Managing Director telecentre.org Mr. Mark Surman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mapping my telecentre or telecentre network</td>
<td>Participants place their centres on map</td>
<td>10:15 – 10:30</td>
<td>Mr. Alex Okwaput</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TEA BREAK</strong></td>
<td>10:30-11:00</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>World Café: conversations about key telecentre issues</td>
<td>Small discussion groups</td>
<td>11:00 – 12:15</td>
<td>Mr. Meddie Mayanja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The way forward: what are the biggest opportunities?</td>
<td>Report out / plenary</td>
<td>12:15 - 1:00</td>
<td>Mr. Sulah Ndaula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LUNCH BREAK</strong></td>
<td>1:00 - 2:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Telecentre Models in East Africa: Grassroots Experiences</td>
<td>Market place: UDS, Nabweru, Fadeco, Sengerema, Nyamata- Rwanda, Saderec-Kenya, Nabweru, CPAR</td>
<td>2:00 - 300</td>
<td>Mr. Mark Surman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content &amp; Partnerships for telecentres.</td>
<td>Participatory Discussion</td>
<td>3:00 - 4:30</td>
<td>Mr. Pete Cranston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary and what’s next?</td>
<td>Closing circle</td>
<td>4:30 – 5:00</td>
<td>Mr. Sulah Ndaula</td>
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11/1/2006
### DAY TWO 6/10/06

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Speaker(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00 – 9:00</td>
<td>Registration Form filling</td>
<td>Mrs. Sarah Mpagi. N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00 – 9:15</td>
<td>Day one recap Tracing day one path and opening circle</td>
<td>Mr. Sulah Ndaula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:15 - 10:15</td>
<td>What role do networks play in the telecentre movement? How can they be</td>
<td>Miss Esther Nasikye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15 - 10:45</td>
<td>Tea break</td>
<td>Mrs. Sarah Nalwoga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:50 - 11:25</td>
<td>What is on the ground? Joseph, Paul, Chelimo give challenges and</td>
<td>Mr. Meddie Mayanja</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>experiences for the establishment of national networks and followed by</td>
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<td></td>
<td>an open discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:30 - 11:50</td>
<td>What knowledge sharing and learning platforms are available in the</td>
<td>Mr. Pete Cranston</td>
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<tr>
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<td>telecentre movement? Open discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:55-1:00</td>
<td>Is the mailing list important? Why AND Do you find the times important?</td>
<td>Mr. Sulah Ndaula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Why How can they be improved?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00 - 2:00</td>
<td>LUNCH BREAK</td>
<td>Mrs. Sarah Mpagi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:05 - 3:15</td>
<td>What is the online support centre? How does it work? How can it meet</td>
<td>Mr. Ahmed Ndaula UgaBYTES Technical Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>telecentre needs better? Handson demonstration TLs ask questions &amp; the</td>
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<td></td>
<td>experts answer them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:30 - 3:55</td>
<td>Do you find the online support centre useful? Why</td>
<td>Mr. Sulah Ndaula</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:00 – 4:15</td>
<td>Way forward and closing remarks Tracing day two path and speech</td>
<td>Mr. Mark Surman + Mr. Sulah Ndaula</td>
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<td>4:20 - 4:45</td>
<td>Registration for field trip Form fill-in</td>
<td>Mrs. Sarah Mpagi. N</td>
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<td>Evaluation of workshop Form fill-in</td>
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### Day Three 7/10/06

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:30 – 9:00</td>
<td>Greenland Towers</td>
<td>Mrs. Sarah Mpagi. N</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00 – 9:30</td>
<td>Travel to Nabweru In-bus chats (non formal)</td>
<td>Miss Esther Nasikye</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:35 – 10:35</td>
<td>Nabweru CMC First stop &amp; experience learning</td>
<td>Mr. Edward Jjuuko</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:35 – 12:35</td>
<td>Travel to Nakaseke In-bus chats (non formal)</td>
<td>Miss Esther Nasikye</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:00 – 3:00</td>
<td>Nakaseke CMC Second stop &amp; experience learning</td>
<td>Mr. Peter Balaba</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:00 – 5:00</td>
<td>Travel to Kampala In-bus chats (non formal)</td>
<td>Miss Esther Nasikye</td>
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11/1/2006