

## RWENZORI INFORMATION CENTRES NETWORK

RIC-NET Newsletter July - December Volume II 2012



*RIC-NET Executive Director making a presentation on RIC-NETS library activities during an exhibition at the first public Library summit in Johannesburg in september 2012.*



*The Deputy RDC Kamwenge District, Ms. Akello cuts the ribbon to the E-society Resource Center during its launch in Nov. 2012 at Kamwenge District Headquarters.*



*Plant Dr. Asaba Wilberforce educates a farmer one Baita Francis on the common pests and diseases that affect oranges and how to manage them during a plant clinic day at Mawa Market in Kasese.*



## Inside this Issue

Communication from the RIC-NET BOD Chairperson. **Pg 2**

RIC-NET Contributes to Uganda's 50 Years Of Existence. **Pg 3**

RIC-NET Participates in The First African Public Libraries' Summit. **Pg 5**

RIC-NET Participates in the 5th Annual Civil Society Fair. **Pg 8**

Why Uganda Is Moving From Analogue To Digital Television Broadcasting **Pg 10**

Smart Phones Ease Access to Information on Plant Pests and Disease management. **Pg 11**

Milestones Registered In The Promotion Of ICT In The Rwenzori Region And Beyond. **Pg 15**

BRIC Community Library Increases Access to Information. **Pg 16**

Ric-Net Activity News In Brief . **Pg 18**

Who Is Who In RIC-NET **Pg 22**

## COMMUNICATION FROM THE RIC-NET BOD CHAIRPERSON



**Rev. Mucunguzi R. Isaiah,  
RIC-NET Board Chairperson**

Dear Brethren

I am privileged to extend my warm greetings to all readers of this RIC-NET news edition of July to December 2012 and to make this note as chairperson RIC-NET Board of directors. What many people think is what they do and what they do makes them what they are.

People think about what they want and people have power over what to think about. So one has the relative power to become rich or to remain poor. It's not by God's choice for one to be rich and another one to be poor. Both (rich and poor) have equal opportunities to move from one category to the other. This puts doubt to the theory or belief of predestined life, or else it makes God an unjust being. My concern in here is to make some people think and not get satisfied with the status quo.

We need to incite them think critically of their situation or status.

RICNET's life is less than a decade and we envision a society effectively using ICT for timely access and utilization of relevant information for development and governance and to realize this, we are running among other projects good governance and enhancing civic competence for social accountability with an aid of ICT tools.

Series of activities are being implemented with a motive of informing and awakening the people's mind to become conscious and see how best they can live

and enjoy their life. Many have accepted their status quo and wait for some to develop them thus uphold the theory of predestined life.

I believe the matter is in every ones hand. Everyone is gifted but some never open their packages. So our mandate is to incite citizens' thinking and challenge them to translate their thoughts into action; like demanding for their entitlements and holding their leaders accountable for their words and actions.

Our concern therefore is not getting people the good life but enable them get it themselves. Living a good life is a personal obligation that starts with thinking. Thinking is a quality of life that grows and develops with in an individual. Thus RIC-NET is proud of associating with the communities in the Rwenzori region as their partner in development.

One basic role is to mobilize them, help them develop the strength within themselves to make meaningful engagements with duty leers. As we publish this edition, this internal motivation is building up among the civil society as this analytical skill develops and we believe this will forge a sustainable human development.

Therefore RIC-NET in the next stories is enabling society especially the poor to open up their packages. No one can develop the people because the responsibility of true developments rests with the people themselves.

As you read through these thrilling news stories of RIC-NET's contribution towards the endeavor, I wish that you will enjoy your reading.

## RIC-NET CONTRIBUTES TO UGANDA'S 50 YEARS OF EXISTENCE

Free at last, was the sigh of every Ugandan 50 years back, and down the road we have come to witness the joy of self rule and being instruments of our own development.

Today individuals, CSOs, Government and private sector are all happy to know that they are part of the development/achievements that were celebrated at the 50<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary.

In the same vein Rwenzori Information Centers Network (RIC-NET) a Community owned Information Network in the Rwenzori region is glad to mention how it has spear- head the use of ICTs in information sourcing, sharing and dissemination in the Rwenzori region and boosted agriculture during these 50 years of independence, [www.ricnet.co.ug](http://www.ricnet.co.ug).



*RIC-NET staff and some members of the community, test the computers and on-line platforms at the E-society Center minutes before it's launch in Oct. 2012*

Having piloted E-society Resource Centers in the region, first in Kasese District in 2010 and later Kabarole in 2011, and now Bundibugyo and Kamwenge Districts in 2012; it is evident



that the information gap between the District Local Governments and the community has been bridged, while the computer literacy and the use of different on-line platforms and social media has been enhanced amongst the civil servants and the community at large.

This has been made possible through the development of the different on-line platforms developed for the districts to share information; websites; [www.kasese.go.ug](http://www.kasese.go.ug) [www.kabaroledistrict.go.ug](http://www.kabaroledistrict.go.ug), [www.bundibugyo.go.ug](http://www.bundibugyo.go.ug) , [www.kamwenge.go.ug](http://www.kamwenge.go.ug) and blogs, e-libraries, Skype accounts among others and through the free computer trainings offered at these centers by the RIC-NET staff.

Related to the above is piloting the use of ICT and CINEDUC in the teaching and learning of English in secondary and Primary Teachers Colleges in Kasese and Kabarole Districts. The purpose of this project is to address the traditional teaching methods of chalk and talk with ICT enhanced methods that use photo digital stories, power point and video aimed at increasing efficiency in the learning-teaching process.



*Plant Doctor Asthaluzi explains to farmers the pests and diseases that attack jackfruit and how they can be managed during the recent Market Information Symposium in Kisinga, Kasese District.*

Rwenzori region is a food basket in Uganda though challenged by various agricultural problems like crop pests and diseases, poor infrastructure, lack of available market information and markets as well as unpredictable weather patterns. In response to this, RIC-NET developed a "Healthy plants for healthy people" project run by 16 trained plant doctors. These are charged with supporting farmers with plant diagnosis and treatment through "plant Clinics" conducted on market days in the market places.

This has reduced crop pests and diseases, enhanced crop productivity and also increased farmers' household incomes.

Strengthening Citizens' participation in Social accountability/monitoring District Local Governments' service delivery has reduced misuse of public funds and discouraged shoddy work on public projects.

Great thanks go to the Government of Uganda for the cooperation and enabling environment, and to the RIC-NET funders and partners; HIVOs, EU, Connect for Change, Plant Wise Uganda, CABI UK and EIFL for their financial and technical support.

Congratulations Uganda, Happy 50<sup>th</sup> Independence. For God and My Country!



## RIC-NET PARTICIPATES IN THE FIRST AFRICAN PUBLIC LIBRARIES' SUMMIT

5



Key Note Speakers at the Summit

Quotations can pack so much wisdom in such few words, and this is exactly what several speakers at the African Public Libraries Summit did. So much was shared and or implied in these few quotations;

*“Public Libraries should be made temples of knowledge, creating innovative ways of addressing lives and providing knowledge”*: Adama Samassekou, Chairman Board of Philosophy and Humanities and President of MAAYA Network Global Linguistic Diversity.

*“If you are planning for tomorrow, grow rice, if you are planning for the future, grow trees but if you are planning for a*

*life time establish a library”*: Omara Jatta, Acting Director of the Standards and Quality Assurance Directorate, Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, Gambia.

*“Libraries provide the oxygen for today’s information economy”*: Garoma Daba Jaleta, African Union representative.

*“The incorporation and use of ICT tools and resources in libraries is very key because it opens up new possibilities for both libraries and library users. It should be noted that Libraries today have moved away from the old traditional book stores to more dynamic and digital social centers geared at addressing all community needs as identified from time to time”*: Monika Elbert, Eifl.

These quotations seemingly summarize what the participants at the African public libraries summit discussed during the three days. The Summit that was conducted at Indaba Hotel, Johannesburg started on 19<sup>th</sup> Sept.2012 to 21<sup>st</sup> Sept.12 and brought together approximately 150 delegates and speakers from all over Africa.

The participants included key librarians and directors of Public libraries across Africa, some Lecturers of Library and Information Sciences from Universities in Africa, Permanent secretaries and Ministers of culture and education, and other institutions running library projects like RIC-NET, Life line Project-Botswana, Masiphumelele Library, Eifl, World reader, Read Nepal, to mention but a few.

The summit whose theme was **“Informing Africa, Developing Africa”** was funded by Bill and Melinda gates foundation.

The purpose of the summit was to get African Policy makers and Librarians to meet and discuss issues related to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century libraries, the contribution of Libraries to development priorities, sharing success stories and experiences about public libraries’ impact and above all to agree on the establishment of a public library network.

During the summit participants discussed several topics like Public libraries in an inclusive African knowledge society, how public libraries can contribute to existing regional and national policies, developing national policy in support of African public libraries, beyond access-a conversation about the global effort to turn all libraries into hubs for development, how public libraries contribute towards Africa's development, technological change development and public libraries good practice, regional perspectives on public library policy in Africa.

Other things shared were success stories from community and public libraries as well as the requirements for establishing a public libraries' network.

Sharing their experiences and success stories, a participant from Botswana shared how libraries were helping youth entrepreneurs to find jobs, get connected to other local entrepreneurs and as well supported them do develop marketable business plans, while Read Nepal shared how libraries have transformed the livelihoods and the social economic status of the women there.

On the other hand Stephen Agbenyo from Ghana shared how libraries and technology had improved maternal health in Ghana, while Nyasha Sithole shared on how the library has bridged the digital divide in Cape Town.

In the same vein John from RIC-NET shared how community libraries have reached out to farmers in the Rwenzori Region of Uganda. Last but not least one Zev Lowe of World reader also shared how the use of digital books has transformed African classrooms and libraries in Africa.

Commenting on the success stories shared, Ms. Deborah L. Jacobs, the Director Global Libraries' initiative, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundations, noted that it's impressive to learn of how much the libraries are impacting on the lives of and economy of Africa. She however noted that it's up to us (librarians) to develop and sustain libraries that will have continued profound impact on the people in Africa.



*RIC-NET Director John Silco share with members at the summit about RIC-NET's work*

Presenting at the Summit Professor Adama among others highlighted the key challenges for public library advancement. He noted that while progress has been made to advance and expand how public libraries in Africa contribute to development priorities, there are still significant challenges. And these include lack of adequate funding, need for digital technology, absence of professional staff and training, physical resource limitations, and scarcity of national policies among others. These Prof. Adama emphasized must be addressed at both the country level and across Africa.

From the discussions several issues emerged and were agreed upon. These included;

- Participants agreed that since libraries have the potential to transform the local economies through the provision of the necessary information and knowledge



transfer they must be in the fore front of the knowledge society and knowledge economy relating to the national development agenda. An enabling/supportive national or regional policy on libraries should be advocated for and put in place by the relevant policy makers to enable libraries deliver their best. Unfortunately only 11 out of 40 countries in Africa have library policies, while 22 countries do not have, whereas 2 other countries (Uganda and Botswana) have pending policies while for the remaining 5 it is not yet established if they have one or not. Participants acknowledged that if given a chance libraries can contribute to existing regional and national policies.



*RIC-NET Information Officer Alice Mbayahi presenting at the summit*

- Libraries should move away from telling what they provide to proving that they can change lives of individuals in the community.
- And that Librarians should commit to causing impact and also be willing to be measured although their skills and capacities in several areas like impact evaluation, advocacy, use of ICT tools and resources, public relations and library management should be enhanced.

Officiating over the closure, Ms. Deborah L. Jacobs, the Director Global Libraries' initiative Bill and Melinda Gates Foundations and Dr. Ingrid Parent, IFLA President expressed gratitude to the organizers for the tremendous and organized work they had done, the participants for their turn up and all the facilitators and presenters for their willingness to share their knowledge and experience with others.

Ingrid also congratulated the participants upon making history- participating in the first African Public Library Summit ever.

They also challenged the participants to carry with them everything that had been discussed and ensure that they implement them. And to the policy makers Deborah called upon them to view libraries as key development partners with the potential to transform society. She appealed to them to work towards passing enabling policies for libraries across Africa. Deborah and Ingrid pledged continued support towards Library activities in Africa and even beyond.

# RIC-NET PARTICIPATES IN THE 5th ANNUAL CIVIL SOCIETY FAIR

**Asimwe Emily, Administrative Secretary.**

The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Civil Society Fair in Rwenzori region was recently held in Bundibugyo District at Booma grounds next to Bundibugyo District headquarters under the theme; **“strengthening peace and unity for sustainable regional development”**. The Civil Society Fair was attended by network organizations under NGO Forum and other participants from the private sector who had come to exhibit their products.

The main purpose of the Civil Society Fair was to share information across all network organizations through interactions and open discussions.

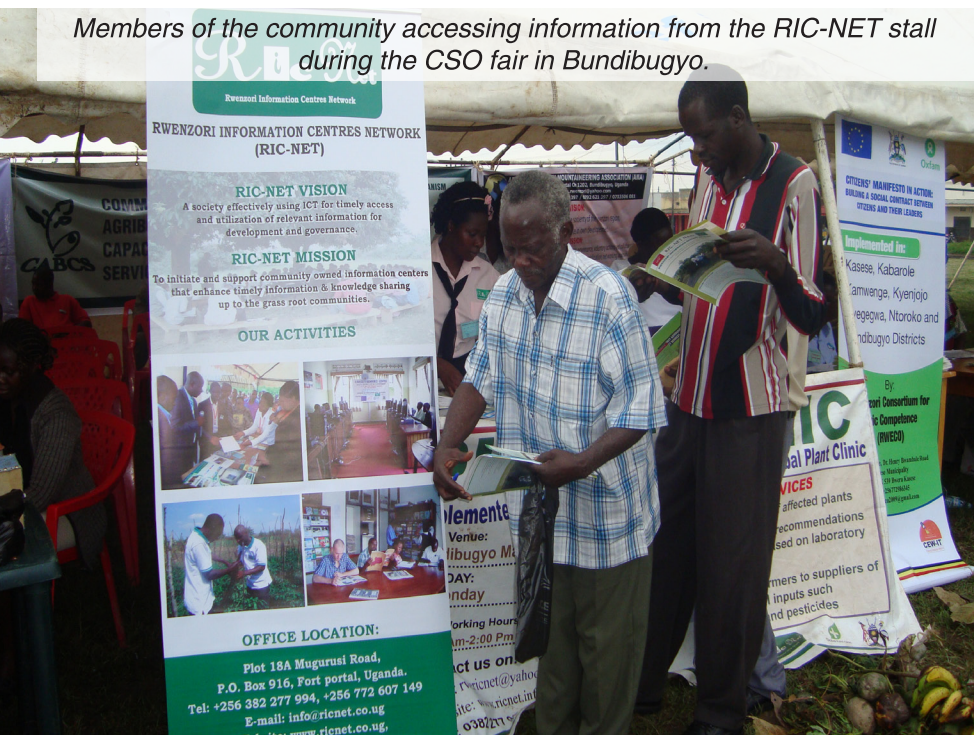
Issues concerning food security and Uganda at 50 years were discussed during the civil society meeting. It was agreed that every house hold in Bundibugyo district should create a store of food locally called **“Enguli”** for food storage so as to be able to keep food for a long period of time. It is on this day 27<sup>th</sup> September 2012, that enguli was launched by the guest of honor, Hon. Alex Ruhunda a sign of boosting food security in the region. Hon. Alex explained that when households store food they are able to avoid hunger.



*Photo of enguli - granary/food store*

In addition to this, participants acknowledged that, when the family has no food, there is no peace and development because quarrels amongst the husband, wife and children will arise from time to time thus causing instability in the family and consequent under or no development will be realized at the end of the day in the region.

*Members of the community accessing information from the RIC-NET stall during the CSO fair in Bundibugyo.*



Another issue discussed was Uganda at 50 years; presenting on this, the Chair Person LCV Bundibugyo District Mr. Tibamanya Jolly noted that, Uganda has moved a step ahead compared to the past years. An example quoted was the new technologies like use of cars, availability of personal phones and Net works, and improvement done in infrastructure.





He said today one takes only a few hours to reach Bundibugyo District yet it used to take like a whole month because of poor roads. He added that internet and computer training services have been brought closer to the people and so communication has been made easy, giving the E-society at Bundibugyo Local Government as an example. Also modern technologies of agricultural farming have been introduced through NAADS programme and the culture of saving has been adopted through rural financial service programmes of "Boona Bagagawale" as efforts of the government to promote peace and unity for sustainable regional development.

During the Civil Society Fair, Rwenzori Information Centers Network exhibited its services and products and received over 100 people at its stall. 70% of these were farmers looking for agricultural information especially on plant diseases of Cocoa, coffee and banana growing. The information was availed to them both verbally and in hard copies. In addition to this the Executive Director Uganda Communications Commission Eng. Godfrey Mutabazi Launched "**Bundibugyo E-society Resource Center and district website hosted at [www.bundibugyo.go.ug](http://www.bundibugyo.go.ug)**" on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2012.

Eng. Godfrey Mutabazi officiated over the function as Chief Guest. Officiating over the closure of Civil Society Fair, Eng. Godfrey noted that, every person on this planet has the potential to develop him or herself and to contribute towards regional development since we were all created in the image of God. "*We have the power to create things that can lead us to earn money*" he remarked.

He also noted that access to information is power and yet most people are not developing due to lack of information, knowledge and skills. It is necessary that everyone gets involved in accessing information to realize faster development.



*UCC Executive Director Eng. Godfrey launching the E-society center website.*

Eng. Godfrey thanked the organizers of the Fair for the great work and RIC-NET for extending IT services closer to the people in Bundibugyo, saying that, it would help in accelerating information sharing and consequent development in the District.

Conclusively, participants made two key recommendations from the two days' discussions; food security and information sharing components are key in strengthening peace and unity for sustainable development.

# WHY UGANDA IS MOVING FROM ANALOGUE TO DIGITAL TELEVISION BROADCASTING

Samuel Mumbere, [smmumbere@gmail.com](mailto:smmumbere@gmail.com)

A number of developments have been going on in the telecommunications and internet Industry overtime. The broadcasting industry has undergone many developmental changes. These include changes in television designs from the box-like tube TVs to the thin-panels which we see today. This involves a key development of shifting from analogue type of television to digital broadcasting.

The migration from analogue to digital terrestrial broadcasting was agreed upon under the United Nations (UN) umbrella with a deadline of 2015.

It's therefore taking place across the whole world. Most of the developed countries and some African countries like Mozambique, Morocco, Namibia, and South Africa are already using digital terrestrial broadcasting, while others like Uganda, Kenya, Brazil, Argentina, Rwanda, and Australia are still in the process of changing to digital broadcasting. You could be wondering what this whole migration thing is, well here below I share and try to present some of the frequently asked questions about this subject;

## What is analogue broadcasting?

Analogue television broadcasting is a type of digital transmission that involves the broadcasting of encoded audio and video signal. This commonly uses satellite broadcasting technology.

**Satellite broadcasting:** This is where the broadcaster sends the signal to the satellite and then it is beamed back from the satellite to the consumer. A satellite dish or analogue antenna will be required by the consumer in

this case.

## What is digital broadcasting?

This is the practice of using digital data rather than analogue wave forms to carry out broadcasts over television channels or assigned radio frequency bands. In this case, we need terrestrial broadcasting technology.

**Terrestrial broadcasting:** This is where the signal is sent by the broadcaster to the transmission tower (emulongoti) and is then beamed through a network of towers to the users. In this case, the use will be required to use an aerial.

## What is the advantage of digital over analogue broadcasting?

Digital broadcasting will improve the consumer's (you and me) TV experience in terms of better sound and picture quality.



It will have a clearer, more accessible and faster signal quality. Users will connect to this network just like the way mobile phones do.

It will also offer a wide range of space in the frequency spectrum that can be used to provide more TV channels and other ICT services that can be accessed worldwide.



## What do consumers need to pick digital signals?

The migration from analogue to digital will need a digital TV. **A digital TV;** Is any TV that has a digital tuner. One needs to get a digital receiver called as a set-top-box (also referred to as a **Decoder**).

**Asset-top-box;** Is a device which converts the encoded signals from a digital television into a form that can be viewed on a traditional television. The conversion of this signal is what we refer to as **digitalization**.

Examples of companies providing digital broadcasting facilities are; Star Times, DSTV, Start TV Go TV, Mo TV etc.

## Does this mean we now have to pay to watch the channels under digital broadcasting?

There are two types of broadcasting service packages;

**Free-to-air and Pay TV;** Free-to-Air channels are those you can receive without

subscribing or paying a monthly fee. Examples are; UBC, WBS, NTV, NBS, Lighthouse TV, Record TV, Capital TV, Bukedde TV, BTN TV, Bunyoro TV, EATV, Family TV, Top TV, Kakira Sugar TV, Channel 44, Urban TV, Northern TV and TV WA. These channels will continue to be free even after the migration from analogue to digital.

While Pay TV is where someone has to subscribe and pay a subscription fee to watch the associated TV channels. Examples are; Start Times, Mo TV and Go TV.

Note: The Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) is entirely the regulatory body of the communications sector in Uganda. UCC is also responsible for type approval and licensing of vendors of communication equipment.

All citizens are entitled to the benefits of this venture. We are therefore encouraged as people from Rwenzori Region to embrace the technological changes for a better information access, sharing and dissemination using ICTs for development.

## SMART PHONES EASE ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON PLANT PESTS AND DISEASE MANAGEMENT

Kaliba Charles, Community Outreach Officer

As the fight against plant Pests and Disease management in the Rwenzori region continues, RIC-NET has finally started the use of smart phones in gathering information on control of major Plant Pests and Diseases and sharing it with the farmers during field visits and Plant Clinic days. The project is being piloted in Kasese Municipality by Busongora Rural Information Center with support from EIFL and RIC-NET.

Busongora Rural Information center mainly deals with farmers who have for long been frustrated by low yields due to plant pests and diseases, like Banana Bacteria wilt [BBW], cassava brown streak/Mosaic, maize weevil.

*continued on page 14*

# RIC-NET PHOTO GALLERY



Participants at the 5th CSO Fair conducted in Bundibugyo District in October 2012.



The UCC Executive Director, Bundibugyo Vice LCV Chairperson, RIC-NET BoD Chairperson and Executive Director sign documents about the E-society Center minutes before its launch in Oct.2012 at Bundibugyo District Head Quarters.



Sandra and Monika of EIFL share with the Kasese Vice LCV Chairperson about the role and relevance of libraries and E-society Center during their visit to RIC-NET's library projects in Aug. 2012.



The Librarian at Fort portal Public Library shares with Sandra and Monika of EIFL about the Library's operations and relations with RIC-NET during their visit to RIC-NET's library projects in Aug. 2012.



EIFL partners pose for a photo after the training on Communication, Awareness Raising and Advocacy Libraries at Hotel Africana in Aug. 2012.



Participants at the first African Public Libraries Summit in Johannesburg in Sept. 2012.





*RIC-NET ICT Officer putting up internet trunks during the set up of the E-Society resource Center in Kamwenge.*



*RIC-NET E.D John Silco and Julius of PAC share with the Soroti LCV on why the development and deployment of the district website.*



*RIC-NET ICT Officer presenting a paper to the Kyenjojo District staff on the establishment of the E-society Resource center at Kyenjojo district.*



*RIC-NET staff and some members of the community, test the computers and on-line platforms at the E-society Center minutes before it's launch in Oct.2012.*



*Standing in pic, RIC-NET ICT staff supporting participants (LG staff in the region) on the use of on-line platforms and the different social media during ICT training at St.Joseph's Inn Virika, Fort portal.*



*RIC-NET ICT Officer at BRIC librarian at work in the library at BRIC.*



With an increase in population in the areas and farmers shifting from subsistence to commercial farming, pests and disease control has become an issue of concern.

About 20 IDEOS Smart phones have been given to model farmers and plant Doctors to help in information sourcing and sharing in the rural villages.

Basically the plant doctors use their smart phones to photograph diseased plants, and immediately send the photographs to the agricultural research centers where experts examine the photographs and identify the diseases. The findings are thus shared



*Plant Doctors studying Coffee berries and leaves during a farmer to farmer field visit.*

through the SMS text message on the phone back to the Plant Doctors who then pass the information back to the farmers with instructions on how to manage the crop pests and diseases identified.

According to one of the plant Doctors attached to Busongora Rural Information Center, Bahunguli Astaluzi said *“Smart phones have reduced on the time we spend attending to farmers. They have also simplified information sharing amongst us,*

*the research institutions and also filled in the gap of formerly difficult to tell crop pests and diseases”.*

On the whole, this service has improved farmers' access to agricultural information with the intention of reaching out to about 6000 farmers in the region [Busongora County]. Timely solutions to farmer's problems have been handled, improved better practice of farm management and reduced on the cost of transporting samples to the research centers.



# MILESTONES REGISTERED IN THE PROMOTION OF ICT IN THE RWENZORI REGION AND BEYOND.

**Baluku Yosia, ICT Officer**

One can say it is on record that there has been limited will, and or slow pace of individuals to embrace and use ICTs in Uganda and more so in the Rwenzori region. Almost every Ugandan also knows that recently Ministers dodged an ICT training organized in Kampala as reported by the New Vision 24 September 2012 <http://www.newvision.co.ug/news/635545-ministers-dodge-ict-training.html>.

Whereas it goes without saying that such tendencies are shameful and also discouraging to ICT promoters like RIC-NET, it is also important to note that despite of this limited will and other challenges such as low literacy levels, and poor/unreliable internet connection RIC-NET has been able to do several things to promote ICT in Uganda.

Some of these activities include; piloting and scaling up of E-society resource centers in the Rwenzori region. First in Kasese, then Kabarole, now Bundibugyo, and Kamwenge districts, while in Kyegegwa and Kyenjojo districts round table meetings have been conducted and MoUs about the establishment of the same signed.

It should be noted that these Centers have been officially launched and presided over by key persons for instance in Bundibudgyo, the launch was presided over by the UCC Executive Secretary Eng Mutabazi Godfrey while in Kasese by the then LCV Chairperson Rev. Canon Julius Kitaghenda, Kabarole, the LCV Chairperson Hon. Rwabuhinga Richard and in Kamwenge by the District deputy RDC Ms. Akello Beatrice.

Important to note is that these Centers have continued to facilitate easier access to and sharing of information amongst the LG staff and even with the wider communities.

As a whole package of E-society resource centers, RIC-NET has also developed on-line platforms and social media accounts for these districts and their staff; websites, [www.kasese.go.ug](http://www.kasese.go.ug), [www.kabaroledistrict.go.ug](http://www.kabaroledistrict.go.ug) [www.bundibugyo.go.ug](http://www.bundibugyo.go.ug) , [www.kamwenge.go.ug](http://www.kamwenge.go.ug), blogs, <http://kasesenews.blogspot.com>, <http://kabarolenews.blogspot.com> , <http://bundibugyonews.blogspot.com> , <http://kamwengenews.blogspot.com> CSO portals, E-libraries, d-groups, <http://kasesecso.org> ,<http://dgroups.org/iicd/kasese> to mention but a few.

In a related development RWECO and CEWIT through RIC-NET is currently working on twenty five other district websites. And for this year RIC-NET has designed ten, these are Serere, Ngora, Gulu, Kitgum, Luwero, Kalangala, Arua, Koboko, Kyegegwa and Kyenjojo districts.

The remaining 15 Districts' websites will be designed early next year (2013). Round table meetings with the districts' leaders have been held and prototypes of the websites already developed and sub domain links shared with the respective leaders who have expressed gratitude and can't wait to have their district websites up and running.

Expressing her gratitude the District Vice chairperson of Koboko Grace Goro; noted that ” *You have come at the right time when we really need this website because we’re challenged by Koboko town council that has one yet the whole district does not own any. We hope the process is quick*”

It should also be noted that RIC-NET has acquired a server and is going to host all these websites on these server. RIC-NET is also configuring it’s hosting environment platform at <http://rwenzoriweb.com> , so for all hosting services we’re here to serve.

It can therefore be said that the wave of ICTs is sweeping stronger and faster than before and that sooner than later the traditional difficulty of access to and sharing of information will be but a thing of the past. This is all evidenced in the rate at which the individuals trained (LG staff, community and CSO members) have continued to actively use the social media accounts (Skype, blog, yahoomessenger, watsup, linkedin) opened for them and also trained on.

Precisely approximately 1025 people have been trained on how to use on-line plat- forms and over 400 are active users of these platforms.

Today staff at RIC-NET testify to reduced expenditure on airtime since most of the communications with their partners and other stakeholders are done on line and also realized quick progress in the activities planned for since information is instantly shared and responded to by the respective persons.

In addition to this, the use of smart phones by the monitors in monitoring and reporting on social accountability issues in the Rwenzori region has facilitated faster reporting and response on service delivery challenges in the region. This initiative is has yielded indisputable results in terms of addressing challenges by the leaders and also improving service delivery.

In a nutshell, when all shall have been said and done to completion RIC-NET shall not hesitate to proudly take on the name “Shakers and Movers” of ICT in the Rwenzori region as commonly referred to it by its stakeholders and partners and to always stand to be counted among those that promoted the use of ICTs and facilitated easier, faster and more reliable access to and sharing of information in Uganda.

## **BRIC COMMUNITY LIBRARY INCREASES ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

**Kobusinge Lovence, BRIC Librarian**

Busongora Rural Information Center in conjunction with RIC-NET joined the other Uganda community Libraries Association members in celebrating the Book Week that ran from the 15<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> October. The event took place on 18<sup>th</sup> October.2012 at Busongora Rural community library located in Base Camp Kasese District. This library serves farmers, students/pupils and the general community in and around Base camp.

The objectives of the event were to create understanding on the value of reading to the



pupils and students in Kasese, to create a linkage between the tradition teaching method with the modern, to derive a picture of the type of library required by the users- community, pupils and student, and to enhance the visibility and relevance of the library at BRIC to the community in Kasese.

Over 40 pupils and students from Kasese Secondary, Kasese High, Kasese Moslem, Light of Hope Secondary, Kasese Primary, Base camp Primary, Mother Care and Rock primary schools, participated in this event. Other participants included RICNET, RWECO and BRIC staff, teachers from the participating schools, the Kasese District Information Officer, District Education Officer, and the Secretary for Education and Sports Kasese District Local Government represented by Mr.Tsembere Venesio the area District Councilor.

Several activities on this day were conducted; a debate under the theme "Formal education is better than informal education" was conducted



*A pupil sharing during the book week event at the library*

to help the students/participants understand the difference between the two and the value/contribution of each. While a general discussion on the value of reading and the relevance of libraries in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century was also done. In addition to this, art and painting competition on the type of library they would love to see/have as well as a reading competition were also done. Other activities were silent reading and storytelling. Narrating a story on cultural and moral values- respect and unity in the community, Mr. Kyaminyawande Augustine an elder helped the pupils to understand that cultural values passed on through informal education are still relevant even in today's world and should be embraced.

From the activities, the pupils and students acknowledged to have learnt several things; that reading is important because it increases one's knowledge and awareness on a variety of things in the world, increases one's ability to speak and write better. The students also noted that from the debates and reading competitions conducted their confidence and public speaking abilities had been enhanced.

Other things learnt were the variety of books and services offered at the library and the government programs geared at promoting libraries, education and children's rights and responsibilities.

*A student sharing during the book week event at the library*



Sharing their views at the library, one Degaulle a primary four pupil from Mother Care Preparatory School and Komukebya Sharon from Base camp Primary cried foul over the increased flow of alcohol and other drugs in the community and most especially the cheap price at which they are offered; citing the alcohol sold in almost every shop at 500sh in 'buveera". They appealed to the district leadership to address this concern.

Responding to this, the area Councilor Hon. Tsembere Venesio thanked the children for raising such pertinent issues and promised to table them in the council for further deliberations and address. To crown the day, winners in the different activities were awarded.

## RIC-NET ACTIVITY NEWS IN BRIEF

### RIC-NET GOES SCOUTING FOR NEW ICT INITIATIVES IN KENYA AND TANZANIA

In the bid, to catch up with the ICT trends and to also make RIC-NET's interventions more relevant in the region, RIC-NET Executive Director, Murugahara John Silco and Information Officer, Alice Mbayahi visited Twaweza (a CSO) in Kenya and Tanzania to learn from their experiences on the use of on-line platforms (Huduma, literally meaning service delivery) in amplifying citizens' voices in service delivery. The learning visit that was conducted between 08<sup>th</sup> August.2012 to 15<sup>th</sup> August.2012 introduced the staff to new innovative ICT communication platforms used in Tanzania and Kenya.

In Tanzania and Kenya the team met with Justice Rutenge and Ali Hassan respectively. They shared the different ICT platforms and strategies that Twaweza uses to engage the citizens in social accountability.



*Justus of Twaweza Tanzania sharing with RIC-NET Information Officer*

First, they shared that Twaweza doesn't directly relate with the community but rather uses five established networks; media - radio, TV and phones, fast moving consumer goods like pens, books and gum boots and already established institutions dealing with large numbers of people like the teachers unions and religious institutions. Other organizations visited were HIVOs and SODNET in Nairobi and Get Real Training in Dar es Salaam.

SODNET shared with RIC-NET some ways in which the huduma platform can be made more effective and relevant. Among others, the staff learnt that; the use of ICT is one reliable and most effective way of reaching and engaging masses fast and easily because a large



percentage of citizens have phones, radios and TV sets, on the other hand they are a good channel of amplifying citizens' voices. Lastly it was recommended that in future, RIC-NET should exploit the strategy of using frequent/fast moving consumer goods because, they reach many people. More about this story can be got on; <http://ric-netnews.blogspot.com/2012/08/ric-net-goes-scouting-for-new-ict.html>

## **CREATION OF NEW DISTRICTS VERSUS SERVICE DELIVERY.**

Members of Development Network of indigenous voluntary associations (DENIVA), on 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> August 2012 assembled at the Pope Paul memorial Hotel in Rubaga, Kampala to attend DENIVA's 20<sup>th</sup> AGM.

The meeting discussed a range of citizen concerns; the launch of the National Alternative peoples' assembly, the discussion and approval of the 2011 Audit Report and the continuous split of the Districts Viza-vi the extension of services to the communities.

According to a presentation by Professor Makara Sabiiti's survey results on the Dynamics of District multiplication and service delivery in Uganda (Evidence from Kumi, Bukedea and Ngora Districts) reasons advanced for creation of new Districts include; bringing services closer to the people, effective administration, solving ethnic and social tensions, and popular demand from the people, however the endless creation of the local Governments is increasing costs of administration.

There is also no clear formula for creation of the Districts, while small districts with limited sources of revenue are not self-sustaining. Responding to this the CSOs present appealed to the Chief Guest Hon. Kintu Florence, Chairperson of the Local Government and Services Committee who represented the Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda, to review and operationalise the constitutional provision for new Districts.

During the meeting the Chief Guest also launched the National Alternative people's Assembly. RIC-NET Program Officer, Kyomuhendo Joselyne participated in this meeting.

## **WOMEN FARMER GROUPS EMBRACE ICT SKILLS**

What was seen as a thing for the literate urban dwellers became a reality to the women farmer groups in Kisanga Village- Karambi Sub county Kasese District. The women farmers were on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> July 2012 introduced to ICT skills by Maendeleo foundation and RIC-NET during an outreach activity to the farmers in the Bwera sub-region of Kasese District.

The purpose of the introduction of the women farmers to the use of ICT was to equip them with knowledge and skills on how to source for market for their produce.

The activity targeted women groups dealing in the production of food crops like maize, soya, beans, G-nuts horticulture and other farmers of honey and coffee. Several farmer groups attended the training, they included; Kyempara Bee Farmers Association dealing in honey

and wax production, Karughe farmers Partnership dealing in the production of maize, coffee, G-nuts and Banana, St. Francis Women Group which deals in production of Maize, beans and G-nuts, Celak Bwera farmers group dealing in production of banana and pineapples, St. Marys Kisanga Women group dealing in G-nuts, coffee, Karughe United Women Farmer group which deals in banana and fruits production and Kyambogho Women Association who produce fruits, maize and G-nuts. The training which was a follow up on the earlier trainings in basic computer



basically discussed how ICT tools can be used in sourcing for market information, on better farming practices, crop pest and diseases management, and new breeds of crops and access.

The training also involved field visits to the farmers' gardens in the area.



According to one Eliza Maguniha a member of Kisanga women group the training was an eye opener *"the training has helped me realize how uninformed we have been. We have for so long been frustrated by price fluctuation and inadequate information on who and where to find good market for our produce, but this training has enlightened us. It has provided us with an opportunity to look for our own markets and to avoid middle men who have been cheating us. We can now deal with buyers from Kampala and bargain thoroughly for better prices"*.

Precisely farmers were introduced to basic skills on how to connect to different buyers of different crops in Uganda. This can be done by using web based platforms like the SMS system e.g. **"go to messages on the phone, type PRICE leave space, name of the COMMODITY OR CROP, leave space NAME OF MARKET and send to 8555"**.

We hope by this new innovation the first of its kind in the region we shall help farmers and or provide direct linkage to market in and outside the region and thus help in the struggle against poverty in the region and Uganda in general.

## **EIFL STAFF VISIT TO RIC-NET LIBRARY PROJECTS**

Monika and Sandra of EIFL, on 24<sup>th</sup> August 2012 visited the Eifl supported RIC-NET Library project at BRIC. The purpose of the visit was to learn about the progress of the project and its impact on the community. Apart from the Library at BRIC, the team also visited RIC-NET



secretariat, the E-society centers at Kabarole and Kasese Districts headquarters and Kabarole Public Library as one of the RIC-NET partners in the region.

At the Public Library the team met Mr. Martin the Librarian, while at the E-society centers, the team met with the E-society center Officers, and the Kasese Deputy Chairperson Local Council five Hon. Muhindo Tadeo.

Hon. Tadeo expressed gratitude to EIFL for choosing to support information sharing in the district and strengthening the knowledge and capacity of farmers to manage crop pests and diseases; which he said was a major threat to crop productivity and household incomes in the region.

In addition to this, the team also interacted with the some of the plant doctors(Asthaluzi and Wilberforce), the BRIC Chairperson Mr. Isingoma Patrick, the Librarian Ms. Kobusingye Lovence and some of the Library users. Other staff that participated in this activity were; the RIC-NET Information Officer-Alice, ICT Officer-Yosia, Community Out-reach Officer- Charles, the RIC-NET Office administrator and the Program manger- Joselyne. More about this story can be got on <http://ric-netnews.blogspot.com/2012/09/eifl-staff-visit-ric-net-library.html>



*Monika and Sandra at the E-Society centre in Kasese*



*Some participants in the activity pose for the photo at BRIC*

# WHO IS WHO IN RIC-NET



*John M. Silco  
RIC-NET Executive Director*



*Joselyne Kyomuhendo,  
Program Manager*



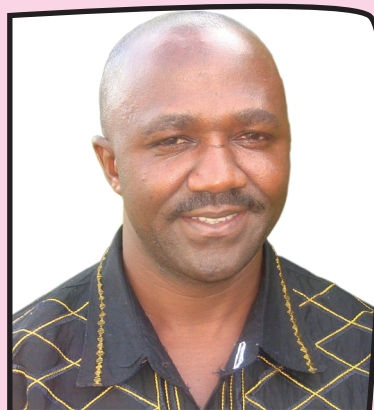
*Geoffrey Rwaheeru,  
Finance Officer*



*Alice Atholere Mbayahi,  
Information & Advocacy Officer*



*Yosia Baluku,  
ICT Officer*



*Geoffrey Muhindo,  
Documentation Officer*



*Sher Charles Kaliba,  
Community Out-reach Officer*





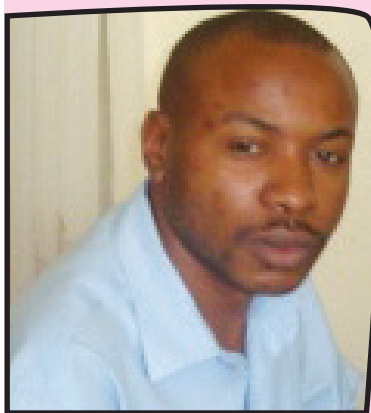
*Emily Asimwe,  
Office Administrator*



*Charles Asimwe,  
Systems Administrator*



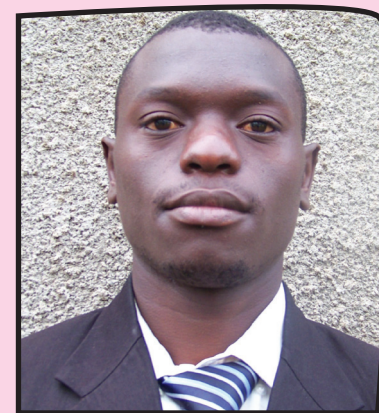
*Samuel Mumbere,  
Assistant ICT Officer,  
In-charge of Kasese  
E-Society Resource Center*



*Elijah Mbusa,  
Assistant ICT Officer,  
In-charge of Bundibugyo  
E-Society Resource Center.*



*Joy Morgan,  
Assistant ICT Officer,  
In-charge of Kamwenge  
E-Society Resource Center*



*Nicholas Ategeka,  
Assistant ICT Officer,  
In-charge of Kabarole  
E-Society Resource Center*



*Lovence Kobusinge,  
Librarian at Busongora  
Rural Information Center  
(BRIC), Kasese*



*Mwerya Scovia,  
Volunteer*



*Percy Kabugho,  
ICT Intern student*

# 2013

## January

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

## February

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28		

## March

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

## April

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

## May

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

## June

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

## July

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

## August

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

## September

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

## October

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

## November

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

## December

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				