



## RWENZORI INFORMATION CENTERS NETWORK

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### TWENTY FIVE WEBSITES AND E-LIBRARIES DEVELOPED BY RIC-NET DEPLOYED AND LAUNCHED

*Baluku Yosia, ICT Officer*

At a colorful ceremony held at Hotel Africana on 14th June 2013, RIC-NET in collaboration with it's partner CEW-IT launched the 25 websites and 25 electronic libraries that RIC-NET has over the year been developing, deploying and introducing them to the users.

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**Note from the Editor**



Hello readers, Greetings from Rwenzori Information Centres Network. Congratulations upon completing the first half of 2013.

And as we look forward to the remaining half, RIC-NET in this publication, Volume I of 2013, would like to share with you its key interventions, and mile stones regis-

tered in this first half of the year. We are grateful to all our stakeholders and partners that have worked with us to accomplish the different activities herein. We invite you to read on, and we hope this Newsletter is to your liking.

We also implore you to share your views, comments and observations with us on; *Email: [info@ricnet.co.ug](mailto:info@ricnet.co.ug), Twitter: [@ricnetnews](https://twitter.com/ricnetnews), Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/ricnet.ricnet>, P.O. Box 916 and Tel: +256382277994, or +256772607149.*

**Alice .M. Atholere**  
Information and Advocacy Officer

**Continued From Page 1**

**District Electronic Library**

1	Ndee	12	Arua
2	Kamwenge	13	Koboko
3	Gulu	14	Hoys
4	Kitgum	15	Yumbe
5	Kiryungu	16	Alturu
6	Hoasa	17	Soroti
7	Luwero	18	Kaberamaadi
8	Kalungala	19	Bundibugye
9	Kiboga	20	Fader
10	Kyegeya	21	Ngora
11	Kabarole District	22	Kaseke District

**District Web Portals**

1	Ndee District	12	Arua District
2	Kamwenge District	13	Koboko District
3	Gulu District	14	Hoys District
4	Kitgum District	15	Yumbe District
5	Kiryungu District	16	Alturu District
6	Hoasa District	17	Soroti District
7	Luwero District	18	Kaberamaadi District
8	Kalungala District	19	Bundibugye District
9	Kiboga District	20	Fader District
10	Kyegeya District	21	Ngora District
11	Kabarole District	22	Kaseke District

*a list of the e-librarie and District Web portals launched*

Under it's EU-HIVOS funded project CEWIT through RIC-NET developed and deployed 25 websites and 25 electronic libraries for five districts in each of the in the five regions of Uganda; Central, Teso, West Nile, Rwenzori and Northern. The project code named "Enhancing Civic Competence for Social Accountability in 25 Districts in five regions of Uganda" aimed at promoting easier access to and sharing of information between local governments and the community. Besides the development and deployment of these on-line platforms,

RIC-NET also trained the respective District leaders in all the five regions on how to use, maintain and manage them. Approximately 15 training sessions were conducted and 90 district staff trained. They included Chief Adminstrative Officers, District Information Officers, District Planners, District secretaries , Staticians, and Population Oficers. During the same trainings, the participants were also oreinted on how to use other social media like Skype, Facebook, Twitter, blogs and Youtube. Participants were

supported to open accounts and also shown how to use them.

Having tested their functionality and user-ability it was time for RIC-NET to officially hand them over to the different districts to manage.

The Launch attracted 50 participants; they included officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of I.C.T, representatives from European Union (EU), Oxfam Novib, District Officials and representatives from the CEW-IT fraternity.

Presiding over the launch as Chief Guest Mr. David Turuho on behalf of the Minister for I.C.T appreciated the work of CSOs in bridging the communication gap between local governments and the community and for their continued collaboration with government bodies.

Besides the websites and electronic libraries, a policy brief paper on the evidence of fruits of the government policies in the Acholi region and the Huduma platform <http://citizens-voice.ug> were also launched. Huduma is a service delivery platform that allows citizens to send/share service delivery challenges with their leaders using the short code 6030.

Evidently, RIC-NET's intervention in enhancing civic competence for social accountability using I.C.T has had an impact in the community, for



*RICNET Executive Director presenting at the launch*

it has facilitated easy access to and sharing of information, strengthened the ICT skills of 90 District leaders in the five regions of Uganda.

For example some leaders in Nebbi and Kyenjojo districts have been able to routinely update their websites and electronic libraries [www.nebbi.go.ug/elibrary](http://www.nebbi.go.ug/elibrary) , [www.kyenjojo.go.ug/elibrary](http://www.kyenjojo.go.ug/elibrary) on their own. This shows that our efforts have been appreciated and proven to add value to the work of the different Local Governments.

Great thanks to EU-HIVOS and DGAP for enabling us to deliver this wonderful service and to the different local governments for welcoming, supporting and owning the initiative.

## STORIES FROM OUR INFORMATION CENTRES AND POINTS

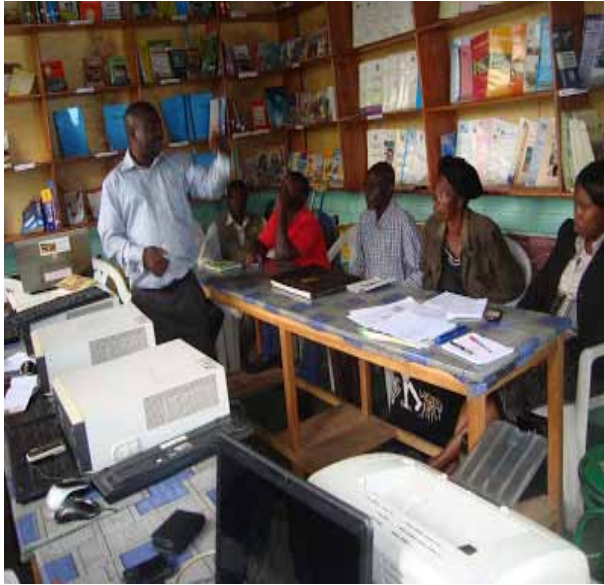
### INFORMATION CENTRES EXHIBIT MORE RESULTS.

Mbayahi Alice Information Officer RIC-NET

In addition to the many results RIC-NET has registered in the recent times, like promoting the use of ICTs, strengthening computer literacy,

reducing crop pests and diseases through plant clinics, Busongora Rural Information Centre (BRIC) has also worked to improve the reading envi-

ronment, culture and attitude of the community towards libraries through the community library at Information Centre. In the same vein RIC-NET learned that the several information points under BRIC had since last year till date engaged in various social accountability activities. And these activities had accordingly paved way for improved service delivery in their respective areas of operation.



*RIC-NET director setting the climate for the meeting*

During the meeting held at BRIC on 09/04/13, members from the information points shared some of these interventions; According to one Kisembo Obadiah from Rwesande Information Centre, the information centre had monitored the performance of the National agriculture and advisory services (NAADS) program in the sub county and found out that the sub county had supplied maize seeds and cassava cuttings to the farmers in late April 2013 after the planting season.

These findings were shared with the Sub county chief and the NAADS Co-ordinator who pledged to meet the beneficiaries in a community meeting to explain and also apologize to the farmers about this mishap.

In addition to this, the Information Centre also appealed to the sub county to improve the road network

in the area with particular focus to the road connecting Rwesande to the main road; accordingly the road was worked on last year.

All deep potholes were covered and the road graded making it easier for the community to connect to the outside world. Meanwhile the Centre also advocated for more health workers at Rwesande HCIV and for an ambulance, all these have been addressed as the HC received over 6 nurses and an ambulance between October and March this year.

On behalf of Muhokya information point the Chairperson Mr. Tushabomwe Saveri revealed that they had been able to accomplish several things with and for the community among which included securing office space at the sub county headquarters as recognition for their good works and relations with the sub county, started up an evening adult literacy class at the sub county for the community.

This is aimed at curbing the illiteracy levels in Muhokya Sub County. In addition to this, the Information point sensitized around 50 persons living with HIV/AIDs (PLHAs) in Kahendero about the importance of taking ARVs. Reports indicate that these people had lost hope in life and ceased to see the relevance in taking medication.

However after the sensitization meetings, over 30 patients resumed their medication and are now in better health carrying on their duties.

In Bugoye Sub County, Bugoye information centre Chairperson Mr. Ndaleghana Samson also informed the meeting that they had devoted all their efforts to educating the farmer community about the management of banana bacterial wilt which has for long frustrated farmers' yields. As a result of this intervention, farmers have finally understood and



*Samson sharing at the meeting*

accepted to cut down the affected banana plants as the first step to managing this disease. On the other hand those who embraced the information earlier have seen great improvement in their plantations and yields. Apparently banana bacterial wilt is gradually becoming a thing of the past in the sub county.

In a related development, Mr. Isemusoro Chairperson Kirembe Information point in Muhokya Sub County also shared how their interventions had seen to better quality coffee, increased yields and returns through bulk marketing. Mr. Isemusoro revealed that the centre staff read the books on the management and control of coffee pests and disease

## **MILESTONES FROM BWERA INFORMATION CENTRE'S (BIC) WORK.**

Baluku Xevario, Information Officer- BIC

Social accountability has been appreciated by the progressive farmers in Bukonzo County Constituency, Kasese district.

Having mainstreamed social accountability in its information packages, a social accountability data base was established and incorporated in BIC's M&E tools. The progressive farmers were retooled and have since participated in sub county budget

received from BRIC and applied the knowledge therein.

As a result the coffee farmers were able to grow and manage their coffee better and mobilize themselves into a group which was able to collect two tones of coffee and sell to great lakes coffee company; Great lakes is known for buying only quality coffee.

This turns out to be quite impressive because unlike in the past, the farmers were able to produce better quality coffee and to also determine how much coffee they produced in a season. These among others are the case stories that the information centre representatives shared during the meeting whose aim was to share what each has been doing in their respective sub counties.

The meeting also aimed at discussing a strategy on how to strengthen the network's social accountability interventions in the District of Kasese. It was agreed that members should embrace proper documentation and reporting of their interventions for further advocacy and sharing.

RIC-NET secretariat pledged to support the different points in this area whenever called upon.

and planning processes. BIC also trained progressive farmers in basic data management, public expenditure monitoring and application of ICT Tools like phones and computers in all their work.

This has allowed for timely information sharing between BIC and the farmers and amongst the farmers themselves and also fostered timely reporting on issues by the farmers.



*BIC Members participating in the budget conference*

Besides the progressive farmers, BIC also trains professionals and intern students in basic computer skills, secretarial work and entrepreneurship. The products from BIC have proven to be well skilled and employable. In the last three years BIC has trained 48 ICT/IT student interns who have excelled in their project work due to the skills attained from BIC.

With support from Book Aid BIC has been able to restock their public library with approximately 300 assorted books on topical issues. With these facilities in place, BIC will continue to be a hub of information in Bukonzo West and East Constituencies.

It's upon this background that BIC and

## **FARMERS IN RWESANDE SUB COUNTY QUESTION THE PROCUREMENT & DISBURSEMENT OF NAADS ENTERPRISES**

Mr. Obadiah Kitembo Chairperson Rwesande Information Point

I wish to thank the Government of Uganda for bringing the NAADS Programme to our District Kasese. Although I still think it is not doing very

the Info Points that were established have contributed to the demystification of the cyber language and web/dot com world.



*School garden master with SNV advisor monitoring the kitchen garden at Nyabugando PS*

On the other hand, BIC has continued to support and promote food security in schools. You have to visit the school gardens that we have established in 19 Primary schools to get the best of parents' contribution to food security in schools. With support from SNV BIC has worked with the community, school management and pupils to boost food security and student's nutrition through kitchen gardens.

These efforts are geared at meeting the 2015 MDG targets of improving the status of service delivery in health, education, water and agriculture.

well as expected especially when it comes to procuring the farmers' inputs. Being an information point involved

in dissemination of information to the community and in monitoring service delivery in the sub county, we received complaints from the community and from some farmers that we deal with that the procurement of this year's enterprises was not clear to them.

This prompted us to follow up the matter with the office of Sub County Chief and Sub County NAADS Coordinator. They informed us that; government had disbursed 750, 000 shillings for buying heifers (milk cows) in this financial year of 2012-2013 for 8 eight farmers but when it came the District Production Officer advised them that a good heifer costs 1,000, 000 shillings; and so they asked those farmers to contribute 346, 000 shillings each which totaled to 1096, 000shillings.

On counting it was clear that the procurement would cost 1000,000 net, inquiring what 96, 000 shillings balance will be used for, the NAADS Coordinator told them that it would cater for the 46, 000 shillings co-funding fee. With a balance of 50000shillings and no explanation to what it was also going to do, the farmers felt cheated. Adding salt to injury the farmers were not satisfied with the quality of the cows brought for them.

According to them the heifers were small and of poor quality. Actually one of the farmers

## HOW RELEVANT IS THE ACCESS TO INFORMATION (ATI) ACT

The Access to Information Act (ATI) is instrumental in empowering the public to effectively scrutinize & participate in government decision making processes that affect them and to protect persons disclosing evidence of contravention of the law.

Mr. Jeremiah noted that he had bought for himself a "pregnant" and better quality heifer at only 960, 000 shillings. This revelation got farmers wondering how the NAADS officials could have bought for them the allegedly poor quality heifers at 1000, 000 shillings each.

In addition to this, only six out of the eight farmers received their cows at the promised time of delivery while other two (Biryandi and Nehemia) were kept waiting for over two months till they together with other farmers made 'noise' and they were finally delivered to them. On the other hand, we also learnt that in April 2013 NAADS enterprises (maize seeds and cassava cuttings) had been supplied late after the planting period. And as a result most farmers had improvised and bought their own seeds and cuttings.

I wonder what kind of accountability the officials submitted to their seniors after failing the project down here. Anyhow I still think there ought to be some kind of explanation to all these alleged anomalies.

And it is this that Rwesande Information Point together with the farmers in question is working on, following up further with the sub-county NAADS Coordinator to establish the reasons and factual truth about these anomalies; and be sure to get the feedback in the next RIC-NET bulletin.

Speaking at the one day training in ATI Patrick Tumwine a board member of Africa freedom of Information Centre noted that Access to information is a right that can only be exercised by demanding for information.

He also noted that Access to informa-



*Patrick speaking at the meeting.*

tion is not a media law but a law for every citizen to demand for their entitlements and it is guaranteed by the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda.

The one day training organized by Africa freedom of Information Centre (AFIC) was held at Jerusalem hotel on 10th April 2013. Africa freedom of Information Centre is a Pan African organization that promotes the right to access to information. The right to access to information paves way for an efficient, effective, transparent government.

The purpose of the training was to introduce and or refresh the participants on the importance of the ATI and to create understanding on its different provisions therein.

During the training participants (who included CSO organizations operating in Fort portal and the Kabarole district local government staff) were taken through various topics; they ranged from the ATI and its importance, the different provisions in the ACT, how to use it and the relationship between access to information and the advancement of socio-economic rights.

In his sharing Patrick gave an overview of the ATI Act. Among others he mentioned that in seeking for infor-

mation, the law provides that if the information sought for is not provided within 21 days, it passes for denial of information and in that case stern measures can be taken against the person that failed to provide the information.

Explaining the relationship between access to information and the advancement of socio-economic rights, the facilitator and Program Officer of Africa freedom of Information Centre Mr. Peter Nsekengi mentioned that the ATI Act creates conditions in which government policies about resource allocation are challenged. Peter noted that according to a UNDP report effective anti-poverty programs require accurate information on problems hindering development to be in the public domain. He added that without adequate and authentic information one can't form an opinion on the allocation of district resources as individuals or as CSOs.

In advocating for socio-economic rights it's important to understand that the ACT provides means to seek explanation as to why decisions have been taken by whom and with what consequences.

Summing up his presentation Peter strongly asserted that without information one cannot advocate for policy change, calling upon all CSOs and individuals to update themselves with the ATI Act if they must realize results in policy advocacy.

Closing the training the Kabarole District Information Officer, Lillian Nkwenge thanked AFIC for the training.

She noted many times CSOs have not utilized her office for information, wondering what information they use to guide their implementation in the district. Among others she decried the poor reading culture of the citizens that she said is the biggest hin-





*Lillian giving her Closing remarks.*

drance to access to information.

Lillian however noted that there is need for massive popularization of the ATI Act through the mass media.

The District Information Officer appealed to the CSOs and all other development partners to incorporate this into their work plans.

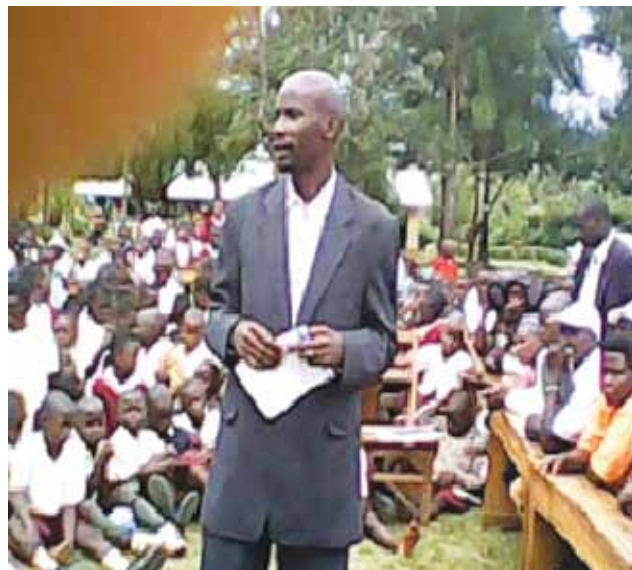
## ACTIVITY NEWS BRIEFS

### *Civil Society Organizations In The Rwenzori Region Launch Lunch Campaign*

In the bid to fight hunger and boost improved academic performance in UPE schools in Kabarole, CSOs in Kabarole District: Kabarole Research and Resource Centre, Rwenzori Information Centers Network, Rwenzori Anti -Corruption Coalition, AHURIO, Ride Africa, KANCA and JESE on 29th April 2013 launched a regional lunch campaign at Kiboota primary school, Kabarole district under the theme "Increasing Stakeholders' fulfillment of Obligations as a key Milestone for achieving Lunch in Schools, reduced corruption and accountable leadership".

The campaign that included an interface meeting was chaired by the head master Kibota Primary School Mr. Karuhanga Francis. It was attended by a cross section of stakeholders

like the school management committee, PTA, parents, children and CSOs. This launch follows parents' continued failure to provide lunch for their



*Patrick of KRC Speaking at the Campaign meeting*

children due to the misconception that government is responsible for everything about their children's education under the UPE program and either due to negligence.

In Kibota primary for instance, members learnt that only 400 out of the 1010 pupils pack lunch from home while the remaining 6010 pupils go hungry every day. This has gravely impacted on the children's health and academic performance and or even forced some to drop out of school.

### *ICT Wave Finally Sweeps Across Kyegegwa, Ntoroko And Kyenjojo Districts*

The ICT wind has not left Kyenjojo, Kyegegwa and Ntoroko Districts the same; between January and June 2013 RIC-NET finally set up E-society



*RICNET Executive Director facilitating at one of the trainings*

centres in these districts, developed and deployed websites; [www.kyegegwa.go.ug](http://www.kyegegwa.go.ug), [www.kyenjojo.go.ug](http://www.kyenjojo.go.ug), [www.ntoroko.go.ug](http://www.ntoroko.go.ug), and Blogs for these districts.

Pre-launch meetings were also organized to educate the participants who were mainly heads of departments, Political leaders and CSO representatives on what an E-Society Centre is and how it operates.

In the same meetings participants

Delivering their message the CSOs appealed to all stakeholders, development partners, other CSOs, government and especially the parents to support the children for a better future. It was recommended that all parents pay 10000 shillings to the school which will in return provide lunch for the pupils.

were taught on how to use the deployed on-line platforms and other social media like Skype, face book, twitter and Youtube. The participants were excited about the initiative and training in Kyegegwa for instance the District planner Mr.Kutesa Andrew noted that the district will continue supporting the initiative, while in Ntoroko the CAO Mr. Ashaba Allan remarked that "I am optimistic that this is going to foster faster and easier sharing and access to information and also provide my staff an opportunity to improve their computer skills.

In Kyenjojo the Information Officer





*RIC-NET staff setting up the centre in Kyenjojo*

Mr. Kamara appreciated RIC-NET for establishing such a big project in the district, adding that the project will enable timely information sharing with the entire community.

Approximately 50 people Participated in the pre-launch meetings and since the establishment a good number of

people have so far visited the Centers and also been trained. For example in Ntoroko district 408 have visited and used the centre while 93 have so far been trained.

With internet connectivity in place, on-line platforms deployed and members trained on how to use them, coupled with the placement of IT staff at these ESCs to manage them and also support the districts, RIC-NET left the districts jubilating and grateful for the collaboration between them and RWECO through RIC-NET.

Just like the already established centers, Kyegegwa, Ntoroko and Kyenjojo will offer free computer literacy trainings, free Internet Access, updates of online platforms (websites, e-libraries) and subsidized secretarial services.

### ***Church Choirs And Boda-Boda Cyclists To Become U-Reporters.***

In a meeting conducted at RIC-NET boardroom on 19th February 2013, the RIC-NET staff; Program Manager, Information Officer and Administrative Secretary together with the U-report Program Officer – Caroline Barebwoha appreciated that as much as the U-report database had increased to 215,502 in the country, there is still need to recruit more u-reporters given the various silent service delivery challenges in the community.

The meeting whose purpose was to share RIC-NET’s work plan for U-report activities and ideas on how U-report/ UNICEF can support RIC-NET and also work even better discussed several things ranging from conducting routine u-report trainings in the community, targeting already established/ organized groups in the community such as church choirs, boda-boda cy-

clists associations and academic institutions, running radio jingles on u-report to create more awareness about the platform, engaging active U-reporters in the region in the different U-report activities organized by RIC-NET, liaising with radio presenters to promote U-report during



*Carol of UNICEF (in red) in a meeting with staff at RICNET*

their programs to putting up village phones for youths without phones to use for reporting among others.

A work plan of how these activities will be implemented was developed and will soon be implemented.

### *Information Centres Visited and Supported In Social Accountability*

With the determination to improve the implementation of social accountability by the Information Centres, RIC-NET in February and March 2013 set out to visit and technically support the information centres.



*RICNET staff in a meeting with CIS BoD and staff at CIS*

Five information Centres Kamwenge communities information centre (KACOICE) Bwera information centre (BIC) Busongora rural information centre (BRIC), Semuliki Information Centre (CIS) and Kyaka Information Centre (KRIC) During the meetings RIC-NET learnt that the information Centres had been doing a thing or two under social accountability for instance the team learnt that in Kamwenge District

KACOICE caused a meeting with the Town Council to account to the citizenry on the non-functionality of Kyabyoma gravity water flow scheme and was following up with the leadership to ensure that the action points from the meeting are satisfactorily

This strategy at the end of the day will see to the recruitment of more U-reporters and increased reporting on service delivery issues as well as give a consequent boost to the U-report profile in the Rwenzori region.

addressed, while in Kasese Bwera Information had followed up on the incomplete classroom block at Muhindi primary school causing a meeting between the community/school and the district leadership and a recall of the contractor to complete unfinished block.

At Busongora Rural Information Centre the restocked community library in place was helping farmers and students access agricultural related information that was helping them control crop pests and diseases and also fight poverty and hunger.

In Bundibugyo the team learnt that CIS had monitored the quality of ART services at the HIV clinic and established several unhealthy things which they shared with the In-Charge.



*group photo of ricnet staff and KACOICE members at KACOICE*

On the other hand the team learnt that Kyaka Rural Information Centre had relocated from town to Kibira.

Besides this RIC-NET supported the Information centres how to monitor and report on social accountability, basic financial management and accountability.

The Information Centres were also encouraged to strengthen their engagements/interventions based on the Lo-

cal Government plans and budgets, and to involve partners implementing related work.

These meetings were participated in by the Information Centres' Information Officers, Coordinators, BoD Chairpersons, Treasurers, Secretaries and the RIC-NET staff and were conducted at these Centres. Approximately twenty five (25) people participated in this activity.

### *RICNET Plant Clinics Receive new Clinic Kits*

Under its plant clinic project, RIC-NET received two plant clinic kits from Plant wise Uganda to support the plant Clinic operations in Bundibugyo and Kasese Districts. The kits comprised of tent, seats, table, lenses, clinical coats, disposal bins, log book and modem.

These kits were received by the plant doctors Asaba Wilberforce and Biira Rosette for Kasese and Baridi Hassan for Bundibugyo.

According to Asaba Wilberforce the kit has made their work more comfortable to execute for example the tent now provides shelter from the scorching sun and the modem has

made information sharing and research faster.

In addition to this RIC-NET staff also participated in two workshops on plant clinic establishment and plant diagnosis held at Lesuix hotel in Fort Portal. Apart from acquiring more knowledge and skills in plant diagnosis and information sharing, RIC-NET also supported Plantwise in video documentation of the workshop proceedings.

RIC-NET is grateful to Plantwise Uganda for the continued support and partnership.

### *RICNET Boosts its Human Resource Capacity*

With a great mandate and large area of operation it is important for RIC-NET to have a strong human resource base.

In addition to the routine in-house training of staff in several things like use of ICT platforms, audio-visual documentation, social accountability to mention but a few; RIC-NET in the months of May and June supported 10 staff for an M&E Certificate course at Mountains of the Moon University. Staff had their knowledge in monitor-

ing and evaluation enhanced especially in the areas of monitoring and reporting on projects, and tracking of project results. Apparently the quality of monitoring reports especially capturing of project results is being seen to improve.

In a related development, two staff (Mugume Shaban and Masika Bridget) were recruited to support the existing team and to also manage the new E-society Centres in Ntoroko and Kyegegwa Districts respectively.

An ICT volunteer Biira Milly was also brought on Board.

On the other hand two of the RICNET staff (Alice Atholere and Kiiza Joy Mogan) were able to graduate with a Masters degree in International relations and diplomatic studies from Makerere University in January and a Bachelors Degree in Information Technology from Uganda Pentecostal University in March.

In addition to this, two other staff Mumbere Samuel and Masika Bridget are currently undertaking a Certified Certificate in Networking Associate (CCNA) at Makerere University.

## INTERNSHIP PLACEMENT AN OPPORTUNITY TO PROVE YOUR WORTH

*Kyomuhendo Joselyne, Program Manager*

The experience of relating and supervising internship students over the years has taught me that a lot more is needed in this area if we are to have a more productive human resource with practical touch from the university. Rwenzori Information Centres Network offers an average of 10 internship placements annually for students in tertiary institutions and university both at local and international levels.



*RICNET Information officer orienting an intern student on the basics of writing and reporting*

Over the years, students have come from universities in the Netherlands, Uganda and Fort-portal town noting that there are two universities (UPU & MMU) where majority of internship applications are received.

An internship placement is an opportunity where a student can prove her/his worth in the organization and also be able to acquire several skills. I still believe it goes back to the student's interest to learn.

One can never stop wondering if students know that once you are searching for a placement it's as good as saying here are my skills, abilities and knowledge for which I should be taken on, in reality an intern application is as relevant as a job application and thus adequate preparation and critical choice in terms of the institution to your placement should be done.

I believe the students can go beyond the limits by:

### **KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR PLACEMENT**

#### **1. Preparing in advance:**

this takes into consideration the course a student is pursuing and the aspirations attached to it, the related institutions and departments. It's important to find out from the NGOs around and outside the university that the student desires to work for, and if at all there are opportunities for placements. For some organizations, an excellent intern can pave way for a job placement especially when the student has proved to add value to the organization.

## **2. Writing a good application:**

Even though the universities write to the possible organizations requesting internship placements for their students, a student's application is a must to clearly bring out the abilities of the student and the desired areas of learning.

## **3. Take note of the competition:**

Due to the limited resources, opportunities are also limited. It is important to know that organizations have limits on the number of intakes. So the earlier the student applies for their placement and the smarter/cleverer they are in doing it, the better for them.

I have seen students seeking for placement midway the recommended time, or come in groups to seek placement while some have gone ahead to send their parents and friends to find them placements verbally. This is not good.

## **4. Follow the regulations/ existing policies:**

Every organization has regulations that guide their daily business. Every intern must take note of this and strive to abide by them even though the student does not get a salary; there are definitely other benefits that they stand to get at the end of the day like future

recommendation for a job.

It is important for the intern student to know that their supervisors take note of all the good and bad things that they do per day. To the students who miss out some days of work without genuine reasons it should be known that if in future you require a recommendation from any organization you have worked in, the supervisor will recommend based on your previous conduct.

## **5. Have a target and always share it:**

Before you report for your placement always have a clear list of the things you intend or would like to learn from that institution and in line with your course. And as you report to the organization take the time to share what you would like to learn BUT do not be rigid, use that time to learn other useful things as well like how other departments work and how they can relate or impact on your field of work because one day you will be required to work with more than one department.

## **6. Make use of all the available opportunities:**

Make the best of every new day to learn a new thing or understand something better or to offer something.

When given an assignment never look at it as a test but as an opportunity to learn, and where you do not understand ask for guidance. I've seen some interns fail to interact freely on official matters with their supervisors and other staff members which is not good as it limits interpersonal skills yet it's a key skill in aspects of life.

## **7. Write and share a report:**

Having been awarded a placement care to always write a report of what you did, what you learnt and think about the organization in terms of it's future interventions. Find it within your interest to do this to also appreciate that organization for that placement opportunity.

Who knows your report could inform management on their unknown weaknesses and strengths or guide their future interventions and maybe act as a point of future reference or interaction because people always meet.

## VOICES FROM OUR INTERNS AND VOLUNTEERS

Am Biira Milly; I've a diploma of Information Technology from the Uganda Pentecostal University Fort Portal. I am glad to have done my internship training with Bundibugyo E-society Centre through RIC-NET, where I acquired several skills; termination of cables, networking, reporting, administration and communication skills. I am currently volunteering with RIC-NET and excited about my experience here. I appeal to all intern-students to take their placements serious.

My name is Kenya Evelyn, a third year student of Mountains of the Moon University pursuing Bachelors Degree in Social and Community Development.

During my internship placement that started in June, I've been able to learn how to share information both locally and electronically, communication, social interactions, and writing skills as well as computer skills.

I am sure the things I've learnt have given me an advantage to adequately compete for job placements when the time comes.



My name is Kabugho Robinah from Ndejje University. I am a first year student of Journalism and Mass communication. My placement at RIC-NET started mid June and goes on til end of July. So far I've been able to learn how to develop news stories and also share them on the RIC-NET blog, <http://ric-netnews.blogspot.com/2013/06/help-patients-at-buhinga-hospital-ask.html>.

During this period I hope to learn several things how to write and edit news stories, how to write reports, capture and edit videos, photography, use ICT and social media to share information and other ICT platforms.

I thank the staff for the routine support and guidance.

Kabugho Harriet is my name. I school at Mountains of the Moon University pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Information Technology.

I am grateful to RIC-NET for the placement. Among others I've learnt how to use different social media like Skype, twitter, bulk sms, and youtube. I've also learnt networking and computer maintenance and the basics of video capturing and editing. I am glad that RIC-NET gave me the opportunity to train with them. I must admit I've learnt a lot and this will certainly help me in future.

I am Muhindo Strida, a student of Uganda Christian University pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Information Technology.

I am currently doing my internship training at RIC-NET and I've learnt how to install software like windows, do computer assembling and maintenance, cloning, trunking, termination of cables, scanning, typing, photocopying and sharing of information on different social media like Skype, Face book twitter, youtube, and bulk sms among others. I am grateful to RIC-NET for the opportunity and their hospitality.

## HOW THE WEB BLOG TRANSFORMED MY ORGANIZATION'S STORY

Mr. Kiima Charles, Executive Director- RRHS

Rwenzori Rural Health Services (RRHS) is a community based organization (CBO) whose vision is to see every house hold having all the health amenities, acceptable health records and reduced morbidity and mortality rates in the community. In the bid to boost its capacity, skills and knowledge on community service, RRHS networks with several likeminded organizations. In the same vein, we reached out to RIC-NET to support us in the development and use of on-line platforms and other social media. The purpose of which was to acquire skills in the same to allow for a wider and faster sharing of information about RRHS activities with the outside world and to also match with the current IT trends, aka dot.com society.

I desperately wanted to have a website for my CBO and to learn how it operates. I pestered RIC-NET Director Mr. John Silco to orient me in this because I had previously seen him working on the Website for Kasese District. John later invited me to the E-Resource Centre at Kasese District Head quarters and introduced me to one ICT Officer Samuel Mukamba to me teach me what I needed to learn.

While at the E-Society Centre I learnt how to develop and use a web blog; I actually started with developing one for RRHS; <http://rrhkasese.blogspot.com> and also uploaded relevant organizational information and activity photos on it. Little did I know that this was the beginning of great visibility and growth for RRHS. It was our turning point as an organization. Immediately International friends and organizations started contacting us.

They thanked us for our interventions, and expressed interest in supporting us. For starters RRHS got a lot of on-line technical guidance from one Jim Chapman a project consultant based in the USA. Jim's guidance helped us in refocusing and improving our interventions

for the better.

We later received 363,000shillings from Mithai Avondestonet in the USA for community rural medication free supply Program. With this we were able to extend free medical services to a bigger number in the community. As usual results were documented and shared on the blog.

From our routine sharing another partner supported RRHS with 3,500.000 shillings for renovation of water springs in Rukoki sub county. This was aimed at improving access to safe and clean water by the community.



The pace had been set, many more institutions and persons that accessed our blog reached out to us and supported our different community I interventions; Volunteers without boundaries in the USA donated 10,000,000 shillings for starting a mini gravity flow scheme to run approximately 4.5 kilometers in Nyakabingo Village, Rukoki Sub County; meanwhile another partner donated approximately 12,000,000 million shillings for constructing a water reservoir tank to feed into the gravity flow scheme; in Oct 2011 the Dutch Organization too donated 14,000,000 million shillings to construct a rural maternity centre.

Other support was received from SNV.

This offers capacity building to RHS in its advocacy for clean and safe water, improved sanitation and hygiene in ten primary schools in Kasese District.

I am grateful to RIC-NET for equipping me with the knowledge and skills in the use of on-line platforms and social media that have enabled me to share our work and also attract support from all the above partners and more.

RRHS is equally grateful to all its partners and funders for their interest in it and support given, without which it would not have been able to cause positive impact in the community, and also register the various achievements.

Among others RRHS is particularly

grateful to the Foundation for Community Development and Empowerment (FCDE) in USA for awarding it a Certificate of acknowledgement of its good performance in community work.

Apart from attracting funders, RRHS has also been instrumental in passing on these skills and knowledge to other institutions for instance it guided Miriam Medical Centre to develop and regularly update its weblog; <http://miriam-medicalcentre.blogspot.com/>; which accordingly has in return enhanced the centre's visibility on the services offered. I appeal to everyone to dedicate their efforts to community service and to value regular sharing of information using ICTs because the world seems to have moved in this direction as opposed to the traditional methods.

### Key Photos from our work



Rwenzori Information Centres Network

**RIC-NET MEMBER COUNTY INFORMATION CENTRES****Busongora Rural Information Centre (BRIC)**

Located in BaseCamp Kasese,  
Kilembe Road Opp. Spring International Hotel  
Email: [johnordisef@gmail.com](mailto:johnordisef@gmail.com),  
Tel: +256 772 391521

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**Bwera Information Centre (BIC)**

Plot 4 Bwera, Hospital Road,  
P.O Box 507  
E-mail; [bicbwera@yahoo.com](mailto:bicbwera@yahoo.com),  
Tel: +256 392707151, +256 772977740

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**Kabarole Information Centre (KIC)**

Located in Kabarole Town.  
E-mail: [kabaroleinfo@yahoo.com](mailto:kabaroleinfo@yahoo.com)  
Tel: +256779584602

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**Kyaka Rural Information Centre (KRIC)**

Located in Kyegegwa Town Council  
E-mail: [tovixy@yahoo.com](mailto:tovixy@yahoo.com),  
Tel: +256782885823

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**Mwenge Rural Information Centre (MRIC)**

Located in Nyantungo Sub County,  
Off Kamwenge Road at Defora Offices.  
E-mail: [mric.ricnet@gmail.com](mailto:mric.ricnet@gmail.com)/[renniemonica@gmail.com](mailto:renniemonica@gmail.com)  
Tel: +256779584602, +256776204185

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**Kamwenge Communities Information Center (KACOICE)**

Located in Kamwenge Town at KABECOS Offices  
Tel: +256773108080

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**Semuliki Information Centre (CIS)**

Located in Harugale Sub County,  
Bundibugyo District.  
E-mail: [baridihassan@gmail.com](mailto:baridihassan@gmail.com)  
Tel: +256779584602