THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

October, 2020

Policy brief: A framework for the Establishment of community multipurpose telecenters in Karamoja sub region

Executive Summary

In Uganda's development history, Karamoja region remains the least socially and economically developed with 61% of the total population living in absolute poverty (UNFPA, 2018). The poor information amenities and lack of access to information are the major causes of rising illiteracy levels in the Karamoja sub region (Global Poverty Report 2000), which creates an information gap between Karamoja and the rest of Uganda (Mbeta, 2018) This project intended to design a framework for the establishment of Community Multipurpose Telecenters (CMTs) in Karamoja Sub Region, which are ICT4D innovations that transform rural communities by bridging the digital divide gap that exists between them and urban centers. In the first phase, the project conducted a study that identified the community information needs, factors affecting telecenter establishment and gathered requirements necessary for telecenters establishment in Karamoja sub region. The second phase is intended to implement telecenters and mobilize resources for its sustainability. The findings of this study inform policymakers at all levels the urgency of establishing community multipurpose telecenters in Karamoja sub region.

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Methodology

The study adopted a mixed research approach with multiple case study design in six districts of Karamoja sub region (Abim, Amudat, Kotido, Moroto, Nakapiripirit and Napak). The study benchmarked Nakaseke telecenter for the best Telecenter practices. A pre-visit that pretested data collection tools, mapped study sites, selected and trained field guides was conducted. A total of 728 respondents were involved in the study who were purposefully and conveniently selected from the six districts with 84.7% of the respondents coming from the community and 15.3% district leaders, health workers, Education officers, and NGOs workers

Findings

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Distribution by category of respondent: majority 84.7% of respondents was from the community and only 15.3% from district leaders, health workers, Education officers, and NGOs.

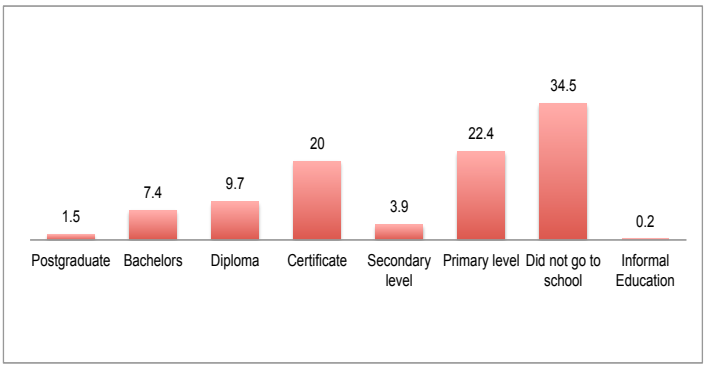
Table 1: Respondents' Age and Gender Distribution

Age group	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
10 – 20	7.6	6.1	13.7
21 – 25	16.2	17.9	34.1
30 – 40	8.8	16.9	25.7
41 - 50	8.1	9.1	17.2
Above 50	4.1	4.8	8.9
Age not specified	0.8	1.7	2.5
Total	55.0	45.0	100

As indicated in table 1 above, majority 34.1% of the respondents were the youth aged between 21-25 years out of which 17.9% were male and 16.2% were female. The adult youth constituted 25.7% while elders beyond 50 years 23.1%. This could partly be attributed to the fertility rate of Ugandan women (Worldometer, 2020)

However, **overall** female representation (55%) in the study was more than male (45%).

Figure 1: Education Characteristics of Respondents



As indicated in figure1, majority of the respondents had not gone to school (34.5%) while 22.4% had stopped at primary level and only 3.9% had finished up to secondary level. 0.2% had attained some form of informal training, 37.1% attained a certificate, diploma or degree. However, only 1.5% had postgraduate degree.

Figure 2: Frequency of Migration

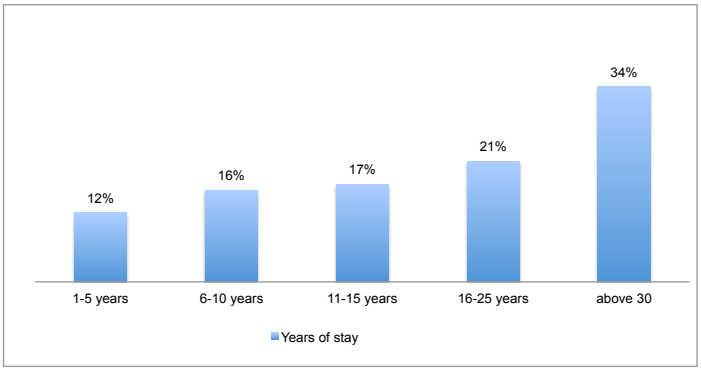


Figure 2 above, shows the frequency in migration of respondents. It was revealed that overall, 34% of respondents had not migrated to other locations for the

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last 30 years while only 12% had migrated and settled in new places in the last 5 years. It was established that a few who migrated mainly did so in search for pasture for their catle leaving behind their families settled in Manyatas

Table 2: Respondents Source of Livelihood

Source	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
Livestock farming and crop Production	0.8	38.4	39.2
Petty business	12.4	11.3	23.7
Salary	2.8	4.9	8.7
Local Brew	5.8	2.6	8.3
Not working	-	4.7	4.7
Didn't indicate source	-	2.6	2.6
Mining	0.4	0.4	0.8
Boda-boda riding	-	0.6	0.6
Research and Education	-	0.6	0.6
Health Sector	0.4	-	0.4
Entertainment	0.2	-	0.2
Total	28.4	69.1	100

Table 2 indicates that majority 39.2% of respondents acquire their income through livestock farming and crop production and the biggest number is male 38.4% compared to their 0.8% female counterparts. However, majority 12.4% of female respondents engaged in petty businesses that bring in daily income compared to 11.3% of male.

Interestingly, 4.7% of male respondents were not engaged in any income

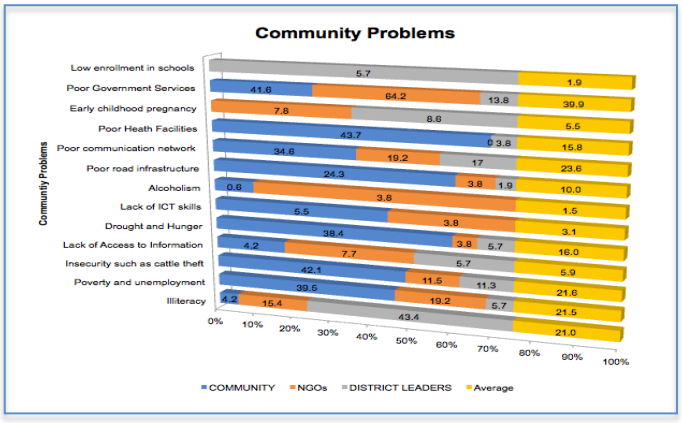
Table 3: Community Meeting Places

Meeting place	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
Shrines	9.7	16.0	25.7
Village Meetings	7.7	8.3	6.0
Religious Places	7.3	8.3	15.7
Social Gatherings	5.4	5.4	10.9
Cattle Grazing	2.2	4.6	6.8
Manyattas	3.2	3.4	6.6
Schools	2.3	3.1	5.8
Traditional Ceremonies	1.2	1.2	2.4
Subcounty Headquarters	0.3	0.5	0.8
Public Library	0.3	0.4	0.7

Table 3 reveals that majority (25.7%) of the respondents' meet at the shrines and 16% of them are male. It was established that respondents rarely meet at a public library. Interestingly, 2.2% female respondents indicated that they meet at the crazing field. This explains how hard working the female

Information Needs of the People of Karamoja sub region

Figure 3: Community Problems



As indicated in figure 3, respondents indicated that the biggest challenge they face as a community is related to poor health facilities 50.6%. 39.5% reported poor

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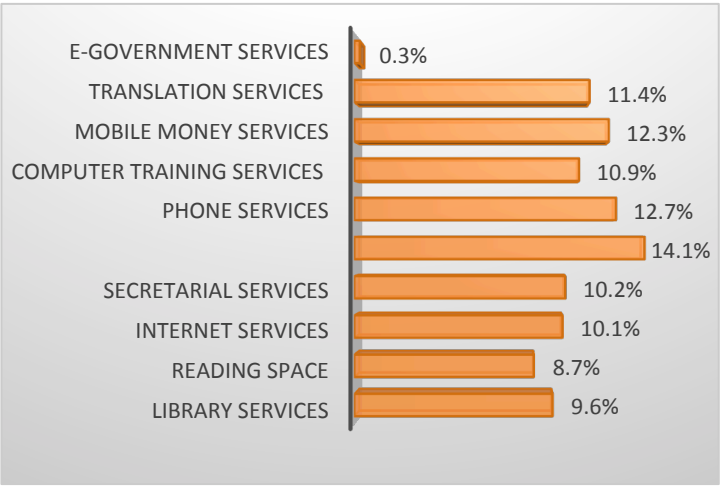
government services, 38.4% poor communication networks, 21.6% insecurity, 21.5% poverty, while 21% illiteracy

Interestingly only,
5.5% saw early childhood pregnancy and 5.9% lack of access to information as problems within the community.

It was established that different categories of users (the community (youth, elderly, women, men, boys and girls, traders, and shepherds), district leaders, health workers, education officers and community based and non Governmental organisations) had varying information needs. However, majority of respondents identified information on government services (provision and access), farming and crop production, health and food security, education including availability of scholarships, environment (protection), social services, financial information management, sports and entertainment, library and information services, secretarial services, ICT and computer services, phone repair and maintenance, HIV and AIDs information as the most common pressing information needs of all categories of respondents in Karamoja sub region.

Figure 4: Telecenter Services Needed



Respondents were asked to indicate the services they would like the telecenter to provide and as indicated in figure 4 above, majority (14.1%) preferred community radio and TV services. This was followed by 12.7% phone services, 12.3% Mobile Money Services, 11.4% Translation services, 10.9% Computer Training Services, 10.2% Secretarial Services, 10.1% Internet services. 9.6% Library and Information Services, and 8.7% read space. Only 0.3% of respondents reported that they needed the telecenter to provide e-government services.

On whether a public library existed within the region, the study revealed that there existed a single public library in the entire sub region (Moroto Public Library) that had also turned into a conference hall ((Chimpreports), n.d.; (URN), 2017; Daily), n.d.). This has entrenched illiteracy and poverty within the region.

Figure 6: Willingness to Pay for Telecenter Services

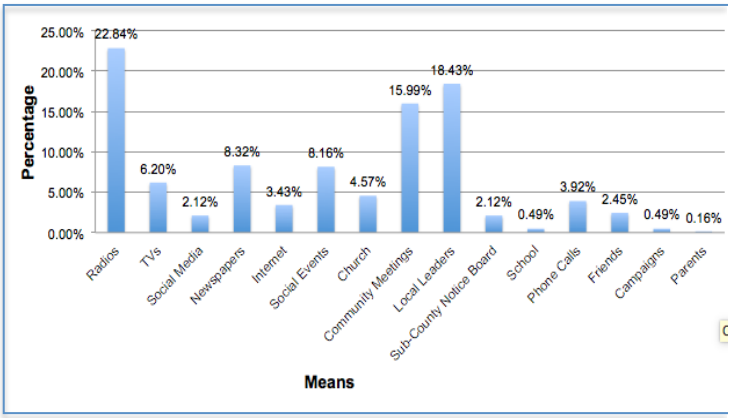


Figure 6 above indicates that 55% of the respondents are willing to pay for telecenter services once established. However, **78.6%** cannot afford to pay for telecenter information services. 66% indicated that they want government to pay for them while only 2% indicated the telecenter user h/herself.

Factors affecting Telecenter Establishment in Karamoja sub region

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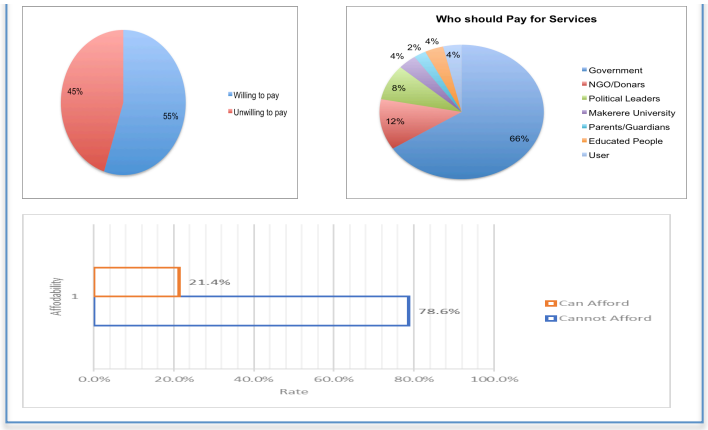
Table 5: Respondents Knowledge of a Telecenter

Category of Respondent	Yes	No
District Leaders	38.2	61.8
Education Officers	35.3	64.7
Community	0.5	99.5
Heath Workers	40	60
Total	28.4	71.5

The study indented to reveal if respondents of all categories understood and knew what a telecenter was. As table 5 above shows, on average **71.5%** had never heard about telecenters while only **28.4%** had ever. Even those who had ever heard about telecenters (28.4%), **80.6%** were not certain about their description, purpose and services Telecenters provide in addressing community information needs and problems.

However, on whether community respondents could access Internet through their mobile phones, majority 90% reported that their phones couldn't access Internet

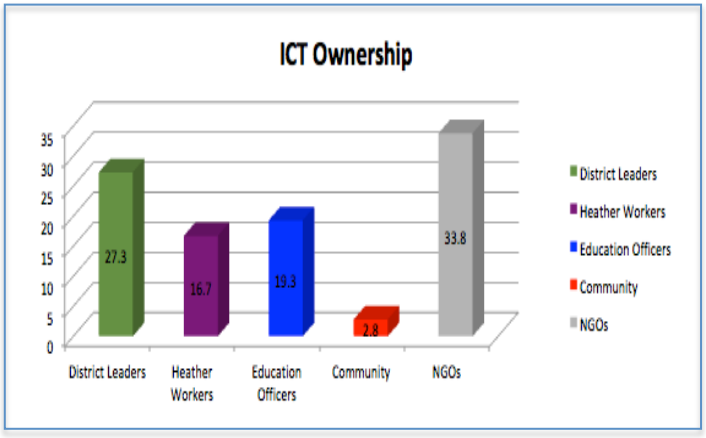
igure 7: How Respondents know about government programmes and ervices



The study sought to reveal how the people in Karamoja sub region get to know about government programmes and services. Figure 7 above indicates that, overall, 22.8% of respondents get to know about government services and programmes through the community radio, 18.4% through their local leaders (like among others the village chairmen and LC 3 chairpersons), 16% village/community meetings, 8.3% newspapers, 6.2% TVs, 4.6% Church announcements, 3.9% phone calls, 3.4% Internet, 2.4% friends, 2.1% noticeboards at subcounty headquarters and social media such as Facebook and WhatsApp and 0.5% through schools. The small percentage social media and Internet means ICT penetration in the region is still low.

Interestingly, 0.5% of respondents get to know about government programmes and services through political campaigns

Figure 8: ICT Ownership



In addition, the study sought to reveal ICT ownership especially radios, TV and phones. Interestingly, **87.7%** of the community respondents indicated that they owned a mobile phone. However, **90%** of these phones are not smart and so cannot connect to the Internet. Even the 10% is not owned by the community rather NGO, Education Officers, district leaders and health workers.

Whether there are radio stations within the Karamoja sub region, the study established that five radio stations existed within the sub region. These are currently operating in Moroto, Nakapiripirit, Abim and Kotido. Apparently there are no radio services in Napak and Amudat. ***Interestingly, In Amudat specifically; people***

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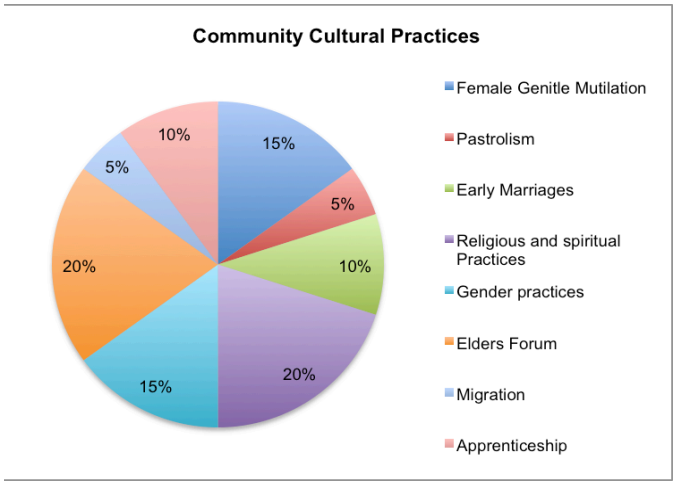
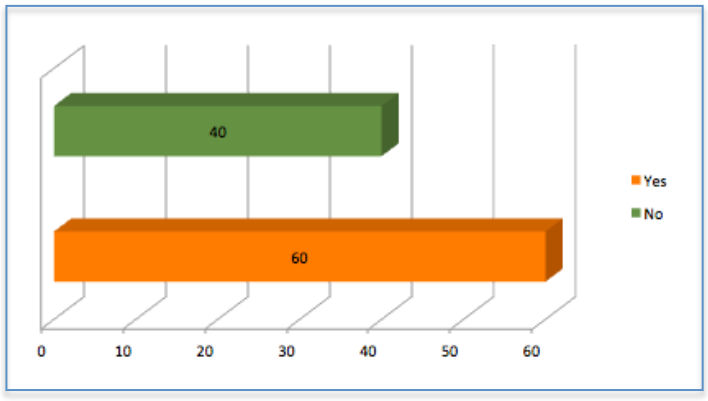
receive Kenyan content since the available radio network comes from Kenya.

Figure 9: Cultural Practices that may affect Telecenter Establishment



The study further sought to understand the likely cultural practices to affect the establishment of community telecenters in Karamoja sub region. Figure 9 indicate that, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and other gender related prohibitions are the most likely cultural practices to affect telecenter establishment in Karamoja sub region while 20% of them indicated elders' forums, 15% religious and spiritual practices, 10% early marriages and 10% apprenticeship

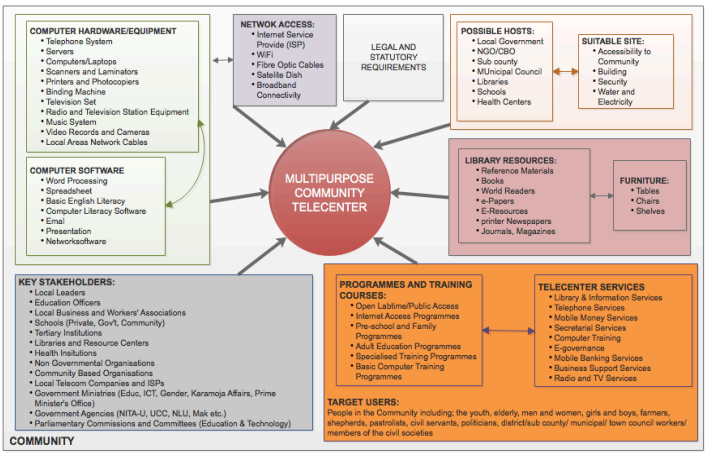
Figure 10: Failed Government Programmes



The study sought to establish if there existed any government project that has ever started and failed within the sub-region. 60% of respondents indicated that they knew of such programmes and 80% indicated that corruption, embezzlement and poor management could have led to their collapse.

Telecenter Requirements

Figure 11: Requirements Needed to Establish Community Telecenters in Karamoja Sub Region



As figure 11 indicates, a steering committee, a clear project business plan and project proposal are required. Other factors identified included: computer hardware and software together with network access; legal framework, stakeholders – such as district/local leaders, donors, government agencies and ministries among others, library resources and furniture, community acceptance, Telecenter location – that includes accessibility, ready building, security, water and electricity, programmes and services and community engagement are all crucial factors that are necessary to have the Telecenters established in Karamoja sub region.

Telecenter Framework

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Figure 12: Telecenter Framework

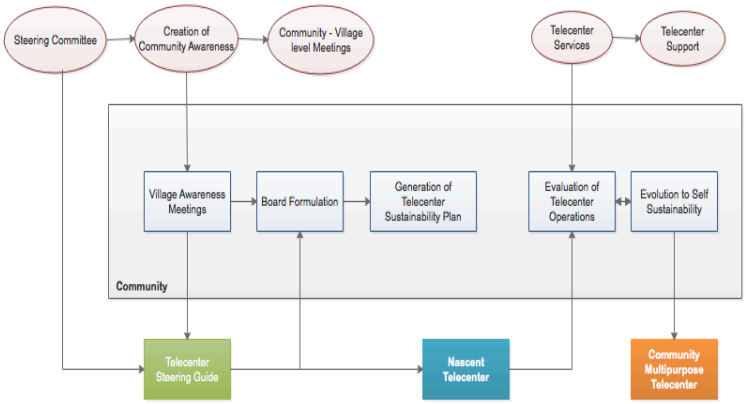


Figure 12 above presents the three-tier framework proposed to lead the establishment of Community Multipurpose Telecenters in Karamoja sub region.

In stage 1, a steering committee shall be established to conduct initial preparations and developments. The Telecenter steering guide, proposal, and a business plan to guide the rest of the processes; will be developed. Community awareness through community – village level meetings aimed at creating awareness and bringing the Telecenter philosophy acceptable to the community will be conducted.

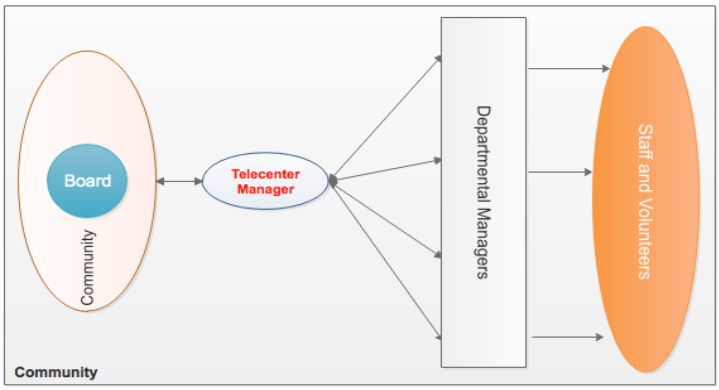
In stage 2, the decisions made from the community – village meetings will inform the establishment of the Telecenter Board with a representative from the community. The Board shall work with the steering committee to develop an embryonic (Nascent) Telecenter that will act as a prototype (Pilot) Telecenter.

In stage 3, the Nascent (embryonic) Telecenter services will be assessed by a team of experts from Makerere University and other key stakeholders to ascertain whether the embryonic telecenter is meeting the objectives under which it was established. In case the nascent Telecenter addresses the community needs, preparations for a Community Multipurpose Telecenter (CMT) will then be rolled out. Even if the government and NGOs/donors may fund initial Telecenter developments, we strongly recommend a community sustainability model.

Management Model

The project proposes this management model as presented in figure 13 below. The Board shall be the supreme governing body of each Telecenter established. Its mandate will be to among others provide strategic direction of the Telecenter. The board will be responsible for the Telecenter Management that will be headed by the Telecenter Manager who shall be the CEO of the Telecenter. The board shall be accountable for the performance and affairs of the Telecenter. Various department heads such as ICT Manager, Librarian, and Business Manager shall assist the Telecenter Manager in the day-to-day Telecenter operations. All Telecenter employees (whether permanent or volunteer staff) shall be strictly residents of the respective communities where the Telecenters are established.

Figure 13: Management Model



Implementation Model

The project will adopt a blended implementation model depending on the available resources. The project proposes to adopt both a pilot and phased plan where a

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nascent (embryonic) Telecenter will be established and later phased slowly in other districts. Services, programmes and technology will also be phased into the embryonic Telecenter based on the diffusion model. This is proposed to allow the community evolve with the technology and engage with it over time.

Conclusion

The study proves that the need for telecenters, which is an ICT4D initiative in Karamoja sub region, is long overdue. Establishing a Telecenter in Karamoja will not only bridge the digital divide gap that exists between Karamoja Sub region with the rest of Uganda, but will go a long way to achieve economic development of Karamoja sub region. We therefore call upon the different stakeholders and well-wishers to support and donate towards the cause of establishing Telecenters in Karamoja Sub region.

Recommendations

i. The government of the republic of Uganda should set up Community Multipurpose Telecenters in Karamoja sub region as affirmative action to address the needs of the people of Karamoja in order to uplift their social, economic, and technological wellbeing by bridging the digital divide gap that exists between Karamoja and the rest of Uganda.

ii. The government of Uganda through the relevant ministries and agencies together with the private sector, national and international development partners should support the establishment of Community Multipurpose Telecenters in Karamoja sub region

iii. The government of the republic of Uganda should look into the development of public libraries through revising Public Library legislations, the management and governance models throughout the country.

iv. Makerere University Research and Innovations Fund (Mak-RiF) should offer more funds for further engagement with stakeholders in the establishment of Community Multipurpose telecenters in Karamoja sub region.

Team Composition

1. Mr. Mwanje Ssenono Aloysius - Principal Investigator
2. Dr. Agnes Rwashana Ssemwanga - Researcher
3. Mr. Ekwaro Francis - Researcher
4. Ms. Lois Mutibwa Nankya - Researcher
5. Mr. Kirya Kenneth Erickson - Researcher

Acknowledgement

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