

ICT and Governance in East Africa

A Landscape Analysis in Kenya,
Uganda and Tanzania 2014

Report by

Varyanne Sika, Nanjira Sambuli
Albert Orwa, Anne Salim.

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Executive Summary

ICT is a newly prevalent, but under-researched phenomenon in Africa, especially in the sphere of governance. However, the application of ICTs in various areas of governance is increasing steadily. iHub Research sought to explore the potential and promise of ICT use for governance in East Africa. "ICT and Governance in East Africa: A Landscape Analysis in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania", therefore, is a qualitative study that aimed to identify, describe and analyze conditions under which ICT tools can or have successfully been used to facilitate two-way interaction between government and citizens. The study specifically focused on four areas of governance: access to information, service delivery, tracking corruption and citizen participation.

This report presents findings from the study that was conducted in 2014 in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. The study used qualitative methods, which combined literature review, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and crowdsourcing. Interviews and focus group discussions were conducted in two areas, urban and peri-urban, in each of the three countries. These interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with four categories of stakeholders: government representatives, civil society organizations, developers of ICT tools for governance, and citizens.

Of the tools and initiatives in this study, it was found that using ICT tools for governance is most effective in cases where low-cost and non-Internet based¹ methods and tools such as radio and mobile phones [feature phones] are used, and in areas where forums exist for citizens to physically meet then follow up on issues raised using ICTs. Mobile and web applications, which are created mostly in tech hubs and tech competitions such as hackathons, are popular and hyped only among people who are particularly interested in technology and applications. It was also found that of the four focus areas, citizen participation had the most dominant use of ICT tools. Citizen participation exists in forms such as, using mobile phones to share and receive information with CSOs that run governance programs, calling or texting to toll-free numbers, radio show call-ins, posting on social media platforms by both CSOs government ministries and departments.

Citizens are motivated by the ease provided by ICT tools to interact with government and CSOs. The use of ICT is increasingly diminishing the fear of getting victimised thus boosting citizens' morale to leverage ICTs in reporting issues affecting them in society. Organizations mandated to oversee transparency in service delivery were found to be quick to respond to citizens, and as a result, this motivated citizens to continue reporting issues of relevance to respective institutions. However, a key demotivating factor in the two-way interaction between citizens and government using ICTs is the belief by citizens that nothing will come out of the interaction. The development and design of these tools for governance, moreover, does not involve citizens for whom the tools are intended. The lack of citizen involvement in designing and developing ICT tools and initiatives for governance hinders a comprehensive capturing of the pressing needs of citizens. In addition, government and CSOs are dissuaded from adopting ICT initiatives by the high costs involved in setting up and running ICT initiatives. There also is the issue of limited expertise and a lack of incentive among government officials to use ICTs.

From these findings, we recommend that citizen consultations should be conducted to serve as needs assessments when designing ICT for governance initiatives; low cost and non-Internet based ICT tools should be favoured because of technical accessibility and affordability; extensive awareness and information campaigns should be conducted to let citizens know about the existence of and how to use the tools.

¹ Non-Internet based ICTs are those that do not require Internet connectivity to operate. Examples of non-Internet based ICTs are feature phones and radio.

Glossary

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

For the purpose of this study, we use UNESCO's definition. ICT(s) thus refers to “forms of technologies that are used to transmit, process, store, create, display, share or exchange information by electronic means. This broad definition includes such technologies as radio, television, video, DVD, telephone (both fixed line and mobile phones), satellite systems, and computer and network hardware and software, as well as the equipment and services associated with these technologies, such as video-conferencing, email and blogs” (UNESCO, 2007).

Governance

Governance is understood to be two sided, that is, having a political and economic aspect (Olugbenga, 2001). The political aspect involves the exercising of rights and obligations and articulation of interests by the citizens, institutions and businesses in the country. It involves government decision making and general public affairs (Bhavya et. al., 1999). The economic aspect on the other hand, involves the management of societal resources and governments' role in this management (Olugbenga, 2001). Governance also has a social aspect which involves the system of values and beliefs that are needed to form social behaviours and for public decisions to be taken (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2003). According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2006), governance is “exercising economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. Governance comprises mechanisms, processes, and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences.” Good governance thus has eight major characteristics.

It is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law (UNDP, 2006). This study adopts a combination of the two definitions, that of governance being political and economic and the UNDP definition, and uses the United Nations good governance indicators to narrow down to a focus on ICT use in the following four areas of governance:

- i. Access to Information
- ii. Monitoring Service Delivery
- iii. Tracking Corruption
- iv. Citizen Participation

Transparency

Transparency as a concept has different meanings to different actors. On a general level, transparency can be defined as ‘the release of information by institutions that is relevant to evaluating those institutions’ (Florino, 2000).

As defined by Kopits and Craig [1998], fiscal transparency, used to refer to transparency in government operations is “openness toward the public at large about government structure and functions, fiscal policy intentions, public sector accounts, and projections.” They further offer that such transparency involves ready access to reliable, comprehensive and timely information on government activities that assist in assessing the government’s financial position as well as the costs and benefits of a government’s activities.

In an extensive review of literature on transparency, Williams [2014] offers that two common criteria of transparency are that “1) transparency is about increasing the amount of information available to interested parties, and [2] transparency is about increasing the constraints on public officials in order to enable citizens to hold these officials accountable for their actions.” He also cites work by Kolstad and Wiig [2009] who emphasize that the availing of [more] information is not enough for a government to be held accountable.

We therefore rely on these definitions of transparency for the purpose of this study.

Accountability

“Accountability ensures actions and decisions taken by public officials are subject to oversight so as to guarantee that government initiatives meet their stated objectives and respond to the needs of the community they are meant to be benefiting, thereby contributing to better governance and poverty reduction” (Stapenhurst and O’Brien, 2007).

Accountability, according to Stapenhurst and O’Brien, involves answerability and enforcement. Answerability refers to a government’s and public officials’ obligation to provide information and justify their decisions and actions to the public and institutions tasked with provision of oversight. Enforcement, on the other hand, suggests that an offending party can be sanctioned by the public or institutions responsible for accountability, or that the latter can remedy the contravening behaviour.

Transparency and accountability can be mutually reinforcing, enabling citizens to have a say about issues that affect them and to influence decision-making, and hold those making decisions to account, be they in government or other institutions of relevance to the governing of a community or region. (Transparency and Accountability Initiative).

Civic participation

Citizen participation in governance involves two critical elements: citizen engagement and government responsiveness. These elements of citizen participation are essential to the democracy and democratic governance in any given country. The intersection of citizen engagement or participation and government responsiveness constitute public deliberation. Public deliberation is a foundation of participatory democracy and representative government [Carpini, 2004]. Citizens' participation is strictly governed therefore by public deliberation. It relies solely on the interaction between the government and its citizens in public administration in a bid to improve both service delivery by governments and the quality of life of its citizenry.

Citizen engagement is important because it instils a sense of ownership in governance in the citizens which provides for and supports checks and balances against unscrupulous service delivery in the government [Odhiambo & Taifa, 2009]. In spite of this importance, there are rarely cases of authentic participation as public officials possess a reluctance towards including citizens in the decision making process (Yang & Callahan, 2005). In East African countries, there have been bolstered efforts to improve citizen engagement through government initiatives, civil society initiatives and non- governmental organizations and in some cases, partnership between different organizations. The East African Community (EAC), for instance, has decried lack of citizen participation in the EAC integration process [Omondi, 2012]. This lack of citizen participation in the EAC is a symptom of poor citizen participation in the individual countries in the EAC bloc.

Abbreviations

APC	Association for Progressive Communication
CAP	Citizen Action Platform
CDF	Constituency Development Fund
CEEC	Community Education and Empowerment Center
CHRAGG	Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAWASCO	Dar es Salaam Water and Sewerage Corporation
eGA	e-Government Agency
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HCI	Human Capital Index
ICT	Information & Communications Technology
KPLC	Kenya Power and Lighting Company
KRA	Kenya Revenue Authority
MCA	Member of County Assembly
NRI	Network Readiness Index
NTA	National Taxpayers Association
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSI	Online Service Index
PDI	Political Development Index
PIN	Personal Identification Number
RDC	Resident District Commissioner
SMS	Short Message Service
TAAC	The Apac Anti-Corruption Coalition
TANESCO	Tanzania Electric Supply Company Limited
TI	Transparency International
TII	Telecommunication Infrastructure Index
TIN	Taxpayer Identification Number
TRA	Tanzania Revenue Authority
UHRC	Uganda Human Rights Commission
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VSAC	Voluntary Social Accountability Committee
WOUGNET	Women of Uganda Network

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Introduction

The increasing growth and general prevalence of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in Africa is as a result of various contributing factors, but one of the most dominant reasons for governments encouraging the growth of ICTs is for the stimulation of economic growth (Rostow, 1959; OECD, 2005; World Economic Forum, 2009; Andrianaivo and Kpodar, 2010; UNCTAD 2011) and more broadly, social and economic development. The massive support and encouragement of ICT adoption on the continent by governments and the private sector has contributed to a rapid growth in Africa's ICT sector. ICTs are now widely accepted to be powerful tools with which to combat many of the challenges that African countries face, including governance. Exploring ways to deal with the poor governance that has plagued many African countries is a fundamental aspect of solving other social and economic challenges.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are changing how social and economic structures operate and interact, both within and outside institutions. In influencing a stimulation of positive social and economic changes, ICTs are also changing the ways in which local, regional and national government authorities communicate within themselves, with each other and with the citizens (Misuraca, 2007). While ICTs' impact and how they are leveraged for good governance, remains under-researched (Waema & Ofwona, 2011), this has not slowed down the application of ICTs in various areas of governance by local, regional and national government authorities in East Africa.

iHub Research, as part of the ICT4Democracy East Africa network (www.ict4democracy.org) therefore undertook a study in 2014 to assess how ICT tools are being used for and in various aspects of governance in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. This study, with an aim to bridge the research and insights gap on ICT use in East Africa, sought to answer the following:

1. Which ICT tools are used in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania addressing the following aspects of governance:
 - a. Access to information,
 - b. Service delivery,
 - c. Tracking corruption and
 - d. Citizen participation?
2. In which ways are ICT tools used in the four areas?
3. What successes and challenges exist in the use of these tools?

ICTs in governance should not be conflated with e-governance, which is more specific. E-governance is the use of ICTs to enhance access to and deliver government information and services more efficiently (Brown et. al., 2001). E-governance also involves relationships between governments and customers (including citizens, businesses, and other governments or government agencies) using electronic means (Means et. al., 2000). This study looked beyond e-governance in the context of government initiated initiatives and included ICTs use in governance as initiated by CSOs, government and citizens.

Background

ICTs are often seen as a catalyst for democratic processes, freedom of speech and fraud solution, while e-governance has been said to have the potential to establish an environment for improved service delivery, increased transparency and accountability [OECD 2003; Ndou, 2004; Dawes, 2008; Klopp et al 2013]. However, e-governance and many ICT projects in governance result in lower expected returns especially in developing/transitional countries where 35% of e-governance related projects are likely to fail [Heeks, 2003]. This failure is attributed to, among other factors, the design-reality gap. The design-reality gap is a physical and cultural one between project design and realities on the ground where implementation occurs [Heeks, 2002]. Other factors that lead to the failure of ICT projects in governance and e-governance involve political control of ICT infrastructure [Heeks, 2002].

Limited penetration, lack of strategies and local policies, low financial resources, the high cost for end users, poor IT skills, low usability and political will are often described as reasons for the failure to realize the full potential of ICT. The absence of government strategies to harmonize local, regional and continental ICT networks and policies [Gillwald, 2010; Waema, 2011] is complemented with a shortage of technological training and capacity, as well as public officials' resistance to change and technology [Thomas et al, 2010].

An analysis of government websites [Mitulla, 2008; Rorissa and Demissie, 2010] found poor usability and a low level of citizen interaction with the websites. Mismatch between the possibilities and promise of e-governance and actual results of implementation calls for raising awareness on the e-governance efforts in order to promote usage of ICT tools [Pathak et al, 2012]. Furthermore, citizens are not familiar with their rights to communicate with government.

Majority of respondents in a 2011 M-Governance study conducted in Kenya, for instance, indicated that they preferred other means of interaction with government out of fear of being exposed from a lack of anonymity which exposes them to be targets of retaliation [Crandall and Mutuku, 2011]. Again, there is a challenge of getting the public accustomed to use of ICT systems [Thomas et al 2010]. Apart from the users' needs for relevant and accessible information, insufficient funding or government interference is also noted as a reason for low success rates of ICT tools [Zanello and Maassen, 2011]. Civil society is perceived as a service to government, although it faces challenges with infrastructure, ICT literacy, and funds [APC, 2009]. Social media has been found to increase space for citizen communication, thus serving as an open forum of diverse viewpoints [Makinen and Kuira, 2008], but governments are rarely affected by such feedback [Magro, 2012].

ICT and democratization are put to test as some authors put irreversible connection of development and IT into question. If better development fosters ICT, and ICTs foster development, there should be a rapid increase in informatization or democratization. Political stability, rule of law and corruption have significant impact on development of ICT policies [El Mehdi, 2011]. Transparent democracies provide access to information; so good governmental practices serve as a precondition for e-governance [Alozie et al 2011]. However, the presence of ICT per se did not foster better governance, [using the eight principles of good governance highlighted in the definitions of concepts section] [Singh et al, 2010] or it showed little evidence of impacts [Zanello and Maassen, 2011], this was in an East African exploration study on strengthening citizen agency and accountability through ICT conducted in 2011.

Normative ICT literature generally promotes the idea that ICTs, Internet and e-governance platforms facilitate democratization, but lacks evidence of implementation [APC, 2009]. Some reports [Bekri et al 2011; Alozie et al 2011] agree that considerable empirical examples are not provided but purely advance the present theory discussions of ICTs in Eastern Africa. Relations of ICT adoptions and democratic outcomes, for example, Internet penetration and good governance, are frequently put into existing context but rarely supported by evidence. For example, there are some contrasting findings on that issue; Groshek [2009] supports the idea that Internet diffusion has positive impact on democratization, whilst Nesbit et al [2012] found no correlation.

Authors claim that proper Internet use, rather than penetration may have positive impact on citizens' demand for democratization [Nesbit, 2012]. Similarly, citizens believed e-government would reduce bribery cases in a study on citizen perceptions of e-government in Ethiopia, India and Fiji, however, no evidence to support this idea was provided [Singh et al, 2010]. Amorreti [2007] argues that e-government, e-governance and similar ICT initiatives are nothing more than newer concepts of the old Western development paradigms. These concepts are more often than not, proven ineffective in contexts where they are used to build democracy, that is, in developing countries. Key concepts, terminology and methodology are often unclear in ICT research or do not access relevant information in a systematic and reliable way [Crandall and Mutuku, 2011; Zanello and Maassen, 2011].

For example, Crandall and Mutuku [2011] discovered that respondents in their M-Governance study did not have clear perception on the actual meanings of the terms 'governance' and 'transparency', whilst Zanello and Maassen [2011] found that data collected often cannot support the general idea of positive ICT impact.

Research often describes existing tools but without categories to match those with the needs of citizens [Pathak et al, 2012]. Clearly, for successful ICT projects, it needs to be stated who is using the technology, what it is used for and how long-term engagement strategies complement changes and impact such projects [Klopp et al, 2013].

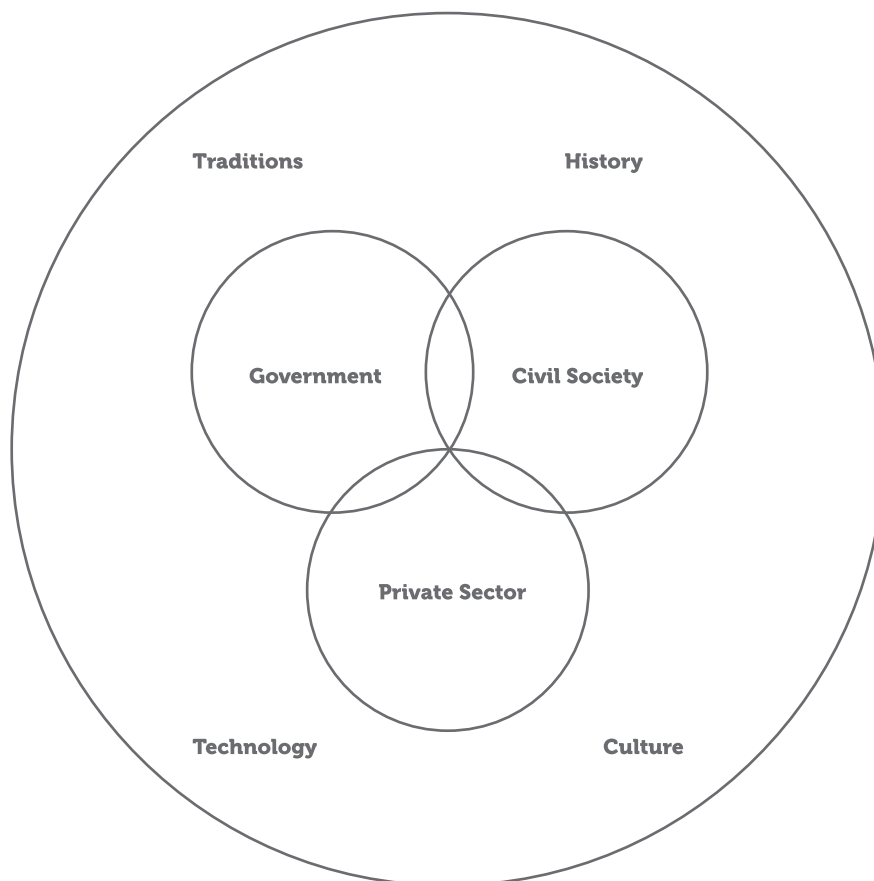
Some ICT publications compare countries based on scoring in different ICT-related categories, but again, they provide no deeper context of understanding what practice pushed initiatives into successful projects. For example, the UN created the E-Government Development Index to measure the willingness of national administration to use technologies in service delivery by combining Telecommunication Infrastructure Index 15 [TII], Human Capital Index [HCI] and Online Service Index [OSI]. Similarly, Alozie et al [2011] created a political development index [PDI] based on 11 factors that include county-level data on infrastructure, development indicators and data on political development. The Global Information Technology Report 2014 [introduced Network Readiness Index [NRI] composed of three components: the environment for ICT development given by the country, readiness of the country's key stakeholders and the use among these ICT stakeholders.

Theoretical Framework

This study is framed within the first and the third approaches of Garson [1999]'s four proposed theoretical frameworks on ICT use in governance. The first framework is of ICT use in decentralization and democratization and the third theoretical framework emphasizes a continuous two-way interaction between ICTs and the organizational and institutional environment [Yildiz, 2007]. The second and fourth approaches proposed by Garson which are excluded in framing this study are the dystopian approach which underlines technology's limitations and contradictions, and the approach in which e-governance is placed within the theories of globalization.

This study is also framed within the proposition of the interdependence of actors (Figure 1) in governance [Graham et. al, 2003] in which Government, Civil Society and the Private Sector [and citizens] are the interdependent actors in governance. These actors are influenced and interact with traditions, technology, history and culture throughout the governance process.

Figure 1: Interdependence of governance actors (Graham et. al, 2003).



Finally, this study adopts a general framework for understanding interaction in governance based on Yildiz's general evaluation of the theory and practice of e-government and e-governance. This framework outlines the possible ICT based interactions in governance as being: Government-to-Government, Government-to-Citizen, Government-to-Civil Society and Citizen-to-Citizen. This study has gone ahead to add on to the four interactions: Civil Society-to-Citizen, Civil Society-to-Government, Citizen-to-Government and Citizen-to-Civil Society. Following Graham, Amos and Plumtre's (Graham et. al., 2003) illustration on the different actors' interdependence in governance, this study proceeds to look at ICT tools for 17 governance initiated and managed by government, civil society organizations (CSOs), and citizens.

In as much as social governance and economic governance provide the basic foundation for any society, political governance ensures cohesion of a society (NzongolaNtalaja, 2003). Governance is therefore not only about operation of social and public organizations and their interaction with each other, it also involves the state's ability to relate to and interact with citizens (UNDP, 2000).

Methodology

The ICT and Governance in East Africa study was a qualitative audit of the existing ICT tools in governance in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. The study also used both primary and secondary data. This study was conducted in specific towns and cities in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania and followed the presence of ICT4Democracy East Africa network² partners in various towns and cities across the region.

In Kenya, the study focused on Nairobi³ and Nakuru. These selections were based on the prominence of ICT initiatives⁴ in the two areas⁵, which were discovered through crowdsourcing. Crowdsourcing is the act of getting information by enlisting the services of a number of people, either paid or unpaid (in this study, unpaid) typically on the Internet. In Uganda, the study focused on Kampala, the capital city, Apac and Lira in northern Uganda, periurban towns which are also postconflict areas,⁶ and in Fort Portal⁷, a periurban town in Western Uganda. In Tanzania, the study focused on DaresSalaam and Mwanza.⁸

A broad list of tools that are used in the study sites were identified from crowdsourcing platforms, primarily, Twitter and Facebook. Eighteen ICT tools were also identified within the ICT4Democracy East Africa Network of which iHub Research is a member. The identified tools were categorized based on the governance actor responsible for their implementation, that is: government, civil society and citizens (tech developers fell under this category). This was done for the three East African countries. These tools were further categorized according to their primary functions, that is, whether they facilitate i) access to information, ii) monitoring of public service delivery, iii) tracking corruption and iv) citizen participation.

Based on an initial review of tools available in the three countries, data collection targets were identified according to the three stakeholders in governance identified in the study. Data collection was intended to include key informant interviews from two government institutions in each country found to be implementing ICT tools in governance, interviews with five civil society organizations implementing governance related ICT tools or projects in each country, and interviews with three developers of ICT tools used for governance in each of the three countries. The table below presents a representation of stakeholders who participated in the study.

- 2 The ICT4Democracy in East Africa network is “premised on the recognition that ICT enhances communication and the right to freedom of expression as well as the right to seek, receive and impart information.” The Initiative is active in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, where some organizations are leveraging on ICT to hold leaders accountable to citizens, as well as to fight corruption, monitor service delivery, and contribute to building a democratic culture.
- 3 Nairobi, as the ICT hub in the East African region was a natural fit for the study.
- 4 Nairobi had ICT for governance initiatives such as Mzalendo, Ushahidi, MajiVoice, Voice of Kibera among others as illustrated in the annex section of this report.
- 5 Nakuru is the first town in Kenya to get free Wifi enabling citizens to have access to the internet within Nakuru town. This move was aimed at enhancing ICT in ensuring better public service delivery and simplifying public participation in governance through social media.
- 6 Kampala, being the capital city, has prominence of ICT use and infrastructure. Apac, on the other hand, is one of the towns in which there exists heavy use of ICT tools for governance as we discovered in our exploratory study.
- 7 Fort Portal in Western Uganda is a town in which Toro Development (ToroDev)Network is based. ToroDev is part of the ICT4Democracy East Africa network. The organization runs among other programs, an ICT – Enabled Public Accountability & Democratic Engagement for Improved Service Delivery in Uganda.
- 8 Both Dar es Salaam and Mwanza have a high presence of organizations and projects whose central theme is ICT for Development, within and outside of the ICT4Democracy East Africa network.

COUNTRY	Stakeholders Interviewed	
KENYA	Government	3
	Civil Society Organizations	15
	Developers	3
	Focus Group Discussion Participants	36
UGANDA	Government	1
	Civil Society Organizations	11
	Developers	2
	Focus Group Discussion Participants	36
TANZANIA	Government	3
	Civil Society Organizations	8
	Developers	2
	Focus Group Discussion Participants	32

Two focus group discussions were conducted with at least eight participants in each group in each study site to investigate challenges, successes and user experience considerations that went into the design of the ICT tools identified in the exploratory study. Data was analysed using Dedoose, for both thematic and content analysis through excerpting and coding.⁹

⁹ Dedoose is a cross platform application for analysing qualitative and mixed methods research with text, photos, audio, videos and spreadsheet data.

General Findings

- 1.** There exist numerous websites, mobile phone and web applications for governance which are not used as often as the developers expected because of two key reasons:
 - i.** Governance needs are not assessed adequately by the creators of the tools and applications,
 - ii.** Citizens are not optimistic about action being taken on the issues they raise, thus limiting their use of the applications. This is brought on by the lack of consultation during the creation of the ICT tools in governance, lack of follow up procedures on the issues raised, poor communication by government on the course of action to be taken on issues raised by citizens, and, the fact that there are more people who share negative experiences they have had with government than there are people who share positive experiences.

- 2.** Successful uses of ICTs in governance have been found in cases where nonInternet based ICTs such as radio and mobile phones [feature phones] are used, or in areas where forums exist for citizens to physically meet then follow up on issues raised using ICTs. Mobile and web applications, which are created mostly in tech hubs and tech competitions such as hackathons, are popular and hyped only among people who are particularly interested in technology and applications. Few people are reached through the app creators' marketing strategies, if at all there are any such attempts. Radios are the most common ICT tools in many rural areas many success stories were reported among the organizations which use radios to make information on various governance issues accessible to citizens.

- 3.** Citizens are motivated by the ease provided by ICT tools to interact with government and CSOs. The use of ICT is increasingly diminishing the fear of getting victimised thus boosting citizens' morale to leverage ICTs in reporting issues affecting them in society. That organizations mandated to oversee transparency in service delivery were found to be quick to respond also motivates citizens interviewed to continue reporting cases whenever they come across issues requiring such organizations' attention. In this study, a popular tool for citizen participation was tollfree numbers which allow citizens to call without incurring any costs. Minimal costs to citizens in ICT tools served as another motivator across the three countries.

- 4.** A key demotivation in the two-way interaction between citizens and government using ICTs is the belief by citizens that nothing will come out of the interaction. A demotivating factor for using ICTs in interacting with citizens on the part of government and CSOs, is costs involved in setting up and running ICT initiatives, limited expertise and a lack of incentive to use ICTs. High illiteracy levels have been a big hindrance towards successful implementation of the ICT tools especially in rural areas. Many organizations lamented about inadequate knowledge and basic ICT skills, which would allow them to use the tools appropriately, as major obstacles that limit many of the citizens from using the existing ICT tools.

- 4.** Overall, citizen participation is the most dominant use of ICT tools from the interviews and focus group discussions we conducted. Citizen participation exists in forms such as, using mobile phones to share and receive information with CSOs that run governance programs, toll-free numbers, radio shows, social media platforms by both CSOs and Government ministries and departments. Participation by citizens is in reporting cases of poor management of public resources and sharing opinions on governance issues. Monitoring service delivery by the citizens is especially dominant in areas away from cities. Monitoring service delivery is through using an integration of innovative methods such as using digital cameras for evidence based monitoring, and simple ways such as using SMS to report cases of poor service delivery. Social media is mostly used by organizations interviewed to push out information to citizens with an aim of increasing access and raising awareness. This was particularly prevalent with civil society initiatives targeting youth.

Theme-specific Findings

1) Access to information

United Republic of Tanzania

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GOVERNMENT PORTAL
One Stop Centre for Public Services

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DSE	1569.710 ▲ 2.71

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Tanzania's eGovernment portal, retrieved from www.ega.go.tz

"Those in power see ICT as a tool meant to expose them. Before the use of ICT, those in power would cheat the citizens, and getting information by the citizens was not an easy task. Article 41 of the constitution of Uganda says, everyone should have access to information so long as it does not interfere with the security of the nation" Focus Group Discussion Participant in Lira, Uganda.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are making information available to the public concerning various governance issues. CSOs such as Kenya's Mzalendo and National Taxpayers Association, Uganda's Parliament Watch, UReport, DevTrac, and Tanzania's Twaweza ni Sisi, and Afyamp provide information that is open to the public on ranging governance issues such as unemployment, service delivery, and parliamentary proceedings. CSOs have mostly adopted low cost data collection using mobile phones and SMS programs.

Government Institutions/ Ministries/ Departments have also been taking strides to make information accessible to citizens. The information shared by East African governments through initiatives such as Tanzania's eGovernment Portal and Kenya's eCitizen platform is limited to very basic information which citizens find to be a bare minimum and insufficient for their needs.

["The information there is information I can get from Google."](#) FGD Participant, Dar es Salaam, referring to the Tanzania eGovernment Portal.

Tanzania's one stop centre for public services got a facelift recently, towards becoming a user friendly website with links to various other government institutions such as the Tanzania Revenue Authority, the Prevention and Combating Corruption Bureau, Tanzania Police, Dar es Salaam Stock Exchange, and more online services. This one stop centre however, is incomplete according to a few participants in the focus group discussions we had. According to the participants, the portal has very scarce information. This was highlighted as a challenge to the smooth running and usefulness of the website by the eGovernment Agency [eGA] which is in charge of the portal.

The process of continuous data collection and aggregation for up to date information on the portal depends on numerous ministries, institutions and organizations, which is still being improved. Knowledge on the existence of the portal and its purpose is also being addressed through advocacy campaigns by the eGA. Another example is AfyaMap in Tanzania, a web platform that maps health facilities to enable citizens to find facilities near them has 200 health facilities mapped, but is currently dormant because of limited data to continue populating the map.

["Most of the information on the government websites are out of date."](#) FGD participant from Lira, Uganda.

Citizens who participated in the FGDs felt that governments do not seem concerned about the information citizens need; they only offer information that can already be found on the web. This implies citizens' greater demand for more specific and possibly granular, as opposed to basic information. The government initiatives that were interviewed, however, reported challenges in data management and keeping information up to date, which makes it difficult to meet citizens' expectations. Furthermore, the campaigns to create awareness about the information availed by government either did not exist yet [as was the case of Tanzania's eGovernment Portal] or were not known to the citizens who participated in the FGDs [as was the case of the eCitizen platform in Kenya].

A key feature of the information availed by both CSOs and governments is that it is not processed in a way that makes sense to citizens. The implications of the information shared is not immediately explicit to citizens in most cases which leads to them asking 'so what?' Information shared is laden with jargon and communicated in ways that do not reach the citizens in some cases, such as websites, which very few citizens who participated in this study visited. This information shared by government and CSOs was however very useful to other CSOs and organizations working in related or similar sectors, in and for their work. DevTrac's¹⁰ visualized data on their web platform presented another illustration of information that was not easy for lay citizens to understand since the data was technical.

10 DevTrac is a Ugandan initiative led by a consortium of government and donor agencies: including the GEOIS Working group, OCHA, Uganda Bureau of Statistics and UNICEF to visualize and monitor the status of national services (schools, health centres, water points, etc) and development projects.

Social media is used to make information accessible by some civil society organizations in order to reach more people who would usually not visit websites, which were the main platforms for information on public issues from the organization interviewed. Parliament Watch Uganda¹¹ runs a website and uses Facebook and Twitter to communicate and engage with its audience on topical issues. A striking feature in the interaction with its audience revealed that Twitter users were more knowledgeable about government proceedings and engaged more on governance issues compared to their Facebook audience. This finding was also the case with Mzalendo¹² in Kenya, which inspired the creation of Parliament Watch in Uganda. Greater engagement on Twitter is experienced by both Mzalendo and Parliament Watch despite both organizations having a greater following on Facebook (16,320 likes) than on Twitter (7,670 followers) for Parliament Watch Uganda, and Facebook (12,720 likes) and Twitter (7,427 followers) for Mzalendo¹³. Breaking down jargon used heavily in government proceedings is necessary for effective communication with Parliament Watch Uganda's audience, which is one of the key challenges.

Short Message Services (SMS) sent over mobile phones are also used to provide information to citizens as well as to collect information from citizens in some cases. In Kenya, Muungano Support Trust¹⁴ uses SMS to share information with citizens who they have met previously in different community forums. These forums provide an opportunity for citizens to opt into getting notifications on any government activities, forums or issues in which they might be interested. Opting in requires provision of mobile phone numbers, which Muungano records into its database. The data is stored according to different categories based on gender and area of residence. This enables targeted sharing of information to specifically targeted groups instead of sending messages to the entire database. The targeted messages are sent to the citizens that opt in at no cost to them. In Tanzania, Sauti za Wananchi¹⁵ (Voices of the Citizens) uses mobile phones to collect data in inexpensive, fast and generally more efficient ways compared to traditional household surveys. The project was started to address the data gaps in the country, specifically to avail more data to the public and to provide regular reliable data on time sensitive issues such as drought, opinions about governance, quality of service delivery or citizens' ability to exercise agency.

11 Parliament Watch Uganda used a web platform because it allows them to share a variety of informative material as well as archiving this material for future reference for people who have access to the Internet.

12 Mzalendo is a web platform that keeps track of the activities of legislators in Kenya. Mzalendo uses both Facebook and Twitter to share information with the public.

13 Number of followers and likes for both Mzalendo and Parliament Watch Uganda, retrieved on 23rd January 2015.

14 Muungano Support Trust, implements Forum Syd Kenya's Kikao SMS (Short Message Service) project which is a bulk SMS system that communicates public information from county government officials to the community and from the community back to the government. The bulk SMS system creates dialogue between community and government. Kikao SMS has a database of around 40,000 registered subscribers to messages and operates in six districts in Nakuru County and in four other counties in Kenya.

15 Sauti za Wananchi is an initiative of Twaweza ni Sisi in Tanzania. Sauti za Wananchi uses a combination of household surveys and low cost, high frequency feedback which is offered by mobile phones. Mobile phones and solar chargers are given to citizens in 200 households (who are over 18 years) based on a multistage stratified sampling method. These phones are used by the citizens to respond to questions asked by the implementers of the initiative.

2) Citizen Participation



Focus Group Discussion at HiveColab, Kampala. [Image courtesy of Brian Ndyaguma.](#)

Citizen participation in governance is sustained in cases of service delivery where citizens do not have a choice in engaging with a specific ICT tool. When citizens are dealing with a single service delivery agency, which provides public goods by government, such as electricity and water, they then engage with the ICT tools involved out of necessity and not out of choice. This was seen in cases of utility bills payments such as in Tanzania's TANESCO, DAWASCO, Uganda's Umeme, and Kenya's KPLC.

["We don't get involved and the only time youth are involved is during election time."](#) FGD Participant in Nairobi, Kenya.

Youth were not found to be active in governance matters (yet they form the largest population in the three countries), many do not resonate with the importance of using ICTs for governance purposes. Instead they recognize ICTs primarily as tools for entertainment. This was especially true for the urban youth who participated in the study.

"I don't visit any governance websites or social media pages because they don't have anything that I need. I only go to them when I have the need to, which is not often."

FGD Participant in Nairobi, Kenya.

Citizens are eager to have their voices heard on governance issues and they are eager to take opportunities to do so. However, they are discouraged from participating and from continued participation because of the belief that no action will be taken by government to address their issues.

"Nobody will act on my complaint, I will just waste my money calling and waste my vifurushi (data bundles on mobile phones) visiting websites to complain."

FGD Participant in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

Citizen participation, from the data collected, fell into three broad categories: listening to citizen voice, participation using shortmessage services (SMS) and participation through social media.

i. Listening to Citizen Voice

Citizen participation using ICT tools and initiatives to facilitate citizens telling stories of what is happening in their communities was noted in the case of Voice of Kibera in Kenya, National Taxpayers Association in Kenya and Transparency International in both Kenya and Uganda. Some civil society organizations have taken initiative to amplify citizen voice by providing avenues for communication such as call centres and toll-free numbers. The National Taxpayers Association (NTA)¹⁶ is one such CSO, which has established two call centres in Kakamega in Western Kenya and in Mombasa in the Coast region of Kenya.

These call centres are specifically set up to give citizens a voice in questioning tax use by government. Calls made to the centre by citizens are recorded and forwarded to concerned government departments for response, which is relayed back to the call centres, then to the callers. The call centres communicate back to citizens when the complaints are resolved. For security purposes, the identities of callers remain undisclosed to public officials and to any parties external to the NTA call centres.

This way, privacy is respected through anonymity and citizens are not afraid to communicate their complaints to the call centres. The call centres work under the pressure of understaffing, with only 2 staff members in each centre. In addition, citizens do not get adequate or comprehensive responses to their inquiries from the Government due to the existence of poorly informed respondents from the Government's side. Those assigned to address complaints in the relevant government departments are not properly informed on the various issues raised, therefore responses they provide often fail to actually tackle the issues and concerns raised by citizens through the call centres. The call centre officers share feedback with citizens upon their receiving it from the Government departments. Success for the call centres has however been experienced in the resolution of longstanding land disputes and recovery of lost funds from the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in Kakamega, Western Kenya.

¹⁶ NTA is an independent, nonpartisan organization focused on promoting good governance in Kenya through citizen empowerment, enhancing public service delivery and partnership building. It does this through development of social accountability tools, Citizen Report Cards (CRCs), citizen awareness and citizen capacitybuilding and initiating partnerships with the government and nonstate actors.

Toll-free numbers are also used to give citizens voice on governance issues. Toll-free numbers were dominant ICT tools found in Uganda (second to radio in Uganda generally). These numbers are mostly government led initiatives such as the Uganda Human Rights Commission's toll-free number, the National Water and Sewage Corporation's toll-free number, UMEME's (Uganda's power and lighting company) and the Police number. The numbers are widely publicized in newspapers, on billboards, television and radio. The study interviewed two of these toll free numbers in Uganda, Transparency International Uganda and the Uganda Human Rights Commission.

Transparency International (TI) Uganda uses a toll-free number set up in 2012, which operates in 8 health facilities¹⁷, in the northern Uganda districts of Lira and Oyam. People in these areas (the general public and TI monitors) can use their mobile phones to call (strictly calling) in with their complaints about service delivery in the health sector. The tool is used to monitor service delivery in the health sector, particularly what is taking place in the health centres, where majority of citizens interact with health care providers on a day-to-day basis. The issues raised by callers are looked into by the various health management committees in each health facility and not necessarily communicated back to the citizens who raise issues related to health service delivery. There had been 3267 calls made to the toll free number, and absenteeism in the health facilities collectively reduced by 30% as of August 2013. The initial plan was to have an SMSbased tool, but after wide consultations they realized many people preferred a calling system due to the low literacy levels in the region (where the tool is mainly used), that hinders them from proper communication through writing messages. The community based radio stations in the region are used to advertise the free tollfree number.

Uganda Human Rights Commission also has a toll-free number at its central regional office. This enables citizens to seek legal advice on human rights in general. Concerns that are handled on the toll-free number include following up on complaints lodged, enquiries on cases and general legal advice on different issues concerning human rights abuses and violations.

Some of the feedback from the citizens who use or have used the numbers in Uganda is that, ["the toll-free numbers work, but it is difficult to get someone to listen to your complaints or concerns."](#) FGD participant, Kampala.

Transparency International Kenya (TI Kenya) uses a toll-free tool¹⁸ (both SMS and phone calls) where citizens are able to lodge complaints; the system came into use in November 2012. The aim of the toll-free number is to report corruption cases or to seek advice on how to go about any corruption incidents experienced. TIKenya uses toll-free numbers because citizens often fail to make reports out of a conviction and experience of no action taken to those they report to; some are uninformed on the reporting processes and mechanisms; some complain that physical offices are inaccessible; and others are afraid to report due to victimization fears.

The TIKenya tollfree numbers currently receive about 300600 SMS complaints in a month; they also receive a similar number of complaints via phone calls. According to TI Kenya, ICT has really made it easy for people to report issues affecting them. However, this had led to the organization receiving calls which are beyond their scope.

17 The health centers from Oyam include Anyeke HC (Health Center) IV, Iceme HC II, Loro HC II, Agulurude HC III and the other four health centers from Lira include Amach HC IV, Barr HC III, Ogur HC IV and Aromo HC III.

18 TI Kenya's tollfree numbers are 22129 for SMS and 0800720721 for direct calls. TI Kenya chose Safaricom (Kenya's leading mobile service provider) due to the network's vast customer base.

Voice of Kibera¹⁹ aggregates reports on governance issues from youth in the Kibera²⁰ slum area in Nairobi and maps reports made by citizens around various governance issues. These reports made by citizens are verified by trained citizen journalists then mapped on Ushahidi's²¹ crowdmap platform. Reports are shared with relevant government representatives in the area to be addressed.

Existence of challenges such as running the initiative on a volunteer basis hampers the sustainability of the effectiveness and the promise of growth for Voice of Kibera. Citizens of Kibera use the platform to report stories consistently because they were engaged first in several physical meetups, then they took on to virtual unpacking of their issues. Mapping of their stories is not the end of this process though, follow ups by the Voice of Kibera team with concerned representatives are made and citizens meet again to listen to what the representatives have to say about the issues, especially in cases where the issues are pressing, such as forced evictions which was dealt with when the citizens reported that, despite a court order to stop the evictions and demolitions, they were evicted and their shelters demolished.

A government representative in the area was informed of the situation to which he reacted by providing mattresses for evictees to sleep on in a public hall as efforts continued to halt demolition. Demolition was stopped following the representative's intervention. Topical radio talk shows have very high numbers of listeners and people who call in to contribute to discussions. Radios are the most successful in facilitating and promoting citizen participation. Apart from reaching urban dwellers, they can also reach people living in rural areas, which constitute three quarters of East Africa's population. The radio talk shows are regional or community radio stations with a focus on issues that listeners can relate to directly, instead of broad national governance topics that they feel removed from. Afya Radio in Mwanza, Radio Amani in Nakuru and Sauti ya Mwananchi in Nairobi are such radio stations that enjoy sustained citizen participation with their shows through callins and messages about different topics under discussion.

ii. Participation Using SMS

There were cases of citizen participation through various SMS initiatives such as UReport²² in Uganda. Ureport also serves the purpose of data collection and providing access to information through the project's weekly polls. Citizens are able to take part in polls on various governance issues when they respond to Ureport poll questions. In addition, citizens are able to provide suggestions on the ways to tackle challenges in their regions through the platform.

19 Voice of Kibera <http://voiceofkibera.org/>

20 Kibera is one of the slums in Nairobi. The slum is home to residents who live on under \$1 a day.

21 Ushahidi which means "testimony" in Swahili, was a platform initially developed to map reports of violence in Kenya after the postelection incident at the beginning of 2008, it has since provided an open crowdmap to be used to map other phenomena by different organizations.

22 Ureport is a free SMSbased system that allows young Ugandans to speak out on what's happening in communities across the country, and work together with other community leaders for positive change. The initiative is run by UNICEF.

Muongano Support Trust implements Forum SydKenya's Kikao SMS²³ project, which is a bulk SMS system that communicates public information from county government officials to the community and from the community back to the government. The bulk SMS system creates dialogue between community and government. The system has a large number of registered subscribers, which is very attractive to politicians and their lobbyists who request to use the system for mobilization purposes during elections and by-elections. However, since Muongano and the bulk SMS system are apolitical, the organization avoids manipulation by politicians through maintaining confidentiality on subscribers' numbers and by sending SMSes from a central point in Nairobi, at their partner's (Forum Syd) office. The bulk SMS system has seen more citizens attending public discussion forums convened by government representatives in their various areas of jurisdiction. The budgeting forum in Nakuru County held between 2nd and 7th February in 2014, is an example in which a large turnout of citizens was recorded; they were informed of the proceedings through Muongano's system. Kenya's Community Education and Empowerment Centre²⁴ (CEEC) launched "Sauti Mtaani"²⁵ to facilitate engagement between youth and their Members of County Assembly²⁶ (MCAs) through an SMS platform and a Facebook page. The platform enables the Members of County Assemblies to communicate with the youth even when they are physically away from their wards.

The Toro²⁷ Development Network (ToroDev) in Fort Portal in Uganda, sends out poll questions via SMS which it subsidizes together with Trac FM²⁸, on the state of various service delivery topics. ToroDev uses TracFM's SMS platform to send the polls, it uses the TracFm website to share results from the polls and shares the same results through radio stations covering the region. The evidence-based approach to advocacy that ToroDev uses has seen more attention paid to issues that citizens raise, by politicians and state officials. The reports generated from the polls are used to steer discussions with government officials and government departments on the various issues that are raised. Previously, government officials did not take seriously most issues raised due to a lack of evidence.

- 23 Kikao SMS has a database of around 40,000 registered subscribers to messages and operates in six districts in Nakuru County and in four other counties in Kenya. The system has been used to disseminate information on public consultations and forums such as the county budget proceedings.
- 24 CEEC is a CSO in Kenya which acts towards building the capacity of communities to be actors in their own development.
- 25 The Sauti Mtaani platform which was developed in 2014, is a web based portal which enables the youth to send text messages to their respective MCAs through a short code. The MCAs then respond to the concerns raised by the youth from any web enabled device.
- 26 Members of County Assembly (MCA) are elected by citizens in the wards which are found within subcounties in Kenya's new devolved system. The MCAs represent citizens in their wards in the County Assemblies which deliberate on county legislation and government matters. ²⁷ Number retrieved on 29th of January 2015.
- 27 ToroDev leverages ICT in its work to engage community mobilization activities geared towards free and equal access to development opportunities.
- 28 Trac FM is an online software platform serving Radio stations, NGO's and Government bodies with the ability to hold citizen centered interactive Radio polls through a visualization dashboard that creates unique crowd-sourced Feedback Loops. <https://tracfm.org/>

iii. Participation through Social Media



Mzalendo Twitter Page ([@Mzalendowatch](https://twitter.com/Mzalendowatch))

Citizen participation in governance through social media is focused on expressing opinions on different governance issues. This is especially higher on Twitter than on Facebook through CSOrun initiatives such as Mzalendo in Kenya and Parliament Watch in Uganda. The level and quality of interaction of citizens on governance issues is higher on Twitter than it is on Facebook for these CSOrun initiatives.

Mzalendo in Kenya and Parliament Watch in Uganda inform citizens on different public issues and parliament deliberations. Both of these CSOs run web platforms and use Facebook and Twitter to communicate and engage with their audience on topical issues. The web platforms allow them to share and archive a variety of informative material for people who have access to the Internet. A striking feature in the interaction with audience for both Mzalendo and Parliament Watch Uganda revealed that Twitter users were more knowledgeable about government proceedings compared to their Facebook audience. This is despite having a greater following on Facebook. Breaking down jargon used heavily in government proceedings is necessary for effective communication with citizens and is noted by both CSOs as one of the key challenges that citizens face in participation.

The Community Education and Empowerment Center (CEEC) in Nairobi, in addition to the SMS system, also runs a Facebook page for their Sauti Mtaani project (loosely translated as “Voice in the Slums”) which is meant to connect citizens in slum areas to their local leaders. This page has 229 likes²⁷, which the organization attributes to hesitance by citizens to report or engage with their local leaders due to a lack of anonymity and a fear of being target for unfair reprimanding by their local leaders.

3) Service Delivery



Huduma Centre in Nakuru, Kenya.

Government is more geared towards offering service delivery ICT tools more than any other in our areas of focus. A dominant area of focus in service delivery using ICTs is payment services for utilities such as electricity, water and taxes. Some of the ICT tools focusing on payment services by government institutions are Tanzania Electric Supply Company Limited (TANESCO), Dar es Salaam Water and Sewage Company (DAWASCO), Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA), Uganda's UMEME, and Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA). The Tanzanian Revenue Authority (TRA) has integrated automated systems²⁹ for various services such as Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) registration which is done online on the TRA website, though fingerprints must be taken at the TRA offices. These automated systems are established with the aim to reduce time spent on tax processes.

Kenya's Huduma Centers³⁰, however, are focused on bringing together many of the government services to citizens under one roof. Huduma centers (there are currently nine centers in nine counties in Kenya)³¹ provides drivers' license renewal and registration, identity card replacement, business name search and registration and more than ten other government services.

29 TRA's Value Added Tax registration process is completely based online. The Revenue Gateway system of the TRA is used for tax payment over 5,000,000 Tanzania Shillings (USD 2880) and to enable customers to pay for or renew their driving licenses and vehiclerelated taxes. TRA's Customs Integrated System (TANCIS) is a new system which is meant to allow simple transparent cargo clearance. TANCIS was launched in March 2014, to reduce bureaucracies and delays in the process.

30 Huduma centre is a onestopshop centre that aims to transform Public Service Delivery by providing citizens access to various Public Services and information from One Stop Shop citizen service centres through integrated technology platforms. Huduma Kenya provides Efficient Government Services at the Convenience of the citizen.

31 There are Huduma centers in Nairobi, Nakuru, Machakos, Eldoret, Kakamega, Kisumu, Nyeri, Embu, Mombasa.

A few of the FGD participants reported having gone to Huduma centers but not knowing about the existence of the Huduma websites.

CSOs monitoring service delivery are particularly focused in rural areas and use nonInternet basedtools to achieve their objectives. Information collected on service delivery is shared by some CSOs among other CSOs and with government. CSOs such as Women of Uganda Network [WOUGNET]³¹ have Voluntary Social Accountability Committees, which use digital cameras for evidencebased monitoring of service delivery.

UReport uses SMS to get information on any incidents of poor service delivery, which is one of the areas of interest for the initiative. The Apac AntiCorruption Coalition [TAAC] also uses Citizen Action Platform [CAP]³² to engage the citizens in regard to service delivery. The CAP expands and intensifies citizen engagement in the demand for government integrity and accountability in the provision of public health services. It uses an integrated system that collects, validates, analyzes and maps information, making it available to health service providers, to track and report on the response. This information is collected from the reports made by citizens.

Women of Uganda Network [WOUGNET] runs a program called the Voluntary Social Accountability Program.³³ The Voluntary Social Accountability Committees [VSAC] correspond with Resident District Commissioners [RDC]³⁴ on issues raised by the community members. Monitoring service delivery is done using digital cameras provided by WOUGNET. VSACs take pictures of dilapidated structures such as pictures of run down school buildings and show them to the RDCs in their districts for action to be taken. This evidence based approach to monitoring service delivery inspires action by local government officials out of fear of being exposed to the public and central government for poor performance.

Tanzania's Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance [CHRAGG]³⁵ uses an SMS system for reporting any cases of human rights violation. This SMS system is meant to serve people who are unable to physically access the office and people with limited resources, which prevents them from being able to access the CHRAGG offices. This system allows more reports of human rights violations to be captured and followed up on.

32 Citizen Action Platform (CAP) tracks problems with health care service delivery in the Apac district of Uganda. Partnership for Transparency Fund and its partners, Anti-Corruption Coalition of Uganda (ACCU) and The Apac Anti-Corruption Commission (TAACC), validates the issues reported and work with health authorities at the local and federal level to resolve them. <https://www.citizenactionplatform.org/>

33 This program is run in 8 districts. Each district has a committee of 15 leaders who are selected by community members to monitor service delivery in their district.

34 The Resident District Commissioner (RDC) is a public officer appointed by the President in accordance with Article 203 of the Constitution of Uganda as amended. They are part of the Executive arm of government.

35 CHRAGG is an independent government department, established as the national focal point institution for the promotion and protection of human rights and duties as well as good governance in Tanzania. CHRAGG is part of the ICT4Democracy East Africa Network.

4) Tracking Corruption

Corruption is rapidly becoming one of the global phenomena, which every country in the world is struggling to contain. Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania have not been left out either. Various organizations have come in handy to mitigate the menace. Kenya and Uganda for instance have Transparency International (TI) as key checkers of corruption. Both TIUganda and TIKenya have implemented tollfree numbers to enable citizens in reporting corruption cases happening in their localities. Many of the citizens in FGDs indicated contentment with leveraging ICTs to report corruption cases. According to the citizens, the use of ICT has minimized the fear of getting victimized.

“I can easily report a corruption case without fear of getting victimised since no one knows me,” Focus Group Discussion participant, Lira, Uganda.

However, people become demotivated to make reports if there seemingly is no action taken. In Uganda, the Apac Anti Corruption Coalition keeps health centers in check through the use of the Citizen Action Platform. Despite the good efforts made, the organizations still face a myriad of challenges, which include restricted mandate which forces them to refer issues raised to other agencies such as the Ethics and Anticorruption Commission in Kenya to which Transparency International Kenya reports. This is sometimes misinterpreted by the citizens to be a sign of no action on the CSOs' part.

When ICTs in Governance Work

Toll-free numbers have proven to be a promoter of the use of ICTs; the study learnt that people tend to use ICTs to participate in governance issues more when there are no cost implications associated with the tool. Other situations in which ICTs in governance work are those in which navigating basic public services are simplified using ICT. This applies to utility paying services for water and electricity bills.

The cases in which ICTs are successful in promoting citizen participation possess two characteristics:

- i Involving low cost and non-Internet based ICTs
- ii Involving physical meet-up of citizens

The success in citizen participation is seen as such through a sustained high frequency of information flow to and from citizens on governance issues. ICT initiatives that were interviewed which possessed these two characteristics were more successful in promoting citizen participation compared to those that did not.

Low cost and non-Internet based ICTs were found to be particularly effective in reach, citizen awareness and sustained use over time, examples of which include U-report (Uganda), Sauti za Wananchi (Tanzania), Muungano (Kenya), all of which leverage SMS reporting and/or local or community radio stations. Other cases where ICTs work in governance are where physical meetups are facilitated either before or after the implementation of an ICT-based initiative. An example of low cost ICTs in governance is Muungano's Kikao SMS, which uses Short Message Service to share information with citizens, at no cost to the citizens. (More information on Muungano initiative in the citizen participation findings section).

Radio Amani has witnessed the establishment of listeners' fan groups in different areas. This presents an example of physical meetups of citizens outside of the ICT tool, which is the radio station. Radio Amani does not organize the listener fan groups. Citizens with interests in different topics, one of which is governance, which the radio station discusses, take it upon themselves to meet. These groups listen to Radio Amani's shows together and participate in discussions jointly since calling the station to contribute their thoughts

and complaints, requires money for calling; calling jointly reduces the financial burden on a listener. The listener fan groups, whose creation is made possible by the existence of Radio Amani's various shows, do more than listening to radio shows and calling in to make joint contributions. They work on income-generating projects together, apply for joint loans for their economic endeavours; they even buy land together in some cases. Other examples include AfyaRadio's interactive talk shows and WOUGNET's use of digital cameras.

Combining two or more ICT tools has also proven to enhance two-way interaction between citizens and government. Such combinations gain a wider reach of citizen information disbursement, facilitating a wider audience reach and higher response rates. AfyaRadio for instance uses radio to reach out to people, encouraging listeners to report incidents of corruption or misappropriation of public utilities. Citizens therefore report cases through AfyaRadio's toll-free numbers, and the station takes it upon itself to follow up accordingly. In instances where no action is taken after making follow ups, the station publicly calls out the 'culprits' on air to put a spotlight on their failure to take action. This has induced fear among government officials who do not want their corrupt ways made public. When these incidents of corruption are reduced, citizens are motivated to use ICT tools to report corruption, as their contribution does not go in vain.

Limitations of ICTs in Governance

Citizens only visit governance-related sites that are a priority for their needs at a specific time, and even then, they reported that the websites are clunky and ugly. User experience is not a key factor in the creation of these websites. Participants from the focus group discussions said that the cluttered and user-unfriendliness of websites, particularly run by government was especially off-putting. Kenya Revenue Authority's (KRA) website was highlighted as an example of tools that seem to be designed only for the tech savvy. On the KRA website, obtaining a Personal Identification Number (PIN) certificate is not a straightforward process; this forces users to go to cyber cafes where there are tech savvy assistants who help users through the process at a cost.

"Those websites are ugly, it discourages me from going beyond the home page, so I don't." – FGD Participant, Nairobi.

The impression made by said 'ugly' and cluttered websites is taken to indicate that government institutions do not in fact care what the citizens think or have to say.

In some cases, citizens felt that even though costs to accessing government services are reduced through ICT tools, some are still unable to meet the costs of accessing these tools. Websites, for instance, are difficult to access for people living in rural areas - a majority of East Africa's population, mobile phones require airtime for communication - except in the case of toll-free numbers for SMS and calls which are few.

Citizens who are end-users of these ICT tools are not involved in their development and as a result, many would-be users are not invested in using the tools. Some do not address users' priority problems, and user experience seemingly is not taken into account. This lack of inclusion in the initial stages of the development of tools hampers their general usability.

Citizens' perceptions on societal challenges and ICT tools (mis)match:

Common challenges faced in society that FGD participants highlighted include corruption, (youth) unemployment, insecurity, poor service delivery in education and health, persistent difficulty in communicating with government through its representatives, income inequality, neglect of rural areas, lack of information on what is going on in the government, poor awareness of rights of citizens to participate in governance issues, and perceived indifference by government to citizen complaints and concerns. Other issues that were raised were, poor budgetary allocation, poor infrastructure, environmental issues, illiteracy and generation gap between government officials and most citizens especially given that majority of the population in the three countries are youth and that most government officials are older. From the issues raised by citizens, it would be expected that most governance tools would be focused on the issues that were raised by the citizens. However, there was little indication, from the interviews with the organizations running the tools, that citizen opinions on what constitutes governance priorities informed the establishment of tools.

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For a citizen who thinks that the priority areas in governance are those highlighted in the previous paragraph, it is difficult for them to interact with tools that address different areas of governance. This illustrates a design-reality gap in the ICT tools in governance; citizen consultations do not seem to inform the creation or prioritization of efforts. An example of a design-reality gap, which led to an initiative being dormant, is the Road Conexion application in Uganda, which was developed at a three-day hackathon. This application did not address the priority needs that citizens had, and was eventually halted due to disuse. The developers found out later that citizens in Uganda have far more pressing needs than traffic information.

The cases of service delivery and corruption are few exceptions to this finding. Service delivery tools were created mostly out of the need to increase effectiveness, reduce queues and bureaucracies in government processes and access services quickly and efficiently. Both governments and citizens share this need. Most participants were more aware of service delivery tools and initiatives than they were about any other type of tools under consideration for this study.

In Uganda, for instance, participants knew about Huduma which is a Kenyan initiative, they knew about Uganda Human Rights Commission's toll-free number which some of them had used successfully, they knew about U-Report which publishes findings in the national newspapers, UMEME's (Uganda's Power Company) toll-free number as well as the National Water and Sewerage Company's toll-free number. In Tanzania, participants had heard of TRA's online services, Tanzania Electricity Supply Company (TANESCO) mobile payment services for electricity bills, and Dar es Salaam Water and Sewerage Corporation's (DAWASCO) mobile payment service for water bills. Lastly, in Kenya, tools that participants had knowledge of included Huduma, the new e-Citizen service delivery platform and Kenya Power's mobile payment services as well as their Twitter and Facebook customer service accounts.

A major hurdle faced in the deployment and use of ICT tools in governance is a lack of trust in the government, as well as apathy among citizens that is brought about by perceived government failure to respond to complaints or issues raised along various governance lines.

“Why should I bother to report an issue when those that have been reported by others before me have never been addressed?” – FGD Participant in Kampala, Uganda

Citizens who participated in the study indicated a conviction that little-to-nothing would be done about the problems they report. They believed that if action is hardly ever taken when incidents are reported physically, it's unlikely that any action will be taken virtually.

“If my going to the office, physical presence, does not inspire the [government] official to act on a problem, how will communication using their websites or Facebooks be different?” – FGD Participant in Nairobi, Kenya.

Challenges faced by implementers of ICT tools for governance

Implementers of ICTs in governance experience both internal and external challenges. Internal challenges within the implementing organizations were resource and design-based. Internal challenges formed the larger part of general challenges in implementing ICTs for governance. External challenges presented by factors outside of the implementing organizations were also resource based. The main challenges reported by implementers of ICTs in governance in the study- that is, civil society organizations, government, and developers- include:

- challenges in convincing relevant stakeholders to share their data and to be transparent, in cases concerning data collection. Further, keeping the data up to date is a challenge which compromises the validity of the data shared, as was found with the e-government portal in Tanzania.
- limited resources to widen reach of the initiatives or to address the technical challenges faced.
 - Financial resources: This is especially true for those that rely on grant-based funding.

“Governance is not fund based, it compromises the continuity of the work we do, but we have no other way to raise money for this project. The government will not give us money to do it, citizens will not pay to participate either.” CSO representative in Tanzania
 - limited technical know-how to maximize the potential of some of the ICT tools used for governance for most of the CSOs interviewed. They asked for assistance in developing social media communication strategies to maximize social media engagement in their work.
 - limited access to information and limited resources to process information into comprehensible formats for citizens’ easy consumption was a noted challenge among organizations focusing on citizen participation.
- low uptake and usage of most of the tools that were discovered was discouraging to the implementers, reducing aggressiveness in the implementation of the ICT tools and initiatives.
- ICT tools and initiatives lacked user analytics to monitor trends in the use of their tools and initiatives either due to lack of expertise or in other cases because it was not considered important.

Conclusion

Despite the investment in ICTs in Governance by the East African governments, evident in the established policies for ICT and e-Government, the implementation of ICT-related projects in governance has not yet been effective in promoting two-way interaction between citizens and governments.

The underlying reason for challenges in implementation of ICTs and ICT initiatives in governance is majorly the design-reality gap yet to be effectively addressed by governance stakeholders. This means that decisions on which ICT tools and initiatives to deploy in governance lies squarely with governments and organizations running the initiatives. Since the initiatives are created for the two-way interaction between citizens and government, more successful implementation would be achieved if citizens were involved in the design process. The design process of applications, which are made for citizens, should involve comprehensive needs assessments and user experience design, which require adequate time and resources. Mobile and web applications that are created or developed in competitions such as tech hackathons do speed up the design process such that within a few days or a few weeks, an app is created. The short time taken to create apps in these hackathons does not allow enough time to involve citizens in the design process; the design-reality gap in these apps is therefore maintained.

Low-cost and non-Internet based ICTs are a natural fit for promoting citizen participation in the East African countries with respect to governance. A big proportion of the East African population lives in rural areas which, as yet, do not enjoy extensive ICT infrastructure as the urban areas do. This therefore makes it imperative that ICT initiatives match the infrastructure available and tech-savviness among citizens in rural areas.

The high investment of ICTs in governance is informed primarily by the potential and promise of their effectiveness in governance. To meet this potential, investment in ICTs for governance needs to shift from developing the ICT tools themselves, to efforts and strategies that reduce the gap between design and implementation of ICT tools and initiatives.

Recommendations

- 1.** The design of ICT initiatives in governance that are meant to facilitate two-way interaction between citizens and government should include the input of citizens who are intended to use them.
- 2.** The design process of ICT initiatives for governance should be comprehensive enough to include implementation and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plans to assess impact and effectiveness. This will allow implementers to detect areas and devise plans to improve over time. M&E, in addition, could provide insights that are shareable among stakeholders.
- 3.** Training the implementers of ICT initiatives in governance should be conducted before implementation actually begins. This training and/or awareness raising should also be extended to the citizens who are the targeted users of the ICT tools or applications for governance.
- 4.** To reduce the rampant reluctance of citizens to interact with government and CSOs, success stories about interaction with government should be shared and supported by stakeholders. Other strategies to address the lack of optimism by citizens in interacting with government should also be explored to encourage more interaction. ICTs in governance should complement and enable good governance practices and not be considered the sole solution to governance problems.
- 5.** CSOs and government ICT initiatives should increasingly share what works and what does not work in ICT for Governance not only within themselves but with citizens as well. Citizens are locked out of such exchanges despite being important stakeholders in governance.
- 6.** Non-Internet based ICTs used in governance such as mobile phones and radios need to be integrated more in ICT and governance initiatives since they are the most widely used and most accessible to the East African Population. While mobile and web applications are useful, they are yet to reach critical mass. Furthermore, for those people that are able to access mobile and web application, strategies need to be developed and deployed to improve their engagement with the tools.
- 7.** ICTs used in promoting citizen participation should incorporate or encourage physical meetups of the citizens (with other stakeholders) to unpack the governance issues in question. This allows citizens to deepen their understanding and engagement around governance issues faced. Introduction of ICT initiatives without the physical meetup or physical engagement component, is more likely to lead to a disinvestment in the initiative by the citizens over time and could perpetuate the sense of apathy which is a predominant hindrance to citizen participation. However, because of the difficulty in organizing physical meetups, alternative ways which allow citizens to unpack issues on which they are engaging government on need to be established.

Annex 1

Table of Organizations Interviewed

UGANDA			
TOOL/INITIATIVE	PURPOSE	DESCRIPTION	TOOL
U-Report	Citizen Participation, Service Delivery	A UNICEF initiative; A free SMS-based system that allows young Ugandans to speak out on what's happening in communities across the country, and work together with other community leaders for positive change.	SMS
Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC)	Service Delivery, Civic Participation	The UHRC is a body established under the 1995 Constitution Article 51 under the Bill of Rights found in Chapter four of the Constitution.	Website, Toll Free Line
Concerned Children & Youth Association (CCYA)	Access to information	CCYA mainly uses local radio stations to reach out to the citizens for initiatives that include, creating awareness on environmental conservation and protection, Peace building and reconciliation initiatives, child protection among others).	Radio, Mobile Phones (SMS and Calls)
DevTrac	Service Delivery, Civic Participation	DevTrac is a Ugandan initiative led by UNICEF that visualizes and monitors the status of public services and development projects in real time.	Web Application, Mobile Phones (SMS)
Kubere Information Centre	Access to information	Kubere Information Centre (KIC) is a multi-dimensional information centre offering Agricultural information. The main objective of this centre is to enhance and improve access to agricultural information to and from rural women farmers using a variety of information and communication technologies (ICTs).	Tech Center
The Apac Anti-corruption Coalition (TAAC)	Service Delivery, Citizen Participation	The Apac Anti Corruption Coalition (TAAC) is a Coalition of 150 subscribed members (CBO, NGOs, Media Houses and individual activists) who share a common objective of fighting all forms of corruption and human rights abuses in Lango sub region. They use an ICT tool known as Citizen Action Platform (CAP).	Website, Software
Lira NGO Forum	Service delivery, Citizen Participation	Umbrella body of Civil Society Organizations (CSO) operating in Lira District to coordinate activities of CSOs, mobilize resources, advocate for the rights of the voiceless and build capacity of CSOs. Their mission is to "Promote good governance, gender sensitivity and poverty reduction in Lango sub-region through collective	Website

Transparency International Uganda	Citizen Participation	CSO working towards promoting good governance programmes in Uganda since 1993. The organization works to create change towards a Uganda free of corruption and its effects. It has national jurisdiction and promotes good governance (transparency, integrity and accountability) with specific emphasis on health, education, water, private sector, extractive industry, and political corruption.	Website, Mobile Phone
Women of Uganda Network's Voluntary Social Accountability Program	Service Delivery, Civic Participation	Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET) is a non-governmental organisation initiated in May 2000 by several women's organisations in Uganda to develop the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) among women as tools to share information and address issues collectively.	Mobile Phones, Digital Cameras
Transcultural Psychosocial Organization (TPO)	Access to information, Civic Participation	Rights based NGO that supports and works with local communities, civil society organizations and government to meet the social protection, psychosocial and mental health needs of vulnerable people.	Website
Parliament Watch Uganda	Citizen Participation	CSO dedicated to providing information on Parliamentary processes and increasing the transparency, responsiveness, and accountability of Parliament. Not affiliated to Parliament--it is an independent initiative.	Web Platform, Social Media (Facebook, Twitter)
Corruption Brakes Crusade (COBRA)	Access to information	Enhancing good governance free of corruption and other abuses of the rights of the rank and file citizen of the country –Uganda.	Website

TANZANIA

TOOL/INITIATIVE	PURPOSE	DESCRIPTION	TOOL
Twaweza, Sauti za Wananchi	Citizen Participation	CSO running bottom up approach program which is citizen-centered among other programs, towards effective and transparency in governance.	Mobile Phone
Ifakara Health Institute's Sentinel Panel of Districts	Access to information	CSO that runs a District Health Information System project in 27 districts in mainland Tanzania.	Mobile Phones, Software
Afya Mtandao	Service Delivery	CSO in that focuses on health and Education. It is a web and network based electronic Health Management Information System (HMIS) meant to reduce congestion and queuing in hospitals by being able to pull patient information faster than through manual systems.	Software, Website
AfyaMap	Access to Information	A stalled project to map all health facilities in Tanzania.	Web Platform
Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRAGG)	Service Delivery, Citizen Participation	CHRAGG is an independent government department, established as the national focal point institution for the promotion and protection of human rights and duties as well as good governance in Tanzania	Mobile Phones (SMS)
Tanzania Revenue Authority	Service Delivery, Access to Information	Tanzania's revenue collection authority that oversees all tax issues in the country.	Mobile Applications, Web Application
e-Government Agency's National Information Portal	Access to information	Semi-independent institutions that oversees and provides e-Government initiatives and enforces e-Government standards to public institutions for managerial and administrative purposes and access to improved services to the public	Website, Web Platform
Forum SYD	Citizen Participation	Forum Syd is a Swedish non-governmental member organization. The organization works with people and people's rights. They believe that sustainable and long-term development can take place only when people's rights are being recognized.	Website
ADLG	Citizen Participation	Tanzania	

Afyaradio	Access to information, Service delivery	Afya FM Radio is a non-profit project, under Tandabui Health Access Tanzania. It is a tool for Educating, informing, advocating and stimulating social action for better health. Afya Radio covers Mwanza region and some parts of other Lake Zone Regions.	Radio
Governance Link	Service delivery	NGO that works on three linked thematic areas of Food Governance, Health Governance and Trade Governance.	Website
Mwanza NGO Forum	Access to information	Network of CSOs working in Mwanza on various focus areas.	Website

KENYA

TOOL/INITIATIVE	PURPOSE	DESCRIPTION	TOOL
Maji Ripoti	Service Delivery	Private company Synacor developed this utility management software solution to help water companies in Africa manage their processes and increase revenue generation through automating their meter reading and consumer feedback processes.	Mobile Application, Web Application
Countylink	Citizen participation, Access to information	Susoftechnology is a CSO that runs Countylink to connect citizens with their counties; county businesses, jobs and government information that is specific to their counties.	Web Application
Community Education and Empowerment Centre (CEEC)	Access to information, service delivery	CSO which strives to build the capacity of communities to be actors in their own development. They empower communities through capacity building, advocacy, research and documentation on issues of gender, human rights, gender sensitive active nonviolence, law, leadership and governance.	Website, Social Media (Facebook)
Ushahidi	Citizen participation/ engagement	This is a non-profit software company that develops free and open-source software for information collection, visualization, and interactive mapping. Ushahidi (Swahili for "testimony" or "witness") created a website in the aftermath of Kenya's disputed 2007 presidential election that collected eyewitness reports of violence reported by email and text message and placed them on a Google Maps map.	Software
Centre for Transformational leadership (CTL)	Citizen participation	CSO that develops leadership capacities among the youth, corporate and institutions towards sustainable futures.	Website, Social Media (Facebook, Twitter)
Nakuru County Government (with ICT Minister Maritim in Nakuru)	Access to information	The Nakuru County Government Office runs all government administrative matters in Nakuru county.	Website, Social Media (Facebook, Twitter)
Nakuru Chief's Office	Citizen participation/ engagement	Chief Kariuki is the Chief of Lanet Umoja in Nakuru North district in Nakuru county who uses Twitter to Mobilize his community.	Social Media (Twitter)
Tears Group	Access to information	CSO based in Nakuru and operates within Rift Valley and parts of Kenya with collaborative partners. TEARS focuses on behavioural change/change of mind-set of the targeted population and facilitation of meaningful alternative skills for self-reliance and good citizenship.	Website

Huduma Centre Nakuru	Service delivery	Huduma Kenya is a programme by the Government of Kenya that aims to transform Public Service Delivery by providing the citizens access to various Public Services and information from One Stop Shop citizen service centres called Huduma Centres and through integrated technology platforms.	Tech Centers, Website, Social Media (Facebook, Twitter)
Kenya Aids NGOs Consortium (KANCO)	Citizen Participation	Network of CSOs, FBOs and Research and Learning institutions working in the health sector in Kenya.	Social Media (Twitter, Facebook)
Nakuru County Citizen Forum	Citizen Participation	CBO that advocates for citizen issues to be addressed in Nakuru.	Social Media (Twitter, Twitter for SMS)
Nakuru County News Online	Access to information	Independent journalist leveraging social media to break news in Nakuru.	Social Media (Facebook)
Voice of Kibera	Citizen Participation, Access to Information	Voice of Kibera aims to give collective global voice to Kibera residents by aggregating local citizen reports, Kibera community media and other relevant news and information.	Web Application (Ushahidi platform)
Spatial Collective	Citizen Participation, Access to Information	Social Enterprise that uses Geographic Information Systems for community development.	GIS Maps, Website
National Taxpayers Association Call Centers	Access to Information, Citizen Participation	CSO focused on promoting good governance in Kenya through citizen empowerment, enhancing public service delivery and partnership building. It does this through development of social accountability tools, Citizen Report Cards, Civic awareness and citizen capacity-building.	Call Centers, Website
Muongano, Kikao SMS (in Partnership with Forum Syd Kenya)	Access to Information, Citizen Participation	Muongano Support Trust, implements Forum Syd-Kenya's Kikao SMS (Short Message Service) project which is a bulk SMS system that communicates public information from county government officials to the community and from the community back to the government. The bulk SMS system creates dialogue between community and government.	Mobile Phones (SMS)
KHRC	Citizen Participation, Service Delivery, Access to Information	NGO that advocates for constitutional change that would secure for Kenyan people governance systems and structures that promote, protect and enhance the full spectrum of human rights and fundamental freedoms.	Website, Mobile Phones (SMS)
Maji Voice	Service Delivery	Government service that enable Kenyans to easily and conveniently reach their water company for water services inquiries, complaints, and payments.	Mobile Phones (USSD and SMS), Web Application
Transparency International Kenya	Citizen Participation	CSO that aims to develop a transparent and corruption free society through good governance and social justice initiatives.	Toll free lines (SMS and Calls)

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