

UGANDA DEVELOPMENT SERVICES (UDS), Uganda

Information resource centre

Introduction

UGANDA DEVELOPMENT SERVICES is a UK funded non-governmental organisation whose mission is to contribute to the socio-economic development of communities in Uganda, through information sharing and technical empowerment.

UDS aims to help the poorest uplift themselves, in consultation with them, by providing appropriate:

- INFORMATION to facilitate development;
- COMMUNICATION to receive and distribute information;
- and TRAINING people in its practical applications.

The country remains basically unindustrialised and, while there is relative growth among the urban population, 90% of the nation's population live in rural areas. These rural communities are the intended beneficiaries of the pilot Development Support Centre in Kamuli (plans are place for a second centre in Mubende District).

Some families independently, or groups of families acting as Community Based Organisations (CBOs), who may be farmers or small traders, want to improve their income to give themselves better access to health and education. They are eager to learn how to improve their standard of living, e.g. through finding alternatives to expensive chemical fertilisers. The centres aim to make this kind of training available in one place, making the process economical.

At the Kamuli centre, the project provides a growing range of services:

- training in computer skills using in-house computer facilities; they are starting a Community Computer Literacy project in which trainers and computers travel to provide training in communities;
- business services e.g. photocopying, typing and printing;
- stationery shop;
- library facilities – access to books, newspapers, and a quiet room.
- Public phone – they have entered an agreement with MTN to install a phone booth on the veranda of the high street premises.

SUSTAINABILITY FACTORS	Notes from Interviews Directly Involved (UDS) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Charles Eyomu, Programme Manager,• Moses, trainer,• Rita Mijumbi, Project Manager• Goretti Asio, Business Assistant• Geoffrey Namukoye, Librarian & Information Officer Users <ul style="list-style-type: none">• From interviews with a teacher (receiving training), SAFA, Plan International programme Area manager (PI) (PI work in collaboration with government, taking participatory approaches to development in a number of sectors: schools (books, furniture, uniforms); girl child education; sanitation facilities (schools and into communities); health promotion (HIV/AIDS, malaria, nutrition); safe water; environmental protection and sustainable agriculture; micro finance). Organisations Having an Overview <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deputy Resident District Commissioner & district statistician (DS) Wankya Tom Francis
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	<p>(The District development plan is created from local plans submitted from sub/county level. His role is to coordinate capacity building. The district has taken a lead in creating a centralised database to assist with development planning in the district. At present, the database is structured according to a comprehensive range of development sectors, and contains information on which organisations are active in each sector, with limited information on the nature of their resources and activities. Creating and maintaining the database depends on the district requesting information, and relevant ministry departments, NGOs and CBOs providing accurate and comprehensive information. UDS took part in workshops organised to promote the initiative.)</p> <p>Other service providers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maria's Care (Orphan care programme). • Nalumu Computer Centre (started Mar 2001)
Objectives	<p>UDS Aims to help the poorest uplift themselves, in consultation with them, by providing appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • INFORMATION to facilitate development, • COMMUNICATION to receive and distribute information • and TRAINING people in its practical applications.
Policy environment	<p>UDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UDS has links with Ugandan Communications Commission (UCC); they attended WB workshop on ICTs in development (Dec 2001), consulted as part of recent WB survey of impact of liberalisation on roll out of telecoms services to rural areas, and are aware of Rural Communications Development Fund (UCDF). As a result of government initiatives, some government officials are receptive to ICT initiatives. • There are initiatives within some ministries to provide computers at district level - partly as policy of e-governance, and partly as a resource for staff. <p>Users</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools do not have computers, so there is no scope for children to use IT skills. Computers are low priority. <p>Overview Organisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no ICT policy yet, still being debated at parliament level. UDS activities fit in with decentralisation policy e.g. workshop arranged by Strengthening Decentralisation Unit (SDU), USAID. Intends to strengthen leadership e.g. training for new LC3 politicians; corresponds with UDS work on capacity building.
Institutional arrangements	<p>UDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 member steering committee in Kamuli

	<p style="text-align: center;">UDS Management Structure</p> <p>Users</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No formal links with schools; some staff and children use UDS facilities. • SAFA have 6 full time staff <p>Overview Organisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UDS needs to register with district (formal requirement). District wants information on NGOs to see which are active – request any reports. • (DS) Activities of NGOs in the district are overseen by District Chairman's Office. NGOs are represented on the District Technical Planning Committee.
<p>Target Groups</p>	<p>UDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project has identified 3 target groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • private individuals wanting IT training; • local NGOs / CBOs; • small scale local businesses and government offices. • The project provides private training, business services e.g. photocopying, and runs a library. They are now starting a Community Computer Literacy project. Gone into communities to tell people about PCs. Requested people to mobilise groups of >10 (to make it worthwhile). Target groups are teachers, students, NGOs, Admin offices e.g. district, youth groups and women's groups. They sent letters to 20 schools and have talked to people in each sub county. <p>Users</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Books in the library are most useful for NGOs and for specialists doing research. They don't reflect the needs of school children or school curriculum; children will read newspapers. • SAFA provide training of women farmers in business <p><u>Poverty and the project</u></p> <p>UDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The poverty focus is achieved through enabling local organisations to better service the needs of the rural poor. <p>How have they been involved in project design?</p>

	<p>UDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local groups took part in 2 stakeholder workshops conducted during the needs assessment stage of the project design. <p><u>Group ICT Capacity</u></p> <p>UDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ICT capacity is poor, which is the justification for the project e.g. schools have no computers and only a handful of businesses (10) have computers. With some exceptions, the ICT capacity of local organisations can be regarded as non-existent. <p><u>Organiser/ User communication</u></p> <p>UDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local NGO / CBO are unaware of facilities; they are preparing a programme of flyers and schools outreach.
<p>ICT Technology</p>	<p><u>ICT Equipment and Source</u></p> <p>UDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To date, most equipment has been provided by UDS UK. Kampala office: 2 laptops, 1 PC, 1 printer, 1 copier, 1 fax. Kamuli: 1 fax, 1 laptop, 3 PCs, 2 printers The keyboard on the programme manager's laptop is giving out. The district education officer has lent UDS anew laptop as he doesn't know how to use it. <p>Users</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SAFA have mobiles, 1PC and printer, photocopier. No problems with PC - technician visit from Jinja every 3 months. PI are waiting for the internet to become a viable option <p>Other Service Providers</p> <p>Maria's Care:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 PCs, which they use for education, and for external training, including standard computer training (Introduction to PC, Excel, WordPerfect). Training for S4 students in vacations. Buy paper locally, consumables provided from donors in UK. <p><u>Technical Support/ Repairs</u></p> <p>UDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When equipment was relatively new, they preferred to use repair services in Kampala; now looking into using an individual in Kamuli. Moses can fix most things except where a spare part is needed. He would like to do a maintenance course, and get tools. <p>Other Service Providers</p> <p>Nalumu Computer Centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consumables - ink 90,000 / cartridge; power 10,000 / month. Repairs are done in Kampala and are expensive. People can repair in Jinja, but they are not experts. Maintenance and repair courses are offered in Jinja (250,000). <p>Other Service Organisations</p> <p>Maria's Care:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No particular problems with equipment. Insist on removing plugs to minimise risk of lightning damage. Maria's care (MC) have links with Busoga diocese and get assistance with repairs e.g. they came and sorted out virus problem. <p>Overview</p>

	<p>Repairs are expensive, so it is most important to protect equipment – surge protectors, UPS, take plugs out of sockets. New versus old equipment. UDS use reconditioned equipment and experience equipment failures. Private trainer and SAFA with new equipment said they had no problems (one failure with power supply – cost the organisation 100,000/-). Price of new equipment in the capital is falling.</p> <p><u>Most popular services/technology</u> UDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The photocopier is the single largest revenue earner. • Most appreciated function appears to be capacity building (Maria's Care did fund raising, SAFA attended planning workshop). <p><u>Common cause of failure</u> UDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faults: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power supplies and monitors damaged when power cut; • Computers crash if used for along time • Dust – keyboard and mouse fail • Users – inadvertently delete files and mess up settings. • Major problem is power cuts, particularly embarrassing when running training, but people understand. They experience load-shedding once/twice per week (6 hours?) and cuts in bad weather. The biggest problem is that it is unpredictable. They have a small UPS to enable them to power down machines. <p><u>User criteria/ Constraints</u> UDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One problem is that technical language is English. <p>Other Service Providers Nalumu Computer Centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICT awareness is poor e.g. Kadwoda (NGO) were given a PC and sent it back to be replaced with a typewriter, now they come to his centre for PC training.
<p>Financing</p>	<p><u>Main funding sources</u> UDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They ran a targeted campaign and have won donations of books from BookAid, British Council, American Information Centre. Value of books approx. £12,500 which means existing funding can be used for operating costs. Donors are more willing to give in kind than cash. They are about to embark on another fund raising campaign, starting with research into what the funding priorities are of all donors. They are considering breaking down the activities of UDS into units to match these priorities. • To date, funding has been raised by UDS UK – they have experience of fund raising. Mailshot to >300 foundations and individuals, got 120 responses and raised £45k. • Standard Chartered Bank has a policy of supporting NGOs and awards welfare grants; UDS has applied for a photocopier and computer. • MTN support NGOs – UDS has applied for a grant. <p>Users</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAFA PC bought by US donor who funded a training project for three years which has now ended. <p>Other Service Organisations Maria's Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term commitment from UK donors.

Budget

UDS

- They keep the following cost centres relevant to technology (estimates of costs so far):
 - Telephone (20,000/- per month)
 - Electricity (80,000/- per month)
 - Equipment maintenance

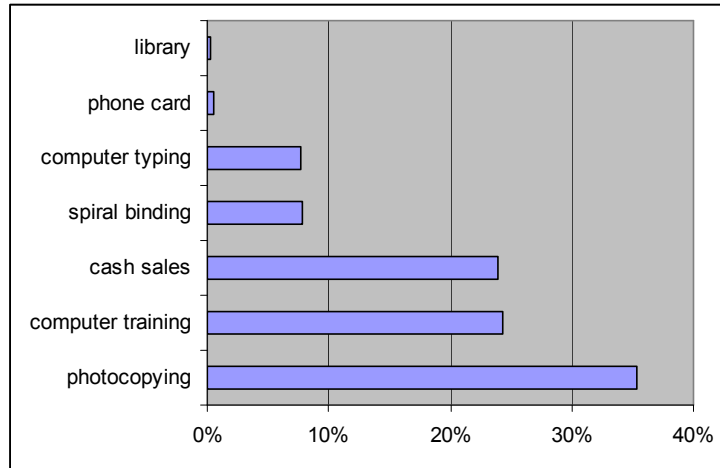


Figure 1. UDS Resource Centre Revenue over first 6 months of operation

Cost recovery mechanisms

UDS

- MTN installed a Publicom booth at the centre shortly after it opened. It accepts coins and cards; most people prefer coins. UDS receive 8% of revenue, which is paid (3 months later) in kind in phone cards that they sell.
- They are putting in a fax machine. Post Office charges 1000/page, so they will charge the same. They will also offer a message delivery service, which will give them a competitive edge; have yet to work out how much they will charge for this.

The project process

UDS

- Dr. Maitland came up with the idea of information centres. UDS commissioned consultant to identify districts to explore – done on the basis of:
 - District officials positive towards the idea;
 - Nobody else providing service
- Kamuli and Mubende selection. Having made contacts with local government, they got support to hold stakeholder workshops in each district. At these, they took an open agenda approach and started with identifying development needs then developing a problem tree; this identified “information”. Grouping: youth, women, men, old men, disabled, NGOs. Used results to draw up logical framework, used as basis for strategic plan. Stakeholders aware of UDS when centre then set up. Commitment of government is critical, to ensure support when eventually handing over to the community.
- Rita is currently doing an evaluation.

Users

- SAFA and PI were involved in the initial needs assessment workshops

<p>Key linkages</p>	<p><u>What links does the project have with local/national organisations (government, non-government, private sector)?</u></p> <p>UDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The contacts made during the project design stages have been maintained and are most valuable, esp. local government. • UDS have worked with District Planning Unit to provide training in information management (with UBOS) - all related to decentralisation policy. • They have been given pamphlets and reports by WHO, Min. of Health, Uganda Debt Network, Straight Talk (AIDS). • Charles was a member of Community Development Resource Network and ran a training session for E. African NGOs in Mbarara, this was attended by 3 / 4 NGOs from Soroti (esp. Fr. Mubiru) who asked if he could do similar in Soroti. • UDS has recently started a Community Computer Literacy Project, under which they will take PCs and provide training to any group of over ten people (and charge 20,000/- per person); there needs to be power supply. They are currently running a course for 15 teachers at a school, where the headmaster is keen on computers and made arrangements for the training. • The Manager of the local bank (a woman) has agreed that any woman who has attended a UDS business skills course can be eligible for a loan. <p>Users</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAFA plan to use women in business CD developed by UDS project manager. • SAFA have links to Kulika (trained 2 volunteers) <p>Overview Organisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (DS) the District is coordinating with UDS and the NGO Forum on the gathering of information for the database. • The NGO Forum rent an office in the UDS centre. <p><u>What links does the project have with international organisations?</u></p> <p>UDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links with international NGOs have been established, but do not appear to be used regularly e.g. Plan, USAID project. <p><u>What local sources of information have been identified (and accessed)?</u></p> <p>Users</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PI office also serves as a resource centre for research. • PI generates micro-level (household) data for development planning from within communities. They compare data with information from both the District administration and UDS. <p><u>Issues arising</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is very important to get the district officials on your side. This is primarily for credibility, marketing (awareness raising) e.g. deputy CAO is chair of district NGO board, and chief of district planning unit, but also pragmatic - there are registration and reporting procedures for NGOs to adhere to. • Good relations obviously exist between local organisations (e.g. UDS, Plan International), but there appears to be little in the way of coordination of efforts or facilities. Although Plan International took part in the initial UDS consultation activities, they do not now appear to take advantage of the facilities available. Plan International talk of running a resource centre, but it is not clear to whom this will be available; there may well be a need for a facility open to the community to duplicate those of (international NGOs).
<p>Intermediaries</p>	<p>UDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One aspect of UDS' work is capacity building for NGOs. They carried out a training needs assessment (through AIDTS), and found there was demand for reporting, financial reporting, bookkeeping, fundraising, communication

	and leadership skills. They ran 2 workshops, but the funding has run out.
Capacity	<p><u>Staff Equipment Training</u> UDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project manager has worked on IDRC community telecentres, and works as a high level consultant e.g. to World Bank missions. • 1 trainer – Makerere graduate in urban planning. Picked up computing during school days. • Moses would like to do a computer maintenance course <p><u>User Training</u> UDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See above <p>Overview Organisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (DS) worked with UDS in organising workshop on needs assessment and database; run with Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS). Kamuli District Data Needs Assessment Report no to be replicated in 15 other districts. <p>Other Service Provider Nalumu Computer Centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manager received training at Methodist training centre (Jinja) • They provide business services (typing, printing) and training in Beginners, MSWord, Excel. 5 students passed out now working locally e.g. town council. • Trainees include health workers, teachers, NGOs and private individuals. • Director is an individual who studied in Austria and bought a PC for personal use, then decided to use for business services, customers then asked for training. • St. Kizito primary school is beginning to train pupils this year, although they have no instructor. • Some students from UDS come to him for repeat training because they didn't understand. <p><u>Issues arising</u> The effectiveness of the resource centre in meeting the needs of target groups is compromised by a lack of "extension" skills and resources (although UDS is now taking training courses out into the community). Such a link with target groups is needed, both to field requests for information (to understand the information needs of CBOs), and to feed information out to target groups. There may also be a role for extension staff to work with groups in managing and analysing information, and even incorporating it into their activities.</p>
Development benefits	<p>UDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They have rented premises: 6 room offices, 5 room quarters. At present staff stay in quarters (Free). Idea is to rent these out to small NGOs. • Training to teachers – no direct benefit as no computers in schools, although there are expectations. Similarly, girls want to be secretaries – some go to cities, others waiting for technology to arrive. Also NGO staff (e.g. UCCF, Community development volunteers), and admin staff. • In 9 months they have trained 70 people including staff from the District administration and from Community Development Volunteers (a CBO). • Initially 3 - 5 students were using the library, to day 20 - 30 students daily • About 105 students have received computer training • 17 women entrepreneurs in Bulamogi have received micro loans under the UDS rural support project <p>Users</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He has done training course at UDS. He had some prior experience of computing, but the training has given him an in depth understanding. Two reasons for doing training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He is often asked to take minutes of meetings (e.g. church, NGOs) and has to prepare good copy for typing up (?) • An educated person should know how to use a computer. • The only access he has to a computer is through one of the computer service centres (6 in town). <p>Overview Organisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a fax at the UTL office, and one in the CAO office – both are out of order, so UDS fax will provide a useful service to the community. • <p><u>Other</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sub-county level consultation process has raised awareness of information (created demand) and secured buy in from potential users (marketing) e.g. headmaster requested mobile training unit to train 15 of his teachers • PCs & photocopiers owned by NGOs can make valuable services available to communities (those who can pay), and recover costs for NGOs (make it sustainable). BUT at expense of stifling local private sector, which places communities in long-term jeopardy – risk of losing facilities when donors pull out. Then the private sector can step in pretty quick but prices will increase, as donor subsidies will no longer exist. There will be value in redundancy in early days of infrastructure development e.g. 2 fax machines out of order. • Resource centres are becoming popular, with Districts and NGO networks rolling out plans to set up centres; opportunities will increase in the near future when internet service becomes viable.
Anecdotes	