

**COUNCIL FOR ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT FOR WOMEN
OF AFRICA - UGANDA CHAPTER (CEEWA-U)**



**WOMEN AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT (WED)
PROGRAMME - ICT PROJECT**

**ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT
SUBMITTED TO Hivos
JULY 2004 – JUNE 2005**

Submitted By

CEEWA – U ICT PROJECT

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List of acronyms

CEEWA-U	:	Council for Economic Empowerment for Women of Africa-Uganda Chapter
HIVOS	:	Humanistic Institute for Cooperation with Developing Countries
ICTs	:	Information and Communication Technologies
WIRES	:	Women Information Resource Electric Services
ERC	:	Empowerment Resource Centre
WED	:	Women and Entrepreneurship Development program
WOF	:	Women and Finance program
WOA	:	Women and Agriculture program
GEDM	:	Gender in Economic Decision-Making program
TOT	:	Training of Trainers
CSOs	:	Civil Society Organizations
FM	:	Frequency Module
TV	:	Television

1.0 INTRODUCTION

CEEWA-U is a Non- Government and Non Profit making Organization (NGO) of professional women with diverse backgrounds and experiences who have committed themselves to work towards empowering Uganda's grass root women. CEEWA-U's mission is to promote the economic empowerment of women in the development process by increasing the level of women's access to and control over economic resources namely; credit, land and agricultural extension services. CEEWA-U Implementation strategy includes advocacy, training, research, documentation and information dissemination.

CEEWA-U implements its programs through 4 program areas;

- Gender and Economic Decision-making (GEDM), which promotes gender equity in economic decision-making.
- Women and Agriculture (WOA), which promotes gender sensitive agricultural policies and programs in Uganda through gender focused research and advocacy.
- Women and Finance (WOF) which advocates for effective and gender sensitive credit policies and programs that address women's needs and are financially sustainable.
- Women and Entrepreneurship Development (WED), which promotes entrepreneurship development among women.

With financial support from Hivos, CEEWA-Uganda under Women and Entrepreneurship Development (WED) program has continued to implement an Information Communication Technologies Project (ICTs) to build the skills and bridge the information gap of rural women entrepreneurs. The project is being implemented in 6 project sites namely Buwama, Nabweru, Kampala and Mukono in central Uganda plus Jinja and Iganga in Eastern Uganda. The focus has been building capacity of grass root women to access and utilize ICTs for enterprise development, training in entrepreneurship development and business skills to effectively manage their businesses, best practices in agriculture, promote linkages and information dissemination.

In Nabweru, Buwama and Mukono, CEEWA-U works through the established community telecentres as conduits to reach grassroots women and the communities.

In April 2004 CEEWA-Uganda received further financial support from Hivos amounting to 165,000 Euros to support the activities under the ICT project phase III for two years (April 2004- March 2006). CEEWA-Uganda is grateful to Hivos for the continued financial support and thankful to Ms Catherine Van der Wees (Programme Officer Economy East Africa), Karel Chambille (Head Bureau Africa) for the invaluable support and guidance extended to CEEWA-U in implementing the Project.

2.0 THE ICT PROJECT PHASE III

The overall objective of the third phase of the Project is to strengthen and develop capacities for the enhancement of economic empowerment of micro women entrepreneurs and women's organisations through the use of ICTs to enable them transform into bigger enterprises.

2.1 Specific Objectives

- To strengthen WIRES so as to enable beneficiaries to access and utilize Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) in their businesses.

- To increase skills and knowledge among women entrepreneurs in ICT use and application for sustainability of project activities.
- To advocate for the implementation of gender sensitive ICT Policy that caters for the needs of both women and men.
- To operationalise the Empowerment Resource Centre Business Plan to make the ICT Program sustainable.
- To monitor and evaluate the impact of the project among women beneficiaries

CEEWA-U is happy to report that there is notable progress and increased interest among the 809 beneficiaries so far targeted for the first year of project implementation.

3.0 THE IMPORTANT SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS FOR THE ICT PROJECT

3.1 Growth of the ICT sector in Uganda

The ICT sector growth has not changed so much since our last date of reporting (2004). The number of ICT providers and the current ICT market status as detailed by the Uganda Communication Commission (April 2004) is as follows:

Table 1: ICT MARKET STATUS IN UGANDA 2005

Service	Number of operators/subscribers/stations/lines
National telecommunications Operators	2
Mobile Cellular operators	3
VSAT International Data Gateways	8
Internet Service providers	18
Wired telephone lines	65,793
Mobile cellular subscribers	893,035
Internet/email subscribers	6,500
Private FM radio stations	130
Private televisions stations	23
Courier service providers	19

Source: Uganda Communication Commission

3.2 Policy and Legislative Frame Work

There is a Draft ICT Policy in place, which is yet to be passed. CEEWA-U has had an opportunity to participate in the sector working groups during the development of the policy, to ensure that the policy is gender responsive.

The objectives of the ICT Policy include the following:

- Sensitization and creation of awareness among the public and stakeholders about the role of ICT in the development process.
- Increase the levels of ICT functional literacy in vital sectors and build human resource capacity.
- Promote the use of ICT in increasing the production and dissemination of information and knowledge.
- Ensure gender mainstreaming in information and communication programmes and in ICT development.
- Encourage and support research and development related to ICT policy
- Enhance collaboration and coordination in ICT development at the local, regional and international levels.

Currently the Uganda Communications Commission is in the process of consulting various stakeholders for input in the process.

4.0 ENABLING AND CONSTRAINING FACTORS

4.1 Opportunities

- CEEWA-U has acquired experience in bridging information gaps through the implementation of the ICT project. The organisation has grown and is recognised as a strong advocate for the economic empowerment of women.
- Donor funding: CEEWA-U has received financial and technical support from Hivos for 2 years (April 2004-March 2006) of the project implementation to strengthen, expand activities and develop strategies to sustain the program for the enhancement of economic empowerment of women entrepreneurs through the use of ICTs.
- CEEWA-U continues to network with other organizations to advocate for the use and application of ICTs for the economic empowerment of women. Net works include Women Of Uganda Net work (WOUGNET), Uganda Women Entrepreneurs Associations (UWEAL), Local Government authorities at the district and sub-county levels in the six project sites, CEEWA-U has been able to learn and share ICTs best practices and experiences.
- Civil society continues to enjoy the good will of the Ugandan Government, which is strengthening its partnership for creating an enabling environment for sustainable development.
- Telecommunication companies are able to use the government mast at a subsidized fee to enable them widen coverage. There is an incentive for the broadcasting institutions that wish to expand - those that transmit over 200km

and cover a wide area pay less for the broadcasting license for both radio and TV. This arrangement increases opportunities for the rural people.

- The liberalisation of the communication sector to allow more actors, has increased coverage of the service to the rural areas
- The Communication Commission set up by government has played a key role in promoting and regulating the communication sector.
- There is increased awareness on the importance of ICTs in business development. Particularly telephone services in both peri urban and rural areas.

4.2 Threats

- Inadequate infrastructure development for ICT sector i.e. connectivity in rural areas is still inadequate. Reception of signals for telecommunication is not widely distributed. There is unreliable power supply and in some rural areas it is lacking. The Road networks in the rural areas are still limited and this affect installation of ICTs and utilization.
- Taxes: The rate of excise duty on airtime was raised from 7% to 30% in the budget of 2005/2006, which led to subsequent increment of the calling rate per minute. This is likely to reduce access to telephone services especially for the grassroots. Government has introduced an annual tax on household Television sets of Uganda shillings 12,000 equivalent to US\$ 7. This tax is likely to discourage the utilization of the mostly used ICT tools among the urban and peri urban poor.
- ICT tools /equipment and services are still expensive especially for the rural communities.
- Social-cultural biases have continued to keep women lagging behind in adopting to new technological changes.
- Mushrooming organizations with related objectives, which may lead to donor fatigue due to duplication of activities and little impact.

5.0 CEEWA – U INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

5.1 Mission

The mission and long-term objectives of CEEWA-U have remained the same in the reporting period of the Project. The mission is to promote the Economic Empowerment of Women in the Development process.

The ICT Project is being managed under the Women and Entrepreneurship Development Program (WED) and the Mission is to promote Economic Empowerment of Women through use of ICTs.

5.2 Advocacy Strategy for CEEWA - U 2005-2007

ICT Project is a part of the over all CEEWA Advocacy Strategy (2005-2007) whose goal is to advocate for the promotion, formulation and Implementation of Gender Sensitive policies and Programmes that can benefit both women and men equally and facilitate women's economic empowerment. The focus of this Advocacy Strategy is to ensure women participate and benefit in Agricultural Enterprise Development (AED) in Uganda.

The advocacy Strategy is a bold step towards the recognition that significant impact in uplifting the status of women will only be realized when the processes for the design, appraisal, and implementation of both policies and programmes are gender sensitive. This provides a framework in which important decisions are made in favour of the marginalized such as women and youth.

Given the success of the ICT project and developments in the ICT sector, CEEWA-U has embarked on advocating for a widespread use of ICTs in promoting businesses, especially in rural areas. In addition to building the capacity of rural women to be able to utilize ICTs and provision of ICT services, CEEWA-U uses its experience and best practices to advocate for gender sensitive ICT policies. This is done through Lobbying, documentation, ICT advocacy materials and creating awareness and sensitization through the media.

5.3 The Empowerment Resource Center (ERC) - Business Plan

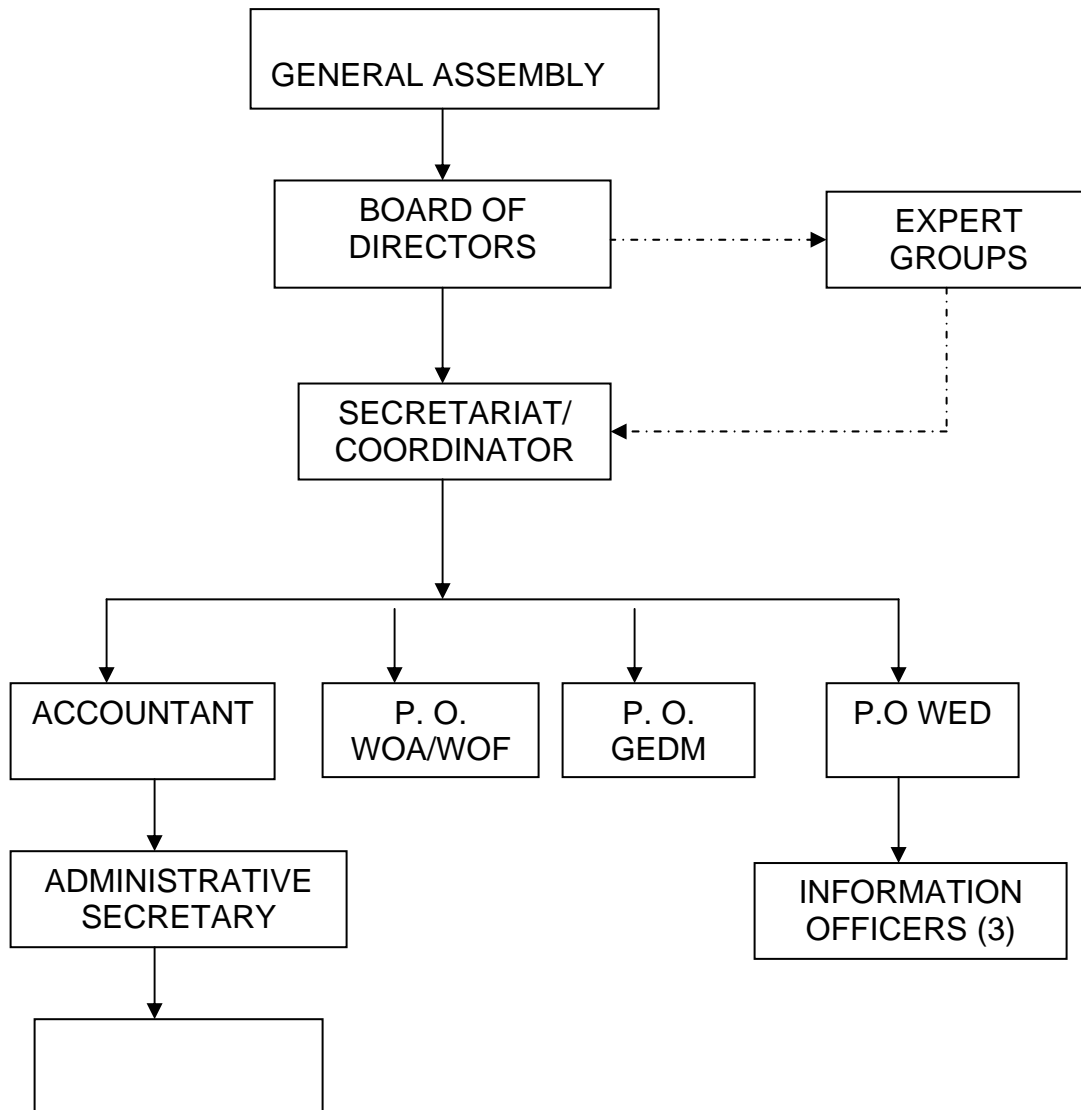
CEEWA-U has registered its Empowerment Resource Centre into as a business to generate income for sustainability of CEEWA-U activities. The services at the center i.e. WIRES, empowerment sessions, Resource Library, Photocopying, Typing, printing, Internet services, Binding, Telephone services, computer training and Consultancy services are offered at a fee to ensure sustainable service provision. In this regard, the business plan for the Empowerment Resource Centre will be operationalised in phases as the funds become available.

5.4 Organizational Structure

The organization structure has had changes during this reporting period and is detailed as shown below:

Figure 1: CEEWA-U Organogram

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF CEEWA UGANDA



KEY	
P.O:	Program Officer
WOA:	Women and Agriculture
WOF:	Women and Finance
GEDM:	Gender and Economic Decision Making
WED:	Women and Entrepreneurship Development

5.5 Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation of Activities

CEEWA-U holds Annual Planning meetings to develop a corporate plan. The monitoring and evaluation of activities continues to be done with the support of the Board, Expert Groups and the management meetings at the secretariat.

a) Planning

The activities of the programme are implemented according to approved work plans. Technical aspects of the implementation of the Programme are the responsibility of the Programme Officer with the support of the Coordinator.

The approved work plans are discussed at the annual planning meeting and periodically reviewed by the Expert Group and the management team at the Secretariat.

b) Monitoring

A framework to monitor performance of the programme is in built in the programme design and is done at different levels of implementation. The Coordinator is responsible for monitoring and supervision of implementation of program activities. The Secretariat monitors performance through weekly meetings chaired by the Coordinator at which the Programme officer gives a progress report on the previous week activities as well as what is planned for the week.

The Expert group meetings are held at least quarterly. At this meeting, the Program Officer reports to the expert group on progress of the planned activities for the Board of Directors meeting. It is also a time to review the status of implementing the activities.

The Accountant ensures that project funds are released and accounted for by the Program Officer and reports to the Coordinator.

The Coordinator is responsible for the overall of CEEWA-U programmes implementation

c) Evaluation

Evaluation is provided for at the end of the project, however a mechanism has been put in place for mid term internal evaluation to look at the performance and draw lessons learnt. CEEWA-U has a Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) comprising of persons from Expert groups with Technical expertise, Chairperson of the program and some Executive committee members to ensure that reasonable standards are met in consultancies.

5.6 Human Resources

CEEWA-U Secretariat has got 17 staff, 10 women and 7 men.

6.0 Financial situation overview

7.0 PROGRAM/ACTIVITIES

The Planned activities for the period of July 2004 to June 2005: -

- Mobilization of more women in the 4 project sites and two new districts to use WIRES through publicity and out reach programs.
- Training of women entrepreneurs in six districts (the old 4 project sites and two new districts) in ICTs use and application in enterprise development.
- Conduct Training of Trainers in the four project sites and in two new districts to build a cadre of trainers.
- Development and translation of simplified training materials
- Updating of Information on market prices, best practices in agriculture, market availability and trade support services.
- Information dissemination to women entrepreneurs in the project sites.
- Review the ICT Policy, engender it and develop lobby briefs for advocacy
- Purchase of equipment to enable smooth implementation of the project activities
- Operationalization of the Business plan for Empowerment Resource Centre (ERC)
- Monitoring the utilization of skills given to project beneficiaries

7.1 PROGRESS REPORT

The Report focuses on activities of the 'ICT Project' (2004 to 2005).

7.1.1 Mobilisation of women entrepreneurs

According to Phase II Project 'Monitoring and Evaluation Report' carried out in May 2004, Micro women entrepreneurs reported to have benefited from CEEWA-U's intervention especially in the areas of ICT application and Business Management. The important skills learnt were record keeping (46%), savings in business (17%), expanding business (12%), keeping track of business performance (8%) and how to spot business opportunities (7%).

It is evident that the ICT project educated beneficiaries about the importance of business management. It's against this background that CEEWA-U realized the need to replicate the project activities to benefit other women entrepreneurs at micro level and build a cadre of trainers to sustain CEEWA-U activities among the local communities.

CEEWA-U found it necessary to carry out a ¹Needs Assessment in order to increase outreach to new parishes within the old project sites and to new districts. The purpose was to provide baseline information and training needs of Micro and Small Scale women entrepreneurs in 4 old and 2 new Sites/Districts namely; Buwama (5 parishes), Nabweru (6 parishes), Kampala (3 parishes), Mukono (5 parishes) in Central Uganda, Iganga (3 parishes) and Jinja (3 parishes) in Eastern Uganda.

A total of 414 respondents were mobilized and gave responses on their training and information needs. The findings are being used to guide the implementation of the Project.

¹ The Needs assessment exercise was not included in the approved Hivos proposal but it was deemed necessary to update and identify the information and training needs of the old beneficiaries and new entrants before implementing the current phase. The funds that facilitated the exercise were got from the exchange gain savings on the old Hivos Account.

Findings of the Needs Assessment Exercise

- **Training needs**

The study revealed that 63.5% wanted training in Internet/e-mail use and application, 58.9% in computer applications, 51.6% in costing and pricing, 44.9% in marketing, 31.4% in savings and credit management as summarized in the table below.

Table 3: Training needs of respondents in six project sites

Training need (s)	Number of respondents (%)
Internet/e-mail	63.5%
Computer applications	58.9%
Costing and pricing	51.6%
Marketing	44.9%
Savings and credit management	31.4%

- **Information needs**

Respondents indicated that they want to receive current and timely information on markets, prices, and farm inputs, credit services with soft conditions.

A total of 1440 beneficiaries are targeted in the six project sites by the end of phase III. During the mobilization exercise for the first year 809 beneficiaries were mobilized to participate in the project activities. In Buwama site the number increased from 99 to 181, Nabweru site from 121 to 147 Kampala from 46 to 51 and Mukono the number declined from 157 to 115. In the new sites of Jinja and Iganga the number of beneficiaries mobilized were 198 and 117 respectively.

Table 4: Number of beneficiaries per site

Site	Number of beneficiaries by end of phase II	Number of beneficiaries by end of year one phase III (July 2004 – June 2005)	Participation by Gender (phase III)	
			Female	Male
Kampala	46	51	51	0
Buwama	99	181	130	51
Nabweru	121	147	133	14
Mukono	157	115	86	29
Iganga	-	117	96	21
Jinja	-	198	151	47
Total	423	809	647	162

Through mobilization, strong and sustainable linkages have been created with local communities and their leaders. This has enabled more beneficiaries to participate in project activities. The increase in the number of beneficiaries is an indicator that the communities are interested in developing and strengthening their capacities to manage their businesses through application of ICTs, entrepreneurship and business skills.

7.1.2 Training in ICTs use and Entrepreneurship Development

Training in ICT use and application and in entrepreneurship development and business skills was conducted in all the 4 old and 2 new project sites. The purpose of the training was to strengthen the capacities of beneficiaries in the old project sites and equip beneficiaries in the new sites with knowledge and skills in ICT use and application as well as in entrepreneurship

and business development. A total of 720 beneficiaries were targeted in the first year of program implementation but 809 were trained of which 647 were women and 162 were men. The training covered the following areas:

- i) Introduction to ICT use and application in enterprise development for the new sites
 - a. Sensitization and awareness about different ICT tools,
 - b. How to use and apply various ICTs in business and
 - c. Advantages of using ICTs in business
- ii) How ICTs can support the survival and growth of Small and Micro enterprises by use of case studies
 - a. How to access business related information such as market prices on the Internet,
 - b. How to communicate using e-mail and short message services (SMS) and
 - c. How to use Internet search engines for business information
- iii) Entrepreneurship development and business management skills. This covered topics such as
 - a) Individual growth and entrepreneurship development, Business planning, Record keeping, Self help group formation and group dynamics for the new sites.
 - b) Business planning (Costing and pricing, Marketing among others), proposal writing, Self-help group formation and group dynamics for old sites

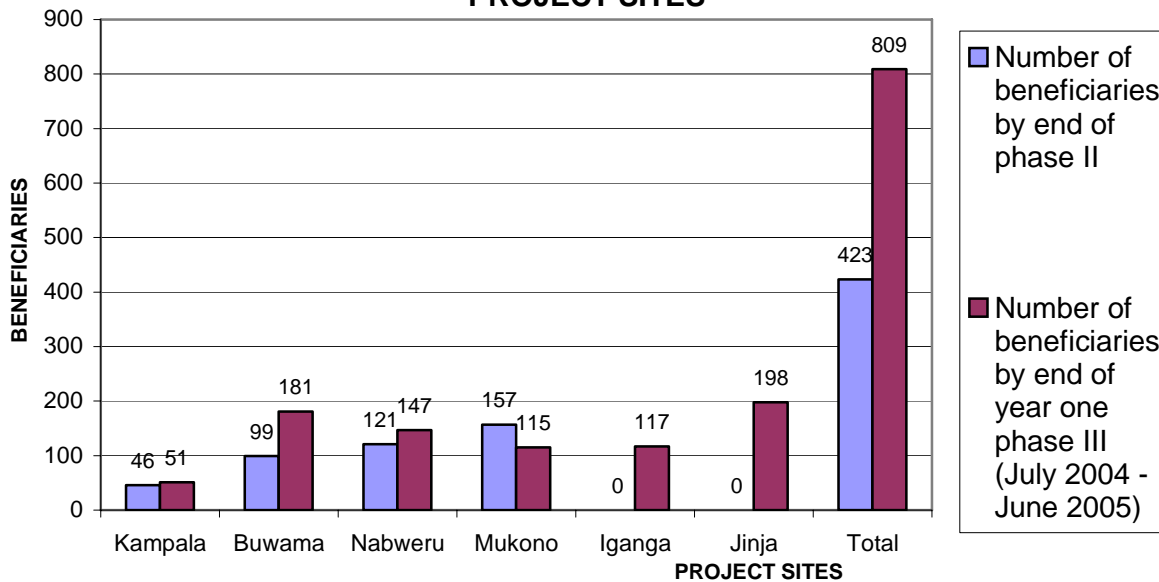
Monitoring of the utilization of skills is on going and it will help us to track the impact of the training.



Figure 2: Bringing ICTs nearer to the rural communities: women beneficiaries in the new Iganga Project site learning how to use computer.

The graph below shows the details of the number of beneficiaries trained in each site compared to the number of phase II

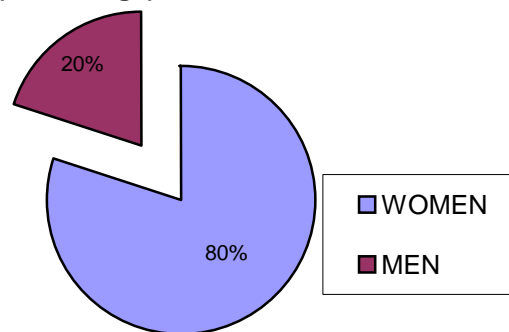
GRAPH 1: NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES TRAINED IN THE SIX PROJECT SITES



In phase II of the project a total of 423 beneficiaries were trained in the four Project sites of which 93% were women and 7% men. The number of beneficiaries has increased from 423 in phase II to 809 in the current phase of which 80% are women and 20% men. This is due to expansion of the project activities in 2 new sites (Jinja and Iganga) and continuous sensitization and awareness created in the first training.

There is still a progressive increase in the number of beneficiaries accessing training in entrepreneurship and ICT application in the rural areas i.e. Buwama, Jinja, Iganga compared to Kampala, Nabweru and Mukono which are urban and peri-urban areas. While there is an increase in the number of beneficiaries in rural areas, their counterparts in urban areas can easily access similar services at their convenience from private service providers.

Graph 2: PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN AND MEN (Percentage) IN THE ICT PROJECT



The number of women participating in the project activities is still high at 80% compared to men, which is 20%. However, men are increasingly beginning to participate in the project activities, because of the need to acquire ICT application skills, entrepreneurship development and business management skills among the rural communities.

7.1.3 Training of Trainers in the four project sites and in two new districts to build a cadre of trainers

The main purpose of the training was to build up a cadre of dedicated trainers in ICT use and application in business, entrepreneurship development and business management skills in the four old Project sites namely; Buwama, Nabweru, Kampala and Mukono. A total of 35 beneficiaries were trained covering the 4 old sites. The TOT graduates were equipped with skills for training other women entrepreneurs to sustain the project activities in the communities. The training covered the following areas:

- Principles of Adult learning
- Communication skills
- Session preparation and presentation
- Preparing and conducting a workshop
- Gender and gender mainstreaming
- Self-help group formation and group dynamics
- Resource mobilization
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Characteristics of an entrepreneur
- Business planning skills
- Buying skills
- Costing and pricing skills
- Record keeping skills
- Stock control skills
- Marketing and marketing skills
- ICTs use and application

During the last trainings in ICT and entrepreneurship development CEEWA-U TOT graduates participated in mobilizing, organizing and conducting seminars in SME management and ICT use and application in business. This gave them an opportunity to practice the skills learnt during the training and gradually enable them gain experience and build confidence.

A total of 10 women will be tracked down in each project site for purposes of assessing impact. Files have been opened up for the women and their business profiles have been documented.

Note: Training of trainers in the two new districts of Jinja and Iganga shall be conducted in the second year of implementation.



Figure 3: A group photo of CEEWA TOT graduates from Kampala site pose with a CEEWA member (Front row right) and trainers after receiving their certificates.



Ms Nabanja Rovincer one of CEEWA TOT graduate from Nabweru site conducting a session on entrepreneurship during one of CEEWA trainings.

7.1.4 Development and translation of simplified training materials

Existing training manual and guide for entrepreneurship and business skills development have been reviewed, updated and translated from English into a local dialect (Luganda) to enable TOT graduates use them during training. Also 10 booklets on selected business and entrepreneurship tips were reviewed and translated into a local dialect (Luganda) to enable trained beneficiaries make references after training. These include, Entrepreneurship, Buying and Selling, Organization and time management, Types of businesses, Record keeping, Marketing, Business planning, Credit management, Resource mobilization and stock control.

The locally translated training materials shall help TOT graduates and women beneficiaries apply the concepts of business management and entrepreneurship development since they are simplified and repackaged in a user-friendly format.

7.1.5 Information Update on the Website

CEEWA-U considered to use a website as one of the channels through which information can be disseminated to reach the rural and peri-urban end users through Women information resource electronic services (WIRES). The website is supposed to be regularly updated with information related to women enterprises such as market prices and opportunities, best practices in agriculture, credit and trade support services among others and accessed by women through established telecentres in the different project sites. Due to technical challenges with the site (www.ceewauwires.org), updating information on the site has not been effected. A new website is under construction and expected to be up and running by end of July 2005.

However, the project staffs have been disseminating information through meetings and telephone (Short message services especially for market prices) to the beneficiaries in all the project sites.

7.1.6 Information dissemination to women entrepreneurs in the rural sites

In an effort to bridge the Information gap between women beneficiaries in the project sites and information sources, collection, repackaging and dissemination of simplified information related to women enterprises was carried out. The information included market prices for agricultural crops; Media programs (radio and newsprint) that disseminate business information, sources of agricultural inputs, animal and poultry drugs and their prices; sources of credit and lending requirements. Local content on best practices in agriculture such as vegetable, cabbage and onion growing, green paper growing, passion fruit production, poultry keeping, pig farming and soil conservation.

Special skills in banana farming were given to beneficiaries through a demonstration of the banana farming video documentary in the rural project sites where the main economic activity of the beneficiaries is agriculture. The demonstration covered different stages of banana farming from preparation of the banana field to harvesting and marketing the product. (Preparation of the banana field, different types of bananas, selection of good type of bananas and suckers for planting, how to dig the banana holes, planting, weeding, use of organic manure, pruning, prevention and control of pests and diseases, harvesting, marketing and selling of bananas).

The demonstration gave beneficiaries a forum to share experiences among themselves because it was participatory and they also learnt new skills in banana farming. The demonstration generated more interest among the beneficiaries because it was audio and visual. ICT tools used for demonstration included an LCD projector, Video Cassette Recorder and public address system.

All information dissemination has been carried out through group meetings with 30 women beneficiaries for each of the six project sites.

7.1.7 Review the Draft ICT Policy, engender it and develop lobby briefs for advocacy

i. Review the Draft ICT Policy, engender it and develop lobby briefs for advocacy

The consultant was hired to review the Draft ICT Policy and gender issues have been identified and documented. The issue brief will be used as an advocacy tool to lobby policy makers and key stakeholders, to lobby them to integrate the recommendations for mainstreaming gender in the ICT policy.

ii. Participation in ICT Policy sector working groups

CEEWA-U has participated in two sector working groups i.e. E-commerce under Uganda Investment Authority and E-information under the Department of Information in the President's office. In the National ICT Policy development process, CEEWA-U is currently lobbying for engendering the implementation process for the benefit of all particularly women.

7.1.8 Operationalization of the Business plan for Empowerment Resource Centre (ERC)

In an effort to address the question of sustainability beyond the project time frame, CEEWA-U developed a Business plan and the process for operationalization is in progress. The following has so far been done.

i. Registration of the Empowerment Resource Centre

ERC was legally registered as a limited company and it can now transact any business with the public because it is a legal entity.

ii. Setting up the office

- Premises for the ERC were identified and acquired. The premises are shared with CEEWA-U Secretariat. The permanent premises for the ERC will boast our services.
- Furniture and other items for the start off phase was bought and put in the premises. This includes computer tables, chairs, bench and Telephone set.
- A Local Area Network (LAN) and Internet facilities were installed and are up and running.

iii. Recruitment of staff

A volunteer has supported the management of the Resource center until it is fully operational.

iv. Implementation of the Business plan

The Business plan is being rolled out as funds become available. The following services are being offered to the public on market price.

Internet/e-mail, photocopying, typing and printing, binding, scanning, telephone services and computer training. However, the ERC still lacks facilities to be able to meet its operation costs and purchasing more equipment.

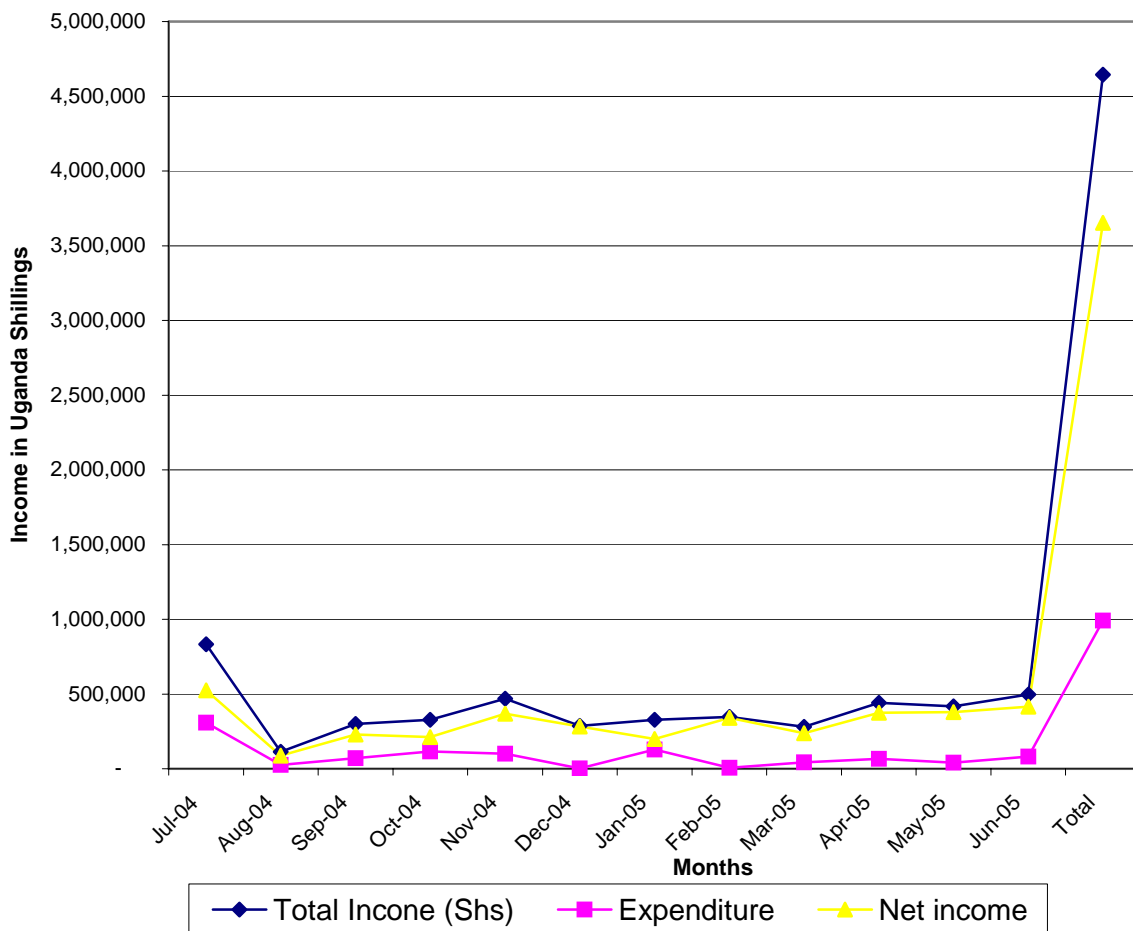
Way forward

Fundraising efforts for the Economic Empowerment Resource Center are still ongoing, such that it is fully equipped with the necessary equipment and items such as computers, photocopier, printer, fax machine among others though tangible results are not yet realized.

8.0 Mukono Information and Communication Centre (MICC)

Mukono center has continued to bridge the information gap by providing relevant information to women beneficiaries and the community. Women and other community members have continued to acquire ICT skills such as Internet and email, word processing, excel among others. On average 25 people access and use the centre services on a daily basis and the number is anticipated to increase due to continuous sensitization of the community members and publicity.

GRAPH 3: PERFORMANCE OF MUKONO CENTRE FOR THE PERIOD JULY 2004 - JUNE 2005



The graph above shows that there was a steady increase in income generated at the centre from July 2004 to June 2005. The income generated in the second half of the year (January – June 2005) was greater than that generated in the first half (July to December 2004). The increase in income collections is largely attributed to diversification of the services at the

centre especially the Internet facilities, which is the mostly used service by community members and also continued publicity of the centre services.

Women have appreciated the existence of the centre because it has helped them to access information and acquiring basic ICT skills.

9.0 Purchase of Equipment

10.0 Milestones

- Increase in the number of beneficiaries from 423 to 809
- Improved training methods i.e. use of localized training materials and improved ICT tools like LCD projector
- Widening rural outreach in sensitizing and creating awareness on the use and application of ICTs i.e. 2 new districts (Jinja and Iganga sites) and 4 parishes in old sites
- Strengthened collaboration with local communities and local leaders has increased CEEWA-U visibility in the local areas and the importance of bridging the information gaps and application of ICTs.
- Addressing sustainability through building a cadre of trainers

11.0 Challenges and constraints

- Multipurpose community telecentres still face a challenge of self-reliance and sustainability, which makes it difficult to maintain and keep them, running efficiently.
- There is still a big challenge of inadequate infrastructure especially in the rural settings where the project is implemented. Internet and telephone network connections are still concentrated in urban areas; most rural areas lack electricity. This has still hindered the rural communities from accessing ICT services like computer, photocopy, fax and telephone.
- Effective implementation of activities in Jinja and Iganga will require a coordination office with ICT facilities, which will require financial resources. Even where there are established telecentres, beneficiaries walk long distances to access ICT services. However, mobile ICT clinics like the use of laptop computers has assisted in addressing this problem during ICT training and demonstrations.
- Most of the project beneficiaries are low-income earners and cannot afford some of the ICTs that can enable them improve or manage their businesses, more specifically the cost of buying and maintaining telephones, Newspapers, Internet, and buying dry cells for radios are considered to be high.
- Illiteracy is another challenge that hinders most beneficiaries from utilizing ICT tools like computer, Internet, telephone and even applying some of the skills in entrepreneurship like book keeping. CEEWA-U has addressed this challenge through development of localized, training and dissemination materials, and also create linkages with service providers that provide adult literacy training.
- The process of developing the web site required technical expertise. There is need to build capacities of programme staff to enable them handle some technical aspects.

12.0 Lessons learnt

- Services are delivered well when they are extended closer to the beneficiaries. Currently the centers are located at the sub county level, which is still considered by the beneficiaries too far from their parishes in terms of distance. The beneficiaries suggested having information points within their parishes and to emphasize their point some offered premises to house these points. A case in point is Iganga site, Jinja site and Jalamba parish in Buwama site.
- It is important to involve the communities in implementing of project activities for sustainability and self-reliance within the communities.
- Beneficiaries utilize information most when it is in local dialect and simplified formats.
- Updating information for dissemination has to cope with the ever-changing technologies.

13.0 Way Forward

14.0 RELATIONSHIPS WITH DIFFERENT STAKE HOLDERS

14.1 Organizational Membership

The Council for Economic Empowerment for Women of Africa (CEEWA) – Uganda Chapter is a non government organization initiative of professional women with diverse academic backgrounds and working experience in fields related to gender, banking, agriculture, business management, economics and development. The total membership is 47 women who have all paid their membership to the organization.

14.2 Changes in composition of organization

There has not been any change in composition of the organization. The Organization target group has not changed i.e. Policy makers, Private sector, Development partners, grass root women entrepreneurs and women organizations that promote enterprise development. CEEWA- U has continued to work hand in hand with her stakeholders through networking, lobbying, training and disseminating business information to grass root women entrepreneurs

14.3 Networking

CEEWA-U has worked together with other CSOs in the area of advocacy by building a team of advocates who have been delivering messages to the different audiences. The media has been utilized as active messengers from time to time. CEEWA-U ICT Project staff and members have participated in a number of networking activities with like-minded organizations and associations. During these meetings, ideas and experiences were shared related to ICTs and business development.

Free open source software (FOSS) South Africa

A CEEWA-U staff attended a training workshop for Free Open Source Software tools in South Africa in September 2004. The purpose of the workshop was to stimulate awareness and adoption of free and open software source solutions among women's organizations in the region and deepening the understanding and skills among women technicians in providing technical support to women organizations in the assessment, adoption and use of

FOSS applications within their organizations. The workshop was important as it enabled participants acquire skills for planning and decision making about implementing open source solutions.

National Stakeholder Workshop on the Development of National ICT Strategy for Uganda

The stakeholder workshop organized by the National Council for Science and Technology was held in September 2004 in Kampala - Uganda to review the National ICT Strategy for Uganda. The objective of the workshop was to refine and endorse sector strategies, agree on modalities of their integration into the National ICT Strategy for Uganda and discuss the framework for their implementation. In the same workshop, CEEWA-U observed that all documents produced by different sector working groups were not gender responsive and this was put to the attention of the chairpersons of the 6 sector working groups. CEEWA-U has continued to participate in the ICT Policy design process in an effort to ensure that the policy is gender responsive.

Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET) – “ Women’s Health: The role of ICTs

CEEWA-U participated in a workshop organized by Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET) focusing on Women’s Health: the role of ICTs that took place in August 2004 in Kampala - Uganda. The purpose of the workshop was for participants to merge a good understanding of how ICTs can be used to address women’s health related issues, given the fact that access to timely and relevant information is widely acknowledged as one of the challenges faced by many health care workers and organizations. Participants brainstormed on how ICTs can help in accessing timely and relevant information.

International Congress on E-Governance – South Korea

In 2004 CEEWA-U participated in an International congress on E- Governance: ‘**Challenges and opportunities for democracy, Administration and Law**’. The main purpose of the congress was to understand the concept of e-governance as the whole spectrum of relations between people in the process of societal steering which is about listening, speaking and how ICTs like computers and televisions can assist in shaping the future.

The congress provided a platform for sharing experiences and exchanging views on a number of issues that were discussed.

Forum for Agriculture Research in Africa (FARA) exhibition

CEEWA-U staff participated in the FARA exhibition in June 2005. The exhibition was focused on the theme “ **Innovation to transform agriculture for development in Africa**”. This attracted technology application groups, which included farmer groups, and various companies that deal with agricultural technology, products and best practices. During this exhibition CEEWA-U exhibited Best practices in agriculture, the video documentaries on banana farming, poultry keeping and pig farming and the case study of women using ICTs to access agricultural information. The initiative helped CEEWA-U staff to get links for information that can be disseminated to the project beneficiaries. It was evident that there is a growing need for ICTs in the changing world.

15.0 CONCLUSION:

The first year of project implementation has been an interesting challenge and it has strongly brought out the reality that ICTs are vital means of bridging information gaps for economic empowerment of women. Women are still disadvantaged and efforts to address gender disparities and inequalities are critical for poverty eradication.

We have found that strengthening linkages and networking with the local administration and communities will assist in the realization of expected results from the Project.

The ICT project has been very well received by the communities and the beneficiaries have shown high interest to continue with training in entrepreneurship and ICTs use and application for strengthening their businesses. The ICTs have allowed access to information sources, promoted networking transcending borders, languages and cultures. This has fostered empowerment of communities especially women, youth and socially disadvantaged groups, and has also helped the spread of knowledge about “best practices” and experiences in ICT.

The intervention for the next 1-year (2005-2006) will enable the Project increase ICT skills among beneficiaries and extend out reach by building a cadre of trainers, use of best practices in ICTs and to advocate for a Gender sensitive ICT Policy environment.