

ICEIDA Boosts Mukono Information and Communication Centre

Good news Again!

Iceland through her Development Agency ICEIDA has provided support in form of Information and Communication Technology equipment worth US\$ 17, 000 equivalent to twenty six million Uganda shillings (26,000,000) to CEEWA-Uganda Mukono Information and Communication Centre (MICC). Ms Augusta Gisladottir, the Country Director ICEIDA officially launched the support on 31st July 2007 at Seeta, Mukono District. The equipment includes Nine (9) new computers with related accessories,



Ms Edith Mwanje, Chairperson CEEWA-U (in Red) & Ms Augusta, ICEIDA Country Director after signing the Cooperation the agreement at Iceland Embassy Offices, Kampala. Looking on is Ms Maria Karuhanga, Coordinator CEEWA-U.

Nine (9) computer desks, An Inverter and a Photocopying machine.

“It was realized that women entrepreneurs were more constrained than their male counterparts in accessing information due to their multiple gender roles. Therefore as a mitigation, women needed to have information points of presence that are easily accessible, thus the basis for establishment of this Mukono Information and Communication Center,” Ms Milly Mugenyi, CEEWA-U Vice Chairperson, said during the launch.

“Last year, Iceland approved \$6m for a 10-year development program. This year, \$2.5m has been set aside to support Uganda’s development process,” Ms Augusta said. The projects include the Functional Adult Literacy that will train 8,000 fishermen in the islands of Kalangala and Mukono.

She explained that ICEIDA will also support Kalangala District Development Program, Fisheries Quality Assurance, Entrepreneurship training, Geo-thermal and some Non- Governmental Organizations.

MICC was the first ICT centre to be established by CEEWA-U in Seeta, Goma sub-county, Mukono District in 2003. This was after successful implementation of the ICT pilot telecentre project in the communities of Nabweru and Buwama. The ICT centers are aimed at bridging the information gap between information sources and end users.

“At Mukono centre, women entrepreneurs can access information on sources of credit, product development, market and market prices, information on gender awareness as well as business management skills,” Mugenyi said.

The centre also provides entrepreneurship training, business management skills, to women entrepreneurs and also provides the same services to the general public at a market price to generate income for the center's sustainability.

Mugenyi said as a result of the awareness that the ICT project has created in the area; there was increased demand of services not only by project beneficiaries, but also the entire community especially in computer training and Internet applications.

However, the available facilities have been inadequate to satisfy this demand. "With a well-facilitated centre, beneficiaries' skills in usage and application of ICT tools especially Internet will be improved in addition to enhanced information sharing, exchange and networking," Mugenyi added.

She said the facilities will also lead to increase in number of customers not only for computer training but also Internet, which will enhance the center's sustainability for the benefit of the community.

The CEEWA-U Vice Chairperson called on all stakeholders particularly in the ICT sector to pay attention to the challenges that still limit use and application of ICTs such as Infrastructure (rolling out ICT services, power supply and connectivity), localizing content, raising more awareness to change peoples' attitude towards ICTs and overcoming the multiple gender roles that constraint women's access to ICTs.

"There is need for all of us to strive to influence the implementation of a gender responsive national ICT policy and programs because CEEWA-U has tested ICTs as an invaluable tool in poverty reduction in terms of improving livelihoods, reducing production costs, extending participation to a wider population. We should continue to mobilize the power of partnerships because the strength of the individual partner may vary but our collective strength is considerable," Mugenyi emphasized.

Ms Nassaka Lugemwa thanked ICEIDA and CEEWA-U on behalf of the project beneficiaries. "We are grateful because we shall no longer experience power shortage; jam on computers as it has been



previously," Nassaka said. Women in Goma Sub County and the community at large have not been left out in the new information era according to Ms Nassaka. "We have been trained on how to start, manage, improve and sustain our businesses with the use and application of ICTs. This has improved the status of our lives and some businesses have given birth to other new ones. The use of easier and cheaper channels of communication has minimized costs in our business. Some how, somewhere we have become business consultants among our communities because we are informed," she happily asserts. END!

← **Beneficiaries using computers after official launch**



Ms Mugenyi speaking during the launch at Mukono Centre