

# NABWERU TELECENTRE

## CWRC SITE VISIT



### PARTICIPANTS

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## **Introduction**

Nabweru Telecentre is located about 5km from Bwaise Trading Centre. It is one of the six telecentres that are set to benefit from this CWRC project. In the implementation phase to be carried out soon, the telecentre will act as hub of the network and therefore, in effect it will act as an ISP for its partners.

Given the fact that the telecentre has got a new manager (Ivan Kibirige Gaayi), it was found necessary to make a short visit to this telecentre and bring him up to speed on CWRC and its plans before actual field implementations begin. The visit was also intended to familiarize the CWRC team (most especially the students) with telecentre setup and the kind of services that community-based telecentres actually offer.

## **General Information**

The telecentre service provider is Bushnet; however, internet access has been down for almost two years due to failure to meet the cost of connectivity (which was \$250 per month for a 64 kbps bandwidth). The ISP dish is still mounted on the telecentre building.



***Bushnet dish at the Telecentre***

A guyed radio mast, approximately 10m high, is situated at the telecentre compound. It is owned and used by the radio station of the telecentre, Tiger Radio Station, for its broadcasting purposes.

The Telecentre has got six computers three of which are working and the rest are down. This is due to lack of skilled technicians to maintain them. It also owns a 16-port switch that currently supports the connectivity of the computers locally. There is a plan to move the telecentre to new premises (the old court house) nearby.



***Radio mast***

### **Telecentre Services**

In the past, the telecentre used to offer photocopying, faxing, typesetting, video coverage and internet services but currently it is only able to offer Computer Training (at the telecentre), printing and radio broadcasting services. It also offers library services although the library is under-stocked. In future, the telecentre hopes to offer Computer Training in an Outreach program to neighboring schools as well as internet services. The telecentre also hopes to get computers from Computer Aid and funding from National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO) as it looks to increase on its current capacity. The radio station has two transmitters which are coupled onto an amplifier to amplify the total output signal. The radio, broadcasting at 102.5 FM, has an average coverage radius of about 40 km. The telecentre mainly used grid power but it has two standby generators rated at 5 kVA. However, the fuel consumption of the generators is high.



***Tiger Radio Studio***

### **New Developments**

Since the site survey last year, interest in the CWRC project has grown and the number of prospective clients has increased. Currently, new partners that have shown interest in being part of the project include:

- Happy Hours High School, which is approximately 1 km away and has Line of Sight from the telecentre.
- Brilliant High School which does not have Line of Sight.

### **Challenges**

- Funding for the telecentre: The Telecentre is currently not being funded since the period for IDRC support expired. Mr. Ivan Kibirige is following up on NARO, which had tentatively offered to contribute some funding.
- Sustainability of the internet service: The telecentre was unable to meet the monthly cost of internet connectivity. On another note, when the telecentre was established, no local personnel were trained in operations and maintenance of the equipment. This resulted in equipment breakdown hence some services were terminated.
- Interference from political leaders in the past: The telecentre faced a problem of political leaders using its resources for personal gain for example giving out the books in the library and selling equipment in return for votes.

## **Conclusion**

The CWRC team was introduced to the LC-III and the Sub county Chief, who were informed about the entire project and the proposed date of commencement of the implementation phase. The two were enthusiastic about the project although they had questions about sustainability of the internet connectivity, which questions were duly answered by the team. From observations made, the telecentre has the capacity to embrace the project and benefit from its objectives in the long run.

## **Recommendations**

- The new prospective partners should be added to the network if possible. However, a new survey needs to be done to ascertain their ability to pay and if their addition is technically viable.
- Local personnel should be trained in operations and maintenance of the system so that technical issues can be solved as and when they come up.