

PAGAK KER KAL KWARO DEVELOPMENT TRUST

End of Project Report

PROJECT TITLE	Enhancing access to mobile phone and internet based information services for rural population in Northern Uganda
PROJECT REFERENCE	1528
PROJECT HOLDER	Pagak Ker Kal Kwaro Development Trust
FUNDING BODY	World Association of Christian Communications
TOTAL COST OF THE PROJECT	€ 8,500
PROJECT LOCATION	Pagak in Amuru District, Northern Uganda
PROJECT IMPLEMENTED BY	Mr. Justine Binyi- Coordinator Pagak Ker Kal Kwaro Development Trust email: justin.binyi@gmail.com
COUNTRY	UGANDA

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1. Background to the Project

This project was initiated to address agricultural and other related information needs, and inadequate financial services in areas beyond the reach of commercial banks, for the rural population of Pagak community in Amuru district of Northern Uganda and has been funded by World Association of Christian Communications. The services would be built on the criteria of accessibility, availability and affordability through Information and Communication Technology tools in the form of village based mobile phone services and internet services. Northern Uganda remains the poorest region in the country, lagging behind on all socio-economic indicators. Therefore, introducing mobile money systems was viewed as an effective means to deal

with the problem of lack of banking services. Activities to be carried out ranged from establishing a pilot Community Village Information Centre project with basic information and communication technology infrastructure as an access point to address the information needs, and provision of m-money services, providing training in ICT and partnering with the government and other service providers to open up new opportunities to access services



Project Coordinator introducing project

in the rural area. Direct beneficiaries would include vulnerable women and men who require development information and communication services to uplift them from poverty, as well as people in rural areas receiving and sending money at affordable rates. The outcome would be an increase in household income and empowering the poor through enhanced communication.

2. Objectives of the Project

The project was intended to achieve the following objectives:

- a) The community has regular and timely access to market information via communications networks, which helps rural farmers make astute decisions about where and when to sell their produce which crops to grow and where to buy inputs.
- b) The community has access to financial services through mobile money transaction as a simple, trusted way to receive, keep, and send money between individuals through mobile phone as a banking service.
- c) The community increases social communication- keeping in touch with friends and family and interaction through phone-ins to FM radio stations using mobile phones.

3. Deliverable Status

Deliverable	Deliverable Description	Current Status	Target completion date	Actual completion date
1. 1 Community Village Information Centre fully equipped established in Amuru village, in Amuru district.	A community village information centre was opened, and equipped with 2 computers, with internet connection, local and international newspapers and journals. Mobile money services are available, through MTN Mobile Money outlet, furnished with telephone and other accessories	The facility is gradually growing into a self-sustaining entity, running on the service charges and subscriptions from members	September 2011	November 2011
2. 100 rural farmers in Amuru district trained and registered with the Information Centre, to access agricultural related information delivered on their mobile phones	100 rural farmers in Amuru village were trained and registered with the information centre, to access information related to agriculture: marketing of produce, accessing quality inputs and quality control.	100 rural farmers in Amuru village utilising the information centre, to access information related to agriculture; marketing of their produce, accessing quality inputs and practicing quality control	November-December 2011	December 2011
3. 100 community members registered to use Mobile money services	100 farmers were registered to use Mobile Money services as a medium of saving, sending or receiving money.	100 farmers in Amuru village are currently using Mobile Money banking, to save, send or receive money	June – December 2011	April 2012
4. 10 Community volunteers trained as managers and operators to collect agricultural related information from the internet, print media, mobile phones, radio programmes and to transmit through computer for farmers to their	10 volunteers were trained to work at the Village Information Centre, as managers and operators to collect agricultural related information from the internet, print media, mobile phones, radio programmes and to transmit through computer to farmers' mobile phones.	10 trained volunteers are working at the Village Information Centre, as managers and operators: gathering agricultural related information from the internet, print	October 2011	November 2011

mobile phones.		media, mobile phones, radio programs and transmitting the same to farmers.		
5. 100 farmers trained to access information on development initiatives from government	100 farmers were trained to access information on development initiatives from government	100 farmers are accessing services from National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS. Through the Integrated Support to Farmer Groups (ISFG), the farmers are accessing a revolving fund to increase their access to improved seed, better breeds and inputs.	June 2011 – June 2012	April 2012

4. Project Cost

Cost Item	Original Estimate (Uganda shillings)	Actual Cost (Uganda shillings)
Communication costs		
Computers	2,030,000	2,120,000
Community Consultations	2,000,000	1,600,000
Volunteer Costs	10,000,000	9,600,000
Training	5,000,000	6,000,000
Internet Connectivity	8,000,000	7,700,000
Monitoring and Evaluation		
Baseline surveys, Evaluation costs	8,000,000	4,000,000
Total Expenditure	35,030,000	31,020,000

Community Consultation and Volunteer Costs were apportioned and shared between the main project the trust was undertaking concurrently

5. Scope and Benefits of the Project

As originally intended, the project addressed agricultural and related information needs, and inadequate financial services in areas beyond the reach of commercial banks, for the rural community of Amuru, in Amuru district, of Northern Uganda. The project aimed at enhancing accessibility, availability and affordability of the said services, through Information and Communication Technology tools in the form of village based mobile phone services and internet services.

Considering that Northern Uganda remains the poorest region in the country, the pilot Community Village Information Centre project with basic information and communication technology infrastructure as an access point to address the information needs, and provision of m-money services, has acted as an eye-opener for rural communities as well as other development stakeholders, with regard to what interventions are needed to bring about socio-economic transformation in Northern Uganda.

6. Lessons Learned

Rural communities are eager for information if only they could obtain a medium of access. During the project, it was discovered that a lot more people were eager to participate in the programme, a lot more than the pilot project had planned for. Most of the trainees and volunteers mused at the realisation that so many things went wrong in their communities due to ignorance.



Training Session

While the project was embraced by the community, it was discovered that a more extensive Village Information Centre project, with a larger information and communications technology infrastructure of computers, internet connectivity, and availability of local and national newspapers were desired to cover the wider Northern Region.

The Pilot Project proved the centrality of Information and Communications Technology in bringing about socio-economic

transformation in the disadvantaged region. This calls for a full scale ICT tailored intervention to spearhead the recovery.

7. Risks and Challenges Encountered

The project was faced by poor and unreliable internet service, a concern that affects the entire country. Even when it's available, it is very slow. This slowed down the work of the Community Village Information Centre. The Mobile Money Service was also on and off, due to unstable service by the service provider. The government is working hard towards improving the internet service nationally. It is hoped that in due course the Centre will have a more reliable internet service.

Community Consultations



MTN, the Mobile Money service provider is also upgrading its system to make it more consistent and reliable.

Most farmers faced communication problems arising from illiteracy in English and computer use. Trainees and volunteers had to have a considerable level of literacy in English, which requirement left out majority of the farmers who are largely illiterate. This slowed down the training programme. More intervention is needed in computer literacy as well as literacy in the English language.



Community Consultations

Farmers also wrongly anticipated that the centre was going to be providing financial support for their farming activities. Future projects and programming will need to consider extension of financial support to the farmers, through the ICT tool, to boost their productivity.

8. Post Project Review

A post project review has been underway, under the stewardship of the Coordinator of the project progress its sustainability and make projections regarding necessary interventions as and when they may be required. A number of development partners are invited to meet beneficiaries to evaluate next requirements. This approach has met some success.



Development partners evaluating project



9. Sustainability and Requirements to Scale

The project enables a rural community in Amuru district to access and make use of real-time market information in a user-friendly and affordable way. The project now allows small-scale farmers to use knowledge of the current commodities prices to negotiate better prices and improve the timing of getting their crops to market. Requirements to sustain and scale the project are;

- bulking produce and obtaining secure standard storage.
- prudent crop selection; because the area in Amuru can literally grow anything.
- improved infrastructure; broad band Internet, and power.
- increased literacy
- advocacy to promote model of service
- integration with mainstream services
- service fees structure and additional support funding

Bulking produce and secure storage requirement is currently being considered by ACF Uganda which has recently erected a number of depots in rural areas.

Report Compiled and Submitted by: Project Coordinator: *JUSTIN BINYI*

Signed *[Signature]*
Date

