



GK Jether Solutions LTD

OpenNet Africa

End of Project Evaluation Report

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Client:

Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPESA)

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Executive Summary

Introduction

OpenNet Africa is an initiative of the Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPESA). In recognition of the potential of information and Communication Technology (ICT), particularly the internet as a tool for social, political and economic development in Africa, the project is aimed at monitoring and promoting internet freedoms, primarily in East and Southern African states.

Launched in December 2013 for an initial duration of 18 months, the program was supported by three donors: the Canadian International Development Research Centre (IDRC) through the Citizen Lab at the University of Toronto, the Dutch Humanist Institute for Cooperation (Hivos) and the Africa Network Information Centre (Afrinic) through its Fund for Internet Research and Education (FIRE) programme.

The project has a geographical span of six Sub Saharan countries namely Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, South Africa and Ethiopia.

Project Funding Summary

Donor	Funding
Citizen Lab	31,140 (Canadian Dollars)
FIRE	10,000 (US Dollars)
HIVOS	25,200 (Euros)

The above funding was to be used solely to perform the objectives and implement activities of the project in accordance with the contract agreement(s) or Memorandum of Understanding agreed upon by CIPESA and the funding Organizations.

Purpose of Evaluation

As is the case with CIPESA’s organization performance review policy, all implemented projects - OpenNet Africa Project being one of them - have to undergo a post-implementation evaluation aimed at identifying project performance levels, achievements and lessons learned. The evaluation provides an overview of any revisions from the original project plan, a summary of accomplishments, an analysis of achievements compared to original goals, and explanations for any variances. The results of the evaluation are aimed at contributing to better informed decision-making processes, fostering an environment of learning by doing and promoting accountability for performance.

Objectives of the evaluation

The evaluation set out to assess:

1. The relevance of project concept and design
2. Efficiency and effectiveness of project implementation process
3. The overall impact of the project, actual or potential, positive and negative
4. Prospects for sustaining and up-scaling the project’s results after the termination of the project.

Based on the above assessment, the evaluation aims to inform CIPESA and her partners in the areas for improvement for future projects by drawing on lessons learned. This includes but is not limited to:

1. Enhancing the design and the implementation of CIPESA projects
2. Setting Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound objectives
3. Improving the implementation and the monitoring of future projects;

4. Improving on project estimation (Cost and schedule).

Challenges encountered

As is the case with any project, there are bound to be challenges and OpenNet Africa is not an exception. Some of the challenges encountered include;

1. Internet freedoms is a new area and most stakeholders are more focused and interested in other areas like ICT infrastructure, connectivity, reliability of service than internet freedoms.
2. Most stakeholders are more interested in addressing issues around basic human rights and look at internet freedom as a “luxury right”.
3. Setting measurable targets for a project with qualitative tendencies has been a challenge.
4. The qualitative nature of the project means measuring impact is very difficult. The impact is measured through subjective approaches.

Findings and Conclusions

The project had and continues to have a profound positive impact on its beneficiaries and all its stakeholders at large. There is an increased access by beneficiaries to information material on the OpenNet web portal and broadened understanding of internet rights not only from a global context but from an African perspective as unanimously stated by all respondents in the evaluation.

Only 40% of respondents knew of other organizations carrying out similar work to that of OpenNet Africa. This implies that the OpenNet Africa project is focusing on a young and robust area especially in Sub Saharan Africa with only a few other actors engaged in the same field.

Respondents noted that although many other organizations recognize the importance of Internet freedoms, their work is currently more concerned with core ICT/internet needs like Infrastructure, connectivity, reliability, affordability etc.

The project documented and publicized internet rights issues, violations and legislative developments in the Sub Saharan region thereby creating awareness on a key emerging field.

Some of the works published by CIPESA as a result of OpenNet Africa project have been referenced in research elsewhere, an indication of the relevance of the project.

Key Recommendations

There is need to create an updatable database that can track changes on policies affecting internet freedoms. This will provide traceable record of OpenNet Africa impact overall.

Although social media pages are active in discussing, debating and sharing views on internet freedoms, the traffic flow is low and strategies to direct traffic to these pages needs to be explored.

For sustainability of this project, it is important that CIPESA continues to centrally manage the web portal and social media pages for purposes of aligning discussions to the strategic objective of the project and also moderating them.

Due to difficulty in quantifying project impact because of the qualitative nature of the work it is recommended that future projects be designed with project outcomes, verifiable indicators and means of verification. This will help quickly measure the impact of the project after implementation.

Background to Assignment

Context

Africa's Internet usage continues to grow steadily, with an estimated 172 million internet users, or 19% of the population on the continent, currently using the net (Source: http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/statistics/2014/ITU_Key_2005-2014_ICT_data.xls). Increased availability of affordable marine fibre optic bandwidth, a rise in private sector investments, the popularity of social media and innovative applications, and increased use of the mobile phone to access the internet, are all enabling more people in Africa to get online. In turn, there are numerous purposes to which users in Africa are utilizing the Internet - from mobile banking, to connecting with fellow citizens and with leaders, tracking corruption and poor service delivery, innovating for social good, etc.

The increasing usage of the Internet, however, has in some countries attracted the attention of authorities, who are eager to provide caveats on the openness of the net and the range of freedoms which citizens and citizens' organizations enjoy online. The popularity of social media, the Wikileaks diplomatic cables saga and the Arab Spring uprisings have led many governments including those in Africa to recognize the power of online media. In a number of countries, there have already been curbs on Internet rights, in what portends tougher times ahead for cyber security. Whereas the 2009 OpenNet Initiative studies on internet filtering in Sub-Saharan Africa concluded that Ethiopia was the only country in the region that imposed nationwide politically motivated internet filtering, the continued growth of the Internet has seen authorities in other countries move to control its use.

Project Objectives

Over an eighteen (18) months period, OpenNet Africa monitored and promoted Internet freedoms in a number of African countries including Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa and Uganda.

The project set out to:

- Establish the status of intermediary liability (legislative, policy, practice), and reporting on an ongoing basis about any changes in the focus countries and how intermediaries can promote internet freedom
- Document and publicize internet rights violations and related policy changes in the region
- Review how current cyber security policies and legislations in select African countries enhanced, or undermined, internet freedom. And make recommendations on how these policies and laws can be more supportive of freedom of expression, human rights and access to information
- Map initiatives that are promoting open Internet and using ICTs to promote wider freedoms in Africa
- Develop an online platform for researchers and practitioners to access reports and news on Internet rights violations in Africa.
- Promote awareness of online freedoms in Africa through research dissemination, dialogue, sharing learning, innovations and best practices on the state of online freedoms
- Promote awareness and grow the capacity of media and CSOs in the protection and promotion of internet rights
- Engage stakeholders such as ISPs and web hosting companies on the need to protect and promote internet freedoms.
- Champion the development of a regional network of civil society groups, and the media that promotes internet freedoms.

Project Outputs

Output	Description
Research reports	Publish reports on intermediary liability and how current cyber security policies and legislations enhance Internet Freedom in Africa.
Policy briefs	Publish a series of policy briefs based on the policy analysis and advocacy activities. The policy briefs will be extracts from the larger research reports that provide a quick overview of findings and recommended actions.
Incident reports	Periodically publish incident reports on Internet rights violations in Africa.
Information and Education materials - Info-graphics, audio visuals, newspaper articles and blog entries	As a means of Promoting awareness of online freedoms in Africa.
Workshops	Comments and feedback on project work, stakeholder engagement and advocacy.
Online portal maintenance	Develop an online platform for researchers and practitioners to access reports and news on internet rights violations in Africa.
Knowledge and Skills development	To promote safety for users, media and civic groups. Conduct safety and security training for bloggers, media and civil society organizations that use the internet, or promote its use for causes that might be threatened by blockage or filtering of content, curbs on users' privacy, and criminal sanctions on free expression.

Purpose of Assignment

CIPESA commissioned this evaluation as an independent review of The OpenNet Africa Project with a view of:

1. Understanding the project performance levels – Actual Vs Planned
2. Analyze achievements in comparison to original goals
3. Create a lessons learned database to inform future projects

The above was achieved through an assessment of whether the project was developed and implemented in accordance with the following criteria:

- Relevance of concept and design
- Efficiency and effectiveness of project implementation process.
- Analysis of the overall impact of the project
- Analysis of the prospects for sustaining and up-scaling the project's results

Detailed Methodology

The evaluation adopted a consultative and transparent approach with internal and external stakeholders' involvement through document reviews and interviews. The evaluation process was carried out along the following six pillars of project management:

1. Scope management
2. Schedule Management
3. Cost/Budget Management
4. Stakeholder Management

5. Communications Management

The table below gives a detailed approach to the assignment.

Evaluation criteria	Key results areas	Evaluation Questions	Key sources of Data
Relevance of concept and design	The level to which the project responds to the key issues underlying its initiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are project objectives aligned with CIPESA strategic goal(s)? • Are the project objectives SMART • Were targets set at design stage and/or realistic? • How was the final scope arrived at? • Are outputs realistic and in line with project objectives? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memorandum of understating • Project contract of agreement • Project Concept note
Efficiency and effectiveness of project implementation process	<p>Was the project planning, execution, Monitoring & Control adequate?</p> <p>What plans exist for project closure?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what level were stakeholders involved in the planning stage of the project? • Does the project have an up to date stakeholder register? • Were project risks identified and managed • Was The Project Schedule Realistic • Was Budget Appropriate • Did the Project Have A Communication Plan and/or How Effective Was It? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved project plans • Project status reports • project progress reports • Project variance reports • Project finance reports
Analysis of the overall impact of the project	Impact assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what level are stakeholders on the project satisfied with its impact so far? • Can we cite any policy and/or behavioral changes in project areas? • To which extent has the project's general objectives and final goals been achieved? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project reports • Facebook page • CIPESA website • CIPESA twitter account • Interviews with implementers and partners/ stakeholders • Review of the portal opennetafrika.org formed by the project

Project sustainability	Assess to what extent the project has been adopted by the beneficiaries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what level is the current technology in use on the project sustainable • Will there be continuous delivery of benefits after project implementation? <p>Administrative sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will beneficiaries play a role in ensuring continuity? • Are the same managers expected to participate throughout the life of the funded project and beyond? <p>Social sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the level of participation by other stakeholders other than the project staff in project activities and management? • What benefits will continue to accrue to the beneficiaries after the project completion? <p>Financial sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What provisions will be made to cover recurrent costs once initial project funding is exhausted? • What strategies can be initiated at the local level for financial sustainability 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Concept note 2. Project implementation plans 3. Interviews with selected stakeholders 4. Review of portal
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Project status, analysis and findings

Project Concept

As more East and Southern African citizens get online, governments are evidently taking a keener interest in what citizens are doing with their phones and on the internet. Governments are increasingly moving to place controls over the internet and associated technologies such as mobile phones. These caveats are often framed from the angle of countering terrorism, fighting pornography, or guarding against cybercrime. However, often they are intended – or result into – curtails on legitimate opinion and affronts to the enjoyment of the right to freedom of expression. These caveats are often retrogressive and hamper citizens' right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through digital technologies. They also appear to be mainly aimed at stifling critics of state actions and curtailing citizen learning and freedoms rather than genuinely protecting the public good.

There is subjective evidence which suggests that most of civil society in East and Southern Africa has only a limited understanding of what constitutes online freedoms and of the need to promote these freedoms. As such, there are hardly any comprehensive and coordinated online freedoms monitoring and promotion campaigns in the region. Similarly, there is a scarcity of information on the state of online freedoms in the region, a mapping of actors in this sphere, and advocacy positions and resources that can be utilized in creating awareness and lobbying for the protection and promotion of internet freedoms.

This creates the need for: understanding how policy and practice affect internet freedoms in the region, identifying aspects of policies that need to be changed to make legislation more supportive of online freedoms, forming a network of national and regional actors involved in the promotion of internet freedoms, raising awareness and spurring multi-stakeholder conversations on the importance of protecting internet rights the way human rights have always been protected and promoted. But users also need to know that as much as the internet gives seemingly unlimited freedoms, their actions online can have negative consequences on society and direct repercussions on themselves. This calls for responsible online actions, including an awareness of the law but also having safety on the internet skills.

CIPESA's mission is to increase the capacity of East and Southern African stakeholders to participate in ICT policy-making. The aim is to promote the effective representation of African interests in policy-making processes, and to see that policy decisions can effectively be translated into positive outcomes for African citizens. The scope of the project – internet freedoms as a component of ICT use and its geographical coverage directly falls under CIPESA's mandate. Project coverage is East and Southern Africa comprising of the following countries; Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, South Africa and Ethiopia.

Currently, the world is fast becoming a global village due to digital evolution. Social media has enabled people to interact in real time. There are, however, protocols and challenges that come with this digital evolution given that most Governments especially in the Sub-Saharan region have never had clear legislation on online communications. The few countries making efforts towards relevant legislation are often never engaging their citizens on formulation of such policy, instead pursuing efforts of controlling citizens. The OpenNet Africa project therefore has clear objective of creating awareness and a necessary platform for a participatory approach in development of policies regarding internet freedoms.

The project has the added potential of influencing policy at national/regional level, creating awareness and contributing to global research.

The concept of the project was well thought out and aimed at informing of a new and robust area.

Project Design

The design of any project sets the tone of focus of implementation and subsequent reviews. OpenNet Africa was designed with clear measurable outputs as indicated in the proposal submissions to the funders. Based on the desired outputs, timelines were set and agreed upon.

However, given the qualitative nature of the project, it would have made sense to design project outcomes, verifiable indicators including means of verification.

Below is an illustration of how this can be designed in the project plan:

- *Strategic objective* - Creating awareness on online freedoms
- *Activity* - Conduct x number of awareness workshops
- *Outputs* - Number of workshops conducted
- *Verifiable Indicator* - Percentage of workshops conducted in comparison to planned
- *Means of Verification* - Workshop training reports, post training evaluations, increased participation in discussions on online freedoms etc.
- *Project outcomes* - Increased level of awareness

A review of the project timelines shows the timelines were aligned with donor/funding agency requirements. This is typical of analog (Top-down) estimating approach which is proven to be less accurate. Although this kind of timelines can still deliver the project, they are sometimes not based on reality on the ground and should therefore be reconciled after carrying out a bottom-up estimate with stakeholders.

Project Scope Management

A project of such large geographical coverage requires the involvement/consultation of all stakeholders in the design process to ensure their requirements and expectations are incorporated and met during project implementation. A review of the project documents does clearly indicate a strong stakeholder engagement process. Among the stakeholders involved during the planning and/ or implementation stages were the direct funding partners, Government agencies, the Kenya ICT Action Network (KICTANET), Union for Tanzania Press Clubs (UTPC), the Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET), East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project, Paradigm Initiative Nigeria and the Internet Society Uganda and Burundi Chapters, among others. There is visibility of the stakeholders especially the beneficiaries participating in online discussions and through social media.

There was a very clear approach/plan in collecting and disseminating information throughout the project lifecycle. However, the project design was not specific on some of the set/agreed targets. For example one of the objectives of the project was *to promote awareness and grow capacity of media and CSO's in the protection and promotion of internet rights*.

The above objective could have had more specific targets such as;

“To promote awareness to 10 million Ugandan citizens and grow capacity of 100 media houses” (if that is the population targeted).

During review, we would then look at actual penetration – say 8 million. This would then allow us measure our project performance as being 80% coverage.

Setting specific targets is a very important aspect of project formulation as it sets the baseline from which project performance can be evaluated.

Project outputs need to be SMART (Specific Measurable Attainable Realistic Time bound). A review of the project shows that most outputs are in line with project objectives and will help measure the outcomes accurately.

The approach to develop and use a web portal for dissemination of information was an excellent strategy that focused the audience on the main aim of the project “online freedoms”. For effectiveness of this strategy, it requires a strategy to attract and/or direct traffic to the portal. The following approaches can help supplement the drive of traffic to OpenNet Africa Portal and increase its presence:-

- **Social Media:** Project maintained social media presence i.e. Facebook page and twitter – also an event to launch the website was held at the start of the project. The social media approach was actively and efficiently used on this project and has brought profound results. Some social media have paid services that could further help direct traffic to the OpenNet Africa Portal.
- **Inbound Links;** Using this strategy, links to OpenNet Africa can be installed on OpenNet Africa Stakeholder websites using the viral approach. Reverse links to partner/stakeholder websites from the OpenNet Africa website would further improve presence (win-win situation). This method is effective and easily reviewed as you can visit the relevant website to see if your link exists and is still active. An example of such approach is the link to OpenNet Africa web portal from the CIPESA website.
- **Email address:** For stakeholders whose email details CIPESA possesses, automatic updates can be sent directly when there is new content on the portal. There already exists an email and physical address database that could be continuously updated and linked to the Web Portal for automatic push technology.
- **Search Engine Optimization and Search Engine Marketing:** This is the process of getting traffic from internet search results on search engines and ranking it. All major search engines such as Google, Bing and Yahoo have primary search results, where web pages and other content such as videos or local listings are shown and ranked based on what the search engine considers most relevant to users. The OpenNet Portal can attract more traffic by management carefully selecting appropriate keywords, descriptions and titles which pertain to the portal and indexing them with major search engines thereby making the web portal and its content attractive, relevant and visible to search engines and web searchers.

Project Implementation Process

Project Communication

The communication type was mainly the “pull” technology where information was uploaded unto the web portal www.opennetafrica.org. Other communication approaches used were periodic reporting, workshop and conference presentations.

No.	Communication method	Frequency of use	Effectiveness/Efficiency on the project
1	Pull –upload of information to Web Portal http://opennetafrica.org/	High	High depending on the audience –emphasis and effort on pulling audience to portal
	Portal – www.cipesa.org	High	Traffic is redirected to the web portal
	Portal – www.cyberstewards.org	High	Publications by CIPESA are posted to this website further communicating to audiences targeted by Cyber Stewards
2	Progress Reports	High	Pegged on donor requirements
3	Workshops/conferences/presentations	High	Exceeded expectations as CIPESA was invited to a number of Conferences and workshops besides the planned ones.
4	Meetings	Medium	Round table dialogue with like-minded organizations to chart out areas of collaboration.
5	YouTube	Low	There is need to increase multimedia content on YouTube and index it properly
6	Facebook page- https://www.facebook.com/pages/Open-Net-Africa/146027042249077	Low	There is need to promote this page through “likes” and paid advertisements.
7	Twitter Account -@opennetafrica	High	This account is currently very active as a discussion forum

Project implementation was through execution of activities as outlined in the project implementation plans. Project progress reporting was done in accordance with the Funding Organizations’ requirements.

A project of such magnitude required set targets that could enable evaluation of project performance through using other project monitoring tools like project status/variance reports (Comparing actual deliverables/outputs against planned). For example, how many people were expected to be made aware of internet freedoms in the first quarter of the project? How many were actually made aware? This is effective reporting but would have been more effective if there was an expected number of hits for each output to compare with.

Project Stakeholder Management

The project registered the following stakeholders as indicated in the table below.

No	Name of Stakeholders
1	IDRC
2	Afrinic
3	CIPESA
4	Citizen Lab
5	Government of Countries within project area
6	Paradigm Initiative Nigeria
7	Unwanted Witness
8	KICTANET
9	Uganda Police
10	HIVOS
11	Union of Tanzania Press clubs (UTPC)
12	Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET)
13	East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defender's Project
14	Article 19 Kenya
15	Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC)
16	Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance Tanzania (CHRAGG)
17	Privacy International
18	Africa Centre for Media Excellence (ACME)
19	Human Rights Centre Uganda
20	Action Aid International Kenya
21	Internet Society (ISOC) Burundi
22	Africa Centre for Freedom of Information (AFIC)
23	Human Rights Journalist Network Uganda
24	Great Lakes Voices, Rwanda
25	Internet Society (ISOC) Uganda
26	Ifreedoms Uganda

The project did not have a clear stakeholder register with customized management strategy. Having reviewed the stakeholder Management strategy and consulted various stakeholders, it was evident during the survey that more stakeholders need to be brought on board as indicated below;

1. The Judiciary
2. Global solution developers like Google and Microsoft
3. More women's rights organizations to be able to get the gender perspective of the internet freedoms and cyber security and how these may promote or hinder participation of women and girls in the digital space.
4. Human right defender organizations such as : Ligue des Droits de l'Homme de la Région des Grands Lacs (LDGL), which is a network of human right defenders of the great lakes region covering Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda (<http://www.ldgl.org/en/>)
5. Union Burundaise des Journalistes (Burundian Journalists Union) - www.ubj-burundi.org/
6. Academic Institutions like Public and private universities in the focus countries;
7. More Human Rights Organizations in addition to Human Rights Centre Uganda; Foundation for Human Rights Initiative and East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project; (EHAHRDP) - <http://www.defenddefenders.org/>, which currently in discussions on areas of possible collaboration

8. Media Institute of South Africa - www.misa.org
9. Freedom of Expression Institute - <http://fxi.org.za/home/>

The above list is not exhaustive but nevertheless is an indication of need to continuously identify and continue engaging new stakeholders.

Project Schedule Management

The project schedule was set to run over a period of 18 months. The project has remained on schedule throughout the implementation lifecycle.

The project scheduling approach (top-down approach or sometimes referred to as analog approach) was based on the donor funding requirements. Since the project deliverables as designed in the project plan were not time based, this kind of approach is adequate. The project achieved its objectives and emphasis should now focus on growing the audience.

The project was funded by agencies who have strict structures in which they operate. As such, project budgets were aligned with the funding agencies' structures and limits.

In similar vein, accountability of funds were carried out according to the funding agency requirements and subsequent reports including audit reports indicate proper use of funds in accordance with funded budget lines.

Overall impact of the project

To assess the impact of the project, an online questionnaire was designed to capture data from various stakeholders. This data was to supplement the data already collected through document reviews and interviews.

Purposive sampling was used with a sample size of 20 stakeholders identified for the survey.

The questionnaire was sent by email to all the sampled respondents achieving a response rate of 50% (10 out of 20).

The aim of the survey was to capture the impact of the project from the beneficiaries and participating partners.

The overall impact of the project is very good with only 40% of the respondents aware of other organizations doing similar work. The organizations doing similar work to OpenNet Africa as listed by the respondents are;

1. Freedom House (<https://freedomhouse.org>)
2. Unwanted Witness Uganda, <https://unwantedwitness.or.ug/>

The detailed content and particular areas of focus of the above named organizations is not outlined in this report as this is out of scope. Developing a working relationship with the above organizations would help identify and minimize duplication of efforts while expanding project coverage. This would also help share experiences and best practices.

Respondents' Excerpts about the Project

Asked about the two most important things learned as a result of the project, Moses Owiny of WOUNET- Uganda said; *"I have got a deeper understanding on the state of internet freedoms and*

cyber security within the region. I have also gained a deeper understanding on the internet freedom and cyber security laws in Uganda and how some of the laws infringe on certain freedoms and rights of individuals. I also got to know how these laws actually put women at disadvantaged positions and further hinder their participation."

Paul Kimumwe of Africa Centre for Excellence on the other hand states; *"Internet Freedom is a rights enabler that needs to be protected and promoted and it is important to monitor, document and share information about the status of online freedom especially the Internet."*

Haguma Jimmy of Uganda Police summarized the two important things learned as; *"Awareness is the strongest tool to fight cyber-crimes and Privacy online best practices."*

The Deputy Chair of ISOC-Burundi simply states; *"I got more knowledge about Internet Freedoms and common users are not aware about those rights"*.

"I received the excellent regional research report from CIPESA" were the words of Neil Blazevic –Program Manager - EHAHRDP

Other observations noted include;

1. Awareness of different laws in South Africa
2. Understanding State of internet freedom in East African Community
3. Sharing experience with others partners involved in Internet freedoms

In summary, it is clear that the project has had a positive impact on everybody that has been involved. It is important that this impact continues to be felt across the sub Saharan region as more and more stakeholders are identified and engaged.

Project Communication Approach

Regarding the approach OpenNet Africa project is using to reach out to its stakeholders, 50% of the respondents agreed that CIPESA was using the best approach while the remaining 50% were not sure. However, there were some recommendations on approaches to be considered in future projects;

1. More publicity on mass media platforms like Television and radio talk shows
2. Work more closely with Governments, MDAs, CSOs for collective efforts in ensuring citizens benefits without fear or impediments
3. Collaboration with journalists might help to better raise awareness.
4. More efficient dissemination of the publications. It should be deliberate including populating them on various online platforms, distribution of hard copies to key stakeholders.
5. The skills and knowledge sharing aspects should target players with multiplier effect potential
6. Blogs on other stakeholders' websites

Project Achievements

Despite the challenges OpenNet Africa has faced, there has been many great achievements. To date;

1. The research agenda set out at the initiation of the project has been duly completed, published and presented at both national and international levels. CIPESA conducted research and published country reports on the state of internet freedoms for Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, South Africa and Uganda. Besides the individual country reports, a regional State of Internet Freedoms in East Africa report was also published. For most of these countries, this was the first time ever that research on internet freedoms was being conducted. A total of

28 publications relating to Internet freedoms have been published and are accessible on the web portal. There are 39 blogposts on various issues that have been posted on the portal.

Table: Select statistics on access to OpenNet Africa Project resources online

No.	Resources/publications	No. of Hits –April, 2014	No. of hits – April, 2015	% increase or decrease
1	Report of Online Discussion on The State of Internet Freedom in Africa	1104	1308	18%
2	Internet Rights In Uganda- Challenges And Prospects Workshop Report	528	964	
3	State of Internet Freedoms in East Africa 2014	495	7057	1325%
4	Forum on Internet Freedoms in East Africa Agenda	87	469	470%
5	State of internet freedoms in South Africa 2014	-	38	-
6	State of Internet Freedoms in Burundi 2014	-	258	-
7	CIPESA Presentation at the Launch of The State of Internet Freedoms in East Africa Research Report Launch	-	147	-

Source: OpenNet Africa Web portal

2. CIPESA conducted 3 stakeholder engagement events: a capacity building workshop, portal launch and a regional event as a dissemination platform for all its stakeholders - Forum on Internet Freedoms in East Africa which brought together ICT thought leaders, government officials, media and human rights activists from six African countries in Kampala, Uganda.
3. The OpenNet Africa Project research publications (<http://www.opennet africa.org/open-internet-freedom-publications/>) have been referenced in various academic research works at Universities.
4. The positive impact of the project has led to CIPESA being recognized and invited to present their work at both international and national fora.
 - a. Online freedom in East Africa requires amendments to current laws and openness from state agencies; <http://www.oafrica.com/ict-policy/online-freedom-in-east-africa-requires-amendments-to-current-laws-and-openness-by-state-agencies/>
 - b. Stringent laws stifling internet freedom – survey; <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Stringent-laws-stifling-internet-freedom---survey/-/688334/2325210/-/bbie9cz/-/index.html>
 - c. East Africa internet freedom: Governments faulted for imposing controls: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GCmzGQNMZRZl>
 - d. Ugandans Denied Right to Expression, Privacy Over Mobile Phones and Internet – Lobby; <http://allafrica.com/stories/201405231390.html>
 - e. Launch Of The Internet Freedoms In East Africa 2014 Report; <http://www.kictanet.or.ke/?p=19913>
 - f. New laws in Uganda make internet providers more vulnerable to liability and state intervention; <http://www.apc.org/en/news/new-laws-uganda-make-internet-providers-more-vulne>

5. Set up www.opennetafrica.org as the one-stop portal for information on internet freedoms in Africa, including policies, internet rights violations, and research reports. The portal promotes information availability on what in Africa is a fairly new and under-researched area.

Project Extension

Given the qualitative nature of the project and difficulty in measuring impact, respondents were asked whether the project had achieved its objectives as set out at initiation. 75% of the respondents strongly believed the project required extension and more importantly recommended future focus on;

1. Education at higher institutions of learning and tertiary institutions
2. Child online protection.
3. Dissemination of research findings, advocacy, awareness, trainings especially for women and girls since they are more prone to online attacks.
4. More on Research and Advocacy; and the Knowledge and skills sharing.

Challenges Encountered

As is the case with any project, there are bound to be challenges and OpenNet Africa is not an exception. Some of the challenges encountered include;

5. Internet freedoms is a new area and most stakeholders are more focused and interested in other areas like ICT infrastructure, connectivity, reliability of service than internet freedoms.
6. Most stakeholders are more interested in addressing issues around basic human rights and look at internet freedom as a “luxury right”.
7. Setting measurable targets for a project with qualitative tendencies has been a challenge.
8. The qualitative nature of the project means measuring impact is very difficult. The impact is measured through subjective approaches.
9. Funding for this project has been restricted to donor limitations and not the project requirements. The project budgeting has a top-down approach with activities planned to fit in a fixed budget. The ideal approach would have been to plan the project including the costing and look for funding to meet that budget.

Future focal points

Despite the challenges, CIPESA continues to be committed to the OpenNet Africa initiative. It has future plans of focusing on areas such as;

1. Continue understanding, contributing and creating awareness in such a new and robust area especially in the East African region
2. More emphasis on capacity building and empowerment arising from research.

Project sustainability

We sought to assess to what level is the current technology in use on the project sustainable? The www.opennetafrica.org portal, social media and mailing lists were the most used technologies in implementing the OpenNet Africa initiative.

Respondents were also asked - *Will there be continuous delivery of benefits after project implementation?*

Only 25% of the respondents in the survey believe that the project objectives will continue to be met without CIPESA. This is a strong indication that beneficiaries believe the role of CIPESA as a central point is paramount to the success of this initiative. After implementation, management of the web portal and social media accounts will remain the responsibility of CIPESA as the implementing agency who have

built capacity since the inception of the project and have experience in managing the various communication media.

Will beneficiaries play a role in ensuring continuity?

The role of operation and maintenance of the various communication media will be handled by CIPESA. However beneficiaries will continue to play an important role in participating in the various online forums to continue engaging and debating on online freedoms

What benefits will continue to accrue to the beneficiaries after the project completion?

After project completion, beneficiaries will continue to engage through the fora created as a result of the project (Web Portal, Social media, workshops and conferences) to share and promote online freedoms in the Sub Saharan Africa region and beyond.

Financial sustainability

Through fundraising efforts, CIPESA has secured further funds to meet any costs in operation and maintenance of the online fora for OpenNet Africa initiative for the foreseeable future

Recommendations and Conclusions

The OpenNet Africa project main delivery mode is through communication. It is therefore extremely important that there are efforts to document and track changes in regional internet freedoms. An updatable database with a trail log and timestamp to entries such as changes in internet policy and freedoms will help CIPESA monitor the impact of its work more efficiently.

Affiliate marketing

While the current approach of social media, web portal etc. is having a great impact on the work of OpenNet Africa Project, a great internet marketing promotion idea of promoting other websites on OpenNet Africa web portal in return of OpenNet Africa Portal being advertised on the participating websites would supplement drive of traffic to the Web portal and its social media pages thereby greatly increasing the size of audience. Such websites may include websites of organizations doing similar work, civil rights organizations, ICT for development websites etc.

CIPESA's involvement at the core of this project is key to its success, given the diversity and complexity of the stakeholders involved, it is important to have a centralized and neutral management and support mechanism. There are many smaller projects that could spiral off this Project and CIPESA is better placed to manage and align them with the strategic objective of OpenNet Africa Project.

Future project design should incorporate elements of project outcomes, verifiable indicators and means of verification. This will greatly help measure the overall qualitative impact of the project.

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List of participants in the evaluation

1. Tilburg University
2. Ndikumana Alain, Independent Consultant in Burundi
3. Uganda Police Force
4. Paradigm Initiative Nigeria
5. Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET)
6. Internet Society (ISOC) - BURUNDI
7. African Centre for Media Excellence
8. Cured Ltd
9. Association for Progressive Communications (APC)
10. East and Horn of Human Rights Defenders Project (EHAHRDP)