



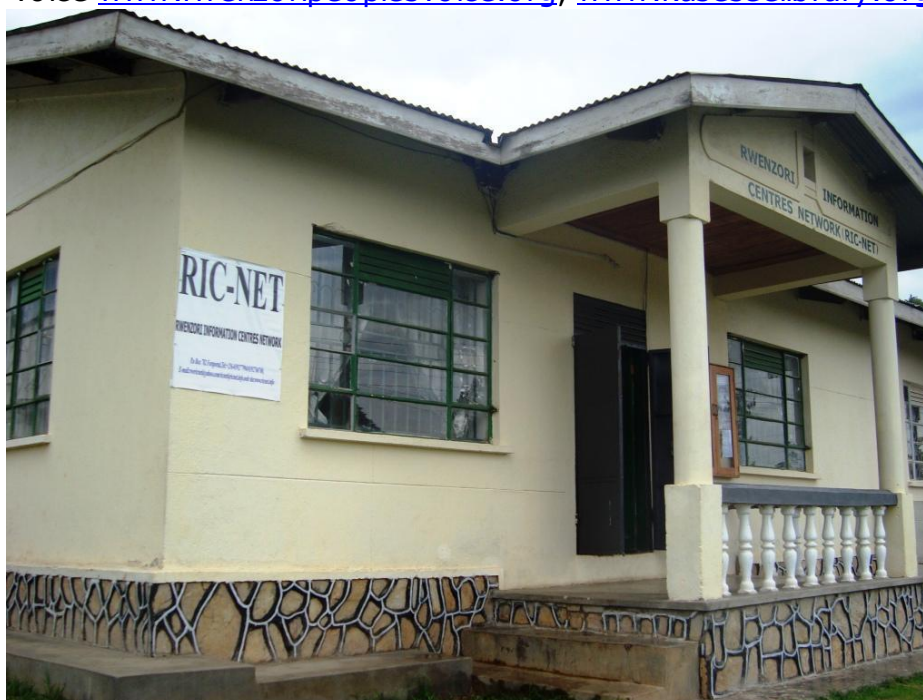
# Rwenzori Information Centres Network (RIC-NET)

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## RIC-NET PROFILE

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[ RIC-NET core activity is to facilitate information documentation and sharing, and promote the use of ICT for community development. A member of RWECO<sup>1</sup>, CEW-IT<sup>2</sup> and DENIVA<sup>3</sup>, a lead local organisation in implementing e-platforms such as Uchaguzi Uganda [www.uchaguzi.co.ug](http://www.uchaguzi.co.ug) and Rwenzori peoples voice [www.rwenzoripeoplesvoice.org](http://www.rwenzoripeoplesvoice.org), [www.kaseseelibrary.org](http://www.kaseseelibrary.org).



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<sup>2</sup> Citizens Election Watch-IT

<sup>3</sup> Development Networks of Indigenous Voluntary Associations

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Rwenzori Information Centres Network (RIC-NET) is a community owned information sharing network established in 2005 by the Civil Society Organizations.

The genesis of RIC-NET was at an open space forum for Rwenzori region CSO in 2002, where the need for a network to boast effective and reliable information sharing was recommended by members of CSO. Hence, RIC-NET was established to answer to this need and harnesses the available resources and opportunities in order to strengthen information, knowledge and skills sharing within the Rwenzori region.

RIC-NET is registered as a Community Based Organization (CBO) by Kabarole District Reg. No: CD/CBO/078 and a Company Limited by Guarantee under the Republic of Uganda companies Act (Cap. 110), Reg. No: 85565.

RIC-NET is currently comprised of (8) eight Information Centres at county levels and 35 rural information centre/points at sub county/parish levels distributed in Districts of the Rwenzori region namely: Kasese, Kabarole, Kamwenge, Kyenjojo, Bundibugyo, *Kyegegwa and Ntoroko in the near future.*

The Network cherishes a holistic approach to development that recognizes the provision of information as an essential element to the transformation of rural peasant productivity, social, political and economic spheres. It emphasizes a participatory approach that involves the participation of local communities in identifying their information needs, participating in designing strategies, (that use ICT) to meet their needs and monitor the process.

This methodology empowers the individuals, organizations as well as the communities to take responsibility of their own development process; wealth creation for prosperity and improved livelihood.

### **1.1 Target group**

RIC-NET's target groups are organized rural citizens, farmers under mentorship of a progressive farmer, CSOs, government institutions and private sector.

Our direct clients are the members; County information centres (CICs), the District E-society centres, other CSOs/NGO both local and international, the business community, academic and government institutions, Local Governments establishments and institutions.

The clients are both the providers of the initial input (raw data/information) and the end users of the final product (processed and packaged information).

### **1.2 Area of Operation**

RIC-NET by mandate operates in Uganda, but most of its centres are primarily in the Rwenzori region: districts of Kasese, Bundibugyo, Ntoroko, Kyegegwa, Kyenjojo, Kabarole and Kamwenge. From 2010, through partnership with CEW-IT members, RIC-NET extended its services to Kampala, Soroti, Gulu, Arua and Kabale.

### 1.3 Vision

A society effectively using ICT for timely access and utilization of relevant information for development and governance.

### 1.4 Mission

To initiate and support community owned information centres that enhance timely information & knowledge sharing up to the grass root communities.

### 1.5 RIC-NET Objectives

1. To facilitate delivery of relevant, timely and appropriate information & skills to the rural communities in the Rwenzori region.
2. To support the local communities with technical expertise and training facilities that boosts their capacity to effectively share knowledge and information using ICT tools.
3. To generate innovative ways of applying ICT by women and men for their own socio-economic development and actively participating in their governance.
4. To promote public, private sector and civil society partnerships in building the information society.
5. To support the marginalized groups' (especially the women, youth and people with disability-PWD) involvement in the development process through information sharing, lobbying and advocacy so as to improve their quality of life.
6. To source, repackage, document and disseminate local content for future posterity.
7. To carry research on indigenous knowledge & skills, local content and affordable ICT tools.

### 1.6 Core Values

- Transparency and accountability** is at the centre of all our transactions.
- Team work** is basic to the achievement of a positive and lasting change.
- Voluntarism** is a prerequisite to development.
- Professionalism** and due care in doing work is basic to community custodianship.
- Responsibility** for our decision and action centre to openness to learning.
- Commitment** to work and relationships is core to our diversity and cross-cultural.
- Respect** for human dignity, legal process and justice is our virtue.
- Receptive** in view of innovation and creativity generated by shared endeavor.
- Gender** sensitivity and equity enables every one exercise his or her full potential.

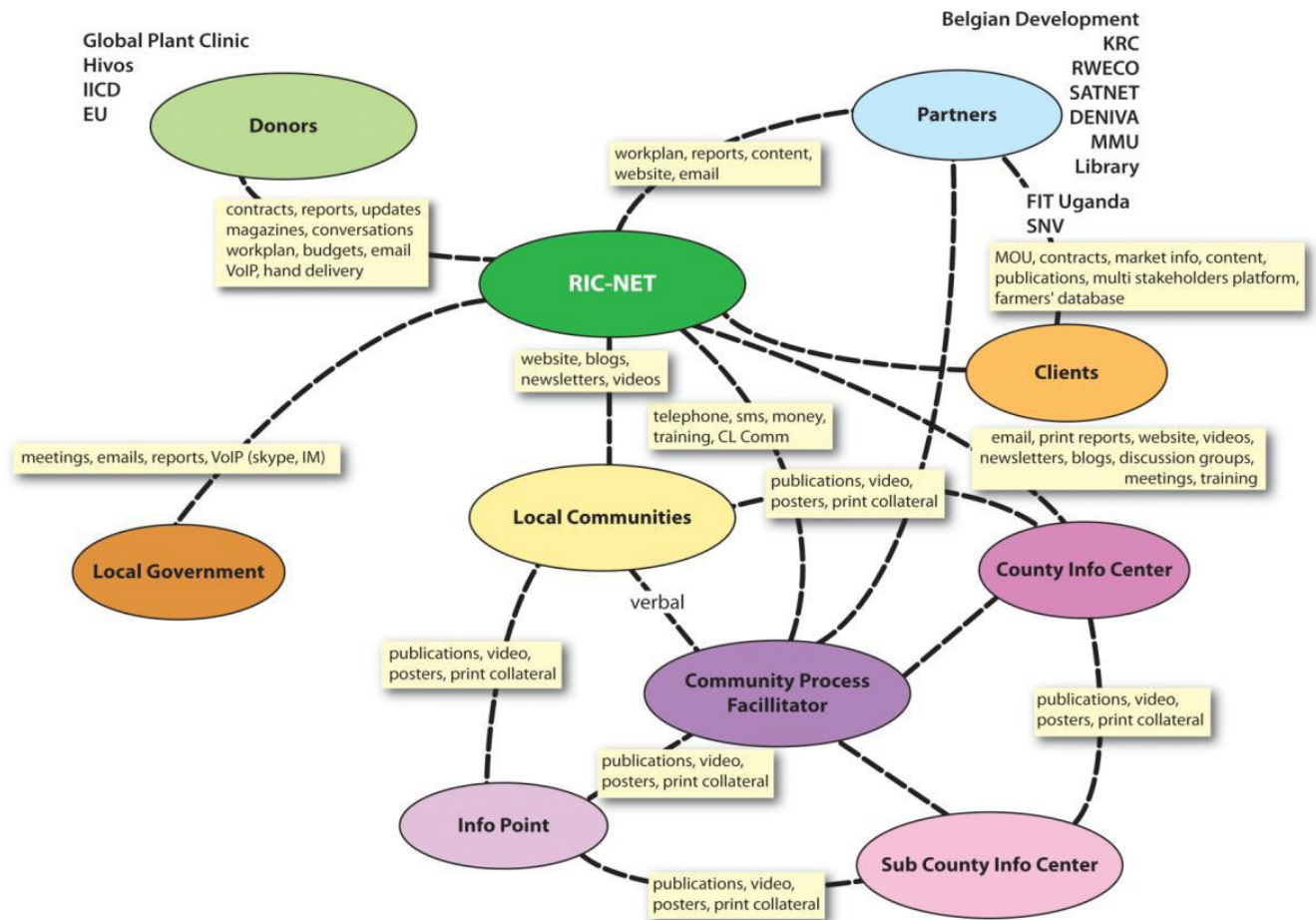
### 1.7 Personnel:

RIC-NET has 12 committed staff (**4 females and 8 males**) with the executive Director as the head of the Team. RIC-NET also has seven staff based in Districts for initiating the

District e-society centres in the seven Districts of the Rwenzori region and over 25 information officers affiliated to RIC-NET but resident in the information centres.

### 1.8 Operational Programmes structure:

RIC-NET carries out activities through a chain of information centres, the progressive farmers, community process facilitators and partner organisation.



### 1.9 Information Centres:

INFORMATION CENTRE	AREA OF COVERAGE	LOCATION (DISTRICT)
1. Kyaka Rural Information Centre (KRIC).	KRIC Operates in three (3) out of six (6) sub counties of Kyaka County	Kyegegwa
2. Kamwenge Communities Information Centre (KACOICE).	KACOICE operates in one (3) of the six (6) sub counties of Kamwenge District	Kamwenge
3. Kabarole Information Centre (KIC)	Operates in one (4) out of eleven (11) sub counties of Kabarole District.	Kabarole
4. Semuliki Information Centre (CIS)	<i>CIS operates in three (3) out of six (6) sub counties of Bwamba County.</i>	Bundibugyo
5. Busongora County Information Centre (BRIC).	<i>BRIC operates in six (6) of the twelve (12) Sub counties of Busongora County</i>	Kasese
6. Bwera Information Centre (BIC).	<i>BIC operates in all of the eleven (11) sub Counties of Bukonzo County</i>	Kasese
7. Mwenge Information Centre (MIC)	Operates in one (1) sub county out of 8 in Kyenjojo District.	Kyenjojo
8. Kitagwenda Information and Resource Centre	Operates in one (1) out of five (5) sub counties of Kitagwenda County.	Kamwenge

## MAP OF INFORMATION CENTRES



Key:

**Yellow dot:** e-society centres

**Blue dot:** county information centres

**Green dot:** plant clinic centre

**Red dot:** Rural information centres

## **2. POROGAMME AREAS:**

RIC-NET implements activities through three programme areas:

**2.1.0 CITIZENSHIP, ENGAGEMENT AND EXPRESSION;** this programme area handles three projects areas.

2.1.1 **Social Accountability project** focuses at strengthening the civic competence on social accountability by empowering citizens to actively participate in and influence the planning and feedback processes within a local government setting with emphasis to Health, Education and water sectors. The project uses round table meetings, e-platforms (HUDUMA), digital media, radio programmes and general e-society tools for raising the voices of the citizen in democracy and accountability process.

2.1.2 **Citizen Manifesto Implementation Project;** focuses at facilitating effective engagement between the citizens and the elected leaders on the implementation of the people's (Citizens) Manifesto vis-à-vis the party/leaders' manifesto. This is a twelve months action that is supported by the European Union and Oxfam Novib (under the Democratization and Good Governance Programme (DGAP) of the EU/Government of Uganda).

**2.1.3 Citizens' use of ICT in Service delivery tracking;** Focuses on availing information on governance services to spur citizens to take action, and to amplify citizens voices through digital media and web-mobile technology platforms.

**2.2.0 SOCIAL INCLUSION, HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT,** this programme area has three project focuses.

2.2.1 **Inclusion and empowerment of minorities;** this focuses in Spearheading the rights of women, the youth, the children, the elders/aged and people with disability. The project ensures that budgets formulated by local governments have priorities to the minority groups, and projects implemented take care of the concerns of minority groups.

2.2.2 **Voicing the silence;** the project focuses on amplifying the voices of marginalized groups in the society by expanding the space for the freedom of expression and use of technology to allow the voice of every citizen to be heard. The project promotes social and digital media, use of mobile web platforms that strengthen citizen engagement in an open, democratic and pluralistic society.

2.2.3 **Health plants for Health people;** the project focuses on increasing agriculture production and food security with environmental concerns of sustainable use of natural resources. It ensures constant provision of information/alerts on pests/disease, crop market information and weather forecast. The project uses radio programmes, bulk sms and public plant clinics in market places, sensitization of the community on preventive mechanism of disease at household levels. "Health is made at home and only repaired at health facilities", Prof. Omaswa.

**2.3.0 ICT AND MEDIA;** This is the coordinating programme of RIC-NET activities. It focuses the strategic use of ICT, digital, video/cinema and social media information. The key project areas are:

2.3.1 **Sustainable usage of ICT equipment;** this focuses on training on using ICT strategically for attainment of other projects goals and how to maintain ICT equipments.

2.3.2 **Knowledge sharing;** the focus is on sourcing, documenting and sharing information relevant to the user needs. It also involves promoting indigenous knowledge and skills for posterity. The promotion of building knowledge networks, facilitation of platforms for knowledge sharing, research and innovation use of ICT are core to this project area. We Promote roundtable discussions/ think tank that foster a culture of learning and self-critique, and document and share lessons in creative and accessible formats.

2.3.3 **Pro people media policies;** the focus is on promoting best practices of use of media both the traditional and New media for community development; advocating for better policies on media ownership and licensing in favor of rural community and Civil society that are non profit in nature and focus on information sharing, citizen participation and voicing the silence.

### **3. RIC-NET EFFORTS IN RWENZORI REGION:**

Since 2005, RIC-NET has undertaken activities in the field of information generation, processing and dissemination using modern ICTs. These processes have been supported by a number of development partners notably HIVOS, IICD, SNV, EU, Global plant clinic, SATNET, KRC, Government of Uganda, and local farmers. Over the last five years RIC-NET registered a number of achievements in facilitating information sharing processes and training the members of CSO in process documentation.

- Supported civil society Organisation in the Rwenzori region to document best practices for learning purposes and scaling up good practices in Agriculture.  
[www.ricnet.info](http://www.ricnet.info)

- RIC-NET designed and deployed online platforms to enable archiving and quick retrieval of information. These platforms have helped in the access of information within and outside the districts. The platforms have stimulated local government staff to share information with citizen's e.g. E-society library, district Website for Kasese and Kabarole, the Rwenzori people's voice blog, and the CSO portal for Kasese CSO. [www.rwenzoripeoplesvoice.org](http://www.rwenzoripeoplesvoice.org) <http://rwecovoice.blogspot.com>
- RIC-NET, under RWECO project and in partnership with EU, IICD, HIVOS and Kasese local government established an e-society centre at Kasese where CSO and the public can access information on local government development plans or reports of implemented activities. This centres enables CSO and citizens access authentic information from local government that the use to hold government officials accountable. [www.kaseseelibrary.org](http://www.kaseseelibrary.org)
- RIC-NET facilitated dialogue among different stake holder and the citizens through joint radio programs, CSO fairs, roundtable meeting and seminars, TV programmes, online d-group and other platforms. <http://uchaguzi-uganda.blogspot.com> [www.uchaguzi.co.ug](http://www.uchaguzi.co.ug)
- RIC-NET trained local government heads of departments for water, health, planning finance, Agriculture production in Kasese and Kabarole district in web 20.2, Training on internet, Training on computer usage, CSO portal usage, E library and website.
- RIC-NET has established a good working relation with local government units. For instance, RIC-NET have participated in budget conferences at district and sub counties, conducted training on computer literacy to LG staff of Kasese and Kabarole Districts.
- RIC-NET is a local capacity builder for SNV in the Rwenzori region and has documented for SNV case studies in water, education and pineapple wilt management in both Video and user manuals.
- Have established an active network of information centres right from the villages to the district levels that share information on health, governance, agricultures related issues.
- RIC-NET has supported information centres and district e-society resource centres with equipments for internet connection, telephone facilities and computers that are used by the members of the community to access and share information.
- Documented, repackaged and published information in form of quarterly magazines, flyers, brochures and videos on critical issues affecting the community in the agriculture, health, Education, water sectors and critically analyzing the governance issues around these sectors. **Cfr: RIC-NET 2009 annual report**

#### **4. POSSIBLE AREAS OF COOPERATION WITH UNICEF**

- Mobilization and sensitization of the partners and public to use the services and platforms from UNICEF e.g. educate the RWECO 800 community monitors and the 90 community process facilitators in the Rwenzori region to effectively use the platforms available.
- Contribution to sourcing, documentation and sharing of information using the existing web based platforms for information. Enhance use of different report by stakeholders and our partners to use them to engage /advocate for better services or change in policies.
- Offer technical backstopping in maintenance of ICT equipments and online platforms.
- Document voices from the community on the successful use of the developed platforms and how they helped in realization of better services.
- Disseminate reports, information and any other content from UNICEF on its several programs.
- Participate in carrying out any research and content development from the local community.
- Taking leading in publishing newsletters, flyers and brochures in local language. <http://www.ricnet.info/files/publications.html>

#### **FUNDING AGENCIES**

RIC-NET is currently receiving funding from the following agencies:

1. Hivos – this is a Dutch NGO that supports Humanist Development and Cooperation with Developing countries in over 60 countries in Africa, South America, Asia and Eastern Europe.
2. Oxfam Novib – is Dutch NGO and is a member of Oxfam International. In Uganda it supports actions in Eastern, Northern and Central Uganda. It also works across the world in many countries.
3. European Union Delegation to Uganda.
4. Global plant clinic- CABI
5. Local funds from sale of services and products.

### **Platforms for Information sharing**

<http://www.kasesecso.org/> - Kasese CSOs Portal

<http://www.kasese.go.ug/> - Kasese District Website

<http://kaseseelibrary.org> - Kasese District E-Library

<http://dgroups.org/iicd/kasese> - Kasese Community D- Group

<http://kasesenews.blogspot.com/> - Kasese District News Blogs

<http://rwecovoice.blogspot.com/> - CSOs News Blog

<http://www.kabaroledistrict.go.ug> Kabarole District website

[www.uchaguzi.co.ug](http://www.uchaguzi.co.ug) Election incident reporting website

<http://uchaguzi-uganda.blogspot.com> Election observation related news blog.

### **THE MEDIA REPORTS**

<http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/9/32/741232>

<http://www.ngonewsafrika.org/?p=718>

<http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/18/733904>

<http://www.monitor.co.ug/Business/Technology/-/688612/816942/-/tv6sdf/-/index.html>

<http://llafrica.com/stories/201010040296.html>

<http://pamojamedia.com/2010/07/knowledge-sharing-in-rural-africa>

[http://www.i-network.or.ug/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=350](http://www.i-network.or.ug/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=350)

<http://www.skyscrapercity.com/showpost.php?s=23a3df2b64334f6b8e7224bb9f6ea032&p=69027071&postcount=294>

<b>LIST OF STAFF AT RIC-NET</b>				
	<b>Names</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Title</b>
1	Murugahara John	Male	Bachelor of Info. Tech. (BIT), Dip. Educ., Dip. Philo, Cert. M&E., cert. consulting Skills.	Executive Director
2	Kyomuhendo Joselyne	Female	B.A. Social Sciences Cert. project cycle management	Programme Manager
3	Timothy Balikenga	Male	Bachelor of Philosophy, Dip. Mass Comm, MA (student)	Programme Officer (citizenship, expression & Engagement)
4	Tuhaise Geoffrey Rwaheeru	Male	BSC. Accounting and Finance	Finance & Admin officer
5	Bwambale Edwin	Male	Bachelor of Information Technology (BIT)	Programme officer (ICT and Media)
6	Oluka Emmanuel	Male	Bachelor of Computer Science (BCS).	Systems Administrator (software developer and platform designer).
7	Mukasine Betty	Female	BIT	ICT officer (Data processing)
8	Baluku Yosia	Male	BCS	ICT officer ( e-society)
9	Muhindo Vicent	male	BCS	ICT officer (data analyst)
10	Angeinda Erastus	Male	Bachelor of Mass Communication	Documentation Officer
11	Mbayahi Alice	Female	Mass Comm, M.A International Relations (Student).	Social inclusion, Health & development Officer
12	Emily Asiimwe	Female	Dip. in Accountancy	Administrative Assistant