Emerging Trends in E-Science: Citizen Science, Mobile technologies and ICTs' in Uganda

BY:

BARBARA BIRUNGI
HIVE COLAB
WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY UGANDA
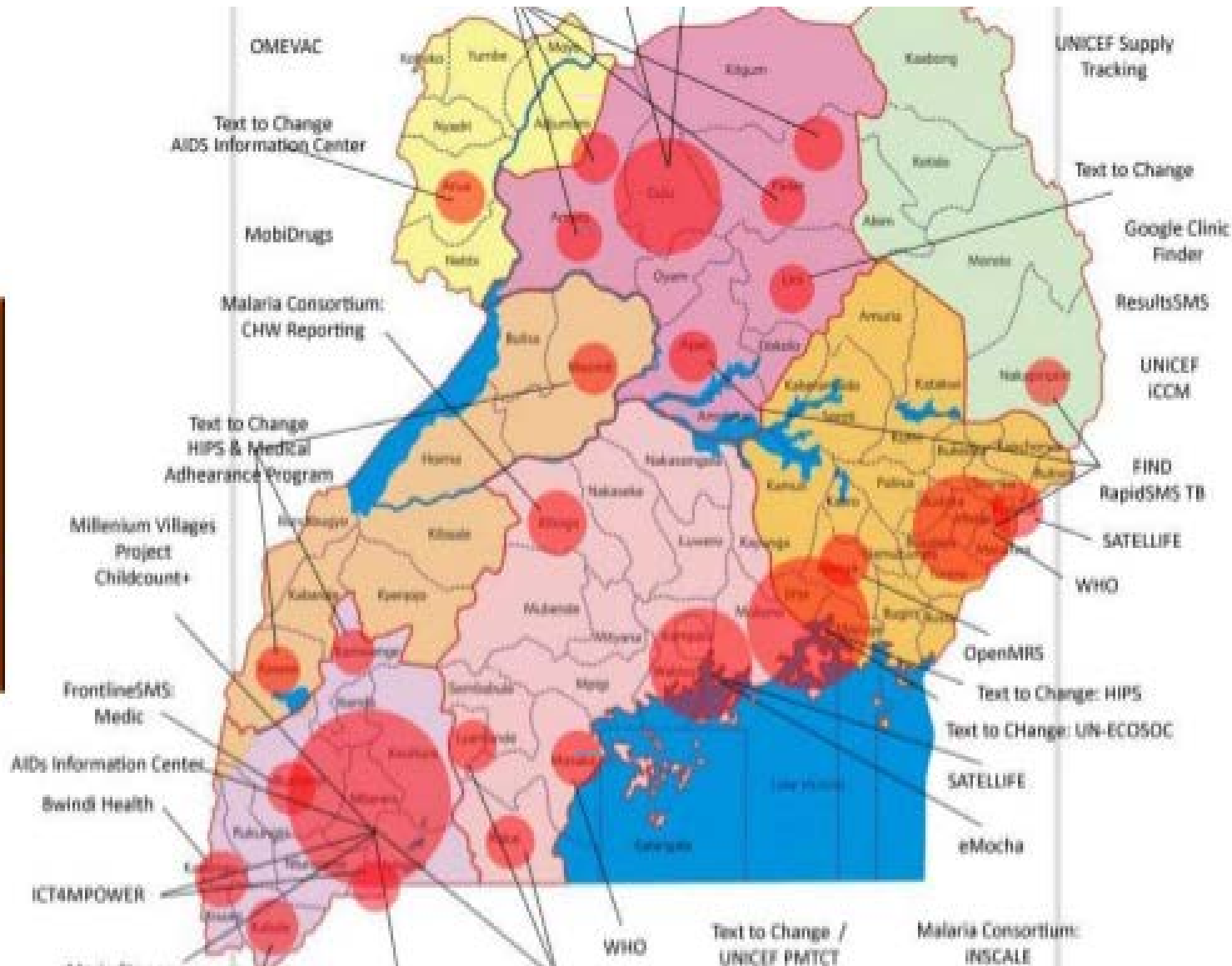
Introduction

Women In Technology Uganda

Uses of ICTs, Mobile Tech in Uganda

Current Efforts

Challenges communities, particularly women and young people face in using some of these tools to facilitate the scientific process

Women and Youth Challenges continue…..

- -Literacy rate among women and youth, making most information being useless to them.
- -Low Mobile phones ownership and usage needs to be taught first or help them use ICTs
- -Lack of ownership of mobile phones by women or youth
- -Electricity outages or lack of it
- -Poor network infrastructure,
- -Cultural challenges, when a woman speaks up in certain communities, she is taken to be ill mannered.

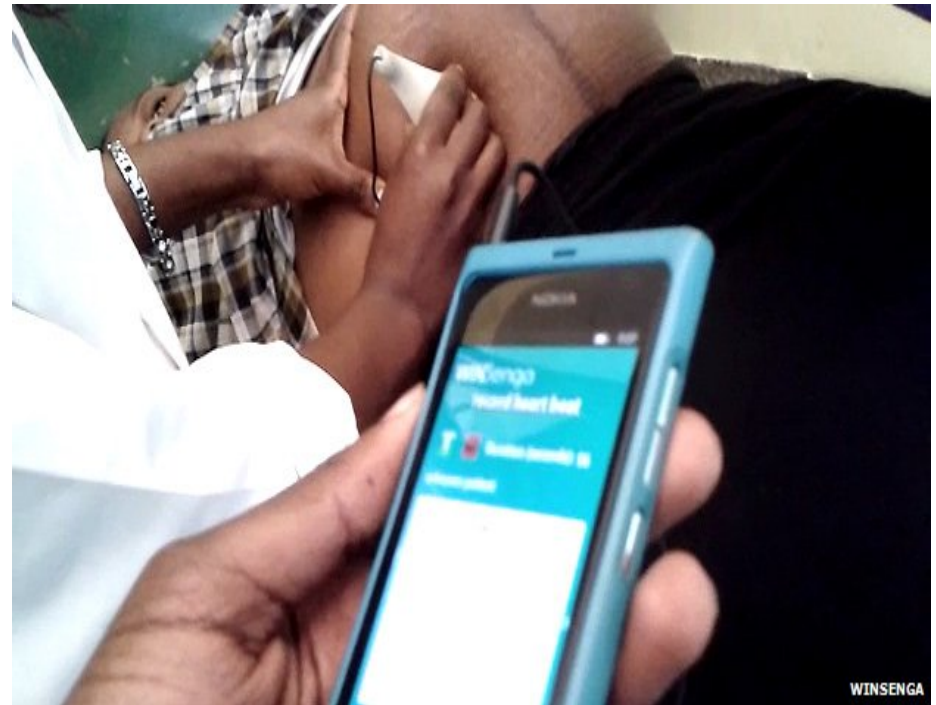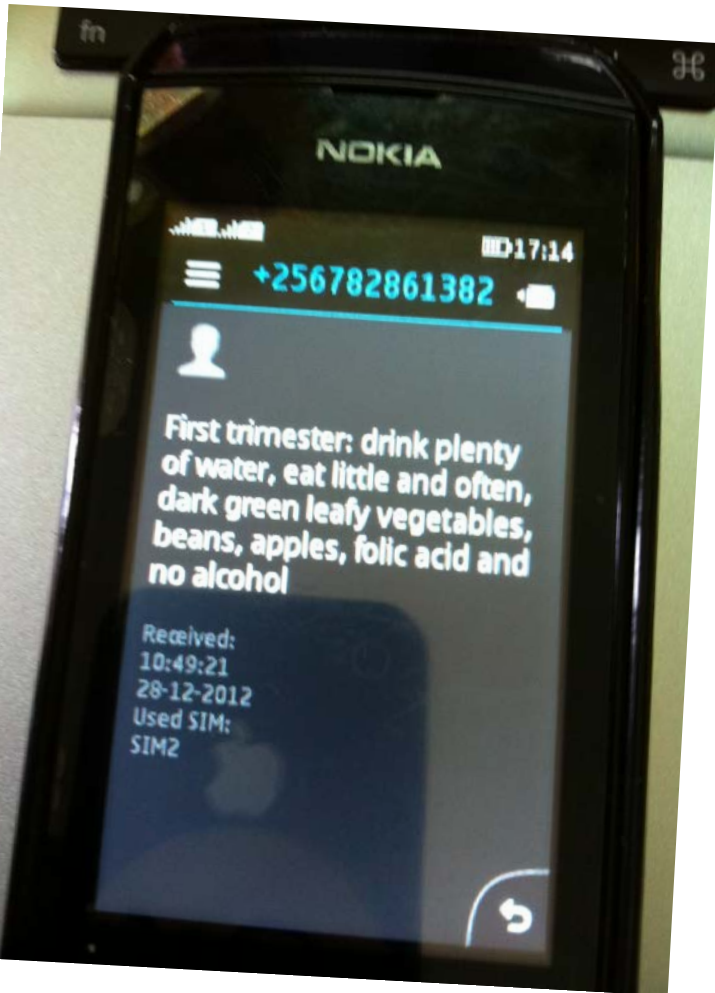# Role of Youth in the interface between science, society and policy

- They can come up with innovative solutions that will enhance this interface, easier collection of information for better decision-making processes. Creation of mobile and web applications to increase citizen participation in policy formation and implementation.

- U-report

MAMA-App

WIN_SENGA

Youth Role continues….

- -Advocacy role: Use of social media to encourage adaptation to new policies, and collecting and disseminating information from local masses using mobile technology
- Engaging government agencies, using social media, providing feedback directly from citizens to government

Reporting health care on medicine shortages, abuse of office

Mobile phone accessibility:

Actions from Use of ICTs by citizens

- New policy introduction:
- Medical sector
- Forestry sector
- Agricultural sector: identifying fake chemicals
- Security sector: Domestic Violence reduction : Police toll free lines

Civil society role

- Educating communities to use the technologies, learning processes, ie use of contraceptives, immunization, assessing responses of communities
- Representing masses at national policy development level
- Collecting, disseminating and analyzing information
- Providing input to agenda setting and policy development process
- Assessing policy conditions and monitoring acceptance progress
- Advocating for justice of during policy formation

Civil society role......

- -Civil society is the voice of the community, policy development consultation
- -Policy implementation and adaptation
- -Representation of the underprivileged like women and children during policy formation, in Ugandan culture, women especially in rural areas, do not have as much freedom of expression as men, civil society plays a big role in being the voice of such groups.
- -Active mobilizers of support for agreements, policies.

Challenges of Using E-science

- High Illiteracy rate
- Corruption
- Poor Infrastructure
- Lack of Information centers
- Low internet usage by majority Ugandans

E-science in civil society

- Quick access to information
- offers a sphere for communication which can enhance political interest and pull citizens into the democratic process.
- Connection of different communities to access info and engage governments
- Easier distribution and reach to masses, faster response solicitation

challenges faced in Youth-led e-Science initiatives

- -Access to funds, sustainability models of these projects is not easy; most projects are great but have no viable sustainability models,

- - Access to markets,

- -Fear for shutting them down, the case of NOT IN MY COUNTRY, school attendance monitoring software to reduce teacher absenteeism and influence policy decisions at national level when such information is collected

- -Fear of prosecution by corrupt government officials

- - Lack of testing facilities to test their innovations

Society Needs on the platform: Teach them on how to use it

Include teaching in schools

Considerations

- Innovation Tech challenges by Youth to build applications that interface with the Platform : Local understanding

- Linking the web platform to mobile phone USSD (Messaging)

- Training trainers(Community Knowledge Workers) in rural Areas to access to platform on behalf of others

Continued…

- Language barrier: thus a need for translation of the content to major languages

- Ease of use of the platform by basic users: Make it basic and direct not fancy

- Anonymity of contributors….

- Practical skills training

- Content downloadable and can be read when offline

Thank you

- Email: barbara@witug.org
- Twitter: @barbs311, @wituganda, @hivecolab
- Skype: barbs.birungi