Chapter 10
Assessment of Contribution of ICT for Sustainable Livelihoods in Kilosa District

C. Shirima
Sokoine University of Agriculture, Tanzania

Camilius Sanga
Sokoine University of Agriculture, Tanzania

ABSTRACT

ICT plays a key role in socio-economic development and ensuring sustainable livelihoods. The purpose of this chapter was to assess the contribution of ICT for sustainable livelihood in Kilosa district. Data were obtained from both primary and secondary sources of data. Structured questionnaires were used in collection of primary data. The collected data was analyzed using SPSS. A sample size of 60 respondents was interviewed. The study determined various contributions resulting from using ICT by rural people to enhance their livelihoods. In addition, this study highlighted several constraints which rural people face in accessing and using ICT. The results from this chapter revealed that majority of respondents are using ICT tools in their daily activities but the socio-economic development through ICT are yet to be realized fully.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The advancement of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) since the end of 20th century has affected all sectors (NICTP, 2003). Pigato (2001) argues that the current wave of globalization towards integration of markets is spurred by the development of ICT. The most noticeable ICT are the Internet and mobile phones (Chilimo, 2008; Sife et al., 2010). ICT can enable the realization of social development objectives to the extent that there is appropriateness and long lasting solution (Mallaliev *et al.,* 2010). Thus, the use of ICT can take into accounts not only the technologies itself but also the ultimate development objective and other factors which have an impact on sustainability.

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In Africa, there is insufficient evidence to suggest a direct link between ICTs and development. Ngwenyama *et al.,* (2006:3) argues that

Recent studies have found a positive correlation between investment in ICTs and economic growth in development countries, but evidence for developing countries is not as extensive.

Many if not most countries in Africa lag behind in basic requirements for ICTs to play a meaningful and sustained role in improving people's life (Bernard & Vonk, 2003).

The development gaps in Africa are compounded by the problem of the digital divide, which exacerbated not only by lack of access to ICTs but also the challenges of inadequate pool of skilled persons and the use, maintenance and rapid obsolesces of the ICTs innovations and development (Vukanikinds-DTI, 2005).

Various studies have been done to access the use of ICTs to improve delivery of services and well being of rural people. For example, in Ghana, most users access the Internet through Internet cafes (Frempong, 2005). In Uganda few people use e-mail due to the lack of access to ICTs (Tusubira *et al.,* 2005). Access to email is through internet cafes which are only available in large towns. The reverse side of this coin as highlighted by Barnard and Vonk (2003) is that around 70% of the African continent population lives in rural areas, with many Africans lacking the basic needs. In Kenya there is generally no incentive to develop the ICT sector and this problem is compounded by inadequate ICT skills and lack of Research and development in rural areas in ICT (Weema, 2005).

In Tanzania for example, effective adoption and use of ICT requires basic infrastructure like electricity, which is badly missing in many rural areas. It is also important to note that unless there is a critical mass of ICT adopters, its value for business is greatly compromised. Thus, many more people should be facilitated to access and use ICT to make it commercially viable in the country.

However, a lot more needs to be done to ensure reliability, affordability, availability and usability of the ICTs devices. One of the challenges in Tanzania is that key sectors of the National economy do not perceive ICTs as a critical business imperative. However, the Government of Tanzania recognizes that ICTs is indispensable for development and is creating a suitable ICT environment starting with a National ICT policy framework[1].

Chapman and Slaymaker (2012) argue that in order to further understand how ICT can contribute to wider development objectives of sustainable economic growth which equitably benefits those living in developing countries it is necessary to consider the existing role of information in people's livelihoods, the current communication context and how recent developments might influence them.

As Fleming (2012) reported that ICT and development are linked both in terms of "information and communication technologies as the engine of development".

Therefore, it is against this background that this study was designed to assess the contribution of ICT on sustainable livelihoods of rural people in Kilosa District.

ICT is regarded as one among the sources of development, Tanzania UNDP reports of 2011 states that ICT is one of the key factors in social-economic development (UNDP, 2011). Access to relevant information and knowledge improves efficiency and productivity, enhance social services delivery, increase access to market opportunities, and improves government performance among others (UNDP, 2011). For these reasons, ICT has been considered as vital in most developing countries including Tanzania. It has been incorporated in the poverty alleviation and other socio-economic development strategies.

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