

KIKANDWA ENVIRONMENTAL ASSOCIATION COMMUNITY INNOVATION RESOURCE CENTER



Impacting Rural Farmers

2015 has started on a rather good note as we accomplished a lot in the last year. KEA CIRC's mission is to make a community full of career ICT professionals with the knowledge to transform themselves so that they can affect and transform their lives for a positive social change. Despite our location where we are situated within a context which is essentially characterized with low ICT use inspite of an ever developing global village. We started this resource. Compelled by a very high population growth rate of 3.03% translating to nearly seven children per woman, it is not hard to imagine the challenges that the people encounter to access ICT services. This population growth rate creates strain on the country's resources including arable land as the majority of people live in the rural areas and are farmers.

ICT services are no exception to the high population growth rates. Consumption of these services is mainly present in the urban areas than the rural areas. There exists a digital divide between the urban areas and the rural areas.



Figure 1: women of Kimanya village in Kikandwa sub county in meeting organized by KEA CIRC

Therefore access in rural areas is limited due to poor infrastructure, high levels illiteracy, and high costs of connectivity coupled with lack of technical expertise to implement and deliver services effectively. These are major impediments preventing people especially women from using ICTs for development.

This is why KEA CIRC is working with rural Kikandwa, to provide internet connectivity and PCs for the whole community. With ICT, the community especially farmers are able to find and share information and access forecasts from weather stations. Radio broadcasts detail the symptoms and treatment for crop diseases, videos demonstrate pest control techniques and web

pages provide satellite imagery and analyses of local soil and vegetation. This information helps rural farmers to plant appropriate crops most suited to the region and the expected weather, increase their crops' resistance to pests, all of which enable them to significantly increase their yields. Additionally, specially developed software collates and distributes market data to farmers' mobile phones so that once their crops are ready to sell, they have the information necessary to secure a good price for their produce.

The Role of ICT in Rural Education

There is an ever increasing demand from schools, religious institutions for computers and ICT services. This is not simply because ICT literacy creates employment opportunities, but also because ICT is recognized as an important educational aid and service in itself.

ICTs demonstrate traits of being alternatives to formal education and display noticeable beneficial effects on student learning, motivation and ultimately on student achievement across a diverse range of subjects. 30 farmers have so far been trained in computer literacy and these are people who are either school dropouts or never received any sort of formal education.

These are among the success stories that compelled the management of the resource center to increase the fundraising goal on global giving because more people from other communities have started to see the impacts of ICTs on farmer beneficiaries.

The resource center is going to partner with [Rural Women Initiative](#); a women led organization in Kikandwa, to train under privileged girls in the positive use of ICT to change their lives. This will help bridge the gender gap in the use of ICT in rural areas of Kikandwa Sub County because the primary target of the partnership will be women and girls in the community.

Conclusion

Thus we call on your continued support to help these farmers get enough income from their efforts through the use of ICTs. We also continue to thank all of you who have unconditionally donated your hard earned money to the resource center to make our vision and mission possible.