

ICT Implementation in Rural Communities in Developing Countries: Towards a Quality of Life Perspective

ICT4D Symposium-Joensuu Finland
8th - 9th September 2008

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Outline

- Motivation
 - Rural Communities in Developing Countries
 - Supply focused approach to ICT4D initiatives
- Research Aim and Questions
- QoL Definition
 - Theoretical Motivation
 - In the rural context
- Research Design and Site Selection

A Rural Community in a developing Country

- Holds majority of the world population
- Poverty – low income, poor housing etc
- Isolation – inaccessibility to social services like health, education, transport, electricity
- Main source of income is subsistence farming
- etc

The Ugandan Context

	Overall	Population Share	
		Urban	Rural
Population	27.2 million	15%	85%
Literacy rates	69.4%	85.9%	66%
Poverty	31.3%	15%	85%
Subsistence farming	49%	10%	58%

Generic ICT4'R'D Model

- Aimed at increasing availability & access to ICT to improve QoL (ease poverty and isolation)
 - Implementation –efforts in Uganda include
 - Policy reforms like liberalization of the telecommunications sector
 - Universal access fund thru the RCDF in 2001
 - etc
 - IS Evaluation or Assessment - International and national indicators – teledensity, households with televisions, radios etc

As a result...

- Increased availability

...of RCDF in Uganda

- 45% of villages in Sub-Saharan Africa are covered with mobile signal

ITU, 2007

- In Uganda teledensity as of March 2008 reached 20 phones (both fixed-line and mobile)

UCC, 2008

- 1.17% of the people in Uganda own a computer, 0.01% have an internet connection

RIA, 2008

Services	completed	planned
Internet Points of Presence	52	24
Internet Cafes, ICT Training centers, Multi-purpose Community Telecentres	114	88
District Web Portals	78	-
Public Pay Phones	316	2283
School ICT Laboratories, Healthcare ICT facilities	8	130

Remember...

'Museum' – computers gathering dust



More than just an ICT facility,
but also a resource center



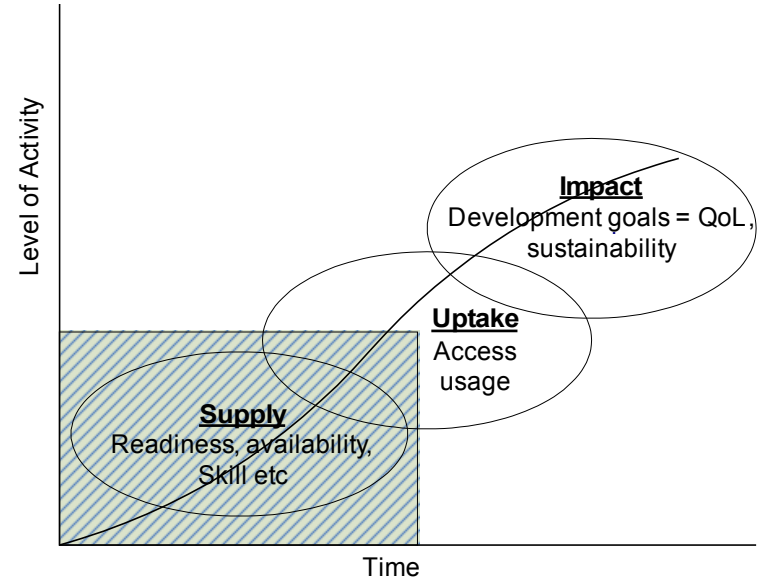
Mobile phone penetration

In Summary....

- Mixed results of ICT availability;
 - Unintended, innovative use of personal/simpler ICT (mobile, radio) – e.g. money transfer thru mobile, beeping, community radio
 - Limited or no use of externally motivated ICT (Computers, internet) (a prerequisite for QoL)

Attributed to...

- Focus on the supply side = availability and access, not the demand side = Quality of life



Research Aim

To explore how a QoL perspective towards ICT integration would optimize utilization in rural communities in Uganda

Research Questions

7. How do ICT integration strategies (personal/external) in the rural communities impact on its adoption?
9. What are peoples' perceptions of the role of ICT towards their QoL?
11. What factors influence peoples' adoption of ICT in relation to QoL?

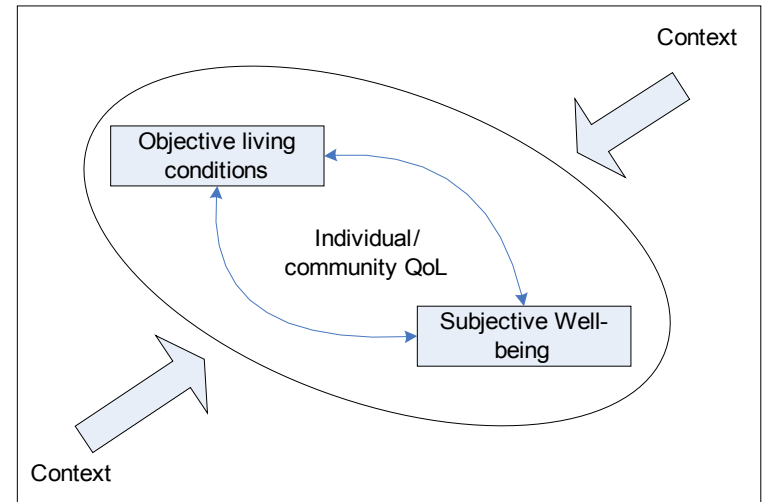
A Step back: Quality of Life

- **Subjective** - dependent on context and personal values;

“just like beauty, it lies in the hands of the beholder”

Bannister and Remenyi, 2003

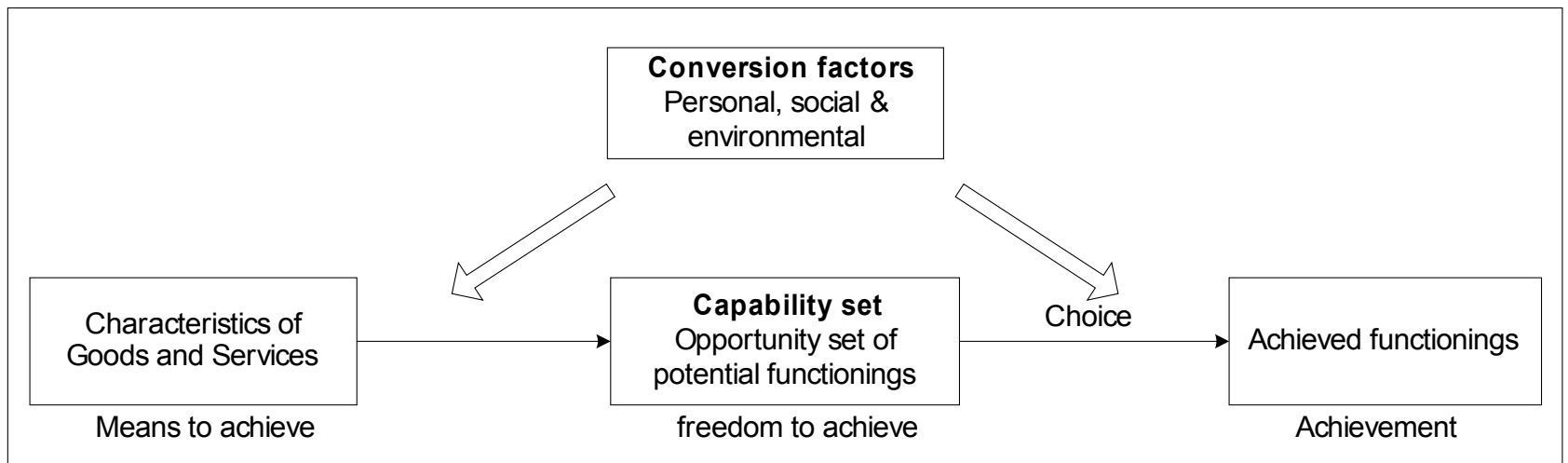
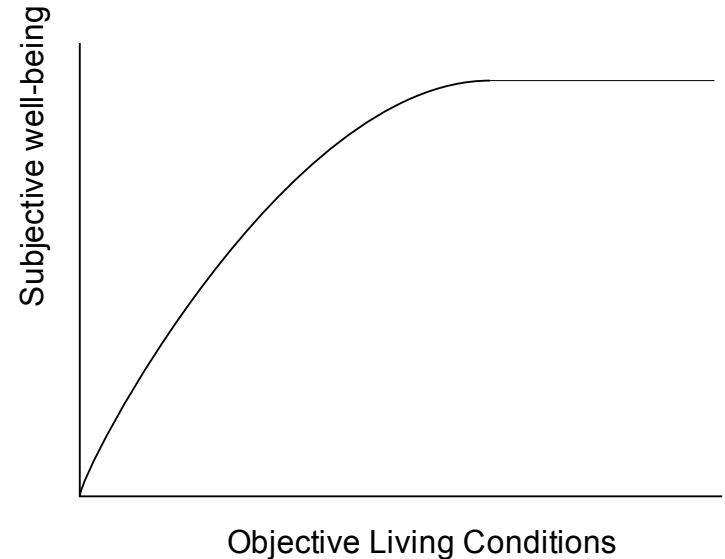
- **Multidimensional** – objective and subjective dimensions;
 - Objective living conditions (OLC) are a means to subjective well-being (SWB)



Focus is on the Beneficiaries

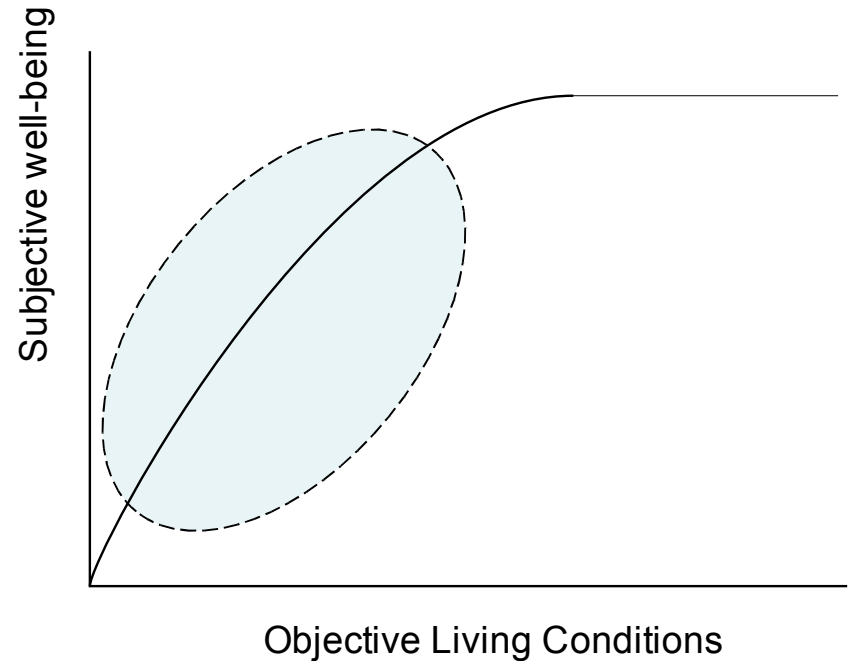
Theoretical Motivation

- SWB Homeostasis - QoL is maintained at a level of stability (Cummins, 2000)
- Amartya Sen's Capability approach – “Development as freedom”



Quality of Life of the Rural Poor

- low levels of OLC defeat the homeostatic maintenance of SWB
- Therefore; for the rural poor, QoL = improving living conditions e.g. food, shelter, money etc



- *Either through* meeting the basic material needs e.g. food, shelter...etc - unsustainable
- *or* providing opportunities to meet the basic needs – empowerment and relevance

A QoL perspective: ICT potential for the rural poor

- ICT ↔ QoL relationship is indirect and complex.

i.e. access to pc or phone ≠ food, shelter etc

- ICT as a resource, a basic need, just like food or shelter, possession of which should lead to life satisfaction or dissatisfaction;
- or ICT (**information & communication**) as a means that creates exploitable opportunities. For example, *use the phone to conduct a business transaction, then use the money obtained to meet one's needs*

Research Design and Process

1. Object of Study

- QoL of people in rural communities in Uganda
- Perception of Info & comm benefits towards their QoL
- Governing contextual factors like isolation, culture, skills etc

2. Philisophical Assumption

Interpretive

Participants' subjective and contextual interpretations about the importance (both experienced & perceived) of ICT to their QoL definition

3. Research Methodology

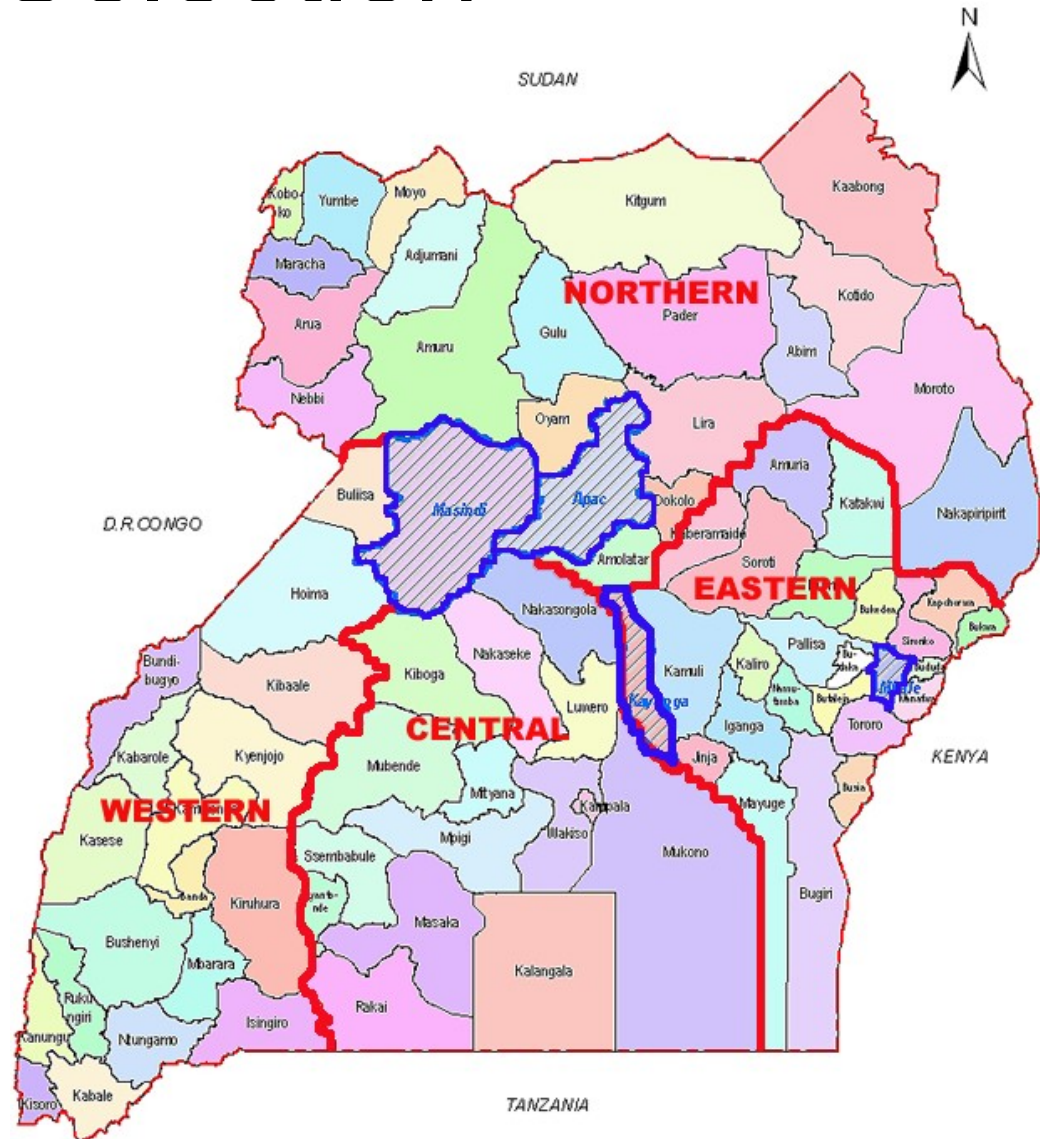
Mixed Methods

- *Qualitative* - Un quantifiable, in-depth assessment of the ICT- QoL interactions
- *Quantitative* - obtain data on values and actual use patterns of ICT, frequency etc

Site Selection

Selection Criteria

- Regional representation
 - a district per region
- Presence of ICT facilities
 - A county with an RCDF implementation ≥ 4 years
- Proximity to ICT facilities
 - ‘Adopters’ and ‘Non-adopters’
- Respondent fatigue



Given access, what does life become?



Thank you!!