Diffusion of Information and Communication Technology for the Blind: the Experiences of Blind and Sighted Users in Uganda

Abdul Busuulwa, Annemarije Kooijman-van Dijk, Jon C. Lovett

Central question: To what extent has ICT for the blind diffused in Uganda? To answer the question emphasis was put on the first four stages in the innovation decision process model.

Subquestions:
• What is the experience of blind and sighted users of ICT on a daily basis in Uganda?
• What are the factors responsible for adoption or non-adoption of ICT for the blind in Uganda?
• What is the role of the various stakeholders in the spread of ICT for the blind in Uganda?
• What is the contribution of Universal Design to the diffusion of ICT for the blind in Uganda?
• What should be done to improve the situation of ICT use for blind people in Uganda?

Location: Three districts in Uganda, Iganga, Kampala and Soroti, known to have secondary schools and other tertiary institutions with high numbers of blind people as students, as well as organizations employing some in the formal sector. In total 100 blind and 100 sighted people and 22 key informants interviewed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of ICT</th>
<th>Blind - Yes</th>
<th>Blind - No</th>
<th>Sighted - Yes</th>
<th>Sighted - No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computer</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mobile phone</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATMs</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Use of different types of ITC by blind and sighted respondents. N=100 for both groups.

Preliminary recommendations for improving computer use by blind people in Uganda:
• More training/sensitization to be done in the use of computer and the special software
• Government should make special software for the blind affordable
• Special software should be available to whoever wants to buy them
• Computers should be adequately distributed throughout the country
• Establish computer training centres for the blind
• Make demonstrations on the use of the special software

Research funded by the Ford International Fellowships Programme

Abdul Busuulwa