

Uganda National Council for Higher
Education
Capacity Training Workshop
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**Information and
Communication Technology
In
Institutional Management**



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Part 1: Setting the Stage in Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) in Uganda

- *“Self discovery is a must. We tend to think we are who we think we are, tamed by our environment/roles and aspiration in life...”*
NKM



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Characterised by.. (1)

- Manual management systems
- Slow and inefficient operations
- Systems that have effectively ground to a halt
- Very poor customer (students) care
- Reversed priorities (1. Administration; 2. Academic staff; 3. Students..)
- Distorted employment figures (Admin and Support vs academic and research)
- Traditional and outmoded modes of learning (committing academic genocide)



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Characterised by.. (2)

- A civil service rather than a private sector culture (procedures are more important than results)
- Conservative mind set..
- Endangering Uganda by producing ICT-illiterate graduates (Treason!)
- etc...



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Part 2: The Imperative Need for Universities to Change

- *“It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the ones most responsive to change”– Charles Darwin*



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The Imperative Need for Universities to Change (1)

- Creating efficiency and cost-effectiveness in instruction, research, academic and administrative management
- Creating transparency in university governance
- Establishing a student-centric and student-friendly environment
- Responding to the modern perception of universities, especially in a market-driven environment like Uganda and the Region



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The Imperative Need for Universities to Change (2)

- Joining the global knowledge society and creating international visibility
- Generating a human resource that will lead Uganda to the 21st century (*still in the 20th!*)
- Turbo-charging Uganda's rising status as an education destination in the Region
- Adapting to, or changing with change



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Part 3: Identifying Solutions..

- *"Give me a place to stand, and I will move the earth"*



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Identifying Solutions..

- In any large organisations, like IHLs, solutions must be holistic
- Approach the challenges in totality through institutional transformation programmes
- Identify strategic priorities that respond to the IHL's mission and vision, guided by national and regional development needs.
- It is almost inevitable that, if it has not been done, ICTs will be identified as one of the strategic priorities



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Part 4: Motivation for using ICTs

- Motivation
- ICT – An opportunity for change



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Motivation for using ICTs

- IHLs can use ICT to respond to the challenges, and leverage performance to great heights
- We do not introduce ICT for its own sake - We introduce ICT where it will help us to achieve our strategic objectives faster, more efficiently, and cost effectively; **achieving more with less.**
- ICT is not the end, but a means to the end. It is just a tool. ICT should not set our direction: we set the direction of ICT in so far as it is relevant to our strategic objectives.
- We must map ICT on to our vision, rather than map our vision on to ICT.



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ICT – An opportunity for change...

- Automation of poor methods of work just leads to failure faster!
- An Opportunity to review the way we do things: faster vehicles require better roads
- Success requires willingness to change and re-train if necessary:
 - Aeroplanes require pilots, not faster drivers



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Part 5: Addressing the Challenges of ICT

“Do not fear going forward slowly, fear only to stand still” – Chinese wisdom

- Creation of awareness and ownership
- Addressing the Mindset
- The Process
- Information resource management (skills crisis)
- Sustainability
- Creating ICT literate institutions



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Creation of Awareness and ownership (1)

- Understand the IHL's vision, mission and strategic objectives
- User identification of ALL constraints in achieving strategic objectives
- Identify ICT as a tool that will overcome some of the constraints



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Creation of Awareness and ownership (2)

- Understand ICT, its strengths, limitations, and risks
- Look at best practices
- Definition of desired functionality by users, not ICT professionals
- Development of clear plans and timelines by users
- **Makerere: Achieved through targeted workshops**



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Addressing the Mindset

- ICT : an opportunity for complete re-evaluation of all enterprise processes
- Focus: Achieving more with less, but -
 - Increase output rather than reduce resources
- Fear of job loss: Address re-training and new opportunities; liberate the human mind from drudgery for high level functions
- **Makerere: Issue in all workshops; End User Training;**



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The Process(1)

- Quantify the starting point; know the destination; define the route; ICT is the vehicle; develop a clear and realistic timeline
- Institution wide consultations promote ownership
- Policy makers and managers must be fully on board: priority target as the major decision makers. ***The Institutional Head MUST Champion the process***



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The Process(2)

- Learn from best practices (and failures)
- The process must be iterative: the only constant is the university vision
- **Makerere:**
 - E-readiness/ needs; Policy and Master Plan
 - The first workshops addressed top University management and Council - the top policy organ, + Unit Academic and Administrative managers
 - Best Practice study visits to Universities in Africa and Europe with clear mission objectives



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The process (3): The Policy and Master Plan: critical content

- Anticipated ICT services of strategic relevance
- Actions to be taken to implement the services
- Principles of an enterprise-wide ICT Infrastructure
- Major Characteristics of the ICT Management Environment
- Sustainability issues
- Implementation Master Plan: costs and time line



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The process (4): Makerere University ICT Policy and Master Plan

- Look at:
- <http://www.makerere.ac.ug/makict/documents/policydoc/index.htm>
 - The document may be downloaded for non-profit academic purposes, subject to the acknowledgement of Makerere University



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Information Resource Management

- A systematic approach to IRM needed because of the high risks and potentially high costs inherent in an ICT environment
- Use a high level policy organ, chaired by the Institution Head, that manages the policy and master plan; and a *high level* user forum, the Architecture Working Group (AWG) to drive the information architecture:
- **Makerere: Council ICT Comm; Directorate for ICT support; and AWG set up but has not performed (was not high level)**



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Sustainability

- Addressing sustainability as an integral part of the process is critical.
- Requires user ownership and appreciation to avoid tensions, resentment, and failure
- Development partners assist with capital acquisitions, *not recurrent costs: Do not bite more than you can chew!*
- **Makerere: Cost recovery agreed by forum of Heads of Academic and Admin units. Each unit contributes; long term – about \$20 per student per year.**



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Creating an ICT Literate campus

- **Critical to Successful Implementation: The human resource is the most critical component of any information system**
- (Will be addressed by Director ICS as part of his presentation)



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Part 5: Working Together

Ubuntu or Obuntu – I am because we are

- Need and benefits of collaboration
- Necessary actions



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Need and Benefits of Collaboration (1)

- Expertise scarcity – can share expertise through online network management tools
- Expertise cost – ICT expertise is very expensive and highly mobile the world over. By sharing expertise, the cost to each institution is minimised
- High cost of information systems and the related database management platforms – can pool resources and share costs for common software and platforms



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Need and Benefits of Collaboration (2)

- Creating stronger negotiating positions with regulators and government on issues related to ICT, for example in addressing the current high cost of bandwidth and regulatory restrictions
- Creating stronger negotiating positions with suppliers of hardware, software, online resources, and bandwidth, and benefiting from economies of scale



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Need and Benefits of Collaboration (3)

- Increasing research and academic collaboration among Uganda Universities
- Sharing the academic human resource – through the establishment of common courses that can be delivered over e-learning platforms
- Enabling easy portability of students and their records from institution to institution
- Strengthening the position of universities in negotiating on issues of common benefit with development partners (e.g. ICT Projects!)



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Necessary Actions (1)

- Formalisation of collaboration on all ICT issues as one of the objectives of the association of Vice Chancellors and other IHLs with institutional support from UNCHE
- Adapting common major ICT policies (Applications, Services, Information Systems, Database platforms, Network Management, Infrastructure, etc) + common information policies



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Necessary Actions (2)

- Adapting uniform systems (programme and curriculum structure, library services, finance management, human resource management, etc) to enable use of the same information system software
- Development of a coordinated project for a Uganda Universities Network (UniNet) and selling it to development partners
- Adoption of criteria by UNCHE that require some minimum ICT readiness in all IHLs



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Conclusion

“I pointed you to the stars, and all you saw was the tip of my finger” – African saying

- **THANK YOU!**



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