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1. Introduction

Uganda Communications Commission (UCC), in 2010 established an annual initiative “The ACIA AWARDS” that fosters innovation through the recognition and reward of outstanding ICT innovations. The Commission is committed to continuous improvements, redesigns and fine tuning of the Initiative to having more ICT innovations recognized and awarded in different ways.

In order to enable UCC to better plan and execute future ACIA Initiatives, the Strategy and Research (S&R) Division conducted a post evaluation of ACIA 2016. Specifically, the evaluation aimed to:

1. Determine the demographics of the ACIA Participants
2. Assess the effectiveness of the Application and judging process from stakeholders’ perspective
3. Assess the respondents’ opinions on whether the acia Initiative is successful and whether the sponsored innovations are still ongoing
4. Identify the current challenges the ACIA stakeholders are facing.
5. Identify and prioritize the areas for improvement of future ACIA initiatives.
2. Methodology

A mixed-methodological survey design was adopted for the 2016 Post ACIA assessment survey, in which the primary instrument of data collection was an online structured questionnaire, designed to offer direct information on the evaluation objectives. The online survey monkey tool was chosen to collect data for this study because it met the needs of the researchers, in addition to being economical and easy to use.

All ACIA participants from 2012 to 2016 were given an equal opportunity to participate in the survey, through a secure online link sent to all of them. The eligibility period was twelve (12) working days for participants to provide input. The data collection phase ended on Saturday, August 13, 2016. Responses were sent to the researchers via the Survey Monkey tool in aggregate and anonymous form and were downloaded into the Excel and SPSS programs for analysis.
3. Survey Findings

3.1 Introduction
This section provides the detailed findings of the survey. Specifically, it describes the demographic characteristics of the respondents, Perception on the application and Judging process, assesses the communication channels and details the challenges and recommendations.

3.2 Respondents’ Demographic Characteristics
In the survey, we explored four respondents demographics that is respondents gender, submission of an entry, the categories if any that they have applied to, as well as what best described the respondents in their engagement/ participation in the ACIA challenges they have participated in.

As reflected in figure 1, there were 159 respondents of which 23.3% (37) were female while 76.7 % (122) were male. Thus the study registered more men than women.

Figure 1: Percentage distribution of respondents by gender.

Source: UCC Post ACIA Survey Data, 2016
A look at the distribution of respondents by their participation categories reveals more organization applicants (39.6%, N=159), followed by the individual applicants (34.6%, N=159) and other Invited guests at 11.9%. Of the 159 respondents, 66.7% have made at least an entry to the ACIA challenge over the years while, 33.3% hadn’t. On the other hand, the ACIA Judges and the organizing committee members registered the lowest responses at 6.9% and 3.8% as reflected in figure 2.

**Figure 2: Percentage distribution of respondents by participation category.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other Invited Guest</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACIA Service Provider</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational Applicant</td>
<td>39.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Applicant</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judge</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acia Organising Committee Member</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: UCC Post ACIA Survey Data, 2016*

Of the 66.7%, N=100 who have made at least an entry to the ACIA challenge over the years, the top three categories under which they had made entries were ICT for Development (36%), Digital Content (17%) and Uganda ICT Visionaries Category (16%). The ICT Explorers Category and Service Excellence registered the lowest respondents at 1% and 5% respectively as detailed in figure 3.
Figure 3: Percentage Category distributions for which respondents have made entries.

Source: UCC Post ACIA Survey Data, 2016

3.3 Other Assessed Parameters
In the survey we assessed the different ACIA parameters which among others include; the application and judging process from the respondents perspective with specific focus on clarity of the application and Judging, timeliness of the ACIA award notification, the effectiveness of the Communication channels used, challenges met as well as possible recommendations from the respondents.

3.3.1 Clarity of the Application and Judging Processes
The respondents who have made atleast an entry to the ACIA challenge were asked their perception about the clarity of the Application process and figure 4, below depicts their responses.

Figure 4: Respondent’s perception on the clarity of the application process.

Source: UCC Post ACIA Survey Data, 2016
Overall, 85.9%, N=99 of the respondents who have made entries to the ACIA challenge think the application process is generally clear, of which 40.4% believe the process is clear, 25.3% perceiving it’s very clear while about 20.2% perceiving it as somewhat clear. Furthermore, of the 85.9% who generally perceived the application process as clear.

Turning to the Judging Process, of the 7 judges who participated in the survey, 86% that is 6 of the 7 Judges believe the judging process is clear. Only 14% that is 1 out of the 7 judges perceived the judging process as somewhat unclear. As shown in figure 5.

**Figure 5: Judge’s perception on the clarity of the Judging process.**

![Pie chart showing judge's perception on the clarity of the Judging process.]

Source: UCC Post ACIA Survey Data, 2016

Regarding the timeliness of the ACIA awards notification process, Overall, 81.8%, N=99 ranked the timeliness of the awards notification process as timely while only 18.2% ranked it as not timely.

### 3.3.2 Communication Channels through which respondents knew about ACIA

The respondents were asked “How did you hear about the ACIA awards?” and figure 6 below details their responses.
Figure 6: How the respondents got to know about ACIA

Source: UCC Post ACIA Survey Data, 2016

From figure 6, Majority of the respondents 44%, N=159 who participated in the Survey had received information about ACIA via the UCC website, followed by 34% on the social media platforms. Surprisingly, Only 13% of the respondents came to know about ACIA via the radio adverts.

TV adverts, newspaper and UCC employees registered 21%, 15% and 17% respectively. It’s thus evident that the online advertisement channels seem to be more effective in reaching out to the ACIA target group than the other media advertising platforms.

3.3.3 Perception on the success of the ACIA Awards

Respondent’s opinions on whether they thought the ACIA Awards have been successful in encouraging individuals, academia, industry, government agencies and other entities to harness ICTs in creating solutions to Uganda’s development challenge was examined. As seen
in figure 7, 77.78%, N=159 responded in affirmative while 22.22% disagreed.

**Figure 7: Respondent’s opinions on whether the ACIA Awards have been successful**

In your opinion, do you think the acia Awards have been successful in encouraging individuals, academia, industry, government agencies and other entities to harness ICTs in creating solutions to Uganda’s development challenges?

Source: UCC Post ACIA Survey Data, 2016

In addition, respondents were asked whether they would recommend the ACIA Awards Initiative to other individuals or organizations. An overwhelming majority 90.82%, N=159 would recommend ACIA Awards.

### 3.3.4 Perception on suitability of Prizes and supported innovations continuity.

In this section we examine the winners’ project continuity and utilization of the seed funding. First, we ask respondents whether they have been among the winners/runner up under any ACIA category and below are their responses.
Figure 8: Showing whether Respondent’s have been among winners/runner-up

Source: UCC Post ACIA Survey Data, 2016

From figure 8, 36.4%, N=99 of the respondents had been either winners or runner-ups’ while majority 63.6% N=99 were not. Of the 36.4% who were winners, 73.0% described their Prizes as either good (56.8%) or Very good (16.2%), 18.9% were indifferent, while a relatively low number 8.1%, N=99 that is about 1 in every 10 described their prizes as either Bad or Very bad.

We also asked the respondents whether they were among the winners over the years. 36.4%, N=159 had emerged either runner up/winners. Thus we examined the innovation continuity of these ideas by asking the winners how long they had continued to advance their ideas after getting the UCC support.

As can be seen in figure 9, 75.7% of the innovation projects have continued to scale up to date while 24.3% have collapsed as detailed below;
75.7% of innovation projects have continued to scale up to date.

Source: UCC Post ACIA Survey Data, 2016

3.3.5 What Participants like about ACIA Initiative.

In the survey, we investigated what participants liked most about the ACIA initiative based on their experience. In the fourth quartile (Q4), respondents reported transparency in Judging process, (18.9%, N=159), encouraging innovation in Uganda (17.3%, N=159) and Regional Competition (12.8%, N=159).

In the third quartile (Q3), respondents reported (networking opportunities, exhibitions, and the team work among the organizers. Whereas in the first quartile (Q1), respondents reported (direct support to innovators, Awards Session/Galla) as detailed in figure 10 below;
Figure 10: Showing what respondents like about the entire ACIA Initiative.

![Bar chart showing responses](chart10)

**Source:** UCC Post ACIA Survey Data, 2016

Having examined what the respondents like about the ACIA initiative, we further asked respondents about the stages of the ACIA Awards Initiative where they experienced challenges and this is as detailed in figure 11 below.

**Figure 11: Frequency of Challenges in the Acia Initiative process**

![Bar chart showing challenges](chart11)

**Source:** UCC Post ACIA Survey Data, 2016
3.3.6 Suggestions for Improvement

In the survey, Respondents were asked to suggest areas that they thought needed improvement in the ACIA Initiative. The analysis of their responses is profiled in figure 12 below.

Figure 12: Themed ACIA Initiative areas for improvement as perceived by respondents.

From figure 12, Introduction of pre and post ACIA training or mentoring program toppled (25%) on the respondent’s area that respondents want to see improved. This was followed by the need to give feedback/Communication to all applicants (20%) at every stage of the ACIA awards process. This was followed by the need to for more emphasis on publicity, holding regional pre competition seminars, as well as making the pitching events open to the public at 12%, 11% and 10% respectively.
4. Conclusion

Conclusively the report gives useful insights about the ACIA Initiative participants since 2012. Overall, most of the participants perceive the ACIA as a successful initiative that encourages the creativity and ICT innovativeness in Uganda.

The respondents propose various areas of improvement, key among others is the need for pre and post acia training and mentorship programs.
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