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Anne: Tell me about your experience with the LLL?

Perez: Since we started with the LLL in July we have managed to share information with our friends. We download information from the internet and it helped us in starting a few things that we thought we could not start. We have got an information centre in Bwama but it is not very active. And you find that when you come from Bwama to come to Mpigi town there is a distance of more than forty kilometres. Now apart from Bwama the rest of the district does not have any internet cafe service and also the cafe in Bwama is not very active perhaps because of the limited strength of the system, so if I want to access the internet I have to travel all the way to Kampala. By the time I reach Kampala it is already late in the evening and the whole place is congested. Then that one coupled with the slow speed of the system you find that if you are to post some meaningful information you need to spend not less than two hours and that is unacceptable to most of the people who want this service because as soon as they see I have spent a lot of time there they will begin quarrelling! So what we thought of was maybe to have one person who can always be using the internet from somewhere you can be surfing all the time. But we also found it a little bit difficult because of machines being off or difficulties with electricity etc. Then we thought that as we in the Mpigi town have the district headquarters nearby and we have a number of government employees in the town, we could find ways and means of opening up a cafe that belongs to the association. Maybe it could do some good business for the association because being the fact that we have no other service provider within the town and the people are developing a great liking for accessing the internet services. We have a photocopier which is one of the most modern in the town and people are leaving the old fashioned ones to come to ours because of the good work it does.

Anne: You have some comments on the use of the tools?

Perez: Yes as I have already indicated because we do not have the service nearby I don't feel confident to use the internet so that lack of frequent practice means that at times I forget some of the steps and if I have to move a long distance and I find it difficult at times to carry the file all the time.

Anne: What is the topic that you feel that you have benefited from?

Perez: Initially the question that I posted was how do we increase farmers' access to the markets because basically within Mpigi we are blessed to have farmers growing for the local market and for the international markets, we have a good number of exporters so we have received some good information about how we can access the international market and how we can prepare for the local market. Recently we have got information on organic vegetables production and I managed to develop a concept out of the information I got on organic vegetables production which was submitted to Danida. Yesterday they accepted the concept and told me to write a proposal, so maybe such kind of information has benefited us a lot.

The other topic was how do we improve our access to the internet? So with one of my colleagues who has some personal equipment and me I am coordinating a group at the district level and two colleague who are working at the sub county level, so with the organisation we have been able to show the importance of the LLL to the farmers and they have tried to mobilize to see if we can get the internet service to Bwama using this gentleman's equipment, but still because of the signals for Bwama for the internet they are very very weak so at times when I visited him when they tested if they could access the internet but they had problems so they wanted to install a booster so it was a little more expensive. So when they have some more subscribing maybe it will be cost effective. But there is a problem generally when you go longer distances from Kampala. But I think within Mpigi town itself the only service is at the bank and that is possible so I think it will be possible from my offices.

¹ Interviewed by Anne Dennig on October 21 2004 at LLL Assessment Workshop in Kakamega, Kenya after three months of using the LLL service.