

# Uchaguzi Monitoring and Evaluation Research Summary Report

March 18, 2013

Rhoda Omenya and Angela Crandall



## Uchaguzi Statistics:

### Number of active teams:

11 (SMS, Media Monitoring, Geolocation, Translation, Reports, Verification, Analysis & Research, QA, Tech and Communications, Ushahidi internal team chat)

### Number of Training sessions with Field Partners:

50+ meetings between January 4 and March 4<sup>th</sup> (There were many in 2012 too).

### Number of Community Working Group and Digital training team meet-ups<sup>1</sup>:14 (There were also some side group team sessions (e.g. Analysis)

### Number of people trained for digital teams from February 11 - Sunday, March 3, 2013: Over 239 trained

### Number of active volunteers (March 3 - 6<sup>th</sup>): 218+

### Number of days of live monitoring: March 1<sup>st</sup> to March 7<sup>th</sup> 2013

**Volunteers from:** Kenya, Cameroon, Libya, Botswana, Nigeria, Ireland, UK, Slovenia, US, Canada, Brazil, New Zealand, Spain, South Korea, Australian, United Kingdom

As of *March 18th*, the Uchaguzi platform had **2,699 verified** reports, and **4,964 total** reports.

---

<sup>1</sup><http://www.meetup.com/Ushahidi-Community/>



## Background on Kenyan Elections

Elections in Kenya have been held every five years since 1962. In 1992, Kenya ceased to be a one party state when parliament revoked the law and changed it into a multi-party democracy. Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi, who was already president, won the first multi-party<sup>2</sup> election and the second in 1997 until 2002 when the opposition came together under one party - NARC (National Rainbow Coalition). NARC constituted the National Alliance Party of Kenya (NPK) and the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and other smaller parties and together they defeated KANU (Kenya African National Union) - that had ruled Kenya since independence for nearly 40 years - in a landslide. Mwai Kibaki, then under NARC, became the third president of Kenya defeating KANU's candidate, Uhuru Kenyatta.

However NARC was troubled by in-fighting that led to one half of the coalition, LDP, being thrown out of the government due to disagreement over the 2005 referendum where LDP did not support the proposed constitution. The 'rebel' LDP then formed the Orange Democratic Movement. 'Orange' arose out of one of the symbols used in the referendum and it was headed by Uhuru Kenyatta (KANU) and Raila Odinga (LDP). Later on, ODM split with Uhuru Kenyatta backing President Kibaki's re-election, Kalonzo Musyoka forming ODM-Kenya and the opposing ODM remained with Raila Odinga, William Ruto, Musalia Mudavadi and others.

In the December 2007 elections, the flag bearer of ODM, Raila Odinga faced off with President Kibaki. President Kibaki won the election under circumstances that observers termed 'questionable' as they were conducted in a manner that indicated rigging. On the swearing-in of President Kibaki, tribal civil unrest broke out resulting in the infamous 2007-2008 'Post Election Violence' mainly between the Kikuyu and Kalenjin. Eventually, in late February 2008, a power-sharing agreement was reached in which Kibaki would remain President and Odinga would gain the new post of Prime Minister. A coalition government, with an equal number of ministers for the PNU and the ODM, was named in April 2008.<sup>3</sup>

Due to the bungled 2007 elections, a new independent regulatory body, the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) was founded in 2011 under the new constitution replacing the defunct Electoral Commission of Kenya. This new constitution, enacted in 2010, also gave rise to a devolved system of government where 47 counties were formed each with their own government; to include new posts of governor, senator, member of national assembly, women's representative and county assembly representative.

Leading up to the 2013 elections, ODM allied itself with Wiper Democratic, formed by Kalonzo Musyoka into the Coalition for Reforms and Democracy (CORD) together with Ford-Kenya and other parties. The other major parties

---

<sup>2</sup><http://www.kenya-information-guide.com/kenya-history.html>

<sup>3</sup><http://info.mzalendo.com/info/political-parties>



were the Jubilee Alliance that is a coalition between The National Alliance (TNA - headed by Uhuru Kenyatta), URP (United Republican Party - headed by William Ruto), Eagle Alliance, formed by KNC (Kenya National Congress headed by Peter Kenneth and POA (Party of Action - headed by Raphael Tuju) and Amani Coalition, formed by UDF (United Democratic Forum Party - headed by Musalia Mudavadi), New Ford Kenya and KANU.<sup>4</sup>

## Ushahidi

The post election violence of 2007 - 2008 resulted in the development of Ushahidi<sup>5</sup>, a technology platform that was created to map incidents of violence occurring in the country, as shared by citizens via the web and text. The name itself, *Ushahidi* (Swahili for testimony) illustrates the core role of citizens on the platform. Citizens give 'testimony', informing others on the happenings on the ground, alerting authorities, and enabling faster response. Since 2008, Ushahidi has grown from an ad-hoc volunteer initiative into a not-for-profit tech organization that specializes in developing free and open source software for information collection, visualization and interactive mapping. The organization builds tools for democratizing information, increasing transparency and lowering the barriers for individuals to share their stories. Ushahidi is the flagship tool; SwiftRiver - an open source platform that aims to democratize access to tools for filtering and making sense of real-time information; and Crowdmap, the online hosted version of Ushahidi.

Ushahidi<sup>6</sup> uses a combination of citizen journalism, social activism and geospatial information towards increasing accountability. The software has been used around the world for various deployments from the tracking of anti-immigrant violence in South Africa in May 2008, mapping of needs after the Haiti earthquake in 2010, and even by Al Jazeera to collect eyewitness reports during the 2008-2009 Gaza war. Since its launch, it has been used over 40,000 times in 159 countries, translated into 30 languages giving the Ushahidi platform a global reach.

---

<sup>4</sup><http://www.dw.de/kenyas-latest-political-alliance/a-16499784>

<sup>5</sup><http://ushahidi.com>

<sup>6</sup><http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ushahidi>



# Uchaguzi

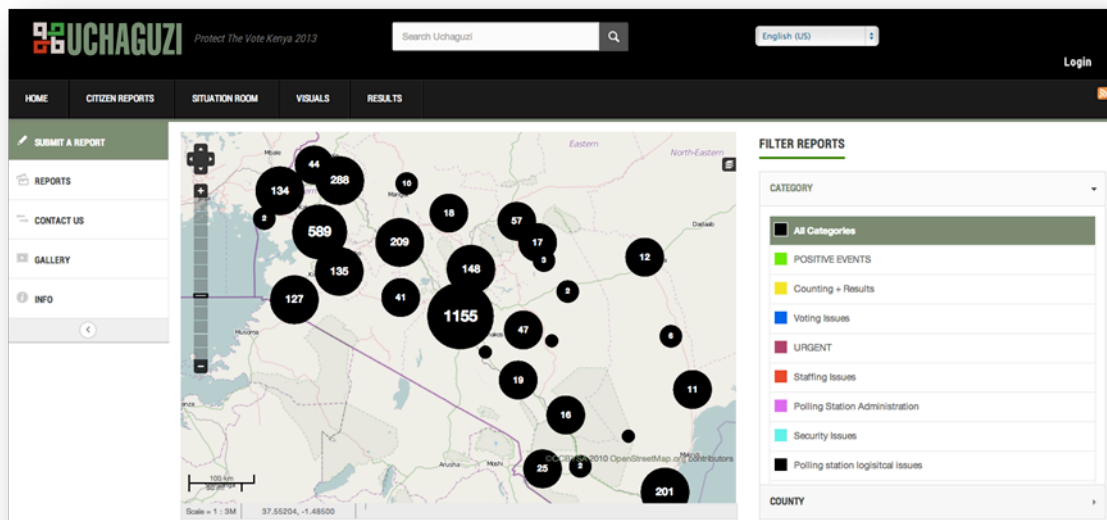


Figure 1. The Uchaguzi web platform

Ushahidi has come full circle since the 2007 elections with its *Uchaguzi* (Swahili for elections) initiative to monitor elections. Uchaguzi was first used to monitor the 2010 referendum in Kenya, and then used in Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambian elections, among others. This year, Ushahidi and its partners launched Uchaguzi Kenya 2013. Uchaguzi KE 2013's aim was to help Kenya have a free, fair, peaceful, and credible general election. Uchaguzi's strategy for this is to contribute to stability in Kenya by increasing transparency and accountability through active citizen participation in the electoral cycle. This strategy is implemented through building a broad network of civil society around Uchaguzi as the national citizen-centered electoral observation platform that responds to citizen observations. Uchaguzi is a joint initiative between Ushahidi, Constitution & Reform Education Consortium (CRECO), and Hivos Foundation with support from Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).<sup>7</sup>

According to Daudi Were, the Uchaguzi Kenya 2013 project lead, the difference between Uchaguzi and Ushahidi is that Uchaguzi has built partnerships in advance - well ahead of the crisis - and that Uchaguzi has been developed to avert the crisis, whereas in 2008, Ushahidi began in the middle of a crisis and was basically chasing after the crisis. The Uchaguzi platform is also quite different in that it is a much more enhanced and upgraded version of Ushahidi. There has also been improvement around collaboration on the back-end. This is why the Uchaguzi platform is now able to accommodate eight digital teams, each with different workflows to deal with the data, but all geared towards mapping and responding to the citizens.

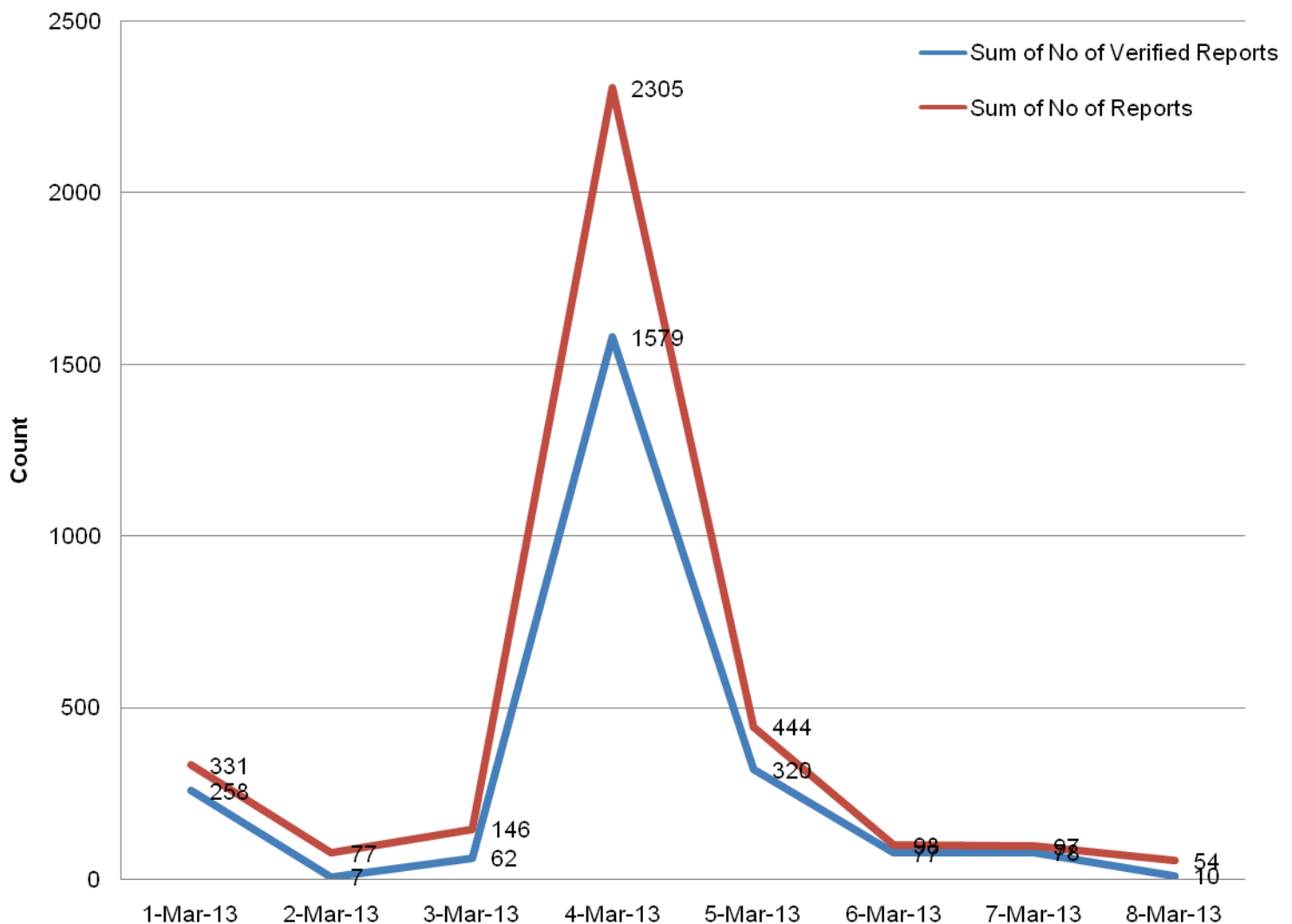
<sup>7</sup><https://uchaguzi.co.ke/info/index/5>



Uchaguzi is coordinated through an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) platform, which enables Kenyans to keep an eye on the vote and provides avenues through which they can report any incidences significant to the election, with any technology available to them. For the purposes of Uchaguzi, the electoral process is perceived as a permanent and recurrent cycle, in which every stage, not just the Election Day, counts. Uchaguzi facilitates unprecedented collaboration between *wananchi* (Swahili for citizens), election observers, humanitarian response agencies, civil society, community-based organizations, and law enforcement agencies to monitor elections in near-real time.

## Uchaguzi KE 2013 Activity

Count of Reports Received and Verified during Uchaguzi KE 2013





## The Platform - Processes and Challenges

The process workflow on the platform is modeled from the Standby Task Force,<sup>8</sup> which is a skilled volunteer community of personnel who provide dedicated crowdsourcing, mapping, data scrambling and technology testing support to organizations in the humanitarian, human rights, election monitoring and media space.



Citizens sent information to the platform through the Short Message Service (SMS) short-code 3002, smart phone applications for iOS and Android, email,

<sup>8</sup><http://blog.standbytaskforce.com/>

the web form on Uchaguzi.co.ke and through social media feeds (@Uchaguzi and #Uchaguzi). There were two digital teams on the first tier of receiving reports coming into the platform - the media monitoring team and SMS team. The **media monitoring team**<sup>9</sup> identified citizen social media feeds, monitored them and extracted useful and actionable information to pass to the GPS and translation team (if need be).

Challenges faced by the media monitoring team were around the quickly changing dynamics online, where some hashtags were hard to follow due to the magnitude of the stream flow (e.g. #KenyaDecides) and new hashtags continually emerged necessitating constant search for new social feeds.

The media monitoring team noted the 'online mass action' of #KOT (Kenyans on Twitter) who spoke out against foreign journalists who had sensationalized reports about Kenya as well as the incredible number of Kenyans on social media who continually promoted peace and patience during the tense election period.

The second team that received incoming information was the **SMS team**<sup>10</sup> through the short-code 3002. The team received SMSs from CRECO members, citizens, and other CSOs (Civil Society Organizations) and created reports from those relating to the Uchaguzi categories.<sup>11</sup> Within this team, there was another small team called the Emergency team, composed of a few people, who handled SMSs classified as URGENT. Challenges faced by the SMS team largely revolved around the manual process and the fact that many duplicate reports were created (due to the manual process).

**Geo-location team**<sup>12</sup> was next in line to receive the reports created by the SMS and media monitoring teams and locate the grid coordinates for a given report to plot that location on the report map. The geo-location team also collected and kept track of all available maps of the area where emergencies were taking place. It was therefore vital for the team members to be proficient in or familiar with at least some of Open StreetMap, Google Earth, ArcGIS, QuantumGIS, Wikimapia, creation of KML files and map databases. The challenge faced by Geo-location was that there were many reports that were impossible to geo-locate, as the information in the SMS was not geographically located.

**The translation team**<sup>13</sup> was responsible for translating reports from any local language into English with help from The Translators Without Borders.<sup>14</sup> The major challenge faced was that some team members did not understand the instruction on where to write the translation and therefore wrote it in the

---

<sup>9</sup><https://wiki.ushahidi.com/display/WIKI/Uchaguzi+Media+Monitoring+Team>

<sup>10</sup><https://wiki.ushahidi.com/display/WIKI/Uchaguzi+SMS+Team>

<sup>11</sup><https://wiki.ushahidi.com/display/WIKI/Uchaguzi+Categories>

<sup>12</sup><https://wiki.ushahidi.com/display/WIKI/Uchaguzi+Geolocation+Team>

<sup>13</sup><https://wiki.ushahidi.com/display/WIKI/Uchaguzi+Translation+Teams>

<sup>14</sup><http://translatorswithoutborders.org/>





verification box (the latter to be done by the verification team) thus causing some confusion.

The third tier of volunteers was the reports and verification team that approved and verified the reports respectively. The **reports team**<sup>15</sup> determined which reports were fit to be mapped, thereby acting as the first quality control step in the workflow process by evaluating all information submitted in report form, and by working closely with the Media Monitoring, Geo-Location and Translation Teams. This team confirmed that the report has been translated (if necessary), geo-located, and that there were no duplicate reports. The major challenge faced by the reports team was the large number of messages received which at times overwhelmed the number of volunteers available at one given time.

The **verification team**<sup>16</sup> worked with the Media Monitoring and SMS Teams to assess reports; collaborating with Reports and Emergency Desk teams for any urgent or critical items; working with Uchaguzi partners to assess veracity of information in the reports and using the Internet and social media to determine the reliability of sources (triangulate) and then escalating them to the response partners, i.e. IEBC<sup>17</sup> and the NCS. Thus, it was vital for the verification members to have previous experience in crisis mapping and be very detail-oriented. They prioritized reports that had been categorized as “security issues”, “dangerous speech” and “police actions”. The challenges encountered were network problems and subsequent difficulty reaching the personnel on the ground.

There were two teams that played support roles - the technology team and the analysis and research team. The **technology team**<sup>18</sup> was in charge of maintenance of the <http://uchaguzi.co.ke> for the duration of the election-monitoring period. The greatest achievement for the tech team was that the site worked and the servers did not crash. They were also flexible by being able to build things on the fly and thus respond quickly to arising requests, e.g. adding new links and tabs, moving the research and analysis team to a mirror site when they were unable to download reports from the original site due to the load. One of the technology challenges faced related to the alert system, which was sending out multiple similar alerts. Eventually, the alert system had to be shut down, effectively closing one of the feedback loops for communication with citizens.

The second support team was the **analysis and research team**<sup>19</sup> in charge of analyzing information received on the platform, and providing situation room reports in the form of data visualizations. The team was to release reports twice daily that were an aggregation of the reports received depicting trends

<sup>15</sup><https://wiki.ushahidi.com/display/WIKI/Uchaguzi+Reports+Team>

<sup>16</sup><https://wiki.ushahidi.com/display/WIKI/Uchaguzi+Verification+Team>

<sup>17</sup><http://www.iebc.or.ke/>

<sup>18</sup><https://wiki.ushahidi.com/display/WIKI/Uchaguzi+Technology+Team>

<sup>19</sup><https://wiki.ushahidi.com/display/WIKI/Uchaguzi+Analysis+and+Research+Team>



and collated statistics. The largest challenge for the analysis team was the “dirty” raw data that had not been properly coded or cleaned. This made analysis on a tight timeline difficult since some reports had not been categorized well and therefore the data team had to manually check for the content and categorize them before analyzing.

In our consequent full report, to be released in June 2013, we shall give an in-depth study into the above processes.



## Conclusion

In order to get citizens (the “crowd”) involved, they need to know about the platform. Therefore **publicity** about the platform must be done well in advance and repeatedly so citizens are constantly reminded about the platform and its purpose. For Uchaguzi, this was done through mass media, i.e. having announcements made on community radio stations, TV interviews and roadshows around the country. Additionally, fliers, t-shirts and posters were printed and distributed around the country. Citizens should also begin to **engage with the platform** prior to the elections in order to build a relationship with it and create an avenue of trust where they are able to send reports freely.

A crowdsourcing platform needs **volunteers** who are able to give their time and work on the reports coming to the platform. For the volunteers to be able to efficiently work on the reports coming into the platform, they have to be trained well. Therefore, **recruitment strategies** have to be in place and the volunteers need to be recruited in ample time prior to the actual deployment in order to undergo multiple **trainings** to familiarize with the processes and form relationships with other volunteers. For Uchaguzi, the call was made to the Kenyan community and those in the diaspora to be part of the deployment and they were then put through trainings that ran from February 11th to March 3rd.

Response partners must be able to receive actionable information in a timely manner and act on them instantaneously. Consequently getting the support of pertinent **partners** is paramount, as they not only form part of the response, but also verification. For Uchaguzi, CRECO (Constitution and Reform Education Consortium), a network of civil society organizations that belong to the broad human rights, governance and democracy category of NGOs, joined as the partner to handle verification of reports through members distributed throughout the 47 counties. For response, the National Steering Committee for Peace and Security (NSC) acted as the link to law enforcement agencies and government bodies such as IEBC. In so doing, Uchaguzi was able to have a feedback loop from citizens to the platform to verifiers to the response team and back to the citizens. Other partners that were part of this deployment were CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency) who funded the deployment and HIVOS - the Dutch organization for development that both administered the funds and were part of implementing the deployment under their larger project, ICT Election Watch, a 3-year project running from March 2010 to April 2013.

Owing to the complexity of the facets involved in such a deployment like Uchaguzi, it is vital that all processes are **documented** to help inform future deployments and improve on the same. Uchaguzi created an online public wiki that detailing the partners involved, digital teams and their processes, the background and origin of Uchaguzi and other necessary information. In addition, iHub Research is conducting a monitoring and evaluation of the Uchaguzi platform and processes.

Technology and civil society are two communities working towards the same goal: empowering citizen for improved welfare. Civil society enlightens citizen on their rights and responsibilities while the technology community develops tools to ease daily life processes. Bringing the two together for an election-monitoring project amplified citizens'voices, enabling the world to gauge the Kenyan election atmosphere and mood of the nation.

When citizens see response taken on account of their efforts, they will learn to speak out. Seeing the feedback loop builds their confidence in their nation and its systems of operations, whether government or non-government and supports the notion that citizens should participate in governance of their country.

The alliance of Uchaguzi, a technology company, and civil society, through CRECO, gave citizens reason to speak out and engage in election matters that affected them. This is an example of a technology-enhanced feedback loop between citizens and government/civil society. Important to note, the process is not without challenges, some mentioned above. However, embracing the process of creating these relationships will inevitably lead to improving the relationship between citizens, government, and civil society. This brief is a first look at the Uchaguzi KE 2013 process. In June 2013, we will be publishing an in-depth report detailing the successes and challenges of the platform, especially around the key areas of technology, partnerships, publicity and outreach, and personnel.