Public Access to Health Information
Infectious Diseases
(Tuberculosis, Malaria and others)
Information and Infectious Diseases

• Whilst most infectious diseases are curable, the best alternative is prevention.
• This depends on:
  – Good information on transmission
  – Advice about preventive measures, and
  – Information on treatment.
Information on transmission

• Although Malaria, Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS are the main killers, there are many other such as: cholera, typhoid, typhus, meningitis, STIs, and influenza.

• Transmission can be through contact with infected people and animals, contaminated water, parasites such as ticks and mosquitoes.

• Traditional medicine is notoriously inaccurate on this (blaming the wrong sort of mangoes for malaria for instance).
Tuberculosis (TB)

• The important information is that although it is infectious and contagious, there can be a long incubation period before symptoms occur.
• Avoiding contact with body fluids from infected people can prevent transmission
• Carriers of the infection can be tracked and identified
• Immunisation with BCG vaccine can prevent the worst forms of the disease (it is 80% effective for 10 years).
Transmission of TB
Malaria

- Malaria is passed on by the Anopheles Mosquito
- Preventive health campaigns can
  - Disinfect the mosquito habitat with larvicides
  - Drain and fill puddles
  - Screen blood products
- Individuals can
  - Use mosquito nets
  - Use insect repellents and insecticides
  - Take prophylaxis (quinine related drugs)
A library Infectious Diseases Programme

• In addition to stocking relevant information materials, the library can:
  – Partner in information campaigns on particular conditions
  – Display and help users to interpret posters
  – Organise learning groups at which relevant health messages can be transmitted.