



Welcome to the second edition of the Creating Local Connections West Africa Sierra Leone (CLCWA-SL) Bi-monthly Newsletter.

CLCWA-SL...changing lives!

We would like to appeal to our fellow Sierra Leonean youths to do their best in contributing information about their organization's activities and programmes.. You don't have to worry about cost... CLCWA-SL is offering you this unique opportunity FREE of Charge!!!

The CLWA-SL project was stalled due to the elections wherein it was considered that a lot of youths and would be participants in events were engaged in the electioneering process either as monitors or as party agents, campaigners etc. it was good that the youths, realizing their role in post war reconstruction and democracy were actively involved in the democratic process. For this we congratulate the youths and look forward to their usual cooperation once the project activities recommence.

As at present, CLCWA-SL have organized two technical training sessions for both urban and rural youths on acquiring basic tips in the use of ICTs. Participants were able to acquire the basic skills in the use of computers, digital camera and how to access the internet. The hands on training also provided the opportunity for youths to be able to use software programmes like Microsoft Word, Microsoft excel and Micro soft Publisher.

Speaking to the News letter team after one of the training sessions, Alhaji Kamara of Koya Youth Development Movement expressed sincere appreciation that the CLCWA-SL project aims at reawakening the consciousness of the Sierra Leone youth over a new horizon, noting that ICTs have the potential of transforming the outlook of the Sierra Leone youth and at the same time providing a limitless opportunities for socio economic recovery and development after long years of a brutal and senseless war.

Creating Local Connections West Africa (CLCWA) aims to realize the potential of youth and engage them as development actors in the improvement of their communities, countries, and region. CLCWA will achieve this through peer-led trainings, networking, national youth meetings, media creation; award processes, research and development of strategic use of information and communications technologies (ICTs) during its implementation in: Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, and Liberia. The project's activities will run over a 12 months period (March 2007 – March 2008).

Member Story



Raffieu Gibao Mambu 19 (Student and Youth Activist), Action for Youth Development: I had always looked at the computer as a luxury and computer literacy as a matter for industrialized and highly developed countries that has no place in an upcoming democracy like my country Sierra Leone. Thank God for the CLCWA-SL this absurd thinking has been eroded from my mind. CLCWA-SL has opened the flood gates of appreciating the versatility of ICTs and it's importance to developing countries like my country which is coming out of a ten year rebel war. Just going through the basic technical trainings has whetted my appetite to delve in more into the information communications technology business. As secretary general of my organization I can now browse the internet and search for potential donors or partners, write, edit and print my documents on my own. I am indeed grateful. I wish to encourage the organizers to continue these technical trainings and to perhaps support those of us that have gone through the technical trainings to replicate such trainings in our communities and for our organization members.

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Technical Training Workshops



Opportunities

Waterloo Rural Area Development Association (WARADA) is inviting applications from suitable qualified persons to serve as Project Manager.

Requirements:

- Must be a resident of Waterloo Rural Area
- Must possess a minimum qualification
- Must possess a valid Drivers License
- Must be willing to work as a Team leader
- Must be willing to work under pressure and able to meet deadlines
- Must be between the ages 25 -35 yrs.

Application should be sent to: The Director, WARADA, c/o 14, Adams Street

- ✚ **National Youth Council will be conducting a consultative outreach with youth organizations to explain the rationale behind the twining of the Youth and Sport with Education as one Ministry.**

The President AI Sankoh Conteh has asked for the cooperation of youth leaders.

Event Report

Technical Training Workshops

For 6 full days, 24 youth from various organizations in the city Freetown converged at the iEARN Sierra Leone centre to engage in a week of ICT training workshops and dialogue.

Through intensive interaction and hands on training, the youth had to meet a course curriculum offered by Taking It Global. These courses were divided into Basic ICT, ICT and Leadership, and ICT and Entrepreneurship. The need to expand access to information technology and learning services through the creation of computer learning facilities in communities in Sierra Leone were highlighted in the discussions. The technology training at the center is a testament to the ever-growing need to prepare youth in the workforce, develop after-school enrichment, as well as youth continuing education.

The participants were also encouraged to dialogue, challenge and explore the courses offered by the young professionals in their various disciplines.

During the ICT basic training, the youth were taking through a tour of the various parts of the computers and its operating system. The Workshop Co-Facilitators Mr. Lakoh and Mr. Fredrick Conteh also encouraged the participants to understand these various parts of the computers as well as the computer operating system.

The question of the Digital Divide, showed that although that certain groups are still far less likely to have computers or online access. Lack of such access affects the ability of the youth who participated to improve their learning with educational software, to learn valuable technology skills, and to benefit from online connections to important health and civic information.

During the ICT and Leadership workshops, Sylvanus S. Murray, Andrew Greene and Mohamed Dao also highlighted the "digital divide" in our nation's schools, with children and youth attending high poverty schools less likely to have access to computers, the Internet, or high quality educational technology programs.

These trainings will assist Communities Bridge the "digital divide," reducing inequities in access to information technology and the Internet. Sylvanus noted that "ICT helps tremendously in assisting young leaders gain access to valuable resources that further helps in building youth self-esteem, capacitate the youth leaders and their respective organizations through access to resource materials such as funding possibilities, international collaboration, projects and networking, and exploring talents".

He referred to the TIG website [www.takingitglobal.org] as an indispensable source for youthful service and enterprise, a tool that can be used by every young leader or aspiring leader.

During the ICTs and Entrepreneurship workshop, the facts were clear that the young were innovative but unaware of the potentials that ICTs have in making their entrepreneurial skills reached its full potential.

Various successful ICT projects were identified online and showcased to the youth to understand the impact that ICTs can have in entrepreneurship.

Through out the training process the young people were very keen to discover skills, make connections and contribute to the dialogue.

Editorial

Sierra Leonean youths: let's emancipate ourselves from mental slavery – by Joseph Kamara

Sierra Leonean youths let us awake our senses, rise from our ignorance and change our life-styles, habits and our pattern of thinking and talking. Tolerate no superfluous talking, because there may be years of crowded passion in a word, and half a life in a sentence. There seems to be less understanding about politics and democracy and its interactions with youth development among Sierra Leoneans.

First, let us talk about politics; so it will teach our semi-literates Sierra Leoneans who think that, politicians as a bunch of individuals who talk here and there for their self fish motives.

Politics is a normal activity of men once they are organized into group, cities and nations. Originally, politics only meant life organization in a city; it was a necessity for men to unite and co-ordinate their talents to guarantee the safe guard and progress of their cities and communities. Politics guides any organization, governs its principles, method and means of action and its objectives.

Let us now talk about democracy, the youths are the architects of our present democracy, and should to teach our semi-civilize and mass illiterate people that democracy and politics is every body's business. Democracy is majority rule, but majority are not enough. We must have intelligent, enlightened, dedicated and determined political leaders. The principles of democracy is of social equality and respect for individuals within a society.

And the function of democracy therefore is to teach the people to think intensively and critically for a brighter future. But democracy with an inefficient youth population may prove the greatest menace to society. The least Sierra Leonean youth may be the man gifted with reasons and ideas. We must, however, ask ourselves of what real values are political and legal equality to a Sierra Leonean youth who has no bread to eat, no cloth to wear, no roof to shelter, no chance to earn as a democratic.

What I understand as a democratic society must provide for its citizens the political and legal treatment that preserves a person's minimum status as a member of that society, that keeps him/her from becoming frustrated, a beggar, out cast, or an outlaw and that offers him/her some protection in his/her deprivation loses and fears.

Where has that basic human right gone? Where indeed? Is this the way a responsible government and intelligent political leaders should behave? Should we as youths continue to place our future in the hands of politicians? There are still many Sierra Leonean youths who do not have jobs, no shelters, no clothes, and no bread to eat. The indiscriminate use of drugs have harmed our brothers and sisters, young and old, rich and poor, professionals and intellectuals, skilled and unskilled. A moral and intellectual paralysis has fallen upon Sierra Leoneans. For many years we have been striving for a solution to our incapability and problems facing the youths as highlighted above. In this light, the CLCWA-SL project aims at creating opportunities for youth to engage in dialogue and networking, to discuss issues pertaining to the enhancement of our welfare and to arrive at concrete resolutions that will aide the realization of our aspirations. Through

enhanced ICT for development skills youths will be able to tap the world wide resources at disposal for youth empowerment and development.

Announcements

- ✚ The CLCWA-SL project will continue its technical training workshops, open forums and national youth meetings in the coming days after a brief break due to the elections. All participants and members of the network committee should contact the National Coordinator on 232-33-423-823 or visit the office at Peacelinks, 14A Williams Street.
- ✚ The first African Youth Day will be celebrated on November 1st. the President of the National Youth Council Al Sankoh Conteh has disclosed. Arrangements are being coordinated and will be communicated to all youth groups soonest.
- ✚ Following the consultative meeting of youth leaders at the Sierra Leone Library Board on Tuesday October 23, 2007 a committee has been set up to examine the advantages of the establishment of a National Youth Commission instead of a ministry for Youth affairs. Details of the committee report shall be communicated to all groups.
- ✚ The next CLCWA-SL National Youth Awards process will be held in the last week of October 2007. Please contact the office at Peacelinks, 14A Williams Street or the National Coordinator on 033-423823.
- ✚ CLCWA-SL will be coming up with a National Youth Conference, which is an integral component of the CLCWA-SL project on the 22 to 24th November 2007. The venue will be announced later.

National Youth Awards

❖ Essay Competition

The CLCWA-SL project conducted an Essay Competition which was won by Lansana Godson. The Essay titled **“The role of information technology in the socio-economic development of a country”** was a delightful reading full of the many advantages a developing country can make use of ICTs for development. Below is extracts from the awarding winning essay:

Over the last century, since these scientists Guglielmo Marconi and Alexandra Graham Bell began the era of Modern Communications, we have seen their inventions create profound challenges in social economic and economic development. Their vision was not just about overcoming scientific hurdles, but about bringing the world together and enabling humans to overcome their handicaps. This same inspiration should touch the soul of any caring community, a state and the world at large. In addition to the basic necessities of food, clothing and shelter for caring communities, we should now include the need for “Information “. Information can be used for

- *Dispelling ignorance*
- *Empowering the oppressed*
- *Binding the global community*
- *Spreading the common ideas of peace and tolerance and growth and development*

But there still exist a gap between rich and poor and young and old when it comes to access to information, and a global effort is needed to eliminate it. For example, we must ensure that:

- *A farmer in a remote part of Africa or Asia can have instantaneous access to information on the global market, information that will help him/her to improve his/her ability to choose the crops he/she grows or to pick the day he/she takes his/her harvest to the market.*
- *The power of Information Technology can bring simple water purification techniques to villages where geriatric mortality rates are still as high as the day Marconi's first telegraph message crossed the Atlantic in 1901.*
- *Also the world of Information Technology must also involve older persons fully and without discrimination. Within this 1991, United Nations General Assembly resolution, what pertains most to this issue is the theme of "participation" which states that "Older persons should remain integrated in Society, participate actively in the formation and implementation of policies that directly affect their well-being and share their knowledge and skills with younger generation." This should be our thoughts in the "Age of Connectivity".*

❖ **Art Competition**

Title for work: Youth Empowerment for Self-reliance in the midst of Poverty

The Art competition of the CLCWA-SL project was won by Sheku Shakalearn Mansaray. The winning art work depicts a common saying; **"...don't give a man a fish, instead, teach him how to fish..."**

According to Sheku, the youths are the central nervous system in the development of any community, nation and the world. But issues like poverty, unemployment and corruption have been undermining this. Youth must be given the attention and the opportunity to be empowered. Their tremendous talent, zeal and ability to work cannot be overemphasized. Youthfulness must be usefulness. Fishing collection is one of the ways wherein young people, more so the indigenous earn their living. This is also known as subsistence economy, the youth in any shape should be a contributor to development in all spheres of life.

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