

Participant Reading Material
for
DIGITAL BRIDGE AFRICA - 2003

Conference Sponsored by:

**MIT Program on Internet & Telecom Convergence
Digital Partners**

**W.E.B. DuBois Institute for Afro-American Research,
Harvard University**





DIGITAL PARTNERS

Utilizing the Digital Economy to Empower the Poor

Social Venture Fund

Digital Partners' Social Venture Fund invites members of the Brain Trust, corporations, and angel investors to support the expansion and enhancement of IT-based, anti-poverty efforts around the world.

Goal

To provide seed capital to social entrepreneurs to leverage commercially viable information technology to impact education, healthcare, commerce, governance and communication.

Objectives

To raise \$50 Million over 5 years for the Fund from contributors in the US, India, and around the world interested in developing IT solutions that empower the poor. We are hoping to leverage 10 times this amount from foundations, development and aid agencies, local governments, etc.

Targets

| | |
|-----------|---|
| Immediate | 1 Million from contributors |
| Year One | 2-3 Million from contributors in the US and India |
| Year Two | 10 million from contributors in the US and around the world |
| Year Five | 50 million from contributors in the US and around the world |

Contributors

| | |
|------------|---|
| Patron | \$250K initial with larger contributions after the start-up period. Patrons may sit on the Social Venture Fund Board and assist in directing the operation of the Fund and the distribution of its resources. |
| Benefactor | \$50K initial with the possibility of larger contributions after the start-up period. |
| Sponsor | \$25K initial with the possibility of larger contributions after the start-up period. |
| Supporter | Smaller contributions with a willingness to become mentors to specific projects. |

Management

Digital Partners will manage the Fund. Initial financial support from donors will immediately fund the on-the-ground efforts of select NGOs. A percentage of the Fund will be utilized to offset some of the costs incurred by Digital Partners in support of these efforts.

Fund Repository

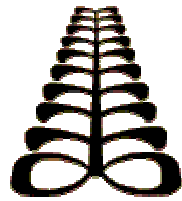
Columbia Financial Management will serve as the repository for the Social Venture Fund and provide oversight.

PROFILE

OF

Ghana New Ventures Competition, Inc.

“Building the infrastructure of entrepreneurship in Ghana.”



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What is the Ghana New Ventures Competition Inc?

The Ghana New Ventures Competition Inc. is an international not-for-profit corporation established in the United States and Ghana, with the mission of “*Building the infrastructure of entrepreneurship in Ghana*”. We place emphasis on the educational, informational and social infrastructure because these ripple on the other aspects of the Entrepreneurial challenge. We achieve this through an annual, nationwide business plan competition. The competition consist of a series of events building a process that fulfills 3 functions: i) provide training to youth and aspiring entrepreneurs in the basics of entrepreneurship and business planning (ii) create networks of role-models and business angels, and (iii) provide seed funding to the most promising new venture opportunities. These events culminate in teams of participants submitting a business plan, prepared with the help of mentors from the Ghanaian business community and judged by successful business professionals, the winning teams coming away with seed funding for their new venture. Basically this is to strengthen the growth of free enterprise and that is a major step at alleviating poverty because new enterprises and jobs are created with their ripple effects on society and the nation at large.

What is the problem?

Ghana is a potential oyster for entrepreneurs. There are vast opportunities in the agribusiness sector, spurred most recently by the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) of 2000. Secondly, Information Communication Technology (ICT) is bounding along on two major fronts – vast increased access to the Internet and an explosion in mobile telephony (“Business in Africa” reports that from 1997 to 2002, the number of mobile subscribers in Sub-Saharan Africa grew from 2 million to 47 million). A new ICT policy to be embarked upon in Ghana will open up this market even further. With an estimated \$400 million in remittance flowing back to Ghana from abroad each year, finance is converging with information technology in developing channels for these transfers to happen more safely and reliably. The twin towers of development, construction and manufacturing are also experiencing tremendous growth, Ghana being infrastructurally comparable to Israel 45 years ago. The capital market is opening up, with the Ghana Stock Exchange, previously the exclusive domain of beer and mining multinationals, adding 2 more listings designed for young high-growth companies. Moreover, there is a new, aggressively business-oriented government whose clarion call is to usher in the “golden age of business” in which the private sector is envisaged as the engine of growth of the economy.

This “golden age” will not materialize though, unless there are dramatic changes in the microeconomic fabric of business development. Entrepreneurs in Ghana currently have no framework in which to function. There is a gaping lack of training in entrepreneurship for students of tertiary institutions and innovative individuals – even Ghana’s premier business school lacks a course in this area. Secondly, the diverse and inspirational network of role-models, mentors and business angels that has always accompanied and enabled new venture growth does not exist, even though individuals exist in Ghana who are ready and willing to take on this mantle. Risk and uncertainty in business planning are also very high, there being no accurate and reliable

source of micro-economic information that entrepreneurs can use to solidify business planning. “Pie-in-the sky” cost estimates, and opaque business planning, lead to investor aversion as well as imminent and frequent implosion of many new companies. Finally, a dearth of access to risk capital, or seed funding, has been extremely crippling to aspiring entrepreneurs. Venture capital companies are virtually non-existent, and banks impose interest of up to 30% on loans.

GNVC has been established to create the environment that will allow *starting* entrepreneurs to take advantage of the opportunities that exist. This is unique and underserved niche, and distinguishes us markedly from other entrepreneurship promotion agencies that already exist in Ghana, who work with established business people. Hence we are dealing with the process at the grassroots as in moving the poor person via his or her intellectual ability to engineer an enterprise.

Accomplishments to Date

In January 2002 the founding team of GNVC organized a flagship 3-day Entrepreneurship Workshop and Executive Summary Writing Contest in Accra. Funding to do so was provided by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. This Workshop attracted over 60 applicants of which 32 were selected, over 90% of whom came from tertiary institutions. After being exposed to Panel Sessions in which members of the Ghanaian business community dwelt on various aspects of entrepreneurship, and after getting assistance from Mentors, participants came out with 10 executive summaries. These were judged by successful Ghanaian entrepreneurs, and other members of Ghana’s business elite. The two best summaries, *Strategic Accounting Solutions*, and *Fitness Factory* were awarded a total of \$1200. Photos from the Workshop are available on our Web Gallery at <http://www.gnvc.org>.

The Workshop was a success in many ways. Our high applicant rate demonstrated a huge demand for such a competition. Secondly, GNVC was able to establish relationships with over 30 individuals in upper management (Managing Directors and Chief Executive Officers) of companies, ranging from cable manufacturer Tropical Cables to law consultancies and non-banking financial institutions. It also drew participation and won support from key members of the new government, including Kwamena Bartels (Minister for Private Sector Development), Kwesi Abeasi (CEO of the Ghana Investment Promotion Council) and Dr. Paa Kwesi Nduom (Minister for Economic Planning & Regional Cooperation).

We are currently completing the second phase of our two phase business plan writing competition for this year (2002 / 2003). This years’ competition is aimed at getting the teams to write full world standard business plans and also get training that motivates them into kick-starting their business. We had 72 entries by November 29th 2002 and then we short listed to 48 who where mentored until January ending 2003. Based on the recommendation of the mentors we short-listed again to 19 and these entered our two week intensive training programme comprising of Training Clinics, Entrepreneurs Summit and Panel Sessions. In the Clinics we went through the structure of writing a full business plan and then our teams had an hour and half to

practice that on the Computers. In the Entrepreneurs Summit we brought Success Entrepreneurs who came to tell their “war stories” in an informal setting where the teams had the opportunity to ask questions and interact with them. The panel sessions on Saturdays presented an opportunity to look at the diversity of views on the panels as well as the policy direction of the government on Entrepreneurship and Enterprise engineering.

Out of the 19 teams that participated 15 of them presented to us on the 28th of February 2003 full Business Plans which are currently being judged both locally and in the United States. The scores of both judging would aggregated to get the best two teams to be presented with seed-funding to start their businesses at our final award ceremony which is part of the Digital Bridge Africa Programme.

The GNVC Team

Founders and Management

Managing Director: Victor K. Mallet (MIT '02, Endeavor, Boston Consulting Group)

Chief Financial Officer: Baafour Asiamah-Adjei (MIT '03, Ford Motor Co., Salomon Smith Barney)

Chief Technical Officer: William Tetteh (MIT '03, MIT Media Lab, Microsoft Corp.)

Chief Information Officer: Kodjo Hesse (MIT '03, MIT Media Lab, InterSystems Corp.)

Chief Marketing Officer: George Heming (MIT '03, MIT Media Lab, AITI)

Balancing Act

What Balancing Act Does

Balancing Act is facilitating the development of content for the internet and other new media technologies in Africa that will have an impact on people's lives and that they will want to use, in the three fields of economic, social and cultural development. Whilst the primary focus is digital products that can be delivered through things like e-mail, the internet and CD-ROM, we are also interested in development of appropriate linkages between new and old media (eg community radio, satellite, the internet and multimedia) that will deliver to Africa's less well-connected rural areas.

Its approach

Balancing Act has three different kinds of work:

1. Partnership development projects

During our action-based, feasibility stage, this is what we called pilot projects. Partnership development projects are where we apply energy, expertise and networking skills to help set up projects or assist existing projects develop the capacity to develop content that works in a variety of digital forms. This takes the following forms:

- identifying sustainable projects with African partners.
- offer expertise and capacity-building in the areas of content development and marketing.
- brokering relationships with supportive organisations in Africa and internationally.
- helping to raise funding and support for partnership projects.

In this aspect of its work, Balancing Act will focus exclusively on two to three projects. These are described under [Balancing Act Partnership Development Projects](#).

2. Our own direct work

Our own direct work is with government, the private sector and NGOs to help create a supportive environment for the widest possible access to the internet and new media in Africa.

Balancing Act publishes News Update, a weekly e-letter on the internet and new media in Africa that goes out to over 3,500 subscribers (as at 15/8/01) in government, the private sector, NGOs and education. It is not simply a passive information resource but actively networks individuals or organisations in different fields. Through News Update we will publish a CD-ROM series that will track the development of the internet and new media in Africa.

We are producing a CD-ROM of our back issues for use offline along with a range of free software. In future, we plan to produce a CD-ROM with creative content (literature, poetry, music, animation) along with various versions of free creative software.

In addition, Russell Southwood is currently writing a report for Panos on international connectivity issues and will be running a series of entrepreneurialism workshops for those involved with ICTs in Botswana, Ghana and Kenya.

3. Consultancy

We have carried out a number of consultancy assignments (including the relaunching of a web site for an African publisher) that help fund our not-for-profit activities.

We have a range of professional skills with a well-developed understanding of developments in digital media in Africa. Our approach combines rigour with sensitivity and we have track record of successful project development. Our professional skills include: business planning, feasibility studies, project development, marketing strategies, market appraisals and market research, strategic planning and management and organisational reviews.



Training a new generation of ethical and entrepreneurial business leaders in Africa

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

April 2003

Ashesi University Foundation
603 Stewart St., Suite 819
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Tel: (206) 545-6988
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E-mail: awuah@ashesi.org
Web: www.ashesi.org

I. MISSION

Ashesi University is a private, secular liberal arts college in Ghana, West Africa. Ashesi University is a subsidiary of Ashesi University Foundation a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization based in Seattle, WA. Ashesi's mission is to train a new generation of ethical and entrepreneurial business leaders in Africa and to nurture excellence in scholarship, leadership, and citizenship. Ashesi University is designed to be an operationally self-sustaining institution, featuring a liberal arts core curriculum and offering bachelors degrees in business administration and computer science.

II. PROGRAM

Ashesi, which means "beginning" in Akan (a native Ghanaian language) is a new beginning for higher education in Ghana. Housed in a campus that is equipped with state-of-the-art computers and the latest teaching materials, Ashesi University is at the forefront of a move towards a curriculum reform in African higher education. Ashesi's program challenges students to hone their critical thinking and communication skills and to apply theory to practice through class projects and internships. Coupling liberal arts courses in the humanities, social sciences and mathematics forces students to expand their intellectual boundaries, and small class sizes mean students get personalized attention from professors who are experts in their fields. With an academic curriculum designed in collaboration with 24 professors from Swarthmore College, University of California at Berkeley and University of Washington, Ashesi offers an educational experience unlike anything available in West Africa today.

Ashesi enrolls students who have great capacity to become leaders and are prepared to benefit from our intensive curriculum. These students are a diverse group who come from rural villages and metropolitan cities, and from several African countries including Ethiopia, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. When they leave Ashesi they will have the tools they need to transform Africa.

III. MANAGEMENT

Ashesi University is led by accomplished academics and businesspeople in the United States and Ghana. Board members and advisors include executives at Microsoft Corporation, Hewlett Packard Corporation, AmGen Inc., Databank (Ghana), and professors at Princeton University, New York University, Swarthmore College, University of California at Berkeley, and the University of Washington. This influential team is bound by the belief in the power of Ashesi's mission and oversees the development and operation of this young University.

IV. TRACK RECORD

The second year of classes began at Ashesi University on March 3rd, 2003, and the impact of our presence in Ghana's higher education landscape is already apparent. Ghana's national accreditation board, influenced by Ashesi's liberal arts curriculum, is requiring all new universities in Ghana to feature similarly broad academic programs. Qualified Ghanaians who left teaching or moved abroad are joining the faculty of Ashesi University and returning to academia in their native country. External examiners at Swarthmore college and UC Berkeley have rated the performance of Ashesi students as being comparable to that of students at selective US institutions. The University has support among the Ghanaian business community and from the highest levels of government, including the President of Ghana, John Kufuor.

V. ASHESI'S IMPACT ON THE FUTURE

Ashesi will help build an academic foundation for research and public policy-making relevant for Africa. But most importantly, Ashesi will help thousands of young students realize their dreams and ultimately, to change the trajectory of Africa's economic development. Our model of education will help Ghana mirror the economic transformation that countries like Japan and Taiwan achieved in the late 20th century when they rebuilt their educational systems. We aspire to develop citizens who actively participate in Ghana's democracy and set new standards for industry and civil society.

Ashesi University is positioned to have a significant impact on Ghana's future:

- Ashesi will train approximately 15,000 students at a level equivalent to top-tier schools in the United States over the next fifty years. These students will in turn contribute to the development of Ghanaian businesses.
- Ashesi will raise the bar for institutions of higher education in Ghana, thus affecting the education of hundreds of thousands of students in the decades to come.

- Ashesi will help stop the brain drain by offering the right environment and incentives for the best and brightest to stay in Ghana instead of leaving for education and careers abroad.
- Ashesi will offer scholarships to many talented students that otherwise would not have had the means to get a high quality education, thus improving their lives and the lives of their families.

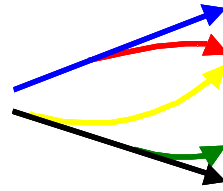
EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Nana Araba Apt | <i>Dean of Academics</i> Professor of Sociology & Director, Centre for Social Policy Studies, University of Ghana, Legon PhD in Sociology, University of Ghana, Legon |
| Patrick Awuah | <i>Founder & President</i> MBA, University of California, Berkeley |
| Nina Marini | <i>Co-Founder & Vice President</i> MBA, University of California, Berkeley |
| Leah McCollough | <i>Director of Development</i> JD, Case Western Reserve University MNO, Case Western Reserve University |
| Yaw Nyarko | <i>Acting Dean of Institutional Development</i> Professor of Economics, New York University PhD in Economics, Cornell University |
| Mildred Wulff | <i>Director of Business Operations</i> BA in Economics, Swarthmore College |
| Linda Young-Ribeiro | <i>Dean of Student & Community Affairs</i> BS in Human Behavior & Development, Drexel University |

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Kwame Anthony Appiah | Professor, Philosophy, Princeton University |
| Yaw Asare-Aboagye | Associate Director, Amgen Inc. |
| Patrick Awuah | Founder & President, Ashesi University Foundation |
| Bill Bliss | General Manager, Search & Navigation Services, Microsoft Corporation |
| Annie Chan | Financial Analyst, Hewlett-Packard Company |
| Neil Collins | Senior Investment Professional, Quellos Group LLC |
| Keval Desai | Venture Associate, Onset Ventures |
| David Leonard | Dean, International & Area Studies/Professor, Political Science University of California at Berkeley |
| Mike Murray | VP Human Resources & Administration (retired), Microsoft Corporation |
| Patrick Nutor | Founder & Managing Director, Accu-Computers Ltd. & Accu-Works Ltd. |
| Todd Warren | General Manager, Microsoft Corporation |

KITE



Kumasi Institute of Technology and Environment

Overview

The Kumasi Institute of Technology and Environment (KITE) is a non-governmental organisation whose vision is a poverty free Ghana and Africa. KITE's mission is to influence policy formulation and implementation in favour of sustainable development through research, training, project development and implementation in energy, technology and environmental issues, in partnership with other leading local and international organisations. KITE specializes in environmentally sound technical solutions and related policy interventions for sustainable development and the core competence areas include rural energy, renewable energy technologies, power sector reform, clean energy enterprise development and clean development mechanism (CDM).

KITE has been in existence since November, 1996 and has worked on over twenty projects with funding from a wide range of international donor agencies including the World Bank, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and DANIDA. Staff strength currently stands at twelve (four women and eight men) made up of a wide mix of professional backgrounds including mechanical and electrical engineering, science and technology policy, economic policy, finance and administration. KITE has two offices: the headquarters in Kumasi, with the other office located in the capital, Accra.

Experience in ICTs and Knowledge Networking

1. ICTs Governance and Regulatory Issues in Ghana, African Technology Policy Studies Network (ATPS) Regional Project, December 2002 to date.
2. Knowledge Networks for Sustainable Energy in Africa, Principal Coordinator at Regional Level – World Bank, June 2001 to date.
3. Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) in micro and small-scale metal working in Ghana–African Technology Policy Studies (ATPS), June 2001-present.
4. The Impact and Potential of ICTs in SMMEs in Ghana – UNU-INTECH, The Netherlands, April 2001 to date.
5. African Technology Policy Studies Network (ATPS), Ghana Chapter Coordination – ATPS Regional Secretariat, July 1998 to March 2003.
6. Sustainable Livelihoods Framework of Small-Scale Carpenters at Anloga – Intermediate Technology Consultants (ITC), UK, March to June 2001.
7. Centre for Innovation and Enterprise Development (CIED), Pilot Project – UNCTAD and International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada, October 1999 to June 2001.
8. Technological Capabilities and Development Financial Institutions in Ghana – African Technology Policy Studies Network (ATPS), July 1999 to date.

Principal Officers

Dr. Abeeku Brew-Hammond, Director, has over twenty years experience teaching energy conversion and related subjects at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. He has an MEng degree from McGill University in Montreal, Canada, and a DPhil from Sussex University (Science Policy Research Unit) in Brighton, UK. Dr. Brew-Hammond is currently an Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi Ghana. He has undertaken several consultancy assignments for international organisations like the World Bank and UNDP as well as national bodies including the Ministry of Energy and the Energy Commission.

Mrs. Harriette Amissah-Arthur, Senior Projects Manager, had about fifteen years experience working in Ghana's generation and transmission utility (VRA) before joining KITE in 2001. She is an electrical engineer with a BSc (Honours) degree from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology and she also has an MBA (Finance) from the University of Ghana. Mrs. Amissah-Arthur leads two project teams in KITE focusing on rural energy (multi-functional platforms for poverty reduction) and clean energy enterprise development

Mr. Ishmael Edjekumhene, Projects Manager, has four years working experience in KITE. He holds a Masters degree in Economics (Public Policy) from the University of Hull, the UK and Bachelors Degree (First Class Honours) in Land Economy from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi. Mr. Edjekumhene is the author of several books including "Power Sector Regorm in Ghana in the 1990s: The Untold Story of a Divided Country versus a Divided Bank" published by KITE in January 2003.

Contact Details

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Bridging the Gender Digital Divide in Africa Through Strategic Partnerships

Background

Information and communications technologies (ICTs) are becoming widely accepted as an integral means for transforming the path of development. Yet, as statistics describing the growing digital divide demonstrate, women and girls are at particular risk for exclusion from opportunities presented by ICTs to secure better livelihoods and other rights.

The potential opportunities presented by ICTs as a means to foster women's economic security in Africa, while being tested on a small scale in the region, remain largely untapped. Constraints of infrastructure, cost and content, as well as gender biases in the use and development of ICTs constitute significant barriers to use for most individual entrepreneurs or micro-enterprises.

On the other hand, there is a wealth of untapped expertise among Africans in the Diaspora, particularly in the private sector, who could make a significant difference in closing the digital divide faced by African women. What are missing are partnerships combining the know-how and outreach of agencies such as UNIFEM and its partners, with those companies and entrepreneurs who are developing and financing ICT development and deployment.

Programme Initiative

In January 2002 in New York, UNIFEM launched its Digital Diaspora initiative to build strategic partnerships between African IT entrepreneurs in the Diaspora and women's organizations and business associations in Africa. The initiative is aimed at harnessing the financial resources, IT and business expertise of Africans in the Diaspora to tackle the challenges of feminized poverty. It seeks to undertake projects that empower women economically through capacity building in the use of ICTs, identifying business opportunities, creating business partnerships, and providing access to finance as well as building the knowledge base on ICTs for poverty alleviation.

The initiative is guided by a Global Advisory Committee (GAC) comprised of African ICT entrepreneurs from the Diaspora, ICT experts and representatives of the private sector and the UN system. A comprehensive programme to address the gender digital divide in Africa has been prepared with advice from the GAC and will form the framework for action under the initiative. The Global Advisory Committee recommended that the initiative should focus on the following strategic areas:

1. Creating an enabling ICT environment for African women, addressing policy and regulatory mechanisms as well as infrastructure issues.
2. Cooperate in capacity-building initiatives at country level, especially in the following areas:
 - a) IT access
 - b) IT Business Management/Finance/Marketing/Training (at management/ entrepreneurial level)
 - c) Business Incubator Services
 - d) Mentorship
 - e) Establishment of a venture capital fund
 - f) Job placement
 - g) Technology Transfer Program including Diaspora/international business expertise
 - h) Youth and grassroots campaigns
3. Establish business linkages between African entrepreneurs in the Diaspora and women entrepreneurs based in Africa, through networking activities, pilot projects and partnerships with the private sector and private foundations.

Partnership with the UN ICT Task Force, Digital Partners and Gruppo Cerfe has been forged in the June 2002 launch of a complementary initiative, the Digital Diaspora Network Africa (DDNA), with chapters in North America and Europe. A gender caucus including African women's groups and organizations in the field of ICT has also been forged to catalyze women's rights and organizing around the preparatory processes of the World Summit of the information Society (WSIS).

The initiative is now to be launched in Africa, with a meeting in Kampala, Uganda on May 5-6, 2003. This meeting will officially launch the programme of action of the Digital Diaspora Initiative in Africa, expanding the constituency of support by bringing on board other stakeholders from governments, civil society, donors and the private sector; and forging synergy between the efforts of the GAC, DDNA and the Gender Caucus of the WSIS. More specifically, it is intended to:

- Provide an opportunity for participants to learn from some innovative approaches to using ICT for gender responsive poverty eradication and development in Uganda.
- Explore the specificity of the gender digital divide in Africa and learn about strategies and experiences that have been used to enhance women's access to ICT and IT female entrepreneurship in Africa;
- Share information and ideas about the programme for bridging the gender digital divide through strategic partnerships with a wider audience;
- Expand partnership opportunities with governments, civil society organizations, the private sector, donors and UN Agencies towards implementing the initiative.

Hewlett Packard's E-Inclusion Initiative

What is e-Inclusion?

"e-inclusion" is our vision of a future in which all people have access to the social and economic opportunities of the 21st century, and can use technology as a means to learn, work and thrive. Our efforts in e-inclusion seek to create new market opportunities, for ourselves and for the communities with which we engage, by forging new kinds of partnerships with private and public entities to close the gap between technology-empowered and technology-excluded communities.

Mission

Our mission is to close the gap between the technology-empowered communities and the technology-excluded communities on our planet by making it profitable to do so. In concert with other innovative HP efforts such as Digital Villages and e-government, e-inclusion is determined to invent new solutions that will increase revenues for HP's current lines of business while promoting economic development in emerging markets. Our projects and activities will be unique in:

- how we participate in emerging markets
- the delivery of economic and social value to the communities in which we do business
- how we promote profitability through our solutions
- how we catalyze knowledgeable partners — including governments, NGO's, corporations, funding agencies and ministerial contacts — to create, deliver, support and publicize solutions

Involvement by Region

| Africa | North America | South America |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Dikhotole Digital Village South Africa Providing community with basic computer, Internet and business skills to improve their chances of gaining employment.</p> | <p>Tribal Digital Village San Diego, CA USA Creating a digital community that preserves ancient cultures and kinship networks.</p> <p>Asia</p> <p>Kuppam i-community Andhra Pradesh, India Accelerating economic growth and access to new markets.</p> | <p>Digital Garage Sao Paulo, Brazil Merging music and technology to inspire underprivileged youth.</p> <p>McInternet Brazil Providing Internet access to e-education, e-jobs, e-health, e-marketing and e-finance.</p> |



DIGITAL PARTNERS

Utilizing the Digital Economy to Empower the Poor

The Social Enterprise Laboratory (SEL) Overview

Digital Partners' Social Enterprise Laboratory (SEL) assists social entrepreneurs developing IT-enabled, market-based, self-sustaining enterprises that directly benefit the poor. SEL brings the entrepreneurs together with IT professionals, venture capitalists, academics, and graduate students from prestigious schools to design, incubate, deploy, and scale their ideas.

How it Works

Digital Partners accepts applications from social entrepreneurs in developing nations who are utilizing technology in innovative ways to address issues confronting individuals at the bottom of the economic pyramid, such as health, education, and economic empowerment. The top applicants are identified via an on-line judging process conducted by Digital Partners' extensive network of professionals in IT, business, academia, and economic development. Applicants are assessed based upon the following criteria:

IT-Driven - Innovative use of information technology must be an integral component of the business or project model

Strong Management Team - The management team should demonstrate the expertise and commitment necessary to enhance the concept's chance of success

Market-Based for Sustainability - The concept must show the potential to generate a market-based revenue stream (must have a demonstrable revenue-based business model) to ensure sustainability

Scalable/Replicable - The concept must show promise to be broadly scaled or widely replicated to serve much larger constituencies

Bottom-up - The concept should be initiated and benefit those at the grassroots level to assure that real needs are being met with customized solutions

Selected social entrepreneurs are matched with teams of students from prestigious graduate schools in the U.S. and abroad, who provide them with mentoring assistance to design, deploy, incubate, and scale their projects. The nature of the assistance is tailored to the needs of each individual social entrepreneur after an initial needs assessment. The primary focus is to provide support necessary to:

- Effectively incorporate market mechanisms into their ICT-enhanced enterprise
- Develop efficient implementation strategies
- Re-write their proposals into business plans capable of convincing potential financial supporters of the project's viability, impact, and sustainability.

Each student team is provided guidance by 2-3 advisors, drawn from the network referred to above, who offer their geographic and/or technical expertise. Attempts are made throughout the process to connect the entrepreneurs with appropriate sources of funding. At the conclusion of the process, the entrepreneurs demonstrating the greatest potential for success are funded by Digital Partners itself via its "Social Venture Capital Fund" (see sheet on "Social Venture Fund") made up of contributions from individuals and corporations. DP investments in the past have ranged from \$10,000 to \$100,000.



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a division of 

What is Geekcorps?

Geekcorps (www.geekcorps.org), a division of International Executive Service Corps (www.iesc.org), is a non-profit, non-governmental organization dedicated to bridging the international digital divide in emerging nations by bringing high-tech, Information Technology (IT) business volunteers to work with companies and sector specific organizations in developing countries.

Founded in 2000, Geekcorps was the brainchild of Ethan Zuckerman, a successful IT entrepreneur who had spent a year in Ghana as a Fulbright scholar. When the company he co-founded, Tripod.com, was bought out by Lycos in 1998, Ethan decided to privately develop Geekcorps, a dot-org designed on the concept of the US Peace Corps, using the skills of high-tech IT professionals who volunteer for projects to work with small- and medium-sized businesses that can use technology to expand their business opportunities. After two years of successful operations in Ghana, Geekcorps expanded its work through its acquisition by IESC to provide its volunteer services in other locations worldwide.

How does Geekcorps Ghana Work?

In Ghana, Geekcorps is now fully funded by the United States Agency for International Development (www.usaid.gov) and brings groups of volunteers, usually seven volunteers per group, to Ghana to work with small, medium and start-up Information Communications & Technology (ICT) firms. Each volunteer is assigned to a specific partner business for a period of around 4 months, where he or she will be responsible for working one-on-one with specifically assigned counterparts to share their unique knowledge and to transfer the skills necessary to improve the company's potential for expansion and growth in the world wide marketplace.

Who are the Geekcorps Volunteers?

With a current database of about 1,400 international IT business specialists, Geekcorps Volunteers are chosen according to the particular set of skills needed for each project. The skills of the volunteers is wide-ranging, but some typical requests include Database Development, Network Optimization, Programming, Web Database integration and Web design.

Typical Geekcorps Volunteers are currently employed in the IT industry in various locations around the world. Each person makes the commitment as a volunteer, taking a hiatus from his or her current job or consulting contracts, to forgo 4 months of income from paid work to dedicate themselves to a Ghanaian firm. Geekcorps Volunteers are young professionals; typically between the ages of 25-45 with between 3-20 years of IT experience that earns them highly paid positions in US and International firms.

The contribution of Geekcorps Volunteers' time, in addition to Geekcorps and USAID funded travel, housing, insurance and other support costs, adds up to an investment of between \$40,000 - \$60,000 USD for each primary partner business project, depending on the level of assistance required. Thereby, over a half a million USD (\$500,000) is invested in the Ghanaian ICT industry every year.

Who does Geekcorps Ghana assist?

Although Geekcorps Ghana does not limit itself to the type of firms with which it conducts business, the firms selected for Primary ICT Partner Projects must be registered in Ghana, majority Ghanaian owned and operated, involved in the ICT sector and preferably work as a business support organization that provides ICT products and services to other businesses (as opposed to retail consumer sales.)

Typical firms have included: Data Collection and Data Disbursement websites, Internet Service Providers (ISPs), Internet-based and Communications companies, Software Developers and ICT Training Firms as well as other firms which can show significant potential to impact the ICT industry in Ghana and West Africa.

How can my firm apply?

If you have a technology-related business, or an organization to which the addition of computer technology will have outstanding benefits, you can apply to host a Geekcorps Volunteer Consultant. Geekcorps is responsible for recruiting and selecting the Primary ICT Partner businesses based on explicit selection criteria. With only 14 spots per year, each partner business chosen must be a leader in the industry and express a high level of commitment and cooperation. Equally important is the willingness to fully support the individual volunteers, as well as Geekcorps, to enable each project to provide the maximum amount of skills transfer to the respective company.

If you are interested in applying, copy the business application www.geekcorps.org/docs/bizapp.htm into a word doc and submit it electronically to: ghana@geekcorps.org or bring a signed copy to the office where we can discuss further details regarding potential selection criteria and requirements.

How can an organization partner with Geekcorps?

Aiming to be a cross-cutting ICT support agency for other USAID and other Donor funded programs, Geekcorps is looking at a new initiative to provide support to link NGO programs with local ICT service providers. Geekcorps can evaluate your plans to determine if it is appropriate for us to support a local ICT service provider, by providing a Geekcorps Volunteer as a "Project Manager" for this aspect of your program.

If your program has a significant ICT component where you will need the design or implementation of a new IT system, network, or program application, you can access Geekcorps as a support agency to provide ICT Consultation, help to define Scopes of Work and how to advertise and evaluate different ICT Companies and their capabilities. Following the selection process, a Geekcorps Volunteer can work directly with the company to provide support and transfer skills in specific areas of the project. Following this support you will have the benefit of having a specially trained local provider to provide on-going training and support. We call this the process of creating "Digital Independence" within the country.

These projects will be provided to International Partner Organizations on a full cost basis, but at a significant savings to using outside consulting services, since our support is provided by volunteers who live in modest housing on a very low per diem for up to 6 months. Contact the local Geekcorps Ghana office for more information.

What else do Geekcorps Volunteers do?

Geekcorps Volunteer Seminar Series- On top of their daily work, Geekcorps Volunteers also facilitate workshops/trainings typically hosted by Busy Internet. Designed to highlight an area of expertise that the volunteer has learned is important through their daily work experience in Ghana, topics have included: E-

Commerce Strategy and Implementation; Setting Up a Small Office / Home Network; Web Page Design Course One & Two; Introduction to Object-Oriented Programming; Intro to the Telecommunication Industry; Intro to Networking; Firewalls; Network Administration & Management; and a three part series on Tiered Application Development with more to follow.

Geekcorps Volunteer Secondary Projects & IT Consultations – For smaller companies that do not necessarily fit our primary project requirements, sometimes secondary projects can be arranged with Volunteers in-country. Depending on the nature of a business and its IT Issues, Geekcorps Ghana may also be able to provide a specific industry consulting session to determine the IT needs and assist it with a specific problem or recommendation.

Where else does Geekcorps operate?

Geekcorps operates independently and through IESC in Ghana, Mongolia, Armenia, Bulgaria, Lebanon, Thailand, Kyrgyzstan, Romania and Rwanda, about 80 projects worldwide by mid-2003. Future project expansion sites scheduled include Jordan and Senegal with additional possibilities in Mali and South Africa.

GHANA DIGITAL PROJECT A CASE STUDY

Yaw Owusu, April 15, 2003

HISTORY

On July 12, 2002, the United Nations hosted the First Annual Digital Bridge Africa Conference to mobilize the technological, entrepreneurial and professional expertise and resources of the African Diaspora to promote ICTs for African development. Yaw Owusu, CEO of Ghana Cyber Group, Inc., Ama Fordjour, President of GCG USA, and other GCG leaders, including Nii Bannerman, Nana Dwemoh Benneh and Sonny Vanderpuy were among delegates at the historic meeting that brought 130 business leaders together.

The young executives from the Ghana Cyber Group were inspired by Dr. Akhtar Badshah, Executive Director of the Digital Partners, John Sarpong, CEO of Africast LLC and Awo Quaison-Sackey, CEO of AQ Solutions and their respective roles in putting together the Digital Diaspora Network - Africa ventures. <http://www.ddn-africa.org>

After the one-day summit at the United Nations headquarters in New York, GCG launched the Ghana Digital Project to accelerate the process of expanding PC and internet access for education to all schools (primary, secondary and universities) in Ghana.

PROBLEM/OPPORTUNITY

The northern half of Ghana, covering about 50,000 square miles, is primarily rural, having the least developed educational and economic infrastructure in the country. In 1992, the University of Development Studies was established as a multi-campus institution to serve the four northern regions (Brong-Ahafo, Northern, Upper East and Upper West). With this modest foundation, an aggressive program in computer literacy and information technology is urgently needed to attract jobs and investments into the region.

SOLUTION

In October 2001, Hewlett Packard, Palo Alto, California, awarded the University of Pennsylvania grant for equipment worth \$1.12 million to establish Community Technology Centers (CTCs) at the University of Science & Technology in Kumasi and other parts of Ashanti and Eastern regions. GCG studied this HP-UST-Penn model for implementation in the northern part of Ghana. On October 4, 2002, Yaw Owusu, who was then pursuing an MBA degree at Columbia Business School, Ama Fordjour, a Raytheon Corporation software engineer and Tanko Mohammed, MIT Sloan MBA '03, arranged to see Leo Osgood, Dean of

Minority Education at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology on October 4, 2002.

GCG lobbied MIT to pursue grants from technology giants like Microsoft, Oracle and IBM to invest in educational ventures similar to the HP-UST-Penn deal in Ghana, in partnership with the Ghana Cyber Group. The dean expressed interest in this arrangement as well as a proposal to send 40 MIT engineering students to work on the digital project in participating schools every summer on hardware installation, system administration and software engineering.

GCG and MIT reached a tentative agreement. Pending a comprehensive report on the infrastructure needs of the schools, to be submitted by Yaw Owusu and Ama Fordjour, MIT would solicit funding from multilateral firms, such as Samsung, Microsoft and Dell Computer Corporation to lay the foundation for the first project, including:

(1) Establishing an IT infrastructure backbone at the University of Development Studies (UDS) in Tamale. The project is designed to stimulate educational, social and economic development of underserved communities in Ghana, starting with the northern half of the country.

(2) Training of students to teach information technology courses in secondary and primary schools, and intensive programs to prepare young men and women with marketable computer skills for the job market

(3) Link secondary schools, starting with the four Northern regions with SchoolWeb, a technology that allows learning modules such as IT training courses from the United States to be broadcasted onto the SchoolWeb server at the participating school for students to learn at their leisure. The software empowers underserved areas to offer distance education for community development.

CONCLUSION

The proposed IT infrastructure to be built at the University of Development Studies would not only expand PC and internet access for education in Ghana and help expand its economy, but MIT's involvement would also sharpen the leadership skills of its engineering students and strengthen the university's reputation as an international institution of higher learning. A strategic partnership involving an influential U.S. university, a powerful multilateral firm and a promising research university in Africa: a new working model for community development is emerging.

E-Academy, Tanzania

Demand-Driven Kiswahili Software

Opportunity

The four main obstacles that challenge Tanzanians from getting a quality education are 1) high costs of education, 2) the availability of educational institutions, 3) lack of professional teachers and 4) the shortage of quality teaching materials.

Project Description

Although E-learning overcomes these obstacles that accompany traditional education in Tanzania, it does raise new challenges. The reach of the Internet is far greater than the availability of the Internet; there are still areas of Tanzania that lack access to the World Wide Web. Another challenge is the acceptance of Tanzanians to learn at one's own pace, at one's own encouragement and without the presence of a teacher/trainer while maintaining personal integrity.

Identifying the opportunity and taking in consideration the challenge, E-Academy Ltd. was established. This company, based in Dar es Salaam, aims to touch the mind of every Tanzania with the gift of quality education at an affordable price using electronic learning to facilitate a greater reach and maintain a set of standards, while creating local content in the local language.

E-Academy's Demand-Driven Kiswahili Courseware project is designed to expand the reach and quality of education in Tanzania by developing courseware in the local Kiswahili language and incorporating familiar Tanzanian terminology into its content. Content will be developed by experts within Tanzania and from other parts of Africa.

E-Academy will take advantage of mushrooming Internet cafes throughout Tanzania to provide Internet connectivity to subscribers of E-Academy as a means to bring education to otherwise excluded communities. They will also provide CD-Rom - based education to those areas without Internet connectivity.

The project is distinctive in its special attention to local needs in the context of ICT use. For example, as part of their payment method for access to the courseware, E-Academy has developed a pre-paid scratch card system as many Tanzanians do not possess credit cards.

Business Model

E-Academy will achieve self-sustainability by charging students for the classes they take on-line. By setting profit margins low and targeting a large number of clients, E-Academy will generate sufficient income to cover operational costs and meet investment needs.

Projected Benefit

Greater access to affordable education empowers poor communities who can use these ICT skills and this newfound knowledge for employment, entrepreneurship and to

facilitate other aspects of their daily practice. The project's online courses benefit school students by diversifying instructional methods and thus making them more effective workforce by providing an opportunity to accumulate skills that increased productivity and effectiveness. Potential reach is several million individuals.

Scalability/Replicability

This project has the potential to be scaled in such a way as to serve the entire Tanzanian population with access to a computer. Perhaps more importantly, the project can also be replicated anywhere in the world by developing local course content adapted to a given environment or culture.

Current Progress

E-Academy Ltd. is currently offering over 600 online courses, franchised from the United States, through our website www.elimuimara.com. The content is developed in the US and is available only in English. This courseware is offered to customers in Tanzania with access to the Internet and to institutions under a license program in the form of a CD. To indicate the nature of our offerings we arranged our library into six categories:

- Personal Skills Development
- Business Skills Development
- Computer Skills Development
- MCSE Skills Development
- Networking and Programming
- Web Design

Contact

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E-Academy Ltd, Quality Tower
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Dar es Salaam
PO Box 77100
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HealthNet Uganda

Founded in 1995, Healthnet Uganda is a Non-Governmental Organisation joint initiative between SATELLIFE Inc USA and Faculty of Medicine, Makerere University. Located in the Medical School of Makerere University, Healthnet Uganda serves a wide array of users, including the medical faculty, doctors, researchers, students, and other health workers including the Mulago Hospital, which is the main referral and teaching hospital in Uganda.

The objectives of Healthnet Uganda are:

- To promote, use and access health information using Information Communication Technology (ICTs) in all health-related services, research and training.
- To operate and manage centers of training, research, dissemination, networking, outreach, advocacy and acquisition of professional skills in the use of ICTs in the health sector.
- To solicit for financial, material, technical and otherwise facilitate access and use of health information using ICTs.
- To train, advise, and support health workers in the use if ICTs in the collection, processing and dissemination of health information.
- To create and maintain a functional network of health information consumers.
- To cultivate and nurture a sense of belonging to the network of health Information Consumers through regular publications, discussions, etc.
- To organize seminars, workshops and conferences intended at disseminating information and sensitizing members of the health fraternity and the public for the improvement of welfare and health using ICTs.

Some of the activities that Healthnet Uganda is involved in include the following:

PDA Projects

Over the last year Makerere University Medical School, HealthNet Uganda and SATELLIFE have engaged in a trial of the hand held technology in the health sector. The success of that experience has encouraged us, along with IDRC, to explore the possible widespread use of the handheld computer in Uganda. The handheld computer (also known as the Personal Digital Assistant, or PDA) has become increasingly commonplace in Western healthcare settings to capture, store, interpret and retrieve patient information, and to manage pharmaceutical, financial, logistic and epidemiological information. Recent studies conducted in Uganda bolster the expectation that handheld computers can function effectively in Uganda, and provide significant ability to improve the management of information. Uganda also has the best cellular telephone network in Africa, with a significant proportion of the country with full coverage. A three country study conducted by SATELLIFE recently concluded that connecting a handheld computer to another computer via wireless technology would allow remote data transfer for synchronization, back-up, and downloading of information. It would also bring an element of computing power to wireless technology, adding further

dimensions to what wireless offers. Given the increasing focus on telecommunications liberalization and the growing wireless markets in Uganda, this is a powerful combination with real potential.

Training

HealthNet Uganda has also established a computer training center using a model and training materials developed by SATELLIFE. HealthNet Uganda has trained nearly 300 medical personnel in basic computing and Internet tools. HealthNet Uganda also collaborates with the World Health Organization's Health InterNetwork at Makerere University to offer training and networking for health professionals.

Telemedicine

Healthnet Uganda plays a very big role in the support of Telehealth projects in Uganda. Notable are the Tele-in vivo project funded by the European Union which is a online tele-radiology consultation between Mulago Hospital Nakaseke Hospital in Uganda and Coimbra teaching school in Spain.

Consultancy and Technical Support

Over the years, the Healthnet team has provided advice and technical support to the Faculty of Medicine and Mulago Hospital. This ranges from carrying out needs assessments to evaluation of the existing ICT infrastructure.

Youth for Technology Foundation (Owerri Digital Village)

History

Youth for Technology Foundation (YTF) is a non-profit organization with headquarters in Nigeria and the United States. YTF's mission is to transform rural communities in Nigeria into enriched learning environments in which technology used well enhances and expands opportunities for the marginalized, the poorest of the poor. Since the organization's establishment in 2000, YTF has been committed to sustainable development as a means of achieving economic prosperity, rural empowerment and the social integration of diverse community groups.

The vision of Youth for Technology Foundation was conceived by Ms. Njideka Ugwuegbu. Her vision for YTF grew from the educational, social, technological and cultural challenges she experienced as a result of migrating from Nigeria to the United States a decade ago. As the founder of YTF, she has consistently demonstrated an exemplary commitment to helping disadvantaged people in rural communities unlock their greatest potential using education and technology.

YTF's theme is Delivering to the Community. This theme was borne out of an aspiration to help communities in potentially strong nations, like Nigeria, embrace technology. YTF achieves this by furnishing them with the skills and tools that they need to prosper in the global, knowledge-based economy of the twenty-first century. YTF recognizes that technology is not going to solve all the numerous problems endemic to African communities but it is an instrument that can be used to help bridge different social and economic obstacles.

YTF has a 23 person board consisting of 8 Board of Trustee and 15 Board of Advisory members who are leaders in the public, business and academic sectors in Nigeria and internationally. YTF has six full-time employees based in Nigeria and over 70 volunteers worldwide.

What We Do

An embodiment of YTF's vision is the *Owerri Digital Village*, a community technology and learning center, in eastern Nigeria. The Digital Village offers technical skills development and training to Nigerian youth in an effort to develop entrepreneurial spirit, technology skills and passion for learning. The hands-on activities and training at the Owerri Digital Village are a critical part of YTF's broader mission to help Nigerian youth make their dreams a reality by learning and applying the necessary tools to further their studies and become enthusiastic employees or job creators.

YTF's goal is to expand to many other rural communities in Nigeria in the next few years. Subsequently the rural community technology center network can serve as a replicable model for other developing countries.

Our Model

The model of YTF consists of the following three elements:

- 1. Enhancing Education:** The emergence of new information technologies, the evolution of the global digital economy and the global competition for technically skilled workers creates an urgency to improve Nigeria's educational system. YTF takes a bottom up approach by teaching youth how to employ powerful technologically advanced tools in transforming the way they live and work. The TechKids and TechTeens Programs at the Owerri Digital Village address this need.
- 2. Empowering Women and Girls:** Social isolation, lack of skills and poor access are major factors that undermine the adoption of technology by women. YTF is positioned to enhance women's opportunities in the economy by providing them with access to technological resources, tools and

training to make their small-scale enterprises more viable. The TechPreneurs program offered at the Owerri Digital Village addresses this need.

- 3. Poverty Reduction through Workforce Development:** YTF programs are designed with a focus on deploying technology as a facilitator of job creation through the mastery of transferable skills. The Owerri Digital Village is managed by YTF staff members, who live in the immediate community and have been trained in the necessary information and communication technology skills. As the programs develop, future employees will be graduates of one of YTF's programs. The TechEnhancement program offered at the Owerri Digital Village addresses this need.

Milestones

YTF has achieved the following organizational milestones:

- Created the Owerri Digital Village, a community technology and learning center in Eastern Nigeria, the first of its kind in West Africa.
- Enrolled over 100 youth in YTF programs aimed at providing disadvantaged youth with access, training and resources they need to realize their greatest potential.
- Partnered with 10 Primary, 15 Secondary and 4 Tertiary institutions on collaborative learning programs for youth.
- Created jobs for 6 community members at the Owerri Digital Village.
- Mobilized private sector professionals to volunteer as instructors and speakers at YTF programs and workshops. Over 70 professionals and student volunteers have volunteered their services to YTF.
- Developed a strong reputation within the local and international community while gaining the recognition of numerous funding and development agencies. YTF has been widely covered in leading technology journals and online portals such as TechKnowLogia, OneWorld Africa and the World Bank Development Gateway.

How We Work

YTF takes a holistic community approach and all our programs have a social benefit to the communities we work in. We start with young children, between the ages of 8 and 12 in our TechKids program. The program helps children begin to develop an understanding and witness the magic of computers. In the TechTeens program, we work with at-risk youth, teaching them how technology can improve their academic performance and learning. In September 2003, the TechPreneurs program will be launched. The goal of this program is to fuel technical innovation in youth, facilitate direct to producer purchases by women entrepreneurs, and help rural artisans promote their products globally.

A guiding principle of Youth for Technology Foundation programs is that effective learning is based on processes that are participatory, people-driven and collaborative. YTF implements community based technology programs that help Nigerian youth develop a passion for technology and an understanding of how it can enhance their lives and improve their communities. Rather than beginning with technology, YTF starts with understanding the needs of an underserved community and focuses on how technology resources adapted to cultural and social needs can assist the community with its drive towards sustainability.

SchoolNet Africa

Our Vision

To empower the African child to be an active global participant through the effective use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in education.

Our Mission

Our mission is to support national SchoolNets throughout Africa by mobilizing resources, building effective partnerships and knowledge in promoting education through sustainable use of ICTs in African schools.

- SNA stands for the right of all African youth to education and lifelong learning possibilities.
- SNA stands for the right of every African child to have access to information.
- We stand for affordable and sustainable access to ICTs in African Schools.
- African education content on the Internet.
- We work towards developing online content in local languages.

Our History

It all started at a Cape Town workshop in September 1999, which was attended by SchoolNet representatives from 10 African countries. The SchoolNet Africa Case Statement, which was tabled at the African Development Forum (ADF) hosted by the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) in November 1999, was adopted at this workshop. The ADF formally endorsed the initiative.

With support from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), a SchoolNet Africa Business Plan was developed and tabled at a Workshop on School Networking in Africa, held in Okahandja, Namibia in July, 2000. This workshop was hosted by SchoolNet Namibia, the Namibian Ministry of Education, the National Institute for Educational Development, and the IDRC. It was attended by more than 100 representatives from SchoolNet projects, ministries of education, and private sector from 20 African countries. Here an interim Steering Committee was elected comprising two representatives from all five sub-regions in Africa.

In July 2001, the Interim Steering Committee met for the first time in Cape Town and proceeded with establishing SchoolNet Africa as an independent organization in partnership with the Open Society Institute for Southern Africa (OSISA). SchoolNet Africa is now an established non-governmental organization headquartered in Johannesburg, South Africa. SchoolNet Africa (SNA) was officially launched on 12 November 2001.

Flagship Projects

Supporting National SchoolNets

SchoolNet Africa's mission is to support national SchoolNets in leveraging and mobilizing resources. At the same time, national SchoolNets are also supporting SchoolNet Africa by enrolling as members of SNA and by informing SNA of their experiences and how they can work with and support other SchoolNets in Africa.

Researching ICTs for Education in Africa

The main purpose of our research programme is to inform SchoolNet Africa and its network of practitioners on appropriate frameworks, ideas, and policy positions to advance the course of school networking from a developmental perspective. The research also aims to add value to SchoolNet Africa's lobbying and advocacy strategy.

ThinkQuest Africa

ThinkQuest Africa is a Pan African Programme that aims to promote a new style of learning and Internet-based education in Africa. It promotes adoption of methodologies and approaches that enhance the educational process using ICT to empower African youth to become critical learners, thinkers, and eventually future African leaders who will contribute to the development of their respective countries.

Building SchoolNet Champions

The main objective of the Building African SchoolNet Champions Programme is to establish a cadre of African leaders who have acquired a range of skills to drive systemic change towards educational transformation at national level. This programme contains a series of projects aimed at building capacity and leadership amongst a leading cadre of digital pioneers in promoting education through ICTs in African schools.

African Teachers Network

The objective of this project is to conduct research on the variety of online professional development courses targeted at African teachers. The main purpose of the project is to ascertain the range of courses available and to evaluate experience with these online courses. The final objective is to provide guidelines on what constitutes a good teacher professional development course.



ECOSANDALS.COM

P.O. Box 10174-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
sales@ecosandals.com

PROFILE

Ecosandals.com is a zero profit importer and re-seller of Akala Designs unique footwear, produced in the Korogocho shantytown outside Nairobi, Kenya. The project began eight years ago to provide quality work for a small number of Korogocho residents. Today, sandal-makers produce quality footwear, with soles made in part from recycled auto tires, to customers around the world. Working out of a neighbourhood known to be among the most dangerous and hopeless, the project uses electronic commerce, creativity, and hard work to enable a community to find some glimmer of hope.



THE PRODUCT

Priced at between \$18 and \$25, the 11 sandals currently on the world market are inexpensive, quality, handmade footwear. Here are a few of our sandals, all with used-tire soles:



Starting with the traditionally-worn used tire sandal, project sandal-makers have been working to enhance the sandal product since the project's founding seven years ago. Recent innovations, based in part on customer feedback from around the world, include light sandals with thicker soles and sandals produced without the use of any animal products.

THE PROFITS

Since going online in February 2001, Akala Designs has sold over \$20,000 in footwear. A minimum of 49% of profits goes directly to the project's sandal-makers, and all profits are controlled by and for Kenyans. As the project currently spends no money on marketing, depending solely on volunteers globally, the project has an extraordinary profit margin that enables Korogocho residents to benefit.

AWARDS AND FEATURES

In the past 18 months, Akala Designs has received the following awards and media coverage:

- Winner, Youth Employment Summit Innovators Award (2002) (one of five globally)
- Finalist, Stockholm Challenge Technology Award (2002)
- Winner, World Bank ICT Stories Award (2002) (one of four globally)
- *Business Africa*, People TV (2002)
- *Bongo la Biashara (Business brains)* Kenyan Television Network (2002)
- Borsen Newspaper (Denmark) (2002)
- Earth Island Journal (2002)
- Grist Magazine (2002)
- **CNN** Ten-minute on-air profile (2001)
- People Daily (2001)

Ecosandals.com is a zero-profit importer and re-seller of akala used-tire sandals produced as part of an income generating and recycling project. While sandals are guaranteed to last three years, they are known to last forever. All proceeds go directly to Akala Designs of Nairobi, Kenya.

"Kutengeneza akala, kuinua maisha"

"Making sandals, enriching lives"

WSIS NOTE: Role of the Business Sector

Introduction

Business today is global. Communication technologies have enabled social and economic participation between people and businesses regardless of distance and geographic borders. As the issue of distance dissolves, events once domestic in nature can become global with social and economic consequences.

In recognising the symbiotic relationship between countries and between the public and private sectors, businesses are increasingly making investment decisions that deliver both sustainable value to its shareholders as well as to society. This business practice is just one dimension of Corporate Social Responsibility¹ (CSR), but reveals the important role of business in social and economic development efforts.

The ICT industry sector is well placed to serve at the forefront of global development activities. It is both an economic sector and an enabler of economic and social participation. As the December World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) approaches, the ICT sector can demonstrate leadership on CSR by “walking-the-talk”. Being both a user/consumer of ICT as well as supplier/innovator, the approach of CSR by ICT executives is unique and can play a significant role in sustainable national development through investment and job creation.

The Opportunity

An unparalleled opportunity is provided by the Summit process and at the Summit for decision-makers in government and business to work as partners on policies and actions that fulfil the goals of a truly inclusive global Information Society. By working together on the incentives that will encourage partnership, the WSIS will serve as a powerful vehicle to demonstrate the effectiveness of public-private partnerships for development and to create and implement ICT strategies that stimulate competition, entrepreneurship, investment and e-commerce for job creation and growth.

Partnerships Toward Action

In September 2000, at the United Nations Millennium Summit, 191 United Nations Member States have pledged to meet a set of time-bound and measurable goals and targets for combating poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women².

In so doing, governments are already designing and implementing national policies to meet these goals. How these policies are formulated will have a significant impact on a corporation’s bottom line. The WSIS process will provide an opportunity for business

¹ The Corporate Social Responsibility Forum organised by the Prince of Wales Foundation defines Corporate Social Responsibility as, “open and transparent business practices that are based on ethical values and respect for employees, communities and the environment. It is designed to deliver sustainable value to society at large, as well as to shareholders”, www.iblf.org.

² For a list of the Millennium Development Goals, please refer to Annex 1 attached, or www.un.org/millenniumgoals/index.html

stakeholders to engage in dialogue with governments to shape “win-win” ICT policies that impact overall development goals.

For example, business processes that have as their core ambition: scalability, efficiency, success, sustainability, risk mitigation, impact and catalytic effect, can influence the resulting WSIS partnerships, actions and policies.

In an effort to maximize the potential for this historic gathering, business can suggest a set of goals and priorities to be considered at the Summit and then form new partnerships with governments for action and implementation. Among such goals could be the following:

- Develop concrete and realizable targets for rural, national, international, school, university and hospital access and connectivity by 2005 and 2015.
- Build human capital via literacy, education, training and R&D with innovative partnerships and solutions and benchmarking by 2005 and 2015.
- Promote ICT and media for health and in support of HIV-AIDS and other infectious and communicable diseases in prevention and treatment.
- Foster enterprise and entrepreneurship for women and youth via a series of discernable and measurable initiatives by 2005 and 2015.
- Support new models for content distribution and local content and applications creation in the development context by 2005.
- Establish a framework for privacy protection and network security to be in place in at least 50 countries by 2005 and in all countries by 2015.

As the WSIS serves as a strategic opportunity to reach international agreement, at the highest level, on some clear and quantifiable goals and targets relating to the Information Society, the above list of suggested goals can serve as a starting point for developing concrete business plans.

In parallel, the WSIS will be a meaningful platform that can promote business processes in public-private sector projects, shape policies that facilitate a “win-win” development dynamic, showcase corporate citizenship activities, and establish new strategic partnerships.