

PCF5 PROPOSAL

Winneba Open Digital Village for ICT Capacity-Building and Community Development

Presenters

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Background & Context

The President's Office and the Government of Ghana have expressed a strong desire for the enhancement of ICT initiatives across the country, and particularly in education, for at least the last five years. The Government of Ghana is committed to the transformation of the agro-based economy of Ghana into an information rich and knowledge-based economy and society using the tools of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The Government of Ghana, led by the President's Office, has explicitly recognized the importance that ICTs can play in the country.

This can be exemplified by Ghana's Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRSII) which explicitly mentions the following key areas of focus and policies that are directly addressed by this proposal: Science and Technology to support productivity and development; developing ICT; promote development of e-strategies in key sectors of the economy; and Education. The government has acknowledged the need for ICT training and education in the schools, colleges and universities and the improvement of the education system as a whole. The deployment of ICT into Education will result in the creation of new possibilities for learners and teachers to engage in new ways of information acquisition and analysis. ICT will enhance access to education and improve the quality of education delivery on equitable basis.

The Winneba Open Digital Village (WODiV) was established with the goal of developing a center in Ghana in particular in the Winneba region that can leverage local assets to develop an effective low cost and innovative ICT for Development (ICT4D) strategy and program. This includes providing reliable computer and Internet access to evaluate those best practices most relevant to effectively develop and incubate innovative social enterprise model that addresses local community needs. On a larger scale, it's expected to offer a model for rapidly bridging the *Knowledge and Digital Divide*.

More specifically, the WODiV project

- collaborates with a major educational university (University of Education, Winneba - UEW, Ghana) as a focus point to train teachers in sustainable development, including ODL whilst developing a comprehensive eco-system approach to development in Winneba region;
- applies the Open Digital Village (ODiV) concept with the idea that people can have access to the Internet anywhere in the local regional network, ODL and wireless connectivity for sustainable development throughout Ghana using UEW as the focus point for coordinating the efforts of graduating student teachers participating in programme;
- develop Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Materials in audio format to be aired on two community radio stations over a period for a Community of over 100,000 people and a student population of 7,000 from the UEW and design effective mechanisms to collect feedback from the broadcast for evaluation;
- uses low cost ICT tools such as wireless, Linux and web portals and augment and pool existing local resources to teach global best practices in sustainable development;
- provides training for men and women, whereby they become not only teachers, but also social entrepreneurs with ability to design local training solutions suitable for local needs;
- develops ODL modules that can be used in Community Health Nurses Training School (CHNTS) and other nursing colleges to educate nurses in the use of computers and

spreadsheets, basic sustainable practices that provide good nutrition and sanitation, and collaborative approaches to meeting health and economic development needs in the villages where they practice; and

Proposed Session: Seminar & Networking Session

The Winneba Open Digital Village for ICT Capacity Development seminar and networking session will provide the opportunity to showcase the use of low-cost and appropriate technologies being applied in the Winneba region of Ghana to support poverty alleviation and livelihood with support from the Commonwealth of Learning's Poverty Reduction Through Education Innovations and Networks (COL PROTEIN). This includes but not limited to the establishment of free wireless networks and internet access to schools and institutions in the project catchment's area that has increased access to information and knowledge on varied subjects and learning and improved research skills for academic work.

Statement of purpose

This session helps to evaluate and collect feedback; expose and share best practices of the project.

Questions that the session intends to address include what the theme leaders would have stated as:

1. How to include the entire social, economic, cultural aspects required for livelihood community in a holistic learning cooperation?
2. How to ensure consideration of traditional, indigenous, common knowledge and local wisdom?
3. What is needed for teachers to be able to use these resources?

Intended outcomes

The outcomes of the seminar and networking session are varied including received input into the project's future work and network to seek further support to scale-up the production of Audio ODL materials in the second phase to:

1. support educational delivery of the University of Education and the Community Health Nurses Training both in Winneba, Ghana and
2. expand the reach of community education via radio on specific themes to support poverty alleviation

THE WODiV ACHIEVEMENT

The WODiV project is a pilot that is expected to be replicated across Africa making the use of the best practices and lessons learnt through the project. These lessons learnt, both documented and otherwise include

- WODiV Community Network established providing Information and Knowledge Services (Diagram attached)
- WODiV portal prototype (under construction)
- Radio programme framework/structure designed for airing on two local Radio station – Radio Windy Bay and Radio Peace
- Successful training on wireless network and ICT support infrastructure
- Equipped the WODiV with computers for ICT Capacity Building and Community Development.
- Project showcased at the UN GAID event in Geneva, Switzerland in September 2007
- ODL and Radio broadcast materials have been developed

Further Details

- <http://www.opendigitalvillage.org/>
- http://www.onevillagefoundation.org/ovf/projects/ovf_ghana/wo-div.html
- <http://flickr.com/photos/wodiv>
- <http://www.onevillagefoundation.org>

WINNEBA OPEN DIGITAL VILLAGE (WODiV)

COMMUNITY WIRELESS NETWORK DIAGRAM

