

Ibadan Open Digital Village (IODiV) - bridging the digital divide by building a network of digital community information and training center.

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Background

AIDS Relief Foundation started from a desire to use Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) to improve the way in which we address the AIDS pandemic in Africa. The central focus was on AIDS, the tragic results of which Joy Tang, ARF's founder experienced first hand while traveling through Africa. As of April 20, 2003, ARF began doing business as the oneVillage Foundation.

OVF headquarters offices are in San Jose, California and it has affiliates in Winneba, Ghana, Ibadan, Nigeria and Nairobi, Kenya.

Mission

OVF sees the challenge and opportunity of using Information Communication Technology (ICT) to address World Urgent Issues, by providing a platform for an integrated approach to sustainable development. People have lost, or stopped practicing the knowledge of sustainable living. Our mission is to connect art, science and education with proactive hands on community oriented actions on ground that promote more sustainable ways of living in both developing and developed parts of the world. We are devoted to increasing collaboration and access to ICT in under-served communities, facilitating local content creation and disseminating and building bridges among digital and physical communities globally.

Vision

We envision the development of powerful networks empowered by ICT to develop local efforts, promote integrated and whole systems oriented approaches to sustainable development that will be prototyped through Multi-purpose Community and Unity Centers. Through the Centers and oneVillage Initiatives, we facilitates a community oriented development processes that empower local communities in both developed and developing regions of the world. The result will eventually lead to a rapid scaling of sustainable technologies that will address World Urgent Issues as part of a Concerted Global Effort.

Forty Million Hopefuls, a presentation given to the black congressional caucus in 2003 by OVF Founder Joy Tang was a plan to develop project to promote local economic self-sufficiency through entrepreneurship training. This effort eventually led to the development of OVF regional affiliates in the African countries where various projects are being designed and executed.

oneVillage Foundation is officially registered in Nigeria as Global Resources Information Technology Network (GRITEN) with Registration number: CAC/IT/NO 22671 and the major plan of OVF is to use Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to build complimentary relationships between developing and developed regions, while increasing the rate of sustainable

development. This includes economic development, social entrepreneurs training, health care, orphanage care and ICT augmented educational programmes and so on and so forth.

The oneVillage Foundation Initiatives is a comprehensive platform for sustainable economic development, built on six 'pillars', which are the foundation of oneVillage Initiative Ecosystem. The pillars are; **education, governance, economy, ecology, wellness & healthcare, and Culture & tradition.** Complementing the e-Learning and collaboration portal has resulted in the plan to developing Multi-purpose Community and Unity Centers as demo sites to highlight the benefits of this comprehensive approach to development.

Multi-purpose Community and Unity Centers which we also called the Open Digital Village (ODiV) is a physical convergence points for local community revitalization and improvement featuring the most relevant sustainable practices and technologies. (www.onevillagefoundation.org)

The Ibadan Open Digital Village(IODiV); ICTs for Education, Capacity-Building and Community Development

Abstract

The Ibadan Open Digital Village (IODiV) for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Capacity-Building and Community Development is an initiative of oneVillage Foundation (OVF) which is focused on using ICTs tools to educate and organize people for both personal life skills and sustainable economic development which includes improving the lives of students and staffs of major training institutions, disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals and families, supporting local businesses and to building a sustainable economy using a combination of Open Source, Open Hardware and Wireless Technologies. There will be establishment of free wireless networks and internet access to schools and institutions in the project catchment's area which will increase access to information and knowledge on varied subjects, learning and research skills will also be improved

This paper demonstrate the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), including Open Digital Library (ODL) modules to support poverty alleviation and rural and urban development, promote and increase literacy levels, to develop a sustainable and open society and demonstrate the viability of low cost wireless solutions to aid in community development. The availability of trained university and polytechnic lecturers within the center will greatly enhance the potential to make open schooling available to significant percentages of the students in need of it. The model is transferable to other developing nations of the Commonwealth countries.

Executive Summary:

Developing countries are faced with the challenges of youth unemployment and poverty. This crisis is crystallized by weaknesses in educational systems and a failure to incorporate Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills acquisition into youth development programs. Without the proper skills to survive in a technologically literate world, school dropouts and even graduates are vastly unemployed.

Furthermore, the lives of many African youth particularly those with high unemployment rates are ingrained with poverty, violence and deprivation. Some African youths are forced to subsist as child soldiers or as participants in ethnic, religious and political violence. The scourge of AIDS has also orphaned thousands of children across the continent, leaving many vulnerable to exploitation and displacement. These young people have little hope of receiving a basic education, let alone gaining access to critical technology skills that can ensure better employment and a brighter future.

As a case study, Nigeria has been deeply affected by poverty, social unrest, and health-related challenges. Public schools are often the first to suffer when money is scarce. Pervasive corruption has also led to misuse of education funds. As a result, education at all levels is suffering in Nigeria and so are the lives of millions of young people. The problem of under-education in Nigeria runs deep in the general population. According to recent UNESCO estimates that about 25% of males and 41% of females ages 15 and over are functionally illiterate in Nigeria. And while these percentages are expected to drop slowly over the next five years, that still leaves over 22 million people without basic literacy skills.

Very few percentage of young people have used computers or know how to apply technology as a tool for learning in their daily lives and to improve their communities. A small number of fortunate schools have one or two computers, but often the computers go unused because they are outdated, broken, or teachers do not have adequate skills to teach the technology. Unless they have real and frequent interaction with computers, children are simply too far removed from practical reality to gain concrete technological skills and learning. In addition, technology training and courses are not part of the educational curriculum in the early stages of primary and secondary school levels, leaving a key window in early and catalytic learning development unopened. Broader community access to technology is also lacking in Nigeria.

The cost of using technology tools in “roadside cyber-café” is prohibitive (the average monthly cost is about \$40 for 20 hours of Internet service²) given that the average gross national income (GNI) per capita is only \$260.3 Very few people use computers outside work or school. Out of the over 150 million people in Nigeria, only 6.6 people per thousand have personal computers and only 200,000 are Internet connected. For a country of its size and international importance, Nigeria has a long way to go before its youth receive the technological education they need and deserve in order to be economically competitive in the global marketplace. Perhaps more than ever, Nigeria’s young people need new opportunities to gain access to technology as a tool for improvement

of themselves and their communities. Because the government is not always able to meet people’s educational needs, the aggregate efforts by non-governmental organizations have begun to “fill in” in small ways to link youth, education and technology. This paper describes one of such efforts called “The Ibadan Open Digital Village”

Description/Background:

The Ibadan Open Digital Village (IODiV) is the replication of our first of its kind Open Digital Village in Ghana, called “Winneba Open Digital Village (WODiV)”.

The Ibadan Open Digital Village (IODiV) is a community focused project to use Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to educate and organize people for both personal life skills and sustainable economic development; improve the lives of students and staff of major training institutions; disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals and families; support local businesses and to build a sustainable economy using a combination of Open Source, Open Hardware and Wireless Technologies. This project specifically provides connectivity and local access to ICTs; focus on ICTs for Education and Community Development through the use of Wireless Technologies to give access to the academia, students, health posts, nurses and police training institutions, small and local businesses and the general community.

Vision/Theme:

African youth are demanding a voice in society and are using Information and Communication Technologies to empower themselves. Building on the momentum of similar and previous efforts,

we believe the key to addressing the African conundrum is through community scale development strategies. Open Digital Villages (ODiVs) promotes better ways of living and give the underprivileged the opportunity to fulfill their dreams and aspirations through the development of a network of telecenters deployed throughout Nigeria.

Concept:

ODiV Multi-purpose Centers facilitates effective ICTs augmented sustainable development programs (Holistic ICT for EcoLiving). IODiV focuses on an integrated human network oriented approach that refines techniques and processes for effective deployment. This includes evaluating technologies and approaches for their usability, applicability and performance in relation to the greater Nigeria as consistent with OVF vision and mission. This is being done through the effective integration of web 2.0 tools such as wikis, blogs and social networking platforms. Such a process maximizes the potential of technology for local use and makes sure that large scale technology roll outs are appropriate to local needs.

The project started up in Ghana and first place of replication is Ibadan, Nigeria while the region of intervention for the program will be through-out Africa Africa

The project is first being replicated in Ibadan where the premier University (University of Ibadan) and one of the first generation Polytechnic in Nigeria, The Polytechnic Ibadan and other institutions like, School of Hygiene, College of Education- where teachers are being trained, University of Ibadan College Hospital- where medical doctors are being trained and resides. In addition to these, IODiV is located in a center of Ibadan and surrounded by private secondary schools and colleges where the leaders of tomorrow are groomed.

Methodology:

[One Village Foundation Initiative \(OVI\)](#) is an [Assets Based development model](#) (ABCD) that identifies local needs and designs systems that address those needs. OVI evolves this process by developing a highly integrated development model that promotes local self-reliance, while also increasing competitiveness within the global economy. This includes a Holistic ICT for Development model that designs the relevant ICT infrastructure to enable this process.

We work closely with our partners using the center to analyze local areas of needs and opportunities, particularly those relevant to the partners and stakeholder groups. The initial infrastructure at the center will be utilized to provide basic analysis and development services for these groups as well as provide opportunities for talented youth at local institutions to excel using these tools.

A series of seminars will be convened at the IODiV and will be a multistage community outreach program:

- Explain OVF and our partners agreement and what we seek to achieve.
- Weave various community inputs into a development framework for multistakeholder collaboration
- Identify Asset and Opportunity Clusters and how the center can move the process forward to realize the alliance's goals
- Complete report on preliminary opportunity statement on how center will be used to reach those goals identified by the community.

Financial Sustainability:

The center will be sustainable through the development of income generating social enterprises that deliver useful ICT services to the community increasing the regions economic productivity and competitiveness within the global economy.

Goals:

IODiV demonstrates the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), including Open Digital Library (ODL) modules to support poverty alleviation and rural and urban development; promote and increase literacy level to develop a sustainable and open society; and demonstrate the viability of low cost wireless solutions to aid in community development. Specifically;

- Develop ODiVs as centers for youth to learn basic technology skills, software applications and share best practices;
- Demonstrate ODiVs as hubs that expedites the process of replicating sustainable human habitats and production systems;
- Compliment and support the national human capacity development efforts by building a platform to absorb and develop individual talents and contributions using ICT, for the realization of Nigeria's vision 2020;
- Operate as model for social enterprises development in Nigeria and Africa;
- Promote access and develop confidence in Open Source Software applications in Emerging Markets.

Target Groups:

This project is a multi-stakeholder partnership focused on the youth, who are the future of all nations, involving universities, polytechnics, colleges of educations and secondary schools students, NGOs and the private sector as well as local and national government officials in Nigeria.

Long Term Vision:

An Open Digital Village (ODiV) is considered an early stage [Multipurpose Community \(Unity\) Center](#). We anticipate that the Holistic ICT approach will develop a more integrated approach to sustainable development that includes the development of Demo site for sustainable technologies. Within this structure social enterprises promoting sustainable technologies relevant to local needs will be promoted and cultivated.

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TechKnowLogia, July - September 2002 © Knowledge Enterprise, Inc.