



TakingITGlobal

Creating Local Connections West Africa Final Report

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**Creating Local Connections West Africa (CLCWA)
Final Report**

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Introduction

I. Executive Summary

Young people around the world live in an opportune moment in history – never before have there been the collective will amongst everyone to make a positive impact on their local communities. Their desire to make a difference is driven by their energy and enthusiasm, but their ability to actually make change is limited. The capacity of young people needs to be built and supported by networks – those that harness the power of information and communications technologies, and perhaps even more importantly, those that exist on the ground and connect local institutions together, to address the challenges of the local communities.

Through Phase I of Creating Local Connection West Africa (CLCWA), TakingITGlobal established a project that addressed the particular nuances of the West African situation. The activity cycles in each country have produced the foundations upon which greater youth engagement can flourish. As more and more young West Africans become comfortable dialoguing about such themes as the emergence from conflict, advancement of democracy, economic empowerment, reducing stigma and raising awareness about HIV/AIDS, their ability to do something about them will improve. There exists a gap where young West Africans have the passion to make things better but do not have the ability to make things happen. They need to be inspired, informed and involved; CLCWA helps to close this gap, by increasing the awareness of issues, and engaging and empowering the West African youth community.

Historically, young people have not been engaged as active members of society, yet the potential exists within each of them. The West African situation is a particularly trying one, where conflicts and historical inequities have made the climate difficult for positive change. Today there is a groundswell among youth that recognize that the potential for change rests in their hand. On TakingITGlobal's online community, there are over 21,000 West Africans using TakingITGlobal's tools and resources to achieve their objectives – this represents nearly 10% of overall membership. Although this is an astounding number, the reality is that lack of internet access and/or technological knowhow is excluding thousands of youth who share the same passion for positive change. However, while bridging this digital divide is an important component of developing West African youth's ability to make a difference, the very act of engaging around issues that affect their daily lives is a step in the right direction. Networking and learning in an offline environment will pay dividends, increase self-confidence, and will have just as much impact in the local communities. TakingITGlobal's primary unique contribution to addressing these common challenges lies in the Creating Local Connections model itself. The model, customized for relevance to each local implementation context, combines: information and communications technology capacity building, community events, youth-media creation and civic engagement. The model sits of three universal, basic premises. The first premise is the realization of the potential of young people as development actors through the leveraging of information and communications technologies. The second premise is the need to inspire, inform and involve youth in global challenges while simultaneously bridging urban and rural divides locally. The model's third universal, basic premise is the leveraging and networking of existing local level youth engagement efforts and infrastructure. The inclusion of this premise aims to avoid both the creation of any long term local dependency on the project and the inclusion, rather than duplication, of existing efforts.

II. Project Objectives

Prior to CLCWA, TakingITGlobal had conducted research into the possibilities afforded to young people through digital and technological improvements, and in particular the pre-existing situation in West Africa. In August 2003, we published a report on the National Information Society Youth Campaigns, a worldwide movement designed to "ground the WSIS [World Summit on the Information Society] in local activities ... building local movements to collaboratively work with their peers to create digital opportunity."¹ Youth in 15 countries organized and executed a series of workshops, interactive radio programs, media outreach and other activities to promote the idea of a national youth platform on the information society, as well as raise awareness of youth participation in the Summit itself. Both Sierra Leone and Nigeria were part of this campaign, and youth from each country offered their thoughts and opinions on topics such as the role of youth in this global campaign, community development in a post-conflict area and creating youth employment opportunities.

This process helped TakingITGlobal lay the groundwork for what to expect when implementing a project like CLCWA. It was also critical in formulating a needs assessment of West Africa:

- increase employment and entrepreneurship among youth
- bridge social fragmentation based on culture, religion and economic status
- provide education for development of marketable skills among youth
- stabilize existing social, economic and political climates
- increase youth participation in civic life
- include voices of youth in societal dialogues
- balance consistent gender equality
- improve the physical health of youth
- reduce corruption among decision makers
- acknowledge, reduce and address root causes of xenophobia

The selection of the implementation countries (Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone) was made with recommendations from OSIWA, as well as consultation with various stakeholders and partners of TakingITGlobal. These were chosen for a number of reasons:

- **Emergence from conflict:** Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire and parts of Nigeria have suffered horrendously from civil war. Youth were heavily implicated in these conflicts, and now need psychological and social support to rebuild their lives and communities;
- **Building bridges:** Disputes between ethnic, socio-economic, religious, and political groups fueled tension within the region. Media provides an important a space for dialogue among these groups;
- **Development of Democracy:** Development of civil society groups, including youth groups, will prove critical for public engagement, effective policy development, and accountability;
- **Economic development:** The region remains economically disempowered, with growing youth unemployment. Keys to economic development employment include: good governance, primary education, entrepreneurship and technology training;

¹ "Realizing the potential of youth to create digital opportunities," TakingITGlobal, August 2003.

- **Addressing HIV/AIDS:** HIV/AIDS deeply affects communities across West Africa. Young women especially are marginalized and affected. They must be engaged in combating both the spread of the disease and stigma surrounding.

We believe that young West Africans have the passion to make things better but require increased capacity to affect greater change and have long lasting impact in their communities. They need to be inspired, informed and involved; CLCWA helps to close this gap, by increasing the awareness of issues, and engaging and empowering the West African youth community. TakingITGlobal's local engagement strategy rests on three basic principles: building youth capacity, strengthening networks and increasing locally created content. CLCWA would do exactly this, with an added emphasis on improving the information and communications technology skills of youth.

III. Implementation & Management

Early on in the development of CLCWA, it was evident that regional coordination would be vital for the project's success. To organize and manage teams in five separate countries, while at the same time liaising with TakingITGlobal's Canadian-based staff required an individual with experience in both areas of the world, as well as familiarity with the work that TakingITGlobal hoped to achieve. To that end, the selection of CLCWA Regional Coordinator, who would be based in Mali, was an apt choice (for more on his background and experience, please refer to Section 5: Supporting Documents).



First planning meeting between TakingITGlobal & host organizations

Another important step taken by TakingITGlobal was the selection of the national host organizations – not only were they expected to have the capacity to house and support the CLCWA Country Coordinators, but a requirement was that their mandates emphasized the role that young West Africans can (and should) play in addressing development issues. The first planning meeting in October 2006 was critical in identifying the potential partners, as well as including them in the project development process. It was clear from the beginning that the selected partners would be well suited to carry out the project. Background information on each host organization can be found in Section 5: Supporting Documents.

To select the Country Coordinators who would be responsible for the local implementation of CLCWA's objectives, TakingITGlobal turned to its West African membership base, which numbered at 11,386 in October 2006. Through a transparent yet intensive process, five young individuals were selected on the basis of their existing qualifications and skills, their prior experience with project management, as well as a demonstrated enthusiasm for addressing the challenges in their respective countries by leveraging the potential of information and communications technologies. All five were offered a 12-month term to become a part of the CLCWA team, while also representing TakingITGlobal in their countries.

The Country Coordinators displayed initiative in securing a support team for the implementation of the project in their respective countries. In cases where geography and distances made it difficult for a coordinator to reach out to all parts of the country (such as in Nigeria), it was obvious that a team of young, motivated West Africans would be perfect for conducting the various activities. Additionally, the

amount of initial preparation, relationship building and project implementation could not have realistically completed by the Country Coordinators on their own, especially on a part-time basis. Each local team was composed of youth volunteers, and was critical in the success of the project implementation in the respective countries.

Between May and July 2007, the Regional Coordinator embarked on a site tour, familiarizing himself with the local nuances and realities of each country, and carried out promotional activities, met potential local partners and conducted an orientation and training session with the Country Coordinators and their teams. With an average of 2 weeks in each country, there was plenty of time to address issues such as how to adapt the general activity cycle, identifying and meeting potential partners and supporters, and developing an effective plan to ensure smooth communication between the CLCWA team.

It was clear during the site visits that the original timeline proposed would have to be modified to the local realities and nuances of each country. Despite their enthusiasm, it was vital to ensure that the appropriate partnerships and networks were in place so that the flexible activity cycle would be able to proceed.



Regional coordinator with Africa Peace Child Initiative in Liberia

Beyond the on-the-ground coordinators, an Advisory Board was formed which would guide and provide support when needed. Composed of local and international youth leaders, they would be drawing on their experiences to provide context and mentorship for the CLCWA team, and in particular, the Regional Coordinator. Information on the Advisory Board can be found in Section 5: Supporting Documents.



ICT Workshop in Guinea

As CLCWA was designed to impart knowledge and skills around communications technologies and given that the team was spread out across six countries, internal communications centred around online chats and emails, along with the use of TakingITGlobal's platform to share documents and collaborate on the project.

The following table outlines the various milestones reached during the implementation of CLCWA:

Conception and Project Development	
September 2006 to November 2006	Identification of host organizations Consultation with partners on program components Hiring of Regional Coordinator
Preparation	
February 2007 to May 2007	Memoranda of Understanding signed with host organizations Hiring of Country Coordinators Online and offline orientation for CLCWA Team Workshop & Curriculum Development Development of activities, reporting and evaluation processes and project-related working documents
Project Implementation	
April 2007 to July 2008	Ongoing Activity Cycle launched – see next section for details
Evaluation	
January 2007 August 2007 April 2008	Progress reports with Country Coordinators Interim project report Final project evaluation and report
May 2008 to August 2008	External report from IISD commissioned

Toward the end of 2007, the five Country Coordinators were asked to assess their progress, with particular attention paid towards examining their specific needs to ensure their projects would be placed on a path towards continued success. Their findings are highlighted in Section 4 of this report. Additionally, an external evaluation was conducted at the end of the implementation period (June/July 2008) by the International Institute for Communication and Development, in order to objectively assess the success of CLCWA and recommend future directions.

Project Achievements & Impact

I. Activities description

Each country was given an activity cycle which included a number of components. The CLCWA Team was tasked with determining when and where they would roll out these activities given the realities they faced in their respective countries.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Capacity Building

TakingITGlobal partnered with Kabissa, a network of African civil society organizations that integrate technology into their work, to develop and deliver three unique series of ICT workshops. Kabissa was largely responsible for the framework, lesson plans and materials required for the workshops, as well as adapting the curriculum once the first round of trainings was completed. The three workshops were:

- ICT Basics: No prior technical knowledge needed; focus was on learning how to use a computer, the Internet and Microsoft Windows software;
- ICT & Leadership: Basic capacity with ICT's needed; focus was on developing heightened leadership abilities through existing technology-related resources and tools;
- ICT & Entrepreneurship: Basic capacity with ICT's needed; focus was on building business development and strategic planning capabilities by leveraging existing technology-related skills.

All workshops operated without tuition costs to participants and with an aim of gender balance between participants. Each series ran for between 4 and six full days and were facilitated by youth selected by the Country Coordinators from within their networks.

The aim was to increase technology awareness and skill levels while developing peer-training capacity among participants. Thus while delivering necessary skills, each workshop operated on a train-the-trainer model; participants were expected to walk away with the ability and confidence to teach their peers.



Demonstrating how to access TakingITGlobal.org to workshop participants

<p>ICT Basics curriculum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part 1: Introduction to Computer Basics • Part 2: Office Software • Part 3: Internet Basics <p>URL: http://www.tigurl.org/clcwa-ict1 (English)</p>	<p>This in-depth document (126 pages) was taught the basic skills and knowledge needed to use technology. 15 modules spanned the 3-part workshop, which included 8 handouts for distribution.</p>
<p>ICT and Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part 1: Finding Ways to be a Leader • Part 2: Creating an Action Plan • Part 3: Implementing Your Plan <p>URL: http://www.tigurl.org/clcwa-ict2 (English)</p>	<p>This 78-page curriculum walked participants through the methods of using technology to enhance their leadership skills and capacity. Three case studies were included, along with 7 modules and 10 handouts.</p>
<p>ICT and Entrepreneurship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part 1: Entrepreneurship Basics • Part 2: Creating Your Road Map • Part 3: Getting Feedback on Your Plan <p>URL: http://www.tigurl.org/clcwa-ict3 (English)</p>	<p>At 86 pages, this curriculum examined the various steps to incorporate technology into youth-led entrepreneurship projects. With 7 modules and 10 handouts, this workshop also looked at Web 2.0 technology.</p>

Regional Networking of Youth

Networking opportunities – whether virtually or in-person – were a vital component of CLCWA. A number of activities that focused on connecting young West Africans were facilitated:

- **Online Newsletters:** Distributed via an e-mail listserv, issues included opinion pieces, event announcements, action-inspiring projects and other news submitted by youth.
- **Open Forums:** Inclusive and interactive spaces for 10 to 35 youth to discuss and plan actions around common challenges.
- **National Youth Meetings:** Held over a weekend, these face-to-face opportunities allowed youth to cross-reference and leverage existing assets. Between 20 and 60 participants would meet for inspiring keynote speeches, facilitated networking and skill building sessions.
- **Country Sites:** Each Country Coordinator was given the responsibility of updating content on their respective country page on the TakingITGlobal online network. These pages included listings for organizations, events, announcements for professional and volunteer opportunities, and provided a portal where user generated content was aggregated.

Country Page URLs

<http://cotedivoire.tigweb.org>
<http://guinea.tigweb.org>
<http://liberia.tigweb.org>
<http://nigeria.tigweb.org>
<http://sierraleone.tigweb.org>



<http://projects.tigweb.org/clcwa>

In addition to these specific activities, a particular emphasis was placed on the TakingITGlobal online platform (www.takingitglobal.org), which acted as the main focal point for communication and general networking. The CLCWA Team not only promoted the use of the online tools and resources, but also contributed content detailing many of the success of the project. The blogs, event photos and other reports were displayed on the respective country sites and the corresponding TIG Project pages.



Presenting CLCWA @ Global Forum on Youth & ICTD

ICT Advocacy

In the original project proposal, there was a component on research on accessibility and connectivity in each of the countries. It was clear right from the start that this would prove to be

difficult to complete; the situations in each of the five countries were unique and conducting a worthwhile investigation would tax our limited resources. Additionally, TakingITGlobal and its Country Coordinators had little to no experience in completing such a survey, and it was also evident that there were many organizations (both at the local and regional level) that were better suited to work on such a project.

As a result, CLCWA focused on ICT support and advocacy – an area where TakingITGlobal has had experience in, having worked with WSIS and UN Global Alliance for ICT for Development (UN-GAID). In September 2007, the Regional Coordinator presented CLCWA as a case study and best

practice at the Global Forum on Youth and ICTD in Geneva. Additionally, the work that TakingITGlobal has done with WSIS and the National Youth Campaigns illustrated that placing the responsibility of ICT training into the hands of capable youth would enable greater sharing of knowledge. Thus a training-of-the-trainers curriculum was also developed as part of our partnership with Kabissa:

<p>Training of Trainers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part 1: Training Skills • Part 2: Reviewing TIG course content • Part 3: Preparing for Your Workshop • Part 4: Training Fair <p>URL: http://www.tigurl.org/clcwa-tot</p>	<p>This curriculum was designed to impart skills to West African youth to deliver the ICT training workshops. At 37 pages, and 11 handouts, this intense seminar gave participants all the skills and tools necessary to educate their peers.</p>
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Thanks to the youth who were trained, other young West Africans or organizations would benefit from employing ICTs in their development work and being connected into a greater network. These experiences could therefore be inputted into case studies document that can be used by ICT advocates. Each CLCWA Country Team thus had the opportunity to connect with their respective Ministry of ICTs to advocate that access to technology and connectivity are vital for youth-focused organizations to be successful in delivering their programming.

II. Activity Cycle Metrics

Most of the achievements and outputs from the implementation of CLCWA can be found at the project page on TakingITGlobal: <http://projects.takingitglobal.org/clcwa>. More specific details are provided below.

Workshop Outputs

	Total	Côte d'Ivoire	Guinea	Liberia	Nigeria	Sierra Leone
Training Hours	1,236	168	54	300	264	450
Participants	486	121	30	51	76	208
Reach	1,372	300	150	272	350	300

Country-specific achievements

Activity	Number of instances by country				
	Côte d'Ivoire	Guinea	Liberia	Nigeria	Sierra Leone
ICT Basics	6	1	3	4	4
ICT and Leadership	7	1	3	4	4
ICT and Entrepreneurship	7	1	3	4	4
Open Forums	3	3	4	4	6
Live Chats	2	0	0	3	0
National Youth Meetings	2	0	1	1	1
Offline Newsletter	5	4	4	5	5
Online Newsletter	5	1	4	4	2
ICT Advocacy	1	1	6	1	1
Award process	1	1	1	1	2

Online Community metrics (as of December 2008)						
	Regional	Côte d'Ivoire	Guinea	Liberia	Nigeria	Sierra Leone
Members	16,505	901	203	452	14,442	507
Membership Growth, 04/2006 to 04/2008 (%)	49%	178%	332%	128%	58%	87%
Organizations	1,382	36	19	60	1,178	89
Events	722	15	6	25	644	32
Blog posts	13,380	406	357	162	12,366	89
Opportunities	37	2	1	5	23	6
Country site pageviews	2,687,102	131,879	36,192	49,532	2,221,507	86,113

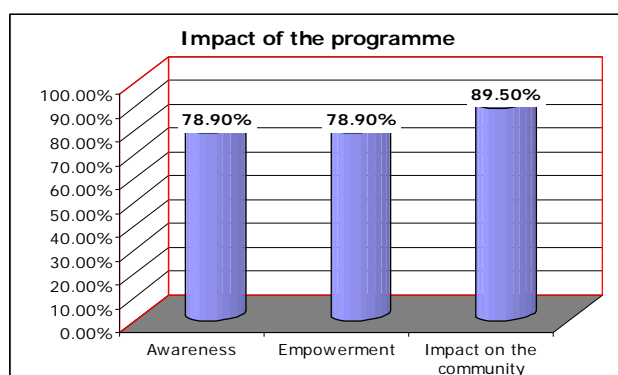
III. Regional Impact

One of the primary goals of CLCWA was to offer young project leaders and participants the opportunity to gain valuable skills and abilities. This was certainly achieved through the various activities run by the Country Coordinators and their national teams. An early challenge encountered by the CLCWA Team was the experience gap facing the Country Coordinators, particularly around time management and project coordination. Nonetheless, this was quickly overcome with the Regional Coordinator's efforts to share resources, offering direct support, monitoring and suggesting strategies. As a result, the Team was prepared to meet the ambitious targets that TakingITGlobal set in its original proposal. While the project outputs might have been lower than expected, it should be noted that the attempt to establish a program that emphasized youth empowerment through technology and peer-to-peer learning was largely successful, thus laying the foundation for long-term impact.

CLCWA can thus be considered a new type of regional development project with its emphasis on ICT training and the strengthening of local networks. What was pioneering in the implementation of this project was the lack of effective communication between the project countries; never before have youth from Nigeria and Sierra Leone, or Anglophones and Francophones, reacted to the events in neighbouring countries and connected with each other using ICTs. These cross-border interactions were very encouraging and have inspired other regions and countries in Africa to initiating their own versions of CLCWA.

"At the end of the training I learnt that leadership may be defined as speaking, listening and acting in ways that mobilizing self and others to take effective action to realize dreams, vision and possibility."
Idiku Ukpo, Nigeria

"I like this program because , as many young Liberia children without computer knowledge being trained through this project free , it is a blessing for we Liberian children and a very good opportunity that TakingITGlobal is offering us young people , this organization also is really bringing youth together and imparting knowledge in them."
Joshua Zeahwon, Liberia



TakingITGlobal did try to measure the impact of the CLCWA project by asking participants to fill in specific questionnaires related to their perception of *the impact on the community*, on *awareness* and on *empowerment*. Although only answers provided by Nigerian youth were collected, the findings do give some indication of the impact of the project. Overall, the consensus that each indicator was seen as having great impact, with *“impact on the community”* seen to have the greatest effect.

Over 78% of youth surveyed mentioned that they did feel empowered and were confident in their ability to able to impart their newly acquired skills onto their peers. Additionally, participants felt that CLCWA would ultimately contribute to greater awareness on issues related to the advancement of democracy, economic empowerment and reducing stigma and raising awareness about HIV/AIDS.

Beyond evaluating the impact of the CLCWA project, participants ranked their satisfaction with the various components of the activity cycles. Generally their experience with the components were largely positive; the offline activities that received the greatest support were the training opportunities and youth meetings, while participants were most satisfied with the email list and projects database online.



The Commissioner for Information, Cross River State

A positive step taken by the coordinators is their engagement of national governmental organizations and institutions which increased their ability to disseminate information to marginalized youth and communities. Recent observations have shown that knowledge sharing processes are useful, and with proper training, coordinators can efficiently cover a wider area. This was particularly beneficial for the ICT advocacy work that many of the coordinators undertook. Newsletters, reports, and announcements of local opportunities shared online and offline demonstrated that these means of communication were effective in building the capacity of youth to become more effective contributors to society.

A number of promotional efforts by the country teams have provided the initiative with national and regional attention, which in turn adds weight to its reputability. This was a factor that the original proposal had not anticipated and ensuring constant awareness amongst young West Africans will be a priority as the project cycle continues. Key stakeholders, government officials, and policy and decision makers are now showing interest in the initiative, as many are getting involved at their various levels. In Sierra Leone for example, the Minister of Communications had the will to provide a communal space to further encourage the continuation of ICT training and promotion of the use technology to drive development. In Côte d'Ivoire, the Minister of ICT wants to apply the CLCWA concept to a nation-wide government program.

"I had always looked at the computer as a luxury and computer literacy as a matter for industrialized and highly developed countries that has no place in an upcoming democracy like my country Sierra Leone. ... CLCWA-SL has opened the flood gates of appreciating the versatility of ICTs and its importance to developing countries ... Just going through the basic technical trainings has whetted my appetite to delve in more into the information communications technology business."
Raffieu Gibao Mambu, Sierra Leone

Country Profiles

I. Côte d'Ivoire

TIG Coordinator: Kouakou Niamien Kouao	Host Organization: Worldwide Entrepreneurship Campaigners' Network (WECaN)
Project Page: http://projects.takingitglobal.org/llaocotedivoire Country Site: http://cotedivoire.takingitglobal.org	Representative: Jules Yao Yao Description: To leverage the capacity of Ivorian youth through ICTs, leadership and entrepreneurship; to bring a concrete positive and measurable impact on youth and their local, national and regional communities
Membership (April 2008): 928 Gender Breakdown: 69 % male, 31% female Age Breakdown: 10 – 20 yrs: 2 % 20 – 30 yrs: 50 % 30 – 40 yrs: 34 %	

In Côte d'Ivoire the challenges in terms of technological infrastructure were few and far between. Reasonable accessibility can be found within the majority of the youth communities, even within certain marginalized communities. The few issues that were highlighted were of possible outreach mechanisms, the decentralization of activities, and the high cost of running such activities with the allotted budget. Ivoirians, greatly influenced by the French, tend to follow certain protocols and formalities, which resulted in some budgetary challenges with for this grassroots initiative. As a result, specific activity budget lines such as transportation and lodging needed to be trimmed, yet would not affect the implementation of the activity cycle especially those focused on capacity building.

One of the greatest accomplishments was that the host organization completely adopted the CLCWA activities as their main programming, with a specific emphasis on entrepreneurship. The national project team decided after reflection that the needs of youth to develop capacity building opportunities in leadership and entrepreneurship was paramount, and thus emphasis was placed on these components and activities. Months-long training series were implemented (instead of the required 5-day events), and micro-grants valued between \$600 and \$800 were offered by the Ministry of Customs to participants who developed business plans during the entrepreneurship workshops.

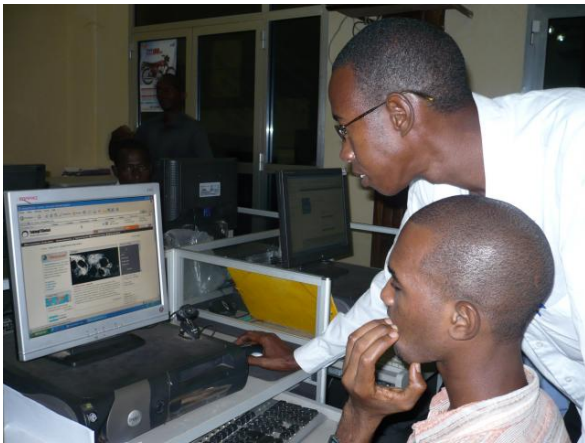


CLC West Africa in Côte d'Ivoire launches

The team's other accomplishments certainly comes from their incomparable vision of the project, having engaged many mainstream media outlets, hosted numerous promotional or partnership development meetings, and trained 10 dedicated young trainers for capacity building activities. Finally, they have engaged serious processes with very important decision-makers and entities, including the Canadian Embassy, the Ministers of ICTs and Youth and Sports and the National Youth Council. The Ministry of ICTs has also been discussing a plan to create 8 telecentres that would operate under the CLCWA template.

II. Guinea

TIG Coordinator: Malick Diallo	Host Organization: Les Amis du Futur (LAF)
Project Page: http://projects.takingitglobal.org/clcguinee	Representative: Mohamed Camara Description: To develop, within the local youth community, new moral and civic values along with good citizenship qualities; contribute to a durable and constant community development while reinforcing solidarity, fraternity and friendship among local and international youth.
Country Site: http://guinea.takingitglobal.org	
Membership (April 2008): 206 Gender Breakdown: 82 % male, 18% female Age Breakdown: 10 – 20 yrs: 7 % 20 – 30 yrs: 63 % 30 – 40 yrs: 23 %	



Learning about TakingITGlobal

Guinea was an example where the need for major modifications to the original framework for implementation was considerably reduced. One reason for this was the extensive network and experience of the host partner, Les Amis du Futur, which were assets the Country Coordinator used to avoid spending time, energy and finances on establishing operations and outreach capacity. A well-regarded reputation and 12 satellite offices across the country made implementing CLCWA in Guinea an easier task. The country's connectivity can be seen as satisfactory; Internet access can be found outside of the capital Conakry but is not available consistently in every corner of the country. The contributing factor towards success was the highly involved team in place supporting the Country Coordinator.

The team's main accomplishment was a very thorough and coordinated media campaign through national television, radio and several newspapers, which resulted in mass interest for the project from youth to ministers. With regards to its own sustainability, the team approached institutions that work with youth or provide the country with technologies for support. Meetings were held with Mouna Internet, Merit International, and the Ministers of ICTs and Youth and Sports.

The CLCWA Guinea team was also comparably large and worked well with each other. The 12 members met every Saturday for at least half a day in structured and organized meetings. Each member was assigned a specific role – partners, networking, marketing, coordinating activities – and each took pride in their specific tasks.

III. Liberia

TIG Coordinator: Alvin N. Poure	Host Organization: African Peace Child Initiative – Liberia (APCI)
Project Page: http://projects.takingitglobal.org/clcwa_liberia Country Site: http://liberia.takingitglobal.org	Representative: Fred Domingo Barlue Description: To create a better future for the children and young people of Liberia and Africa; activities run along skill building in literacy, entrepreneurship, promotion of peace, domestic violence, sexual health and conflict resolution.
Membership (April 2008): 460 Gender Breakdown: 80 % male, 20% female Age Breakdown: 10 – 20 yrs: 5 % 20 – 30 yrs: 45 % 30 – 40 yrs: 31 %	

Liberia presented a unique opportunity for TakingITGlobal, as the country is still re-establishing itself after a long civil war; the time was ripe for a youth-driven socially-oriented project to be implemented. A lot of attention is placed on the country, particularly by international organizations with limitless funding sources eager to engage and work with young people, which also presents many potential partnerships for CLCWA.



Open Forum on Democracy

Still, a country still recovering from many years of conflict presents serious and tangible barriers, from a lack of stable structures producing electricity to a lack of a communications and technological infrastructure. Access is very limited, expensive and centralized in the capital Monrovia, while there is a critical lack of knowledge and skills among youth. Thus a primary concern for the national team was to provide a telecentre where training and cheap Internet access could be provided. The physical location was jointly funded by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Mission for Liberia's Short Impact Project. The majority of the CLCWA project funds for Liberia were thus spent on providing the hardware for this telecentre, allowing the team to carry out its activity cycle.

Overall, Liberia probably faced the most challenges with CLCWA, however there is a strong sense of hope that it will eventually succeed. Despite only having 4 members, the country team showed proactivity and understanding of their role considering the challenges and coped well. Liberian youth are anxious to gain skills in order to take part in the redevelopment of their nation. They will be the driving force of this particular CLCWA implementation. Presently, their main partners and collaborators are the Federation of Liberian Youth, minister of youth and sports, YOCADS, YMACA and YWCA.

IV. Nigeria

TIG Coordinator: Jerry Chibueze Nwigwe	Host Organization: Paradigm Initiative Nigeria (PIN)
Project Page: http://projects.takingitglobal.org/clwestafrica-nigeria	Representative: Gbenga Sesan Description: To help deliver ICT for socio-economic opportunities in Nigeria; has set standards in ICT education, telecentre support, ICT applications in rural areas, and other ICT4D interventions in Nigeria.
Country Site: http://nigeria.takingitglobal.org	
Membership (April 2008): 14,548 Gender Breakdown: 79 % male, 21% female Age Breakdown: 10 – 20 yrs: 4 % 20 – 30 yrs: 54 % 30 – 40 yrs: 28 %	

Similar to the Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria is a vast, populous country with remarkably developed infrastructure. People are active and involved, and have nation-wide connectivity and access to information and communication technologies, all of which have been influential in this particular implementation's success. The country also benefited from an existing TakingITGlobal membership community, which allowed the creation of a committed and involved team of CLCWA volunteer ambassadors. This proved extremely valuable for the coordination team to reach out to youth from all over the country, while at the same time implementing some of the specific activities in their localized regions. As expected, the Nigerian implementation was by far the most active with the greatest impact, and was completed as originally envisioned.

This support network alleviated the pressures on the Nigeria team, so much so that they were extremely successful in finding concrete workable solutions for any challenge presented to them. Additionally, young Nigerians tend to be very proactive and demonstrated plenty of initiative; for instance, they quickly secured practically all their venues for upcoming activities, trained over 60 youth for the ICT Basics workshops, and began developing a very promising partnership with MTN, Nigeria's most important telecom company. The potential partnership would involve using the CLCWA model in 120 ICT-connected classrooms across the country.



Breakout session at CLCWA Nigeria National Meeting

V. Sierra Leone

TIG Coordinator: Sylvanus Murray	Host Organization: Peacelinks Sierra Leone
Project Page: http://projects.takingitglobal.org/CLCWA-SL	Representative: Emerson Kamara Description: To ensure that young people realize their potentials and tap their untapped resources; empowering marginalised and mainstream young people to step forward for positive change in their communities.
Country Site: http://sierraleone.takingitglobal.org	
Membership (April 2008): 507 Gender Breakdown: 80 % male, 20% female Age Breakdown: 10 – 20 yrs: 6 % 20 – 30 yrs: 51 % 30 – 40 yrs: 23 %	

While Sierra Leone is also rebuilding within a post-war context, there are still large numbers of young West Africans who are motivated in seeing concrete changes in their country. One of the highlights of the Sierra Leone implementation is that the host organization has been operating in the country for 15 years, a marvel given the country's fractious history. This had awarded the Country Team great benefits including, the attention and involved from various high-level politicians, decision-makers and civil society actors who respect the reputation of Peacelinks. They are excited to become involved and have offered their moral, institutional and promise of financial support. One of the advantages that Peacelinks offered was that there were a number of drop-in centres for street kids that served as natural places to deliver CLCWA activities. The Minister of Information has proposed donating to an abandoned technology-enabled public information centre to be a venue for ongoing activities to help encourage measures of sustainability.

The Sierra Leone team also hosted a successful training-of-the-trainers event and participants have confirmed that they are transferring their newly gained technology skills to their peers. Where the original goal was 2 sessions, the team completed 4, with roughly 8 to 10 organizations per sessions. The challenge remains to ensure that there is a proper solution for them to keep practicing their skills. Through this, they were able to develop an impressive team of directly and indirectly involved local youth. As for their partnerships and collaborators, organizations include YEDEM, Peace Society, Movement for Non-Violence and Conflict Resolution, Children's Forum Network, Shine Foundation, Baguwa development organization, the Minister of Information, Long Bench Youth Development Organization and NYMCOS.

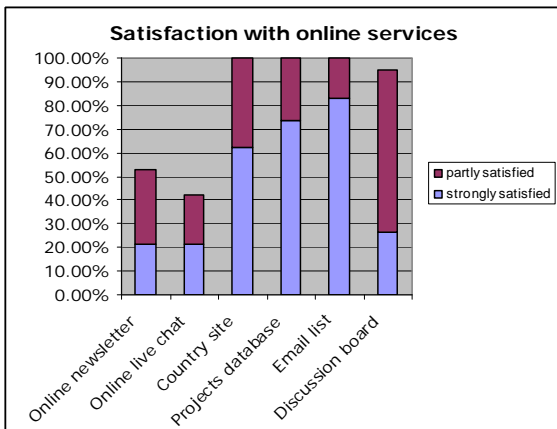


ICT Basics training in Sierra Leone

The Future of CLCWA?

I. Regional & National Needs

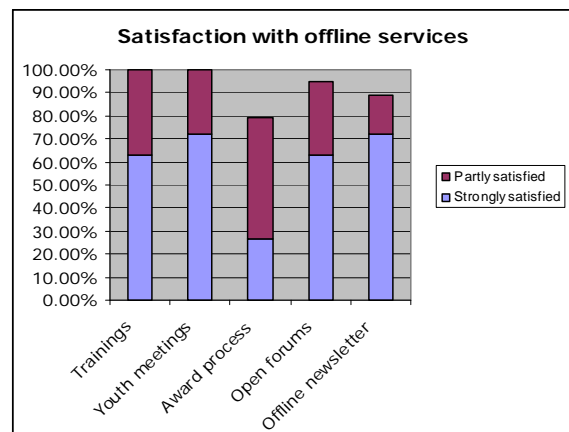
One of the clearest needs that existed on both regional and national levels is the lack of access to ICTs, and in particular, the affordability of such access. In the October/November 2007 progress reviews with the CLCWA Country Coordinators, a common refrain was that the existing limited infrastructure in West Africa could not support a CLCWA project to its fullest potential. Country Coordinators recommended providing laptops and a stipend for internet access to enable them to meet their responsibilities. Joining forces with internet cafes so that other West African youth may benefit from the activities was also suggested.



Coordinators also stressed the value of having face-to-face contact, not only with the Regional Coordinator, but with their fellow CLCWA project team members. A Regional Meeting where all country teams could share information and prepare for future activity cycles would be useful in addressing regional-wide concerns. This highlighted the necessity of having regional coordination to ensure that there is support for each country team.

An important factor that was not addressed early in the implementation was building a sense of ownership, particularly with the host organizations. It was clear the by the end of the project cycle, host organizations and participants felt that they had contributed to CLCWA; this needs to be incorporated earlier in future implementations of CLCWA.

One of the initial challenges that the National Coordinators faced was the considerable amount of time and energy that was needed for the promotion and publicity of CLCWA in their local and national communities. To aid this effort the regional team, alongside the TakingITGlobal staff, developed a series of supporting documents that permit the building of strong and lasting partnerships and collaborations to ensure sustainability and durability. This approach pointed to locally-oriented sustainability activities to be run from the ground to increase the sense of ownership. The project team recognized that local institutional sponsorship would give more weight to local actions. It would be also critical to tie CLCWA (as a regional project) to existing networks in the five countries such as ICT(4D) organizations or national/regional youth-networks. From the perspective of publicity, being associated with reputable organizations and network would greatly benefit the project.



II. Sustainability

To ensure self-sustainability for CLCWA and ensure its long-term impact on affecting the lives of young West Africans, the project will require additional support from a number of parties. Support will come in a variety of forms, from project funding to in-kind donations to government assistance, from in-kind support from local organizations to international development aid. Critical too will be the need for a self-sustainable business model that is flexible enough to be adapted to local realities, yet can be broadly applied to the regional level.



Regional Coordinator meets with Ministry of Youth & Sports, Côte d'Ivoire

To that end, negotiations have begun with the West African Youth Network to continue incubating and supporting the CLCWA project. With its presence in 12 of the 16 West African countries, WAYN offers the institutional support that TakingITGlobal was unable to provide, such as well-functioning back-office services and clear outlines on procedures, roles, tasks and responsibilities. With such an arrangement in place, the CLCWA team could focus on building a regional network, on securing partnerships with local actors and reaching out to greater numbers of West African youth.

The training-of-the-trainer workshops were one of the more successful series of activities, and allow for expanding reach and impact on West African youth. The participants were encouraged to share their knowledge and spread their newly learned skills to the wider local community.

III. Conclusion

The philosophy behind TakingITGlobal's approach in West Africa is that facilitated learning would lead to proactive action. The participants of CLCWA, the more youth in the five implementing countries would be able to initiate their own community improvement projects and become civically engaged. The benefits are endless considering that globally aware and self-motivated youth are vital and valuable members of society.

The two years of planning and implementing the CLCWA project demonstrated that offline engagement through workshops and face-to-face interaction does lead to greater involvement in an online setting. The resulting growth of activity on the TakingITGlobal.org website attests to that – the challenge will be to ensure that on-the-ground impact continues once the project concludes.

The seeds have been planted in the five countries – the response from governments and other interested parties has been overwhelmingly positive, and a sense of ownership has taken root. When youth are successful in collaborating with other national and regional stakeholders, they can serve as best practices for the greater global community of actively engaged youth around the world.

Through CLCWA, young people will be more entrepreneurial and sensitive to issues of HIV/AIDS and climate change. They will be further integrated into civil society, and play important roles in connecting local communities with national structures, and aligning national interests with regional realities. They will contribute to the development of an open West African society, one that is built on the principles of transparency and accountability.



Supporting Documents

I. Background Information: OSIWA

The Open Society Institute for West Africa (OSIWA), a private operating and grant making foundation is dedicated to promoting a West African society where transparency and accountability in governance, basic freedoms and the empowerment of citizen prevail. OSIWA supports and advocates for initiatives that promote Open Society values in West Africa. OSIWA's principal aim/niche is to build capacity of West African civil society and government institutions through support to catalytic and innovative initiatives and to advocate for Open Society ideals. OSIWA's strategy combines three methodological approaches in its programs: grants to NGOs to execute projects, implementation of internally generated initiatives with partners; and proactive advocacy based on its experience of the terrain, aimed at policy reform at the national and sub-regional levels.

Main contact: Ben Akoh, bakoh@osiwa.org

URL: <http://www.osiwa.org>

II. Background Information: TakingITGlobal

TakingITGlobal is non-profit charitable organization based in Toronto, Canada. Founded in 2000 by Jennifer Corriero and Michael Furdyk, its mandate is to provide opportunities for young people to become inspired, informed and involved in their communities on local, national and global levels. We accomplish this by using information and communication technologies through a number of avenues, including our flagship program, TakingITGlobal.org. This vibrant online platform is a global hangout for young people to learn the information, get the tools and resources, make friends and share experiences to make a positive impact in the world. TakingITGlobal incubated a number of local engagement projects, including Creating Local Connections Russia and Canada. The lessons learned in both countries have informed the development of CLCWA, particularly the benefits that technology as it is applied to local community improvement. At the same time, TakingITGlobal recognized the importance of having West African involvement and leadership when implementing CLCWA, as the nuances of working in the region would not be evident in Canada.

Funding for TakingITGlobal's operations comes from a variety of sources, but the three main areas are: government and foundation support through grants; corporate sponsorship of specific programs; and revenue generated from licensing technology to other charities and non-profit organizations in Canada.

III. Background Information: Host Organizations

Peacelinks (Sierra Leone)

Peacelinks is a local youth-led non-governmental organization that is working to ensure that young people realize their potentials and tap their untapped resources. The organization aims at empowering marginalised and mainstream young people to step forward for positive change in their communities. Since its inception in 1990, Peacelinks has been actively engaged in youth and child advocacy and developmental program both during and after the deleterious, decade-long conflict in Sierra Leone. The history of Peacelinks is, moreover, the realization of youth capacity to enact meaningful change.

PIN (Nigeria)

Paradigm Initiative Nigeria (PIN) is a social enterprise seeking to help deliver ICT for socio-economic opportunities in Nigeria. Having worked with government, civil society, private institutions and international organisations, PIN has set standards in ICT education, telecentre support, ICT applications in rural areas, and other ICT4D interventions in Nigeria. PIN delivers assignments and projects that help connect individuals, people-groups, institutions and communities with the socio-economic opportunities that ICTs provide.

African Child Peace Initiative (Liberia)

ACPI is a secular, non-tribal, non-political, humanitarian youth-led organization dedicated to creating a better future for the children and young people of Liberia and Africa. Its key focus areas are all aimed at disadvantage youth and activities run along skill building in literacy, entrepreneurship, promotion of peace, domestic violence, sexual health and conflict resolution.

WECaN (Cote d'Ivoire)

The mission of **WECaN** (**Worldwide Entrepreneurship Campaigners** & **Network**) is to leverage the capacity of Ivorian youth through ICTs, leadership and entrepreneurship. It wants to undertake, participate, network, orientate and tackle obstacles and bring a concrete positive and measurable impact on youth and their local, national and regional communities

Les Amis du Futur (Guinea)

The LAF's main goal is to develop, within the local youth community, new moral and civic values along with good citizenship qualities. By doing so, the structure contributes to a durable and constant community development while reinforcing solidarity, fraternity, friendship among the local and international youths.

IV. Team Biographies

Regional Coordinator

Coordinator: Francis Cardinal, <http://profiles.tigweb.org/kwessy>

A long time member of the TakingITGlobal community, Francis was first the coordinator for TakingITGlobal's "Language as Violence, Violence as Language" project in 2006, running media arts workshops with youth in Toronto as an alternative to violence. His background in photography, film production and intercultural development gave him the necessary skill set to manage and implement the regional aspects of CLC West Africa project. Based in Mali, where he had worked on a documentary in 2005, he considers West Africa as his second home, and brings a deep understanding of the importance cross-cultural understanding, especially as it applies to this project.

Liberia

Coordinator: Alvin N. Poure, <http://profiles.tigweb.org/nyonbayor>

Alvin is an IT professional, a social worker and an environmental evaluator. His past work has involved peace building, computer literacy training for youth, awareness on HIV/AIDS and the Millennium Development Goals and environmental education. He works mainly to improve the livelihood of rural youth who have been affected by war and conflict. Alvin believes in the potential sustainable development has on alleviating poverty in Liberia.

Côte d'Ivoire

Coordinator: Kouakou Niamien Kouao, <http://profiles.tigweb.org/rogerkouakou>

Kouakou has had extensive experience in a variety of professional and personal areas. He has been vice-president of a youth enterprise promotional association, coordinated human relations operations for several youth associations, and has managed a student cyber-café in Cote d'Ivoire.

Nigeria

Coordinator: Jerry C. Nwigwe, <http://profiles.tigweb.org/sahacaan>

Jerry has been a long time TakingITGlobal active member and the organization's key representative in Nigeria. He holds an impressive list of youth-oriented initiatives and activities that he had developed and managed. These include founding the International Youth Coalition on Sustainable Development and the Nigeria Debate Movement.

Guinea

Coordinator: Malick Diallo, <http://profiles.tigweb.org/Diallomalick>

Malick recently completed his bachelor's degrees in computer engineering and is the youngest of the CLC West Africa coordinators at the age of 25. He has a long history of voluntary work and membership in various social youth organizations.

Sierra Leone

Coordinator: Sylvanus Murray, <http://profiles.tigweb.org/sylmurray>

Sylvanus has been involved with TakingITGlobal for a long time, having served as a key contact to successfully initiate or coordinate all TakingITGlobal related activities in Sierra Leone. He has taken part and played a key role in the development of the CLCWA project. He founded the Youth Empowerment for Development Movement in 1998, and has also worked with several United Nations missions.

V. CLCWA Advisors

Name	Title/Organization	Country	Area of Expertise
Abiodun Ajjjola	CGMIE Consulting	Nigeria	Entrepreneurship, education, ICTs, youth
Pindarous Allison	Youth Employment Summit	Liberia	Youth, YES, entrepreneurship
Henry Ekwuruke	TIG/Nnado Foundation	Nigeria	TIG, trainings, education, networking, project management, ICT4D
Dan Herman	new paradigm/YOCADS	Sierra Leone	ICTs, networking, Sierra Leone, TIG, West Africa
Sessi Hounkanrin	TIG	Canada	CLC concept, TIG, ICTs, arts, youth, translations
Mamady Kobele Keita	NGO: Guinee Ecologie	Guinea	Project planning and management, ecology and environment, youth issues, ICTs
Francois Laurey	International Institute for Communication and Development	Holland	ICT development and training, West Africa, networking
Latif Mbengue	Synapse Center	Senegal	Networking, project coordination, entrepreneurship, education, ICT4D
Vincent Opuku	AIESEC-Ghana	Ghana	Management, youth leadership and engagement, development of Africa, networking
Linda Remy	TIG-CIDA Intern (OSIWA)	Canada	Volunteering, anthropology, international development, coordination

VI. TIG Support

Jennifer Corriero (Co-Founder & Executive Director)

As Executive Director, Jennifer took on a supervisory role with regards to the CLC West Africa project. Her wealth of knowledge and involvement from previous incarnations of the Creating Local Connections module was critical in guiding the Regional and Local Coordinators of the project. She also contributed to the various written documents associated with the project, including the proposal, interim reports and this final report.

Michael Furdyk (Co-Founder & Director of Technology & Finance)

Along with providing technical support (including the implementation of live chat technology and project pages), Michael added another level of financial oversight, managing the funds from OSIWA and disbursing them as needed.

Nick Yeo (Development & Communications Manager)

Nick played a general role of supporting the project, in particular, being the focal point of contact for the Regional Coordinator. He also contributed to various evaluation and reporting documents, including this final report.

Jo Anne Tacorda (HR & Partnerships Manager)

Jo Anne's main contributions to the project revolved around human resources and operational management.

Xingtao Zhu (Graphic Designer)

Xingtao designed and laid out the various curricula and communications material for the Local Coordinators to use. He worked closely with the Regional Coordinator to provide a consistent, thematic look and feel to all materials.

Jocelyn Sweet (former Development & Communications Coordinator)

Jocelyn was instrumental in the development of the original proposal to OSIWA and assisted the Regional Coordinator in laying out the groundwork for the project. She represented TakingITGlobal at the first planning meeting and continued to provide advice and guidance throughout implementation.