

NORTHERN PROJECTS NODE MEETING

AREWA SUNSHINE HOTEL, TAMALE

24th September, 2009

The Northern Projects Node successfully organized a one day projects node meeting in Tamale at the Arewa Sunshine Hotel on Thursday the 24th of September 2009.

Present at the node meeting were IICD supported projects (ACDEP, MAPRONET, WADEP, CIC Managers from Zebilla, Bolgatanga, Bongo, Sandema, Damongo Walewale, Salaga, Yendi and Bimbilla and Bernadette Huizinga, Capacity Development Officer, IICD.

The Northern Projects Node Coordinator, Agbenyo John Stephen thanked all who came from far and near for being a part of the meeting. He explained to participants the essence of the node meetings and urged all and sundry to actively and freely participate in the discussions.

A video documentary of telecentre sustainability was shown. The video explained how the Kilosa Rural Service and Electronic Communication (KIRSEC) which started as an Internet café and provided farmer news and other secretarial services grew on the back of a business plan to become a thriving ISP.

In the video, Mr. Mark Farahani, CEO of KIRSEC explained how he developed a business plan for KIRSEC and watched the telecentre grow as a result of the implementation of the business plan.

A discussion was held on the video by the participants. Participants were of the view that based on the video, it is clear that there are a lot of resources, but we are not really profiting from them because we are not making the best use of them. Also, Internet enabled computers are not just for special people, but they are for all including the local

people. CIC Managers present agreed that their CICs could be used to provide fishing and weather information for farmer groups in their communities.

The mention of telecentre sustainability hinged on business plan set the tone for another fruitful discussion. Mr. Mubarak Muntari, CIC Manager of the Bolgatanga CIC mentioned how fruitful a recently organized Business plan development workshop organized by IICD for CIC managers from 10 districts in the Northern Region has been. He said most of the CICs are considered a waste by the assemblies but urged his colleagues CIC managers to use their business plans to prove to the Assemblies that the CICs are a very viable business ventures. The CIC managers were urged to factor into their business plans, the role of the other IICD supported projects and networks.

PEER ASSIST – WADEP

Mr. Obed Tuabu of WADEP presented a challenge for a peer assist. The following were his questions;

1. Has TRADENET served ECAMIC well?
2. What has been the bottlenecks and setbacks in the Market Price Information distribution to their farmers?
3. What are some of the pitfalls WADEP should avoid in their Market Access Information Project implementation process?
4. Is Esoko a good option, are they giving a good service?

Though the ECAMIC representation was not present at the project node meeting, the other project partners available brought in various suggestions that could be considered by WADEP

Mr. Norbert Apentibadek mentioned that an alternative for WADEP to consider is to contact Savana Farmers Marketing Company. He mentioned that they work with small farmers and producers and help them to have access to markets. They do this buying the products. He mentioned that volume and the quality are assured with the help of MoFA.

Mr. Norbert pledged to link the two organizations (WADEP and Savana Farmers).

The CIC Managers also had another alternative for WADEP. Mr. Mubarak urged WADEP also take a look at <http://www.shopafrica53.com/>

He mentioned that they are into the sale of traditional goods within localities. He said data and form are designed so that personal data of producers are captured and the goals include Reliable design and Uniform competitive price

The CIC managers were tasked to send full data about this platform to the dgroups for further study and discussion

Mr. Bala Ibrahim and Mr. Latif Baako took turns to educate WADEP on the Esoko platform. They mentioned that MAPRONET is almost about concluding discussions with the managers of the Esoko platform; thus, MAPRONET will soon be joining the Esoko platform

Showcase of Blog of Damango District

Mr. Malik Ewuntomah Joe, the CIC Manager of the Damongo CIC was given the opportunity to do a showcase of the district and CIC blogsite <http://www.damongodistrict.blogspot.com>

He stated that it is one thing having the blog and another thing keeping it updated. He urged his colleague CIC Managers to collaborate effectively with their District Information Officers to keep their blogs updated with news of the District and the CICs

Trainings / CDP

The IICD Capacity Development Officer, Bernadette Huizinga took the opportunity to discuss CapDev plans with the Project Partners and CIC Managers. The following were some of the plans:

- 1 Sustainability / fundraising / resource mobilisation
- 2 Mainstreaming ICT in organizations
- 3 Training to project end users
- 4 How to make ICT training materials
- 5 How to use the appropriately internet in low-bandwidth environments (user perspective)
- 6 Web 2.0
- 7 Content production
- 8 Participatory mapping
- 9 Business plan Development Refresher course
- 10 SGT - NGT exchange
- 11 Change management
- 12 OpenIT forum: Internet and Connectivity
- 13 word processing
- 14 Spread sheets
presentations
desktop publishing
- 15 Open IT forum:
- 16 ICT4D Forums at CICs
- 17 Workshop on market price manuals
- 18 Open Source Software (FOSSWAY)
- 19 workshop for DCEs, DCDs and opinion leaders on use of CIC

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