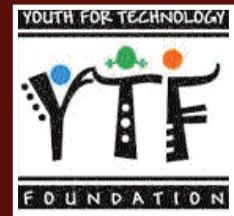


# Youth For Technology Foundation Fact Sheet



**Youth for Technology Foundation (YTF)** is an international non-profit organization founded in 2000. YTF's mission is to transform rural communities into enriched learning environments in which participants are taught to utilize technology appropriately. This enhances and expands opportunities for marginalized people, particularly youth and women.



YTF pioneered the 'Digital Village movement' in Nigeria. These Digital Villages are community technology and learning centers in rural areas and serve as information hubs for community members. Villagers gather at these centers to learn and share resources and information. YTF programs are designed to use technology as an enabler. First, social or economic issues facing the community are identified. Then, technology is used to address the problem through community education and implementation of solutions.

YTF's theme is 'Delivering to the Community'. This theme came from an inspiration to help communities in potentially strong developing nations embrace technology at the grassroots level. YTF recognizes that technology is not going to solve the problems of African communities but it is an instrument that can be used to help bridge different social and economic obstacles. To this effect, all YTF's innovative programs are designed to use technology as a tool to address a concrete community reality and at the same time, equip young people with the skills they need to prosper in the global world.

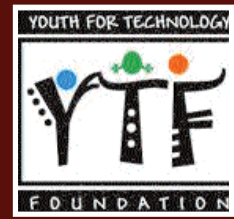
*"Having spent most of my life with limited access to information and communication technology resources in Nigeria, I am a model of how developing awareness and knowledge of technology even in its simplest form can transform lives. I am determined and poised to make a difference for others."*

*- Njideka Harry,  
Executive Director, YTF*

YTF believes that the effective use of technology, even in its simplest form can transform lives. To date, over 12,000 young people have participated in YTF's programs and over 200,000 community members have been positively impacted by our work. Youth for Technology's vision is simple, yet powerful. It was borne out of the experiences of its founder, Njideka Harry, after moving to the United States from Nigeria in 1993. Njideka recalls that one of her greatest challenges was the technology component of

education. Several years after graduating from the university, Njideka accepted a position with Microsoft Corporation. It was here that Njideka felt compelled to give back to the community and convinced Microsoft to establish a local office in Nigeria and make socially responsible investments in Nigerian communities.

# Youth For Technology Foundation Fact Sheet



## SITUATION

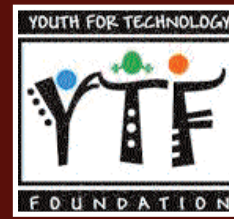
Youth for Technology Foundation is committed to using technology to identify problems and solve the problems of rural communities in developing areas, thereby improving the standard of living in those communities. However, YTF also realizes that many basic community needs must be met before technology can be a widespread tool of change in these areas. There are significant economic and social obstacles that must be overcome. There is a growing consensus that poverty is intense and becoming increasingly worse in Africa.

Continued economic difficulties and socioeconomic problems often drive people to seek social justice through politicized religion, which is often marginalized in popular discourse. Thus, it is often militant and destructive. Poverty increases these problems, which are particularly devastating for women and children. Consequently, acquiring and completing an education in poverty-stricken areas is often not a priority because there are so many more important issues facing families and communities. After all, access to technology is not particularly useful if an individual is unable to read and write. Another issue facing YTF in these areas is social obstacles. For example, in many developing areas of the world, knowledge and the program's objective is not to teach stand-alone technology, but knowledge and interest in information technology is very minimal among girls and women. They are often under-represented in the fields of science, math, and technology.

*The program's objective is not to teach stand-alone technology, but to use technology to spark project-based learning and inspire collaborative learning to enable participants to apply their skills in meaningful initiatives that improve the economic well-being and standard of living of the community.*

These fields are primarily male dominated and there are very few female mentors. To address this problem, YTF is very focused on creating opportunities for the "girl-child." Girls are very heavily recruited and at least half of YTF's scholarships are available to girls in order to foster interest in these opportunities. The program's objective is not to teach stand-alone technology, but to use technology to spark project based learning and inspire collaborative learning to enable participants to apply their skills in meaningful initiatives that improve the economic well-being and standard of living of the community.

# Youth For Technology Foundation Fact Sheet



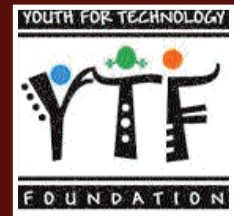
## STRATEGY

YTF is an advocate for developing rural communities. This objective is achieved by implementing programs that encourage young people to stay in rural areas by identifying problems facing those communities, and formulating solutions for those problems. In turn, young people are able to avoid the urban vices of overpopulation, unemployment, disease, and crime. Youth participants acquire a technical fluency that can be used in a variety of jobs and industries, including farming. Access to technology and information provides opportunities for youth in farming communities by providing them with the resources to grow their family's income base through sustainable businesses including farming and petty trade.

To be valuable, information must be relevant, timely, and in the possession of people who are able to utilize it. YTF programs are all youth-led and based on the belief that mastering new techniques not only provides access to better work and income opportunities, but also to new information and resources. In order to foster feelings of ownership among community members, YTF ensures that there is a bottom up approach to development. YTF works with the community to understand their needs and recognize what they want. They then recommend a model designed to meet those needs. Beneficiaries are able to gather at these centers to learn and share resources and information, and gauge the progress of the project for themselves.

There is a 98% completion rate of all YTF programs. Children apply from schools, churches, and local community organizations, among others. The program is competitive due to limited resources at the centers. Students undergo a selection process beginning with the application and then participate in an interview. Candidates are selected based on their interest and passion for technology. Beneficiaries pay a minimal fee to enroll in YTF's programs. Graduates have gone on to continue their education at the university or technical institute level, create small businesses, or become community activists on a variety of issues.

# Youth For Technology Foundation Fact Sheet



## CORE PROGRAMS

### **TechKids:** *Introduction to Computers.*

The TechKids program is designed to teach youth between the ages of 8 and 12 to use computers as a tool for learning. Program goals include improving critical thinking, information synthesis and problem solving skills through inquiry-oriented learning modules. The TechKids program duration is three months and classes are held three times a week. Partners include local schools, churches and community organizations.

### **TechTeens:** *Computer Fluency Education.*

This program is designed to prepare students between the ages of 13 and 18 for a career in the field of information technology. Participants gain the technology and entrepreneurial skills to be job creators or enthusiastic employees in their local communities. Courses offered at this level include Windows, Office Applications, HTML, Front Page and entrepreneurship. The TechTeens program duration is three months and classes are held three times a week. Partners include local schools, churches and community organizations.

### **TechCommunities:** *Community Enlightenment Program.*

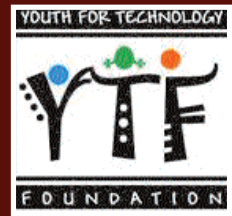
This program is targeted towards youth and their communities. In addition to the core technology training, participants attend career workshops and are mentored on how simple technology and better business practices can help them create sustainable communities. The TechCommunities program duration is three months and classes are held twice a week. Partners include local Universities, community organizations, employment agencies.



### **TechEnhancement:** *Civil Servant Training.*

The Civil Service plays a vital role in promoting the prosperity of a country and the welfare of her citizens. Civil servants need to keep abreast with the tools of information and communication technology. TechEnhancement program equips civil servants with the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies to carry out their jobs more effectively and enable them to deal well with change and challenges of a work and external environment. Partners include state and local government agencies.

# Youth For Technology Foundation Fact Sheet



## WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

There are many ways for individuals and businesses to contribute to YTF's work. We need your financial support to continue the very important work that we do. YTF is always looking for donations of time and talent.

For more information on how you can work with YTF to help rural communities overcome challenges and reach the potential within each of them, please contact us at [ytf@youthfortechology.org](mailto:ytf@youthfortechology.org) or visit the "**Get Involved**" page on the **YTF website**.

Thank you for giving generously!