CONNECTING YOUTH TO ICT POLICY PROCESSES

A partnership proposal to the

World Bank Civil Society Fund (CSF)

by

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1   INTRODUCTION

Paradigm Initiative Nigeria (PIN) is a social enterprise that connects underserved Nigerian youth with Information and Communication Technology (ICT) opportunities; with specific concern about the ill effects of unemployment and cybercrime, among other vices that limit the potential contribution of young Nigerians to the nation's economy. Having worked with government, civil society, private institutions and international organizations including the United Nations, PIN has set standards in ICT education, telecenter support, ICT applications in rural areas, and other ICT interventions in Nigeria. PIN's projects include *Ajegunle.org*; *Internet Safety, Security and Privacy Initiative for Nigeria (ISSPIN)* and *Techie. Entrepreneurial. Nigerian. Talented (TENT)*.

(a)   Ajegunle.org
Ajegunle.org is a model that we have designed to create better livelihoods – through ICT opportunities, entrepreneurship training and short-term internships – for young people in Nigeria's underserved areas. Ego, like many other young people in Nigeria's most popular slum, was not sure of what tomorrow held for her. Now, she works at the Visa Section of the British Deputy High Commission in Lagos, thanks to her participation in the Ajegunle.org project. Funke, another project participant, grew her business of ₦2,000 by over 2,000% after the training.

(b)   Internet Safety, Security and Privacy Initiative for Nigeria (ISSPIN)
The challenge of cybercrime in Nigeria informed the need to raise awareness through a social campaign that involves sensitization workshops in selected schools, annual one-day events and a rehabilitation project. The task of redirecting the energy/skills of these at-risk youth involves working with our partners, Microsoft and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, to retrain them on how to use their passion and skills to develop a legitimate career in technology. Based on this, they are encouraged to either seek employment within relevant organizations or work as entrepreneurs. The process will also include a mentorship component that allows them to intern with a mentor who can guide them to avoid relapse.

(c)   Techie. Entrepreneurial. Nigerian. Talented. (TENT)
TENT brings together the cream of today's young Nigerian code-spinners and ICT gurus-in-the-making, to discuss the technical, business and leadership requirements of ICT and innovation. We believe that Nigeria's economy, tech businesses operating in Nigeria and the businesses that these young (wo)men build will benefit from the outcomes. Following series of nationwide workshops holding between May 2011 and August 2012, PIN will host TENT gathering from December 12, 2012, where the best selected based on effort (so far) and promise (for the future) will showcase their products, meet with potential partners and learn how to: *improve their skills; create wealth from their skills;* and *set out on a journey that ensures personal development, corporate growth, national relevance and global participation*.

PIN's directors include Prof. Pat Utomi (Chairman), Dr. Seyi Adebayo-Olubi and 'Gbenga Sesan (Executive Director) and the organization was officially registered with the Nigerian Corporate Affairs Commission (with registration number CAC/IT/NO 30547) on December 16, 2008 – after about 1 year of operations.

2   PROPOSED PROJECT

The concern for internet safety is a global phenomenon, especially as those who never had access are increasingly being connected through their computers, mobile phones and other devices. The annual Internet Crime Report has listed Nigeria as number three on the list of the world's top ten online crime spots for at least four consecutive years; and walking into most cybercafés in Nigeria today, one will notice clusters of young people gathering around public computers for the purpose of manipulating the powers of technology to defraud others and disturb the desired safety of the internet. Unfortunately, these online criminals get better at their vices each time we ignore the need to act fast by promoting internet safety.

To curb this menace, PIN partnered with Microsoft Nigeria, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, and other partners, to launch a social campaign that involves sensitization workshops in selected schools across Nigeria, one-day concerts, a "youth ambassador" initiative and intensive lobby for the passage of a "cybercrime bill" – that will address the need to criminalise (and determine appropriate punishment for) the act while also preventing the spread of the menace by empowering youth as positive users of new technologies for innovation. The social campaign, through series of workshops, concerts and a music/video project, helped to direct the spotlight on the issue of internet safety while also providing a platform for other stakeholders to work together.

In less than 2 years, the MISSPIN campaign has become a positive technology face of Nigeria, and has been described as a best practice at various technology events across the world where the ongoing work has been presented. From Ouagadougou to Addis Ababa, London to Brussels, California to Vilnius, Geneva to Essen, the request for discussions, and interest in the concept, increasingly direct attention to the issue but **the missing component has been the existence of legislation that can correct the ill with an institutional approach**. The ongoing phase of the campaign builds on partnerships that were developed with strategic organizations during the first phase and while the earlier objective of the campaign – redirecting the energy of youth towards positive internet use – remains the focus, we recognize the role of legislation in this campaign, hence the need for the passage of a "cybercrime bill".

Young Nigerians are the demographic most affected by the wide-ranging effects of cybercrime, including the removal of Nigeria from international platforms (such as PayPal among many others) due to the suspicion – and reported incidents – of fraud. Building on the success of PIN's contributions to the 2011 elections through the appropriate use of technology tools to encourage participation and allow young people to become active civil participants, PIN now seeks to mobilise young people for engagement towards getting the cybercrime bill passed into law. Our earlier attempts in the 2003-2007 and 2007-2011 legislative cycles included lobbying via industry stakeholders but PIN believes that we can now involve young people to lead the efforts and demonstrate that they would rather have enabling environment that punishes/prevents cybercrime so that true technology innovation can flourish.

Through online engagement on platforms that are popular with young Nigerians (e.g. Facebook, which has 3,148,540 Nigerian users with 81% below the age of 35), young people will be directed to the project website which will have details of what has transpired to date and what they can do to create change as citizens (including signing an online petition). PIN will host a stakeholders' meeting of students in Lagos where the issue will be discussed and concrete recommendations will be made towards the need (and process) of having the "cybercrime bill" reintroduced at the National Assembly for passage into law. Selected delegates and PIN will then visit the National Assembly chambers to hand-deliver the signed petition and letter of request ahead of post-delivery follow-up which will be done in partnership with PIN's project collaborators.

3   ACTIVITY PLAN

The entire process will be planned to resume after the new National Assembly commences sittings, with a project timeline of six (6) months. The following activity plan is suggested:

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	TIMELINE
Preparatory Activities	The project website and online petition will be set up with adequate information about the anti-cybercrime campaign, the possible role of citizens in promoting required legislation and specific action-steps for involvement in the anti-cybercrime civic campaign	July 2011
Activity Announcement	The World Bank-supported activity will be announced on this year's *International Youth Day* as a call to young Nigerians to take action through civic participation towards the resumption of work towards the passage of the "cybercrime bill"	August 12, 2011
Online Mobilisation	An online petition will be set up to collect signatures from young Nigerians and others, towards the success of the presentation to the National Assembly	August 12 – September 30, 2011
Stakeholders' Meeting	A 1-day stakeholders' meeting will be convened as a platform for young people to discuss the problem of cybercrime and how it is our civic responsibility to support legislative processes. This will be hosted by PIN and the World Bank Country Office in Nigeria, in partnership with Microsoft, the Economic & Financial Crimes Commission, and other project partners	October/November 2011
Abuja Visit	Selected participants will join PIN to visit relevant committees and leadership of the National Assembly to present the petition and letter requesting for the resumption of discussions, and accelerated passage of the much-needed cybercrime bill	November/December 2011
Activity Report	An activity report will be submitted to the World Bank and archived on the project website	January 2012
Post-event follow-up	Post-civic engagement activities will include continued stakeholder discussions supported by project partners and continued discussions with relevant institutions that can work towards the passage of the "cybercrime bill"	From January 2012