

Business Proposal:
Empowerment through the Internet

ATHGO Global Forum 2008 – Washington, D.C.
Group 11

Problem Statement:

When corruption leaks through every nation and through all peoples, we believe we can address and prevent corruption in governments through educating young peoples of moderately developed nations. When capable young people are not aware that they can be apart of resolving governance issues, education can be a key to youth empowerment.

Conceptual Solution:

Our goal is to raise awareness of issues such as good governance and corruption. Citizens of these countries can suffer from the effects of corruption; however may not know how to fight against it. Thus, educating indigenous youth about their civic duty and methods of how to fight corruption will empower them to do so. Even though organizations may have attempted to bring awareness; we propose to approach this education in an innovative way targeting 18-35 year-olds.¹

Targeting the youth in local communities of middle-developed countries that want democratize, we hope to create awareness of corruption and good governance so that youth will be compelled to civic action, which will create civic unrest so that ultimately, the government becomes accountable and responds to the will of the people.²

Practical Model:

We accomplish our objective by setting up internet cafes that act as a hub of civic engagement. We will raise awareness through the promotion of a central website complete with blogs, chat rooms, and forums to expand knowledge of good governance and economic self-sufficiency. Internet access would be provided as a free service and the café would be a place where practical models that can be accessed by youth to help them fight corruption, support good governance, and establish entrepreneurial growth.

The cafés would be funded by advertisements from socially responsible corporations, local businesses, other NGO's, and refreshment sales. Job listings from the local and surrounding communities will be included in the e-network to enhance the self empowerment, training, skills, and revenue of the local community. The café will hire and train local young people to manage the café. They will receive basic job training and computer skills and have the support of franchise-like standardized operational systems.

Market Assessment:

This concept will work because the internet is growing in acceptance as it becomes available to societies and this model provides free access.³ Secondly, it provides an opportunity for youth to be socially engaged and personally benefited.⁴ We expect the social aspect to draw and keep customers coming back, learning, and buying the refreshments at the café which will contribute to covering the expenses. See Attachment B. NGO's will sponsor 75% of the café through support of socially responsible corporate sponsors in partnership with the local government. The advantages are that it is fast, free, and keeps in touch with young pop culture however there are a few challenges such as upfront costs to build and the need for sustained income streams. This challenge is not insurmountable since there will be partnerships.

Our group would be involved very closely with the fleshing out of our model and implementing the pilot project. See attachment B. We have several people with many different types of educational experiences and backgrounds that could bring a strong skill set to a business model such as this. Attachment C.

Attachment A: Budget

The NGO would aim to finance 75% of the project through a financing institution, 25% through partnership with the local or state government.

Attachment B: Countries for Consideration for Pilot Internet Users by country:

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/3/32/Internet_users_en_2007.PNG

Georgia - Why? Despite the growth country achieved in recent years, the Internet Usage remains below 8% of the total population. In rural areas is even below 1%.

<http://www.statistics.ge/main.php?pform=59&plang=1> Broadband use: Only 27,000 people and most of them live in Tbilisi, the capital. And since our Internet Cafe will have broadband, it justifies using this country as an example. Little bit about their economy: In 2006 Georgia's real GDP growth rate reached 8.8%, making Georgia one of the fastest growing economies in Eastern Europe. The World Bank dubbed Georgia "the number one economic reformer in the world" because it has in one year improved from rank 112th to 18th in terms of ease of doing business. However, the country has high unemployment rate of 12.6% and has fairly low median income compared to European countries. Corruption - Transparency International: 84th out of the 99 countries analyzed.

Bolivia - Why? Internet usage around 580,000 Internet users as of Sept/07, 6.1% of the population, according to ITU. [http://www.itu.int/ITU-](http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/cs/bolivia/material/CountryProfileBOL.pdf)

[D/ict/cs/bolivia/material/CountryProfileBOL.pdf](http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/cs/bolivia/material/CountryProfileBOL.pdf) Situation: The Internet market is experiencing fairly rapid growth but is nonetheless constrained by a number of factors. The most notable are legal restrictions that forbid Internet Service Providers from directly providing their own outgoing international connectivity or domestic leased lines. The ISPs claim that this results in higher costs, poor service and unfair competition from the traditional telecom operators that provide Internet access. Other factors such as low incomes (after Haiti, Bolivia is the second poorest country in the Latin American and Caribbean region), lack of awareness and shortages of and antiquated communication equipment also affect Internet take-up. Broadband users: 0.1%, again, we'll provide fast Internet in the area. Corruption: According to the Latin Business Index 2007, Bolivia is the second-worst place to do business in Latin America.

<http://www.business-anti-corruption.com/normal.asp?pageid=164>

Kenya - Why? Internet Usage: 1,111,000 Internet users as of March/2007, 3.2% of the population, according to ITU. Study >

http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?_ob=ArticleURL&_udi=B6V1H-488NNKW-2&_user=10&_rdoc=1&_fmt=&_orig=search&_sort=d&view=c&_acct=C000050221&_version=1&_urlVersion=0&_userid=10&md5=236b8ae6da84822af8b158569c9caaff found that initial investment cost of end-user equipment limits the ownership of PCs, compelling academics to seek Internet access in cyber cafes and other public places. Broadband less than 0.1% of the population. On corruption: In the Corruption Perceptions Index 2005 Kenya is ranked 144th out of 159 countries for corruption (least corrupt countries are at the top of the list). It is estimated the average urban Kenyan pays 16 bribes per month.

Attachment C: Group Roles

Our group will be involved in fleshing out the model and implementing the pilot project. We feel that based on our collective experience, we will be able to implement the proposal effectively.

- Nga Vu – native of Vietnam (developing country)
- Karen May - Labor organization and ownership
- Mousum i Mukherjee -India, Education, AIDS, Africa
- Lindi Roelofse - South Africa, Economic Rural Development
- Aimee Hedges - Education systems, women’s rights, homeland security Tim Sandole -Us Foreign Policy: EU membership, Middle East.
- Milan Jovic –Eastern Europe, loans for business start up
- Celia Grell -Caribbean-dependence on IMF, AIDS
- Michaela Rollins -Soviet union, the relationship between NGO and aid allotment
- Swathi Veeravalli –Youth empowerment, e-Education and youth development
- James Kim - energy and education policy; work in Afghanistan and Jordan
- Lori Bailey-youth outreach in US, experience in business

¹ Arman Introduction at Athgo Conference 2008

² Ambassador Linda Sanchez Athgo Conference 2008

³ Corey Griffin Athgo Conference 2008

⁴ Karen Brooks 2006. Will social networking sites transform politics?: Candidates take chance on MySpace, YouTube in quest for votes. Knight Ridder Tribune Business News October 1 1. <http://www.proquest.com/> (accessed July 11, 2008).