

## **ISOC-CG INTERIM REPORT**

### **Introduction**

ISOC Congo was one of the chapters which were funded through the first funding project round of 2007. We submitted two projects and one was retained and funded. The project retained was the one the title which of is 'Information about Internet and capacity building on how to use Internet, in three localities in Congo'.

The chosen localities had one common characteristic: They are far from the two big cities of the Country in which the major ICT related activities are held. As our country lacks efficient communication and transport infrastructures, we decided to give opportunities to three localities which are distant to one another to open them to and through the world. We then chose Dolisie, Impfondo and Ouesso as cities in which we would conduct our project.

The project was nationwide. We experimented some circumstantial difficulties in the process of the project, due to the unavailability (lost of Internet access) of the second locality (Impfondo and then the third (Ouesso) planned localities. Face to this situation, we chose Nkayi another locality instead of Ouesso as in Nkayi a private had just set up an Internet access network. Few days later, Oyo (another locality, in the very north of the country) had been connected to Internet, and we then chose Oyo as the 3<sup>rd</sup> locality.

To date, the project has already been completed in Dolisie and Nkayi. In Oyo, only the lectures activity and the setting up of the local club were carried out, the training activity will be done in the very last part of the project, very soon.

The coming lines clearly state on all the progress of the project up to now by presenting the undertaken activities, pointing out some lessons learnt and presenting the financial situation as well.

### **Description of the undertaken activities**

Dolisie was the first town where we began to perform the project. As the major locality among the three, the biggest job was then in this town.

We have managed to put together separated beneficiaries of all social groups (civil servants, women, students, youngsters, peasants, tradesmen and disabled people) to form our audience.

So, in Dolisie two activities were undertaken. The information phase consisted in informing participants upon Internet related-issues. We use the powerpoint means to make presentations on the theme: 'Information society: stakes and opportunities'. The Internet was presented on its technical and operational aspects and as a development tool as well. The process of WSIS and Internet governance were also explained to the audience. People were surprised to know

that they were been unaware of much information on Internet related-issues. Exactly 52 various questions were then asked to lecturers to further understand about Internet, the level of its integration in our country, how it can really help to achieve development needs, how things are going at international level and about ISOC as well. In each locality, after the lectures some groups were constituted for the hands-on phase planed to be holding the next days according to the agenda and schedule made for the circumstance.

The second phase consisted in the capacity building step; during which when we trained a cross-section of people on how use Internet. This phase was very attractive and tiring as well. On one hand the trainers were very content to teach to enthusiastic people about the utilization of Internet, on the other hand we had to face some eccentric situations: for example someone does not want to leave the turn to the others just because of fascination by what he/she is performing through that “magic and crazy thing”. We occupied all the three local cybercafés in Dolise and the sole of Nkayi. ISOC chapter members mainly served as instructors.

The following notions had constituted the training program according to the documentation designed for this purpose:

- Basic notions on how to use a computer for those who had ever use it.
- To create an e-mail box for each attendee. Each tried to send, receive and reply mails with others.
- To browse on internet based on some known URL ([www.isoc.cg](http://www.isoc.cg), [www.congopage.com](http://www.congopage.com), [www.isoc.fr](http://www.isoc.fr), [www.rfi.fr](http://www.rfi.fr) ...
- To use research engine, mainly Google, to look for web links leading to specific information.

The third activity was the formation of the local ISOC club. It was done on a voluntary basis, almost all trainees and some of those who only took part in the lectures activity involved to form and be member of the club.

For each locality, we appointed one member as the leader of the club. Each club planed to have it first meeting generally on Friday the next week, and this was done. We have encouraged the ISOC local members to be enthusiast and active and reassured them our avaiability to assist them.

The team of the project left the localities at this step, and bought some utilization-times from cyber cafes so that attendees individually come to make more practices on the use of Internet.

### **Performance against the goals of the project: Discussion**

The project had a number of targets to reach in term of the number of persons to inform and train upon Internet. The following table presents those goals and indicates it level of achievement to date.

<b>N0</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Result to date</b>	<b>Difference</b>
1	Inhabitants to be informed	600	500	-100
2	Group to be trained	50	40	-10
3	Trained to be select as trainer	34	26	-8
4	Local ISOC club to create	3	3	0
5	Inhabitants to be train	300	141	-159

This table reveals how the project is going on in term of obtained results obtained against the initial goals. The lectures activity have channeled and interested a great number of people. We would like to point here that people who participated in these activities came from various situations and social profiles, as well as different ages. Here (line 1) we have a gap of 100 persons to be formed upon Internet related-issues. This is due to two reasons. First, the time of the information campaign about the project in *Dolisie* locality was underestimated. More days of information should have channeled additional participants on the lectures. The fact that the third locality (Oyo) was not the one which we initially chose, played on the number of people who attended the lectures, as Oyo has less inhabitants than the former locality (Ouessou) on the basis of which the project was designed.

The target of the number of persons to be trained for the hands-on activity was set to 50. To date, 44 persons have been trained in the first two localities, and this will be completed in the next round of the training activity planned to be hold in Oyo (the 3rd locality) next July. In those two localities, we have extracted 26 over 40 trainees to serve as trainers of other local potential people who need to be trained upon the use of Internet, including those who did not participate in the lectures phase. This activity (line 3) is, let's say, in a good progress according to the target set by the project.

The project had planed the setting up of the local ISOC club in each locality. Here upon, 3 clubs have been set up, one in each locality exactly as it was planed.

The project had planed that the 34 trainees should form, at the end part of activities, in respective locality 300 others inhabitants in the use of Internet. In fact this activity was going on under the supervision of the ISOC local club committee which had to mobilize new persons to be trained. As seen on the table above, only 141 people have been trained to date over the 300 planed by the project. The gap in line 5 of the table is surely due to the beginning difficulties. As trainers we trained could not mobilized sufficient new learners, we can take that as the beginning stammering and we are sure to make them fulfill their mission when completing the project.

### **Outcomes and achievements**

- People have discovered what Internet really is and learnt for the first time that Internet is a development tool. They were ignoring so far the impact of Internet on their lives and how it can help them to solve their development needs and expectations as well.
- People are joined the Internet community

- Some things have changed in the comprehension of nowadays stakes and have become stakeholders of the information society process.

### **Lessons learned & Disappointments**

- Internet is not known by the most part of the people, even by those who should know and use it such teachers, nurses, students...
- There is a group of people who is interested on the results obtained through Internet but is not interested to use Internet by itself. It is the case of many people who request to send/receive e-mails and skype communications by only seeking to turn to somebody.
- We would like to evoke the issues on finding alternative funding. As a matter of fact, Internet is not very well known here, the deciders do not really master all the stakes related to this tool and it was not easy to find local partners so that to match the finance needs. But we struggle as we could and obtained something after many difficulties from our local partners.
- The quality of connection and thinness of the bandwidth were the two major disappointments.

For the coming work we would not have many problems as we know well that Oyo has it Internet access, and the training phase will be easily conducted.

The major changes in the design of the project are mainly the change of localities because of the lost of Internet connectivity in two previous planed cites. This obliged as to change many things in our planning and the management of the project. On the other hand we understand the fact that was due to some situations independent from our will.

So far, things have gone pretty well and we really think that people are very enthusiastic once they have discovered Internet and are eager to become permanent Internet users if the access could be guaranteed for all and if the prices are rather affordable as well. And we think that we have a serious problem of access in the Country. The quality of connection and the bandwidth is too weak.