INNOVATE AFRICA
Supporting innovative projects online

April 2015–June 2016

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A PROJECT BY
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
Editorial

With mobile telephony and, to a lesser extent, the Internet developing apace, the media are having to address African consumers’ switch to digital. Even though there is no shortage of overseas initiatives on this promising market, African stakeholders still suffer from a dearth of professionals in the field of information technologies and limited access to the capital they need to develop new services and content.

In this context, CFI and Code for Africa have launched the Innovate Africa project, which will distribute one million dollars of investment among the most innovative African initiatives. This project will help journalists and web developers with new ideas to compile, process and distribute information in the era of the Internet, mobile phones, social networks, data journalism and all the new techniques that are shaking up the media ecosystem in Africa. In a rapidly advancing environment, it is designed to enhance the quality and impact of online African journalism and to expand its audience using economic models that encourage independent work.

Using an online training course (MOOC – Massive Open Online Course) and activities out in the field (hackathons), the project’s aim is to nurture and develop an ecosystem bringing together journalists and IT developers with a view to creating innovative media.

Étienne Fiatte
Managing Director of CFI
THE 12 FINALIST PROJECTS

Twelve young journalists, developers and IT professionals from Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Benin, Senegal, Cameroon and Madagascar, among other countries, have come up with truly innovative ideas: news platforms, social media, web and mobile applications, image and data visualisation tools. Innovate Africa is helping them to make their projects a reality.

KA-KOADB KIBAYA: THE VOICE OF THE FARMERS

What can be done to provide Burkinan farmers, who are often illiterate, with training and information in an increasingly connected Africa? Boukari Ouedraogo is a Burkinan journalist with a passion for new media. Together with four other Burkinan journalists and developers, he had the idea of creating a platform for training farmers through audio messages received on their smartphone. All information relating to training, awareness-raising and trade will be disseminated via the interface Ka-Koadb Kibaya in the national Mossi, Dyula and Fula languages.

NIOUZ: THE MALAGASY SOCIAL MEDIA TOOL

Journalist, photographic reporter, presenter and programme designer Tantely Rasoanaivo has joined forces with a team of developers and engineers to work on the Niouz project, a socially oriented media outlet for young Malagasy citizens. Madagascar is a very young island: 50% of its inhabitants are under the age of 20. It also has a highly urban population which makes significant use of social networks. The aim of the project is to educate these young people, in particular through web documentaries broadcast via social networks and podcasts in the island’s public transport system. The issues addressed include drugs, sexuality, abortion and unemployment.

OKEMA: KEEPING THE ECONOMIC SECTOR BETTER INFORMED

In Africa, and more specifically Côte d’Ivoire, the private sector is cruelly deprived of reliable, up-to-date economic and financial information. This has driven Edmond Kouame and Virgile Mael Yapo, an Ivorian journalist-and-developer team, to create the Okema project, which has been set up to fill the gap by seeking out this information. Using a network of correspondents active in all economic sectors, Okema aims to compile, process and distribute reliable, exhaustive, up-to-date information to economic operators via a mobile application linked to a website.

REINE D’AFRIQUE: HONOURING AFRICAN WOMEN

In most French-speaking African countries, news items in the media are dominated by men. The project Reine d’Afrique (Queen of Africa) is seeking to redress this imbalance by creating an information site focusing exclusively on news relating to women in French-speaking Africa. It is led by Beninese journalist Bismarck Soussa, together with a journalist from the Democratic Republic of Congo and two developers from Senegal and Cameroon. The project also aims to provide a range of freely accessible audio and video resources for media outlets and a mobile application on health issues for teenagers.

PAN-AFRICAN WEB AND RADIO APPLICATION: EXPANDING THE AUDIENCE OF LOCAL RADIO STATIONS

Togolese journalist Aristide Kawele champions this project, the aim of which is to create a web and mobile platform dedicated to the rural and community elements of French-speaking Africa. This platform will relay programmes from local rural radio stations, giving them not only an additional source of income but also the opportunity to expand their audience and benefit from digital broadcasting.
AFRICAMEDIAFLOW: EXPERIENCE AFRICAN INFORMATION DIFFERENTLY

Africamediaflow is an interactive African information platform compiling external media flows. It is aimed at distributing information about Africa from international sources to African journalists, citizens, public authorities, communities and NGOs.

The project was set up by Ivorian developer Aubin Zoh together with six journalists and developers from Côte d’Ivoire, Cameroon and Gabon.

KOMKONSO: A CONSUMER INFORMATION SITE

In Senegal consumers currently lack information on the products they buy. Similarly, potential foreign investors need information on the Senegalese consumer economy.

Led by Senegalese journalist Aminata Thior, KomKonso is a project based on a website which aims to provide information on Senegalese products and the country’s consumer sector, while also promoting local consumption.

The project is seeking to combine an e-commerce site selling goods commonly purchased by Internet users with a quarterly magazine on Senegalese consumer culture.

KIONSHE: BEAUTIFUL IMAGES FOR AFRICA

The project Kionesha was set up to counter the problem faced by most African news sites of having no high-quality images to illustrate their articles. Guy Muyembe, a journalist from the Democratic Republic of Congo, is seeking to offer these sites not only beautiful photos but also data visualisation solutions (infographics, maps, graphics, etc.). Together with two developers from Cameroon and Côte d’Ivoire, he aims to set up an image and data bank on a site specially designed for African online media.

KAKWAORO: A BURKINABE COMMUNICATION MULTI-PLATFORM

Promoting agricultural products and non-timber forest products (NTFPs) is the prime focus of Burkinan communication multi-platform Kakwaoro. Noël Somé, the engineer, developer and blogger who came up with the project, intends to launch a web platform, an SMS platform and a voice kiosk in regional languages in order to communicate with people about these products, in particular in rural communities.

UNDER DAKAR: THE FIRST AFRICAN SMARTZINE

Winner of the Innovate Africa hackathon in Dakar in May 2015, the project Minute Actu has since been developed and is now called Under Dakar. Its aim is to offer a condensed cultural news bulletin via a one-minute video viewing application. Through the application’s functionalities it will be possible to find information, reserve or purchase tickets, connect an audience to an offer or generate unique video content and share it with individual communities.

This project is led by Senegalese developers Djibril Cissé and Alioune Niang and Malian journalist Christine Traoré.

LE CARREFOUR DES MÉDIAS: INFORMATION ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

Journalist and developer Joëlle Rebecca Andi champions the project Le Carrefour des médias (The Media Crossroads), a web and mobile application seeking to make information accessible to as many people as possible, anywhere, at any time.

Featuring an interactive information platform, an MP3 newspaper kiosk, a news channel, advertising space and a community portal, this project, supported by a four-person team, will initially be launched in Côte d’Ivoire, but is hoping to expand internationally.

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INNOVATE AFRICA IS...

7 HACKATHONS

These hackathons, held with a view to giving young project leads a hands-on understanding of the key issues involved in Innovate Africa, brought together developers between April and October 2015 to discuss collaborative IT programming. They were organised in seven African cities (Douala, Abidjan, Antananarivo, Casablanca, Dakar, Algiers and Tunis), in partnership with local media outlets and coworking hubs or new-technology incubators. Over the course of these events, journalists and IT developers created a prototype product or innovative service for the information sector.

1 MOOC (MASSIVE OPEN ONLINE COURSE)

Open to all and offering an accredited certificate upon completion, this interactive online course was set up in 2015 as two learning segments – one for journalists and another for developers. The first part offered teaching and the second invited attendees to collaborate on joint projects.

The aim of the MOOC was to encourage as many young African web professionals as possible to submit an innovative project to the Innovate Africa Competition panel through the support of a remote online mentoring system.

1 FAST-TRACK PROGRAMME

The 12 project leads successful in a continent-wide selection procedure will take part in a fast-track training programme in 2016 led by international mentors, in preparation for the Innovate Africa Competition.

1 MILLION-DOLLAR COMPETITION

After a final selection phase, the most promising projects will receive funding and a share in an overall pot of $1 million (from $10,000 to $100,000 per project). The development of the winning projects will then be monitored by Code For Africa.
ABOUT...

CFI
CFI, the French media cooperation agency, has actively promoted media development in Africa, the Arab world and south-east Asia for over 25 years. The agency is currently working on some 30 projects grouped into four major programmes: Media & Pluralism, Media & Enterprise, Media & Development and Media & Human Resources. 
www.cfi.fr

CODE FOR AFRICA
Code For Africa is the largest data journalism and citizen technology programme in Africa, with a network of CitizenLabs spanning the entire continent in support of the media’s digital experiments and transformations, newsrooms and civil society organisations. In conjunction with these technology labs, Code For Africa conducts digital scholarship and training programmes in a bid to help the African media construct the digital infrastructure and ecosystem that it vitally needs. Code For Africa also provides digital pioneer journalists with basic financial support through the Innovate Africa and Impact Africa programmes and the Code For Africa Sandbox fund.
www.codeforafrica.org
CFI: THE FRENCH MEDIA COOPERATION AGENCY