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ACTIVITY REPORT

IT INNOVATIONS AND TRAINING WORKSHOPS

[Abstract](#)

At African Soul Initiative, we believe that ICT innovation is a key element to spur growth in our communities. ICT innovation is a game-changer in enabling emerging economies to sustain their economic growth in the future.

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IT INNOVATIONS AND TRAINING WORKSHOPS

Tell us briefly about this activity.

INTRODUCTION:

At African Soul, we have witnessed how technology can change our lives and the community at large. This is why we encourage our communities to fully utilize the use of technology in their day-to-day lives. Ever since our inception, we have been innovative in coming up with the best IT solutions for the problems facing our communities especially in business sector. We have been supporting all ICT Innovation efforts designed to tap the power and interoperability of ICT applications.

Through software development we have helped the business community with brilliant ideas on how they can do business profitably while exploring every available opportunity at their convenience. African soul has developed two online software business project ideas that were the basis of this year's IT innovation and training workshop. These two projects involved **website designing for businesses** and **managing of an online shop**.

This report provides the details of activities that were undertaken during the implementation of the IT innovations and training workshop in Nansana at Home Away Resort in Kabumbi in December 2022 in partnership with Bootim Inc. and Wambah Holdings Ltd.

The theme for that year's (2022) Activity event was, "**Embracing Innovations in IT for better Business performance in communities.**" Most of the beneficiaries had little or no knowledge of online business. To many this was a "great opportunity" to learn how to take their businesses to the next level of online presence.

These innovations have promoted sustainable prosperity in our communities by developing solutions that provide accessibility of information to the underserved communities.

What was the major objective of carrying out this activity?

GOALS & OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM

Main Goal of the Program

The main goal of this IT Innovations training program is to encourage the business community to embrace and benefit from the use of IT to do online business to conduct.

Specific objective of the Program

1. To design an Online shop Platform for the community where they can transact business and gain some IT experience
2. To design a system that will provide the community with IT experience in designing and managing personalized websites for their businesses.
3. To mobilize and register beneficiaries for the training program who are to benefit from the implementation of this training workshop
4. To conduct a successful training workshop for Trainers and Business Owners on the new Online IT Software innovations for Businesses.
5. To help register and subscribe up to 100 Online Shop Accounts and websites for new businesses by the beneficiaries.

Who were the beneficiaries of this activity?

Program Beneficiaries

This program was designed to benefit two categories of people within the community. The first beneficiaries were the youthful population within our community. African Soul has a large youth base that includes students at both high school and institute levels of education; and both employed and unemployed youth. The second category of beneficiaries were members of the business community. These trainee beneficiaries not only came from Kabumbi Village where the main training center is located but also from various areas of Nansana municipality.

What came out of this activity?

Innovation Outcomes

Creation of an Online Shopping Platform:

The Bootim online shop is an IT innovation project ideally created and promoted by African soul initiative. The idea of an online shop stems from the global total lock down of most countries during the recent covid19 pandemic. During this period people were forced to learn how to conduct online business especially on social media platform. As a result African soul was forced to think a head and partnered with Bootim Inc. to develop an online shop. We developed an online website to help promote e-commerce within our community. We have developed a system to help manage businesses on behalf of our members. After registering your business with Bootim online shop, the user can then upload his products on the site with full description of the products and services including the price, discount, and contact details. This system is full in operation today with over 300 registered community businesses from different sectors of the economy like agriculture, retail, and electronics among others. Thought this year 2022 we have conducted several IT related training workshops with groups of youth to teach them how to use our online shop system.

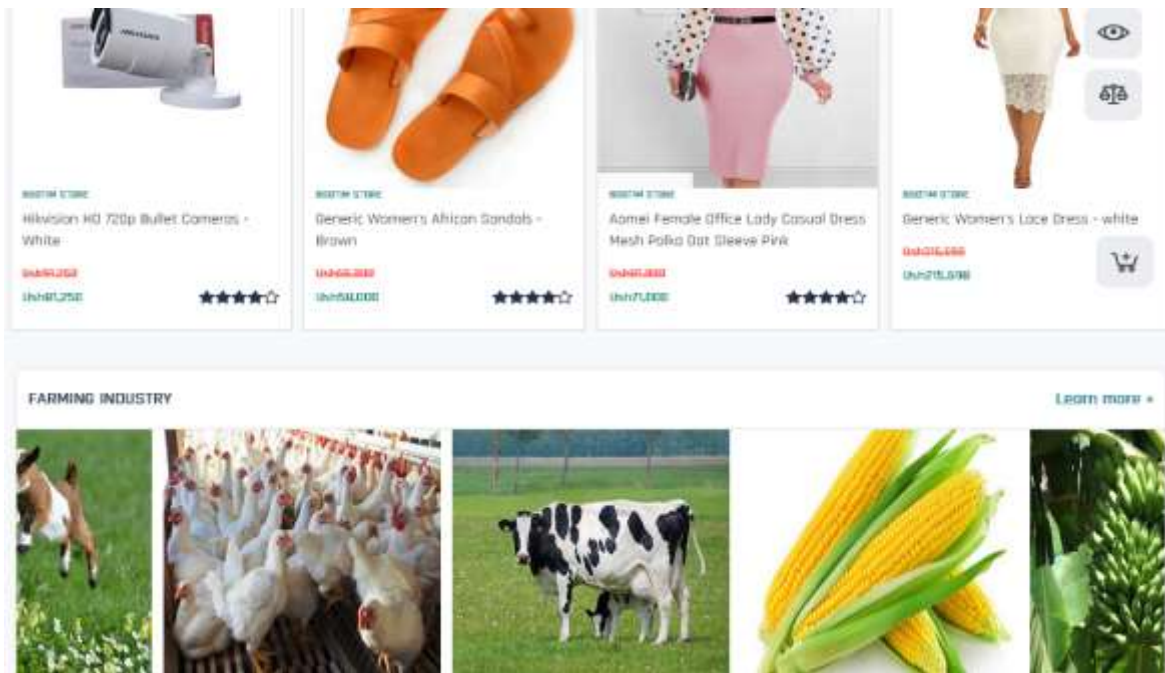


Figure 1: Print screen of our Online Shop at BOOTIM.SHOP

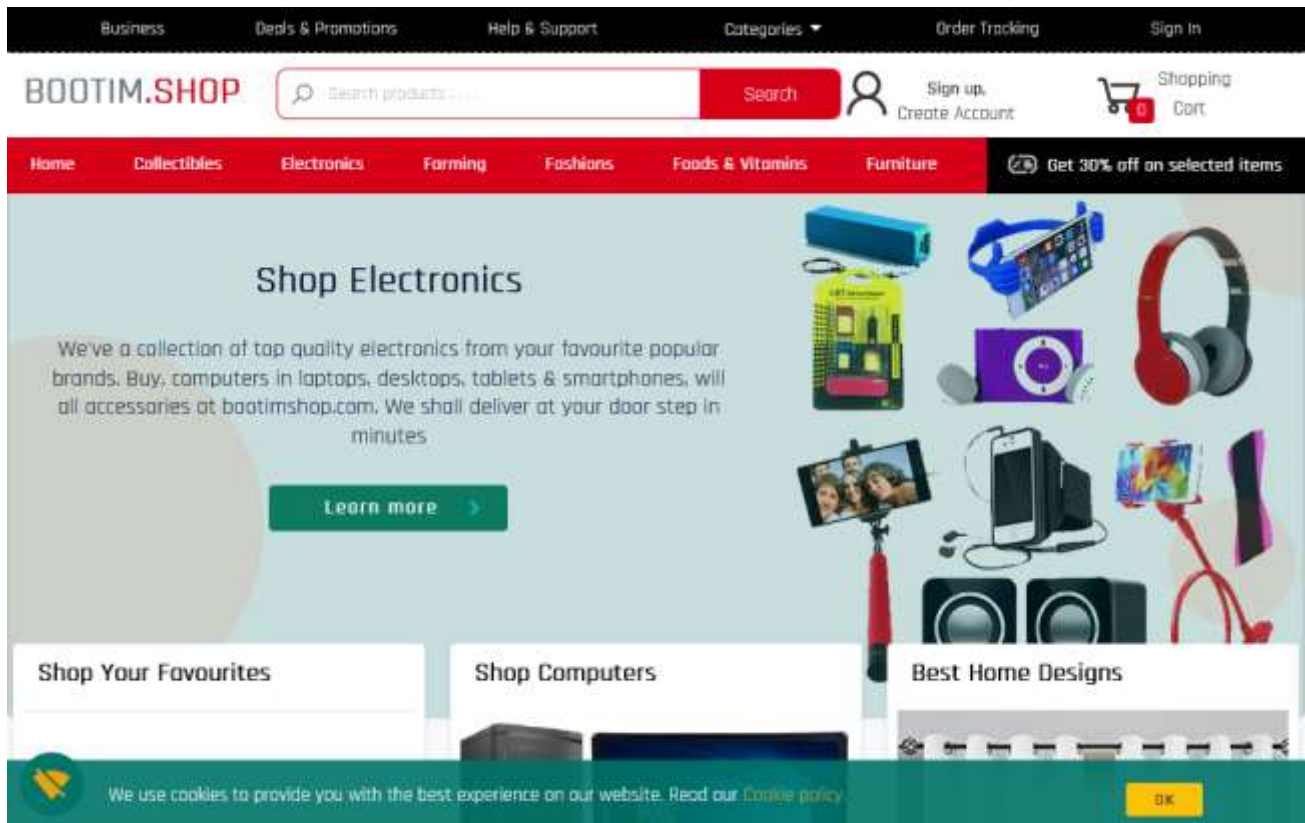


Figure 2: Print screen of our Online Shop at BOOTIM.SHOP

Creation of a website development template system:

Website designing requires one to have received education and training in computer programming. It's a technical skill that requires professional training in computer coding. However, African Soul together with its major IT partner Bootim Inc. through our IT innovation department has managed to develop a system which enables every individual with or without a business to be able to create a website for his/her business without prior knowledge and training in computer coding.

This system has well developed website templates ready for use by anyone in the business world. You only have to replace the existing information with your own company information.

Training Outcomes

According to the training that was carried out during the workshop, these were the outcomes;

1. Promotion of use of technology: We have seen an increased use of technology within our community. This is evident according to the number of visitors on our online shop platform. Individuals have opened up online business accounts on our platform and have benefited from the use of technology in their lives.
2. Formation of Virtual Business: With zero capital individuals only need a smart phone to start transacting and make money. The majority of the youth with smart phones are buying into this new IT innovation. After creation of an account with us, they only needed to upload images of products and their prices on the online shop. These registered business owners are able to manage their online businesses on their phones conveniently even while on the move.
3. Creation of Virtual Jobs: To the many jobless youth within our community, through this IT Innovation, African soul has created IT jobs to them. We have and are still organizing several training workshops to help train youth on how to use our new website development system. This new innovation allows our trainees to use our fully developed website templates to construct websites of their own for their clients. The system is user friendly and can be learnt within 24hours while using one's mobile phone or personal computer. Successful trainees have in return been recruited within our IT team as website developers who earn a living by developing and generating website sales within their community.
4. Promoted businesses within the community: Our website development system and new innovation has offered a unique solution to businesses within our community today. Technically it has simplified website management for owner where the owner doesn't require the services of a

technical person to manage their site on a daily basis. Website maintenance doesn't come very cheap and it comes as an added cost if one is to erect a website and ensure that it is up and running. Once you learn how to use the system you will have forfeited the cost of website designing which doesn't come very cheap either if you ask around. Online marketing and advertising today is taking the lead especially after the recent lesson of the effects of COVID19 to most world economies and businesses.



Figure 3: Taken from the recent IT Innovation Training workshop

Who were the funders of this activity?

Program Sources of Funding

African soul offers this IT training program and business registration for free to its beneficiaries. African Soul on these two particular programs also works in partnership with Bootim Group Inc. and Faizhad Stationers. Bootim incorporation is a software and website development firm with bags of experience in the information Technology field. Bootim and Faizhad Stationers volunteered and

provides IT related professional support to this training program in form of Trainers and software.

What were the challenges faced?

Program Challenge

The program's major challenge is illiteracy and ignorance about IT especially the use of IT related gadgets. Many people own smart phones and some Personal computers, however many still need training on their use. Some are ridged to change and to new development which has resulted into a lot of resistance on the use of technology. This has forced us to focus on youth who are receptive towards new ideas and developments. As an organization we are experiencing a growing turnover of youth within Nansana municipality seeking employment. The program therefore requires more assistance and support in form of computers and finances to help run it for extended an un-fore mentioned time.

What is the long-term impact of this activity?

Long-term Impact

We believe that this program will transform the way in which people conduct business. The high levels of unemployment and joblessness among the youth will be reduced as a result of this training workshop.

What is your conclusion towards this activity?

Conclusion

African soul has this program initially enrolled for the Nansana community. However, we also intend to extend it to other regions within the district. This would call for mobilization of more resources in form of finances, equipment and human resource volunteers to make it a success in other community areas of Wakiso District. African soul is also working on a new IT project with the intension of easing business and enjoying the benefits of online presence.