

# Wireless Africa

Potlako Nts'ekhe

Digital Doorway to Communities

Ha Tsolo

# Profile of project area

- The Ha Tsolo community is situated 10 minutes drive from the city centre, but in peri-urban setting.
- The community comprises of students from two primary school one which is community run, and a secondary school.
- The area also accommodates a large number of factory workers, mostly women, from the industrial area close to the community. It is also near a new settlement of displaced people from the area where the Katse dam was constructed.
  - Majority of the families are run by women who are single, have left their children and husbands in the rural homes or are widows,
  - Almost half of the children are orphans or have one parent surviving,
  - A minority work mostly in the factories, whilst the rest are self-employed as hawkers at the factory sites and in the city,
  - Members can be classified as being poor to very poor. There is a sprinkling of average households

# Site selection

- A needs assessment study done beginning of these year.
- Everybody has knowledge of a telephone and a cell phone, although most do not possess the instrument.
- A few had ever used a computer, but knew it.
- All knew about a television, but a few owned it.
- The least level of education is Standard 7 (seven years of Primary Education).
- Members can be classified as being poor to very poor. There is a sprinkling of average households.

# Description of project network

- A government initiative under a subsidy of the EU afforded electricity to most of the community members.
- Wireless, GSM and landline services not readily available in the project area. Supplied by two providers.
- Network envisaged based on the Digital Doorway Initiative (Meraka)
- Project is donor funded with possibility of Government participation
- Regulatory environment not yet flexible to accommodate community based networks.

# Cont,

- The main objectives include:-
- To introduce Digital Doorway as a model in building support networks and online information resources that will assist communities to improve their capabilities and expand their knowledge.
- To develop the basic ICT skills required for on-line communication and introduce initiatives that contribute to the development of business and management skills of people in the communities.
- To expand the training and educational establishments and coverage, notably literacy programmes as well as components of programmes that enhance the potential and status of illiterate people.
- To deliver basic information on ***how to and what is***, in sectors such as agriculture, tourism, health, local government, education etc.
- The Digital Doorway was also sold to several Government Ministries as a model that has the capacity to conduct user friendly surveys and create custom services as in hospitals, schools, community centres etc, to reduce the pressure of developing initial administrative procedures and institutional management deficiencies.

# **Business models**

- **We are here to learn about suitable business models that can be adapted**

# Challenges & Lessons learned

- **Challenges include:**
  - Developing clear information dissemination networks to policy makers, service providers and the community about the advantages of Wireless Africa and its objectives,
  - Ensuring that information and results from workshop like this are circulated accordingly.
  - Developing sound business models that would be relevant to the different needs of the communities.
  - Overcoming the terrain constraints which are more costly
  - Bridging the gap and enhancing the collaboration between the public and private sectors
  - Developing relevant content for the community
  - Marketing the box (DD) realistically in order to develop a network

# Way forward

- **More support from the donors and Wireless Africa to ensure that the project takes over and be replicated throughout the country**
- **The effective dissemination and adoption of the Digital Doorways will also pave the way for the implementation of the Singazenzela Project. The Singazenzela Programme is a fundamentally child-centric approach to service delivery that will extend the reach of mainstream national and local public and NGO organizations to the poorest and most vulnerable of Africa's children (urban and rural) using a systemic, innovative and appropriate blend of communication approaches.**