



The Rwanda Convention Association Education Project Concept Note

1. Introduction

Since 2004, the Rwandan Convention Association (RCA) has been dedicated to promoting development in Rwanda; specifically in the following four sectors: education sector, private sector, Information and Technology, and media development. RCA is a registered nonprofit organization, based in Los Angeles, however it organizes conventions in a different city each year throughout the US and Canada

RCA has decided to become more directly involved in Rwanda's progress by developing its own education project. RCA will contribute to Rwanda's development of a knowledge-based society, by utilizing video-conferencing.

RCA has partnered with two nonprofit organizations.

1. Process Learning Centers has contributed to educational projects around the world for over 20 years.
2. Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE). The Binghamton University chapter has worked with students in Kenya on creating microfinanced business plans for the past three years, and now hopes to continue their program here in Rwanda.

RCA, PLC, and Binghamton SIFE all believe that video conferencing is the future of knowledge exchange and can be an essential tool in aiding education programs in Rwanda. The technology's highest potential would be realized through training educational instructors and students within Rwanda.

Initial investment cost for startup equipment is often returned in six months by avoiding travel and accommodations expenditures.

2. Project Concept

Developing and strengthening our education systems in Rwanda is one of the pre-requisites of the Rwanda Vision 2020 plan. Our goal is to find inexpensive and efficient ways to connect Rwandan students with their peers and educators from around the world. and expertise.

Rwandan students will be able to become exposed to video-conferencing software and equipment, learn specific skills to writing and analyzing business plans, and earn an opportunity to build upon their own ideas.

3. Technology

There are several technical issues which must be addressed before investing heavily in video conferencing. Most notably, the required bandwidth is currently unavailable in many parts of Rwanda as well as consistent connectivity. Through this pilot program, RCA hopes to discover solutions to any and all technical issues which may arise, at no cost to the Ministry of Education. Thus, our success and experiences will undoubtedly determine future possibilities for other educational video conferencing projects. To guide us through the technical issues, RCA has joined forces with PLC, which has both the professional expertise and technical capabilities to ensure our project's success.

Process Learning Centers (PLC) is the non-profit arm of the company, Video Conferencing International. Established in 1988, the organization has promoted educational projects for the past twenty years, focused on improving the learning process through use of technology. Most recently, PLC has supported the development of the Rwanda School Project by helping raise funds for construction of a high school in eastern Rwanda. VCI CEO, Burl Waits has been very active in supporting our project and lends his guidance on how to strategically implement our project. Recently, PLC enabled a veterinarian in Davis, CA to teach a class of vets in Kenya.

The greatest benefit of this partnership is the added value which they offer to the video conferencing experience. The VCI site will allow users several options, including: open conferences through the web; closed conferences, allowing access with a password; and store conferences for future trainings. Those who do not have access to VC equipment, will still be able to view the proceedings through the VCI website.

4. Action Plan

As we embark on this project, there are several steps which we must first endure to set the direction and goals of the RCA and SIFE Education project. As we continue to outline our project, we now look to co-ordinate with local educators, and volunteers in Rwanda to expand the details of our project. At this time, we are seeking approval from the Ministry of Education, and hope that we may gain their support in this pilot project. It is important to RCA that our project concept and goals are fully aligned with the Vision 2020 plan and the current initiatives of the Ministry of Education. SIFE's program has a distinct focus on promoting and training the entrepreneurial spirit and has a flexible program that is willing to change to best suit the needs and desires of the Rwandan Ministry.

We will need to attract a small group of volunteers in Rwanda to become our own taskforce on the ground to get the project up and going. Our transfer of knowledge taskforce will be in charge of implementing and monitoring the progress of this project. To this end, the RCA Education Director, Mutoni Karasanyi, has moved to Kigali to begin the project's implementation.