AN INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION TO DEVELOP A REGIONAL NETWORK OF INNOVATION HUBS WITH PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

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Purpose and Outline

Purpose

• Share insights from UC-BIUST partnership in the adaptation of UC’s Greater Cincinnati Regional Smart Campuses (GCRSC) model for Palapye Secondary School (PSS) - Botswana

• Demonstrate the value of library collaborations through already existing institutional and/or community partnerships

Outline

• UC’s GCRSC model
• Local adaptation for the PSS project
Greater Cincinnati: A Tale of Two Cities

- ~2.12m citizens, 17 counties
- 9 Fortune 500 companies
- R1 University
- Growing hi-tech Industry (Innovation Corridor)
- ~44% of Cincinnati children live in poverty
- Skills gap
- Lack of diversity in IT
- Adverse Digital Divide impact
“Regional Smart Campuses is a multi-layered environment that spans physical, mobile and virtual spaces to create a network of education, workforce development and innovation.”

- N. Vincent, UC CIO, 2018

Innovation Hubs ~ “Smart Spaces”

A physical or digital environment ... where people, processes, services and technology-enabled systems interact ... to create a more interactive ecosystems & experiences.

“This trend has been coalescing for some time around elements such as smart cities, digital workplaces, smart homes and connected factories.”

*Gartner’s Top 10 Strategic Technology Trends, 2019*
Innovation Hubs ~ “Smart Spaces”

Space & Activities
• Active learning
• Specialty Technologies
• Collaboration
• Mentorship, consulting
• Technology events, outreach
• Services and Support

Outreach & Services
• Tech Talks (industry and academia)
• Hackathon days
• Collaborative meetings, etc.
• Training, mentorships
• Consulting: Advising, Creating an MVP, Bring product to market
Innovation Hubs ~ “Smart Spaces”

- Computers (HE)
- Mobile devices
- 360° cameras
- Media software
- Gaming software
- Immersive tech
- 3D VR gears
- AR/VR software

- Smart wearables
- Health monitors
- Smart devices
- Robotic kits
- Drone kits

- DB software
- Analytics software
- AI platforms
- Cognitive computing
Public-Private Partnership

University of Cincinnati team:
Dr Bleuzette Marshall, VP for Equity, Inclusion & Community Impact
Josette Riep, Director for Software Development, IT@UC
May Chang, Library Chief Technology Officer
Other Components

- **5 locations in the region strategically selected to create a canopy of services and opportunities**
- **A Smart Tech Truck to increase reach to rural areas**
- **Managed by associated school, community center or library**

- Planned investment of ~US$3 million over 5 years
- UC Office of Equity, Inclusion & Community Impact, IT@UC, and UC Libraries
- UC Co-Op students, experiential learning, peer-to-peer teaching and mentoring, train the trainers
- UC College of Education + Cincinnati Public Schools
- UC’s 1819 Innovation Hub
GCRSC Model Adapted @ Botswana

• UC & BIUST already strategic international partners
• BIUST and UC Librarians – from IFLA professional networking – determined applicable approach to GCRSC model
• BIUST leadership had already initiated conversations with key stakeholders from the community, business and policymakers on concept of smart village
• Palapye Secondary School (PSS) project partners – BIUST, Palapye community & leaders, business community, Government departments
Project Relevance @ PALAPYE

• A junction village for Botswana Economic corridor; between the only 2 cities in the country
• Hosts coal mine and power station – Botswana principal domestic source of electricity
• Demonstrates fast economic growth characterized by construction industry; retailing and hospitality activities
• Has rural village characteristics of poverty; low educational attainments; adverse effects of information and digital divide (similar to some of Cincinnati’s social issues)
• BIUST - set up in 2014, mandated to be responsive to community technology and engineering needs, and to transform Palapye village into a University city.
Roles of Project Partners

- BIUST already in partnership with the Morupule Coal Mine (MCM)
- BIUST library serve as expert advisor – borrowing from the GCRSC model (space & activities BIUST library in direct relationship with PSS librarian through Palapye Librarians’ Forum).
- MCM - through “national adopt a school initiative“ - refurbishing the school library and equipping it with the necessary study materials
  - Refurbishment September 2020 - handed over 27th March 2021 not in 3 months as planned (COVID19)
  - Contract awarded to predominantly women owned or managed local company
  - The project scope included equipping the library with new shelves, library tools, and the needed technologies. - not books / information resources
Role of Project Partners (cont...)

• BIUST library engaged a campaign strategy to develop the needed collection. The collection is intended to support the teaching, learning and recreational purposes of the user community (500 books, 3 computers, stationery)

• Handing over occasion graced by area Member of Parliament; Minister of Mineral Resources, Green Technology and Energy Security; BIUST Management and library reps; Executives from Ministry of Education; Village leadership, etc. (to ensure ownership and support)

• Internet and Cellular network providers enabled free internet
GCRSC Model Applied to PSS Project

**Space & Activities**

- Internet access
- State of art shelves; reading space (36 seats); tables and computer space; television, white board and a projector
- 2 discussion rooms
- Air conditioned

**Outreach & Services**

(deferred due to COVID19)

- Tech Talks (industry, community & BIUST)
- Hackathon days
- Collaborative meetings, etc. (BLA; P Lib Forum)
- Training, mentorships
- Consulting: Advising
- ILS programs
PSS Library Before Refurbishment
PSS Library After Refurbishment
Desired Project Outcomes

- Increasing digital and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) literacy, bridge the digital divide
- Support technology education and workforce
- To give PSS students an opportunity for experiential learning

- Attract student exchange to assist in leading innovation hubs, peer to peer leadership, etc.
- Attract research to determine scale and sustainability in different environments
- Develop guides and other info and training materials on digital/IT literacy

- The library will empower community with Information Literacy skills (teachers & students)
Social Value and Impact

• Viable and empowering.
• Removes the barrier of affordability for broadband access.
• Enhances digital literacy, IT competency, & provides programs to develop IT professionals, innovators and entrepreneurs.
• Addresses a growing skills gap that threatens to stifle economic progress and innovation.
• Enhances education; workforce development, and public-private partnerships through a win-win investment for all partners.
• An ecosystem that connects multiple entities for enhanced communication and support across systems.
• Positive impact on the entire economic corridor (Junction Village).
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