

# YAMORANSA INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY CENTER



west elevation



## INTRODUCTION

The Yale Alumni Service Corps (YASC), a program of the Association of Yale Alumni, seeks donations to support the construction of an Information Communication Technology (ICT) Center at its project site in Yamoransa, Ghana. The ICT Center will serve as an educational and community center and bring internet access and computers to the local population. Construction of this ICT Center will greatly improve educational and entrepreneurial prospects for the residents of Yamoransa and create a crucial hub for economic, political, and social activity in the village.

The ICT Center project was begun in 2012 in conjunction with YASC's first service trip to Yamoransa. A second service trip is scheduled for August 2013 during which time work will continue on the building. This project is being completed in phases. **Phase 1** involves completion of the foundation, first floor, electrical, and plumbing facilities. Completion of this phase will allow activities to start in the building before the construction of the second floor is completed. The budget for this phase is US\$150,000 (GH¢ 290,000). **Phase 2** will involve completion of the entire building, budgeted at an additional US\$125,000 (GH¢ 242,000).

## BACKGROUND

In the summer of 2012, the YASC visited Yamoransa for ten days of volunteer work. Yamoransa is a village of 4,700 people located along the Cape Coast of Ghana, West Africa. It is an expanding community, known within Ghana as a popular source of *kenkey*, a staple food product eaten throughout the country. The 150 YASC volunteers who went to Yamoransa participated in a number of activities, including teaching in



the local schools, advising local business people, running an after-school sports program, and operating a medical clinic. In addition, YASC volunteers worked alongside local workers on the initial stages of the construction of a new two-story building designed to house the ICT Center and provide a forum for other community activities.

The project involves the construction of a 5,000 square foot (440 square meters) concrete building in the center of town, adjacent to one of the town's elementary schools. It will

include classroom and meeting space, secure storage for equipment, electricity, and bathroom facilities. In addition, it is expected that high-speed internet will be delivered to the building by wire or satellite. Discussions for subsidizing the cost of this service are underway with several potential service providers.

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The Yamoransa community has raised capital for the initial phase of the project and has committed to raising more. They have also donated hundreds of hours of work to the construction. YASC volunteers also donated both money and work in connection with the 2012 service trip. The local residents have continued to work on the building since the YASC trip and as of now the foundation of the structure is complete and many of the columns to support the second floor have been constructed.

## THE ICT CENTER

The ICT Center as envisioned will provide the community with a venue for expanding computer literacy and access to information. In doing so it will help bridge the digital divide that currently places information and opportunities out of reach of most members of this community. Access to computers and the internet will improve community access to:

- Markets and employment opportunities outside of Yamoransa
- Capital markets
- Much needed health care information and treatment
- Educational materials and technical information
- Training in the use of computers and information and computer technology.

While private access to the internet and computer technology is available for a few, relatively wealthy members of the community, this project will provide access and training for all.

Yamoransa also lacks space for community activities. The ICT building is expected to fill other community needs as a library, health clinic, educational center, and place for local council meetings.

It is also expected that the ICT Center will serve as a test case of the efficacy and lasting effects of introducing ICT to a small Ghanaian community. The University of Cape Coast (UCC) has initiated research to characterize the community and will monitor the health, income, educational achievement, involvement in the democratic process, and overall well-being of community members as a result of the establishment of the ICT Center. It is anticipated that UCC will provide regular performance evaluations of the project, reporting on the degree to which the project is meeting its stated goals.

The ICT Center will be owned and operated by the Yamoransa community through its Village Council. Land for the Center has been provided by the Roman Catholic Church of Ghana. Funding for ongoing programs and equipment will be provided by the community itself or through grants, NGOs, and other outside sources. A detailed plan for operation of the ICT Center, including budgeting, administration, and programming guidelines, will be developed as part of YASC's 2013 Service trip.

## PARTNERS

A primary strength of this project is its wide-ranging roster of partners:

The **Yamoransa community** is the lead organization for this project. The community is represented by their Village Council, made up of the four main community Chiefs. The Village Council is responsible for local fund raising, volunteer coordination, obtaining all government required approvals, developing the program of activities that will be taking place within the ICT Center, and marketing the Center to the community.

Yamoransa has a diverse and energetic religious life, spanning a broad range of faiths. The ICT Center will be available to all members of the community, regardless of religious identity. It is anticipated that the **Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Pentecostal, Mormon, and Muslim communities** will participate in local fund-raising and will encourage volunteer participation by community members in the project.

**The University of Cape Coast (UCC)** is one of the premier centers for higher learning in Ghana, and is located only a few miles from Yamoransa. UCC has a long-standing relationship with Yamoransa. Each spring a group of students from

UCC spends 10 days in the Village, living in the community and serving as positive role models for continuing education. They conduct surveys, provide social support to the elderly, and undertake some medical and public health projects (e.g., eye care clinics). UCC is committed to supporting the ICT Center after its completion with volunteers to help the local community develop education programs and will study the role of the Center and its programs in the community. UCC's participation is being led by Professor Kofi Asusabo-Asare



and Mr. Kobina Esai-Donkoh from UCC's Department of Population and Health.

The Association of Yale Alumni through its **Yale Alumni Service Corps (YASC)** has committed volunteers and has raised funds for the ICT Center. Yamoransa will again be the focus of YASC's service trip to Ghana this summer. YASC volunteers are assisting in the planning of the construction. In addition, it is anticipated that a group of YASC volunteers will continue to work with the community going forward following this summer's trip to ensure continuity and progress with the project. In particular, YASC volunteers will assist in the development of ICT programs for the community as the building is completed.

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**AFS-Ghana** has been a key partner “on the ground” in Ghana. In 2012 AFS’s top officials were instrumental in the planning and coordination of YASC’s service trip. In addition, numerous AFS volunteers worked on-site with the YASC volunteers in all aspects of the service trip, including work on the construction site itself. AFS has been instrumental in the material logistics and procurement systems, working with both YASC and Yamoransa. AFS is continuing their partnership role with YASC’s trip this summer and hopes to play a significant role in the development and operations of the ICT Center.

## FUNDING

A construction plan for the completion of the building, including detailed cost estimates, has been developed and is available for review. The construction plan anticipates two phases, phased construction of buildings by floor being a common practice in Ghana.

In the first phase, the foundation and first floor, along with plumbing and electrical, will be finished, allowing for immediate use of the building before the second floor is completed. The first floor will include classroom space, storage, and library and community meeting space as well as toilets for men and women. The first phase is budgeted at US\$150,000 (GH¢ 290,000).

The second phase will consist of completing the second floor, which will include expanded classroom and community meeting space and is anticipated to cost an additional US\$125,000 (GH¢242,000).

These budgets reflect the expectation of continued and substantial volunteer participation on the project within the community. To-date over US\$20,000 (GH¢ 38,000) has been raised by the community and the partners, and hundreds of hours of labor have been donated. Fundraising within the Yamoransa community is continuing, but these efforts will not be sufficient to complete the building within a reasonable timeframe. We expect that a mechanism will be put in place by YASC and the other partners to monitor the construction process and provide financial oversight for all funds raised from outside sources.

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