



UNI-Africa eFuture, bringing websites to unions in Africa

The Concept in a few words...

To date, only 5% of UNI-Africa affiliates have websites, mainly due to lack of trained resources and others discouraged by expensive hosting packages with local internet service providers.

Many unions have demanded for assistance from UNI in hosting and creating/maintaining an online presence, which is why the UNI-Africa eFuture project was imagined.

UNI will hold the first Communicators' Forum to take place in Africa, this coming 9-11 April 2008, in Cape Town – South Africa. During the forum, we will train 16 unions from 13 countries in Africa to manage their new free websites independently. Back home, they will share their new skills with other staff members and start publishing content on their websites as well as market their sites to their members and the general public.

UNI will offer the hosting of the sites and software development, and Comfia CCOO in Spain will provide technical support. One of our funding organisations will grant travel and accommodation funds to the 16 participants for them to get the necessary training in Cape Town during the Communicators' Forum, which will also integrate these new communicators in the existing UNI network.

The project will be evaluated in 2009 and 2010 and if it proves successful, UNI will see how it can be expanded to other UNI-Africa unions.

Project document...

Background information

UNI has 146 affiliates in the Africa region. 113 of them have email accounts and only 8 have websites.

This digital divide gap is probably the largest, in consideration of all UNI regions. Many UNI affiliates have expressed the need and desire to go online with a union website, as website creation and hosting is very expensive in all African countries. A luxury most unions cannot afford. Some unions have tried to set up a website but it's proven so costly to make the slightest change in content that they have given up.

The UNI-Africa eFuture project attempts to find a solution to the lack of web presence of UNI affiliates in Africa by offering **16 of them*** free hosting, free content management systems (websites) and training to fully create and update their websites on their own.

** please find a list of 16 candidates at the end of this paper*

Problem analysis

eCommunications are difficult for many countries in Africa due to telecom infrastructure and lack of computers, reliable internet connections and training. Although email has now almost reached all of UNI's affiliates, only around 5% have an online presence. This not only affects communications from unions to their members but also from unions to the outside world and to UNI.

A website is not only a tool that ensures union news gets across to high numbers, but also a means of organising new members, building interactivity with current members, saving time and resources by using web-software solutions. All of which 95% of UNI-Africa's affiliates are missing out on because of a lack of financial resources.

Development Objective

The UNI-Africa eFuture project will contribute to improving unions' communications with their members and the outside world, give them visibility and means for eAction during union events (meetings, strikes, negotiations etc). By providing easy websites to manage and update, by including participants in the UNI Communicators' network where they have easy access to advice and help to run their website work, this project ensures a facilitated continuation in the use of the web media, not only to spread the union message, but also to serve existing union members and recruit new ones.

Project Objective

1. Each participating union in the eFuture project will go to Cape Town in April 2008 to get training on their website
2. Each participant will return to his union with a ready-made and running website after the training and train extra staff as backup

3. Each union will have put aside a budget to cover web costs until 2012 and maintained their website alive in an autonomous way for the duration of the project
4. Each participant will be an active member of the Global Network of UNI Communicators after being introduced to the existing team at the Communicators' Forum held in Cape Town during the same dates of the training.

Target groups

The target groups are UNI affiliates in English or French-speaking Africa who:

1. don't have a website or have one but can no longer afford hosting / update costs
2. have a reliable IT structure (at least one computer with a decent internet connection)
3. have at least one member of staff who is IT savvy and who's General Secretary has committed to making sure his/her new role in web communications will be fulfilled
4. are up-to-date with the payment of their affiliation fees to UNI global union
5. have completed nomination criteria in Candidates' form for the project
6. have shown motivation to get a website by nominating candidates for the project in the very short period of response, given which was three weeks.

Project strategy

1. Selection of candidates through a survey run by UNI in August and September 2007
2. Setup of hosting server in Spain with the help of UNI's affiliate, Comfia CCOO
3. Setup of template CMS-based websites in English and in French
→ before April 2008
4. Training for 16 nominees from 13 countries, to take place in Cape Town, South Africa, during the UNI Communicators' Forum 9-11 April 2008
5. Tele-support by UNI and Comfia CCOO between April 2008 to April 2010
6. Project evaluation April 2009 and again in April 2010.

Expected results

- 16 unions from 13 countries will be given websites and been trained to update and manage them plus a free non-commercial email account to use, in Cape Town, South Africa, 9-11 April 2008
- Each union will have a recognised person in charge of website updating, who is fully trained on the eFuture CMS and has, when returned from Cape Town, trained two other staff members from his/her union for backup purposes
- Each union will have put aside a budget to cover eCommunication costs (computer and internet connection) which will keep them running until at least 2012
- All 16 participants will have attended the First UNI Communicators' Forum in the UNI-Africa region and became a member of our UNI Communicators' network, ensuring easy access to UNI information but also to advice and help on website work from the global team.

Monitoring/evaluation

Monitoring and project evaluation will take place April 2009 and April 2010.

The indicators of success will be that at least 60% of the 16 websites are alive and regularly updated (at least once every two weeks), that unions have maintained their office computer equipment (at least one pc) and internet connection during the duration of UNI-Africa eFuture *and* budgeted these eCommunication costs for the coming years (at least two – 2010-2012). All unions will have marketed their new website and email address amongst members, local press and international affiliations.

Sustainability

Once the training's taken place, each participant will return to his/her country and union with a website and CMS and will train two other staff members on website updating, to ensure continuation of the web updating work even if the current nominee to the project leaves the union.

Each union will put aside a budget to cover office IT equipment (computer and internet connection) not only for the project period but also for the following years, in order to maintain their eCommunications (email and web updating).

Free hosting through Comfia CCOO will be provided during the project duration, and if the participating unions maintain their website on a frequent basis (at least several times per month), Comfia CCOO will continue to offer hosting and re-evaluate the progress every year.

If this project proves successful, it can be deployed in other African countries with other affiliates. Training can be appended to existing future UNI events.

CANDIDATES SELECTED THROUGH UNI's SURVEY

Conducted in August and September 2007

1. Burkina Faso: FESBACI
2. Cameroon: SNEGCBFCAM
3. Cameroon: SYNACOM
4. Chad: SYNAPOSTEL
5. Egypt: NTUBIFA
6. Ghana: ICU
7. Guinea: FESABAG
8. Kenya: COWU
9. Kenya: KUPRIPUPA
10. Mauritius: CAFTEU
11. Nigeria: SSAUSGOC
12. RDC: FNC
13. RDC: SYNCASS
14. Uganda: ATGWU
15. Zambia: ZUFIAW
16. Zimbabwe: CASWUZ

Total women: 8

Total men: 8

Total youth (<35): 6

Total English speaking: 8

Total French speaking: 8