

**-For Immediate Release-**

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**UIC Students Make a Difference in Africa!**

***A student organization is looking to make a difference in Lyontonde, Africa***

**Chicago, Illinois-March 4, 2010 – *Project FOCUS*** is partnering with local organizations in rural Southwest Uganda to launch an Internet Cafe, providing access to information and communication previously unavailable to residents of the region. The Café will also provide technology skills training, revenue source for a local community-run primary school, and allocate space and tools for the production of creative multi-media projects.

Web access provides communities with the opportunity to improve social welfare and claim their voice in the global conversation on strategies for rural development. With this service, the local populace will benefit from direct links to job, educational, weather, and health information, as well as more efficient markets for produce and products. Former U.N. Secretary General Kofi Anan warns of the danger of excluding poor rural communities from the Internet: “People lack many things: jobs, shelter, food, healthcare and drinkable water. Today, being cut off from basic telecommunications services is a hardship almost as acute as these other deprivations, and may indeed reduce the chances of finding remedies to them.”

In a time when most development strategies are being created and authorized from behind desks in

Washington D.C., the Internet Cafe initiative is a culmination of a running partnership between ***Project***

***FOCUS*** and Ugandan service organization ICOD (Integrated Community Efforts for Development) aimed at implementing community-lead, sustainable development projects in the southwestern district

of Lyantonde, Uganda, a region that continues to be heavily affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Looking forward, ***Project FOCUS*** and ICOD see this service as a financial and physical foundation for change in the region, as the Internet Cafe holds significance both for direct participants and the broader economy. The two organizations have their sights set on supporting growth and stability in the key sectors of community development – education, health, agriculture, business – and will continue to champion locally developed solutions to local challenges.

Look for more information about the ***Project FOCUS*** program during this winter season. For further inquiries regarding the project, or to make a donation please contact Erik Cooper at 217-821-5521 or at erikccooper@gmail.com.

**“*Planting the Seed for a Better Tomorrow*”**