

Closing the Digital Gap using Universal Service Funds

– Key Lessons from Ghana

Abraham Kofi Asante

Administrator, GIFEC

December 11, 2018



Outline

- □ Overview – Ghana’s Universal Service Fund
- □ Our Projects
- □ Innovation in Rural Coverage and Affordability
- □ Our Strengths and Challenges
- □ Opportunities-Lessons Learnt



GIFEC : Universal Access to all persons

- ✓The Fund was launched in November, 2004. Operationalized in January 2005.
- ✓The Electronic Communications Act, 2008 (Act 775) provides the legal framework (mandate) for the activities of the Fund.
- ✓The mission of the Fund is ***“To facilitate the provision of Universal Access to all persons through the use of affordable Information Communication Technologies for socio economic development.”***



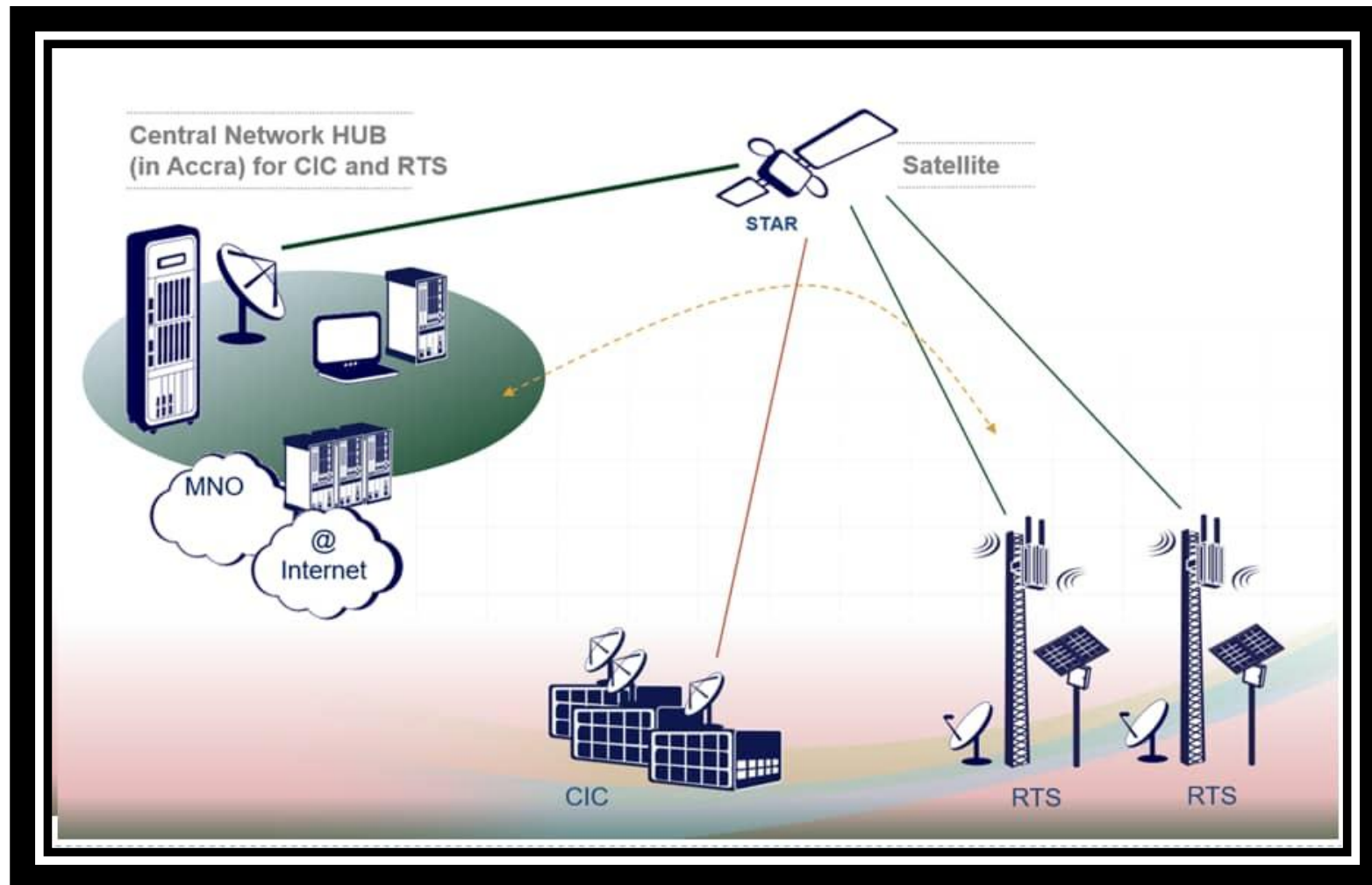
Our Projects



Rural Telephony Project



Satellite Hub



Reaching unserved schools



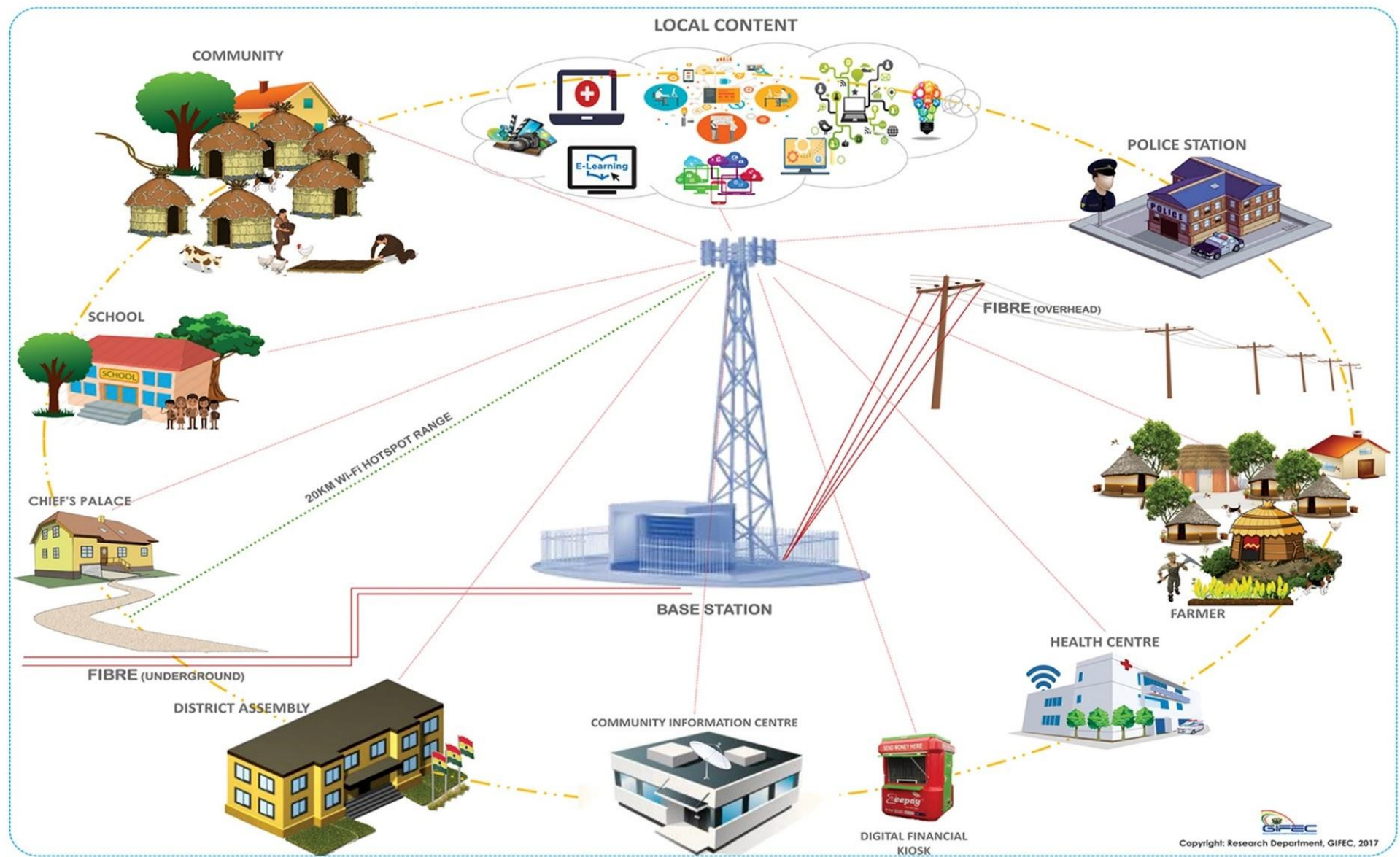
One Hundred and Eighty (180) ICT labs equipped and connected through our Satellite Hub



Community Information Centre – Access Hubs



Smart Community- Architecture



Our Broadband Technology



Outdoor



Indoor



Digital for Inclusion (D4I) Banking the Unbanked

40% of D4I agents are women



D4I platform is internet enabled

Our solution to address the gender digital divide



ICT Capacity Building, Awareness and Content Creation



The Women involved are ;
Dressmakers
Beadmakers
Hairdressers



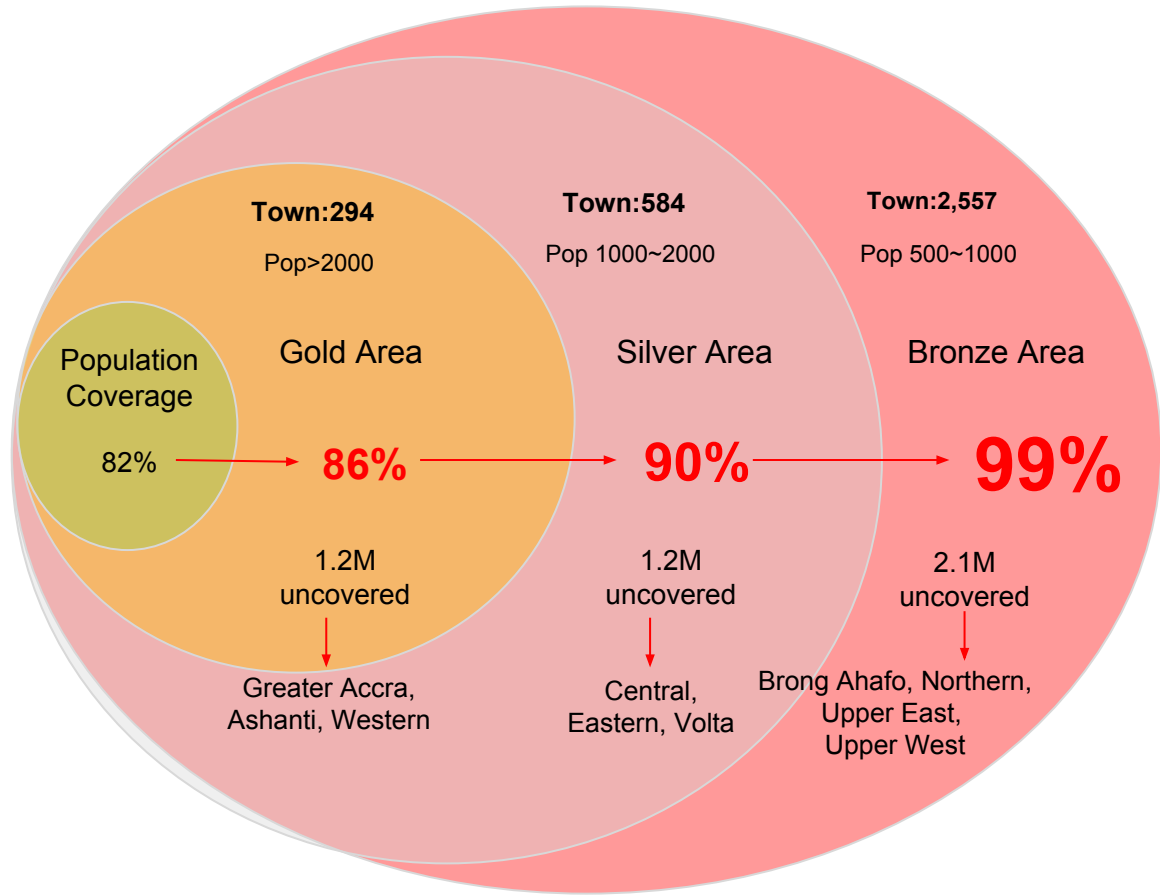
Coding for Kids



Innovation in Rural Coverage and Affordability



Challenges in Extending Connectivity



- Lack of Infrastructure (Road, Power, and etc.)



- Scattered Settlements and Low Revenue



- High CAPEX and OPEX



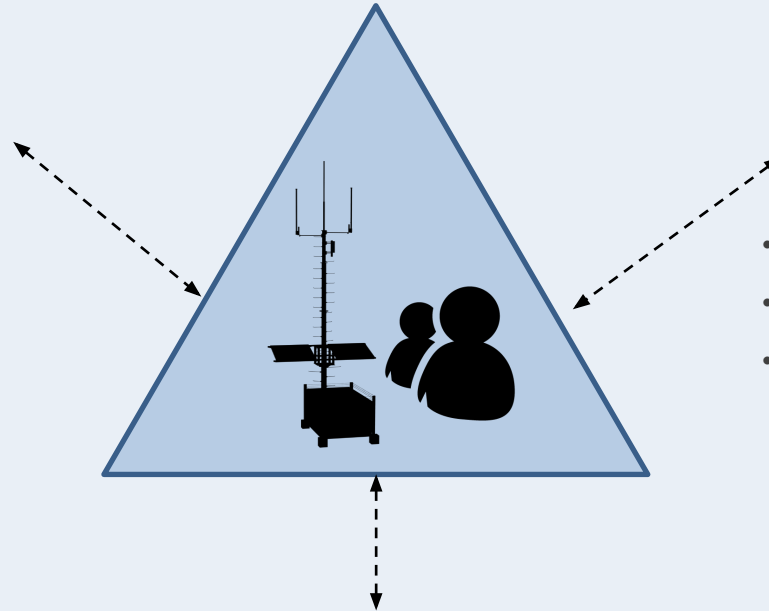
Innovative Partnership Model: More Stakeholders

Benefits Sharing

Tripartite Partnership Model

GIFEC

- Site Acquisition and permitting
- Joint Site survey based on nominal selection
- Custom's waiver for equipment clearance
- ECG facilitation for selected sites
- Acquisition of frequency (UMTS 900)



**Investor/
Telecom
Partner**

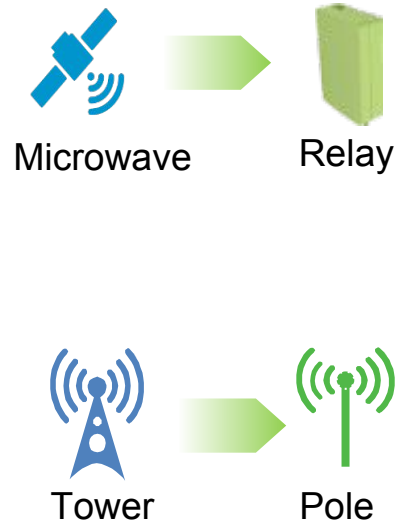
- Innovative solution offering
- Site build implementation and telecom works
- Site operations and maintenance

Telco

- Site selection and planning
- Site integration and marketing activities
- Sales and Distribution
- Only 3G or better




Innovative Solution: TCO Savings and Increased Rural Coverage



70% TCO Savings

Traditional Solution VS Innovative Solution

	Traditional Solution	VS	Innovative Solution
CAPE X	150,000 USD		59,000 USD
OPE X	12,200 USD		8,400 USD

Rural Connectivity and Broadband Services: Our Achievements



- ✓ The objective of the **Rural Telephony Project** is to support telecommunication operators to extend their mobile broadband services into locations of less commercial viability.
- ✓ **400+ Rural telephony sites** have been constructed in deprived communities that were without communication facilities in the country.
- ✓ A total number of about **1,200,000 new subscribers (voice and data)** in the beneficiary communities can now communicate and transact business with people in and around the world using broadband services.



Our Strengths

- Established by Ghana's Electronic Communications Act, 2008 (Act 775)
- Tax Exempted
- A 5-Year strategic plan
- Reliable source of funding by industry players
- Regional offices to bring service closer to the people
- Adequate in-house capacity to serve as technicians and facilitators
- Prudent fund managers

Our Challenges

- Insufficient funds – 1% of net revenue from Telcos
- Sustainability of Projects – Community ICT Centers to run as self sustaining entities
- Drive for affordability – special tariffs for unserved and underserved communities
- Categorization – Unserved areas vs. Rural areas



Opportunities – Lessons Learnt

- ✓ Adopt more Public, Private, Partnerships (PPPs) in deploying ICT infrastructure
- ✓ Develop, adopt and monitor sustainability measures and indicators for each project to ensure longevity
- ✓ Develop relevant content, create awareness and build capacities
- ✓ USF interventions should be co-created with the involvement of beneficiaries and demand driven
- ✓ Improve collaboration with key stakeholders - Telcos, Private Sector, Regulatory Agency and the Ministry
- ✓ Address Policy and Regulatory bottlenecks to improve rural connectivity and affordability.

THANK YOU

