

MISSPIN Ambassadors' Retreat

Hotel De Island, Lagos. May 14 – 15, 2009



Half-way into the first year of the *Microsoft Internet Safety, Security and Privacy Initiative* (MISSPIN) campaign, fourteen ambassadors gathered in Lagos for what turned out to be 2 of the most remarkable days in the history of the campaign. Following up on the request of MISSPIN ambassadors, ground work by the duo of Oluwakorede Asuni (the volunteer coordinator of the ambassadors) and Nana (Microsoft West Africa staff) and the much-appreciated support of Dr. Jummai Umar-Ajijola (Citizenship Lead, Microsoft Anglophone West Africa) and N'Dee Uwadoka (PR & Events Manager, Microsoft Nigeria), the retreat was hosted at Hotel De Island between May 14 and 15, 2009.

The day began with the ambassadors' participation in the Microsoft Imagine Cup finals for Nigeria, after which the group left for Hotel De Island in time for lunch, and for the commencement of the much-awaited retreat. Ambassadors took a break from their campaign activities and other involvements in *Abuja, Akwa Ibom, Calabar, Ebonyi, Lagos and Ondo states* to discuss the progress of their component of the campaign and highlight plans for the future. Following general self-introductions moderated by 'Gbenga Sesan (Paradigm Initiative Nigeria), Dr. Umar-Ajijola welcomed the participants and discussed Microsoft's operations in West Africa in details. After she highlighted the reason behind the campaign and the need to move Nigeria away from the consistent high rating in the annual Internet Crime Report, 'Gbenga Sesan discussed how ambassadors can maximize their roles for both corporate and personal benefits. While speaking on "*How to be a good ambassador*", he shared from his personal experience as Nigeria's Information Technology Youth Ambassador from 2001 to 2003 and asked all ambassadors to rise to the challenge. They literally rose to the challenge, saying in unison that their task is not one to be taken lightly. "**It's a big deal!**" was the consensus in the room, and the phrase has since been included in a new campaign logo designed by one of the ambassadors.



Ambassadors were then invited to make presentations about the work they have done since October 2008, and the session was revealing, exciting and inspiring. They highlighted various activities including one-on-one discussions with youth who have now turned away from cybercrime; visits to schools to discuss cybercrime and positive alternative internet uses with students; hosted seminars/workshops; started work on a book publication to chronicle the stories of Nigerian youth using ICTs positively; designed a project that will see Nigerian musical artistes collaborate to produce a hit track encouraging youth to shun cybercrime; wrote articles for journals and media institutions; incorporated cybercrime discussions into their work; held discussions on television programs; and collaborated with other projects across Nigeria to spread the word about online positive engagements for young Nigerians! After a very late dinner, the session resumed again at half past midnight to discuss the challenges faced by ambassadors in line of duty and also highlight what ambassadors will do over the next six (6) months. The challenges were then discussed by Microsoft and PIN staff (Dr. Umar-Ajijola, 'Gbenga Sesan, Nana and Ugo) while the ambassadors voted on who would be announced as the "*Most Outstanding Ambassador*" for the period under review.



The session resumed again at 8am, after breakfast, with the "*Most Outstanding Ambassador*" (Ohimai Godwin, Lagos) announced and presented with his prize of ₦50,000. 'Gbenga Sesan presented feedback on the discussed challenges and highlighted the agreement to help ambassadors with capacity building by: inviting them to Microsoft events and other training opportunities; providing human resource support for campaign events; providing detailed information about Microsoft technology platforms that will aid their work; sponsoring the production of the first set of campaign stickers; facilitating media outreach for ambassadors; integrating the work of ambassadors into the campaign's overall rehabilitation plan (to include life skills training, employability skills training, tour of ICT organizations, training and paid internships); and the production of a brochure detailing campaign progress. The PR & Events Manager for Microsoft Nigeria, N'Dee Uwadoka, joined the morning sessions and she discussed the need to maximise PR opportunities with the ambassadors. Dr. Umar-Ajijola discussed the LLP 'Go LIVE' initiative and commended ambassadors for their various plans to host 'Go LIVE' events in their respective states. She also announced that the one-year campaign will now span a 3-year period, a development that clearly excited all participants. After the presentations, ambassadors were presented with certificates that will further demonstrate their role as campaign and brand ambassadors.

The retreat was not only about the brainstorming session alone, it also afforded Microsoft Nigeria and Paradigm Initiative Nigeria the opportunity to celebrate the World Telecommunications and Information Society Day which holds May 17 every year. Noting that this year's WTISD had a relevant theme ("Protecting children in cyberspace"), the team left for Laureates College, Lagos, where ambassadors spent the day with students. The Microsoft/PIN team was hosted by the school's principal, Mr. Ogunsola, who expressed the school's delight at the visit and thanked Microsoft for

the Digital Literacy Curriculum CDs that were presented by Dr. Umar-Ajjola. The day continued in the school's meeting hall with welcome remarks by the school's principal, followed by brief discussions on the World Telecommunication and Information Society Day by 'Gbenga Sesan and Ore Somolu (Executive Director, Women Technology Empowerment Centre). The ambassadors and students were introduced to each other, and two ambassadors were invited to discuss their work with students before the students engaged them through thought-provoking questions.



By the time the day came to an end with group pictures, it was clear that the 2-day mission had been clearly accomplished!