**WEDE5020**

**Web Development: POE (Part 1)**

***Student Number: ST10478568***

***Student Name: Botshelo Letebele***

**Project Proposal: Ubuntu Rise Community Centre**

**A Web-Based Platform for prompting the spirit of Ubuntu is RSA by helping the less fortunate.**

**Proposed by: Botshelo Letebele**

**Organization Name: "Ubuntu Rise Community Hub**

**Tagline: Our humanity is bound up in each other. We rise together.**

**1. Introduction**

The Ubuntu Rise Community Centre, established in partnership (The Partnership is factional) with the Gift of the Givers Foundation, is a non-profit organisation (NPO) built on the foundational African philosophy of Ubuntu – "I am because we are." Our mission is to provide holistic, integrated support to the most vulnerable in our community, the elderly (Ouma and Oupa) and frail, survivors of abuse, and those who are lost and without focus by creating a safe space that fosters dignity, connection, and mutual upliftment.

Our vision is a resilient, organised community where no one is left behind, and where support is a mutual process that empowers every individual to rise and thrive. The Hub (Shelter or Centre) runs several key programmes, including the "Golden Years" day programme for seniors, the "Safe Harbour" programme for survivors of abuse, and the "Pathfinders" life skills programme, alongside a social enterprise retail store, "The Rise Shop."

This project proposes the development of a new, comprehensive website to serve as a digital extension of our physical hub, enabling us to scale our impact, streamline our operations, and deepen our community engagement in the digital age.

**2. Significance of the Project**

In today's busy world, a digital presence is not a luxury but a necessity for effective community outreach. A strong website will significantly enhance the Centre's ability to fulfil its mission by:

* **Extending Reach**: Making our services discoverable to those in need who may not be aware of our physical location.
* Democratizing Access: Providing discreet, 24/7 access to information and help resources, which is critical for vulnerable groups like abuse survivors.
* **Optimising Resources:** Automating and streamlining administrative tasks like volunteer applications and donation processing, freeing up staff time for direct client support.
* **Ensuring Sustainability:** Creating a new revenue stream through the online "Rise Shop" and facilitating easier online donations to ensure long-term financial stability.
* **Building Transparency**: Showcasing our impact through stories and news, building trust with donors, volunteers, and the wider community.

This project directly translates the spirit of \*Ubuntu\* into the digital realm, ensuring that our community can grow and support its members without physical or informational barriers.

**3. Problem Statement**

Currently, the Ubuntu Rise Community Centre lacks a strong digital footprint. Our existing online presence (if any) is outdated, not mobile-friendly, and lacks critical functionality. This creates significant barriers to achieving our goals:

* Ineffective Outreach: People in need of help who feel isolated or are in crisis find it hard to access information about our programs.
* Operational Inefficiency: Reliance on manual processes for volunteer sign-ups and donation management is time-consuming and prone to error.
* Limited Funding Channels: The absence of a secure, integrated online donation system and e-commerce platform hinders our ability to generate sustainable income.
* Lack of Engagement: There is no dynamic platform to share success stories, update the community on events, or celebrate the contributions of volunteers, missing opportunities to strengthen community bonds.

A new, purpose-built website is the essential solution to these challenges, acting as a force multiplier for our on-the-ground efforts.

**4. Target Audience**

The website will be designed to serve four primary audience segments, with tailored user journeys for each:

* Beneficiaries and Those Seeking Help: This includes the elderly, their families, abuse survivors, and individuals looking for guidance. They need clear, compassionate, and easily accessible information on how to get help, shared with the utmost discretion and privacy.
* Volunteers: Community-minded individuals looking to contribute their time and skills. They require a clear list of opportunities and a simple, transparent application process.
* Donors and Supporters: Both individual and corporate donors who want to contribute financially or through gifts-in-kind. They need a secure, easy donation process and obvious information on how their contributions are used.
* General Public and Community Partners: Those interested in learning about our work, shopping at The Rise Shop, or forming partnerships. They will engage with our blog, news, and impact reports.

**a) For the Elderly & Frail:**

* "Golden Years" Day Program: A safe, engaging space for seniors to combat loneliness. It includes social activities, gentle exercise classes (like yoga or walking clubs), shared meals, and help with managing medications.
* Practical Support: Volunteers assist with minor home repairs, gardening, and transportation to medical appointments. This helps them keep their homes and remain independent for longer.
* Intergenerational Connection: Programs that connect seniors with youth volunteers for storytelling or tech-help sessions, benefiting both groups.

**b) For the Abused (e.g., survivors of domestic violence, elder abuse):**

* Provides immediate crisis intervention, confidential counselling, and support groups. Staff help clients navigate legal protection orders and connect them with safe houses if needed.
* Empowerment Workshops: Courses on financial literacy, job readiness, and self-esteem building to help survivors regain independence and \*\*find their focus in life\*\*.
* Trauma-Informed Care: All staff and volunteers are trained to support clients with empathy and understanding, helping them keep their mental health. A priority.

**5. Budgeting**

The following budget outlines the estimated costs for the development and initial setup of the new website.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Category | Cost (USD) | Cost (ZAR) | Notes |
| Domain & Hosting | $100 | R1,800 | `. org.za` domain registration + 12 months of reliable shared hosting |
| UI/UX Design | $800 | R14,400 | Freelancer to create wireframes & a responsive design mock-up in Figma. |
| Frontend (React.js) | $2,000 | R36,000 | Responsive, mobile-first development for optimal performance on all devices |
| Backend (Node.js) | $2,500 | R45,000 | Development of user accounts, form handlers, and data management systems |
| Database (Firebase) | $300 | R5,400 | Real-time database for forms, shop inventory, and user data |
| Payment Gateway Setup | $200 | R3,600 | Integration fee for a secure payment processor (e.g., Pay Fast) |
| Testing & Deployment | $500 | R9,000 | Quality Assurance (QA), user acceptance testing, and deployment |
| Content Population & CMS Training | $500 | R9,000 | Loading initial content and training staff to use the WordPress CMS |
| Contingency (10%) | $720 | R12,960 | Buffer for unforeseen expenses or additional feature requests |
| Total | $7,620 | R137,160 |  |

**6. Summary**

The development of an integrated web platform for the Ubuntu Rise Community Hub is a strategic investment that will profoundly enhance our capacity to serve the community. By solving critical problems in outreach, efficiency, and sustainability, the website will become an indispensable tool that embodies the very principle of \*Ubuntu\*: connecting us all and allowing us to rise together.

This project will provide a clear, secure, and compassionate digital doorway for those in need, a streamlined conduit for support, and a vibrant showcase for the community's resilience and creativity. We seek approval for the outlined budget to commence this vital digital transformation.

**References**

* Gift of the Givers Foundation. (2023). Who we are. Retrieved October 25, 2023, from https://giftofthegivers.org/who-we-are/
* Mbigi, L. (2005). \*The spirit of African leadership\*. In L. Mbigi & J. Maree (Eds.), \*Ubuntu: The spirit of African transformation management\* (pp. 1-16). Knowledge Resources.
* Ubuntu Rise Community Hub. (2023). \*Internal programme documents: Golden Years, Safe Harbour, and Pathfinders\*. [Fictional Organisation].
* WordPress.org. (2023). \*About WordPress\*. Retrieved October 25, 2023, from https://wordpress.org/about/

This model of the Ubuntu Rise Community Hub perfectly combines the heart of an NPO with the practical elements of a small business/retail store, all driven by the powerful African philosophy of \*Ubuntu\* to help the most vulnerable members of society.