



**Innovation-Oriented Cooperation of Research Infrastructures and Collaboration with a Private Sector Through Advisory Services**

**University of Benin**

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### 1. Introduction and Background

- **Overview of Opolo Global Innovation Hub at Uniben:** Describe the establishment, mission, and goals of the hub at the University of Benin, emphasizing its role in fostering innovation, entrepreneurship, and skill development.
- **Personal Role and Contributions:** A detailed overview of your role as the manager of Opolo Hub, outlining your responsibilities, vision, and the impact you've made so far.

### 2. Current and Past Initiatives at the University of Benin

- **Tech Conference Collaboration with Edo Innovation Hub:**
- **Engagement with Google Developer Group Benin:**
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- **Nurturing of Talents and Community Incubation.**
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### 3. Collaborations and Partnerships

- **Edo Innovation Hub:** Ongoing collaboration details for startup support and incubation.
- **Co-Creation Hub:** Partnership discussions for driving startup discussions on campus.
- **Google Developer Group Benin:** Collaboration on various tech events and training programs.
- **University of Benin Stakeholders:** Engagement with lecturers, student leaders, and other organizations for innovation and community sustainability.

### 4. Ongoing and Future Plans

- **Promotion of Skill Development and Employment Opportunities:** Plans to enhance students' skills and translate them into employment opportunities.
- **Development of Startup Unicorns:** Strategies for identifying, nurturing, and scaling startups to become unicorns.
- **Continual Incubation and Business Support:** Plans to maintain a strong incubation program, renovate hubs, and support hackathons.

- **Scalability and Market Linkage:** How to measure the scalability of startups and link innovative ideas to the market, including creative industries like sports and music.

## 5. Tables and Listings

- **Startups Currently Supported:** A table with information extracted from the Excel sheet, including startup names, founders, progress, and specific support provided.
- **Current and Future Partners:** A comprehensive table listing partners, their background, contact persons, ongoing and future projects, and communities involved.

## 6. Conclusion

- **Summary of Achievements:** Highlight the impact made so far.
- **Vision for the Future:** Reiterating the plans for the future and how they align with the overall mission.

# University of Benin: Innovation, Collaboration, and Future Vision

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## Introduction and Background

### Overview of Opolo Global Innovation Hub at the University of Benin

The Opolo Global Innovation Hub at the University of Benin was established as a focal point for fostering innovation, entrepreneurship, and skill development within the university community. Its mission is to create a conducive environment for students, faculty, and the wider community to engage in groundbreaking technological advancements, business incubation, and sustainable development projects. The hub's goals include:

- Supporting startups through incubation and mentorship programs.
- Bridging the gap between academia and industry by providing practical skill development opportunities.
- Facilitating collaborations with industry leaders, tech communities, and other stakeholders to drive innovation and economic growth.

### Personal Role and Contributions

As the manager of Opolo Global Innovation Hub, I have been at the forefront of driving the hub's vision and ensuring its success. My responsibilities include:

- **Leadership and Vision:** Overseeing the day-to-day operations of the hub, setting strategic goals, and ensuring alignment with the university's broader objectives.
- **Partnership Development:** Establishing and nurturing relationships with key partners such as Edo Innovation Hub, Google Developer Group Benin, and Co-Creation Hub.
- **Program Implementation:** Designing and executing programs that promote digital literacy, entrepreneurship, and community engagement.
- **Community Building:** Creating and incubating tech communities on campus, such as the Huawei, Microsoft Student Learn Ambassadorship, and Google Developers Student Club.

Through these efforts, I have contributed to the development of a vibrant ecosystem that supports innovation and entrepreneurship at the University of Benin.

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# Current and Past Initiatives at the University of Benin

## Tech Conference Collaboration with Edo Innovation Hub

Last year, we successfully partnered with the Edo Innovation Hub to organize a tech conference that brought together students, faculty, industry experts, and entrepreneurs. The conference focused on emerging technologies, innovation, and the startup ecosystem in Nigeria. Key outcomes included:

- **Knowledge Sharing:** Industry experts delivered keynote speeches and workshops, providing insights into the latest technological trends.
- **Networking Opportunities:** Participants had the chance to connect with potential mentors, investors, and collaborators.
- **Startup Showcase:** Several startups from the University of Benin and beyond had the opportunity to pitch their ideas to a panel of judges, leading to potential funding and incubation opportunities.

This year, we have continued our partnership with the Edo Innovation Hub to provide ongoing support for startups through incubation programs, mentorship, and access to resources.

## Engagement with Google Developer Group Benin

As a speaker at the Google Developers Group Benin event, I led workshops on Generative AI and Gemini 101. These workshops were designed to introduce students to cutting-edge AI technologies and inspire them to start building their own innovative solutions. The impact of these workshops was significant:

- **Increased Interest in AI:** Many students expressed a newfound interest in AI and began exploring the possibilities of applying AI in various fields.
- **Project Development:** Several students started working on projects related to generative AI, demonstrating the immediate impact of the workshops.

## Data Analysis IT Program

In collaboration with the Center for Innovation and Development at the University of Benin and Google Developers Group Benin, we concluded a transformative Data Analysis IT program. This program provided participants with:

- **Hands-on Training:** Practical training in data analysis tools and techniques, equipping participants with valuable skills for the job market.
- **Internship Opportunities:** Select participants secured internships at the Edo State Investment and Procurement Office, further validating the program's quality and relevance.

## Meeting on Innovation and Community Sustainability

A key meeting on Innovation and Community Sustainability was held at the University of Benin, bringing together lecturers, student leaders, and representatives from various organizations, including Google Developers Student Club, Microsoft Learn Student Ambassador Community, Postman, Huawei, GritinAI, and more. The meeting was supported by UNIBEN ICT, Opolo Global Innovation, and Bank of Industry Limited. Key outcomes included:

- **Feedback Collection:** Valuable insights and feedback were gathered from participants, helping to shape future initiatives.
- **Collaboration Strategies:** Strategies for collaboration between faculty, students, and industry partners were outlined.
- **Future Planning:** Plans for future meetings and initiatives were discussed, focusing on sustaining innovation and community engagement.

## Digital Skills Section at the Faculty of Pharmacy

As the lead for the Digital Skills section at the Faculty of Pharmacy, my objective has been to equip students with essential digital skills, including:

- **Digital Literacy:** Basic computer skills, online research techniques, and the use of digital tools in pharmaceutical practice.
- **Data Analysis:** Training in data analysis techniques relevant to pharmaceutical research and practice.
- **Digital Marketing:** Understanding the role of digital marketing in the pharmaceutical industry and how to leverage it for professional growth.

These skills are critical for modern pharmacists who must navigate an increasingly digital world and integrate technology into their practice.

## Nurturing of Talents and Community Incubation

I have been actively involved in nurturing talents and creating and incubating several tech communities on campus. Some of the notable communities include:

- **Huawei Community:** Focused on developing skills related to Huawei technologies and promoting Huawei certifications.
- **Microsoft Student Learn Ambassadorship:** Providing students with access to Microsoft learning resources and certifications.
- **Google Developers Student Club:** A platform for students to learn, share, and collaborate on Google technologies.
- **Locally Developed Communities:** Including the GritinAI community, Uncovering Stars, HotGist, HotPlate, Uniben Tech Wave, and more, which focus on various aspects of technology and innovation.

These communities provide a supportive environment for students to develop their skills, work on projects, and collaborate with peers.

## **Hackathons and Free Tech Training Programs**

Organizing hackathons and free tech training programs has been a core part of our efforts to promote innovation and skill development on campus. These events have been organized in collaboration with partners such as Bitgrit, DSN, Microsoft, Google, and private sponsors like RigrAI. Highlights include:

- **Hackathons:** These events challenge students to develop innovative solutions to real-world problems, often resulting in the creation of prototypes and startup ideas.
- **Tech Training Programs:** Providing students with access to free training in areas such as coding, data science, AI, and more, helping them to build in-demand skills.

In addition, we have supported game development initiatives like Maliwo Games, encouraging creativity and innovation in the gaming industry.

## **Technical Partners**

We have established strong relationships with technical partners such as GritinAI, Dextovate, Cerxxx, and others, who provide valuable support in terms of technology, mentorship, and resources for our initiatives.

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# Collaborations and Partnerships

## Edo Innovation Hub

Our ongoing collaboration with the Edo Innovation Hub has been instrumental in providing startup support and incubation services. We continue to work together to:

- **Support Startups:** Providing access to resources, mentorship, and funding opportunities for startups.
- **Incubation Programs:** Offering incubation services to help startups develop and scale their ideas.
- **Community Engagement:** Hosting events and workshops to engage the university community and promote innovation.

## Co-Creation Hub

We are currently in discussions with Co-Creation Hub to drive startup discussions on campus. This partnership aims to:

- **Foster Innovation:** Encourage students to explore innovative ideas and develop them into viable startups.
- **Provide Mentorship:** Offer guidance and mentorship from industry experts to help students navigate the startup ecosystem.
- **Support Startup Development:** Provide resources and support to help startups grow and scale.

## Google Developer Group Benin

Our collaboration with the Google Developer Group Benin has been ongoing, with a focus on:

- **Tech Events:** Organizing events and workshops on topics such as Generative AI, data analysis, and more.
- **Skill Development:** Providing students with access to Google resources and training programs to enhance their technical skills.
- **Community Building:** Supporting the development of a vibrant tech community on campus.

## University of Benin Stakeholders

Engagement with lecturers, student leaders, and other organizations at the University of Benin has been crucial in promoting innovation and community sustainability. Our collaborations with organizations such as UNIBEN ICT, Opolo Global Innovation, and Bank of Industry Limited have:



- **Strengthened Community Ties:** Fostered a sense of community and collaboration among students, faculty, and industry partners.
  - **Promoted Innovation:** Encouraged the development of innovative solutions to address local and global challenges.
  - **Supported Skill Development:** Provided students with opportunities to develop and apply their skills in real-world scenarios.
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# Ongoing and Future Plans

## Promotion of Skill Development and Employment Opportunities

Our plans for the future include a strong focus on promoting the ability of campus students and those in the surrounding environment to develop skills that translate into employment opportunities. Key initiatives include:

- **Advanced Training Programs:** Expanding our training programs to cover emerging technologies and in-demand skills, ensuring students are prepared for the job market.
- **Internship and Job Placement:** Strengthening our partnerships with industry players to provide more internship and job placement opportunities for students.
- **Entrepreneurship Development:** Offering entrepreneurship training and support to help students turn their ideas into successful businesses.

## Development of Startup Unicorns

We are committed to developing startup unicorns from the school environment by:

- **Identifying High-Potential Startups:** Working closely with students and faculty to identify startups with the potential to become unicorns.
- **Providing Comprehensive Support:** Offering incubation, mentorship, funding, and resources to help these startups grow and scale.
- **Fostering a Culture of Innovation:** Encouraging a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship on campus, where students are motivated to think big and pursue ambitious goals.

## Continual Incubation and Business Support

Our incubation program will continue to provide essential support to startups, including:

- **Business Development:** Assisting startups with business planning, marketing, and scaling strategies.
- **Resource Access:** Providing access to resources such as office space, technology, and funding.
- **Mentorship and Networking:** Connecting startups with experienced mentors and potential investors to help them grow.

We also plan to support the renovation of existing hubs and the development of new ones to ensure that our facilities remain cutting-edge and conducive to innovation.

## Scalability and Market Linkage

Measuring the scalability of startups and linking innovative ideas to the market will be a priority. Our approach includes:

- **Scalability Assessment:** Regularly assessing the scalability potential of startups and providing tailored support to help them grow.
- **Market Entry Support:** Helping startups navigate the market entry process, including regulatory compliance, marketing, and sales.
- **Linking with Creative Industries:** Exploring opportunities to connect tech startups with creative industries such as sports, music, and entertainment, creating synergies that drive growth.

## Support for Creative Industries

Recognizing the potential of creative industries, we are also focusing on:

- **Supporting Creative Startups:** Encouraging and supporting startups in areas such as sports, music, and art.
- **Building Market Connections:** Creating opportunities for these startups to connect with the market and scale their businesses.
- **Fostering Innovation in Creativity:** Promoting the use of technology in creative industries to drive innovation and growth.

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## Tables and Listings

### Startups Currently Supported

Startup Name	Founder(s)	Progress	Support Provided
GritinAI	Osehon	Early Stage	Mentorship, Funding
UncoveringStars	Joshua	Growth Stage	Incubation, Resources
HotGist	Alex	Scaling	Networking, Funding
HotPlate	Tosin	Early Stage	Technical Support
Uniben Tech Wave	Umukoro	Growth Stage	Marketing, Mentorship

### Current and Future Partners

<b>Partner</b>	<b>About</b>	<b>Contact Person</b>	<b>Ongoing Projects</b>	<b>Future Projects</b>	<b>Communities Involved</b>
Edo Innovation Hub	A hub focused on supporting startups and innovation.	Asemot a	Startup Support, Incubation	Continued Startup Incubation	GritinAI, UncoveringStars
Co-Creation Hub	A leading technology innovation center in Nigeria.	Jude	Startup Discussions on Campus	Mentorship Programs, Workshops	GritinAI, Uniben Tech Wave
Google Developer Group Benin	A community for developers to learn and collaborate.	Joseph	Generative AI Workshops, Data Programs	Advanced AI and ML Workshops	Google Developers Student Club
UNIBEN ICT	The ICT unit of the University of Benin.	Prof Tony Waka	Innovation and Community Sustainability	Digital Skills Development	Microsoft Student Learn Ambassadorship
Opolo Global Innovation	A hub for innovation and entrepreneurship at UNIBEN.	Peter	Hackathons, Tech Training Programs	Startup Incubation, Market Linkage	Uniben Tech Wave, HotGist

## Conclusion

### Summary of Achievements

Over the past years, we have made significant strides in promoting innovation, entrepreneurship, and skill development at the University of Benin. Our collaborations with key partners, the successful execution of various programs and initiatives, and the nurturing of tech communities on campus have all contributed to creating a vibrant ecosystem that supports the growth of startups and the development of future leaders.

**Vision for the Future**

Looking ahead, our vision is to continue building on this foundation by expanding our programs, forging new partnerships, and providing even greater support to startups and the broader university community. We are committed to:

- **Enhancing Skill Development:** Equipping students with the skills they need to succeed in the rapidly evolving job market.
- **Supporting Startup Growth:** Helping startups grow and scale, with the goal of developing unicorns from the school environment.
- **Fostering Innovation:** Encouraging a culture of innovation and creativity, where new ideas are nurtured and brought to market.

By staying true to our mission and continuously adapting to the changing needs of our community, we are confident that the Opolo Global Innovation Hub will remain a driving force for positive change at the University of Benin and beyond.