



Case Studies Highlighted by the Youth Employment Network

Cisco Systems Networking Academy® Program ¹

The ever-increasing demand for and reliance on the internet, as well as the need for larger and more highly integrated network designs and implementations, has led to substantial growth of IT education. It is increasingly recognised that knowledge of IT is both necessary and desirable in many sectors of today's job market. As a number of traditional industries decline, the existence of the internet offers entirely new business models. If, as President and CEO of Cisco John T. Chambers asserts, the internet and education are the two great equalizers, it is important to engage in facilitating their access for all, so that the 'digital divide' may be addressed. If students are able to take the same courses and thus have the same opportunities as those taking them in any other part of the world, the career prospects of the student are enhanced as well as the economic and technological development of the country as a whole.

Created in 1997, the **Networking Academy® Program** helps students gain skills to better prepare them the global digital economy. The academy is a partnership between businesses, government, education and community organizations to deliver a broad range of services and support to the workforce, and in July of 2000 Cisco announced its Least Developed Countries (LDC) Initiative objective of establishing academies in at least half of the world's 48 LDCs. Alliance members include Cisco Systems, USAID, the UNDP, the International Telecommunications Union, the Japanese International Cooperation Agency, and the Institute of International Education. With academies in West Africa, including in Benin, Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal, Cisco Systems is looking to help build the quality of the region's workforce, a social investment which also serves to improve the pool of labour pool from which it can recruit for its core business needs.

The Program is a comprehensive eight semester/560 hour course that teaches students and workers in-transition to design, build, and maintain computer networks. It is an e-learning model that comprises web-based educational media-rich content, online testing, student performance tracking, and instructor training and support, as well as hands-on labs. Cisco works with educational organisations to train instructors on the latest technology and in best practice for delivering these courses. In order to ensure sustainable and timely international growth and quality, Cisco trains instructors at regional academies, who in turn can train and support up to ten local academies. Educational experts, faculty, and students are consulted in order to ensure smooth and continuous curriculum development.

¹ http://www.cisco.com/edu/emea/pdfs/cnap_brochure.pdf