BUILDING A MODERN AFRICAN HAIRDRESSING FACTORY

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Abstract

Development is about bringing well-being to the people. And this well-being is related to the acquisition of basic needs including: basic food, education, health care, proper vocational training and especially employment which are a great necessity for the poorest of the world in Africa who unfortunately lack it. Therefore, these poor people of Africa are practicing different type of jobs in order to survive: Hairdressing is one of those jobs that are deeply rooted in the African culture which in contrary are truly neglected over there, especially by parents who does not give any consideration to this type of activity. The idea is that Hairdressing like other vocational professions are what remain to do while one fail to accomplish the so called “proper education”. All parents wish their kids to become Medical Doctor, Engineer, and Lawyer/Solicitor/Barrister or Judge...Teacher. However, the hairdressing sector has become over the time an interesting business sector in some organized economy around the world, where it counts for billions of US dollars. As poverty is increasingly progressing in Africa, though the continent is registering an average economic growth of 7% per year, Hairdressing is one of those economic sectors that should be supported in order to be well managed and developed throughout the continent. Hence, jobs will be created and people can feed themselves and their family and become autonomous. Therefore, as Information and communication technology, ICT become tools to be used to tackle poverty issues, the concept of People.net that stand for the transfer of knowledges or constructive information either throughout sound culturally integrated highly usable mobile and/or web ICT platform among people either rural or urban from any background should be considered in order to help the poor people of Africa to sustainably boost their various job activities. Thus, reduce ignorance and reinforce personal and collective development. Applied to the Hairdressing category of activity, knowledge could be exchanged, more clients will be acquired, turnover will rise up, appointments will be well scheduled...online training could be ran and catalogues could also be showed off and consulted either by clients/customers or peers.

1. Introduction

Hairdressing and hair care play an important role in the African Culture, especially among women: “ask almost any black woman and she will probably tell you that her relationship with her hair is similar to a love affair. Whether it’s the long hours spent waiting at the hair salon, the pain endured from pressing or braiding, or the amount of money spent—hair is truly an obsession. While I realize other cultures value hair, in Black culture hair is extremely significant and often synonymous with identity. And many individuals, such as Don King, Bob Marley, and Angela Davis have used their hair to make a statement.” Trip down memory lane (2012) “Hair played a significant role in the culture of ancient African civilizations as it symbolized one’s family background, social status, spirituality, tribe, and mar-
“African civilization had variety of different hairstyles. A lot of person still wearing, inspiring ancient African hairstyles in the world. They had symbolic hairstyles because of tribal traditions. Hairstyles in Africa and among African Americans are ever-changing and yet deeply rooted in a shared past” trip down memory lane (2012). “As early as the 15th century, hair was the main disseminator among different tribes and within communities of marital status, age, wealth, and rank on the social hierarchy within a community or tribe. Members of royalty would often wear elaborate hairstyles as a symbol of their stature, and someone in mourning, usually women, would pay little attention to their hair during the period of grieving. Hair was seen as a symbol of fertility as thick, long tresses and neat, clean hair symbolized one’s ability to bear healthy children” Africacom (nd). This is a historical practice, done by our ancestors and having undergone many changes over time. Therefore, Hairdressing among Africans has undergone several stages of changes in the practice up to become a real profession with the expression of a given skill most of them natural even though several learning and teaching micro centers and salons are opened.

The hairstyle is apprehended in different ways depending on the environment, also having various advantages and disadvantages.

Basically, it was the mothers and/or sisters who took care of braiding the kids. But because the cultures, lifestyles are changing trends, it was necessary that this profession makes its appearance. While in Africa especially in Togo women are gathered most of the time in rudimentary containers based rooms in order to perform different models for their clients, they are working in an informal sector unknown and fought by the government. “According to Feige (2005), the phrase informal economy has been used frequently, and inconsistently; he argues that the informal economy comprises economic activities that circumvent costs and are excluded from the benefits and rights incorporated in laws and administrative rules covering property relationships, commercial licensing, labor contracts, torts, financial credit, and social systems.” Medina L et al (2016) Hence, those women do not receive any support and their activities are not that prosperous even though this economic sector is booming and flourishing nowadays all over the world.

In order to better understand the subject, the question asked is: Who are the actors in this field? What characterizes them in Togo, one of the poorest countries in the world? How does each involved structure work? How can ICT help this area of activity through the People.net platforms, the knowledge for all, and development concept approach?

2. Overview of the hairdressing environment: processes and procedures

The job of hairdresser is to cut and arrange the hair one way or another with a comb and / or scissors Wiktionary (2017). In relation to the African reality, we must add to this definition the addition of wicks, extension and pearls. A hairdresser can work from home, in a salon or at her clients’ premises. This activity is organized as informal business. However its role in the society is truly recognized by the government Republicoftogo (2010).

Combing hair exists from the time of Cro-Magnon; although there were no suitable tools to execute this action. At the time of the Greeks, it is a luxury; and also in ancient Egypt, with pharaohs and high-ranking women. The hairdresser trade did not exist as such yet. The beneficiaries of this time were usually slaves and maids. Hairdressing was and remains a way of ‘categorizing’ people and distinguishing the most affluent. Intox (2015). For some communities of Africa, it was easy to be braided by one’s mother, sisters and / or friend. It was, however, necessary to distinguish oneself from royalty like in ancient Europe “a distinctive hair-dress characterized the head chief in the Marquesas Island. Long hair was worn by Caesars, the most illustrious family of the Julian House and constituted probably a symbol of royalty. The long hair of the Frankish Merovin-gian kind was sacred and implied a prerogative of the royal race”. Gunnar Landman (nd)
Nowadays, the job of hairdresser is more widespread, practiced by all. The hairdressers are categorized very often by their mode of operation. Hairstylists may have salons in different ways depending on the regulations in the country. Some build them from scratch, next to their others and rent space for their work. The hairdressers are not limited to weave locks. These are also resold. The hairdressers do this in order to increase their income. Some make cosmetics for sale, and some provide existing products. The state has put in place a certain regulation for taxes payable. However, all these activities are informal and does not unfortunately account yet in the national economy.

“Africa witnesses widespread transactions in informal services ranging from hairdressing, construction, and housekeeping to education, health and finance. Such services trade flows seem to flourish on the African continent—despite the many barriers to the movement of services providers. Tanzanian Maasai hair braiders are in high demand in Zambia, while Congolese, Kenyan, and Ugandan hairdressers are sought after by Tanzanian women from all walks of life, from the girl next door to the wife of the minister. All these hairdressers are crossing borders—usually helped by facilitators and fixers to provide their services in a foreign country. And the earnings they receive by working in foreign countries (export earnings) often remain their main source of income, contributing to significant improvements in their livelihoods. “This is the only way I earn an income. I have been able to take care of my family,” explains Helene, a 38 year-old Congolese hairdresser living in Zambia.”” The World Bank (2016)

However Hairdressing is a big business that becomes an industry of billion US dollars nowadays in Africa with “the biggest growth in 2014 was in Nigeria where people spent more than $440 million, the sales of conditioners and relaxers rose 11% since 2013.

Similarly, in South Africa the amount of money spent on haircare increased 7% from 2013 to 2014, and in Kenya consumers spent more than $100 million on haircare, and salon sales were up 8%” Parke P (2016).

Moreover another way of improving the income of hairdressers is to immigrate to western countries and especially in the US where there is a huge market of blacks including: black American and black African. The income is obviously higher and the creativity too. In this part of the world Black American has grown up with this culture of Hairdressing brought up by the slaves as “at the time when slavery was abolished, black women in America tended toward straightening their hair. Though they were free, these women still needed to strive to fit in and "good" hair was one way to do it. The women with straight hair, like white women, were considered well-adjusted and were more accepted. At the same time, however, many younger girls were able to carry on the cornrow tradition.” LeafTV (nd) The hairdressing culture has gone through several transformations from till “today, the care and maintenance of black hair styles has become a multimillion dollar industry. Shops all over the country specialize in weaves and cornrows”” LeafTV (nd). The 20th and the 21st centuries have seen a huge revolution creativities coming from the mother land Africa in this sector as

“across the United States, women from countries such as Senegal, Ivory Coast and Togo, have used braiding as a bridge to a better life. In the 1990s and 2000s, entrepreneurial instinct and the ability of braiders to amalgamate traditional braiding styles with hair trends within African-American culture, meant braiding was a secure source of income. According to professor Cheikh Anta Babou, an expert in African history and the Africa diaspora, although it was generally confined to the informal economy, braiding was once such a lucrative profession, in the peak season braiders could earn $200 to $300 a day. Babou estimates 70 percent of Senegalese immigrant women in the United States are hair braiders. Braiding is so perva-
sive it has reshaped and transformed Senegalese life in the United States. For instance, the economic independence women gained from braiding meant patriarchal norms were resisted; consequently divorce has become more frequent within the Senegalese community” Mbakwe C (2016).

In most of African countries and especially in Togo, hairdressers normally receive training before practicing even though the majority of the women have got the skill naturally while they were kids or teenagers from scratch. They often create contacts with potential customers during the training and then during the internship. This training is done by registration with a hairdresser exercising followed by the payment of fees. The training is then culminated in an exam (written and/or oral as well as a practical exam) and a graduation. The minimum level of study required is GCSE.

Even though hairdresser trade is an informal business and is not accountable in the country’s economy, it saves many unemployed women and allows these ladies to comb and maintain and get paid for it. It also paves the way for some women to a greater success in life like Mariatu Turay who “braided hair to survive when she was homeless and penniless after fleeing war-torn in Sierra Leone at the age of 16. Now she is prominent in London’s African community as an entrepreneur with her own fashion boutique and believes her story demonstrates that anyone can follow their dream” Cave A (2017).

3. Methodology

3.1. The Life Based Design

In order to obtain the necessary data for the research, interviews and focus group were run during the formal life study of the Hairdressers in Togo. The research followed the methodology of Life Based Design, the micro-innovation tool for better integration of the users thought, aspirations and needs and all the holistic aspect of their lives to be considered in the design and the development of the information technology Application process in order to foster usability and sustainability. Hence, “the conceptual model of life-based design (LBD) is based on segregating unified systems of actions called forms of life. While investigating the structure of actions and related facts relevant to particular forms of life, in addition to the values that people follow is the core tool of LBD. The knowledge produced constitutes a template for human requirements, which serves as a basis for design ideas and technological solutions” Saariluoma P (2016) et al as “Technologies are intended to help people realize their action goals in life, and thus make life easier or richer” Saariluoma P (2016). “Life-based design (LBD) is a framework, approach and philosophy in which all designs, technological and otherwise, should be inspired by and initiated from the potential end-users themselves [19,20]. The main tenet behind LBD is that humans develop technology in order to improve the quality of everyday life, and/or to free people from the arduous, less important tasks, e.g., washing clothes or bookkeeping, in order to concentrate on the more significant activities such as family life or innovating” Saariluoma P (2010).

“One of the obvious characteristics of human-technology interaction design has been the disproportionate attention it has paid to immediate use rather than to the role of technology in people’s everyday life. Much more work has been done to develop knowledge of how people can use techni-
cal devices than to understand why they actually use or wish to use them. However, people are not necessarily interested in placing their pin codes in cash dispensers and payment terminals. Instead, they are interested in getting their money and paying bills. They are not interested in controlling DVDs but in watching movies. Therefore, the latter kinds of life actions define the position of technology in human life” Saariluoma P (2010) Sameer Datye (2012) provided with the necessary tool to be used to gather all stakeholder of the social actions including: various funders and the NGOs and also the beneficiaries of the charitable program together in order to exchange and boost the social actions through the development of an information and communication technological platform based on the Life based Design Methodology. Hence, NGOs are looking for funds and Funders are looking for accountability figures about the projects and their impacts on beneficiaries will be enhanced.

This research aims to investigate in the formal life of the Hairdressers in order to know how they perform their activities, find their problems and see whether ICT has the potential to enhance the level of performance and empower the hairdressers. The objective is to make the Hairdressing a more considered and attractive activity that should not only contribute in the resorption of poverty calamities but also provide the unskilled people of Africa a truthful business option for boosting the national economy. And a respondent in the Marc & Mary in Uganda (nd) assumed that “with hairdressing, you can set up at your home or in the village, it does not cost so much and your children are with you and you work when the time is right. There is always work, everybody has hair’ Hair braiding and weaving is very complex, ubiquitous and costly”.

3.2. Data Collection and Analysis

Six focus group of six hairdressers which including: senior and junior apprentices, a city hall agent in charge of receiving taxes, owners of hairdressing salon of Agoè, Totsi and Avédji, all north Lomé, Togo quarters. Each group was rigorously formed and was representative of hairdressing environment. Several questions went to them. The research method is based like said above on the focus group that defines as an oral and group process to better understand the point of view of the correspondent, to gauge his expectations and needs, to capture the behaviors and opinions Thibeault (2010). The interviews and focus group sessions were spread over three weeks. The conversations and the various dialogues allowed taking into account the psycho-social, psychological, sociological and biological point of view in order to develop a suitable solution.

Making hairdressers exchange and asking them questions was not very complicated at all; as they were very friendship and empathetic. Most of the participants of the research are female hairdressers who have been questioned. The last two focus group sessions were difficult. It turned out that they feared that the group of researchers would be agents of the Togolese Revenue Board (OTR) mission to extract information about their finances. Although the atmosphere was heavy, everything was arranged afterwards and data was collected from a maximum of answers throughout the discussions. A salon manager wanted even the young data collectors to become her apprentices in order to better understand the environment. This was a tempting proposal. Opportunity was also offered to make managers converse with the apprentices through the sessions. They latter were very excited to answer questions. They thought they were on television. Overall, all discussions had been successful. It is important to notice that a hair salon is the ideal place for conversation and chat for most women.

In the course of the discussions with these hairdressers and their apprentices, it was noticed that they had not often had the opportunity to speak about their work with Information and Communication Technology students. There have already been interviews of this kind with students in marketing, sociology or business creation. But having the opportunity to participate in the creation of a solution for their environment is an incredible opportunity. They consider this new approach as very interesting and hopeful for the future. During the talks with the hairdressers, the cus-
customers present intervened too. The discussions were very lively. Some provided interesting answers and their experiences. Others were very skeptical about the work.

The main difficulties to deal with were building trust, arranging meetings with hairdressers and recording information like Raheim M et al (2016) confirmed that “Pre-understanding and openness, closeness and distance, the co-construction and situating of knowledge, trustworthiness and integrity, power relations, and ethical dilemmas are given primacy in the qualitative methodology (Dahlberg, Dahlberg, & Nyström, 2008; Finley, 2002; Gergen & Gergen, 2000; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 1985)”.

The data collected from the different actors have triggered the question of how ICT could contribute to build and interesting and emergent Hairdressing flourishing business sector in this African poorest country Togo that is discussed together with those actors. As indeed “using ICT in pursuit of development goals allows countries to achieve a wide diffusion of benefits, which will benefit broad-based economic growth, as well” (UNDP 2001) in Kelles-Viitanen A (nd). Therefore, an integrated ICT solution is provided. This solution is developed further down according to the need of the subjects of the research who were happy to use their smartphone to boost their activities in order to access informations in real time either by exchanging with their peers, customers, boost their turnover or schedule all their appointments and moreover receive appropriate online training and browse some proposed catalogues full of models.

4. How hairdressers work

An average of twelve (12) hairdressing and beauty salon open each week in the UK. Douglas L (2017) indicated that “according to the Royal Mail’s Address Management Unit, more beauty and grooming salons opened on UK high streets last year than any other type of independent business, with a net increase of 626 salons, the equivalent of 10%.” Douglas L (2017) continue by saying that “ Industry supplier Salon Services’ annual Beautiful Britain report, which surveys 2,000 hair and beauty salons across the UK, found the average annual spend on hair and beauty treatments grew 19% for female clients to £876 in 2015, and 23% for male clients to £711.”

In 2015 the industry generated $56.2 billion in the United States. Hair care is the largest segment with 86,000 locations. Skin care is a close second and growing fast, expected to have revenue of almost $11 billion by 2018. This growth is being driven in part by a generally increasing awareness of the importance of skin care, but also specifically due to an increase in the market for men” Sena M (2018). “While still largely based in the informal economy, the African haircare business has become a multi-billion dollar industry that stretches to China and India and has drawn global giants such as L’Oréal and Unilever Although reliable Africa-wide figures are hard to come by, market research firm Euromonitor International estimates $1.1 billion of shampoos, relaxers and hair lotions were sold in South Africa, Nigeria and

Cameroon alone last year” Sibeko S (2015). Togo is just next door to Nigeria and there too, the world of hairdressing is highly booming. The number of hairdressers continues to grow. A hairdresser already graduated can have up to ten apprentices alone according the apprentices. Usually within ten (10) apprentices at a salon contacted, five pass the exam, three drop out, two remain their eternal apprentices, Table1. In Togo without the graduation no apprentice become a Patron as it is the case in Ivory Coast where only some knowledge of the hairdressing would be enough to practice the profession and open salons. This exam of vocational study practices in Togo was established and organized by the German since the colonial time in Togo before the First World War. Of the five graduates, three will eventually fully practice and get other apprentices; the last two will give up for lack of resources to begin or lack of customers, Table2. The competition is getting heavier. Everyone wants and can become a hairdresser. Hence, nowadays there are also in Togo, without the state control, hairdressers practicing the profession without having been graduated. Therefore, in the district of
Avédji alone, four hairdressers can be found in the same lane. In the markets, they are more than a dozen. According to Tata GOKAN Akola, a hairdressing manager, there will be a day of more hairdresses than customers Africa.fr (2010).

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<tr>
<th>Number of Apprentices</th>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Pass the Exam</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<th>Number of Apprentices</th>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Will effectively practice and get own Apprentices</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Give up and due to lack of funds to start their Salon or not getting Clients/Customer</td>
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Faced with this competition, hairdressers had to think of other ways to make profit. This is how they started selling wicks and weaves as business strategies need to be applied. “If your enemy is strong at all levels, be prepared to face it. If he seems stronger as you, invade him. If your opponent is a blood, try to provoke him. Pretend to be weak and he will become arrogant. If he takes his ease, do not give him a break. If his forces are unified, separate them. Attack the right where he is less prepared, appear especially where you are expected the less” said Sun Tzu (nd). And competitive strategies call for a wide range of adapted options like diversifications or the introduction of innovative products. “Of course, innovation can create value in many ways. It might make a product perform better or make it easier or more convenient to use, more reliable, more durable, cheaper, and so on” Pysano G (2015). According to one of the participants of the research, it was necessary to go to a shop or a specialized shop in Assigamé, the bigger market place of Lome at 20km from the research area to have locks. Finding these products at her usual hairdresser was a good point. As time goes by, competition on this ground has climbed which led the hairdressers to sell cosmetics products. This option has really been a revenue generator. Some hairdressers also sell jewelry, clothes and other accessories. Because of the competition, some hairdressers must open to other horizons. This is how we find hairdressers who style men (braids or shaving). Still others take training in manicure and pedicure. All means are good to bring in money, as they say. Apart from the competition, the hairdressers of the research did not complain about the economic situation in the country.

People always need to make nice appearance: “as a woman, you can vary your appearance from day to day in ways that men could never hope to. You can change your hair style or color, your outfit, your makeup, your nails, your entire look. This builds suspense! It keeps them interested!” Aleida Morel (2018). “Your appearance can hold the burden of the person you used to be and psychologist Dr. Patricia A. Farrell agrees that hair
is one of the easiest ways to make that shift. “Hair is one of the most important aspects of our expression of who we are and who we want to be seen as,” she explained. “Dramatic haircuts would indicate a wish to make a drastic change and then fit into that new persona we’re creating.”

Lindsay K (2016). Women are always looking to be more hairstyle, to buy cosmetics or accessories. As a result, hairdressers still have customers. They just depend on changing trends and fashion.

“What motivating factors are driving women to visit their salon? Below are some of the most cited reasons why the ladies are having cosmetic work done. Note that these trends account for more than just Indianapolis hair salons, and encompass survey responses from all over the country. When finding a makeup artist, Indianapolis residents can typically expect similar answers.

1. Beauty salons report that 58% of women surveyed admitted they were planning on changing their hairstyle in the near future as a matter of regularity.

2. Around 56% of women claimed they prefer to seek the advice of their hairdresser or cosmetologist about an idea they have pertaining to their appearance.

3. One of the most interesting reasons on the list is this — 44% of women changed their hairstyle or color at least once in their lives out of sheer boredom.

4. Reinventing oneself was found to be a popular motivator, as over 25% of women surveyed claimed that this was something that brought them into the salon at least once in their lives.

5. 50% of surveyed women who visit salons will go at least once per month for regular upkeep on their looks. The amount of money spent on services and treatments increased 14% or so when this trend first started to really catch on around 2007. Compare this to Spanish women, where the typical cost of a visit to the spa or salon is close to $200 a pop.

6. Also in 2007, the amount of facials, massages, and manicures and pedicures increased by 50%, 38%, and 28% respectively, making them huge favorites for the ladies.

7. About 38% of surveyed women claimed that they wanted to feel more confident about their appearance and feel more attractive to the opposite sex.

Whatever the reason, women love going to the salon. Whether it’s to feel more confident, reinvent themselves, or simply because they’re bored, there’s always time for a trip to the salon.” Splash (2018)

As difficulties found, hairdressers have to deal with indebtedness, or unsold stock and payments of various expenses. Sometimes clients do not immediately pay for the braids or products they get from the hairdressers. Some clients just disappear. Suppliers of products and wicks are also a problem. If they do not increase prices for no reason, they also disappear with the advance of large orders or do not deliver in time. Tax and tax agents are not on a leash. All these situations are sources of stress for hairdressers. This creates delays in the payment of charges, such as rent and salaries... or difficulties in meeting their own needs. That comes out of our interviews.

On the client side, the sources of stress and problem are the availability of services. It is often necessary to make appointments, especially during festivities. Another point is the time spent braiding. It can drag on and sometimes you are not always served in time. Clients are also sometimes uncomfortable when hairdressers start gossiping. The clients are also sometimes disappointed when the hairdressers convince them to try this or that product-wick, without conclusive result.

5. The place of the hairdressers in the Togolese society

Whether in Togo or elsewhere, the job of hairdresser is respected because of the training and the diploma required exercising. Depending on the country, the profession is framed in different ways. In Togo, hairdressers organize themselves into a community and association to interact with
the state and its agents. Hairdressers who have ambition and know how to manage their finances are doing well in the society. They have many assets and many other activities. Some hairdressers even start making products and create their own brands. They become true businesswomen. The hairstyle gradually becomes art and a way to stand out from the crowd. “Hair styling can be one of the most rewarding and amazing careers that can provide flexibility, and the ability to have control over your income, and what you get out of it directly depends on what you put in. You must be very patient, and self-motivated, humble, and observant of others that are experts in the art. You must also have the drive to never, ever stop learning. You have to be prepared to do whatever it takes to hone your skill. If you are not truly passionate about the job, you will probably find that you don’t care to put in the time and hard work it requires to become successful. However, if you do have the love and perseverance to stick with it, I believe the payoff is worth it.” Indeed (nd).

At the beginning of the trade, there were some prejudices against the hairdressing activity, as it was unthinkable to go to an unknown woman, make a hair dress and pay extra. When straightening became fashionable, the hairdressers were held responsible for the misdeeds of this product that is the chemical relaxer and the same reaction to the popularization of skin lighteners. The hairdressing salon being a place for discussion and sharing of history, hairdressers have sometimes been associated with ‘breakers’ or ‘gossips’. When AIDS began its reign of terror, the hairdressers were accused of transmitting the disease through the use of sharp and sharp tools during manicures and wicks weaving. “Various publications, including IOL and Radio 702, reported on the report in the South African Medical Journal, which analyzed the hair clippers of barbers in three townships of Cape Town. It found that at least 42% were contaminated with blood. The media reports stated that the study showed risk of transmitting HIV and Hepatitis B, especially to those who have “chiskops” or clean shaven cuts.” N’tsabo M (2018). All these situations have long tarnished the reputation of hairdressers. Witchcraft cases are sometimes related to hairdressing. The hairdressers would use occult sciences to increase the clientele or finish off business rivals. This job is also frowned upon by parents. They do not understand the fact that their child can end up in such a profession. The perception is that hairdressing is a no-brainer career, something you do if you fail everything. It’s certainly not the sort of life a private school-educated young girl would be encouraged to take up.

This is why they are organizing themselves, re-grouping and creating unions to become stronger as explain Radio Lomé (2017). They are united and work to improve their working conditions as “hairdressers deal daily with harsh chemicals that could potentially cause serious damage to a client, not to mention razor sharp scissors” UnionNSW (2016). At the state level, there are no measures in place for hairdressers (for pensions, for example). This is a sector with little supervision by the administration in place. But steps are being taken to this end, said the agent of the City Council that we had to question. In some parts of the country, according to some participants of our sessions, hairdressers are considered, sometimes wrongly, to be very rich. This creates deplorable situations of theft and racketeering. The hairdressers are also victims of burglary and rape. The Voice of the North (2017).

From the point of view of customers, they are rather well treated. They are the source of income for hairdressers, so they put the means in place to satisfy this clientele and to have other clients and clients. Many women depend on this trade as confirmed Yukiyo O (2005) “It seems that during the period 1984-2000 hairdressing thrived remarkably, and that it was one of the modern and important occupations for women in urban Ghana.” Yukiyo O (2005)

5.1. Psychosocial aspects

Apart from what the bad languages will say about this trade, the hairdressers are rather proud and strong. Like in Nigeria for example “Bruno Oaikhinan decided to set up a hair salon in a Lagos mall after realising that no matter how the
economy is faring, people are always prepared to spend money on their hair. Over the weekends it is packed with women, men ad children being groomed” BBC (2015). They recognize the place they occupy in society and in the lives of women in the country. “I was lucky enough to be on a salon owner’s conference in the beautiful Hamilton Island recently. I was asked at the conference to be on a panel in front of about 80 salon owners from around Australia discussing issues that affect our industry. I looked around the room and I was blown away by the amount of highly successful salon owners who have not only become wonderful trades people, they are also running very successful salons. As salon owners and hairdressers they are giving a lot to the community by employing young people and teaching them to be great hairdressers and life skills. I really felt privileged to be part of this group” said Akle S (2014)

In terms of trade, they contribute to the country’s economy by reselling and producing various items even though they are not most of the time aligned or formal. The hairdressers are in great demand for weddings, fashion shows and other events. “The trade union movement is working to extend its services to the informal economy. CNTT has registered an expansion of 20,000 affiliated trade union members from the informal economy to 53,410 in 2014. The membership of one of the hairdressers’ union has increased from 600 to some 2,000 members” Ulandssekretariatet (2014). Meanwhile, Togo hairdressers are for some of them working in environment where there are drug misuses, they can be pressured by clients and managers as confirmed by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (nd) who said that hairdressers usually face “psychosocial factors that can impede work practices and promote stress include bullying, sexual or racial harassment, intimidation, threats, verbal abuse and, in extreme situations, physical assaults”

5.2. Biological state of Togolese hairdressers

In contrary to certain beliefs, the hairdressing salon is a work place riddled with risks. They are frequent and sometimes cause abandonment or death. Four main risks were identified. First, it is skin, eye and respiratory diseases and allergies. “Hairdressing is not an obviously dangerous occupation. Yet working in a hair salon or a barber’s shop can provoke skin conditions, musculoskeletal diseases such as arthritis and tendonitis and work-related asthma” Tapper J (2017). This is because hairdressers use all kinds of chemicals to style and maintain equipment. Nearly 10% of declared occupational allergies come from hairdressing professionals, as well as 30% of cases of asthma, as underlined by the official website Prevention (nd.). Secondly, musculoskeletal disorders are the result of the uncomfortable and repetitive positions hairdressers must take over the workday. Thirdly we have cases of injuries, cuts and possibly contamination. This point arises from the use of scissors or heating objects. The last point underlined by the Official Prevention (nd.) evokes the stress that a difficult client can cause in the hairdressers. The hairdressers identified that the job sites are sometimes victims of verbal attacks when they have to work at home or in a hospice for example. Cases of theft and rape are also revealed. Hairdressers are exposed to diseases such as malaria, when they have late clients in the afternoon and evening because of mosquitoes bite. They risk cancer and / or end up invalidating too. The hairdressers suffer largely from dermatoses of all kinds. This is one of the main causes of abandonment of the profession.

To add to the above, our interviews revealed that over 75% of hairdressers suffer from hip pain. They feel pain in the joints. The hairdressers also complain about fatigue and headaches. The hairdressers do not feed themselves properly. They skip breakfasts, take care of customers at noon and eat badly. They are very often straddling between several braids to make. All these conditions do not promote their health, as highlighted by E-Santé (2016).

Apprentice hairdressers are bullied whether at the hairdresser salon where they are trained or in their own environment, they cannot stay focused. Apprentices are sometimes cruel to each other. There are cases of sabotage, bullying, personal and verbal attacks Illicome (2016).

Clients are also exposed to injuries through a
hairdressing tool or cosmetic product. They complain about the hairdressers’ schedule and how they set priorities.

In order to preserve the health of hairdressers and their customers, various measures must be taken into account. The Official Prevention (nd) talks about collective prevention (good ventilation, cleanliness in the workplace, regular cleaning of work instruments, use of individual and / or disposable cutting tools, first aid kit ...) and prevention individual (hand protection, no jewelry, use of disposable gloves, wear of a maintenance and varied work clothes). Shows on walls must ensure that they are certified for their cleanliness and quality of service Hygiene Plus (nd) said.

Table 3: Recurrent affiliations encountered in hairdressing activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disease</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dermatitis</td>
<td>A study in 2004 revealed that 70% of hairdressers in Britain had suffered from work-related dermatitis, in the form of red, sore and sometimes itchy skin, mainly to the hands and fingers but also to the arms, face and neck.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asthma</td>
<td>In France, a paper published in 2003 showed that 20% of women affected by work-related asthma were hairdressers, compared with 1% for the general population.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arthritis</td>
<td>According to the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, musculoskeletal disorders are five times more prevalent among hairdressers than in the general population. Research published in the journal Work in 2009 showed that in a study of 145 hairdressers, 41% experienced ‘work-related upper limb disorders’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancer</td>
<td>An analysis of 42 bladder cancer studies in 2010 showed that hairdressers faced a risk 30 to 35% higher than the general public. However, Cancer Research UK says that because cancer can take many years to develop, this may be due to exposure to older chemicals that are no longer used.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. People.net Platform development

6.1. The Human design of the People.net platform

The people.net concept is dedicated to bring development and reduce poverty throughout ICT platforms by enhancing the exchanges and transfer of knowledge between various stakeholders from all part of Africa extended to its diaspora. This also includes: deprived people from urban or suburban environment and from the rural areas, the experts in various categories of activities, the Funders and the Charities or Voluntary Organizations and the ICT specialists. However in order to build efficient platforms either mobile or web or combined of both, it must be important to establish a clear practical attributes in order to achieve usability and attain personal and collective development of the poor of this continent. Hence, voice, video and images communications in African local languages must be given chance. Information should be exchanged with transparency throughout Africans with no limit.

6.1.1. The African Linguistic problematic and the concept of the usability of the micro-innovation infrastructures

Africa is a continent with a very high linguistic diversity; there are estimated of 1500-2000 African languages Knight J, (nd) “Of these languages four main groupings can be distinguished: Afro-Asiatic (approximately 200 languages) covering nearly Northern Africa (including the horn of Africa, Central Sahara et the top Nile) Nilo-Saharan gathering approximately 140 languages with some eleven millions speakers scattered in Central and Eastern Africa. Niger-Saharan (Niger-Congo) covering the two third of Africa with as a principal branch the Niger-Congo which gathers more than 1000 languages with some 200 millions speakers. The Bantu languages of Central, Southern, and Eastern Africa form a sub-group of the Niger Congo branch. Khoisan gathering about thirty languages in Western part of Southern Africa. All African languages are considered official languages of the African Union” NationsOnline (nd).
The imperialism has introduced new languages in Africa that have become official language the majority of the continent countries like presented by the Figure 1 below.

“Africa has a long and complicated colonial history. The west coast was first visited by the Portuguese and as of the 17th century, above all with the development of the slave trade and the discovery of the trade route to India via the Cape of Good Hope, the continent came increasingly to feel colonial pressure from England, France and Holland as major European maritime powers. This development reached its peak in the 19th century with the Scramble for Africa when the interior of the continent was carved up by the Europeans, usually with no regard for the demographic distribution of the indigenous peoples.

Thus the Belgians took a huge part of equatorial Africa and called it Belgian Congo. The Portuguese took Angola and the British lands on the east and west coasts such as Kenya, Uganda; Nigeria, Sierra Leone; what was later to become the Republic of South Africa shows an early Dutch, a later English and recently more Dutch influence; German presence was to be found above all in South-West Africa, present-day Namibia. Some countries such as Cameroon have had different periods under different colonial powers, in this case the British and the French” English in Africa (nd)

Therefore “Large numbers of Europeans left and settled in the colonies and did not adopt the local languages as their lingua franca. In many cases, the local languages (as well as the people speaking them) were decimated ...in some colonies where there were many disparate languages, the colonial language emerged as the lingua franca between the different linguistic groups” Lee J (2017). Hence in order to implement a serious and very utilizable People.net information sharing ICT infrastructure in Africa, while the culture of orality is extremely developed it becomes important to integrate the local languages too in the conception of the People.net platform, by considering the two (2) paradigm above in the design thinking of the system: the implementation of the use of the African local languages and the foreign official African languages including: French, English, Portuguese and Spanish. However as the French and the English languages are the most used all over Africa, they should be used both as transitional languages which must be essential for the direct translation of the various local languages. Thus, French and English in this case are transitional languages from a local language to another. The circuit of the informations from the senders to receivers is presented in the Figure 2 below.

Once this processing of the information is established through the voice recognition technologies, video and voice messages could be sent easily throughout the people.net platform for the welfare of the users and the poor of African who like said above are the speakers of various different languages as not all of them are educated to be able to speak and understand the foreign official languages.

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6.1.2. People.net Technology and the illiteracy of Users

Usually mobile typical applications need to be downloaded either from AppleStore or Google play store. The application will then be installed on the mobile phone and can be opened and web applications responsive mobile need to be browsed anytime it has to be opened. However most Africans are illiterate or less literate as African Library Project (nd) argued that “in sub-Saharan Africa, youth literacy rates (ages 15-24) have increased over the past 20 years, which suggests that adult literacy rates will increase as they grow up. However, youth literacy rates in Sub-Saharan Africa (70% in 2011) are the lowest of any region. For adults in sub-Saharan Africa the rates have improved by 10%, but there is a disparity between literacy for women and men. While 7 in 10 men can read, only half of women can do so”. Hence, it has become difficult for them to use plainly the mobile applications even though “Africans have embraced mobile telephones across all social classes. Poor people in rural areas and the unsophisticated have found popular use for cheap and very basic mobile phones (talk and text only). The rich and educated middle class are at the top range of the market with all brands of 3G and 4G Smartphones. Mobile phone sales on the continent have continued to soar every year even as manufacturers increasingly propose consumers newer and more interesting models. Everyday, more Africans are getting on the internet for the first time in their lives through a simple mobile phone” Iwuoha J-P (2013). However if the difficulty in the use the mobile applications such as the language, the literacy and those issue are solved in the People.net platforms, it must be important while making the People.net attractive and more usable to consider the possibility of making it automatically installed in the mobile phone. That is what is proposing a technology developed by PC SOFT (2018): “the WEBDEV AWP technology (Active WEBDEV Page enables responsive mobile application available automatically after Two (2) browsing after integrating a shortcut on the desktop of the smartphone. AWP helps users to be less nervous in front of mobile applications.

6.1.3. The UML Analysis Option of the People.net platform

There are two (2) approaches to the completion of the analysis of the physical development of the People.net platform. They are:

- The systemic approach (Soft System Analysis and Design Method, SSADM)
- The object approach (Unified Modeling Language, UML).

The systemic approach, also called functional approach, defines a system as a set of elements in dynamic interaction, organized according to a goal. The basic concept of this approach is the separation of data and treatments. This type of approach is effective when the interactions are nonlinear and strong. But in case of evolution, it makes the maintenance of the systems complex and implies slowness in the development of the software.

In the object-oriented approach, we note that it leads to a design in which there is a strong coupling of data and processing thanks to the encapsulation principle. The problem of maintenance in the event of evolution raised in the systemic approach is solved at this level because with this method, one master better the complexity of the
system and one have a facility of evolution of the designed models.

For the detailed study of the People.net project, the Research opted for the object approach because of the advantages it offers and on the fact that evolutivity is fundamental to this Information System.

Scenario summary of the People.net platform

The People.net, a platform dedicated for sharing development information will be used by different participants in both urban and rural areas and in diaspora of Africa.

Participants access the system by authenticating themselves so they can use the infrastructure. Member of the public, participant of the knowledge sharing project who are not expert or social workers and are just in need of informations are considered as beneficiary of the project. Experts are known and coopted by the Management of People.net development group as a resource persons qualified to deliver knowledge information in a specific category of activity.

Social Workers are the employees of Charities or NGOs allowed or authorized to access the platform either for its promotion throughout the community covered by their programs or for training purposes.

Each participant can choose or display different type of information on specific categories of activity. Informations are posted by community’s peers or experts in various fields of socio-economic activities. Hence, beneficiaries of the various social or Voluntary Organizations programs or communities can not only access informations in key areas but also contribute to the inclusion in the People.net databases.

Representatives of NGOs and international organizations’ social workers can also deliver or receive informations and also use specifically the platform for training purposes. Hence, Representatives of NGOs and international organizations’ social workers train and encourage beneficiaries to use the platform in order to acquire or boost their skill.

The information is classified by category and by country of origin as some information even similar could not be applied to some other locations of the same continent. The information is translated into national or local languages by option of each beneficiary country of the project. French and English represent buffer and transitional languages to ensure this automatic translation from an African dialect to another.

The information may also come from other websites or other locations on internet and are loaded on the People.net platform.

A forum is set up to promote discussions between participants. Only the governments of the countries having discharged the loads of the provision of the platform will be able to see their population access information. This access will be done by identifying the IP addresses of each country.

In order for the participants to exchange individually or in groups, a chat module should be implemented. Thus, beneficiaries could ask questions for express and special needs or instantly discuss with peers or experts on some important subjects.

The experts, social workers, beneficiaries that have access to this platform are local, national or international.

The People.net Hairdressing Category

Typical ICT Solution

The field of hairdressing in Togo is getting more and more attention from the state and from outside. The actors in this field are working to improve their lives and find innovative solutions to boost their work activities like said above. As far as ICT solutions are concerned, several studies have already been conducted in economics, marketing, communication and much more. However none of them were ICT like the actual initiative in Togo.

There is a wide range of ICT solutions on the internet. There is for example Web Coiffure which is an application available in free trial. It allows you to manage all the activities of the showroom from your computer or mobile phones (nd). There is also Wavy which allow tracking an entire center of hairdressing or other services. The application manages checkout, social networks, online booking, stock and more Wavy
Figure 3: People.net General Use Case

Figure 4: People.net Information transaction forum use case

Figure 5: People.net Instant Message Communication (chat) use case

Figure 6: People.net Class Diagram
Groups like Flexy Beauty (nd) can create websites that reflect your salon and increase visibility on the net.

A suitable solution rooted in the African culture like developed above should be provided. Therefore, the research has identified together with the actors some points that should be considered: the ICT solution will initially improve the communication between the hairdressers and the hairdressers with their customers. It will have to favor the increase of the turnover and to improve the services offered and knowledge sharing. The solution will increase the number of clients and help schedule appointments. After consultation, agreement is made to design an application linked to the Peoplenet platform to be found in the category of Hairdressing on the Peoplenet concept platform either as a mobile application to be downloaded or not. Nevertheless, it needs to be easily acquired and user friendly in the context of Africa.

This application should be multiplatform with different features. It will be mobile or communicate with a mobile application to signify appointments or contacts allow the sharing of knowledge (videos, photos, audios ...) and organize events. The hairdressers can then establish a program over several weeks and receive notifications when approaching a task. A space of exchange will facilitate the exchange of knowledge and help between colleagues. The hairdressers will get to know each other and show off their products and services. The platform will be an ideal advertising space for trade shows. Hairdressers who suffer from a lack of customers will make themselves known. The users of the application will be able to carry out a rigorous follow-up of their activities. For customers, he can consult from her laptop or computer, smartphone or tablet, the list of hairdressers close to its location and availability. The platform will therefore use geolocation. When a salon is chosen, a catalog of hairstyles and other available services is displayed. After choosing, a calendar with the free time slots of the show is displayed. The customer can make a reservation which is automatically notified to the hairdresser. In order to avoid hoaxes and withdrawal, an advance is paid by the e-payment or m-payment system. The customer then receives from the application an SMS with a unique code that will serve as confirmation of the order once arrived at the show. The salon is aware of this code. Thanks to the app, customers can discover new salons, be on the lookout for novelties in hairdressing and do good business.

To ensure the safety of any user, hairdressers who register on the platform must provide all their information as well as their scanned diploma. Their identity must be clear and precise. All the financial actions made by the platform will be recorded on an application and processed with a bank of the place. This measure is used to manage theft and other cases of fraud. This measure will make it possible to identify hairdressers who practice illegally or who have arrears with the justice. Any connection to the platform is sanctioned by the use of a username and password.

For this web application and/or mobile application to be effective, each actor must have a laptop and / or computer and a stable internet connection.

This solution will promote a considerable time saving and increase the efficiency of the hairdressers. The solution thus thought will reduce unnecessary travel and expenses. In order to implement this idea, it will be necessary to pay attention to some details including:

- The user: create a suitable virtual environment, taking into account his wishes and fears using human-based methods;
- The cultural difference: to raise the linguistic and behavioral barriers to find solutions by our application;
- The economic and political situation: distinguishing between strengths and weaknesses in order to highlight the resources and to exploit them.

This study and the context being in a poor country of Africa, we will have to take into account the issues of underdevelopment. The creation of various international partnership for the Peoplenet concept remains paramount. Poverty and access to the Internet are challenges that will need to be addressed through research and solution approaches.
7. Conclusion

Throughout this research and investigation, it was discovered a little known and marginalized universe. Several aspects have been revealed to us and this motivates the researchers to deepen the work to improve the image of this profession that is hairdressing and include it like a particular category of activity in a broader aspect of information and knowledge share with the poorest of the world in Africa, the People.net platform. Doing this research for the Hairdressing sector in Africa will surely improve the cash flow of these workers and showcase their quality of services. The goal is to improve the local business climate and, if possible, contribute to the country’s economy and by the same way help in the huge battle of poverty reduction on the continent.

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