

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES FOR

NIGERIA INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA, INC

There is truism to the adage that “where there is no vision, the people perish”. Our organization at its infancy operated without a clear cut vision; however, with collective will and desires; we were able to get certain things done. Recently, there emerged a new dispensation with the way the organization get things done, and through a departure from usual practice. The preceding council set the ball rolling early in the year with a strategic meeting that came up with a road map of taking a different route of engagements on our deliverables to our members and the community we reside.

Gentlemen and ladies, the coming two years must be seen as a year of unprecedented possibilities to maximally use our collective resources to imprint the name of our organization in the socio-economic landscape of Lehigh valley and surrounding environs. To this end, we need to clearly define our objectives in relations to resources to execute, analyze our operating environment, threats, weaknesses and our strengths. In this respect, I intend to provide the needed leadership in concert with all members of this council. My purpose is to make my vision for the next two years a shared vision.

As I said in my impromptu acceptance speech that, much emphasize would be placed on the group dynamics that differentiate us from other ethnic organization; I intend to broaden the consultation within the group to ensure that our group remain unique and completely devoid of vestiges of ethnicity that have wrought havoc into our nation’s psyche.

Socio-economic development that would translate into economic empowerment and socio-political group relevance would be vigorously pursued. The long lasting friendship that already exist amongst our children; facilitated by this organization would be further enhanced by establishment of a program that would be focused on inculcation of moral and cultural values, leadership development, citizenship; will be accorded greater importance during the tenure of this council. Organization of the children forum to coincide with our meeting will also be put on a fast track.

The above were some of the initiatives I spoke about. Moreover, with the support of all of you, I will now lay before you what I like this council to work on during its tenure.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (GROUP EMPOWERMENT)

We have begun the process of obtaining a building. The members have been informed of their functions towards the realization of this lofty goal. The next stage is to map out the various steps of actualizing this goal. I will suggest we begin to coordinate the various committees that were previously charged with performing certain functions in line with realization of this objective. We need to anticipate road blocks and proffer

alternative cause of actions. I will propose as part of this initiative the creation of finance committee that will have a double responsibility of thinking out of the box in term investment idea generations for the consideration of the executive council.

This council must seek out ways and obtain information that will be beneficial to its core program from both governmental bodies and private organizations respectively. The use of grants in relation to programs at hand must be given utmost consideration. Finally, we must seek ways to add value to membership through benefits via economic development initiatives that would improve the economic well being of our membership

ESTABLISHMENT OF FINANCE OR CONSUMER DISCOUNTS COMPANY

I hereby propose an initiative for implementation in the next four years that will translate into the formation of the above economically empowering and socially enriching enterprise. A finance company by definition; is individually chartered by state of its formation to transact a business of providing small loans to consumers for consumption purposes; including but not limited to purchases such as car, furniture, household goods and other short term loans. The capitalization requirement is \$250,000.00.

One obvious advantage we could use this for, the purpose of recycling our hard earn money within our immediate community before it trickles down to other communities. Other ethnic communities from Asia have been successful in practicing this method. By all indications, this approach has served them well because they have been able to use this group dynamic and its antecedent leverage to build their entrepreneurship bases, while creating wealth and values for its members.

Moreover, via this approach, we will be able to extend short term loans to our members and others in the community to purchase cars, furniture and other house goods. We can also bring in other African nationals to make it a broad based economic development plan. We shall determine in the course of our tenure if it is a project we can plan and execute on our own or bring on board some other groups. NIAPA could be an investor in this project because it could not unilaterally embark on this endeavor solely because of its tax status as a public charity.

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND VISIBILITY

Public image is a sine qua non. It will either make or break an organization's aspirations. To this end, good intentions and deeds alone would not translate into good public image unless concerted efforts are made to match both together. With good image comes acceptance and access to the corridors of power. We have initiated good ideas that will eventually translate into marketable programs that would benefit the community at large. The multi purpose community resource center which would house some of our

programs is a good start. We must begin the process of ensuring that both are matched together. According to information made available by the City of Allentown budget analyst, the programs to be implemented in the proposed center must not be duplicated with any program in existence. Adherence to this requirement will make it possible for grant obtainment. Initiating a qualitative program that meet and exceeds the needs of the community will become a magnet for future fund raising and visibility.

To this end, the followings must be given priority:

a. Program development(The programs must be beneficial to our membership, meet the city requirements, does not duplicate other programs in existence and is beneficial to the community at large)

1. Mentoring and Tutoring : To increase scholastic achievements of neighborhood school aged children
2. Skills Acquisition: To train or impact necessary skills for success in the current and emerging economy
3. Cultural Awareness: A program that teaches African cultures, dances, arts and history
4. Citizenship: To provide leadership skills, moral and character training in our children with the ultimate objective of perpetuation of already formed friendship; and above all, organization continuity
5. Gifting or Good Citizenship: As a not for profit organization with exception from taxation through 501© (3) EXCEPTION. It makes contribution to our organization tax except, apart from the fact that we are equally shielded from taxation. This means we are free to solicit contributions from members of the public including public and private organizations. To be a good citizen, we need to reciprocate in kind by initiating a program that will give back to the community. This program will be designed to do just this. We shall make effort to contribute either directly to an organization or organize an event where less privilege amongst us benefits form our good citizen gesture. As we take in, we must also learn to give out at all times.

The way and means of moving forward will be determined by a group that will be charged with its implementation after this idea must have received the blessings of the general membership.

6. Event Sponsorship: This will add impetus to our charity given and visibility. The sole purpose is to at least sponsor one event annually or as budgetary allocation permits.

- b. Grants availability from both Public and private organizations (We have a committee currently looking into the grant from the city of Allentown) we need to encourage this committee to commence its activity by beaming its search light on other available grant opportunities.
- c. Ensure that public relations strategy that will give us continued visibility is implemented (We have begun this effort through our public relation officer Mr. Solace Okpe. The need to have it as a strategy needs to be put in place) One of the ways to craft this outreach strategy is to march it with our programs. Therefore, our public charity initiatives must be tied to what the organization intend to take away from it.(To be further elaborated)

FUND RAISING

It is my considered opinion that we must have a fund raising event yearly apart from our annual signature event. This event should be professionally planned so that one of its advantages is to give us visibility while simultaneously raising funds for our various projects. The modalities of each of this event would depend on the analysis of prevailing environment at the conception stage.

Gentlemen and Ladies, I implore us all to look at these proposals and critique it constructively. We need to begin the dialogue that will elevate us to another level. Let us be focused on what we can collectively achieve. We can decide how we would like the posterity to judge us through our actions today.

May God almighty give us the wisdom and the strengths to continuously make a difference through our collective and individual actions.

God Bless NIAPA, Nigeria and United States of America