



“Enabling Access”—fundraising and marketing problems faced by One Laptop per Child Asia Pacific

InterChallenge 2009 (Case)

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Scenario:

Out of the challenges ahead, the OLPC APAC would like fresh and practical ideas from you lot to help extend its wish and goal to continue to enable the underprivileged children in Asia Pacific to learn, explore, create and share. You are sincerely invited to design a campaign, a series of events or **ANY OTHER PRACTICAL** means of exposure that you can think of to achieve the goal To be concise, we are looking for the following,

- **Imaginative fundraising initiatives with minimal budget**
- **Donation appeals through innovative use of ICT (*Information and communication technologies*)**
- **Creative sponsorship/partnership efforts to synergize resources**
- **Increase in public and media awareness**

Like the future and potential of a kid with proper education, there is no rigid scope for your ideas or format. We would highly value an innovative, awareness-raising, economic, and feasible campaign proposal which can gather love and support, and finally raise sufficient fund to help the children in Asia Pacific. Upon selection, your proposal and wish will be executed and actualized.

Background- What is OLPC?

One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) is a non-profitable organization, which develops a low-cost laptop for the use of education in developing countries. The mission of OLPC is to provide educational opportunities for the world's poorest children by providing each child with a rugged, low-cost, low-power, connected laptop with content and software designed for collaborative, joyful, self-empowered learning.

Since the pace of change in the world increases dramatically, the need to prepare all children for being full citizens of the emerging world also becomes more pressing and urgent.

The best way is to develop the passion and ability to learn. Yet, the gap in equity in education and subsequent opportunity are increasing. Children in developing countries are consigned to poverty and isolation. With their government being unable to contribute more to the commonwealth, they lack opportunities and resources. By giving children a computer, they are receiving a window to the outside world, access to vast amounts of information and a way to connect with each other. They can learn how to learn, share and create on their own. This idea fosters the establishment of the OLPC and leads them to their goal, which is seeing children in the most remote region of the globe being given the opportunity to tap into their own potential, to be exposed to a whole world of ideas, and to contribute to a more productive and saner world community.

History of OLPC

The OLPC was founded by MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) Professor Nicholas Negroponte, together with the faculty members of MIT Media Lab in 2005. Negroponte had the first-hand experience in 2002 of how connected laptops transformed the lives of children and their families in a remote Cambodian village. He then questioned how the future world would be if every child in the world had access to a computer, and this led to the foundation of OLPC and creation of the XO laptop. The project is sponsored by several organizations and companies, including AMD, Brightstar Corporation, eBay, Google, Marvell, News Corporation, SES, Nortel Networks, and Red Hat. Each company has donated two million dollars. The laptop was originally aimed at a price of 100 US dollar and after mass production started in November 2007, the price was estimated to be \$188. The laptops were sold to the governments, which were to be distributed through the ministries of education with the goal of distributing “One Laptop Per Child”.

Principles of the OLPC

The organization has five principles.

First, the XO laptop is the property of the children who receive it. This is the basic right of the child and is coupled with responsibilities of protecting and caring for it.

Second, the XO is designed for the use of children of ages 6-12, which are the years of elementary school.

Third, no children in the community are being left out. Each of them should own a laptop.

Forth, the laptops are connected to wireless network and each other so that children can gain information from the Internet and one another.

Finally, the laptop includes free and open software, therefore the resources and the XO can grow with the children.

What is a XO laptop?

The XO is designed to be low-cost, small, durable, and efficient for standard laptop use, e-book reading and gaming. It is about a size of a textbook and is lighter than a lunchbox. It has round edges, kid-sized handle, and touchpad support pointing, drawing and writing. It is designed to be extremely power efficient and can tolerate alternative power-charging sources, such as solar, human power and car batteries. Children can also charge the laptop as a group by special gang chargers in the school. The unique XO display allows the use of laptop under bright sun. The laptop has a 433MHz processor and 256MB of DRAM, with 1 GB of Flash memory. It does not have a hard disk, but it does have three USB ports and an SD-card slot for expansion. It is durable as its plastic walls are extra thick and USB ports and display are protected internally. It is environmentally friendly and contains no hazardous materials. The laptops have wireless broadband that allows them to work as a mesh network. Each laptop is able to talk to its nearest neighbors, creating an ad hoc, local area network. The product lifetime is estimated to at least five years. The pricing of XO laptop was set to start at USD 188 in 2006, with a stated goal to produce each laptop with the cost of USD 100 in 2008. However, the target cannot be reached even by now with different sets of problems.

What the OLPC has done

Since its founding in the USA in 2002, OLPC the non-profit charitable organization has been able to put over 700,000 laptops into the hands of children in places like Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Ethiopia, Rwanda and Mongolia. Having realized the fact that nearly two billions children of the developing world with little or no access to education, the organization planned to expand its volunteering service over the Asia Pacific. Thus OLPC Asia Pacific was founded in HK in November 18, 2008. Thanks to the hard work of volunteers, volunteering engineers and sponsoring organizations, not long after OLPC Asia Pacific's inception, the organization had already given out over a thousand laptops in the eager hands of the children who were victims in the 512 Sichuan earthquake also those living in Kampung Semop, Pulau Buit Sarawak, Malaysia. Last but not the least, 150 XOs were donated to HK Federation of Youth Groups youth centers

More on the OLPC, Asia Pacific

The OLPC Asia Pacific is an Asian extension of the OLPC. It is a non-profit charitable organization based on Hong Kong. It officially launched in November 2008. It is autonomous, self-financed and is operated by a team of volunteers (there is only 1 full-time staff in OLPC, Asia Pacific)

As a reference to what you need to submit for your proposal, here is the case in Sichuan that OLPC is working on. But please remember the fundraising plan is supposed to be applicable in the Asia Pacific region, not only in Sichuan.

What happened in Sichuan

On 12th May 2008, a disastrous earthquake has taken place in Sichuan, changing the peaceful lives of many Chinese living there. Not only did the earthquake cause catastrophic effects on their homes and infrastructure, but also their most important asset – schools, which are the greenhouse for cultivating our next generation. The Wenchuan earthquake has destroyed 12,000 school buildings in Sichuan Province, which means one out of every seven schools are ruined, disrupting the education of 2.5 million children.

Even before the disaster, the educational standards in many of the affected areas in Sichuan lagged behind national levels. While the retention rate for the five years of primary school was 99% nationwide in 2007, it was only 96% in Sichuan and 86% in Gansu. The earthquake has made the matter even worse. So, the restoration of access to education and improvement of education quality in Sichuan has become an urgent need that demands our imminent concern.

In early 2009, it was the organization's target to send 20,000 XO laptops to 10 pilot schools in the devastated regions in Sichuan. Unfortunately, the goal was hit by the financial Tsunami. Eventually, Puyang Primary school in Dujiangyan in Sichuan was identified as the 1st school to be deployed with the help of OLPC and received 1000 XO laptops on their last day of school on 12th June. In the 7.9 magnitude earth quake, 370,000 were injured, 18,222 found missing, 70,000 passed away and 4.8 million people became homeless. Without computers, students there were unable to access to knowledge and this had created obstructions on their learning and education. Still far away from its target, OLPC Asia Pacific has been currently striving to seek adequate sponsorship and donation from donors aiming to widen the scope of beneficiaries in Sichuan.

Road to School

Like many other poor kids in Caoyang Village, Yang Mei, 13, attended class in the local wood-and-brick school building. The May 2008 earthquake has changed his school lives much when the roof of the school building toppled down and the walls cracked. “We were having class when the quake hit. The classroom was shaking and many students rushed out to the door,” the sixth-grader recalled. The quake damaged some 300 schools in Xihe County, including Caoyang Primary School where Yang Mei studied. After the earthquake, although Yang Mei and her classmates were lucky enough to resume class in tents, it was too hot and they were all wet with sweat after staying inside for more than ten minutes.” And many other unfortunate kids just did not get an opportunity to go to schools.

In many cases, schools in the area are of deprived condition. Like the Zou Ma Cun Primary School (走马村小学) of Sichuan, it has only one teacher struggling to teach all students of the school. The number of students is under 100 right now. Giving them each an XO would really help them along in learning on their own.

Seeing the desperate needs and desire of the underprivileged children, the OLPC is proposing 1 pilot project in Sichuan, giving free XO laptop computers to assist them in their acquisition of knowledge and skills. With the lack of resources and teachers, the computer does play an important role in the education as the children can learn beyond time and place with these user-friendly computers. But the difficulty is that the OLPC has not raised enough funds, hindering the progress of the project.

Our Challenges

Since OLPC Asia Pacific establishment, funding has been raised from its patrons Financial Secretary, Mr John Tsang Chun-wah, JP and Mr Wong Shek Kei (former Commissioner for Innovation and Technology) also donors from the public or even around the world. OLPC Asia Pacific is self-financed and run by a group of volunteers. In the development project in Puyang Primary school, most of the fund was from OLPC USA, this infers that the 1000 XO laptops donated were still unpaid. OLPC Asia Pacific is thus currently facing the problem of lack of continual financial support which could cause troubles of it reaching the target of sending 20,000 XO laptops to Sichuan. Aside from that, in the development project in Puyang Primary School, all volunteers who were being geared up to train the children in using the XO laptops came from Hong Kong. Thus, local Sichuan volunteers in teaching the beneficiaries are in great need to ensure they know how to correctly operate and learn from the XO lap tops in the long run; otherwise, the upcoming developments might be in vain.

As a result, we need your help to think of imaginative fundraising initiatives which requires minimal budget. Via those fundraising initiatives, it is of utmost importance to convey the message that donation appeals through innovative use of ICT (Information and communication technologies). Thereby, raise the awareness of public and media that Children are the most precious resources of the world in the future. By giving children their very own connected XO laptop, we are giving them a window to the outside world, access to vast amounts of information, a way to connect with each other, and a springboard into their future. The pillars of the future deserve receiving good education where supporting OLPC can provide a means for learning, self-expression, and exploration via sending each student in the poverty area an XO laptop!