The Computerworld Honors Program

Honoring those who use Information Technology to benefit society

Final Copy of Case Study

YEAR: 2012

STATUS: Laureate

Organization:

Hewlett-Packard

Organization URL:

www.hp.com

Project Name:

HP Learning Initiative for Entrepreneurs, (HP LIFE)

What social/humanitarian issue was the project designed to address? What specific metrics did you use to measure the project's success?

Entrepreneurs are a vital source of growth and innovation for any economy. Microenterprises can employ more people and create more jobs than any other type of venture. Many aspiring entrepreneurs and young or unemployed graduates lack the business and IT skills to turn their ideas into thriving businesses. Not all educational systems are able to meet the demands of the 21st century. Access to basic training and technologies is limited. And economic and cultural forces are stacked against recent graduates, particularly women. There are challenges in providing IT learning and skills to students or aspiring entrepreneurs. Challenges such as making IT accessible and providing relevant content in a meaningful way to as many entrepreneurs as possible so they can create or build their enterprises and unleash their potential. HP, through its program HP Learning Initiative for Entrepreneurs (HP LIFE: www.hp.com/go/hpentrepreneurs), is committed to using technology as a catalyst to improve access to these skills so the next generation of entrepreneurs can successfully build their businesses. Its success is the number of new businesses and jobs created or business expansion by program participants. According to the Global Enterprise Monitor's (GEM) 2011 Global report, there are almost 400 million entrepreneurs in 54 countries. Donna Kelley, lead author and Associate Professor of Entrepreneurship, Babson College, states, "Over 140 million of these entrepreneurs expect to add at least 5 new jobs over the next 5 years. These figures and growth projections affirm that...entrepreneurship, as an economic engine, is the best hope for reviving a weakened world economy." HP LIFE, by providing vital IT and business tools and skills to entrepreneurs

worldwide, can contribute to local, regional, national and global economic health and social well-being.

Please describe the technologies used and how those technologies were deployed in an innovative way. Also, please include any technical or other challenges that were overcome for the successful implementation of the project.

The program combines face-to-face training and online tools for people from all backgrounds to harness the power of IT, grow their businesses and foster an entrepreneurship culture. Through a competitive Request-for-Proposal process, NGOs/training centers apply to receive a grant of: HP technology, cash grants, training, and a flexible, modular-based business-technology curriculum. ICT is a core component in HP LIFE. Hardware is provided to Training Center partners; they are offered the latest HP technology within the grant year, (e.g., desktop, laptop or multi-seat solutions) that best suits the education training needs. Options usually include a large monitor, mice, keyboards, security locks, docking station, USB graphic adapter, and all-in-one printer. This hardware enables Training Centers to establish or upgrade their training rooms and increase the quality and quantity of their trainings. The laptops provide a way for Training Centers to create mobile training units -- another way to deliver training in remote or rural villages: some centers distribute the laptops to their trainees on 1-year leases, encouraging users to apply IT skills to their businesses. In partnership with MEA-I, (an HP-funded, not-for-profit organisation), online educational tools and games that deploy and supplement the program curriculum have been created. An interactive portal includes animated presentations about widely available technological tools for marketing, finances, operations, management, and communications. Students and entrepreneurs can also play award-wining Serious Games, presenting real entrepreneurial scenarios with common business challenges. These resources are modular, providing flexibility suiting the different experience and skill levels of participants. It also allows participants to go through the modules at their own pace, accessing them in their own time.

Please list the specific humanitarian benefits the project has yielded so far.

HP LIFE gives participants the skills to grow their businesses. The program, through the 340+ training centers, more than 800 certified LIFE trainers, in over 20 languages, has now reached over 1.2 million people worldwide with training, access to technology and online activities. From those taking the HP LIFE training, almost 20,000 new businesses have been created or experienced growth, and 43,000 new jobs established or obtained employment due to the program. HP LIFE has helped to create not only economic impact but also positive social gain, as working gives people sense of purpose and contributes to their well-being. Many groups benefit from HP LIFE, including youth, unemployed graduates and micro-entrepreneurs, as we focus our investments to support marginalized groups.

Please provide the best example of how the project has benefited a specific individual, enterprise or organization. Feel free to include personal quotes from individuals who have directly benefited from the work.

There are many individual examples of HP LIFE entrepreneur's success. Some success stories can be found on the global and regional websites: HP LIFE Global: http://www.life-global.org/; HP LIFE Americas: http://life-americas.edc.org/; HP LIFE Asia-Pacific & Japan:

http://www.lifeasia.org/; HP LIFE EMEA: http://www.life-europe.info/. Or, watch and listen to several HP LIFE participants share their experiences on the HP YouTube Channel: Aissatel Ahmed, a French multi-entrepreneur:

http://www.youtube.com/hptalks#p/c/B126F0036725CA03/0/wohQeElps-w; Neha Gupta, Indian jewelry entrepreneur: http://www.youtube.com/hptalks#p/c/B126F0036725CA03/1/vE2xk-Z8UM0; Bano Fatima, Indian cloth/fabric entrepreneur:

http://www.youtube.com/hptalks#p/c/B126F0036725CA03/3/iig_iXxtz78; Washington Mvelese, South African Internet cafe entrepreneur:

http://www.youtube.com/hptalks#p/c/B126F0036725CA03/4/bJnRSAcmbzM; Sinethemba Mafukula, South African photographer entrepreneur:

http://www.youtube.com/hptalks#p/c/B126F0036725CA03/5/IP0yXG2YEi8. After participating in an HP LIFE program, Wan Ming, owner of a logo production company in China, said: "Before the training...I didn't realize how useful computer technology could be for managing my own business. After. the HP LIFE training... I can now search for online contract samples myself and use Microsoft Office to revise and edit the sample. This skill has saved my business time and money." And Nasim Hashemi, U.S. organic food entrepreneur, credits her HP LIFE training to her company growth: "After completing the courses, I organized a database of potential and existing clients and began communicating with them on a regular basis. Since then, I've doubled my client base and tripled revenue."