ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

iit empowering haiti

Developing Technology to Transform Education in Haiti

The Problem

In 2008, Haiti received a donation of approximately 11,000 laptops from the One Laptop per Child (OLPC) Foundation and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). Unfortunately, one main issue that donors did not consider was that 95% of Haiti's primary schools lack electricity; those few that have it most often utilize polluting, expensive-to-fuel diesel generators. Haiti's educational system is in disarray; a situation made worse by the devastating earthquake of Jan. 2010. Bringing electricity and technology into schools holds the promise of improving children's educational experience, but without a way to charge the laptops, the entire OLPC program is at risk of failure.

Proposed Solution

Our project proposes the design and installation of a replicable, Direct Current-only solar powering solution for schools to charge the laptops, at a lower price point than has previously been available. We plan to install our solar solution at two pilot schools in Lascahobas, Haiti in Aug. 2011—but that is just the first step! Our project is designed to be scaled across Haiti, to all schools participating in the OLPC project, other schools in Haiti, and eventually, to other countries as well. To that end, we are partnered with students and professors at the State University in Haiti and the Haiti OLPC team, both to nurture capacity-building and to incorporate local ownership and long-term sustainability into the project.

Progress & Accomplishments

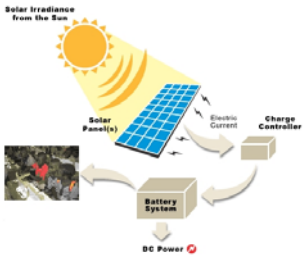
In the past five months, our team has designed preliminary specifications for our solar solution, built a mini-model based on these specifications, was the winner of the Commendation of Merit Award by the Society for New Communications Research, and carried out an assessment trip in January, 2011.

Site Survey Visit

Four students and a faculty advisor visited Haiti for a week in January in order to select two pilot schools, collect more data to complete the solar design, and collaborate with Haitian State University students. Not only did we return with more data to finish our designs, but also with increased motivation and inspiration to help Haiti's educational system and provide its students with a transformative educational experience.

Next Steps toward Implementation

The next steps of this project include: completion of design; fundraising for equipment and travel; coordination to scale-up the project to a national level; and development of an educational component for the primary-level students.



Our Budget:

Solar System + Components= $27,000

Travel= $10,000

Total =$37,000

How you can help!

Our team needs to raise $37,000 in order to implement the solar system in Haiti. Our goal is to be able to provide two schools with this transformative experience and prove the concept. Your generous donations will help the success of our project. Please contact us to donate, or visit our website and help make a difference in Haiti.

IIT Empowering Haiti
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