



Product Campaign: Giving Kids the Gift of Hearing - Vietnam

Solar Ear & Global Foundation for Children with Hearing Loss

Campaign Summary

It is essential for children to hear sound in order to develop spoken language skills. This Product Campaign will fit children with hearing loss with hearing instruments to provide this access to sound. The low-cost hearing aid technology from Solar Ear, combined with early intervention and audiology support provided by teachers trained by the Global Foundation for Children with Hearing Loss, will ensure these children can participate more fully in a hearing world.

The Problem

Hearing loss is one of the most common and least recognized disabilities among children. The World Health Organization reports that as many as 3% of children in developing countries have severe to profound hearing loss. Left undetected and untreated, pediatric hearing loss can lead to delayed speech and language development, academic challenges, reduced employment, and unfulfilled potential.

Many people unfamiliar with deafness assume that the sounds of life are closed to children with hearing loss. It is widely believed that these children will never learn to communicate through the spoken word. These assumptions are no longer true. Earlier identification of hearing loss and advancements in hearing technology have made it possible for more children with all degrees of hearing loss to access sound and learn how to speak and hear. Think for just a moment about the life-changing impact that such developments can have on a child's future.

All children attain language in the first six years of life, and the first three years are the most important. More than 90% of what babies learn is from incidental listening, and with listening comes spoken language. As these skills are cultivated as we grow older, we naturally bond with our families, develop friendships, and engage in the larger community.

More hospitals in Vietnam are conducting hearing screenings of young children, which is leading to earlier identification of hearing loss. However, new hearing aids supplied by the world's major hearing aid companies are often cost prohibitive (about \$2,000 USD each) to many families in Vietnam, where the average annual salary is about \$12,000 USD. This challenge is exacerbated by the shortage of teachers trained in Auditory Verbal Education and Early Intervention techniques to help these children develop listening and spoken language skills once they do receive hearing aids.

Proposed Solution

It is essential for children to hear sound to develop spoken language. We need to fit children with hearing loss with hearing instruments to provide this access to sound. The low-cost hearing aid technology from Solar Ear, combined with early intervention and audiology provided by teachers trained by the Global Foundation for Children with Hearing Loss, will ensure these children can participate more fully in a hearing world.



Impact

As a result of this campaign, approximately 30 children with hearing loss will directly benefit from the Solar Ear hearing aids. The training by the Global Foundation for Children with Hearing Loss will benefit approximately 300 children.

Distribution

The Global Foundation will place an order with Solar Ear. Solar Ear will ship the units of hearing aids directly to the Global Foundation in Seattle, WA. The Foundation's team will hand carry the technology into Vietnam and fit the Solar Ear hearing aids on children during their June 27-July 22, 2011 Teacher Training Workshop. The Global Foundation will also provide the audiology support and early intervention training so the children can benefit from the hearing aids.

Campaign Costs

Total Costs \$18,137 USD

Cost Per Hearing Aid Unit \$192 USD

Timeframe for Implementation

The Global Foundation's expert team of audiologists, auditory verbal teachers, speech pathologists, and early intervention specialists will contribute 4 weeks of unpaid volunteer time for the June-July 2011 Teacher Training Workshop.

The Technology Provider: Solar Ear

Solar Ear manufactures solar powered hearing aids by skilled young adults who are deaf for hearing impaired in developing countries. Through the development of new technologies, we are creating technical jobs, sustainable enterprises, for people who are deaf. We developed the first rechargeable digital hearing aid and first rechargeable hearing aid battery which costs \$2.00 but lasts 2 to 3 years. All products were invented by the workers and meet all world class standards. We have 5 assembly operations and service over 45 countries. All of our products meet world class standards and have won numerous product awards.

Solar Ear's mission is make total hearing health, possible for people worldwide with a priority in developing countries and underserved communities by: providing "affordable and sustainable hearing amplification equipment to all who need it." Our goal is to lower hearing impairment for 60,00,000 people and lower the burden of hearing loss to over 100,000,000 million people within the next five years. Indirectly, we will reach 3 to 5 times as many people, as pregnant mothers, parents of children who are hearing impaired, and their teachers will be involved. Getting a child a hearing aid at a young age, i.e. before 3 years old, is imperative as she can learn to communicate. The hearing aid will also enable the child to be mainstreamed in a local school, thus giving the child the opportunity for an education. Finally, there are very few schools for the deaf in developing countries. This project aims to give the hearing impaired child improved access to education, as without a hearing aid they are deaf.

Our goal is not only to scale the operations but more important to achieve critical scale of our impact. We want to continue to reduce HIV- AIDS rate for the deaf population. We want to continue to show companies that people who are deaf have a special ability, therefore should be given employment opportunities. We want to show society that people with a disability are people with a disability and not a disabled person. We want the people in



the Middle-East to hear the sounds of peace from the Palestinian, Israeli and Jordanian workers who are deaf. We then want to replicate this part of the program in Kashmir, Kosovo, Sri Lanka and Indonesia

Invent for Humanity Profile: <http://inventforhumanity.org/technologies/solar-ear>

Website: <http://www.solarear.com.br/solar/>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Solar-Ear/131673113521294?sk=wall>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/#!/SolarEar>

The Needs Organization: Global Foundation for Children with Hearing Loss

The Global Foundation for Children with Hearing Loss aims to make a direct and lasting impact on the futures of thousands of deaf and hard of hearing children around the world by providing them with access to the hearing technology, education, and resources they need to become independent, contributing members of society.

The Global Foundation provides hearing aids to children who attend the 35 schools for the deaf in its Deaf Education program. Their team of audiologists collaborates with school administrators in advance in order to identify the candidates for hearing testing. Once in Vietnam, their team of audiologists tests the hearing in children, troubleshoots their existing hearing technology, and identifies those who would best benefit from a hearing aid. Recognizing that supply does not meet demand, the Foundation has parameters for eligibility and to establish priority. These parameters include degree of hearing loss, age, income level, and parent involvement.

Invent for Humanity Profile: <http://inventforhumanity.org/needs/global-foundation-for-children-with-hearing-loss>

Website: www.childrenwithhearingloss.org

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Global-Foundation-for-Children-with-Hearing-Loss/98861433072>

YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/user/gfhearingloss>

Blog: <http://childrenwithhearingloss.blogspot.com/>

About the Invent for Humanity™ Technology Transfer Exchange Fair

Organized by the Center for Applied Innovation, the Invent for Humanity Technology Transfer Exchange Fair will take place in tandem with the [LESI Global Technology Impact Forum](#) 2012 in Geneva, Switzerland, on January 24-25, 2012. Invent for Humanity showcases field-ready sustainable innovations – appropriate technologies – and leverages the experience of professionals in IP and licensing in order to effectively match and structure the transfer of such technology to meet the needs of organizations working to benefit developing economies. Visit InventforHumanity.org for more information.

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