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FRONTIER-CETF LOW-COST INTERNET GRANT PROJECT

DPMI PLUS



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ABBREVIATIONS

California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC)

California Emerging Technology fund (CETF)

Community-based organization (CBO)

human-I-T (h-I-T)

Internet Service Provider (ISP)

Low-cost internet (LCI)

Low-income household (LIH)

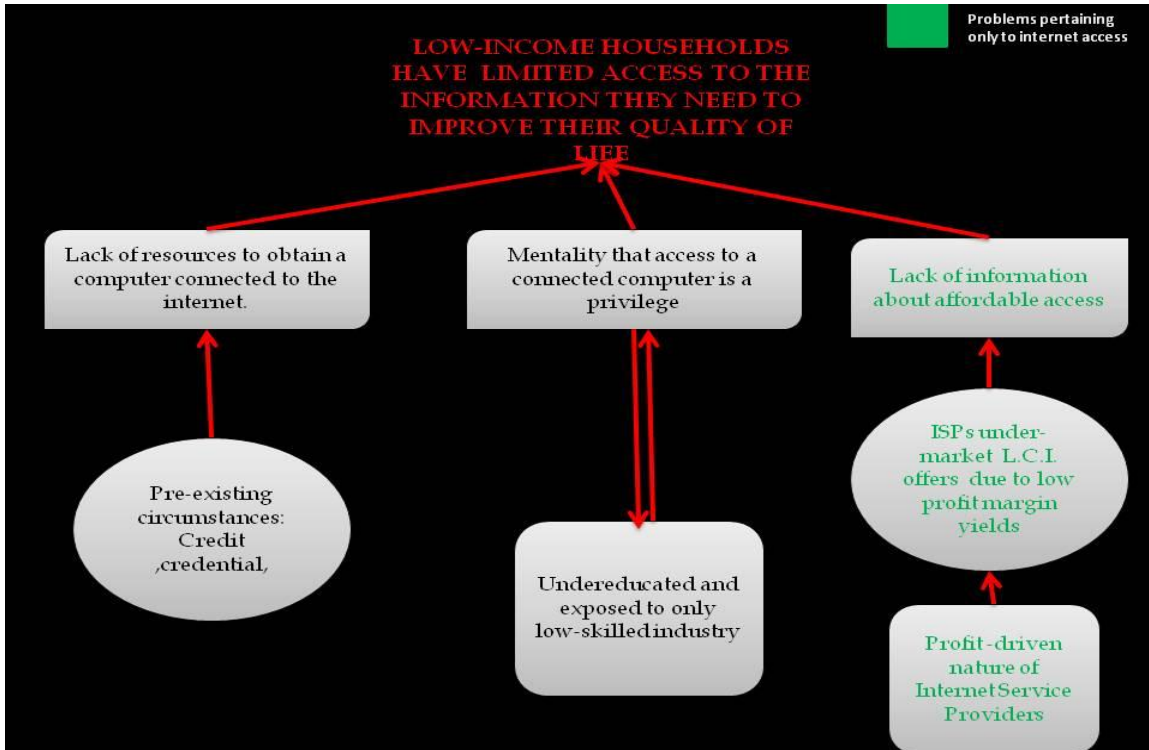
INTRODUCTION

Human I.T. is a registered 501(c) (3) that operates in Long Beach and Commerce California. The organization's primary mission is dual; to connect low-income communities to I.C.T. and to responsibly recycle E-waste through refurbishing and proper disposal.

In summer of 2016, the non-profit embarked on a partnership with the California Emerging Fund for Technology (C.E.F.T.) and Frontier Communication to connect 5000 low-income internet adopters to a connected computer by July 2018.

By the use of tools, frame works, illustrations and annotations, this document describes the project design and how the h-I-T anticipates meeting project goals. A Case study and Reflection are included to highlight the formative experiences of the internship.

PROBLEM TREE



ANALYSIS OF PROBLEM TREE

The City of Long Beach has 469,428 people; 20 percent of these people are impoverished¹. Where poverty is rampant, people are prevented from receiving vital information needed to improve their quality of life.

A computer connected to the internet is a tool of empowerment for people of all age groups. In fact, policy makers have mandated that the internet, like water and other utilities, is an essential public good². Although most people have cell phones with internet capability, it is limited in its capacity to replicate the functions of a connected computer. Many websites are not mobile compatible and mobile plans are not designed for extensive internet usage.

A connected computer also has great recreational value for all age groups to keep them informed, connected or entertained through streaming movies and videos.

For adults, the access to a connected computer facilitates essential activities: - training opportunities, filling out various applications, booking appointments, job and apartment search. For parents, Long Beach unified school district like other districts has initiated the ParentVue portal to update parents on children's progress in school.

In modern classrooms, teachers are utilizing resources found online and students learn to navigate school and society at large using a computer with internet access. It is safe to argue that when a child goes home and does not have the same access to information (s)he has at school, there is an interruption in their learning.

This problem tree illustrates the obstacles that prevent LIHs from achieving access to information that can be acquired by a connected computer.

Lack of resources to obtain a connected computer

LIHs allocate their earnings to their recurring bills and incidentals. Nevertheless, there are low-income earners who see the great benefit in investing in a

¹ U.S. Census Bureau (2013). *City of Long Beach, California*. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/0643000>

² Ruiz and Lohr (2015) F.C.C. Approves Net Neutrality Rules, Classifying Broadband Internet Service As A Utility. New York Times. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/27/technology/net-neutrality-fcc-vote-internet-utility.html>

connected computer and though they have the willingness to save to afford it, they are met with various obstacles.

People with bad credit are usually deterred because ISPs require a credit check and a steep deposit when results are unfavorable. Therefore, the initial cost of acquisition is not affordable.

Another possible barrier exists for undocumented workers who recognize the importance of getting connected and are met with obstacles because they do not have credentials. Many have to devise a way around the requirements; whether by subscribing their American-born child or a friend. Others just avoid the process completely in an effort to stay below the radar.

If people who were lacking resources had access to necessary information to better their circumstances, social mobility could be achieved.

The Mentality that having a computer and internet are a privilege

The lack of resources to afford a connected computer is an inevitable obstacle, however, there are people who reject the importance of internet adoption. This mentality has grave consequences because it creates a vicious cycle of disadvantage and underperformance.

LIHs that embrace this mentality do not feel strongly invested to acquire a connected computer because they are unaware of its benefits. They rely on rudimentary and time-consuming ways of approaching day-to-day activities which stifles their productivity.

Oftentimes, these are people who are undereducated and only exposed to low-skilled industries. If they are parents, they may transfer those sentiments to their children.

Lack of information about affordable access

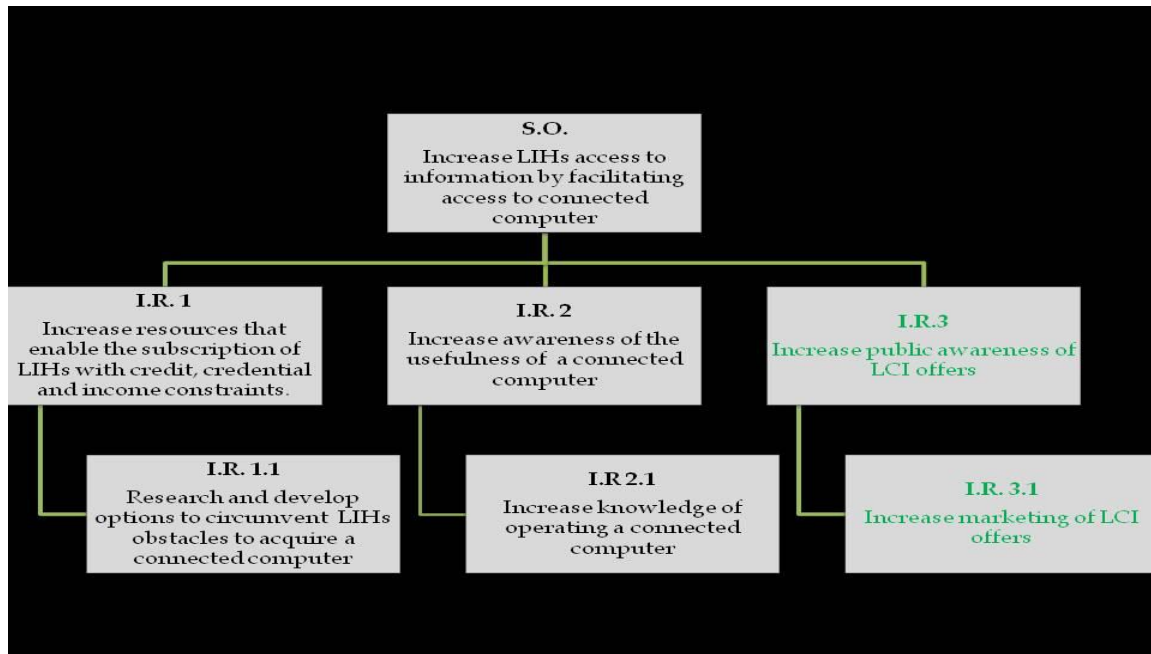
In an age where the private sector has widely embraced corporate social responsibility efforts, an increasing amount of ISPs are creating new plans and services that include low-income earners. Numerous LIHs call h-I-T referencing local-non profits or the school district as their source of information about LCI offers. However, after speaking with representatives from various ISPs, it was clear that there is an internal lack of information about LCI. In general, the representatives were not equipped to assist potential low-income customers and I endured long-holds, the need to get assistance from supervisors and multiple transfers between representatives.

This public lack of awareness about LCI offers is related to the disparity between the marketing of low-cost plans and regular rate plans. Some LCIs that start as

low as \$5 per month but are not being patronized by low-income earners due to poor marketing. If ISPs were more deliberate in their efforts to connect low-income earners, the adoption rate in Long Beach would increase.

This problem tree explores the underlying impediments that prevent people from acquiring information needed to gain mobility. With this information, h-I-T can design activities within its capacity to bridge this gap.

RESULTS FRAMEWORK WITH INDICATORS



	Indicators	Data collection method	Assumptions
S.O.	5000 LIHs own a computer connected to the internet by June 2018	C.E.T.F subscription report	The project retains its funding
I.R. 1	80% of LIHs with bad credit and/or no credentials, are subscribed	h-I-T anonymous survey	These LIHs are able to afford the option available
I.R. 1.1	i. 1 low-cost option available for participants with constraints ii. 1 offer is available is a no-cost sign-up	i. h-I-T 's record of available ISPs illustrated on a Gantt chart	i. Low-cost option remains ii. Partnership with sponsors secured
I.R. 2	i.100% of trainees express a new appreciation for a connected computer ii.70% of trainees sign up to a LCI offer	i.h-I-T. qualitative survey computer literacy trainees ii. h- I-T. subscription records	i.Honest feedback is given ii. Trainees can qualify and/or afford LCI
I.R. 2.1	100% satisfactory completion of computer literacy training program	Records from training assessment.	Training program retains its funding
I.R. 3	300 new inquiries weekly for 104 weeks	Average calculated weekly from Ring Central all-log report and LCI in-take forms for 2years	The project retains its funding
I.R.3.1	i. 5 active channels of disseminating marketing material ii. 30% of subscribed LIHs state Frontier as their source	i. Quantifying the referral sources ii. Extracting the number of participants who were referred by Frontier	The project retains its funding.

The Results Framework (RF) is effective in depicting how the project goal (strategic objective, S.O.) can be achieved through successes in preceding activities (Intermediate Results. I.R.) For a more substantive project outcome, the sub I.R. is derived to fortify the I.R and better streamline the causal events that lead to the S.O.

S.O. : Improve LIHs access to information by facilitating access to a connected computer

h I.T.'s S.O. aims at empowering people through access to information. The memorandum of understanding states that achieved if at least 5000 LIHs were subscribed with the assistance from h-I-T. and then verified by C.E.T.F. The data is collected and verified by the grantors weekly.

I.R. 1: Increase resources that enable the subscription of LIHs with constraints.

The vision of increased options for low-income earners constrained by these obstacles is anchored heavily on how successful the organization is at the sub I.R. activity to generate resources. To be deemed successful at this goal, 80% of low income earners who are impeded by bad or no credit, no credentials, or no disposable income would be able to sign up to a low-cost offer.

In order to measure this, a mixed-methods approach would be required where an anonymous survey could be administered to participants at time of in-take. The questionnaire would comprise of the following qualitative questions

- "1.What best describes your credit score? (Options: no credit, poor, fair, good, very good)"*
- 2. Which best describes your status? (Options: U.S. citizen/legal resident, undocumented person, I prefer not to respond)*
- 3. Select your annual household income from the following options? (Options: below \$10,000, \$10,001 -\$30,000, \$30,001-\$50,000, \$50,001 and above)"*

From these questions, h I.T. could quantify how many participants with those impediments were able to successfully subscribe.

This goal is based on the assumption that people who are impeded by these obstacles are even taking the initiative to seek out low cost internet especially

since the marketing materials do not blatantly state that these provisions are being made. It's also assumes that the low-cost options would be available for the duration of this project.

I.R. 1.1: Research and develop options to circumvent LIHs obstacles to acquire a connected computer.

h I.T. creating options for people who are impeded by credit, credential and income constraints is paramount to the success of I.R. 1. The active plan in place is the organization's venture to become a reseller of the Mobile Citizen subscription. This hotspot device does not subject its users to any verification and eligibility process like the other offers that require subscribers to be beneficiaries of a government programs and submit up-to-date proof of benefits. Instead, the Mobile Citizen gives program participants ease of access and confidence that minimal personal information is being captured.

In order to measure whether h I.T. is achieving this result it is necessary to report whether this offer remains an available option for the life of the program. This could be depicted by a Gantt chart that shows a comparison of what offers are available at the each quarter of the grant cycle. The second indicator challenges h-I-T to develop one more solution specifically targeting households with no disposable income. A discussed activity to achieve this is by acquiring a business sponsorship that would cover the cost for the device and a one-month subscription for a number of selected households.

For a successful result to be achieved, it is assumed that the Mobile Citizen supplier will continue to provide h I.T. with devices for the remainder of the project life cycle. Also, it assumes that h I.T. secures its partnership with the businesses that express interests in sponsoring devices and subscriptions.

I.R. 2: Increase awareness of the usefulness of the connected computer.

This is an intangible result but an essential contributor to the S.O. The I.R. forecasts that the success of the program requires participants to have a positive response to their introduction to the computer and internet. For this goal, the sample that is being used is a group of computer literacy trainees enrolled in a five week course. This training would be facilitated by the Housing Authority. h I.T.'s role in the partnership is to connect the cohort to LCI and a free Chromebook laptop in hopes that their new skill will foster participation that would translate to mobility.

To measure change in mentality towards a connected computer, a questionnaire could be administered before and after the training to capture their responses to the intervention. Sample questions would read:

"On a scale of 1-10, with 10 being the highest:

- 1. Before this training, how much of a priority was it to own a computer and an internet connection?*
- 2. After having the knowledge of how to use the computer and internet, how much of a priority do you now consider these instruments?"*
- 3. How strongly do you feel about investing in a computer and/or an internet connection?"*

However, because a change and knowledge does not necessarily mean a change in behavior, a telling sign of a change in attitude would be whether participants were ready to invest in a low-cost internet offer. This could act as a proxy indicator.

This I.R. assumes that people are not responding to the questionnaires favorably just because they fear that it may interfere with their chances.

I.R. 2.1.: Increase knowledge of operating a computer and using the internet.

The success of I.R. 2 is based on whether the attendees of the computer literacy class have gained proficiency in operating both the computer and internet. The causal link connecting the I.R. 2.1 to I.R. 2 is that one cannot truly appreciate what they do not know.

The measurable results would be the success rate of the trainee from the record of their assessments given in the training. From this information, one could establish how much impact was made on the group.

I.R.3.: Increase awareness of LCI offers.

The more LCI request that h I.T. receives will be a clear indication that the information about the offers is proliferating. All these inquiries may not necessarily materialize a subscription, however, increased knowledge of the offers fosters a sense of inclusion that a computer connected to the internet are no longer symbolic of privilege but of advancement.

This result can be tested by quantifying the amount of new inquiries being received each week by call-log and form submission. As a target guideline, *Governing* estimates 30,745 household in Long Beach do not have internet³; therefore averaging 300 new inquiries weekly until the end of the project.

³ *Governing* (2014) *City Internet Adoption Rates: Long Beach*. Retrieved from <http://www.governing.com/topics/transportation-infrastructure/gov-most-connected-cities-2013-internet-adoption-report.html#data>

The assumption for this result is that the volume of calls reflects people who are genuinely interested in low-cost internet and not the bonus of it including a free laptop.

I.R. 3.1: Increase marketing of LCI offers

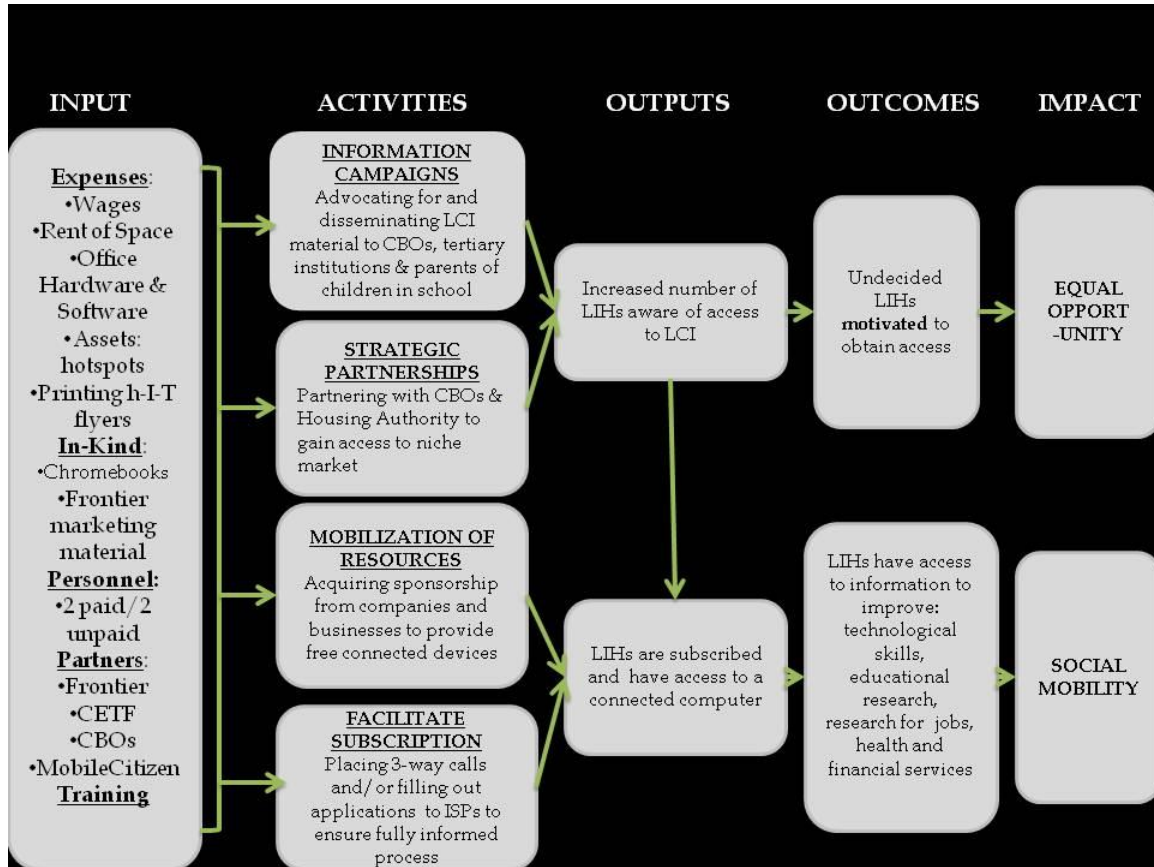
This sub-I.R. speaks primarily to the dissemination of marketing materials that LIHs intercept.

For this result, 2 indicators were identified to achieve the intended result. The first is quantifying that there are 5 different active channels transmitting information about the LCI program. These are through Frontier advertisements (radio, mailers or bus ads), h I.T.'s information campaign, other CBOs, Housing Authority or the school-district. These are options listed in the h I.T.'s LCI in-take form that is completed in order for subscription to be facilitated. This information depicts the breadth of dissemination which is an effective strategy in achieving the S.O.

The second indicator anticipates that 30 percent of these inquiries would express Frontier as their source of information. This would be indicative of the commitment that our grantor has put into creating social impact.

This RF can be a dynamic tool considering that projects cycle through different stages of maturity as new concerns arise. However, staying fixed on the strategic objectives and reassessing its intermediate results with the guidance of indicators will refocus the project towards its anticipated outcome.

INTERVENTION STRATEGY



h-I-T's primary roles in this partnership with Frontier and C.E.T.F. are as information brokers and process facilitators. With reference to the problem tree, h-I-T's intervention efforts attempt to address the immediate causes of LIHs lacking access to information.

In order for h-I-T to undertake this task, an intervention strategy was designed to maximize the limitations of team size and experience. It was necessary to forge new connections with various stakeholders in Long Beach and the surrounding community.

These activities are expected to run concurrently for the duration of the project assuming that the partners are still engaged.

Inputs

These are the resources needed to operate the program. The illustration lists the key physical and intangible materials that h-I-T organizes to create systems and processes to achieve the mission target. h-I-T's input ranges from the headsets used to place and receive calls to the time spent training.

Activities

Information Campaigns

Frontier conducts mass marketing in the form mailers, posters, and billboards. However, h-I-T has chosen a more curated approach in order to penetrate specific niches. Educational institutions are targeted as prime locations, so as to intercept students who are members of LIHs and require a connected computer to complete assignments and conduct research.

Spreading awareness of LCI to tertiary institutions is essential considering many low-income adult learners are receiving government assistance and qualify. Many of these students are the decision makers of their households and would benefit from having access to a connected computer instead of using the school's facilities. Ideally, h-I-T wants to have its approved marketing material posted on campuses and publicized by Student Service offices. Additionally, promoting LCI at student events are effective ways to appeal to this audience. So far, h-I-T has engaged LA Tech and Coastline Community College by speaking to one of its faculty members, who in turn is informing students and proliferating the information

For school districts, h-I-T has to seek permission from the districts' administrator. Once approved, the relevant personnel are contacted and flyers are disseminated as take-home information for parents. PTA events and informational sessions are good events to encourage parents to sign up.

h-I-T project coordinators are trained to advocate the benefits of this investment. Coordinators also make parents aware of the many of the LCI offers that accept the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) as eligibility of low-income status and that options are still available if they do not otherwise qualify.

Strategic Partnerships

h-I-T chose to become strategic partners with a few CBOs and the Housing Authority because these entities connect people to resources that contribute to social mobility. They assist h-I-T in publicizing services and disseminating material to LIHs who are likely to pre-qualify for LCI offers. In these circumstances, partnership is vital for its reach, access and reputation.

CBO partners were prioritized based on whether their core objectives involved education, training, and apprenticeship. Currently, CBOs are able to purchase hotspot devices from h-I-T on behalf of their program participants, extending h-I-T's network and reach. The activity that h-I-T hopes to conduct with closely partnered CBOs is to have kiosks and demo stations set up that people are able to follow detailed instructions to sign-up to LCI offers. An example of an engaged partner with extensive reach was the Long Beach YMCA which provided a strong endorsement of the LCI program to parents of their after-school program and to people who participate in their community development programs.

h-I-T works extensively with the Housing Authority of Los Angeles (HACLA) in technology distribution programs. These residences are heavily subsidized by the government and have limited resources to afford a connected computer. More so, it is crucial these these LIHs have access in order to connect to opportunities that better their standard of living. Housing projects are often strategic locations to host computer literacy training. Through partnership, HACLA's 'reach' becomes h-I-T's as the former has agreed to disseminate h-I-T's marketing material to over 4000 LIHs.

Mobilization of Resources (not yet an active intervention)

h-I-T recognizes that some persons simply do not have the ability to afford LCI plans, even as low as \$10 monthly. For these individuals, private companies and businesses were contacted to sponsor LIHs that wish to participate in the LCI program. The rapport that h-I-T would build with these entities is unique because it calls on the private sector to engage in social impact and

responsibility. Most importantly, this activity shows that h-I-T is innovating and building capacity to serve marginalized people.

For this sponsorship program, the only applicable plan is the Mobile Citizen offer since service is not contingent on being a government assistance beneficiary or other factors. These businesses would sponsor either the hotspot device and/or the monthly reload value. h-I-T would have to develop a process of selecting how households would qualify for this no-cost offer.

Facilitate subscription

This activity is conducted when h-I-T project coordinators receive or place a call to a potential LCI adopter. A prequalification and consultation is done depending on the ISP, a 3-way call is placed or low-income proof is submitted through an online portal. Essentially, the role of coordinators is to advocate, liaise and prioritize the needs of LIHs. ISP agents are trained to sell and often refrain from advocating for LCI unless asked.

In order to be versed in the details of the offers coordinators research all the ISPs, checking for press releases of updates to eligibility and requirements.

Outputs

Output is the product that is an immediate result of the activities conducted. It is safe to argue that the aforementioned intervention activities- information campaign and strategic partnerships, contribute to a heightened awareness of LCI. While these activities may later lead to subscriptions (illustrated by arrow in diagram) at minimum people who previously had no knowledge of LCI offers will now know that it is accessible. The remaining two activities- mobilizing resources and facilitating subscriptions, are actions that directly result in LIHs being connected to a LCI offer and satisfying the objective of the grant.

Outcomes and Impact

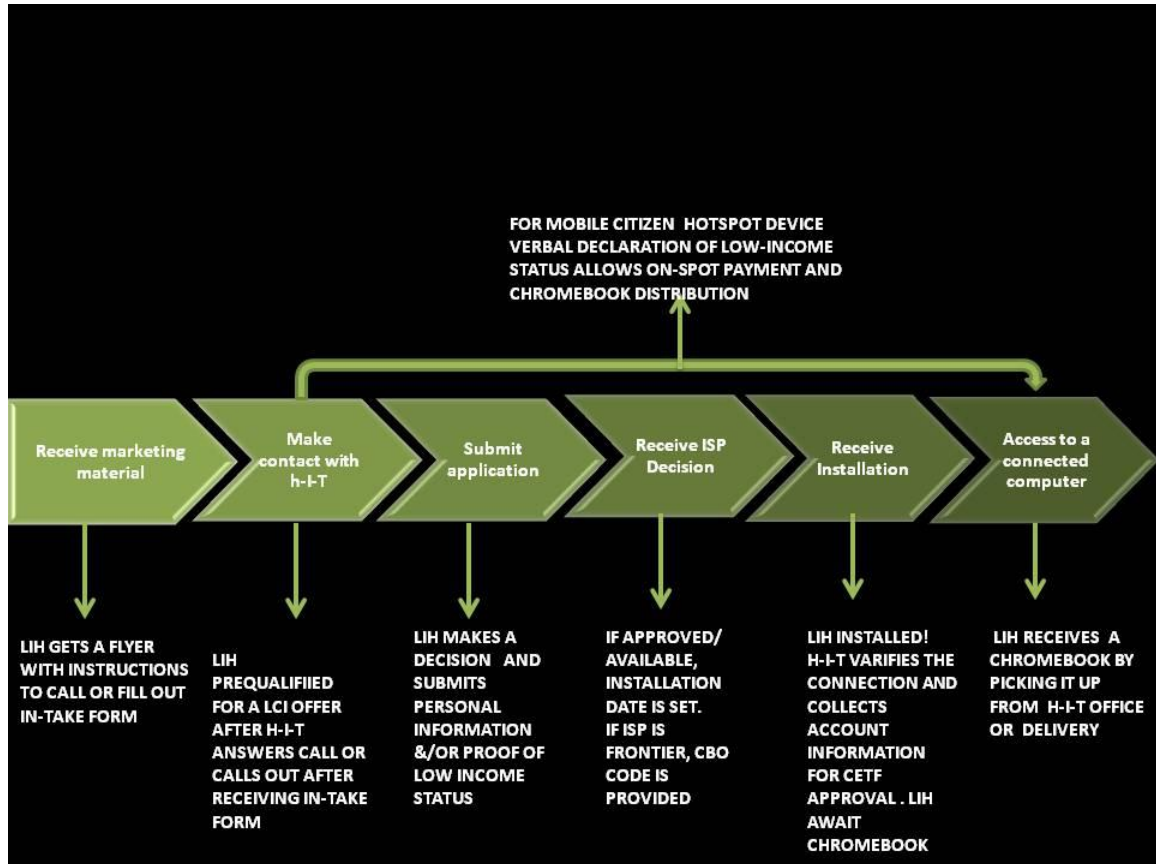
Outcomes and impact are, respectively, short term and long term effects of the activities. The activities that target awareness of LCI, begins to motivate undecided LIHs to become Internet adopters. In the long run, this will change the public opinion and mentality about access to a connected computer. If this inclusiveness becomes status-quo, Long Beach and L.A. County would witness higher adoption rates.

However, for the activities that assist in the procuring a connected computer, the immediate effects are that recipients are able hone their technological skills and access information that was not available before. Therefore the anticipated

impact is that people will gain social mobility from this new accessibility to information.

This intervention strategy provides an outline of the current and future activities h-I-T anticipates to begin or continue with engaged partners. As the project matures and new opportunities arise, partners and the nature of activities may change

JOURNEY MAP: LCI ADOPTER



Journey maps are used to demonstrate the experience of a user at each stage of acquiring a product or service. This journey map is an outline of a LCI adopter using h-I-T's subscription process. It focuses on the emotional experience to ensure that potential LCI adopters are able to 'buy-in' with ease. If not, many LIHs will remain shut-out from accessing a connected computer and limit their access to information.

- **STEP 1: Receive marketing material**

Possible emotional experience: Optimism

Potential LCI subscribers receive a flyer from one of the aforementioned sources and are prompted to make contact by phone or through the online in-take form (see appendix 1 and 2). The flyer highlights low prices and a free laptop offer which is enticing to the public. Some households may have internet and do not qualify. Some may already have a computer and are interested in another and the opportunity to have them fully capable at home. For others, this is a unique opportunity to acquire a connected computer and obtain immediate access to information.

The LCI flyers do not explicitly explain that the program targets first-time internet adopters but this is addressed in STEP 2 when prequalifying the household.

- **STEP 2: Make contact with h-I-T**

Possible emotional experience: satisfaction and indifference

A h-I-T program coordinator attempts to answer live calls within hours of operation. Outside of these hours, people are given the option to leave a voice message and be contacted within a week. Similarly, someone who submits an in-take form online is subject to that response time. At prequalification, a full profile is made and once the h-I-T coordinator deems the applicant a first-time adopter or disconnected for the past 6 months.

At this point, applicants whose household do not qualify feel indifferent about the LCI program as they interpret as being disallowed from acquiring cheaper

internet. At this point, h-I-T coordinators give the disqualified applicant information about available offers but close the profile in h-I-T's database. The qualified applicants who move forward feel positive about their experience at this point because together with a h-I-T coordinator, they are able to make an educated decision about the best offer to suit their needs. Other qualified applicants who have a positive experience are the LIHs who opt for the Mobile Citizen Hotspot offer. These applicants' journey is expedited to STEP 6, as they are able to acquire the hotspot device and receive their laptop the same day.

- **STEP 3: Submit application**

Possible emotional experiences: optimistic

Once the potential subscriber decides on an ISP offer, a h-I-T coordinator reviews and submits their eligibility documents online (AT&T and other providers) or place a 3-way call with Frontier. At this stage of the process, applicants feel confident that they will receive approval because they have received the h-I-T coordinator's assistance. However, coordinators are never able to qualify applicants for any ISPs.

- **STEP 4: ISP decision**

Possible emotional experience: optimistic, disappointment

For some ISPs, approval takes a few days and applicants are notified by mail. If the household was not approved, the letter will state its reason. For some LIHs, the ISP will give the opportunity for resubmission.

For Frontier's LCI offer, approval/denial is received instantly at the time of phone application. With Frontier's infrastructural limitations and imposed subscription caps for LCI saturated areas, many potential LCI adopters have been disappointed at this step. As a result, the household has to pursue to a less convenient option or try again at a later date.

If the LIHs receive approval, they achieve a level of satisfaction and schedule installation at with the ISP.

- **STEP 5: Receive Installation**

Possible emotional experiences: satisfaction, anxiety, disappointment

At this stage, the ISP sends a technician out to install the connection or sends a 'self-install' kit with instructions. After successful installation, a h-I-T coordinator calls the ISP with the participant to verify installation. For all ISPs except Frontier, a copy of first bill proving new installation is required for the Chromebook laptop to be issued.

At this step, many participants experience disappointment and reported glitches with the set-up of their internet connection. Some are unable to set up the self-install kit and eventually need to request a technician. For others, their apartment complexes and landlords place restrictions on ISPs they are allowed to patronize. Additionally, ISPs have various infrastructural problems that are undetectable or overlooked until installation. Therefore at this stage of the journey, many potential LCI adopters are forced to withdraw their request.

- **STEP 6: Access to a connected computer**

Possible emotional experience: Satisfaction

Upon successful installation, the Chromebook laptop is not distributed until h-I-T receives confirmation from CETF. CETF will give the approval after reviewing Frontier's internal records or receiving the first bill for non-Frontier subscriptions. At this stage, disappointment can only occur if the LIH was not honest about their intent to adopt LCI. This is demonstrated by their inability to show proof of active service which occurs when people pre-maturely disconnect services.

Organizations can use the journey map to anticipate the strengths and pitfalls of their processes. For LCI adopters, the process of receiving a connected computer is not as simple as the process for medium to high income households who patronize regular priced subscriptions. However, to ensure the sustainability of the project, these measures are employed to avoid bleed-offs.

To sell or to serve:

A LOOK AT THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN
HUMAN-I-T AND FRONTIER

Introduction

The aim of this case study is to analyze the issues encountered in the Frontier-CETF-h-I-T partnership. Please note that CETF is omitted from most of the analysis because its role is solely supervisory.

Firstly, the project context is presented by the use of a timeline; description of locale and partners; and a comparison of the partners' core competencies.

Secondly, the use of a stakeholder analysis will depict the actors impacted by the project. This tool will identify how h-I-T should interact with each stakeholder to ensure that project goals are achieved.

Thirdly, the challenges encountered in the partnership will be highlighted and discussed. A recommendation will be presented for each issue.

Lastly, the study will conclude with lessons learnt from the issues and what it teaches about partnerships in the field of social development.

Timeline

- **2005**-Verizon (later acquired by Frontier) was mandated by CPUC to make public benefit commitments to close digital divide in CA
- **Later 2005**- CETF, a non-profit monitoring body was formed to oversee the public benefit commitment
- **April 2016**- Frontier's acquisition of Verizon is problematic; California law-makers and regulators set hearing demanding answers
- **June 2015**-CETF and Frontier established a grant that challenges CBOs to subscribe volumes of low-income households to LCI
- **June 2016** -h-I-T's application is approved for a commitment of 5000 sign-ups in 2 years

Description of Locale and Partners

Long Beach

Estimated 30,745 households without internet

40% of population Latino/Hispanic (the ethnic group with the lowest adoption rates by national average)

h-I-T:

4 year old organization

New CBO to Long Beach(October 1, 2016)

Currently developing systems and networks for program operation

CETF:

Monitoring role for grant project

Liaison between CBOs and Frontier

Wide reach of CBO partners and governmental partners state-wide

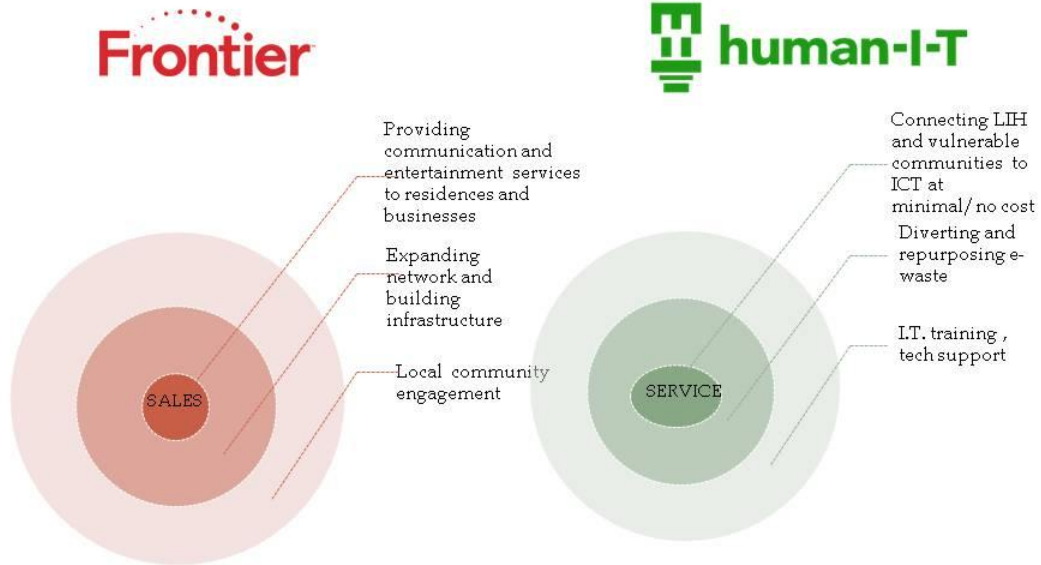
Frontier:

Fortune 500 company

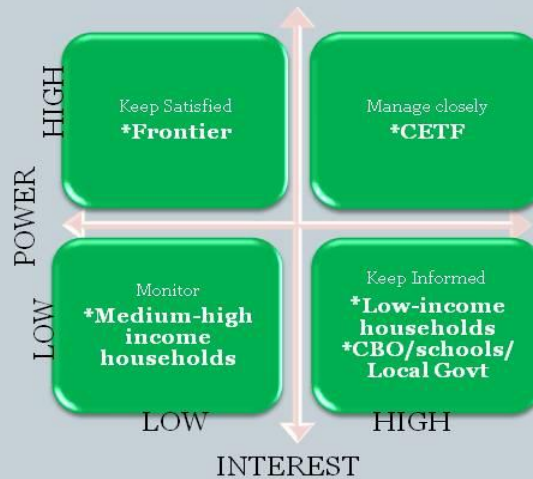
Embattled with low-performance complaints

Honouring inherited public benefit commitments made by Verizon

Comparison of core competencies



Stakeholder Analysis



Stakeholders cont'd

- **High power/Low interest: Frontier**
Funds the project but places limited effort in it's execution.
h-I-T must: Keep Frontier satisfied by hitting target goals so as to sustain the life of the project.
- **High power/High interest: CETF**
Grant manager commissioned to oversee processes and compliance
h-I-T must: Manage closely so as to communicate with Frontier and to ensure that its performance in this project allows them to be considered for future projects.
- **Low power/Low interest: medium to high income households**
These households are 'shopping around' and LCI offer is interesting because of the Chrome book.
h-I-T must: Monitor to ensure that this group does not wrongly benefit from the limited resources intended for first-time internet adopters.
- **Low power/High interest: LIH and CBOs/Local govt agencies/Schools**
LIH: Very interested in subscription but prevented by lacking resources.
CBOs/Local govt agencies/Schools: Interested in LCI offers to share information
h-I-T must: Keep these group informed as they are the main beneficiaries or provide access to the intended beneficiaries of this LCI program

Challenges faced in Partnership

At the end of the 2nd quarter, h-I-T has achieved only 15 subscriptions from the 850 anticipated.

This underperformance can be characterized by the following issues :

1. The complexity and inconsistency of Frontier's business practices

- Frontier's staff are under-trained and often unaware of the details of the LCI offer
- Prioritization of regular priced accounts by introducing caps only LCI subscription when there is saturation
- Negative public opinion of Frontier

2. h-I-T's limited capacity to undertake the subscription of 5000 internet adopters:

- Limited human resources
- Neglect of internal strategy for outreach

Issue analysis: Frontier's business practices

Frontier's staff are undertrained and often unaware of the LCI program

Frontier's inability to properly train staff seems to reflect its latency. When LIHs encounter difficulties in subscription and Chrome book distribution, it reinforces their mistrust of the company. Agents who do not follow proper procedure divert resources to unqualified households

Current practice: h-I-T's coordinators intervene by pre-qualifying candidates and facilitating 3-way calls. Occasionally, Frontier agents call h-I-T attempting to subscribe unqualified households

Recommendations: To streamline this process, Frontier should develop a department specialized in LCI offers with a dedicated phone line for the duration of project.

Prioritization of regular priced accounts by introducing area caps on LCI subscription

After responding to Frontier's LCI flyer, many LIHs are told they cannot receive the internet because their area is saturated with LCI subscriptions. This is not feasible because low-income zip codes will most likely have saturation.

Current practice: Upon denial, h-I-T coordinators try to assist with other LCI offers which may be more expensive or less convenient.

Recommendations: Frontier should discontinue the use of caps and absorb the cost because it is a promotional offer. However, if Frontier is unable to do so for infrastructural reasons it should allow more than 250 non-Frontier subscriptions.

Negative public opinion of Frontier

h-I-T's decision to partner with Frontier was risky because the latter is widely criticized for its incompetence. This translates to people's mistrust of the project and hinders h-I-T's work.

Current practice: h-I-T coordinators are trained to research and advocate for all LCI offers. However, the 250 cap on non-Frontier subscriptions limits the promotion of other ISPs.

Recommendations: h-I-T should refocus its social marketing strategy by disseminating its own marketing materials and conducting strategic outreach. That way, people are familiar with the organization's work despite its partnership with Frontier.

Issue Analysis: h-I-T's limited capacity

Limited human resources

h-I-T's current program team lacks the manpower to undertake 5000 internet adoptions.

Current practice: 3 h-I-T program coordinators conduct outreach, network with potential partners, answer live calls, call-backs, 3-way subscription calls with Frontier. This has quickly led to 'burn-out'.

Recommendation: h-I-T should find creative ways to expand its human capital by mobilizing non-personnel and volunteer staff. By doing so, output can be maximized through 'divide and conquer': creating teams responsible for each of the aforementioned activities.

h-I-T's neglect of intervention strategy to adapt to Frontier's influx

When Frontier began its mass-marketing of the LCI offer geared towards Frontier subscriptions, h-I-T's 4 program coordinators deviated from planned activities to accommodate the high volumes of calls. Due to the ambiguity of the information on the Frontier flyer, many people believed they were calling Frontier. This led to many unproductive phone calls and wasted resources. Currently, h-I-T operates similar to an out-sourced call center for Frontier's LCI offer.

Current practice: The h-I-T coordinators start all conversations by reiterating that the role of the organization is to connect people to all LCI offers including Frontier. After that is made clear, coordinators go to objectively prequalify LIHs to the best available offers.

Recommendation: h-I-T refocuses on the intervention strategy that was designed to reach pre-qualifying LIHs. For the influx of Frontier calls, a pre-recorded informational line would divert unproductive calls and minimize the time spent redirecting people.

Lessons learnt from Frontier-CETF-h-I-T partnership

1. Though funding partners provide resources, they do not necessarily fulfill the requirements to achieve project objectives

Despite Frontier's essential input, its bad business practices resulted in withdrawn subscriptions, heightened distrust of the LCI program and intangible losses to h-I-T.

2. Aim for win-win alliances- entities sharing the same project values.

In partnerships, successful execution of the project entails of all partners shared values being upheld. Frontier's business practices revealed that it was unable to separate its profit-driven nature for this public benefit commitment and this complicated h-I-T's people-centered approach.

3. Beware of organizational identity loss

Frontier's practices were influential in reshaping h-I-T's practices. When Frontier released its mass marketing, h-I-T's role seemed to change from outreach partner to an outsourced call center

4. Guilty by association

h-I-T has the most interaction with the participants so when issues arise on back-end the blame is shared.

REFLECTION

My experience at human-I-T was unique because I was exposed to new systems and processes. The fact that the organization is young and impressionable added to the uniqueness of my experience; it meant that I was able to join in the explorative planning and development phase of the programs department. I had the opportunity to witness raw resources come together to produce social impact through access to technology.

The success achieved at my internship would be connecting people who otherwise would have been shut-out from technology. One particular case was a woman who heard about LCI program from her daughter's teacher. The teacher expressed that the 12 year-old student was very advanced and had an aptitude for STEM subject areas. In attempting to pre-qualify the household, I discovered that they lacked credentials: no social security number or identification card. Nevertheless, they were able to subscribe, and I was proud to be a member of an organization that could offer a solution to uplift marginalized individuals. It also reinforced my career choice and why I pursued my advanced degree in International Development.

Conversely, the failures experienced working on this project reminded me that even non-profits and aid organizations operate within constraints despite their effort to create positive impact. One such failure was Frontier's inability to confirm that h-I-T facilitated over 30 subscriptions. As a result, the majority of these participants was unable to receive their Chrome books and was paying for access that they were not receiving. This incident was especially hard for me because it went against my 'cause no harm' philosophy. I was tempted to defy protocol, considering that the delay was due to an executive member being away on vacation. In that moment, I protested the bureaucracy that exists and was disappointed in my superiors for not challenging the decision. However, I had to learn to take a step back by separating my emotions and supporting my team's decision after expressing that my opinion differed. This was my first experience with

My internship has taught me more about myself as a development practitioner. I believe my biggest contribution was in the area of project design. My team members have very technical backgrounds and I often felt that the workflows, though logical and meticulous, omitted the humanness of the service we provide. I realize that I am very empathetic and oftentimes create mental character sketches and journey maps to design people-centered processes. An example of this was my advocating to offer payment plans for hot-spot internet device after the team assumed \$100 was an affordable price for low-income households. The organization's major concern was that a payment plan would complicate accounting and also lead to participants defaulting on their service. In response,

I urged my team to visualize our typical subscriber-immigrants and single-income households and encouraged that we design easy starter steps to be inclusive.

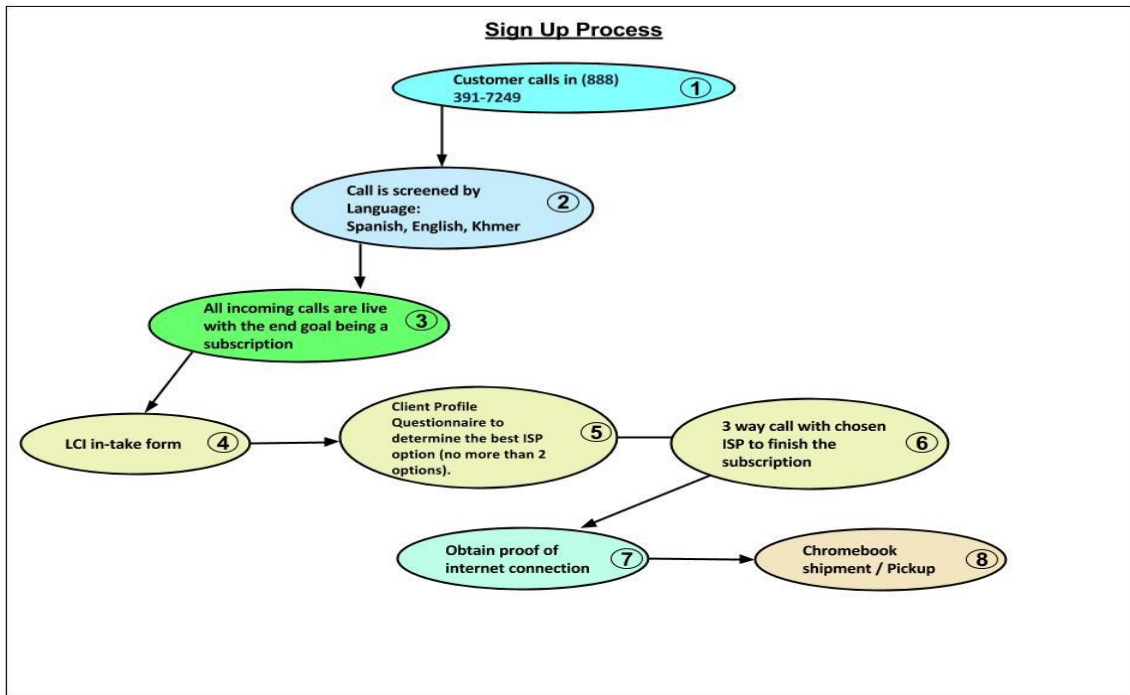
Though h-I-T needs to protect its limited resources while it grows and builds capacity, if LIH have to overextend themselves for the initial cost, it may affect their other financial commitments. In turn, this would hinder the ultimate goal of gaining mobility.

As a new practitioner, I believe it is necessary to practice due diligence when anticipating employment. Personally, it is important to align with organizations that complement my development philosophy. However, we can never truly prepare for what we experience in our practice. During the tenure of our graduate studies, we primarily work in simulated contexts. Contributing variables, that is, team members, organization culture, employee morale, funding and resource constraints, make our experiences unique. Therefore, this internship has taught me that projects and programs are dynamic and to achieve success, one must embrace iterative design.

Currently, I am employed at h-I-T and would love to begin planning where I would like to conduct my fieldwork, specifically a francophone developing country. Despite the fact that I am ultimately returning home, I believe that working in different cultural contexts will enhance my skill-set. After two years of field work, I would feel confident to execute the following medium and long terms plans.

Growing up in a country with a high rate of violence, the field of Conflict Resolution resonated with me. At MIIS, I pursued the Conflict Resolution certificate program and later volunteered for an organization in the field. In fact, I chose to participate in DPPI after submitting an unsuccessful grant proposal for a Conflict Resolution intervention project in Jamaica. Now, with the wealth of skills acquired, I am confident that I can create a clearer and more sustainable project. Therefore, in the next 3-5 years, I envision working towards or executing a project that either designed by myself or in partnership with others. In 7-10 years, I would hope that this project is sustainable and grows to become a permanent program. Before then, I would love to gain more experience consulting on projects related to the field.

APPENDIX 1





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