



mission

Most of the nearly two-billion children in the developing world are inadequately educated, or receive no education at all. One in three does not complete the fifth grade.

The individual and societal consequences of this chronic global crisis are profound. Children are consigned to poverty and isolation—just like their parents—never knowing what the light of learning could mean in their lives. At the same time, their governments struggle to compete in a rapidly evolving, global information economy, hobbled by a vast and increasingly urban underclass that cannot support itself, much less contribute to the commonweal, because it lacks the tools to do so.

It is time to rethink this equation.

Given the resources that developing countries can reasonably allocate to education—sometimes less than \$20 per year per pupil, compared to the approximately \$7500 per pupil spent annually in the U.S.—even a doubled or redoubled national commitment to traditional education, augmented by external and private funding, would not get the job done. Moreover, experience strongly suggests that an incremental increase of “more of the same”—building schools, hiring teachers, buying books and equipment—is a laudable but insufficient response to the problem of bringing true learning possibilities to the vast numbers of children in the developing world.

Standing still is a reliable recipe for going backward.

Any nation's most precious natural resource is its children. We believe the emerging world must leverage this resource by tapping into the children's innate capacities to learn, share, and create on their own. Our answer to that challenge is the XO laptop, a children's machine designed for “learning learning.”

XO embodies the theories of constructionism first developed by MIT Media Lab Professor Seymour Papert in the 1960s, and later elaborated upon by Alan Kay, complemented by the principles articulated by Nicholas Negroponte in his book, *Being Digital*.

Extensively field-tested and validated among some of the poorest and most remote populations on earth, constructionism emphasizes what Papert calls “learning learning” as the fundamental educational experience. A computer uniquely fosters learning learning by allowing children to “think about thinking”, in ways that are otherwise impossible. Using the XO as both their window on the world, as well as a highly programmable tool for exploring it, children in emerging nations will be opened to both illimitable knowledge and to their own creative and problem-solving potential.

OLPC is not, at heart, a technology program, nor is the XO a product in any conventional sense of the word. OLPC is a non-profit organization providing a means to an end—an end that sees children in even the most remote regions 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.