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PAN ASIA ICT R&D Grants Programme

The Scala Program – Proposal Ref: 0301A3_S03

Project Name	The Scala Project
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Research Output Report

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1. Output One

Development of three new ICT resource centres in the Philippines. These ICT resource centres serve the rural poor

Three ICT resource centres have been set-up and completed successfully. Despite the fact that the set-up of the centres proved to be more complex, all centres are currently training their first set of beneficiaries, within a holistic ICT training program, incorporating life skills and entrepreneurship training, with monitoring and impact tools in place. In each location, we have incorporated the centres within existing structures of our local partner, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD):

ICT Resource Centre One

Location		Tacloban, Leyte
Manager		Ms. Liliosa R. Baltazar Department Head City Social Welfare and Development Office Tacloban City
Details	Number of computers	Fifteen computers are located in a city branch of the DSWD (CSWDO)
	Number of trainers trained	4 social workers and 1 newly employed IT school graduate
	Date of first training	July 23 rd 2003
	Capacity of the centre	15 students / month
	Linkages Established	Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE), Department of Education, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Civil Service

ICT Resource Centre Two

Location		Tagbilaran, Bohol
Manager		Ma. Constanca Tunacao PSWD Officer Office of the Provincial Social Welfare and Development, Province of Bohol
Details	Number of computers	Twelve computers are located in a provincial branch of the DSWD (PSWDO)
	Number of trainers trained	6 trainers – 3 are social workers and an additional 3 due to their IT experience
	Date of first training	August 25 th 2003
	Capacity of the centre	Currently 6 students / 2 months, due to an electricity problem all computers cannot be run – soon to be 12 students / 2 months
	Linkages Established	Bohol Employment Placement Office, TESDA

ICT Resource Centre Three

Location		Cebu City, Cebu
Manager		Herminia L. Cabahug Superintendent II Area Vocational Rehabilitation Center II Department of Social Welfare and Development, Region VII

Details	Number of computers	Three computers are located in a vocational institute for persons with disabilities (AVRC II, DSWD). In addition, 4 more computers that were donated by a local Rotary Club who decided to match our contribution!
	Number of trainers trained	One trainer – Already hired specifically to teach and develop a computer-literacy program
	Date of first training	October 2003
	Capacity of the centre	7 students / 3 months (Note: these students are youth with disabilities)
	Linkages Established	DOLE, Regional Office of Social Welfare and Development

2. Output Two

New programming for the Lingayen and new ICT centres, based on evaluating the training methodology implemented in Lingayen 2002

Initially, our objectives of the TESDA Lingayen centre were to develop a vocational ICT training program. Upon returning to the centre and reviewing its impact, we learned that merely improving technical skills is not sufficient to assist our target beneficiaries. Subsequently, we determined two additional areas of training that would improve our ICT training and the situation of our beneficiaries: life skills and entrepreneurship. Therefore, for our new centres, we refined our training curriculum and shifted the focus from vocational training to an integrated ICT training and resource centre with life skills and entrepreneurship training. In other words, we now combine computer-literacy education with other soft-skills training to provide a holistic approach for our target beneficiaries.

Life skills

The complex problem of the vulnerability of Filipino 'out-of-school' youth (OSY) has attracted attention from many other organizations. Through our research with the Philippine National Youth Commission and the World Bank, we learned the following characteristics of the average 'out-of-school' Filipino youth:

- The majority of OSY live in environments with few livelihood options where asset attainment is difficult. Economic pressures, social conditions of the family and personal qualities all contribute to the high prevalence of OSYs in the Philippines. Typically, OSYs are born to large impoverished families whose household heads also lack basic education skills. The families' lack of financial resources was ultimately responsible for forcing youth out of school.
- Often children are required to work to support parents and younger siblings. This is particularly true for the 15 to 24 age group who often have to quit school to help their parents earn an income or do the chores at home while their parents sought employment. About 1/5 of the WB focus groups' participants came from single-parent families, or the family's sole wage earner was either ill or ailing. Often in these cases, the youth take on the responsibility of finding a source of income to provide for the family. Further, most OSY generally have parents who work in unskilled jobs resulting from a low level of education. Typically in two parent households, the father's job was often low-paying and self or seasonally employed.
- Other reasons that youth are not attending school are very similar to the reasons faced in Canada and include unstable home environments, poor parenting or parental role models, and lack of supervision or guidance at home. Naturally other negative influences like family conflict, disability, lack of interest, and peer pressure also contribute to dropout rates.
- The livelihood capabilities of an OSY greatly affect their propensity toward relatively lower intellectual capacity and low self-esteem. The average OSY is found to be hesitant of social interaction and/or integration and display poor stress-coping abilities and poor control of emotions.

- Finally, despite the adversity these youths face the WB's studies revealed that the OSY largely hoped for an opportunity to return to school.

From this research and our experiences, we know that the average Filipino OSY lacks in basic life skills education and employment opportunities, in addition to not having a strong support system through family or school. This is why we have decided to incorporate life skills training into our regular ICT training curriculum. For our target group, the OSY, our computer-literacy training sessions also provide information on topics such as nutrition, physical fitness, anger management, local laws etc., to provide a more balanced education and to improve their life skills. EWB and the social workers from the local DSWD offices work together to prepare the materials, which are taught by the social workers along with the ICT training. Refer to Appendix C (in Appendixes Report) to see a sample Life Skills Schedule.

Entrepreneurship

Our experiences in the Philippines have suggested that there are limited opportunities, resources, and services at the disposal of the underprivileged youth to find employment. Therefore, our beneficiaries may obtain computer-literacy training but whether these skills lead to employment or improved income opportunities is unclear. Since the Philippine employment sector is close to saturated, we now encourage the graduates from our training to become self-employed. For example, trainees can regroup and form micro encoding companies, which are reported as a needed and profitable service in some Philippine communities where we have set-up centres. In addition, the Department of Labour and Employment has created a customized entrepreneurship, training course, which they offer to our graduates after their ICT training. In most centres, we were able to establish a structure by which the graduates can use the centre's computers outside training hours for their first encoding contracts. Finally, one of our centres has set-up an 'On-the-job' training option for their trainees. Where upon graduation from the ICT training, trainees are matched with a local company for 6 months on training on the job, given time and access to local computers to gain experience.

3. Output Three

A set of impact assessment tools and structure to evaluate the impact of increased availability of low-cost ICT training on members of a local community

In order to measure the impact of increased availability of low-cost ICT training on members of a local community, EWB has developed a set of impact assessment questionnaires to aid in this process, which is a challenge for any development work. The Department for International Development's (DFID) Sustainable Livelihoods Approach and IDRC's Assessing Community Telecentre inspired our tools and metrics. Refer to Appendix B (in Appendixes Report) for the Impact Assessment Tools.

Before the start of a project, baseline research is required to have a clear picture of the situation before the project in order to understand the short and long term impacts on the community after implementation. Without this research, the results of the project are subjective and difficult to quantify. Useful baseline information for measuring the impact of our centres includes the status of our trainees before their training (e.g. education level, employment status, overall wellness, and income opportunities, etc.).

Impact Assessment Tools

All trainees and their affiliated social workers must answer a series of questionnaires. These impact assessment tools assist in the definition of our beneficiaries before and after their increased access to computer-literacy training. Specifically, from the DFID's Sustainable Livelihoods Approach, the Scala Program's impact assessment tools are measuring:

- **Human and Social Assets**

Based on our analysis, the Scala Program and our ICT training has the capacity to increase one's human and social assets. According to the DFID, assets are a good measure of impact because options and life resiliency increase with the growth of assets.

- **Indicators of Impact Through Development**

In addition, the questionnaires measure the Scala Program's impact on a youth's well-being, income/food security, and vulnerability, which are indicators of impact through development, according to the DFID.

We have defined human and social assets, well-being, income/food security, and vulnerability as useful metrics in measuring impact and each question in our impact assessment tools directly relates to one of the above defined metrics. Therefore, measuring how our computer-literacy training directly impacted the trainee, according to the youth and their associated social workers.

The structure

As stated earlier, we have been able to develop and implement this impact assessment structure during the implementation in the Philippines. The tools that compose this structure were designed to measure the impact of our training on our target group, the Filipino OSY. In fact, the youth answer a questionnaire before their training in order to paint a picture of the situation they are facing. A similar questionnaire is handed out to the youth 3, 6, 9 and 12 months after their training to study the evolution of their situation after the training. In order to corroborate this information, the social worker affiliated to the youth also fills up a similar questionnaire

according to the same schedule. This process will assess how the computer-literacy training has impacted the students and their household (e.g. have the trainees found employment, gone back to school, how has their vulnerability changed, etc.). Analysis and conclusions on each trainee and questionnaire are drawn on an individual basis by our partners at the Department of Social Welfare and Development and by us.

Unfortunately, the creation and implementation of these impact assessment tools and structure took more time than we had originally planned. Furthermore, because of a weakness in the monitoring of the Lingayen centre we were not able to collect the necessary data to draw a complete analysis of our impact on this community. These are the reasons why we are not able to present the preliminary results of the outcomes of our program in the Philippines. In order to remedy to this, we will send a volunteer to the Philippines in January 2004 to collect and analyse the results from the new structure implemented this summer.

4. Output Four

A set of monitoring tools and structure to ensure the program's objectives are achieved in every ICT centre. Observations from the Lingayen centre are also included

The following section reports our observations from the TESDA Lingayen centre, after its review during Phase II and the conclusions we have drawn from our experience. In addition, output 4 explains the monitoring tools and structure we developed and implemented in all four ICT centres, based on our observations and conclusions.

Lingayen Report

Overall, the consensus among Phase I stakeholders is that the first centre (set-up in 2002) is a success. Specifically, the centre is actively training people more than one year after its opening. We have divided our observations of the Lingayen centre into the following categories:

- State of the centre and its equipment
- State of the staff and management of the centre
- Conclusions

State of the centre and its equipment

Upon returning to the Lingayen centre after one year of operations, we noticed that six of the 15 workstations we had donated had become inoperable. In fact, the centre personnel explained that these breakdowns were actually recent and due to severe power surges that had happened with the newly arrived typhoon season. Unfortunately, after further investigation, we found out that the committee responsible for technical maintenance of the centre had not been advised of the problems. In order to remedy to this situation, we worked with a representative of the committee to repair the broken equipment. By the end of our visit, we were able to have 12 operable workstations. However, the surges had caused some fatal damages to the motherboards of 3 computers which made them no longer useful for the training. They were dismantled and their working parts were either added to the operable workstations (RAM, drives, etc.) or kept as spare parts (cables, cards, monitors, etc.). We also held a meeting to discuss the impact of those destructive power surges. After reviewing the budget, we found some extra money from the subsidised payment structure we had implemented, enough to afford four uninterruptible power supplies (UPSs) (good for 3 CPU's each) which operate on battery. The UPSs will help to protect the remaining motherboards, better than the voltage regulators we had installed one year earlier. This lesson has influenced our model and the set-up of our new ICT centres, as all new centres have UPSs installed in their initial set-up to protect the equipment.

State of the staff and management of the centre

As mentioned earlier, we noticed that there was a communication challenge between the different organisations and people who were involved in the maintenance and management of the centre:

- TESDA: responsible for the teaching and management of the centre
- Pangasinan Employment Service Office: responsible for the recruitment of the trainees
- Management information systems office: responsible for the technical maintenance of the equipment

Primarily, the monthly meeting schedule was not being met and in fact, it had been weeks since the committees last meeting. This seemed to have been caused by the time taken by their other obligations. Since the management of the centre had not become an official task of their job description, little time was given to the required responsibilities and strong ownership of the success of the centre was not shown. The implications of their lack of communication were, as mentioned earlier, damaged and un-repaired equipment. There had also been a discrepancy between our training objectives and the obtained results. In fact, only a very few trainees had come from the low-income bracket while more than 80% were government employees bettering their skills through the TESDA training. The number of trainees was also less than planned. TESDA Lingayen explained that their hosting of a local regional skills competition was the reason behind the low attendance of the course because they had suspended all training during the planning and hosting of this event. Since we considered these observations to have a rather important impact on the outcomes of the project, we wrote amendments to the Memorandum of Agreement that all of our parties had signed in August 2002. The highlights of these amendments are the development and implementation of a monitoring structure (details to follow). We also changed some of the management structure in order to give more responsibilities to the trainers of the centres who are interacting with the students and the equipment on a daily basis.

Conclusions

Following our evaluation of the Lingayen centre, we have outlined the following lessons:

- TESDA is a national body whose objective is to offer vocational training and its mandate is not directly related to helping the poor. Therefore, we should consider collaborating with another local organisation for the implementation of the three next centres.
- Since our organisational structure does not plan for an intern staying in the Philippines between the implementation phases, we need to find an organisation, which can ensure the carrying out of the monitoring structure.
- The Lingayen centre curriculum was designed for training adult students. This is a rather broad group, and we feel that in order to achieve greater impact, we will have to both refine the target group, and customize further the approach.

Primarily, a weak communication and management structure seemed to have been responsible for many of the challenges we identified when revisiting the Lingayen centre. This triggered the development of the monitoring tools and structure.

Monitoring Tools

We developed eight questionnaires to draw a complete picture the centre for monitoring. Refer to Appendix A (in Appendixes Report) for the Monitoring Tools. These tools allow for stronger communication and management for everyone involved. Every stakeholder answers a questionnaire that measures their degree of satisfaction of the activities in the centre. Specifically, the objectives to evaluate:

- The distribution and success rate of the students of the centre;
- The use of the centre;
- The student's satisfaction of the course;
- The centre performance and financial sustainability;
- The technical state of the equipment;
- The trainer's satisfaction of the course;

- The manager's satisfaction of the course;

The structure

Each questionnaire is answered by a specific stakeholder, at a specific time, related to the training schedule. These questionnaires are collected by the centre managers and subsequently, handed in to the officers of the national DSWD during their quarterly visits of the centres. This is also an opportunity for them to crosscheck the information, and to ensure continuity and growth within the centres. With a close communication between the Scala Program in Canada and the DSWD, we are fully aware of the activities of each centre.

For the specific case of the TESDA Lingayen centre, the monitoring will be done directly by the EWB volunteers. A visit of the centre was done in early June and late August 2003, and two more visits are planned for January and May 2004.

5. Output Five

A discussion paper on the role of Engineers Without Borders and of its other partners (linkages) for the Scala project in facilitating the setting up of low-cost ICT centres and ICT training programs

The past phases I and II of the Scala project have given us considerable insight into the role of western NGOs and specifically, the definite role of EWB in facilitating the setting up of low-cost ICT centres. However, we have not had the time to develop this discussion paper, due to the fact we lowered the priority of this research and focused on the actual set-up of the ICT centres, monitoring and impact tools, and development of a holistic programming approach (refer to outputs 1, 2, 3, and 4). We are in the process of completing this output and will follow-up upon its completion.

6. Output Six

The set of training programs in English for basic computer literacy
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We have successfully completed and improved upon the training programs throughout Phase II. Initially the Scala Program training curriculum can be viewed at:

<ftp://mail.ewb.ca>

Login: share

Password: share

Open folder: The Scala Program

Open folder: Education

Filename: Scala Program Training Curriculum

By December 1st, 2003 the set of training programs will be available online at www.ewb.ca/scala

7. Output Seven

A series of technical appendixes on computer/LAN set-up
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We achieved this objective only partially, since we decided to move our research focus away from the technical aspects. Initially the Scala Program technical guide can be viewed at:

<ftp://mail.ewb.ca>

Login: share

Password: share

Open folder: The Scala Program

Open folder: Technical Set-up

Filename: Scala Program Networking Manual

By December 1st, 2003 the series of technical appendixes will be available online at www.ewb.ca/scala

8. Output Eight

A plan for phase III of the Scala Program that enables underprivileged Filipinos to improve their livelihoods through the building of ICT centres and integrated ICT training

Executive Summary

The primary objective of Phase III of the Scala Program is to enable underprivileged Filipinos to improve their livelihoods through the building of ICT resource centres and integrated ICT training. In addition, the next phase will focus on continuing our experience and knowledge to further improve our model and applying this knowledge to finish our Phase II outputs.

In addition, to building 10 ICT resource centres in the Philippines, Scala's innovative approach for Phase III will focus on work with the Philippine Department of Social Welfare and Development to promote their capacity through knowledge and resource transfer. Phase III also employs a computer-literacy outreach program in Canada so that we can achieve long-term positive economic outcomes for disadvantaged youth in both the Philippines and within Canada.

Phase III Objectives

Phase III of the Scala Program (September 2003 to September 2004), promises to be one of EWB's most exciting international endeavours. With a great deal of experience and a successful model in place, the next phase of the program promises to reach even more communities. The specific objectives of the next phase to ensure our beneficiaries will acquire increased economic and social freedom are:

- **To set-up 10 ICT resource centres throughout the Philippines in order to reach more than 1,500 beneficiaries per year**

EWB plans to send over 150 computers and 10 volunteers to assist in the development of centres throughout the Philippines. These centres have the combined objective of providing computer-literacy training, while encouraging the out-of-school youth to return to formal education and building a structure to find or create employment.

- **To ensure our model is self-replicable through the active participation of the Filipino government**

EWB will work with the social workers of the national office of the DSWD to transfer the ability and expertise developed in the past 2 years, to initiate similar initiatives within the Philippines. Phase III will allow EWB to obtain the required experience to further define our development model, learning from another year of experience, while transferring this capacity to the DSWD.

- **Teaching in Canada**

In addition to helping poor communities overseas, we recognise our challenges closer to home. In order to provide those who are underprivileged in Canada with access to similar resources, EWB will provide computer-literacy education both here as well as abroad.

Additional Information

Attached for your review is information on the Scala Program, which we completed about Phase II and III for a (partial) funding request.

Please provide details on the background of the project and its justification/s.

Engineers Without Borders' Scala project is a successful and ongoing initiative initiated by Canadian Youth to help disadvantaged Filipino Youth benefit from ICT training and access to ICT resources. With our partner, the Philippine National Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), it will help over 3000 Filipino youth every year to acquire appropriate IT skills through a month long, integrated training program. These programs are delivered through a network of 19 ICT centres (~300 computers) that are set up by volunteers from EWB Canada in conjunction with local counterparts.

It is widely agreed that there is great potential for ICTs to help promote human development, especially in the Philippines. Their location, language, high-literacy and other advantages means that a strong IT sector is distinctly possible, and this can be a source of economic and human development benefits.

However, currently, access to ICT training and capacity is not equitably distributed among Filipinos. While better-off urban Filipinos have access to ICTs, peri-urban or regional/rural people risk being part of an internal digital divide.

Thus, the development goal of the Scala project is to provide individuals without traditional access to ICTs the opportunity to benefit from ICTs by acquiring technical knowledge and training in a manner that best meets their livelihoods needs.

The project begins with a sustainable livelihoods approach to understanding what sub-group of the community would most benefit from access to ICT training and resources (the targeted beneficiaries). It then analyses how this ICT training can be offered to them in an integrated manner to ensure that it has the maximum impact. And finally, it addresses the need to offer this training and set up the ICT centres in a sustainable manner.

Its major innovations revolve around

- i. Integrating IT training into the broader context of building life-skills
- ii. Finding a low cost, sustainable manner to set up the IT centres
- iii. Supporting a strong partner organisation and building, within them, the capacity to replicate the project in future phases.

The Scala project is an on-going four-phase project:

1. Phase 1: Proof-of-concept. EWB tests and launches one ICT centre in Lingayen, Philippines, 2002
2. Phase 2: Pilot. EWB applies lessons learned from first centre to launch three ICT centres in central Philippines, 2003
3. Phase 3: Roll out. EWB and the DSWD launch 15 ICT Centres across the Philippines, 2004
4. Phase 4: Capacity transfer. DSWD has the capacity, and EWB helps them gain access to the resources, to continue to launch a number of centres across the Philippines, 2005 – ongoing
5. The first two phases have been successfully completed (45 computers installed in 4 centres, benefiting 500 people per year); the third phase (250 computers, 2500 people per year) is underway and will be completed in 2004).

Project Goals and Objectives (What specific outcomes should be realized?)

The goals of the Scala project can be divided into two different categories – first with regard to the beneficiaries, and second, with regard to building capacity within our partner organisation.

I. Beneficiaries

The target group for Engineers Without Borders' Scala project are unemployed, at-risk, or out-of-school youth. This group has been identified as being particularly vulnerable to shocks and in need of support in their struggle to improve their lives

Before talking about the project objectives relating to the beneficiaries, we would like to share how Engineers Without Borders designs projects to address three different levels of goals: Outputs (objectives), Outcomes, and Impacts. In this terminology, a project's outputs will impact people and, it is desired, achieve the desired outcomes. And the outcomes will, in the existing outside environment, it is desired, lead to impact.

For example, we can set-up a sustainable centre with a well-designed training program (output). The desired outcome is that the beneficiaries will improve their job training skills and become more employable and the impact is that they actually get a job and improve their livelihoods. Obviously, any particular project has more control over outputs than over outcomes, and certainly than over impact. Nonetheless, a well-designed project's outputs can lead, with quite a high degree of certainty, to impact.

Impact

The impact of the project will be felt when the youth get a job or otherwise use their new skills and livelihood assets to reduce their vulnerability and improve their quality of life. This will have a positive effect on their community and family.

Outcomes

The outcomes of the project are designed to maximise the ability to have impact in the current environment that the youth face. In particular it is to provide the youth with:

- a marketable skill: ICT literacy
- education on how to market these skills
- a structure to help them market these skills
- life skills to help them in managing their everyday life
- an environment which encourage return to formal education
- linkages to other public services and resources
- an environment which is prone to building new positive relationships

II. Partner

There are three desired outcomes with regard to our work with our partner.

1. Increased communication capacity: by providing the staff of DSWD across the Philippines with ICT equipment and training, we provide tools for the National and Local offices of the DSWD to communicate efficiently. This will allow for a closer monitoring of multiple DSWD programs as well as an increased capacity for training to be delivered from the national office to local offices.
2. A new model to target the OSY: with our experience setting-up 15 new ICT resource centres in 15 local DSWD offices, we will be able to offer our partner and the

development community a model to improve the Out-of-school-Youth's well-being and to widespread ICT access.

3. Self-replicability of the program: by encouraging the DSWD National staff to take an active part in the implementation of several ICT resource centres, we hope to create ability and incentive to replicate the program with limited outside resources.

III. Overall Project Outputs or objectives

Based on the above analysis of the program beneficiaries and the partner organisation, we have three objectives:

- a. To set-up 19 ICT resource centres throughout the Philippines in order to reach 3000 beneficiaries / year – the out of school, at risk, or unemployed youth: Using the experience and logistical model developed during the past 2 years, EWB will send 300 computers and 20 volunteers to help set-up centres all over the Philippines. These centres will have the combined objective of encouraging the out-of-school youth to return to formal education and will provide them with a structure to find or create employment. (4 of the centres, with 55 computers, and for 500 beneficiaries a year, have been completed)
- b. To increase the participation of the DSWD in order to initiate self-replicability: We will have some of these centres set-up primarily by social workers of the national office of DSWD with advising from EWB in order to share the expertise developed in the past 2 years. We wish to stimulate the initiative of setting-up similar ICT resource centres within the Philippines.
- c. To adapt the program model in order to make it more efficient and more impactful: The program model (training offered, target audience, length of training, financial sustainability through fees etc.,) differs greatly from one location to another.
- d. EWB will continue to study the different variables involved in perfecting the program model. It will include targeting locations from urban to semi-urban to rural settings. We will also vary the length and content of the training to see which fits best the learning capacity of our beneficiaries and the local needs in terms of employment and return to formal education, as well as ensuring that the centres are financially and otherwise sustainable.

What are the project's best practice methods in terms of vision, strategy and methodology for implementation and success?

The Scala projects exhibits three principles that make it best practice.

First, the ICT component is integrated into an integrated, sustainable livelihoods approach. The programming – the participant selection, training and support – is designed to maximize outcomes and impact. The identified target audience is selected to ensure that they can benefit from ICT training. They also receive much more than ICT training – they get support in life-skills, job-searching, and other, as necessary, social services.

Second, the model is sustainable: To be sustainable, EWB's ICT training and resource centres exhibit four characteristics:

- A low initial cost is borne by the centre, so as to not force the centre to charge large fees to recoup the capital investment.
- Suitable programming that offers training that directly benefits the targeted audience.
- Innovative cost-recovery models, to ensure that the centre will be financially sustainable. Where necessary, EWB's centres use differential course fees to ensure that people have affordable access, but also that the centre has the funding to operate.
- Local support. It is important to have local support in place to ensure that maintenance, repair etc. of the hardware and software can be undertaken locally. EWB ensures this by making sure that the local staff are integrated into the whole process and drive much of it with EWB playing a supporting role.

Third, EWB leverages volunteer and donated resources to ensure that there is a low cost to setting up the centres and transferring the skills. EWB is able to leverage the volunteer time of our members (all participants, except the phase III project co-ordinator, are volunteers. As well, we get the equipment donated from engineering and other firms. These in-kind donations finance roughly 70% of the project's costs.

How does the project address the beneficiaries' developmental need using ICT?

EWB has conducted, in conjunction with the DSWD, in-depth research to determine which sub-group within the Philippine communities would most benefit from the project, and what their needs are. The conclusions of the research are that the optimum target beneficiaries are the Out-of-School youth (OSY), Persons with Disabilities (PWD) and Youth With Special Needs (YSN) [youth offenders, street kids, youth victim of abuse, youth victim of armed conflict]. A World Bank National Survey, as well as the National Youth Commission of the Philippines have demonstrated the following needs from these youth:

- § A desire but fear to return to formal education;
- § A lack in the existing social programs to provide informal education, but mostly related employment services;
- § A lack in the linkages between the different agencies and their services;
- § A lack of resources in the public education system to cater for special needs; and
- § A national employment context where stable (non contractual, non seasonal) jobs are scarce.

It is in light of those realities that EWB has created our ICT training resource centre model to help empower the youth of communities across the Philippines. This centre presents the following characteristics/offers the following services:

- § Low cost service and flexible schedule which caters to the youth's reality;

The fees are covered through an existing retraining scheme, allowing the program to target the most needy. As well, through meetings with the youth and their social workers, we adapt the schedule of the training to the local reality. Because of personal, family, or geographic limitations, some will prefer full time, part time, or evening schedules

- § Basic ICT training, customised to the needs of the community;

We have created a modular self-taught training program in order to cater to major differences in the youth's learning capabilities and local ICT market needs. The content and length of the centres training curriculum will be determined by a community meeting and by the specifics of the local target group. Our program can teach a variety of subjects, which include: basic computer operations, advanced computer operations, hardware technician, Internet browsing, web page design and database management.

§ Life skills training and other social services to ease the youth into formal education or employment;

Most of our project's beneficiaries lack social skills and have little schooling. To address this, we have incorporated life skills training into the ICT training curriculum. Such life skills include: personal rights, employee rights, nutrition and health, financial management, behaviour management, and others. Through our partnership with the DSWD, we ensure that the youth also have access to special services such as counselling, mentoring, tutoring and involvement of the family.

§ Networking and resources as local public agencies promote their services to the youth through the centre;

During the implementation of the centre, we create linkages between the local DSWD office and other local public agencies. Such agencies include the Department of Labour and Employment, the Department of Education, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, the National Youth Commission and the Civil Services Office. All of these agencies promote their services to the graduates through meetings with the youth and billboards placed in the centre.

§ Job-placement services as the youth who complete the ICT training are guided in their return to formal education, job searching and on-the-job training or self-employment.

Through some of the agencies mentioned above, and through the learning experience of the ICT training centre, we accompany and monitor the progress of the graduates upon completion of the ICT training. Centres will offer different programs such as informal education, other vocational training, on-the-job training or youth internships, and job placements. Some centres also offer a self-employment services in which graduates can use the ICT training equipment to work on their first contracts as new self-employed data encoders or website builders.

How sustainable is the project in the short and long term? Outline the potential and future development of the project?

We feel that the Scala project is very sustainable and, as mentioned, future phases of the project are underway.

We look at sustainability along three dimensions:

1. Initial ICT centre set-up;
2. Ongoing computer maintenance;
3. Ongoing program sustainability.

Initial Centre Set-up

The ICT centre set leads to increased sustainability due to the low-cost, high-skill-transfer model that EWB adopts. Many of the initial costs of the centre are absorbed by EWB – the cost of the computers, the hardware, the software etc. Thus, the centres do not need to find the initial capital that is their largest hurdle. Furthermore, these costs are kept low for EWB by leveraging donations from EWB's member base in Canada – the only incurred costs are shipping.

Second, EWB volunteers (engineering students in their last year) travel to the Philippines to work with each centre to ensure skill transfer to the local workers. This occurs both at the level of the trainers and of the technicians. Because the EWB volunteers can spend two months in each centre, and because they are well trained by EWB Canada in participatory development and participatory teaching methods, as well as human development, sustainable livelihoods and appropriate technology, there is a more effective skill transfer.

On-going computer maintenance.

To ensure that the computer can be kept running, EWB takes a two pronged approach. First, during the centre set up an extensive troubleshooting program is run to help the technicians learn to fix common problems. Second, EWB and the centre set up a local committee is set up to “ensure optimum ongoing operation of all the computers in the facility.” This could, for example (as in Phase 1) include a representative from the provincial Management Information Systems Office (MISO), the Public Employment Services Office (PESO), and a local computer-related business. This committee has both the political/business strength and computer knowledge to ensure that the computers can be fixed.

On going program sustainability.

A functioning IT centre still needs trainers to offer the appropriate services – and these trainers need to get paid. To ensure that the centres are financially viable one of two options is selected.

First, if the local branch of the DSWD is able to incorporate the training within their existing budgets then that is the optimum outcome.

Second, if there are insufficient DSWD funds that an innovative differential fee system can be introduced (one of four centres so far). The on-going costs are recouped through a differential fee structure based on the student’s ability to pay. This was tested by having a TESDA officials interview prospective applicants for the programs; those deemed less-able to pay were charged »\$2 (USD), individuals with reasonable income »\$10 (USD), and businesses »\$30 (USD)/employee to undergo the complete training program. Other fees for using the computers in the evening (as an internet café) are also collected. This ensures that the centre covers costs, and yet is still accessible. Such a compromise balances the principles of affordability and accessibility, which would suggest a lower program cost, and sustainability, which requires a certain amount of income for day-to-day operations.

Based on these three principles, we feel that the centre is very sustainable. In addition, we have the project monitoring which will identify if a centre begins to have difficulties.