

Learning without frontiers

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Education has been described by Nelson Mandela as 'the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world'. Even distance education also can provide a set of strategies to overcome separation between educators and learners to improve living standards and reducing poverty. ICT can contribute a lot to achieving universal education worldwide, through delivery of education and training of teachers, and offering improved conditions for lifelong learning, encompassing people who are outside the formal education process, and improving professional skills. Young people have enough potential to play remarkable role in the entire process.

HIV/AIDS and ICT

The use of ICT complements other Information Education and Communications (IEC) campaigns designed to reach the youth. Some of the technology resources are e-mail, CD-ROMs, listserves and the World Wide Web. That can link HIV/AIDS educators and activists around the world. It also holds great promise to reach youth, who typically embrace the use of the technology for entertainment, learning and communication when given access to these resources. Everyone should have the necessary skills to benefit fully from the Information Society. Therefore, capacity-building and ICT literacy are essential.

According to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), more than 20 years after the first diagnosis of AIDS in 1981, 20 million people passed away due to AIDS and nearly 38 million people (34.6-42.3 million) are living with the AIDS. The age of 70% of the growing number of people with AIDS fluctuates between 20 and 39 years which indicates that they were infected in the adolescence.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) observes the rapid progress in information and communications technologies (ICTs) as offering unprecedented opportunities to transform the exchange and delivery of health information, education and services all over the world.

The role of teacher is essential in the societies which are changing quickly toward knowledge societies; the teacher is the main actor, the main agent of the evolution of education. Access for all young people, community technology programmes, libraries and schools have made a crucial difference in the early years of ICT's evolution by offering tools and training to those who are low-income, disabled, rural, and other groups who otherwise didn't have



<http://www.tribuneindia.com/2003/20031202/w2.jpg>

access to ICT tools and facilities. The specific objectives of using ICT as a tool for generating awareness about HIV/AIDS among the youth are (1) to promote campaign and education on AIDS, (2) to promote the use of the technology among young people, as interchange form, breaking with the existing prejudices around these methods; (3) to increase participation of youth and youth-led organisations in ITU's regional and global activities; (4) to increase the possibilities of the young people to like agents of the development in the communities.

Table 1: The result of study on 24 women and 24 men:

Questions	Number	Percentage
Use of Internet once to week	14/48	29,2%
Two to three times to week	16/48	33,3%
Using Internet for a year	25/48	52.1%
Using Internet in publics cabins	43/48	89.6%
Use of chat and email	40/48	81.3%
Listen Music and download programs	11/48	22.9%,
Download educative material	14/48	29.2%,
Information business	11/48	22.9%
Using internet when have problems in house	30/47	62.5%
Using internet by have friends	19/46	39.6%

Youth in ICT world

According to the study of Support of June 2002, 89% of the users of Internet in Lima – Perú use public cabins. Two cultural factors, language and education matter a lot in ICT application by young generation. Many of the young people mention that they do not know how to use the web page with information in AIDS. The use of education technology to make a difference is not just providing students with access to ICT, but also providing integrity properly in the classroom by using the appropriate application at different grades, training teachers into teaching traditional academics subjects. If technology programmes are not endowed with these characteristics, education technology can have even negative impact on education outcomes. The course Youth and ICT was worked in 2005 with 48 youth between 12-20 years age and the results were as follows:

Centres (publics cabins or telecentres) for out of school boys and girls are providing ICT vocational training and entrepreneurship programmes, basic skills, information resources on knowledge and opportunities, communication skills.

Going ahead with youth power

It has been felt that Internet and other ICT resources may play a contributing role in linking the youth, the future leaders and prompting new youth activism. Therefore the urgent needs of today are as follows:

- Building human capacity at government sectors, private sectors, civil societies and within NGOs;
- Promoting youth ICT entrepreneurship and training programmes, implementing innovative programmes designed to unleash the potential of young people;
- Launching youth exchange programmes that will cut across geographical regions and will provide opportunities for knowledge sharing and research;
- Offering scholarships given at all levels to youth that are promising and showing interest in ICT for development;
- Equipping parents and teachers to encourage children's appropriate use of technology and use ICT themselves to communicate with each other, government, doctors, etc;
- Helping youth in the rural communities to participate in decision making, exchange ideas with their digital peers and improve the quality of life;

- Participating in teaching activities to teach and sensitise the community about ICT and HIV/AIDS issues, enhancing research skills, helping the integration of HIV/AIDS education



into school curricula and helping to emphasize the role of the teacher as a facilitator;

- Taking initiatives for greater participation of young people in the international coordination;
- Use of telemedicine - on-line counseling for schools and communities.

ICT can help

ICT has the potential for 'leapfrogging' in developing countries to accelerate the development of the young as well as of adult generations, to empower them to access and to use information, which was for long a barrier, to learn faster and eventually to stimulate local entrepreneurship for the benefit of their local communities.

Hopefully, early linkages between the impact of investing in the livelihood development of young people through empowerment and education can be demonstrated, thus lowering the HIV/AIDS infection rate among young people through economic empowerment of the youth. In order to decrease their risk of HIV infection today, it is essential that youth receive education about HIV, obtain condoms and clean needles when needed, and have access to health and rehabilitative services. ■

The complete article with references can be read at www.i4d.csdm.s.in