Millennium Project Futurist Recommends New Ideas at the 16th Annual InfoPoverty Conference at the UN

The UN hosted the 16th annual Infopoverty Conference in New York March 22-23rd. The Millennium Project, led by Jerome Glenn, was honored to be a speaker at this event, with the subject being: "Who drives the digital revolution? Development through Innovation."

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Tele-Nations, Self-Employment via the Internet, Collective Intelligence, and TransInstituions were some of the ideas Jerome Glenn, Executive Director of The Millennium Project shared at the meeting to explore how Information Technology can improve the lives of people in poorer nations.

Tele-Nations can improve lives because it connects people overseas with development processes back home. Assisting one's hometown, local school, or hospital, representing products, and reviewing business plans would all become valuable benefits of tele-nations. Affluent countries would be able to donate their time as tele-nationals, and the process would be streamlined through the tele-nation website, which matches development needs with nationals overseas.

There is enormous potential for individuals and groups to create self-employment via the Internet in poorer regions by finding markets among the 2 billion Internet users from tele-tourism, tele-music, and tele-cultural experiences. Today an African village Witch Doctor can go with his English speaker nephew to a cyber café, advertise consultations via a website, and have online payments go to and share with the cyber café. How many of the 2 billion Internet users would be interested? People can seek markets instead of looking for non-existent jobs.

Collective Intelligence is expected to be the next big thing; it is an emergent property from synergies among information, software, and humans that that produces better decisions than any one of these three elements acting alone. Poorer countries can get in on the ground floor to create national collective intelligence systems publically accessible to speed and improve development.

Because too many institutions are inefficient, slow, and ill informed, new kinds of institutions are needed to address acceleration of change and complexity. Governments, corporations, NGOs, universities, and intergovernmental bodies cannot address today's challenges acting alone. Glenn argues that we need to create a new intuitional category called "TransInstitutions," organizations composed self-selected individuals and institutions from all the above institutional categories. Although The Millennium Project is a non-profit organization, it acts like a TransInstitution. The members of its Board of Directors, researchers, the value of its work and income comes from governments, universities, corporations, NGOs, and international organizations, but not from a majority of anyone category.

About The UN Infopoverty Conference

The Infopoverty World Conference has become an event of critical importance held annually at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The event brings together expert leaders in their fields of analysis, strategic evaluation and applied practice, aiming to contribute towards eradicating poverty with innovative approaches to Information and Communication Technologies. According to the UN, "The Infopoverty World Conference is the hub of a conception of digital that goes beyond gadgets and social networks to the application of digital tools and facilities to the needs of the poor through the wise use of low cost and smart technologies."

About The Millennium Project

The Millennium Project was established in 1996 as the first globalized think tank. It conducts independent futures research via its 41 Nodes around the world that connect global and local perspectives. It is supported by UN organizations, multinational corporations, universities, foundations and the governments of Azerbaijan, Kuwait, South Korea, and the United States. The Millennium Project is global information utility for decision-makers facing some of the biggest challenges in human history: climate change, water and energy amongst others, based on a 15-year track record of measuring and reporting on the progress and regress of these issues. It is the only global futures resource produced by a global system. Recently, The Millennium was honored to be a 2012 ComputerWorld Honors Laureate based on the criteria of evaluating the humanitarian benefits and measurable results of applying technology to meet a specific social need.

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Attachments

Power Point of Presentation

Executive Summary