

GLOBAL FORUM ON YOUTH AND ICT FOR DEVELOPMENT

“Youth and ICT as Agents for Change”

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DAW Roundtable: “ICT as an Instrument for the Empowerment of
Young Women and Girls”

Why and How to Empower Young Women in /via ICT?

Itir Akdogan

PhD Candidate @ University of Helsinki

itir.akdogan@helsinki.fi

Welcome everybody,

I will tell you today why we should be empowering young women and girls in and via ICT and how to do that in a little timeframe I have.

ICT

Information and Communication Technologies help us access knowledge and (global) networks easier than ever before. The use of ICT also changes the way we communicate and interact with other citizens, agenda-setters, opinion leaders, and elected representatives. Not only it is now quicker to communicate with these groups but it is possible to interact with them as the new media and new governance with the ICT have brought a new way of communicating and working.

Access to knowledge, networking and (better) communication/interaction bring awareness of issues and what is going on around the community, city, country, region and the globe. This brings more knowledge that brings more skills that brings better chance for employment that brings empowerment that brings wealth...

However there is a gender divide where women are disadvantaged in accessing hardware and gaining skills to use the ICT in a meaningful way. So we have to work to include them equally in the ICT driven world.

e-citizen

This is the case today. But we should be working for the future. I'd like to remind you of a crucial trend. More and more people are becoming e-citizens. What does that mean? They become e-citizens by using ICT in their communication with other citizens and representatives and in fulfilling their rights and duties with e-government and e-democracy models. This is a very crucial point and the very important reason why we should be empowering young women. They should be able to have (the same) access, and skills to use ICT as equal citizens of the new society. Otherwise we risk to have societies without female citizens!

This is my first highlight for the panel. E-citizenship urges equal access, skills and empowerment to ICT for men and women as democracy is now online.

My second highlight is that we could do long talking but we should rather work on that. So I am now gonna present you some project examples from Turkey hoping that they might inspire you to replicate them in your own communities. These are mostly projects implemented by the leading youth NGO in Turkey, Youth Association for Habitat where I have volunteered and worked in several projects before I joined academia.

Project 1: Empowerment of Youth for e-Governance in Turkey

Partners

Youth Association for Habitat

UNDP

The project will strengthen the ICT use capacities of local youth platforms that are established through Turkey's Local Agenda 21 Program. The project will train local youth platforms to become active users of the existing Local Agenda 21 e-Governance

Web Portal and train a selected group of young people to become employable in the IT sector.

Within the framework of this Project, basic computer trainings have been provided for 2500 young people in a period of 1.5 years

Second phase since March 1st, 2006: ICT training for 100.000 socially disadvantaged youth with 200 volunteer trainers within 3 years. It is currently implemented in 43 cities throughout the country. Training of young women is emphasised

Project 2: Refurbishment and distribution of used PC's for youth - informatics train

Partners

Ayhan Sahenk Foundation,

Microsoft,

Ministry of Education,

State Railways

Youth Association for Habitat

The idea is to refurbish used PCs and to distribute them to the schools, youth NGOs and local youth councils all around in Turkey. 6000 PCs have been refurbished and distributed in May 2006. Empowerment of Youth for e-Governance in Turkey Project provided voluntary Office trainings for 817 young people since June 2006

Project 3: Young Action in Information

Partners

Cisco System,

Turkish Informatics Foundation,

UNDP

Istanbul Technical University

Youth Association for Habitat

The aim is to make youth part of knowledge economy and information society in Turkey by empowering and give them skills for their future careers in ICT sector.

It is based on volunteerism. The beneficiaries are 16-26 years old youth with basic english language knowlegde. Priority is given to socio-economically disadvantaged and young girls. 10 trainers from around the country have been trained in informatics and Internet networks technologies. They now train 20 youth each back in their home town.

Project 4: Bridging the digital divide: Empowering youth for Turkey's e-transformation

Partners

Youth Association for Habitat

UNDP

Turkey Vodafone Foundation

This peojct have supported Microsoft's "Turkey's developing with ICT" vision.

1.000.000 young people from 81 cities will be trained online for 30 months (2007 – 2009) and will be awarded with ECDL (European Computer Driving Licence) Girls and other disadvantaged youth is given priority

Finally a European level academic project.

Project 5: CIVIC-WEB- Youth, Internet and civic participation

Partners

Coordinator: University of London

Media and Communication Studies - Lund University / Sweden

Amsterdam School of Communication Studies / The Netherlands

Center of Media and Communication Studies – Budapest Central

European University / Hungary

Faculty of Communication - Universidad Autonoma de Barcelona

/ Spain

Center for Social Communication Studies - University of Ljubljana
/ Slovenia
Istanbul Bilgi University / Turkey

Funded under EU's 6 FP 2nd area "citizens and governance". CIVICWEB focuses on civic websites currently emerging on the internet, which are targeted at young people (aged 15-25). It considers the role such sites play in constructing youth identities in relation to civic participation, paying particular attention to intergenerational relations, culture, gender and nationality (including European identities).

The research focuses on three key dimensions of this phenomenon:

1. production 2. nature and characteristics 3. uses and interpretations

among sub objectives are

- to analyse the content, structure and presentation of civic sites, and the extent to which they invite active participation among their users
- to explore the variety of uses to which young people put civic websites, and the meanings such sites hold for them
- to investigate the different modes of participation and activity such sites make possible, or indeed prevent
- to assess the relationship between young people's uses of civic websites and their 'offline' civic participation
- to analyse the diverse forms such initiatives take in relation to the broader social, cultural and political differences between European member states
- to address their implications for practitioners and policy-makers, nationally and Europe-wide.

Thank you!