

Using web 2.0 to build global youth partnerships for Development

29 November 2007, 9 am, United Nations in Nairobi
Approximately 40 participants

Youthink! Presentation- Christine Sedky, Worldbank

Christine Sedky introduced the Worldbank's Youthink! Website aimed at the global youth population.

Inspired by the Washington Post's Young Post supplementary, a small group of workers at the Worldbank began a website aimed at children which addressed development issues- Kids Dev News. However, it was soon realized that the target age group should be moved up to the high school and university age group.

Youthink! began as very small-scale operation with little championing by the higher decision-makers in the Worldbank and with small-scale funding from the President's contingency fund. It was only after the results achieved by Youthink! that funding was increased for the project.

The Goals of Youthink! were clear from the beginning:

- to inform young people on development topics
- to provide material for teachers
- to engage young people on these topics

The strategy of Youthink! was to discuss development issues rather than just explain the Worldbank's role in development. As Youthink! progressed it affected outreach mechanisms and tools working with its country offices, engaging in consultations with other parties and constantly improving and updating itself so as to keep in-line with recent technological innovations. Most recently it has introduced a blog on the site so as to make it more interactive and create a 2.0 environment.

Youthink! also uses competitions such as the Big Splash photo contest to engage young people and share their experiences with others who visit the site.

Youthink! has been gradually translated into other languages so as to ensure that it is as current and relevant for its other language audiences as it is for its English audience.

To date Youthink! records over 30, 000 visits a month and received a Webby Award in the Activism category for the year 2006. Plans for the future include the expansion of its language base and more multimedia engagement through social networking sites.

An important lesson for Youthink! is the need to be sustainable and different from the thousands of other Worldbank sites.

One World Youth Project presentation- Abdulnuur and Ashima Bhardwaj

The One World Youth Project is a non-profit organization aimed at bringing schools from both developed and the developing world together. The main way of achieving this target is linking up two sister-schools from different parts of the world. These schools then work together on one of the eight Millennium Development Goal's for the duration of the academic year- sharing ideas and experiences and cultural exchange and studying the real life story of a person affected by the issue addressed by the MDG. Communication between these schools is done via the internet, letters and cultural exchange boxes.

For those children and youth who do not attend school the One World Youth Project tries to get them involved in some of their other activities such as their MDG awareness days. While originally there had been hope of having an annual forum for all youth involved in the project this was not feasible and instead the One World Youth Project has organized regional summits where youth can get together and discuss ideas as well as support a Goal in the host country.

A problem faced by the One World Youth Project is their limited ability to involve all the schools interested in participating in the project with the result being that they had to reject interested schools. The problem of quick communication and correspondence is another issue especially with schools located outside of large metropolis where access to internet is difficult.