

Conclusions

'I have always been convinced of the fact that erasing poverty from the Earth is more a matter of will-power rather than of money. Nowadays we do not pay enough attention to this problem yet, maybe because we are not directly involved by it; we keep the problem distant by saying that if the poor worked harder, they would not be poor. When we want to help the poor, we give alms to them. But the only effect of charity is to perpetuate problems, while depriving the poor of the spirit of initiative. We are the only ones to take advantage of this situation: after giving our money to them, we feel relieved and think we have done our duty. If we wanted to be fair, we all should be at the same level, so that everyone is provided with the same opportunities in a spirit of equity and equality.' [Yunu 97].

If the Internet, and all the information and the knowledge, is available to everybody, even for the poorest and the most illiterate, this gap between the North and the South could decrease at any moment and at a relatively low cost. The communication among the people would be as easy and direct as possible. The schools and the universities would become centres for the diffusion of the information, so that everyone would have the opportunity to have information about any subject and in the most proper language.

We would not be surprised, then, to discover that the most brilliant student of Harvard University, or of Università Cattolica of Piacenza or of any other university lives in a rural village in a remote area of the planet. Health organisations would exchange information and they will collaborate to fight infectious, sporadic or epidemic diseases, such as the HIV virus, Ebola, cancer, but also malnutrition or dysentery, which all hit the peoples in distant places of the globe because of lack of knowledge.

The economy of these countries would require some advantages, as the globalisation of the markets would enable the free circulation of goods, capital and people. Through the support of the Internet many companies, even multinationals or joint ventures, would be able to establish their offices in rural areas, providing the young people living in the villages with the opportunity of putting their knowledge at the disposal of companies working on an international scale. Thanks to the emergence of eCommerce: larger markets would open for the local enterprises and they

would have the opportunity to express their abilities and to develop their potentialities without being isolated in small markets.

In this cyberspace context the Developing Countries, combination of the recent inventions in the context national and cultural values, will have easy access to information and knowledge, which are useful for the development of a country and to erase the gap between the rich peoples and the poor. By saying this we do not mean that the international organisations or the Governments of the industrialised countries must abandon all the other initiatives aimed at removing poverty in the world; on the contrary the countries must co-operate in order to arrive at practical solutions to the problem situation. The Net helps the process of globalisation, but what frightens the public authorities is the fact it escapes any kind of control. The states and the powerful businessmen cannot control the flux of on-line information, irrespective of the nature of the data.

The road that has to be followed is the co-operation between the world of the telecommunication infrastructures and the world of the regulations, in order to define a platform enabling everyone to have access to, and to use contents in a flexible and transparent way, without violating anyone's human rights. More specifically, *'self-regulation, not censorship of the Net'* will have to be reached. Internet is just a medium enabling people to free their own dreams, to communicate with the rest of the world by being no more isolated; but it also helps the poorest and the most unfortunate give dignity, respect and a meaning to their own lives.

'In the future world the national identities, the cultures and the traditions must keep on having their own roles: all the religious, political and cultural, regional or local, communities must be able to express themselves in a free way, respecting other people and with no ambitious aims.' [Yunu 97]. We agree with Professor Muhammad Yunus's statement and, like him, *'we think that in a civil and respectable society there is no room for poverty.'* This is not a utopia and we hope that it will soon turn into reality through the help of these new technologies, the new information and communications technology (ICTs) in all its manifestation.