

PRESS RELEASE

Bridging the Digital Divide, or: How a Beehive fights Poverty

Diplomatic Event Hosted by the Embassy of Austria's Office of Science & Technology and One Economy Corporation

January 24th, 2007

WASHINGTON--The Austrian Embassy's Office of Science & Technology (OST) co-hosted a luncheon where diplomats from 27 nations came to hear how one organization works to bridge the digital divide in the United States and around the world.

The lunch celebrated the efforts of the co-host for the event, One Economy Corporation, a national, non-profit organization that aids low-income households in gaining access to information through an online, multilingual content website called the Beehive (www.thebeehive.org).

To guarantee free and efficient access, One Economy uses pre-existing facilities such as schools, community centers, clinics, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and ultimately, homes as launching pads for technological access.

Alec Ross, the co-founder and senior vice president of One Economy Corporation states that the issue with bridging the digital divide is affordability.

"Although price points [for technology] have been going down, they still remain relatively high," said Ross. "People don't understand the importance of technology and the Internet as it relates to upward economic mobility."

Today, technology and acquiring technological skills are more important than it has ever been before. In a world where accessing technology is a daily task, the absence of technology in the home, or in the community, can mean social deprivation and financial decline. However, providing affordable access can significantly bridge the digital gap.

Moustafa Mourad, President of One Global Economy, a support non-profit organization that acts as the 'international arm' for One Economy Corporation, focuses on providing technology not just for the sake of providing it, but as a tool to end poverty.

"We actually never talk about the digital divide. It is not in the vocabulary of One Economy and [One] Global Economy. We are first and foremost concerned with poverty alleviation [and the use of] technology and interconnectivity as a means to an end," said Mourad. "We don't care how technology gets there - as long as it gets there."

While most of One Economy's work is based in the United States, great strides have been made in their global outreach. Ross's and Mourad's presentations included their work for launches of the Durban, South Africa and Jordanian Beehives. With the help of One Economy and One Global Economy, more communities will gain access to education, health employment and all other information that concerns them the most, in their own language.