History of the Infopoverty Institute

Beginning in 2002 The Infopoverty Institute at the University of Oklahoma has closely collaborated with OCCAM for the organization of the annual Infopoverty World Conferences as well as for the development of relevant actions. The University of Oklahoma has agreed to continue its cooperation, coordination and collaboration with OCCAM overall.

OCCAM (Observatory for Cultural and Audiovisual Communication) was created by UNESCO in 1996 as a project which arises from the notion of the great development registered over the last ten years in communication technologies: communication is a fundamental factor for social, economic and cultural development.

Open communication can be one of the strongest means to fight poverty, in rural areas as well as in less developed countries, and a guarantee of the respect of human rights and the affirmation of democratic values within society. In 2003 OCCAM was formally associated to the Department of Public Information of the United Nations. Its President is Mr. Pierpaolo Saporito, former CICT-UNESCO chairman, its Vice President is Mr. Gerardo Zepeda Bermudez, former Minister of Science and Technology of Honduras.

OCCAM, headquartered in Italy, sent a delegation to the World Summit on the Information Society, sponsored by the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland in December 2003. The world assembly adopted a resolution to connect the world’s villages to the Internet by the year 2015. OCCAM is a charter office within the United Nations charged with addressing information poverty throughout the world. The annual Infopoverty World Conference brings scholars, government officials, program staff and vendors together to develop plans and strategies to address this goal of worldwide connectivity.

The Infopoverty Institute is heavily involved in the dialogue among these groups. Each group must continue to reach out to the broader public - students, civic leaders, families, educators and local government officials - to heighten the awareness of the need for connectivity and to increase the number of people working toward universal connectivity.

The next step in connectivity is to deliver content. That is, to deliver messages that will lead and assist citizens with the lowest income to improve their living conditions. Within the overall goal and commitment to connectivity, the Infopoverty Institute intends to focus attention on the importance of developing and utilizing information and content suitable for access by Internet connection to empower local countries and regions to impact sustainable development in the areas of health, education, water safety, economy, and all quality of life areas. Such a message coordinated with other applied content areas must reach the world.

OCCAM constantly updates and improves the model of integrated technologies communities on the basis of lessons learned, spreading the results of its actions and of the best practices realized. More information on the conferences and the history of OCCAM may be viewed at www.infopoverty.net.