



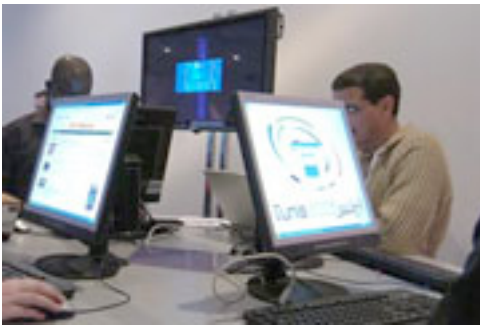
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UN announces launch of world's first tuition-free, online university



19 May 2009 – A leading arm of the United Nations working to spread the benefits of information technology today announced the launch of the first ever tuition-free online university. As part of this year's focus on education, the UN Global Alliance for Information and Communication Technology and Development ([GAID](#)) presented the newly formed University of the People, a non-profit institution offering higher education to the masses.

"This year the Global Alliance has focused its attention on education [and] how ICT can advance education goals around the world," Serge Kapto from GAID told a press conference at UN Headquarters in New York.

For hundreds of millions of people around the world higher education is no more than a dream, Shai Reshef, the founder of the University of the People, told reporters. They are constrained by finances, the lack of institutions in their region, or they are not able to leave home to study at a university for personal reasons.

Mr. Reshef said that this University opened the gate to these people to continue their studies from home and at minimal cost by using open-source technology, open course materials, e-learning methods and peer-to-peer teaching.

Admission opened just over two weeks ago and without any promotion some 200 students from 52 countries have already registered, with a high school diploma and a sufficient level of English as entry requirements.

Students will be placed in classes of 20, after which they can log on to a weekly lecture, discuss its themes with their peers and take a test all online. There are voluntary professors, post-graduate students and students in other classes who can also offer advice and consultation.

The only charge to students is a \$15 to \$50 admission fee, depending on their country of origin, and a processing fee for every test ranging from \$10 to \$100. For the University to sustain its operation, it needs 15,000 students and \$6 million, of which Mr. Reshef has donated \$1 million of his own money.

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