The Digital Divide: An Inhibitor to Integral Human Development
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Abstract

This essay examines the digital divide through the lens of integral human development and identifies strategies for erasing or, at best, mitigating, the chasm. It proceeds in four parts. First, I will introduce the digital divide, identifying critical demographic and sociological data, to demonstrate how more than half of the world is digitally handicapped. Second, I will offer a critical assessment of this inequality from the perspective of integral human development. Next, I will propose the virtue of solidarity as a concrete way to motivate the global community to resolve the digital divide and, in turn, bring access and distribution of information technology in line with the demands of solidarity. Finally, I will demonstrate solidarity in action for integral human development through various in-place practices and long-term proposals for rectifying the technological gap.

Since its introduction into the public square thirty years ago, access to the World Wide Web (Web) through the Internet has transformed social communication, commerce, and politics in revolutionary ways. This explosive growth of information communication technology (ICT) is often celebrated as a democratic and participatory medium where everyone is ‘LinkedIn’ on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and other social media platforms. This popular sentiment, however, fails to acknowledge that the transformative impacts of communications technology have been limited in its reach. Such a claim of universal unfettered connectedness is based on an uninformed understanding or a lack of exposure to scientific data. A sizeable portion of the global village remains disconnected entirely from accessing the WEB and enjoying its “significant positive impacts.” While the “new velocity” of communications technology has enhanced the quality of social, economic, and political participation and increased exchanges in all these areas, there is a large portion of the world’s population which does not has or has limited access to the Internet. The socio-economic political construction of what has been termed the “digital divide” has marginalized an often already vulnerable segment of the global

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3 *Vocation of the Business Leader: A Reflection*, p. 2.
community, resulting in informational poverty, social exclusion, economic isolation, and political segregation.

In this essay, I seek to serve those beyond the richly endowed bandwidth borders to investigate the digital divide through the lens of integral human development and identify strategies for erasing or, at best, mitigating, the chasm. Integral human development seems out of reach without access to the rich communication, educational, and participatory resources that the Web offers. This essay examines the reality and implications of the digital divide, one of the “negative dimensions of information technology,” critiques it from an understanding of the virtue of solidarity as expressed in Catholic social teaching, and proposes viable steps to balance the disparity for those marginalized by exclusion. I will proceed in four parts. First, I will introduce the digital divide, identifying critical demographic and sociological data, to demonstrate how more than half of the world is digitally handicapped. Second, I will offer a critical assessment of this inequality from the perspective of “integral human development” first used by Pope Paul VI in his 1967 Populorum Progressio. Next, I will propose the virtue of solidarity as a concrete way to motivate the global community to resolve the digital divide and, in turn, bring access and distribution of information technology in line with the demands of solidarity. Finally, I will demonstrate solidarity in action for integral human development through various in-place practices and long-term proposals for rectifying the technological gap.

The Digital Divide

At its core, the digital divide is defined as the gap that exists between those who have access to Information Communication Technology (ICT) and those who do not. Admittedly, this distinction between the “haves” and “have nots,” as scholars described the digital early on in the technological revolution, is no longer understood as a strict binary construction. What is

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4 Vocation of the Business Leader: A Reflection, no. 70.

“had” and “not had” is much more involved. While clearly the “have nots” are those who do not even have physical access to technology resources, what is had by the “haves” actually can vary given the reliable quality of device, types of connection (e.g., dial-up or broadband), electrical resources, and availability of training and development.

Only 40% of the world population is connected to the Internet through some technological platform, but to what extent regular access, reliability of Internet signal and electricity, and skills is not known. While only less than half the world is connected, this is a significant change from the 1% that was connected in 1995. However, evidence also amplifies that the African, Asian, and Middle Eastern regions still lag in Internet connections significantly impacting the larger global digital divide. 2.1 billion of the 2.8 billion Internet users of the world live in 20 countries. Heading the list of countries were China, the United States, India, Japan, and Brazil. The residual 0.7 billion comprising the bottom quarter live in 178 other countries of the world. The most connected countries are Bermuda, Qatar, Bahrain, Iceland, and Norway all averaging approximately 96% Internet penetration rates. The least connected countries of the world are, in ascending order, Eritrea, Timor-Leste, Myanmar, Burundi, and Sierra Leone, all with about 1% Internet penetration rates. Without effective access to ICT, the digital divide further alienates citizens within and among countries of the world and amplifies already established ethnic, gender, income, and geographic inequalities.

A number of different efforts have been made by scholars and journalists to illustrate visually the digital divide. Chris Harrison from the Human Interactions Institute at Carnegie Mellon University tracked Internet access over a four year period. In a 2011 map, Harrison showed the increased user connections throughout the world and, at the same time, demonstrated Internet access remained unattainable for areas of the world where access could be transformative for their human condition. In 2011, Gregor Aisch, a graphics editor at the New York Times, used IP addresses taken from GeoLiteCity database by MaxMind to visualize the global digital divide. Aisch qualified his findings by noting that his employment of IP addresses did not recognize the widespread use of mobile devices in Africa which do offer a limited experience of the Web. Harrison and Aisch capture well in their dark spots of the world the locations and extent of the digital divide.

Government agencies as well have studied carefully the digital divide and have suggested creative ways to ensure access to equipment, education, and viable signal connections in order to maximize fuller participation in this dynamic global ICT phenomenon. The digital divide has garnered attention from leadership in the public and private sector given that the global community has become quickly enriched with technology. As a world increasingly dependent on technology for its rich resources, consistent efforts have been made to analyze and make provisions to resolve the digital divide. Any technological deficit only furthers digital inequalities making it difficult for the least connected countries to compete, participate, resource, and communicate the information superhighway. The World Summit on the Information Society declared that the global challenge for the new millennium is to build a society “where

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9 “Internet Live Stats.”
everyone can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge, enabling individuals, communities and peoples to achieve their full potential in promoting their sustainable development and improving their quality of life.”

In its 2000 Millennium Development Goals, the United Nations recognized Internet penetration as a metric to meet its eighth goal to “develop global partnerships for development” by 2015 and eliminate poverty. Notwithstanding the boldness of such a claim, the digital divide remains emblematic of the inequity of the world’s power and wealth. Although recent efforts to bridge the divide have been enhanced by cellular service, but not with broadband access, the evidence demonstrates that the gap though remains wide and progress towards reducing the fissure is slow-moving.

Since 2008, the United Nations International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has produced a report annually entitled “Measuring the Information Society.” Its 2014 edition continued the ITU’s efforts to track the digital divide in an effort to “ensure equal access to ICTs” by attending to “different socio-economic variables” throughout the world. By the end of 2014, “642 million Chinese, 280 million Americans, 243 million Indians, 109 million Japanese, 108 million Brazilians, and 84 million Russians, among others” were online, but 4.5 billion people remained disconnected. Of this grouping, what the ITU identifies as “least connected countries” (LCCs), comprised of 2.5 billion people, more than one third of the world’s population have not made enough progress to alter the widening of the digital divide. Broadband speeds increased in 2014, but still remains costly. Users, particularly in developing countries, opted for 2G (in some instances 3G) or relied on mobile cellular service which is within reach of most of the world. The ITU admitted progress overall with the addition of 300 million now with online access, but also pointed to the continuing disparity between women and men online.

In 2012, UN Secretary General Ban-Ki Moon called for renewed efforts in bridging the digital divide, noting that “All people must be able to make the best use of information and communications technology to help create the future we want.” Moon’s words build upon the United Nations’ Human Rights Council unanimous resolution to identify internet access and online freedom of expression as a basic human right. Yet, this goal remains elusive. A more

16 “Measuring the Information Society 2014,” 6. The report also indicates that these same “LCCs” are also not meeting the Millennium Development Goals.
A comprehensive and compelling framework for thinking about how to resolve the digital divide is needed in addition to goal setting, statistical measuring, and stopgaps. The ethical notion of integral human development offers a richer more sustained and richer moral response. Appealing to the concept of integral human development positions the digital divide as a critical component for authentic progress of the human community.

**Integral Human Development**

Since the time of Pope Leo XIII’s *Rerum Novarum*, the magna carta of modern Roman Catholic social teaching, development has been a primary concern for the Church. With the promulgation of Pope Paul’s watershed encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, the Church’s understanding of development is extended beyond merely economic progress.\(^\text{20}\) Paul VI taught that integral human development consisted in paying attention to all aspects of the human person: cultural, social, political, economic, and spiritual. No one part can take precedent over another. Development must move people beyond their present condition to one that is “more human.”\(^\text{21}\) To achieve this type of development, the marginalized must be placed at the center of the world’s concern and their poverty addressed.\(^\text{22}\)

Without development, there can be no lasting peace. Suffering, inequality, poverty, and war, so evident in the background of this document, will continue to characterize the global community if, as a whole, it does not marshal forces consistently to resolve critical developmental issues. The pope encourages national leaders to work in concert with each other to craft sustainable policies and structures to promote human well-being “toward the establishment of the ordered universe willed by God, with a more perfect form of justice among men” where all might thrive.\(^\text{23}\)

In 2009, Pope Benedict XVI, wrote *Caritas in Veritate* to build upon Paul VI’s writings in *Populorum Progressio*. In this encyclical, the pontiff amplifies Paul’s teaching that “authentic human development concerns the whole of the person in every single dimension.”\(^\text{24}\) Benedict understands the work of development as central to the gospel, a vocation that stems from the freedom to participate in the building up of God’s kingdom. “It is bound up with our understanding of the human soul…[and]…must include not just material growth but also spiritual growth.\(^\text{25}\) Development is an ongoing common task. It is working in concert with others towards a more just common good and is the responsibility of all across the world, not in any way restricted to a particular area.\(^\text{26}\) The human person, particularly the more vulnerable and

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\(^{21}\) “Populorum Progressio,” no. 20.


\(^{23}\) “Populorum Progressio,” no. 76-77.


\(^{25}\) “Caritas in Veritate,” no. 76.

\(^{26}\) “Caritas in Veritate,” no. 9.
oppressed, must be at the forefront of development efforts. Benedict’s context is far beyond Paul’s and truly global. It is one of significant economic competition and technological discovery that easily could lead to a “self-centered and materialistic way of thinking.” In response, Benedict emphasizes that “progress of a merely and technological kind is insufficient. Development needs above all to be true and integral.”

In Pope Francis’ 2015 encyclical *Laudato Si*, the pontiff calls attention to the human ecological system, “our common home.” The environment, an often taken for granted and, at its worse, fragile and abused reality, cannot be ignored; it is part of the ecosystem in which we inhabit. It is a contributing part to our integral human development. “Authentic development includes efforts to bring about an integral improvement in the quality of human life, and this entails considering the setting in which people live their lives.” Francis makes this clear from the onset as he calls for an “integral ecology” that does not suspend scientific and technological development, but places the human person at the center of concern, particularly those who are on the fringes of society, the more vulnerable. While recognizing much work has been done to slow and, in some cases, even reverse significant environmental threats, Francis challenges the global community “to seek a sustainable and integral development” in an age of “rapidification.”

Integral human development can serve as both the framework and motivation for resolving the digital divide. Without access to the Web, the human person or a community is separated from an increasing cache of helpful resources available to develop in an integral human way. The primary focus of the digital divide dilemma is not and has never been about the machinery, access, education, or utility resources. It has focused on the human person and what the human person in community might achieve if connected to others and the information on the Web. Technology extends the range of possible outcomes and without an Internet connection, unequal opportunities for economic, political, and social growth persist. The digital divide eclipses the opportunities to access the wealth of resources available on the Web for individuals, communities, and nations for education, collaboration, and significant development.

Being connected to the Internet has the capacity to revolutionize all the human community towards integral human development through access to informational resources and communication platforms, but technology must be accessible in order to harness its power. Unfortunately, for much of the world, particularly those in the southern regions of the globe, the

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27 “Caritas in Veritate,” no. 11.
30 “Caritas in Veritate,” no. 23.
33 “Laudato Si,” no. 18.
prospect of having a decent computer equipment and a sustainable infrastructure to support broadband access seems as realizable as relief from their persistent impoverishment, hunger, and illiteracy. Technology is not the panacea to the panorama of problems plaguing the world. However, narrowing the digital divide has the capacity to enhance integral human development. Online access levels can level the playing field in the global economy and offer a constellation of advantages for connected individuals.

*Populorum Progressio* issued an urgent “appeal for concrete action toward humanity’s complete development and the development of all humankind.” Working to bridge the digital divide is a concrete action. What is needed is global solidarity around this critical issue. “There can be no progress toward complete development of human beings without the simultaneous development of all humanity in the spirit of solidarity.” Solidarity together with the duty of social justice and the duty of universal charity compel the human community to work towards integral human development. Solidarity can extend the range of concern, help identify unrecognized needs, and call responsible parties to accountability.

### Solidarity: The Virtue That Bridges the Gap

People are social by nature. Aristotle called the human person a “political animal.” Humanity was created to live in community. The human person finds fullest expression within the context of community. The earliest Judeo-Christian scriptural texts describing the creation of humanity support this. This sense of interdependence also has religious roots in the Christian golden rule to love others as one would one would like to be loved.

Christians take their cue for living the virtue of solidarity from the life of Jesus Christ. Throughout his life and ministry, Jesus made radical moves to emancipate people from the oppressive shackles that held them bound. Prompted by the cries of the people that called out for healing and dignity, Jesus in word and action was an agent of solidarity through his healing touch, consoling word, life giving power, and nourishing life. Jesus, through his own example, taught his followers to jettison the appeal of self-interest and live a life of solidarity by loving one’s neighbor as oneself. He also challenged the leaders of the day, namely the Pharisees and Sadducees, to change these “structures of injustice” to “structures of solidarity.”

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35 Closing the digital divide and affording people Internet access could lead to a lessening of the world’s deleterious problems through the Internet’s capabilities. Poverty, oppression, hunger, human trafficking, clean water, violence and war, to name some of the more pressing global concerns, may not be able to be fully resolved through digital connectivity, but could be ameliorated by using the Internet as a catalyst. Although, not all tech leaders agree with my claim that bridging the digital divide would alleviate many of the problems plaguing developing nations. As Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates noted in speaking about the Gates’ Foundation's health and education campaigns, “When you’re dying of malaria, I suppose you’ll look up and see that balloon, and I’m not sure how it’ll help you. When a kid gets diarrhea, no, there’s no website that relieves that. Certainly I’m a huge believer in the digital revolution. And connecting up primary-health-care centers, connecting up schools, those are good things. But no, those are not, for the really low-income countries, unless you directly say we’re going to do something about malaria.” Bill Gates reminds the global community that technology alone will not solve basic problems inherent to developing nations. Yet, access to technology is increasingly becoming an important component to alleviating poverty and increasing opportunities for marginalized populations across the world. (Stone, Brad. “Bill Gates on His Foundation's Health and Education Campaigns,” *BloombergBusinessweek*, August 08, 2013, accessed June 23, 2015, [http://Web.businessweek.com/articles/2013-08-08/bill-gates-on-his-foundations-health-and-education-campaigns#p2](http://Web.businessweek.com/articles/2013-08-08/bill-gates-on-his-foundations-health-and-education-campaigns#p2)).

36 “*Populorum Progressio,*” no. 5.
37 “*Populorum Progressio,*” no. 43.
38 “*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis,*” no. 40.
Jesus’ life is a jumping point to solidarity for Christians. It gives Christians a deeper foundation for practicing this virtue. Solidarity does not have to be enriched by the life of Christ and his message. Jesus’ life and ministry, however, does add a particular enhanced dimension to the virtue of solidarity for Christians and calls Christians to greater witness and responsibility. Whatever the underlying motivation might be, religious or otherwise, people generally are attentive to others’ issues and concerns and seek to somehow make challenging situations better. The Web has served as a catalyst for some people in harnessing the Web’s capabilities to connect and respond to others’ needs, in turn building up the common good, through the exercise of the virtue of solidarity.

In John Paul II’s 1987 encyclical Sollicitudo rei socialis, “On Social Concern,” he defines the virtue of solidarity as:

…not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say, to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all.\(^{39}\)

As John Paul II understands it, solidarity is far from an empathetic sentiment extended to people in need. It is an active effort to work intently for the common good. Solidarity renegotiates the individual range of concern and extends boundaries of responsibility to the global community. It reframes pressing moral issues to incorporate a wider range of concern. This virtue challenges the human person to see that all the human family is connected.

Catholic social teaching proclaims that we are our brothers' and sisters' keepers, wherever they live. We are one human family.... Learning to practice the virtue of solidarity means learning that 'loving our neighbor' has global dimensions in an interdependent world.\(^{40}\) No one is disposable. No one has less dignity or human rights because of his/her situation. No one is ever to be used or exploited for whatever reason. We are all brothers and sisters, part of the human family.\(^{41}\)

The Compendium on the Social Doctrine of the Church teaches that, in addition to being a moral virtue, solidarity is also a social principle.\(^{42}\) As a social principle, it moves a serious commitment to the common good to institutional levels and encourages structures of solidarity. As a social principle, solidarity counters the reality of the day:

A world divided into blocs, in which instead of solidarity imperialism and exploitation hold sway, can only be a world structured in sin. Those structures of sin are rooted in sins committed by individual persons, who introduced these...

\(^{39}\) John Paul II, “Sollicitudo Rei Socialis,” retrieved June 23, 2015, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30121987_sollicitudo-rei-socialis.html, no 38. Previous popes like Leo XIII have used “friendship” and Pius XI employed the term “social charity” to indicate the connectedness of human persons and the subsequent demands placed on each other. Paul VI spoke of humanity progressing towards a “civilization of love.” This term “solidarity” is prominent in the heart and life of a man John Paul II who knew firsthand the effects of unjust structures in his native Poland and who engaged communist forces in the “Solidarity” movement.


\(^{41}\) “Sollicitudo Rei Socialis,”” no. 39.

structures and reinforced them again and again. One can blame selfishness, shortsightedness, mistaken political decisions, and imprudent economic decisions; at the root of the evils that afflict the world there is -- in one way or another -- sin.\(^{43}\)

The principle seeks to transform these “structures of sin” into “structures of solidarity.” In this, John Paul II recognizes that solidarity must occur not merely on the personal level, but also on larger scale, namely reshifting the balance of the world’s power and reformulating institutional policies, principles, and values. Individuals can cultivate a virtue of solidarity, but what is also needed is a dismantling of structures that have been constructed by individuals and obstruct the extension of the common good. Both solidarity as a moral virtue and a social principle are directed towards the common good.

People of solidarity are attentive to the needs of others. As the definition states, however, solidarity is more than a mindfulness, it is also an action. Solidarity prompts people to move beyond their individual or particular interests to contribute to the common good and encourage others to do the same. It is not a matter of how well off one is, even poor people are called to live the virtue of solidarity and give what they can. The *Compendium* invites people who seek to be women and men of solidarity to recognize that they are “debtors” to society. They are debtors because of those conditions that make human existence liveable, and because of the indivisible and indispensable legacy constituted by culture, scientific and technical knowledge, material and immaterial goods and by all that the human condition has produced. A similar debt must be recognized in the various forms of social interaction, so that humanity's journey will not be interrupted but remain open to present and future generations, all of them called together to share the same gift in solidarity.\(^{44}\) That debt fulfillment also involves a duty to be virtuous for the future:

> We have inherited from past generations, and we have benefited from the work of our contemporaries: for this reason we have obligations towards all, and we cannot refuse to interest ourselves in those who will come after us to enlarge the human family. The reality of human solidarity, which is a benefit for us, also imposes a duty.\(^{45}\)

Solidarity challenges individuals and communities to move beyond their narrow purviews, to extend themselves beyond our own range of concern. This may involve sacrificing private goods for the common good. Pope Francis noted this:

> The many situations of inequality, poverty and injustice, are signs not only of a profound lack of fraternity, but also of the absence of a culture of solidarity. New ideologies, characterized by rampant individualism, egocentrism and materialistic consumerism, weaken social bonds, fuelling that “throw away” mentality which leads to contempt for, and the abandonment of, the weakest and those considered “useless.” In this way human coexistence increasingly tends to resemble a mere *do ut des* which is both pragmatic and selfish.\(^{46}\)

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\(^{43}\) “Sollicitudo Rei Socialis,” no. 36.

\(^{44}\) *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 195.

\(^{45}\) “Populorum Progressio,” no. 17.

Practically, it may translate into allowing others to enjoy the commons on which one’s cows, to use an image from Garrett Hardin’s 1968 classic *The Tragedy of the Commons*, have been allowed to graze. 47

**Solidarity, Information Technology and the Digital Divide**

Solidarity, as a moral virtue and social principle promotes integral human dignity and can serve to erase or, at least, narrow the digital divide. The virtue encourages only a heightened awareness on both the personal and institutional level, of the pressing needs of those who do not share in or have access to the same public good as others. More than that, this virtue seeks to ameliorate the conditions of the marginalized in order that they might have an unfettered access to the possibility of flourishing.

The Web has opened up a whole new window on the world. It has made the possibility of being more attuned and positively responsive to the needs of others more real. As a masterful tool of communication, the Web has made more people aware of the plight of others and opened up venues that had not existed before for resolving some deprived situations. The Web plays a crucial catalytic role in both the promotion of solidarity and the exercise of this virtue.

Solidarity is intimately linked to subsidiarity which holds decisions that can be made on the lowest level by a competent authority, should be made on that level. 48 Evident progress has been made and clear efforts to get people online through the exercise of solidarity at all levels. 49 In Kenya, the British Council and Microsoft have partnered to upgrade technology by creating a “Badiliko,” in kiSwahili, a “digital hub,” for students to gain full and free access to the Internet in over 100 schools. This collaboration also involves the training of teachers. It is a small effort to provide students with online learning resources and connect them with peers and teachers throughout the world considering the magnificent number of students enrolled in education. 50

Another program that seeks to bridge the digital divide is the Close the Gap organization, based out of Brussels, Belgium. In its “Mission Statement,” Close the Gap acknowledges that it seeks to:

- bridge the digital divide by offering high-quality, pre-owned computers donated by European companies to educational, medical and social projects in developing and emerging countries…Close the Gap not only provides computers to developing countries, but it also builds partnerships with organisations worldwide

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49 In addition to the promising digital bridge programs identified here, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) has capitalized on the momentum of resolving the divide and have positive impact on impoverished peoples. In the Spring of 2015, CRS is working with the United Nations University Institute for Software Technology to examine the relationship between technology and justice and how information communication technology has and can change international development, particularly in poor rural communities. The groups’ focus is on extending technology platforms, with little or no fiduciary responsibility, to these marginalized peoples. (United Nations University, “Information Communication Technology for Poverty Reduction,” retrieved June 22, 2015, http://unu.edu/research/information-communication-technology-for-poverty-reduction.html#outline.)
in order to deliver comprehensive software and hardware solutions to its recipients. Close the Gap’s unique approach is built upon two important premises. First, in order to gain access to the Internet, appropriate hardware and related software are needed. Second, digital knowledge is needed to properly and effectively utilize the Internet. This endeavor provides both the means and knowledge needed to close the digital gap between the developed and developing world.

Unfortunately, laudatory efforts such as these are not always successful in bridging the digital divide for a variety of reasons, including “outdated and underfunded programs, lack of comprehensive solutions, uninspired models of technology in education, and non-holistic approaches.” A history of debt in the global South, too, has precluded unconnected nations from having the infrastructure and capital to sustain hopeful endeavors only pushing the further into a downward spiral of further fiscal distress, disease, and illiteracy. Admittedly, wealthier nations with a surplus of equipment, generally dated and sometimes inoperable, donate technology equipment to poor nations. Historically, too, there tends to be little to no follow-up educational tutoring for the digital illiterate; no sustainable strategies to access the Internet given infrastructure and operational barriers; and, no ongoing support for computer repair. However, in all instances such as these expressions of solidarity in action, there is greater evidence of realizing integral human development.

Conclusion

ICT empowers people and has the capacity to transform entire cultures. The last decade has demonstrated this. In the Occupy Movement, that begun in Northern Africa and extended across the globe, ICT was a key medium to offsetting a history of injustices and tyrannies. The technologically endowed are led to believe, however, because of their own cache of devices, that the world is saturated in ICT and Internet connections are ubiquitous. Yet, over half of the world’s population does not have access to the Web through a reliable device or have a reliable Internet signal, energy resource, or training program. While mobile telephony has penetrated some previously disconnected parts of the world and offered a semblance of hope, these devices remain limited in their ability to accomplish the work of the larger more powerful ones.

In the end, the digital divide is representative of a deeper seeded divide in the global village. The digital divide reveals the inequities of wealth, power, and politics in the world. To resolve the divide, national and international organizations will continue to strategize and implement policies to offset the digital imbalance. The concept of integral human development offers leaders a clearer and richer framework to bridge the digital divide. The virtue of solidarity moves individuals and communities beyond their parochial boundaries to respond to the digitally handicapped and offer the entire world community to be connected and flourish.

53 West, 2.