



Infinite Family mentors Africa's future.

Worldwide network of mentors use Adobe Connect to provide guidance and support to African children, instilling a spirit of self-reliance.



"Investing in Adobe Connect helps ensure that technology promotes quality video conversations, regardless of location."

Amy Stokes, Founder and CEO, Infinite Family

SOLUTION

Adobe Connect

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



RESULTS



MOBILE

Adopted reliable web conferencing platform to deliver high-quality experiences across devices, including mobile



SUSTAINABILITY

Supported scalable program growth



CONNECTED

Increased interactivity during conversations to improve engagement and create emotional experiences



HIGH-QUALITY

Improved connection quality and availability through reduced bandwidth requirements

Infinite Family

Employees: 300+

New York, New York

www.infinitefamily.org

CHALLENGES

- Providing reliable face-to-face communications, regardless of location or device
- Improving interactivity during web conferences by integrating video, chat, games, and other engagement tools
- Supporting program participants in remote sites with limited bandwidth

Facilitating success

In everyone's life, there are people who shape who we are. However, in parts of the world where illness and poverty have diminished adult populations, there is an entire generation of children who need guidance on how to be successful in their journey towards adulthood.

That's where Infinite Family steps in, connecting adult mentors from around the world via a virtual forum with teens and pre-teens in communities affected by HIV/AIDS and poverty within townships, informal settlements, and rural villages. Within virtual meeting rooms, meaningful conversations happen—from helping children with homework and discussing the day's events to building strategies around how to achieve long-term goals.

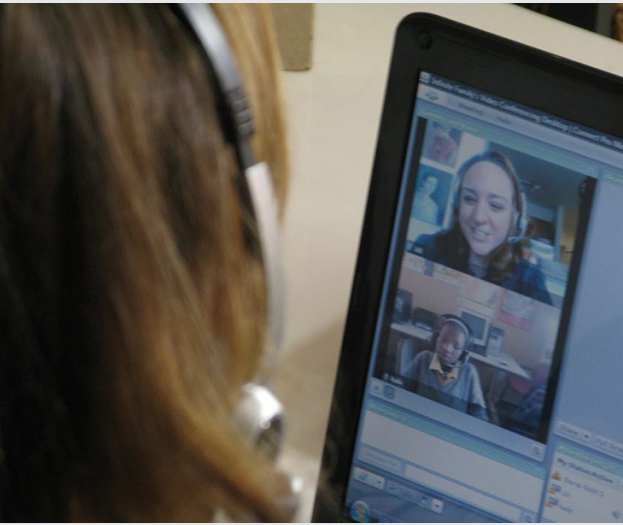
Infinite Family is the result of the personal journey of its Founder, Amy Stokes. When she and her husband visited South Africa to adopt their son, she saw a clear need to help support the country's children by providing not just basic necessities, but also to empower them with the guidance to improve their lives. Since then, Stokes and her team have worked tirelessly to provide mentorship to a generation in need.

"We use technology to bridge physical distance and to build trusting relationships that allow our Net Buddy mentees to learn from their mentors' life experiences," says Stokes. "We wanted to enable very personal and meaningful interactions. To achieve that, we needed a reliable, high-quality web conferencing platform to support face-to-face conversations, creating impact and an emotional connection."

Video was only the top-line requirement. Infinite Family also wanted to adopt a solution that would support the widest range of interactions possible to both enhance online interaction and help Net Buddies build social, language, technology, and academic skills. "To fully engage with young people and teach them a new skill, you need to communicate in multiple ways and provide a holistic experience," says Stokes. "To learn English, for example, Adobe Connect allows our students to read, write, see, and hear it spoken by their mentors, as well as practice speaking it themselves. Equally important, they have the freedom to have fun and play games together." This approach helps build rapport between kids and their mentors, and offers richer experiences for everyone.

Flexibility that matters

After evaluating several web conferencing and collaboration platforms, Infinite Family chose Adobe Connect as the cornerstone of its interactive platform. In addition to supporting reliable, high-quality communications, Adobe Connect provides multiple ways for mentors and Net Buddies to interact.



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Infinite Family*

“The modular pods available in Adobe Connect enable participants to pull in a wide variety of content—including live and recorded videos, games, chat, whiteboards, and more—in a seamless, easy-to-navigate experience,” says Zoleka Petse, Deputy Program Director, Infinite Family South Africa. “It also supports more natural conversations that mentors and Net Buddies would have if they were face to face.”

For example, so that they can better understand their country’s rich history and its struggle toward equality, Net Buddies and their mentors were encouraged to take a virtual visit of South Africa’s Apartheid Museum together and learn why the country celebrates Freedom Day—the day commemorating the country’s first post-apartheid elections. Together they saw photos, read speeches, and learned about the events that led to the birth of a democratic South Africa.

Since its initial implementation, Infinite Family upgraded to the latest version of Adobe Connect to take advantage of lower bandwidth requirements and facilitate higher-quality interactions. By requiring about 20% of the bandwidth compared to previous versions, the organization can support more conversations simultaneously at each mentoring lab without sacrificing experiences. Additionally, lower bandwidth requirements help support the organization’s desire to deploy new terminals in rural locations where bandwidth is at a premium.

“It’s important that we are supporting the highest-quality interactions wherever we are located so everyone can get the most value from the experience,” says Stokes. “Investing in Adobe Connect helps ensure that technology promotes quality video conversations, regardless of location.”

New mobile capabilities available in Adobe Connect—including video, content sharing, and annotation tools—also provide additional flexibility for mentors to engage in meaningful face-to-face conversations without sacrificing the quality of experience. “Many of our mentors work on the go and remotely—offering mobile experiences through Adobe Connect helps them meet their commitment to their Net Buddies,” says Stokes. “At the same time, delivering the same quality experience, regardless of device and location, helps to expand our community by increasing the number of people who can participate.”

Strong foundations

In order to participate in the program as a mentor, candidates are required to complete an application and attend training courses on how to both leverage the technology and interact with young people. To increase training impact, Infinite Family mentor instructors also use Adobe Connect. “The same way we are engaging with African teens, we can show mentors best practices on using the technology in real time,” says Stokes. “Also, we can have face-to-face conversations to confirm understanding, use surveys and chat pods to reinforce learning, incorporate pre-recorded content, and provide more personalized learning.”



SOLUTION AT A GLANCE

- Adobe Connect

For more information

www.adobe.com/products/connect



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The definition of an outstanding interaction for Infinite Family participants doesn't begin and end with the conversation itself. For program managers, security and protecting participants' privacy is also an important element. This is especially important because of the organization's work with minor children.

"It's still the Wild West on the Internet, with people hijacking webcams and slipping unknowingly into video chat sessions, so we have to be particularly cautious about the software we use," says Jennifer Singleton, Managing Director at Infinite Family. "With Adobe Connect, we have a more secure platform and we don't experience those issues. We have complete visibility into who is participating in each session and safeguards are in place to limit who can join."

The future of Infinite Family

With strong partnerships from BT, Internet Solutions, and Adobe, Infinite Family has the bandwidth, expertise, and software solutions necessary to expand its reach further into global communities. In the organization's roadmap, it plans to expand its services to reach more young people across Africa and beyond with similar services. In addition to growing across geographies, the nonprofit also anticipates increasing the number of sites in South Africa, and the number of students at each site during 2014.

"We couldn't be happier with our technology partners—Adobe, BT, and Internet Solutions—helping us bring all of the resources together to deliver an elegant solution," says Stokes. "We're far from a team of technology experts—we had the vision and the drive, and they help us make it happen."