

broadcast information about the IYV in our media, and as a result there were many special programs from NGOs on IYV.

“Our team’s greatest success was securing the initial USD 3 million needed to start the biggest Iranian NGOs and volunteer support center in Tehran, after long discussions with Tehran city council and municipality of Tehran. Based on my suggestion, UNV recognized this center officially: and UNV was listed in the Secretary-General Report of UN to General Assembly, released in 26 Nov 2002,” he said.

The development of networks and relationships with others who share similar viewpoints is vital in creating a successful volunteer program. Farmanesh is involved with dozens of programs in Iran and other parts of the world.

“I see myself more as a facilitator and a gate opener,” he said. “My major role in most of my volunteer involvement is finding new possible horizons for continuing the project or giving new directions to it.”

The role of the gate opener is pivotal. Youth bring a new perspective and energy to tasks that can shake up tradition and “business as usual.”

One of the most powerful and accessible tools for youth to utilize is the media – all forms from radio and television newspapers (in countries with privately owned press) and the internet.

As computers and access to the internet continues to proliferate, youth with varying views are able to freely express themselves in ways they have never been able to previously.

The use of personal computers has literally linked the world, and those who share common values are able to work together on projects and programs that were once restricted to geographic proximity.

Programs such as United States-based iEARN (www.earn.org) work with schools worldwide to link students together who work on various projects. Some write songs, some create cookbooks while others take on much more humanitarian issues such as child soldiers, AIDS and relief efforts for disaster victims.

Students must be part of a bonafide school which is part of the iEARN network, and are free to work on any project that interests them.