



Sreeram Kongeseri - India

Good evening, it is an honour to be here. Some of us are a long way from home, some of us are coming here for the first time, so thank you for making us feel welcome here. I would like to take a couple of minutes to set the context actually. You know, if you look at all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the United Nations (UN), the one SDG that directly or indirectly impacts all other SDGs, except probably SDG 17, is SDG 4. So that is why I want to focus on SDG 4.

Now, if you look at all the education systems around the world, we know that it is not enough for us to use education, it cannot actually educate and train people for the kind of jobs that are coming up. So, imagine this: for the 30 to 40 per cent of the jobs that are coming up in next five years, our present education system cannot train people for that. It will be something entirely new. So, the only two ways to survive, even for us or people living in the villages or tribal areas, is to actually continuously upgrade our skills, or train ourselves in new skills, which means that we have to become lifelong learners, which is basically the core of SDG 4. It is also something that Dr Sachs mentioned today that we all have to do: learn, think, do, act and celebrate.

So, what I want to propose is something different. I know it has been a long day, but I hope your hearts and minds are still open, because I want to propose something a little different. It is a game. Can I have a show of hands of those who have a smartphone and also have a game installed or has ever played a game on a smartphone? [Everyone raises their hands]. See, this is the reason. Now if you look at the case of people all around the world, even in the villages, this scenario is not different, even when there are cases of not having electricity, the people actually apply for subsidized small solar cells, install cable TV and use smartphones to play games, even when they do not have proper lights for their children to learn; so that is the extreme that the world has gone to.

So, if you want to nudge people to become lifelong learners, you have to actually crack engagement. Take the example of India, more than 30 per cent of people drop out from the formal education system, which is actually the minority of the country. If you take the case of online courses, more than 70 per cent of the people drop out whether it is edX, Coursera or any other online course. So, only if you crack engagement can we crack learning. The reason why we all use Facebook, Twitter and all other social media tools and games, is that they have actually tapped into our intrinsic motivation, which is to explore, discover and gain points. So that's what I want to tap into. Most of the learning modules fail because they tap into this extrinsic motivation where they give subsidies or free education. Here I want to tap into this intrinsic motivation through this game. So the name of the project is called *Project Gati*; Gati means "a new direction" in Hindi.

Here is how the game works. If you are familiar with MIT Media Labs projects you may be familiar with the interface that I am talking about. So, on one side you have various actions that you can take and then you basically click-and-drag what actions you want to take for a particular social problem that you want to solve. When you log into the game through any social media channels, like Facebook or Twitter, we process the data and your profile details and then present some social context, social problems that you want to solve.

Let us take an example of domestic violence. So, how would you help a domestic violence victim? You can actually suggest counselling her first, or filing a DV Act – that is the first thing we do in India, you have to go to the police station and file a DV Act – so there are certain steps which are validated and proposed by subject-matter experts and we can build a knowledge bank for that. So, when you sign up for the game, when you start playing your game you are given a limited amount of time and resources. You can earn money, which is important for yourself; you can earn money through the game by taking up any sort of career. Now the interesting thing here is that when you select a career, we know more details about you; we know what kind of career you want to choose, so that data is very useful, and I'll explain why a little bit later.

So with limited amount of time and resources you start solving social problems for yourself and others. The game works at multiple levels: 1) You get the skill of critical thinking, problem solving and computational thinking, which is really important for your career; 2) You help others solve social problems, you can also add new answers, you can be mentors for others to solve social problems. And, most importantly, once we get enough data about you, we can tell you which course you would be interested to learn. Let us say that somebody takes up the job of a plumber in the game, we can tell you which is the vocational school nearby, you know maybe five kilometres away, where you can sign up and join the course. So, imagine all the personalized recommendations coming to you after playing a game. So there you can nudge people to actually sign up for courses or training centres nearby; it could be an edX course or a Coursera training module, or signing up in a university nearby. It could be anything. So the more we learn about you, the better the recommendations are.

And best of all, because it is based on technology, scaling-up is not a problem. There is a saying in India that says if you can sort of make a generic solution that works somewhere in India, it will work everywhere in the world, because the scale is so huge and India has got so much diversity. So, because it is based on technology, you can scale it up anywhere; you can keep on adding solutions which will better fit different countries and different languages; you can translate it, and the interface can also be designed for anybody, even for illiterates. So, I hope I explained the whole concept.

Thank you.