



2012 Year-end Report

While 2011 was the year marked by the Arab Awakening and increasing awareness of ICTs for peace building, protection of human dignity and crisis management, in 2012 academia and think tanks started to analyse in more detail what happened and what the real contributions by ICTs in these instances were. The overall conclusion remains that ICTs has been changing how today societies function, especially in crisis, but that more research on the causality between ICTs and social and political outcomes is required. ICT4Peace has co-organized and participated in several events and processes in this field with Universities and international organisations, including the United Nations in addition to critically commenting on developments throughout the year. This role and work will need to continue in 2013.

We also continued our close cooperation with UN Chief Information Technology Officer and the UN Crisis Information Management Advisory Group (CiMAG) to support the implementation of the UN Crisis Information Management Strategy (CiMS) as part of the UN Secretary General's overall UN ICT strategy. This Strategy is based on the recognition that the international community has time and again failed to adequately protect and support the victims of man-made or natural crises, including conflicts and natural disasters. This was and is inter alia due to the lack of willingness to share information and to inadequate Crisis Information Management Systems and capabilities, for the identification, prevention, mitigation, response and recovery of all types of crises. At the same time all UN stakeholders recognise the need for credible, accurate, complete and timely information for managing crises.

Some of the difficulties are also attributable to what has become a highly fragmented Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

environment. In parallel, crisismapping, with the integration of crowd-sourced information, has radically changed the way information is collected, viewed and analysed in conjunction with other spatial and non-spatial datasets. Interests have also shifted from static maps to placing data and tools into open platforms that contain continuously updated feeds and map services. In many ways this represents a paradigm shift, whereby information management becomes a collective effort that integrates the affected population into information flows instead of a specialty managed by relatively few professional personnel. Many humanitarian organizations are curious about this new opportunity and some are using these initiatives in their programming. At the same time, other organisations may not realize that they have used new crisis maps (e.g. OpenStreetMaps or Ushahidi instances) while others are uncertain of its added value during crisis. Peacebuilding and humanitarian practitioners, often working hand in hand, and Volunteer & Technical Community (V&TC) members – now called digital humanitarians – are asking to better understand the impact of these initiatives.

For example after the Libya Crisis Map which UN OCHA stood up with the Standby Volunteer Task Force, an in-person Lessons Learned meeting was called, where the activities undertaken were reviewed in detail and resulted in over 40 lessons learned as well as the recommendation for the creation of ten thematic Communities of Interest aimed at improving collaboration between V&TCs and the traditional humanitarian community, including UN, Governments and NGOs.

These interactions grew more frequent and stronger in 2012. The ICT4Peace Foundation was proud and humbled to support a cutting-edge simulation exercise involving the newly established Digital Humanitarians Network (DHN) after ICCM 2012, held at the World Bank in Washington DC.

In line with the above, the next five years will redefine the praxis and approach to humanitarian operations in times of crisis, manmade and natural. This new combination of technology platforms, policies and field practices will change the way crisis are managed, peacebuilding operations and relief is designed and delivered.

The Foundation continued its support for UN OCHA to populate and

strengthen the Humanitarian Response Common and Operational Datasets (CODs) Registry to make critical information during a humanitarian crisis more widely available and accessible. In addition to this, the Foundation gave input and support towards the development of the Humanitarian eXchange Language (HXL) focussed on demonstrating the viability of this approach to enabling data flows within humanitarian responses and making that data available to all actors and the public. This proof of concept work focused on a core set of data of interest to all humanitarian actors: the humanitarian profile (HP), which contains estimates of the numbers and types of affected populations in a given crisis. During 2012, the UN OCHA HXL team finalized the HXL standard components needed to support HP data and built several tools for enabling partners to share this data.

The Foundation continued in 2012 the development of training courses in Crisis Information Management (CiM) for multidimensional and multi-stakeholders missions in peacekeeping and peace-building together with the Folke Bernadotte Academy, ZIF, CMI and CMC. The content of this course is anchored to new dimensions in peacekeeping and disaster management, including harnessing the potential of new media, the web, Internet and mobile technologies for increased situation awareness. The next course will be held at IPSTC in Nairobi from 23 February to 2 March 2013. ICT4Peace also lectured in training courses offered by ISCRAM and the University of Lugano Master Programme for Humanitarian Logistics as well as the Folke Bernadotte Academy.

Finally, the new and positive role that the Internet and web have been playing in recent years in developing and applying new tools to save lives and protect human dignity might be put into question if a sustainable and resilient Internet is not assured. Cybercrime, cyberterrorism, and cyberhooliganism in particular threaten a well functioning cyberspace. In addition, the risk of a militarization of the cyberspace could lead to its fragmentation and put into question all the positive achievements for the people and societies. It was for this reason that the ICT4Peace Foundation started to look more comprehensively into the question of cybersecurity and resilience of the Internet and web. ICT4Peace started to map out the instruments, processes and actors in the on-going global cyber security discussions and negotiations. It was observed, that the solutions to some of these new challenges will be generated as much by States (e.g. developing

norms of State behaviour and confidence building measures (CBM's) as by non-State actors, by building for instance new cyber security standards with the help of the new intermediaries (e.g. ISPs), business companies and consumer organisations.

Download a report of our activities from 2006 – 2012 [here](#).

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