The ICT4Peace Foundation: In Action since 2004

In Short

«ICT4Peace is a policy and action-oriented international Foundation. The purpose is to save lives and protect human dignity through Information and Communication Technology. Since 2004 we explore and champion the use of ICTs and media for democracy and peaceful societies, crisis management, humanitarian operations and peace building. Since 2007 ICT4Peace promotes cybersecurity and a peaceful cyberspace through international negotiations with governments, companies and non-state actors.»

2003 – 2006: The first years

ICT4Peace (Information and Communication Technologies for Peace) was defined as a concept and coined for the first time in 2003 by Ambassador Daniel Stauffacher during his work as the Special Representative of the Swiss Government to host the UN World Summit on the Information Society in Geneva (WSIS 2003).

In 2005, together with colleagues he co-authored the groundbreaking publication «Information and Communication for Peace – The role of ICT in Preventing, Responding to and Recovering from Conflict» published by the UN ICT Task Force, with a foreword by Kofi Annan (https://bit.ly/2PTqu7R). In parallel, Daniel Stauffacher introduced and obtained in 2005 the adoption by the Heads of States and Governments of Paragraph 36 of the «WSIS Tunis Commitment»:

We value the potential of ICTs to promote peace and to prevent conflict which, inter alia, negatively affects achieving development goals. ICTs can be used for identifying conflict situations through early-warning systems preventing conflicts, promoting their peaceful resolution, supporting humanitarian action, including protection of civilians in armed conflicts, facilitating peacekeeping missions, and assisting post conflict peace-building and reconstruction.
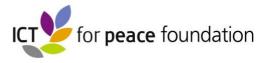
Subsequently the ICT4Peace was incorporated as a Foundation in March 2006 in Geneva by Daniel Stauffacher, Maria Cattaui and Alain Modoux, who, together with Michael Moller , Martin Dahinden constitute the ICT4Peace Foundation Board.

> The **people making ICT4Peace** happen can be found here: https://ict4peace.org/about-us/team/
> An **overview of the areas of work** can be found here: https://ict4peace.org/what-we-do/
> The **list of ICT4Peace activities** since the beginning can be found here:
https://ict4peace.org/activities/
> The **list of ICT4Peace publications** can be found here: https://ict4peace.org/publications/.

Since 2006: The activities of ICT4Peace

1// Promoting the use of ICTs and new and social media for peaceful purposes and human rights and preventing its use for misinformation and hate-speech as well as terrorist purposes.

2006

During the Humanitarian Segment of the ECOSOC Session in July 2006, UN DESA and the ICT4Peace Foundation held informal consultations with member States and NGOS on the implementation on para 36 WSIS Tunis Commitment.

2007

On 15 November 2007 ICT4Peace launched the «International Process for Crisis Management Through ICT» at a high-level meeting at the UN in New York. (https://bit.ly/2qE3a3k). «The main objectives is to enhance the performance of the international community in crisis management through the application of Information Communications Technology (ICT) – technologies that can facilitate effective and sustained communication between peoples, communities and stakeholders involved in crisis management, humanitarian aid and peacebuilding». The Note describing the objectives and the process is attached here: https://bit.ly/32y7XRj.
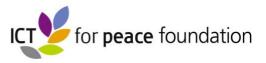
2008

Subsequently in 2008, the UN Secretary General and his ASG Chief Information Technology Officer (UN CITO) invited ICT4Peace to carry out the first ever «Stocktaking of UN Crisis Information Management Capabilities» with all relevant UN Agencies and Funds and Programs (https://bit.ly/2Co4Ssk).

As a result, ICT4Peace and UN CITO created the UN Crisis Information Advisory Group (CIMAG) with all relevant UN Agencies, Funds and Programs as members. CITO and ICT4Peace together with CiMAG then developed the UN Crisis Information Management Strategy of the UN Secretary General, endorsed by the General Assembly (CiMS (A/65/491). ICT4Peace assisted the UN CITO until 2015 in implementing the Strategy. In 2017-2018 a second stock-taking was carried out on behalf of UN USG Hochschild (https://bit.ly/2Cv3F2l). The report can be found here: (https://bit.ly/33yCorZ). Part of these findings ICT4Peace submitted to the High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation (https://bit.ly/2PXvxEm).

2010

In conjunction with the work to implement CIMS, since 2010 ICT Peace provided tailor-made advisory services to International Organisations such as the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UN Special Advisor on Prevention of Genocide and Hate Speech, and the International Criminal Court (ICC) on the use of ICTs and new and social media (https://bit.ly/32p4yEu).

2015

In 2015, at the request of the UN Security Council (SC) and in cooperation with the UN Counter Terrorism Executive Directorate (UN CTED), ICT4Peace launched the project: «Preventing the use of ICTs for Terrorist purposes, while respecting Human Rights» in cooperation with Microsoft, Facebook, Twitter Google, to deepen the understanding of these developments, particularly how industry is responding to terrorist use of ICTs, identify good practices, notably in the area of self-regulation, and potentially engage industry representatives in shaping a voluntary trust building mechanism such as a code of conduct to help mitigate the use of ICT products and services by terrorist groups. The activities and results are reproduced in this report: https://bit.ly/2rn5hcq.

As one of the results, ICT4Peace and UN CTED created the «Tech against Terrorism» Platform and hosted the launch of the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT) in San Francisco, CA https://bit.ly/2NN71TK with the Home Secretaries of the US and UK in attendance.
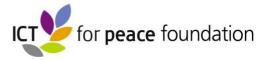
2017

In 2017, given the rapidly increasing deluge of information from multiple sources and in real time, finding actionable, verified intelligence contributing to efficient and effective responses, risk management and decision making, ICT4Peace developed a new capacity building program for UN staff, NGOs and journalists. The courses introduce participants to a variety of new and social media tools, platforms and apps used in the collection, presentation, verification and dissemination of critical information in a timely manner. In Myanmar ICT4Peace conducted lectures on hate and dangerous speech monitoring plus counter-speech strategies, as well as social media strategies during and in response to elections.

Two UN Security Council Resolutions of December 2017 publicly recognized the work of the ICT4Peace Foundation in particular the launching of the Tech Against Terrorism initiative in cooperation with CTED https://bit.ly/36JoaGt.

2019

Following the atrocities in 2019 in Christchurch and Sri Lanka, ICT4Peace was called, along with others, by the Office of the Prime Minister of New Zealand, to help, both in New Zealand and before and during the Paris Meeting, to launch the Christchurch Call https://bit.ly/2NSllKz. The policy paper as an input to the Call can be found here: https://bit.ly/2Clow8u. ICT4Peace is continuing its support the Government of NZ with research on the use social media in the Christchurch attack in NZ, and as a member of Christchurch Call Advisory Network.

2// Support to Developing Norms of Responsible State Behaviour, Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) and Capacity Building for a peaceful, secure, free and open Cyberspace.

2007
In 2007, ICT4Peace Experts, together with the Government of Geneva launched the Geneva Security Forum https://bit.ly/2PXOZRr to discuss among different stake-holders solutions to the threats to the cyberspace, like cybercrime, hacking, hooliganism and terrorism.

2009
In 2009, ICT4Peace experts were invited by ITU to organise the entire Cybersecurity Program of the ITU World Telecom Forum 2009, with over 800 participants https://bit.ly/36GBXOl.

With the increasing militarisation of and use of the cyberspace for strategic purposes by States, in 2009 the ICT4Peace Foundation launched its Programme: „Promotion of Norms of Responsible Behavior and Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) for the Cyberspace". An overview of the activities can be found here: https://bit.ly/33s2nkB .

2011
In 2011, ICT4Peace called for an International Code of Conduct to prevent cyber-conflicts by states and non-state actors. In an op-ed of the leading German language newspaper Neue Zürcher Zeitung (NZZ), Daniel Stauffacher stated that «new online threats such as cyber-espionage and cyber-conflict are very hard to counteract with traditional security policy and instruments. It is now necessary to move forward and develop an international rules-based framework to set standards for the behavior of states in cyberspace.» https://bit.ly/2Q0BXm3.

In support of this Call, ICT4Peace in 2011 published the paper: Getting down to Business: Realistic Goals for the Promotion of Peace in Cyberspace – A code of conduct for Cyber-conflicts:
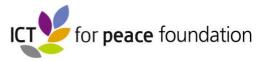https://bit.ly/2qzYOKy .

2012
In 2012 ICT4Peace experts carried out a Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue in Geneva on Protecting Critical Infrastructure against Cyberattacks in Geneva with high-level participation from Switzerland, the US, China, Canada, Mexico and key representatives from critical infrastructure businesses, academia, civil society, and the media. Discussions focused on addressing global interdependencies and risks in the protection of critical infrastructure, risk management, national best practices and the strategic agendas of the key cyber players including the US, China and Russia https://bit.ly/2Q8R519 .

In this year as well ICT4Peace published an Op Ed: «A ticking time bomb: the importance of moving the international cybersecurity agenda forward»: Text in English
Op Ed by ICT4Peace: «Disarmament Negotiations for the Cyberspace are needed». Text in English here.

In preparation of the convening the UN Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Cybersecurity in New York, to address threats to international information security in the UN First Committee, ICT4Peace prepared a publication on the work done by the First Committee in the field of international information security, highlighting key national positions, and looked at the challenges facing the upcoming GGE discussions: https://bit.ly/34HRqfa.

2013
In its continuing support of the accelerating international negotiations on international norms of state behavior, confidence building measures and capacity building in various multilateral fora such as by the UN GGE, OSCE, ASEAN, OAS, AU, OCDE, from 2013 onwards ICT4Peace published a considerable number of publications until today which can be found here: https://bit.ly/2Q3gdpP

In this year too, the ICT4Peace hosted an international workshop at ETH Zurich to develop a better common understanding of practical Confidence Building Measures to be applied to the Cyberspace, based inter alia on concrete experiences of incidents and threats, that are relevant to build trust and rapid response systems to avoid potential conflict. See ICT4Peace Publication: «Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) and International Cyber Security» https://bit.ly/2PYNGSr. This publication was also prepared for the then starting negotiations at the OESCE on a set of CBMs for cyberspace, which concluded successfully with the agreement of the OSCE membership of nine CBMs. https://bit.ly/2pZYAfT.

2014

In 2014, ICT4Peace launched its acclaimed Cybersecurity Policy and Diplomacy Capacity Building Program with a first ever workshop conducted in Bogota with over 50 participants (Diplomats, Security and Technical Staff) from 26 Latin American countries in cooperation with the Organisation of American States (OAS).

Subsequently and until today, ICT4Peace organized over a dozen similar workshops in cooperation with ASEAN, OSCE, AU, OAS, Government of Kenya, GCSP Geneva. A note describing this program can be found here: https://bit.ly/33A7AXJ
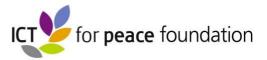
2018

In 2018 ICT4Peace launched its new Project on Trust and Attribution in Cyberspace. This project, in cooperation with Georgiatech, ETH, CitizenLab, Accessnow explores the technical and political challenges related to the effective attribution of cyber activities, with a view to establish an independent network of organizations engaging in a peer-reviewed fact-finding regarding cyber-incidents. In 2020 a pilot phase will be carried out. https://bit.ly/36LFJGd.

2019

ICT4Peace is one of the very few international Foundations to have been accredited to and participated in the first session of the UN Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) in August 2019. This is the ICT4Peace submission to the OEWG: https://bit.ly/2K3XlmD and this is the ICT4Peace Statement to the OEWG https://bit.ly/2X0jdVg .
And finally, given that the agreed UN GGE proposed norms of responsible state behavior are not legally binding, and states are continuously attacking each other's critical infrastructure, with great damages to society, ICT4Peace has issued the following international call: «Critical Infrastructure and Offensive Cyber Operations: A Call to Governments» https://bit.ly/2Cr8nyp .

3// AI, Autonomous Systems and Digital Human Security

2016
In 2016, ICT4Peace helped launch the Zurich Hub for Ethics and Technology (ZHET), an association of ETH and University of Zurich Professors, technology companies such as ABB, Microsoft, and civil society groups. At the same time, ICT4Peace launched its AI, Autonomous Systems and Digital Human Security Program.

2017
Starting 2017 ICT4Peace participated in the meetings of the UN's Convention of Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) in Geneva https://bit.ly/2WYKGqB.

While studying the role and potential impact of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS), ICT4Peace early on concluded that AI, Autonomous Systems, combined with ICTs and even biotechnology, can be of dual use and negatively impact human security also in peace time. Given the speed of information, the rise of social media and the advancements made in Artificial Intelligence (AI), Governments and the international community have to ask, how to address technological developments that may threaten human security? ICT4Peace contends that one way forward is to develop policies that consider the individual as the epicenter of the security challenges, including issues such as the governance and ethical use of AI. As a result, rather than territories, human beings need to be the core focus of the AI, Autonomous system, and cybersecurity agenda going forward. ICT4Peace invites the international community to also focus on «Digital Human Security»

See ICT4Peace's publications that support this analysis and call:

Artificial Intelligence: Autonomous Technology (AT), Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) and Peace Time Threats (2018)

Digital Human Security 2020: Human security in the age of AI: Securing and empowering individuals (2018)

Managing the risks and rewards of emerging and converging technologies: International cooperation, national policy and the role of the individual (2019)

2020 and further: The continuous activities of ICT4Peace

Clearly, ICT4Peace, which in 2004 was one of the very few, if not first think-tank, that studied and promoted the role of Information Technology for peace, has over the years established itself as a leading, independent and credible think-tank.
His services are solicited by many Governments, the UN, Regional Organizations as well as the private Sector and other NGOs to jointly find solutions for and promote an open, peaceful and secure cyber space.

Relying on its strength as a neutral, cutting-edge and action-oriented think-tank, ICT4Peace will focus its work over the next 3 to 5 years in the following areas:
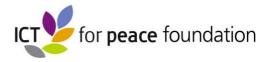
ICT4Peace's active commitment since 2007 to promoting a peaceful cyberspace through global norms of responsible behavior in line with the UN Charter remains at the center of our endeavors. The owners and users of this unique environment are overwhelmingly civilian. ICT4Peace **will continue to call on and work with governments to proactively confirm they will abide by the prohibition on targeting critical infrastructure and further develop ideas and measures for a public-private mechanism regarding the implementation of the agreed norms of responsible state behavior** (UN GGE), Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) as well as **Cybersecurity Capacity Building, especially in Developing Countries**.

Related to the above ICT4 Peace **will pursue its project Trust and Attribution in Cyberspace: An ICT4Peace proposal for an independent network of organizations engaging in attribution peer-review**

In line with its work since 2003 and Para 36 of the WSIS Tunis Commitment of 2005 ICT4Peace **will continue to explore and champion the use of ICTs and new and social media for peaceful purposes, including for human rights protection, peace building and humanitarian operations**.

Unfortunately, the production, consumption, and dissemination of online mis- and disinformation has become a serious concern not only for peace and humanitarian operations, but also for all societies in peace time. As gossip and rumors abound, it is difficult to distinguish among information, misinformation, and disinformation. Content inciting hate and violence on social media based on mis- and disinformation is expanding rapidly and is undermining peace and social cohesion in societies as well as democratic and rule of law-based Government systems. ICT4Peace therefore **will continue to raise awareness and carry out research to better understand these new phenomena and carry as well as capacity building to counter mis-, disinformation and hate speech**, which have become a vector for violence, hate and harm in our societies.

Finally, **in cooperation with its Partner Zurich Hub for Ethics and Technology (ZHET) will continue to carry out awareness creation, policy research and promote normative solutions** in cooperation with business, academia and civil society regarding Artificial Intelligence (AI), Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS), Autonomous systems and Peace Time Threats.

Contact

You would like to know more about our expertise?

Don't hesitate contacting Daniel Stauffacher, president ICT4Peace Foundation:
danielstauffacher@ict4peace.org
https://ict4peace.org