## FRONT COVER & Page 2

Guidance Note

***Tentative title*** (as question)

**How Can ICT Support Democratic Governance for Conflict Prevention?**

***April 2013***

RIGHT-HAND COLUMN – INTRO (runs over onto pg 2)

# Why the question?

Just as the nature of global conflict has changed significantly since the Cold War, the rapid spread of affordable technology in recent decades has changed the way people interact in conflict-affected situations. Technological advancements are driving and enabling changes in human behavior and interactions, representing “a shift not only in what we can do but, over time, how we decide what to do and what needs to be done” (Katsh and Rainey, 2011).

Inherently, these technological changes are neither good nor bad. As Noam Chomsky noted, “Technology is basically neutral. It’s kind of like a hammer. The hammer doesn’t care whether you use it to build a house, or whether a torturer uses it to crush somebody’s skull.” New information and communications technology (ICT) provides opportunities for individuals to access information, share content, and collaborate in ways that far surpass historical spatial and temporal constraints. Whether instigates or mitigates conflict depends on the use that is made of it.

Given the extensive possibilities for utilizing new technologies, development and humanitarian actors should not be asking whether the use of ICTs is good or bad for their programming; rather, they should analyze how specific ICT tools and strategies could potentially enhance programming or cause harm. They also need to understand how other actors use these tools for both peaceful and violent ends. Understanding the role of technology as a “magnifier of human intent and capacity”—as described by Kentaro Toyama (2010)—is increasingly essential for any robust conflict assessment.

This note provides guidance for development and humanitarian actors on the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support democratic governance principles and systems for conflict prevention. While there are many drivers of conflict, an increasing body of evidence demonstrates that conflict is more likely to occur “in situations of weak state institutions, unequal distribution of resources, [and] unstable social relations.” UNDP and other organizations use governance programming in fragile contexts in an effort to prevent conflict, enable governments to operate in crisis scenarios, and support democratic governance in post-conflict settings (UNDP, 2009).

The guidance note begins by explaining the relevance of different ICTs in conflict-affected settings and the relationship between democratic governance and conflict prevention. Second, it provides analysis on the uses of ICT for conflict prevention to date, drawing examples and lessons learned from both operational and structural prevention. Third, the note outlines a framework of key considerations development and humanitarian actors should consider when planning to incorporate ICTs in conflict prevention programming. And finally, the guidance note presents steps and questions to consider when planning an ICT initiative.

LEFT-HAND BOX on page 1

**Information and Communications Technology (ICT)***:* A range of technologies used for accessing, generating and sharing information. These include both new media technology including computers, the Internet, mobile phones, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS), as well as older mass media such as radio and television. ICT also refers to software and applications used to store, analyze and share information, such as databases and mapping software.

**Democratic Governance:** A set of values and principles that underpin state-society relations, allowing people – in particular the poor and marginalized – to have a say in how they are governed, in how decisions are made and implemented, and in how diverging opinions are mediated and conflicting interests reconciled in accordance with the rule of law.” (UNDP, 2010)

**Inclusive Governance:** “all people – including the poor, women, ethnic and religious minorities, indigenous peoples and other disadvantaged groups – have the right to participate meaningfully in governance processes and influence decisions that affect them. It also means that governance institutions and policies are accessible, accountable and responsive to disadvantaged groups, protecting their interests and providing diverse populations with equal opportunities for public services such as justice, health and education.” (UNDP, 2007)

**Conflict prevention:** “Actions undertaken to reduce tensions and to prevent the outbreak or recurrence of violent conflict. Beyond short-term actions, it includes the notion of long-term engagement. It consists of operational prevention, (i.e. immediate measures applicable in the face of crisis), and structural prevention, i.e. measures to ensure that crises do not arise in the first place or, if they do, that they do not recur” (OECD, 2012)

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## **The evolution of Democratic Governance and Conflict Prevention**

## Conflict prevention has roots in the term “preventive diplomacy,” a term coined by UN Secretary General Hammerskjold in 1960—a context focused on preventing “superpower proxy wars in third-world countries from escalating into global confrontations” (Lund, 2009). After the Cold War, the term began to be applied to the prevention of all conflicts—including intra-state and regional conflicts—regardless of their potential to incite global violence (ibid.). As the term evolved, it became associated with peaceful preventative measures that address the drivers of conflict and state-society relations, rather than military force (Swanstrom and Weissman, 2005).

As the field of conflict prevention changed, citizens’ expectations and interactions with government and each other were also evolving. On balance, ICT has increased citizen interaction with government, raised expectations of a rapid government response, and provided governments with unprecedented access to the personal information of citizens (Katsh and Rainey, 2011). The conceptualization of democratic governance that has emerged in recent years views the citizen as “an active customer of public services,” replacing the traditional, authority-centered vision of governance characterized by limited communication between the state and society (UN, 2012).

Further shifting the dynamics, the arrival of new technology provoked a “process of rapid decentralization of power” with low barriers to entry for new actors that bypass traditional hierarchies (OCHA, 2013). Traditional actors have been slow to adopt and experiment with new technologies, favoring the approach of mirroring established activities in a computerized or web-based platform (Katsh and Rainey, 2011). Other actors have filled this gap, as epitomized by the Ushahidi, created by citizen journalists in 2008, as the first platform to use crowdsourcing to map election violence and has since been replicated around the world.

If used responsibly, ICTs hold the potential for a “deepened democracy through citizen participation and insight into state affairs, through influencing the political decision making process, and helping in holding governments accountable” (Hellström, 2011). Fostering constructive state-society relations is essential for conflict prevention. Just as “poor governance interventions can cause violent conflict, […] democratic governance can enable the peaceful settlement of tensions and conflicts” (UNDP, 2009).

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| Box 1. the signifcance of ICTs in conflict-affected situations  Just as mobile phones leapfrogged landlines in developing countries, the same is happening with personal computers. Smartphones are becoming the main access point to the Internet in many countries where the cost of owning a computer is still prohibitive. As a result, Smartphones are outselling computers in Africa 4 to 1 (Praelkelt Foundation, 2012).  Despite the explosion in ICT use across the developing world, the Internet is still inaccessible for many in developing countries. Only 24 out of 100 inhabitants in developing countries used the Internet in 2011, compared with 70% of inhabitants in developed countries (ITU, 2012). Basic mobile phones and SMS communication are far more accessible for populations in developing countries. In Africa, now the fastest growing market, mobile phone penetration has reached 70% (Ericsson, 2013).  Development and humanitarian actors cannot yet rely on the same tools and strategies that may work in more stable or developed contexts. Nor can they assume that populations have equal access to existing ICTs. Disparities in ICT access within countries are common based on by gender status, income and rural/urban divides, and even when the technology is accessible, illiteracy may limit the full potential of its use. Innovative solutions are being developed to reach out to the illiterate, e.g. the use of voice servers.  **IT TOOK 38 YEARS FOR RADIO TO AMASS AN AUDIENCE OF 50 MILLION… ONLY 3 FOR MOBILE PHONE** |

PAGE 3 – (RIGHT)

# How have ICTs been used to date?

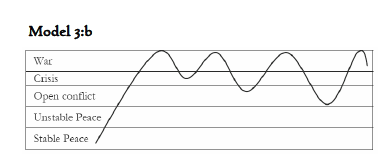
This section analyzes how ICT has been used in support of democratic governance for conflict prevention efforts through three main applications, looking at their successes, limitations, and overall lessons learned. While the potential applications of ICT are extensive, this note focuses on three specific areas of implementation that directly target conflict prevention. The first application—**early warning and response (EWR) to conflict**—demonstrates the application of ICTs for operational prevention. The potential for structural prevention is explored at the community level through the use of **social media for constructive dialogue** as well as at the level of state-society relations, through **e-governance and m-governance.** Each application examined in this note takes a progressively broader approach, building from localized operational response to broader structural changes.

Current definitions of **conflict prevention** highlight the need for both short- and long-term engagement to ease tensions and prevent the outbreak or relapse of conflict. Conflict cycles are often iterative, marked by waves of crisis and violence of varying amplitudes interspersed with phases of relative stability (Figure 1). While conflict prevention aims to anticipate and de-escalate rising tensions in the lead-up to potential conflict, interventions are not limited to a period leading up to the initial occurrence of violence. Structural conflict prevention, notably, can “include policies (such as development, financial aid and capacity building) that take place further upstream and aim to make countries more resilient and able to withstand conflict risk factors” (Niklas and Weissman, 2005), which overlap with other activities (e.g. peacebuilding).

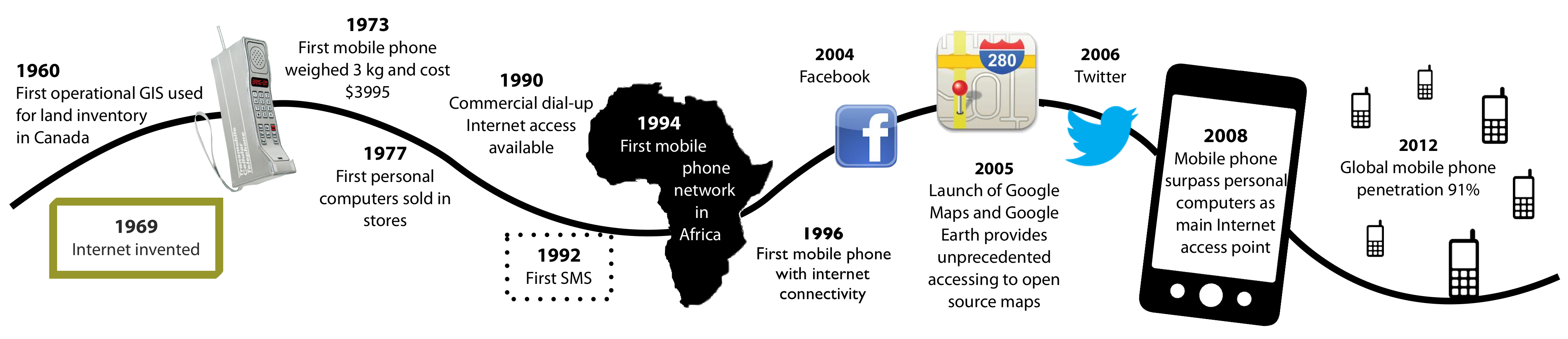
The following sections analyze the current application and lessons learned from these three areas of ICT application: early warning and response, social media for constructive dialogue, and e-governance initiatives.

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Figure 1. conflict curve example

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| **Box 2. Misuse of ICTs (or the Dark Side of)**  While ICTs can help prevent conflict, they can just as easily be used to undermine peace and security. Al Qaeda uses websites, Twitter and forums to recruit and exchange tips on explosives; and gang violence in Chicago has been linked to taunts and threats delivered through Facebook and YouTube (Frazier, 2010). ICTs are also used increasingly by “repressive regimes to block, monitor, censor or interrupt communication” (Meier, 2011). For instance, Iranian authorities used social media platforms to track down and arrest dissidents during the Green Revolution (USIP, 2010).  ICTs have also been used by individuals to circumvent the law. In Brazil, drivers used Twitter to alert users about police roadblocks intended to curb drunk driving. During the 2011 London protests, a platform was set up to share real-time route information for protestors trying to avoid police (Kahl et al, 2012).  The use of ICTs can also lead to the opposite of their states objectives, at least in the short to medium run, if they help highlight structural malfunctions in the political and governance systems. For example, a recent study in Tanzania found that increased voter access to information on political campaigns, via Internet use, led to increased cynicism and political disengagement rather than increased engagement with the political process (Bailard, 2012). |



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**Early warning and response systems (EWRS)**

Much of the impetus for early warning and response systems (EWRS) came as a response to the Rwandan genocide in 1994 and the international community’s failure to respond (OECD, 2009). Cnsistent with democratic governance principles, the goal of early warning and response is to empower “individuals and communities threatened by hazards to act in sufficient time and in an appropriate manner so as to reduce the possibility of personal injury, loss of life, damage to property and the environment and loss of livelihoods” (UN, 2006).

Unfortunately, the vast majority of EWRS have failed to link warning and response. Casey Barrs (2006) described this gap writing: “Alerts, bulletins, and reports are sent around the world in real time. Yet they rarely touch ground where the killing happens. They fly through cyberspace, high over the victims’ heads.” They have been criticized for informing foreign rather than local stakeholders. Technological advances are underutilized, as most systems rely largely on e-mail and websites for disseminating information, which rarely reach the most vulnerable (OECD, 2009).

New ICT strategies are improving linkages between detection and response (See **Error! Reference source not found.** for example). Whereas older generation EWRS used expensive, proprietary software that requires trained technical experts to gather and analyze data, newer platforms take advantage of inexpensive, widespread technology—notably mobile phones and SMS—to gather information from “the crowd” and disseminate it back them, often in real-time. This process of crowdsourcing and crowdfeeding empowers at-risk communities to make more informed decisions and react to potential threats by improving their situational awareness (Meier, 2011).The ubiquity of GPS-enabled cell phones and the availability of open source mapping software and satellite images have enabled new platforms to simultaneously map reported incidents and information through a process often referred to as crisis mapping.

Crisis mapping has been criticized for its tendency to focus too heavily on indicators for conflict, while neglecting indicators for peace and cooperation. Peace Mapping has been promoted as a counterbalance to the current conflict-centric focus. William Ury argues that in a conflict between two groups, the surrounding community—the “third side”—holds the potential to mitigate or prevent negative outcomes. Peace Mapping platforms are believed to strengthen the “third side’s” commitment to peace, while providing individuals with a means of connecting and collaborating for conflict prevention (Heinzelman et al. 2011).

**Lessons learned**

1. **Facilitate information flow within at-risk communities** about potential threats and preparedness strategies, thereby closing the gap between detection and response.
2. **Select appropriate ICTs** that match the skills and available technology of users.
3. **Pursue partnerships** to centralize crowdsourcing and crowdfeeding efforts and ensure adequate participation.
4. **Be prepared for potential misuse.** Implement measures to protect user identity from potential targeting and deter the dissemination of false information through transparent validation strategies.

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| **Box 2. Crowdsourcing in Kyrygyzstan**  The Civil Initiative on Internet Policy (CIIP), a Kyrgyz NGO, led a crowdsourcing initiative in 2011 to monitor the Presidential elections following a period of political transition, with financial support from UNDP. The objective was to track election violations, while diffusing tensions and raising the bar for political accountability through increased citizen awareness.  The initiative used the Ushahidi platform[[1]](#footnote-1) to simplify data collection through text messages. CIIP collaborated with other NGOs to funnel all election reporting into one shared platform. Submissions came from designated observers, regular citizens and campaign staff. Because of the high potential for disinformation by campaigns, trained observers assigned to large polling locations were essential for verifying claims (UNDP, n.d.).  Through the use of open-source software, this low-cost initiative was able to utilize collective knowledge in the promotion of peace, accountable politics and credible elections. CIIP successfully mapped 3,000 messages and verified 206 violations, including instances of repeat voting, ballot stuffing and incomplete voter rolls. In one case of a violation, the attention brought by CIIP led the Ministry of Internal Affairs to investigate and confirm the report. |

## PAGE 5 – (RIGHT)

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|  |  |  | **2008-present:** Decentralized 4G EWRS (e.g. Crisis Mapping) use free and/or open source technologies and mobile phones to share information within at-risk communities in real time |
| **2003-present:** 3G EWRS develop stronger links between detection and response and use mobile phones | |
| **2000-present:** 2G EWRS are still headquarters-centric, but begin developing stronger links to networks in the field | | |
| **1990’s-present:** 1st Generation (1G) Early Warning and Response Systems (EWRS) are headquarters-based and use proprietary tech | | | |

**Social media for constructive dialogue**

Much of what is happening in the world of social media is unstructured and organic in its evolution. The use of popular platforms is largely dependent on the user, not the platform creator. There are, however, examples of social media tools being created or used for the explicit purpose of promoting social cohesion and preventing conflict (See **Error! Reference source not found.**). The social networking site Salam Shabab was established in Iraq to bridge inter-group divides and foster dialogue,[[2]](#footnote-2) and in 2008, Colombian protests against the violent tactics used by the guerilla organization FARC were organized via Facebook (Himelfarb, 2012).

The United States Institute of Peace (USIP) has created a helpful framework that categorizes social media by user, for “better understanding when new media serve a functional—and a dysfunctional—role in contentious politics” (USIP, 2012). This framework consists of five levels of analysis:

* **Individual transformation**: Individuals can access new communities through social media, empowering them to be more engaged or more passive by confusing “online rhetoric with substantial political action” (USIP, 2012)
* **Intergroup relations**: Social media has the potential to either “bond” members of a homogenous group leading to polarization or “bridge” members from heterogeneous groups, promoting mutual understaning.
* **Collective action**: Online platforms can diminish the cost of organizing collective action, but these movements can have difficulty operating in traditional processes (e.g. elections), as their non-hierarchical structure makes it difficult for leaders to emerge from the “crowd.”
* **Regime policies:** Repressive regimes can use social media to co-opt or halt dissidents and protesters. This includes direct repression (targeting users), service disruption (shutting down platforms or the Internet), and mobilizing their own supporters using the same tools.
* **External attention:** While these tools can be extremely successful in drawing attention to a cause, sympathy and support can only go so far toward affecting change. Other powerful factors are also at play.

### Lessons learned

1. **Analyze how social media is already being used** to incite violence or promote peace. Use USIP’s five-level framework to analyze the functional or dysfunctional use of social media in the given context.
2. **Clearly define a strategy social media engagement,** including a plan for monitoring results**.** Just because it is on the web does not mean it is having an impact.
3. **Set modest goals.** Social media penetration in conflict-affected situations is still marginal. Current users of peace-oriented social media initiatives are often members of diasporas or external actors. Social media is still largely inaccessible for individuals living within conflict-affected situations, notably the most vulnerable.

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| Box 3. citizen journalism in sri lanka  Established in 2006, Groundviews[[3]](#footnote-3) was the first citizen journalism website in Sri Lanka. Although primarily a website, it maintains a mobile platform, an e-mail newsletter, and a presence on several social media platforms. Its central goal is to publish content from citizen journalists.  Today, the tri-lingual site is perceived in Sri Lanka as a forum for citizens to pen their own perspectives of life in conflict zones, call attention to humanitarian emergencies and human rights abuses, and share information on security conditions. By using USIP’s analytical framework, we see how Groundviews successfully serves a functional role in a context of contentious politics in a post-conflict setting.   * Groundviews empowers **individuals** to share and access information, by providing a platform for free speech, protecting the anonymity of users and publishing material on topics that are censored from traditional media. * The platform bridges several **inter-group divides** by encouraging streams of experience sharing between groups: it has active Tamil and Sinhalese users; it connects Sri Lankans and the diaspora; and it encourages domestic readers to use media sources with different points of view. * Like many online platforms, Groundviews has not translated into influential **collective action**. However, the intended purpose of Groundviews is more targeted toward attitudes and information sharing than action. * The Sri Lankan government is increasing regulation and control of websites and social network platforms **(regime policies)**, which poses a threat to Groundviews. * The Sri Lankan diaspora represents a majority of Groundviews readers, demonstrating the strength of this platform in engaging **external audiences.** |

## PAGE 6 – (LEFT)

# E- and m-governance

Evidence of changing citizen expectations of government was visibly present in the popular frustrations unleashed during the Arab Spring. Whereas governance was traditionally characterized as the exercise of authority, citizen expectations are steadily increasing for increased accountability, transparency, and citizen participation. E-governance—the use of ICT in governance programming—has become an increasingly popular way to help improve government functioning, service delivery and state-society relations.

E-governance has three components that, if used effectively, can help governments better meet rising citizen expectations in an efficient and cost-effective manner (See example in *Box 4*). These components are generally not pursued in isolation, but are rather elements of a more broader e-governance strategy:

* **E-administration**: The use of ICT to strengthen transparency and accountability in the way public institutions function (e.g. disseminating information about government policies via a website).
* **E-service**: The use of ICT to improve the delivery of public services through greater effectiveness and transparency (e.g. web-based payments for taxes or fines, to limit cash transactions).
* **E-participation:** The use of ICT to strengthen interaction between government and citizens through information dissemination, consultation and citizen participation in decision-making (e.g. SMS surveys of citizen opinions).

E-governance initiatives can improve government accountability by limiting opportunities for corruption. For example, when the Afghan National Police began paying salaries via mobile phones in 2009, it revealed that, “at least 10% of its payments had been going to ghost policemen while middlemen in the police hierarchy were pocketing the difference” (Transparency International, 2012).

Common challenges for implementing e-governance initiatives in conflict-affected situations include: i) limited Internet coverage, unreliable electricity sources, ii) lack of ICT equipment (or means to it), and iii) limited ICT capacity amongst government staff. The introduction of new ICTs can also create barriers to public services for the population, notably vulnerable groups, due to illiteracy and low penetration of certain ICTs, especially web-based services.

Innovative approaches can overcome these challenges. A sub-category of e-governance—**m-governance**—uses mobile devices to facilitate better communication between government entities and citizens. Mobile phones are generally more widespread than the Internet in fragile contexts, and a study led by Dr. Michael Best (n.d.) has demonstrated that unlike other factors, insecurity or conflict does not hinder mobile phone penetration.

### Lessons learned

1. **Government ownership is key.** E-governance initiatives should not be wholly funded by external actors. Governments must allocate a portion of the resources (financial support and staff) and be involved in planning from day one.
2. **Use multiple ICTs to enable accessibility,** notably of vulnerable groups. Multiple channels (e.g. SMS, websites and voice servers) help governments reach out to different audiences. Vulnerable populations, in particular, should be considered.
3. **Plan beyond the initial set-up.** ICT equipment and software needs to be regularly maintained, upgraded, and secured (both in the physical and cyber world). E-governance initiatives need to be planned beyond initial delivery and set-up of equipment.

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| Box 4. grievance redress in pakistan  A UNDP-funded e-governance initiative in Pakistan improved redress of citizen grievances by the Wafaqi Mohtasib (federal ombudsman) Secretariat (WMS). The ICT components of the initiative included an SMS-based complaints tracking system and an interactive voice response system to accommodate illiterate users. The system increases accessibility of this service to citizens and enables performance monitoring of WMS investigators, by digitally registering, recording and tracking complaints. Once the system was in place, a publicity campaign was launched to increase awareness of the new services.  These ICT tools enhanced public access to the WMS and helped investigators increase their average completed workload from 40 to 45 cases per month between 2008 and 2010 (UNDP, 2012). Despite the technological improvements, the WMS was ineffective for a 2-year period due to a lack of political will to appoint an ombudsman. In this period, 75,000 complaints were received, but the office lacked the authority to handle them, with the exception of minor complaints that could be handled informally. An Ombudsman was appointed in December 2012, and the office is once again operational. |

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# Overarching lessons

A few overarching lessons can be drawn from the areas of application discussed above.

**Technology selection is key.** Identify your target audiences and determine which ICTs are right for them, based on skills, preferences and access. In many conflict-affected situations, mobile phones are still the most accessible ICT due to low Internet penetration.

**Analyze the current use of ICTs** **in your area of operation.** Build off of positive initiatives promoting social cohesion, and be aware of how tools are being used to exacerbate tensions, polarize groups, or incite violence.

**Design ICT strategies for users, not donors.** Successful initiatives empower users, not external actors, to become agents of change in their own communities. Initiatives should be designed based on user priorities and preferences to be effective in preventing conflict.

**Be prepared for potential misuse.** Implement measures within your ICT strategy to mitigate the risk of misuse by taking measures to secure user privacy or validate data.

**Develop a long-term strategy.** Whether you plan to exit, scale-up or hand over responsibility, your ICT initiatives need to have a long-term vision. Projects do not end when equipment is delivered or training completed. ICT equipment and software require upgrades and maintenance, and rapid technological changes necessitate regular revisions of ICT strategies.

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| TABLE 2. RE-CAP OF ICT FOR CONFLICT PREVENTION AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE | | | |
| **CATEGORY** | **ICTs** | **STRENGTHS** | **WEAKNESSES** |
| **EARLY WARNING AND RESPONSE SYSTEMS**  *Purpose:*  Protect people from immediate threats and mitigate violence  *Users:*   * At-risk communities * Development & humanitarian actors * Governments | **4th Generation**   * Free and/or open source web-based platforms * Mobile phones * Open-source satellite images | Improves situational awareness of at-risk individuals  Mechanism for self-empowerment  Uses widespread technology | Validation of user-generated content remains a challenge; potential for misuse  Illiteracy a barrier for some, notably the poor and marginalized |
| **3rd Generation**   * Proprietary software * Mobile phones * GIS and open-source satellite images | Uses widespread technology  Formalized response system  Links detection with designated “first responders” | Resource intensive  Requires trained, dedicated individuals to collect information and respond |
| **1st and 2nd Generation**   * Proprietary software * GIS and satellites | Useful for longer term planning and coordination | Headquarters focused  Poor linkages with response  Resource intensive |
| **SOCIAL MEDIA FOR CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE**  *Purpose:*  Change cultural norms about violence and conflict resolution through dialogue  *Users:*   * At-risk communities | **Social media**   * Social networks (e.g. Facebook) * Micro blogs (e.g.Twitter) * Blogs (e.g. WordPress) * Photo and video sharing (e.g. YouTube) * Wikis (e.g. Wikipedia) | Enables user-generated content  Messages delivered in participants’ own words, which increases credibility  Inexpensive or free (although users must first have access to Internet) | Potential to be used to incite violence or polarize groups  Limited access in countries with low Internet penetration  Disparities in access create biases in produced content (e.g. urban/rural divide, gender, income) |
| **E-GOVERNANCE**  *Purpose:*  Improve state-society relations and the quality of public service delivery  *Users:*   * Governments * Citizens | **e-administration / e-services**  Digitized government processes/ services | Reduces opportunities for corruption and adds transparency | It may create barriers to services, notably for the poor |
| **e-participation**  *Information dissemination:* websites, television, radio, etc.  *Citizen consultation:* online surveys, forums, crowdsourcing, voice servers, etc. | Facilitates citizen awareness, consultation and participation in decision-making processes  Multi-tool approach reaches diverse populations | Raises citizen expectations – if not met, could lead to political disengagement and/or instability |

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# What are some of the key considerations for ICT integration?

When planning to incorporate ICT into programming, development and humanitarian actors need to undertake three analytical steps to select the most appropriate ICT strategy for the context.

1. First, conduct conflict assessment, integrating tools that analyze the role ICTs play in instigating or mitigating conflict.

FIGURE FOR MIDDLE OF PAGE

1. Second, determine the scope of the ICT initiative you plan to pursue.

Third, analyze ICT use and accessibility amongst the targeted users to determine the most appropriate tools for the context.

* 1. **CONDUCT CONFLICT ANALYSIS**

Conflict analysis is essential for understanding the context and the potential impact of programming. The Fragile States Principles (FSPs), a set of OECD guidelines for engaging in conflict-affected situations, emphasise the importance of sound political analysis in its first principle—Take context as the starting point. The 2011 FSP Monitoring Report (OECD, 2011) found that while development partners recognized the importance of understanding the context, they “do not always translate their efforts to understand context into programming, thus undermining the value of the analytical process.”

The importance of conflict analysis cannot understated. Drawing from the case of Côte d’Ivoire, Box 5 demonstrates the importance of conducting rigorous conflict and ICT analysis prior to pursuing an ICT initiative. UNDP has its own framework for Conflict-related Development Analysis (CDA), which consists of three stages:

1. Analysis of causes and dynamics (structures, actors, dynamics)
2. Review of current external responses (mapping and impact assessment)
3. Ways forward (influencing responses to conflict and developing/refining policies and programs)

The role of ICT in instigating or mitigating conflict should also be assessed, either within or in addition to traditional conflict assessment frameworks. USIP has developed an analytical framework for assessing the functional or disfuntional role of social media in situations of transition; however, it can be helpful when assessing the role of ICTs more broadly. The framework, discussed in further detail in Section II, is built around five levels of analysis: i) individual transformation, ii) Intergroup relations, iii) Collective action, iv) Regime policies, and v) External attention.

* 1. **DETERMINE THE SCOPE OF THE ICT INITIATIVE**

Consider the type (structural vs. operational) and scope of engagement (e.g. localized response, the broader community/“third-side,” or underlying state-society relations). The proposed categories in this note—e-governance, social media for constructive dialogue and EWRS—are three major ICT initiatives for conflict prevention, but they do not represent a comprehensive list

E-Governance:

Broad support for underlying state-society relations

Social media for constructive dialogue

Structural engagement for community resilience

Early Warning and Response Systems (EWRS) Localized, operational response

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**3. ANALYZE ICT USE AND ACCESSIBILITY**

To determine which ICTs best fit the context, it is important to consider the following issues related to use and accessibility.

1. Local ICT Infrastructure

* Market penetration of various ICTs
* Reliability of electricity supply
* Internet availability and speed

1. Capacity and preferences of local, target users

* Capacity to use and maintain proposed ICTs (e.g. literacy and technical skills)
* Desire of target audiences to utilize proposed ICTs

1. ICT Accessibility

* Identify disparities in market penetration amongst groups based on gender, age, ethnicity, region, socio-economics, education, etc. (See Box 6)

1. UN capacity to use and maintain ICT initiative

* Ability of UN staff to set-up and maintain ICT initiative
* Availability of local partners with capacity to help establish and maintain the initiative

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| **Box 6. Gender-based disparities in ICT access**  Disparities in ICT access within countries are common based on by gender status, income and rural/urban divides. In addition to the economic, education, and infrastructure barriers faced by other marginalized populations, women also face cultural barriers that prohibit or limit access to ICTs. For instance, “in many in many conservative societies, the widely held belief that women will behave improperly with a cell phone (texting boyfriends, etc.) keeps the technology out of their hands” (Murthy, 2011). A 2011 Dalberg study found that 25% fewer women have access to the Internet than men. The disparity was highest in sub-Saharan Africa where the gender gap reached 45%. |

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| **Box 5. E-governance in Côte d’Ivoire: the case for rigorous conflict and ICT analysis**  In 2010, the government in Côte d’Ivoire implemented an e-governance project in an effort to increase the credibility of the electoral process. The initiative—a new voter registration system—incorporated forgery-proof biometric identity and voter cards and a digital database of voter photos (Panos and UNDP, 2011). Unfortunately, the initiative exacerbated pre-existing tensions around the contentious issue of citizenship and failed to render the process of voter registration more efficient and transparent.  Without sufficient technical capacity and resources, the system struggled to meet demand. Only a fraction of the civil registry had been digitized prior to the elections, and manual verification was still required. Other technical problems with the system included: frequent breakdowns of generators needed to operate computers, insufficient light for taking ID photos and a lack of procedures to secure equipment. Moreover, complicated procedures and documentation requirements effectively discriminated against vulnerable populations. For example, the scarcity of photocopiers made it extremely difficult for rural applicants to meet the new documentation requirements (Carter Center, 2012).  After multiple delays, the first elections held after the civil war (October-November 2010) provoked a relapse into violent conflict that was not resolved until April 2011.This e-governance initiative, while not the cause of violence, did put pressure on historical tension lines, demonstrating the need for rigorous conflict and ICT analysis, to ensure selected tools and strategies are appropriate for the context. |

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# What are practical/concrete steps to take?

**The following steps and questions should be considered when planning an ICT initiative in a conflict-affected or fragile setting.**

**Applying an ICT lens to Conflict Analysis**

When analyzing the causes and dynamics of conflict, consider how ICTs used by various actors to exacerbate or mitigate tensions.

1. Which ICTs are conflict actors employing? Consider the involvement of both local and external actors (e.g. diasporas).
2. How are conflict actors using these tools?
   1. Are ICTs being used to spread divisive, polarizing or hateful messages?
   2. Are ICTs being used to bridge divides and ease tensions?
3. Are these communication channels effective in provoking or coordinating action, either peaceful or conflictual?

When reviewing current responses, identify how ICTs are already being used and assess the impact on conflict prevention efforts.

1. How are ICTs currently being used by external actors in their response to conflict?
2. What is the impact of ICTs within existing programs?
3. What lessons can be learned from these experiences?

When assessing potential ways forward, consider how ICTs can play a role in programming.

1. What opportunities exist for applying or refining the use of ICTs for development or humanitarian programs?
2. Are there opportunities for partnering with or supporting existing ICT initiatives?

**Determining the scope of the ICT initiative**

1. Do you plan to focus on structural or operational conflict prevention?
2. What is the scope of your proposed intervention? (e.g. at-risk areas, the surrounding community or broader state-society relations)
3. Who are the target users of the initiative? Be as specific as possible in identifying the user profile (e.g. identifying breakdown by gender, education-level, socio-economic background, geographic distribution, etc.).
4. What is the timeframe for the initiative? Will the project be handed over to local partners/users, scaled up or cut off at the end of the project cycle?

**Analyzing ICT use and accessibility**

Local ICT Infrastructure

1. What is the market penetration of various ICTs within the geographic scope of the initiative? If there is a low penetration, is it due to a lack of infrastructure or other factors (personal preferences, financial accessibility, cultural barriers).
2. Is there a reliable electricity supply that is available and affordable for users? If there are frequent cuts in power, could they hinder the effectiveness of the initiative? What is the cost of maintaining a reliable energy source (e.g. in areas that require generators)?
3. What are the available options for accessing the Internet via mobile phones and computers? What is the average cost to access the Internet through these channels?

Capacity and preferences of local, targeted users

Discuss ICT options with local users. It may be useful to conduct a brief survey of potential users to have better insight into ICT usage, skills and preferences.

1. What is the literacy level of the targeted users?
2. Which ICTs do the targeted local users have experience with? What skills/training would be necessary to introduce a new ICT?
3. What are the ICT preferences of the targeted users?
4. Are there local trained professionals available to provide technical support (e.g. equipment maintenance)?

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ICT Accessibility

1. Analyze the usage patterns of vulnerable groups within your targeted user base and identify potential disparities in access.
2. What is the reason for these disparities in access? Are they based on gender, age, ethnicity, region (e.g. urban vs. rural), socio-economics, education, etc.
3. What steps can be taken to ensure equitable access to the proposed ICT initiative? (e.g. vocal servers for illiterate users, multi-pronged approaches to reach different audiences with a combination of ICTs)

UN capacity to use and maintain ICT initiative

1. Do the internal staff have the necessary skills to set-up the ICT initiative or will external technical experts be required?
2. Will the internal staff be able to be maintain the ICT initiative (e.g. upgrades, maintenance)? Will training or external expertise be required?
3. Are there local partners with the skills and resources to help establish and maintain the initiative?

In addition to the questions above, Table 3 provides a breakdown of some issues to consider when selecting ICTs.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| TABLE 3. ICT TARGETING IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED SITUATIONS | | | | | |  |
|  | **MOBILE PHONES** (crowdsourcing and crowdfeeding) | **WEBSITES**  (static) | **SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS** | **TELEVISION** | **RADIO** | |
| **PARTICIPATORY POTENTIAL** | +++ | +  Suited best for one-to-many communication | +++ | + | + | |
| Suited best for one-to-many communication | | |
| **POTENTIAL TO REACH LARGE AUDIENCES** | +++ | + | + | +++ | +++ | |
| Low internet penetration in many conflict-affected states | |
| **POTENTIAL TO TARGET SPECIFIC AUDIENCES** | +++ | +  Low internet penetration in many conflict-affected states | ++  Can be used for some audiences, such as diasporas | ++ | ++ | |
| Requires thoughtful media placement and design | | |
| **POTENTIAL TO REACH THE POOREST** | +++  Illiteracy a hurdle for SMS, but voice servers provide an alternative | + | + | ++ | +++ | |
| Low internet penetration | |
| **POTENTIAL FOR COORDINATION** (DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN ACTORS) | +++ | +++ | ++ | + | + | |
| Suited best for information dissemination rather than collection | | |
| **Legend:** Level of potential (+++ High — + Low ) | | | | | | |

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# ANNEXES

|  |
| --- |
| GLOSSARY OF ICT TERMS |
| **Crisis mapping:** A process of sourcing, visualizing and analysing data from a humanitarian, political, ecological, financial or other crisis, often in real time, on a dynamic, interactive map. (OCHA, 2013) |
| **Crowdsourcing:** The collection of information from “the crowd” usually via mobile phones. When anyone having access to the appropriate technology is allowed to provide information, crowdsourcing is said to be unbounded. When the pool of informants is restricted to a small group of selected individuals, crowdsourcing is referred to as crowdseeding. |
| **Crowdfeeding:** The dissemination of information collected from the crowd back to users usually via mobile phones. |
| **Early Warning and Response System (EWRS):** “The provision of timely and effective information, through identified institutions, that allows individuals exposed to a hazard to take action to avoid or reduce their risk and prepare for effective response.” (UNISDR) |
| **E-governance:** The use of ICT in governance programming. |
| **Geographic Information System (GIS):** digital database used to capture and store data linked to a specific time and location that can then be retrieved and analyzed. |
| **Information and communication technology (ICT):**the variety of technologies used to access, generate and share information. |
| **Short Message Service (SMS): “**The text-communication service component of phone, web or mobile communication systems, using standardized communications protocols that allow the exchange of short text messages between devices.” (OCHA, 2013) |
| **Social media**: The use of ICTs by individuals to create and participate in virtual networks or communities. This ICT category includes social networks (e.g. Facebook), micro blogs (e.g. Twitter), blogs, and photo and video sharing websites (e.g. YouTube). |
| **Tweet:** A message of 140 characters sent via the microblog platform Twitter. |

## PAGES 13-14 – (RIGHT & LEFT)

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2. The initiative also has a reality TV show by the same name. http://salamshabab.com/about-salam-shabab/ [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Groundviews was launched under the Voices of Reconciliation Project, conducted by the Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA) from 2005-06 and funded by CIDA and AusAID. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)