United States

Institute of Peace

Communication for Peacebuilding – Priority Grant Program

Call for Proposals: Violence, Information, and Peacebuilding

Background

In 2011, the United States Institute for Peace is launching the **Communication for Peacebuilding** priority grant program (CfP). The program will support innovative practice and research designed to increase understanding of how communication flows and communication technology can best be leveraged to improve the practice of peacebuilding. The CfP initiative is based on the premise that because communication is fundamental to peacebuilding, the nature of communication flows within and around conflict has a significant impact on the practice of peacebuilding. The CfP program does not have a geographic focus, and projects in all countries and regions are welcome to apply.

Call for Proposals

Regardless of how conflict-prone a community or society is, violence matters. It creates immediate impact for individuals and communities. As a result, violent incidents always create a communication ecosystem that disseminates information about the violence. This ecosystem includes information flows ranging from word-of-mouth rumor mills to remote sensing satellites. In conflict-affected areas, new communication technologies are rapidly making these ecosystems more complex.

> Individuals in remote areas of Congo use SMS to report on violence and military activity in their communities. . .

The focus of this solicitation, entitled *Violence, Information, and Peacebuilding*, is to improve our ability to impact the communication ecosystem resulting from violent incidents in ways that:

1) **Help support and leverage information flows that create more positive peacebuilding outcomes;**

2) **Help undermine information flows that create escalatory dynamics.**

A wide range of human rights and peacebuilding approaches rely on the information flows stemming from violent incidents, including conflict monitoring and early warning, civilian protection, community security initiatives, genocide and mass atrocity prevention, human rights monitoring and fact finding, and evidence gathering for international tribunals. On the other hand, the same information flows can contribute to mobilization, intimidation, retaliatory attacks, radicalization, and other escalatory dynamics.

To provide a sharper focus, this solicitation is specifically concerned with leveraging information flows as part of three peacebuilding approaches that are used as violence is occurring or in the immediate aftermath of violence. These approaches are *conflict monitoring and early warning*, *civilian protection*, and *community security*. Together, these three related approaches have the common goal of responding to incidents in ways that stop the violence, prevent immediate escalation, and/or get individuals out of harm's way. A range of information flows is at the heart of each of these approaches.

> 'Peace volunteers' in Nepal monitor human rights abuses and publicize the incidents and perpetrators through 'wall newspapers', hand-written local news bulletins displayed in public places. . .

While a broad range of communication-based approaches can have a peacebuilding impact, this particular solicitation is not designed to support longer-term peacebuilding initiatives, such as inter-group dialogue, reconciliation projects, peace education, or other projects designed to strengthen a culture of peace.

Practical Knowledge

The goal of this program is to create practical knowledge that can be put to use by other practitioners. Therefore, proposed projects could include:

- Pilot and proof-of-concept programming.

- Evaluation and assessment of current and past programming.

- Action research and other forms of reflective practice.

- Field-based research.

- Initiatives designed to support communities of practice and other learning networks.

This list is not exhaustive, we welcome other creative ideas.

Proposal Guidance

Stronger project proposals:

- Will articulate not just how the project will support a tool or medium, e.g., community-radio, but how the project analyzes/works with/creates support for information flows that contribute to peacebuilding outcomes.

- Will understand and work with the dynamic relationship between sender, message, medium, receiver, and context.

- Will address not just information flows, but the response to those flows.

- Will articulate projects that begin with an analysis of existing communication flows as opposed to simply proposing new strategies.

> In the absence of credible and local media, many in Kyrgyzstan turned to social media and chat rooms for information during the uprising of April 2010. Within days, an online rumor that 50,000 Bakiyev supporters were marching on the capital spreads panic throughout the city. . .

- Will address how results of the project will reach communities impacted by conflict and violence.

- Will include a field-based component.

Learning Groups

The group of grantees supported under this Call for Proposals will commit to forming a learning group. The learning group will be designed to facilitate knowledge-sharing, mutual learning, joint dissemination, and even collaboration on implementation where feasible. The premise is that having several organizations working together, while using different approaches, creates synergies that ultimately produce a more solid, robust understanding of the problems being confronted.

As part of the full proposal review process, USIP will identify and resource a lead organization to coordinate the learning group. In addition to overseeing the group, the lead organization will be responsible for aggregating the knowledge produced by the group and developing strategies for creating learning in the broader peacebuilding field through the dissemination of materials, the creation of learning tools, and so on.

Under this solicitation you should propose an individual project that your organization will implement. **You do not need to form a learning group in order to apply.**

Eligibility

All U.S. and foreign non-profit organizations and universities are eligible to apply for funding. Support cannot be provided to government agencies or to individuals working for government agencies.

Current USIP grantees are not eligible to apply. Individuals who are currently working as USIP contractors may not be eligible to apply for grant support depending on the nature of the contract.

Projects in all regions and countries will be considered. The Communications for Peacebuilding program does not have a geographic focus.

To determine eligibility prior to submitting an application, please contact Grant Program staff.

How to Apply

This Call for Proposals involves a mandatory two-step application process. The first step in the process is to submit a 3-page concept note. There is no form or specified format for the concept note. The note should describe the proposed project, including a clear description of the goals and the activities that will be implemented. Please also describe the qualifications of the organization and the project team. Please pay attention to the "Proposal Guidance" section above when developing your concept note.

> Satellite imagery analysis shows Sudan Army checkpoints controlling major roads where there have been cases of busloads of southerners being ambushed and many reported instances of rape. . .

Concept notes must be submitted by April 1st, 13:00, EDT (GMT-5). Concept notes should be emailed to cfp@usip.org.

For concept notes that receive a positive evaluation, applicants will be contacted and asked to submit a full proposal. At the top of the concept note, please provide the name of the contact person, the name of the implementing organization and the email address of the contact person.

Timeline

- Submission of Concept Notes: April 1, 2011. 13:00, EDT (GMT-5)
- Request for full proposals: No later than April 8, 2011
- Full proposals due: May 9, 2011

- Funding decision: July 31, 2011
- Initiation of projects: September 2011

This timeline is subject to change.

Funding

Contingent on available funding, current plans for this solicitation envision:

- Total funding: $300,000
- Number of projects funded: 3-5
- Grant range: $40,000-$120,000

Final decisions regarding funding will be made by the United States Institute of Peace Board of Directors.

If you have any questions, please email Andrew Blum, ablum@usip.org.

About The United States Institute of Peace

The United States Institute of Peace (USIP) is an independent, nonpartisan organization created and funded by Congress. Through its work the Institute provides the analysis, training, and tools that help to prevent, manage, and end violent international conflicts, promote stability and professionalize the field of peacebuilding.