Communication for Peacebuilding: Practices, Trends and Challenges

Contents

Summary

This report commissioned by the United States Institute for Peace, is designed to inform a new Priority Grant on Communication for Peacebuilding. Based on evidence collected through a workshop of experts, interviews with key stakeholders and desk based research; this report outlines the current field of Communication for Peacebuilding, and identifies the key trends and challenges. The report is not comprehensive in its coverage. It does not attempt to map every initiative and every trend or challenge. Rather, it focuses on identifying some key initiatives that illustrate new developments and opportunities in the field and summarizes the key trends and challenges highlighted by the interviews we carried out and the desk research we undertook.

The report identifies a wide range of activity that uses varying forms of communication (old and new) undertaken by Non-Governmental Organizations, Governments, Multilaterals and the Private Sector to prevent conflict, improve early warning, monitor peace and promote peacebuilding post-conflict. The research identifies a field that is relatively new with little hard evidence to back up claims for effectiveness, although much anecdotal evidence to suggest that interventions are making a practical difference on the ground.

A key development is the mingling of forms of communication tools as the distinction between 'old' and 'new' media blurs and newer technologies are being used to amplify and complement the messages of the more traditional forms of media. This comes with the recognition that new tools for communication are no panacea for conflict prevention and peacebuilding although they do open up new channels of communication and offer new opportunities for local people to become more actively engaged in conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities. There are many challenges in the use of communication tools including the need for collaboration and improvement in the flow of information between organizations, issues of credibility, trust and validity, the need to ensure privacy, security and practices that are ethical and challenges posed by environmental and cultural factors.

One key challenge ahead is the need to develop a knowledge bank of evidence-based practice. There are clearly new opportunities and new possibilities being created by the emergence of more distributed, horizontal communication flows, but much of the potential remains unrealized. There is a need to learn about the situations in which a focus on communication flows are most important, how changes in those flows can best be facilitated, and how these flows can best be harnessed to create positive peacebuilding outcomes. This is the challenge that is supported by the new USIP Grant Program, Communication for Peacebuilding http://www.usip.org/grants-fellowships/priority-grant-competition#CFP

Acknowledgements

the Project Leader and was responsible for writing this Report. Thanks should also go to Andrew Blum at USIP for his foresight in commissioning this work and launching this new Priority Grant. He has brought a curiosity, dedication and spirit of learning to this endeavor which I hope is replicated in the projects that the Grant Program supports.

Introduction

This report has been commissioned by the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) as part of the launch of a new Grant Program on Communication for Peacebuilding. This Report will:

- Set out a map of the field, providing examples of practice that illustrate new possibilities and potential;
- Identify the key trends and where the field is heading, and;
- Identify key challenges that must be overcome if the field is to advance.

The new grant program that is being launched by USIP will support research and innovative practice that explores how communication flows and communication technology can best be leveraged to improve conflict monitoring and participatory peacebuilding. It is envisioned that the project will run for five years with an annual grantmaking budget of approximately $350,000.

The CfP program is based on two premises. **First**, that communication is an irreducible element of peacebuilding. **Second**, that communication technologies are restructuring the relationships between international organizations, local peacebuilders, and communities. In particular, new tools for communication are allowing messages to be amplified and communication flows to be increasingly horizontal and increasingly continuous. This has significant implications for how conflict monitoring and peacebuilding programs can be implemented.

The CfP Grant Program's primary goal is to build a knowledge base within the field in order to encourage evidence-based practice. It will do this through support for research, pilot programming, evaluation and assessment of existing programming, and the facilitation of learning networks. This report is based on interviews with key stakeholders in this field, desk research and a workshop that Search for Common Ground convened on 19-20 January for experts and leading organizations in the field of Communication for Peacebuilding. It is not a comprehensive review of the field, rather an attempt at highlighting some key practices, trends and challenges and identifying what might be on the near horizon in terms of developments.

Background

Communication is central to many aspects of work in conflict and post-conflict settings. The use of traditional or mass media (radio, TV, print journalism) has long been acknowledged as playing a crucial part in providing information and messaging that can shape popular views. As we know, these tools of communication have been used to both incite violence as well as carry messages that help prevent violent conflict, and promote peace and reconciliation. Technological innovations have created new opportunities and outlets for communication. In particular, the spread of mobile phones, crowdsourcing technologies, and social networks have enabled messages to be amplified, information flows to be accelerated, and new spaces opened up for the involvement of individuals and communities to play a role in the various phases of the conflict cycle (Diane Coyle and Patrick Meier 2009) . In recent years the

use of these new technologies have changed the nature of communication flows that contribute to crisis and disaster response, conflict monitoring and early warning, civilian protection, community peacebuilding, and state-building activities.

The recent publication, *Peacebuilding in the Information Age: sifting hype from reality* (ICT for Peace Foundation Jan 2011), suggested that we are moving from a rigid top-down hierarchical approach to an increasing reliance on mobile, inclusive, interactive tools, building on a wealth of information gathered from locals and those outside of traditional development, humanitarian and peacebuilding communities. This transformative switch to a more bottom-up approach, focusing on the individuals and communities in crisis and conflict areas, creates opportunities for improved real-time communication with a range of agencies, but also creates opportunities for greater self-sufficiency in times of crisis and conflict. In essence, these new tools have changed what information can be gathered and accessed, who can participate in the communication process, and also, who can be a peacebuilder.

The Communication for Development community has long argued that effective information and communication processes are prerequisites for successful development. Proponents argue that communication and information flows are the lifeblood of development projects; an integral part of empowering and enabling a healthy, vibrant civil society; essential for the creation of efficient and effective economies; and a critical component of social adaptation. This central principle was articulated by Panos in their publication, *The Case for Communication* (2007 Panos, London, page. 3):

(FARDC Billboard. Source: SFCG)

"For any improvement in the lives of the poor to be lasting and sustainable, it must include strengthening the powers of poor people to participate in the processes of development – and this means strengthening their capacity to communicate."

Recognising the importance and potential of this principle for the conflict prevention and peacebuilding field, the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) is launching a new grant program, Communication for Peacebuilding, which is designed to support learning and improved practice in this area. USIP is interested in exploring ways it can support the creation of new horizontal and vertical communication flows through the use of various tools that lead to improved conflict monitoring, community-based responses to conflict, and participatory peacebuilding. For the new grant program to be effective and add value where it would lever greatest change and learning it is necessary to map existing initiatives and understand the trends and challenges facing this field. Building on this analysis and the opportunities identified, new funds can then be directed at the most effective and innovative projects that will enhance practice in this area.

The Parallel Histories of Communication for Development and Communication for Peacebuilding

The Communication for Peacebuilding work has its roots in the philosophy and practice of Communication for Development. This section provides a short history of Communication for Development and charts the recent emergence of Communication for Peacebuilding highlighting the similarities and connections between the two areas of practice. We will see that each approach is rooted in and reflects the socio-political and economic circumstances of the era in which it emerged and evolved. Both areas of practice can trace long histories and although Communication for Development is a more mature field of practice, the roots of Communication for Peacebuilding can be traced far back in history.

A Short History of Communication for Development[1]

The theory and practice of Communication for Development is an evolving field, with different approaches and perspectives unique to the varied development contexts. Communication for Development is characterized by the diversity of communication techniques used to address the problem and comprise a diverse "toolkit" including: information dissemination and education, behavior change, social marketing, social mobilization, media advocacy, communication for social change, and participatory development communication.[2]

A number of phases in the evolution of Communication for Development can be observed. The practice began in the 1940s following the establishment of the Bretton Woods system, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in 1944 (Manyozo, Linje 2006). Informed by a mainly economic perspective, the dominant approach to development came to be known as *modernization and growth* theory. This approach characterized development as a unilinear, evolutionary process and divided the world into poor, traditional societies on the one hand and rich modern societies on the other hand.

The approach to the use of communication for development championed by early pioneers in the field, Daniel Lerner, Wilbur Schramm, and Everett Rogers is captured in the following quote:

"Communication has been a key element in the West's project of developing the Third World. In the one-and-a-half decades after Lerner's influential 1958 study of communication and development in the Middle East, communication researchers assumed that the introduction of media and certain types of educational, political, and economic information into a social system could transform individuals and societies from traditional to modern. Conceived as having fairly direct and powerful effects on Third World audiences, the media were seen as magic multipliers, able to accelerate and magnify the benefits of development." (Fair, 1989 quoted in Servaes and Malikhao 2004 p 5)

Mass media was seen as important in spreading awareness of new possibilities and diffusing practices and shaping peoples' attitudes and behaviors. The effectiveness of these approaches were questioned, with some believing that at the point where individuals decide on whether to change their behavior or not, personal communication was far more likely to be influential. The communication approaches in this era attempted to gain support for development initiatives, typically with messages informing the

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[1] This section draws on the ideas in Jan Servaes and Patchanee Malikhao 2004.
[2] See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Development_communication

population about projects, illustrating the advantages of these projects, and recommending that they be supported. In short, engaging in a 'soft-sell' approach.

The elitist, *vertical or top-down orientation* of the diffusion model, influenced by a Eurocentric perspective on development was challenged by Latin American social scientists, and a theory more focused on *dependency and underdevelopment* emerged during the 1960s. The dependency approach formed part of a general re-orientation or paradigm shift in the social sciences that was informed by structuralist and political economy explanations of development. As the dependency paradigm took hold, it gave rise to a movement for a New World Information and Communication Order from the late 1960s to the early 1980s. The new states in Africa, Asia and the success of socialist and popular movements in Cuba, China, Chile and other countries provided the goals for political, economic and cultural self-determination. These new nations shared the ideas of being independent from the superpowers and moved to form the Non-Aligned Nations. The Non-Aligned Movement defined development during this period as political struggle and communications strategies became contested and politicized.

During the 1970s and 1980s, a new concept of development emerged emphasizing *cultural identity and multidimensionality*. The growing interdependency of nations and global issues such as economic and financial crisis, ecological and security crises gave rise to a new perspective on development and social change. The defining characteristic was that change needed to be examined from the 'bottom-up', from the self development of the local community (Servaes and Malikhao 2004 p. 6). During this period, and in to the 1990s, the 'modernization model' disappeared and was replaced by the 'participatory development' model. This model was almost the polar opposite of the modernization model which viewed mass communication as playing a top-down role in social change. Research and practice during these years were characterized as more theoretically diverse and tended to focus on development agency coordination and the development of indigenous models of communication and development through participatory research (Fair and Shah, 1997 p. 19).

The *participatory model* stressed the importance of cultural identity of local communities and of *democratization and participation at all levels*. This led to communication strategies, not just inclusive of, but largely coming from, the traditional 'receivers'. Paulo Freire (1983 p. 76) refers to this as the right of all people to individually and collectively speak their word. The participatory approach involving the community became the point of departure for communication work. An indication of the shift in approach towards a deeper political economy and culturally sensitive understanding of the roots of poverty in the developing world is that the World Bank adopted a definition of communication for development as the "*integration of strategic communication in development projects*" based on a clear understanding of **indigenous realities** (Manyozo 2006).

The advent of the Information Age with the increasing availability of mobile phones and the internet has generated new interest in the impact of these tools on development and more focus on the poor as producers and innovators, as opposed to just consumers of information. The advent of M-Services such as M-Finance, M-Health, M-Agriculture are examples of how the availability of new communication tools have spawned new approaches to communication for development.

Reflections on Communication for Peacebuilding

In the arena of conflict transformation and peacebuilding, communications have historically played a role in shaping the views of policy-makers and influencing popular opinion on conflicts. Starting with the Crimean War (print media), through the American Civil War (photo journalism and print media), World War II (cinema newsreels, radio and daily newspapers) and the wars in the Persian Gulf (1991) and the invasion of Iraq (2002) (global television and the 24-hour news cycle), we can see how communication and media has shaped the views of policy makers and the public on war and the prospects of peace.

(Sierra Leone: Source SFCG)

With the accelerating pace of change and the use of an increasingly diverse range of communication tools, we have seen a shift from the institutional, vertical realm to the new communication space characterized by the merging of mass media and the interactive, horizontal networks of communication. Castells (1996) suggests this has given rise to a new form of communication, mass self-communication, through the Internet and wireless communication networks. We have seen in the recent events in the Middle East how this form of communication has enabled social movements to organize and bring about revolutionary social change.

Within the peacebuilding profession, the role of communications has been relatively unexamined until recently. The seminal work of Kalathil, Langlois and Kaplan (2008) provides a rare examination of the role of communication and media in post-conflict and fragile states. They observe that nearly every post-conflict intervention involves some aspect of communication, from messaging on distinct topics to encouraging national dialogue to rebuilding destroyed media infrastructure and institutions. They conclude that

"both in research and in the field, communication remains an afterthought, frequently treated as part of the public relations strategy rather than an integral and technical component of the post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction process. Because of this, there is very little understanding of the role that communication processes play in the numerous strands of post-conflict reconstruction, including peacebuilding, governance, and long term development". (Kalathil, Langlois and Kaplan 2008 Foreword)

At the same time, the authors recognize that the media and communication sector can be an important element of stabilization, reconstruction and peacebuilding challenges. Over the last several years, Kalathil, Langlois and Kaplan (2008 p 6) and Vladimir Bratic and Lisa Schirch (2007) note that communication-based activity has been used to support humanitarian relief, improve governance, and contribute significantly to the process of reconstruction and stabilization. In terms of identifying the strands of practice in Communication for Peacebuilding, one can discern interventions that have

contributed to managing expectations, building both trust in and oversight of state institutions, aiding the formation of an inclusive national identity, and fostering a participatory and engaged citizenry.

There have been discrete strands of activity around donor public relations campaigns, longer term interventions using behavior change communications as a tool to achieve outcomes, and media development activities which are aimed at supporting the structures and institutions of the media sector. One might also mention 'strategic communications' which might be defined as communication intending to convey a managed message designed to persuade the audience of the information disseminator's point of view (perhaps similar to the early modernization/diffusion models in Communication for Development).

(Sierra Leone Source: SFCG)

Organizations using communication tools as a central part of their work in conflict prevention and peacebuilding is a relatively recent phenomenon. Search for Common Ground is one of the oldest organizations working in this area, having been established in 1982. Internews was founded in the same year. Both organizations started out working on finding ways to address the cold war. Other organizations using communications intentionally as part of their programming include International Crisis Group (1995), Intermedia (1996), BBC World Service Trust (1999), and Equal Access (2000). More recently, there have been a few tech-oriented organizations that have appeared on the scene using new tools for communication (primarily SMS texting) to promote conflict prevention and peacebuilding, notably, FrontlineSMS (2005) and Ushahidi (2008). The work of these organizations would fall within the participatory model and would stress the importance of cultural identity of local communities and of democratization and participation at all levels. The advent of the use of the new tools for communication, like the most recent efforts in the field of communication for development, uses horizontal communication flows involving an interchange of sender-receiver roles through crowdsourcing and crowdfeeding.

Conclusions

There are many insights that can be gained from the experience of Communication for Development that resonate with Communication for Peacebuilding. Three key conclusions emerge from the literature about Communication for Development that have direct parallels in Communication for Peacebuilding:

- First that *communication is an interactive process, involving a multitude of actors and information flows*. Communication is not just about the media or the messages, but the interaction that takes place in a network of social relationships. In contrast to earlier views of communication as a one way process (from a higher to a lower level, from the Centre to the Periphery, from an institution to

an individual, from a communication-rich nation to a communication-poor one), today, the interactive nature of communication is increasingly recognized as involving multiple actors and many channels through which information can flow. The early models of the 50s and 60s saw the communication process simply as a message going from a sender to a receiver (that is, Laswell's classic S-M-R model). The emphasis was mainly sender-and media-centric. Since the 70s, however, communication has become more receiver-and message-centric. The emphasis now is more on the process of communication, the social relationships and interactions created by communication and the social institutions and changed contexts which result from such relationships.

- Second, is that *communications media should be viewed as a mixed system of mass communication and interpersonal channels*, with mutual impact and reinforcement. In other words, the mass media should not be seen in isolation from other channels and information flows. The debate is not about the role and benefits of radio versus the internet for development and democracy, peacebuilding and conflict transformation, but rather how blending these two could lead to an impact greater than the sum of the parts.

- Third, is that communication in development and peacebuilding processes raises an *inter-sectoral and interagency concerns*. The particular challenges involved in the multi-sector, multi-agency spheres of development and peacebuilding and the increasing amount of information that is accessible and available creates practical challenges of coordination information and activity. Consequently, the ability of communication to successfully influence and sustain development and peacebuilding depends to a large extent on the adequacy of mechanisms for integration and coordination of information and action.

Framing Communication for Peacebuilding

There are many ways to understand the current practice of Communication for Peacebuilding. There is no commonly accepted definition, but most would agree it involves the use of a variety of communication tools to support the processes and activities involved in resolving violent conflict and establishing a sustainable peace.

Peacebuilding is defined as the process intended to address the root causes of conflict, to reconcile differences, to normalize relations, and to build institutions that can manage conflicts without resorting to violence. The process involves a diverse set of actors in government and civil society and can involve short-term actions to prevent violence or can take place over many years. Peacebuilding can encompass a range of tasks that include identifying and addressing the underlying political, economic, social and structural imbalances that have contributed to a conflict, reconciling the competing objectives/interests of opponents, preventing the re-emergence of past conflicts and ensuring broad citizen participation in the peace process and transitions to peace, and building the capacity of those institutions that support a secure civil society.[3]

There are four ways to conceptualize how communication has been applied to peacebuilding. First, one might look at the **channels of communication flows** between the following entities

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[3] From the National Academies – USIP Roundtable on Technology, Science and Peacebuilding. Draft Strategic Plan for the first three years of operation 05/06/2011.

- Between individuals in conflict;
- Within a group where conflict exists;
- Within groups or communities in conflict;
- Between communities and organizations such as multilaterals, government, and NGO's where cooperation and coordination are issues.

This approach draws on traditional communication theory and provides one way of framing where communication takes place and is useful to identify at what level communication might be helpful in promoting positive change.

A second way of framing Communication for Peacebuilding is to look at the **tools or platforms** that are used. Diagram 1 sets out a range of different tools that are currently used. A distinction is made here between 'traditional' and 'new forms of media', although this divide has been questioned and there are those who feel the use of these tools are now blurred and the distinction is no longer relevant.

Diagram 1. Tools or platforms
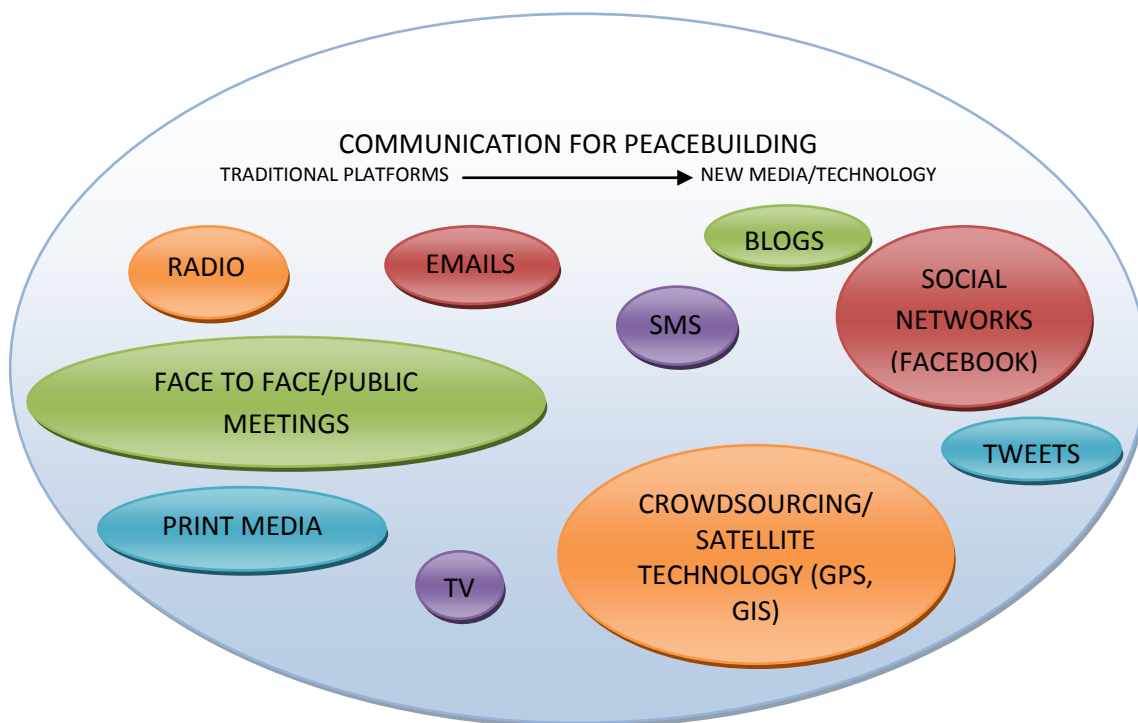
This approach highlights the multitude of pathways, functions and relationships essential to communication and focuses on the tools through which people communicate. Traditional methods, like community meetings, radio, television, and newspapers, have long since served to inform communities and organizations on the ground. With the addition of new communication tools like mobile phones, SMS, and social media, individuals, communities and organizations can now complement these traditional forms of media (and even challenge subversive narratives) by communicating their own stories. In addition, new tools for communication facilitate more information gathering and interactions between users. In their application to peacebuilding, these new tools can contribute to greater knowledge about changing conditions on the ground, needs of communities that are enduring or have endured violence, and even increase contact and understanding between opposing groups. New technologies change what information can be gathered and who can participate in the communication
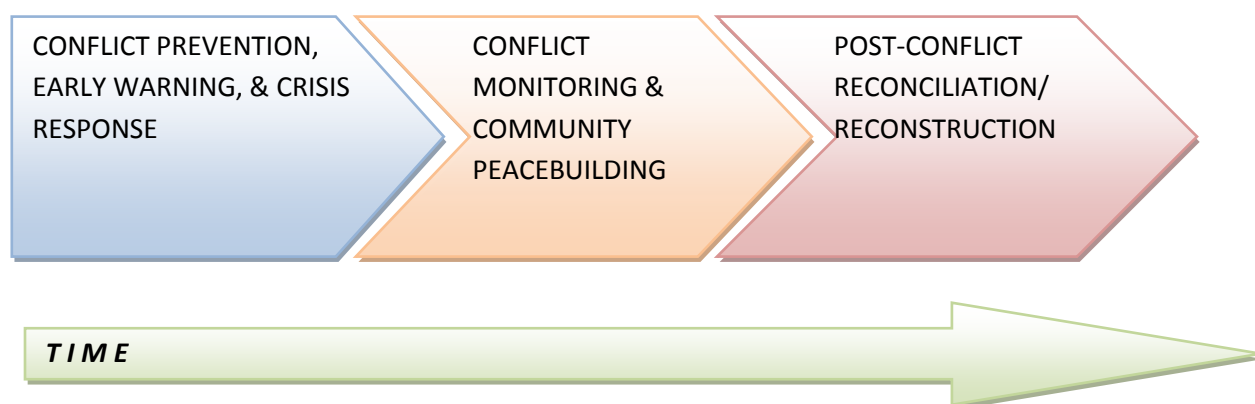
process. Both need to be seen as working in tandem as different platforms to achieve common goals of peace and stability.

The following distinctions have also been made in terms of the tools used and how information is conveyed:

- One to Many – broadcast - radio, TV, web mobile applications and short message service (SMS) broadcast;
- One to One - voice, mobile and SMS;
- Many to Many - social networks including online or mobile internet, mapping and crowdsourcing.

Diagram 2 represents a third way of framing the field, in terms of the **spheres of activity** or where communication can play a role in the broad field of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. The spheres of activity set out below are not complete, but represent the major areas where communication is used in an intentional way to pursue peacebuilding and conflict transformation objectives. This approach is useful in that it reminds us that these processes may have a sequential dimension and that there are particular actors who may be more active in one sphere than another and that different tools may be used in the different spheres identified.

Diagram 2. Spheres of Activity

CONFLICT PREVENTION, EARLY WARNING, & CRISIS RESPONSE	CONFLICT MONITORING & COMMUNITY PEACEBUILDING	POST-CONFLICT RECONCILIATION/ RECONSTRUCTION

T I M E

A fourth approach might involve a functional analysis of how media is involved in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. One such framework, is that proposed by Schirch and Bratic (2007) who identify 7 functions that media can play:

- Media as Information Provider and Interpreter;
- Media as Watchdog;
- Media as Gatekeeper;
- Media as Policymaker;
- Media as Diplomat;
- Media as Peace Promoter;
- Media as Bridge Builder.

This approach shows how media and communication have been used in diverse ways in conflict and peacebuilding settings, with different purposes, serving different interests. It shows the potential for communication to play a multitude of valuable roles in promoting peace and preventing conflict.

Mapping the Field

The field of Communication for Peacebuilding is expanding and governments, international organizations and NGOs are increasingly looking to use all forms of communication in positive ways. The following sections present a selection of current practices across multilaterals, governments, private sector organizations and NGO to illustrate how communication is being increasingly used in the conflict transformation and peacebuilding field. The information is presented based on selected categories used in Diagram 2 above.

Conflict Prevention, Early Warning and Crisis Information Management and Response

Communication technologies can provide effective tools to prevent violent conflicts, provide early warning and enable more effective responses to crises. Until recently conflict early warning systems have not taken full advantage of new technologies. Recent activity by multilateral/international agencies (the dominant actor in this sphere) has begun to change this. In response to the absence of mechanisms to report across sectors on the immediate impacts that global shocks have on the lives of the poorest and most vulnerable populations, *multilateral actors and governments* are developing a variety of information gathering systems to help predict and prevent such impacts. Many of these new approaches involve information management approaches that take advantage of the vast amounts of information available through the internet and mobile technology, and then code for specific indicators that the organizations believe are telling signs of change. Gathering information can identify developing trends in countries that can point to potential sites for violence. Information can also provide evidence for human rights abuses, incidents of genocide, and complaints of oppressive regimes.

The United Nations and the European Union, are developing such information management systems. For example, in 2009, the UN developed the Global Impact and Vulnerability Alert System (GIVAS) to collect real-time information in order to better prepare decision makers for a response to a crisis/emergency.[4] GIVAS is designed to provide the international community with early, real-time evidence of how a global crisis is impacting the lives of the poorest and most vulnerable populations; raise "red flags" on newly emerging and dramatically worsening vulnerabilities of global concern; provide decision makers with real time information and analysis to ensure that crisis-related decisions take appropriate account of the needs of the most vulnerable countries and populations; and bring the voices of the most vulnerable into high-level decision making forums. GIVAS should be seen as a neutral fact-finding and sorting tool. New data presentation formats (i.e. interactive graphics, infographics and mappings) and new technologies will be used. The Alert System's communication package is in development and could include different types of deliverables such as quarterly "situation reports", "alerts", "eye-witness reports", and a "Vulnerability Information Hub" website that could serve as a one-stop-shop to allow GIVAS partners and its wider constituency to access a cross-sectoral array of information on vulnerability.

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[4] GIVAS http://www.un.org/sg/GIVAS/backgrounder.pdf

The United Nations also has a similar initiative called Global Pulse that collects information on vulnerable populations, and is designed to provide real time information to bridge the gap between information and response.[5] The stated outcomes of this initiative are to a) better protect countries against development reversals by integrating vulnerability and resilience considerations into their development policy and planning, and to understand the impacts of a crisis on vulnerable populations early on when there is still time to prevent irreversible harm and b) more effectively target development resources in a climate of increasing fiscal austerity.

In response to the challenges that the abundance of information and new systems presents, ICT4Peace and Ushahidi are working to support the Chief Information Technology Officer of the United Nations (UN) together with other key UN agencies and Departments to develop a coherent crisis information management strategy, addressing procedural, organizational and technological challenges that currently impede efficient and effective aid delivery today. This comprises four dimensions a) information architecture work to define and gather a set of data critically needed during a crisis b) technology development initiatives to create interoperable systems and tools c) capacity building activities to enhance the international community's overall human resources and technical capacity to deal with crises and d) outreach efforts to increase support from a broad spectrum of stakeholders in both public and private sectors for these new integrated approaches (ICT for Peace 2005).

The European Commission, through the Joint Research Centre (JRC), has designed the Geo-Spatial Analysis for Global Security and Stability to use the wealth of information given by satellite imagery in order to code findings and troubleshoot potential areas for crisis.[6] The JRC has also developed a similar crowdsourcing tool to monitor conflict information. Open Source Text Information Mining and Analysis (OPTIMA) is designed to monitor texting and blogging information to detect public sentiments.[7] This effort is in conjunction with their European Media Monitor (EMM) which collects media posts and examines them for changing public attitudes. The EMM system scans and mines data from across 1,600 news portals per day on the Internet, searching 80,000 articles in 40 languages for relevant keywords. This can help identify which issues are important at an early stage of a crisis. For example, if a search is made of racist or discriminatory slogans, this could provide an indication of impending ethnic conflict. The software also recognizes patterns, such as networks of relationships between the people who are mentioned in the news articles. In 2010, OPTIMA integrated a blog-monitoring feature and a sentiment detection system to follow public opinion (ICT for Peace Foundation 2011). The JRC also recently partnered with the African Union to develop, deploy and operate the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS).

Regional organizations are also taking advantage of new communication tools to better protect their citizens. The Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Eastern Africa, has developed a Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) in order to respond to and prevent conflict in their region (Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda). In partnership with ICT4Peace, CEWARN has assessed how ICTs could be used in areas that generally have no access to communication technology, and started using high-frequency radios, satellite phones, and other

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[5] UN Global Pulse http://www.unglobalpulse.org/about
[6] Joint Research Centre, Geo-Spatial Analysis for Global Security and Stability http://isferea.jrc.ec.europa.eu/Pages/default.aspx
[7] OPTIMA http://ipsc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/showaction.php?id=18

technology to access areas that used to take days to travel to and review.[8] Similar initiatives have also been developed by the Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS) within their ECOWAS Warning and Response Network.

The United States Humanitarian Information Unit (HIU) has developed Visualized Information and Synthesized Temporal Analysis (VISTA) to map and display substantive information on satellite imagery. One example of this is their use of mapping to chart activities of the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda.[9] Other organizations like Reuters and the Koff Center for Peacebuilding in Switzerland have developed similar information gathering systems.

The examples cited so far exemplify top down approaches using sophisticated data management approaches to early warning and crisis prevention. However, a major review of conflict early warning systems made the sobering observation that the humanitarian community is in no better position today to prevent another Rwandan genocide than we were in 1994. First and second generation early warning response systems characterized as external, interventionist, state-centric, disjointed and top down have proved to be unreliable and ineffective and often not linked to appropriate responses. The report, produced by David Nyheim (2009), identified a consensus of what a good "good" early warning system, consists of. It is one that: (1) is based "close to the ground" or has strong field-based networks of monitors; (2) uses multiple sources of information and both qualitative/quantitative analytical methods; (3) capitalizes on appropriate communication and information technology; (4) provides regular reports and updates on conflict dynamics to key national and international stakeholders and; (5) has a strong link to responders or response mechanisms

Although the examples from the UN and the EC may help to bridge the information gap and provide improved top down responses, the report concluded that investment should be made in early warning systems that involve regional organizations and NGOs and which seek to empower local stakeholders directly so the latter can prevent violence and/or to get out of harm's way. With the freer availability of open-source software and mobile technology, micro-level early warning and early response mechanisms, often called "citizen-based early warning" or "third or fourth generation early warning", are the latest wave in the field of conflict early warning. They are more people-centered, run by the community, for the community and are more about direct, first responder intervention. Perhaps, the most notable system was the Foundation for Co-Existence's early warning and early response system in Sri Lanka which operated from 2003 to 2009. These systems cover specific areas within a country and attempt to prevent riot-type violence. A conference held recently at the Brookings Institution explored Community Self-Protection Strategies and acknowledged the importance of attempts by locals to take steps to protect themselves. One interesting conclusion that emerged was that in this area there have been 'limited or ad-hoc attempts to inventory civilian self-protection tactics and strategies and to support them.'[10]

The **private sector** is also harnessing technology and ICTs to contribute to conflict prevention. Google is currently sponsoring a project lead by Brian Lapping called the PAX Initiative, which plans to use the information available through the internet, mobile phones, and satellite imagery to point to potential

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[8] CEWARN, http://www.cewarn.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=97&Itemid=131
[9] HIU Highlights Report No. 13 April 1-2006 – June 30-2006.
[10] http://www.brookings.edu/events/2010/1028_civilian_protection_two.aspx

conflicts. The PAX Initiative hopes to be an international public platform for crowdsourcing for organizations and governments to obtain information in their crisis analysis and response.

Conflict Monitoring and Community Peacebuilding

Closely linked to the data management efforts cited above are those projects which use new communication tools to monitor conflicts and empower citizens to engage in peacebuilding. For example, the **NGO** Ushahidi[11] has developed crowdsourcing platforms that were originally designed as a website that was developed to map reports of violence in Kenya after the post-2007 election fallout. The original website relied on reports submitted via the web and mobile phone and presented this information on a Google Map. This website had 45,000 users in Kenya, and was the catalyst for subsequent platforms. Since then, the name "Ushahidi" has come to represent the people behind the "Ushahidi Platform". The Ushahidi platform has now been developed as a tool to easily crowdsource information using multiple channels, including SMS, email, Twitter and the web. Two further platforms have been developed by Ushahidi, Swift River and Crowdmap. SwiftRiver was born out of the need to understand and act upon the massive amounts of crisis data that tend to overwhelm in the first 24 hours of a disaster program. It is an open source platform that aims to democratize access to tools for filtering and making sense of real-time information. Crowdmap is the hosted version of the Ushahidi platform which allows users to map reported events and visualize information ranging from elections, local resources, and crisis information (http://www.ushahidi.com/products)

(Town Hall Meeting Source SFCG)

Ushahidi has been used in a variety of conflict settings including the Democratic Republic of Congo, Gaza, and Afghanistan. With its focus on user-generated information, Ushahidi is designed to be adaptable to SMS, mobile phone usage, and internet posts. Whilst, traditional information management systems are typically closed and controlled, Ushahidi is open and decentralized. These technologies allow for empowerment and ownership at the local community level. Unlike other more traditional systems, Ushahidi closes the feedback loop, such that information collected can be communicated directly to those who most need to use it. As Patrick Meier, a consultant with Ushahidi said, "It is about local communities getting more relevant information for their own immediate security and to be more empowered and not to have to depend as much on external players."[12]

New tools for communication developed for use in development and humanitarian responses on the ground are being re-evaluated to adapt to the needs of peacebuilding and conflict prevention. For example, Frontline SMS is a software that was designed to help NGOs in developing countries improve their communication and increase their capabilities through a simple and cost effective system of SMS. Since its development, FrontlineSMS has been adapted to the needs of peacebuilding to provide election monitoring, to enhance local radio programming, and to continue to improve NGO

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[11] Meaning 'testimony' in Swahili
[12] Interview with Patrick Meier.

peacebuilding efforts. For example the African Great Lakes Initiative has used FrontlineSMS to monitor the elections in Burundi and prevent violence from breaking out. The possibilities for cross collaboration between development and peacebuilding communication initiatives are a vital way for peacebuilding efforts to develop their communication capacities.

An interesting example of a project that shows the potential of the use of new communication tools in community monitoring of peace is the Voix des Kivus pilot project led by Columbia University's Center for the Study of Development Strategies with support from USAID which is designed to assess the feasibility of using a decentralized cell phone based SMS platform for collating events information. A key objective is to learn whether such a decentralized system is technically feasible in the region and seen to be of value to participating communities and potential users. The pilot was launched in four villages in 2009 and has been monitored closely in order to assess and address any concerns raised by participants. At the end of 2010 it was operating in 15 villages in South Kivu.

Voix des Kivus provides a technology to populations in South Kivu that lets them post accounts of events that affect their daily lives, from disease outbreaks and crop failures to population movements and conflict incidents. For participating communities it provides a system for creating histories, archiving testimonies, and communicating with the rest of the world. The information that is gathered can form an important resource to researchers and practitioners working in the region, providing a tool to learn more about the situation on-the-ground in difficult-to-access areas.

The key participants in the Voix des Kivus project are the cell phone holders. In each participating village there are three holders, one representing the traditional leadership, one representing women's groups, and one elected by the communities. Holders are provided with phones and monthly credit, they participate publicly and any village member can seek to post messages through them. Consent of the village is required for participation and continued engagement by holders requires that they post at least one message a week, although that message may be empty. All content is posted on a purely voluntary basis by holders and is done in a revenue neutral way.

The technology for Voix des Kivus is cheap to set up and simple to use. Built on the FrontlineSMS software, the system allows holders to use any cell phone to send numeric or full text posts. On the receiving end there is a standard cell phone linked to a laptop linked to the internet that receives

messages that are automatically filtered according to origin, coded for content, cleaned to remove duplicates, and merged into a database. Graphs and tables are automatically generated which can then be automatically mounted into bulletins spanning any period of interest and with different levels of sensitivity. Translations of non-coded text messages are undertaken manually.

Results so far from the pilot suggest that the system is easy to establish and is valued by participating villages. It is being used to record events but also to voice concerns and requests by otherwise isolated populations. Villagers focus as much or more on developmental concerns as they do on the conflict situation. There appears to be great potential for growth in these directions. Organizations like Intermedia and INCAS Consulting also

provide services that can analyze conflict situations and short, medium, and long term trends, providing training and risk assessment.   These information gathering devices are designed to take advantage of the wealth of information acquired through ICTs. As more and more people have access to mobile phones, skype, and blogging, the information produced through ICTs will transform the way in which organizations like the UN or the EU respond to crisis situations.

Another example of the use of mobile technology in the monitoring and response to violence at a community level is the PeaceNet initiative supported by Oxfam in the aftermath of the Kenyan election violence. When waves of political violence swept through Kenya after the December 2007 presidential election, human rights advocates in the country turned to cell phones to help stem the violence.

PeaceNet was a coalition of Kenyan NGOs, partnered with Oxfam GB to create a text messaging "nerve center" that served as a vital tool for conflict management and prevention by providing a hub for real-time information about actual and planned attacks between rival groups. The text messages were then relayed to local "peace committees" that deployed mediators and took other immediate action to stem the violence (see the following report for a write up of this project, Mobile Technology for Social Change: Trends in NGO Mobile Use, released in April 2008 by the UN Foundation-Vodafone Group http://mobileactive.org/files/MobilizingSocialChange_full.pdf

In preparation for the coming elections in Kenya, Digital Democracy, a United States based organization that uses technology for civil engagement, has a project to map peacebuilding efforts and to work to prevent violence in the lead up to the 2012 elections. The project, called Sisi ni Amani, works to make connections between peacebuilding efforts for "greater coordination and mobilization."[13] Local and regional information can provide opportunities for groups to mitigate tensions as they develop and create a dialogue among actors.

Mapping technologies like Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and satellite imagery are also being used to engage with communities and map information that can help in forecasting trouble spots or see trends in the field. The American Association for the Advancement of Science has used global positioning systems and geographic information systems to map information on human rights abuses in order to, "strengthen advocacy campaigns, support legal cases, and enhance response coordination and prevention efforts."[14] The UN is using mapping in ongoing peacekeeping efforts, like in Sudan, to map where response teams are stationed. Local organizations are also using information to create maps and visual data in their work. GeoCommons and iMMAP are both platforms that deliver web-based location-based visualization and analytics, supporting large data sets in real-time. Both organizations use mapping software and GIS to translate information into visual data. Similar initiatives are used by **local community groups** like Map Kiberia or Map Action to provide local information on community development issues or response efforts.

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[13] Digital Democracy http://digital-democracy.org/what-we-do/programs/#si
[14] AAAS Geospatial Technologies and Human Rights. http://shr.aaas.org/geotech/

Post-Conflict Reconciliation and Reconstruction

Much of the work using communication tools to promote post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction has been carried out by NGOs funded by various donors. **NGOs** have used communications to promote cultures of peace, strengthen the freedom of speech, build trust and understanding, and change attitudes towards violence, and improve systems of governance through their use of media and communication. Search for Common Ground, Internews, Developing Radio Partners, Equal Access, and Panos are examples of organizations that look to help build media capacity and to promote messages of peace, through, among other things, journalism training, media legislation, radio networks, TV and production assistance, and inspirational dramas. These organizations also support the development of local media content through radio shows, interviews, and community outreach programs like traveling theater. This programming provides public service information on health issues, women's rights, and youth interests. It also helps to empower local voices, create transparency throughout the development process, and provides a safe space for interaction between different factions within communities. These organizations focus on a range of media communications, although are mostly centered around the use of radio programming as it is the most accessible form of media. The following examples illustrate these approaches.

Panos has nearly 25 years' experience of increasing citizens' participation, enabling better decision-making and working with the media to improve reporting on crucial issues. Panos identify four key areas of their work, all of which involve communication as part of their strategy: Voice, Dialogue, Media, and Information and Communication Technologies (or what they call Networked Communications). In terms of their media work, Panos continues to work supporting journalists in developing countries to produce news and features that examine political decisions and bring hidden issues to light. Panos have also used participatory communication approaches to work with 'hard-to-reach' groups and help bridge the gaps that prevent the media and researchers working with each other. A newer departure for Panos is their work around Networked communications, where they work to ensure that the benefits of communication technologies are made available to all (e.g. Panos have a project using mobile phones to help meet the Millennium Development Goal of reducing child mortality).

(DRC 2003 Young Reporter Source SFCG)

Equal Access has been working since 2000 to empower underserved communities across the developing world with information and education that could be life-changing. Equal Access describes itself as a communications for social change organization which combines the power of media with grassroots community mobilization. Through their work of creating customized communications strategies and outreach solutions they address critical challenges affecting people in the developing world such as women and girl's empowerment, youth life skills and livelihoods, education, human rights, health, and democracy and governance. Their project in Nepal (Naya Nepal) exemplifies their approach well and shows the power of media in post-conflict settings. Naya Nepal has been Nepal's second-most popular radio program for four years. Each week, one sixth of the population of Nepal listen to Naya Nepal for an inspiring and information-packed half-hour that educates its listeners on the basics of peace, rule of

law, human rights, gender and minority balance in politics, justice, security, voting, and many other hallmarks of a strong, stable, and representative government.

Begun in June 2006, just before a comprehensive peace agreement between the insurgent group CPN Maoist and the Government that ended a decade of armed conflict, sudden political changes at the end of the monarchy provided new hope for civic participation. Seizing this opportunity, Naya Nepal's original broadcasts concentrated on training women in politics and democracy building media skills and understanding the impact of the conflict on the individual and on society and discussing root causes of conflict with special reference to the changing political context of Nepal.

Now, Naya Nepal is well established as a forum where voices from rural or isolated areas can be heard in the most influential political circles in Kathmandu and where policymakers can communicate directly with constituents. To increase the specificity and applicability of the show, Naya Nepal has now been split into central and non-central broadcast, one being produced centrally by Equal Access and seven other being produced and supported independently in seven districts in regional and local languages. The main target groups of the program are rural and semi-urban youth and adults. This example demonstrates the power of radio as a communication tool in countries where radio is a dominant part of society and is the key vehicle for popular mass communication.

Other organizations have focused on strengthening the media infrastructure in conflict prone countries. Internews, for example, trains media professionals, produces local radio and television news, and advocates for fair media laws and policies. Overtime, Internews has expanded its work fostering independent media and access to information into Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

Search for Common Ground (SFCG) has also conducted training for journalists in conflict sensitive journalism that takes a common ground approach to issues and has used radio and TV, often in combination, to influence how millions of people think about themselves, their neighbors and their governments. SFCG uses drama and popular culture to inspire individuals from conflict-torn communities as they mend fences and rebuild their societies, teaching the next generation about new possibilities for living harmoniously within complex situations. From Kinshasa to Kathmandu, Search's work shows how dramatic programming and provocative documentaries can play a key role both in transforming people's perceptions about their lives and communities and – in the long-term – fostering peaceful co-existence among diverse peoples. SFCG began using communication tools in Macedonia in 1998, with a children's television program called Nashe Maalo (Our Neighborhood). The award-winning series ran for five successful seasons and is often credited for being one of the cultural forces that stopped Macedonia from falling into ethnic conflict (Channel Research). In 2008, SFCG created an adaptation of the series in Lebanon, where Kilna Bil Hayy was produced for a highly-diverse ethnic and religious audience. In Nigeria and Egypt, SFCG created a fast-paced drama series about a fictional television news station, aptly named The Station, which aired on national television and radio stations.

(The Team in Cote d'Ivoire Source SFCG)

In Search's most recent project, local production teams and writers in Africa, Asia and the Middle East are producing *The Team*, an episodic drama about soccer players from different ethnic and regional

groups, who must learn to overcome their differences so they can play as a team in order to score goals and win on the pitch or in life.

Search is planning on producing The Team in 17 countries. In each place, the series is written locally and tells stories of a fictional soccer team whose players reflect the ethnic, religious, and economic diversity of their nation. Search has produced the TV and Radio series Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire, Morocco, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Ethiopia (Radio only). The program is about to be aired in Nepal and Liberia.

New communication tools are changing the ways in which organizations can gather and synthesize information, use technology to produce new information, or develop initiatives that use technology to involve the community to facilitate peacebuilding. New communication tools have empowered individuals and communities to bear witness in countries where regimes want to erase inconvenient truths, create their own media and tell their stories, as they wish (particularly important where parts of society are marginalized in mainstream media and politics), document, narrate, build archives, disseminate information strategically, build capacity, create knowledge, and create oral testimonies, advocate and promote and protect human rights.

New communication tools have also been used in conflict situations to enable communication between citizens to warn each other and inform communities where violence is occurring. Existing social media like Twitter, Facebook, and blogging have been used to help share information about ongoing conflicts. Twitter provides a platform for the public to interact with each other in real time and most importantly to have anonymity when responding, protecting individuals from potential repercussions of opposing groups or regimes. The most famous use of Twitter in a crisis situation was during the post-election events in Kenya in 2009, where citizens messaged about events happening around the country (Coyle and Meier 2009).

Blogs like iRevolution and Diary of a Crisis Mapper are collectives that highlight on going initiatives in peacebuilding and communications. Blogs also allow local individuals or groups to tell their story and interact critically with the issues of conflict and peacebuilding. Platforms like Ushahidi also have corresponding blogs where individuals can learn of ongoing initiatives and be inspired by other ideas. Groundviews, a blog in Sri Lanka, supports a rich dialogue about media freedom and issues related to the conflict transformation process in Sri Lanka. Groundviews strives to call attention to issues on the ground and foster debate.[15]   Blogs and Facebook allow for multimedia uploads. Pictures and video are sometimes the most powerful ways to provide evidence from inside a conflict zone. Multimedia also reaches out to individuals who are not literate but who can use technology. Social media provides a platform for individuals to connect across boundaries and to discuss issues that they might not otherwise have an opportunity to voice.

Summary

The current selection of initiatives reviewed above demonstrates a broad spectrum of activities that comprise Communications for Peacebuilding. The possibilities for applying communication technology to peacebuilding are facilitating greater and more accurate communication between individuals and communities on the ground and the various other actors involved. It creates the possibility for better dialogue, expression, and understanding, locally, regionally, and internationally. Ever evolving, technology can bridge gaps that peacebuilding and conflict prevention consistently struggled with in

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[15] Groundviews http://groundviews.org/about/

early peacebuilding efforts in places such as Rwanda, South Africa, and Yugoslavia. But there are still many challenges, much we do not know and many lessons to learn. The next sections deal with these challenges and trends.

Key Challenges

Communication for Peacebuilding is a new and emergent field, and with every new field there are key challenges that initiatives and organizations must overcome to be effective and realize the full potential. Communications can be used to incite and escalate violence as well as to mitigate and prevent violence. Blogs and radio shows can just as easily create a culture of fear and distrust as they can promote trust and understanding. The challenges that Communication for Peacebuilding faces relate as much to the development of trust and credibility as they do to more technical or organizational issues. Challenges can be broken down into the categories of:

- •   Collaboration and Management of Information Flows;
- •   Credibility, Trust and Validation;
- •   Environmental Factors;
- •   Privacy, Security and Ethical Challenges.

Collaboration and Management of Information Flows

- ***How can we manage the flow of large quantities of information and avoid information overload?***
  With the explosion of interconnectivity and the flow of large quantities of information one of the biggest challenges is information overload. There is a need for planned coordination and joined up working to ensure that interoperable networks emerge that support the timely exchange of information that can prevent violence and save lives. The reluctance of individuals to share information combined with complex information management architectures within the international/UN system, combined with information overload, poses great challenges for those working in this field including the UN system, humanitarian and peacebuilding organizations, civil society and the military. There needs to be responsible leadership, buy-in from all levels of these organizations and appropriate training to ensure the efficient and effective use of the information generated by these new tools for data gathering and communication in crisis and conflict settings (*Peacebuilding in the Information Age* January 2011 p. 3). In addition, there is a need for those involved in Communication for Peacebuilding to be closely coordinated with Communication for Development initiatives. Overcoming silos of professional disciplines and coordination between multiple actors on the ground remains a major challenge.

- ***How do we connect monitoring information with community-based responders, not just international responders?***
  This challenge involves getting information into the hands of those who are located in the community who can act as first line responders. Currently, information is not always available to those on the ground in the communities who may be mobilized to make an appropriate response (to mobilize movement of people out of harm's way or to mediate between conflicting parties)

- ***How can multiple actors across sectors not used to working with each other, work more collaboratively? For instance, how can NGOs work better with telecommunication service providers, the private sector with government and multilateral institutions?***
  Coordination between organizations in sectors not used to working with each other is a real challenge for the field. Prof. Bratic observes, "In a real situation, it is very hard to come to any kind of conclusion, to come to a common strategy…There is this realization that if we are really going to make a lasting impact we are going to have to coordinate with multiple members of the field."[16] Each has their own programs and systems that gather and process information, and it is difficult to coordinate between these differing systems to provide the most effective response.

Credibility, Trust and Validation

- ***How do we validate information collected from a decentralized group of sources? Who gets to speak for a community? How do we manage the biases inherent in access to communication?***
  Unregulated information flows allows for a wealth of information gathering, but technology cannot screen for relevant and accurate information in the way that experienced individuals and organizations can. *Accuracy* of information is an important challenge when gathering user generated information. Authentication is key. Witnesses can SMS or phone in updates on the conflict, but the verification of those messages is crucial if they are to be used to justify a response. Organizations must consider how they will verify and account for data gathered through ICTs. For example, Ushahidi provide guidance on how one can verify whether information received through ICTs is accurate or not http://community.ushahidi.com/uploads/documents/c_Ushahidi-Verification-Guide.pdf Discrimination and bias may be present where tool such as phones or Internet may privilege the voices of those who are communication literate and have access to the tools available and discriminate against other groups that are less fortunate, such as women, the elderly and handicapped.[17]

- ***How can we improve the measurement of the effectiveness of Communication for Peacebuilding approaches, particularly since they are normally one element of a larger approach?***
  As Communication for Peacebuilding develops into an important part of peacebuilding, the community of actors must start to measure it's impact. Some studies have already been conducted on the effectiveness of communication in peacebuilding, but they are by no means comprehensive. Many of the existing studies are focused on presenting results of projects, sometimes dependent on funding. An employee at USAID remarked, "…it is more that nothing has been proven yet, and that is the biggest challenge."[18] Efforts to measure the impact of communication projects can run into difficulties when trying to directly attribute attitudinal or behavioral change to an individual's interaction with media. Without knowing the impact that communication technology and media have, programs cannot provide any evidence that communication enhances peacebuilding efforts. While communication is a vital aspect of peacebuilding, the measurable impact of these tools for communication is uncertain and will struggle to attract significant funding unless measures are developed and used.

- ***Given that information is inherently political, how can we improve the credibility and trust between local populations and organizations, between government and NGOs?***

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[16] Interview with Vladimir Bratic, Hollis University.
[17] http://technologysalon.org/2010/07/women-mobile-phones-mservices.html
[18] Interview USAID employee.

Information is only helpful if it is accurate and trusted. Given that there can often be suspicions of where 'free information' is coming from and who the political backers of this information are, establishing trust of the source of the information is another difficulty to overcome. Regimes often control access to information to draw loyalty and support from individuals. Organization must look for ways to challenge the use of information to encourage violence while also creating a culture of trust and reliability between communities and the media. Practitioners and organizations using Communication for Peacebuilding should keep in mind the challenge of trust when setting up media and public communication networks.

Environmental Factors

- ***How do we overcome poor accessibility to channels of communication?***
  Whilst projects in marginalized rural areas face the most significant hurdles, it is these communities that are often at greatest risk of violent conflicts and where projects have the greatest potential for beneficial effect. There are a number of challenges that relate to accessibility:

  - Lack of Infrastructure: no electrical power, no running water, bad roads, etc;
  - Levels of literacy;
  - Costs of access to the internet and of running communication projects can be prohibitive (e.g. in Africa, one year of (dial-up) internet supply will cost more than the average annual income.

- ***How can we improve the enabling environment to support effective and appropriate regulation and work around government control of content and telecommunication tools?***
  In many countries, governments maintain a tight control over media freedoms and can often make it difficult for traditional and independent media to operate unhindered. It can also create barriers to entry for new communication platforms. It is purported that in Yemen, there is a $20,000 registration fee for internet platforms.

Privacy, Security, and Ethical Challenges

- ***How can we ensure the protection and privacy of individuals and communities? How can responders ensure that new systems uphold the 'do no harm' principle?***
  Privacy is another challenge in dealing with the wealth of information gathered from new communication tools. In any situation of armed conflict, any conversations with protection actors can put people at risk, not only because of the sensitive nature of the information collected, but because mere participation in a protection process can cause people to be stigmatized or targeted. The risks they incur can range from physical violence to social marginalization, and are often unknown to the person soliciting the information and, sometimes also by the person providing it. It is therefore imperative that any organization that collects information linked to individuals or incidents for protection purposes, should manage the risks associated with this process and adopt an appropriate code of conduct (ICT for Peace Foundation 2011 p 18).

  Nigel Snoad observed, "Privacy is an enormous challenge. I can't make a website for Microsoft without making a very clear privacy statement about use, but some of these groups have not tackled that adequately. It needs to be communicated loud and clear for the trust internally and

externally."[19] Actors should consider how to protect the privacy of individuals who supply information during a conflict and also agree whether that information is considered public or private and how information should be shared with other organizations and the public. ICRC has produced a set of Professional Standards for Protection work carried out by humanitarian and human rights actors in armed conflict and other situations of violence which addresses critical issues such as humanitarian intent, non-discrimination, and informed consent. It provides 16 standards and guidelines to ensure that the collection of potentially sensitive information, and its subsequent handling, is undertaken in a professional manner. [20]

It has been suggested that the technology community need to develop their own 'do no harm' policy including robust accountability and monitoring mechanisms. In summary, communication tools have substantially improved the rapid and effective protection response to communities and individuals in need. To respect the 'do no harm' principle, all users need to be aware of the responsible management of information. They also need to take in to account the risks associated with the geographical distance between the sender and the receiver and the possibility of manipulation of the crisis responder on the one hand and exposure to risks of violence to the civilians on the other.

- ***Given that community-based reporting often raises expectations, how can we ensure that early warning and monitoring information elicits an appropriate response?***
  The creation and gathering of information can enhance current peacebuilding efforts, but there is a serious challenge in considering how to facilitate a response to the plethora of new information that is available. Systems that gather and produce new information about conflicts using ICTs frequently do not elicit an appropriate response. Despite what information is provided, there is often a lack of political will to respond. For example, while new technology can provide real time information about flare ups of violence, there is no trigger to elicit a response from the actors that can prevent violence. Nigel Snoad stated that, "A lot of these tools don't accurately think about the issues around the purpose of the information or tools…When you get a platform, it elicits calls for assistance without having a way for that assistance to be provided. There is a duty of care that has to be a part of how we are doing this."[21]

  International actors, including governments and multilaterals, aren't compelled to act when presented with new information, nor do these new pathways of information point towards the most effective and necessary action. Information is frequently not actionable or policy related. Therefore peacebuilding and conflict prevention efforts struggle with coordination and timeliness. The most accurate and compelling information about a conflict often presents itself when it is too late to act. Prof Meyer also believes there is a disconnect between the information and who is receiving it. "If you really look in detail at the warnings, the wording, who it's communicated to, you will find that there is still a problem of warning quality…. it needs to be framed in the right way so that it reaches the relevant people."[22]   In order to elicit a response, information needs to be synthesized in a focused and cohesive way and directed at the right recipients. The proponents of 4G early warning response systems argue that training and minimum preparedness measures are pivotal to empowering vulnerable communities with the ability to respond. These should build on existing

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[19] Interview Nigel Snoad, Microsoft and ICT4Peace.
[20] ICRC October 2009 Professional Standards for Protection work carried out by humanitarian and human rights actors in armed conflict and other situations of violence.
[21] Interview Nigel Snoad, Microsoft and ICT4Peace.
[22] Interview Christoph Meyer, Kings College.

local coping capacity mechanisms and ingenuity. With all of the innovation taking place around the use of visualization tools, of real-time, of data-mining, of crowdsourcing, of government2.0, the stark fact is that our ability to respond to crises does not appear to improve much, year after year. The reason for this is simple: political problems can't be solved by technological solutions, and at root most problems addressed by the Communication for Peacebuilding field are political in one way or another.

Key Trends

Several trends within the field of Communication for Peacebuilding can be identified:

- **Technology is not a panacea:** We are beyond the hype of new media technology, and now looking at the practical application and realistically assessing potential and challenges. Communication tools are not sufficient in themselves and need supporting through strategy and outreach that relies on more traditional means – face to face, community peacebuilding efforts (For example, Ushahidi provide guidance on how their crowdsourcing apps should be used in the context of a wider strategy http://community.ushahidi.com/uploads/documents/c_Ushahidi-Practical_Considerations.pdf). Adapting these communications strategies to fit the cultural context is also key to successful conflict prevention and peacebuilding initiatives.

- **The use of visuals** (maps and satellite images) are creating hybrid sources of information which are much faster than any text in answering key questions such as: who is providing what kind of response/aid where? Interactive maps are much clearer than texts in many situations and are likely to become a more important tool in early warning and response settings and are part of the shift away from reliance on a culture of text/literacy towards a more visual culture

- **Implications of more open and inclusive communication**: As the growth of mobile phones, better broadband access, social media (Twitter, Facebook, etc.), more sophisticated and more easily downloadable applications for crowdsourcing and crowdfeeding and cheaper and greater access to technology bring more and more people in local communities into the process, this will involve a reframing, "looking at conflict populations not as victim, but thinking that they are the first responders and that they have agency."[23] This will lead to a democratization of communities as opportunities grow to empower local actors as first responders in conflict and crisis-affected areas. The more active role of citizens also has implications for diplomacy and policy. As conflict resolution and peacebuilding programs continue to recognize and value the contributions of local actors, organizations will have to work on how to incorporate this information into their policy and programming (the US Government is already reflecting on the implications of this trend). Nigel Snoad observed, "We haven't quite figured out what this means for diplomatic efforts and the use of the State Department or what does this mean for the UNDP and their donors and funding, what does it mean for peace and justice organizations? Everybody is going to slowly grapple with the increasing amount of their work being driven by these stories and actions because of the increased visibility."[24]

- **Blurring of old media/new media distinction**: The use of traditional forms of media for building good governance, democracy, and peaceful coexistence will continue. Tools such as the telephone,

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[23] Interview with Patrick Meier, Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, Ushahidi.
[24] Interview Nigel Snoad, Microsoft and ICT4Peace.

radio, and television can often convey information less expensively, in local languages, and to larger numbers of people than can newer technologies. In some cases, the former can enhance the capacity of the latter. That said, there is an emerging trend around the convergence of tools and we are seeing how new tools of communication can help amplify the message and accelerate the flow of information. It is predicted that the defining line between what is perceived today as new and traditional media will be become increasingly blurred: "Traditional media will use citizens in their reporting. Citizens will use the web, Internet and mobiles in their own reporting. Both will compete, and increasingly complement each other…. A slow news movement, involving contextualization, reflection and curation, will emerge as a countervailing thrust to the heady pace of instant news feeds. Compelling stories will emerge from places without TV, radio, electricity, water, drainage, sanitation or permanent shelters but with mobile phones. Print journalists will learn that voice, photo, video and innovative visualizations of complex problems strengthen a story. All journalists will realize that to sustain empathy in protracted conflict, to communicate the horror of a pogrom or genocide, to influence progressive policy and strengthen aid, stories need to be personal, compelling and inspire hope. 2011 will be a year we stop calling new media, new media. We will simply use a range of media through a host of devices, and for little or no cost…. Perhaps we will just use the term communication tools to refer to traditional and new media" (Blog post by Sanjana Huttotuwa). [25]

- **Mainstreaming**: In the near future, as richer engagement and dialogue between the technology sector, multilaterals, governments, and NGOs develops, we are likely to see a mainstreaming of the use of communication tools in the conflict transformation and peacebuilding field. A dialogue of common practice will emerge and there will be a recognition of the possibilities and value that can be developed through communication tools leading to a greater degree of cross-sectoral collaboration and more effective programming.

Summary Comment

In the workshop discussions, there was a refreshing acknowledgement that we were beyond the hype of a new technology revolution. Practitioners are looking at this new technology realistically and asking where is the evidence, what has worked and how can these tools be used to have maximum impact?

One of the key insights from the workshop was that through better collaboration and integration of communication tools into an overall strategy, projects could be more effective. This suggests that encouraging collaboration and learning across sectors and organizations that take different approaches will be a valuable approach. There was also a salutary reminder that in places of war, new communication tools often do not exist. Mobile phones are the only new tool that is commonly available. Realistically, radio and cellphones are the primary source of communications in conflict. There are also many other challenges such as access to electricity, illiteracy rates, and access to and cost of internet, mobiles and SMS messaging.

It is clear that, at the moment, the field of Communication for Peacebuilding is marked by experimentation, a large number of exploratory small-scale programs, and in many cases, hyperbole about the effectiveness of new technologies that are not justified by existing evidence. Such experimentation is not necessarily negative, but overall practice has gotten ahead of evidence in this

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[25] Sanjana Huttotuwa sums this up nicely in one of his recent blogs
http://ict4peace.wordpress.com/2010/11/28/changes-to-media-over-2010/

area. For this reason, it is an opportune time to develop a grant program with the primary goal of building a knowledge base of evidence-based practice in the field. Developing such a knowledge base can help consolidate the field around a core set of successful practices, which is necessary if the field of Communication for Peacebuilding is to realize even part of its transformational potential. USIP's Communication for Peacebuilding Program is assisting this process by providing support for research, support for evaluation and assessment of programs, support for pilot programming, and facilitation of learning networks.

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ANNEX 1. PARTICIPANTS AT THE WORKSHOP INCLUDED[26]:

Kimberly Abbott
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Theo Dolan
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Jon Gosier
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Steve Hansch
Georgetown University

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US Department of State

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From USIP and Search for Common Ground:
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Keavy Nahan
USIP

Nick Oatley
Search for Common Ground

Lauren Sauer
Search for Common Ground

Maura Scully
Search for Common Ground

Michael Shipler
Search for Common Ground

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[26] Many others experts were invited but were unable to participate due to prior commitments

ANNEX 2. KEY STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED OR SURVEYED

Participants Interviewed/surveyed:

Kimberly Abbott, International Crisis Group (returned self-completed questionnaire)

Michael Bosse, Equal Access

Prof. Vladimir Bratic, Hollins University

Catherine Dempsey, PAX Initiative

Michael Dwyer, Internews (returned self-completed questionnaire)

Sonia Gloeckle, Intermedia

Sean McDonald, FrontlineSMS:Legal

Patrick Meier, Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, Ushahidi

Cat Meurn, United Nations Foundation (returned self-completed questionnaire)

Nicolas Van Praag, World Bank

Lisa Schirch, 3D Security/Eastern Mennonite University (returned self-completed questionnaire)

Bill Siemering, Developing Radio Partners

Kitty Warnock, Panos

Ransford Wright, Independent Radio Network (returned self-completed questionnaire)

Non participants interviewed/surveyed:

Denis King, US State Department

Col Yoro Kone, ECOWAS Early Warning (returned self-completed questionnaire

Prof. Christoph Meyer, Kings College

David Nyheim, INCAS Consulting

Juliana Rotich, Ushahidi

Nigel Snoad, Microsoft and ICT for Peace

Aaron Sundsmo, Africa Regional Director at Danya International (returned self-completed questionnaire)

Tjip Walker, CMM, USAID