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From Crisis Response to Peacebuilding: Achieving Synergies

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EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES AND PEACE INNOVATION

INSTITUTIONAL LEAD

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OVERVIEW

The increasing complexity of conflict situations requires new understandings and mechanisms, which create partial solutions for stability. Technological solutions may not just aid understanding of conflict, but may create tailored solutions for local conflict drivers and may also enable broader understanding of what effectiveness in peacebuilding and peacekeeping is. Technological innovation also has the potential to increase inclusivity, create local business potential and provide mechanisms for conflict-affected societies to leap-frog in terms of economic development. Emerging technologies and the development of peacetech create possibilities for development of peace processes to ensure their sustainability.

FOCUS AND OBJECTIVES

This session focused on the role of technologies in bridging gaps in current knowledge and the potential for innovation in peace through practical examples of peacetech. It aimed to engage experts in peace research with technology and to introduce new concepts and thinking around technology, especially regarding creating synergies and strengthening present mechanisms of analysis, peacebuilding and conflict prevention. It also aimed to strengthen and broaden the overall community around peace technology and create potential for further discussion.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Technology can be used for war as well as for peace. In an increasing fast-changing world, technologies cannot be seen simple as a tool anymore. It changes the world, individuals and how they relate to each other. Nowadays, the ongoing development of technology and humanity is intertwined, and this must be taken in account. As the point where the human mind limits understanding has been passed, technology can be used to move this forward and help to better visualize and understand conflict situations. However, despite all the advances and opportunities in technology for peace, it must also be remembered that most of the technology is currently being developed by private companies that, in the end, will always seek to monetize and sell that technology, creating challenges for its wide use and in global governance.

At the grassroots level, it can be seen that peacetech initiatives are already being implemented and used for peacebuilding in user-based initiatives. It has also been showing possible use for open participatory peace processes. Nonetheless, the issues of security and data protection still remain a strong challenge to be met.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Push past the initial stage of understanding how technology and innovation has a role in peace, and move forward with discussions and practice.
- Consider strategic use of existing and widely available technology.
- Further develop best practices and use of technology.
- Empower peacebuilders, activists and academics to fill gaps of information, making it possible to identify patterns and trends in conflict.
- Take into consideration cyber and technological attacks to basic infrastructure, such as broadband and communication, in the humanitarian sphere.

SESSION QUOTES

'In times where we make decisions much faster than the validation of the technology, we might have an issue of bias.'

'We don't want research to be forgotten; we want it to create impact.'

HIGHLIGHTS

Empowerment and disempowerment of technology? What is the responsibility in controlling technology? Denying access to technology can also be a cause of a conflict.

Technology is really changing, and many more discussions are needed. Everyone must challenge themselves in conferences and forums: technology must be more widely discussed in the field of peace and development. Opportunities must be created.

Access to connectivity is increasingly a basic right; in some cases, denying it is an act of war.

RESOURCE LINKS AND DOCUMENTS

United Nations Technology Innovation Labs (UNTIL), <https://until.un.org>.

Effectiveness of Peace Operations Network (EPON), <https://effectivepeaceops.net>.



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