

# ICT4D Webinar: Digital Innovations for Humanitarian Response

## Introduction:

### Speakers:

**Pierre Guillaume Wielezynski**, Deputy CIO and Deputy-Director of IT, World Food Programme

**Michael Waugh**, Global Adviser Shelter and Settlement, Norwegian Refugee Council

**Travis Heneveld**, Director United Nations and International Accounts, Motorola Solutions

## Pierre Guillaume Wielezynski, Deputy CIO and Deputy-Director of IT, World Food Programme

The World Food Program is in 80 countries and technology has become an integral part of doing their job. They are focused on SDG 2: 0 hunger and SDG 17: partnership for the goal. WFP does a lot of innovation but they look at it as part of business as usual. They don't have an innovation division, and see it as a core function. Innovation is part of the day-to-day. They have invested in an innovation accelerator. 3-4 relevant examples.

### 1st Example:

ETC (emergency telecommunications cluster): services that are mandated by the UN WFP is the lead in the logistics cluster and the ETC cluster. In an onset disaster they turn to the WFP for the provision of communication services. They have been doing this for quite some time in partnership with Net Hope, Ericson, and the government of Luxemburg. A few years ago it focused on radio telecommunications. Now it is focused on data and setting up rapid services with balloons and other innovative approaches. Ex. Cox bazar in Bangladesh, rapidly gathered feedback and answered questions to best understand how to tailor services to meet their needs.

### 2nd Example:

There has been a shift with the introduction of cash in emergencies. Now they have a 1 to 1 relationship with project participants. No longer helping indiscriminate masses of people but now have the granularity of who we are serving. This forces us to operate differently

### 3rd. Example.

UAV and drones paired up with artificial intelligence. Dominica and Bangladesh crises, they can better understand terrain and road closure. They are hopeful that it will scale rapidly in planning their response. The 5-year plan is how to get on top of the game in terms of remote sensing, drones, and machine learning.

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Example:

Blockchain- they have developed a blockchain project that empowers their ability to give aid to people they help in Jordan. They have scaled from 10,000 refugees to 100,000. They can add any other organization to this information.

It is the combination of all this technology to transform the way we operate that will be the real innovation. The whole industry is changes to an economy of transaction to an economy of relationship to make sure the assistance they are getting is useful and having the desired impact.

This is moving beyond the technology shop to business transformation. WFP looks forward to being a catalyst and hearing from everyone what does and does not work.

### Travis Heneveld, Director United Nations and International Accounts, Motorola Solutions

Motorola is one of the private sector players in the ETC. They have moved from a device and communication provider to delivering mission critical platforms. The biggest one in emergency response is analog and VHS radios, and digital radios. It can be around the data services and other parts of the delivery. They are looking at mission critical uses like: security, terrain, and others. The 3 trends applicable to emergency response are:

**1st trend.** The pace of adoption and advancement is so fast and broad it does not make sense to pick one piece of the puzzle but rather leveraging on the convergence of these advancements. They are working on making the difference converged networks, and structured ways to leverage the digital core. It doesn't matter if you have 5 people with radios, 10 with tablets, but rather leverage the workgroup communication platform.

**2nd Trend.** How do you make data more actionable? Say for a city solution that Motorola would use in an urban area would turn noise into data, data into intelligence, and intelligence into safety.

Converged security information management in a structured managed to you can leverage it to do what you want it to do, to power real-time situational awareness

**3rd trend-**Moving to having devices at hand to a managed service. If you look at all of our customers, they are moving more and more to mission critical platform level to a manages service and network. You can have many desperate public and private networks.

What does this mean for humanitarian response?: Thinking about structures and effective workgroup communications and building on the capabilities.

## Michael Waugh, Global Adviser Shelter and Settlement, Norwegian Refugee Council

Currently in research and development phase. Operational in Jordan since 2012/3 responding to the replacement of 1.6million refugees. Substandard buildings, lack of security of tenure, and poor work opportunities for refugees. They have been working on improving buildings for occupancy free of charge for one year. They have similar programming in Iraq and Greece. They lack the capacity to serve all, as this does not operate at the scale of the need. The majority of displaced populations they are forced to find housing solutions their selves and use interfamilial relationships which is harder the farther away from home that you are.

There is a lack of consistency and transparency which results in an increase in disputes between tenants and landlords. There is pressure to move to unconditional cash but it fails to address some of the accommodation issues.

### Can they scale shelter assistance through digital?

Digital humanitarian real-estate platform. The key thing they are looking at is what the role of the humanitarian actor looks like. There is Airbnb, yelp, and others that provide services. Can they work as a facilitator of services? In many services the platform provides means of reputation validation, mechanisms of complaints, and insurance scheme for people to open their home to people they do not know. Is there a place for them to play as a facilitator? Can they insure security, adequacy? A lot of the private sector mechanisms rely on crowd sourcing of verification. How do they do that within the humanitarian sector and how many people do they need to bring on for it to be a valid source of information. It has to benefit the refugees and property owners. They could stay within the current group but it doesn't increase the scale. They have had 50 focus group discussions in Greece, Lebanon, and Jordan. Trust is a critical factor to engage in a digital platform. Many were indicating they had never used such a solution before and that they did not trust them. There were concerns of fraud. If there was a reputable organization involved we would be more likely to use it. When talking to people there were a large number of users that had smart devices, however the usage beyond basic communication was limited. The question is, "do we start to develop a platform now with the change that they might start using such platforms in the near future?" The rate of adoption may be relatively slow. It may take a while to get the user base that they need. How do we have longer-term investment in such a product? There is a good chance that it may fail, substantial apps in the private sector fail. Do we have an appetite to risk failure?

How do we get people to use it for the first time? In the private sector you will get high first-time usage and then get a large drop off. Can we create digital pull factors? What does a sustainable business model look like to run and operate a platform like this. How do we look at other funding mechanisms past the humanitarian sector, mixed revenue streams, institutional donors, fees from property owners, and others?

They are in the early stages and they have more questions than answers. In the next several months they are doing to develop a roadmap for what the platform might look like. What functionality does not need to be there day 1. Then they are going to continue to engage with external actors. This is something that is beyond the capacity of NRC to develop internally.

They are looking to partner with Airbnb where people volunteer a place short term. NRC is looking at being the intermediary between the occupant and the host at least initially.

## Questions:

### Are there any specific technology profiles needed to have innovation?

WFP (Pierreguillaume)- you don't necessarily need a lot of technologist. You need to have a very deep understanding of the user. You need to understand what value you can add to a beneficiary or refugee's life. The second competency is very important, you need to have an appetite for changing the way you work. There are a lot of non-technical critical success factors. You need to be clear on the value you provide and the internal dynamics, technology is almost the last thing you focus on.

Motorola/UN (Travis)- 1 is on skill sets, having 2 or more skill sets on wifi, radio, or others. There is a role for a business analyst and somebody who walks through the flow of the real-life user and use that so you can get from data points of information to have actionable and real time ability to do things.

NRC (Michael)-There is always a line for fit for purpose solutions and general use for many cases. You might have a wearable scanner that you can put on a forklift operator but then it is only usable for the fork lift operator, which in some situations may be just fine.

Blockchain question came up – will answer this in follow up documents

### How are the speakers dealing with data Privacy concerns?

UN/Motorolla (Travis)- the role of a mission critical platform, you might say for these services and applications you want to have it on a more secure platform as opposed to social media feeds which are public. When you are managing a network of networks some are mission critical and some aren't and accessibility comes into play.

WFP (Pierreguillaume)- With great power comes great responsibilities, they have a centralized database that benefits from the most state of the art cybersecurity. WFP is treating this as a critical asset of the organization.

A lot of training is going in place to assure that: the data is property collected, with consent, to cleanse the data. Will it ever be enough, I don't know? The goal and the reality on the ground is that you still have some offices collecting data in excel and share by email. While WFP is really ahead on this, it is still

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the reality on the ground. For Blockchain they are using this on the ground in Jordan and UNHCR tells us whether the beneficiary is in their system yes/no. If yes then we proceed with the processes. Privacy is one of the most challenging areas and they are bringing on experts and a privacy officer because trust is key on the way the operate.