



# University

## CRS Faculty Learning Commons Spring 2015 Session 1, “ICT4D – Healthier Communities” Discussion Guide

Discussion Prompt #1: What exactly is ICT4D? And what do we mean by resilience?

### Readings/Video Resources:

- a) **For prompt #1, watch the first nine minutes** of Mr. Stephen Hellen’s lecture entitled [Building Resilience in Poor Communities through Innovation](#) (total video, 39:38). Stephen Hellen is CRS Director of Global Knowledge and Information Management. For a clearer version of the video Mr. Hellen shows see [“ICT4D: Building Resilience Through Innovation,”](#) (video, 5:23).
- b) [Mobile Phone Usage Explodes in Africa Spurring Innovation](#) (video, 9:00), by PBS Newshour.

### Questions for discussion:

- 1) Steve Hellen talks about the “ubiquitous” use of mobile devices in international development as a “fundamental transformation” in his field. Is this transformation surprising to you? Why or why not? Substantiate your comments with at least one statistic or example from Mr. Hellen’s remarks.
- 2) According to Steve Hellen, the goal of using ICT4D is “sustainable development.” After viewing the PBS video on mobile phone usage in Kenya, select one of the ways that a particular group in Kenya is utilizing mobile devices (from Google professionals to rural farmers). Who is benefiting from this particular innovation? How (profit, health, etc.)? Is this “sustainable development” in your view? Why or why not?

Discussion Prompt #2 – Case study on using mobile devices for maternal health in rural India

We have learned about the presence and promise of information communication technologies in developing countries. In order to understand this promise of more sustainable development, we need to dig into case studies. What does ICT4D look like in action for CRS? How does a simple mobile device improve the quality of a community health worker’s engagement with pregnant women and their young children in Uttar Pradesh, India?

## Readings:

- a) [CRS India Cell Phones Lead to Better Health for Expectant Moms](#): CRS' Reducing Maternal and Newborn Deaths (ReMiND) Project 2012–2015 (video, 3:41, by CRS).
- b) [CRS' Global Health Innovations Using ICT4D](#) (video, main presentation is 23:45), by Mariana Hensley, CRS Regional Technical Advisor for Monitoring and Evaluation, Accountability and Learning in East and South Asia. Hensley led project design and mobile content development for the ReMiND project.

## Questions for discussion:

- 1) Describe the value added by the mobile devices in the ReMiND project. Why is the use of mobile devices a good investment as part of a comprehensive approach to health?
- 2) How does the ReMiND project respond to the government's assessment of needs for improvement in quality of care by health workers?
- 3) What did you find surprising about Mariana Hensley's presentation? (For example, you could respond to one of her "lessons learned" near the end of the video, minutes 17:50-23:45.)
- 4) Do you have a question you would ask Ms. Hensley if given the chance?

## Discussion Prompt #3: ICT and Sustainable Development – The Ethical Implications

Finally, let's focus on the principles and decision-making that drive the use of information and communication technology in international development. How does an organization like CRS integrate goals of efficiency and justice?

## Readings:

- a) Minutes 19:46-25:29 of Steve Hellen's talk on [Building Resilience in Poor Communities through Innovation](#) (total video length is 39:38, but watch minutes 19:46 – 25:29 for this prompt). Hellen discusses the factors that facilitate ICT4D adoption in developing countries and the way ICT4D can impact an entire "value chain."
- b) You could revisit [Mariana Hensley's "lessons learned"](#) – especially about "scaling up" as a resource (minutes 17:50 – 23:45).
- c) [Principles for Digital Development](#), by the Greentree Consensus.

## Questions for discussion:

- 1) According to Hellen, describe one factor that facilitates "adoption of ICT"? Make a link to the Greentree Principles if possible.
- 2) Hellen concludes that ICT in development is "disruptive." Google "information technology, international development, and disruption" to learn more about "disruptive

innovation.” (See [this article](#) for one position on technology as disruption. See also [this interview](#) with USAID Director Rajiv Shah from the *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 64, No. 1 Fall/Winter 2010.) What are some reasons that ICT can be “disruptive” in developing countries? Is disruption a good thing?

- 3) Do you think that information technology is “disruptive” in your own community? Briefly describe one way that information technology has a significant impact on your quality of life. For better or worse? (For example, is your phone a definitive part of the way you learn and socialize? Does it determine the way you and your peers spend your time and make choices that do or do not make the world a better place? Is your smartphone part of a business value chain? Who is profiting?)