

Leveraging Technology for Peacebuilding in the ECOWAS Region

Documentation of a Consultative Process, March 2022





ECOWAS COMMISSION
COMMISSION DE LA CEDEAO
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BUILD UP A



A regional consultation process on technology and peacebuilding in the ECOWAS region

64

**peacebuilding
organizations
surveyed**

8

**online
consultation
workshops**

76

**online
consultation
participants**

78%

of survey respondents use
technology in their
peacebuilding work

Youth engagement

Social media

Analogue technologies

Four areas of technology for peace in the ECOWAS Region

1. Re-imagining youth engagement for peace
2. Strengthening early warning systems
3. Countering harmful online narratives
4. Digitizing mediation

Social media networks, messaging applications, digital games and tech-enabled polls can all be used in a way that amplifies youth representation in decision making.

“I have witnessed political thuggery find its way to social media platforms in the form of harassment and intolerant content.”

Digital technologies make available new information that existed in these conflict contexts but was too costly for peacebuilders to gather and analyze.

Digital technologies can also be applied in response processes to supplement offline engagement.

Late reporting and limited analysis skills can result in delays in warning, critical information can be missed or misunderstood, and it ultimately becomes very challenging to respond to or prevent violence outbreaks despite having a resourced system.

Peacebuilders are realizing that a collaborative approach with key actors on digital spaces such as social media influencers to deliver alternative narratives, allows them to access insights and audiences that they would otherwise find challenging to reach.

“Some of the things we look at as hate speech and dangerous speech can be very fluid, one moment they are hateful and dangerous and the next minute they just are not.”

There is very limited experience with digital mediation in West Africa, but consultation participants found the concept practical.

“I am a mediator now and I know how important trust is, how do you get that trust in digital mediation?”

Developing and strengthening the technology skills of West African peacebuilders offers enormous opportunity to engage youth, improve early warning systems, counter harmful online narratives and leverage digital spaces for mediation.

Thank you

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