DIGITALISATION, PEACE AND SECURITY CSPPS BRIEFING PAPER
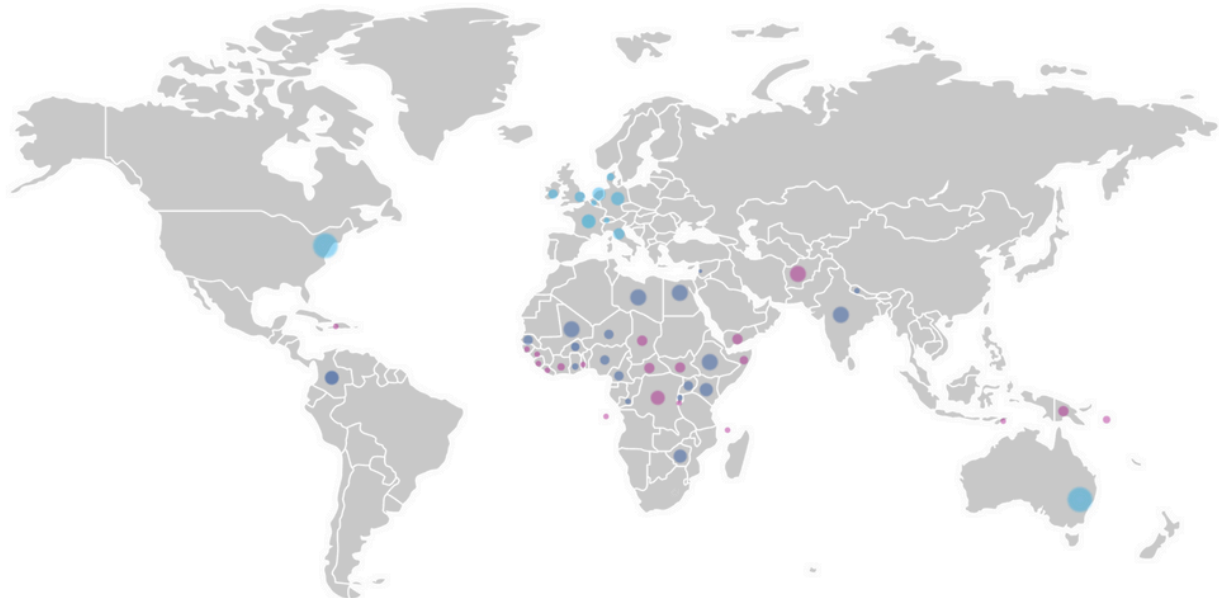
JULY 2025

ABOUT CSPPS

The Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (CSPPS) is a global network of civil society organisations supporting peacebuilding and conflict prevention efforts in fragile and conflict-affected settings. CSPPS brings together a diverse representation of civil society globally from countries affected by fragility, conflict and violence, and international civil society organisations working on the issues of peacebuilding, statebuilding, conflict prevention and development. CSPPS supports in-country interventions to amplify the voice of civil society in political dialogues and relevant policy processes.

At the global level, CSPPS represents civil society in the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS), a unique strategic tripartite partnership for political dialogue gathering civil society actors, governments from the g7+ group of countries, and donors represented by the International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF).

ABOUT THE CSPPS BRIEFING PAPERS

As part of a grant from the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), CSPPS is developing a series of briefing papers on various themes interlinked with peacebuilding and conflict prevention. These include Gender Equality, Climate Change, Migration and Forced Displacement, Digitalisation, Health and the persistent consequences of COVID-19, Food Security and Poverty, in addition to Youth, Peace & Security, Civic Space, and Inclusion. The briefing papers are written in collaboration and based on consultations led by the secretariat with the CSPPS membership.

On this basis, the briefing papers aim to give a general introduction to how peacebuilding and conflict prevention are interconnected and interlinked with the various themes aforementioned. Most importantly, they present, illustrate and highlight the multifaceted and diverse work of various CSPPS members, their expertise and insights on how these interlinkages play out in practice.

ABOUT THE DIGITALISATION, PEACE AND SECURITY BRIEFING PAPER

_____

This briefing paper aims to highlight how the Civil Society Platform for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding sees the interactions between digitalisation, peace and security.

It begins by unpacking the concept of digitalisation and examining its growing integration into peacebuilding processes. The paper then highlights the opportunities that the digital era offers for advancing peace and conflict prevention. However, these benefits come with potential risks. As societies become more digitalised, new challenges and threats emerge, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected settings. Acknowledging this dual reality, the paper continues by highlighting how the Platform and its members engage in the nexus in their everyday activities and core missions. The briefing paper concludes by highlighting the interlinkages between SDG16 and other Sustainable Development Goals. A comprehensive understanding of the digitalisation, peace and security nexus is essential for building more resilient, just and peaceful societies.

To this end, the paper calls for greater efforts to mitigate digital risks while enhancing collaboration to fully harness the transformative potential of the digital space.

ACKOWLEDGMENTS

_____

TABLE OF CONTENT

I. THE DIGITALISATION, PEACE AND SECURITY NEXUS: WHY IT MATTERS

Understanding Digitalisation

Digitalisation refers to the use of digital technologies, but also to the systemic integration of digital technologies and data into social, political, and economic life. This includes information and communication technologies (ICTs), big data, artificial intelligence, platform technologies, etc.

From a peacebuilding perspective, it encompasses how digital tools are employed to support nonviolent conflict transformation, inclusive governance, civic engagement, and early warning systems. This is also referred to as PeaceTech, an "umbrella term" for technologies used in the context of conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts.[1]

This is also referred to as PeaceTech, an "umbrella term" for technologies used in the context of conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts.

Therefore, new areas of intervention appear for peacemakers as new opportunities are created through the ever-growing use of ICTs. At the same time, digitalisation poses new challenges in fragile and conflict-affected settings. The paper explores the opportunities and challenges below.

- **PeaceTech**

PeaceTech emerged as digital technologies play an increasingly prominent role in conflicts. It should therefore be taken into account and studied in the context of peacebuilding initiatives. This trend can be observed at every level, as we are witnessing multilateral institutions, like the UN,[2] and local organisations[3] developing strategies to respond to digital transformation.

Digitalisation & Peacebuilding

Digitalisation offers new pathways to democratise peace processes by enabling wider participation from marginalised or geographically distant communities. It supports information accessibility, counters disinformation and hate speech and enables conflict-affected populations to make informed decisions. Civic technology and digital platforms can facilitate inclusive dialogue, document human rights abuses, and build transnational solidarity among peace actors.

💡 *Reflections from our members: RIKO's critical considerations on peacebuilding digitalisation*

Digital tools must not replace political will or structural reforms. Peace cannot be achieved through technology alone — it requires addressing root causes like inequality, marginalisation, and militarisation. The digitalisation of peacebuilding should be human-centred, ensuring that digital solutions are locally owned, ethically governed, and free from coercive surveillance or corporate exploitation.

---

1. Bell, C. (2024). PeaceTech: What Is It?. In: PeaceTech: Digital Transformation to End Wars. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-38894-1_2
2. Strategy for the Digital Transformation of UN Peacekeeping | United Nations Peacekeeping
3. See examples developed in this briefing paper. 'Social Setting', Fiveable'.

💡 *Reflections from our members: SCPS on a Cyber Peacebuilding Approach to foster peace in the digital sphere*

Digitalisation has fundamentally altered how conflicts manifest, escalate, and resolve, introducing new dimensions of insecurity and conflict dynamics. While it enhances connectivity and creates new opportunities for dialogue, it also brings about new challenges, namely Cyber Warfare and Information Warfare, that can worsen existing structural inequalities and act as violence multipliers in contexts of peace fragility and active conflict. As a result, traditional peacebuilding approaches must evolve to address the unique conditions of cyberspace, taking into account the reciprocal effects between the digital and physical realms. Cyber Peacebuilding embodies this adaptation, emphasising an integrated approach that can assess, analyse, and respond to the new threats of violence and inequality originating from and impacting cyberspace.

Unlike conventional cybersecurity, which operates within defensive and reactive frameworks inspired by the traditional approaches of the Westphalian model, Cyber Peacebuilding takes a broader, human-centred approach by addressing the foundational questions of digital justice, equity, and structural violence that undermine the conditions for genuine security and sustainable peace. It expands beyond the mere application of existing peacebuilding frameworks to digital channels, seeking to extend the current definition of positive and negative peace to the unique conditions of cyberspace. By reframing security in cyberspace as a continuum leading toward positive cyber peace, we move beyond the mere absence of cyber attacks as the base condition to establish peace in the digital sphere, becoming more proactive in tackling structural threats such as cyber violence, inequalities in capability and accessibility, surveillance, manipulation, and coercion, particularly those targeting marginalised communities and individuals.

II. DIGITALISATION AND PEACEBUILDING: EXPLORING THE OPPORTUNITIES

Digital technologies have introduced new ways to support peacebuilding that were unthinkable a generation ago. When used responsibly, they can complement political processes and strengthen the role of civil society in shaping peaceful outcomes. The systematised use of digital tools provides new opportunities for peacebuilding practitioners. This section aims to highlight these opportunities at the local and global levels.

AMPLIFYING NONVIOLENT MOVEMENTS AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Digital platforms have proven to be vital for organising and sustaining nonviolent movements, especially in restrictive or volatile environments. Whether through encrypted messaging apps or social media campaigns, activists can raise awareness, document abuses, and mobilise support without relying on traditional media or institutions. These tools have allowed local voices to reach global audiences, putting pressure on authorities and galvanising solidarity across borders.

SUPPORTING DECISION-MAKING AND INNOVATIVE PEACEBUILDING INITIATIVES

Within the evolving landscape of PeaceTech, digitalisation offers powerful opportunities to enhance peacebuilding and conflict prevention. One notable example is the development of "PeaceGames" by Principles for Peace[4]—an AI-supported simulation tool inspired by the concept of War Games. This interactive platform enables decision-makers to engage in role-playing exercises, test scenarios, and refine strategies. By enhancing foresight and strategic thinking, PeaceGames represents a significant advancement in the use of digital tools to support innovative, data-informed approaches to peace and security.

ENABLING DIALOGUE AND CITIZEN DIPLOMACY

Digital spaces can act as bridges in deeply divided societies. Virtual dialogue platforms, online town halls, and peace forums allow individuals and communities to exchange views safely, even when physical meetings are impossible. This is especially important for reaching diasporas or communities in exile, whose input can often be critical in post-conflict reconstruction.

STRENGTHENING EARLY WARNING AND CIVIL MONITORING

Crowdsourced information and open-source intelligence have opened new avenues for civilian-led monitoring in fragile contexts. Platforms like Ushahidi, which mapped violence during Kenya's elections, show how digital tools can enable real-time responses and localised peace efforts. These tools empower communities to take part in conflict prevention rather than remain passive observers.

---

4. Peace Games Wins Innovation Award at I/ITSEC 2024, Principles for Peace, December 2024.

EXPANDING ACCESS TO PEACE EDUCATION

Online platforms are making peacebuilding knowledge more accessible. Conflict resolution training, mediation skills, and trauma healing resources are now available to a much broader audience, including those in hard-to-reach or high-risk areas. This has been especially useful in contexts where formal institutions are weak or absent.

PROMOTING TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Digitalisation also offers tools to improve governance in post-conflict settings. Civic tech applications can be used to monitor ceasefire compliance, track public spending, or report corruption. These mechanisms contribute to rebuilding trust in public institutions — a cornerstone of lasting peace.

UPLIFTING MARGINALISED VOICES

When designed inclusively, digital platforms can support greater participation by women, youth, and indigenous communities in peace processes. In Colombia, for instance, mobile technology helped collect testimonies from rural communities during the Truth Commission, ensuring that the peace narrative included voices often left out.

☀ *Reflections from our members: Devoir de Mémoire on mobilising digital tools in the context of peacebuilding*

The use of digital tools for sustainable peace should take into account the underlying conditions that foster conflict, such as poverty, marginalisation, corruption, and climate-related disasters. These tools could include the digital issuance of birth certificates and national identity cards, as well as judicial proceedings, public expenditures, trademark registrations, and more. Ensuring the traceability of decisions and transactions within the public sector could have a significant impact on the vast scale of corruption and help strengthen accountability to citizens.

Mobile banking and payment platforms can help reduce losses for informal businesses, which are often victims of extortion and theft. They also support growing businesses in building verified and legitimate credit histories. Digital voting platforms could greatly enhance participation, transparency, and the legitimacy of elections in countries like Haiti, where elections are often chaotic and voter turnout is low, historically with very limited participation by women. These platforms would also create opportunities for diaspora communities to contribute to the governance of their home countries.

Lastly, strategic partnerships with local businesses and organisations can help expand internet access in marginalised and rural areas through the deployment of internet platforms such as Starlink. This would also enable telemedicine providers to reach broader populations and have a greater impact.

While digitalisation brings clear advantages, it is not a substitute for political will or structural change. These tools should enhance — not replace — the work of dialogue, justice, and inclusive governance that peacebuilding ultimately depends on. In the next section, the paper explores the risks around technology and digitalisation.

III. CONSIDERING THE RISKS: DIGITALISATION IN FRAGILE AND CONFLICT-AFFECTED AREAS

While digital tools can enhance peacebuilding, they also introduce new risks, especially in fragile or conflict-affected settings where legal protections are weak and power is often unevenly distributed. If left unchecked, digitalisation can reinforce structural violence and deepen existing divisions. In this section, we elaborate on some of the risks that must be considered when we look at digitalisation in the peacebuilding and conflict prevention sphere.

SURVEILLANCE AND EROSION OF CIVIL LIBERTIES

In many contexts, digital technologies are used to monitor dissent rather than support dialogue. Activists, journalists, and human rights defenders are increasingly targeted through spyware, facial recognition, and metadata tracking. Such tools, often sold by companies in the Global North, have been used by authoritarian regimes to suppress civic space and silence opposition. This not only endangers individuals but also creates a climate of fear that undermines peacebuilding from below.

MISINFORMATION AND MANIPULATION

Digital platforms are also fertile ground for the spread of misinformation, hate speech, and polarising narratives. This is currently exacerbated by the misuse of AI tools. In conflict-prone settings or contexts of geopolitical rivalry, false information can escalate tensions rapidly, fueling cycles of retaliation and mistrust. Social media algorithms, designed to prioritise engagement, often amplify the loudest and most divisive voices, undermining efforts at reconciliation.

MILITARISATION OF CYBERSPACE

The increasing use of digital technologies for military purposes presents a serious threat to civilian infrastructure and peace efforts. Cyberattacks on hospitals, communication systems, or electoral commissions can paralyse societies and derail fragile peace processes. The growing integration of artificial intelligence in warfare — from autonomous drones to psychological operations — raises urgent ethical concerns and blurs the line between peace and war.

THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

Access to digital tools is deeply unequal. In many fragile contexts, women, rural communities, and marginalised groups are excluded from digital spaces due to a lack of infrastructure, education, or affordability. This creates a two-tiered system where only some voices are heard, reinforcing existing inequalities and limiting inclusive participation in peacebuilding.

TECHNO-SOLUTIONISM AND LOSS OF LOCAL AGENCY

There is a growing tendency to treat digital tools as quick fixes to deeply rooted political problems. This so-called "techno-solutionism" risks sidelining local knowledge and agency, while placing too much faith in external consultants and imported technologies. True peace cannot be automated; it requires context-specific, human-centred approaches.

MITIGATION AND SAFEGUARDS

To reduce these risks, peacebuilding actors must advocate for strong digital rights protections, promote ethical design, and push back against the use of digital tools for repression. Civil society should play a key role in shaping the governance of digital spaces, ensuring they remain open, inclusive, and accountable.

GAPS WITHIN INTERNATIONAL LAW

An additional risk is the prevailing ambiguity regarding the definition and conceptualisation of "peace" in cyberspace. This definitional gap creates significant legal and diplomatic challenges, leaving international frameworks inadequate to address contemporary cyber threats effectively. Without a clear understanding of what peace entails in cyberspace, diplomatic and legal instruments remain insufficiently robust, allowing malicious state and non-state actors to exploit ambiguities and evade accountability. Addressing these gaps requires robust international dialogue, clear normative frameworks, and comprehensive diplomatic engagement to define and uphold principles of cyber peace.

Effectively mitigating these risks necessitates coordinated international efforts, including strengthening global cyber norms, fostering cyber resilience through capacity-building initiatives, promoting digital literacy to combat disinformation, and enhancing accountability mechanisms. Only through such comprehensive strategies can the international community adequately address digitalisation's multifaceted threats and foster sustainable, equitable peace in an increasingly digital world.

IV. HOW DOES CSPPS ENGAGE IN THE DIGITALISATION, PEACE AND SECURITY NEXUS?

Digitalisation is key to the activities of CSPPS, as the Platform collaborates remotely with partners and members across the globe. Access to digital tools gives CSPPS the ability to gather its members online and stay connected. The widespread use of information and communication technologies has also created another field from where advocacy is conducted.

▶ NETWORKING

CSPPS is part of the Just Future Alliance, a programme funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which aims to strengthen the capacity of civil society to lobby and advocate for peace initiatives and to foster accountability. In this context, CSPPS is the networking partner. Through the "Just Future Networking Meetings" that are held online every month, partners have an opportunity to connect, share best practices and update each other on activities and opportunities in the framework of the Consortium. This example illustrates a key activity of the Platform, in which digital tools are essential.

Connecting with members around the world has been made possible through the democratisation and widespread use of digital tools. ICTs have created new spaces for networking, expanding our membership, and broadening our areas of action. Although the difficulty of access to internet connection, proper digital tools or even electricity - especially in fragile and conflict settings where the Platform operates - remains a persisting challenge.

The response to such challenges can be found through networking, as CSPPS strengthens its advocacy by fostering spaces for mutual learning, knowledge exchange, and collaborative action, including in the peace and digitalisation nexus. By partnering with a wide range of stakeholders and participating in international forums, CSPPS actively engages in ongoing global conversations on digitalisation, such as the Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development and the World Bank Fragility Forum.

▶ AMPLIFYING

As the Platform aims to include its civil society network in international-level discussions and decision-making processes, leveraging digital technologies is essential to amplify their voice. In this context, our initiatives also highlight how digitalisation can support efforts toward peaceful, just and inclusive societies.

The Peace Corner Podcast is an intern and youth-driven joint initiative between CSPPS and the United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY) that offers peacebuilders worldwide the opportunity to share stories that voice personal journeys, challenges and solutions for peace. The eighth season of the podcast, under the theme of *"CTRL + Peace: Navigating the Digital Age"* precisely explored the digitalisation, peace and security nexus. Each episode featured a different aspect of the interconnection between new technologies and peacebuilding, such as interlinkages between technologies and migration, the use of new technology in peacebuilding or again the concept of cyberjustice.

▶ AMPLIFYING

The Member stories initiative features articles written by our members to highlight the activities and focus they chose in their specific context. Many of these include how to deal with the manipulation or misuse of information in an increasingly connected and online world.

For several years now, CSPPS has been involved - with a number of partner organisations - in the Voices of SDG16 : Stories for Global Action Campaign to bring the work of civil society on SDG16+ to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. Through an open call for short video submission, the campaign showcases stories of best practices and efforts undertaken towards SDG16+. By blending storytelling with digital content sharing, the campaign also demonstrates how digitalisation can be harnessed to better engage civil society in global policy forums and to reach diverse audiences through innovative formats. This year in particular, the High-level Political Forum's theme, "Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals for leaving no one behind" resonates with the challenges posed by digitalisation, and more specifically, misinformation. In this context, CSPPS remains committed to elevating civil society voices in high-level spaces, ensuring their lived experiences, insights, and solutions continue to shape the advancement of SDG16+ in the digital age.

▶ LOBBY & ADVOCACY

Lobbying and policy outreach are key elements of CSPPS' activities. Committed to the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, CSPPS provides a space and platform - where possible and needed - to amplify the voice and agency of civil society working on SDG16+. Putting forward the concerns and demands of civil society in its diversity in lobby efforts is essential to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

Within the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS), CSPPS holds a key role in representing civil society. The dialogue serves as an opportunity for lobbying and advocacy activities within the policy space of peacebuilding and statebuilding between civil society, governments (g7+) and donors (INCAF). CSPPS collaborates with IDPS partners and supports its civil society members in attending significant political dialogues, ensuring that the voices and perspectives of local CSOs are consistently heard and represented in related policy dialogues. In these contexts, CSPPS brings forward various concerns, including digitalisation, peace and security.

▶ LOBBY & ADVOCACY

Federal Ministry
for Economic Cooperation
and Development

Since January 2024, CSPPS has been in partnership with the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). This partnership is crucial for CSPPS to enhance its focus on the intersection of peacebuilding and digitalisation, as BMZ is also dedicated to promoting sustainable digital transformation. This partnership increases CSPPS opportunities for advocacy and lobbying efforts with the German government. The collaboration allows CSPPS to leverage their political influence and commitment to peacebuilding and conflict prevention to drive meaningful change. Cooperating with BMZ allows CSPPS to raise its voice collectively and advocate for policies that support, safeguard, and empower communities globally. By leveraging this partnership, CSPPS can amplify its influence on policy-making processes and drive impactful change in international development agendas.

Just Future has actively contributed to combating disinformation by supporting the creation of a collaborative network of young people and journalists in Niger. The initiative aims to strengthen community resilience against false information and promote accurate, conflict-sensitive reporting. By equipping key stakeholders with tools and strategies to identify and counter disinformation, Just Future fosters informed public dialogue and supports peaceful conflict resolution efforts.

JUST FUTURE

V. EXAMPLES OF OUR WORK

CSPPS advocacy activities and efforts to amplify the voice and agency of civil society involve promoting and highlighting the work of its membership. In this section, we put forward the work of some of our members who drive progress in the digitalisation and peacebuilding nexus.

▶ RIKO (Council for International Conflict Resolution), Denmark

RIKO (Rådet for International Konfliktløsning) is a Danish foreign policy think tank promoting non-military approaches to international conflict resolution. While RIKO works across a broad range of peace and foreign policy issues, part of their activities - including research - are focused on PeaceTech.

- **Advocacy Against Digital Surveillance Exports**. RIKO has publicly opposed the export of Danish surveillance technologies to authoritarian regimes. Through commentary and public engagement, we raise awareness of how these technologies can undermine civic freedoms and fuel repression abroad.

- **Exploring Opportunities and Ethical Dimensions of AI in Peacebuilding.** This is an emerging area of interest within RIKO. One of our members, Kristian Svendsen, is currently pursuing aresearch focused on the role of artificial intelligence in conflict resolution and peace processes. We aim to contribute to broader discussions around opportunities and ethics, as well as the risks of AI in peacebuilding.

- **Digital Storytelling Workshops in Post-Conflict Contexts**. RIKO has piloted workshops using digital storytelling as a method for peacebuilding and reconciliation. These initiatives train young people and local actors in conflict-affected areas to document personal narratives and community histories using digital tools.

- **Promoting Ethical Civic Technology.** RIKO promotes civic tech solutions that are rooted in democratic values, respect for privacy, and grassroots participation. We support the idea that digital peace tools should be co-created with local communities and resist centralised or corporate control.

- **Co-Hosting the First PeaceTech Conference in Denmark**. In collaboration with partners, RIKO co-hosted Denmark's first PeaceTech conference. This platform brought together academics, civil society, and technologists to explore the intersection of digital innovation and peacebuilding, laying the groundwork for future initiatives in this field.

To find out more about RIKO, visit their website: www.riko.nu

Sustainable Cooperation for Peace & Security, Italy

Sustainable Cooperation for Peace & Security (SCPS) works on promoting peacebuilding globally and the implementation of the UN "Youth, Peace and Security" and "Women, Peace and Security" agenda in connection with the other SDGs. More recently, SCPS has been focusing on cyber peacebuilding.

- **Future of Europe Youth Summit 3.0.** In 2023, SCPS contributed to the "Future of Europe Youth Summit 3.0" conference in Iași, Romania, participating in the panel debate on "*The Phenomenon of Disinformation in the Context of War and Tensions in 21st Century Europe*". The debate featured representatives from civil society, academia, and fact-checking organisations with the goal of drawing a picture of the impact of disinformation on social cohesion and democracy, discussing the performance of past and existing counter-disinformation projects, and providing insights on future challenges.

- **Artificial Intelligence and P/CVE.** In 2024, SCPS contributed to the consultation on "*AI: Understanding and opportunities for P/CVE practitioners*" organised by the C&N Working Group of RAN (Radicalization Awareness Network). In this project, we explored the technical, ethical, and legal aspects of Artificial Intelligence in the context of radicalisation and human rights. Thanks to a diverse working group consisting of civil society, academia, tech experts, and representatives from major social media platforms, we gathered useful insights on the threats and impacts of AI within contexts of fragility and structural violence, and provided the working group with our unique perspective as a Peacebuilding-focused organisation.

- **Researching the impact of disinformation narratives on the 2024 European Elections.** In 2024, SCPS was called to contribute to the Summer School of the Digital Methods Initiative, organised by the University of Amsterdam. In this instance, we presented a research project titled *"Exploring political narratives around the 2024 European Elections"*, making our data and methodology available to the researchers participating in the initiative. For a week, we worked on-site with a team of 8 researchers from various universities across the world, exploring different methodological approaches to assess, analyse, and measure narratives that could represent a threat to social cohesion in the context of electoral competitions.

- **Narrative Intelligence: measuring disinformation narratives in the context of the 2025 Romanian Presidential elections.** In 2025, SCPS started an ongoing project to test the efficacy of the Narrative Intelligence methodology to detect, classify, and counter disinformation narratives, using the 2025 Romanian Presidential elections as the first testing ground. Recognising the escalating threats posed by disinformation, particularly its capacity to erode democratic processes, polarise societies, and destabilise international relations, we have developed an innovative analytical framework combining Natural Language Processing (NLP) and Large Language Models (LLMs) to provide quantitative and qualitative measures of disinformation narratives.

- This methodology facilitates comprehensive monitoring of digital platforms, accurate identification of influential disinformation actors, and rigorous assessment of narrative impacts and vulnerabilities. By automating the identification and classification of complex narrative structures, our AI-driven approach enhances our ability to proactively detect emerging threats, thus equipping stakeholders, including fact-checkers, journalists, and civil society organisations, with actionable intelligence to strengthen resilience against digital manipulation and uphold democratic integrity. Our findings will culminate in the creation of an open, publicly accessible database of disinformation narratives later this year, facilitating transparency and collaborative engagement among fact-checking initiatives, media outlets, and civil society.

To find out more about SCPS, visit their website: https://sustainablepeace.eu

▶ CercleDev, Niger

The Reflection and Action Circle for Innovative Local Development (Cercle de Réflexion et d'Action pour un Développement Local Innovant), known as Cercle.Dev, is a group of volunteers dedicated to empowering and enabling young people in Niger and Burkina Faso by mobilising our internal potential within a dynamic of inclusion, innovation, and diverse partnerships.

Cercle Dev leverages digital tools to strengthen its activities within the CSPPS Niger network, notably by organising online meetings with its members. A series of webinars is currently being launched, helping to ensure the continuity of their initiatives while reaching a new audience active in cyberspace. In this context, the organisation has also developed the project "Peace Echoes" (Échos de la paix) to promote peace, social cohesion and the fight against violent extremism through accessible and informative podcasts. Broadcast across all their social media accounts, this podcast reaches an audience of nearly 50,000 people, thereby strengthening their impact among young people, local communities, and change-makers. To date, four episodes have been recorded, addressing important topics for building sustainable peace. These include:

- *National strategies to combat radicalization and violent extremism in Niger*: In this episode, Professor Moulaye Hassane from the National Center for Strategic and Security Studies (CNESS) of Niger discusses public policies, security challenges, and community-based approaches.
- *Responsible use of social media:* this conversation features Lourwana (founder of Digital Niger) and explores the opportunities, pitfalls and responsibilities of youth in the digital age.

At a time when social media influences opinions, behaviours, and sometimes even social tensions, CercleDev deems it essential to offer spaces for dialogue and analysis such as Échos de la Paix. This format helps demystify complex issues, gives a voice to experts and grassroots actors, and strengthens the culture of peace through information.

To find out more about CercleDev, visit their website: cercledev.org

▶ Global Participe, Congo-Brazzaville

Global Participe's work focuses on democratic governance and local development, with a particular emphasis on human rights, peace and support for local initiatives to fight poverty. To achieve this, the organisation has been involved in supporting populations' digital inclusion.

Congo-Brazzaville is developing digital identification systems as a way of facilitating and improving the delivery of government services and access to private digital services for its population. Despite this progress, achieving full population coverage in terms of legal identification remains a major challenge. Indeed, many individuals from indigenous communities or people living in remote areas far from administrative centres still lack legal identification. This situation exposes vulnerable groups - such as indigenous peoples, communities in forested and landlocked areas, and women—to a heightened risk of exclusion.

To support vulnerable communities during this transition to digital identity, Global Participe has launched a training programme for community paralegals to assist and accompany these populations in obtaining civil identification. To date, Global Participe has established a network of paralegals in the sub-prefectures of Mvouti, Hinda, and Madingou Kayes, in the Kouilou Department. However, three other sub-prefectures—Kakamoeka, Nzambi, and Tchiamba Nzassi —remain insufficiently operational. With adequate support, this network could help bridge exclusion gaps in other departments of Congo-Brazzaville.

Global Participe now seeks to strengthen the effectiveness of community paralegals by legally empowering vulnerable communities in urban, rural, and forested areas, through training in local languages. This will enable vulnerable populations to better access late birth registration, digital identification processes, and digital services.

Their approach includes:

- Developing awareness and training materials in local languages,
- Engaging community ambassadors to support the paralegals and assist vulnerable populations in accessing their rights and obtaining documents related to citizenship and private digital services,
- Enhancing collaboration with civil registration officers, responsible for recording births, and with all judicial authorities involved in issuing supplementary judgments when birth declarations exceed the legal deadline.

To find out more about Global Participe, visit their website:
https://global-participe.over-blog.com/

⮞ Positive Peace Ethiopia, Ethiopia

Positive Peace Ethiopia (PPE) is a youth-led civil society organisation built on a strong commitment to peace, justice, and human rights in the entire country of Ethiopia. PPE has considerable experience in community mobilisation and is implementing notable projects like #defyhatenow Ethiopia, which is geared towards hate speech and digital peacebuilding, as well as women empowerment initiatives such as EmpowerHer.

Positive Peace Ethiopia's current activities are focused on responding to the increasing threat of

POSITIVE PEACE | ETHIOPIA

misinformation and disinformation, which has been incorporated into the search for conflict resolution and social cohesion in Ethiopia. The fight against these challenges is one of our fundamental objectives. The project includes both a Fact-Checking Fellowship and Women's Online Safe Spaces, among other sub-programs.

The Fact-Checking Fellowship is an initiative targeted at priming Ethiopians on the skills of identification, verification, and rebuttal of false information. Trainees go through extensive training in fact-checking tools and strategies, which assist them in becoming exceptional practitioners of spotting misinformation in the current widespread media. Graduates of the programme have engaged their community members and imparted to them the concept of media literacy, along with combating misinformation. Throughout the programme, they were tested with different claims to test their fact-checking skills and usage of fact-checking tools, proving their readiness to apply these skills in their communities and guide others in media literacy. They have already started to reach out and extend their impact by teaching the grassroots communities the lessons they acquired through local meet-ups, training people on media literacy, and forming Media Information Literacy (MIL) clubs in secondary schools to help roll out the programme further in the communities they live in.

Another key programme is the Women's Online Safe Spaces initiative is focused on helping women in every corner of Ethiopia learn about and exchange ideas on important issues without fear in three relevant themes: 1) Media and Information Literacy (to identify and deal with mis/disinformation and understanding the role of healthy media in society), 2) Cybersecurity and Online Safety (to provide security for women within the cyberspace), and 3) Gender-Based Violence and Mental Health (tackling issues of digital disinformation regarding GBV and trauma healing and resilience after conflict). This programme imparts important information and assistance to the participants, which enables them to use the internet without fear and fight for their rights. Such empowerment has a ripple effect, as most of them teach others within their households and communities.

To find out more about Positive Peace Ethiopia, visit their website: https://ppeth.org/

You can read more about the work of PPE around digitalisation on our dedicated Member Story here

---

29. Ali, *Going on Tahriib*.

▶ IIDA Women's Organisation for Development, Somalia

IIDA Women's Development Organization (IIDA) is a women-led non-profit organization founded in 1991 in Mogadishu, Somalia by a group of pioneering Somali women leaders to provide relief and emergency services to women and children affected by the civil war in Somalia.

- **Digitalization – A Double-Edged Sword in Fragile Contexts:** Digitalization has opened new pathways for civic engagement, policy advocacy, and inclusive dialogue — but it remains a double-edged sword. As Deqa Yasin, former Minister of Women and Human Rights Development of the Federal Government of Somalia, former CSPPS focal point, and one of the founding members of IIDA, has often highlighted, digital tools can empower voices but also expose people — especially women and activists — to digital harm, particularly in contexts lacking legal protections. Since 2019, IIDA and its partners have actively used digital platforms to counter misinformation, particularly around legislative reforms for women's and children's rights in Somalia. When fake narratives surfaced — often distorting laws such as the Sexual Offenses Bill — our team responded by publishing accurate legal texts, organizing Zoom forums, Facebook Lives, and live discussions involving lawyers, professors, and human rights defenders. This strategy has helped reclaim digital space — not only around gender-based violence (GBV) and human rights — but also on climate change and migration, ensuring access to truth and dialogue despite polarized contexts.

- **Gaps in Protection and the Legal Battle of Deqa Yasin:** One of the most critical digital protection gaps in fragile states is the absence of laws that protect individuals from cyberbullying, defamation, and online gendered attacks. A powerful example is the case of Deqa Yasin, who was viciously attacked online for supporting the Sexual Offenses Bill. She faced smear campaigns, threats, and digital violence. Instead of retreating, she responded by taking legal action — bringing her case twice before the Court in The Hague, where she won both times against one of the cyberbullies involved. Her case has become a landmark example for digital justice and has advanced both national and international dialogue on how to protect digital rights defenders, especially women in fragile and conservative societies.

- **Local Custodianship of Digital Archives and Narratives:** IIDA has long emphasized the need for local ownership and custodianship of digital archives — particularly in sensitive areas like gender-based violence, women's and children's rights, and migration. Too often, digital evidence and narratives are held exclusively by international actors. This creates space for denial, discrediting, or disengagement, as those resisting accountability claim these are "external" agendas. Without local custodianship — by civil society and national institutions — there is no shared responsibility, no sense of ownership, and no effective path to lasting change. IIDA strongly advocates that Somali institutions, civil society, and local researchers must be the custodians of truth, so that responses are authentic, locally driven, and sustainable.

▶ IIDA Women's Organisation for Development, Somalia

- **Youth-Led Digital Action on Migration:** After years of groundwork — including awareness-raising, policy engagement, psychosocial support, health screening, and job creation for returnees — IIDA and its allies are now using digital platforms to amplify youth voices on migration. In partnership with Somali CSOs and academic institutions across East Africa, and in close cooperation with the Office of the Special Presidential Envoy on Migration, Returnees and Children's Rights, Somali youth and university researchers are conducting community-based research and digital outreach to inform policy and protect young people. This is especially critical, as trafficking and recruitment networks have expanded their targets to include not only university students, but also middle and high school students. Hence, more unaccompanied minors are on the move, often without protection or access to accurate information. These youth-led digital initiatives are both a tool for prevention and a platform for evidence-based advocacy. This work was recently showcased at the National Migration Conference, hosted by the Somali Government in collaboration with regional and civil society partners in Nairobi on 20 April 2025 — where youth were not just participants, but leaders of the discourse**.**

To find out more about IIDA, visit their website:
https://iidaafrica.org/

VI. SDG16 + EXPLORING INTERLINKAGES

Peacebuilding is intertwined with various themes, including migration, gender, climate change, health, food security, and poverty. This paper has explored how it is interlinked to technology and digitalisation. SDG16+, acknowledges that to achieve SDG16 in all its facets, we must also focus on making progress on relevant adjacent Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and look at the interlinkages between the various goals. Additionally, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development underlines that global interconnectedness and ICTs' widespread use have the potential to respond to the digital divide and support global development.

In subsequent Briefing Papers, you will learn more about the interlinkages with other themes, such as health, food security and poverty.

CLIMATE-INDUCED MIGRATION

Digital tools can support early warning systems and humanitarian coordination, but must not be used to criminalise displaced people or restrict mobility. A just approach to digitalisation should uphold the dignity and rights of climate migrants.

MIGRATION AND DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT

Digital platforms are key for keeping displaced communities connected and informed. They also offer ways for diaspora groups to contribute to peacebuilding. However, risks such as surveillance, exclusion, and online harassment must be addressed.

DIGITAL HEALTH

Digitalisation can also be seen as a tool towards the promotion of healthy lives and global well-being. For instance, on what is called "Digital Health",[5] that is to say, the mobilisation of digital technologies to enhance scientific knowledge, respond to the needs of health systems innovation or improve health outcomes.

GENDERED DIGITAL DIVIDE

Women and girls often face systemic barriers to digital access and safety. In least developed countries, gaps in online presence between women and men persist, with 31% of men online compared to just 19% of women.[4] Therefore, digital peacebuilding initiatives must be designed with gender inclusion from the start, ensuring equitable access, representation, and protection in online spaces.

EDUCATION AND PEACE LITERACY

Integrating peace values into digital literacy programmes, particularly for youth in conflict-affected areas, can counter online radicalisation and foster nonviolent civic engagement. This is especially important where formal education is lacking.

INTERSECTIONAL JUSTICE IN DIGITAL PEACEBUILDING

Technologies are not neutral. Digital peacebuilding tools should be locally grounded, respect Indigenous and community-based knowledge, and avoid reproducing colonial or extractive models of governance.

4. Digital technologies to achieve UN SDGs, ITU Council.
5. Digital Health, Global Strategy on Digital Health 2020-2025, World Health Organisation.

VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bell C., *PeaceTech : What Is It ?* In : PeaceTech: Digital Transformation to End Ward, 2024.
- Digital technologies to achieve UN SDGs, ITU Council, December 2021.
- Global Strategy on Digital Health 2020-2025,World Health Organization, 2021.
- Strategy for the Digital Transformation of UN Peacekeeping, United Nations Peacekeeping, 2021.
- The digital transformation and development cooperation, German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), May 2024.

To learn more about the work of CSPPS:

- **Visit our website: www.cspps.org**
- **Follow us on Social Media:**

@cspps   CSPPS   @idps_cspps   @cspps_global

To read other papers in the series:

- **CSPPS, 'Gender and Peacebuilding Nexus', October 2024**
- **CSPPS, 'Climate, Peace and Security Nexus', March 2025**
- **CSPPS, 'Migration, Peace and Security Nexus', May 2025**