Social Media and Political Participation

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Konnektiv – Geraldine de Bastion, Melanie Stilz, and René Herlitz
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1. Introduction

Had this study been composed a year ago, the first paragraph would have been a different one. It would have reflected on the so-called “Arab Spring” and the use of social media in political protests. The study would have begun with a critical but positive outlook on the power of digital technology for democratization. At present, this study needs to start with the NSA. The revelations made over the course of this summer by whistleblower Edward Snowden and journalist Glenn Greenwald have unveiled programmes such as PRISM and XKeyscore, systems of global mass surveillance with the power to tap into any internet user’s personal communication and track individuals in real time.

However, surveillance or misuse of personal data is not just a threat extended by foreign powers. National governments use surveillance to different degrees, often the software used is produced in countries endorsing the use of social media for political communication like Germany. In Germany, there is at present no export control for so-called dual use software, products that can be used for security reasons as well as surveillance activities, which results in such products being exported to countries known to use these products to abuse civil and human rights. Currently, Reporters without Borders is filing OECD complaints against companies producing such products, hoping to influence export policies.1

These revelations impact on the question how social media can be used in political contexts. They also take us back to square one and beg the question if democracy is possible in a state of surveillance as well as the question how civil freedoms and rights can be balanced with governments’ strive for security and control.

Since 2011, social media have been largely seen as democratizing and liberalizing technologies, giving voice to the masses, allowing for unfiltered, uncurated many to many communication, enabling exchange of information and mobilization amongst citizens. The power of social media as a tool for organizing protests and actions of civil disobedience has been proven time and again during the past years, be it in the organization of demonstrations during the so-called “Arab Spring” or in Brazil and Turkey this year. We are living in a world where commercial social media platforms have become the central outlet for thought expression and voicing of political ideas. At present, social media and political action is mostly associated with mobilization for protest movements and political campaigns. However, governments and citizens are experimenting with the use of social media in other areas. Examples of successful government-to-citizen or citizen-to-government interaction facilitated via social media are growing. The possibilities of how technology will impact our political opinion shaping and decision-making processes seem far reaching. Perhaps one day, creating a global decision-making body through Facebook and Twitter may seem more practical than the UN general assembly.

Many governments are recognizing social media platforms as a means to understand and reach their citizens directly. In August 2013, the Kenyan government announced plans to develop an online monitoring portal that will monitor publicly voiced conversations, views, and issues, allowing it to make needed policy decisions. Cabinet Secretary Ann Waiguru said the new platform would help the government respond to the needs and concerns raised by Kenyans on social networks. According to Waiguru, social media are important tools for future policy planning and public service delivery: “We are just trying to adopt the existing technology to help us inform policy making and to make it more responsive to the needs of the Kenyan people” (Sato, 2013).

Governments wanting to listen to and understand their citizens seem like a great idea. With increased usage by different parts of a country’s population, social media can be used to gain insight into citizens’ reactions to policy decisions, or for a government to gather ideas and impulses, thereby creating possibilities for more direct forms of participation than polls and four-year-voting routines allow for.

But what happens when repressive regimes are using the same technologies to watch what opposition and critical thinkers are saying? Social media may be tools for liberation and more direct forms of democratic interaction; they may well also be part of an architecture for control. The internet today can be seen as a modern version of the paradigm that Michel Foucault establishes for the disciplinary society, the Bentham Panopticon of the digital age. Whilst it seems that the transcendental mode of the central proctor does still exist with government secret services at the core of centralized government surveillance systems, Foucault’s thesis that we have shifted to a complete immanent mode in which each member of the society is supervising the ensemble of the other members while being supervised himself has also become true (Foucault, 2001). Personal data, whether collected by commercial enterprises or the government, has become the key currency of the digital age. We readily volunteer our data, personal thoughts, images and locations via social media and check that of friends, employees, colleagues and people we have just met. We rely on social media to evaluate someone’s social sphere and biography, to share our most personal information as well as to be at the ball of world news. In the world of social media, freedom and control seem to complement each other.

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1 See Reporter ohne Grenzen (2013) and WikiLeaks (2013) for further reference.
1.1. Defining Social Media

Social media is software that enables the publication of user-generated content online and the direct, unfiltered communication between individuals and organizations (Winter, Mosena, & Roberts, 2011). Social media creates potentials for exchange, interaction and collaboration between many. For example, a social media software can be a Blog Content Management System which allows articles to be linked and traced when cross-published on other blogs, a software that allows users to comment and share or embed the content. Independent of whether these functions are fully used, the software is part of a social media eco-system. In other, more technical terms: social media is defined by the code that enables interaction between platforms through application interfaces, making the sharing of content and embedding of content in other platforms easy and thereby enabling social media to become key tools for decentral and viral information dissemination. The culture of sharing is not only part of the social but also of the technical design of social media. The emergence and spread of social media is part of the development of the internet and digital services which have made the creation of digital content and its publication increasingly easy.

Social media are used for different purposes. They are part of modern identity management as they offer platforms for self-presentation and individual articulation of thought. They are used for relationship management and information management (Schmidt 2008, p. 24). Depending on their media richness, different types of social media service these uses to different degrees.

Types of Social Media

Social media can be categorized according to the functions they fulfil. However, these are not distinctive. Content platforms, for instance, are social networks that focus on specific media types. Increasingly users use social networks as micro-blogging platforms, etc. The categories merely cluster different types of social media.

Blogs are websites hosted and authored by individuals or groups who regularly publish editorial content. Blogs are characterized by the fact that posts can be commented on and linked, enabling the creation of content networks. Popular blog hosting providers are Wordpress and Blogspot. Twitter is the most popular micro-blogging service. A tweet is a short message of 140 signs posted in chronological order. Many people use Twitter as a personal news service. Over 50 million people publish over 200 million tweets a day.
Social networks are platforms that enable the establishment and maintenance of personal contacts. Facebook is currently the global leader with around 1 billion users around the world. Different social networks service different user needs. For instance, business networks such as LinkedIn or XING are mostly used for professional contact making, Academia.edu and Researchgate address academic communities, and Instagram is becoming more popular amongst younger audiences.

Content platforms are platforms specialised on the sharing of specific kinds of media. Youtube and Vimeo are popular video sharing platforms; Flickr is a photo and Soundcloud a music sharing community. Although features of social networks are often integrated, these platforms are primarily about the content, less about the contributor.

Collective projects and crowdsourcing platforms depend on the knowledge and input of their users. Social media enable these collaborative interactions between – and contributions by many. The term crowdsourcing defines the collective, public collection of knowledge and verification of that knowledge through the community. Wikipedia and OpenStreetMap are internationally known and established examples. Crowdmap is an example of an African platform hosting maps with crowdsourced information using the open source software Ushahidi, developed in Kenya. Crowdfunding platforms such as Indiegogo or Kickstarter enable collective project funding and are playing an increasingly interesting role in the area of international cooperation.

In developing contexts, SMS-based services often play an important role as they can act as a two-way interface to online platforms in areas in which end users do not have access to the internet. Online services and software such as FrontlineSMS or RapidSMS enable multidirectional communication as well as sending and receiving information via feature phones. Platforms such as Ushahidi that are often deployed in developing contexts have standardized interfaces to support these SMS services.

1.2. Social Media in Developing Countries

The State of Global Internet and Mobile Connectivity
Access to the internet via fixed line or mobile connection is a prerequisite to using social media. According to recent International Telecommunications Union (ITU) statistics, over 2.7 billion people, 39% of the world’s population, are using the internet in 2013. In the developing world, 31% of the population is online, compared with 77% in the developed world. The continent with the lowest internet penetration remains Africa where only 16% are using the internet – half the penetration rate of Asia and the Pacific. Overall, more men use the internet than women. Globally, 37% of all women are online, compared with 41% of all men.

The global connectivity divide becomes especially apparent when taking a closer look at the speed at which people can access the internet. Uptake of high-speed broadband (at least 10 Mbit/s) is highest in some Asian economies, including the Republic of Korea, Hong Kong (China) and Japan, and in several European countries, such as Bulgaria, Iceland and Portugal. In Africa, less than 10% of fixed (wired) broadband subscriptions offer speeds of at least 2 Mbit/s. This is also the case of several countries in Asia and the Pacific, the Americas and some Arab States. Here, the internet is mobile.

In 2013, there are almost as many mobile-cellular subscriptions as people in the world. We are quickly approaching a global mobile-cellular penetration. At present, mobile-cellular penetration rates stand at 96% globally, 128% in developed countries, and 89% in developing countries. According to statistics from Ericson, mobile penetration in Africa is now around 71%, whilst most handsets in Western Europe and North America are expected to be smartphones by 2018, only 40% to 50% of handsets in the Middle East, Africa and Asia-Pacific regions will be smartphones by then (ITU, 2013).

The distinction “developing / developed” was made by ITU and has been used in this section due to a lack of more accurate data categories.
Social Media Penetration in Developing Countries

Commercial social media platforms have reacted to this market situation and cater for users relying on feature phones and 2G mobile internet connections. Services such as “Facebook 0” and “Facebook for Every Phone” have contributed to the fast spread of commercial social networks in developing countries. “Facebook for Every Phone” is an app based on technology that Facebook acquired when it bought the Israeli start-up Snaptu in 2011, designed to use less data than other mobile services when accessing Facebook and thus making the service cheaper for consumers.

Just as with “Facebook 0”, which installs Facebook as the homepage on the user’s phone, the company has negotiated deals with mobile phone carriers around the world to offer free or discounted access to the app (Bailey, 2013). Ran Makavy, who helped develop “Facebook For Every Phone”, wrote in a company blog post that “today, millions of people in developing markets like India, Indonesia and the Philippines are relying on this technology to connect with Facebook, without having to purchase a smartphone” (Makavy, 2013).

Continuous High Growth of Mobile Broadband

More than 2 billion subscriptions worldwide by end 2013 (estimate)
Social media and political participation

In societies where the majority of people have “free” access to the internet, social media can serve as a technical base for digital political debate and can facilitate opinion shaping processes, at least in theory. In this context, “free” refers to the freedom to access the internet, to access information freely, to express oneself freely without fear of surveillance or persecution. Academia is still in debate about the impact on societies of this process that has been described as the new “structural transformation of the public sphere” (Imhof, 2006, p. 5), building on the Habermasian concept of the public sphere.

Not only do the technical and infrastructural frameworks determine to what extent social media can be used for political communication. The political will of a government to interact with its citizens is a prerequisite. As stated in the strategy paper 01-2010 of the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, a constructive relationship between state and society is only possible if the state seeks the active participation of its constituents in decision-making processes (BMZ, 2010). Depending on the political culture and the degree of readiness of the government to interact with their citizens, social media can potentially create new possibilities for political participation. Finally the acceptance of and trust in digital media and their use for policy purposes amongst citizens as well as their digital literacy are decisive for any digital participation.

2. Social Media and Political Participation

Social media usage has surpassed other forms of internet usage including email. To many users, Facebook is the entry point and the face of the internet today. This is especially true in developing contexts. According to the report "Worldwide Social Network Users: 2013 Forecast and Comparative Estimates," released in the summer of 2013 by the market research firm eMarketer, nearly one in four people worldwide will use social networks in 2013. The eMarketer report explains that whilst users in developed regions “tend to have more diverse internet user populations, as users often access the web for a variety of reasons such as shopping or searching, […] in countries with less-developed online markets in the Middle East and Africa, Asia-Pacific, Central and Eastern Europe, and Latin America, internet users skew younger and more tech-savvy, and they are more likely to use social networks” (eMarketer, 2013).

Different social media platforms are popular in different places. Although Facebook has conquered the world as the top social networking portal, there are still countries where other platforms have maintained their popularity. In particular in countries, where Facebook is restricted in use due to national internet regulation, other social networks take its rank. Countries with highly controlled internet infrastructures which restrict access to international networks often have their own popular social media platforms, such as the Twitter alternative Weibo in China and the Facebook alternative VKOrrskre in Russia. Also, specific social networks are popular in some places due to local connectivity or cultural settings, such as the mobile platform Mxit in South Africa (Winkels, 2013; Kohut, 2012).
2.1. Classifying Social Media Usage for Political Participation

The different ways social media can be used for political participation can be classified according to the direction (government to citizen or citizen to government) of the interaction. The direction refers to the initiation of the interaction. Both bottom up or top down projects can also be classified according to the degree of participation in the democratic process, adapted from Arnstein (1969):

1) **Sharing of Information:** citizens are informed about what is planned. Often the first step to:

2) **Consultation:** Citizens are asked for their opinion.

3) **Cooperation:** Citizens are invited for active participation, e.g. by providing own ideas and solutions.

4) **Delegated Power:** Citizens take responsibility in the implementation.

5) **Proactivity:** Citizens initiate and have full control.

These levels are by no means measures for “good” participation, different forms are appropriate for different actions. Depending on the political system and legal framework for public participation, social media projects can be designed to enable formal participation of citizens in political processes or informal participation. The first describes the legally mandatory involvement or information of citizens whereas the latter describes the voluntary engagement of citizens depending on the degree of openness to public participation by key political actors and institutions and the degree of public pressure.

2.2. The Bright Side: Potentials of Social Media and Political Participation

Social media offer a range of potentials for innovating governance and finding new ways of government to citizen interaction, from listening to citizens’ needs and ideas and including them in agenda setting and decision-making processes, via increasing transparency and accountability, to improving service delivery through crowdsourcing.

**Involving Citizens in the Policy Cycle and Governance Processes through Direct Communication and Interaction – Social Media is about Listening to What Others Have to Say**

The greatest potential in the use of social media for good governance lies in the power of direct communication and interaction between governments and citizens. Governments can reach out to citizens and communicate without the filters of curated mass media. They can also listen. As the example of the Kenyan government touched in the introduction shows, social media are becoming a vital source of information for governments wanting to make needs-based policy decisions. Social media can be employed at different stages of governance processes:

- **Agenda Setting:** Generate public interest in a problem or use social media to find out about issues on the public agenda. Social media can be used to gather ideas and impulses, to involve citizens in agenda-setting processes and identify relevant topics and issues concerning the public.

- **Policy Design:** Social media can be used to inform and consult the public about policy designs and gather input on the formulation of new policies.

- **Implementation:** Social media can be used to coordinate actions, crowdsourcing tasks and funding as well as to inform citizens about the progress of project implementation.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Social media can be used to monitor opinions, to crowdsource statistical information and to conduct polls.

Introducing social media to the policy cycle and allowing for bottom-up input in processes that are classically designed as top-down processes can help improve relations and raise interest for issues on the government’s or public agenda as well as increase acceptance for policy changes. The degree of interaction and citizen control can vary, depending on the degree the political systems allow transferring decision-making competencies to the public. Social media can play a role for good governance on different levels. Not only can social media be used in national and international contexts, many successful examples of using social media for improved governance take place on a local level. As mentioned, a number of political leaders are embracing social media as a means to interact with citizens.
This is true for national leaders, like Rwanda’s President Kagame, but also for local leaders, like Chief Francis Kariuki. The Chief of a rural community in Kenya started to use Twitter two years ago. All members of his community follow the chief as his tweets are sent out as text messages not just as tweets on the social platform. The Chief uses Twitter to inform his community of his work and activities, make public announcements and share citizens’ concerns. As he explained to the online magazine allAfrica.com, Twitter is a cheap and effective alternative to traditional communication for this community, “I looked at how Twitter works and how I could reach over 28,000 people living in Lanet Umoja in an easier and cheaper way. The Twitter to text service by one of the networks provided an easy way to reach people who do not have smart phones” (Macharia, 2013).

By involving citizens in the policy cycle and governance processes, governments can potentially increase the legitimacy and acceptance of their actions. Social media can also be used to increase transparency and enable citizens to better understand and control government expenditure and actions.

**Improving Accountability by Increasing Transparency and Legitimacy of Actions – Social Media is about Sharing**

Social media creates technical solutions to make the sharing of content easy. Governments and citizens can use social media to share and distribute information and data. Using social media to regularly report to citizens about government expenditure, budget allocation and service delivery in specific areas of governance can help further transparency of governance processes.

Making data openly available in formats that allow the use and sharing of data is one way to increase government transparency. Open Data in governance generally refers to making non-personal data collected by the state freely available for insight and use by the general public, with “open” referring to a non-restricted use, reuse and redistribution. Governments can provide access to data sets, via portals like Berlin Open Data and enable citizens to use this data to create applications, thereby stimulating innovation in governance and service delivery as well as business development. In Germany, wheelmap.org is such a citizen initiated project, improving city life for persons bound to a wheelchair. Publishing such sets of non-personal data can help increase transparency and accountability. The UK site “Where Does My Money Go?” for instance provides citizens with clear and detailed information on tax expenditure.

**DIY (Do It Yourself) Governance and Improved Service Delivery – Social Media is about Harnessing the Power and Knowledge of the Masses**

Social media can be used to organize different processes of collective action and crowdsourcing processes, such as crowd funding initiatives, crowd mapping projects, like Map Kibera (see Case Studies) and open innovation processes. Through crowdsourcing tools and platforms, which often combine different social media elements and organize collective actions, citizens can combine knowledge and resources and work toward a collective goal, like funding a school or mapping clean water sources. In many countries, crowdsourcing processes in local area service delivery have been successfully established. FixMyStreet, a service that engages citizens to report road damages is one example.

Open Innovation can be used to involve citizens in the formulation of creative ideas to improve governance processes. The Chilean government launched an open innovation process to generate ideas to tackle a number of water-related issues. Organized by the Ministry of Economy, Development and Tourism, the competition was open to all Chilean residents, including foreign residents, and during the five week submission period it attracted thousands of participants and more than 800 ideas. They were judged by an expert panel that included members of government ministries and leading innovators amongst others. In addition to the top three prize winning places, there were also a number of honourable mentions and a vote for the public’s favourite innovation (ideaConnection, 2013). Innovative processes like this show how social media can be utilized to include the voice of the public and a civil society perspective by allowing bottom up formulation of needs and ideas.

2.3. The Dark Side: Risks of Social Media and Political Participation

**Digital Divide and the Risk of Exclusion**

One of the main risks of using social media for good governance in developing contexts is excluding people without access. Today, a number of digital divides exist as not all people have access to the internet and social media and
specific parts of the population are likely to be excluded when relying on digital forms of communication, in particular people with poor education, rural communities, and senior citizens. When governments use social media to “listen” to their citizens as an information source for need-based policy decisions they need to be aware what voices are excluded. Depending on the rate of connectivity, the legitimacy of relying on social media for the organization of political participation processes can be questioned.

In order to minimize this risk, working with different media and considering cross media approaches which involve traditional mass media such as radio alongside SMS based services or social media platforms can be crucial. Further, considering which target group can be reached through which platform is important before initiating a social media project or campaign. For instance, journalists may be reached best via Twitter, whereas young people prefer to use Facebook or Instagram.

Digital Security and Surveillance – Infrastructure Matters

As described above, social media often includes the use of social networks and the sharing of personal or professional information. Such processes result in the collection of personal data. If citizens are to be encouraged to use social media for political communication, it is a prerequisite for governments to respect the right to anonymity, ensure data protection and prohibit or at least limit surveillance of digital communication. In addition, physical internet infrastructure and infrastructure policies directly impact the degree of internet freedom. These limitations of internet access can occur on different levels as the cases of Ethiopia and Tunisia show.

In Ethiopia, the monopolized infrastructure is by far the biggest hurdle. The only provider is the state-run Ethio Telecom. This monopoly causes high prices and also makes the net easier to control and survey. With the government still being the sole telecommunication service provider in Ethiopia, there is no way to escape the eye of the state for Ethiopians online (Lemma, 2012). In 2012, TOR (an organization which develops tools for online anonymity called “The Onion Router”) announced that the Ethiopian government is now undertaking deep packet inspection of all internet traffic (Runa, 2012). They compare this kind of action to the censorship and spying on private communication conducted by China, Iran, and Kazakhstan.

Tunisia offers a powerful example on how a government can change a centralized controlling infrastructure to a decentralized less controllable one (Abrougui, 2013). Tunisia has a history of internet censorship. The extensive surveillance and filtering practices of Zeine el Abidin Ben Ali’s former regime had earned Tunisia the title of “internet enemy” in 2009 and 2010, along with countries like China, Iran, and Saudi Arabia. Two years after the fall of the Ben Ali rule, Tunisia is taking steady steps toward embracing internet freedom. Shruting down the filtering equipment was only a tiny step toward cutting ties with internet censorship practices. During the Ben Ali rule, the Tunisian Internet Agency, ATI, hosted censorship machinery and implemented filtering orders. The agency still manages TunIXP, the country’s internet exchange point, but was reformed toward a neutral and more transparent organization. Further legislation allowed telecommunication providers also to by-pass TunIXP making Tunisian internet traffic decentral and thereby less controllable for future governments and at the same time aiming for internet neutrality (ibid).

Freedom of Expression in Different Political and Cultural Contexts

The Tunisian example also shows how reform can remain threatened by laws restricting freedom of expression online. A number of repressive Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and internet laws from the Ben Ali regime remain to date and pose threats to free speech online (Article 19, 2011). For instance, Article 9 of internet Regulations (dated March 22, 1997) obliges Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to monitor and take down content contrary to public order and “good morals”, while Article 11 prohibits the use of encryption technologies without prior approval from the authorities. Under Article 86 of the Telecommunication Law (dated January 15, 2001), anyone found guilty of “using public communication networks to insult or disturb others” could spend up to two years in prison and pay a fine. In the political context of the Arab world, such laws can be used and abused to stifle the voices of marginalized members of society. Currently, social media battles between atheists and religious forces are an example how freedom of expression needs to be guaranteed if citizens are to voice their personal and political beliefs and ideas online (Abrougui, 2013).

Whilst some governments may lead by example when it comes to employing social media for good governance in some areas, they may display critical behaviour in other ar-
Case Studies

3.1. Methodology and Approach

Ten case studies were authored for this study by social media experts around the world. This process was undertaken in order to ensure a range of examples from different countries could be included. Instead of conducting a desktop research, authors who have had direct interaction and first hand insight into the cases covered were identified and contacted. These local experts were contracted to cover specific examples and share their local insights and perspectives. A set of guidelines was defined and given to the authors to ensure all case studies cover central points. The authors were selected through a call across the networks of Konnektiv and its partner organizations, ideas were gathered and jointly selected with the contractor based on geographic variety and variety of the type of interaction. All cases were proof read and checked by Konnektiv for obvious flaws but represent the author’s personal opinions.

Slacktivism and Participation as a Mere Marketing Tool

The omnipresence of Social Media for political causes has also formed the expression “Slacktivism”, meaning the low entry-level that makes online participation look meaningful while little or no effects can be observed “offline”. Similarly popular platforms that have become part of a digital existence are understood as another means of increased visibility and attention by political actors. Often, social media are used to demonstrate accessibility and participation rather than being actually integrated into political processes. In order to not create high expectations amongst participating citizens and cause disappointment and in order to be effective, social media for political participation needs close links to real life decision-making and action instead of digital scores. True commitment from both political actors as well as citizens in using social media for participatory purposes can turn so called Slacktivism into meaningful online activism.

For more information on “Slacktivism” and political participation see Breuer & Farooq (2012).
Classification
The case studies presented in this chapter portray both examples of bottom-up (citizen initiated) and top-down (government initiated) projects ranging in their degree of participation from category 1 to 5 (see page 8). All projects examined in the case studies focus on informal participation projects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Degree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government-Citizen Interaction via Twitter</td>
<td>Ruanda</td>
<td>Communication and Interaction</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map Kibera – Crowdsourced digital mapping</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>Advocacy and Accountability</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EduTrac – SMS-Based School Monitoring System</td>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>Education monitoring</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ghana Decides – Election Monitoring Project</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Election Information Campaign</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marsad.Tn – Parliament Monitoring in Tunisia</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>Democratic Accountability</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participatório – Youth participation platform</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>Interaction and Agenda Setting</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buenos Aires Bache – Pothole reporting system</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>Transparency and Accountability</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Thai Netizen Network for Online Freedom</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCHR – Cambodian Center for Human Rights</td>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>Voter Information</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ReVoDa – Mobile Election Reporting</td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>Election Monitoring</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Geographical Distribution

12 Level of participation between citizen and government from the categories on page 8; categorization by Konurkiu.  
13 The world map below shows the geographical distribution of the 10 case studies.
3.2. Case Study: Government-Citizen Interaction via Twitter in Rwanda by Claude Migisha Kalisa

Rwanda is a developing country rebuilding itself fast from several civil wars and the horrible 1994 Tutsi genocide that savagely took away a million lives. When you look at the regimes that were in place before 1994, they were characterized by hatred and divisionism thus hampering equal political participation of all citizens to national development initiatives. Almost 20 years down the road things have changed. We are in the era where Twitter and Facebook, two social networking platforms, are changing the world. In Rwanda, however, the use of social networking sites has taken a different angle, with various government officials and institutions notably embracing them as new channels through which they can easily reach out to the people. From the top, President Paul Kagame is among the most conversational world leaders on Twitter. He has led the way, personally taking time to directly engage or respond to people inside and outside Rwanda. “Yes I answer questions from followers. When I am having my lunch, for example, it gives me time to check on Twitter … I don’t have different times to allocate to my meals and my tweeting responsibilities – I do both,” he said.

Several government agencies have begun to use social media platforms as a mean to disseminate information to the public and collect their feedback. It allows participation in governance and development matters. For instance, every Friday the Prime Minister interacts with citizens via a Twitter Q&As with the hashtag #askPMRwanda. Exchanged Tweets are focused on providing information on issues pertaining to the country, service delivery and government activities. The Prime Minister tweets on average of 2.11 tweets per day with 37% being replies to citizens during the Q&As session.

The Minister of Health, Dr Agnes Binagwaho, initiated a series of online discussions through Twitter feeds, engaging medical practitioners, partners and the general public on various health-related issues. She holds the session Monday afternoon, twice a month, in what is dubbed “#MinisterMondays”. In a recent statement from the Ministry of Health Binagwaho tweeted: “the Twitter forum is a great opportunity for improving service delivery by incorporating the direct suggestions of the population, who are at the centre of all decisions made by the MoH”. Supt. Theos Badege, the Police Spokesperson, says that the Rwanda National Police has been using such online platforms for a year now, adding that they have proved to be quick and effective means of communication. “Social networking forums, especially Twitter and Facebook, have helped us reach and interact with many people. We are able to inform the public simultaneously during major events like the anti-GBV campaign, traffic week and to bring on board those not present in the country,” he said.

Last year a report by Portland Communications, a political consultancy and public relations agency, after conducting a survey dubbed “How Africa Tweets” ranked Rwanda at the seventh top users of Twitter in Africa with close to 10,000 tweets in the last three months of 2011. The number of Rwandans actively using social media in Rwanda is significantly increasing. Looking at several weekly sessions organized by government and private organs to engage with citizens either local or in the diaspora one could see the impact. Hundreds of citizens directly exchange with high level as well as local authorities on several issues. For instance sometime back a follower complained to the President about a new scheme under which district mayors and executive secretaries will be given vehicles. The problem is that this person wondered how government would buy 360 vehicles for the officials. The President clarified that Rwanda has only 30 districts; therefore only 60 officials would get cars since there are just 30 mayors and a similar number of executive secretaries. On the same subject, the minister of finance, John Rwangombwa, came in to explain the rationale behind the scheme to provide vehicles for these local officials. He tweeted that the government will only facilitate these officials to get cars, but not buy. Instead, the officials will be using their personal cars to conduct official business. There is another popular case whereby city authorities wanted to close a popular restaurant in Kigali. Then several city dwellers tweeted the matter to high level authorities, the president included. In less than 48 hours, a task force was put in place to discuss further the issue and find an immediate solution. Guess what, the place is still open – thanks to social media. Many efforts still need to be made in order to bridge the digital divide mainly in rural areas. This shall equally increase the uptake in using social media both in rural and urban areas.

http://twiplomacy.com/info/africa/rwanda/. 14
It is becoming a culture to use social media to engage with people. Almost all government institutions use them to exchange with citizens. In other cases political leaders even use their personal accounts to respond to several questions asked by citizens. For example, President Paul Kagame has an average of 1.55 tweets per day with 88% of replies to followers. Social media, especially Twitter ensures accountability as far as public policy is concerned by keeping leaders honest. It’s also from Twitter that the world gets to know what is happening in Rwanda from Rwandans themselves. Social media do remove protocol or long waiting lists one has to go through to see a leader. They enhance instant communication between leaders and citizens. As time goes, many organizations either public or private, are adopting the use of social media as channel to reach out to many easily and effectively.

However, there are still challenges; like illiteracy and access to internet either through broadband or smart devices. You find that social media is much easier embraced in cities than in rural areas. Talking about accessibility to social media in Rwanda, internet penetration is still low – at 9% for the moment, whereas mobile phone subscription is rapidly growing – currently at 62.8% according to Rwanda Utilities Regulatory Agency (RURA). Among these are feature phones as well as smart phones, with a rising number of users who access social media through apps (mobile phone applications) or through different mobile phone browsers.  

3.3. Case Study: Map Kibera – Crowdsourced Digital Mapping by Erica Hagen

Map Kibera is a project started by American development and technology practitioners, Erica Hagen and Mikel Maron, in Nairobi, Kenya, in 2009. Initial support came from a grant by the organization Jumpstart. The project was initiated by the two founders who worked in close cooperation with citizens during the planning and implementation. The founders registered the Map Kibera Trust in Kenya in 2010 to sustain the project’s activities and impact. The Trust continues to use various forms of social media for greater political and development impact by marginalized groups in Kenya, particularly slum communities in Nairobi.

From the start, Map Kibera engaged community members as the primary stakeholders, particularly youth living in Kibera, a major Kenyan slum. Map Kibera targeted youth from each of the “villages” of Kibera, and engaged a mix of young women and young men aged approximately 18 to 26. Religious diversity and some tribal diversity was important, though Kibera is no longer home to certain tribes due to the postelection violence in 2007. After the Trust reached out to the slums of Mathare and Mukuru, as well as coastal areas like Kilifi and other parts of Kenya, the Trust began to engage with a wider variety of tribal backgrounds and ethnic groups. Older members of the communities (adults and elders) became more directly involved as advisors and partners. At present, Map Kibera has a strong gender balance with several young women in leadership roles.

No government officials are directly involved in the operations or were involved in initiating the project. However, the organization engages with local government frequently including the local District Officer, Chief, and Member of Parliament. These relationships have been built over time.

Map Kibera’s initial inspiration was to map the largest slum in Kenya, using digital open mapping platform OpenStreetMap. The reason was that it was a “blank spot” — a metaphorically invisible place despite being home to a quarter of a million people in Nairobi. Open mapping technology allows such places to be mapped online without relying on traditional government agencies to create such a map, thereby conferring legitimacy. Residents of a community can add themselves to the map and declare their own community to be visible, valid and legitimate.

15 http://www.mapkibera.org/.
16 http://jumpstartinternational.org/.
17 http://www.openstreetmap.org/.
Building off of this theme, Map Kibera sought to support slum residents to create other representations online and increase visibility and “voice” using tools like blogs, Ushahidi software, and online video production. These media resources as well as the maps were created by participating youth residents of the slum. A focus on youth allowed the program to emphasize computer skills and youth voice, thereby targeting some of the least represented and least skilled, unemployed members of the community.

The initial mapping of Kibera began in October 2009 with the recruitment of 13 youth, partnership building with local community organizations in Kibera, and training in the use of a GPS device and OpenStreetMap editing software. The initial exercise of adding basic features of Kibera to the map required about three weeks of intensive field work by youth and support by the two founders. Later mapping added further details to the map points of interest. Over the course of the project participation has gone from inviting and training citizens in the initial phase to citizen self-initiated proactive contributions and extensions today.

More social media was introduced after that initial mapping period with the creation of a video training program. The group which later became known as Kibera News Network, a program of Map Kibera, began to meet weekly in early 2010 and began to post videos to Youtube almost immediately. Small handheld flip cameras were used to create videos examining community topics of the highest importance to the youth participants, such as local problems and issues residents face. Shortly thereafter, also in early 2010, Ushahidi software was used to bring together elements of mapping with news and reporting about community affairs. The Voice of Kibera site allowed residents to submit SMS messages reporting on local happenings to be added to the map. A youth team was recruited to both submit and approve messages as well as administer the site.

After 2010, these activities began to be expanded to other parts of the city and country through partnerships in locations such as Mathare and Mukuru (two slums in Nairobi). The organizational structure became a youth-led membership organization incorporated in Kenya as a Trust, with a board of trustees including the founders of Map Kibera and other members. The youth participants took on gradually more responsibility and membership duties, including receiving stipends for their work rather than functioning solely as volunteers. Funding was based primarily on grant support as well as consulting for other groups wishing to learn some of the technical skills of Map Kibera.

There was very little involvement of government in the project for the first couple of years. Kibera, and the slums of Kenya more generally, are places which are highly contested politically. Most politicians would prefer to ignore the problems of the slums, or solve them by demolition and rebuilding, a technique underway in Kibera via a UN Habitat program. In spite of this, government locally was either supportive or did not pay close attention to Map Kibera in the beginning. This allowed for growth and establishment of closer relationships with the general public in the slums. This was strategic, because most local impact in the slums comes from civil society groups and NGOs which function as service providers in the absence of government services or attention. For example, Map Kibera mapped about 200 informal schools in Kibera, but just two formal schools and no government schools within the specific boundaries of the slum. Therefore most younger children attend schools that are provided by various community groups, private individuals, or NGOs. Additionally, in a place with so many interventions coming and going, it takes time to build support and trust within the community or government.

However, in order to finally impact Kibera and the other slums in a more long-term and significant way, Map Kibera slowly began to make inroads and gain influence with government officials. By 2013, Kenya was about to experience a major presidential election and Kibera and Mathare were key constituencies and potential hotspots. At this point, Map Kibera cooperated with government locally to help prevent the violence of the prior elections. Providing reports in real time via social media, maps of security hotspots, and providing candidate interviews by video to the community helped connect political participation and improve processes of democracy. For more information about the elections and Map Kibera’s role, see Kepha (2013) and Hagen (2013).

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18 Comment by Konnektiv: Here referring to participation between project and citizens, not participation between government and citizens.
19 http://www.youtube.com/kiberanewsnetwork.
21 http://www.voiceofkibera.org/.

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3.4. Case Study: EduTrac – Uganda’s SMS-Based School Monitoring System by Paula Akugizibwe

Improving education is a priority goal of most countries, and while it is relatively straightforward to monitor progress in quantitative terms – such as number of schools or students enrolled – it is more challenging, though equally important, to monitor the quality of education. Uganda’s pioneering school monitoring system, EduTrac, has risen to the challenge by developing a mobile phone-based platform that allows for rapid reporting on indicators of school performance.

EduTrac is a platform that uses RapidSMS to collect weekly data on the performance of primary schools across Uganda – including attendance of teachers, sanitation facilities, incidents of violence, school feeding, curriculum progress, receipt of funds and use of educational materials.

The first phase of EduTrac was piloted in 14 districts in 2011, and has now expanded to cover 21 districts and 2,000 schools, representing around a quarter of the country. Expansion is ongoing, with another 14 districts to be enrolled by the end of 2013.

Prior to EduTrac, traditional reporting on school performance had taken place through an annual school census – meaning that many major problems which required urgent responses were only identified long after the fact. By collecting data on a weekly basis, EduTrac promotes consistent accountability by enabling prompt identification and resolution of problems.

The following organizations are involved around the EduTrac project:

**Example of data collected from EduTrac male adults and youths**

UNICEF, the United Nations Children’s Fund, provides technical expertise and funding to the government of Uganda for a variety of programmes – including several Technology for Development initiatives – targeted at improving children’s health and welfare. EduTrac was conceptualised by UNICEF and subsequently implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Sport. This partnership oversees the planning and operational management of EduTrac.

District officials – in particular, the District Inspector of Schools, District Education Officer and the Chief Administrative Officer – recruit and maintain school participation in EduTrac. The data collected is readily available to them through a web-based platform, which they use in ongoing planning and supervision – for example, by arranging inspection visits to schools that are performing poorly on key indicators.

The central stakeholders in EduTrac are its reporters, as the system relies on their active participation. There are currently over 6,000 reporters, the majority of whom are teachers and head teachers. Smaller numbers of reporters are drawn from school management committees and Girls Education Movements (GEMs), which are comprised of members of the community.

EduTrac is also linked to Uganda’s flagship SMS-based system, U-Report, which engages youth reporters to provide data on development issues in their community. Some indicators overlap between the two systems, enabling multiple perspectives to be integrated into the final analysis.

When EduTrac is rolled out to a district, recruitment takes place through official district structures and public platforms such as the radio. EduTrac employees also visit districts to encourage school and community leaders to enrol.

People who enrol then take part in an orientation workshop, where they are taught how to use the system and have an opportunity to raise their own issues and queries. Once oriented, reporting begins – with most indicators submitted on a weekly basis, and some on a monthly basis. Reporters simply send a free SMS listing responses to the different data fields.

When submissions have been collated at district level, reporters can also view and extract certain data for use in their own research or advocacy. In addition to the mobile platform and the web-based interface that is hosted by UNICEF, there is also an EduTrac blog, which is written in informal narrative style by various EduTrac employees, and captures experiences related to implementation in the field.
EduTrac is a classic top-down project, with the concept originating from an international organization which then entered into partnership with the national government to plan, budget and operationalize it. The ministry is also responsible for identifying major bottlenecks based on the collated data and engaging stakeholders in the education sector to respond to these issues.

Citizen participation is limited to those with leadership roles in schools or girls’ empowerment movements. While their feedback can be used to improve and fine-tune the system as implementation progresses, they are not directly involved in planning, but are only called upon to cooperate in reporting.

The insights of EduTrac staff as shared on the blog suggest that teachers’ attitudes towards cooperation vary widely, with some being extremely enthusiastic, and others indifferent. In response to these variations, some district officials have suggested introducing a reward system for schools who participate, and punitive measures for those who do not. This indicates the degree to which there is a lack of ownership of the system from the people who are central to it.

It is also notable that students themselves do not contribute to EduTrac. Although the system is linked to U-Report, which makes use of youth reporters, integration of data is only done on selected issues, such as violence in schools. In future, the system would be strengthened if reporting was consistently solicited from the population most affected (youth/students).

Despite these limitations, EduTrac has demonstrated a positive effect from its earliest days – for example, teacher absenteeism and reported cases of violence have declined in districts where the system is active. With efforts to increase youth participation and strengthen community ownership, this initiative has significant potential to reform Uganda’s education system.

For further information see the EduTrac blog. UNICEF has also produced a report on Uganda’s use of technology to improve monitoring of development programmes, including EduTrac.

3.5. Case Study: Ghana Decides – BloggingGhana Election Monitoring Project
by Mac-Jordan Degadjor

In 2008, there was very little social media coverage of Ghana’s elections. Apart from the few Ghanaian accounts posting on Facebook and tweeting the results and stories, there was a lot more international journalists and media houses covering the elections from their perspective.

Ghana Decides – an election-monitoring project by BloggingGhana with funding and support from STAR-Ghana (a multi-donor pooled funding mechanism funded by DFID, DANIDA, EU and USAID) was born to tell the Ghanaian story, project the voices of citizens offline, spur discourse about issues and encourage informed participation in the electoral process of Ghana.

Ghanaians on December 7, 2012, went to the polls to cast their ballot in the Parliamentary and Presidential Election in Ghana. The non-partisan project with a team of bloggers, social media enthusiasts, professional photographers and volunteers across the country, monitored electoral discussions from both sides of the divide, educated NGO’s and CSO’s on social media use before, during and after the 2012 General Elections for the first time in the history of Ghana. Ghana Decides team covered the elections using Blogs, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Flickr and other social media platforms. It focused heavily on monitoring and documenting Ghana’s election on social media and also keeping citizens in the diaspora up to date whose only source of information about the elections, were through online radio, friends and families and the internet.

22 http://edutrac.blogspot.de/.
The government of Ghana never had any role in Ghana Decides. BloggingGhana, Ghana’s largest organization of bloggers and social media enthusiasts lead and executed this project until today. Ghana Decides comprised of a core team of 10 bloggers and social media enthusiast with Kinna Likimani23 as the project lead.

Several online and offline campaigns were launched to drive citizen participation in the 2012 general elections:

*iRegistered* was a campaign, introduced and led by Kwabena Akuamoah-Boateng24, which aimed to encourage eligible Ghanaians to get registered on the Biometric Voter Registration (BVS) system. Ghanaians shared their experience of the registration process by sending in images and videos of them in queues, registering and with their new ID cards. Photos from registered voters were uploaded on to the social media photo sharing sites25. The hashtags #iRegistered and #bvr were used to disseminate information.

*Speak Ghana* was a campaign introduced by Sharifah Issaka26. It aimed to encourage citizens to express their views and hopes for Ghana by writing their thoughts on a speech bubble. Participants wrote their thoughts on a printed speech bubble, took photos of themselves holding the speech bubble and posted it online.

The #GhanaDecides tag was an interactive video campaign introduced by Jemila Abdulai27. This campaign was run loosely on an online video series the “Ghana Tag” on YouTube. It consisted of online video uploads by Ghanaian YouTube users and videos of non-You Tube (offline) users responding to a set of questions pertaining to the upcoming general elections and Ghana’s development. The aim of the campaign was to spur discussions and gain insights from average Ghanaians regarding the 2012 presidential elections, key development issues, and being Ghanaian. Participants were asked to “tag” 3 to 5 other Ghanaians to participate in the Ghana Decides Tag, and they in turn will make a video response and upload. The videos were viewed more than 100,000 times in total.28

The Get Out and Vote and Our Vote, Our Voice campaigns focused mainly on registered voters to get out and vote on Election Day (December 7, 2012).

Further activities were social media working group trainings for civil society organizations focusing on women, children and gender issues. The trainings were conducted at 11 locations all over the country. Focus of the training was how to use social media tools in their area of work and how to report on electoral issues during the elections. In total 189 persons from 112 organizations were trained.

The low use of social media by election stakeholders (the electoral commission, political parties, IIGs, civil society and the voting public) prompted Ghana Decides and BloggingGhana to use tools and channels that the youth use daily to cover the run up to the elections, educate and cover the elections itself.

Ghana Decides became the go-to source for credible election-related information among Ghana’s online community, mainly the youth. During peak period, there was vigorous activity, debate and discussion on the main platforms. The wide use of the #GhanaDecides hashtag and wide participation in the campaigns launched showed the interest from the side of the public.

Indirectly the government seemed to welcome the use of social media as a platform of engagement. This can be seen in how the NDC stepped up its social media efforts in the weeks leading to the election. The parties were generally open to Ghana Decides; the group had interview opportunities with ministers, received accreditation for official programs as the presidential inauguration, and received the #Innovation Ghana award from the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

Ghana Decides showed that it is possible to engender political participation among youth, when it is done socially using technological tools the youths are very abrasive with.

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22 Personal blog: http://kinnareads.wordpress.com/.
23 Personal website: http://kwabena.me/.
26 Personal blog: http://sharifahportfolio.tumblr.com/.
3.6. Case Study: Marsad.tn – Parliament Monitoring in Tunisia
by Amira Yahyaoui

Al Bawsala is a Tunisian NGO founded by recognized activists committed to promote transparency and accountability in national politics. Its main target is to put citizens at the heart of political life by providing them with the means to learn about the political process, and thus to protect their interests and fundamental rights.

Al Bawsala has implemented several projects in this context, including Marsad.tn, the observatory of the Tunisian National Constituent Assembly (NCA), considered as the NGO’s flagship. Marsad.tn aims at facilitating access to information for everyone, mainly regarding the drafting process of the new Constitution, and advocating for participatory democracy and transparency. Marsad.tn, Al Bawsala’s main project, directly and permanently mobilizes a team of seven employees and two volunteers.

The implementation of the project came following the elections of the NCA on October 23, 2011, and was stimulated by the vagueness surrounding its work. Al Bawsala has therefore advocated for transparency within the NCA. Al Bawsala sued the Tunisian assembly using the law on freedom of information to gain the right to access and share the work of this elected institution. Since the launch of Marsad.tn project, Al Bawsala has signed several partnerships with several organizations:

Parliamentwatch.org is a German NGO and an online platform that enables citizens to directly ask questions to politicians in order to comprehend their points of view. Al Bawsala has signed a partnership with Parliamentwatch for the development of Marsad.tn from June 2012 to December 2013. Parliamentwatch has formed Nabil Yahyaoui, programmer and webmaster of Marsad.tn for six weeks in June to July 2012, concerning the question & answer forum developed by Parliamentwatch and implanted on Marsad.tn.

MICT is a German non-profit organization that implements development projects of media in the MENA region. MICT’s activities focus on interaction between conflict, media coverage and reconciliation in regions which go through crisis. Marsad.tn is financed by MICT with funds from the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Marsad.tn advises Marsad.tn in the elaboration of its partnerships with Tunisian media organizations to improve its visibility and to promote its online platform.

Nawaat.org is a Tunisian association that promotes citizen participation. Created in 2001 by a group of opponents, Nawaat fought against dictatorship and campaigned for democracy in Tunisia. Since the revolution, Nawaat has become a reference in citizen journalism. Thanks to their good implantation in Tunisian regions (through their network of citizen journalists) and to their impact, Nawaat draws up, along with Marsad.tn an exclusive column (in French) to cover the activities of the NCA.

Marsad.tn, through its website, helps to get to know the NCA Members by publishing their biographies, interviews, as well as following their proposals and participation in votes. The information for the publications is gathered by Al Bawsala employees. Marsad.tn works at disclosing the discussions within the different constitutional commissions, allowing citizens to take ownership of their Constitution. The website therefore allows access to details about most of the NCA work, namely attendance at plenary sessions, committee work, debates and votes. Marsad.tn gives also the opportunity to interact with the NCA members through the Questions & Answers platform, where citizens can send questions to their deputies and answers are usually collected and published by the Marsad team. Hence, citizens are more likely to take part in the democratization process by suggesting ideas, and pushing their elected deputies to reflect on issues of concern to local society.

In addition to the website, the information is relayed via social networks to ensure maximum visibility of the NCA work, mainly via Twitter, on the official account of Al Bawsala, and on Facebook, where references and summaries are disclosed. In Tunisia, Facebook is the first source of
online information, therefore Al Bawsala decided to change its communication through the platform and to launch a Facebook campaign to gain more visibility. But in order to push internet users to use marsad.tn, Al Bawsala decided to design its new website as a tool that has a special focus on the news page which uses the same strategy as a Facebook timeline.

However, it is clear that the choice of sharing information online does not yet allow reaching all Tunisians. Al Bawsala has established several partnerships with national media to further facilitate access of the data collected. The information on Marsad.tn is provided both in Arabic and French, in order to reach a greater number of citizens.

Following the revolution of January 14, 2011, and the general change in the political climate, Tunisians have been looking for objective and non-partisan sources of information. In this context, Marsad.tn was favourably received by the public given that the information provided by the website is checked and verified, therefore reliable.

On the other hand, the reaction of politicians was slightly different at the beginning, including those claiming that the assembly is a sovereign institution and cannot be subject to any kind of observation. Even if some are still criticizing the project, they are becoming increasingly rare and most politicians have understood and agreed that transparency and accountability are key factors of good governance. Based on its statistics, Al Bawsala noticed that the group of ministers and secretary of state who are having both a legislative and an executive role has the highest rate of absentees. Al Bawsala pushed these ministers to choose between the two positions and pushed them to resign.

The main lesson learned after one year of legislative monitoring work is that Al Bawsala is fighting against a mentality of opacity, which is deeper than the non-transparent practices and behaviour. The NGO now understands that its work will be done on the long term. It is for this reason that it has decided to expand the scope of its monitoring work to the sub-national level, in order to broaden its outreach capacity to citizens, with a focus on service delivery on priority sectors.

3.7. Case Study: Participatório – Brazil’s Youth Participation Platform by Felipe Fonseca

Participatório33 – the Participatory Youth Observatory – is a digital platform whose main goal is enabling and fostering social engagement through participatory processes. It intends to “generate knowledge about/by/for” the Brazilian youth, promoting open discussions about youth-related projects and public policies. It was created by Brazilian Federal Government through its National Youth Secretariat, and informed by a number of open discussions with society and digital networks.

Participatório invites anyone to register and then participate in discussions created by others, or propose their own discussions. It follows the usual form of a community website, allowing users to send private messages, maintain a weblog, create or join groups, and share content (links, documents, wiki pages, etc.) with their contacts or groups. The website was developed by C3SL, a lab related to the Federal University of Paraná, using the open source software Elgg. It’s also hosted in a university-located server – which may be a good way to ensure its persistence against any changes in government. Some of its public data may soon be offered via an open API. Its upcoming developments will be a user interface reformulation, the creation of a digital library and tools for participatory processes.

Upon its launch, Participatório was accused by some of being a superficial or hasty attempt by the government to address the demonstrations that took the streets of Brazil starting last June. According to website collaborators, the protests have indeed played an important role into setting a high priority in every public effort aimed at addressing a supposed crisis of democratic representation. They have also made the case for the current development (underway) of tools to allow direct democracy and collaborative decision-making in the platform. Nonetheless, Participatório has also a deep relationship with the National Youth Conferences, which have involved the participation of over 400,000 youngsters from every one of Brazil’s 26 states during some years now. It was first sketched in late 2011 and its development started in December 2012. The website was finally released in July 2013.

The idea of creating an online environment that would be effectively appropriated and used by youngsters comes from that background, and not only the recent protests. As a result of the attention paid to the online behaviour of youngsters to ensure its relevance, Participatório was

33 http://participatorio.juventude.gov.br/.
Informed by and will soon be integrated with corporate social networking websites such as Facebook and Twitter. Ever since they started planning the observatory there was the understanding that it wouldn’t be possible to avoid such platforms, which will remain as important hubs of mobilization, connected to Participatório. But they wanted to create a platform on which every user can choose whether or not their postings will go to corporate social networks.

Participatório acknowledges and tries to take advantage of the deep level of involvement Brazilian cultures have with social uses of the world wide web. Following the decrease in economic inequality, the percentage of population with internet access has grown steadily in the last decade. An estimated 94.2 million Brazilians had active access to the internet around December 2012 – almost half the country’s population by then. According to some sources, that would make Brazil the fifth biggest country worldwide in absolute number of internet users. Digital social networks have been the most attractive kind of website for Brazilians since as early as 2004/2005, when the first ones were launched. Some people sustain Brazilians have become heavy users of social networks (of which the biggest example was Google’s Orkut) a couple years before these services became strong between Europeans or North-Americans.

In such a context, Participatório was established to create an open environment for conversations between “youngsters, networks, collectives, social movements, managers, researchers, congressmen, everyone who wants to contribute to and integrate the proposed discussions”. It expresses a perspective according to which the knowledge and methodologies emerging autonomously from networked groups of young people should be taken into account when formulating and implementing public policies for the youth. Participatório’s online documentation suggests the discussions it hosts may influence public policy, although it does not propose any institutional way for that to happen.

Participatório is the result of an ongoing effort by Brazilian Presidency’s General Secretariat to understand and propose new ways of political participation through information technologies. The General Secretariat has the role of articulating the dialogue between social movements and the Federal Government. One of its departments, the National Secretariat for Social Articulation, has been pushing initiatives related to free/open digital tools for social participation for some years now. Their main project is another one, the social participation portal34 which is still under development. They claim one of the biggest challenges, not only in Participatório but in their every project, is finding ways to combine the needs and modes of operation of very large-scale organizations and the distributed, often fragmented environments of social networks.

One of the most subtle outcomes of Participatório is indeed the cultural change it requires within the public sector. Policy makers and public servants face the need to use collaborative environments and tolerate critical or ideologically opposed postings. That’s in itself remarkable in a country whose mainstream political culture is one of avoiding open conflict at all costs. Maybe it is the case that internet-acquired conversation habits are spontaneously influencing the way traditional politics are carried out.

On the other hand, Participatório intends to promote structured ways to bridge open discussion and policy-making. The first such attempts are two communities proposed and created by the Participatório team: “political system reform” and “living youth”. Each relates to one policy project currently under discussion within Brazilian government. The contributions on these online communities in Participatório will be compiled and offered as the platform’s official contribution to such projects. The idea is that these two experiments help shape the wider National Policy on Social Participation35, being developed by the National Secretariat for Social Articulation.

For further information see the website of the tech support manager Redmine36 and Participatório (2013).

3.8. Case Study: Buenos Aires Bache – Pothole Reporting System by Valeria Duran

The state of the pavement at the city of Buenos Aires is a usual complaint among its neighbours and it is a frequent topic in candidates’ speeches during election campaigns. Each year, the local government earmarks a considerable budget for a street reparation plan. Nevertheless, some people claim that this plan is not well reflected or does not correspond to the current state of the city roads.

34 http://psocial.sg.gov.br/.
36 http://redmine.c3l.ufpr.br/projects/ppnsj.
In this context, *Buenos Aires Bache* (BAB) – *Buenos Aires Pothole* could be a possible English translation – was launched on January 28th, 2013.37 The project consists of a website38 created with the aim of building collectively an inventory of the potholes that exist in the city of Buenos Aires. Web and social media – BAB also has a twitter account39 – are the basis where the project is leaned on. According to the description made by its creator, Diego Kravetz, it is both a “management and control tool” as it is useful not only for the neighbours – drivers in particular – who can report a pothole, but also for the Government which can easily supervise whether the reparations paid had been effectively done or how long they last.

To include a pothole in the website is not necessary to give any personal data. It is only required information about the hole reported: exact address, neighbourhood and size, according to a humorous and colloquial classification proposed: “fits a ball” (“entra una pelota”), “fits a cow” (“entra una vaca”), “fits a tram” (“entra un bondi”), “it’s a cliff” (“es un precipicio”). Besides, the date of the pothole being added to the web is registered in order to keep track of the time it takes to be solved. Once recorded, the reported pothole is automatically indicated in the digital map and its size can be deduced through a specific colour. The map allows to sort the sign by size and so to visualize, for instance, only the biggest or the smallest holes. With the records included, the website generates and publishes statistics that show a percentage chart of sizes.40

*Buenos Aires Bache* was created by the former councilman for the City of Buenos Aires between 2003 and 2011, Diego Kravetz,41 once his legislative labour was over. Kravetz is a lawyer and was councilman representing Frente para la Victoria, opposition party to PRO, whose leader is Mauricio Macri, governor of the city.

The colour chosen for the website, a yellow similar to the one used by the Government of the City of Buenos Aires and identified with the party of Macri, created some confusion about the manager of the project. However, the government does not take part in any stage of the project.

One of the most highlighted aspects of BAB is the possibility of making visible the state of the roads of the whole city, and not only the ones with more traffic or of the central neighbourhoods that usually get more benefits in reparation plans. With the denounces received, the project intended to prepare a report and to deliver it regularly to the Ministry of Environment and Public Space (Ministerio de Ambiente y Espacio Público) of the City of Buenos Aires. This report has a dual goal. On one side, it intends to inform the public servants about the quantity and characteristics of the holes as well as to speed up their solution. On the other, it pretends to become a tool to monitor the companies in charge. So far, the few reports sent to Diego Santilli, Minister of Environment and Public Space, did not get any answer.

BAB was financed by its creator and it had only a few expenses caused by the creation and the administration of the website. The software was specially programmed for the project by a friend of Kravetz at no cost.

The active participation of citizens is the main premise of the project as they provide information. Indeed and according to media that gave publicity to BAB, it had full acceptance and received a big amount of denounces in short time.42 However, the level of participation of the citizens could be described as equivalent to “consultation” as they can only contribute to the inventory but there is no room for providing solutions nor being responsible for its repair.

The impact of the project was good concerning citizen participation and presence in media. Even more, a few weeks after BAB’s launch, Buenos Aires Vereda43 (Buenos Aires Sidewalk) was created, defined as a cousin of BAB, having similar characteristics. On the contrary, there was

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37 Interview with TV 360 on the launch day: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mGeN3mUPtLI.
38 http://buenosairesbache.com/.
39 https://twitter.com/babaches.
40 For instance, “fits a ball”: 41%, “fits a cow”: 44%, “fits a tram”: 7%, “it’s a cliff”: 6% (data of August 29th, 2013).
42 On January, 29th, 2013, Clarín newspaper asserted that within 3 hours since its launch, about 450 holes had been reported.
43 http://buenosairesvereda.com/.
TNN's main projects include the following:

1) fighting against legislation that curb internet freedom (CCA and lèse-majesté),

2) creative commons and

3) public participation.

TNN engages in a number of both online and offline advocacy activities. Apart from regular research reports and press statements on current cyber-crime cases and criticism towards government's new internet control measures, in recent months the group has begun to proactively engage involvement in its work. Through the use of social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter, TNN regularly updates its activities and statements with the public. Offline, TNN frequently holds public talks and participates in various internet-related fora in an effort to build a broad coalition of cyber freedom activists.

Recent projects such as “NetizenMeetup” and the “Night School Program” represent concerted efforts to raise the TNN’s profile among the public as well as actively engaged with internet users. The Night School programme, for instance, holds public fora in a small popular library to discuss and exchange ideas on various issues above and beyond net freedom. During one session, the TNN staff gave a talk on the importance of SOPA and generated interesting discussions with the group, which then fed back to the online forum on TNN’s website. In the future, TNN plans to engage with the public more through the use of both online and offline tools. The group is optimistic that it has growing support base among the public, aided ironically in part by the government’s growing repression online.

One of TNN’s flagship project is its annual report on the state of the cyberspace in Thailand. The report outlines all issues relating to the broad internet environment, as well as highlighting key development and concerns for internet users and regulators. This annual report represents a one-of-a-kind effort to take stock of cyberspace activities in Thailand.

Despite TNN’s strong and growing criticism of the Thai government’s internet policies, the government has thus far not cracked down on the group’s activities. The government is certainly aware of the TNN’s mandate and its cyber freedom advocacy but has left the group to its own devices. TNN instead has sought to engage more with policymakers, whom it believes can have direct impact on internet policies. The group has recently engaged in some lobbying activities with key stakeholders inside the government and the bureaucracy in an effort to increase advocacy effectiveness.

Thr no feedback from the city government, even though a report with about three thousand potholes was presented to the ministry.

The actual challenge of BAB is to follow the information about each pothole to the Government. The project intends to find a way to avoid the “pure complaint” and to keep the complainants updated on the changes instead.

3.9. Case Study: The Thai Netizen Network for Online Freedom
by Aim Sinpeng

Cyber repression by the Thai state authorities has been a growing concern for the 20 million internet users in Thailand. As more people enter the cyberspace, more heavy-handed measures are employed by the state to control and limit internet freedom. From 2007 to 2011, computer crime-related persecution rose from none to nearly 100 cases (iLaw, 2012). Freedom on the Net 2012 report also ranks Thailand’s internet environment as “not free” – the only country that has a functioning democracy without a free cyberspace. The establishment of new cyber-crime units, such as the Cyber Security Operation Center, stands to threaten rather than protect freedom of speech online.

Amidst growing concern over internet control, an important advocacy group – the Thai Netizen Network (TNN, thainetizen.org) – was formed in 2008 to champion online freedom. The TNN represents a bottom-up, citizen initiative formed by a small group of concerned Thai bloggers following the coup d’état in 2006 and the subsequent passage of the 2007 Computer-related Crime Act (CCA). This CCA is seen by critics as a draconian law that gives the state overwhelming power to control and restrict what goes on in the cyberspace. TNN was thus set up to advocate against as well as raise awareness about how the CCA affects internet users in Thailand. From this humble beginning, the TNN has since created networks with other activist groups, such as iLaw and Prachatai, to pressure for press freedom more generally.

One of TNN’s flagship project is its annual report on the state of the cyberspace in Thailand. The report outlines all issues relating to the broad internet environment, as well as highlighting key development and concerns for internet users and regulators. This annual report represents a one-of-a-kind effort to take stock of cyberspace activities in Thailand.

TNN remains small, with 5 staff members and some 10 active members-turn-activists. The group does not have a membership system. While unintended, the group’s activities target young internet users between the ages of 25-35. This targeted group is largely drawn from middle class families and is composed of individuals who are generally concerned about social issues both locally and globally. Part of their advocacy involves technical work on encryption and circumvention tools, which makes its materials more accessible to tech-savvy, university-educated, younger crowds.
to encourage Cambodians to not only vote in the run-up to the National Assembly elections on 28 July 2013, but to also vote based on the policies of each party. Inspired by “Get Out to Vote” efforts in other countries, this was the first non-partisan, civil society-initiated project of its kind in Cambodia.

The project ran from 27 June 2013 to 26 July 2013 and focused primarily on reaching out to voters through CCHR’s Facebook page and other online social media through the use of simple messages. CCHR produced – using internal resources – a series of photographs of Cambodians holding signs pledging to vote during the elections. These photographs – 25 in total – were posted on Facebook (one per day), accompanied by a short description of the people in photos – which ranged from students, to tuktuk drivers, to NGO employees, to food sellers, to a famous singer – and the policy-based reasons why they would be voting. The people profiled in this campaign were also included in a short video, posted on YouTube.

Through these methods, the project capitalized on the growth in popularity of social media and the internet in Cambodia over the past few years. According to government figures, internet subscriptions total 2.7 million, or approximately 18% of the population, in comparison to 679,281 subscribers in 2011, which accounts for 4.62% of the population (Heimkhemra, 2013). Although the lack of functioning fixed landlines means that the majority of Cambodia’s population, particularly in rural areas, still does not have access to the internet, the number of Cambodian subscribers to Facebook has grown constantly in the last few years: currently, 759,249 Cambodians use Facebook, or approximately 5.25% of the population. Compared to 2011, 14,820 more users joined the social network, a 1.95% increase in the number of users country-wide (socialbakers, 2013). These numbers clearly point to the potential of using social media for democracy and human rights in Cambodia.
In addition to using social media to encourage people to vote, CCHR also used the radio, which is genuinely democratic as it is accessible to all and so far has been censored relatively little by the government – especially in comparison to the print media and television, as a means to reach out to sectors of Cambodian society which remain unconnected to the internet. CCHR created nine radio spots, each around 35 seconds and comprising the voice of two people who explained who they were and why they would be going to vote on 28th of July. The spots concluded with CCHR’s message regarding the elections, which was to encourage people to vote according to their will. The spots were broadcast during CCHR’s usual radio live talk shows.

The initiative was well received by members of the public – particularly those who follow CCHR on Facebook and who are already supporters of CCHR’s work: on average, each of the Facebook posts reached around 6,700 people and was shared approximately 28 times. At the regional level, some of the organizations CCHR works closely with, such as the Indonesian NGO Kemitraan (the Partnership for Governance Reform), welcomed the initiative. Another Indonesian NGO is planning to replicate the initiative ahead of the elections there in April 2014.

Despite the successes of the initiative, there are lessons to be learned from this first attempt at encouraging non-partisan civic action in Cambodia. Because CCHR implemented the project only a month prior to the elections, there was not sufficient time for the project to reach a wide enough audience. Moreover, the action, and especially its social media component, was limited to CCHR’s existing audience (due to limited means), rather than reaching a wider audience. In order to enhance the success of future “Get Out to Vote” initiatives in Cambodia, it would thus be important to ensure the message is more widely distributed.

3.11. Case Study: Enough is Enough Nigeria – Mobile Election Reporting App ReVoDa

Enough is Enough Nigeria (EiE) was birthed out of a protest demanding government accountability and responsibility while simultaneously placing a demand on young Nigerians to take responsibility for the Nigeria they desire to see. EiE firmly believes in its mission that young people have the power and potential to shape Nigeria’s destiny.

Fifty percent of Nigeria’s population are aged 18 to 35. If this part of the population is fully informed and engaged, it will change the dynamics of governance in Nigeria.

EiE’s core campaign is R(S)V:P: Register | Select | Vote | Protect. The RSVP Campaign is built around the common abbreviation that usually accompanies an invitation to an important event or occasion – RSVP: Répondez S’il Vous Plait. It is a formal request to the invited guest to kindly indicate their willingness and ability to participate in the event / occasion. Its widespread colloquial use in Nigeria as “Rice and Stew Very Plenty” presents a potentially attractive incentive to the expected guest.

EiE ingeniously harnessed this mindshare with the RSVP Campaign, stating that young Nigerians intend to be at the table to determine Nigeria’s future. The letters represent four key groups of activities young people should complete successfully to positively impact governance in Nigeria. They are: (1) Register to vote, (2) Select credible candidates (having scrutinized the options), (3) Vote, (4) Protect their votes – on election day and during the four year cycle.

Registered Voters Database (ReVoDa) is an election reporting mobile application that empowers citizens to report election-related happenings with their phones. It allows users (registered voters) to send information about happenings in their area without describing their location. The mobile phone number and polling unit (PU) number are required to download the app which simplifies geo-location. The platform can also send information to users that is relevant to their geographic location – either at the polling unit, ward, local government or state level. This is possible because the sequence on a voter’s card is as the following: State / Local Government / Ward / Polling Unit.

The app provides contact numbers for the relevant election management body, security agencies, a list of party acronyms and the provision to call EiE directly.

46 In 2003, CCHR established Voice of Democracy, a radio program, and in 2007, the Cambodian Center for Independent Media was established to run Voice of Democracy as an independent radio station. CCHR regularly hosts radio talk shows – which are broadcast on six radio frequencies throughout Cambodia – to discuss a variety of issues related to human rights and democratization in Cambodia.

47 Comment by Konsektiv: This interpretation by the author however was described less positive in CCHR’s report on freedom of expression in September 2013 (Cambodian Center for Human Rights, 2013)
The interface makes it very easy to use and allows to report data such as:

- Electoral officials arrival
- Material availability
- Voting
- Vote counting
- Result announcement
- Violence
- Fraud
- Police behaviour
- Results (independent verification)

Each report costs N10, but it is planned to reduce the cost to N4 soon – the cost of a regular SMS. The data received is mapped and also displayed on the website as a report. Anonymity is guaranteed as the reports only show polling unit numbers.

ReVoDa was the first such application on the continent and it was developed by a team of volunteers over a weekend, one month before the April 2011 General Elections. There had been various conversations – individuals and elections-related workshops – about how a mobile application could empower citizens during elections. The trigger point was when an EiE Board member started asking questions about the PU number and its possible usefulness. Though we had no direct funding for it, EiE funded the weekend of work and subsequent publicity from the technology budget provided for the elections in the Omidyar and MacArthur Foundation grants.

While some beta testing had been going on, it was formally presented to the public through an animated advert during the “What About Us?” Presidential Debate on March 25th. It was supported by online adverts, magazine articles, and skeletal adverts in traditional media (newspaper and TV stations in Lagos, Kano and Ekiti), SMS blasts, and distribution of 10,000 flyers in 10 states. ReVoDa had been downloaded by over 9,000 people by the time elections ended on April 30th, 2011. Over the three different election days, we received 1,048 reports from all 36 States and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

The biggest challenge EiE faced was the limited time. This affected the ability to educate and raise awareness effectively and it also limited the time spent on designing the application. Though the app was available on all platforms except iOS, the user interface and functionalities could have been much better and they will be improved for 2015.

In the interim, ReVoDa was upgraded to allow multiple PU reporting for the July 2012 gubernatorial elections (#EdoDecides). In most cases where schools are used, there are multiple polling units on the property, thus, the upgrade allowed an observer to report from multiple units with the same phone number. In addition, ReVoDa’s drop down menu for the type of election did not include an option for “Local Government”. This was upgraded for the April 2013 Edo local government elections - #EdoDecidesLG.

The tagline for ReVoDa 1.0 was “making voting social”. The next iteration will morph into a suite of reporting applications with the tagline – “making participation social”. The six components of the suite are: (1) Elections, (2) Electricity, (3) Corruption, (4) Shineyoureye (National Assembly), (5) Emergency / Crime, (6) Polls & Petitions. ReVoDa 2.0 has the potential to turn millions of mobile phone users and social media enthusiasts into election watchdogs and advocates for good social services.
4. Recommendations and Outlook

In the case studies from around the world we have seen that social media can be used for political participation in very different ways and on all levels ranging from the sharing of information – as in the examples in which social media was used for campaigning or transparency – to delegated power as in the example of Map Kibera. As the degrees of participation between government and citizen in the table above show: The use of social media for campaigning and outreach remains the most commonly used purpose, as parts of society can be reached that were not easy to reach before.

In most cases in which the government was involved directly, the participation process was not formalized as in the online petitioning system established by the German Bundestag. It was rather used as a soft political approach in which social media are used as a channel through which politicians can listen to citizens' concerns like the example of Rwanda or the Chief in Kenya show. It was particularly obvious in the cases included in this study that none went beyond “cooperation” where citizens report back to the government on particular issues. This limited impact might also be the cause for little interest in participation as in the case of EduTrac. Instead of being involved in the whole process, the teachers were only collecting data for the government. In the case of Participatório this weakness seems to have been recognized by the initiators. They try to move towards a more direct influence by compiling reports from community discussions related to specific policy projects and integrate these reports into the decision-making process by the government.

At the same time citizen initiated projects often did not (yet) reach sufficient recognition from the government side. There seemed to be a tendency to ignore them, as in the case of Buenos Aires Bache or the Thai Netizen Network. As in many other cases of unheard protests, this conscious ignorance can have the effect of frustrating the participants sufficiently to quit, without any need for action by the government. Other reactions to inconvenient public mobilization include direct threats and arrests of key figures, often under false pretence to raise as little attention for the cause as possible. In other examples the pressure by the general (participating) public reaches a critical point, as in the case of Marsad.tn which became a controlling entity of the parliament and seems to quickly gain in influence.

General Recommendations

Levels of Participation – Creating Effective and Sustainable Processes

As in the offline world, organizing participation processes can be complex and complicated, depending on the level and degree of participation. Whilst sharing information or short term mobilization may be easy to organize via social media, long term consultation or cooperation processes may be more difficult to organize in a sustainable and effective way. The question how to use social media platforms beyond short term mobilization for long term political engagement or dialogues is another issue. Different studies have been conducted on the use of social media for protest mobilization, in particular in reaction to the “Arab Spring”, but the question how long term, sustainable governance processes can be organized via social media remains largely unanswered. Based on the German experience of the Enquete Commission on internet and Digital Society and other social media based governance processes such as regional crowdsourcing processes, for instance to determine budget expenditure in Hamburg, one can recommend:

• Setting clear expectations: How much influence will citizens actually have on decision-making processes?

• Make it clear what kind of input and engagement is asked for, who can participate how and with what effect.

• Make the language and technology as simple as possible.

Don’t expect citizens to engage long term if the topic is not directly relevant to them or the topic or processes are too abstract.

Integrating Social Media Activities in Existing Good Governance Projects

The cases have shown that social media is now part of everyday life around the world. It should therefore be considered as accompanying measures for communication or participation in every newly established or existing project. Social media can be integrated into existing good governance programmes. Depending on the structure and content of the programme, the approach may vary. However, the following may apply in any case:

Working with local experts: Always seek the advice and expertise of local experts. These may be social media power users, social media consultants, or media specialists from the private sector or civil society.
Analyses of target group preferences and popular platforms: Before deciding on any communication channels or platforms it is advisable to analyse the local market and the local media consumption habits, including e-literacy. Here, the choice of platform and tool according to local preferences as well as cross-media approaches, for instance by employing a mix of digital and analogue media, like radio, are highly relevant. It is therefore always advisable to analyse the local social media landscape before selecting a platform to use.

Connecting with existing communities: When engaging in a social media project, it is advisable to reach out to local technology, media as well as political communities and see what possibilities for collaboration there are. Whether it is employing members from these communities to build the solution, or asking them to act as a focus group, their engagement is crucial as existing communities can act as multipliers and offer valuable insight into local social media use.

Using existing GIZ social media expertise: In early 2014 a new Social Media Community will be launched on GIZ’s Global Campus 21 in which social media experiences and best practices from around the world can be shared among all GIZ employees and projects. This will in the future be a good starting point for all upcoming social media efforts. New initiatives can learn from these experiences and share their own. Often the same technologies such as Ushahidi are employed for varying purposes in different sectors and contexts. GIZ could make use of its size and experience by centrally offering their country offices to install and host this kind of software. Projects would thereby share resources and know-how in this field.

Media training: German development cooperation can promote the development of media skills and local abilities to harness social media for political communication and participation by improving access to such media. German development cooperation can support local infrastructure initiatives that help make internet access possible, more secure and decentralized. Such projects can be large scale infrastructure projects like helping set up internet exchange points to small scale projects such as helping set up local area networks.

U.S. government has passed a law that requires social media companies to provide the government with user data. The data includes user information such as name, address, and email. The law also requires social media companies to provide the government with the ability to access user communications. The law is intended to help the government track down criminals and terrorists. The law is opposed by privacy advocates who argue that it violates user privacy. They say that the government should only have access to user data if it is necessary to prevent a crime. The government says that the law is necessary to combat terrorism.

Policy advice: Digital freedoms are a prerequisite for political participation via social media, just as civil rights such as freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and freedom of information are prerequisites for political participation in general. German development cooperation can offer to engage in policy dialogues with governments interested in using social media around net-political topics, such as freedom of speech, data security and privacy issues, open data, etc. In particular, fostering regional exchange and net political debates including the private sector, civil society and governments can be a valuable contribution to existing structures like the Freedom Online Coalition48 or the Internet Governance Forum49.

Awareness for data security, privacy and use of commercial products: Creating digitally secure environments will be of high importance for social media solutions hosted by German development cooperation. In addition, commercial products where Germany’s implementing organizations cannot guarantee data ownership, like Facebook, should only be employed when necessary, i.e. when there are no suitable alternatives. In general, data sensitive and open source products should be the first choice when it comes to the selection of social media products to be used by German development cooperation. If social media are to be used to address critical topics and opinions, or in contexts where the political regime is repressive and human rights are threatened, the question what tools to use (or if any should be used) is especially important. Inviting people to join in an open innovation processes and submit ideas for improving homosexual rights in Uganda on a public platform for instance, is a dangerous idea, just as it would be to host a real-life rally for LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex) rights on the streets of Kampala.

Recommendations for Projects Specifically Focusing on Social Media for Good Governance

German development cooperation can support specific projects focusing on participation and social media in the following areas:

Infrastructure: Enabling the use of social media for political communication and participation by improving access to such media. German development cooperation can support local infrastructure initiatives that help make internet access possible, more secure and decentralized. Such projects can be large scale infrastructure projects like helping set up internet exchange points to small scale projects such as helping set up local area networks.

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Media training: German development cooperation can promote the development of media skills and local abilities to harness social media for political communication both for governments and the civil society, in particular for digitally marginalised people. Working together with local experts and established NGOs to help spread their efforts to increase awareness about online safety, data security and privacy, and different usage of social media would be most valuable as an approach to media skill development.

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45 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D2WQnK3feY.
5. Annex

5.1. Case Study Authors

Opeyemi Adamolekun serves as the Executive Director of Enough is Enough Nigeria (EiE), a coalition of individuals and youth-led organizations committed to instituting a culture of good governance and public accountability in Nigeria through advocacy, activism and the mobilization of the youth population as responsible citizens. She started her university education at the University of Lagos and has degrees from the University of Virginia, the London School of Economics and Oxford University’s Said Business School. She has worked for over 15 years in the private and public sectors in the US and Nigeria. She serves as a volunteer for the Kudirat Initiative for Democracy (KIND) and Kaleyewa House, an NGO focused on the elderly. Yemi is passionate about ensuring that leaders that are selected, elected and appointed are accountable to the citizens they are required by law to serve.

Contact: yemi@eienigeria.org ∙ www.eienigeria.org

Paula Akugizibwe, a writer and activist, was born in Nigeria to parents of Rwandan and Ugandan origin and grew up largely in Southern Africa. She considers herself a happy pan-African nomad. For the past few years, she has been based in Cape Town where she coordinated a regional advocacy project aimed at improving access to and quality of HIV/TB services in Southern Africa. Prior to this, Paula worked in several roles relating to health and human rights in Rwanda, Burundi and Botswana. She has also served on technical advisory groups for the Southern African Development Community and the WHO. Paula has a Bachelor of Pharmacy and a Master in Public Health (Epidemiology) from the University of Cape Town. In her spare time, she writes political poetry and non-fiction.

Contact: paula.akugizibwe@gmail.com

Mac-Jordan Degadjor, award winning Ghanaian blogger, social media entrepreneur, Sandbox Ambassador, US State Department 2013 Internet Freedom Fellow, 2011 Knight Digital Media Fellow who has worked on social innovation projects in different parts of the world especially in San Francisco, sub-Saharan Africa (Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, South Africa, and Nigeria) and North Africa (Egypt and Tunisia). Mac-Jordan helps brands, start-ups, small businesses, co-working spaces and social enterprises build their community and mentor them. He served as Technical Advisor on Ghana Decides project which saw the use of Social Media in Election monitoring in Ghana in 2012.

Contact: macjordan@ghanadecides.com ∙ +233 200 72 0093
http://www.macjordangh.com/
Valeria Duran is Sociologist, Master in Culture and Communication and PhD Candidate for the University of Buenos Aires (UBA). She researches on urban space, cultural identity and process of social memory. Currently she teaches Communication at School of Architecture, Design and Urbanism, UBA and at the National University of Avellaneda. Together with Anne Huffschmid, she compiled Topografíasconflictivas. Memorias, espacios y ciudades en disputa (2012) and has published several articles in journals and books.

Contact: valevduran@yahoo.com ∙ +54 911 5851-7327

Felipe Fonseca is a Brazilian media activist and researcher working on technological appropriation, low-tech experimentation, free (livre) and open source multimedia software, open licensing, experimental laboratories and online collaboration. He was the founder and articulator of projects as MetaReciclagem, an emergent Brazilian network related to the deconstruction of information technologies. He is also the co-founder of the Tropixel festival in Ubatuba, Brazil.

Contact: felipefonseca@gmail.com ∙ +55 11 985368091 ∙ http://ubalab.org/

Erica Hagen is a journalist and international development practitioner working for democracy of information and citizen participation in both online and traditional media. She is the co-founder of Map Kibera and GroundTruth Initiative. Erica has worked in four countries on development communication and evaluation, and in the United States on refugee and immigrant issues, for organizations such as United Nations Population Fund, Concern Worldwide, and Unicef. She holds a Master’s Degree in International Affairs from Columbia University, New York.

Contact: erica@groundtruth.in ∙ +1-773-313-5782 ∙ http://www.groundtruth.in/

Claude Migisha Kalisa is a Rwandese Technologist passionate about ICT and sustainable development. He worked in the areas of Data Management and Mobile Health, Technology & MDGs as well as Youth & ICT Innovation. He is a 2009 ITU Telecom World Fellow, 2011 ITU Global Digital innovator, and a UNESCO Chair fellow in Human Rights. Claude is an active member of the Global Shapers Community for Kigali, which is an offshoot of the World Economic Forum. He is also an active member of the African ICT for Development Researchers Network. Claude lives in Kigali and is also an amateur photographer.

Contact: mikaclau@gmail.com ∙ +250-788-520-006
Juliette Rousselot joined CCHR in July 2012 following a three-month volunteer position. As an International Consultant, she provides advocacy, research, policy, fundraising and reporting support to several of CCHR’s projects. She has previous experience working in human rights at Amnesty International USA. Juliette also worked with the Science for Human Rights Project and conducted trainings and workshops to build capacity in local civil society organizations in Haiti, Kenya and Uganda. Juliette holds a Master’s degree in International Affairs from the George Washington University.

Contact: juliette.roussetol@cchrcambodia.org ∙ +855 1535 0620
http://www.cchrcambodia.org/

Aim Sinpeng was born in Bangkok, Thailand. Her doctoral research focuses on Thai politics. She has previously worked for the Government of Thailand. She blogs regularly on Thai politics and writes for Global Voices Online, which promotes freedom on the net.

Contact: aim.sinpeng@alumni.ubc.ca
http://www.politics.ubc.ca/graduate-program/phd-profiles/aim-sinpeng.html

Amira Yahyaoui is the president and founder of Al Bawsala. Prior to the Tunisian revolution Amira was a human rights activist active in the field of freedom of expression and anti-censorship. Amira won several awards like the vital voices global trailblazer award, she is ranked by Arabian Business Magazine as one of the most influential Arabs.

Contact: amira.yahyaoui@gmail.com ∙ +216276663832


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