### **What is ICT4D?**

ICT4D is an initiative which tries to close the digital divide, apparent between those who are able to use modern technologies and those who have little to no access to said technologies. It is been an ongoing effort identified into three evolutionary phases, starting all the way back in the mid 1950’s in government and private sectors in developing countries. It has particularly been focused on helping poor and marginalized people and communities, focused on four main notions, mainly: **development**, **growth**, **progress** and **globalization**.

The United Nations, actively promotes ICT4D as a tool in aiding economic and social development around the world. The purpose of this is to improve the unions between technology, regulation and policy in a country. This ultimately aims to facilitate transformation using the benefits of technology which results in a modern and developed society.

### **ICT4D in the core sectors of development**

**Agriculture**

Farmers use ICT’s to connect to other farmers and to access pricing information from both foreign and domestic markets. Farmers could also use ICT’s for updates regarding climate changes and the status of their crops. Most of the above communication and research can be done simply with use of an internet-enabled smartphone which reduces the need for excessive traveling or extensive off-farm research.

**Climate change and environment**

Weather forecasting is usually separated into using mass media to inform the public on weather updates and into monitoring weather patterns through advanced equipment. An example of this is where mobile services for flood management are currently used in Africa to inform farmers of potential floods. There is a tool which converts information from complex satelite sensors to simple text messages which are sent to farmers to warn them of flood events

**Education**

ICT’s in education provide alternative solutions to problems in older education systems. Education in places like the Asia-pacific region in the case study has been improved through raising the capacity of teachers to utilize ICT effectively in teaching. One such project, ***Project Mind***, utilizes the power of the SMS for distance learning.

**Health**

With ICT, the lives of people with disabilities can be improved. This is done by improving their level of interaction with society by increasing the number of activities they can be a part of. By empowering disabled persons with the potential to gain employment, it allows for increases in their skills, confidence and self-esteem.

**E-government and civic engagement**

New technologies like social media have created platforms for individuals to make contributions in matters of civic engagement. In recent times, people on social networking sites bring attention to social issues which can be openly discussed. In South Africa it has also been used as a means for reporting criminal activity which negatively affects communities.

**Reducing the Gender gap**

Access to ICT's allow women to gain a stronger voice in their communities. Historically, women in poor or rural communities have typically been given subservient roles both in their communities and households so ICT4D aims to address this inequality. ICT's can provide jobs and economic empowerment and in the case study it has been used as a tool in communities in Egypt to report incidents of sexual harassment by using an SMS mapping system which alerts users of hotspots and occurring incidents.

**Tourism**

Tourism is one sector that has kept up with the demands of ICT and benefited greatly.  Sites like Tripadvisor have been extremely successful in allowing users visiting hotels and resorts globally to give a rating on a five star scale for these destinations. Pricing, transport and communication information is also given to facilitate a transparent and well received promotion of tourism.