**The Shape of ICT4D to Come:**

**Future Perspectives on Digital Development**

Pre-ICIS SIG GlobDev Workshop, Bangkok, 15 December 2024

Workshop Chairs: Silvia Masiero, Jolanta Kowal

The field of Information and Communication Technologies for Development (ICT4D) can be described as being at a historical juncture. With a “date of birth” positioned by researchers in the 1980s, and early studies on computers in low- and middle-income countries dating back to the 1960s (Heeks, 2014), the early days of the field developed around the idea that the question on whether ICTs could participate to development processes was solved with a clear yes (Walsham & Sahay, 2006). Corroborated by investigations of the meaning of “development” in ICT4D (Zheng et al., 2018), the field grew along the fundamental assumptions that “development” is to be pursued, and that ICT could, in many interlocking ways, act as an enabler of it, being inscribed in national development policies and in the global agenda embodied by the Sustainable Development Goals (Andersson & Hatakka, 2023).

The last decades have, however, casted multiple shades on this perspective. As reflected in the notion of adverse digital incorporation (Heeks, 2022), studies from multiple fields have displayed a common argument: ICTs can, beyond the development orthodoxy associated to them, be implicated in outcomes that are not only unjust, but can be outright harmful for the very people they are supposed to benefit. Technologies of food distribution, aimed at supporting social protection programmes, have resulted into exclusionary outcomes that have even been associated to hunger deaths (Khera, 2019; Singh, 2019). Biometric systems, aimed to identify asylum seekers, have been made interoperable with police authority databases with repressive powers (Martins et al., 2022). Surveillance technologies with logics of “security” have resulted in violent forms of policing, such as the surveillance of women’s clothing in Iran (Akbari, 2021) and the design of AI applications for border externalization in the EU (EuroMed Rights, 2023). All these perspectives, drawn from empirical research, seriously dispute the very idea of an ICT “for” development, leaving open questions on the future of the field and on the legitimacy of its original assumptions (Masiero, 2024; Akbari & Masiero, 2023).

It is at this historical juncture that we launch this call for papers. Motivated by awareness of the interface position of the ICT4D field, between a past of positive assumptions and a present of at least partially adverse digital incorporation, we invite papers that concur, in many ways, to building the shape of ICT4D to come, that is, the future of our field. These can be theoretical contributions making sense of the field, or empirical contributions centred on research objects that the ICT4D of the present days needs to confront. Possible topics are of a wide span, especially given the increasing need for ICT4D to interface with different disciplines (Akbari & Masiero, 2023). Topics include, but are not limited to:

* Theoretical conceptualisations of ICT4D and cognate fields of research;
* Philosophical and methodological contributions to the study of ICT4D;
* Studies of technology and society: participation of technology into societal outcomes;
* Studies of adverse outcomes of technology: for instance exclusionary outcomes of digital ID; biometric borders; surveillance; policing; data violence and cyberwarfare;
* Studies of solidarity and resistance to adverse outcomes of technology;
* Studies of technologies embedded into projects of restoration of peace and justice.

Full papers (max. 12 pages) and research-in-progress papers (max. 7 pages) should be submitted via [EasyChair](https://easychair.org/my/conference?conf=icisglobdev2024) by 30 September 2024. Papers should use the SIGGlobDev workshop [template](https://1drv.ms/w/c/eba0b35c5ae550ed/EfLWvEoCjShBsxjCqOyRTcEBNkQOkrKeokniZwcTOq51dA?e=XUMLrC), and be fully anonymised for submission.

Paper submission link: [https://easychair.org/my/conference?conf=icisglobdev2024](https://easychair.org/my/conference?conf=icisglobdev2024l)

Paper submission template: [SIG\_GlobDev\_2022\_Paper\_Template.docx](https://1drv.ms/w/c/eba0b35c5ae550ed/EfLWvEoCjShBsxjCqOyRTcEBNkQOkrKeokniZwcTOq51dA?e=XUMLrC)

For any questions about the workshop, please feel free to reach out to the chairs at [silvima@ifi.uio.no](mailto:silvima@ifi.uio.no).

**Important dates**

30 September 2024: Submission Deadline (full and research-in-progress papers)

30 October 2024: Decision Notification

15 December: Pre-ICIS SIGGlobDev Workshop

**References**

Akbari, A., & Masiero, S. (2023). Critical ICT4D: The need for a paradigm change. In *IFIP Joint Working Conference on the Future of Digital Work: The Challenge of Inequality* (pp. 350-355). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.

Akbari, A. (2021). The threat of automating control: Surveillance of women’s clothing in Iran. *Automating Crime Prevention, Surveillance, and Military Operations*, 183-199.

Andersson, A., & Hatakka, M. (2023). ICT4D and the Sustainable Development Goals: a road well-traveled. *Information Technology for Development*, *29*(1), 1-8.

EuroMed Rights (2023). Artificial Intelligence: The New Frontier of the EU Border’s Externalisation Strategy. EuroMed Rights, https://euromedrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Euromed\_AI-Migration-Report\_EN-1.pdf.

Heeks, R. (2014). From the MDGs to the post-2015 agenda: Analysing changing development priorities. *Development Informatics working paper*, (56).

Heeks, R. (2022). Digital inequality beyond the digital divide: conceptualizing adverse digital incorporation in the global South. *Information Technology for Development*, *28*(4), 688-704.

Khera, R. (2019). Dissent on Aadhaar: Big Data Meets Big Brother. New Delhi: Orient Blackswan.

Masiero, S. (2024). The shape of ICT4D to come. *Information Technology for Development*, *30*(1), 1-9.

Singh, S. (2019). Death by digital exclusion? On faulty public distribution system in Jharkhand, The Hindu, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/death-by-digital-exclusion/article28414768.ece>.

Walsham, G., & Sahay, S. (2006). Research on information systems in developing countries: Current landscape and future prospects. *Information technology for development*, *12*(1), 7-24.

Zheng, Y., Hatakka, M., Sahay, S., & Andersson, A. (2018). Conceptualizing development in information and communication technology for development (ICT4D). *Information Technology for Development*, *24*(1), 1-14.