OPEN SITUATION ROOM EXCHANGE (OSRX)

MAKING CONFLICT DATA ACCESSIBLE TO PEACE BUILDERS

By Peace Tech Lab

Project URL: http://www.osrx.org/home
Project Twitter: @PeaceTechLab

Organisations Involved Peace Tech Lab http://www.peacetechlab.org/
United States Institute of Peace (USIP)

- Safety & Security
- Data
- Internet

There is a well-known link between adverse weather and conflict. A recent NASA study found that the drought that began in 1998 in the eastern Mediterranean Levant region was the worst in 900 years, and it includes conflict-affected countries Cyprus, Israel, Palestine, Syria and Turkey. Other researchers demonstrated that extreme drought in Syria between 2006 and 2009 was closely linked to the emergence of the violent uprising that began in 2011.

Traditionally, weather and conflict data have only been available from the top down, and shared among governments, NGOs and the military. Noel Dickover, a technical director for global network strategy at the PeaceTech Lab, is part of a team that wants to democratise the system, making conflict-relevant data available to grassroots organisations and members of the public.

PeaceTech Lab created a data hub called the Open Situation Room Exchange (OSRx), which provides critical insight into economic, social and political conditions on the ground in conflict zones. An open web application analyses news reports, social media chatter and expert reports from the likes of World Bank, so that policy makers as well as local people have access to the kind of analytical insight usually reserved for organisations with expensive conflict-monitoring software. "I can investigate as events are happening," says Dickover.

Users can search by country, keyword or even conflict event, and the OSRx blog has tutorials on how to access and analyse data from, for example, the Taliban's terrorist attack in Lahore and ISIS attacks in Belgium, from earlier this year.

Dickover says that OSRx will move beyond simply vacuuming and displaying data to making predictions. There are plans to incorporate weather data, like figures on droughts and rainfall patterns, and to allow local groups to upload and visualise their own content. Find out more at www.osrx.org

Image courtesy of IOM | UN Migration Agency

Last updated: 19th of September, 2016