



MERL TECH

OCTOBER 16, 2015

WASHINGTON

— DC —

ACADEMY HALL • FHI 360

SUPPORTED BY:



Conference Information

Wireless Networking

Network Name: FHI360Guest

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Twitter Hashtag

We are using #MERLtech as the event hashtag. The conference is supported by @FHI360, @MercyCorps, and @TechChange, and was co-organized by @Wayan_Vota, @KBruce2001, Barbara Willett, @Jennie_Army, and you. Thanks for all your support and participation.

Private Meeting Space

The upstairs balcony area will be available for small meetings or a quiet working location on an ad hoc basis. Please be courteous to your fellow conference attendees and keep noise to a minimum.

Punctuality

Every effort will be made to make sure MERL Tech runs on time. Please support our efforts by reviewing this agenda, planning out your day, and moving quickly between sessions. Thank you.

Participating Organizations

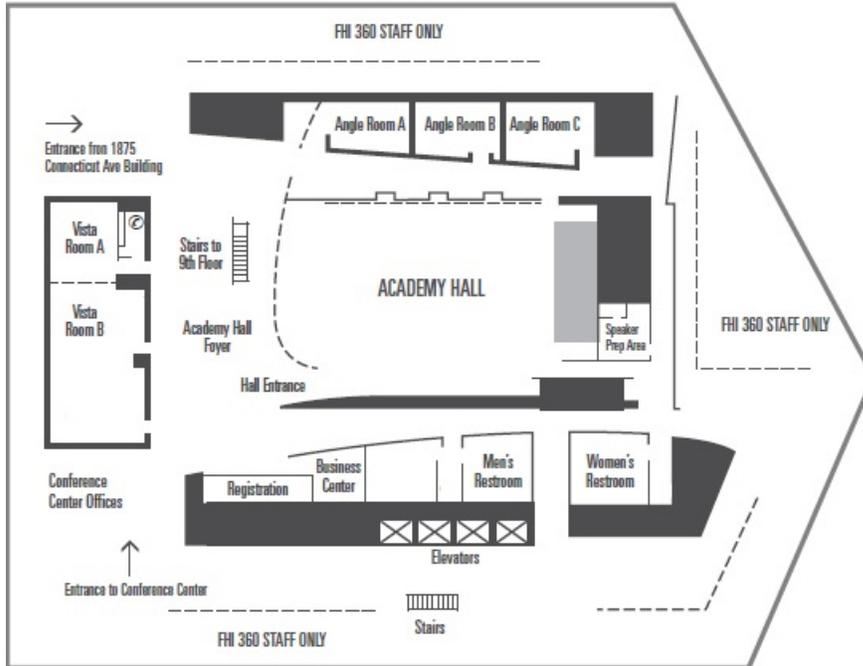
Over 260 people, representing the 157 organizations listed below, are participating in MERL Tech.

ACDI/VOCA	FMA
Aga Khan Foundation	Forum One
Akvo Foundation USA	Freedom Fund
American Bar Association	GEF
Aptivate	GeoPoll
Bamba Group	Global Environment Facility
BigData4Development	Global Fund to End Slavery
Booz Allen Hamilton	Global Public Policy Institute
Brevity	GlobalGiving
Broadcasting Board Of Governors	Goodweave International
Caktus Group	Goodwill Industries International
Capsenta	Google
Catholic Relief Services	Grameen Foundation
Causal Design	HHS
CDHAM	Humanity United
charity: water	Human Rights Watch
Chemonics International	IBTCI
CIPE	Impact Lab
Cisco	IMPAQ International
Clinton Health Access Initiative	Improve International
Creative Associates International	Innovation & Planning Agency
Crown Agents USA	Innovation Network
Cub Inc	Institute of Development Studies
D-tree International	Integra
DAI	Inter-American Development Bank
Dalberg Global Development Advisors	International Committee of the Red Cross
Danya International	International Executive Service Corps
Development Gateway	International Finance Corporation
Devex	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
DevResults	International Justice Mission
Dexis Consulting Group	International Youth Foundation
Dimagi	Internews
EDC	Intrahealth International
Education Technology for Development	IREX
Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation	ISG
EngenderHealth	JBS International
Engility International	Jhpiego
Environmental Incentives	JHU CCP
Evans Incorporated	John Hopkins SAIS
Evidence Action	JSI
FHI 360	JSI Research & Training Institute
First Mile Geo	

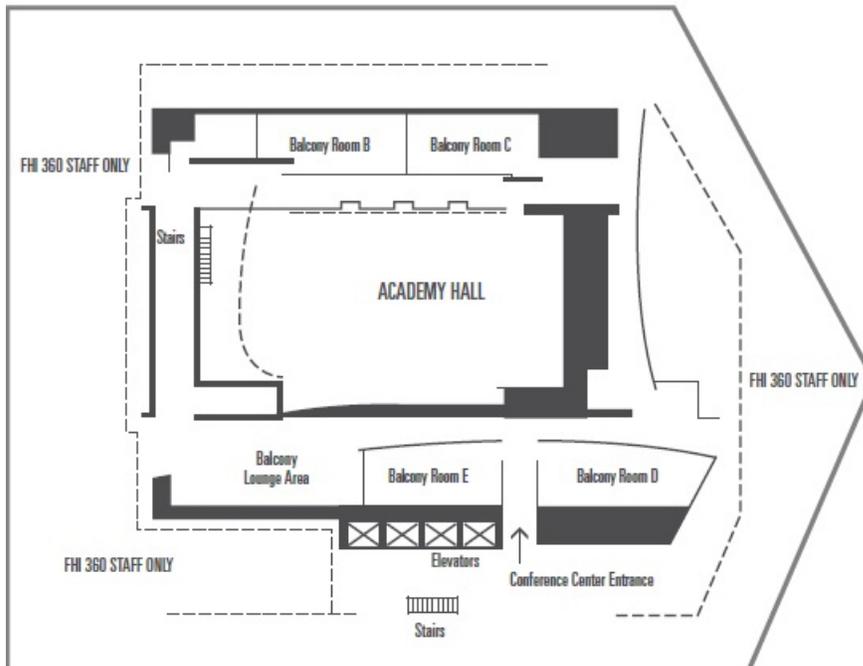
KeenEdge Associates
Kimetrica
Kurante
Kwauk & Associates
Lutheran World Relief
Making Cents International
Management Sciences for Health
Management Systems International
Measure Evaluation
Mercy Corps
Millennium Water Alliance
MIT
Mobile Hub
Moonshot Global
mPowering Frontline Health Workers
MSI
mWater
National Democratic Institute
NCBA CLUSA
NetHope
Newdea
NGO Impact Solutions
Nile Point Consulting
Novametrics
Npoki
OSC
Oxfam America
Oxu Solutions
Pact
PATH
PeaceTech Lab
Population Council
Population Reference Bureau
Premise
PwC
PYXERA Global
Red Cross Global Disaster
Preparedness Center
Regenstrief Institute
Relief International
RTI
Save the Children
Search for Common Ground
SIM Lab
Social Impact
Social Sector Accelerator - Counterpart
Souktel Digital Solutions
SurveyCTO
SweetSense
Synergy International Systems
Tableau
Taoti Creative
TaroWorks
TechChange
Tetra Tech ARD
The Engine Room
The Kaizen Company
The MasterCard Foundation
The Mitchell Group
The Rockefeller Foundation
Unicef Egypt
United Nations Foundation
University Research Company
USA International Procurement Agency
USAID
USAID LEARN/Dexis Consulting
VOTO Mobile
Voxpaxis International Development
WASH Advocates
Winrock
Women for Women International
World Bank
World Cocoa Foundation
World Resources Institute
World Vision
WSD Handa Center
YouthPower Learning

Room Locations

8th Floor



9th Floor



AGENDA

Friday, October 16th

#MERLTech is the event hashtag.

8:30-9am: Registration

- **Light Breakfast and Registration**
Wake up, grab coffee and treats, and find your friends and your seat before the event begins.

9-10am: Opening Session

- **The Current State of Technology in Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, and Learning:** *Ben Ramalingam, Institute of Development Studies*
Organizations are experimenting with new technologies and are hungry for learning, sharing and doing, but the way forward isn't clear. We will start the conference by asking:
 - What is working, and where are we still struggling in MERL?
 - Where is the innovation and failure in technology?
 - What can we learn from the interaction of MERL with technology?
 - Who is leading the way with solutions that are succeeding at scale?

10-10:30am: Inspiring Lightning Talks

- **Stop Failing at Sharing – 3 Key Insights on Publicizing M&E Results** *Jacob Korenblum, Souktel Digital Solutions*
Every single organization that engages in M&E has this challenge: With the advent of low cost ICTs, we're able to collect and analyze more data than ever before, yet we still fail to make this data fully accessible to the communities we serve. Learn what does and doesn't work when using tech to share M&E results, and emerge with 3 key steps we can collectively take to ensure communities benefit from the data they share with us.
- **The Use and Cost of Real Time Feedback for Journalists:** *William Bell, Broadcasting Board of Governors*
For the first time, broadcast journalists in D.C. can get "overnight ratings" from far flung corners of the world, thanks to adept use of Web and SMS. However, we had a few surprises when we implemented a real-time feedback system – with the technology, the cost, and the actual usefulness of real time data.
- **How Can We Make Results Data Actually Useful?** *Vinisha Bhatia, Development Gateway*
We have reams of M&E data, but it's often stuck in donor or government systems, unavailable for other donors and civil society to access and use. For example, there are over 20,000 separate indicators for health, and while we talk of a data revolution with them, Ministry staff have trouble with basic IT issues. Let's have a real conversation on how we can make results data really useful.
- **Lessons Not Learned in MERL:** *Susan Davis, Improve International*
There is a proliferation of evaluations of development programs, and more evaluations are now shared publicly – off people's desks and into the world. But is anyone learning from them? In the WASH sector, we've been producing the same "lessons learned" reports for 40 years, re-learning the same lessons. It's time for us to stop reinventing the flat tire, actually learn and change.
- **Data on Mobile Data Collection: Trends Over Time:** *Jeremy Wacksman, Dimagi*
What do over 10 million CommCare forms from hundreds of frontline programs around the globe tell us about device type trends over time, how long it takes users to become experienced, and the variance of project life-cycles? What insights can we infer that will help us design better mobile tools today, and better programs tomorrow?
- **What is Your MERL Tech Threat Model?** *Rahel Dette, Global Public Policy Institute*
How can we approach privacy and security by using the concept of "threat models" from software developers? We should be more worried than we are. What new risks are we introducing with MERL tech? Who might be interested in the data we are generating? Where are the security gaps and loopholes? Why aren't we more worried about a data breach of constituent data?

10:30-11am: Morning Break

- Reconnect with your friends and peers in MERL and technology, reflect on the morning's inspirations and ideas, and visit vendor demonstrations.

11am-12pm: MERL Plenary Panel Session

- **The Future of MERL: A Donor View** *Joshua Kaufman, USAID; Nancy MacPherson, The Rockefeller Foundation; John Hecklinger, Global Giving; Justine Greenland Duke, The MasterCard Foundation; Kerry Bruce, Global Fund to End Slavery*
Key leaders from the donor community will discuss three timely issues in making MERL a driver of change in development programs:
 - **The need to make M&E matter.** The default donor M&E model is almost clinically divorced from the actual management of programs. How can new MERL innovations allow for adaptive and evidence-based management of programs?
 - **Locally owned MERL.** Donors are rightly embracing local ownership of programs and local implementation. This has huge implications for how we do MERL and raises a largely unanswered question – what does locally owned MERL look like and is it a good idea?
 - **Data quality vs. quantity.** We (governments, donors, implementers and constituents) are not set up to drink from the fire hose of data without drowning. How can we create real time data systems that are optimized to produce guidance we can actually use?

12-1pm: Learning Lunch Tables and Vendor Demos

Learning Lunch Tables

- **Big and Small Data for Program Performance** *Steve Ollis, D-tree International*
- **Business Development for MERL Tech** *Nicholas Demeter, MERL Consultant*
- **Ensuring Data Quality** *Christopher Robert, SurveyCTO*
- **M&E During Ebola Response** *Amanda Berman, JHU CCP*
- **M&E for the Judiciary** *James Brown, American Bar Association*
- **M&E for the Health SDGs** *Donna Medeiros, Regenstrief Institute*
- **M&E on KM & Learning** *Jacob Laden, Dexis Consulting Group*
- **MERL With Social Media** *Marnie Valdivia, Tetra Tech ARD*
- **Mobile Tech Meets Field Reality:** *Will Durbin, World Bank*
- **Open Source Data Standards** *Barbara Willett, Mercy Corps*
- **Organizational Readiness for M&E Tools** *Michael Klein, ISG*
- **Professional Development for MERL Tech Professionals** *Nick Martin, TechChange*
- **Role of IT Professionals in MERL** *David Goodman, NetHope*
- **Technology for Social Accountability** *Lauren Serpe, Pact*
- **Unleashing Results Data** *Vinisha Bhatia, Development Gateway*

Vendor Demos

- **It's Not All About Technology:** *Or Dashevsky, Mike Matarasso, Zerion Software*
- **M&E with TaroWorks:** *Elaine Chang, TaroWorks*
- **Indicata with Synergy:** *Arshak Hovanesian, Synergy*
- **What is Measured, Improves:** *Marshall Wallace, Landscape*
- **High-quality M&E with SurveyCTO:** *Faizan Diwan, Dobility*
- **Easy Logframes with Kashana:** *George Flatters, Aptivate*
- **A Better Way to Manage International Aid:** *Herb Caudill, DevResults*
- **Lifelong Learning with TechChange:** *Nick Martin, TechChange*
- **Small Data, Big Data, Data on Demand:** *Matt McNabb, First Mile Geo*

1-2:30pm Mid-Day Breakout Sessions

- **Dashboards: A Force for Good, Great, or Greater Confusion? - Vista A**

Amanda Makulec, JSI; Barb Knittel, JSI; John Skelton, Mercy Corps; Madeleine Short Fabric, USAID

Evidenced-based decision making is fundamental for adaptive management. However, there is often confusion about when dashboards are effective tools for decision-making, and when deeper insight is needed. What are best practices and concrete frameworks for designing dashboards as part of collaborative and decentralized teams where decision makers are scattered about and Skype often fails?

- **What Does Open M&E Data Look Like? - Balcony E**

Neeran Saraf, KeenEdge Associates; Robert Baker, World Bank

USAID now mandates Open Data. We all should be producing it regardless. Yet what should M&E look like in a world of Open Data? How can we shape and respond to the Open Data movement and specific initiatives by donors and governments? What are the real risks and opportunities when we all share our deep, dark data secrets?

- **How Can We Integrate M&E Across Sectors? - Balcony D**

Brian Dooley, FHI 360

International development programs tend to be sector specific to meet the needs of their clients. Yet we are (slowly) breaking out of our silos and integrating development work to form holistic solutions. How will this shift change M&E? What new approaches and skills will we need to both collect and evaluate data from cross-sectoral interventions?

- **Data Minimalism – How to Collect Less and Learn More - Balcony B**

Teresa Crawford, Counterpart International; Monalisa Salib, Dexis Consulting Group; Vanessa Corlazzoli, Search for Common Ground

Every day we hear about 'big data' and the magic of data scientists. But what about 'small data' and our own ability to ask good questions of it? Learn how we can collect less data and learn more with simple analysis tools for small data that reduces our risk, and allows us to adjust existing programs along the way.

- **How Can We Create a Positive Surveillance State? - Balcony C**

Eric Foster-Moore, Impact Lab; Hillary Eason, Impact Lab; Priyanka Pathak, World Bank

Surveillance is a scary word but in development it should mean coordinated and sustained efforts to track key indicators over time. Instead, we have multiple actors running private, uncoordinated, one-off assessments. What are the technology and techniques we can use for systematic surveillance? How can we change the political economy towards systematic M&E? And how will these approaches lead to better decisions in real time?

- **How Real-Time Data Can Lead to Adaptive Programming and Learning - Academy Hall**

Samir Doshi, USAID; Ben Ramalingam, Institute of Development Studies; Prabhjot Singh, Arnold Global Health Institute

How can data systems be used to tighten feedbacks in complex environments? What is needed to loop in decision makers from frontline workers to government actors? USAID and other donors are collaborating on real-time data systems to facilitate adaptive programming and learning throughout development interventions, from project design to M&E, with the aim to create better MEALs for everyone.

- **How to Obtain & Maintain Buy-in on Centralized Online M&E Systems - Vista B**

Susan Rogers, Creative Associates International; Patty Hill, Engility; Maby Palmisano, ACDI/VOCA; Chip Temm, MSI

Centralized web-based M&E reporting systems are increasingly common in international development agencies. Planning and developing such a system requires considerable buy-in across the organization and at strategic points in the process. How do you get buy-in to either build in-house or externally buy such a system? How do you get buy-in to actually adopt and use the system once developed?

2:30-3pm Afternoon Break

- Reflect on the previous session, visit vendor demonstrations, and choose your next experience.

3-4:30pm: Afternoon Breakout Sessions

- **Lessons Learned in Using Sensors for Impact Evaluations - Vista A**

Danae Roumis, Social Impact; Dexter Gauntlett, SweetSense; John Feighery, mWater; Olga Rostapshova, Social Impact

Sensors promise rapid insights into the performance of development programs. So, what have we learned so far in practice? What measurement challenges can sensors alleviate and how can they be incorporated into mixed methods evaluation? What are the real and perceived opportunities and limitations, and the costs and benefits? Where and how else could we use sensors to gain unbiased understanding of our development impact?

- **Defragging Data Management: How Can We Match Technical Solutions to Our Needs? - Balcony D**

Brian Dooley, FHI 360; Barbara Willett, Mercy Corps; Ankur Sisodia, Google

We are all challenged to find the elusive 'perfect' one-size-fits-all software solution for all our M&E needs. Is there really one platform that fits all of our M&E needs, or should we be happy using a combination of technologies that complement each other and focus on managing the data flow between collection, aggregation, analysis and visualization?

- **How Are We Failing at Security and Privacy and What Should We Do About It? - Balcony C**

Rahel Dette, Global Public Policy Institute; Henry Peck, Human Rights Watch

We all have security and privacy failure stories with MERL data. It's time we shared them in an open and safe space to recognize that collecting data is inherently risky. We will focus on how we can improve our risk awareness and mitigation options, including technological features, organizational approaches, and behavioral changes.

- **The Trials, Tribulations, & Triumphs of Choosing an M&E Platform - Balcony B**

Tania Lee, Cactus Group; Laura Walker McDonald, SIMLab; Lynnae Day, Oxfam America;

Every organization goes through a process to choose an M&E system – not a singular decision but a series of technology decisions made over time based on funding, context, and phase of the M&E process. Research shows that these decisions are often not evidence-based or, ultimately, very successful. This session will be a space to share lessons learned and discover guidance for future technology tool decision making.

- **Mapping as the Engine for M&E - Balcony E**

Ayan Kishore, Creative Associates International; Caleb Parker, FHI 360; Matt McNabb, First Mile Geo

GIS is today simple, mobile and ubiquitous. We now have the ability to geo-locate almost everything we do, and use spatial analysis to unlock new insights from the resulting data. How is GIS being regularly used by M&E specialists, local staff and even beneficiaries? How can we improve to ethically report impact? What does the future hold for mapping technology for M&E?

- **How Can We Use Business Intelligence Tools for M&E? - Vista B**

Ragini Dutt, BigData4Development, Elena Vinogradova, Education Development Center

Thinking beyond traditional big data analysis tools, how can we use new enterprise and analytic business intelligence tools like Pentaho, Tableau, Informatica, or TAP to perform data analysis to uncover associations that are otherwise invisible and improve analysis. How does the private sector use these tools? What can we learn from them?

- **Do ICTs Make Us More Inclusive Or More Extractive? - Academy Hall**

Veronica Olazabal, The Rockefeller Foundation; Linda Raftree, Kurante; Michael Bamberger, Independent; Melissa Persaud, VOTO Mobile; Jeremy Wacksman, Dimagi

How can organizations use ICTs to support inclusivity and equity-based evaluations while ensuring privacy and protection and overcoming methodological challenges such as sample bias? What are lessons learned and good practice in designing guidelines to help improve inclusivity when using ICTs for program evaluation?

4:30-5pm: MERL Solutions Lightning Talks

- **A Better Way to Manage International Aid:** *Herb Caudill, DevResults*
DevResults is a web application specifically designed to empower international development, grant-making, humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief programs, with tools for managing M&E data, mapping, project management, and collaboration.
- **Lifelong Learning in Tech for Monitoring & Evaluation:** *Nick Martin, TechChange*
This fall, TechChange launched a new online diploma program for working professionals and prospective graduate students. The 16-week program includes three facilitated online courses, on-demand courses, workshops, 1-on-1 mentorship, capstone projects, job placement services, and more.
- **Small Data, Big Data, Data on Demand:** *Matt McNabb, First Mile Geo*
First Mile Geo is an end-to-end business intelligence platform that enables non-technical users across the enterprise. Users can capture data through integration with best-in-breed collection tools (mobile, SMS, pen-and-paper, and web) to help projects, portfolios, and entire enterprises to become truly data driven.
- **SurveyCTO and the Quest for Trustworthy Data** *Faizan Diwan, Dability*
In all of the excitement around data-driven decision-making, we often spend too little time thinking about, and investing in, the quality of our data. Learn how we're building SurveyCTO to be a tool that intelligently helps you catch errors, detect fraud, and produce data you can really trust.
- **What Enterprise M&E Software Looks Like:** *Arshak Hovanesian, Synergy International Systems*
Indicata is a powerful cloud-based solution designed specifically for enterprise-level M&E. It gives organizations a complete platform to track programs and indicators, analyze results data, and derive actionable insights. Indicata also empowers them with extensive capabilities to flexibly manage data, frameworks, workflows, and users.

5-5:30pm: MERL Solutions Hands-On Demos

- **It's Not All About Technology:** *Or Dashevsky, Mike Matarasso, Zerion Software*
Zerion Software, creators of the iFormbuilder mobile platform believes that "Data is knowledge and good data can change your world." Learn how to design and implement digital M&E that leads to real impact.
- **M&E with TaroWorks:** *Elaine Chang, TaroWorks*
TaroWorks is a suite of mobile data collection and analytical tools for managing remote field operations, and monitoring and evaluation. It is built on the Salesforce platform and accessed in the field via Android devices.
- **Indicata with Synergy:** *Arshak Hovanesian, Synergy*
Synergy is the local company that provides Indicata, the leading enterprise software for measuring development results and managing program portfolios. We empower

organizations worldwide to achieve a technological breakthrough in how they use results data for decision making, learning, and effectiveness.

- **What is Measured, Improves:** *Marshall Wallace, Landscape*
Landscape helps you and your team monitor social dynamics—and the social impact of your projects and programs—in ways that promote learning and rapid adaptation to changing environments. It is quick, easy, simple, and, above all, useful.
- **High-quality M&E with SurveyCTO** *Faizan Diwan, Dability*
Learn how you can use SurveyCTO to collect data you can truly trust – without consultants, and without breaking the bank.
- **Easy Logframes with Kashana:** *George Flatters, Aptivate*
Kashana is an easy-to-use, web-based tool for planning, monitoring and reporting using logframes. We have built Kashana to take the pain out of planning and monitoring to enable you to spend more time on evaluation, learning, and delivering better results. Kashana is open source and it is designed to work on low-bandwidth connections.
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5:30-7:30pm: Conference Reception

- **MERL Tech Working Group Convening:** A happy hour to meet others interested in technology for MERL in international development and develop shared solutions to some of our toughest challenges.

Post-Conference Follow-Up

- **ICTworks**

We will be publishing a series of posts on ICTworks.org covering most, if not all, the keynotes, plenaries, lightning talks, and breakout sessions. As a conference participant, you will be automatically added to the distribution list to receive them as they are published.

- **NetHope M&E and Tech Working Group**

We encourage all MERL Tech participants to join the NetHope M&E and Tech Working Group to explore the intersection between MERL and technology. Sponsored by the HC3 Project, the group meets in-person and virtually to learn from each other and share good practices. Please sign up here:
<https://groups.google.com/d/forum/nethopemetech-working-group>