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Interviewer

Carol Gitobu, Market Engagement Manager at GSMA

Guests

Daniel Odongo, Ushahidi

Jedidah Ganira, World Vision Kenya

Intro	<i>You're listening to the GSMA Mobile for Humanitarian Innovation programme's podcast.</i>
Carol	<p>Welcome everyone to our podcast series on leveraging on digital technology to accelerate climate change action. You're listening to the episode on addressing the climate crisis. I'm Carol Gitobu, market engagement manager for the GSMA M4H programme. The GSMA Mobile for Humanitarian Innovation programme works to accelerate the delivery and impact of digital humanitarian assistance through building a learning and research agenda to inform the future of digital humanitarian response, catalysing partnerships, investing in innovation for new digital humanitarian services, advocating for enabling policy environments, monitoring and evaluating performance, disseminating insights and profiling achievements.</p> <p>Our three main work streams include research and policy, innovation, fund, and strategic partnerships. This podcast focuses on the third work stream, which is the acceleration of strategic partnerships between MNOs and humanitarian partners. Addressing the climate crisis is one of the five core themes of the M4H programme. As we all know, Sustainable Development Goal 13 is about climate change action and is one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015.</p> <p>Today, we'll be discussing an interesting topic on strategic partnerships to catalyse digital humanitarian innovations, and I'm delighted to be joined by two key guests, Daniel Odongo, who is the director of project implementation at Ushahidi, and Jedidah Ganira, who is the livelihoods advisor at World Vision Kenya. World Vision Kenya leveraged on the innovation, innovative use of the Ushahidi platform to geotarget and crowd map community feedback in order to aid in evidence generation towards the advocacy for greater regenerative land management practices on natural resource management.</p> <p>This was to support the vulnerable communities on food security, livelihoods and mitigate climate change. Well, now we are going to start our podcast questions, and I'll start with Jedidah. Jedidah, please tell us about your work with World Vision Kenya. What is it about this topic and the issues you work on that has kept you engaged? Over to you.</p>

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<p>Jedidah</p>	<p>Thank you so much Carol for this opportunity, and I want to start by saying that World Vision is a humanitarian organisation that seeks to alleviate human suffering and make sure that every child lives alive in all its fullness. As you look at the landscape of the work that we do, we have several key aspects that we respond to, and one of them is humanitarian assistance in relation to disaster management, issues around livelihood, resilience, building, and also aspects around making sure that communities are well equipped with skills and capacities to be resilient when it comes to response to shocks on drought and other climatic shocks.</p> <p>In this particular aspect, World Vision has partners with different organisations, with different donors, private actors and non governmental organisations and private partners to make sure that we respond, build the capacity of communities in areas around responsive climate management aspects, and also giving them the capacity to be able to engage with their governments and make sure that they're able to get the necessary support from the government to respond to the, the issues in relation to the climatic shocks.</p> <p>Some of the things that you realise is that there is high land degradation that basically threaten livelihoods, incomes, and also food security, especially for communities that rely so much on rain fed agriculture and also pastoralism. And these impacts have also exacerbated by the fuel, wood harvesting issues around logging and sustainable farming practices that degrade their land and also overdependent on the natural resources that are well overstretched already.</p> <p>So World Vision comes in to build the capacity of the communities to make sure that they come up with the systems and structures within their communities that support them to be able to manage their resources sustainably and make sure that they have the capacity to draw support from every person and every partner that is within their ability to support them to respond to these challenges that they face. And that's how GSMA and Ushahidi came in to support our work that we do in relation to responding to these shocks that communities find themselves in. Thank you, Carol.</p>
<p>Carol</p>	<p>Thank you very much, Jedidah. Daniel, please could you share with listeners more about your organisation? How have you utilised digital technology to tackle humanitarian assistance?</p>
<p>Daniel</p>	<p>Thank you very much, Carol, the Ushahidi platform has been first of all helping to increase transparency and accountability across the globe for maybe just over the last 14 years. Our mission at Ushahidi is to help communities to quickly collect and be able to share information that enables them to raise voices, inform</p>

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	<p>decisions, and actually influence change. Ushahidi deployments enable any citizen with a phone or computer to report on issues that are affecting them. the Ushahidi platform also supports sending out targeted surveys to pre identified beneficiaries or stakeholders for monitoring evaluation or situational awareness purposes.</p> <p>And we worked with World Vision very productively in the project in Tana River that we've been discussing, we'll also be sharing more about. And these reports can be routed to inform response by organisations or escalated to appropriate authorities that are tasked with being able to respond or to help in making better decisions. Globally, the Ushahidi platform has been deployed over 200,000 times, in about 160 countries, and we've enabled our partners to gather over 50 million individual reports in the areas of human rights activism, crisis response, and civil empowerment.</p> <p>So, working with World Vision in Tana River, we were able to leverage the Ushahidi platform as an innovative solution to gather collective intelligence of the communities relating to how they're affected by climate change. Thank you.</p>
Carol	<p>Thank you very much, Daniel. Jedidah, World Vision Kenya recently engaged Ushahidi for evidence generation for a target audience for intended advocacy for natural resource management. Did the digital integration make a difference as compared to previously used conventional methods of data collection?</p>
Jedidah	<p>Thank you, Carol. Let me start by saying that, initially, we always depend on what we perceive and what we think is the issue that we are facing. And one of the things that is key when you are engaged with the policy aspects basically is to make sure that you have concrete information in relation to the subject matter. And before we engaged Ushahidi, one of the things that we looked at is, are we able to get concrete information that we can validate to make sure that we are able to engage with the necessary key decision makers with information that can be proved?</p> <p>And so, we worked with the Ushahidi, and I can say that using the digital platform has actually helped us to gather information within a very short time from people across the project area and we were able to get this information that we can validate, including the specific respondent. And so, we are very confident that integration of the digital platform within the data collection is actually a step forward into making sure that we have authentic data that we can use.</p> <p>And I can say that compared to the conventional data collection methods, this digital integration process has really given us a way ahead of what we have always been using. And I'm very confident that the information that we have is going to</p>

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	<p>make a big difference because it represents the voices of different people spread across different sections within the target area. And then we have the feeling of every last one of them presented in this platform and the integration has really made a big difference, I can say. Thank you, Carol.</p>
Carol	<p>Thank you very much Jedidah. You've mentioned a very important point when it comes to integrating digital technology. Going by World Vision's Kenya's experience, and the need for increased community inclusion in policy making and changes is leveraging on digital technology, the future of inclusive climate action in the humanitarian space by other humanitarian actors as well as the private sector.</p>
Jedidah	<p>Thank you, Carol. I totally agree with you. Um, this is the way to go. We have been in this space for quite some time, and I think this has been a great learning for the organisation. It is actually the first time we're integrating digital, use of digital platform to be able to get for the work that we are doing. And given that the space and the landscape is actually changing, we are in a digital era. And I think the digital tools available are to make work easier. The digital tools available are to make work more efficient.</p> <p>And as an organisation this is a way that we are going. We are from the results that we're able to realise from this engagement, we are actually in a scale up trend. We are scaling up the information that we are getting, we are scaling up the, the lessons that we have learned. And actually, yes, this is the way to go for a, a great organisation like World Vision Kenya.</p>
Carol	<p>Thank you very much, Jedidah. Daniel, as you've heard from Jedidah, about mention about the success of digital technology, whereas digital technology is gaining traction in tackling climate change, how can we bridge the digital divide for increased inclusion of the marginalised communities where mobile penetration is still very low?</p>
Daniel	<p>I think like, like Jedidah mentioned it is indeed increasingly common for us to see digital technologies being adopted, you know, for work in climate action. And while we look at this in the big cities, there are very many people who still remain left behind. Our perspective really is that it's essential for international development and humanitarian actors to, to reach marginalised communities where they already are. Cause we know they exist, we know the places where, you know, are always underserved by very many resources and services that other communities enjoy. Many of these communities actually exist in low bandwidth environments. To be able to effectively bridge this digital divide the solutions that we come up with need to allow the contributors in these communities to participate</p>

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	<p>in raising their voices, no matter the technology constraints. And once this is done, they also need to see that you are augmenting the existing processes or, or services that you're providing them with greater insight and clarity that reflects their situation on the ground.</p>
Carol	<p>Thank you, Daniel, for sharing those insights and your perspective on inclusion of the marginalised communities. How then can we leverage on the digital platforms for collective follow through and monitoring on the achievement of the actionable climate action?</p>
Daniel	<p>When it comes to collective action the first thing that comes to my mind is crowdsourcing, which is being able to use digital technologies to gather the collective effort and wisdom of communities. It's very useful, and I think one of the, the best use cases I can say is, you know, we are increasingly now seeing communities being able to collect information, all their voices actually brought together and published, related to what's taking place at the local level. working with World Vision, we are being able to evaluate, you know, what are the types of energy use, for example in Tanar River, and what are the driving factors and motivations or challenges that they have especially when it relates to clean energy. But we also see, you know an ability to, to just be able to evaluate what's the environmental factors that exist due, due to the land usage in these communities. And we're able to also see information that is a value add for policy makers. So, once we take these pieces of feedback that have come in from communities and put it before decision makers, it's a bit of evidence that is undeniable and they're able to actually be held accountable to whether they provided solutions to these issues.</p> <p>I think one of the issues I saw raised by the communities in Tana River was the fact that when you cut down trees for charcoal use, for example, you're being charged more taxes as compared to someone who is planting trees in a nursery garden. And this is a clear piece of feedback that came through collective feedback and monetary of what's taking place on the ground. And this is a feedback that then is passed on to policy makers to be able to evaluate, you know, is this something that they can reverse or make positive strides towards changing such that they can encourage greener in efforts within this community that's affected.</p>
Carol	<p>Thank you, Daniel. And it's interesting to know that most of this feedback and data that you are collecting will later on be passed onto the policy makers. Jedidah, we know that data is extremely useful in making decisions, particularly as Daniel has mentioned by the government. While we do a good job at collecting this data, how can we involve the government, policy makers and other relevant stakeholders, including the private sector in utilising the digital data for climate action or related actionable decisions and policies?</p>

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<p>Jedidah</p>	<p>Thank you, Carol. Before I respond to that, let me start by saying that the information that we have is authentic and we have confidence that even as we engage with the, the policy makers and the other partners, we are very sure of the source of the information that we have, and we can track it back to the source. So, one of the things is the integrity of the data that we have. And with this integrity of the data, we have the confidence to reach out to the government. We have the confidence to reach out to the policy makers and other stakeholders within the sector and the private sector on how to utilise this data for climate action.</p> <p>Going to your question, I think one of the things one of the avenues that you want to utilise, and specifically for this process that we have been against with together, is including the community members, is part of the convergence point with the government and other policy makers. As World Vision, we build a community capacity to be able to engage the government and any other relevant partner in terms of speaking out on the issues they are faced with.</p> <p>And we have the intentionality of working together with the community members, equipping their skills on how to lobby, on how to advocate, and how to present the results from this process so that the community action and recommendations can be taken into place. One of the things that we appreciate is that the Kenyan government has provided for community participation when it comes to government planning and policy making.</p> <p>And this provides us with a very good avenue for the communities to present their fields and their results in terms of these feedback processes and make sure that their voices are captured when it comes to government planning processes. We looking into a place where we will sit down with the government, the policy makers, and other relevance stakeholders using the information that we must make sure that we have a common roadmap that will drive the change that we envisage to see.</p> <p>And through these engagements, we are looking at coming up with common plans that will help us to change the public resource service delivery, and basically making sure that there is commitment basically from the government, commitment from the community members, commitment from the policy makers, and commitment from the relevant private stakeholders, and make sure that everybody is aware of the challenges that the community is facing, looking at their entry points and coming up with a common action plan that drives a common action that is going to help the community change driven process.</p>

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	<p>We are actually at the forefront of facilitating these engagements, building the communities, and making sure that we have everybody on the table to be able to utilise this information that we got through the digital data collection process. Thank you, Carol.</p>
Carol	<p>Thank you very much, Jedidah. It was interesting to hear from you about how you are facilitating and conducting capacity building to the communities. Could you please talk more about capacity building to the communities and also to the policy makers?</p>
Jedidah	<p>Yes. Thank you so much, Carol. We have, in World Vision, we have a model we call community voices and action. And basically, it's a package that we capacity build community members through a stepwise process that looks at them getting one, the skills that are prerequisite to engage with policy makers being able to understand their key issues that are facing them as the communities and packaging the issues that they need to stage forth into, into for these kind of conversations. And gratefully, this digital data collection process has already helped us to do that.</p> <p>So, for the communities, basically to build their confidence in the ability to look out and reach out to the government officials. And before we do this, we usually have an interface process where we engage the community the government officials, basically we call them the duty bearers, to just make sure that we have a common understanding into what is expected of them, in terms of service delivery to the communities that they serve, and make sure that they understand the commitment in terms of the, the deliverables that everybody expects of them.</p> <p>And so, once this is understood with everyone of these sides of the two arms, we now bring in together everyone into one sitting place where we come together agree on the specific standards that we expect related to the key sectors that we are talking about. And then we bring on board now the conversation on the table where everybody now is able to bring the expectation, and especially we talk about the, the people who are the obligation, and we also have the duty bearers who also have the responsibility of the delivering.</p> <p>So, we have dialogues and also accountability sessions that we provide in terms of these meetings that we bring together, the communities and also the, the government together. And then we go to a point of soliciting commitment for action, basically looking at the common actions that we commit to achieve together. And once this is agreed upon, we continually monitor and evaluate the action plans through regular meetings to review the change and the action progress that we committed ourselves to do.</p>

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	<p>So, this is a collective process, it is a dialogue process, and it takes quite some time, and everybody's actually engaged dependent on their responsibility and their obligation as it relates to the specific aspect that you're looking at.</p>
<p>Carol</p>	<p>Great. Thank you, Jedidah for your response. It was quite a key lining. And just for your information, we would be more than happy as GSMA to sit in some of these round table events when you're engaging the government so that we can get a buy in to pass these processes and procedures. Let me go back to Daniel. Daniel, how can we use, make use of the digital technology for the information management on climate change, aggregation of the best practices and sharing to amplify collective climate action?</p>
<p>Daniel</p>	<p>Yeah, Thank you very much, Carol. So, I think I'd like to state that, to date, very many climate adaptation projects have been undertaken in isolation. If it's not that, it's in an ad hoc manner. And so digital technologies can ensure that, you know, many actors or stakeholders who are involved in these efforts don't reinvent the wheel, and they can be able to actually consolidate on the games made by other organisations or institutions by sharing their knowledge and experience between themselves or with other actors or in forums like Jedidah mentioned as open data. Open datasets can be able to be downloaded and made available for further analysis by different actors. But also, stakeholders can benefit, you know, from best practices in crowdsourcing, reporting and facilitating feedback. I think together with World Vision, we're able to, you know, put together a, a case study of this about how a community that is several hours away from the capital is still able to bring their, you know, voices together using the platform that we offered them.</p> <p>And these voices actually can actually be raised before leaders who can be held accountable or can be used for advocacy for future initiatives that, you know, help us counter climate change. So, in sort of the elimination of the inefficiencies that have been existing, that decision makers don't need to make educated guesses, but they actually have data that I think in Jedi in Jedidah's words, is verifiable and someone can actually go and verify that, you know, this is exactly what the committees have been saying.</p> <p>But that said I think it's also just important to have effective corporation between local authorities, the general public the public sector and synergy between, you know, the various domains that exist. Because effective climate action is not something that only one actor can, can do also at, at, at, at once. So, this collaboration, I think, is key, just to make sure that there is success. Thank you.</p>

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Carol	Thank you very much, Daniel. And it was great to hear from your comments about strategic collaborations. From where you see it, do you think there's sustainability for partners to come together to collaborate for sustainable climate action?
Daniel	<p>Yes. I very much agree that there is, there is actually an opportunity for partners to come together. And in more ways than we recognise, the little input that any partner brings to that table might actually provide input for other partners within, within the process of collective action. So, one of the ways, for example, that I like to highlight is coordinating mechanisms. So different development actors or even just broader public sector stakeholders, can come together just to look at the information that exists on particular subjects in round tables or forums.</p> <p>And they're able to, you know, find out ways in which they could contribute to provide, to make sure that change takes place but also so that they can act more efficiently and effectively using the data that has been put before them. I think it's one of the best practices that we are trying to send across to all partners that are out there, that, you know, there's an opportunity, especially first with climate change that is, you know, a global crisis that is, is going out of hand. all of us can come together and play our part and together we can be able to bring about change.</p>
Carol	Thank you, Daniel. As we talk about collaborations and partners working together, there is an issue about information sharing in between partners or in between organisations. What data protection considerations do you think are critical for all partners when sharing data?
Daniel	<p>Yes. I think today, data privacy is, is one of the, the things that, you know we are really trying to ensure that everyone is, is aware about, both as a, a data handler, but also as a data collector. You really need to be mindful about the position that you sit at. I think the first principle I'd like to share is just one about the principle of do know harm. Once you are collecting data out there, I think it's just important to note that as you either collect data or disseminate data, it cannot bring harm to the communities on whose data that you're collecting.</p> <p>And I think one of the, the best practices across very many data protection laws are just to make sure that we need to respect the privacy of communities by de identifying or removing personal identifiable information. And this makes sure that the data is still usable, but while ensuring that the people who are collecting this data it's very safe. and then I think for many initiatives, it's just good to make sure that there's visibility and transparency around how you handle data. Making sure that you tell people how long you're going to keep data for, you're going to tell people what you're using that data for.</p>

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And I think these kind of policies are very important for people who are handling data. We also just like to make sure that it's possible to trace data and audit data, so in case there's a breach how can we be able to look back and say, "Okay, this is the data that has been this is a data that has been lost and this is who potentially might you know, be affected by this"?

I would like to, to maybe just say that within this initiative that we've been running with World Vision, I think we've had price privacy embedded into this, this entire project by design, just making sure that we are respecting the wishes of the communities, reminding them about what type of data that we collected, but also ensuring that, you know, after a certain time, we'll make sure that this data is actually deleted off our servers, just to make sure that any traces of it beyond the period within which it has been offered to us by the public it's actually making sure that our communities data is only used for what they've given it to us for.

If I add a plus one there, it's just essential to make sure that there are existing considerations that are kept in mind when sharing data of users with third parties. if you've not been offered the rights to do so ensure that you don't do so. And I think here in Kenya, the Data Protection Act is in full force, and they provide good guidance around how organisations should be able to respect their privacy of the users.

Carol Thank you very much Daniel. Jedidah, sitting in the humanitarian space, could you talk more about data protection and privacy when you're serving the community beneficiaries or when you are sharing back information to donors or to other key stakeholders?

Jedidah Thank you, Carol. I think this was a very critical aspect of our work. And actually, this current year, the government of Kenya passed on a new law that relates to data protection and also in terms of how we manage personal information from beneficiaries. This is one of the key things that we really are careful with to make sure that the privacy of every individual that is participating in our project is well protected. We have protocols as an organisation that we observe in relation to how we manage personal data because it is very sensitive.

And with the new policy that has just been passed by the Kenyan government, we actually have an obligation to actually seek consent for anybody's data that we want to use for any purpose that we will be engaging in. And so, this is a very key place we are very sensitive about. And for every partner that we against with, even including ourselves as staff, we have to do a lot of background checks. We do a lot of confidentiality policy binding and agreements towards ensuring that the data for

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	<p>the beneficiaries are well protected, well taken care of and we are a whole policy and protocol that defines especially how you need to behave around that.</p> <p>And so, as we continue to engage, we continue to make sure that we uphold absolute confidentiality in terms the work that we do, personal information from our beneficiaries, because this can be a tool that can be used against our, our beneficiary. And so, we are very keen when it comes to use of data for beneficiaries that we work with. Particularly for this process that we engaged one of the things that we did, we had to make sure that between ourselves and Ushahidi, we had agreed on how to handle this issue and we agreed on the use of World vision data policy because it's very water tight and this is what has actually really guided our engagements and our management of the data that we were able to collect through this process. So, we are very keen to make sure that our beneficiaries are protected from any harm, from any exploitation and any unnecessary exposure through the work that we do.</p>
Carol	<p>Thank you very much, Jedidah. And it was great to hear from both of you how we treated the data that we collected, which informed the survey and the report for the TCLIRP, the Tana River Climate Change and Restoration Project. Final question, let me start with Ushahidi. Daniel, if you had the opportunity to start again and run a project focusing on climate change action from a technology point of view, what would you do different and how do you think this could make a difference to the population we are serving?</p>
Daniel	<p>Thank you very much, Carol. It's interesting you say from a technology point of view, but our rule of thumb actually at Ushahidi is that, you know, technology is only 10% of the solution when rolling out initiatives with communities. 90% of it is actually community engagement. So that technology is only a small part of the solution. And one of the takeaways I'd like to share with anyone wanting to set up initiatives or technology solutions to benefit communities is that follow the principle of nothing for us without us.</p> <p>This is what we've witnessed in our previous projects, and we always do to be able to increase buy in and participation making sure that there's early collaboration between stakeholders in planning and management of the projects. That's my take.</p>
Carol	<p>Makes sense Daniel, for sharing your takeaway. And over to you, Jedidah, for the same question. If you had the opportunity to start again and run a project focusing on climate change action from the humanitarian sector or from the NGO sector, what would you do and how do you think this could make a difference to the community we are serving?</p>

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<p>Jedidah</p>	<p>Thank you, Carol. I think I'll do it the same way but make a few adjustments. One of them is to start with clarity on exactly what needs to be done. Make sure that the roles and responsibilities for everyone are clear from the word go. Of course, ensure timely engagements and feedback processes as the process continues. And key is involvement of the government in this process. I think this is one of the things I would really change in terms of how I would go about it.</p> <p>One of the reasons I think government would come in very handy is because it would give them an opportunity to learn into how the process takes place as a way of scaling up the adoption of the digital solutions for data collection, of course, basically because it would help them to develop their processes and their systems for transformational development.</p> <p>And of course, during the emergency processes, like right now, we are dealing with a drought situation. Lack of adequate financial resources, human resources, would actually be effectively mitigated by use of this digital processes that would help effectiveness and efficiency during these times. And of course, help them to see that this gives them an opportunity to engage with their citizens even as they look at what can be done, what is it that they're doing and what needs improvement, so that they can have a data driven decision making for the betterment of their communities. So, government engagement in this process for me would be very critical so that we all move at the same point at the same time. Thank you so much.</p>
<p>Carol</p>	<p>Thank you very much Jedidah, and Daniel, and thank you for sharing your reflections and highlighting the areas that we need to work on, especially now that we are looking forward to kickstarting the TCLIRP phase two. Very much looking forward to implementing some of these lessons learned that we've shared today to making the TCLIRP phase to a huge success and developing a better success story. Wow. To all listeners, thank you very much for joining this M4H Podcast and very many thanks to Jedidah, and Daniel for your participation and for your responses.</p> <p>We look forward to the success story of TCLIRP phase two. Again, to our listeners, please log on to our website, www.gsma.com/m4h to read more about our work at M4H in catalysing partnerships between mobile network operators, NGOs and also technology platform providers. Thank you and looking forward to our next podcast.</p>