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CCNMTL COLLECTS FEEDBACK ON EDUCATIONAL TOOL
FOR THE PREVENTION OF MASS KILLING

New York – April 29, 2009. Last week the Columbia Center for New Media Teaching and Learning (CCNMTL) and program coordinator Mark Whitlock of the Center for International Conflict Resolution (CICR) at the Columbia School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA), hosted a delegation of government officials from the Democratic Republic of Congo. The delegation spent several hours at Columbia University advising on the development of an educational tool called Country X, a Web-based educational simulation created by CCNMTL and CICR in response to challenges surrounding the training and education of future genocide prevention practitioners.

The simulation was used this past semester in a SIPA course entitled, "Prevention of Mass Killing and Genocide." Students in the course worked in groups of four with each person taking the role of a character of varying power, such as a president, a foreign envoy, or an opposition leader. The simulation was built to challenge student knowledge and confidence around the theory and history pertaining to mass killings by illuminating unintended consequences that can arise from the unpredictable combination of decisions made by different power-holders.

The Congolese delegation, who participated in the simulation during their visit, entered into a lively debate over the simulation's decisions and consequences. "Although we planned on using the tool for just part of the agenda, the debate and discussion arising from the participants was so rich that we decided to keep it going," said Whitlock.

One of the most valuable outcomes of the meeting was the feedback the Congolese shared with the Country X creators regarding the variables and conditions that should or should not be added to the simulation. "It was of great benefit to the project to consult and interact with the Congolese officials as they are directly affected by many of the conditions built into this simulation," said CCNMTL's educational technologist and project manager Tucker Harding.

The Country X pilot will continue in Columbia University courses this fall and is set to formally launch in spring 2010. The simulation's creators hope to introduce the tool to international conflict resolution training programs and workshops, and to use it as a research tool to better understand decision-making in international conflict.

About the Columbia Center for New Media Teaching and Learning (CCNMTL)
CCNMTL's mission is to enhance teaching and learning through the purposeful use of new media and technology. We form partnerships with faculty, providing them with as much support as they need in everything from the construction of course Web sites to the development of advanced projects. We are committed to remaining a leader in our field, engaging our faculty partners in the reinvention of education for the digital age.

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