

Dear All,

Thank you again for attending the workshop earlier this week! Here you can find some of the key insights from the workshop along with relevant links. We look forward to any feedback or comments and hope to see you all after a relaxing summer!

Insights from UNDP's Ben Kumpf:

1. **Design for outcomes, not outputs:** Outputs are easier and “shiny” but without outcome metrics, you eventually will hurt your portfolio.
2. **Invest in hands-on learning:** Enable staff to shadow and learn from real specialists.
3. **Identify behavioral drivers:** Understand the real incentives and necessary rewards in the company.
4. **Invest in the boring parts of innovation:** Influencing agility in these “behind the scenes,” intangible, less sexy parts of innovation is key to fostering real innovation.
5. **Measure from the get go:** Know what to measure and always collect data to ensure projects actually create impact. Here are the links to the metrics blog posts from UNHCR and UNDP: [‘Innovation metrics for human development - what have we learned’](#) and the post from UNHCR’s Innovation Team [‘Developing humanitarian innovation impact metrics’](#).

Ben also invites you to join UNDP’s online community by signing up for the monthly [Innovation for Development Newsletter](#).

Thank you so much to Adriana De Oro (ITC), Chris Earney (UNHCR), and Maya Shah (MSF) for presenting their initiatives! Here’s a quick summary of the key points in the discussions:

ITC Group: As the Innovation Lab at ITC is an internally facing initiative, the discussion centered on the topics of structure, top-down support, and incentives.

- *Top down support and structure:* “When looking for buy-in at all levels, it is key to start lightly and informally.” We see that often a formalized structure can have the effect of stifling information. This is a balancing act. “It is great that the top directors are physically present in the innovation events, but what does their support really entail?”
- *Incentives:* In reflecting on whether to make a volunteer based lab or mandated, key to look at the motivations for people to innovate. Is it necessary to establish formal HR regulated motivation systems or are informal social motivation sufficient? The table decided it was important to have both and particularly in the UN context, to establish performance metrics based on innovation. HR should be for example involved on the selection committee for initiatives to know who is doing what and how they can be rewarded for it. Formal incentives would help with the challenge of “how to get the middle layer of management to work for you.”

UNHCR / MSF Group: The group primarily focused on the MSF initiative “Insulin Thermo-stability” that allows patients to take home and administer their own insulin. UNHCR shared “Boda Boda Talk Talk.”

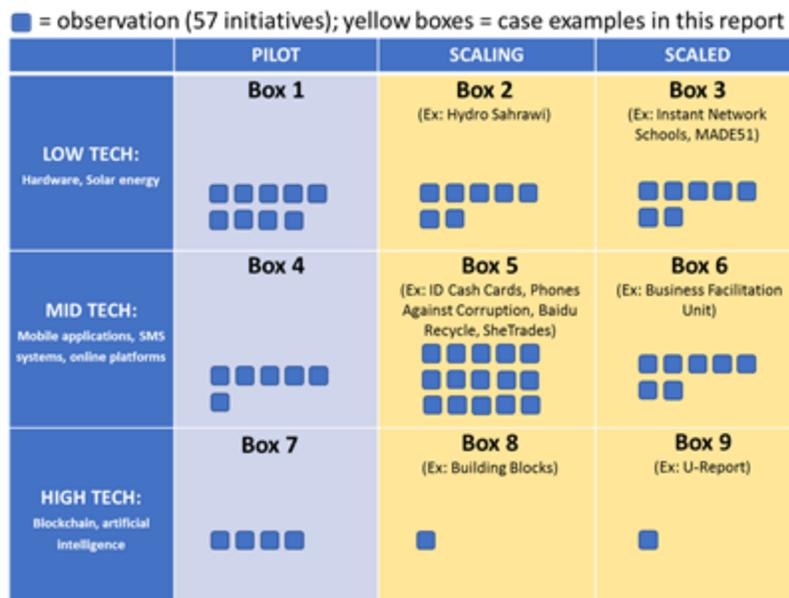
- *Overcoming bottlenecks is critical:* in the example, we discussed the critical bottleneck that kept the project from moving forward is that the person in charge of publishing the report has not yet done so, preventing MSF from implementing their findings on the field and with pharma companies. Sometimes we need new and unconventional strategies to overcome such bottlenecks. The group discussed using a social media campaign to drive action! Often, a new perspective is needed or another person needs to step in to refuel the energy in the project.
- *Emotions are a key success factor for innovation.* We like to put things in neat boxes in terms of how projects develop, but it’s often less structured in reality. To affect change, both internally and externally, emotions are often more important than rational tools. We need to help people relate to the project – which also influences the above bottlenecks! “We’re very ‘projectized.’ Everything starts and ends with a project... [we

need to start] changing language to... how do we change people’s lives? Change language to something people can relate to.”

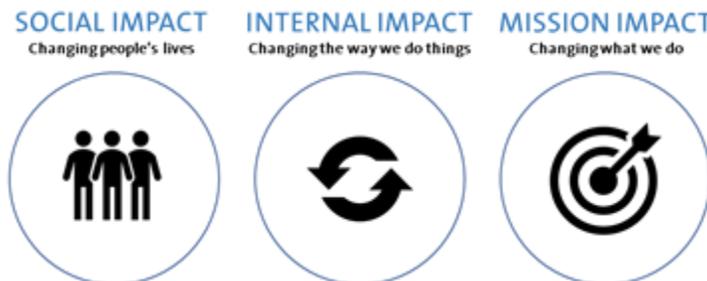
- *The organizational embeddedness of innovation is key.* Whether organized in an innovation unit or in a service center, it is important to instill ownership of innovation in the organization. Sometimes structures need to go through changes to reinvigorate.

Insights from UNIGE Research: Our research has progressed significantly with your help over the last year. Our current focus areas are on creating a typology of initiatives and on understanding their impact. Please see our slides attached for more details on the typology. Below more detail on impact – thanks for your feedback on this during the session!

Typology: We built a simple model plotting the initiatives based on their level of scale and their use of technology. This model doesn’t make a value claim on a specific tech type – but aims to understand what plays a role in how these initiatives arise within the organization. Each blue square symbolizes the number of initiatives in our database that fit in each part of this model. Our research focuses on initiatives that have moved beyond the proof of concept (yellow):



Impact: Success in innovation is “impact!” It is critical to understand how and where initiatives generate impact. However, it is multi-faceted and difficult to capture. Rather than focusing on the quantitative measurement of impact, our research aimed to identify in which domains innovation creates impact. We found three key types of impact that IOs deliver:



- **Social impact:** “changing people’s lives” - refers to impact on IO beneficiaries across the globe. It is usually easier to measure with quantifiable metrics, such as reach, number of beneficiaries/families/refugees/households reached on the ground; increase in production of food; higher enrollment rates at schools; decreased infant mortality.
- **Internal Process:** “changing the way we do things” - refers to impact on the core processes of the IO itself. Even though the initial focus of these initiatives was external (on the beneficiary), we find that many had internal implications on the way things were done within the organizations. For example, the data gathered through certain initiatives has led to reprioritizing certain issues in particular countries. Other initiatives have changed the way partnerships are formed. And others still have led to the creation of a new team or center of excellence that sets precedent and paves the way for further initiatives.
- **Mission Impact:** “changing what we do” - refers to impact on the value proposition of the IO. These are initiatives that fundamentally change or expand what the organization does. WFPs Building Blocks, a blockchain payment implementation system deployed in refugee camps (currently in Jordan and Pakistan) aims to decrease fees for payments and transfers. This type of initiative would probably fit better under a fintech or bank but yet, it loosely couples with the mission to end hunger and poverty but also effectively extends that mission by turning WFP into a blockchain cash transfer provider.

Insights from ITU Innovation’s Moe Ba: Moe’s presentation, attached, focused on the importance of building an ecosystem with an agile organizational relationship (“team of teams”). Innovation requires the following new approaches:

- User centric approach
- Private sector led Innovation
- Efficient resources utilization (e.g. find and invest in working good practices)
- Replicable every year with fast changing ICT context
- Common language between all stakeholders (e.g. common understanding)
- Everyone should have skin in the game (e.g. engaged)
- Sustainable and predictable (e.g. Stability),

The set of tools Moe uses on the field with governments to design innovation ecosystems is available online here: [“Bridging the Digital Innovation Divide”](#)

Final takeaways:

1. **Move beyond the “shiny objects”** – the ‘sexy’ innovation structures, the impressive metrics that may not really be the influential parts of the innovation itself. Sometimes these requests come from donors, but we have to be careful to do more than just please donors!
2. **Get around the organizational immune system** – many of our organizations are hardwired to resist innovation and collaboration. We must find ways to move beyond these silos.
3. **Watch out for the “dark side” of partnerships** – dependency on partners sometimes hurts.

Best,

--

[@TinaAmbos](#) [@KatyaTatarinov](#) [@SylvieSomerville](#)
 Geneva School of Economics and Management (GSEM)
 Boulevard du Pont d'Arve 40
 1205 Geneva, Switzerland

Contact us more information on our research and future events!