

01

BRIEFING PAPER

DEPP INNOVATION LABS

The Disasters and Emergencies Preparedness Programme Innovation Labs

**A TWO-YEAR PROGRAMME TO FOSTER
COMMUNITY-CENTRED INNOVATIONS
IN DISASTER-PRONE CONTEXTS**





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Contents

TUKLAS
PHILIPPINES LAB

UDHVABANI
BANGLADESH LAB

MAHALI
JORDAN LAB

MAARIFA KONA
KENYA LAB



What is the DEPP Innovation Programme?

4

What do the DEPP Innovation Labs look like and how do they work?

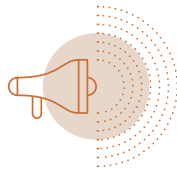
10

Udhvabani

12

Mahali

16



Maarifa Kona

20

TUKLAS

24

How are DEPP Innovation Labs different?

30

Annex

34





What is the DEPP Innovation Programme?

The Disasters and Emergencies Preparedness Programme (DEPP) Innovation Labs is a two-year programme that aims to foster, and eventually scale up, innovations that address key problems faced by disaster-prone communities.

The programme has established 'lab' spaces in disaster-prone communities in Bangladesh, Jordan, Kenya and Philippines. Here, lab staff work directly with disaster-affected communities to identify, design and develop promising innovations in disaster preparedness. These labs have

created the space for experimentation, community participation and new forms of interaction with external partners that may not be possible in traditional top-down programmes. Many of the

innovators are from the community themselves, with limited experience and knowledge of developing and scaling innovations, but with knowledge of local issues and priorities. Lab staff have developed unique and comprehensive packages of support to help build capacity and to guide these innovators through the process.

“

MANY OF THE INNOVATORS ARE FROM THE COMMUNITY THEMSELVES, WITH LIMITED EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE OF DEVELOPING AND SCALING INNOVATIONS, BUT WITH KNOWLEDGE OF LOCAL ISSUES AND PRIORITIES.





What is a lab?

In the context of this programme, a lab refers to a space (not always physical) where people can explore problems related to disasters, share information and perspectives, experiment creatively with new ideas and ultimately develop innovations that will address these problems. This process involves innovators – individuals or teams from the target community or the same region or country – along with community members and other stakeholders, with lab staff providing support and structure. The lab also refers to the multi-faceted package of support that each lab provides, including, financial, technical, capacity-building and network development.



JORDAN

LOGIC/BACKGROUND TO THE PROGRAMME

This programme takes a community-centred approach to fostering innovation, meaning that people and organisations affected by disasters are involved in the design, development and implementation of innovative solutions to their problems. This aims to ensure that solutions are **relevant** and **appropriate** by helping innovators to understand the needs and priorities of the community, and to avoid the biases and assumptions often made by external organisations and individuals innovating on their behalf. Ongoing community participation throughout a project allows for continual user feedback, and this can help innovators to develop a deeper understanding of people's needs and make relevant adjustments.

'Innovation Labs' were selected as the most appropriate mechanism because they allow innovation spaces to be established that are:

- **Independent from pre-existing ways of providing aid, with the option of a separate identity from their aid-providing organisation.** This independence can encourage new approaches and perspectives.
- **Embedded in affected communities.** This takes innovation capacity out of capital cities and organisational offices to the places where the impact of disasters is felt the most.
- **Purpose built.** With flexible capacity to meet specific needs and adapted to the contexts in which they are operating.



PHILIPPINES

Recognising the limitations of other lab initiatives – particularly their tendency to develop pilots which failed to scale – the DEPP Innovation programme aims to have labs with ‘thin walls’. This means there is not a clear separation or barrier between the lab and the community which helps to embed labs in the reality of the community. Innovators are exposed to user requirements, local constraints and real world needs at an early stage, meaning that innovations are more likely to be sustainable once they leave the lab. Helping innovators to forge partnerships for the future is also a priority and this further supports sustainability in their post-lab lives.

Bangladesh, Jordan, Kenya and Philippines were selected to host labs because they were considered conducive environments for fostering and scaling up innovations. The short-two-year window to establish and implement labs meant that DEPP needed to be pragmatic when selecting countries to host Innovation Labs. These locations were selected because they are:

- Vulnerable to disasters: Where emergencies are likely to recur, this allows the iterative testing required for developing innovations.

TUKLAS PHILIPPINES LAB
INNOVATOR MEETING HEALTH WORKERS



- Considered to have a high appetite for innovation:¹ These were environments where an innovation lab could be established and quickly flourish, and where innovations could grow and scale up.
- Relatively stable:² An issue with permanent Innovation Labs is that they can be more challenging to run in areas affected by conflict. For example, Unicef had to close their South Sudan Innovation lab when conflict erupted.

The selected countries also provide a diverse range of risks, because they are vulnerable to different types of disasters.

-
1. Ranking high in the Global Innovation Index.
 2. Ranking low on the Fragile State index compared to other DEPP countries.



The programme has four key aims:

1.

IMPACTFUL INNOVATIONS

Individual country labs work to identify and support the development and growth of promising innovations in disaster preparedness. The labs integrate systems thinking into the design process so that innovations are more resilient and scale-ready as they transition out of the lab.

2.

COMMUNITY-CENTRED APPROACH

The Innovation Labs promote local solutions to disaster-related problems, by putting crisis-affected people at the centre of the process. Labs are located within disaster-prone areas and many of the innovators are community members. Communities are continually engaged in designing and implementing the lab's processes, from identifying the problem area to selecting which innovations should be scaled up. Furthermore, innovators, whether from the community or not, will involve community members when developing, testing and refining their innovative ideas. This engagement aims to optimise the lab processes and innovations, to make them more relevant and sustainable.

3.

BUILD SUSTAINABLE LAB CAPACITY

The programme aims to build sustainable capacity within individual labs. This means a successful lab would ultimately continue to identify promising ideas and turn them into viable solutions beyond the scope of the immediate DEPP project.

4.

GENERATE, USE AND SHARE LEARNING

Use what has been learned in the DEPP Innovation Programme to help each lab adapt its activities, and to contribute to a wider body of knowledge relevant to other initiatives. ■

COMMUNITY IS INVOLVED AT MULTIPLE STAGES IN THE INNOVATION PROCESS

DEFINE

Identify and understand the problem to address.

RESEARCH

Develop an understanding of how the user experiences the problem.

IDEATE

Generate innovative solutions to the identified problem.



SCALE

Define the innovation's future pathway to scale.

TEST

Validate the prototype with the wider community/user.

PROTOTYPE

Build a basic representation of the solution.

What do the DEPP Innovation Labs look like and how do they work?

TUKLAS
PHILIPPINES LAB

MAARIFA KONA
KENYA LAB

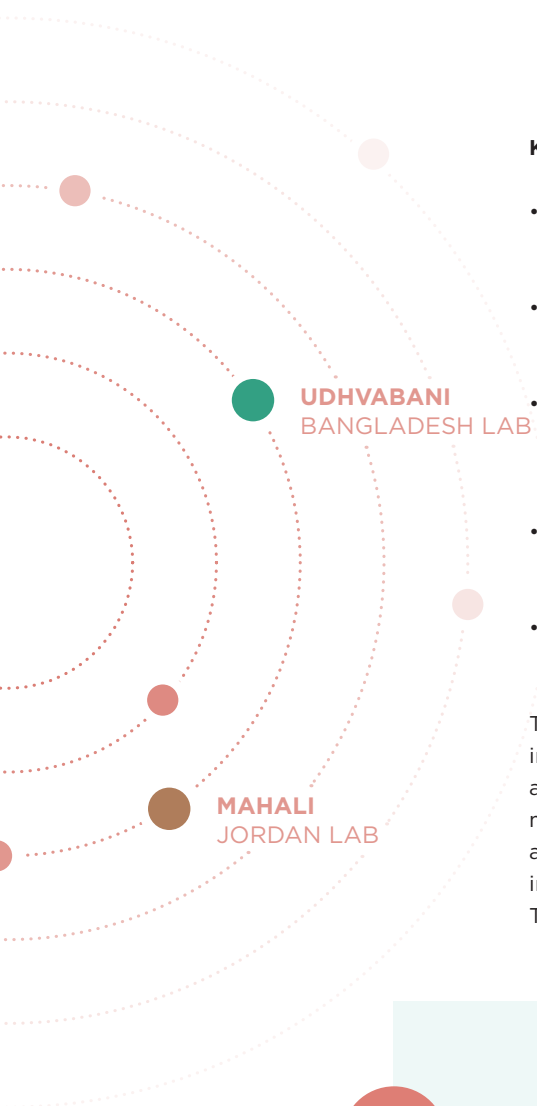
The DEPP Innovation Labs are a network, but each lab is different both in its set-up and in its approach to identifying and supporting contextualised solutions to disasters.

Individual labs are responsible for implementing programme activities relevant to their own context. Chosen lab host organisations or consortiums support a range of innovators, largely from the disaster-prone communities in which the lab operates, to develop their ideas and to overcome the barriers that slow down or prevent the implementation and growth of their innovations.



The Global Lab

Staffed by the Start Network and the CDAC Network, it is responsible for overseeing the programme and all labs at a global/programme level (see [Annex](#) for more details).



Key activities common among all labs include:

- Setting up lab spaces and providing an office space with communications and administrative support.
- Administering a small grants fund to innovators. This provides initial financial support while they develop their ideas.
- Building capacity by providing innovators with the skills and knowledge to develop and scale their innovations. Helping innovators to develop, refine and implement sustainable business plans.
- Facilitating, supporting and monitoring community involvement in lab and innovator processes.
- Connecting innovators to external mentors and partners to help fill gaps in their expertise and knowledge.

The DEPP Innovation Labs are a network, but each lab is different both in its set-up and in its approach to identifying and supporting contextualised solutions to disasters. For example, while all labs identified similar methodologies to fostering innovation – helping innovators to define a problem and to find, test, adapt and scale up their solution – their innovations processes are diverse and specific to their own context. These differences are illustrated in the following pages.



Innovation advisers – ThoughtWorks

ThoughtWorks provide strategic support to the Global Lab on programme design and iteration, and taking an agile management approach. They also contribute to identifying lessons learnt as they emerge, and to key policy issues. They provide technical advice to country labs on user-centred design methodologies; innovation processes; lab support to innovators; iteration and refinement of lab methodology; developing business models for the lab; and developing thinking around lab sustainability.



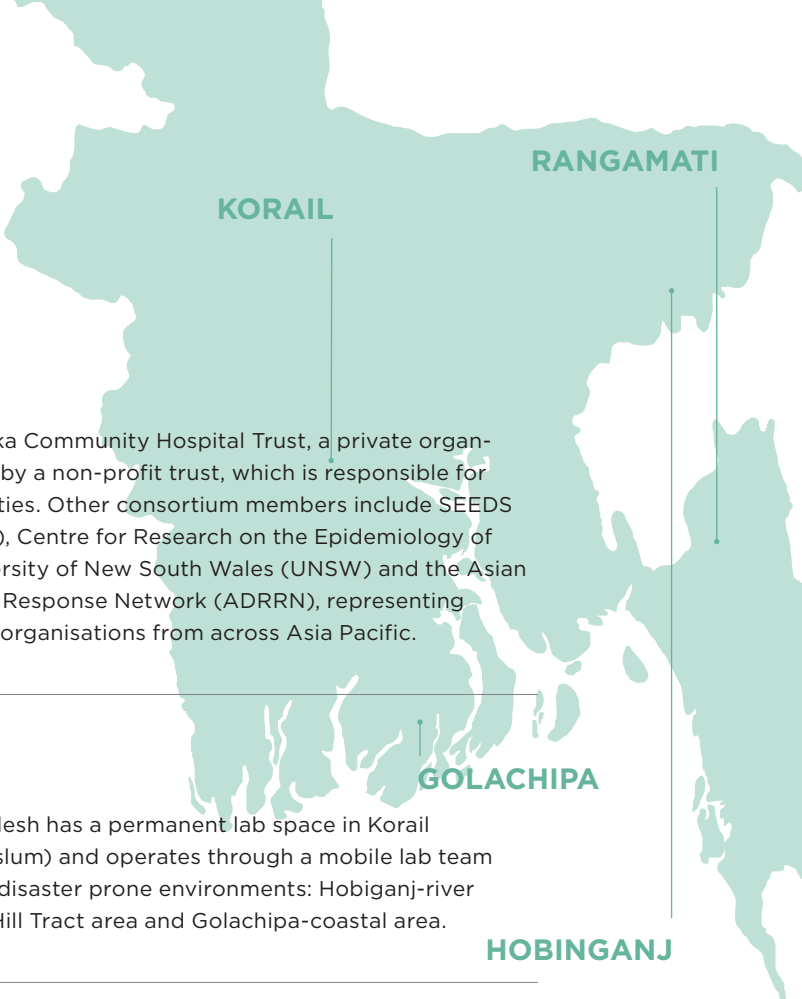
Udhvabani

BANGLADESH LAB

Udhvabani Lab's set-up is different from the other labs in this network.

Firstly, its lead organisation (Dhaka Community Hospital Trust) is a self-sustaining trust organisation that works for the disaster-affected community, rather than a traditional donor-funded humanitarian NGO.

This explains their strong pre-existing relationship with the target community. Secondly, while other labs have a consortium set-up, Udhvabani lab has consortium partners whose skill sets have a heavy research focus. This approach enables a deeper understanding of risks and disaster impacts as well as the ability to source specialist expertise to support specific innovations.



STRUCTURE

Consortium led by Dhaka Community Hospital Trust, a private organisation in Dhaka owned by a non-profit trust, which is responsible for implementing lab activities. Other consortium members include SEEDS India (technical partner), Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED), University of New South Wales (UNSW) and the Asian Disaster Reduction and Response Network (ADRRN), representing research and academic organisations from across Asia Pacific.



LAB LOCATIONS

Udhvabani Lab Bangladesh has a permanent lab space in Korail (Dhaka’s largest urban slum) and operates through a mobile lab team in three other high-risk disaster prone environments: Hobiganj-river basin area, Rangamati Hill Tract area and Golachipa-coastal area.



FOCUS

Innovations focus on the interface between healthcare and built infrastructure, but also respond to specific disasters identified by their target audience’s need assessment.

For example, innovations coming from Korail focus on heat (corrugated iron roofs can cause indoor temperatures in the high 40s) and fire (because of illegal and unsafe gas supplies). Many of the innovations from Korail focus on improving ventilation, insulation and fireproofing and on creating contingency plans.



HEALTHCARE



INFRASTRUCTURE



INNOVATORS

12 individual innovators and innovator teams supported initially.

9 innovations supported after 1st round of evaluation.



TARGET COMMUNITY

The Udhvabani lab works with ‘underprivileged’ people living in informal settlements in Korail (Dhaka), as well as Rangamati, Golachipa and Hobiganj.



UDHVABANI BANGLADESH LAB – STAFF AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

SCOPING



BASELINE SURVEY

EXPLAINING INNOVATION



CONVERSATIONS

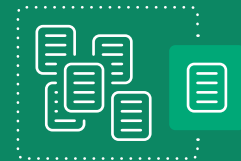
IDEATION



CALL FOR IDEAS



TARGET COMMUNITY IDENTIFIED



83

24

12

APPLICATIONS SHORTLISTED
SCORING BY COMMUNITY COMMITTEE, PEER WORKSHOP AND EXPERT COMMITTEE

NOV 2017

COMMUNITY DEFINES CHALLENGES

Baseline 8-14 November 2017.

Ask slum residents to define their challenges, needs and approaches to 'problem solving'.

NOV 2017 - JAN 2018

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Community meetings and visits to explain and identify innovation within the community.

CALL FOR IDEAS: DEC 2017-JAN 2018
IDEA SELECTION: FEB-APR 2018

IDEA SELECTION

Community committee: Each proposal scored on how embedded and connected to the user group the team is; members including professor of built environment, professor or health and business members.

Peer workshop: Members including different stakeholders from universities NGOs, and specialist, to evaluate and score each other's ideas.

Expert Committee: Scores from both community scoring and peer workshop were then handed to a committee made up of panel of experts, including professor of built environment, professor or health and business members.

Community Stakeholders from universities engaged.

'INNO'
Lab developed a 'superhero' character called 'INNO' to explain innovation within local communities. Ran local workshops and community meetings on innovation approach.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT



INNOVATORS



3-DAY BOOTCAMP



IDENTIFY MENTORS

DEVELOPMENT



TESTING AND REFINEMENT WITH COMMUNITIES

INCUBATION



ITERATE



MAY 2018

IDENTIFY SUPPORT

3-DAY BOOTCAMP

On understanding innovation and lab processes, policy, community engagement, strategy, held in Korail Cafe, Korail Dhaka Slum.

Identified mentors for innovators.

JUN-DEC 2018

DEVELOPMENT OF IDEAS

12 ideas/Innovators receive:

- Monthly stipend.
- Training and development.
- Based in lab space 3-days a week or if located in rural area the lab team travels to them.
- Mentors in community.
- Develop research proposals.

Ideas tested with the community through engagement, perceptions surveys and feedback sessions.

JAN-MAR 2019

INCUBATION OF LAB IDEAS

Led by partner organisation.

Innovators receive funding grants to scale up.

Run pilots, collect feedback, iterate.

Lab will also help innovators:

- To identify potential donors.
- Network and establish active partnerships with private sector and government and disseminate nationally and internationally.



Mahali

JORDAN LAB

Mahali's approach to fostering innovation is unique in two important respects.

Firstly, while other labs selected innovators based on the quality of their ideas, Jordan looked for 'changemakers', believing that finding the right person was more important and that, with the right package of support, good ideas could be developed in the lab.

Secondly, while the other labs focused their efforts on supporting one contingent of innovators over a prolonged period, Mahali planned three ten-week design sprints each with a contingent of new innovators. This allowed for reflecting and iteration after each sprint.

IRBID

AMMAN



STRUCTURE

Run by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) with technical support from Airbel Centre (IRC's innovation centre). Shamal Start (a business accelerator) has been contracted to help incubate successful ideas.



LAB LOCATIONS

The Mahali lab is located in Amman but also runs activities in other locations, including Irbid.



FOCUS

The innovations supported by the lab focus on three broad thematic areas - livelihoods, healthcare and education - which were initially identified by community members as the most pressing and important factors in building their resilience.



LIVELIHOODS



HEALTHCARE



EDUCATION



INNOVATORS

10+

innovation teams supported to develop and refine solutions in

3

separate ten-week design sprints.

At the end of each sprint, the most promising teams graduate to an incubator and others are matched with relevant partner organisations.



TARGET COMMUNITY

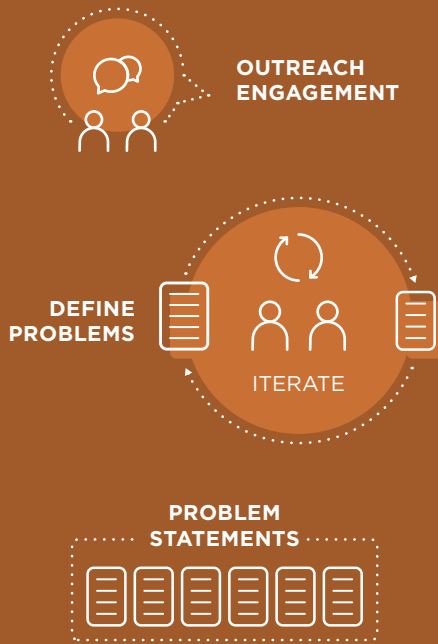
The Mahali Lab aims to use innovation to build the resilience of refugee, migrant and host populations living in urban areas of Jordan.



MAHALI LAB STAFF AND INNOVATORS

Mahali

DEFINE



IDEATION



3 MONTHS

COMMUNITY DEFINES THEIR PROBLEMS

Lab prioritises community needs into 6 main 'problem statements'.

Community-workshops. Lab-hosted workshops to validate back challenges with members.

The community voted on top three challenges most relevant to them:

- Online, through the Mahali page and key WhatsApp and Facebook groups with Syrians in Jordan.
- In-person through community liaisons, door-to-door and community centres.

In total, 1,543 votes were cast by 671 individuals.

2 MONTHS

CALL FOR CHANGEMAKERS

For each design sprint, Mahali lab does a 'Call for Change makers' as opposed to 'Ideas', through online application, workshops and community outreach.

Written application narrowed down applicants from 1,000-2,000 to 100 by looking for people with skills related to social innovation.

100 Applicants attended 4 'Hackathon Application' sessions, that tested their innovation and teamwork skills.

Challenge 1: a 5-day Bootcamp focused on human-centred-design processes.

Challenge 2: a 3-week (part time) bootcamp focused on exploring the issue, thinking of solutions and finding a team.

DESIGN

JAN - APR 2018
DESIGN SPRINT 1



PROBLEM:
LIVELIHOODS

JUL - SEP 2018
DESIGN SPRINT 2



PROBLEM:
HEALTHCARE

JAN - MAR 2019
DESIGN SPRINT 3



PROBLEM:
EDUCATION

INCUBATE



— OR —



JAN 2018 - MAR 2019

DESIGN SPRINTS

10-week design sprints, iterated & pivoted between cycles.

- 2-3 teams per sprint.
- Participants receive a scholarship.

Each team went through many prototype iterations and gained feedback from:

- Their target community.
- The judging panel on weekly pitches.

Judging panel

At the end of 10-week sprint teams pitch their solution to a judging panel made up of people from the private and public sector, and community volunteers. Community volunteers are compensated for their time.

FROM DEC 2018 - 6 MONTHS PER INNOVATION

INCUBATION OF IDEAS

Shamal Start distributes the funds and provides 6-months of incubation services.

Participants receive:

- An office space.
- Financial, legal and technical consultancy.
- Up to 25,000JD.
- Mentorship, monthly trainings.
- Connection to investors at demo days.

For teams that do not qualify for the incubator, Mahali Lab connects them to potential investors and partners.



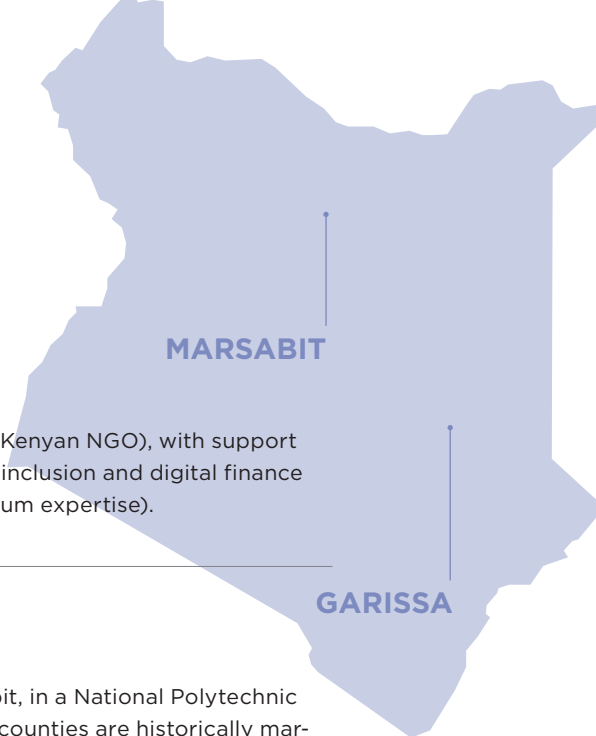
Maarifa Kona

KENYA LAB

In Kenya, government administration and technological innovation has traditionally been centralised in Nairobi. As iHub explains, pastoral regions “have limited opportunities for innovation compared to urban areas, where financing of innovation is more easily accessed and concepts of tech innovation are more easily understood”.

By setting up spaces in Garissa and Marsabit, Maarifa Kona is effectively decentralising innovation away from its traditional centre and giving different people the opportunity to innovate within a structured environment.

Interestingly, the establishment of Maarifa Kona labs outside of the capital coincided with the roll out of the government’s national decentralisation strategy, aimed at devolving decision-making and budgets to counties.



STRUCTURE

Consortium led and managed by Adeso (a Kenyan NGO), with support from the Mastercard (expertise in financial inclusion and digital finance mechanisms) and iHub (innovation curriculum expertise).



LAB LOCATIONS

Two labs are located in Garissa and Marsabit, in a National Polytechnic and a Catholic Mission respectively. These counties are historically marginalised, dependent on pastoralism and livestock and drought prone with Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL).



FOCUS



The innovations developed by the lab focus on livelihoods, food security, water management and livestock protection.



INNOVATORS

22 innovators and innovation teams supported in researching, developing and implementing their ideas.

OVER 90% of the innovators (nearly all) are from their target communities.



TARGET COMMUNITY

They aim to increase “preparedness and resilience of disaster-prone communities” in “rural, underdeveloped pastoral areas” of Kenya.



LAB STAFF AND INNOVATORS IN GARISSA, KENYA

Maarifa Kona

SCOPING | TEST MATERIALS



BASELINE SURVEY



TEST CAMPAIGN MATERIALS

IDEATION



CALL FOR IDEAS



RADIO 'HOT SPOTS'



OUTREACH COLLECT IDEAS



236

IDEAS SHORTLISTED

22



2 DAY OPENING BOOTCAMP

DEC 2017 - FEB 2018

TEST CAMPAIGN

Test community outreach campaign materials.

- The idea submission form was tested with team from the lab staff and students, both male and female, from the North Eastern Polytechnic Institute Garissa.
- Tested form again in Marsabit conducting a focused group discussion with a different group of community involving the elderly.

MAR - JUN 2018

CALL FOR IDEAS

Month-long outreach campaign. Radio campaign in Garissa and Marsabit. Community asked to define challenges and opportunities.

Ideas covering the 3 thematic areas - Water, Agriculture & Livestock.

Host Radio 'hot spots', 'call in shows'. Languages: Rendille, Samburu, Gabra, Borana, Swahili, Somali.

APR - JUN 2018

SELECTION OF IDEAS

Innovators develop ideas and go through set of criteria to filter.

Opening 2-days bootcamp in Nairobi

- Introduction to human-centred design.

Stakeholder mapping

- Identify the user profile (e.g. gender, age, location). Identify partners.

User needs assessment

& weekly feedback.

Closing boot camp, human-centred design workshop & introduction to mentors.

RESEARCH



**SPEAKING TO THE
COMMUNITY AND
TO EXPERTS**



ITERATE IDEA

DEVELOPMENT



PROTOTYPING

BUILD BASIC SAMPLE
OF INNOVATION

↓
TEST WITH KEY
STAKEHOLDERS

↓
ITERATE BASED
ON FEEDBACK

INCUBATION



ITERATE



DEMO DAY

JUN - AUG 2018

RESEARCH

22 Innovators receive:

- Monthly stipend.
- Training: Human-centred design thinking, monitoring and evaluating.
- Free lab space.
- Mentors in the community.

Innovators conduct research, test their ideas with community and experts, and iterate based on feedback.

SEP - DEC 2018

DEVELOPMENT OF IDEAS

PROTOTYPING

22 Innovators receive:

- Monthly stipend.
- Training: Leadership and ethics, financial literacy and entrepreneurship, human-centred design thinking, software.

Innovators develop draft versions of their ideas and test the features and overall design concept with potential users. Iterate idea based on feedback. Produce minimum viable product.

JAN - JUL 2019

INCUBATION OF IDEAS

Top 6-10 ideas selected for incubation.

Innovators receive commercial investment and marketing training and supported to:

- Develop business and pricing models.
- Conduct market testing.
- Register as companies.
- Conduct customer product validation.

Final group of innovators invited to county and national 'demo days'. They pitch their ideas to community representatives, investors, experts and consortium partners.



TUKLAS

PHILIPPINES LAB

TUKLAS aims to be “a nationwide programme [that] improves disaster preparedness across the whole country”. Unlike other labs, which limited themselves to a handful of regions, TUKLAS held an open-ended call for ideas across 17 regions via 50 open sessions, social media, mass media, and dissemination through national networks. As a result, their portfolio is diverse; innovations address landslides, flooding, drought, earthquake, typhoon, storm surges and armed conflict.

Moreover their innovators are located throughout Philippines (300,000km²), a country slightly larger than the UK, but located over 7,000+ islands. This makes physical access to innovators more challenging. To address this, TUKLAS established four lab spaces across the archipelago and their lab teams regularly travel to and communicate remotely with innovators, reducing their travel burden and allowing them more time and resources to focus on developing their ideas.



STRUCTURE

A consortium of four humanitarian organisations – Plan International UK, Action Against Hunger, CARE International, and Citizens’ Disaster Response Center (CDRC) – each responsible for its own lab. The consortium is managed centrally by Plan International UK through a country coordinating unit that includes staff members from each of the consortium organisations.



LABS LOCATIONS

Four regional innovation spaces established across distinct regions of the country in Baguio City (Northern Luzon), Quezon City (Central and Southern Luzon), Tacloban City (Visayas) and Cotabato City (Mindanao), with a central coordinating office in Makati City, Metro Manila.



FOCUS

TUKLAS labs are tackling a broad set of challenges under the umbrella of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Framework, seeking innovators throughout Philippines and encompassing a spectrum of disaster risks. This reflects the fact that Philippines is exposed to a plethora of different types of climate and weather-related risks, as well as political and conflict-related risks.

Their aim is to create a “nationwide programme [that] improves disaster preparedness across the whole country”, focusing on the priorities of disaster-affected communities.



INNOVATORS

40 innovation teams supported located all over Philippines. These are a mixture of individuals, teams and NGO/civil society organisations.



TARGET COMMUNITY

Each innovation has its own target community that is unique to the solution and its context.



DEFINE



50

INFORMATION
SESSIONS

12

WRITING
WORKSHOPSORIENTATION
ON PROGRAMME
AND INNOVATIONOUTREACH
ENGAGEMENT

IDEATION

BASELINE AND CONTEXT
ANALYSIS DONE WITH
THE COMMUNITYREVIEW, SHORTLIST AND
SELECT PROMISING IDEAS

CALL FOR IDEAS

SELECTION
PROCESS - THREE TIERS

PEER

COMMUNITY

TECHNICAL

FINAL 40 (10 PER LAB)

SEP - NOV 2017

DEFINE
PROBLEMS

Broad thematic, environmental and political challenges.

- Reach out to vulnerable communities; social media work, mass media and information sessions to orientate communities on the project and innovation; writing workshops; partnership building; network building.

DEC 2017-MAR 2018

CALL
FOR IDEAS

A nationwide call, leveraging the 4 consortium member's networks and using multi-channels (phone, email, social media).

Writing workshops, information sessions and coaching helped spread the word and support anyone to apply.

3 MONTHS

SELECTION PROCESS

First review - Intra Lab

- Peer review:** Pitch to peer innovators.
- Community review:** Pitch to a diverse group of community representatives.
- Technical expert review:** Pitch to experts from different fields: scientists, innovation expert, private sector, government and consortium members.

3-day Bootcamp stage:

Top 60 (15 per lab) innovations receive:

- Technical expertise from consortium partners.
- Peer-to-peer support from other innovators.
- Pitching support.

Haraya sessions: 1-week of capacity building for all innovators focused on project management, scaling canvas, human-centred design, community engagement and safeguarding, fraud, corruption.

Small grants management: Strengthen capacity of innovators.

DEVELOPMENT

9 MONTHS

ITERATE, TEST AND REFINE



REVIEW COMMITTEE EVERY 3 MONTHS

INCUBATION

BUILDING OF NETWORK OF INCUBATORS AND INNOVATION HUBS



MATCHMAKING WITH POTENTIAL ORGANISATIONS AND COMPANIES



DEMO DAY/LEARNING FAIRS

MAR 2018-JAN 2019

TESTING AND REFINEMENT WITH COMMUNITIES

40 Innovation teams (10 per regional lab) Participants receive:

- Seed funding.
- Training and mentorship.
- Co-working space to work on their ideas, connect with peers and mentors.
- Lab guidance and technical support.
- Cross-lab thematic learning sessions.
- Progress reviews.

Review Committee: Comprised of project team members, peer innovators, community members, innovation experts, local private sector and academia to evaluate innovations.

ONGOING

PARTNERSHIPS

Provide avenues for innovators to potentially scale:

1. **Build a network:** a community of innovation practice across Philippines.
2. **Identify partners for funding and technical support:** 25 projects funded.

Demo Day: Public event to showcase new ideas.



Response Innovation Lab (RIL) Matchmaker

In addition to the labs, the DEPP Innovation Programme also supports a matchmaking pilot scheme in Jordan. The platform seeks to bring together people and organisations experiencing humanitarian preparedness challenges with innovative solutions from a variety of sectors. This service is available to larger humanitarian organisations such as foundations, INGOs and NGOs. The Matchmaker is also experimenting on adapting this service so that individuals or very local groups (camp groups, local agricultural groups, women’s groups etc) can benefit from more localised solutions to their specific issues. Both versions aim to ensure that existing and relevant solutions are used to improve humanitarian responses.

The Response Innovation Lab takes an alternative but complementary approach that allows the programme to learn about differing methodologies and how to integrate them into a holistic approach.

AN INNOVATION TEAM FROM MAHALI JORDAN LAB





Consortium partners and innovation

ThoughtWorks, Innovation Consultants to DEPP Labs, were interviewed about the differences and similarities between the labs.

“On the surface [across Jordan, Bangladesh, Philippines and Kenya], there are diverse sets of problems but, fundamentally, interacting with the innovators, it didn’t seem different. These were people who were exceedingly resourceful and had figured out a way around problems, even with the magnitude of problems around them. We might have our own fancy definitions of innovation, and if you ask one of them what an innovation is they may not have an answer. But they’ve figured things out. The DEPP Lab is the guardian of the innovation process – they help innovators figure things out.”

“The organisation running the consortium has a significant impact on the nature of the lab.

- **Kenya** faced political uncertainty externally, and internally the lab set-up took time. Our coaching was to facilitate the three consortium members to come together for the first time and manage the project. This meant we weren’t looking at the innovation process initially: iHub had innovation processes and the lab was going to adopt that, but we did have to revisit details of the process later.
- **Bangladesh** had many partners with specific strengths, including a research focus, and the team was new. More time was spent walking them through the innovation process and processes for idea selection. The Dhaka Community Hospital Trust had a lot of presence and good contacts. They were able to do an elaborate baseline survey but also benefited from visiting other labs.
- **Jordan** had leadership with innovation experience and the IRC Airbel innovation centre within their organisation. For staff in the lab day-to-day, this was still their first time working on an innovation programme, but they had a framework to work to and so needed less support from start-up. They also learnt significantly as they progressed from activity to activity: so some struggles but a good frame and good advice.
- **Philippines** had a base lab in Manila and had experience working with innovation, a team truly vested in the labs succeeding, and key leaders bringing experience of working in innovation in the humanitarian world and in the private sector. This helped to drive the lab: set a challenge, set criteria and drive practice out to the country labs.” ■



How are DEPP Innovation Labs different?



DEPP Innovation Labs are different from the ‘traditional’ humanitarian assistance models in several important respects.

DECISION-MAKING IS LOCALISED AND SHARED WITH THE ORGANISATIONS AND PEOPLE BEST PLACED – GEOGRAPHICALLY, INSTITUTIONALLY OR AS PRODUCERS OF KNOWLEDGE – TO RESPOND

This is in contrast to the formal humanitarian system, which has been criticised for “failing to connect meaningfully with national and local institutions and groups” and affected populations.³ In traditional aid models it is common for a single organisation, located geographically and institutionally in ‘headquarter’ countries, to have full control over funding and procurement decisions and process. In these cases, humanitarian organisations have responsibility for assessing need, deciding on solutions, delivering them and then self-evaluating their own activities. In contrast, in the DEPP Labs programme, decision-making involves different stakeholders at different levels, including affected populations and national and local organisations, who all help to define, shape and co-design the solution.

PEOPLE AFFECTED BY DISASTERS DEFINE THEIR PROBLEM SPACE (THE CHALLENGE THEY FACE)

Normally, disaster-affected communities participate in need assessments, where humanitarian organisations ask them what they need

3. *Time to let go: Remaking humanitarian action for the modern era* (<https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/10422.pdf>).

BOTTOM-UP APPROACH



Innovators – the majority connected to the problems they are trying to solve – select, develop and implement the solutions.

DEFINING THE PROBLEM



Labs and innovators work with the communities to identify and understand the cause of their disaster-related problems and needs.

USER-CENTRED DESIGN PROCESS



Decision-making involves affected populations and national and local organisations, who all help to define, shape and co-design the solution.

RATHER THAN PROVIDING A SOLUTION IN THE FORM OF ASSISTANCE, THEY HELP THE COMMUNITY TO DEVELOP THEIR OWN SOLUTIONS.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

COMPLEXITY AROUND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

ENSURING THAT LIABILITIES AND RISKS ARE ETHICALLY MANAGED AT THE DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDER LEVELS

THINKING THROUGH APPROPRIATE COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

NOT MAKING ANY ASSUMPTIONS ON BEHALF OF THE 'COMMUNITY'



TUKLAS PHILIPPINES LAB INNOVATION - SOLAR POWERED MOBILE WATER TREATMENT

or want, but DEPP’s approach is different. Rather than focusing on immediate needs, labs and innovators work with the communities to identify and understand the cause of their disaster-related problems and needs. Because these problems are complex, this engagement is a continuous process.

PEOPLE CLOSER TO THE PROBLEM DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT THE SOLUTION

Decisions about how to respond to a problem, and the method and type of response (including humanitarian innovations), are often made by humanitarian organisations with a top-down approach. In this bottom-up approach, innovators - all located in lab countries, and the majority from the community and connected to the problems they are trying to solve - select, develop and implement the solutions. This is an iterative process that involves the community at multiple stages, capitalising on their understanding of the problem to find the best solutions for building their own resilience and preparedness. This helps to ensure that solutions are customised.

AS A RESULT, IMPLEMENTING HUMANITARIAN ORGANISATIONS PLAY A DIFFERENT ROLE

Rather than providing a solution in the form of assistance, they help the community to develop their own solutions. This means a change in their use of language - from ‘needs’ and ‘vulnerabilities’ to ‘capabilities’,

'ideas' and 'intellects'. It needs a shift in mindset, from the assumption that needs must be assessed and met by a humanitarian organisations to an understanding that these organisations may not be the best placed authority to intervene. It also requires community expectations to be carefully managed. Where implementing organisations have pre-existing relationship with communities that are based on providing tangible aid, some labs have needed to rebrand themselves as separate to their humanitarian organisations.

COUNTRY-LEVEL IMPLEMENTING ORGANISATIONS ARE GIVEN THE POWER AND THE SPACE TO DESIGN, IMPLEMENT AND ITERATE THEIR PROCESSES

As observed by ThoughtWorks, DEPP Labs' Innovation Partner:

"The most innovative aspect has been the Global Lab's commitment to let the four labs have as much ownership as they could, to empower the labs and to go back and forth to the donor, UK Aid, to align expectations. From the beginning, [Start Network] told labs, do it your way. The labs came back for support, but the approach was less about control and more about help. This is the first time I've seen this with money from a big donor."

“

THE MOST INNOVATIVE ASPECT HAS BEEN THE GLOBAL LAB'S COMMITMENT TO LET THE FOUR LABS HAVE AS MUCH OWNERSHIP AS THEY COULD, TO EMPOWER THE LABS AND TO GO BACK AND FORTH TO THE DONOR, UK AID, TO ALIGN EXPECTATIONS.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN INNOVATION

Given the innovative and experimental nature of the programme, ethical considerations are different from those in traditional humanitarian programmes. They range from the complexity around intellectual property to ensuring that liabilities and risks are ethically managed at the different stakeholder levels, as well as thinking through appropriate compensation for participation and not making any assumptions on behalf of the 'community'.

RESEARCH AND LEARNING

The DEPP Innovation programme is planning a series of research papers and case studies to document the programme, explore the implications of these differences and share valuable learning. These will be published during the two-year life of the programme and will be of interest to the humanitarian, development and innovation sectors. These outputs will complement wider research around community engagement, scaling and models for supporting innovation. ■

Annex

Global Lab roles

The Global Lab, staffed by the Start Network and the CDAC Network, is responsible for overseeing the programme and all labs at a global/programme level. The role includes:

- Foster global level partnerships that link DEPP Labs to a wider humanitarian, development and innovation ecosystem. These connections facilitate learning and collaboration, opening up pathways to scale. After the programme, they also sustain both promising innovations and the labs themselves, involving non-traditional humanitarian actors, for example in the private sector.
- Promote 'cross-lab' opportunities for learning and collaboration. The aim is to create a network of labs that is stronger than the sum of its parts.
- Provide specific technical advice and develop lab capacity in community engagement, communications, monitoring, evaluation, and learning and innovation.
- Contribute to a wider body of knowledge around disaster preparedness, humanitarianism, innovation and involving communities in the design and implementation of solutions, by building an evidence base around the labs' experiences and sharing this with a wider eco-system of stakeholders.
- Oversee and provide operational support and establish processes that align labs, while at the same time allowing each of them to be agile and unique. ■



Start Network is made up of 42 aid agencies across five continents, ranging from large international organisations to national NGOs. Together, our aim is to deliver more effective emergency aid, harnessing the power and knowledge of the network to help people affected by crises. We advocate for radical change in the system so that the world can deal better with the humanitarian challenges of today, and of the future.



The CDAC Network is a growing platform of more than 30 humanitarian, media development, social innovation, technology, and telecommunication organisations, dedicated to saving lives and making aid more effective through communication, information exchange and community engagement.



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The Disasters and Emergencies Preparedness Programme (DEPP) Innovation Labs is a two-year programme that aims to foster, and eventually scale up, innovations that address key problems faced by disaster-prone communities. It takes a community-centred approach, meaning that people and organisations affected by disasters are involved in the design, development and implementation of solutions, helping to ensure their relevance and appropriateness.

Are you interested in finding out more about the programme, labs and our innovators, including opportunities to support innovators to scale or deploy their ideas?

Visit startnetwork.org or email DEPPLabs@startnetwork.org.



01

BRIEFING PAPER

