Arab States

UNDP in the Arab States, kicked off the year with a regional call for proposals, to provide Country Offices with the knowledge, creative space and seed funding to experiment with new ways of tackling complex development issues. Nine Country Offices submitted 22 applications, an impressive showing for the first year of dedicated UNDP innovation support in the region. Offices with shortlisted proposals were invited to participate in hands-on learning events on design thinking, games for social change, and foresighting with world-class experts to deepen their understanding of the various methodologies and refine their ideas. Ultimately, three UNDP country offices received seed funding to pursue their proposals: Tunisia (SDG social innovation camps); Morocco (games for social change); and Egypt (foresight).

UNDP Egypt and Sudan Country Offices, both early adopters of social innovation, continued to set a tremendous pace as they coordinated and spearhead innovation via their Innovation Lab and Innovation Nucleus, respectively. Other notable efforts at the country level included UNDP Iraq and Yemen's initiatives to promote youth entrepreneurship through the use of social innovation challenges, camps and labs to help young people transform their ideas into viable social ventures. UNDP Egypt, Lebanon and Yemen tapped into alternative financing for development, specifically crowdfunding, to mobilize resources for their projects.

As well as country level initiatives, regional and cross-regional initiatives were undertaken to facilitate learning from oher countries and regions: the Social Innovation Challenge on Technology for Citizen Engagement awarded Sudan's Raik Shino and Yemen's Musharaaknaa initiatives; the Big Data Exploration in Eurasia and Arab States supported initiatives in Egypt, Sudan and Tunisia.

The Social Innovation Camp, "Engaging Arab Youth in Innovating Their Future," the first such event organized by UNDP in any region, brought together 65 youth from all countries served in the Arab States region to examine key development challenges facing the region and collaboratively design innovative solutions to address them. In addition, a "Public Sector Innovation" workshop

A significant investment was made to capture insights and systematize knowledge of Country Offices and the Regional Hub on social innovation.

The regional community produced "A Field Guide to Exploring Innovation," three learning videos, and numerous blogs, all shared on national, regional, and global platforms. The sharing of this knowledge opens up a world of possibilities that is vital as colleagues and partners explore new methodologies that are often untested in the development context.

In 2016, we will continue to deepen and expand our offerings to national and regional partners – alternative financing mechanisms, infrastructures for peace, dialogue/engagement/collaboration mechanisms, data collection/ analysis/visualization tools. These efforts are resulting in not only better programmes but also the establishment or strengthening of partnerships, ranging from Microsoft in Egypt to Impact Hub in Sudan; these collaborations are much needed as we collectively look to deliver on Agenda 2030.

> " We are putting people at the heart of our work, by engaging citizens, policy makers and entrepreneurs. Through design thinking, co-creation, crowdsourcing, storytelling, gamification, open data, and other non-traditional approaches and tools, we can help our national partners to address their development priorities more effectively. "

Anita Nirody,
UN Resident Coordinator
UNDP Resident Representative,
Egypt

Early Stage	Testing & Evidence Collection	Scaling Up
Egypt- Foresighting on Youth Employment	Tunisia- unConferencing to Enhance Youth Engagement Towards the SDGs	Egypt- Smarter Citizens for Innovation Future
Lebanon- Innovation in Vocational Training	Sudan- Participatory Foresight for Peacebuilding under the Innovation Nucleus	Sudan –Innovation Nucleus
Morocco- Gamification of Ecosystem Services	Sudan- Electricity Consumption as a Proxy to Estimate Poverty Levels under the Big Data Exploration initiative	Sudan- Raik Shino under the Tech4Citizen Engagement initiative
Yemen- Mushaaraknaa under the Tech4Citizen Engagement initiative		
Under the UNDP Big Data Exploration initiative: Egypt- Agriculture and Irrigation Management		
Tunisia- Monitoring SDG 16		