UNDP INNOVATION FOR DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA - A SNAPSHOT

In a rapidly changing world, innovation increasingly drives economic growth and social development. UNDP’s Innovation Facility supported initiatives in 11 countries in Africa during 2015. These initiatives tackled a variety of issues ranging from disaster preparedness to renewable energy, from fighting gender-based violence to employment, and from technology to youth engagement. The initiatives all emphasize involving a diverse set of actors throughout the process and linking new partners – such as youth groups, private sector and civil society – with traditional government partners. These innovation initiatives aim to accelerate the achievement of the global sustainable development goals (SDGs) to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change by 2030.

ForesightXchange - Mauritius

Developing foresight capacity is critical to help identify innovative measures to build a responsive public service. The Mauritius foresightXchange towards an Innovative Civil Service was co-organized by the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms, UNDP Mauritius and UNDP Global Centre for Public Service Excellence. The aim was to develop an outward-looking, future-oriented and value-based process and ‘compass’ for innovation in Civil Service, in response to shifting citizen needs and emerging opportunities for integrating new technologies in service delivery. Participants were asked to reflect on current strategic planning practices and learn and test foresight approaches and methods. The empowering premise of foresighting is the realization that the future is still in the making and can be actively influenced in the present. This allows governments and public administrations to construct contingency plans for probable scenarios, while creating policies that capitalize on transformational possibilities, moving from foresight and insight to strategy and action. Read more.

Young Farmers Innovation Lab - Zimbabwe

Low agricultural productivity is a challenge in Zimbabwe, which has limited access to inputs, skills, credit and markets. A significant share of the population, especially the youth, is excluded from opportunities and remains unemployed, despite being educated and tech-savvy.

This pilot programme launched by UNDP and the Zimbabwe Farmers Union targets 100 farmers and seeks to revolutionize the farming sector, meet food needs, address unemployment and transform farming practices into productive, commercially viable agri-business ventures designed as a collaborative entrepreneurship model. The initiative provided young farmers with market and business development skills and competencies; exposed them to tools, practices and inputs for sustainable productivity; and allowed them access to ICTs for increased productivity. Within this, a young farmers’ marketing label was developed for branding produce of young farmers in the market and a revolving fund was made available as seed capital for the farmers. The initiative used business acceleration programmes and innovation design labs as entrepreneurship development incubators by building a pool of 10 highly skilled social innovators with capacity to design, test, and pilot and deploy ICT-based agri-business solutions for the food production chain and strategic partnerships with private and public sector institutions to support venture enterprises for employment and income generation. Read more.

Resilience Innovation Lab - Malawi

Malawi suffers from chronic flooding and droughts. This has led to rise in the costs of living, seriously affecting vulnerable households and communities, and negatively impacting the country’s development.

Malawi’s first-ever Resilience Innovation Lab is an incubator of new ideas in building resilience against economic and environmental shocks. Specifically, it supports identification, testing and scaling up of innovative ideas to strengthen resilience at the individual, household and community levels. The ideas, tools and solutions generated are then implemented at the local and national level, and promoted internationally. Using the ‘find and reflect’ innovation framework, the lab learns from other successful UNDP innovations while contextualizing them to the Malawi experience - connecting Malawians to both internal and external networks and initiatives to harness local knowledge and indigenous practices while learning from others. The lab adopts a dual approach to accelerate transformational ideas into solutions - the Design Thinking Approach, on the one hand, encapsulates new and emerging ideas on resilience, selecting those with the highest transformative potential, and presenting a strong case for building resilience in a thematic or geographic area; while the ‘Crowd Sourcing Approach’, on the other hand, identifies existing projects and innovations exhibiting a potential for scale up and resilience building. Read more.

Operational Strategic Tools - Democratic Republic of Congo

UNDP developed a set of innovative tools to improve performance and cost effectiveness, as well as mobilise and manage resources. This suite of tools included a Resource Tracking and Reporting System (RTRMS), which enables centralization of data focused on partnership and resource mobilization, analysis of maturity level of projects pipeline, management of commitments to donor, and generation of reports; the HACT Database through which partners’ risk level is now accessible to all agencies through a common database which allows a substantial saving of about 66%; and a staffing tool that gives the status of personnel’s presence or absence to both human resources and security. All of these solutions result from analysis of specific problems and which are not addressed either by existing corporate tools or by other offices. All solutions are flexible and scalable web applications. Inter-regional cooperation for the implementation and the localization of the tools will also be a first.

Applying Visual Analytics on Climate Change Adaptation - Cape Verde

Abundant information exists on climate change and the environment in Cape Verde. However, this information was not systematically captured, analyzed and shared, making it difficult to quickly capture lessons and apply them to other contexts. The purpose of this initiative was to establish a streamlined and efficient way to consolidate, analyze and disseminate knowledge being generated from all projects being implemented in the area of climate change adaptation.

Knowledge presented in an accessible and digestible format, strengthened replication and scaling up in other parts of Cape Verde, as well as other countries facing similar challenges. This initiative provided a methodology, capacity and tool to analyze and use different types of information being generated from UNDP’s work across sectors, programming areas and themes thus a bird’s eye view on climate change adaptation work in Cape Verde. Read more.
Empowerment Programme - Nigeria

The Special Target Enterprises Development and Monitor Initiative for persons with disabilities focused on inclusive and sustainable growth and development incorporating productive capacities that create employment and livelihoods. The initiative is aimed at empowering 30 participants with vocational skills in four areas - shoe making, tailoring, hair dressing and computer application/management.

The entrepreneurial monitor, an assessment mechanism, was designed to ascertain success of the enterprises and entrepreneurship capacity growth. The results were useful in determining credit worthiness and provide inputs for designing a national policy for Special Target Enterprises Support. Read more.

Electronic Platform for Reporting Gender-Based Violence - Benin

The focus of this initiative was to strengthen the current system of reporting gender-based violence throughout the country. To deal effectively with gender-based violence cases, it is necessary both to ensure punishment of perpetrators, and to protect the victims and/or witnesses. To do this, an electronic platform was established to ensure the anonymity of whistleblowers and guarantee their safety. This digital platform combines several Information and Communication technologies (SMS, Internet, interactive voice response) that allows information recording, processing and analysis by violence category. The special feature is an integrated digital platform through a voice module designed in local languages to enable users to communicate better and receive a receipt for each message sent. Read more.

Justice and Empowerment Lab - Botswana

In Botswana, access to justice is a relatively recent service and still out of reach of rural communities who are most vulnerable and most in need of assistance. The Access to Justice and Social Empowerment Lab aims at decentralizing access to justice particularly in the Ngamiland region, bedeviled by poverty and high incidences of gender-based violence.

This three-month pilot, in partnership with Women against Rape, a Non-Governmental Organization, attracted sufficient evidence and publicity to reignite government interest in providing mobile legal aid in remote regions and incorporated a human-centered design approach, engineered towards specific needs of the community. Members of the community conversant in the dialect, social dynamics and traditions particular to the community provided assistance and involved a cross section of the community in co-designing the legal service delivery model. The team conducted a mock user safari (a user safari is a methodology for developing collective problem-solving capabilities and skills by working on real-life challenges), to reveal how women interacted with and experienced legal services and how increased empowerment put them at a greater risk of violence. The findings from this safari revealed that legal empowerment paradoxically often created high incidences of abuse, and that educating and addressing men was therefore a critical aspect of prevention. A trained counselor joined the team to engage male and female recipients of legal services and their respective partners.

Training Programme - Comoros

This initiative aimed to enable women involved as pickers in the ylang-ylang sector to take advantage of the opportunities offered by this key cash crop sector of the Comorian economy. The innovative approach was to improve the role of women at all stages in the value chain, including at the distillery; to establish a technology improvement system; and to improve energy efficiency.

The women began training with a general knowledge module of the sector, to understand the essential oils and how distillation works. They then received training on group facilitation and project development, which allowed them to know how to function, organize and sustain their businesses. Read more.

Solar Initiative - Burkina Faso

The Barefoot College and Burkina Faso signed an agreement to promote solar energy through this initiative. Six rural Burkinabé women were identified and sent to India for six months training in solar energy.

To date, about 10 pilot projects have been funded in 10 villages. The results from the completed projects show that the women have managed to electrify 1,000 households, bringing light to more than 14,500 beneficiaries. Given the success, the Government of Burkina Faso wants to scale up this initiative. Read more.

Governance and Peace Tracking Poll (GaP) - Ghana

The GaP poll is a nationally representative public opinion tracking survey that seeks to support good governance and peaceful resolution of conflicts. Governance and peace indicators are subjective, and therefore difficult to define and measure, encouraging many practitioners to focus on output or activity-level results.

The GaP Poll differs by producing quarterly reports that track public opinion on governance and peace indicators. Critically, this poll provides a platform for accessing and acting upon the views and concerns of citizens. Pulse Lab Kampala created an interactive visualization tool for tracking this poll which provides easy insights into the data collected. The visualizations by Pulse Lab Kampala help end-users to interact and better understand the results of the poll and compare them with previously held polls, aiding decision-making based on the survey results. Read more.

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