INNOVATING FOR RESULTS

Working with UNDP's Innovation Facility, the Bureau's Innovation Fund is counteracting stubborn development problems with new thinking.[20] The Fund collaborated with Country Offices to redefine how persistent development challenges are traditionally framed; in particular, it harnessed new opportunities presented by rapidly changing contexts in the developing world, especially in terms of how people interact with each other, and with their governments, through technology as well as digital media.

New partners who have bought into this vision include gaming and design labs, private sector actors, technologists and youth groups such as students and Scouts. UNDP Nepal's ideas of using animation to encourage young people to challenge gender-based discrimination and violence persuaded the University of Chicago Game Changer Lab to help with the technology. In Bhutan, UNDP is working with a telecoms operator and Emerson College's Engagement Lab to collaboratively design gaming content to maximize youth participation in tackling unemployment issues. In Maldives and China, UNDP engaged with new technology firms

▶ In Bangladesh, UNDP partnered with local cyber-think tank Urban Launchpad and enlisted 10 transport pioneers who usually travel in their private cars to commute using public transport; then it held a feedback session to understand their experiences and the reasons that prevent them from using public transport regularly. Armed with the users' new insights, UNDP Bangladesh is now working with a traffic expert from Chicago to convert this feedback into making public transport a more viable – and even a desirable – option for all instead of only for those who cannot afford the alternatives.

SAVE MONEY
SAVE TIME
SAVE US
RIDE THE BUS

THE COST OF DHAKA'S TRAFFIC CONGESTION IS ESTIMATED AT $3.8 BILLION A YEAR AND THAT'S JUST THE DELAYS AND AIR POLLUTION. USING PUBLIC TRANPORTATION CAN SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE CONGESTION AND POLLUTION.

GETTING OUT OF THE GRIDLOCK

with experience in public sector innovations (Fixmystreet.com) and massive popular reach (Baidu.com) to adapt technology to the needs of local communities.

Consulting the end user when a solution is developed is traditional UNDP practice. However, placing the user at the heart of the issue, empathizing and engaging him or her to play a central role in co-designing the solution, is new – and has been integral to the Innovation Fund ethos. Initiatives have used pioneering techniques to gain feedback from the end user and to design new solutions to old problems.

Many of the innovations being developed through the Fund have harnessed opportunities that new technologies bring to human

development. Using technology to increase citizen engagement with parliamentarians and councils lends itself well to countries like Bhutan and Maldives (Case Study 1). In Papua New Guinea, a campaign launched in partnership with the Ministry of Finance uses mobile phones to encourage citizens to report corruption by texting information to a designated line. The short prototyping phase already yielded a substantial data set, pointing to the potential for scaling up.

Proving that technology only comprises a small part of an innovation, and that much of the innovation relates to rethinking the problem and exploring beyond "business as usual," Viet Nam combined the forces of local communities and law students to improve people's legal literacy and change the face of traditional education systems. Community homesteads are where law students now head to get "schooled," and some of Viet Nam's top universities, keen to learn from this experience, have reached out to UNDP.

UNDP Innovation Summit 2014: Rethinking development in a changing Asia and the Pacific

Foresight, new partnerships, taking risks, and being open to change to realize creative solutions to stubborn development challenges were among major themes discussed at UNDP's Innovation Summit in Bangkok. In rapid-fire brainstorming sessions, country office teams from across the region explored new designs and shared lessons. The result was an explosion of ideas aimed at injecting innovation in all programmes, with the goal of making UNDP a global leader in innovation.