

# UNDP ACCELERATOR LAB NETWORK

Building the world's largest learning network to  
tackle 21st century development challenges.

Core investors:

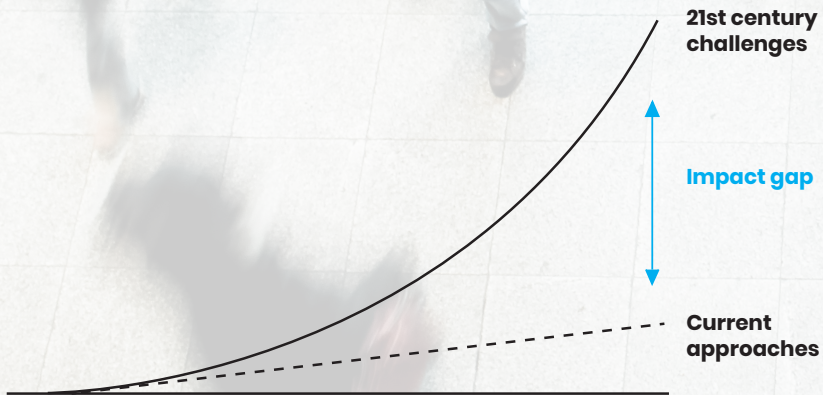



Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.



# RE-IMAGINING DEVELOPMENT FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

---





The impact of artificial intelligence on unemployment. Migration due to climate change. The influence of disinformation on democracy and conflict. The speed, dynamics and complexity of today's challenges are fundamentally different from previous eras in history.

Our current approaches are not making enough progress against 21st century challenges. The outside world is moving faster than many of our development solutions are adapting.

Effectively addressing these challenges doesn't just require new solutions. It requires radically new approaches that fit the complexity of current development challenges.

How development works needs a new set of pathways and parameters, designed with courage and creativity.

## **THE NEXT GENERATION UNDP**

At UNDP, we are disrupting the way we deliver, think, invest and manage to perform faster, better and at scale.

This is the #NextGenUNDP, walking the talk as an innovative, agile partner – and inspiring others to do the same.

The Accelerator Labs are part of our effort to inject innovation into our organizational DNA. This network of 60 Labs will create new capabilities for national partners to respond to exponential changes and 21st century challenges.

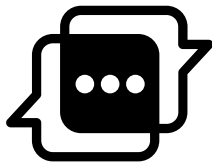
# BUILDING THE WORLD'S LARGEST LEARNING NETWORK ON DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

---

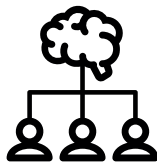
The Accelerator Labs are being created to reimagine development for the 21st century by tapping into the relationships, resources, and expertise of UNDP and its partners.

This will be the largest learning network focused on development challenges. 60 Lab teams, embedded in UNDP country offices, serving 78 countries will test new ways of partnering to address sustainable development challenges.

This capability will introduce new services, backed by evidence and practice, by accelerating the testing and dissemination of solutions within and across countries.



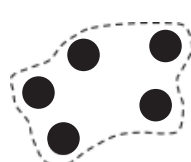
SENSE-MAKING



COLLECTIVE  
INTELLIGENCE



SOLUTIONS  
MAPPING



PORTFOLIO  
OF  
EXPERIMENTS

SENSE-MAKING, COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE, SOLUTIONS MAPPING AND EXPERIMENTATION WILL BE PART OF THE NEW OFFER FROM UNDP TO GOVERNMENTS.

**Sensemaking:** Together with partners, the Labs will analyse challenges within local contexts to identify connections and patterns in search of new avenues of work to address wicked development challenges.





## **SOLUTIONS MAPPING: BUILDING ON LOCAL INNOVATORS**

---

Together with local actors, the Labs will identify grassroots solutions together with local actors and validate their potential to accelerate development.

Solutions can come in many different forms, from a farmer discovering a new way to prevent floods to approaches that emerge from within governments, start-ups or the private sector.

The labs will also harness the potential of real time data and people's energy to respond to rapidly evolving challenges that impact development.

Building on these locally-sourced solutions, the labs will rapid test and iterate new ideas to learn which ones work, which ones can grow, and which ones don't, bringing experimentation to the core of development.



## CASE STUDY

# USING COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE TO UNCOVER INSIGHTS ON POVERTY

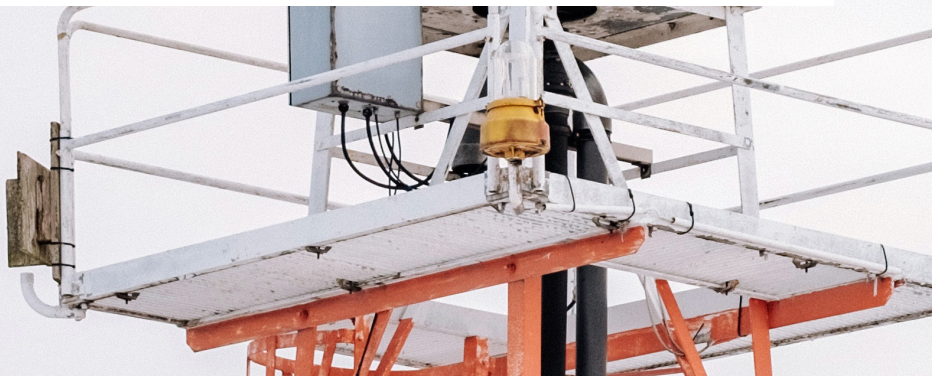
---

Maintaining precise, accurate, and up-to-date information about multidimensional poverty at a national scale is a gargantuan challenge for governments – but it is crucial to better target public service delivery.

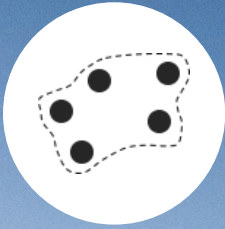
In Sudan, UNDP is working in partnership with Zain Telecom, the National Telecom Corporation, and big data analytics experts to test using phone metadata to complement official statistics and provide more granular data for measurement of progress in addressing multidimensional poverty.

The data show a strong correlation between the multidimensional poverty index and covariates from call records.

With proper privacy controls, the data provide a geographical precision of multidimensional poverty right down to the level of network antennas.







## CASE STUDY

# EXPERIMENTING TO TACKLE AIR POLLUTION IN NORTH MACEDONIA

---

In Skopje, one of the top ten most-polluted cities in Europe, UNDP supported setting up a platform, based in the city's Innovation Lab, to provide a space for a wide variety of actors to find new solutions around pollution.

Out of this, the lab designed a portfolio of experiments where big data, behavioural insights, design thinking and prototyping were used to address air pollution issues.

On the big data front, the platform used mobile phones to crowdsource data collection in more than 5,000 households.

The findings showed that heating accounted for more than 30 percent of all emissions, eventually influencing legislative changes to legally ban coal usage for heating by 2020.

Based on this data, the Lab also developed a variety of tools to tackle the issue, including an online calculator to help citizens make informed energy consumption choices, and a foresight tool to demonstrate the possible future impact of different actions to combat air pollution.

A man with a beard, wearing a white sweater over a blue collared shirt, is looking down at a laptop. The background is blurred, showing office charts and diagrams. One chart has a red square with the number '1' and another has a red square with the number '2'.

# HOW UNDP'S ACCELERATOR LABS WORK

---

The Accelerator Labs, embedded in UNDP's country office capacity, are teams that provide governments with a set of new services to better tackle complex sustainable development problems.



**The UNDP Accelerator Labs bring three competitive advantages to the development sector.**

### **1. Radically accelerated learning**

The Labs accelerate learning on two fronts. First, the Labs operate as an integrated global network, building on each other's learnings about development solutions in real time. Second, the Labs conduct experiments around portfolios of solutions rather than individual solutions, enabling us to learn about what works and doesn't in weeks or months rather than years.

### **2. A greater breadth of solutions**

The Labs combine deep local networks that allow us to elevate grassroots solutions as well as source solutions globally, mobilizing a wide and dynamic partnership of actors contributing knowledge and experience.

### **3. The ability to bridge to scale**

The Labs, by being integral to UNDP's capacity at the country level, build on our partnerships with government to scale solutions. The Labs work on development challenges that are determined with national partners. Some of these include climate justice, or the connection between schools and job markets, or combatting disinformation campaigns assisted by artificial intelligence.

# TOWARDS A 21ST CENTURY MODEL FOR DEVELOPMENT

---

## TODAY

Disconnected pilots  
without adequate learning  
and scaling

Pursuing “unicorns” –  
investing a single solution  
for complex problems

Best practices lag behind  
challenges that are  
constantly shifting

Development actors  
working in isolation “re-  
learn” what other offices  
have already learned

Looking at the usual data  
sources leads us to the  
usual answers

## TOMORROW

Faster learning through  
experiment-driven testing

Portfolios of potential  
solutions allow us to  
consider multiple solutions  
in parallel

Learning from existing,  
local solutions that are  
closer to reality

Collective intelligence  
through a globally  
integrated network

Bringing in new sources of  
data to real-time evolving  
challenges



# INNOVATION BACKED BY THE RELATIONSHIPS AND EXPERTISE OF UNDP

---

UNDP is present in 170 countries. We have deep knowledge of local contexts as well as long-standing relationships of trust and mutual respect with governments and local partners.

**STRENGTHENING 1 IN 3 PARLIAMENTS WORLDWIDE**  
and supporting an election every two weeks

**#1 IN VALUE-FOR-MONEY**  
in development information for policymaking

**#2 IN TRANSPARENCY**

Organization	Score (%)
Asian Development Bank	99%
UNDP	95%
UNICEF	78%
GLOBAL FUND	75%

Asian Development Bank (99%)

UNDP (95%)

UNICEF (78%)

GLOBAL FUND (75%)



# ACCELERATOR LAB LOCATIONS

---

Algeria

Angola

Argentina

Azerbaijan

Benin

Bosnia and  
Herzegovina

Burkina Faso

Cambodia

Cape Verde

Caribbean  
(based in  
Barbados)

Central African  
Republic

Chad

Colombia

Congo

Democratic  
Republic of  
Congo

Dominican  
Republic

Ecuador

Eswatini

Ethiopia

Ghana

India

Iraq

Jordan

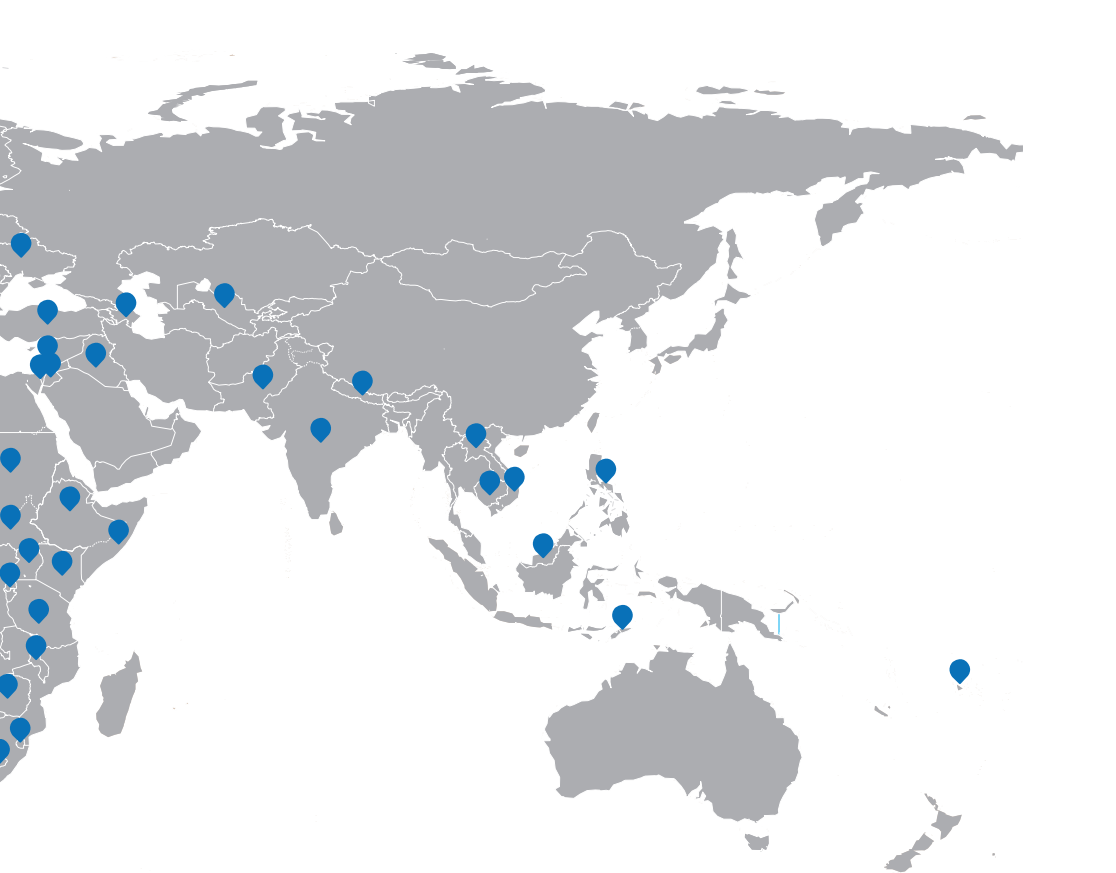
Kenya

Lao PDR

Lebanon

Lesotho





Libya

Niger

Serbia

Timor Leste

Zambia

Malawi

Pacific  
(based in Fiji)

Sierra Leone

Togo

Zimbabwe

Malaysia

Pakistan

Somalia

Tunisia

Mali

Palestine

South Africa

Turkey

Mexico

Paraguay

South Sudan

Uganda

Morocco

Philippines

Sudan

Ukraine

Namibia

Rwanda

Tanzania

Uzbekistan

Nepal

The Gambia

Vietnam

# HOW TO GET INVOLVED

---





The background of the entire page is a photograph of a city skyline at sunset. The sky is a warm, golden-yellow color. In the foreground, there is a dense field of dark green plants with small, light-colored flowers. The city skyline in the background features several buildings, including a prominent one with a large, ornate dome and minaret on the left side.

Join us!

**Core investors** will co-build the Accelerator Lab Network as a joint venture.

Our core investors are part of our Strategic Advisory Group together with high impact members with in-depth experience in social innovation. The group will help shape the direction of the Lab Network.

They will benefit from the learning opportunities of the Labs, have real-time access to data, solutions and learning from the 60 Labs, and be an integral part of our identity.

**Partners** will include the Governments of the 78 countries the Network serves, as well as other investors.

They will benefit from the emerging lessons of the Network and co-define the problems the labs address through experimentation.

**Knowledge partners** are institutions with niche expertise and data relevant to the Accelerator Labs who will benefit from insight into emergent demand in this area.

**Action partners** are organisations, individuals and other actors who take part in the work of country Labs and the broader network.

## LET'S MAKE THIS HAPPEN

---

We're looking for partners to join us in investing and contributing knowledge to this global effort.

For more information, please contact:

Gina Lucarelli

Team Leader of the Accelerator Lab Network

Email: [gina.lucarelli@undp.org](mailto:gina.lucarelli@undp.org)

Partners:

