HUMANITARIAN INNOVATION FUND: Early Stage Innovation Final Report

Organisation Name	World Vision UK

Project Title	Response Innovation Lab (RIL)
Partner(s)	Civic, Gray Dot Catalyst, Save the Children, MSF, George Washington University, Oxfam, Relief International, Center for Humanitarian Leadership.
Problem Addressed / Theme	Innovation in emergency settings
Location	Global
Start Date	1 Oct 2016
End Date	31 March 2017

Total Funding	HIF: £50,000 Total Funding: £139,500
Total Spent$	HIF: £50,000

Innovation Stage	Invention
Type of Innovation	System change
Project Impact Summary	Set up of an inter-agency deployable innovation lab in both a rapid onset and protracted crisis settings.

ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT
1. **Describe all the activities carried out. Please attach a workplan or log frame, if these were used.**

The RIL followed the initial workplan submitted to HIF , and adapted it continuously as the implementation progressed.

Activity 1: the RIL developed a detailed workplan and identified who is responsible for what in line with the workstreams initially proposed namely governance and legal structure, staffing, funding, service toolkit, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), partnerships and networking. The resulting outcomes and outputs are listed in section 3 and 4.

Activity 2: the RIL conducted research on a weekly basis to ensure it has a strong evidence base as a baseline for RIL development.

Activity 3: the RIL held three strategic design workshops namely in London, Amman, and San Francisco over the course of the project to pull together all the work done remotely, further develop the group ideation, and agree on the ways forward.

Activity 4: the RIL undertook monthly online meetings with the founding partners (Oxfam International, Save the Children International, World Vision International, Civic, Centre for Humanitarian Leadership, and George Washington University) which included an update on

the project's progress and accomplishment and a re-definition of the RIL priorities. The RIL also undertook an evaluation of the last 6 months focusing on successes, areas of improvements, and alignment with the core principles initially agreed on, notably the need to remain practical and field oriented.

<u>Activity 5</u>: the RIL has completed a short draft strategy including initial guidance on next year's implementation. The strategy outlines a theory of change, the RIL's mission, vision, and parameters within which it can innovate. An interim executive committee has been set up as well as an operational group which supports the RIL's operations.

2. If you have made changes or amendments to the planned activities and objectives that have not been detailed in an *Agreement Amendment Form*, please list them here.
No amendments done

ACHIEVEMENTS
3. Has the project demonstrated the success of the innovation or idea?
⊠ Completely successful
This project has succeeded in moving the response innovation lab from an idea to a lab structure that is ready to set-up in a rapid onset or protracted crisis. Areas of success within the greater goal include:

A) Shared interest and commitment of a wide range of stakeholders from the humanitarian, academic and private sectors, to build an inter-agency humanitarian innovation eco-system at field level:
- The founding partners jointly signed a letter of intent indicating willingness and commitment to invest resources in the RIL. This included GBP20-40K upfront for each founding partner and then for the NGO founding partners an additional GBP116K to be provided as initial start-up funds in the case of a rapid onset emergency (while the RIL finds additional funds). Partners are also signing a letter of support to donors and setting up meetings to discuss additional funding.
- Advocacy at organisational level to establish and develop RIL included:
  o Save the Children raised GBP40K for the RIL through multiple affiliates, and hosted multiple high level information sessions with their leadership teams at a global, affiliate, regional, and field levels.
  o Oxfam is hiring a humanitarian innovation staff member with 30% of their time given to the RIL for operational uses.
  o World Vision will host the RIL partnership for the next 12 months and has already committed to provide human resources (HR) namely the RIL Director and supporting positions such as finance, legal, and HR, to be back filled by other revenue sources. World Vision has also added innovation to its disaster management policy and included the RIL in its global fragile states strategy.

B) An enhanced evidence base of the 'convening, matchmaking and supporting' functions at field level to create more effective humanitarian innovation. Research showed that the absence of a local eco-system within an emergency causes huge barriers to effective humanitarian innovation at global and field levels.
- There are growing requests from the NGO field offices on innovation needs around specific areas which can be linked to already successful innovations or current pilots.

- There are growing requests for connections both from/to the field and innovation global players.

C) Practical humanitarian innovation field guidance and tools are not easily available. They need to be built, tested and co-located in a place which can support the field which is what the RIL has been doing.

4. Please describe how the project achieved the planned objectives, and describe all of the results achieved through the activities indicated in Question 1.

Over the course of the implementation, the RIL succeeded in growing its partnership base which now includes 6 founding partners, 8 strategic partners, and 10 additional partners providing staff time on a monthly basis. About 120 organisations are on a mailing list and 15 companies have provided details on how they could support the lab in country. Preliminary discussions on the RIL's establishment in the field have been conducted with field practitioners in Jordan, Iraq, Turkey, Somalia, Burundi, Kenya, and Uganda with the aim to implement 2 labs in 2017.

RIL systems and structures developed
- Agreed on a vision, goal, mission, objectives, principles of the RIL, and a definition of innovation
- Agreed on the RIL partnership structure (i.e. founding partners and strategic partners and their rights).
- Agreed on global and local governance mechanisms for the RIL partnership (i.e. Executive Committee, Advisory Committee, decision rights and accountabilities of partners and groups) as well as core policies and processes (i.e. go/no-go policy and process for deploying a lab).
- Built success measures for the global and country lab RILs to ensure we define humanitarian innovation impact for our work.

Process for managing a global inter-agency lab partnership developed
- Outlined and agreed on barriers to humanitarian innovation and the most important services the RIL Central Support Unit should offer (refer to the following bullet point). The RIL also developed an implementation plan that includes building a surge capacity network, developing a curriculum and training, outlining evidence for impact, developing a match-maker service, and developing a lab management process and structure.
- Built the RIL Central Support Unit with a focus on innovation process, team culture, evidence and research, ethics, resourcing, accountability, information sharing and learning, responsible use of data, partnerships, decision making, and experimentation.
- Developed Terms of Reference (TOR) for Central Support Unit, the Global Executive Committee, the RIL Advisory Committee, the Central Support Unit host, the Central Support Unit staff (i.e. RIL Director, Operations Manager, Evidence and Learning Manager, Finance and Business Manager, Business Development Manager, and Administration Manger).

Processes for the RIL country lab developed
- Developed initial TORs for the country level Executive Committee, country level staff, and country lead organisation.
- Drafted a geographic strategy and a Go-No Go framework and policy to ensure we have clear decision points around when, where, and how the RIL can decide to open a lab in country.

- Outlined the services offered by the Global Central Support Unit, the reporting processes, the fundraising guidelines and developed an initial funding proposal for a country level lab.
- Drafted a country lab manual which includes very light touch guidelines on: opening a lab, governance, staff management and reporting lines, services offered by the country lab, financial management and liabilities, procurement issues, donor and funding principles, intellectual property and documentation, staff management, reporting requirements, media and branding, country lab decision matrix, and TORs for lead agency and staff.
- Developed a field humanitarian innovation toolbox. This includes tools and guidance to run a lab (i.e. proposal template for a small grant fund or criteria for scaling and pilot projects) to innovation guidance and tools for prototyping, pilot, scale up and out (i.e. lean experimentation, agile management, rituals, human centred design tools and guidance for prototypes and pilots etc.).

Research conducted
A number of documents were produced around: a) an overview on barriers of humanitarian innovation, b) challenges with ethics and evidence for humanitarian innovation in the field, c) scaling challenges and how to solve these by match-making field problems to successful innovations, d) field capacity building for humanitarian innovation. An initial proposal was drafted on how to build a match-maker which matches field problems with already successful innovations to scale. Nethope showed interest in funding the test and Thoughtworks in supporting to build the digital platform and design the service process.

RIL strategy developed
RIL have drafted an initial strategy for the next 12 months. The initial collaboration agreement for a three year RIL programme is in the process of being drafted with founding partners, in addition to legal MOUs and documents.

Beta-test of an initial humanitarian innovation surge roster set up
This is underway with Human Surge

APPROACH
5. Describe how the approach, project design or methodology you used was OR was not appropriate to carry out the planned activities or to achieve the planned objectives.

What worked well:
- Bringing together diverse organisations and people (private sector, NGO, academic) was crucial to get the best out of a variety of sectors and push different thinking into the innovation action.
- Working with an evidence and research consultant was key to ensure the RIL's efforts is grounded in evidence. Also, discussions with field practitioners enabled the RIL to be relevant and useful to the realities in the field.

Areas for improvement:
- The RIL could have invested more efforts on fundraising to test assumptions in the field which would have strengthened the build-test-learn approach.

- The RIL could have also focused more on signing high-level agreements to ensure it could move forward earlier with field action.

MAJOR OBSTACLES
6. Please list the three most significant obstacles faced during the project and describe how they affected the planned activities and results.

Obstacle	Impact of Obstacle
The bureaucracy of the humanitarian sector	Decisions could not be taken as quickly as wished given the multiple levels of decisions makers and sign offs within NGOs. This also impacted the communication of rapid changes to large organisations which created some confusion throughout the implementation.
The lack of understanding and prioritisation of eco-system support for field innovation across the sector	This meant that broader and more comprehensive engagement was needed at multiple levels (i.e. global and field levels) and industries (i.e. donors, NGOs, private sector, academia) to build further support for humanitarian innovation and to drive it forward in the field.
The lack of practical field humanitarian innovation support	The dearth of evidence and practical field guidance and tools for the practice of innovation at the field level meant that it has been difficult for the project to easily pull together operational support and processes to implement a country lab.

7. Please indicate what steps were taken to address these obstacles and whether the solutions were effective.

Solution	Effective?
Defining which pieces of work can be done without moving through bureaucratic sector processes.	Moderately effective.
Investing efforts in advocating and increasing the understanding of key actors on the importance of innovation eco-system support needed at the field level.	Moderately effective: innovation will need time to instil in organisational culture, values and behaviours.
The RIL invested a lot in researching what is available, building partnerships needed to create cutting edge tools, and share knowledge between actors.	Moderately effective: more resources are needed including time, funding, and human resources.

OPTIONAL: **PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION**
8. **How and why did the partnership change during the course of the project?**
The partnership grew (and continues to grow) from few interested people to a more comprehensive formal partnership of organisations coming from different sectors. As partners understand humanitarian innovation more and see it as the way forward, they more and more realise that the key factor of success is pooling together expertise from different sectors.

9. **Are there plans to continue your partnership, either while continuing this innovation or on other projects?**

☒ Yes, with this innovation

This project will continue. The 6 month HIF project has allowed an idea to translate into a formal partnership with the tools and support ready for the implementation of the idea.

DISSEMINATION

10. Please describe any steps taken to disseminate the outcomes of the project.

- All documentation and outputs of the project have been reviewed and shared with founding partners and are available for strategic partners or the network to utilise depending on their need/request. Those will also be disseminated to the country labs in the field during implementation to support iteration of what has been created in this project through an action-learning approach.
- The monthly RIL interim executive meetings and operations meetings continue to work on, iterate, and build on all the work undertaken in this project.
- Dissemination will also be done through network actors interested and working on specific parts of the sector innovation change.
- The RIL is considering writing an article in a peer reviewed journal.

NEXT STEPS

11. Will the project, idea or innovation be replicated, carried forward or scaled up?

☒ Yes

The project will be carried forward with the next step being fundraising, pilot/testing/implementation of the lab and its services and building the RIL further.

12. If the project or innovation could be carried forward, replicated or scaled up, please list the three most important issues or actions that will need to be considered

Suggestion/issue	1	2	3
1. Fundraising The RIL has done a lot of work to identify and provide evidence of the gaps to effective humanitarian innovation, and has also suggested solutions for these. Funding will be key to build/test humanitarian innovation field evidence tools and guidance, humanitarian innovation field ethical tools and guidance, design a implement a match-maker service, put in place a humanitarian innovation surge capacity roster, and of course fully roll-out field labs.	☒	☐	☐
2. Implementation RIL needs to start testing all its researched thinking in the field and operationalise it through partners.	☐	☒	☐
3. Further develop the partnership The RIL needs to build further appropriate actions through current partners (such as geographical prioritisation, field office interest points, connection to innovation positive deviants in the field) and then relevant partnerships around the implementation and funding goals. It also needs to continue with the innovation thinking, evidence and research on functions in the field, and areas mentioned above in fundraising so that even without funds we can work on moving the sector forward in these areas.	☐	☐	☒