

UNDP Innovation Facility

Building a new innovation unit with the capability for internal and system transformation

Who: United Nations Development Program (UNDP)

Where: Istanbul, New York

When: 2019-2023

Overview

Industry:

International Development

Company Size:

+ 7.4k employees

> \$5.4 billion core funding

Themes:

Internal Change

International Development

Core Activities:

Sensemaking Protocol

Deep Demonstrations

Dynamic Management Protocol

Leadership Coaching

Further Reading:

[IF Concept](#)

[Deep Demo Iraq](#)

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"It was not easy, but once we overcame solutions-bias we unlocked deep exploration and engagement across the UNDP, helping country offices to unlock partnerships and resources they never thought were possible."

Challenge

Can we accelerate transformation by putting strategic innovation and dynamic portfolio management at the centre of the achievement of the SDGs?

In recognition of the significant disparity between the goals set forward in the 2030 Agenda and reality, many leaders in the UNDP began exploring routes to increase commitment and coordination to change at all levels of society, from the individual to the policy level. They were wondering how innovation could be brought closer to the core of the organisation and how program synergies could be leveraged for more holistic development programs.

Solution

From the UNDP Administrator to country level Portfolios, CHÔRA worked at all levels of the system to support the formation of a new strategic intent, commitment and confidence for this internal transformation.

Providing access to its strategic innovation framework, CHÔRA supplied intensive advice, innovation capabilities and frontline implementation support. Notable milestones were the development of new protocols for the design, learning and management of Portfolios; the coaching of country and regional leadership and capability building of key staff as well as the design and implementation of global innovation pilots and change programs. Moreover, CHÔRA supported partnerships building and assisted leaders in galvanising third party supporters and funds for this internal transformation.

Results

- **Strategic Unit:** What began as a quest by individual early adopters from around the world, turned into the consolidated formation of a UNDP Innovation Facility.
- **Systems and Tools:** The Portfolio approach is being embedded through redesign of systems and tools to support dynamic and adaptive programming
- **Scaling Portfolios:** From cities, to countries and regions - the UNDP has successfully tested and scaled CHÔRA's System Transformation Portfolio approach and attracted over 4.2 mil USD in funding and over 30 mil USD for local innovation portfolios.

"We can make short term decisions and take limited stands by funding single-issue projects. Or we can invest together in shifting the systems that underpin development"

Achim Steiner, Annual Session of the Executive Board, June 2022