Challenging and Reimagining 'Humanitarian Innovation': Power, Inequity, and Cultural Invasion

Terms of Reference: 11 December 2020

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ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

The Community-Led Innovation Partnership (CLIP) seeks to improve the relevance and effectiveness of humanitarian preparedness, response and resilience interventions through innovation driven by the people affected by humanitarian crises. This programme is funded by the UK Government Department for International Development (now FCDO) and managed collaboratively by Elrha and Start Network with support from ADRRN's Tokyo Innovation Hub.

The CLIP is a three-year programme (2020-2023) providing financial and non-financial support to community innovators in four countries: DRC, Guatemala, Indonesia, and the Philippines. The partner organisations in each country have a different programmatic approach, but all are seeking to work with members of communities they are working in and support them to develop novel solutions to the humanitarian problems they face, in collaboration with others.

Equally importantly, for those innovations to be sustainable, the programme will facilitate pathways that will enable emerging innovations to access market opportunities in the future, include a grant-making provision for innovations at different points in their journey and support uptake of the innovations within the humanitarian sector.

elrha

ABOUT THE PARTNERS

COORDINATING PARTNERS

Elrha is a global charity that finds solutions to complex humanitarian problems. Our Vision is of a world equipped to mitigate the impact of humanitarian crises. We are an established actor in the humanitarian community working in partnership with humanitarian organizations, researchers, innovators, and the private sector to tackle some of the most difficult challenges facing people all over the world.

The Start Network is a membership organisation working to change the way the humanitarian system operates and serves people in need. The Start Network's aim is to drive and catalyse change in the global aid system by tackling what it sees as the biggest systemic problems that the sector faces. The Start Network's vision is for a proactive, innovative, and locally owned humanitarian system in which people receive better quality humanitarian aid, maintain their dignity and are protected from suffering and harm.

The Asian Disaster Reduction & Response Network (ADRRN) is a network of national civil society organizations across the Asia-Pacific region. Since 2002, ADRRN has rapidly evolved from an awareness focussed network to a regional voice in advocacy and capacity building issues as well. Its main aims have been to promote coordination, information sharing and collaboration among CSOs and other stakeholders for effective and efficient disaster reduction and response in the Asia-Pacific region.

OPERATIONAL PARTNERS

ASECSA (on behalf of the Start Network Guatemala Hub), is an association of over 48 community-based organisations in Guatemala fighting for rural, indigenous health access since 1978. The hub's vision is a society that lives well, a holistic, integral, and harmonic vision between human beings, mother earth, the cosmos and everything that surrounds us.

CAFOD (on behalf of the Start Network DRC Hub), is an international development charity and the official aid agency of the Catholic Church in England and Wales. It reaches out to people living in poverty with practical help, whatever their religion or culture. CAFOD is the host of the programme on behalf of the Start Network DRC Hub. The Hub's vision is to build a model of a humanitarian system that is more inclusive, independent, proactive, locally-led and with shared collective responsibilities by 2025.

The Center for Disaster Preparedness (CDP), the Philippines, works with non-government organizations, people's organization, communities, and government agencies at all levels to enhance their capacities in disaster prevention and mitigation, preparedness, emergency response, and rehabilitation and recovery. Innovation is a strategic element of CDP's core work, cross-cutting DRR, response and recovery. CDP has regional offices across the archipelago.

YAKKUM Emergency Unit (YEU), Indonesia, has a mandate to deliver inclusive emergency response where community participation in needs assessment and relief distribution are encouraged. YEU works to articulate initiatives to build community resilience through community-led disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. YEU is National Coordinating Organization for GNDR in their Views from the Frontline, and a part of various networks, including the National DRR Platform, Provincial DRR Platform in Yogjakarta and Sigi (Central Sulawesi), Humanitarian Forum Indonesia, and National Clusters. YEU is also an umbrella organization for organizations of persons with disabilities.

BACKGROUND

Against the backdrop of global protests over racism and inequity, the humanitarian sector is facing a reckoning about its past, present, and future. The sector's deep roots in colonialism are well documented. Organisations are being challenged to reflect deeply about how they are contributing to perpetuating the system of massive power gaps, inequity, and structural racism, and how they can change it through education, policies, and practice.

At the same time, there has been a sector-wide move in the last decade to focus more on innovation in humanitarian response. Examples include the Response Innovation Labs, WFP Innovation Accelerator, DEPP Innovation Labs, Humanitarian Innovation Fund, and the UNDP Accelerator Labs. Given the association of innovation with Western academic literature tracked back to the work of Austrian economist Joseph Schumpeter in the 1930s[1] and, in more recent years, the rise of Silicon Valley, it is important that we engage in deep reflection on humanitarian innovation and open this agenda up to further scrutiny.

Innovation is often associated with an array of methods and approaches such as Design Thinking and Lean Startup. It has become a buzzword across various sectors, and its association with economic theory means it is often associated with 'business diversification' and the development of new products and services.

In a more general sense, innovation is about the 'creation of new value' and about problem solving – products and services that are intended to solve problems for people. But problem-solving has been a key feature of humanity since time immemorial and value can be defined in many different ways. What other perspectives on humanitarian innovation - what values and methodologies, appropriate to other contexts - might be being marginalised through the dominant language and culture of a Western, Silicon Valley influenced approach?

Are we failing to learn and understand how creativity can best be explored and supported in different cultures? In the active promotion of Western approaches to innovation in the humanitarian sector, are we imposing values and methodologies which may be inappropriate in other contexts? Are we perpetuating a Western

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[1]Ziemnowicz C. (2013) Joseph A. Schumpeter and Innovation. In: Carayannis E.G. (eds) Encyclopedia of Creativity, Invention, Innovation and Entrepreneurship. Springer, New York, NY. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-3858-8_476

dominance that is ultimately hindering necessary power shifts towards local leadership in humanitarian response?

The paper "Decolonizing Neo-liberal Innovation" by Jimenez and Robert[2] is enlightening here. Jimenez and Robert argue that often events hosted in the "Global South" by innovation hubs bring in "expertise" from the North. They "assess innovations in terms of whether they are patentable, monetisable, or scalable, and calculate the value of innovations as dollar return on investments. From this perspective technology and innovation hubs can be interpreted to be sites where the goal and measure is to become as much like the Silicon Valley (USA) as possible."[3] In many ways, Jimenez and Robert assert that, "these values are in conflict with the indigenous value systems that exist in many places that innovation hubs are located. Values of shared enterprise, communal interests, reciprocity and interconnectedness are central to, for example, the worldviews of Ubuntu in Southern Africa, Swaraj in South Asia, and Buen Vivir in South America."[4]

The practice of this imposition of external, foreign ideas, concepts, and knowledge onto communities, invalidating indigenous knowledge has been labelled "epistemic violence"[5] or "cultural invasion"[6] by scholars. It is thought that this practice often "actively obstructs and undermines non-Western methods or approaches to knowledge as the Other."[7]

Colonialism is present in our historical and current understanding and practice of humanitarian innovation. Given our work across borders and across cultures, it's vital that we take time to step back, reflect and examine the knowledge and beliefs upon which the humanitarian agenda is founded. We need to explore ways of understanding innovation more expansively and in a way that respects and dignifies different perspectives and different sets of values.

In addition to exploring innovation models and perspectives on innovation, we need to interrogate the ways that innovation *support* is currently provided and how that may also perpetuate power imbalances. Given our shared role in promoting innovation within the humanitarian sector, starting with this commissioned piece, we aim to explore the history, current practice (Western and other concepts) and future of innovation in the humanitarian sector – and investigate how we might decolonise our approach to innovation.

PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES

The CLIP is commissioning this research as an initial scoping exercise with a goal to help us learn which key issues we need to explore further and provide some early

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[2] Jimenez, A & Roberts, T. Decolonising Neo-Liberal Innovation: Using the Andean Philosophy of 'Buen Vivir' to Reimagine Innovation Hubs Information and Communication Technologies for Development. Strengthening Southern-Driven Cooperation as a Catalyst for ICT4D, 2019, Volume 552, ISBN : 978-3-030-19114-6

[3] Ibid 2

[4] Kothari, A.; Demaria, F & Acosta, A. Buen Vivir, Degrowth and Ecological Swaraj: Alterna-tives to sustainable development and the Green Economy. Development, 2014, vol. 57, issue 3-4, 362-375. (2016).

[5] Spivak, G. C. (1988). Can the subaltern speak? In C. Nelson & L. Grossberg (Eds.), *Marxism and the interpretation of culture* (pp. 21–78). University of Illinois Press.

[6] Freire, P. Pedagogy of the oppressed. London: Penguin Books. (1970).

[7] Jimenez, A & Roberts, T. 6

recommendations. This work will lead to a follow up process to address those issues in more detail.

The purpose of this work is to:

1. Interrogate how colonialism manifests itself in humanitarian innovation models and innovation support approaches

2. Produce a set of 3-5 case studies from around the world examining different cultural perspectives on innovation, researching and surfacing examples of how other cultures consider approaches to problem solving and value creation.

3. Propose a set of key issues to explore further and early recommendations to help build a more globally informed and equitable approach to innovation within the CLIP and potentially more broadly.

Through the interrogation and case studies we wish to explore the following key questions on innovation and current culturally relevant concepts and processes:

1. How do other cultures approach problem solving, identifying ideas, testing ideas, understanding what works, and 'scaling' (e.g., to what degree do concepts such as building a business case, or planning for growth come from a capitalist perspective)? What other philosophies exist around creative problem solving?

2. How does this compare to the Silicon Valley based concepts of innovation, including methodologies such as Human-Centred Design?

3. Innovation is primarily seen as a commercial tool; an idea that has been driven by the broader Western social/political/economic paradigm. Does this limitation on how we define innovation result in a failure to recognise activities that are not decidedly economic in purpose as innovation? What are the implications for practitioners of innovation in the social sector using Western concepts exclusively without being inclusive of a more globally informed version of innovation?

4. How do we go about researching, identifying, and understanding global innovation practices? Which practices emerging from the research should we explore further and how do we translate Western and non-Western practices to make them more relevant to additional contexts?

5. In what ways do common approaches to innovation support programmes/approaches perpetuate inequitable power dynamics and commit cultural invasion/epistemic violence? How can we shift our innovation support practices to create more equitable programming and partnerships?

DELIVERABLES REQUIRED

- **Research Plan** detailing methodology, suggested resource channels, key contacts to interview etc.

- **Research Outputs: 3-5 case studies** based on literature on indigenous or non-Western perspectives on innovation: To answer the above questions, we need to explore concrete examples of how innovation is described and practiced in various contexts. Case studies based on specific regions, countries, and communities will be necessary to ground our understanding in the history and current practice of innovation globally. Examples to explore might include "Jugaad" (India), Maori Innovation (NZ), Buen Vivir (Andean communities, South America) etc. Ideally, we would want to prioritise examples from Guatemala, DRC, Indonesia, and Philippines, to be discussed with the consultant based on initial review.
- **Final Report/Set of key issues to explore further and early recommendations** for a more open and equitable approach to innovation within the CLIP (and more broadly, as applicable). This report may:
    - interrogate the findings of how colonialism manifests itself in humanitarian innovation (models and support practices)
    - investigate the implications for practitioners of innovation in the social sector using Western concepts exclusively without the inclusion of more diverse, global perspectives on innovation,
    - explore what a globally-informed innovation practice might look like (i.e., how different value sets are considered and prioritised)
    - propose a set of key issues that may need further exploration and hopefully reach a set of early recommendations on building a more equitable practice of humanitarian innovation.
- Additional outputs to be discussed with consultant.

TIMELINE OF ACTIVITIES

The intended start date is 25 January 2021 and the period of implementation of the contract will be 3 months from this date. Our goal is to have this work completed by the end of April 2021.

Activity	Due Date
Kick off meeting with MEAL task team	27 January 2021
Final proposed research plan	3 February 2021
Desk research complete	17 February2021
Key informant interviews complete	6 March 2021
Midpoint meeting with MEAL task team to share progress and learnings	10 March 2021
3-5 final case studies submitted	27 March 2021

Draft report/recommendations submitted	10 April 2021
Final Report submitted	24 April 2021

REPORTING LINES

The main point of contact for this work will be Seema Kapoor, Innovation Manager, Elrha. The consultant will also work closely with Alessandra Podesta, Innovation Learning Manager, Start Network.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

- Knowledge of innovation history, landscape, and practice
- Knowledge of the humanitarian sector, including humanitarian innovation and localisation agendas
- Knowledge of debates around power dynamics and decolonisation in general
- Excellent writing skills and publications record
- Experience in designing and conducting similar social research projects using a variety of methodologies
- Ability to utilise academic and non-academic sources of literature
- Demonstrable understanding of different cultural contexts
- Self-starter

AVAILABLE BUDGET AND EXPECTED STRUCTURE OF FINANCIAL OFFER

A budget of up to £13,000 is available, excluding applicable UK VAT but including any taxes that overseas suppliers may be liable for outside the UK.

Please indicate if you/your company is VAT registered and where.

The budget submitted to us should be broken down by deliverable and with any allocations for individual team members shown clearly.

Please note that payment is in arrears and linked to satisfactory completion of specific tasks (e.g. the delivery of reports) by the deadlines specified in Section 4 above (Timeline).

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Applications should be in English and should include:

- CV(s) and evidence of expertise in innovation and international development.
- Proposal setting out:
  - A concise summary of why you/your team are qualified to conduct this work
  - Your proposed approach/methodology to achieve the required deliverables and overall aim
  - Your proposed budget in total for this work (allocated by each team member, if relevant), or your day rate, if working alone.
  - Maximum 1-2 pages

Optional - you may wish to include (attached as links or appendices):
- Examples of relevant work and materials produced.
- References or testimonials from previous partners or clients

We are looking for proposals to demonstrate a concise and clear communication style. Proposals can be submitted as Word documents or PDFs.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

The application deadline is 00:00 GMT on **02/01/2021**. We will not be able to consider incomplete applications or applications submitted after the deadline.

We would welcome applications from both individual consultants and small teams, where each member of the team has a clearly defined role related to their specific areas of expertise and there is a lead point of contact for Elrha.

Submit applications to Seema Kapoor at hif@elrha.org.

PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Evaluation Criteria	Maximum score
Organisation and methodology (coherence with purpose, objective(s), key activities & expected deliverables)	35
Qualifications & Experience of key staff including their understanding of innovation theory and practice and experience in working in relevant sector(s) and contexts	35
Financial offer	30
Overall total score	[100]

DUE DILIGENCE CHECKS AND CONTRACTING

We must ensure any potential supplier is evaluated for compliance to relevant statutory and quality requirements, and that appropriate due diligence checks are carried out, proportionate to the nature and value of the contract.

Due Diligence is our process of reviewing your organisation's finances, governance structure and business activities (including vetting key team members and/or board members, as applicable). We carry out this process on all our suppliers before we can enter into an agreement.

We run our Contracting process in parallel to our Due Diligence. We have a standard agreement which all providers are expected to sign up to. You can request a copy to contracts@elrha.org. If you have any questions about this, please include them in your submission.

Thank you.