DIGITAL FOR SOCIAL

ABOUT THE INNOVATION SPRINT

If the SDGs are not to be just 'another set of goals' we need to apply a new set of approaches to achieving them. The Innovation Sprint is about experimenting with these approaches.

The Innovation Sprint is a multistakeholder, innovation process that is meant to create new forms of collaboration and develop pilot-level solutions to SDG challenges. A cohort of 25 individuals has been assembled from a variety of institutions, disciplines and backgrounds. The cohort has identified four priority action areas - financial system reform, participatory infrastructure, food systems and digital for social.

The Digital for Social team is exploring how access to technology can enable new business models and sustainable development outcomes. They are now testing crucial assumptions identified during the workshop and gathering further background research to inform the next stage of the process which is ideation - creating actionable idea that could be taken forward into projects.

Scoping the System	→	Validation and Assumption Testing	→	Ideation	→	Pilot

WHY DIGITAL FOR SOCIAL?

It is well known that technology can increase efficiency and scalability of new ideas and can democratize information, build new networks, and empower communities. However, this is only possible with equitable access to technology for all and with careful consideration of how this technology should be harnessed and used. There is great excitement about the potential of technology but also concern that it could be yet another great divider between those who have access and those who do not. It is crucial that growth of digital technologies enables social priorities while also being inclusive of vulnerable communities in order to prevent new structural forms of poverty.

DESIGN QUESTIONS

How can we increase equitable access and use of digital technologies for local communities to achieve prosperity through sustainable means?

Access - Technology is only an enabler of prosperity and sustainability if it is accessible to those who need it to power new business models, receive information and scale responses to social issues. In addition, there must be deliberate effort to develop locally relevant and multilingual content so that technology access does not disadvantage certain communities. Equitable access to technology is crucial to ensuring that no one is left behind and that we do not create greater inequality through a digital divide. How can we increase equitable access to digital technologies?

Use - Digital technologies can increase access to finance, save time and money, allow for scale of new sustainable business models, provide economic empowerment, and foster communal spirit. At the same time, there is a dark side to technology that encourages unhealthy competition and unsustainable practices, infringes on privacy and ethics, and provides a false sense of connectivity over meaningful community building. Digital should be used to create democratic, safe enabling environments for new technologies to thrive but to do this we must think carefully about how it is used. We must build strong institutions, enable positive leadership and instill inclusive mindsets in order to do this. How can we utilize digital technologies in local communities to achieve prosperity in sustainable ways?

MEET THE TEAM

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