

## INNOVATION

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The UNIN "Innovation in the UN" Update includes highlights from the innovation activities of UNIN members. All members are invited to contribute. This update includes contributions from:



INNOVATION IN DIFFERENT SECTORS



STRENGTHENING CAPACITIES



INNOVATION CHALLENGES &amp; CALLS



## INNOVATION IN DIFFERENT SECTORS

## COVID-19 &amp; HEALTH

- ▶ WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNESCO and partners published a guide to [Youth-Centred Digital Health Interventions](#), which offers guidance on planning, developing and implementing digital interventions to promote better health among adolescents and youth. Drawing on the experience of a wide range of organisations, it discusses key steps and unique aspects of designing such interventions with and for young people.
- ▶ UNDP and [a2i Bangladesh](#) repurposed the national information hotline, enrolling 4,300 doctors in an "Uber-like" doctor pool, enabling them to connect to COVID-19 patients, track hotspots in near real-time and identify hotspots 7 - 15 days prior to testing.
- ▶ DOS's Technology Infrastructure Support (TIS) team started 3D printing masks and face shields for essential staff to overcome shortages of personal protective equipment.



Photo: UNICEF

TIS is also working with UNHQ to distribute face shields to the field. 3D printing is already in use at the UN Mission in Mali and the Global Service Centre (GSC) is supporting the implementation in other missions. GSC is also working on procuring new 3D printers and establishing an online catalogue of tested 3D models.



The UN Innovation Network is an informal, collaborative network of innovators from UN Agencies. To find out more about the UNIN, please visit our website, where you can also subscribe to our mailing list.

- ▶ WHO launched chatbots in more than 30 languages to bring COVID-19 facts and information to millions via [WhatsApp](#), [Viber](#) and [Facebook Messenger](#). The chatbots have reached tens of millions of people and allowed WHO to get information directly into the hands of the people who need it most in formats and languages they prefer. The platforms also provide the latest situation reports and numbers in real-time to help government decision-makers protect the health of their populations.
- ▶ WHO, Facebook and [Praekelt.org](#) reached more than 1 million of the most vulnerable people on the internet through [Discover](#) and [Free Basics](#). These mobile-friendly platforms now carry lifesaving COVID-19 information and are available without data charges in 55 countries in the six UN languages.
- ▶ WHO and Google partnered to develop innovative search initiatives and engaging campaigns to bring life-saving health information to people around the world.
- ▶ UNAIDS partnered with StartupBlink to develop an [interactive COVID-19 innovation map](#), which maps 1,000+ innovations for the pandemic from around the world and keeps up-to-date ranking tables of cities and countries. Drawing on the map, UNAIDS launched a [report on COVID-19 innovations](#) in July.
- ▶ OCHA and partners developed the [COVID-19 Data Explorer](#), an open data-sharing and visualisation platform that provides an up-to-date overview of humanitarian crises in the 63 countries that are part of the [Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19](#). The interactive tool shows epidemiological and socio-economic impacts of the pandemic at global and national levels and harmonises data streams on a single layered map.

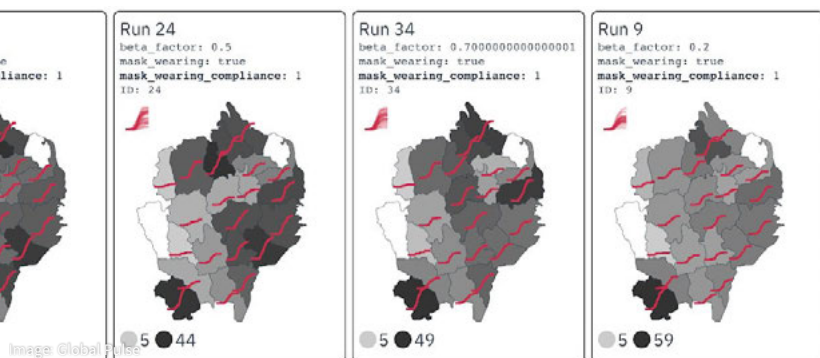


Photo: OCHA/UNDP

- ▶ UNICEF's big data initiative [Magic Box](#) provides data, tools and insights to allow monitoring of physical distancing and its potential impact across ten countries. The Tech Interactive and Discovery Education Initiative awarded Magic Box a [Tech for Global Good Laureate](#).
- ▶ As part of its global population data platform UNFPA launched a new [Population Data for COVID-19 Preparedness dashboard](#). The interactive tool allows country teams, policymakers and the public to access data on populations at high risk of COVID-19 for preparedness planning.
- ▶ To support data-driven decision making in response to COVID-19, a team is modeling [the impact of different public health interventions in Cox's Bazar](#). The team consists of public health professionals from UNHCR and WHO, scientists and domain experts from UN Global Pulse, UNHCR's Innovation Service, OCHA, and academics from Durham University and IBM/MIT.
- ▶ COVID-19 highlighted the need for data and the value of predictive models to inform response strategies. OCHA's Centre for Humanitarian Data has worked with the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory to develop a [COVID-19 model adapted for use in humanitarian contexts](#).

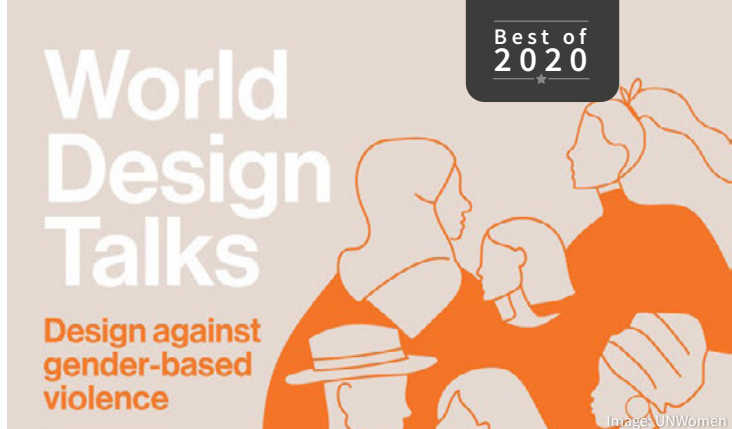


## VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

- ▶ UN Women and WFP are [assisting Syrian refugee women](#) in Jordan to access and utilise their salaries from cash for work programmes. Remotely controlled blockchain and contactless iris scanning technologies allow for safe and effective cash transfers despite global pandemic-related restrictions. The model's resilience has made it a new standard for UN Women's camp-based efforts.
- ▶ UNFPA launched a new [Geospatial Dashboard on Intimate Partner Violence \(IPV\)](#), which features national data for 119 countries, including disaggregated data on IPV by age, location, place of residence, employment, education, and household wealth. This is an extension of UNFPA's global population data platform.
- ▶ Thailand piloted UNU's [expert screening tool](#) at fishing inspection centres in four coastal provinces. [Apprise](#) helps inspectors better understand working conditions aboard fishing vessels and look for signs of abuse and malpractice. UNU shared findings from this pilot in a [UNIN webinar](#), through a [comprehensive assessment](#) and a [journal article](#) highlighting the potential for applying interdisciplinary approaches to help identify changing patterns of exploitation, develop evidence-based policies and support action to combat forced labour and human trafficking.



- ▶ In partnership with the World Design Organisation and UNICC respectively, UN Women explored the role of human-centered design in [addressing violence against women](#) in [Asia-Pacific](#) and [promoting safe public spaces](#) during COVID-19 in Mexico. Through virtual challenges, designers, activists and experts developed digital and behavior-based solutions, to be prototyped next year.



## EDUCATION

- ▶ UNESCO developed a [methodology](#) to track the evolution of [school and university closures](#) and thereby estimate the global number of students unable to attend educational institutions because of the COVID-19 pandemic. UNESCO updates the data on a rolling basis and improves visualisations to help governments and other stakeholders understand the scale and severity of school closures. Interactive maps, graphics and timelines disaggregate affected learners by level of education and sex in almost real-time. In line with its support for open data, UNESCO has made all of the raw tracking information available for download.
- ▶ WFP's EMPACT [digital skills training program](#) is transforming lives in Africa's biggest urban slum in Kenya and helping trainees lift themselves and their families out of poverty.
- ▶ UNITAR responded to training and capacity building challenges imposed by COVID-19 by leveraging new technologies and digital learning, such as through the [Educate All](#) initiative which uses mobile learning to give free access to adult learning worldwide via the Ed App platform.
- ▶ Giga, UNICEF and ITU's initiative to connect every school to the internet, was featured in the [Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation](#) and by the UN Security Council. Key partners have joined to accelerate Giga's efforts in 15 countries, including [Ericsson](#), [Softbank Investment Advisors](#), the [European Investment Bank](#) and Dubai Cares.





## FOOD & AGRICULTURE

FAO launched the [Hand-in-Hand geospatial data platform](#) to build stronger food and agriculture sectors. It boasts over one million geospatial layers and thousands of statistics data series and metadata records [for over ten food and agriculture domains](#), within FAO's [Hand-in-Hand initiative](#) - an evidence-based, country-led, country-owned initiative accelerating agricultural transformation and sustainable rural development.

- WFP leveraged its [mobile food security monitoring technologies](#) to continue collecting data when movement restrictions were put in place. WFP's [Hunger Map LIVE](#) tracks hunger and the COVID-19 situation across 40 countries in near real-time.



Photo: FAO

- FAO Council endorsed the [International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture](#) to link agriculture and digital economy fora, supporting governments to enhance benefits of digital agriculture, while addressing potential concerns.
- FAO launched the [Food Coalition](#) ensuring global food access and sustainable agri-food systems. [The Food Coalition](#) is a voluntary multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral alliance supporting innovative initiatives.
- IFAD presented a special edition on [Innovations in Agriculture](#), which explores new technologies designed to ensure food security, as part of its monthly podcast: [Farms. Food. Future.](#)
- Following the successful [Rome Call for AI Ethics](#), the Pontifical Academy for Life, FAO, IBM and Microsoft organised a follow up event and AI initiative with the signatories on the exemplary use of [AI for Food](#).



Photo: UNDP

## ENERGY, WATER & ENVIRONMENT

- Facilitated by UNEP, [The Playing For The Planet Alliance](#) was created in 2019 to inspire the video game industry to take environmental action. Following the launch, 45 actions have been taken, two-thirds of the companies are taking steps to decarbonise and the first ever [Green Game Jam](#) saw in-game activations reach over 100 million players.

- Via the [“Ready to Go” Water Solutions Challenge](#), the UNDP Palestine Accelerator Lab identified a Palestinian start-up, FlowLess, able to deploy a smart system using [IoT & AI to detect water losses in public water networks](#). The data is available in real-time and 78 percent cheaper.

- UNEP's [Glowing Gone campaign](#) teamed up with Adobe to launch Photoshop Camera Glowing Filters, enabling users to dive into a virtual underwater world and get creative about showing their support for more ambitious coral reef protection and climate action by governments and businesses. To date, users have downloaded 250,000 filters.

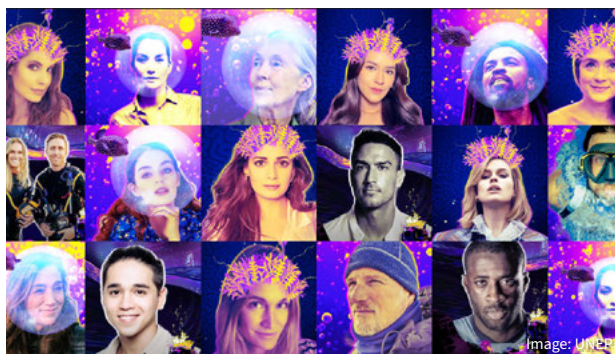


Image: UNEP

- The UNAIDS-led Health Innovation Exchange partnered with the International Solar Alliance (ISA) to [scale access to energy for health facilities](#) in low and middle income countries, which will enable leveraging digital health tools. The initiative aims to build a USD150 million fund in 2021 and was approved by ISA Member States.



- ▶ To scale clean energy solutions that will close the energy divide in least developed countries, UNCDF and Columbia World Projects kicked off a formal partnership that aims to [expand energy access in Uganda](#) by collecting and analysing data about energy availability. The data will be used to help UNCDF and partners [invest in entrepreneurs, innovators and other entities](#) to expand energy access to new areas and communities. Columbia researchers will develop and deploy new techniques for mapping energy demand with data stored on an open-source data platform. In addition, a dashboard will be designed for practitioners and policy makers to share the information.



Photo: iFarmer – ESCAP/UNCDF partner

- ▶ UNEP and UNDP provide the [UN Biodiversity Lab](#), a free, open-source tool supporting policymakers to integrate nature in national planning. With [130+ geospatial datasets](#) on nature, climate and more, users can upload data in secure workspaces, analyse and visualise data, and create maps.
- ▶ ESCAP promotes cultural change towards [greener behaviours in the UN compound](#). Policies to prevent waste, optimise energy and water usage, and reduce travel have significantly decreased the compound's environmental footprint.
- ▶ WFP's [climate hazard monitoring system](#) is helping to reduce technical barriers in accessing satellite data so that governments and humanitarian agencies can better prepare for and respond to climate-driven hazards.

## SME Competitiveness Outlook 2020

COVID-19: The Great Lockdown and its Impact on Small Business



Image: ITC

### ENTREPRENEURSHIP & ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

- ▶ The UN launched a near [real-time data portal](#) to track how UN country teams around the world are supporting countries to roll out socio-economic response measures to recover better from COVID-19.
- ▶ UN Women's [Buy from Women Digital Initiative](#), first piloted in Rwanda, Haiti and Mali, is expanding to new locations, including Costa Rica, Liberia, Senegal and Malawi. The mobile and web-based platform is a one-stop shop for women agri-entrepreneurs to connect to buyers and suppliers, find information on climate and market opportunities, and access financial services.
- ▶ The ESCAP and UNCDF-led [Women Small and Medium-sized FinTech Innovation Fund](#) invested in innovative digital solutions for women entrepreneurs. One such start-up was iFarmer in Bangladesh, a [peer lending platform](#) that connects urban investors with farmers. iFarmer provides loans in the form of farm products and connects farm producers with buyers, with the profits shared between the investor and farmer.
- ▶ [Together with Jumia Food Uganda](#), UNDP launched an online marketplace which connects more than 1,200 micro, small and medium enterprises (often from the informal trade sector) with consumers and thereby allows them to continue trading.
- ▶ UNWTO launched the [Jobs Factory](#) to help workers find the right job through skills matchmaking in times when more than 100 million tourism jobs are at risk.
- ▶ ESCAP and the Small Enterprise Assistance Fund (SEAF) launched the [Women's Economic Empowerment Fund](#) and transformed SEAF's Bangladesh Ventures Fund to take a gender lens investing approach. Together, the funds will mobilise USD150 million in private capital.
- ▶ The annual ITC SME Competitiveness Outlook analysed the impact of COVID-19 on small firms, international supply chains and trade. The [report](#) provides projections and a 15-point action plan for businesses, policymakers and business support organisations to weather the crisis and adapt to the new reality.







- The ILO's [Strategic Compliance Plan](#) is a web-based tool promoting labour law compliance. It gives labour inspectors access to innovative compliance interventions through a dashboard. [ILO's harmonised labour inspection statistics](#) and analytics support the design of future interventions.
- IFAD supports catalytic solutions for migrants to promote greater impact of remittances and diaspora investment in agriculture and rural areas, including programmes to increase digital remittances and cut costs. IFAD partnered with the Malaysian Mobile Money Provider, [Valyou](#), to open digital remittances channels to Pakistan and Bangladesh. This increased access to remittances and financial options for migrants' families, and cut the costs of sending money to below the 3 percent target.
- UN-Habitat and the German Government established the first UN Innovation [Technology Accelerator for Cities](#) in Hamburg, which will develop and test innovative and technological solutions to solve urban challenges. The new lab will implement people-centred digital and innovative solutions, including running Innovation Challenges and developing digital transformation policies and smart city masterplans in collaboration with local and national governments. The Lab will also work to develop knowledge and capacity on digital technologies and urban innovation.
- UNWTO is working with finalists of its innovation challenges focused on artificial intelligence for rural tourism ([MyStreetBook](#)), accessibility ([Visualfy](#)), digitalisation of hospitality ([Hijiffy](#)), destination experiences (Questo) and smart mobility ([Eccocar](#), [Road.Travel](#)), gastronomy ([Food-ideon](#)) and rural tourism ([vanwow](#)).
- UNIDO and UNCTAD joined forces to form the [Friends of Industry and Innovation Group](#) and discuss and re-think the future of industrial policy.

## PEACE & JUSTICE

- UNODC's Global Judicial Integrity Network supports judiciaries in addressing ethical challenges. A new project focuses [on preventing gender bias and discrimination in AI systems used in judiciaries](#). The initiative was one of the winners at the AI for Good Global Summit in the Gender Equity track.
- In response to COVID-19, UNODC's Education 4 Justice initiative launched [The Lockdown Learners](#), a series of [interactive online dialogues](#) with students and educators in India that address the impact of COVID-19 on the SDGs and the rule of law. Educational materials were disseminated to 600 schools.
- Supported by DPPA, two Special Political Missions, the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen and the UN Support Mission in Libya conducted the first [AI-assisted large-scale public dialogues for inclusive peace and political processes](#).
- UNODC Brazil launched a new multi-stakeholder partnership to support the production of technical subsidies for violence prevention and treatment of drug use disorders for the [Pernambuco Crime and Violence Prevention Programme](#) for young people.





## STRENGTHENING CAPACITIES

### SUPPORTING MEMBER STATES

- ▶ ESCAP supported Myanmar in using human-centered design principles and a [co-creation approach to developing its Science, Technology and Innovation policy](#). The policy has already been endorsed by the Minister of Education.
- ▶ UN-Habitat, OICT and partners released the first open-source urban land registry solution for the Government of Afghanistan. [goLandRegistry](#), a blockchain-based solution for urban informal settlements, is set to address access to secure land rights, one of the key causes and results of conflict in the country.
- ▶ UNWTO and Google launched the [Acceleration Programme](#), which trained over 150 tourism officials from Africa. The initiative will scale to other regions of the world in the next months.
- ▶ Supporting governments in their COVID-19 response while building foundations for a better recovery has been one of the biggest tasks for Resident Coordinator Offices (RCOs) in 2020. One innovative solution developed by the RCO in Cabo Verde and the UNDP Accelerator Lab to support this effort is the [“ComVida” Platform](#) and Mobile App. This public-private partnership is the official platform of the Government of Cabo Verde for information and communication, monitoring and management of the pandemic. It has been ranked one of the best technological innovations worldwide to combat COVID-19 by the Startup and Technological Innovation platform [Startup-Blink](#), and has been ranked as the best platform among lusophone African countries.



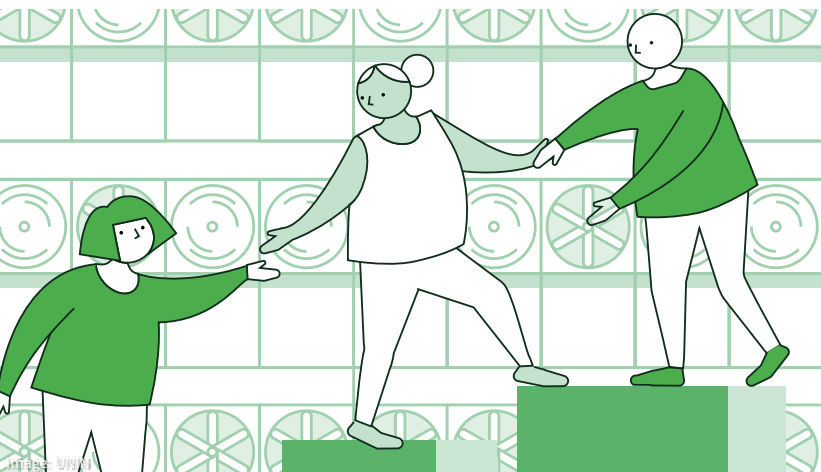
- ▶ The World Bank has scaled up the [Geo-Enabling initiative for Monitoring and Supervision](#) (GEMS) to systematically enhance Monitoring, Evaluation and Supervision in settings affected by Fragility, Conflict and Violence. The initiative strengthens capacities of World Bank clients, partners and local stakeholders to leverage field-appropriate, low-cost and open source technology for digital real-time data collection and analysis. Using the GEMS tools and methods allows operations to create customised digital M&E systems to enhance the transparency and accountability of implementation across the project cycle. GEMS provides platforms for remote supervision, real-time risk & safeguards monitoring, and portfolio mapping for coordination across projects and partners. GEMS has been implemented in 50+ countries, with over 500 project teams and 3,000 staff trained, a majority in sub-Saharan Africa.
- ▶ OICT is the emerging technology partner for [UNOCT's Countering Terrorist Travel programme](#), which aims at building Member States's capacity to prevent, detect and investigate terrorist offenses. The [goTravel](#) platform was developed by OICT and installed in Member States to help them detect terrorists travelling in their jurisdictions.





## DEVELOPING NEW SOLUTIONS

- **The Atrium** is an interagency tool designed to allow any UN entity to learn and experiment with blockchain. Launched this year by UNIN, UNDP, UNICEF and WFP, the platform has users from over 35 entities and features 10+ UN blockchain projects. The platform also features **The Practical Guide to Using Blockchain Within the UN**, and other learning resources. The Atrium and the Practical Guide complement UNIN's **Blockchain Group**.



- **The UN Digital Solutions Centre (UN DSC)**, a pilot project of WFP and UNHCR, with operational support from UNICC, aims to create a suite of digital solutions to transform common business operations and streamline time-consuming transactional tasks. In the spirit of emerging technologies supporting the **UN Secretary-General's Strategy on New Technologies**, UN DSC developed a **digital identity solution for UN personnel** for their personal, Human Resources, medical, travel, security, payroll and pension data. The UN Digital ID is harnessing blockchain, biometrics and mobility, making UN identity verification efficient, secure, transparent, immutable, portable and universal. The UN Digital ID was one of the **winners of the Reimagine the UN Together Challenge**.

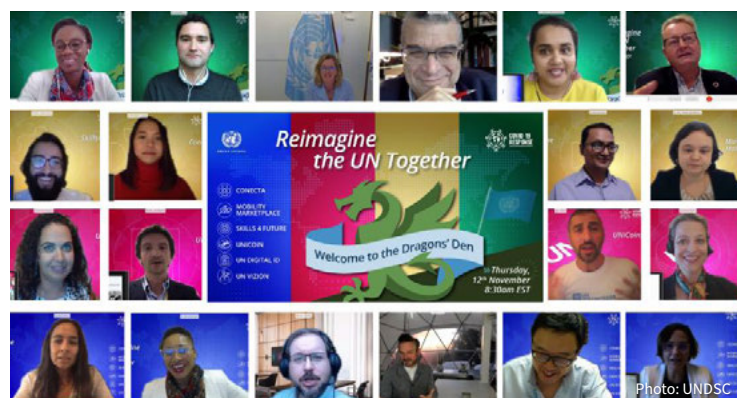
- UNOV/UNODC launched the **UN Vienna Client Support Portal** (internal link only), which serves as the central entry point for all administrative and internal service needs, allowing personnel from UNOV/UNODC and UNICRI to request services and link up with the correct application or counterpart. With the portal launch, UNOV/UNODC aims to enable virtual access to services for personnel anytime, anywhere.



- WFP and the German Aerospace Center are collaborating on a **self-driving all terrain vehicle** to deliver assistance to the most dangerous last mile.
- OICT's **Alba** is a virtual assistant, which assists UN personnel in finding information and performing personal tasks related to messaging and scheduling. It is the first chatbot that has been built on a standardised Conversational AI Framework for the Secretariat.

## ENABLING INNOVATION

- The Secretary-General published his **Roadmap for Digital Cooperation**, which lays out a plan in which all stakeholders play a role in advancing a safer, more equitable digital world, one which will lead to a brighter and more prosperous future for all. Based on recommendations from the Secretary-General's **High-level Panel for Digital Cooperation**, the roadmap outlines actions in eight areas, including achieving universal connectivity, promoting digital public goods, ensuring digital inclusion and strengthening digital capacity-building.
- A team from Columbia University SIPA teamed up with the 60 UNDP Accelerator Labs to develop a hands-on, publicly available **strategy** and **toolkit** to scale social innovation.





- ▶ UN Global Pulse expanded its volume of work based on demand from across the UN System and launched and operationalised the [Crisis Insights Team](#) (CIT). The CIT is supporting thinking and decision making around how the UN can recover from this crisis using foresight approaches, advanced analytics, and new technologies.
- ▶ DPPA launched a range of innovation initiatives testing out [new methodologies and approaches](#), including AI for peacemaking, Natural Language Processing, predictive analytics, strategic foresight and speculative design, and innovative ways of data storytelling. Among other innovation efforts, DPPA developed a tailored social media reporting tool ("Sparrow"), expanded capacities on political economy analysis and data analytics, tested new technologies for complex text mining of diplomatic language to advance conflict prediction and pioneered new methodologies for geospatial analysis and early warning.
- ▶ Young UN is incubating the [Next UN](#) through the way it works as a network of autonomous teams, relying on granular role definition and collaborative digital platforms to run projects and create hubs. Current projects in the [YoungUN ecosystem](#) include prototyping [UNicoins](#) – digital collaboration tokens to incentivise cross-UN system work - and taking [conecta](#) (a collaboration between YoungUN and the Centre for Learning and Multilingualism at UNOG) to the next level. conecta is a global platform that links people, skills and projects across the UN system and which was selected as a [winning entry](#) at the recent Reimagine the UN Together Challenge Dragons' Den.



Photo: ITC



- ▶ UNICEF launched its new Innovation Portfolio approach, a key element of its [Global Innovation Strategy](#), which is designed to ensure investments in innovation tackle UNICEF's most pressing programmatic problems.
- ▶ The Secretary-General's [Task Force on Digital Financing of the SDGs](#) report [People's Money - Harnessing Digitalisation To Finance A Sustainable Future](#) highlights the opportunity to accelerate and expand the transformative impact of digitalisation in financing the SDGs. The Task Force's three recommendations focus on advancing catalytic opportunities, building sustainable digital financing ecosystems and inclusive international governance.
- ▶ One of ITC's Innovation Lab core activities in 2020 focused on promoting a more inclusive working culture. The challenge team formed by members of the inclusion group at ITC, launched the [100 coffees for inclusion challenge](#) to spark conversations between different staff members. The findings will allow the team to define concrete actions to promote inclusion at ITC.





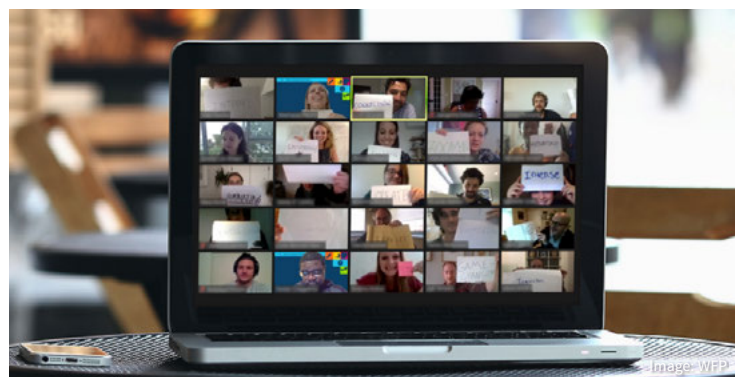
Image: UNIN

- ▶ **NewWork's** weekly [Innovation Days](#) expose UN staff to innovative ideas, processes, behaviours and concepts through briefings on innovative efforts from across the UN system and by external speakers. The sessions, which are linked to actual projects, mandates and contexts, help staff link new concepts to their day-to-day work and find ways to apply innovation in mandate delivery. Participation is open to any UN personnel in any location ensuring broad application and discussion. A spin off series "Speak Up and Transform" dives deeper into topics raised during Innovation Days and challenges participants to apply the new concepts in their own projects and teams.
  - ▶ With UN entities noting the urgent need for guidance on the privacy protective use of data, [the UN Privacy Policy Group](#) developed a [Joint Statement on Data Protection and Privacy in Response to COVID-19](#) to help inform and guide the response to COVID-19 across the UN system.
- ### TRAINING & CAPACITY STRENGTHENING
- ▶ UNIN and Apolitical partnered to run a five-week online bootcamp on [How to Work Remotely, Through COVID & Beyond](#). The bootcamp was built on emerging good practices from across the UN system and offered insights into tools for collaboration, running remote meetings and events, staying productive, looking after your mental health and managing hybrid teams.
  - ▶ ITU, OICT and UNIN ran the [TechLearnTalk series](#), which introduced new technologies in a non-technical way. Supported by experts from across the UN, the series explored blockchain, drones, virtual reality, artificial intelligence, chatbots, predictive analytics and 3D printing.
  - ▶ As part of the [Reimagine the UN Challenge](#), UNIN piloted an online innovation bootcamp with sessions featuring idea validation and test design, business model innovation, prototyping and development roadmaps, developing islands of stability, stakeholder management in the UN and [pitching ideas](#).
  - ▶ ITC-ILO is bundling its expertise in online transitions and sharing it through targeted capacity development initiatives. An example is the recent collaboration with UNV and the Red Cross, which re-imagined volunteering in 2030. Online facilitation and moderation tips can be found here as well as offerings for innovative [tailor-made e-learning labs](#) to other UN Entities.
  - ▶ UNITAR created several free [online facilitation toolkits and resources](#) to help make online events more effective, inclusive and impactful. Find more about their innovative COVID-19 responses to training, capacity building and digital learning [here](#) or [get in touch](#) with UNITAR's Learning Solutions team.
  - ▶ UNSSC worked on [innovation in capacity-building](#) through online and blended transformation to adjust to the new COVID-19 realities; adapted its training materials to current needs. This includes a free, asynchronous [training module on innovation](#) as well as adjusting to new digital ways of working to provide quality training and access to the UN System in general.
  - ▶ As custodians of the [UN Innovation Toolkit](#), UNSSC launched new initiatives to examine, highlight and celebrate the mainstreaming and contextualisation of the Toolkit. This was achieved through collaboration events with other UN Entities, and by developing a community of UN Innovation Toolkit professionals through videos, written storytelling and blogs.
  - ▶ [UNHCR's Innovation Fellowship](#) went completely digital for the first time. With the integration of new online tools to facilitate learning, it was an area of success for how UNHCR can run innovation learning in new ways for future colleagues.





- ▶ WFP moved its entire Innovation Accelerator offering, including bootcamps and sprint support, virtually within the first weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic. Over time, the team has refined their [approach to virtual bootcamps](#) and hosted seven bootcamps virtually in 2020.
- ▶ UNHCR's [Digital Inclusion programme](#) faced unprecedented demand for support in adapting to COVID-19. Guidance has been issued, trainings undertaken, new reports released, and operational pilots delivered through a call for proposals. For example, across four countries the Service is helping [UNHCR engage with communities](#) through messaging apps.



- ▶ ECLAC developed the [SDG Gateway](#), an interagency knowledge management and data platform on the SDGs in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Gateway, which gathers inputs from all UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes in the region, has become a one-stop platform, whose knowledge products, data and indicators allow member states, UN Country Teams and Resident Coordinators to access country information and reports, specialised knowledge, data and statistics related to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the regional and country level. It also fosters peer learning, exchange information and knowledge disseminations on sustainable development across the UN development system operating at the regional level.



## FACILITATING KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

- ▶ The [Behavioural Science Group](#) of the UN Innovation Network published a brief showcasing how ten UN Entities are leveraging [behavioural science to respond to COVID-19](#).
- ▶ UNHCR's Innovation Service further applied inclusion and diversity across its work by optimising user experience on their [website](#) for people with impairments. First in the organisation to provide widespread accessibility and to comply with the UN's web accessibility guidelines, the work started [discussions on the culture](#) needed to make inclusion part of all the spaces we work in.
- ▶ DESA published [A Compendium on Digital Government Initiatives in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic](#), including digital innovations in e-participation, e-health, e-business, contact tracing & social distancing.
- ▶ DESA published a new edition of its [Frontier Technology Issue](#) exploring how countries are using technologies in their response to the COVID-19 pandemic, to create economic growth and decent work, improve health services and outcomes, and promote education and learning for all. A previous edition put a spotlight on the [sharing economy](#).
- ▶ The DOS Innovation Network launched the DELVEIN initiative, which aims to empower staff, build skills and competencies and foster innovation through the use of the Delve application within the Office 365 suite. Delve allows staff to create individual profiles to showcase experiences, connect with others, seek out colleagues for advice and collaboration.
- ▶ IFAD has launched the [IFAD Innovation Network](#) Community of Practice on the DGroups.io platform. This group is open to IFAD staff, fellow UN colleagues, IFAD members, academia, private sector and those who wish to contribute to developing innovation at IFAD. Click [here](#) to join the network.



- ▶ **Youth2030**, the UN's first-ever youth strategy, was launched in 2018 to strengthen the foundations of the UN to work with and for youth. The Strategy is designed to position the UN as a knowledge and innovation pioneer by strengthening the funding base and mechanisms for youth-focused programming and youth-led actions at all levels. The [Office of the Secretary-General Envoy on Youth](#) invites all UN Entities to [share their work on innovation for youth and with youth](#), as well as best practices and lessons learned from challenges.



## WORKSHOPS, EVENTS & CONFERENCES

- ▶ ITC-ILO's Learning Innovation team piloted a series of platforms to set up virtual trade or knowledge fairs for large audiences (up to 5,000 people). This format creates on-line networking spaces around webinars with project or knowledge product exhibition booths for virtual network. [Contact the team](#) to learn more.
- ▶ UNIDO and the Union for the Mediterranean set up an online collaboration lab at the [Women in Industry and Innovation Conference](#). It facilitated the discussion on improving the resilience of women against the impact of COVID-19.
- ▶ UNAIDS 2020 [Health Innovation Exchange](#) global event virtually brought together 4,000+ participants from around the world with 80 key speakers, including 15 Ministers, Members of Parliament, innovators, investors and the EU Commissioner for Innovation. The event hosted a virtual marketplace showcasing [25 high-potential innovations for health](#), 50 percent of them came from Africa.



Photo: ITC-ILO

- ▶ The ITC-ILO facilitated the ILO's first virtual reality event, the [ILO Skills Management Forum](#) during which colleagues engaged in hackathon style strategic discussions for lifelong learning and skills development. ITC-ILO's [VR portfolio](#) is steadily growing and new collaborations with other UN agencies are scheduled for 2021.
- ▶ ITU hosted the [2020 Global Innovation Forum](#) under the theme "Mainstreaming competitive digital innovation ecosystems in the age of COVID-19". The five-day immersive programme took participants on global and regional learning journeys to accelerate digital transformation in their communities and shared new approaches, insights, tools, frameworks, communities and relevant case studies to help participants understand how to mainstream sustainable ecosystems that accelerate digital transformation.
- ▶ [UNU's Institute in Macau](#), in partnership with government, private sector, academia, and civil society organisations, hosted a [Cyber Resilience Capacity Building workshop](#) for managers and directors of third-sector organisations in Macau. This effort is part of the [Smart Citizen Cyber Resilience](#) project, which aims to enhance the resilience of the civil society in smart digital futures, in Macau, the Asia-Pacific, and around the world.
- ▶ **Despite COVID-19 restrictions**, the IAEA continued delivering on its mandate and create value and partnerships in new ways. Within the first five weeks of lockdown, over 3,100 WebEx meetings took place at the IAEA, initiated by 500 different hosts and involving a total of 17,500 participants. By choosing the right format (physical/hybrid/virtual), all governance meetings of the year were held with the multilingual interpretation as per the regular schedule. The IAEA hosted three virtual scientific conferences with 6,000 participants - significantly more than usual. The first International Conference on the Management of Naturally Occurring Radioactive Material in Industry, held virtually for two weeks, engaged industry decision makers, regulatory bodies and the scientific community at large on topics such the circular economy.







## INNOVATION CHALLENGES & CALLS

- ▶ The Reimagine the UN Together initiative unleashed the creativity, experience, and skills of UN colleagues to share, innovate and scale solutions to common business challenges. The volunteer-driven Initiative consisted of a [Pulse Check](#) to understand opportunities and challenges surfaced by the COVID-19 pandemic; a UN-system wide crowdsourcing challenge to jointly ideate solutions to these challenges; and a [dialogue series](#) to dive deeper into more sensitive issues or those that might not have a clear solution. In the Challenge, over 3,000 colleagues submitted, commented and voted on 80 ideas. Thirteen teams participated in an online innovation bootcamp with the [top six](#) moving on to pitch their ideas at a [UN-wide Dragons' Den Event](#). [UN Digital ID](#) and [connecta](#) emerged as the [Dragons'](#) favourite with [Mobility Marketplace](#) winning the audience choice. The Reimagine Initiative is driven by an alliance of interested individuals, networks and departments across the UN system, including UNIN, DCO, UNSSC, OICT, YoungUN and [#NewWork](#).
- ▶ UNICEF's Venture Fund offered its first call for applications for start-ups to receive funding in USD and cryptocurrency. [UNICEF CryptoFund made its largest investment](#) in projects to expand their solutions to mitigate hardships of COVID-19 on children.
- ▶ UNFPA Innovation's [2020 Call for Bold Innovations to End Preventable Maternal Deaths](#) has progressed to its prototyping and user testing stages for the nine participating Country Office teams. By December 2020, the cohort will have a suite of tech and non-tech prototypes that strengthen midwifery skills, improve referral linkages, support community outreach, provide telemedicine platforms, and more with the ultimate goal of ending preventable maternal deaths.
- ▶ The IMF iLab hosted the final event of its [Anti Corruption Challenge](#) in October 2020. The [top eight proposals](#) pitched their solutions to a panel of judges and a virtual audience of over 11,000 colleagues from the IMF, the World Bank, Annual Meetings participants and others. The four winning ideas - selected by the judges, including one "virtual judge" comprised of 600 public votes - joined the iLab Accelerator program, where teams will receive further support and financing of up to USD50,000 by the Swiss Secretariat for Economic Affairs and the iLab to develop a working prototype of their solutions in the coming year.
- ▶ UNIDO's [Innovative Ideas and Technologies vs COVID-19 and Beyond](#) Challenge found globally scalable solutions to cope with COVID-19 impacts in developing countries. UNIDO is also hosting the Facility for Low Carbon Technology Deployment Innovation Challenge, which promotes low-carbon technologies in India.



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- ▶ UNWTO closes 2020 with [7 Startup Competitions and 6 Innovation Challenges](#) with over 17,400 participants from 150 countries, having the opportunity to connect with 150+ Member States, 500+ companies and 300+ investors. The UNWTO SDGs [Global Startup Competition](#) reached over 10,000 startups.
- ▶ The ILO launched the first [Skills Challenge Innovation Call](#) on finding solutions to skills mismatches. The [first national Skills Challenge Innovation Call](#) was launched in Cambodia in October 2020 on finding solutions to challenges for digital, technical and vocational education and training. Recognising the importance of an ecosystem to support turning great ideas into solutions, the ILO also established a [global network on skills development](#).
- ▶ The ILO's Enterprises Innovation Facility is one of four [innovation initiatives](#) supporting [sustainable enterprises](#). It identified challenges in enterprises formalisation, financial inclusion and digitalisation, and policy approaches supporting enterprise development. Three proposals advanced to prototype their idea.
- ▶ The fourth edition of the [ITC Innovation Heroes Awards](#) recognised innovation in four categories, placing importance to corporate priorities such as inclusion and sustainability. The award ceremony was hosted in hybrid format with nominees and speakers present at the ITC and staff following the ceremony online.

