

Side Event

Harnessing Innovation for the Needs of Crisis-Affected People

June 6 | 6:15pm – 7:30pm | New York | CR 1

Overview

In the context of rapidly expanding humanitarian need, innovation plays an essential role in advancing the humanitarian response system, making it more agile, efficient and flexible. Panelists in this side event will offer insights on the challenges and opportunities faced within the humanitarian innovation ecosystem, making recommendations for the application of technology and innovative approaches in delivering improved outcomes for millions of vulnerable and crisis-affected people around the world.

Background

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development makes inclusive and sustainable development a priority, while innovation is recognized as vital in ensuring the humanitarian system is adequately equipped and responsive for building resilience among populations most in need in order to leave no one behind.

More specifically:

- SDG 9 calls for “building resilient infrastructure, promoting sustainable industrialization and fostering innovation”, and
- SDG 17 calls for “strengthening the means of implementation and revitalization of global partnership for sustainable development.”

Innovation, including the use of technology and shared best practices, can help economies leapfrog to a new model of production and has the potential for wide application both in the humanitarian and development sectors.

Context

The formal humanitarian system has been challenged by rapidly increasing needs while present efforts have failed to keep pace with these shifts. For example:

- The number of people in need of humanitarian assistance tripled just in the past decade.
- People in crisis live in contexts of fragility, where poverty, food insecurity and exclusion are compounded by conflict and violence, natural disasters, and unplanned urbanization; leaving them in need of humanitarian action for decades.
- 2014 has seen the largest humanitarian funding and yet recorded the largest gap between contributed to required funds, at a staggering 40%.

Concurrently, the humanitarian innovation ecosystem continues to face barriers to its success. It suffers from duplication of investments, resource constraints and a lack of shared priorities with regard to the types of challenges that could be addressed collectively through innovation and taken to scale. Some of these challenges are as follows:

- Business leaders and academics with solutions to offer are overwhelmed by the maze of UN and NGO actors.

- Innovative solutions that might be applicable across sectors remain siloed, preventing knowledge sharing and successful models from being maximized.
- The pace of innovation and the ability to scale and disseminate transformations remain significantly short of what is needed.

The 2030 Agenda calls on a diversity of stakeholders to work differently and across both the humanitarian and development sectors to move crisis affected people from relief, to development.

Expected Takeaways

- Understanding the broad value of technology and innovative approaches for improving resilience within affected communities and strategically focused, responsible methods of innovation through multi-stakeholder collaboration;
- Mechanisms for accelerating response and improved resource utilization.
- Examples of technologies and innovations that have been deployed in response to the needs of vulnerable populations, contributing to achieving SDGs 9 and 17.
- Roles of different stakeholders within innovation in response to the need of affected groups.

Panelist Bios

Keith Chibafa, World Vision International (WVI): Keith is the manager of the Last Mile Mobile Solutions programme at WVI. He joined WVI in 2010 after a career in the private sector and is responsible for overseeing efforts to collaborate with local and international entities interested in the implementation and execution of WVI's Last Mile Mobile Solutions (LMMS) technology. In addition, he provides advisory and technical support to innovative approaches to Cash Transfer Programming and Digital Payments.

Olivier Delarue, Global Humanitarian Lab: Olivier is the CEO of the Global Humanitarian Lab (GHL), a new initiative that is working between partners to accelerate the adoption of innovative solutions that are fit for purpose and that result from an innovation process with affected populations at its centre. Prior to becoming CEO of the GHL, he was the Lead of UNHCR Innovation.

MasterCard (panelist TBD)

Andrew Lamb, Makernet: Andrew Lamb has had a career in systems engineering, international development and disaster relief and has been searching for ways to unlock what he describes as 'massive small change'. Through Field Ready, which makes aid supplies in the field after a crisis, Andrew has been collaborating on the concept of an 'Internet of Production', dubbed the 'Makernet'.

Andrew Billo (Moderator), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA): Andrew leads OCHA's work on innovation, supporting innovation both within OCHA and with partners across the wider humanitarian system. In that context he is working with partners to setup the Global Alliance for Humanitarian Innovation (GAHI) that was launched recently at the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul.