

Harvard University
Graduate School of Design

INNOVATION LAB

How can engagement with local partners promote innovation, gender equality, and resilience?

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Master in Design Studies, Risk & Resilience Program
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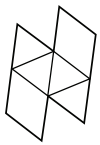
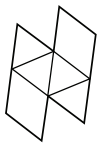


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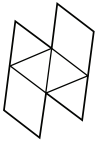
The Innovation Lab, established as part of the World Vision Nepal Earthquake Response, is an initiative where new ideas, products, technologies, and processes may be developed and tested towards the goal of improving disaster response, both in Nepal around the earthquakes that happened in Spring 2015 and within the humanitarian community more broadly. In order to ensure that efforts are successfully targeted and designed for local impact, as well as to build long-term resilience, it is essential that the lab develops and strengthens diverse partnerships with local organizations, communities, and people. Lab partners will play a key role in developing innovations for the lab as well as in promoting, testing, and scaling up innovations.

This document outlines key considerations for the engagement of local partners in the innovation lab. The proposals and recommendations included in this report build off a core thesis—engaging local partners in developing, implementing, reviewing, and scaling innovations is the core mechanism through which these innovations will contribute to improved disaster recovery and that this engagement is central to the embedded goals for building gender equity and social inclusion and increasing resilience.

The document starts by outlining a model for local partners, including roles, types of partners, key messages, guidance for interfacing with international partners, and suggestions for reviewing and monitoring these partnerships. The document goes on to outline specific considerations the lab should make around gender considerations and resilience, many of which are directly related to the ways in which the lab will develop local partnerships.

Finally, the document finishes with thoughts on potential partnerships, communications, and a note on methodology. This document is intended to help guide the lab through its initial launch and introduction to local partners as well as in its evolving concept of operations.





ROLES OF LOCAL PARTNERS

Local partners are the central component of the Innovation Lab structure. These partners play key roles that will enable, strengthen, and scale the successes that are emerging. These roles include:

Innovating

Local partners are best positioned to imagine, design, and create the types of break-through innovations that will contribute most significantly to improved disaster response and improved quality of life thereafter. As companies, organizations, and individuals embedded in Nepali communities, local partners have the key cultural and contextual knowledge to ensure new technologies, products, and processes are useful in Nepal. They also have insight into the challenges faced when trying to pilot or scale new ideas. Innovators could include individuals, local companies, NGOs, village and trade associations, government agencies, or universities.

Partnering with International Organizations

Local organizations should be engaged as partners for international organizations. International partners are able to contribute new ideas, technologies, skills—and funding to support these projects—to Nepal. Local partners can ensure that these innovations are developed and applied in culturally and contextually appropriate ways. Partnering with international organizations, local organizations can play two primary roles:

- (i) Co-developing or refining ideas with international partners, or;
- (ii) Piloting and field testing ideas developed by international partners.

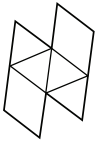
Scaling-Up Innovations

After ideas have been successfully demonstrated, local partners and networks of local partners should be engaged to take those innovations to scale. This can include engaging local partners to manufacture new products in country, build or install new innovations in a community, and train or educate communities in how to utilize innovations effectively.

Communicating Results and Opportunities

Local partners will have networks extending far beyond World Vision and the Innovation Lab. Successful projects or opportunities for new projects can be communicated by local partners through their networks in order to not only deliver greater impact, but also continue to fuel the lab by bringing more and more effective partners into the fold. If operating effectively, the lab should be a revolving door of relationships and outcomes with reverberating impacts across sectors. Unconventional synergies should be fostered.





TYPES OF LOCAL PARTNERS

Local partners could potentially include anyone in Nepal who is interesting in pursuing or promoting innovations. However, key partners to consider engaging include:

Academic Institutions

Academic institutions are centers of research and knowledge. They have the capacity and interest to engage in processes targeting invention and innovation.

Innovation Labs

Nepal is home to a number of other innovation labs focused on issues ranging from new energy sources and cook stoves to open-source data aggregation. These labs are already working to develop and apply innovations and could be key partners in identifying and testing how those innovations apply to disaster response.

Companies

New technologies and ideas are delivered to Nepali people primarily through private companies. These companies have the knowledge and capacity of the newest technology or products available in Nepal. They can be a source for considering new products or new iterations or versions of existing products. Alternatively, they could be engaged to identify potential gaps in the market or new opportunities that have not yet been pursued.

Trade Associations

Within a specific sector, such as solar energy or biofuels, national trade associations exist linking all of the companies in each field. These associations offer services such as education and capacity building that could be utilized, particularly in efforts to scale-up processes through market forces. Trade associations in many fields have also worked with international donors in the past and may serve as an intermediary between the Innovation Lab and local companies.

Local and International NGOs

There is a thriving community of NGOs both at the district and national level in Nepal. These NGOs have experience working in poor and underserved communities throughout the country and could be engaged in the innovation process to identify key issues. They

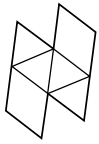
also have a strong network that extends to the local level, through which pilot-testing or scaling up could be facilitated.

Government Agencies

Many government agencies have mandates to provide services or benefits to people within a specific area. At minimum, partners in the Innovation Lab may have to inform and acquire permission from relevant government agencies. However, opportunities exist to engage these agencies in a more productive way. These include utilizing government networks to promote innovation, for example by linking efforts to scale-up with existing subsidy programs or by distributing innovations through government channels, or it could include efforts to support government in delivering on their responsibilities, for example by generating information and data to identify new ways to deliver services.

Households and Villages

Ultimately, innovations in support of the poor and vulnerable will have to improve conditions at the household and village level. Therefore, all projects within the innovation lab should consider how they support and include households and villages in identifying, promoting, and utilizing any innovation.



EXPANDED MODEL FOR ENGAGING LOCAL PARTNERS

Roles for Local Partners

As Innovators

Local organizations can engage as creators and innovators in the lab developing and testing their own concepts and ideas.

As Implementers

As innovations are being developed and trialed, local organizations can provide field staff and expertise to ensure successful implementation.

As Multipliers

Local organizations can take these innovations to scale, contributing funding, manpower, social capital and other resources to innovations.

As Communicators

Successful innovations should be communicated through local organization networks to deliver greater impact and encourage new partnerships.



The Innovation Lab proposes to hire a woman as the Deputy Innovation Lab Manager.

Potential Organizations: Universities, Private Companies, NGOs, Other Innovation Labs

Alternative qualification is developed targeting potential, rather than competence; the position is advertised outside of traditional channels; interviews are conducted; a candidate is selected and hired. She is offered compensation and benefits commiserate with her potential, not her qualification. Her strengths are highlighted and her shortfalls are activated.

Potential Organizations: Private Companies, NGOs

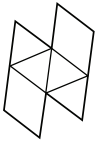
A - She integrates into the lab with broad effect.
B - She is unable to integrate or has no apparent effect.

A women's leadership framework is developed to support women who demonstrate potential but lack education or experience. More women are brought on board in various capacities and developed.

Potential Organizations: Communities, Private Companies, Government Agencies

The practice and outcome are communicated broadly, adopted by other organizations. More women are encouraged to approach the Innovation Lab as both candidates and innovators.

Potential Organizations: Private Companies, NGOs, Other Innovation Labs



INTERNATIONAL AND LOCAL PARTNER INTERFACE

A key role for the Innovation Lab will be to establish and facilitate partnerships between international and local partners working in the lab. These partnerships will be critical to ensuring innovations are culturally and contextually appropriate and that efforts to test and scale innovations fit within Nepali culture, context, and institutions. In order to ensure these partnerships are successful, some key principles and guidelines should be followed.

Build things for Nepal

The Innovation Lab and the entire World Vision response is tasked with delivering tangible improvements to the Nepali people. All ventures and projects developed within the Innovation Lab should be contributing an effort that is intended to add direct value and benefit for the people of Nepal.

There are many kinds of knowledge

Expertise and knowledge exist in multiple forms, ranging from technical and scientific information to local and cultural knowledge. Working successfully to bring innovation into Nepal will require the application and integration of a range of knowledge types. Partners within the Innovation Lab should recognize both the value and limitations of the knowledge they bring as well as that of their partners in order to ensure that ventures are both innovative and reflective of local contexts.

Respect

All engagements in the lab should be built from mutual respect. The different backgrounds, skills, and knowledge types of partners in the lab will lead to different methods and styles of working which could lead to tension, conflict, or miscommunication. Maintaining a position of mutual respect will allow partners to work through disagreement in ways that are mutually beneficial and lead to improved understanding.

Communicate

Ventures and projects within the lab will require the engagement of multiple partners at different levels and milestones. In order to facilitate effective cooperation and collaboration, systems should be put in place within each project to ensure clear and regular communication.

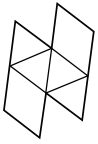
Assume good intentions

All partners in the lab will be engaged in the work in support of underlying goals and motives to improve the lives of people in Nepal and around the world. When there is tension or disagreement, all partners should assume that the other partners are approaching their work with good intentions and with their full capacity. Even when the activities of other partners may seem confusing, discussions for addressing the issue should begin with an assumption that is reasonable and rationale behind partner actions.

Fit within local culture and customs

The work of the lab is based in Nepal and should seek to fit within the standards, customs, and mores of Nepali culture. Local organizations and people are the best guides to ensuring that actions fit within this context. World Vision and partners should rely on local guidance and cultural knowledge to ensure actions and projects are appropriate given local cultural considerations.





KEY MESSAGES FOR LOCAL PARTNERS

- 1 Innovative ideas, products, and processes can greatly contribute to earthquake recovery and long-term development in Nepal.
- 2 The lab is focused on bringing in and testing new ideas, products, and processes that are not currently widely used within the humanitarian sector.
- 3 Engagement will help local partners develop the skills and capacity to generate innovations and oversee projects around critical areas of concern.

Substantiate Message

Nepal remains underdeveloped, and, as in many countries, inequality is widening, but the situation is not set in stone. Big changes, driven by technological leaps or other innovations can lead to big jumps in socio-economic development.

If development continues to progress incrementally, it will miss opportunities for huge leaps forward, and the world's most vulnerable people will be left behind and inequality will continue. Yet, introducing new and innovative ways to engage and work with the most vulnerable is a possible answer to closing gaps and delivering breakthroughs.

The disruption from the earthquake provides a unique opportunity to rebuild the country in a new, more innovative, and more equitable way.

The lab provides an opportunity to learn about, engage with, and test ideas, processes, and products that can contribute to their work.

Projects in the lab will be developed to test how new innovations can best contribute to disaster response and recovery, specifically for the most vulnerable people.

Local partnerships will be critical to testing and implementing these new innovations. Local partners will be deeply engaged in projects.

All projects in the lab will be implemented by or in partnership with one or more local partners. These local partners may include NGOs, companies, and the government, at national, community, and household scales.

The roles for local partners will require that they gain knowledge and skills that enable them to effectively implement and manage projects. These new capacities may include project or sector-specific knowledge related to the specific innovation, or broader capacities around entrepreneurialism and management.

Partners will be encouraged to continue with development and management of specific projects.

Partners will be encouraged to develop their own ideas and projects for inclusion in the lab.

Insights that Support the Message

Big gaps! Especially in Nepal;

Pace of change of technology;

Inequalities widening across all countries;

Huge opportunities with rapid change in developed countries to bring equal opportunity to developing countries.

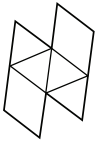
Priorities: Emergency shelter; Health and Nutrition; Water, Sanitation & Hygiene; Livelihoods; Education & Child Protection;

The Lab is supported internationally to develop and test new ideas.

Local partnerships are central to the work of the lab.

Law requires all project implementation occurs with local partners.

World Vision has history of community engagement in Nepal and worldwide.



INDICATORS OF SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS

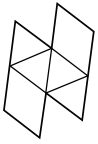
Nearly all of the ventures and innovations tested in the lab will be developed and tested through partnerships. Successful partnerships will be those that ensure the achievement of the goals and objectives of the project, while also contributing to growth and development of individual, and especially local partners. Successful local partnerships will generally exhibit the following characteristics.

- **Local partners, international partners, and World Vision are communicating effectively.** There are systems in place to ensure consistent and regular communication, and all partners feel that they are receiving information, feedback, and guidance in a timely and clear manner.
- **'Innovation' is successfully tested.** The partnership ensures the project successfully develops, tests, and monitors innovations in the field. Successfully testing innovations will require local partners, international partners, and World Vision to all fulfill their roles within the partnership.
- **Local Partner capacity is built.** Local partners develop new skills, knowledge, and capacity enabling them to continue working in the field and consider ways they could introduce innovation or entrepreneurialism into their operating models.
- **Local partner continues to work on the project or the broader issue.** Following completion of projects in the Innovation Lab, local partners use the new skills and capacities they have gained to continue developing and scaling the project if it is successful or, if the tested innovation is not successful, to continue working to develop solutions to the emergent issues and problems.

Monitoring and Reviewing Partnerships

In order to ensure partnerships are working well, are supporting the overall objectives of the project and lab, and proving beneficial to individual members, the lab should develop some basic systems to provide opportunities to monitor and review partnerships. Formal or semi-formal reviews should occur both before and after any project as well as at periodic intervals in order to gauge and monitor progress. In addition the lab should establish systems and an overall culture to enable partners to provide feedback, discuss issues, and ask for advice at any time throughout the project. A system for monitoring and reviewing partnerships should include the following.

- **Pre- and Post-engagement interviews with partners.** Interviews or meetings with a partner conducted before a project or engagement should focus on what each partner hopes to gain from engagement in the lab. Interviews after a project should reflect on what a partner gained from participating, their feedback on the specifics of the project, reflections on the partnership including what worked well and what did not work well, and a discussion of future opportunities to continue engaging in the lab.
- **Periodic check-ins with partners.** The Lab Manager should set-up periodic one-on-one meetings with partners throughout a project to ensure that each partner has an opportunity to provide feedback and receive guidance before the end of the project. This could happen formally, perhaps once per quarter, as well as informally through the daily interactions within the lab.
- **Defined process for submitting and managing complaints.** A defined and clearly articulated process for submitting and managing complaints will ensure any challenges partners face can be brought up in a professional manner. Communicating this clearly to local partners will be of particular importance in order to ensure that they feel they can work to shape the partnership and their engagement in a way that is beneficial to them.
- **Culture of communication and reflection.** The culture within the lab should encourage reflection on the work and communication about challenges and possibilities for improvement. To the extent reflexivity is built into the working styles developed in the lab, partnerships will be better able to grow and change in response to new information, issues, and changing conditions.



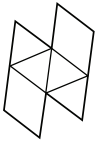
CONSIDERATIONS FOR GENDER AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) is an existing guiding principle of many organizations in Nepal. However, women are primarily perceived of as the end-of-line beneficiary, a recipient of special consideration or services, rather than a qualified member involved in the planning or implementation of women-oriented programs. Furthermore, these programs seem to exclusively target rural women. When prompted, local partners described that if women were to be fully incorporated into the planning, management, or execution of these initiatives, then unacceptable exceptions would need to be made – i.e. standards would be lowered – which would undermine programs and rightly serve no one. In addition, programs are designed to address inequities of the caste system, where lower caste individuals receive additional benefits; however, field conditions indicate a shortfall in equitable execution. Overall, no organization offered insight on the institutional and cultural challenges that reinforce a dynamic where women are less capable, nor did they speculate on capacity-building strategies to redress this dearth of female participation and leadership.

Alternatively, quality-of-life and standard-of-living improvements for rural women are prioritized and the impact of these efforts is not only acknowledged but also highly regarded. These programs are extremely valuable. For instance, a solar-powered water pump may alleviate the burden on girls and women who spend hours transporting water from the valley to hillside domiciles, expanding opportunities for girl's education and women's livelihood. In Nepal, collection of firewood, processing of agricultural crops, water sourcing and purification, and household management to include laundry and cooking are all responsibilities of women. Women development programs are common and include promoting improved cook stoves and alternative biomass fuels over firewood, installing micro-hydro agricultural mills, incentivizing female entrepreneurs to pursue micro-enterprises in energy and handicrafts, and more. The existing gender equity strategy targets baseline metrics for female wellness and opportunity but should be expanded to development women's status and capacity for more robust empowerment. Significant potential for Nepali women is feasible as demonstrated by mobility, independence, and opportunity available to urban women, particularly those with higher education.

The socio-cultural challenges implicated in targeting expanded capacity building for girls and women, both in rural and urban contexts, are dually significant and complex. Essentialist gender roles are embedded within familial and matrimonial expectations, with broad impacts across educational and professional development. Simultaneously, mass migration of able-bodied men seeking employment, either to urban centers or abroad, is fundamentally driving the emergence of a household structure that is dually globalized and divided. Remittances are raising the standard of living, even for the most remote and poorest regions of Nepal, yet result in a fracture of household authority. With the male head of household out of the country, often leaving entire villages devoid of middle-aged men, the females manage their households to include children and elderly care as well as sustain subsistence livelihoods independently. Yet, these women still defer to their absent male counterpart as the ranking household authority. If men are present even as a minority, men seem to speak for the community; however, if only women are present, then women seem both comfortable and capable speaking for themselves and managing their properties autonomously, but still refer to their removed husbands as primary decision makers. Following the earthquakes, men returned to Nepal to assist their family to recover and rebuild, however have again departed.

An additional gender divergence is apparent in the capacity of Nepali people to envision their future. When asked, rural women living in earthquake-affected regions stated that they did not think of their futures. Rather, these women expressed that they only thought of the earthquake and necessities for daily life. Similarly, girls were unable to verbalize what they wanted to be when they grew up. One young girl did eventually state that she wanted to be a teacher, and a group of rural women were able to communicate their desire for a safe house – both representing the immediacy of their aspirations to a local context. Notably, both men and women, even in very remote areas, have mobile and smartphones with access to the Internet. Alternatively, men spoke frequently and casually about future plans and demonstrated a continuity of forward-thinking adaptation and entrepreneurship in providing for and improving their own and their family's lives.



OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

In order to target the institutionalized context of women's position relative to men, priority should be dedicated to initiatives and projects that incorporate women as equal partners in the development and implementation of these efforts - regardless of the designation of a project - all projects are an opportunity. Women should no longer be viewed as the key benefactor, which is a reflexive labeling and accordingly subsumed into the psyche of the women, communities, and aid sector itself - women as victim. Rather, women should be incorporated into the full range of vision planning and project implementation and development. Women must be built-up as leaders, which will in-turn elicit or embolden these critical qualities, in order to overcome overwhelming essentialist bias.

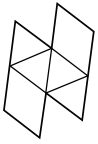
Setting a threshold that women must demonstrate or achieve in order to be indoctrinated into the fold is an equally discriminatory screening practice. Rather, a system must be developed around the benefit-of-the-doubt, that a woman is as capable as she is enabled to be - which will lead to a self-actualization that will then release her from dependence even on the group or body that initiated her transformation.

Monitoring GESI in the Lab

The following considerations can help guide the lab to ensure GESI is integral to all efforts:

- **SHORT TERM:** What percentage of projects involve women in key positions of management, idea development, and implementation?
- **MIDDLE TERM:** What percentage of projects are led by women, across both international and local partnership teams?
- **LONG TERM:** What percentage of companies engaged in the lab are led by women?
- **INNOVATION LAB:** What percentage of the Innovation Lab's outreach and communication strategy highlights women as innovators and leaders?
- **TREND:** Quantify the role of women in projects (by level) relative to the success of the project as measured through the other two indicators (disaster and resilience).





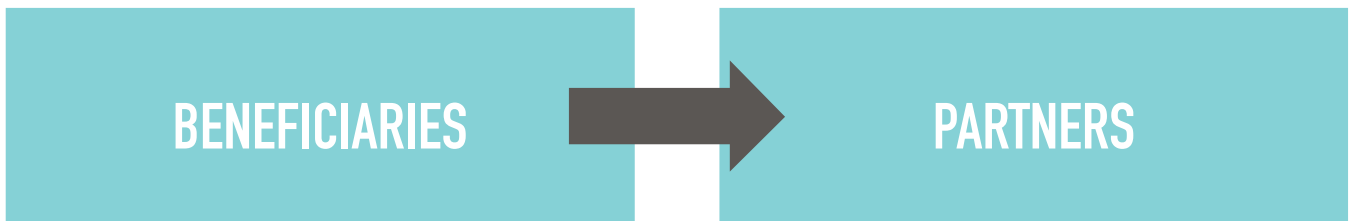
APPROACHES TO RESILIENCE

Resilience is at the center the World Vision Earthquake Response and Recovery (NER) Strategy, which calls to “strengthen the resilience and self-recovery” for children and for communities. Resilience has many measures that change across scales and context, ranging from the individual and household level to the level of systems at urban and national scales. Within the NER, resilience efforts are focused on individual and household levels. Resilience indices have been developed that capture the key elements of absorptive capacity and adaptive capacity that will contribute to resilience (see NER Resilience Indices). These include such measures as the capacity to anticipate and prepare for future shocks, access to and possession of assets and services that act as a safety net, and the ability to move between multiple livelihoods.

The Innovation Lab can take the resilience indicators developed by World Vision as a guide to selecting

and developing projects and partnerships. As part of developing and selecting new partnerships to incorporate into the lab, the Lab Manager and potential partners should consider how projects and activities will contribute to specific indicators of resilience.

Beyond the specific substantive focus of the lab, projects can further contribute to resilience by engaging local community members, communities, and partners in actively developing, shaping, and managing projects within the lab. Experiences building resilience in other parts of South and Southeast Asia suggest that when local partners are engaged in the planning, management, implementation, and monitoring of projects, projects are more likely to contribute to a wide range of measures of resilience. To put it another way, projects contribute to resilience when they shift people and organizations away from being beneficiaries and instead develop them as partners.



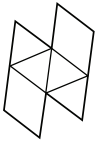
NER Resilience Indices

Absorptive Capacity

- People anticipate, prepare for and mitigate the effects of shocks and stresses (shock preparedness and mitigation).
- People bounce back better and recover quickly from shocks (household perceived ability to recover).
- Households create an asset safety net/risk transfer mechanism and draw on in times of need (household savings).
- Access to social protection and safety nets/ People care for others (Informal safety net/ and Bonding social capital, e.g., social cohesion/connectedness within the community).
- People, their families and assets are safe and secure (asset ownership/safety and protection, using shelter).

Adaptive Capacity

- People have livelihood strategies that factor in risk (diversity of livelihoods).
- People express hope and ambition (aspirations and confidence to adapt).
- People have access to financial services and take advantage of opportunity (access to credit).
- People have options to move on from non-viable livelihoods (human capital).
- People are aware of risks and know how to mitigate them (access to information).
- People have access to markets/opportunity (bridging social capital, e.g., unaffected communities share resources, connectedness to external support).



The lab can engage communities and organizations at multiple levels to contribute to resilience across scales.

National Scale : Partner Organizations

Engaging partner organizations actively in the process of developing and managing ventures will build their knowledge and skill sets around the specific areas that innovations are targeting while also contributing to entrepreneurial skills and capacity. These partner organizations will continue to operate in Nepal beyond engagement with international organizations and likely, beyond the duration of the lab. Building capacity for innovation and entrepreneurialism, in addition to core skills and knowledge, will enable these local partners to continue working in these areas and to develop further innovations beyond the time frame of the engagement of the NER. Developing these capacities in organizations around the country will contribute to long-term resilience at the national scale.

Community Scale : Community Leaders

Innovations that seek to foster improvements at the community level will need to engage with communities and community leaders. In developing projects that engage directly in communities, community leaders should be brought into the process early and given defined roles in the planning and implementation of activities. In this way, they will come to better understand the goals and aspirations of innovation ventures, and will be more likely to develop the capacity to continue efforts once World Vision, international partners, or local organizations draw down direct support. By developing the capacity of community leaders around specific focus areas, community leaders will be more prepared to drive change and development around these topics, thus contributing to overall resilience.

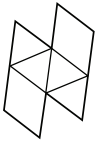
Individual Scale : Household Resilience

To the extent projects and ventures deliver things to the household and individual level, every effort should be made to avoid “just delivering” the innovation. Recipients should be engaged in the use, construction, or development of the specific product they are receiving so that they develop a greater understanding, fluency, and sense of ownership with the innovation. This will enable them to use and maintain the product beyond the scope of engagement of World Vision and partners, which will ensure the durability and sustainability of any delivered product or process, and thus ensure it contributes more to long-term resilience.

Monitoring Resilience in the Lab

To the extent that engaging, empowering, and building the capacity of local partners is central to the lab strategy on resilience, the following indicators and questions can help the lab monitor its contributions toward resilience.

- SHORT TERM: What percentage of projects involve local partners in key positions of management, idea development, and implementation?
- MIDDLE TERM: Are local partners able to take on and guide more parts of the development, testing, or review processes?
- MIDDLE TERM: Are local partners starting to develop their own ideas and introduce them into their work within the Lab?
- LONG TERM; Are local partners able to take over management of projects and implementation of ideas from international partners?
- LONG TERM: Are local partners continuing on to develop additional products, processes, and other innovations around similar core challenges?
- INNOVATION LAB: Does the lab engage local staff and partners in key decision-making, management, and oversight conversations, decisions, and actions?
- TREND: Local organizations in Nepal, both those partnering with the lab and others working in the field, are developing management and entrepreneurial skills that allow them to increasingly oversee projects and/or develop their own ideas and innovations around core challenges.



SELECTING PROJECTS FOR THE LAB

The Innovation Lab will have many opportunities to engage with a wide range of international and local partners and a range of project proposals will be developed. While all projects will have to show how they will be innovative, building on the concepts developed in this report, project selection should include consideration for how projects contribute to the overall goal and strategy of the World Vision, Nepal Earthquake Response. This screening should center around three criteria: contribution to (1) disaster response, (2) resilience, and (3) gender.

Disaster Response

The Innovation Lab is set up under the Nepal Earthquake Response. Ultimately, the goal of having an innovation lab is to generate and test new techniques to improve, expand, and speed-up disaster response and recovery efforts. Innovation Lab projects should therefore be targeted towards this goal. This focus may preclude other projects with a development bent, but a clear focus around disaster will both contribute to the current needs in Nepal as it works to recover while also creating opportunities for developing new tools to inform and strengthen humanitarian aid worldwide.

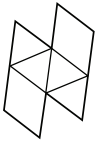
Resilience

Resilience is at the heart of the World Vision strategy and should serve as an additional screen for projects coming into the lab. Building on discussions about resilience earlier in the document, this could both include projects that target specific indicators within the resilience indices and projects that include strong skill development and capacity building, which themselves contribute to resilience.

Gender

Gender inequality throughout Nepal continues to impact who is engaged in recovery and reconstruction and how. Empowering those underrepresented and bringing them into more clear entrepreneurial and leadership roles would serve to strengthen and expand the role of Nepali women, which would contribute to long-term development, security, and resilience. Therefore, the impact projects have on gender through who they target and especially who is engaged as partners and leaders should serve as an important criteria for selecting projects.





COMMUNICATING LAB SUCCESSES AND FAILURES

In addition to supporting the disaster response and recovery in Nepal, the Innovation Lab aims to test and experiment new ideas in order to improve worldwide humanitarian response. In order to influence this sector worldwide, the outputs of the lab will need to be clearly communicated. Periodically, such as on an annual or semiannual basis, the lab should produce communications materials to highlight successes and failures. This communications materials should be easily accessible, utilizing clear language and visual communication where possible, and should be distributed widely to development professionals in the UN, government organizations, and the global NGO community. Additional communication in the Nepali language should be produced.

Successful Projects

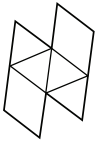
For projects or ventures that produce successful outcomes, this communication should seek to document conditions under which the project operated, key factors that drove project operations, and the degree of success. Clearly documenting the conditions under which projects are successful will aid in scaling up and application of that project in future implementation. Partners should further be invited to reflect and speculate, on the reasons and conditions most critical to project success.

Failed Projects

Failed projects should be communicated as clearly as successes. It is expected that some projects and ventures tested will fail. These projects may prove ineffective, out-of-context, too costly, or to have minimal impact on core goals and strategies. Communicating what fails, including the context and conditions under which it was tested, will be equally valuable information to share with the international and local humanitarian communities. Documentation of what does not work and the conditions pursuant will provide key information for others who may be interested in testing a similar project, process, or product. In addition, documenting failures will enable other organizations to reconsider whether they are operating with a different idea or under different enough conditions to warrant additional exploration – saving them valuable time and resources in pursuing a similar effort. Even within a successful project, if partial aspects are deemed as failures, these should also be annotated accordingly.

Given the lab will host many people with design and communications skills, the development of regular communications can be supported by lab partners. Regular communication channels can also provide a space within which partners develop their own ideas and thoughts to share with the broader Innovation





NOTES ON METHODOLOGY

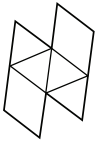
These frameworks are the independent recommendations of Justin Henceroth and Ashley Thompson, both graduate students concentrating in Risk & Resilience at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design, and are critically informed by three weeks of fieldwork launched from the nascent World Vision Nepal Earthquake Response Innovation Lab based in Lalitpur, Nepal.

Examining the ongoing fuel crisis and the significant collateral impacts experienced across scales and sectors, the team deployed energy - a topic of real concern and relevance to Nepali people - as an opportunity to discuss broader opportunities for innovation and partnership. Primary source information was accumulated through key meetings with individuals, businesses and trade organizations, and governmental and non-governmental organizations. The accessibility of fuel as an urgent issue at a personal, community, and national level elicited highly productive perspectives, speculations, and aspirations with regard to understanding the complexities of transformation for the future of Nepal. These were critical for facilitating conversations about effective and potential partnerships across aid and development with emphasis on gender equity and social inclusion.

The day to day reality of the energy situation in Nepal was inescapably apparent to the researchers as experienced through extended rolling brownouts and the associated restrictions on electrical equipment and amenities (lighting, hot water, communication connectivity), significant increases to cost and availability of transport, and degraded cooking and heating capacity. Notably, these impacts are so significant as to express across sociocultural demographics, although the severity and collateral implications remain graduated. In order to understand the alternative supply-chains and emergent markets that have emerged to sustain daily activities, the team operationalized common knowledge to independently procure energy resources, an energy scavenger hunt for fuel, transport, and firewood. Two site visits to earthquake-affected districts allowed for additional contextual knowledge and community engagement to understand implications of strategic intervention and interface directly with the people's needs and desires.

This fieldwork was informed by previous and ongoing scholarship surrounding risk, resilience, gender, capacity-building, development, and humanitarian aid. The team will continue to engage across this experience and expertise to frame, question, and re-frame the Innovation Lab, its role and purpose, as contexts and capacities develop.





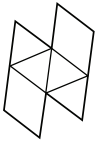
CONCLUSION

The World Vision Nepal Earthquake Response Innovation Lab offers a valuable opportunity to engage with partner organizations within Nepal in ways that will not only contribute to innovation within World Vision and internationally, but will build capacity, equity, and resilience within Nepal. Partnerships – with women, with local organizations, and with communities and households – are central to a strategy for empowerment and capacity building. A strategy within the lab ensuring local partners and women take

on management and leadership roles within projects will lead to capacity and skills building that will enable them to take on more prominent roles in the future development of Nepal. These are the skills and capacities that contribute over time to gender equity and long-term resilience. In this way, the lab can place gender and resilience at the forefront of efforts to explore and promote innovation in disaster recovery and humanitarian aid.

Acknowledgments

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Harvard University
Graduate School of Design

“If we don’t innovate, then we are leaving the most vulnerable communities behind.”

