PATH’s Living Labs Initiative accelerates the pace of health innovation by co-creating with users to rapidly design, test, and scale solutions to their long-standing challenges. We envision a world where all communities have the solutions they need to live healthy lives.

Our approach

The Living Labs Initiative uses a human-centered design (HCD) approach. HCD is a creative approach to problem solving that focuses on listening to and co-designing with the intended users so that a solution can be developed that is tailored to their needs. HCD enables the global health community to shift from prescribing solutions according to a perception of people’s needs to co-creating solutions that actually meet their needs.

Working with partners in the spirit of innovation and collaboration, we design sustainable health solutions for all.

Our approach to HCD is characterized by:

- A process led by local HCD experts who understand the cultural context, health care system, and users.
- A deep commitment to listening and empowering our users.
- A system of rapid ideation, prototyping, and iterative testing that takes only two to three weeks.

We use a “4D” approach to co-creation: define the problem; discover the needs of our users; dream with our users about possible solutions and prioritize concepts to test; design with our users, build a prototype, and keep iterating until a version is accepted by the users.

By engaging with frontline health workers, we are co-designing solutions tailored to their needs. Photo: PATH/ Faith Mbai.

What we do

The Living Labs Initiative draws on PATH’s 40+ year history of health innovation and the expertise of a global team more than of 1,500 people. Living Labs draws on PATH’s multi-disciplinary team of scientists, health professionals, engineers, and business professionals.

Currently, Living Labs operate in Kenya and Zambia and offer the following services:

- **Innovation strategy support**: Assistance with defining a vision, objectives, and design process.
- **Ethnographic research and stakeholder mapping**: Engage deeply with potential users to understand their needs and the local ecosystem.
- **Design facilities**: Spaces designed to promote collaboration and co-creation, and technology to facilitate virtual design sessions.
- **Local networking**: Access to strong relationships with national and local government, health facilities and community organizations.
- **Product development expertise**: Engineers who rapidly create low-fidelity prototypes for testing.
• **Local design and health systems expertise:** Staff with deep knowledge of the health system and local challenges and opportunities who engage users in participatory design workshops.

• **HCD capacity building:** Support for the continued growth of local HCD expertise.

**Expected impact**

By putting users at the center of designing innovations for health, the Living Labs Initiative will:

1. Align stakeholders in a way that enables faster ideation and implementation.
2. Improve product outcomes, reducing design and development time.
3. Lower the risk of a solution failing by improving its attributes to increase its acceptability and feasibility.

**Current projects**

**Engaging frontline immunization workers**

**Location:** Kenya and Zambia.

**Funder:** Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

**Challenge:** Numerous health system and technological improvements have helped frontline health workers increase vaccine coverage, but a key challenge is often overlooked—health worker engagement and motivation.

**Our approach:** Living Labs in Kenya and Zambia are engaging immunization workers in an HCD process to uncover solutions that can build on their professional goals to learn, improve, gain more job satisfaction, and achieve increased uptake of immunization services.

**Intended impact:** This project aims to test hundreds of solutions for strengthening health worker motivation and engagement to drive increased vaccine coverage.

**Identifying solutions to prevent and manage postpartum hemorrhage (PPH)**

**Location:** Kenya.

**Funder:** Merck for Mothers.

**Challenge:** PPH is a top contributor to maternal mortality globally, and health workers need appropriate solutions to reduce these preventable deaths.

**Our approach:** Living Labs is engaging health care workers to understand barriers and opportunities associated with prevention and management of PPH. By sharing learning, the team will help inform the Ministry of Health’s future PPH interventions.

**Intended impact:** Ultimately, this project will influence solutions adopted by the Ministry of Health to reduce maternal mortality associated with PPH in Kenya.

**Interested in learning more or partnering with Living Labs?**

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