

# Living Labs Initiative

## Overview



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: **discover** the problem and the needs of users; **define** the key themes and insights shared by 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 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 of more than 1,500 people. The Living Labs initiative uses PATH's multi-disciplinary team of scientists, health professionals, engineers, and business professionals. We have applied HCD to a variety of health areas including immunization, maternal health, and child health and nutrition.

The Living Labs Initiative offers three primary services: designing solutions, exploring concepts, and testing prototypes. While the overarching aim for each approach or service remains the same—bringing the voice of the end user into the design process—the specific objectives and outputs may vary.

- **Designing solutions:** We use this approach when there is a limited understanding of the problem and the desire to deeply understand the stakeholders and co-develop ideas for addressing their needs. We identify users for a particular problem or challenge and gather insights from them through a participatory process.
- **Exploring concepts:** We use this approach when there is a firm understanding of the problem and

potential concepts to solve it. This approach lowers the risk of entering a new market by providing an opportunity for rapid, initial user feedback and positioning for the concept, while simultaneously avoiding an expensive and time-consuming pilot of a concept that is not appropriate, scalable, or sustainable.

- **Testing prototypes:** We put early-stage solutions in the hands of end users, observe or simulate use to discover strengths and weaknesses, and then strategize improvements.

## 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.

## Example projects

### Engaging frontline immunization workers

**Location:** Kenya and Zambia.

**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.



Sue Wairimu, Living Labs Creative Designer, consults with a user during a workshop in Kenya. Photo: PATH/Faith Mbai.

## COVID-19 Vaccine Label: User Evaluation

**Location:** Kenya and Zambia.

**Challenge:** Healthcare workers need to be rapidly trained and mobilized to support the distribution of COVID-19 vaccines. Well-designed vaccine labels and packaging can help ensure healthcare workers are clear on vaccine administration procedures and feel confident in the new vaccine. The World Health Organization has proposed universal packaging and labelling for the COVID-19 vaccine in order to unify labeling requirements.

**Our approach:** Healthcare workers interacted with labeling prototypes for vaccine vials and packaging and provided feedback through surveys and focus groups.

**Intended impact:** Findings are informing training guidance for healthcare workers and updates to label designs for future batches of COVID-19 vaccines produced by manufacturers.

**Contact us:** [LivingLabs@path.org](mailto:LivingLabs@path.org)

**Learn more:** [www.path.org/livinglabs](http://www.path.org/livinglabs)



[path.org](http://path.org)

PATH is a global organization that works to eliminate health inequities by bringing together institutions, businesses, investors, and individuals to solve the world's most pressing health challenges. With expertise in science, market development, technology, advocacy, and dozens of other specialties, PATH develops and scales solutions—including vaccines, drugs, devices, diagnostics, and innovative approaches to strengthening health systems worldwide.

**Mailing Address**  
PO Box 900922  
Seattle, WA 98109 USA

**Street Address**  
2201 Westlake Avenue  
Suite 200  
Seattle, WA 98121 USA

**Updated**  
April 2021