UNHCR Innovation Service

A brief innovation glossary

Creativity:

The use of imagination or original ideas to create something new.[1] Tendency to recognize or generate ideas.

Imagination:

The ability of the mind to be creative or resourceful.[2] Imagination is the heart of creativity.

Invention:

A new, unique or novel idea, device, method, process or discovery.[3]

Inventor:

Someone who comes up with new ideas and concepts that may or may not lead to innovations.[4]

Innovation:

The implementation of a new or significantly improved product (good or service), process, a new marketing method, or a new organisational method in business practices, workplace organisation or external relations.[5] Innovation is an application of invention so that it creates value.

Innovation process:

We have a five-step process: 1) Define the challenge; 2) Identify solutions; 3) Test solutions; 4) Refine solutions; 5) Scale solutions. The process is not linear and it is not considered complete, as we seek to continually iterate.

Prototyping and testing:

A prototype is a small-scale, tangible representation of an idea or solution (or part of it) that people can directly experience. Prototyping allows you to communicate your idea or solution to others in an interactive way, try ideas out quickly and gather feedback easily. The prototype is tested to make sure it is fit for the purpose and users' need. Based on the feedback, the prototype is improved and tested again.[6]

---

1   Oxford Dictionary.

2   Oxford Dictionary.

3   Strategic Management of Technology and Innovation. CTI Reviews.

4   Lean Ventures, Seedcap AB.

5   OECD.

6   TD4Ed – Teachers Design for Education

UNHCR Innovation Service

Radical (or discontinuous) innovation:
Innovations with features offering dramatic improvements in performance or cost, which result in the transformation of existing markets or creation of new ones.[7] New to the world.

Incremental innovation:
An improvement in performance, cost, reliability, design, etc. to an existing product or process. New to the organization, but not to the world.

Disruptive innovation:
An innovation that transforms an existing market or sector by introducing simplicity, convenience, accessibility, and affordability where complication and high cost are the status quo.[8]

Design Thinking:
A discipline that uses the designer's sensibility and methods to match people's needs with what is technologically feasible and what a viable business strategy can convert into customer value and market opportunity.[9]

Human-Centered Design (HCD):
A design and management framework that develops solutions to problems by involving the human perspective in all steps of the problem-solving process. Human involvement typically takes place in observing the problem within context, brainstorming, conceptualizing, developing, and implementing the solution.[10]

Social Innovation:
A social innovation is a novel solution to a social problem that is more effective, efficient, sustainable, or just than current solutions. The value created accrues primarily to society rather than to private individuals.[11]

Piloting:
A pilot program, also called a feasibility study or experimental trial, is a small-scale, short-term experiment that helps an organization learn how a large-scale project might work in practice. A pilot provides a platform for the organization to test logistics, prove value and reveal deficiencies before spending a significant amount of time, energy or money on a large-scale project.[12]

---

7   Innovation-3

8   The Clayton Christensen Institute

9   Tim Brown CEO, IDEO

10   Wikipedia.

11   Stanford Graduate School of Business.

12   Techtarget (2017). Pilot Program (Pilot Study).

UNHCR Innovation Service

Ideation:
A structured process to generate a lot of ideas, preferably in a relatively short time frame. There are many different ideation techniques, e.g., brainstorming and empathy maps.[13]

Brainstorming:
An idea generation technique. Brainstorming combines a relaxed, informal approach to problem solving with lateral thinking. It encourages people to come up with thoughts and ideas that can, at first, seem a bit crazy. Some of these ideas can be crafted into original, creative solutions to a problem, while others can spark even more ideas.[14]

End-users:
Individuals who ultimately uses or are intended to use a product or service. End-users are the starting point of the innovation process.

Facilitation:
Facilitation is about taking a leadership role in innovation process (instead of content). The facilitator remains "neutral" meaning he/she does not take a particular position in the discussion. Innovation facilitators help to unleash the creative potential in people who own the content by creating and managing the environment so that each individual is able to contribute their best.[15]

Product innovation:
Changes in the things (products/services) which an organization offers.

Process innovation:
Changes in the way in which they are created and delivered.

Position innovation:
Changes in the context in which the products/services are introduced.

Paradigm innovation:
Changes in the underlying mental models which frame what the organization does.[16]

---

13   Lean Ventures, Seedcap AB.

14   Mindtools.

15   The Creative Problem Solving Group, Inc. Understanding the Role of a Facilitator

16   4Ps of Innovation by ©2005 Joe Tidd, John Bessant, Keith Pavitt