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Makerere University College of Health Sciences, School of Public Health ResilientAfrica Network (RAN)

A Highlight of RAN's Strengths and Offer

Makerere University School of Public Health ResilientAfrica Network (RAN) www.ranlab.org is founded on the premise of leveraging the talent and creativity within universities and communities to develop evidence based high-impact technologies and approaches to address development challenges. In particular, RAN has a specific focus to identify, develop and scale innovative solutions that strengthen the resilience of communities to natural and man-made stresses and shocks, and this requires deep engagement with vulnerable communities so as to understand and prioritize the development challenges.

Currently, RAN lab manages a portfolio of 139 innovations, 68 of which have received SEED funding support to pilot, test and refine their solutions and 71 innovations that have received technical and other support without funding. The lab team has also been creative and developed EpiTent Limited (a "portable habitation solutions" provider) and the Dynamic Project Trajectory Toolkit (DPTT) (used to track project trajectories). The lab has engaged over 1,372 faculty from diverse disciplines and over 10,000 students through monthly events like innovation BootCamps, Innovation Garages, and

capacity building trainings such as Human Centered Design (HCD), Hackathons, weekly innovation pitches, Business Modeling, Story Telling and Documentation, Grant writing, and Publication, Internships among others

The lab is well positioned to nurture budding entrepreneurs from universities, private sector and communities across Africa. We support innovators to launch the most compelling ideas, start-up enterprises and businesses that tackle issues affected by communities such as climate change, food insecurity, rapid urbanization, disease epidemics, chronic conflict and displacement among others.

RAN has developed the first ever and largest university institutionalized platform that can be used as a conduit for engagement with cities and communities in Africa in order to generate contextualized knowledge and data to inform resilience-driven innovations.

RAN has also engaged in cutting edge research and translating these research findings into sustainable start-ups. Through this process, RAN has tested and used

these connections to the communities to generate contextualized knowledge and data to inform resilience-driven innovations. Through this platform, RAN has developed tools such as the Resilience Analytical Framework, common Lexicon of resilience dimensions and the RAN analytical approach. In addition, RAN has undertaken resilience analyses covering 26 communities in Africa, generating 6 resilience problem sets and 15 scientifically proven resilience innovation pathways.

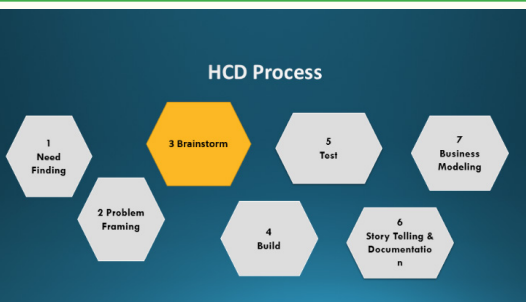
RAN has built a working collaboration with national and local governments in countries where the Universities are located. In these countries resilience data has been collected, policy and program stakeholders engaged using a resilience lens that promotes interdisciplinary and integrated sectoral programs.

The results accumulated over the years have contributed to positioning the lab as a reliable partner and utilitarian platform for catalysing innovation in the region and beyond.

More specifically, RAN offers a list of opportunities to; build the capacities of both upcoming and existing innovators, entrepreneurs and the community at large, inform policy, generate evidence based resilience data.

These include;

I. The Human Centered Design (HCD) Approach –The Design Thinking Course



Ongoing Design Process to inform Innovation

RAN uses the Human-centered design methodology to equip individuals with skill sets and knowledge in creative problem solving. Design thinking is an approach that frames problems creatively and generates highly innovative solutions, intervention pathways, strategies, systems and paradigms at the nexus of domains. It involves building deep empathy with people; generating tons of ideas; building prototypes and sharing with end-users to get feedback before one puts out the innovative new solution in the market.

The process involves making ideas visual, tangible, and experiential. We emphasize the importance of closely working with the communities with emphasis that this is more powerful than designing solutions for them. During the HCD training participants work in teams and after learning the design cycle we engage them in a Design Challenge to identify problems and solutions, come back in their teams to reframe the problem, synthesize their findings, brainstorm solutions, converge and take forward an idea to develop, prototype and test. Most of the design strategies still take a top-down approach; but we propose an approach towards problem solving where we iteratively engage with clients, customers, or end-users in the design, development and testing stages. The challenge can address broad topics

like agriculture, health, education, financial systems and result in viable prototypes or specific topics such as urban waste systems and to develop innovative solutions for that specific challenge.

Additionally, we support participants to continue to work on their projects from the Design Challenges because RAN is an Innovation Incubator. The RAN team also supports teams with technical assistance, connect them to innovation opportunities in the broader network as well as offer support to leverage funding in form of SEED grants. All participants join our Alumni database and are continuously exposed to rich opportunities within and outside the network.

2. Community and System Level resilience assessments



Ongoing Deliberative Polling (DP) Exercise in Malawi

RAN has generated several tools and instruments to facilitate rapidly conducting resilience assessments, community engagement, and innovation processes that are scientifically validated through data analyses and implemented across Africa. These include a range of tools and approaches for resilience assessment, managing the innovation process, knowledge sharing and policy formulation while engaging community voices.

These tools include; a guide to the Deliberative Polling (DP), Dynamic Project Trajectory Toolkit (DPTT) approach, Community Engagement and Co-Creation strategy, Design Thinking Training Manuals, Need finding guide, MKITS strategy, Communication Strategy, a guide to the Intervention Strategy Workshop (ISW) approach, and Monitoring Evaluation and Learning plans among others.

Feeding into RAN's objectives 1 (strengthening resilience) and 2 (provision of resilience innovative solutions to address community challenges), results from the community assessments are published in the first ever State of African Resilience Report (SOARR) which also highlights resilience gaps in resilience related efforts informing further research and response/provision of solutions to address communities' most pressing challenges. The first State of African Resilience Report is accessible on <http://www.ranlab.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/State-of-African-Resilience-Report.pdf> and the second report is currently under review in preparation for publication. Other publications are accessible on <http://www.ranlab.org/resources/publications>.

The community being at the centre of RAN's operations, innovators currently being supported by RAN are encouraged and supported to maintain a back and forth loop with target communities so that they are all part of the innovation process right from idea inception. This process also allows for product iteration.

3. Innovation Management

RAN's multidisciplinary team facilitates priority intervention setting with innovators using robust knowledge generation and sharing tools for continuous innovation incubation support, technical advice on sourcing for impactful innovations, capacity

building and mentorship etc.

It is at the RAN Innovation Lab where the Scaled Innovation Process including Field Research, Innovation Strategy, Exploratory Design, Solution Refinement, Pilot, Scaling and Diffusion takes place.

It is this hand holding aspect which most creative thinkers in Uganda are looking for to realize their dreams directed towards further developing the country. Someone needs to walk the innovation journey with you and RAN is here to do this. The RAN team has continued facilitating and supporting hackathons directed towards development of innovative solutions to address different challenges. To highlight two hackathons, one with Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) on Safe and Smart Transport Management <http://www.ranlab.org/partnership-with-uganda-communications-commission-in-acia-2017> and the other in partnership with UNDP-IGAD on Climate Change <http://www.ranlab.org/igad-climate-hackathon-november-28-30-2016>.

4. Intervention Strategy Workshop (ISW) Approach



Idea Generation process during one of the ISW sessions

This short but intense workshop is one that draws on full hands-on participation

of carefully selected participants from diverse backgrounds including the target communities for problem analysis. The ISW uses a robust framework for conceptualizing and launching innovative future systems designed for impact and scale.

During the ISW workshop, most of the work is done in small groups taking on different sub-tasks from the different tools in order to steer desired outcome of intervention pathways which clearly define the challenge. This relies on stakeholder input in determining the most strategic and high priority interventions, which if addressed, would result in maximum transformational impact using minimal resources.

5. The Humanitarian and Disaster Resilience Leadership (HDRL) Course

Due to the increasing number and intensity of disaster incidents which impose an immeasurable scale of impacts to the population, many Humanitarian and Development organizations are involved in delivery of interventions that reduce risk of vulnerable populations to shocks and stresses. However, it has been observed that due to the shortage of disaster risk management training, many practitioners learn their trade on job. There is a gap in effective leadership as well as limited knowledge in Disaster Risk Management (DRM) which has affected full involvement of Programs in resilience building.

As a result, there is an increasing need to train and strengthen the capacity of existing practitioners and leaders in the field of Resilience and DRM. Acknowledging this significant need, Makerere University School of Public Health (MakSPH) ResilientAfrica Network (RAN) and its partners developed an online certificate course in disaster resilience leadership for practitioners. The major focus of this course is to develop a new generation of humanitarian and disaster

resilience leaders with competences that will increase their effectiveness and involvement in DRM. This is a high level course and the first of its kind in the region. Well-experienced and regionally recognized resourceful persons in humanitarian, DRM and related fields from Makerere University and partner organizations involved in disaster risk reduction and management facilitate the course.

By the end of the certificate course, participants will be able to: identify and address leadership gaps in their respective organizations; identify the role of their organizations and themselves as leaders in DRM; identify and leverage resilience based interventions/ innovations to promote community driven resilience approaches. Details shared on <http://musph.ac.ug/index.php/%20short-courses/205-short-course-in-disasterresilience-leadership-2>.

6. RAN's Community Co-Creation Approach



Community Co-Creation in Northern Uganda-Pader District

RAN also prides in an approach called Community Co-creation. This is a form of engagement in problem solving between innovators and user communities. The goal is to allow the community members experience the process of creating their own solutions

which not only creates more exposure and impact to the design process (meaning they can engineer solutions to other looming challenges) but also creates a foundation for sustainability of the same solutions.

Community Co-creation means users and designers work together (design with) to come up with ideas, plans or processes and later on implement them. The same happens during the co-designing and co-production processes. In combination with Design Thinking, we shall use user-centered design which means the solution is designed by the community with help from the innovators/ facilitators. The goal is to allow the community members experience the process of creating their own solutions which not only creates more exposure and impact to the design process (meaning they can engineer solutions to other looming challenges) but also creates a foundation for sustainability of the same solutions.

The Community Co-creation process is run as a highly practical session. We encourage a lot of team building and cohesion among the groups. This helps the community to appreciate each other and it fosters a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect. Using Community Co-creation training approaches, we bring together all community members regardless of their educational background and equip them with skills on how to design and build technologies using locally available resources that will not only improve their lives and strengthen their communities but they can use these technologies to earn an income from either selling the products or renting them out.

7. Business Development Support

The Business Modelling training focuses on converting innovative ideas and projects into sustainable businesses that can finally be launched on the Market. Many innovators come up with brilliant ideas but lack the

acumen to turn these ideas into businesses and products to boost the Market.

At RAN, through the Business incubation arm we help participants to work on their Business plans, identify and develop customer survey tools, work on product marketing, and pricing tools. They map out their sales and marketing activities, articulate their value proposition and clearly highlight distribution channels through which they will deliver their offerings to their target customers and beneficiaries mindful of the cost and revenue streams. We also deliver a series of coaching sessions how the innovation will meet the user needs in a financially and technologically viable manner using the business model canvas.

Mentorship is also introduced at this stage; multi-disciplinary industry experts are invited to coach, critically analyze as well as support the innovators in sales, marketing, business finance, managing people, business legalization as well as identify scaling opportunities. Multiple pitching sessions are conducted both in-house and with invited targeted users and investors. At this stage, our efforts are directed at securing funders, investors, scaling partners, identifying and utilizing effective diffusion channels.

8. Story Telling and Documentation Support



Video editing in the RAN Multi Media Suite

Through the RAN's Multimedia and Communication Departments and informing RAN's objective 3 on knowledge sharing, we support innovators and entrepreneurs to develop short informative videos, take and use talking photos, make publications in multi-disciplinary journals, maintain robust blogs etc. documenting their journey of innovation so as to effectively market their projects to the outside world, potential funders via online and social media platforms. We also use MKITS (Modular Knowledge and Information Transaction Systems) which capture the spectrum of possible educational resources to build the capacity of innovators and communities. These range from short instructional videos or presentations that are designed to offer targeted, 'Just in Time' capacity building, to the more 'traditional' courses that may take weeks to complete, and offer broader training. Some of our developed courses are already shared on the different RAN platforms including; the Website-www.ranlab.org, YouTube-<https://www.youtube.com/user/ResilientAfrica/featured> and Facebook-<https://www.facebook.com/ResilientAfricaNetwork/>. Details are shared on http://www.ranlab.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/RAN-Achievements-as-at-September-2016_Share.pdf.

9. Leveraging from the Network of other Stakeholders



RAN leverages from the vast network of partners across the globe to further support the Innovation ecosystem within Uganda and beyond. The long and costly Innovation process calls for efforts from all sectors and players.

The RAN Innovation Lab team is fostering and nurturing relations with other

stakeholders including UNDP, UNHCR, The National Information Technology Authority (NITA-U), Parliament of Uganda, other Innovation Hubs, Agha Khan Foundation, Uganda Communications Commission and USAID Missions among others to further support innovation in Africa and beyond. Testimonies from some of the Innovators accessible on <http://www.ranlab.org/testimonies>.

10. Innovation Incubation Space



The RAN Innovation Lab on Plot 28, Upper Kololo Terrace, Kampala Uganda

An ambient working environment has been set up within Kololo, Kampala Uganda for the Eastern Africa Resilience Innovation Lab hosted at Makerere University and all the other Resilience Innovation Labs (RILabs) (Horn of Africa in Jimma University, South Africa, University of Pretoria and West Africa, University for Development Studies) to enhance creative thinking. These spaces have been fitted with 3D Printing services, reliable internet connectivity, access and linkage to multidisciplinary mentors among others.

11. Innovation Pilot and Scaling Support

It is at RAN where innovators are supported to work with the communities to develop solutions to address the diverse community challenges. Following the back and forth between the innovators and community members to inform iteration of the solutions, the RAN team engages with these innovators for community piloting of their solutions to inform uptake. To-date, 16 Start-Ups have been set up addressing community challenges but also the problem of unemployment.

12. Intellectual Property (IP) Acquisition Support

With support from RAN's Legal Advisor and the other Universities' Legal Offices, innovators have worked to ensure that they secure their IPs in time. Puliida Agricultural Lawyers have also extended Legal Support the RAN innovators giving back to the community through a non-financial related collaboration.

13. Policy Influence and Advocacy

Through all RAN's work, we are informing policies for better execution of specific country activities. Access some of the published policies on <http://www.ranlab.org/resources/publications> Several innovations being supported by RAN have also received enormous Media Coverage both nationally and internationally because of the relations RAN maintains with the different Media Houses.

As at June 2017-Details shared on www.ranlab.org

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