

# **Innovation Fund Platform V1.0**

**How might we design a platform that both motivates investors to explore new and emerging opportunities in social innovation as well as allows for the monitoring of investments in real-time?**

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## **THE PLATFORM**

UNICEF's Innovation (Venture) Fund is a newly established, non-thematic, pooled fund which has been specifically designed to finance early stage, open-source technology that can benefit children. The core motivation of the Innovation Fund is to identify "clusters" or portfolios of initiatives around emerging technology – so that UNICEF can both shape markets and also learn about and guide these technologies to benefit children. We invest in solutions that can impact the lives of the most vulnerable children.

We find these solutions clustered around \$100billion industries in frontier technology spaces, such as: blockchain, UAVs, virtual and augmented reality, 3D printing, machine learning, quantum computing, genetic engineering, Internet of

Things, artificial intelligence, nano-satellites and human dynamics.

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While the design team contributes to both streamlining the recruitment and portfolio management process backstage, we are also responsible for the website design you see here. The current objective of the website is to display real-time data information which allows users to monitor the growth of projects in each of our portfolios – Youth Engagement, Real-Time Information and Infrastructure.

## **THE OPPORTUNITY**

We wanted a platform that could summarize the landscape of our investments, inspire investors to participate in the social innovation space and motivate startups and UNICEF Country Offices to apply for the fund and see themselves as contributing to enhancing opportunities for children.

### ***Capacity***

We don't have a huge design team, so another challenge we face is capacity to build out the website while concurrently addressing the overall system and architecture of the fund. We know that aside from the website, we must also address things like how we recruit startups, how we make it easier for country offices to understand the application process, how we manage a growing number of investments and how we onboard companies.

Through all of this, a big goal of ours is how we maintain empathy in the technology space. At the end of the day, we must continue to share UNICEF's mission so it important for us to find the best ways to express impact and change for the communities we are servicing through the products we invest

in.

We indeed have our hands full with this project.

## ***Uncertainty***

You see, the first sketch of the UNICEF Innovation (Venture) Fund website started on a brown paper lunch bag, evolved to a flimsy paper plate and eventually made it's way through a rough and tumble developer onto a screen. It has been iterated on through a not so orderly design process and passed through the hands of different designers and conceptualizers for the past 2-3 years. It's important that we acknowledge that the concept of the Venture Fund is quite new, and with newness comes uncertainty. How do we share information? Why does real-time data matter? How can this website add value or build demand? How can we work with constraints in timing, capacity and budget? These are just some of the questions we face as we design.

We are constantly thinking about how we design a digital experience that can accommodate for the changing needs of our stakeholders, so our current site from a design perspective is very much a work in progress.

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## **RapidPro**

# **How do we build a mobile**

**technology brand that is  
global, scalable, open source  
and very  
easy to use?**

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## **THE PRODUCT**

RapidPro is a platform that allows you to visually build scalable mobile-based applications from anywhere in the world. RapidPro powers the connection between government leaders and the most important voices in their countries, while allowing organizations to connect those voices across borders and geographies.

RapidPro has been built by UNICEF with the collaboration of Nyaruka – a Rwandan software firm. It builds on UNICEF's 8 years of innovation experience in the most difficult operating environments and Nyaruka's TextIt application – a visual SMS application builder that has grown out of the RapidSMS community.

## **THE OPPORTUNITY**

We needed to create a global brand that could convey the universality of the RapidPro platform. The design needed to stand on its own and not get lost in the massive system of UNICEF. It was important for us to create a clean and simple design because of the sheer number of people RapidPro would reach. So began the quick, dirty and hands-on branding process

for RapidPro.

We started fairly simple, breaking down what it was at its very core – RapidPro is about real time data collection, SMS-based workflows, group coordination, cloud-hosted platform, basic basic basic mobile phones. We then layered this with the feeling the brand needed to evoke – fast, connected, responsive, real-time, new age, DIY.

Along with the logo, we created an easy-to-use set of icons in the same style as the logo to be used by our global deployment specialists. These icons are used by our deployment specialists in presentations and print material to explain system flows and identify stakeholders more clearly.

Additionally, we worked with a development team to create a simple, streamlined look and feel for the RapidPro.io website. Our contributions included friendly iconography and patterns derived from the logo and curation of fresher images, which was a departure from the normal UNICEF imagery.

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**MagicBox  
Visualization**

**Concept**

**How can we use illustration  
and storytelling to convey**

**the journey to build a complex unconventional open-source data platform which can analyse pandemics and other moments of global crisis?**

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## **THE PROJECT**

UNICEF Innovation is building Magic Box, a real-time digital platform which is used to analyze moments of global crisis and exogenous shocks. It is a system that catalogues amongst other factors, temperature, terrain, and population data, which helps track movements of people and potential risk areas.

Magic Box is comprised of both public and private data. Public data includes weather, maps, and population and socio-economic data, and some epidemiological data. Private data includes mobility and behaviours at aggregate levels.

Currently, Magic Box processes data from different sources in order to forecast the spread of infectious diseases like Ebola and Zika, but future versions might be used to contribute to work around climate change or urbanization, and not necessarily purely for acute emergencies.

While it cannot tell us when or where the next epidemiological outbreak will be, or the next earthquake or civil unrest, what makes Magic Box valuable and unique is that it can provide

information that will support UNICEF's response efforts in line with our humanitarian partners and experts. By doing so, UNICEF's program and field teams will be able to work more quickly to reduce the impact on children and communities, becoming more proactive rather than reactive.

## **THE BOOKLET**

For this project, we worked with illustrator, Sadi Tekin (<https://www.behance.net/saditekin>) to create a metaphoric narrative which explains how a crisis like the 2014 Ebola pandemic led to collaborations with unconventional partners like Amadeus, MIT, Telefonica and Google. The booklet is an attempt to convey how we're leveraging the power of data, science and technology and the power of our corporate and academic partnerships to tackle and prevent emergency crisis.

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## **70 Years of Innovation Poster**

**As the innovation team, how might we commemorate UNICEF's 70th Anniversary in a fun and fresh way?**

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***OK, really now, we are designers and we just wanted to have some fun...with a purpose of course.***

Design has always played its part in supporting the work of UNICEF since its founding after World War II in 1946. The sale of UNICEF's endearing postcards and greeting cards has been a key source of fundraising for decades, so we thought what better way to celebrate UNICEF's 70 years as an innovative change engine than through design?

There's so much to say about UNICEF's great work and it's already written all so well in UNICEF's anniversary publication, so to complement and express in our own delightful way our congratulations to UNICEF, the Office of Innovation designed a poster to celebrate UNICEF's 70 years as an innovative change engine.

## **GETTING STARTED**

We wanted to share something different and something that could encapsulate not just the work of our team, but the work of UNICEF at large as an innovative organisation. We reached out to fellow UNICEF colleagues to crowd-source and capture innovations throughout the years. We then took those ideas and turned them into a poster and set of shareable icons.

The poster contains over 50 representations of innovations and people, which chime on all of UNICEF's programmes from education, health, emergencies, water and sanitation and more.

***Harmonizing on a singular aesthetic was no easy task for four designers, but we thought it would be fun to share with you a little bit about the behind-the-scenes process on how we managed to accomplish the challenge:***

## **RESEARCH AND CROWDSOURCE**

We reached out to our innovation colleagues to crowdsource and study up on the many innovations that have spawned over the years. We generated a long list, sent out some quick surveys, researched and read publications and articles and then narrowed down innovations that would represent UNICEF's programmatic areas. We took these ideas and illustrated them into icons and a diverse array of people. See the list below to learn more about some of innovations represented in the poster.

## **FOUR DESIGNERS, ONE DESIGN STYLE**

Developing a system for iconography and agreeing on a direction required us to set-up rules and guidelines that would help us maintain a design consistency. We came up with a few rules to keep our aesthetic consistent, agreeing on things like stroke weight, corner radius degrees and spacing between lines within an object – all perhaps mundane sounding tasks for some, but imperative to the design. We were really conscious of covering as many programmatic areas as possible, from health to education to emergencies. We were really mindful of balancing between how much or little to represent, keeping in mind that the purpose of the poster was to express a joyful summary of UNICEF's pioneering in equity for

children.

## **OPEN DEBATES AND GOOD RAPPORT**

Communication and establishing a workflow between four designers located in different time zones was a crucial part to making this poster. We had a number of debates over things like typography, Pantone colors, branding and other designerly nuances. In between it all, we maintained a strict timeline between the rest of our priorities, chatted constantly on WhatsApp and email, and tapped into our colleagues for feedback and debate. What more, our design team utilized our already strong and transparent rapport, which allowed us to make quick, strategic and meaningful decisions. This is perhaps one of the most outstanding and valuable qualities about our design team and is something to highlight as something really special and exceptional about our team.

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## **[No Brand] Branding UNICEF Innovation**

**How do we design a cohesive,  
agile and fresh identity for  
innovation work at UNICEF?**

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***“The speed at which global problems – from disease outbreaks, to the global refugee crisis, to millions of out-of-school children – disrupt the lives of children around the world is only getting faster. UNICEF innovates in order to stay agile and find solutions to the evolving challenges affecting all children.”***

The UNICEF innovation identity was created to share a clear and cohesive story about who we are, what we do and how we do it. The identity conveys the personality of a team that is agile, fresh, forward thinking and optimistic.

The innovation ‘identity’ has always been a work in progress, with fragments of colours palettes and fonts being pulled up as the need arises. We were always hesitant to create a brand for UNICEF Innovation, not wanting to be too distinct or separate from the larger UNICEF brand. Our design team tasked itself with trying to create something that reaches a happy medium while also staying authentic to the UNICEF Innovation agenda. The term ‘no brand branding’ came about and stuck. After many iterations, collecting stories and consultations with the larger team, the UNICEF Innovation identity was created to follow four clear principles:

# **HONOUR UNICEF**

Innovation is here to strengthen UNICEF's mission.

# **REFLECT INNOVATION PRINCIPLES**

Our identity is agile, sustainable, scalable and open for both our team and for our audiences.

# **BE EASY TO APPLY**

Communication materials will be built with open fonts, complementary & contemporary colours, curated photographs and templates that are practical and easy to apply.

# **BE SIMPLE AND CLEAR**

A simple, fresh and optimistic look that lets our audiences know we're confident about our work.