For questions, please email the Accelerator Labs team at acceleratorlab.ph@undp.org
“Minds at the margin are not marginal minds.”

- Anil Gupta, Honey Bee Network -

BUILDING ON LOCAL INNOVATORS

At the UNDP Accelerator Labs (AccLabs), we aim to identify grassroots solutions together with local actors and validate their potential to accelerate development. Solutions can come in many different forms, from a farmer discovering a new way to prevent floods to a nonprofit that is especially impactful.

The labs will also harness the potential of real time data and people’s energy to respond to rapidly evolving challenges that impact development.

Building on these locally-sourced solutions, the labs will rapid test and iterate new ideas to learn which ones work, which ones can grow, and which ones don’t, bringing experimentation to the core of our work.

What’s inside

The Field Guide is divided into two sections:

**LEARN**

A summary of the fundamental concepts and principles of Solutions Mapping.

**NOTES**

An analog note-taking and quick reference tool as you go through the adventure.

SOLUTIONS MAPPING
is one of the principal methodologies of AccLabs that allows for a
deep immersion into the dynamics of grassroots communities in
order to identify and work with grassroots innovators who have
addressed some of the most pressing social challenges in their
communities. It is also the belief that grassroots solutions are
embodiments of a deep sense of empathy in the community.

**NEEDS** — **SOLUTIONS**

(Grassroot innovations)

**GRASSROOTS INNOVATIONS**

Grassroot innovations are created by people who are affected by
an issue directly or indirectly, they are not created by private
companies, NGOs or governments.

**SALIKLAKBAY**

SalikLakbay is a combination of two (2) Filipino words: **Saliksik**, to
explore or research; and, **Lakbay**, to journey or go in an adventure.

**SalikLakbay** is an activity that brings together curious individuals to
embark in an epic journey of solutions mapping in grassroots
communities around the country.

**SalikLakbay** can be done by anyone. In fact, we highly encourage
everyone, you included, to join in the movement and make your
duty to document and map solutions as you go on with your daily
routines.

As an adventure of sorts, **SalikLakbay** is a collaborative journey
that is both an outward journey to empathize with the grassroots
communities and an inward journey of self-reflection.

Our goal is to identify needs, issues and opportunities by looking
for solutions developed by the people.
THE PRINCIPLES

VIEWING PROBLEMS FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF USER-LED SOLUTIONS

We will start our adventure by embracing the following principles:

OPENNESS
Openness is about being open-minded, curious and imaginative. This is the beginning of empathy and allows for one to understand how a solution answers a specific need of the community.

OPTIMISM
Optimism is the ability to embrace the possible – that despite the lack of resources and knowledge, people can find ways to solve their problems with ideas that have potential for scale.

POSITIVE DEVIANCE
Positive deviance is about finding uncommon and unique behaviors, solutions or strategies that enable particular individuals to find better solutions, despite facing similar challenges, lack of resources or insufficient knowledge.

PEOPLE-CENTERED
The object of solutions mapping is not the idea nor the solution but the people who benefit from it. It is also about connecting with people and engaging them in deeper conversations to talk about their background, needs and aspirations.

LEVERAGING THE FILIPINO DISKARTE

Innovation or hacking is deeply ingrained in the Filipino psyche. We see these everyday: the quintessential jeepney, the adventurous habal-habal or the functional pedicabs. Filipino Diskarte is about ingeniously and creatively finding ways to survive despite the bare essentials.

Diskarte is framed well by Morales (2017) defining it as creative problem-solving in response to practical problems within one’s social sphere. It requires creative ideation, specifically divergent thinking, making remote associations, and flexible cognitive control, to generate original solutions.

Diskarte is in a way a humble acknowledgment that “minds at the margin are not marginal minds.”

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THE PROCESS

CONNECTING AND ENGAGING WITH GRASSROOTS INNOVATORS

The SalikLakbay Solutions Mapping process a straightforward three-step process:

IDENTIFY FOCUS AREA

Before we even go out and engage the community, we need to identify the focus area to guide our discovery and search process.

ENGAGE WITH COMMUNITIES & LOOK FOR SOLUTIONS

We will do field visits to look for solutions, observe and interview grassroots innovators on how their solutions are helping their challenges.

DOCUMENTING & ANALYZING

We need to be able to document the solutions, take photos or videos, capture insights and reflect on results.

WHO & WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

SOLUTIONS MAPPING CHANGES THE POWER DYNAMICS BETWEEN SOLUTION DEVELOPERS AND USERS

WHO. Our target individuals are those in the communities who have created, modified, improved, enhanced or hacked a product, service or solutions in the community. There is no specific demographic for these individuals. They may be craftspersons who are looking to improve their tools, or perhaps a mother who modifies a home appliance to suit her needs.

WHAT. We are looking for user-led innovations – those borne not in labs or design firms but in the experience of regular persons wrestling with a problem. We will look for “hacks” where people have enhanced or modified an existing product / service; or, created a new one to fit their needs, preferences, improve the performance, or bypass barriers and limitations.

FOR

Designer led
“Designers” develop solutions for end-users

WITH

Co-creation
“Designers” develop solutions with end-users

BY

User-led
Solutions are developed by end-users for themselves, their families and communities.
EXAMPLES

Here are some examples of grassroots innovations in the Philippines:

Originally created in the landlocked province of Agusan del Sur, the motorized pedicab uses a low-horsepower air-cooled pumpboat engine mated with a conveyor-belt or chain-belt mechanism to run. This is the Agusanons way of providing inexpensive transportation options for those living in hilly areas in Mindanao.

This wooden bicycle is a regular sight in the mountains of the Cordillera region. As the region is naturally mountainous, riders use the power of gravity to ply the highways. Check out the cool foot-activated wooden brake!

Turns out, wooden bicycles are not just Filipino innovations. The photo above is from Rwanda and is used to haul lumber and other heavy objects.
The 1-peso coin-operated water dispenser is a cheaper alternative to single use plastic use such as water bottles.

This is a taxi driver’s solution to the heat wave plaguing cities today. By attaching an aluminum duct to the front air conditioning vent, passengers enjoy a more comfortable cabin temperature.

SOLUTIONS MAPPING

PRO TIPS

Follow these tips to ensure a pleasant SalikLakbay experience:

- Go out and explore in pairs. It is always best to have someone take notes while the other is busy conversing and engaging.

- Target those who are busy working on something (e.g. craftsperson, smith or worker).

- Inform them of your intent to ask or inquire.

- Observe in detail how they interact with the tool or solutions.

- Talk to them and engage them by asking questions focusing on:
  
  - What are the reasons behind the idea / solutions? Why did they do it?
  - What is the main pain point / frustration / challenge or need that they are trying to address?
  - How did the idea / solutions answer this challenge?
  - Have they shared this solution to others? Are they willing to share this to other people?

- Take pictures or videos focusing on how they interact or use the solution / idea.

- Don’t forget to ask permission!
SAFETY & SECURITY TIPS

Walking along the streets of Manila is truly an incredible experience. But it also comes with risks that will lead to potentially dangerous situations if you are not careful. Follow these tips to avoid common problems in the Metro:

- Prepare extra clothes and a bottle of water.
- Always walk together in pairs.
- Be always on your guard when walking the streets.
- Study the map provided to you and be aware of where you are.
- It's okay to say “No, I'm not interested.” to people. They won't hold it against you.
- Don't wear expensive jewelry or clothing.
- Dress simply and wear comfortable clothes.
- Wear your body purse across your shoulder having the purse right in front of you.
- Place your wallets in front pockets.
- Be wary of overly friendly strangers.
- Do not accept any food or drinks offered to you.
- Buy sealed bottled water, bottled softdrinks with sealed caps or in aluminum cans.
- Take as less money as possible.
- Leave non-essentials: passports, IDs and credit cards.
- Do not flash your cash.
- Blend in and act like a local.
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