



IDeass

Innovation for Development and South-South Cooperation

Participants

• ACADEMY OF SCIENCE, CUBA • ACADEMY OF SCIENCE, ALBANIA • SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL, NICARAGUA, CONICYT • UNIVERSITY OF "TUNIS AL MANAR", TUNISIA • UNIVERSITY "7 NOVEMBRE À CARTHAGE", TUNISIA.

• INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT & DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE, YORK UNIVERSITY, CANADA • WHO MEDITERRANEAN CENTRE FOR VULNERABILITY REDUCTION • WHO REPRESENTATIVE, ALBANIA • EXCLUSION.NET INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF PRACTICES AGAINST SOCIAL EXCLUSION • ONG COE.

• OB-GY AND CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL, BOGOTÀ, COLOMBIA • ENVIRONMENT AGENCY ARPAT, TUSCANY, ITALY • NATIONAL CENTRE OF AGRICULTURAL HEALTH, CUBA • NATIONAL CENTRE FOR TRADITIONAL AND NATURAL MEDICINE, CUBA • OFFICE OF THE HISTORIAN OF THE HISTORICAL CENTRE OF HAVANA, CUBA • HERBAL FOLKLORE RESEARCH CENTRE (HFRC), TIRUPATI, INDIA • BIOLOGICAL PHARMACEUTICALS LABORATORIES, CUBA • CENTRE FOR TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE, FIOR DI PRUGNA, FLORENCE, ITALY.



Presentation

“Development and technology enjoy an uneasy relationship: within development circles there is a suspicion that technology-boosters are all too often people who promote expensive and inappropriate solutions without taking into account development realities. Indeed, the belief that there is a technological silver bullet that can ‘solve’ illiteracy, bad conditions of health or economic failure reflects a superficial knowledge of the reality of poverty. However, if the co-operative communities overlook the explosion of technological innovations in food, medicine and information, they risk marginalizing themselves and denying developing countries opportunities that, if carefully examined, could transform the lives of poor people and offer new development opportunities to poor countries.” (UNDP 2001 Human Development Report). UNDP refers here to technological innovation; it is clear, however, that the same concept could be applied to other forms of innovation, especially in social and economic practices. There is little systematic recourse to innovation in development circles, but innovative practices could contribute significantly to the pursuit of development objectives.

With this idea in mind, ILO/Universitas, UNDP/APPI and UNDP/IFAD/UNOPS, as part of their international programmes in human development and the fight against poverty, have decided to launch an Initiative to promote the exchange of innovations through south-south cooperation projects. IDEASS is founded on the pledges of the major world summits of the 1990s and of the General Assembly of the Millennium, which give priority to cooperation among southern actors, with the support of industrialized countries.

The initiative aims to identify and promote, at international level, innovations (and experiences) that have contributed to human development, valorised environmental resources and reduced exclusion, unemployment and poverty. In order to share and disseminate these innovations (and experiences) IDEASS supports specific projects in south-south cooperation, with the technical and financial support of actors in international and decentralised cooperation.

In the pursuit of these aims, IDEASS has involved local authorities engaged in decentralised cooperation projects within human development programmes. Local institutions have identified innovations that contribute to the development of their territories, fine-tuning the technology as well as their methodologies of intervention. IDEASS again supports specific projects in south-south-north cooperation, with the technical and financial support of actors in decentralised cooperation.

IDEASS has an international dimension, as a corollary to the activities that the promoting programmes carry out in the countries. An International Secretariat is flanked by National Secretariats in each participant country.

The International Secretariat is based in Rome, in the offices of UNDP/UNOPS, and in Geneva, at the ILO Social Protection Sector.

Promoters of Ideass

The ILO's Universitas programme (Decent Work through Training and Innovation) promotes innovative solutions to problems of human development, especially in the world of work. It conducts action-research activities and is involved in capacity-building and training for decision-makers, project managers and personnel working in development. The ILO/Universitas programme applies the labour practice innovations promoted by IDEASS.

UNDP's APPI programme (Anti-Poverty Partnership Initiatives) is a tool, based on integrated and participatory local development practices, to help both States and social actors define and implement national policies to reduce poverty and social exclusion. The APPI programme promotes south-south cooperation through IDEASS, extending the impact of its current programmes in order to involve further southern countries and additional international cooperation organizations. APPI promotes innovations in all dimensions of human development.

UNDP/IFAD/ILO/UNOPS' human development programmes promote integrated and participatory local development processes in the framework of national policies, with the support of public and private actors and civil society. These programmes constitute a framework in which various donor countries, private sector bodies and communities of industrialized countries can collaborate in an organised way through decentralised cooperation. It is within this framework that the projects of south-south cooperation are carried out through IDEASS.

Programmes are currently operating in Albania, Algeria, Angola, Colombia, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Libya, Macedonia, Morocco, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic, Serbia, South Africa and Tunisia. The initiative is extendable to further countries as soon as the conditions and the means for expansion are met. Moreover, with the collaboration of IFAD, UNOPS is setting up a STEP programme promoting innovations in Albania, Macedonia and Serbia through IDEASS.

More than 300 local authorities are involved in decentralised cooperation within human development programmes to support processes of participatory and integrated territorial development. These authorities and their institutions contribute significantly to the IDEASS initiative.

Objectives

IDEASS seeks to reinforce territorial, integrated and participatory development processes by promoting innovation for human development. The Initiative aims at improving the ability of local and national public and private actors to respond in a satisfactory manner to the needs of the population through innovative and efficient mechanisms and tools already adopted in other countries.

South-south cooperation projects bring concrete benefits to actors engaged in the conceptualisation and implementation of territorial development processes and complement the activities carried out by the promoters' programmes.

Moreover, IDEASS offers southern countries an opportunity to collaborate in concrete activities, strengthening relationships among public and private actors, service providers, workers' and employers' organisations, universities and local communities in the countries concerned. Finally, the international dissemination of innovations promoted by IDEASS stimulates interest in a wider public.

Activities

The main activities of IDEASS are:

- **Building a “supply” of innovations** through research conducted internationally and in participating countries. Countries indicate their fields of interest and specific needs, to orient the international identification of pertinent innovations.
- **Promoting innovations** to potential users. In collaboration with the respective authors of the innovations, IDEASS produces descriptive brochures that are disseminated at international level through a web-page, and in pilot-countries with the collaboration of the institutions sponsoring IDEASS.
- **Formulating and implementing south-south and south-south-north cooperation projects** with the actors interested in adopting specific innovations promoted by IDEASS. The projects are technically supported by the protagonists of the innovations themselves, with further technical and financial support from the promoters’ programmes and from international and decentralised cooperation.

Fields of action

The fields of action refer to the commitments of the World Summit on Social Development held in Copenhagen and the Millennium Goals. In particular, they correspond to UNDP’s “practical areas” in the field of human development and the fight against poverty and ILO’s strategies to promote decent work practices at a local level.

- **Governance**, supporting the functioning of local institutions, promoting rights, forging concertation, territorial planning, managing judicial systems and public services.
- **Developing a sustainable environmental patrimony**, managing the historical and artistic heritage, valorising environmental and energy resources, reducing vulnerability, managing emergencies, identifying appropriate technology and methodologies, supporting environmentally sound business practices.
- **Developing sustainable health and social services**, decentralising services, widening access to and participation in services, social integration of children and adults with problems in education and the labour market, identifying appropriate technology and methodologies.
- **Developing sustainable educational services**, decentralising education, widening access and participation in schools, including children with problems, valorising the cultural heritage, identifying appropriate technology and methodologies.
- **Widening access to decent work** practices through the promotion of employment and local economic development, social protection, social dialogue and tripartism, promoting labour rights, fighting child labour, reducing social exclusion.

Characteristics of innovations

The innovations can be products, technologies or social, economic or cultural practices. The most important characteristics of the innovations promoted by IDEASS are that they:

- **Have transfer potential.** Innovations able to generate concrete projects in other countries through south-south and south-south-north cooperation are promoted taking into account the existence of legal barriers, intellectual property constraints, the level of technological complexity, dependence of an innovation on particular social institutional, cultural or environmental situations.
- **Increase impact of projects.** Innovations should have proved to have a significant and sustainable impact on the objectives they were designed for. They should also contribute to resolve internationally recognized problems related to human development and widening access to decent work.
- **Are nationally and internationally validated.** IDEASS cannot evaluate the effectiveness of the innovations. Hence, priority is given to innovations that have already been the subject of reliable national or international validation. During the transfer process, IDEASS will ensure that intellectual property rights and any profits deriving from it are attributed to the inventors of the innovations.
- **Demonstrate cost-benefit advantage.** Innovations should demonstrate cost/benefit advantage compared to alternatives.
- **Provide technical assistance.** Inventors of innovations should be willing to provide technical assistance within the framework of south-south and south-south-north cooperation projects.

Building an international “supply” of innovations

The gathering of innovations is coordinated by the IDEASS International Secretariat.

Innovations are selected by consulting web pages specialised in the dissemination of innovations, through universities associated with the Universitas Programme, by means of experts in the different fields of action and international cooperation organisations, and through the results of international competitions for innovations.

National Secretariats promote activities to identify innovations conceived and implemented in the country, in collaboration with authorities, institutions, associations, workers’ and employers’ organizations, United Nations Agencies, Universities, research centres, international cooperation organizations and other actors involved in the respective programmes. The necessary documentation to launch national innovation competitions is available at the International Secretariat.

In order to orient the International Secretariat’s research, National Secretariats also identify specific requests for innovation in collaboration with national and international actors involved in the initiative.

Promoting innovations

Each innovation is presented in a brochure, prepared by the International Secretariat in collaboration with the respective inventors. The brochures are promoted at international level through the web page: Ideassonline.com

In the involved countries, disseminating the brochures is intended to create a “demand” to learn more about the innovations, about their potential effectiveness in solving problems in the national and local context, and eventually, about how to undertake cooperation projects.

Brochures are circulated among potential users in the countries in different ways: through specific events, through “Innovations Fairs”, national institutions, relevant United Nations agencies and national universities.

In order to promote the innovations, international meetings and seminars on key themes are also organized, with the involvement of the innovation inventors and the interested countries. The brochures provide useful information for organising this kind of meeting.

South-South cooperation projects

Once these promotional activities have generated specific interest for an innovation coming from another southern country, or from territories involved in decentralised cooperation partnerships, the necessary steps are taken to formulate a south-south or a south-south-north cooperation project. The nature of the activities of the projects may vary according to the innovation in question, but in all cases they are carried out with the technical assistance of the creators of the innovations.

In collaboration with the International Secretariat, exchanges between the interested country and the originators of the innovation are organised to move projects forward. The implementation of south-south projects will follow these stages:

- **Presentation of the innovation.** Through an organised event, the innovation is presented by its creators to the interested public. These events are usually organised by the national institution which supports IDEASS in the country, in collaboration with the programme promoters. In their turn, they involve the appropriate national authorities, potential users, public and private bodies, universities, international cooperation organizations and United Nations agencies.
- **Formulation of the cooperation project.** Through an ad hoc working group with interested actors, the originators of the innovation provide technical assistance for feasibility studies and to formulate a project to implement the innovation in the country. The project indicates the activities, costs, technical assistance required in the country from the innovation inventors, travel for training purposes, and the modalities of monitoring and evaluation.
- **Presentation of the project to potential donors.** The ad hoc working group organises meetings with international cooperation actors or potential donors (foundations, regional banks, etc.), in order to present the project proposal, and to promote financial and technical participation in the implementation phase.
- **Implementation of the south-south project.** The project is implemented with the technical support of its creators, specialized experts, and with the technical and financial support of the promoters’ programmes and other mobilized international cooperation actors.

The International Secretariat

The IDEASS Initiative is coordinated by an International Technical Secretariat, which benefits from the complementary activities of the promoters' programmes and from the contributions of the corresponding organisations (UNDP, UNOPS, ILO).

In particular, various units of ILO collaborate, both at headquarters and in the field: the Bureau for Employers' Activities, Bureau for Workers' Activities and Employment, Social Protection and Social Dialogue Sectors. In the field of decent work, the promotion of innovations is made within the framework of the ILO's Task Force that implements the Universitas programme. ILO Contact: Philippe Vanhuynegem; e-mail: vanhuynegem@ilo.org. UNDP/UNOPS Contact: Giulia Dario; e-mail: giulia.dario@unops.fao.org.

The International Secretariat is responsible for:

- Coordinating the identification of innovations.
- Collaborating with the innovation inventors in the production, translation and design of brochures.
- Guaranteeing the dissemination of brochures in countries among all the actors that participate in IDEASS, as well as through the web-page.
- Supporting the implementation of activities in countries.
- Organising and co-financing, in collaboration with countries, travel for the inventors of the innovations in order to promote and formulate south-south and south-south-north projects.
- Providing technical assistance in the formulation and implementation of south-south and south-south-north cooperation projects, collaborating in international fund-raising activities.
- Organising meetings and international seminars on key themes in order to promote innovations among potential technical and financial partners.
- Monitoring the Initiative's activities and producing periodical reports.

The National Secretariats

In participating countries, an IDEASS National Secretariat is established within the appropriate national institution interested in managing the Initiative. In Albania and Cuba, for example, Academies of Science are responsible. In other countries, universities run the Initiative. Coordinators of the promoting programmes actively participate in the work of the National Secretariat. All IDEASS activities in the country see the active collaboration of the national authorities responsible for the promoting programmes and for south-south cooperation.

With the support of the International Secretariat, the National Secretariats are in charge of:

- Implementing activities to identify innovations created in the country, in collaboration with all the interested parties, through specific competitions, among other things.
- Identifying requests for innovation.
- Organising travel to the country for the originators of the innovations.
- Organising promotional events related to the innovations, involving all the national actors concerned.
- Supporting, within the framework of ad hoc working groups, the formulation of south-south and south-south-north cooperation projects.
- Promoting south-south and south-south-north cooperation projects, in collaboration with the international and decentralised cooperation actors operating in the country.
- Supporting the implementation of south-south cooperation projects and ensuring monitoring and reporting.

The IDEASS Initiative — Innovations for Development and South-South Cooperation — is promoted by the following international cooperation programmes: OIT/Universitas, UNDP/APPI, and by the UNDP/IFAD/UNOPS Human Development and Anti-Poverty Programmes, currently active in Albania, Angola, Colombia, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mozambique, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, Serbia, South Africa and Tunisia. The cooperation initiative grew out of the major world summits in the 1990s and the Millennium General Assembly; it gives priority to cooperation between protagonists in the South, with the support of the industrialised countries.

The aim of IDEASS is to strengthen the effectiveness of local development processes through the increased use of innovations for human development and decent working conditions. By means of south-south cooperation projects, it acts as a catalyst for the spread of social, economic and technological innovations that favour economic and social development at the local level. The innovations promoted may be products, technologies, or social, economic or cultural practices. For more information about the IDEASS Initiative, please consult the website: www.ideassonline.org.

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Innovation for Development and South-South Cooperation



UNDP's Anti-Poverty Partnership Initiatives (APPI) Programme is a tool designed to assist governments and social actors to establish and apply national policies for reducing both poverty and social exclusion, based on local integrated and participatory development practices.



The human development and anti-poverty programmes run by UNDP, IFAD ILO and UNOPS promote integrated and participatory local development processes within the framework of national policies, with the support of public, private and civil society actors. These programmes provide the framework within which donor countries and communities in the industrialised countries can collaborate in an organised way, through decentralised cooperation. It is in this framework that south-south cooperation projects will be carried out via the Initiative.



The ILO/Universitas programme (decent work through training and innovation) encourages the use of innovative solutions to problems in human development, especially in the world of work. To achieve this, it carries out action-research activities and trains decision-makers and personnel working in local development.