

UNICEF Innovation Unit | Academic Partnerships Framework

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Academic partnerships help UNICEF stay agile and relevant through:

1. **Future planning:** working with leading academics to look 3-5 years out at emerging technologies, research, and methods and how they can add value to UNICEF's work
2. **Next-generation talent development:** connecting with young problem-solvers and building a community of practice around UNICEF Innovation principles and methods

Main value outputs:

Networks
 Research
 Internal capacity building
 Talent development/recruitment

Structure:

1. **3 Flagship partnerships** (*partnership managed by IU Academic Partnerships Lead*)
 - a. Integrated partnership with several points of engagement, including collaborative research, student programs, staff development, and north-south/south-south collaboration.
2. **3 Emerging partnerships** (*partnership managed by relevant IU focal point*)
 - a. Small, exploratory engagements with universities focused on building networks, internal capacity building, and/or exploring flagship potential
3. **Partnerships managed by Country Offices, Labs, Natcoms, or relevant Innovation Unit focal points**
 - a. Support provided by the IU in the form of advisory, guidance materials, documentation & lessons learned

	LEVEL(TYPE?)	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE	VALUE CREATED
time and resources required ↑	Institutional	integrated engagement across multiple levels	Design Matters program at Art Center	networks, validation, talent development, new ideas
	Research team	research team or individual researcher; doctoral level +, remote or on-site	medical test-strip R&D with Rhodes University	new ideas/products, knowledge sharing, validation, M&E
	Course	full semester course co-taught by UNICEF	Design for UNICEF course at NYU ITP	internal capacity building, talent dev, new ideas
	Challenge	design contest around UNICEF problem statement	Global Design Challenge	internal & external capacity building, partnership development, new ideas
	Workshop	short-term assignment, hackathon, presentation, etc.	communications workshop with The New School	internal & external capacity building, networks, new ideas
	Intern	individual student sitting with our team	RIT student developer working on Innovation Mapping	talent development, project support

Qualification Assessment for Academic Partners

Flagship Partners:

- Based in a country where UNICEF works. Priority will be given to universities that add geographic diversity to UNICEF's current portfolio of partners.
- Demonstrated research leadership in at least one of the following areas:

- One of UNICEF Innovation's current project portfolios: Access to Information, Youth-Engagement, Real-time Information
- One of UNICEF Innovation's 'Future areas' of focus: Identity, Transport, Learning, Mobile Finance, Wearables
- Energy and Environmental sustainability
- Innovation management, user-centered design, social entrepreneurship
- Data science
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Multinational campuses or existing north-south/south-south collaborations
- Interest in a multifaceted partnership that includes open, collaborative research and one or more student programs
- Contribution of in-kind resources including but not limited to 1. Opening a new line of research 2. Dedicated lead faculty 3. Team of PhD students 4. Opportunity to publish research
- Joint application for at least two funding grants over two years
- Endorsement of UNICEF Innovation principles, including a commitment to open source outputs from the collaboration
- Clearance of UNICEF partner screening ([via PFP](#), [PPD](#))

Emerging Partners:

- Based in a country where UNICEF works
- Demonstrated research leadership in at least one of the following areas:
 - One of UNICEF Innovation's current project portfolios: Access to Information, Youth-Engagement, Real-time Information
 - One of UNICEF Innovation's 'Future areas' of : Identity, Transport, Learning, Mobile Finance, Wearables
 - Energy and Environmental sustainability
 - Innovation management, user-centered design, social entrepreneurship
 - Data science
 - Monitoring and evaluation
- Multinational campuses or existing or planned north-south/south-south collaborations
- Demonstrated potential for expansion of partnership to include pursuit of funding and new areas of work
- Endorsement of UNICEF Innovation principles, including a commitment to open source outputs from the collaboration
- Clearance of UNICEF partner screening ([via PFP](#), [PPD](#))

Value of Academic Partnerships (detailed)

Value to UNICEF	Value to Academic Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Access to knowledge/expertise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>programmatic and technical; short-term 'consultant'-style or strategic over longer collab</i> ● Networks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>tap into academic community and existing partnerships</i> ○ <i>build community of practice and practitioners around our methodologies and work</i> ● New ideas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Early-stage concepts, products, etc. developed through challenges/courses /workshops</i> ○ <i>Advanced R&D around specific needs, technologies, etc.</i> ● Identify and engage new talent ● Internal capacity building <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Engage colleagues in Innovation work, methodologies</i> ○ <i>Exposure to new models/systems/practices that can inform our work</i> ● Reputation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Applied research / Participatory Action Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Opportunities to conduct research around real case studies provided by UNICEF</i> ○ <i>Opportunity for research to have wide-reaching impact (both in terms of people served as well as academic exposure)</i> ● Opportunities for fieldwork <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Able to conduct research with difficult-to-reach places/populations, with support of local UNICEF office</i> ● UNICEF expertise/understanding of problems ● Access to data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Unique data from UNICEF could allow people to do research they otherwise might not be able to do</i> ● UNICEF brand