

Shaping RIL's Future Strategy

Main Takeaways from RILx23 Event



— *Intro*

Welcome to this debrief of RILx23, this document aims to present the significant outcomes and key takeaways from RILx23, the annual event organized by Response Innovation Lab (RIL), held in Nairobi from June 12th to June 15th. RILx23 served as a dynamic and engaging platform, bringing together a diverse range of stakeholders from the Response Innovation Lab network, as well as prominent global and regional humanitarian innovation actors. The event centered around the theme of "Innovation Partnerships," fostering a vibrant exchange of information, opinions, and ideas.

The primary objective of RILx23 was to deepen collaboration among key actors in the humanitarian sector, shape RIL's future strategy, and influence the global agenda for humanitarian innovation. This document provides an overview of the four enriching days of the event, highlighting the specific avenues of collaboration explored and the transformative changes in partnership approaches discussed.

One of the focal points of RILx23 was the exploration of partnerships between for-profit and nonprofit entities. The event delved into the potential for collaboration between these sectors and how it can drive innovation in the humanitarian space. Additionally, RILx23 examined how international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and other humanitarian actors can adopt new partnership approaches to bring about transformative changes.

The event showcased breakthrough insights and innovations from East African innovators, surpassing the traditional scale limitations. This provided valuable insights into the necessary support required for innovative ideas to gain traction in the humanitarian field. The event concluded with a thought-provoking discussion on "RIL 2.0 Strategy and What's Next," where participants openly explored the future evolution of RIL and the humanitarian sector as a whole, considering the challenges and opportunities highlighted throughout the event.

This document will now presents the key outcomes and takeaways from RILx23, shedding light on the impactful discussions, collaborative initiatives, and strategic directions that emerged during the event.

1- Do what we do better:

There were no calls for RIL to radically alter its approach or ways of working but a general wish that Response Labs and the CSU increase both the quality and quantity of its interventions.



- Convene more actors: Increase opportunities for actors to directly engage with RIL through initiatives like Smart Communities Coalition, Communities of Practice and more Convener events.
- Increase strategic partnerships: provide more meaningful opportunities for other organizations to engage with RIL platforms, especially entities with non-INGO profiles.
- Ramp up Continuous Quality Improvement: Accelerate efforts to upgrade existing tools to make them more user-friendly and effective and regularly roll out new beta versions of new guidance/trainings/products.



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2-Move RIL closer to the ecosystem center:

RIL platforms remain overwhelmingly anchored in the legacy humanitarian system and do not reflect the increasingly diverse ecosystem that is developing around protracted crises, climate adaptation and fragility.

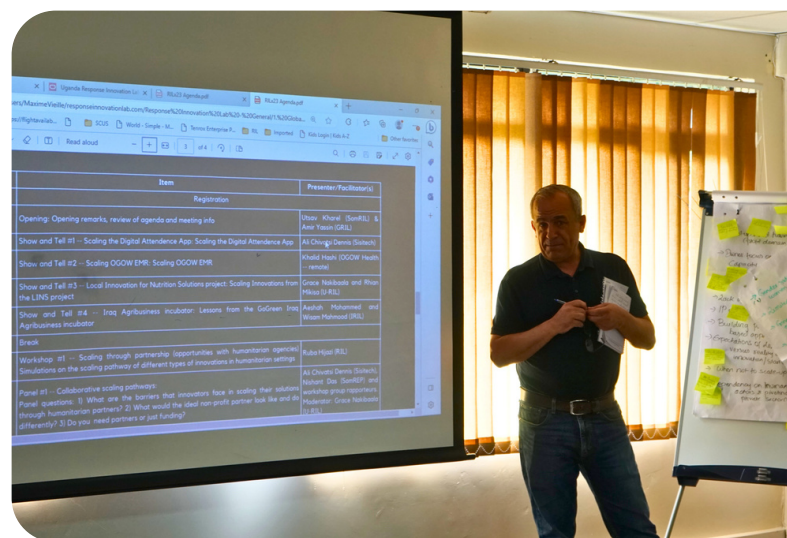


- Engage more meaningfully with the private sector: Focus on initiating dialogue with companies that have existing customer bases / employee networks / value chains in areas facing humanitarian challenges and look for win/win propositions with the humanitarian sector.
- Build relationships with government actors: Identify key potential allies in government agencies most likely to have influence over the scaling of solutions in RIL's programmatic areas and find ways to engage them constructively in our processes.
- Diversify sources of funding for RIL and innovations: Develop relationships and an effective RIL value proposition with foundations, corporates, social impact funds, frontier economy investors, High Net Worth Individuals and other non-public donors. Test alternative finance models for innovation scaling.

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3-Develop the innovation marketplace:

Generate useful, up to date and attractive catalogues of locally available innovations to boost their visibility and highlight the wealth of local ecosystems



- Link to more hubs/incubators/accelerators: rely on other ecosystem actors to provide content in exchange for added visibility and connections
- Think beyond national borders: Compile information on innovations developed/deployed in neighboring countries and/or similar contexts in the region. Develop systems for sharing innovation information across Response Labs and with regional/global actors (Elrha, Start, etc...)
- Go beyond individual products/services: Generate knowledge about emerging trends in innovations and find ways to group similar solutions

4-Make RIL more visible:

Communicate more effectively and intensively on RIL's model and accomplishments, including beyond its current geographic scope.



- Promote the initiative more actively: Develop professional quality promotional material to reflect RIL's growing influence in the system, including a sleeker website, more multi-media content and stronger case studies of RIL wins.
- Use all possible channels to disseminate our information and knowledge: Ramp up use of social media, experiment with new content types (podcast, press outreach, web series, etc...) and partner with our Member orgs and peers to disseminate them



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5- Engage more closely with the global humanitarian innovation ecosystem:

Demonstrate RIL's unique value proposition as the link between global and community-level humanitarian innovation initiatives and partner with peers to improve the coherence of the overall system



- Develop more active collaboration with Start Network and Elrha: Formalize the partnership between RIL and these two actors with which it shares significant overlaps in membership and vision.
- Become THE link between the global actors and the response-level actors: Leverage RIL's growing field and regional presence to become the partner of choice for global organizations seeking to conduct research or launch innovation initiatives in humanitarian contexts.



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6- Invest more in our learning agenda:

Mobilize resources and partnerships to better exploit the data and knowledge that RIL generates so that it can influence the global and local ecosystems.



- Produce more content based on RIL's experience: Develop regularly updated knowledge products based on RIL's core interventions.
- Feed that content to the ecosystem via multiple channels (incl. Start and Elrha): Generate demand for RIL's content and supply the right type of media to effectively reach target users.



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7-Figure out how to help scale community-led innovation in our response ecosystems:

Experiment with ways to connect community-level innovation work with the response-level ecosystems to generate scaling pathways for successful solutions



- Increase engagement with subnational hubs/networks/CSOs/govt.: Offer collaboration opportunities to entities working closely with affected communities such as co-hosted events, information-sharing MOUs, mapping coordination, etc...
- Adapt tools to community-level usage: Customize RIL tools to make them more accessible and useful to local communities



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8-Continue to expand RIL:

Maintain an expansionary trajectory to grow the influence of the RIL initiative on the global humanitarian system and beyond.



- Open more Response Labs / Enroll more Affiliate Facilities in fragile settings: Respond to demand for RIL services in contexts where populations are facing conflict, protracted emergencies, long-term reconstruction and climate adaptation challenges.
- Expand collaboration with existing/nascent hubs in non-humanitarian settings: Partner with ecosystem building organizations in development/middle-income settings to broaden learning opportunities and explore the value add of RIL processes in different contexts
- Increase our footprint in places where we are currently working: Scale up currently understaffed RIL platforms and look to expand the presence of Response Labs outside of the capital

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9- Be more intentional about localization and inclusivity:

Position RIL to be at the forefront of the localization agenda and a model of inclusivity



- Make GEDSI a central part of the strategy and innovation approach: Develop metrics and milestones to ensure equitable access to solutions and investment opportunities to communities and innovators from vulnerable and marginalized groups.
- Orient RIL resources and programming to support the work of local organizations who share RIL's vision of an effective, dynamic humanitarian innovation ecosystem and provide preferential access to partnerships, funding and other collaboration opportunities to locally led solutions and innovation actors.



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10-Strengthen the bonds between RIL Members and Response Labs:

Promote RIL internally within Member organizations to ensure broad support for RIL's work and minimize reliance on a few champions



- Leverage the new CSU structure to engage more regularly at the global and regional levels: Offer opportunities for regular engagement at multiple levels so that all staff profiles can connect with RIL
- Intensify collaboration with Member innovation structures: Provide as much support as possible to internal innovation initiatives within Member organizations and develop symbiotic partnerships between teams (while maintaining RIL's mission to benefit all actors in the ecosystem)



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