

HEIGHTS Innovation Ecosystems Study Overview

Higher Education Institutions Generating Holistic and Transformative Solutions

Higher Education Institution Engagement in Innovation Ecosystems (IE)

February 2024

ABOUT HEIGHTS IE

HEIGHTS-IE explores how Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), across their many types, can contribute to an innovation ecosystem through a variety of roles while considering factors like resources, relationships, and social norms. The study will be carried out on the premise that HEIs in **low- and middle-income countries (LMICs)** have the potential to contribute to innovation and that there are several areas in which HEI engagement in innovation ecosystems could be strengthened.

With the growth of knowledge-intensive economic sectors, **the role of HEIs in generating and disseminating knowledge for innovation and economic development has become a priority area to invest in for LMICs.** There is growing evidence that HEIs educational role can foster absorption and adaptation of innovation in LMICs, though many of them are not providing the skills needed by industry.

QUICK STATS

FUNDER: USAID

YEARS ACTIVE: 2021-2024

PROJECT LEAD:
University of Notre Dame

PARTNERS:

- Resilient Africa Network (RAN)
- Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS)
- SMART CITY Universitas Indonesia (UI)
- University of Nairobi - Kenya

RESEARCH QUESTION

What lessons can be derived from **analyzing the involvement of HEIs in LMICs in specific local and regional innovation ecosystems** that could inform policies and strategies to enable HEIs in LMICs to engage more effectively in and strengthen national and/or sub-national innovation ecosystems?

RESEARCH FOCUS AREAS

1. Outcomes & Results
2. Actors & Roles
3. Relationships
4. Resources
5. Enabling Environment & Rules

PARTNERSHIP LOCATIONS



METHODS & ANALYSIS

HEIGHTS-IE is collecting data that will support the analysis of HEI engagement in innovation ecosystems and is broken down into three phases:

Phase 1: Local partners review existing literature on HEI engagement in innovation and select key stakeholders to better understand how HEIs engage in the innovation ecosystem of focus.

Phase 2: The SHARE team hosts a systems thinking workshop with major actors in order to map out the innovation ecosystem, their goals for its functionality, and the barriers to achieving those goals.

Phase 3: The SHARE team tailors the study to be contextually relevant to partner countries and addresses research questions through the collection and analysis of data from key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs). The SHARE team conducts a validation workshop with stakeholders from the innovation ecosystem prior to a series of various dissemination events.

RESEARCH GOALS

HEIGHTS-IE seeks to inform USAID's education strategic planning, activity design, and professional development in the areas of HEI engagement in innovation ecosystems.

In service of this goal, this study aims to produce evidence-informed strategies to strengthen HEI engagement in innovation ecosystems within USAID partner countries and other LMICs around the world.

The audience for the output of this study includes the following stakeholders: USAID Washington's Center for Education, USAID Missions in Indonesia, Kenya, the Philippines, as well as other USAID Missions worldwide engaged in Higher Education activities, multilateral organizations funding higher education activities in low- and middle- income countries (LMICs), and the governments of the countries of study and other LMICs around the world.

STUDY TIMELINE

Ecosystem Diagnostic

Mar. 2022 - Aug. 2022

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), literature review, online surveys

Research Design Logistics

June 2022 - Dec. 2022

Systems workshops with key stakeholders and contextualization of research protocols, consent forms, and in-country Institutional Review Board (IRB) applications.

Qualitative Data Collections, Cleaning, & Coding

Jan 2023 - Jul. 2023

Conduct system-level focus groups and interviews; Code and analyze data.

Final Analysis & Report Writing

Aug. 2023 - Apr. 2024

Compare, contrast, and interpret qualitative and quantitative findings; Prepare country level and cross-country reports and presentations.

Dissemination & Endline

Mar. 2024 - Jun. 2024

Conduct evidence ecosystem endline KIIs and surveys; Disseminate research findings throughout the education ecosystem.

Contact SHARE Project Manager **Edward Jurkovic** at ejurkovi@nd.edu to learn more about HEIGHTS.

ABOUT SHARE

The University of Notre Dame's Pulte Institute for Global Development is implementing the SHARE activity in partnership with local higher education and research institutions. Through SHARE and its partners, UND will advance USAID's Learning Priorities as a global good to improve education and learning outcomes as part of cooperative agreement No. 7200AA20CA00025. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of the Pulte Institute and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.