

Media Update

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PRESS RELEASE

United Nations Development Programme and National Incubation Center Lahore at LUMS host innovators in plastic waste recycling at SolutionsFest 2.0!

Lahore, December 1, 2021—Innovation-Acceleration-Lab, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Pakistan collaborated with National Incubation Center Lahore (NICL) at LUMS to host *SolutionsFest 2.0: Reimagining our Relationship with Plastics in Pakistan*. This three-day event to discuss, strategize and create solutions for plastic pollution was held from November 29 to December 1 at NICL at LUMS.

SolutionsFest2.0 brought together people at the heart of the design process and curated a community-led problem-solving engagement opportunity to address the issue of plastic waste management in Pakistan. During the event, plastic problem solvers explored materials, tested connectivity, worked with tools and mechanics, created structures, and improved on iterations by focusing on and responding to the problem of plastic waste generation and on creating a system for a circular economy.

Solutions included a mobile app to facilitate door-to-door collection of recyclable plastics; prototypes of interlocking plastic bricks to enable low-cost housing for slums; upcycled, aesthetic furniture; another solution to turn non-recyclable plastics from waste to energy; and eco-friendly, low-cost, specialized shoes made of recycled material for children born with clubfoot. All prototypes were created at NICL's state-of-the art Makers Lab, which includes metal, CNC, PCB, wood, and 3D printing facilities for speedy, high quality hardware solutions.

Mr. Ehsan Gul, Head of Experimentation at Innovation-Acc-Lab, UNDP Pakistan stated, "We need to rapidly prototype and experiment to find solutions for fixing the rapidly increasing plastic waste management problem in Pakistan.

SolutionsFest 2.0 provided an opportunity to bring sustainability enthusiasts, local recyclers, private sector partners, etc. together to catalyze ideation and invention. The National Incubation Center, Lahore at LUMS was a natural choice for us as a key partner, because of their mission to enable Pakistani problem-solvers and their all-inclusive space, which offers critical prototyping facilities and fosters an environment of innovation and problem solving.”

In his keynote address, Mr. Hammad Naqi Khan, Director General of World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Pakistan, appreciated the efforts of the participants and organizers: “We saw a myriad of good ideas today, quite a few ideas were both viable and scalable. In terms of plastic use, radical change is important, but so are small steps in the right direction; for sectors like healthcare plastic usage may be imperative, but for most other sectors it boils down to mere convenience and that is where we need to intervene and make a change.” He emphasized the importance of taking a collaborative approach, and involving stakeholders across the value chain, from consumers to multinational corporations to the government to create synergies and tangible impact.

The National Incubation Center at LUMS is a springboard for venture incubation and corporate innovation through an intersection of applied research, industry and talent, to solve Pakistan’s biggest problems.

SolutionsFest 2.0 is part of a larger portfolio of Innovation-Acceleration-Lab, UNDP Pakistan. UNDP Innovation-Accelerator Lab is a dedicated learning space to reimagine development solutions. We, along with the country office programmes and partners, explore and experiment new approaches, from ethnography to design, to find inclusive and human-centered approaches for meaningful change. In the last two years, the Innovation-Acc-Lab has been exploring this issue with the learning question: how we can reimagine relationship with plastics in Pakistan.

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