#Build Back Better Challenge
REIMAGINING THE UN TOGETHER

Open to all our UN colleagues!

COVID-19 has fundamentally changed our ways of working in the UN. We have had to adapt to working remotely, postpone or cancel duty travel, learn how to move events to virtual platforms, and much more. The pandemic presents unexpected challenges, but also numerous opportunities for collaboration, innovation, learning and transforming the UN together. When the dust settles, what has this difficult time taught us that we want to hold on to?

For the UN to #BuildBackBetter towards a more inclusive, agile and participatory organisation that is resilient to crises going forward, the collective creativity and energy of as many UN system colleagues as possible will be needed to co-create the change needed. That's what the #BuildBackBetter Challenge is all about. It's a place to collectively imagine the Next UN, building on lessons learned during the COVID-19 crisis.

What is the #BuildBackBetter Challenge?

The #BuildBackBetterChallenge is a UN system-wide ideation and crowdsourcing challenge to unleash the creativity, experience and skills of colleagues from across the UN to share, innovate and scale solutions to common business challenges we are experiencing in the COVID-19 crisis and to contribute toward building a more resilient, agile UN.

The focus areas for the #BuildBackBetter Challenge were identified through a UN-wide Pulse Check, in which more than 4,600 colleagues from across the UN system shared challenges and highlighted opportunity areas.
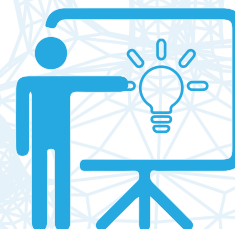
Why should you participate?

Help reimagine and shape the UN of the future!

Collaborate with colleagues from across the UN to refine ideas, gather feedback and co-create change

Present your idea or project in a UN wide Dragon Den's event

When will the #BuildBackBetter Challenge take place?

Launch! → Submit your Ideas & Projects → Human-Centered Design Workshop → Collaborate with Others → Review, Shortlisting and Support to Selected Teams → Pitching Event!

What challenges are we trying to solve?

In a fast-moving world, heavy processes and hierarchical command and control designs, combined with fixed programming and budgeting cycles may not enable organisations to adjust quickly enough to changing realities. COVID-19 has shone a light on the need for structures and systems that are responsive, agile and resilient.

Challenge: How might we better integrate agile practices such as flexible programming, budgeting and policy design; and responsive decision-making in the UN system.

The UN system is home to a wealth of expertise, knowledge and data. But often this is held only by one person, team or organisation and not easily shared within the entire organisation, much less across the UN system. To make the right decisions and effectively design and deliver new, innovative programmes, the UN needs to access all relevant knowledge, skills and data held across the UN family.

Challenge: How might we improve knowledge sharing, collaboration and resource pooling more effectively across the UN system to build back better and prepare for future crises?

The most important asset of the UN system are its people. The COVID-19 crisis has been a challenging and stressful time for many colleagues. From balancing personal and professional responsibilities, rapidly adopting new technologies, coping with meeting overload and/or social isolation, it has been a time of much change and uncertainty.

Challenge: How might we better support our colleagues in times of change and crises, including through access to information, tools, training, resources and enabling effective communication and dialogue?

How can you participate?

Submit a new idea
or an existing project

Browse other
ideas and share your
thoughts and expertise

Join ideas
or teams that you
would like to be a part of

Learn more about
innovation and co-creation
by participating in workshops

bit.ly/un-buildbackbetter

Ideas and projects will be evaluated, amongst others, by their potential for impact, the novelty of the idea, their feasibility and their potential for scalability. Priority will be given to innovation projects and solutions that are jointly led by multiple UN entities or ones that could benefit or be scaled across different UN entities.

Who is behind the #BuildBackBetter Challenge?

The challenge is being developed and driven by an alliance of interested individuals, networks and departments across the UN system, such as the UN Development Coordination Office, the UN Innovation Network, #NewWork, the UN System Staff College, Young UN, and the Office of Information and Communications Technology, together with staff unions and other key bodies. Interested partners are welcome to join the project team at any time!