Students at Arya Primary School in Nairobi, Kenya, are sensitized to the HPV vaccine. Photo: PATH/Chris Obong'o.

For more than 40 years, PATH has worked alongside individuals and communities in low-resource settings to ensure that solutions are appropriate, sustainable, and accessible. Through these partnerships, we create innovative, impactful, and user-friendly solutions to some of the world’s most pressing health challenges. Building on this work, Living Labs was established in 2019 to advance health equity and embed this expertise in our country offices, alongside the users.

**Inclusive innovation**

PATH’s Living Labs accelerates the pace of health innovation by co-creating with health care workers, community members, government stakeholders, and other partners to rapidly design, test, and scale solutions to their longstanding challenges. Living Labs engages users from a place of deep empathy, advancing ideas to address their challenges that are viable and feasible within their context.

“Human-centered design is a problem-solving process that understands the human factors and contexts surrounding a particular challenge and we value this partnership with PATH that promises to advance health equity.” —Dr. Andrew Silumesi, Former Director of Public Health, Zambia Ministry of Health

Living Labs offers five primary services: (1) defining user needs, (2) designing solutions, (3) exploring concepts, (4) testing prototypes, and (5) guiding deployment. The overarching aim for each service remains the same: bring the end user’s context, needs, and challenges into the design process. We use a “4D” approach to co-creation:
The Living Labs difference

With a multidisciplinary team of product engineers, health systems design professionals, material designers, behavioral scientists, clinicians, quantitative modelers, and market access specialists, Living Labs uses a mixed-methods approach to create sustainable, impactful health solutions across several health areas by:

- Prioritizing listening to and empowering users.
- Using our in-country design experts who understand the local health care system.
- Rapidly ideating, prototyping, and iteratively testing.

Our established protocols and diverse network of users help raise acceptability and feasibility of solution design, lower risks and overall investment costs, fast-track product development, and accelerate the scale of implementations. The outcome is increased solution uptake that strengthens health system capacity and resiliency.

By the numbers

- 49 Active and completed projects
- 3K+ Users engaged
- 32 Staff
- 23 Unique donors
- 15 Countries of operation
- 12 Health or functional areas

Impactful solutions

Living Labs’ portfolio of projects includes a range of health areas, including immunization, product development, digital solutions, neonatal nutrition, early childhood development, maternal health, HIV prevention, and others.

Increase immunization demand (Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Zambia)

Living Labs captured user insights on determinants of demand for HPV vaccine and malaria and rubella dose 2, and on reasons for zero-dose children. Working with our users, we co-created innovative concepts to address identified determinants of demand and worked with selected counties to pilot test the co-created solutions. Piloted solutions included mapping demand, under-5 immunization screening, HPV Vaccine Advocacy Through Art, engaging religious leaders as advocates, sensitizing caregivers on immunization schedules, and girl-to-girl support groups. Results were an increase in knowledge on vaccines and vaccine schedules and an increase in immunizations for the targeted age groups.

A bundled approach to sustainable diabetes self-care (Kenya)

Living Labs engaged people living with diabetes as the primary users of the products, as well as local pharmacy shop owners, health care providers, patient association and support groups, government personnel, and private-sector companies through interviews, focus groups, and surveys to develop co-created solutions to increase patient access to insulin and other supplies to inform a bundled diabetes solution, or CarePak. Through this work, our team highlighted key individual- and system-level challenges about diabetes self-care and management.

Learn more

Living Labs continues to expand our portfolio with new projects and new partnerships, and in new geographies. We currently work with several funders, other design agencies, and governments to bring these impactful solutions to life. To learn more about Living Labs and our portfolio of projects, visit our website at www.path.org/livinglabs or contact us at LivingLabs@path.org.