

‘Exclusionary’ Innovation ideation workshop

September 25, 2025, 11:00am -12:00pm

Background:

Many of us in the *Innovation in the Global South* theme are passionate about inclusive innovation - innovations that deliberately include and benefit marginalized, disadvantaged, or excluded groups of people. However, in a previous group discussion, we noted that inclusive innovation as a concept or a “fix” is needed precisely because innovation often tends to be exclusionary and reproduces power asymmetries.

Hypothesis: Innovation can be exclusionary in its means and goals.

- **Who is involved in innovation processes?** → Typically corporations, governments, and elite universities; communities and informal actors are excluded.
- **Whose ideas count as innovation?** → Patents, startups, and high-tech solutions are recognized; grassroots or indigenous practices are often overlooked.
- **Whose innovation can be measured?** → Metrics like patents and R&D spending capture formal innovation but miss informal, frugal, or social innovation.
- **Whose needs are addressed through innovation?** → Market-driven innovation serves affluent consumers; marginalized groups’ needs (e.g., affordable healthcare, rural infrastructure) are neglected.

Discussing the idea of exclusionary innovation, and making visible the ways in which innovation can produce exclusion, can in the best case, help make inclusiveness the default in innovation, rather than an afterthought or an alternative category.

Aim of the workshop:

Building on the *Innovation in the Global South* kickoff, the aim of the first workshop is to brainstorm and discuss ideas around the concept of exclusionary innovation and to develop a definition or conceptualization. Possible ways to approach this include reviewing classic literature on inclusive innovation and discussing it by ‘flipping’ the perspective, as well as pooling examples of instances with evidence of innovation produced exclusion from our empirical cases to ground the discussion.

Goal:

Work towards developing a tangible output, such as a blog post, position paper, literature review, or other formats we identify during the workshop.

Welcome! ☺

Some Readings for Inspiration:

Classics on inclusive innovation

Heeks, R., Foster, C., & Nugroho, Y. (2014). New models of inclusive innovation for development. *Innovation and Development*, 4(2), 175–185. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2157930X.2014.928982>

Papaioannou, T. (2014). How inclusive can innovation and development be in the twenty-first century? *Innovation and Development*, 4(2), 187–202. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2157930X.2014.921355>

Fressoli, M., Arond, E., Abrol, D., Smith, A., Ely, A., & Dias, R. (2014). When grassroots innovation movements encounter mainstream institutions: Implications for models of inclusive innovation. *Innovation and Development*, 4(2), 277–292. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2157930X.2014.921354>

Recent Review of Social & Inclusive Innovation

Patiño-Valencia, B., Villalba-Morales, M. L., Acosta-Amaya, M., Villegas-Arboleda, C., & Calderón-Sanín, E. (2022). Towards the conceptual understanding of social innovation and inclusive innovation: A literature review. *Innovation and Development*, 12(3), 437–458. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2157930X.2020.1859215>

Introducing the Idea of Exclusive Innovation

Schrock, G., & Lowe, N. (2021). Inclusive innovation editorial: The promise of inclusive innovation. *Local Economy*, 36(3), 181–186. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02690942211042254>

Doussard, M., & Clark, J. (2021). Inclusive innovation closing essay: Problems beyond economic development. *Local Economy*, 36(3), 265–270. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02690942211046473>