



**CORPS  
AFRICA**

**Field Guide**  
**for Volunteers**

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**2018**

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.”

- Margaret Mead  
Cultural anthropologist

## **About This Guide**

The CorpsAfrica Field Guide for Volunteers is a collection of the most important tools and strategies to help volunteers catalyze and facilitate community building, empowerment, and action. The guide is divided into three parts: Part 1) Asset-Based Community Development, Part 2) Human-Centered Design, and Part 3) Facilitation. These three aspects of the guide align with the core set of skills and mindsets that you will need as a CorpsAfrica Volunteer.

## **Dedication**

This field guide is dedicated to all of the CorpsAfrica volunteers who have served their countries and the world through their tireless dedication to building community and empowering those with whom they have lived and worked.

## **Acknowledgements**

This field guide would not be possible without the support of the vision of CorpsAfrica and its leadership. A special thank you to Liz Fanning for making Asset-Based Community Development and Human-Centered Design the cornerstones of the work of CorpsAfrica. In addition, methods and materials from many organizations and individuals were used and/or adapted for this guide. The tools contained in this field guide come from MIT's D-Lab IDDS Workbook, IDEO's Human Centered Design Toolkit, Peace Corps's Participatory Analysis for Community Action (PACA), +Acumen's HCD Workshop.

Additional information and ideas for this field guide came from IDEO.org, Episcopal Relief and Development, Engineers Without Borders, and Jump Associates. Many thanks to Terry Bergdall, David Sacco, Jerry Sternin, Robert Choo, and John Collery on articles that bring a number of issues to the forefront. And a special thank you to Ela Ben-Ur for creating and freely sharing the "Innovators Compass" which serves as CorpsAfrica's guiding framework for HCD.

My hope is that this guide serves as a powerful resource for you and the communities with whom you work.

Garrett Mason  
Longmont, Colorado, USA  
13 September 2018



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# Part 2:

## Human-Centered Design

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“People ignore design that ignores people.”

- Frank Chimero

Writer, designer

“The worst misstep one can make in design is to solve the wrong problem.”

- John Carroll  
Author

# What Is Human-Centered Design?

Human-Centered Design (HCD) is a creative, collaborative approach to problem solving and community development. The human-centered design process has five areas—People, Observations, Principles, Ideas, and Experiments—as laid out in the Innovators' Compass.

HCD is a *non-linear* process that places **people** at the center. HCD is all about making **observations** and building empathy among the people who will be designing for each other; uncovering connections, tensions, and the **principles** underlying the issues; generating many different **ideas** for how the community might move forward; and creating **experiments** and prototypes to continue to learn and test promising approaches.

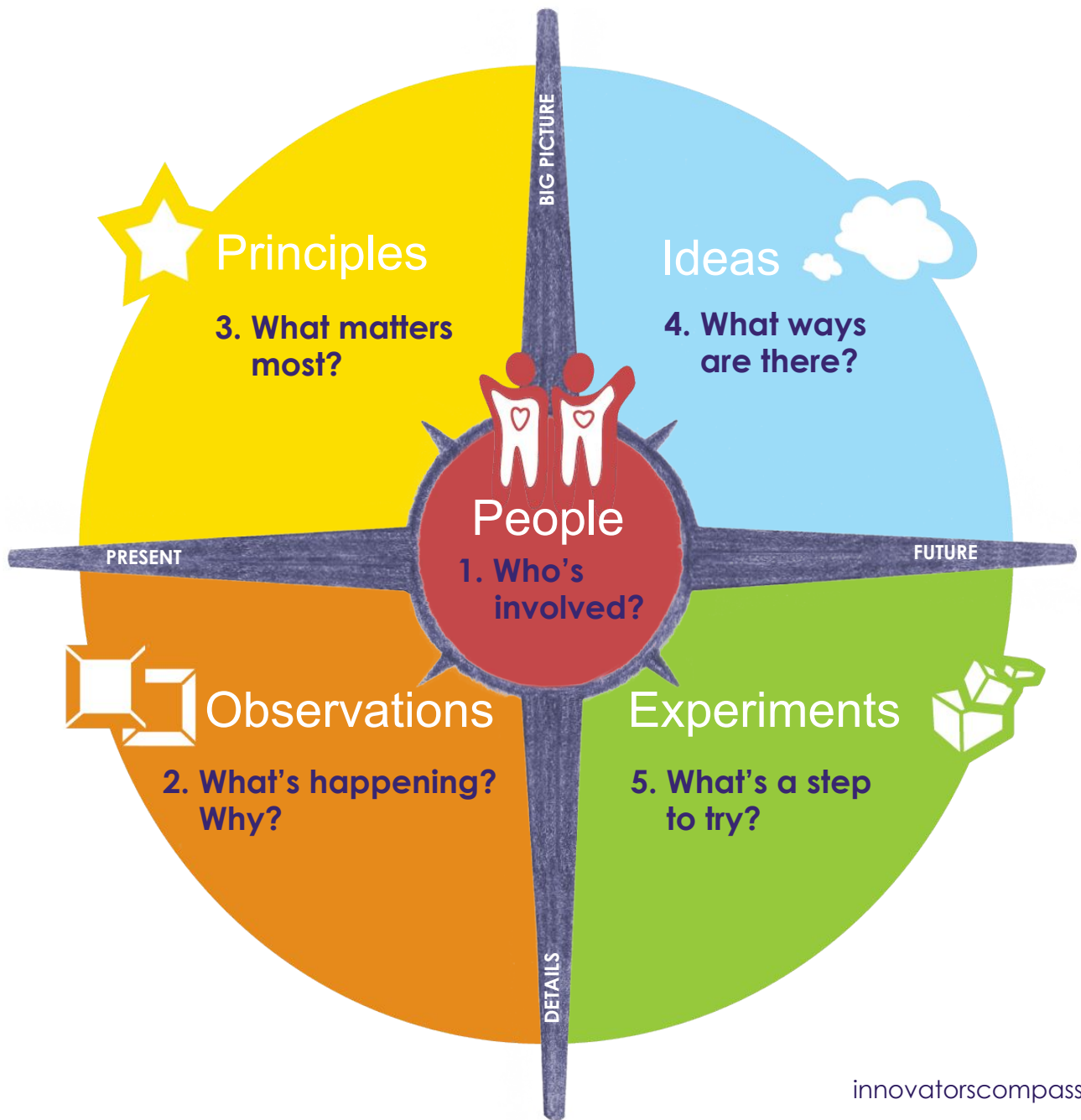
Expect to find yourself shifting between these 5 areas throughout the process, moving from details to big picture thinking and from the present to future possibilities.





# The Innovators' Compass

5 ways we move forward: we **explore**, with and for everyone involved...



[innovatorscompass.org](http://innovatorscompass.org)



# Creating a Community Compass

One of the early tasks that you and your community will need to do is to establish a *collective process, space, and means* to capture and sharing the work of the team with each other and with the larger community. As new things are learned, new ideas emerge, new experiments are tried, and new connections or principles develop, the community compass becomes the platform through which this is shared. This is essential for creating **transparency**, attracting additional help and support, and for inviting additional contributions from members of the community who are not part of the core team. While community meetings can and should be a forum for sharing, it is also important that the work is **shared visually**. A Community Compass is literally the community's "Pool of Shared Understanding."

## When Helping to Develop Your Community's Unique Community Compass:

1. Talk with community members to find out what processes, spaces, and systems (social assets) are already part of the community's culture for sharing information.
2. Consider where and how team members and the larger community will share information and ideas in a way that will provide everyone access (including those who may not often have a voice).
3. Choose a process, space, or system that works for the community.



# HCD Mindsets

The key to success is not only in what you do, but how you do it.

Use these three Human-Centered Design mindsets to guide all of the work that you and your community members do:

**Empathy** - You have a deep understanding of others' perspectives especially those in the community who may not usually have a voice; you do not judge others' views but take it as a fact that they feel and see the world the way that they do.

**Embracing Uncertainty** - You give yourself permission to not know and the time and space to explore multiple--even contradictory--possibilities; you resist making assumptions and jumping to any definitive conclusions.

**Iterate, iterate, iterate** - You approach the work knowing that the first idea or experiment will likely not be the best; you believe that you can get to a better solution by trying something that is imperfect and learning from it and then doing it again a different way. You are willing to take risks, experiment, try different ideas, reflect on what is and is not working, and try again.

