Innovation Roadmap

2025–2027

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ICRC

The Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) and the International Center for Humanitarian Affairs (ICHA), extend their sincere appreciation to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) for their unwavering support and collaboration throughout the development of this Innovation Roadmap.

The ICRC's commitment to strengthening humanitarian action through innovation, and their dedicated support to the Kenya Red Cross, were critical in guiding this process from inception to completion. Their technical expertise, strategic input, and sustained engagement enabled us to align this roadmap with both local realities and global humanitarian standards.

This roadmap reflects not only the collective vision of the Kenya Red Cross and its partners but also the shared values and commitment to excellence that define our collaboration with the ICRC. We are deeply grateful for their partnership and steadfast encouragement in this important endeavor.

Introduction

The Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) is pioneering a transformative approach to humanitarian action through its Innovation Unit. By integrating creativity, technology, and community-driven solutions, KRCS aims to redefine disaster response, resilience-building, and sustainable development. This document outlines the organization's innovation strategy, key pillars, and actionable pathways to position itself as a global leader in humanitarian innovation.

Our Innovation Unit

Who We Are:

The Innovation Unit at KRCS, administered under the International Center for Humanitarian Affairs (ICHA), is a cross-cutting function that builds and delivers innovation capacity and services to maximize community impact. We achieve this through:

• Building innovation capacity across the organization

• Designing, testing, implementing and scaling innovations for programs and key initiatives

• Supporting entrepreneurs to build and market groundbreaking innovations

Our Vision:

To be the leader in humanitarian innovation globally.

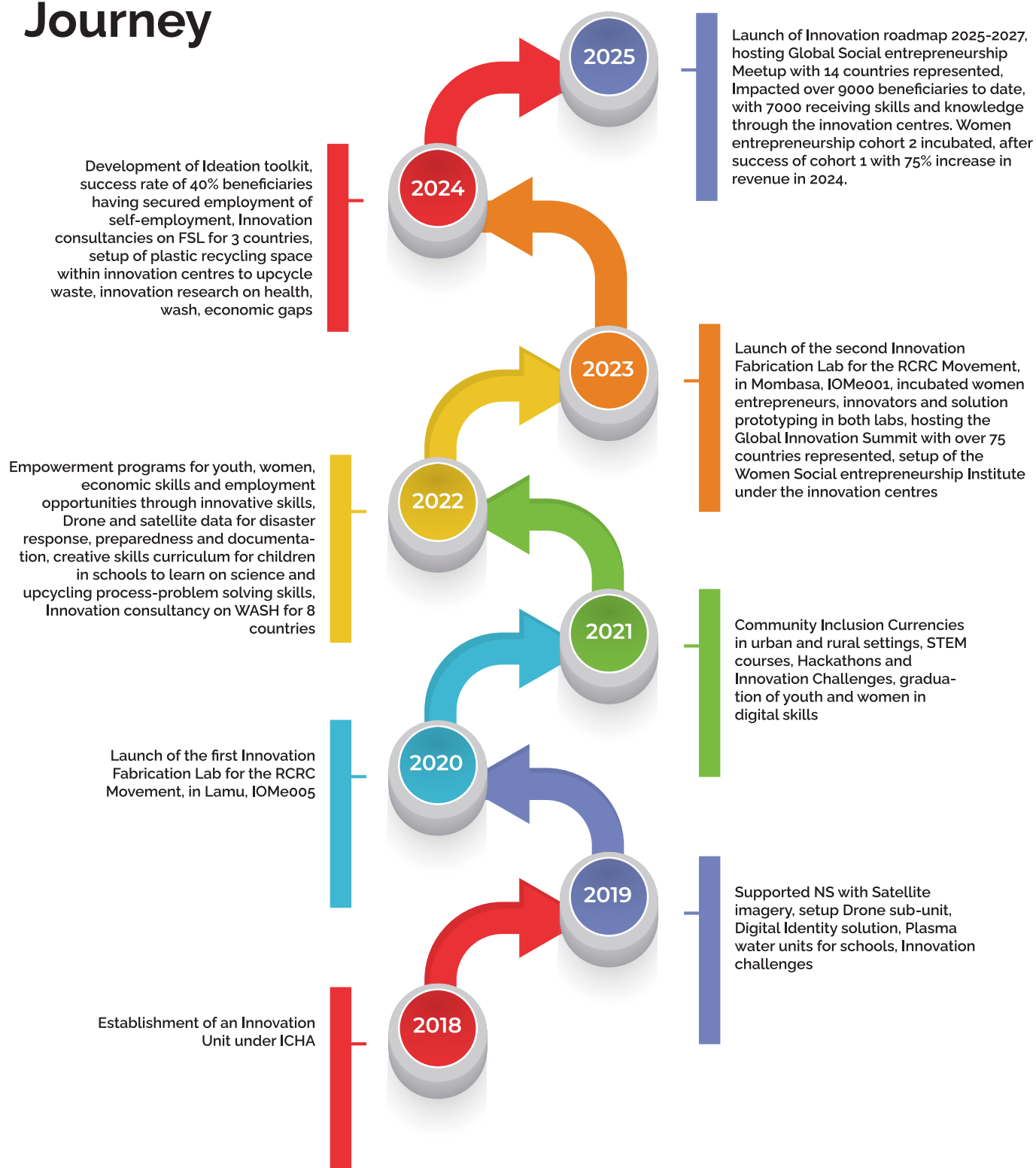## Our Mission:

To provide hands-on innovation capacity building and services to improve humanitarian response and deliver maximum impact to RCRC communities.
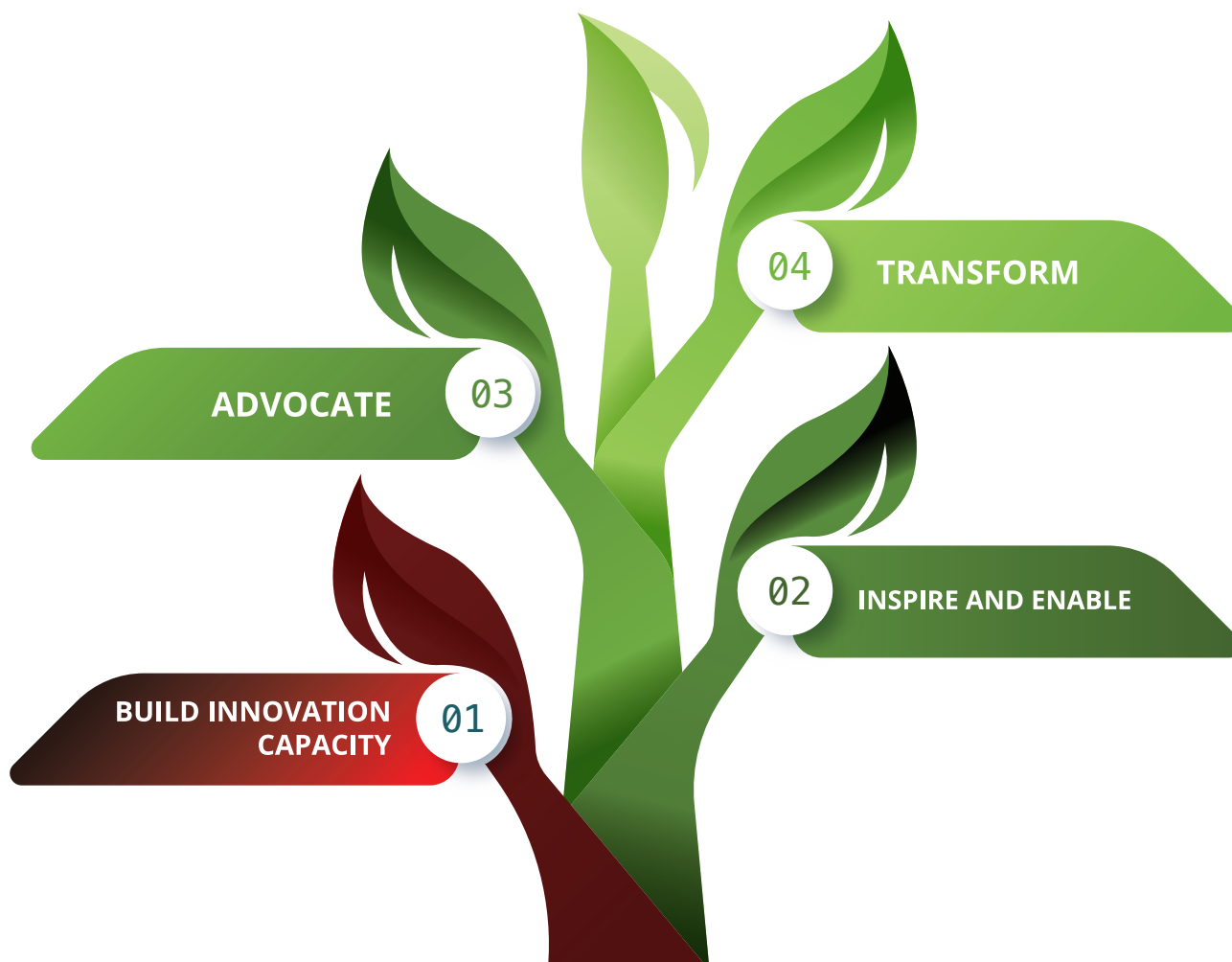
ICHA International Center for Humanitarian Affairs
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The Innovation Journey

2025

Launch of Innovation roadmap 2025-2027, hosting Global Social entrepreneurship Meetup with 14 countries represented, Impacted over 9000 beneficiaries to date, with 7000 receiving skills and knowledge through the innovation centres. Women entrepreneurship cohort 2 incubated, after success of cohort 1 with 75% increase in revenue in 2024.

2024

Development of Ideation toolkit, success rate of 40% beneficiaries having secured employment of self-employment, Innovation consultancies on FSL for 3 countries, setup of plastic recycling space within innovation centres to upcycle waste, innovation research on health, wash, economic gaps

2023

Launch of the second Innovation Fabrication Lab for the RCRC Movement, in Mombasa, IOMe001, incubated women entrepreneurs, innovators and solution prototyping in both labs, hosting the Global Innovation Summit with over 75 countries represented, setup of the Women Social entrepreneurship Institute under the innovation centres

2022

Empowerment programs for youth, women, economic skills and employment opportunities through innovative skills, Drone and satellite data for disaster response, preparedness and documentation, creative skills curriculum for children in schools to learn on science and upcycling process-problem solving skills, Innovation consultancy on WASH for 8 countries

2021

Community Inclusion Currencies in urban and rural settings, STEM courses, Hackathons and Innovation Challenges, graduation of youth and women in digital skills

2020

Launch of the first Innovation Fabrication Lab for the RCRC Movement, in Lamu, IOMe005

2019

Supported NS with Satellite imagery, setup Drone sub-unit, Digital Identity solution, Plasma water units for schools, Innovation challenges

2018

Establishment of an Innovation Unit under ICHA

Strategic Framework

Key Pillars:

1. **Build Innovation Capacity:** For KRCS, the Red Crescent Movement, and the humanitarian innovation ecosystem supported by our network of KMEs (centers for rapid innovation, R&D and testing).

2. **Inspire & Enable:** Inspire and enable community members to become leading innovators and entrepreneurs, improving livelihoods through our programs and KMEs.

3. **Advocate:** For the impact and effectiveness of humanitarian innovation in improving healthcare and economic opportunities for the communities we serve.

4. **Transform:** Developing, piloting, implementing and scaling innovation and sustainable solutions to address key challenges and opportunities, driving lasting change globally.

Core Goals:

- Become a global leader in humanitarian innovation

- Advocate for iterative and adaptive innovation processes

- Empower people and foster an innovation culture

- Build resilience through strategic partnerships

- Focus on user engagement and impact measurement

- Establish a leading innovation hub and knowledge systems

- Economically empower communities through entrepreneurship programs

Our Approach to Humanitarian Innovation

Guiding Principles:

1. **Community-Centered Design:** Solutions co-created with affected populations to ensure relevance and scalability

2. **Effective Aid Delivery:** Innovations that enhance response speed, safety and efficiency in crises

3. **Risk Mitigation:** Technologies (e.g., early warning systems, rescue robots) to protect communities and aid workers

Milestones

2025 - 2027

Establish Humanitarian Innovation Consortium

Pioneer emerging Innovation pathways supporting NS strategy and agendas

Strengthen innovation capacity for movement partners and beyond

Sustain Humanitarian Innovation Labs, IOMe254 and go global

Lead and deepen strategic integration of innovation and tech engagement

Core Themes:

Creativity & Collaboration

- Encouraging creative thinking and co-creation among stakeholders
- Leveraging partnerships to drive impactful outcomes

Sustainability

- Developing solutions that are sustainable and scalable
- Ensuring long-term benefits rather than short-term fixes

Adaptability

- Creating tools that adapt to changing humanitarian contexts
- Innovating processes to improve coordination and response times

Implementation Strategy

Strategic Pillars of Operation:

Organisational Capacity

- Foster strong partnerships for co-creation and localization

Digital Innovation

- Leverage technology and innovation spaces for community engagement

Empowerment & Capacity Building

- Empower youth and communities through skills training and entrepreneurship

Sustainability & Environment

- Promote eco-friendly and sustainable solutions

Integration & Transformation

- Implement innovation mindset across KRCS programs

Research

- Conduct research, document learnings, and advocate for innovation

Core Activities:

- Human Centered Design (HCD) for humanitarian challenges

- Youth engagement through innovation hubs and FABLABs

- Social entrepreneurship incubation and scaling

- Stakeholder engagement with local governments

- Adaptive learning for continuous improvement

- Advocacy and communication for transformation

- Implementation of innovative solutions within RCR5C programming

- Innovation consultancy in matters humanitarian innovation

Quick Wins (Low-Hanging Fruits):

- Leverage on the movement volunteers for greater impact

- Improve communication of campaign impacts

- Develop comprehensive communication strategy for impact staircase

- Package and share innovation insights

- Enhance internal and external messaging
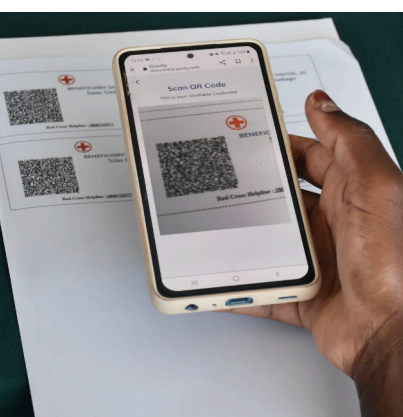
Key Recommendations & Initiatives

- Drive co-creation and integration of Innovation Strategy across the RCRC movement

- Position Innovation Unit as a resource for KRCS and global Red Cross Red Crescent Movement by:

  - Creating clear internal value proposition

  - Communicating success stories effectively

  - Improving departmental integration

  - Establish IOMe's as R&D centers and innovation testbeds

  - Develop sustainable business models for IOMe's

  - Enable youth and women to establish innovative businesses through IOME support

The Path Forward

KRCS/ICHA will transform humanitarian action through:

- Continuous design and prototyping of ideas and solutions

- Scaling Innovation from pilots to widespread adoption

- Economic Empowerment linking innovators to markets

- Global Influence advocating for humanitarian innovation

By embedding innovation into its core, KRCS moves beyond crisis response to prevention, community empowerment, and shaping humanitarian aid's future.

Conclusion

The Kenya Red Cross Society's and the International Center for Humanitarian Affairs (ICHA) Innovation Unit represents a bold step toward a more resilient, equitable humanitarian sector. Through strategic partnerships, community engagement, and cutting-edge solutions, KRCS/ ICHA is setting a new standard for impact - prioritizing people, sustainability, and scalable change.

Innovate. Empower. Transform.

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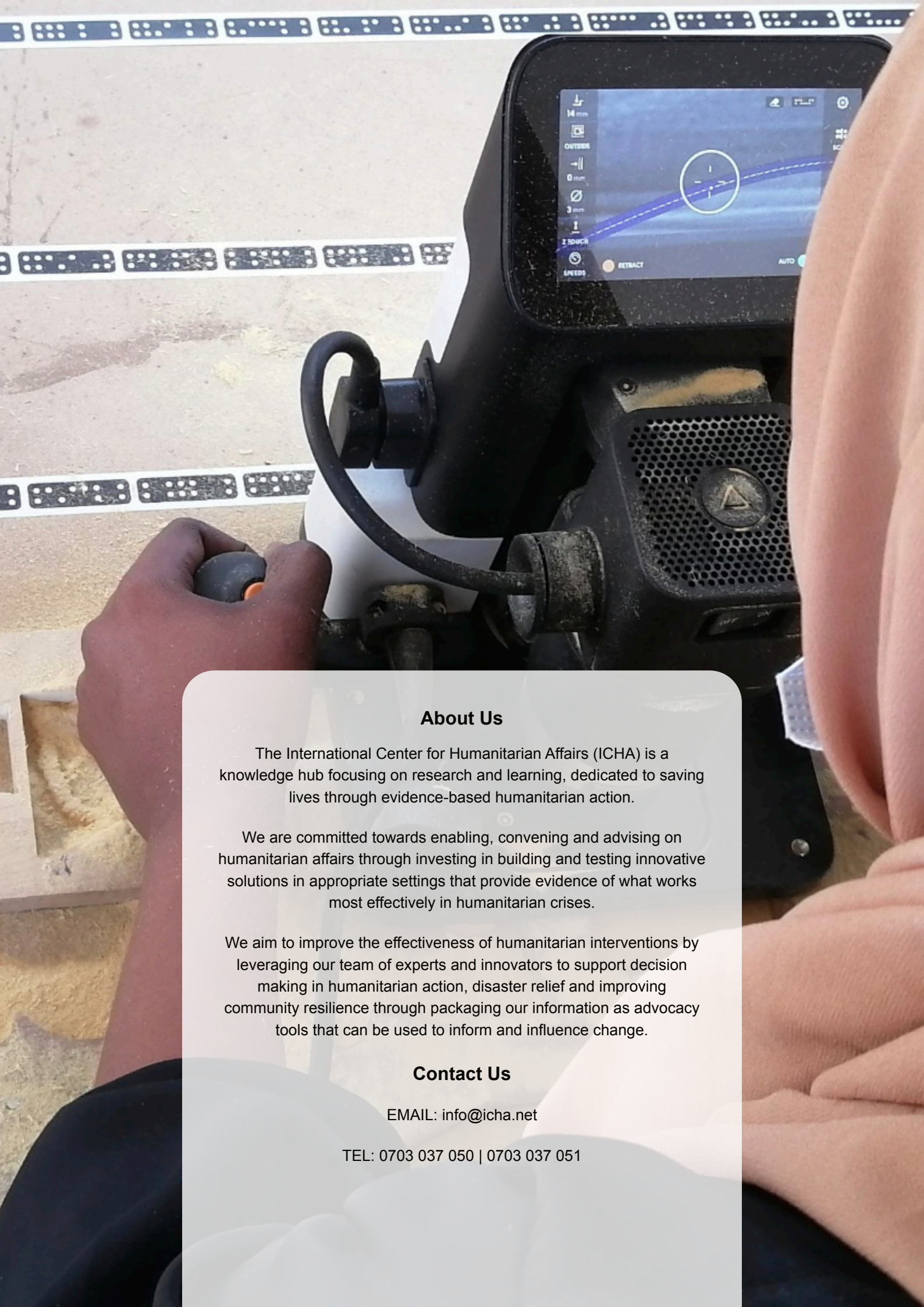
About Us

The International Center for Humanitarian Affairs (ICHA) is a knowledge hub focusing on research and learning, dedicated to saving lives through evidence-based humanitarian action.

We are committed towards enabling, convening and advising on humanitarian affairs through investing in building and testing innovative solutions in appropriate settings that provide evidence of what works most effectively in humanitarian crises.

We aim to improve the effectiveness of humanitarian interventions by leveraging our team of experts and innovators to support decision making in humanitarian action, disaster relief and improving community resilience through packaging our information as advocacy tools that can be used to inform and influence change.

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