



# Frugal Innovation

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# Frugal Innovation

This is an approach to innovation which is based on the principle of simplification – finding solutions to a problem which solve the problem but without adding unnecessary costs or adding unwanted functions. A description can be found in the ‘Deep dive’ section of the Portal and some case examples include its application in Aravind Eye Clinics, NHL and Lifespring Hospitals (all on the Portal).

Frugal innovation (sometimes called jugaad innovation after a Hindi word meaning flexible improvisation) as a concept emerged in the context of developing countries where resource and financial constraints do not permit ‘mainstream’ solutions to problems like healthcare or transportation. But the underlying ideas have much in common with the ‘lean’ approach (described elsewhere in the Toolkit) – for example the Toyota Production System provided a powerful and more productive approach to car manufacturing because it took a frugal approach and challenged the traditional views on how this could be done. It came from a resource constrained environment (post war Japan) but has diffused widely around the world and the concept has been applied in many manufacturing and service sectors.

The tools to enable frugal innovation are those in the lean toolkit and include:

- Value analysis (sometimes called Value engineering)
- Process mapping
- Value stream analysis
- Continuous improvement
- Quality function deployment