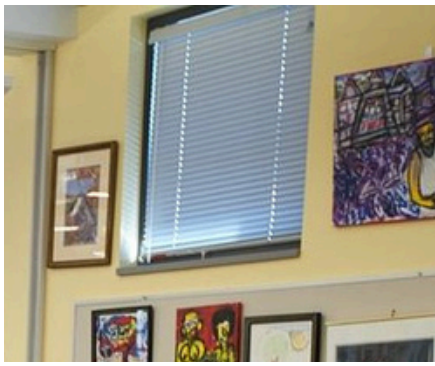
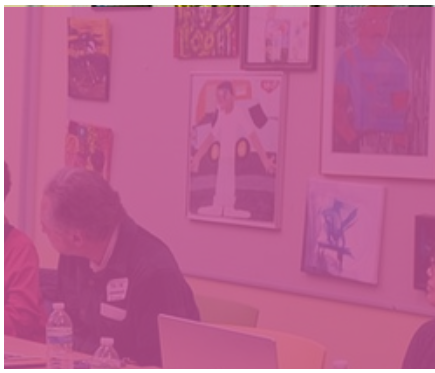
Priscilla King Gray Center for Social Impact

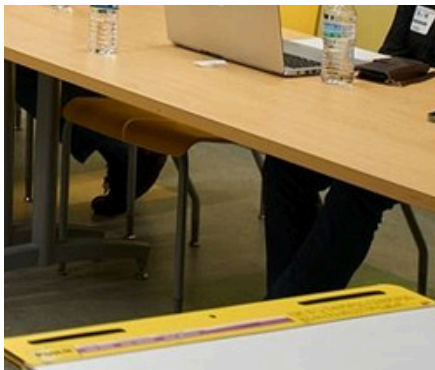
IDEAS Social Innovation Incubator

25th Anniversary Report

Highlighting 25 years of student led impact through social entrepreneurship







PKG | IDEAS Social Innovation Incubator

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Dear Reader

IDEAS was cofounded in 2001 by Amy Smith, who was then with the Edgerton Center and later founded D-Lab, and Sally Suskowitz, then director of the Public Service Center, later named the PKG Center. In its early days, the IDEAS Competition was led by student organizers to encourage innovation, development, enterprise, action, and service—giving us the acronym IDEAS.

Over the years, IDEAS evolved from the IDEAS Global Challenge, to the IDEAS Social Innovation Challenge, and this year became the IDEAS Social Innovation Incubator to reflect the program's distinct role in MIT's entrepreneurship ecosystem–to incubate new ideas into feasible social ventures positioned for funding or an accelerator in and outside of MIT. Under every name the purpose of IDEAS has remained the same: to guide MIT's technical talent toward urgent social challenges—from energy and climate, to healthcare, education, and workforce development.

As you'll read about in this 25 Year Impact Report, since our founding, IDEAS has supported over 1,200 student-led teams, investing $1.3 million in 298 social ventures across 62 countries.

Analysis across our field of alumni shows long-term durability, with 42% of grant award winners still active over the last 10 years, and 30% over the last 25 years (83 out of 277). In addition to data on IDEAS alumni, including sectors, geographies and capital raised, this report features 25 stories of impact over 25 years of IDEAS.

Since our founding, the challenges student entrepreneurs take on have only grown more complex. Issues like climate instability, fragile health systems, and food insecurity are interconnected, dynamic, and resistant to isolated interventions or technical solutions alone. In response, the PKG Center's IDEAS Social Innovation Incubator has expanded to offer rigorous education in systems change strategy, equipping technical founders to analyze the policy, cultural, and power dynamics that hold problems in place. We've introduced workshops on community-driven innovation and business models that support both measurable social outcomes and financial sustainability. We've also incorporated guidance on the ethical and effective use of AI in social entrepreneurship, alongside 18 months of cohort-based support for grantees.

Our recent programmatic enhancements show strong results, with 88% of grantee teams from the last three years still actively operating. We look forward to sharing their stories in the years to come, as they join a global community of IDEAS alumni who exemplify *mens et manus*, mind and hand, working "wisely, creatively, and effectively for the betterment of humankind," in the words of MIT's mission statement.

Lauren Tyger
Assistant Dean of Social Innovation
MIT PKG Center for Social Impact

Education

Liberatory Computing Founder, Raechel Walker, with the 2024 Data Activism Program Participants at the MIT Media Lab

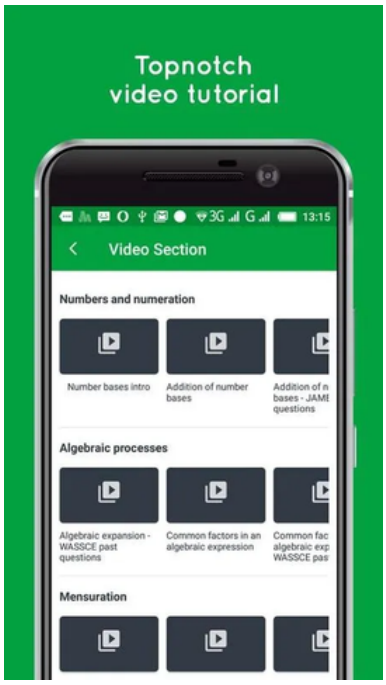
dot Learn

Cohort: 2016

Co-founders:
Sam Bhattacharyya (Course 15, MBA '16)
Tunde Alawode (Course 2, PhD '17)
Chelsey Roebuck (Columbia Engineering, SB '10)

Location: Ghana and Nigeria

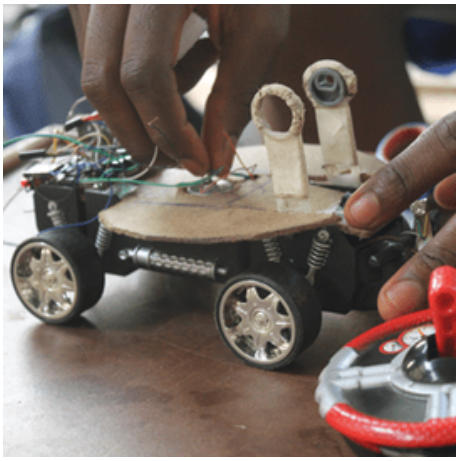
Access to online education in West Africa is inhibited by high data costs and limited connectivity, making most video-based learning platforms inaccessible to students. Even when demand exists, building a financially sustainable model in these markets remains a significant barrier. dot Learn addressed this gap by developing video compression technology that enabled students to access online courses and study on low-data mobile networks using their 'mschool' app. When monetization proved difficult, the team made the platform free and pivoted their core technology into Vectorly, a video-compression startup serving other companies, which was ultimately acquired in 2021.



Impact to date:

dot Learn reached over **50,000 users** across Ghana and Nigeria through its **free** mschool app.

Innovate Salone



Cohort: 2012

Founder: David Sengeh (Course 20, PhD '15)

Location: Sierra Leone

Too often, youth innovation is dismissed for lacking practicality, which stifles the creativity needed to solve pressing global and social challenges. Recognizing this gap, David Sengeh developed Innovate Salone, a high school innovation competition where student teams build projects to address issues facing their local communities. The program introduced a maker culture that reframes innovation as a locally driven effort rather than something externally imported, functioning as an early proto-incubator with mentorship and experimentation spaces.

Through this work, Innovate Salone inspired students to drive Sierra Leone's long-term growth, seeding a critical mindset shift from aid dependency to local problem-solving. Innovate Salone served as the foundational spark that transformed Sierra Leone's innovation landscape into a functioning national system.

Impact to date:

The initiative's early success expanded into **government-led national programs** through the **Directorate of Science, Technology and Innovation** and the **Ministry of Communication, Technology and Innovation**. Together, these efforts have institutionalized innovation within government systems like health and education, creating structured pipelines for talent and establishing clear pathways to turn grassroots student ideas into real-world, government-backed implementation. David served as **first ever Chief Innovation Officer of the Republic of Sierra Leone** and today serves as the **Chief Minister**.

Liberatory Computing

Cohort: 2024

Founder: Raechel Walker (Media Lab, PhD '26)

Location: Seattle, Washington, & Boston, Massachusetts, USA

Systemic inequities are increasingly embedded in the data systems and technologies that shape modern life, yet young people—especially those most affected—rarely have opportunities to critically engage with or reshape these tools. Liberatory Computing is working to close this gap by equipping African American high school students with data science and AI skills through community-driven data activism projects grounded in critical participatory action research.

Through this work, students develop racial identity, critical consciousness, and ethical data practices while building the skills to challenge bias and advocate for change. To date, Liberatory Computing has partnered with three organizations and is currently developing a skills progression program with the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

Impact to date:

Liberatory Computing has **reached over 400 students** through partnerships with AVELA (A Vision for Literacy and Access), the John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematics and Science in Boston, and the company Road Trip.

Practical Education Network

Cohort: 2011

Founder: Heather Beem (Course 2, PhD '15)

Location: Ghana and Liberia

Practical Education Network (PEN), previously Practical Energy Education, is transforming science education across Africa with a hands-on, accessible approach. PEN trains teachers to leverage locally available materials, bringing STEM lessons to life in Ghana, Liberia, and beyond.

A recent control study shows dramatic impact: students taught with PEN's practical methods achieve 97% higher exam score improvements over one academic year, and develop a much deeper enthusiasm for science. Students in a private school in Ghana whose teachers received hands-on science training have consistently recorded the best grades in the subject for four consecutive years – the best ever since the school's students started sitting for the national exams.

Impact to date:

Over the past three years, PEN has expanded its reach through **partnerships with Ministries of Education, MIT D-Lab, and global foundations**, helping over **9,000 educators** reimagine what's possible in resource-limited classrooms. Backed by corporate partners, multilaterals, and widespread acclaim, PEN is closing the STEM opportunity gap for millions of learners, and preparing Africa's next generation of innovators to tackle real-world challenges with confidence.

Practical Education Network
Hands - on, Minds up

SamWise

Cohort: 2025

Founder: Blake Blaze (Course 15, MBA '25)

Location: Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA

Incarcerated learners face persistent barriers to education, including outdated assessment methods that fail to capture real ability, limited instructional capacity, and low engagement, which contribute to poor outcomes and high recidivism. SamWise is an AI-powered oral assessment tool that uses large language models to evaluate students through conversation rather than written exams. By diagnosing skill levels and adapting in real time, it creates more accessible, personalized learning experiences.

Piloted in the Maine Department of Corrections, SamWise has already seen strong early feedback and is expanding through correctional education partnerships. With millions of justice-impacted individuals lacking access to effective education, SamWise offers a scalable path to improve learning outcomes, unlock employment opportunities, and reduce recidivism at a systems level.

Impact to date:

SamWise has started **partnerships with four county houses of correction** in Massachusetts and has delivered AI-powered **curriculum to over 100 students** since last year. In fall 2026, SamWise will begin a pilot program with Mount Tamalpais College located at San Quentin Rehabilitation Center, supporting curriculum for its **600 students**.

Energy, Environment, and Climate

OnePower Africa's solar minigrids

Bevi

Cohort: 2013

Co-founders:
Eliza Becton (Rhode Island School of Design, MID '11)
Sean Grundy (Course 15, MBA '13)
Frank Lee (Course 15, MBA '11)

Location: Boston, Massachusetts, USA

Founded in 2013 with a vision to eliminate the need for single-use bottles and cans, Bevi is redefining how beverages are delivered in shared spaces. Best known for its Smart Water Coolers®, Bevi has grown into the leading connected beverage platform, combining hardware, data, and beverage innovation to deliver premium still, sparkling, flavored, and enhanced drinks on demand. Powered by real-time connectivity and insights, Bevi enables workplaces and commercial spaces to offer customizable, sustainable beverage experiences while reducing environmental impact.

Thousands of Bevi machines are installed across the United States, Canada, the UK, and Ireland in workplaces, multifamily properties, gyms, and other commercial spaces for companies like Hyatt, Tripadvisor, Netflix, and Delta, as well as residential communities managed by Greystar and Colliers. For more information, visit www.bevi.co.

Impact to date:

Since its founding, Bevi has scaled to **serve thousands of customers** with both Standup and Countertop machine models. In September of 2024, Cathy Lewenberg was announced as their new CEO, and in December 2025, Bevi officially crossed the **1 billion single-use plastic bottles saved** milestone. Bevi has **raised $128 million** across four funding rounds.

Forma Systems

Cohort: 2025

Co-founders:
Eduardo Gascón Alvarez (Course 4, PhD '24)
Sandy Curth (Course 4, PhD '25)
Kiley Feickert (Course 4, PhD '25)

Location: Charlottesville, Virginia, USA

The production of structural materials, such as cement and steel, is responsible for over 10% of annual global carbon emissions. Yet up to 70% of the reinforced concrete used in typical buildings is structurally unnecessary, making construction financially and environmentally burdensome. A team of MIT PhDs created a generative design-optimization software, FormaOpt, to address this challenge. By integrating shape optimization into everyday engineering workflows, Forma Systems is reducing the cost and carbon footprint of concrete construction.

Impact to date:

Awarded $290,300

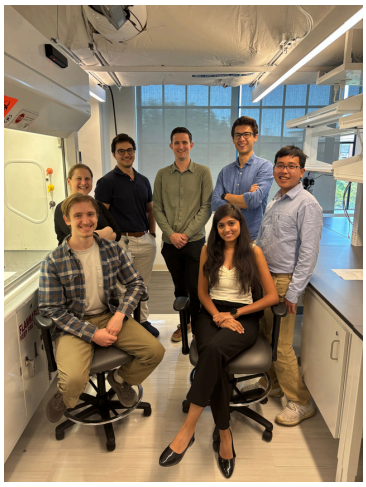
by the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center to demonstrate its shape-optimized concrete floor systems

MIT Climate and Energy Prize Winner

awarded $105,000

FORMA
FORM + MATERIALS

Helix Carbon



Cohort: 2025

Co-founders:
David Brown (Course 15, MBA '25)
Evan Haas (Course 2, SM '24 & Course 15, MBA '24)

Location: Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA

Heavy industry, such as iron and steel, fuels economies but leaves a significant carbon footprint. Even more, industrial CO_2 emissions are often treated as an unavoidable cost of doing business. Helix Carbon addresses this challenge through breakthrough electrolyzers that transform on-site CO_2 into valuable, carbon-neutral fuels and chemicals that integrate seamlessly into existing industrial waste streams without disrupting operations. By turning emissions into economic opportunity, Helix Carbon advances a circular, zero-emissions steel industry committed to solutions that align environmental progress with economic prosperity.

Impact to date:

Helix Carbon **closed a $1M pre-seed round** in 2025 and is currently building their first pilot system for **deployment in early 2027**.

Helix
Closing the carbon cycle.

OnePower Africa

Cohort: 2005

Co-founders:
Amy Mueller (Course 1, PhD '12)
Matthew Orosz (Course 1, PhD '12)

Location: Lesotho, Benin, and Zambia

Across sub-Saharan Africa, millions of people live without access to reliable electricity, leaving rural clinics, schools, and small businesses without the power needed to deliver essential services. OnePower Africa (1PWR), previously STG International, builds and operates solar minigrids that deliver grid-quality power to these underserved communities. Led by Matthew Orosz, PhD, and Amy Mueller, PhD, they began their work in Lesotho, where 1PWR now operates 12 minigrids. In addition, 1PWR has scaled to reach Benin and Zambia and manufactures its own smart electricity meters at its facility in Maseru, Lesotho. 1PWR pairs technical rigor with long-term partnership to build locally rooted infrastructure that advances equity, strengthens public systems, and expands opportunity.

Impact to date:

Today, 1PWR has **over 100 employees** across Africa and operates **12 minigrids** in Lesotho serving approximately **30,000 people**, backed by institutional investors and local pension funds.

SOS Carbon

Cohort: 2023

Founder: Andrés Bisonó León (Course 15, MBA '23)

Location: Dominican Republic, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Antigua & Barbuda

Sargassum influx across the Caribbean has created environmental, economic, and public health challenges — impacting marine ecosystems, coastal communities, and tourism economies while releasing significant greenhouse gas emissions. SOS Group addresses this through a technology-driven model that prevents sargassum from reaching shore and transforms it into valuable products.

SOS Carbon deploys technologies including the Littoral Collection Module (LCM), a patented, ecosystem-conscious system for efficient offshore harvesting using local vessels. Through a vertically integrated value chain, SOS Biotech converts sargassum into high-value outputs, including Marine Symbiotic, a seaweed-based biostimulant used in agriculture, while expanding a blue biotechnology portfolio across cosmetics, biomaterials, and animal feed. This approach mitigates environmental damage while creating economic opportunities by supporting local communities, fishermen, and regenerative agricultural practices. By combining engineering, operations, and biotechnology, SOS Group transforms coastal challenges into scalable climate and economic solutions.

Impact to date:

Since inception, SOS Group has **trained 160+ workers** in sustainable sargassum management and **20+ interns** through the Blue Students Fellowship (MIT, Stanford, UCV, among others). **Over 32,000,000 kg of sargassum have been collected** and **35,000+ tons of CO_2 emissions avoided** through offshore interception and valorization.

Takachar

Cohort: 2012

Founder: Kevin Kung (Course 20, PhD '17)

Location: USA, Canada, India, Kenya, Philippines, Thailand, and Iraq

Most crop and forest residues are loose, wet, and bulky, making it difficult for farmers to transport the material. With expertise in decentralized biofuel and renewable energy, Kevin Kung, PhD, was interested in how this biomass could be upgraded. With that, he co-founded Takachar, which constructs and deploys fleets of low-cost, small-scale, portable reactors–Takavators–that attach to the back of tractors and pick-up trucks. The Takavators are then able to convert locally available crop and forest residues into higher-value, carbon-based products like biofuel and fertilizer. Central to its mission, Takachar breaks down a systems-level supply chain barrier to improve the livelihood of farmers and their communities through sustainable, profitable practices.

Impact to date:

Takachar has deployed **23 units** in the field. They have processed more than **4,300 tonnes of biomass** and scaled to more than **16,000 farmers**.

Health

An ambulance beneficiary of Moving Health's CIP ambulance

change:WATER Labs

Cohort: 2015

Co-founders:
Paul Martin (Course 11, MCP '01)
Diana Yousef-Martinek (Columbia Business School, MBA '04)
Huda Elasaad (Technical Research Assistant, D-Lab '12-'24)

Location: Based in Cambridge with products deployed around the world, including Kenya and Jordan

4.2 billion people around the world lack access to safe toilets, largely because they live in places with no water or sewer hookup, and waste is unable to be flushed. The result is poor sanitation, trapping vulnerable communities in perpetual poverty, chronic disease, and pollution.

In response, change:WATER Labs invented the iThrone—a waterless, sewerless, no-flush toilet that uses revolutionary material technology to absorb the liquid water content of waste by pulling it through the material and then converting it into pure molecular water vapor, evaporating 95% of daily waste deposits in just one day while using minimal energy. Increased access to clean, dignified sanitation has a profound multiplier-effect to promote cross-cutting social and environmental impact with just one intervention: improving health, resilience, gender empowerment, access to opportunity, environmental sustainability and climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Impact to date:

iThrone units have been running successfully in poor urban communities for over 2.5 years, serving more than **20,000 uses**, and consequently **reducing onsite waste volumes by 97% daily waste deposits**. A single iThrone: reduces disease-spread for 1000 people in the surrounding community, conserves 1000 bathtubs per year of freshwater, eliminates 24 bathtubs per year of human waste, and avoids GHG-emissions equivalent to burning 125 klbs per year of coal.

change:WATER

Design that Matters

Cohort: 2003

Founder: Timothy Prestero (Course 2, SM MIT-WHOI Joint Pro '01)

Location: Mali

Design that Matters began as Kinkajou, a low-cost LED microfilm projector, and evolved into Design that Matters. Design that Matters (DtM) is a nonprofit that designs newborn medical devices purpose-built for low-resource hospitals, where unreliable electricity, high patient volumes, and limited training are the reality.

Their flagship products, the Firefly phototherapy device for jaundice and the Otter newborn warmer for hypothermia, are engineered to be "hard to use wrong," so that the easiest action for a caregiver is also the best clinical one. By partnering with international aid organizations and manufacturer MTTS in Vietnam, DtM ensures their devices actually reach the hospitals that need them most.

Impact to date:

As of January 2026, DtM-designed devices have **treated more than 3.1 million** patients across **84 countries**. The Firefly alone has reached 49 countries and treated over 1.1 million newborns, while the newer Otter warmer–having just received CE Mark approval–has already treated more than 800 newborns in Vietnam, Zambia, and the Philippines, with a goal of reaching 30,000 more by the end of 2026.

design that matters

Encoura Therapeutics

Cohort: 2019

Co-founders:
Daniel Carballo (Course 2, SB '18, & SM '19)
Allison Davanzo (Course 2, SB '18)
Kyle Pina (Course 2, SB '18)

Location: Boston, Massachusetts, USA

Tremors and other movement disorders cause great discomfort and stress, hinder fine motor tasks, and limit one's independence. Encora Therapeutics, previously animo, strives to improve Essential Tremor patients' quality of life through medical technology that provides neuromodulation therapy through a device worn on the wrist. Founded by three Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering (Course 2) students, the venture reflects a strong foundation in technical innovation and human-centered design. In February of this year, Encora Therapeutics was granted 510(k) clearance for their device, the Encora X1™, by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, authorizing commercial marketing as a prescription device.

Impact to date:

The Encora X1™ recently passed the two trials that were critical to **receiving 510(k) clearance**. Encora Therapeutics is currently incubating at the Engine in Cambridge, MA.

Incupouch

Cohort: 2001

Founder: Prasanga Lokuge
(Course 10, SB '00 & Course 2, SM '03)

Location: Based in the USA, with deployments to Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Rwanda, South Africa, Bolivia, India, and Gaza

Every year, 15 million babies are born prematurely worldwide. For those in underserved regions, crisis zones or war-torn regions, where electricity is unreliable, standard electric incubators cannot be used. This is where the IncuPouch™ comes in. At under $25, it facilitates Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC) to regulate a premature infant's temperature, heart rate, and breathing. Lightweight, portable, and culturally appropriate, it promotes early breastfeeding and mother-infant bonding in ways science is only beginning to understand. The IncuPouch™ is not a replacement for the hospital incubator; it is a lifeline where the hospital incubator cannot go.

Impact to date:

The IncuPouch™ was the **inaugural winner of IDEAS** International Design Award in 2001. It has since been **tested across four continents**. Most recently, units reached premature infants in field hospitals in Gaza, **delivered via the Royal Medical Services of Jordan in coordination with the Office of HRH Queen Rania.**

Innovators in Health & Everwell Health Solutions

Cohort: 2012

Co-founders: Manish Bhardwaj (Course 6, PhD '09)
Bill Thies (Course 18 & Course 6-3, SB '01, Course 6-3, MEng '02, & Course 6, PhD '08)

Location: India

During the 2007 IDEAS competition, a special track called the Muhammad Yunus Challenge to Alleviate Poverty brought together students committed to tackling global health challenges. Manish Bhardwaj and Bill Thies worked together on a team focused on solving medication adherence for tuberculosis (TB) patients. Their team's initial project involved designing and piloting a low-cost electronic pillbox in India. While that specific device ultimately proved difficult to scale, the experience itself was pivotal in both of their careers, grounding both founders in the realities of TB care, and catalyzing two distinct yet complementary pathways, each addressing the same problem from different angles.

Innovators in Health

Founder: Manish Bhardwaj (Course 6, PhD '09)

Innovators in Health began as a pillbox for TB treatment adherence into a force for healthcare transformation in India's most vulnerable communities. The organization has pioneered community-driven models that train and equip frontline health workers to support TB patients throughout their treatment journey, addressing adherence as well as broader societal and structural barriers to care.

Impact to date:

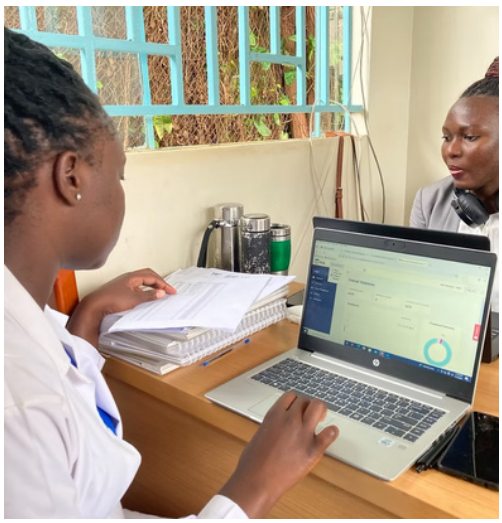
Today, Innovators in Health **supports tens of thousands of patients per year**. Over the years, Innovators in Health has expanded its reach, integrating maternal health programs, improving supply chains for medicines, and championing data-driven interventions. Their grassroots impact has earned **recognition from the Stop TB Partnership** and leading philanthropies and the Indian public health system. In 2024, they received the **Yashraj Bharti Samman award for Innovation in Healthcare Category.**

Everwell Health Solutions

Bill Thies (Course 18 & Course 6-3, SB '01, Course 6-3, MEng '02, & Course 6, PhD '08)

After collaborating with Manish Bhardwaj on TB treatment through IDEAS, Bill Thies joined Microsoft Research to continue iterating on the technological side of the TB treatment adherence problem. Taking the lessons learned from their IDEAS pillbox pilot, specifically the challenges of deploying custom hardware in rural environments, he helped invent a much simpler solution called "99DOTS". This system used paper envelopes with hidden phone numbers that patients would call to log their doses.

As this solution scaled into a national standard of care, Bill co-founded Everwell to manage and scale the technology. Based in Bangalore, Everwell partners with India's Ministry of Health to provide technology support for the nation's tuberculosis program—the largest of its kind in the world.



Impact to date:

Since 2018, Everwell's open-source platform, the Everwell Hub, has **supported 150 million people** across **520,000 treatment facilities**, with coverage throughout India and **pilots in 16 other countries**. Bill's work has led to **over 90 peer-reviewed publications** and has earned various awards, including a MacArthur Fellowship.

Everwell

Lyme Alert

Cohort: 2024

Co-founders:
Erin Dawicki (Course 15, SFMBA '24)
Brenda Ong (Course 15, SFMBA '24)
Michelle Ewy (Course 15, SFMBA '24)

Location: USA

Lyme disease is the most common vector-borne illness in the United States and Europe, yet infections often go undetected until symptoms become severe. Delays in diagnosis make early treatment difficult and can lead to unnecessary antibiotic use or long-term health complications. LymeAlert developed a rapid, on-the-go screening kit that tests ticks for Borrelia burgdorferi, the bacterium that causes Lyme disease. With a plan to launch this summer (2026), the venture will offer home diagnostics enabling faster decision-making for patients while also improving infectious disease monitoring.

LymeAlert was recognized as one of Poets & Quants "Most Disruptive MBA Startups" in 2024. In anticipation of their launch, LymeAlert has lobbied at Congressional offices in DC to ensure vector-borne diseases are funded, raise awareness on Lyme disease and provide educational programming to increase understanding surrounding both the disease and tick tests.

Impact to date:

Erin is a **2026 Presidential Leadership Scholar,** leading an initiative to educate medically underserved and rural areas to collect ticks so Lyme Alert can map the incidence of disease in those underrepresented areas. Lyme Alert has received several awards and recognitions for their early success including being the recipient of the **MIT $100k Audience Choice Winner**, and earning spots in **CIC Social Impact Cohort, MA AI BioHub inaugural Cohort, and Harvard Innovation Lab Climate Circle**.

MDaaS Global

Cohort: 2017

Co-founders:
Genevieve Barnard Oni (Course 15, MBA '19)
Oluwasoga Oni (EM, SM '16)
Joe McCord (SCM '15)
Opeyemi Ologun

Location: Nigeria

Access to quality diagnostics is the critical first step to receiving proper care, yet across Africa, cost and geography keep these services out of reach for millions. MDaaS Global is closing that gap through a tech-powered network of diagnostic clinics. Since launching their first clinic in 2017, MDaaS has scaled to 26 locations across Nigeria and Cameroon, providing x-ray, ultrasound, ECG, and lab tests to low-income, underserved communities. Their model combines technology-enabled operations, a vertically integrated supply chain, and a patient-centered experience to deliver high-quality, affordable services at scale.

Impact to date:

MDaaS Global has **served over 600,000** patients to date. Their network **supports 1,500 healthcare facilities and 50 health insurers** who rely on MDaaS for diagnostics. Patients consistently rate their experience highly, with an **average Google rating of 4.8 stars** across more than 5,000 reviews.

Moving Health

Cohort: 2017

Founder: Emily Young (Course 2A, SB '18)

Location: Ghana

In rural northern Ghana, limited emergency transportation prevents many mothers and patients from reaching care in time, contributing to avoidable maternal and health emergencies. Moving Health designs and deploys Ghana-made tricycle ambulances paired with a community-run dispatch network to provide reliable last-mile emergency transport. Since 2017, the venture has grown into a locally embedded nonprofit working with Ghanaian partners. Today, Moving Health provides reliable emergency transport coverage to people across the region.

Impact to date:

Moving Health provides emergency transport coverage to **over 230,000 people** and has been recognized for advancing maternal health equity, including receiving the **2024 Kenneth C. Frazier Award from MSD for Mothers.**

Workforce Development

Essmart's co-founder, Jackie Stenson, collaborating with a community partner

Assured Labor

Cohort: 2008

Founder: David Reich (Course 15, MBA '08)

Location: Mexico, Nicaragua, and Brazil

Throughout Latin America, low-to-mid wage workers often face fragmented labor markets, long commutes, and limited access to formal job networks despite the rapid spread of mobile phones. Assured Labor addressed this challenge by building the region's largest mobile-first recruitment platforms—connecting workers with higher pay and shorter commutes.

Founded by MIT and Harvard graduates who turned down lucrative offers to pursue the mission full time, the team scaled through deep local partnerships like Claro in Nicaragua, where EmpleoListo became the country's largest digital recruitment platform within its first year. In 2016, Assured Labor was acquired by SEEK, an Australian publicly traded company, with the EmpleoListo brand continuing as SEEK's entry point into lower-wage and mobile-first recruitment services across the region —a validation of both the model and its staying power.

Impact to date:

Assured Labor connected **55,000 employers** with 4 million job seekers across Mexico and Brazil, facilitating over **100,000 placements**—the majority of which offered higher pay and shorter commutes than those workers had before.

Bollant Industries

Cohort: 2013

Founder: Srikanth Bolla (Course 15, SB '14)

Location: India

In 2012, Srikanth Bolla recognized an acute need to provide people with disabilities across India with employment opportunities that aligned with their skillsets, created a sense of community, and provided financial security. Motivated by this mission, Bollant Industries (formerly Aasadeep) was created. The venture manufactures eco-friendly packaging and paper platers, addressing a separate market demand across the country, while employing people with disabilities.

Impact to date:

Today, Bollant Industries operates multiple manufacturing plants and reports providing direct and indirect employment for roughly **500 and 2,500 people**, respectively.

BOLLANT
where everyone counts

Essmart

Cohort: 2012

Co-founders: Diana Jue (Course 14 & Course 11, SB '09 & Course 11, MCP '12)
Taylor Matthews (Course 15, MBA '13)
Jackie Stenson (University of Cambridge, MPhil '11)

Location: India

In rural India, essential technologies, such as clean energy tools and efficient agricultural equipment, often fail to reach the communities that could benefit most from them due to persistent last-mile distribution barriers. Recognizing this, Essmart partners with rural retail shops and technology providers to bring affordable, life-changing products, such as solar lanterns, water pumps, and energy-efficient agricultural tools, to underserved households. Based in southern India, the organization is expanding its role as a market partner that tests and scales new impact technologies for rural and peri-urban communities.

Impact to date:

Since 2012, Essmart has delivered more than 370,000 products, **improving over 1.5 million lives** and reducing carbon emissions by more than **100 million kg of CO_2.** They were recently awarded the 2025 Cartier Women's Initiative Impact Award.

re+Connect

Cohort: 2020

Co-founders: Azury Lin (IDM'21)
Yiyuan Jasmine Qin (IDM '20)

Location: Puerto Rico, USA

Disaster response systems in the United States are structurally disconnected from the communities they serve. Frontline neighborhoods navigate recovery with limited tools, while local knowledge that could improve response rarely reaches institutions positioned to act on it.

Re+collective, an online connectivity and coordination platform, closes that gap. For residents, the platform organizes participation around three capacities: taking resilience actions together, sharing and visualizing community knowledge, and moving from intention to timely action. For organizations, it opens pathways into community life: sharing knowledge, understanding community needs, gathering real-time feedback, activating local leadership, and building durable social connections. Where most disaster tech focuses on alerts, logistics, or physical infrastructure, re+collective addresses the human systems underneath—building civic infrastructure that grows stronger with every action and story shared, linking individual effort to institutional capacity across the full arc of community life.

Impact to date:

re+connect has attracted **investment from NSF, MIT, the Environmental Justice Data Fund, the Natural Hazards Center, and the Foundation for Puerto Rico**, producing **peer-reviewed publications** with Northeastern, Carnegie Mellon, MIT, and the University of Toronto. Re+collective has expanded to municipal governments, long-term recovery groups, national nonprofits, and federated networks across the U.S., building the civic and relational infrastructure that makes resilience possible before, during, and after disruption.

re+ connect

Rurban

Cohort: 2016

Founder: Rebecca Hui (Course 11, SM '17)

Location: New York City, USA, global

Approximately 200 million artists across India rely on handicrafts for their livelihoods, yet many face barriers to selling their work in an increasingly digital marketplace—often forcing them to leave the industry altogether. Rurban (formerly Roots Studio) addresses this challenge by connecting Indigenous and rural artists with global fashion and design partners through an equitable licensing model that returns royalties and protects intellectual property. Since 2016, this venture has expanded collaborations with communities worldwide. In July 2025, Rurban marked its 10-year rebrand with the launch of The Rurban Library in New York City, introducing an enhanced platform for culturally grounded design partnerships.

Impact to date:

Rurban works with **50+ indigenous community groups globally,** channeling income back to artists while guiding **ethical, consent-based use of cultural art**. Rebecca is an Echoing Green fellow, an Unreasonable Fellow, and a Cartier Women's Initiative Fellow.

Wecyclers

Cohort: 2012

Founder: Bilikiss Adebiyi-Abiola (Course 15, MBA '12)

Location: Lagos, Nigeria

In many rapidly growing economies, urban waste management systems struggle to keep pace, leading to trash piled in streets, clogged waterways, and unsafe living conditions. In Lagos—the largest city in Sub-Saharan Africa—informal settlements have limited access to waste collection or basic sanitation services, compounding environmental and public health challenges. Wecyclers addresses this by operating as a for-profit social enterprise using low-cost cargo bicycles ("wecycles") to deliver convenient recycling services directly to densely populated low-income neighborhoods.

Families are motivated to participate through an SMS-based incentive program that rewards consistent recycling with points redeemable for cell phone minutes, food items, and household goods—turning an environmental challenge into tangible economic benefit for residents.

Impact to date:

The model serves more than **20,000 households** across Lagos. Bilikiss is a Carroll Wilson Fellow, an Echoing Green Fellow, and a Cartier Women's Initiative Award recipient, and has since gone on to serve in Lagos State government, most recently as **Director General of the Lagos State Records and Archives Bureau**.

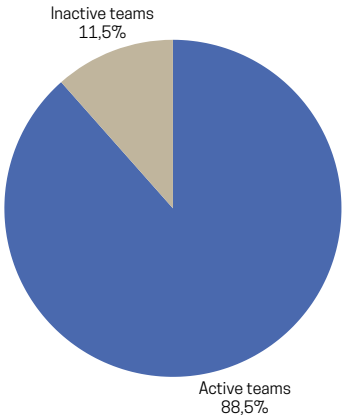
Impact to Date

Over the years, MIT students across the Institute have come to IDEAS to learn how to make a lasting impact through social entrepreneurship. The following data highlights the scale, reach, and enduring impact of the ventures they've built.

"The IDEAS program marked one of the first times that people outside of the founding team saw real potential in Bevi. In the beginning, there were a lot of reasons that our business shouldn't have worked…the IDEAS team acknowledged these problems, but also recognized the massive opportunity for scale and environmental impact if we were able to solve them. The grant we received from IDEAS meaningfully helped us develop our first prototypes and begin finding product/market fit. More importantly, it was an inspiring vote of confidence that encouraged us to keep moving forward." - Sean Grundy, Bevi Co-Founder

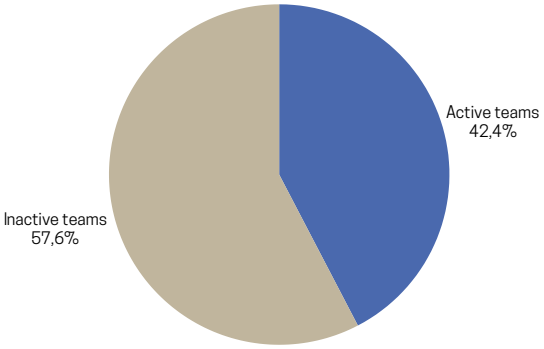
Impact to Date

Sustaining Impact



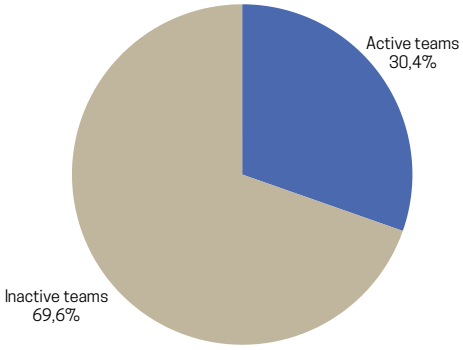
88% of grantee teams between 2022–2025 remain active

88% active over last 3 years



42% of grantee teams between 2016–2025 remain active

42% active over last 10 years



30% of grantee teams between 2002–2025 remain active

30% active over 25 years

Capital Raised

IDEAS grantees (n = 277 as of 2025) have raised $264,441,531 in subsequent funding.

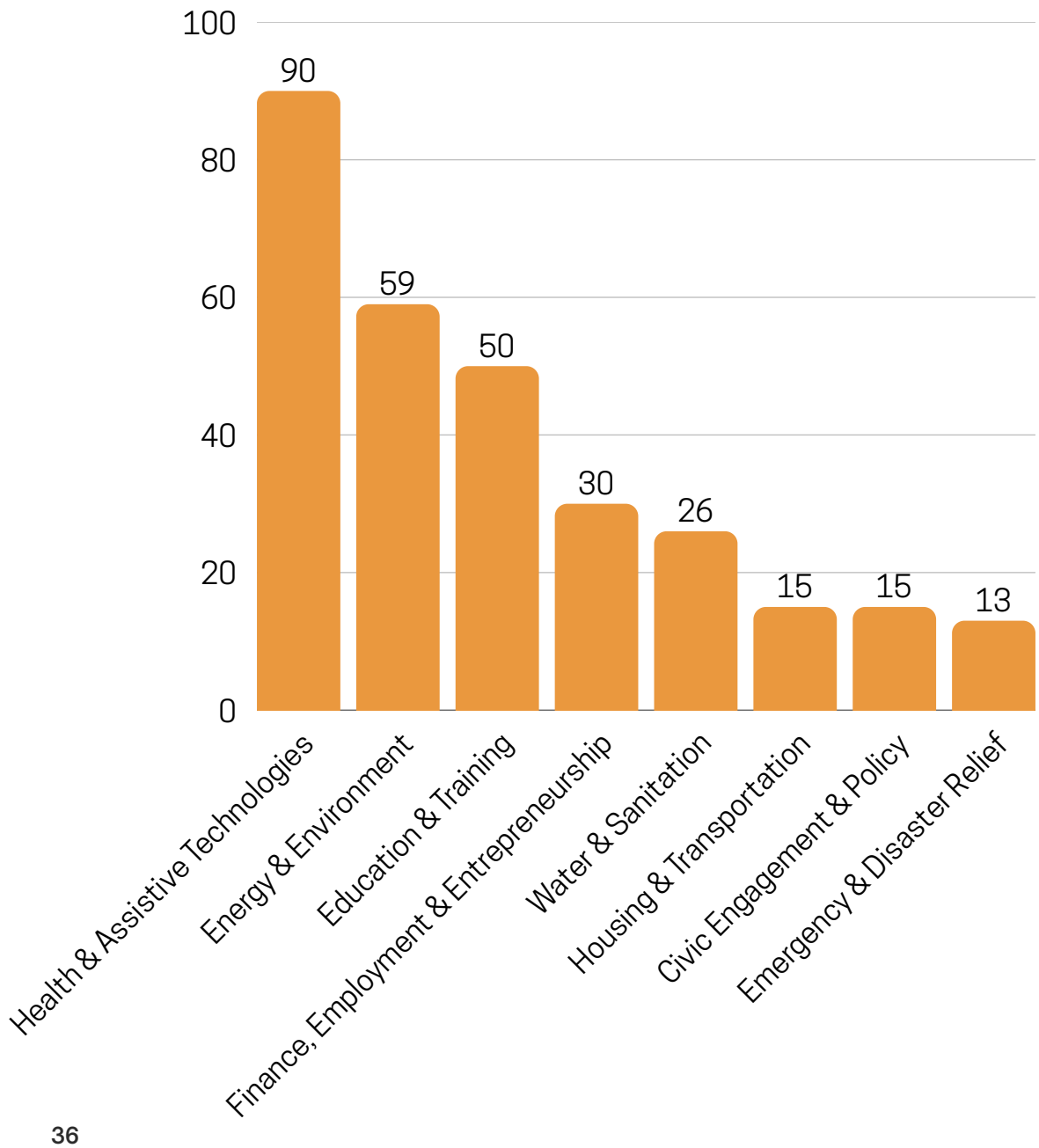
$264,441,531 in subsequent funding

Impact to Date

Sector Trends Over 25 Years

Over the last 25 years, student innovations have clustered around three complex, system-level challenges, which together make up nearly 67% of 298 projects:

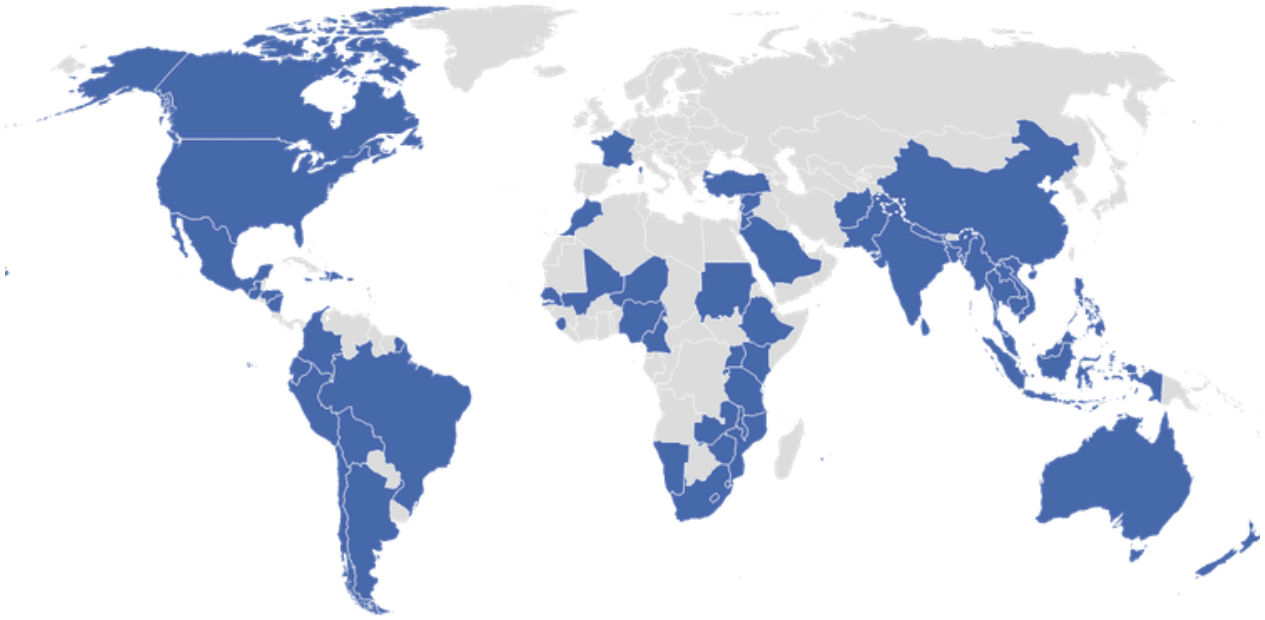
- Health & Assistive Technologies: 90 teams (30.2%)
- Energy & Environment: 59 teams (19.8%)
- Education & Training: 50 teams (16.8%)



Impact to Date

A Global Footprint

298 projects spanning **62 countries**



Where IDEAS Impact Is Concentrated: Top 10 Countries

#1	#2	#3
107	**45**	**14**
United States	India	Ghana

#4	#5	#6	#7
10	**9**	**8**	**7**
Kenya	Nigeria	China	Nepal

#7	#7	#7
7	**7**	**7**
Mexico	Brazil	Rwanda

Looking Ahead

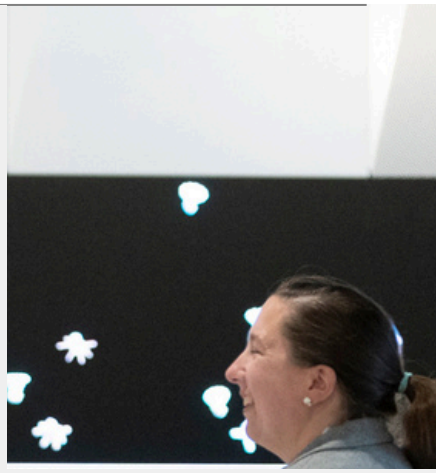
Looking forward, IDEAS is embarking on an ambitious plan not only to better position student ventures for scale but also to scale social entrepreneurship across MIT–encouraging more students, from first-year undergraduates through stage PhDs, to apply their tremendous technical talent to the world's most pressing problems. Based on interviews with IDEAS alumni, and the insights from our 25-year venture data, we're pursuing several strategic enhancements, including:

- Building a social impact investor ecosystem to connect students with the funding and capital they need to turn a good idea into a viable enterprise
- Support for students to repeatedly pilot and iterate on their idea before they leave MIT
- Education in the ethical and effective use of AI in social entrepreneurship
- Developing a global network of alumni to mentor, fund, and otherwise support current and aspiring social entrepreneurs
- Extending our workshops on systems change strategy and community-based innovation to the broader MIT community

At its core, our goal for the future of IDEAS is to help all MIT entrepreneurs make a positive social impact. Thank you for being part of our journey. We hope you'll join us in pursuit of a future where innovation is not only groundbreaking, but grounded in social impact.

Priscilla King Gray Center for Social Impact






Thank you

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