D-Lab: Development and D-Lab: Mobility students in Yogyakarta, Indonesia to work with United Cerebral Palsy Wheels for Humanity, January 2016.

The Goals

- » **Provide** MIT students with hands-on, project-based learning opportunities in collaboration with people living in poverty.
- » **Build** the capacity of students, researchers and staff to create innovative solutions that are relevant to people in the developing world.
- » **Grow** a global network of innovators and innovatioin centers that can transform international development.

"D-Lab offers a critical contribution to the educational landscape of MIT. Through hands-on projects in real-world settings, our students learn that by their efforts they can make a difference in the lives of people living in poverty. They give real substance to the MIT commitment to solve hard problems in service to the world."

Kim Vandiver, Dean for Undergraduate Research, Professor of Mechanical and Ocean Engineering

Inside MIT D-Lab

Designing for a more equitable world

MIT D-Lab works with people around the world to develop and advance collaborative approaches and practical solutions to global poverty challenges.

The program's mission is pursued through interdisciplinary courses, research in collaboration with global partners, technology development, and community initiatives — all of which emphasize experiential learning, real-world projects, community-led development, scalability, and impact assessment.

Founded in 2002 by Amy Smith, Senior MIT Lecturer in Mechanical Engineering, D-Lab has developed a range of technologies and processes, including community water testing and treatment systems, human-powered agricultural processing machines, medical and assistive devices for global health, and cleaner-burning cooking fuels made from agricultural waste.

D-Lab classes, research, and programs are connected to partners around the world in countries including Brazil, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Peru, Haiti, Ghana, Lesotho, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Cambodia, Nepal, India, Pakistan, Lesotho, and the Philippines.

Education

D-Lab challenges and inspires talented students to use their math, science, engineering, social science and business skills to tackle global poverty issues. D-Lab's more than 20 MIT courses include design courses as well as courses that cover the principles of creativity, collaborative design, cross-cultural dialogue, supply chain management, and business venture development. Many courses provide an option for fieldwork. In addition to courses, D-Lab offers dozens of undergraduate research opportunities each year.

"The goal of the trip definitely shifted for me—at the beginning, I was worried about what I could achieve for other people, but by the end, I realized that what was much more important was what I could show people they could achieve themselves."

D-Lab student following her fieldwork

D-Lab by the Numbers

- **Founded:** 2002 by Amy Smith.
- **Student engagement per year**: 200–300 students through courses and the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program.
- **Alumni:** 1,800 as of June 2017.
- **Fieldwork:** Active community partnerships in over 20 countries in Africa, Central and South America, the Caribbean, and South and East Asia.

Research

D-Lab research including needs assessment, market research, product evaluations, and sector-specific applied research, cuts across all programs. Undergraduates, graduate students, and research scientists are all engaged in applied research projects. D-Lab research groups, initiatives and resources include the following:

AGRICULTURE & WATER

BIOMASS FUEL & COOKSTOVES

COMPREHENSIVE INITIATIVE ON TECHNOLOGY EVALUATION

LEAN RESEARCH

LOCAL INNOVATION

MOBILE TECHNOLOGY

OFF-GRID ENERGY

D-Lab Scale-Ups Fellowship

The MIT D-Lab Scale-Ups Fellowship offers one year of support to social entrepreneurs bringing poverty-alleviating products and services to market at scale. Scale-Ups Fellows receive a $20,000 grant, tailored mentorship, skills-building, and networking opportunities. Alumni of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and the International Development Design Summit (IDDS) are eligible to apply. Now in its sixth year, the D-Lab Scale-Ups program has provided 33 fellowships in sectors including agriculture, energy, water, health care, housing, livelihoods, mobility, recycling, education, and personal finance. Scale-Ups fellows have raised $11.4 million, created over 343 direct and 3,278 indirect full-time equivalent jobs; and, through their offerings, have directly improved the lives of nearly 700,000 people living in low-income settings.

Global Programs

In addition to academic programs, research, and the Scale-Ups Fellowship, D-Lab Global programs include:

PRACTICAL IMPACT ALLIANCE

A membership organization of leaders from multinational corporations, government agencies, NGOs, and social enterprises working to increase, accelerate, and sustain impact on global poverty.

HUMANITARIAN INNOVATION

MIT D-Lab is pioneering an approach to humanitarian intervention, which is teaching refugees and displaced persons the design process and the use of tools, to create the things they need to improve their lives.

INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM FELLOWSHIP

A new fellowship for developing world innovation ecosystem builders who provide vital infrastructure for local innovators to succeed.

For More Information

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