INVENTING MIT’S NEXT 150 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE WORLD

What if MIT’s 120,000 alumni had a window on promising public service innovations on campus? And what if MIT students with the passion and talent to change the world had a portal to the experience and resources of those alumni?

Now they do. For MIT, public service is equal parts invention, entrepreneurship, and impact on communities in need. As the Institute celebrates 150 years of public service since its inception in 1861, it is launching the MIT Global Challenge. This initiative supports innovation as public service by:

• connecting student-led teams—through an interactive, web-based “marketplace”—with MIT alumni in 130 countries who are interested in entrepreneurship, innovation, and public service; and

• holding an annual competition that awards up to $40,000 per team for the best ideas to tackle problems in underserved communities worldwide.

The Global Challenge invites students and alumni, along with faculty, staff, and other MIT partners, to identify urgent needs in communities anywhere in the world, and to address those needs through invention and collaboration. Such challenges range from rebuilding after a disaster, to diagnosing and treating disease, to finding alternative, locally available fuels.

MIT students have the ambition, the energy, and the skills to make the world a better place. MIT alumni have the experience, the connections, and the depth of understanding to help make that dream happen. The MIT Global Challenge will bring those two groups together to impact the world.

— Brian L. Hinman, EE 1984

BUILDING ON SUCCESS

The Global Challenge builds on the success of the MIT IDEAS Competition. IDEAS—Innovation, Development, Enterprise, Action, and Service—awards prizes to student teams for outstanding public service innovations. Each award enables a team to develop its prototype into a working solution in collaboration with community partners around the world.

Since it began in 2001, IDEAS has awarded $264,000 to 60 winning teams that have implemented projects in 28 countries, including China, Guatemala, India, Lesotho, Nepal, Niger, and Pakistan. Many of these teams have gone on to secure a total of more than $3.2 million in follow-on funding over the last 10 years.

IDEAS teams have made a lasting impact in many communities worldwide. They have, for example:

• delivered sustainable heating solutions to rural Himalayan communities;

• developed household power solutions for rural, off-grid communities in Tanzania;

• designed an easy-to-fabricate water filter that has provided clean water to more than 100,000 people in arsenic-affected households in Nepal; and

• devised a mobile system for diagnosing certain eye conditions for under $1 using cell phones.

MORE INFORMATION:

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GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

In 2011, the MIT Global Challenge and its predecessor, the IDEAS Competition, will make $150,000 in awards to teams of MIT public-service innovators.

Endow the MIT Global Challenge: $1.5 million

Fund the MIT Global Challenge for one year: $300,000

Fund a Juried Global Challenge Award: $20,000

Fund a Community Choice Global Challenge Award: $5,000

Fund an IDEAS Competition award: $5,000, $7,500, or $10,000

In 2009, IDEAS winner Karina Pikhart (r) of 6Dot Braille Labeler conducts user tests of her team’s electronic braille labeling device.
MIT GLOBAL CHALLENGE

THE CASE FOR SUPPORTING THE GLOBAL CHALLENGE

A GLOBAL NETWORK

IDEAS has grown steadily over the past decade, with more than 1,300 people participating so far. The Global Challenge seeks to expand IDEAS’ scope by leveraging the power of MIT’s worldwide alumni network.

We invite Institute alumni and friends to collaborate with and support teams participating in the Global Challenge in the following ways:

• Underwrite awards. Juried and Community Choice awards provide teams up to $25,000 for one year to implement their service projects.

• Sponsor challenges. Challenges create incentives for teams to focus their time, talent, and energy on discrete problems. Challenge sponsors also agree to host information sessions, recruit mentors, and judge teams.

• Volunteer. Work with teams and the Global Challenge staff by, for example, helping connect teams to potential community partners, mentoring teams, reviewing proposals, providing feedback, and recruiting other volunteers.

In addition to helping celebrate MIT’s 150 years of world-changing service, your support will impact public service and the MIT community through:

• Awards that bring innovation to sectors often underserved by markets, delivering direct benefits to communities in need.

• Worldwide collaboration across the MIT community via the Global Challenge web platform.

• Hands-on learning opportunities that sharpen students’ skills and deepen their knowledge while introducing them to the realities of project implementation.

• Positive public service experiences that cultivate a lifelong commitment to service and problem solving for the public good.

GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

To ensure success, the MIT Global Challenge seeks to raise $300,000 in 2010, and $1.5 million over the next five years. With your partnership, we will not only recognize MIT’s legacy of 150 years of service to the world; we will inspire the next 150 years of service together.

More information:

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For a preview of the Global Challenge web platform, visit beta-globalchallenge.mit.edu

CONNECT WITH GLOBAL CHALLENGE TEAMS ON THE WEB

Go to beta-globalchallenge.mit.edu

The Global Challenge web platform serves as a marketplace for matching alumni skills and resources with the needs of student-led Global Challenge teams.

• View the public service problems that teams have identified and the innovations the teams are developing to address those problems.

• Find teams’ specific requests for help.

• Get information on how to contact teams that you’re interested in sponsoring and/or assisting as a volunteer.

IDEAS 2009 winner EGG-energy team members and community partners train local electricians to install novel leased battery power systems to off-grid homes in Tanzania.