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**MIT D-Lab receives \$35k grant from Newman's Own Foundation
for the D-Lab Scale-Ups Fellowship Program
Providing Funding and Mentorship for Social Entrepreneurs**

Cambridge, Mass. For the second consecutive year, MIT D-Lab has received a \$35,000 grant from [Newman's Own Foundation](#), the independent foundation created by the late actor and philanthropist, Paul Newman. The funding will support the [D-Lab Scale-Ups Fellowship program](#). The fellowship supports promising social entrepreneurs who are tackling global poverty in an innovative way. The year-long fellowship provides seed funding and a highly mentored experience to full-time founders who are launching tech-based, poverty-alleviating products or services in emerging markets.

About the D-Lab Scale-Ups Fellowship

D-Lab Scale-Ups Fellows enter the program with a compelling impact goal, value proposition, and proof-of-concept prototype. During the year, D-Lab works with fellows and their teams to retire risk in three critical but interrelated areas — technical feasibility, social sustainability and market viability — that position their ventures for operational excellence, investment capital, and impact growth. The fellowship offers four key pillars of support: \$20,000 in unrestricted funding; tailored mentorship and capacity building; peer support; and knowledge generation.

2016-2017 Fellows

The D-Lab Scale-Ups Fellowship is open to graduates of the [Massachusetts Institute of Technology](#) (MIT) and members of the [International Development Innovation Network](#) (IDIN). The 2016-2017 D-Lab Scale-Ups Fellows include:

HEATHER BEEM (MIT) | [Practical Education Network](#), Ghana

Teacher training workshops that build the capacity of STEM teachers.

ARUN CHERIAN (IDIN) | [Rise Legs](#), India

A light-weight, cane-based, ecofriendly prosthetic leg.

WARDAH INAM (MIT) | [uLink](#), India

A platform to develop and manage low-cost modular microgrids in off-grid areas.

JACKIE STENSON (IDIN) | [Essmart](#), India

Building a rechargeable headlamp for rural Indian farmers.

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Impact

D-Lab Scale-Ups fellows have launched 27 enterprises in 13 countries on four continents. Nineteen fellows are alumni of MIT while eight are alumni of IDIN. Fellow ventures include seven in healthcare, seven in agriculture, five in energy, two in water sanitation, two in assistive devices, two in waste, one in education, and one in mobile financial services. D-Lab has invested \$590,000 while the ventures have raised \$11.3 million in Equity, debt, and grant investment. Additional impact includes:

- *Jobs.* Direct jobs created: 343 (income earned \$1,820,428); indirect jobs created: 3,278 (income earned: \$671,167).
- *Environment.* Trees planted: 250,000; kilograms waste recycled: 1 million; people with improved waste handling: 87,367.
- *Energy.* People with improved energy services: 76,335.
- *Health & Mobility.* People with improved health or mobility: 506,734.
- *Farmer Livelihoods.* Farmers with improved livelihoods: 18,544.
- *Total People Served.* Total number people reached with goods and services: 701,047.

Tish Scolnik, co-founder and CEO of GRIT, which produces the Leveraged Freedom wheelchair, notes, "the support from D-Lab Scale-Ups covered a critical pre-revenue gap for our budding enterprise. Scale-Ups is filling a hole in the funding pipeline, and its support helped us become a sustainable business."

About MIT D-Lab

Working with people around the world, MIT D-Lab develops and advances collaborative approaches and practical solutions to global poverty challenges.

The program's mission is pursued through interdisciplinary courses at MIT, field-engaged research, technology development, and community initiatives — all of which emphasize experiential learning, real-world projects, community-led development, and scalability.

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