What if world-leading organizations teamed up to develop and scale technology and business solutions to global poverty?

Practical Impact Alliance

at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Practical Innovation

Collaborative Action

Shared Learning

Change Inspiration

MIT | D-Lab

D-Lab at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology is recruiting founding members for the inaugural year of the Practical Impact Alliance. The Practical Impact Alliance is a new initiative that aims to harvest the power of collaborative learning and action to increase, accelerate, and sustain impact on global poverty.

Our Mission

The Practical Impact Alliance fosters collaborative action and shared learning among a community of change-makers from within leading business, social and academic actors. By bringing these independent actors together, PIA aims to catalyze change within organizations, generate and disseminate useful knowledge, create practical innovation, and enable effective implementation of market-driven solutions to poverty.

Why the Practical Impact Alliance?

Over the last decade, an increasing number of businesses, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and public institutions have been striving to create "shared value" by making life-enhancing products and services accessible to the world's poor. In doing so, these organizations are encountering common challenges – from understanding the needs, wants, and habits of resource-poor communities, to managing logistics in remote locations with limited infrastructure. As they explore and embrace new and inclusive models for delivering value, organizations are gathering essential knowledge and experience with the unique challenges of these new markets. This learning, and the resulting innovation, often happen in relative isolation, with organizations duplicating efforts to build the capacity and knowledge they need.

As members of the Practical Impact Alliance, leaders from diverse organizations with aligned missions will be able to share learning, collaborate, and develop best practices together. Through PIA's activities, member organizations can increase their individual and collective impact – all while leveraging and supporting the work of MIT programs focusing on global poverty alleviation.

Who should join the Practical Impact Alliance?

The Practical Impact Alliance was conceived to maximize value for a multidisciplinary and complementary community of organizations, including:
- Multinational corporations with a strong social mission operating in developing markets and seeking to augment the shared value created in their ecosystems
- Leading national companies actively committed to the economic and social development of their countries and regions
- Social enterprises operating in developing nations and delivering goods and services that improve the livelihoods of the poor
- NGOs and foundations with active market-driven programs addressing issues of global poverty
- Organizations aspiring to become one of the above through active learning and collaboration

We believe that the strength of a community stems from the values driving its individual members. The Practical Impact Alliance is seeking leaders who have:
- Passion for improving the world we live in
- Appreciation for practical and inclusive solutions
- Commitment to sharing knowledge and experience
- Appetite for innovative ideas
- Openness to alternative points of view
- Enthusiasm for collaboration

Why MIT?

A core aspect of MIT's mission is to generate, disseminate, and preserve knowledge, and to work with others to bring that knowledge to bear on the world's greatest challenges. Across the Institute, world-leading thinkers are applying their talents to developing innovative business and technology solutions to global poverty. In 2012, the United States Agency for International Development recognized MIT as one of seven world-class universities working to evaluate and strengthen real-world innovations in development, committing $25 million to establish two Development Labs, the International Development Innovation Network (IDIN) and the Comprehensive Initiative for Technology Evaluation (CITE), both spearheaded by D-Lab.

For more than 10 years, D-Lab has been a key component of MIT's international development ecosystem. In addition to being the leading entity behind the IDIN and CITE initiatives, D-Lab's multidisciplinary curriculum of 16 MIT courses engages students and faculty from across the Institute. D-Lab's Scale-Ups program, founded in 2011, enables market-driven deployment of technology solutions to poverty by supporting MIT alumni entrepreneurs, providing technical assistance to small and medium-sized enterprises, and engaging industry in research collaborations. At the nexus of technology innovation and international development at MIT, D-Lab is uniquely positioned to connect the Practical Impact Alliance members with the MIT innovation and research that are most relevant to their goals.

Member Benefits

The overarching benefit of being a Practical Impact Alliance member is the opportunity to access a network of leaders working across industries and geographies on market-driven solutions to poverty. PIA also provides access to experts at MIT and partner institutions who are actively advancing thinking in such fields such as appropriate design, market and user research, technology evaluation, and business models for the developing world. D-Lab, as the organizing entity, will facilitate a collection of activities designed to foster practical innovation, collaborative action, and shared learning among members.

Activities

Working Groups	Working Groups are at the heart of the Practical Impact Alliance. Each year, PIA members will work together to determine areas of common interest or need. Working Groups formed around these themes will drive the content of PIA programming throughout the year, allowing members to tailor their participation to the needs of their organization.
Themed Workshops	Member-driven workshops at MIT or a partner site in which participants will come together to advance thinking on a subject of shared interest. Workshops will result in open-source resources for the benefit of both alliance members and the broader development community.
Co-Design Summits	Field-based seminars in which PIA members will be immersed in local markets to collaborate with community members and local innovators to co-create solutions to local issues, while gaining first-hand experience with market constraints and stakeholder needs.
Innovation Challenges	Leveraging the MIT IDEAS Global Challenge platform, PIA members will be able to sponsor a challenge focused on a topic area relevant to their business, allowing access to fresh, market-relevant innovations through supporting student teams.

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Internship Placements	Through PIA-facilitated internship placements, member organizations can access MIT's exceptional student talent for focused projects, enabling organizations to augment internal resources for faster innovation and a fresh focus - all while students gain valuable experience within organizations at the forefront of social value creation.
Scaling Development Ventures Conference (SDV)	The annual SDV conference convenes international development and business practitioners from across industries and geographies to examine how best to bring poverty-alleviating solutions to market. In addition to regular conference programming, PIA members will have access to special workshops and networking events with conference speakers and contributors.
Case Study Development	MIT will collaborate with member organizations to harvest knowledge and experience related to market-driven poverty alleviation. MIT will distill and disseminate this knowledge through published case studies, allowing organizations to magnify their impact through shared learning.

Become a Member

D-Lab is currently recruiting organizations for the founding cohort of the Practical Impact Alliance. Founding members will have the unique opportunity to shape the direction of this exciting new initiative, helping to lay the foundation for PIA members to become powerful agents of change in their organizations while growing the resources available for international development practitioners, business leaders, and entrepreneurs working in Base of the Pyramid contexts worldwide.

Membership Dues	Annual membership dues are set at US $20,000 for corporations and foundations. To ensure a diverse community of member organizations, social ventures and non-governmental organizations are eligible for discounted dues of US $5,000 per year.
Founding Member Rate	In appreciation of our founding members, organizations that register before September 15, 2014 will receive a 25% reduction in dues for the first year.
Referral Incentives	Members who refer an organization for PIA membership are eligible for a 25% reduction in dues for the following year.

To become a founding member of the Practical Impact Alliance at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, please contact Elisha Clark at eliclark@mit.edu. In your message, please include a brief description of your organization and your interest in PIA membership.

Thank you for considering membership in the Practical Impact Alliance at MIT. We look forward to launching PIA with organizations committed to creating positive social impact.

Questions/Contact

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