



CoLab's most essential tool: a blackboard full of ideas to tackle urban poverty and climate change.

GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

Support CoLab for 10 years: **\$12 million**

Support a team of students, faculty, and staff addressing a problem related to urban sustainability and poverty alleviation. **\$30,000 - \$500,000**

Support five fellows for one year: **\$250,000**

Support one student's work with a community for one year: **\$20,000**

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ADDRESSING URBAN POVERTY THROUGH SOLUTIONS TO CLIMATE CHANGE

More than 90 percent of the world's population has less than 15 percent of the world's household wealth. More than 50 percent of the world's population lives on less than \$2 per day. Perpetuating itself generation after generation, extreme poverty is a difficult condition to overcome.

Many impoverished people, meanwhile, are moving into cities. Half the world's population now lives in urban areas. And the poor are the most susceptible to environmental degradation. It is in the poorest communities that heavy industrialization, lack of access to clean drinking water and sanitation services, and decreased air quality persist. The climate crisis will intensify this disparity.

How should cities respond to the two-pronged issue of poverty and climate change? Their approaches will have ramifications as significant as those of the Industrial Revolution, creating dislocations that could generate tremendous wealth—or drive massive impoverishment.

The Community Innovators Lab (CoLab) at MIT is tackling these issues. Poverty alleviation, climate change, mass urbanization, and city planning are urgent, intertwined

challenges, and they demand innovative solutions quickly. With its interdisciplinary strengths and track record of putting its expertise and discoveries to work in the world, MIT is ideally suited to address these problems.

CoLab views the confluence of mass urbanization and global climate change as a pivotal opportunity: create a future in which the emerging green economy becomes a vehicle for lifting people out of poverty while improving their environmental, economic, educational, and living conditions and their prospects for entrepreneurship.

CoLab launched in 2007 in MIT's Department of Urban Studies and Planning (DUSP)—the largest department of city planning in the U.S. Its students and faculty work with low-income and excluded people around the world, tapping their energy, creativity, and in-depth knowledge of the issues they face to transform politics and the market. The ultimate goal: creating socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable cities.

The efforts of cities around the world seeking to reduce their buildings' carbon footprints, for example, will have the greatest impact in low-

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*"We accept the fact that **we will always** have poor people around us, and that poverty is part of **human destiny**. This is precisely why we continue to have poor people around us. If we firmly believe that poverty is **unacceptable to us**, and that it should not belong to a civilized society, we would have built **appropriate institutions and policies** to create a poverty-free world."*

— Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus



Amy Stitely, a 2007 CoLab summer intern, surveys abandoned buildings along Broad Street in New Orleans for the Mayor's Office of Recovery Management. Photo: Tiffany Chu

income neighborhoods with the least efficient buildings. Similarly, residents and owners of luxury housing will benefit from more education and training for maintenance workers charged with running increasingly technically sophisticated, eco-sensitive building systems. CoLab, along with its community partners, is examining how communities leverage such emerging opportunities.

"Theory is great, but alone it is just insufficient, until it's reduced to practice... [this] really sits at the heart of MIT."

— MIT President Susan Hockfield

CoLab's students and faculty in the fields of planning, engineering, and management work with community groups on a sustained basis. Together, they develop road maps toward climate-change solutions that

generate shared wealth through green enterprises and jobs, and that deepen democratic participation.

In 2007, for example, CoLab deployed a team of students to the Office of Recovery Management (ORM) in New Orleans to work on development initiatives toward a green, prosperous, and equitable recovery after Hurricane Katrina. In 10 weeks, the team created a full-fledged recovery plan for each of 17 target areas. The human capital and expertise of MIT students were instrumental to the ORM's ability to meet many of its publicly stated goals and deadlines.

In 2009, CoLab launched a project called Leveraging the Stimulus. Its student-practitioners helped low-income communities across the U.S. build coalitions to use funding from the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act for long-term economic and social transformation.

These projects highlight the speed at which opportunities for ground-breaking innovation are emerging.

When it comes to solving humanity's major environmental, social, and economic issues, the traditional research model of exploring a narrow topic at length, and reporting on that topic in a peer-reviewed journal, is becoming outdated. CoLab seeks a new methodology to find practical, sustainable solutions to these problems while educating a new corps of informed city planners, community activists, and managers.

SUPPORT COLAB

CoLab seeks philanthropic partners to join us in our mission to implement an entirely new vision for the future of cities. With your support, our students, faculty, staff, and partners will play a leading role in this process. Gifts at any level can have an immediate, positive impact through CoLab.

Website

<http://web.mit.edu/colab>

Blog

<http://colabradio.mit.edu>