

15.971 / MAS 665

Development Ventures

The MIT Developmental Entrepreneurship Seminar
Syllabus
v.20080827

Website -- <http://stellar.mit.edu/S/course/15/fa08/15.971/index.html>

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We challenge students to craft enduring and economically viable solutions to problems faced by at least One Billion people worldwide.

Summary Description – Development Ventures (DV) is a Fall semester elective seminar on planning and building entrepreneurial ventures in developing countries and emerging markets. We place particular emphasis on those transformative innovations and exponentially scalable business models which can enable and accelerate major positive social change throughout the world.

Class Alumni -- Alums from the DV seminar since 2001 have founded nearly a dozen companies, including Ghonsla, AssuredLabor, ClickDiagnostics, FirstMileSolutions/United Villages, blueEnergy, RemesaTel, WAY Systems, Dimagi, Howtoons, CellBazaar, Explorist, WiderReach, and more.

Learning-by-Doing – We explore a range business models and opportunities by examining live case example businesses, including several launched by MIT innovators, and consider the general problems of deploying and diffusing products and services through entrepreneurial action. By drawing on live and historical cases, especially from Asia, Africa, and Latin America, we seek to cover the broad spectrum of challenges and opportunities. Students are asked to craft a business plan executive summary worthy of submission in the MIT IDEAS Competition and/or MIT \$100K Entrepreneurship Competition. (In previous years several teams have won in both.)

Cases Studied -- By embracing live and historical cases drawn from a sampling of regions globally, we hope to cover the broad spectrum of challenges and opportunities facing developmental entrepreneurs. Cases we draw from include:

Historical Cases of Success and Failure

- Communications – African Communications Group, GrameenPhone
- Local IT services -- Drishtee.com, LINCOS, SARI, and PCO booths
- Distributed business structures -- Amul, HLL, and Dabbawalla

Current Live Cases

- Connectivity – UnitedVillages (Drive-by WiFi & Services)
- Medical Informatics – Dimagi (AIDS management and Rural Healthcare)
- MicroFinance – CircleLending, RemesaTel, WAY Systems
- Distributed Energy – blueEnergy, SELCO

Schedule – Class sessions Thursday 4-6pm, Room E15-383. A typical session will have a presentation by current entrepreneurs, followed by group discussions.

Additional class time requirements include individual and team meetings with instructor(s) and team working meetings outside of class hours.

Expected Student Deliverables – Students are expected to propose new venture ideas, collaborate in teams, and ultimately craft a business plan executive summary, worthy of submission in the MIT IDEAS and/or \$100K Entrepreneurship Competition.

Invited Guest Speakers Include

- Amir Hasson / UnitedVillages
- Damien Balsan / WAY & Nokia
- Vikram Kumar / Dimagi
- David Reich / AssuredLabor
- Erich Ramos / RemesaTel
- Matthias Craig / blueEnergy
- Mridul Chowdhury / ClickDiagnostics
- Samir Somaiya / Gyanpad & somaiyagroup
- Nathan Eagle / EPROM
- Carmichael Roberts / DiagnosticsForAll & NorthBridge VC
- Harish Hande / SELCO
- Amy Smith, Randy Zadra, Jhonatan Rotberg, Julius Akinyemi

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Fall 2008