

IMPACT LAB



2021-22 ANNUAL REPORT



HKU
BUSINESS
SCHOOL
港大經管學院



DEAN'S MESSAGE



HKU Business School challenges students to critically question the world around them and innovate for a better tomorrow, and Impact Lab does precisely that. Its experiential nature, the placement of students in real-life experiences, and the diverse environment it exposes students to are qualities that make the Impact Lab Course one of a kind.

To date, more than 1,000 Impact Lab students have contributed 124,800 hours of meaningful support to the social impact sector, gaining practical skills while simultaneously benefiting the community. I am excited for the great impact this course will continue to make, as it has continued to do so even through challenging times.

Professor Hongbin Cai
Dean of HKU Business School and Chair of Economics

INSTRUCTOR'S MESSAGE

It has been 10 years since we first had the vision of offering young people a safe environment to expand their skills while helping to solve challenging social problems. Our journey with these students has been immensely rewarding. Some Impact Lab students have gone on to create their own companies, some are working to improve the system from within the private sector, and some have even returned to work at the social impact organization where they were once an intern. We hear from our alumni often, and know they are forces for good, no matter what career path they choose.

All this demonstrates the unparalleled drive to create positive impact amongst HKU Business School students. They really just need the opportunity to learn and apply their skills and knowledge, under the guidance of leaders who have faith in their ability. That is why the Impact Lab Course exists.



Mr. David Bishop
Associate Professor of Teaching

WHAT IS IMPACT LAB?

Impact Lab is a 6-credit experiential learning course that gives students an opportunity to support social ventures under the guidance of a faculty instructor and professional mentors.

Students are given opportunities to manage teams, solve real-life problems, and gain hands-on business experience, which will strengthen their soft skills, help them implement academic business concepts in a practical way, and greatly improve their ability to compete in the job market.

Since 2013 we've had...



1,040

students who gained valuable real-life experience by joining the course



124,800

hours dedicated by students to assist social businesses scale their impact



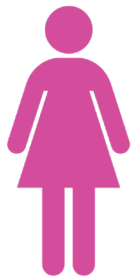
39

social impact organization partners



66%

of students were Female



Male students made up

34%

2021-22 UPDATE

Economic uncertainties as a result of social unrest and the COVID-19 pandemic mean that half of Hong Kong's university students either had their internship canceled or couldn't find an internship at all. Impact Lab has continued to offer students access to real-life work experiences, where students are involved in critical roles and asked to collaborate and innovate solutions to the challenges that exist in society.

Starting an Impactful Business

Over the past year, the Impact Lab team expanded its focus toward helping students learn how to start businesses that positively impact the community. Students enjoyed learning from the real-life experiences of passionate entrepreneurs.

"It was an amazing learning experience to hear from many different people who are so passionate and invested in their causes. This merged into a truly enlightening combination of general life advice, illustrations of the many ways to fail and succeed in the social impact sector. The course has compelled me to continue my social impact journey."

Kyra Krall Placement at EmpowerU

2021-22 by the numbers



96

students gained valuable real-life experience by joining the course



11,520

hours dedicated by students to assist social businesses scale their impact



11

social impact organization partners



OUR IMPACT DURING COVID-19



The COVID-19 pandemic presented challenges to the entire business community, and the social impact sector was no exception. But those challenges also offered significant opportunities for Impact Lab students to utilize their skills and create lasting social impact.

As our partner companies were redirecting resources and recalibrating their strategies to serve the community, Impact Lab students also gained invaluable skills such as adaptability, risk assessment, and creativity, while witnessing first-hand how socially minded organizations can positively impact the underprivileged in society. With the help of Impact Lab students, our partner companies were able to adapt quickly and respond to the changes brought by the pandemic.

In this section we will highlight a few examples.



EmpowerU

HKU students actively supported the [EmpowerU](#) team bring high-quality education to underserved communities. COVID made in-person learning impossible, and Impact Lab students helped research and implement COVID safe classes (when allowed) and an online content delivery platform to continue EmpowerU's education programs for migrant domestic workers and ethnically diverse youth.





Impact Lab students supported [Soap Cycling](#)'s fundraising efforts despite challenges due to social distancing rules. Students helped organize several community outreach campaigns to distribute thousands of face masks and hygiene kits to street cleaners, refugees, and homeless individuals. Soap Cycling also piloted "[Soap Walk for Good](#)" to empower Hong Kong ethnic minorities while promoting intercultural understanding and social inclusion.



Check out the SCMP Feature on Soap Cycling's pandemic relief work [here](#).

Similarly, Impact Lab students assisted the [Foundation for Shared Impact](#) in running the [Community Connections Program](#), which connects social impact organizations with corporate volunteers. Through this effort, our students were able to directly support NGOs that were struggling during COVID.



Playing a unique role in turning the hospitality industry into a catalyst for sustainability, Impact Lab students helped [GREEN Hospitality](#) shift its core events online to offer hospitality and F&B practitioners a platform to share their challenges as some of the hardest-hit industries, and promote knowledge exchange when such dialogues were more urgent than ever.

IMPACT LAB

HKU's Vision for 2016-2025

The University of Hong Kong's highest priorities are to create opportunities for the very best academic talents to excel and to advance human knowledge to the benefit of society. Not only has the Impact Lab Course aided in achieving the University's overall mission, the unique and innovative Course has contributed specifically to all aspects of the Vision.

INTERNATIONALIZATION

Promoting global citizenship and competitiveness through a diverse exchange of ideas and international experiences.

INNOVATION

Continuously encouraging critical thinking and questioning in order to innovate for change and social good.

INTERDISCIPLINARITY

Bringing together different and divergent minds, in order to drive and catalyze new ways of thinking, new ideas and concepts, and new ways of doing things.



IMPACT

From contributing to finding cures for diseases, to promoting oral hygiene in developing countries and more, our aim is to embed impact into all of our academic and educational outcomes.

INTERNATIONALIZATION

By giving students the opportunity to support social ventures - each committed to different Sustainable Development Goals - Impact Lab enables students to become global citizens. From their supervisors to their team members, students are given the opportunity to learn intercultural communication by being exposed to a diverse environment in gender, race, ethnicity, and culture.

Over the years we have had students from



128

Different Universities



58

Different Countries

OUR STUDENTS AROUND THE WORLD

152

Students from
Europe

93

Students from
North America

3

Students from
South America

5

Students from
Africa

760

Students from
Asia

27

Students from
Oceania

3

Students from
Western Asia

41

Students from
Southeast Asia

3

Students from
Central Asia

78

Students from
South Asia



635

Students from
East Asia

132

Students from
China (Mainland)

446

Students from
Hong Kong

14

Students from
Taiwan

38

Students from
South Korea

5

Students from
Japan

INNOVATION

Impact Lab is an award-winning course that facilitates experiential learning. By working with social impact leaders, students are placed in the front-row seat to witness the challenges faced by start-up organizations, and get to apply their knowledge, skills, and creativity in a socially impactful way.

“Working in a start-up environment like that of Good Financial changed the way I view my career prospects and deepened my interest in entrepreneurship and finance. As a result, I decided to apply for a double major in Entrepreneurship, Design and Innovation to which I was eventually accepted.”

Asli Ak Placement at Good Financial



STUDENT INNOVATION

Impact Lab supports student-led companies such as Clearbot and Hollo. Both innovative ideas were conceived by HKU students to rid the world of some of the most pressing problems.

Clearbot

Clearbot is a start-up founded by Sidhant Gupta. The company invented efficient, AI-powered, self-driving boats with zero greenhouse emissions that remove plastic waste from the ocean. Clearbot was recognized by the media and received several innovation awards.



Hollo

Hollo is a platform of clinical-grade software aiming to help measure, track and treat the mental health and well-being of chronic patients. It is the brainchild of Ajit Krishna and Cameron van Breda, who led the startup to several victories such as the Microsoft Imagine Cup Global Champion.



COURSE INNOVATION

The Course in itself is innovative and has been recognized by The University of Hong Kong and other institutions for its innovative approach and teaching excellence. It integrates the philosophy of Impact-Based Learning which is a new model for business education, taking action-based and experiential learning one step further to create and scale companies or projects with sustained social impact.

Students are given opportunities to engage in long-term management opportunities, developing leadership through real-life management opportunities, and “risk-free” entrepreneurship. To our knowledge, Impact Lab is the only course of its kind that creates and manages ongoing social businesses by placing students in leadership roles within said firms.

INTERDISCIPLINARITY

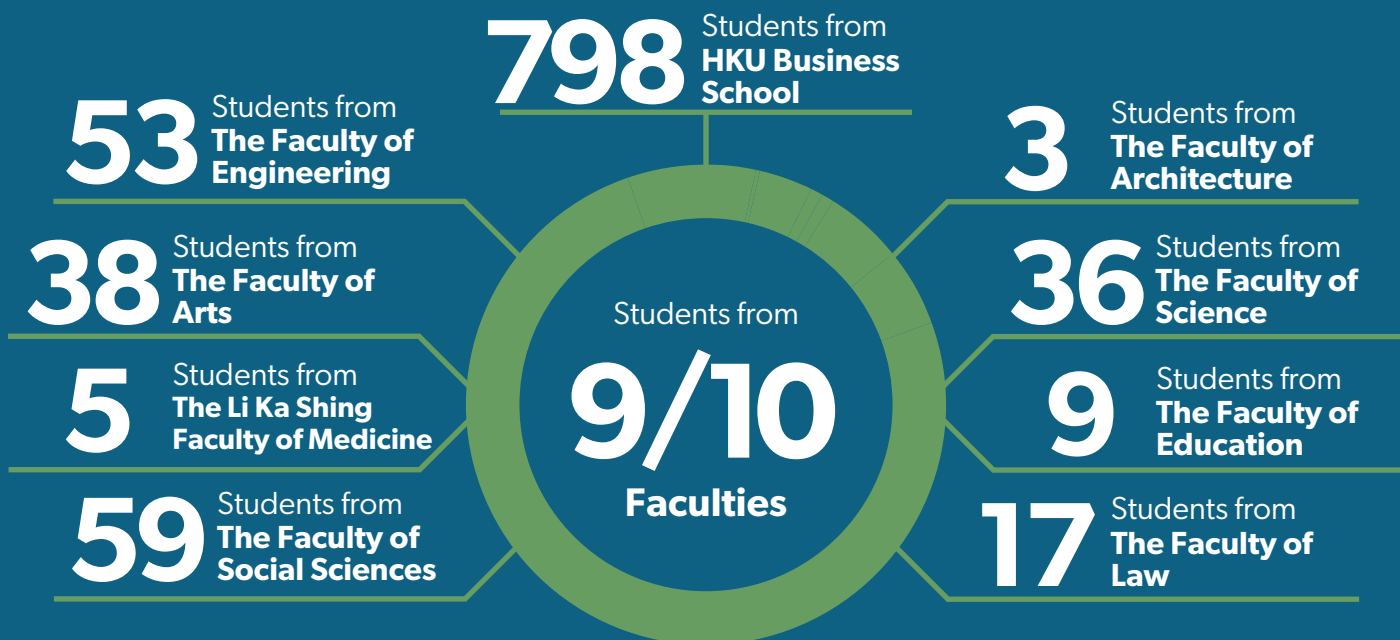
The diverse areas of focus of our partner companies and the wide range of roles and responsibilities students are placed into, give Impact Lab its unique, interdisciplinary nature. This means the Course is relevant, practical, and value-added to students, regardless of their academic disciplines.

Over the years we have had students from



MULTIPLE FACULTIES

Impact Lab students are from almost all of the faculties at HKU



ALL YEARS OF STUDY

Impact Lab students are from almost all years of study at HKU



IMPACT

Impact Lab alumni have gone on to illustrious careers around the globe. Many have started their own social impact organizations, landed in careers with a focus on social impact, or are driving impact from within their private sector employers. These students have taken their learnings forward to empower the next generation of youth and the broader community as responsible global citizens.

Words from our Alumni



Vivian Seo

Impact Lab alumna and currently Project Manager at FSI (Ex-Goldman Sachs)

The Impact Lab Course was an eye-opening experience for me. It showed me that participating students actually have something to contribute to real business.



Tomáš Kessler

Impact Lab alumnus and currently Head of Strategy at EIDU (Ex-BCG)

Participating in the Impact Lab Course reinforced my belief in the value of social enterprise and helped me realize that I want to ensure that social impact is part of my career going forward.



97.2%

Students claimed they became **More Employable**

By taking part in Impact Lab, I had the chance to meet people from different walks of life which really elevated my communication skills. At Soap Cycling, a lot of my tasks involved working in teams and at times I also got to lead these teams. I now know how to lead under pressure and how to work well with strangers.

Syed Lutfi Mahadee Placement at Soap Cycling

UN Sustainable Development Goals

HKU has committed to respond purposefully to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as stated in the HKU Vision 2016-2025. The Impact Lab course works with organizations that are committed to different SDGs. This allows students and the Course to directly contribute to the international agenda and make a positive impact. For instance:



24 Hour Race contributes to the SDGs by working towards the following goals: 10 Reduced Inequalities; 16 Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions; and 17 Partnerships for the Goals.



Migrasia, which works with migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong, contributes to the SDGs related to: 4 Quality Education; 10 Reduced Inequalities; 16 Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions; and 17 Partnerships for the Goals.





Linked in
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