



Ideas for Action Undergraduate Club Report Spring 2021

The Ideas for Action Undergraduate Club at the University of Pennsylvania is a joint initiative between the Zicklin Center for Business Ethics Research and the World Bank Group. The initiative was founded in 2015 following the creation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with the vision of financing the future of international development. The SDGs will create \$12 trillion for the private sector and I4A works to channel this into developing countries by empowering youth with exceptional ideas to advance the SDGs.

The Ideas for Action club operates through three branches: Executive Committee, Accelerator Committee and the Special Initiatives Committee. The Executive Committee takes responsibility for the review proposals for global initiatives that the club launches. The Accelerator Committee provides consulting advice and support for the winners of these global challenges, enabling social entrepreneurs to form partnerships to expand their ideas. The Special Initiatives committee adopts a broader role establishing partnerships, hosting ideation workshops and speaker series for University specific events.

Another unique aspect of the Ideas for Action club is its integration with the LGST 230/401 class at Wharton to conduct ideation workshops and host speakers from The World Bank. The LGST 230 class was also launched as the first Wharton Academically Based Community Service (ABCS) course at Penn, which has enabled greater community partnership for the Ideas for Action team with the Penn Netter Center as well as the larger Philadelphia community.

While the COVID pandemic definitely challenged the implementation of the annual goals of the Ideas for Action club, the students of this club adapted quickly to launch the Ideas for Action COVID-19 Africa Challenge. Having seen the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the club decided to launch an initiative tailored to students and professionals from around the world interested in offering ideas for an effective private and public sector response to the COVID-19 pandemic in countries throughout Africa. This was enabled by the guidance of our faculty advisor Dr. Djordjija Petkoski and the collaborative efforts of key members on the Ideas for Action board including Adam Goudjil, Pallavi Menon, Joud Tabaza, Lucia Vita, Tatiana Curiati, Shivin Uppal, and Melissa Marketos amongst other students.

Through the course of the COVID-19 challenge, the Ideas for Action club pursued partnerships with other student clubs including Wharton Women and Wharton Undergraduate Entrepreneurship Club to provide feedback on proposals. Students of other clubs were also invited to apply to the challenge and the information was shared with organizations including Penn Africa Students Association, Perry World House and Wharton Africa Students Association. Our club also pursued a partnership with the Coronavirus Visualization Team of students at Harvard University.

Data from the Ideas for Action Africa COVID-19 Challenge 2020

Total of 415 registered teams of which 41 teams were comprised of Penn students

282 final submissions of full proposals of which, 8% of the proposals were from Penn students

Categories of proposal submitted included:

- Funding/Development Economics
- Policy/Government
- Community based
- Healthcare
- Technology/engineering
- Start-up Implementation

The Ideas for Action team has provided feedback to the exceptional proposals and is now working hard at compiling a virtual marketplace to connect these outstanding entrepreneurs to potential investors and mentors.

The Ideas for Action club also worked on wrapping up the Annual Ideas for Action Competition 2020 in collaboration with The World Bank.

Data from the Annual Ideas for Action Competition 2020:

Total 4284 proposals (Increase of 37% from 2019)

Sub-Sahara Africa: 2499 proposals (Increase of 44% from 2019)

Mena: 517 proposals (Increase of 9% from 2019)

South Asia: 352 proposals

East Asia and Pacific: 327 proposals

WBG South and East Asia & Pacific region countries: 679 (Increase of 67% from 2019)

LAC and North America: 424

Europe and Central Asia: 165

This year the Ideas for Action team worked with Farhad Peikar to evaluate the proposals and compile the booklet for the Ideas for Action 2020 winners. Out of the 4000+ proposals, 20 teams were finalist from the University of Pennsylvania. The final booklet will be published later this year.

By way of other updates, the Ideas for Action team is also working with LGST 230 students and The World Bank on providing feedback to the winners of the SDGs and HER 2020 initiative. This initiative was launched to enable female entrepreneurs with innovative ideas related to the SDGs to have a platform for innovation. The seven top winners were selected from a pool of 2,400 applicants from around the world that competed in the 2020 SDGs and HER competition.

The Ideas for Action club has also been working with LGST 230 class, which has hosted two inspiring speakers. Specifically, on March 22nd 2021, we hosted CEO of Firmenich Gilbert Ghostine who spoke about Inclusive Capitalism and shared his insight on his company's unique purpose-led journey that has made Firmenich one of the global sustainability leaders today. On April 5th 2021, we heard from Dr. Mahmoud Mohieldin, the International Monetary Fund Executive Director and the United Nations' Special Envoy of Financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. He provided his insightful comments about Financing the SDGs and ESG in Time of Covid-19.

The Ideas for Action club has also recently been recognized as a Wharton Trial Recognition Club following a successful presentation of the club's vision to the Wharton Undergraduate Recognition Council. The club also traditionally conducts an Ideation and Design Thinking Workshop at the annual UN Youth Assembly in NYC, but due to COVID we are gearing up for a virtual workshop. The club has also launched a weekly newsletter managed by Tyler Kliem and Lucy Xu featuring the students voices and highlighting interesting articles related to SDGs from the week. The students of the club are now gearing for the final big event of the semester on April 23rd 2021 'Youth Entrepreneurial Respond to SDGs/ESG: Global Knowledge Exchange and Capacity Development'. Students will have a chance to hear from an expert panel and will also feature feedback that they are working on for winners of the Ideas for Action competition in Indonesia hosted with the Tanoto Foundation.

Since its inception in 2015, the Ideas for Action has grown from a club of 5-10 students to an organization with 50+ students, 3 main committees and partnerships with other student organizations at Penn and otherwise. We've been recognized as a Wharton Club and our excited to continue to contribute to the Penn community and beyond. Our team is extremely grateful to our partners to enable us to continue projects through COVID times as we work together to further the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Written by Pallavi Menon (College of Arts and Sciences, Wharton, Class of 2022)

Other Articles and Features about Ideas for Action:

[Fostering Ideas for Action at Penn](#)

[Championing Global Change](#)

[Wharton's Ideas for Action Competition links students with the World Bank](#)

[Ideas for Action links students to World Bank](#)

[Ideas for Action at the 2020 Youth Assembly](#)

[Ideas for Action Do-a-thon at UPenn](#)

[Building capacity to combat COVID-19 in Africa](#)