



Center for Social Impact Learning: A Career Launchpad for Emerging Social Entrepreneurs

The Center for Social Impact Learning (CSIL) at the Middlebury Institute seeks to increase student engagement in the emerging fields of social entrepreneurship and impact investing through academics, experiential learning opportunities, and action-based research.

The center is unique among social entrepreneurship programs because it is designed to serve the full spectrum of budding social entrepreneurs, from undergraduates to graduate students to young professionals, offering them not just valuable learning experiences, but

often-seamless transitions from one stage of professional development to the next as they prepare for careers in the social enterprise field.

The center currently has three major programmatic components:

The **Frontier Market Scouts**[®] fellowship program provides graduate students from the Institute and other schools, as well as mid-career international professionals, with an intensive two-week certificate training followed by a two- to 12-month fellowship in impact investing and social enterprise management. This flagship CSIL program sets the bar high for cutting-edge content and game-changing impact.

The **Ambassador Corps** is an intensive three-month summer internship program designed to provide undergraduate and graduate students a unique frontlines work experience with premier social entrepreneurship organizations in developing countries. Students are directly engaged in hands-on grassroots poverty alleviation, addressing urgent social issues such as disease, malnutrition, environmental degradation, injustice, and illiteracy.

The **CSIL Research Lab**, the newest addition to the center, is an action-oriented research unit focusing on case study analyses in emerging markets. The lab promises to ground CSIL academically and experientially in establishing informed-from-the-source metrics for evaluating and measuring social impact.

Led by Director Jerry Hildebrand, CSIL is collaborating closely with Middlebury College's Center for Social Entrepreneurship (CSE), which integrates social entrepreneurship and liberal arts education. Together, the two centers constitute a network of Middlebury programs to advance social entrepreneurship across educational sectors and around the world.

Moving forward, the center is focused on exploring new initiatives such as a community-based microfinance fund, a "B" Corps Certification Lab for social impact start-up enterprises, an Innovation Incubator to catalyze Institute students' home-grown social business ventures, building partnerships with local mission-driven businesses in the Monterey Bay, and an Impact Investing Colloquium featuring notable thought leaders and practitioners.

The inclusion of impact investing as a primary component of its vision of social entrepreneurship places CSIL at the forefront of this rapidly developing new field. With the in-house expertise resident at the Institute, and a global network of program partners and allies, the center is well positioned to become a powerful voice for innovative approaches to poverty alleviation.



Whitney Hales MBA/MAIEP '15 completed an FMS fellowship with Maya Mountain Cacao, a social enterprise in Belize, before becoming an apprentice with the Unreasonable Group.



Dr. Sakena Yacoobi at the launch celebration.

Center Launched with “Powerful Gathering”

The Center for Social Impact Learning’s March 2015 launch celebration featured a compelling keynote address by Daniel Epstein, founder and CEO of the Unreasonable Group and director of the Girl Effect Accelerator, prefaced by remarks from Ron and Marty Cordes of the Cordes Foundation, CSIL Director Jerry Hildebrand, and former MIIS president Sunder Ramaswamy.

The audience was also treated to a musical performance by MIIS alumna Maame Afon MAIPS ’05, stories about the founding of the Frontier Market Scouts and real-life experiences working in the social impact sector, and a call to action by a cadre of aspiring change agents. The discussion panels featured impressive social entrepreneurs such as Ashoka Fellow and Nobel Peace Prize nominee Dr. Sakena Yacoobi, a member of the CSIL Advisory Council.

“We were genuinely thrilled to kick off the work of the Center for Social Impact Learning with such a powerful gathering of students, colleagues, social innovators, impact investors, and supporters,” says Hildebrand.

“The Center for Social Impact Learning is a potential game changer for students seeking a career in the field,” said Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Institute Jeff Dayton-Johnson. “Programs like the Frontier Market Scouts and Ambassador Corps offer a direct path into the world of social entrepreneurship and invaluable immersive learning opportunities along the way.”

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Frontier Market Scouts

Frontier Market Scouts (FMS) is an award-winning fellowship and certificate training program for international professionals seeking a career in social enterprise management and impact investing. FMS fellows work with social enterprises and impact investment funds in the U.S. and abroad to provide technical assistance, discover innovations, improve business processes, attract investments, and promote sustainable business models. The FMS program was developed by the Middlebury Institute in partnership with Sanghata Global and Village Capital, and is overseen by the Center for Social Impact Learning.

“Frontier Market Scouts discover local entrepreneurs and help them connect with investors in the markets that need both the most,” says Dr. Yuwei Shi, cofounder of the program, and Institute faculty member. “In the process, the fellows discover themselves—their passion, talent, and fortitude, and their career and life paths.”

FMS participants have solid backgrounds in business and management, experience and adaptability in challenging environments, and a strong belief in enterprise and market development as one of the most important vehicles for improvement of living standards in low-income countries. The FMS program partners with a number of impact investment funds and purpose-driven start-ups. Through these partnerships, FMS fellows have worked in Beirut, Cairo, Ecuador, Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Mumbai, México City, Bogotá, Istanbul, Nicaragua, Dar es Salaam, Lagos, London, Sao Paolo, Shanghai, and a number of other sites.

For more information on the Frontier Market Scouts program, please contact Erina McWilliam-Lopez, emcwilliam@miis.edu or 831-647-4645.

“The opportunity to create a groundbreaking Center for Social Impact Learning at MIIS is truly an enviable task. We are crafting a compelling and innovative experiential learning component to complement the existing rigorous academic program.”

— Jerry Hildebrand, Director, Center for Social Impact Learning



(Above) Ashoka Founder Bill Drayton, FMS Cofounder Professor Yuwei Shi, Former MIIS President Sunder Ramaswamy, Award Sponsor Ron Cordes.

Frontier Market Scouts Program Wins Ashoka U–Cordes Innovation Award

In February 2013, the Frontier Market Scouts program won the Ashoka U-Cordes Innovation Award, given to innovative university programs focused on promoting social entrepreneurship. The award was one of six given by Ashoka U after a review of 130 nominations. In partnership with the Cordes Foundation, Ashoka U recognizes globally relevant teaching, learning, and partnership practices, focusing on practices that may be adapted and replicated. Visit ashokau.org/innovations for more information.