Groundwork Initiative

COURSE OVERVIEW AND FAQS FOR INTERESTED STUDENTS
October 2013, for Spring 2014 class

GlobalHealth Lab

offers students a unique opportunity to learn, collaborate, and take action. Class sessions set the stage for faculty-mentored teams to work side-by-side with enterprise leaders and staff on the front lines of healthcare delivery.

The course is built around our projects and is updated every year. This document presents an overview and timeline to prospective students and addresses common questions.

Projects are developed over several months by the course team and potential hosts in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Each tackles a pressing need identified by the organization, taking on challenges that stand in the way of delivering more or better healthcare to the low-income communities they serve.

Six weeks of on-campus project work set the stage for two weeks of full-time on-site work, then another four weeks at MIT enable students to further improve their projects. Overall, teams invest more person-hours in the on-campus remote collaboration phases of each project than on site. This three-part approach has proven productive.

A measure of our success is the deep relationships we have built with partners and our own students. Over the past six years, many hosts have asked to work with us multiple times. More than 200 students have participated in GlobalHealth Lab and its previous versions (the course was formerly known as G-Lab GHD and ghdLAB). Students report that the class has built their skills and knowledge, shaped their professional and personal outlook, and even influenced their career choices and job opportunities.

GlobalHealth Lab serves as the foundation for the new Groundwork Initiative, a broader effort designed to build an even larger community of learning. Please visit our evolving website to learn more as we continue to develop our work. GlobalHealth Lab is made possible by the inspired and generous support of valued friends of MIT Sloan.

About the projects

We have been working to line up excellent opportunities for you. This year's projects will likely be in Kenya, Zambia, South Africa, Bangladesh, and India, but other countries in the regions are also possible. Most partners are clinics, hospitals, community programs, or service providers, although we work with device and technology companies too. Projects address strategy and business models; operations and process improvement; marketing; technology adoption; and general management.

Our projects are collaborations. In every case, we aim to make a real contribution to the host organization's ability to deliver more or better healthcare. And by taking on multiple projects every year that explore how efficiency, scale, reach, and organizational sustainability may be advanced, we also hope to contribute to the wider dialog about the emerging field of global health delivery and to generate practical, useful material to share with others in the field.

Partnering host organizations benefit most from committed teams that combine practical skills, analytical capabilities, and business insights—and are willing to learn as much as they can from the opportunity. Students are responsible for some travel costs (see below), but we do not need students to pay the major expenses. All teams are expected to work with the course team and their hosts to make

travel and work arrangements.

To set the stage for productive collaboration, we ask teams to quickly respond to our email introductions to their assigned hosts (this takes place by mid-December). Before the first day of class, we expect teams to have begun their preparation and interacted at least once with hosts. The work starts in earnest in early February, with the initial phase running from the start of classes until students depart in mid-March, culminating in an interim report that most teams present once they arrive on site for two full weeks in the second half of March. Teams use April to improve upon and complete their deliverables.

Course overview

Our early class sessions overview key challenges in global health delivery and explore tools and skills relevant to our projects, together with examples of their application. H2 classes are designed to enable students to share insights and experiences with each other and with thought leaders and experts.

Documenting, reflecting on, and generating useful advice from your projects are key components of this course. Each GlobalHealth Lab project offers a unique learning experience. How will you connect your own experiences with the pressing issues related to healthcare delivery in general, and to your own development as a management professional and leader? We use the course structure to enable these valuable forms of learning and personal development, building on the notion that effective leadership involves a combination of capabilities. Not only do you need to get things done by working with and through others, but you also need to assess your experiences to distill and make meaningful to others the most relevant insights—both for yourself and for others.

Important dates for GlobalHealth Lab

Information session: Wednesday October, 30th lunchtime

Application deadline: Thursday Nov. 7th midnight

Student notification dates: in two batches—around Thursday Nov. 14th and Tuesday Nov. 19th

Student response deadlines: for early-round: Monday Nov. 18th; for later-round students, Mon Nov. 25th

Project preview session (optional): Tues Nov. 26th: 11:30 am-12:50 pm

Project mixer (mandatory): Friday Dec. 6th, set your alarm clock! 8:00-10:00 am

Match week: Between 9th and 13th December

Deadline for student first contact with partnering host organization: 23rd December

First day of class: Tuesday 4th February

On-site work: Monday 17th to Friday 28th March

Syllabus will specify the late-April deadline for finalizing project deliverables, the late April/early May lunchtime poster session, and the early-May last day of our class.

For more information, applications, and updates

Sign up for our mailing list by visiting
http://mailman.mit.edu/mailman/listinfo/globalhealth.lab.students

GlobalHealth Lab website page has links to much more information plus updates to be posted:
http://groundwork.mit.edu/globalhealth-lab/for-students/

Contact us via global.health.lab@mit.edu

Frequently asked questions

Dates and links mentioned in the remainder of this document are listed on page 2.

Application process

1. *How do I apply?*

   Complete an online form. The link to the application is posted on our website page. Our application deadline is firm. We'll communicate admission decisions to students by the notification dates. Accepted students will have until their respective student response deadline to reserve their spot. Teams form and projects are assigned during match week.

2. *Is there an essay question on the application?*

   The application includes several short-answer questions. We also ask for your resume (ideally, a one-page version; must be saved as a pdf with the format LASTNAME_Firstname) and a photo of yourself (headshot, saved as a jpg with the format LASTNAME_Firstname).

3. *What do you look for in applicants?*

   You must be an MIT graduate student. There can be no listeners or auditors. First-years and second-years are welcome. We seek a mix of MBA students, including those in LGO and other dual and joint degree programs, and other MIT Masters' and PhD students with relevant backgrounds.

   We look for dedicated students with a strong commitment to working as partners with the leaders and staff of organizations that serve those who most need healthcare. Students must be self-starters and be able to manage their work, logistics, and planning in an independent and professional manner while collaborating with fellow students, the course team, and everyone from volunteers and administrative staff to the CEO to patients themselves.

   A medical or global health background is not required. That said, students who have taken 15.232, Business Model Innovation: Global Health in Frontier Markets, are encouraged to apply as we seek to include those who have had exposure to this important material. Students with this background are likely to gain preferential admission to GlobalHealth Lab, but to enable a mix of students we encourage everyone who is interested to apply.

4. *What are my chances of getting in?*

   We won't know until the application deadline. For your information, the last two times this course was offered at scale, 80 students applied each time for the 36-48 seats.

Projects and teams

5. *How can I get more information about this year's projects and hosts?*

   We are working with hosts between now and late November to finalize projects. This means the full list of projects and hosts will not be available before you apply for GlobalHealth Lab, but we will share what we know as our projects get sorted out. Plan to attend the project preview session to learn more, and find out about past projects via the projects tab on our website.

6. *What kinds of organizations does GlobalHealth Lab work with?*

   GlobalHealth Lab partners are diverse. They include for-profit companies, charitable organizations, international medical device developers, large NGOs, and rural health clinics. We find partner organizations in two ways. First, to identify innovative, potentially high-impact organizations, we conduct our own research, tap into a great network of colleagues at MIT and the greater Boston area,

consult with global health experts, and attend conferences related to GlobalHealth Lab topics, and post announcements on our websites. Second, we invest in building long term relationships, which we believe lead to deeper, broader-reaching, and more impactful projects. Thus, when possible and appropriate, we continue to partner with hosts.

We seek host organizations that we think have something to teach us—and that want to learn from collaboration.

7. *How committed are the hosts?*

Interested organizations complete a detailed multi-part application to propose a GlobalHealth Lab project. Our subsequent collaboration to refine the plans helps to set the stage for them to work closely with students throughout the course. We also check that they are ready to support your on-site work and seek their commitment to share certain costs of the program with Sloan. We interact with hosts multiple times throughout the process, and often visit sites ourselves, so we get to know them well.

8. *How are teams formed?*

Subject to our firm requirements, which we will specify before the project mixer, students form their own teams, with advice, guidance, and help from us. To enable teams to form by match week, we assist you in getting to know others in the class and facilitate team formation and project selection.

Teams must include members of varied backgrounds and skills. Not only does the right team maximize the likelihood that each project will succeed, but it also helps ensure that you benefit the most from this learning opportunity. We want you to learn from each other.

9. *Is the early December meeting mandatory?*

Yes. We are planning this session with all admitted students to facilitate team formation and project selection. Please reserve the project mixer date in your calendar now.

If you are non-resident this semester and cannot attend the early December meeting, you'll need to work out a plan with the course team. With advance planning, remote participation is feasible.

10. *Will I receive preference in course bidding?*

Do not bid for GlobalHealth Lab. If admitted, the course will be added for you.

11. *How are projects assigned?*

Conversations with hosts about project requirements, the setting, and anticipated tasks shape our matching of projects to teams. Foreign language skills may come into play, but usually are not a key factor. Technical skills may factor in, but they are rarely the only thing that matters.

During match week, we make these assignments. Our goal is to maximize your learning, above all. To do this we take into account what we know of your interests and learning goals as well as the needs of the project. For this reason our matching process includes asking students for four projects they are interested in—and not to rank them. If you would be interested in only certain projects and completely rule out others, GlobalHealth Lab is not a good fit for you; please consider something else.

Course expectations

12. *How many credits will I receive?*

You will receive 12 units of letter-grade credit and, if applicable, 2 SIP credits for onsite work.

13. *Tell me about the timing of course assignments.*

Teams get going in December and initiate contact with hosts right away. Before the first day of class, we expect teams to have reviewed any initial materials we provide on their project, have begun researching the host organization, and kicked off a discussion of project plans and deliverables with their hosts. There is an assignment due the first week of class.

Every week, a specific component of your project work is due. From the start of February to mid-March, most teams have weekly calls with their partnering host organization, checking in with mentors at several points. The on-site work phase is two full weeks in the second half of March. Teams use April to complete their field project deliverables, making the most of a rare opportunity to iterate upon their earlier work, continue to check in weekly with hosts, and loop in on-campus and other connections in order to adapt their initial work to take into account what they learn in the field. Host materials are due in by our late-April deadline for finalizing project deliverables, then your last set of course materials is due a week later in our final class.

14. *I expect to be interviewing or out of the country for January. Am I eligible for GlobalHealth Lab?*

Yes. You'll need to work out communication with your host and team, but you can do that electronically.

15. *Do I have to attend class sessions? Do I have to travel?*

H1 and H2 class sessions and the two-week on site project are essential parts of the course. Other required commitments fall outside class time, most of which are scheduled as feasible. For example, we expect teams to email their assigned hosts in December and to have at least one more interaction with them before class starts. Mentor meetings are scheduled outside of class time. Students are also expected to attend a certain number of lunchtime sessions in H1 and a poster session in H2.

16. *I will definitely be traveling to my assigned project site, right?*

Student travel is not a right but a privilege earned on the basis of your conduct and performance throughout the application process and course.

17. *What happens if I drop the class?*

In a word, don't!

To line up amazing projects, the course team imposes on hosts. We engage in multiple emails, phone calls, and skypes; ask them to complete complicated on-line forms; and request financial and in-kind support. To ensure that teams are well-balanced and matched to host needs, we invest in learning about you and connecting you with your classmates. Not only would dropping the class burden your classmates (and the course team), but it would also burden our partners. Recognizing that such behavior would be unacceptable, past students have kept their commitments (our drop rate is under 1%). If you think that there is a possibility you will drop, please do not sign up for the class.

18. *How hard will I be working for the on-campus portion of the course?*

A 12-unit class accounts for twelve hours of work per week, every week, for an entire semester. After allocating time for class sessions, some planning and logistics, class prep, and other assignments, each student should plan on at least six hours per week for projects while on-campus at MIT for ten weeks, from February to mid-March and in April. In compensation for all this hard work, we finish class early, some two weeks before the rest of MIT. And there's no final!

19. *How much do I have to work on site?*

You are expected to work full time, and likely will put in some after-hours work, too. We appreciate that you are devoting two weeks to this effort, at least part of which you could have spent on the

beach. We make sure that our partners and others recognize that your time and effort is an invaluable contribution to the project that goes beyond the regular course load. We also inform hosts that you will complete the entire project by the late April deadline for finalizing project deliverables. So, you should be completely done with your project before the start of May.

Speaking of working hours, note that in many countries, Saturday may be a working day, if half-day. Working hours vary by setting, and weekends vary (in Bangladesh, for instance, Friday is the Sabbath, and Saturday is also a day off). Check with your hosts on expectations for "full time" work.

20. *How much effort do students invest in each project?*

Add two full weeks of on-site work to the full-semester course equivalent, and each four-person team can invest as much as 1,000 person-hours in the project. The result of this substantial effort could be a real and lasting contribution to your partner host organization.

21. *Why do any work on field projects after our return?*

Hosts tell us that they value the thought, insights, and, above all, useful content that is only possible once students have had a chance to reflect on their field experience, consult more resources, and get additional feedback from peers, faculty, and others *after* they have returned to Boston. An action learning class like GlobalHealth Lab is not just about the field work—it's also about reflecting on and integrating all that you learn in the field, connecting to other themes and ideas within MIT and broader communities, and coming up with creative products that are designed to be as useful as possible to the organization you've worked with. This is a crucial point of differentiation for GlobalHealth Lab. So make the most of your time in April!

22. *What are the course deliverables?*

The syllabus will describe assignments. Key deliverables include initial and final individual assignments that bookend the course, along with two team portfolios: the full set of components of your field project; and shareable work products that others may draw on for projects similar to yours. Blog posts will be an option for the latter.

Travel

23. *Who arranges travel and accommodations?*

You do. You'll start by developing an overall travel plan, then work with our team and MIT Sloan's Action Learning staff to make long-haul travel arrangements, keeping within our set budget guidelines. It is crucial to coordinate with hosts to finalize accommodations and logistical details—not only the arrival and departure dates, which you need in order to specify your air travel—but also for local transport, lodging, and work arrangements.

Know that host organizations have already agreed to help you arrange your local travel (both point of arrival to lodging and lodging to place of work) and the lodging itself, regardless of who is paying for it, so you will have assistance when it comes to arranging ground transport and accommodations. This will therefore be an early topic of conversation with your hosts.

Students must arrange their own vaccinations, immunizations, personal prescriptions, and visas. All students are covered by MIT's blanket travel assistance program in case of emergency. You are required to register online for this service by entering travel and lodging details into an online form, and to share some contact information with us. The travel assistance service is free of charge.

We also ask you to check US Department of State and MIT travel sites (reachable from http://informit.mit.edu/epr/3.1travel_risk.html) to make sure you stay informed about any developments that may affect safety and feasibility of travel.

24. *Who pays for what aspects of the on-site team project?*

Major expenses, including point-to-point travel, accommodations, and certain work-related project expenses during the two-week onsite project, are covered. We work hard every year to gather funds from generous supporters to enable your participation in the class by raising individual donations to cover the major costs of your projects. In addition, the course team negotiates each host's contributions individually, every year. Students may not request any contributions from hosts.

GlobalHealth Lab and hosts pay for:

* Economy-class, round-trip airfare between Boston and your host location, on airlines selected by MIT travel agents
* Safe, clean lodging during your time on site
* Translation services and other office services as needed for specific project tasks on site (as feasible)
* Transportation for work-related outings or travel, such as to visit patient homes for interviews (please note that the cost of daily commuting to the worksite is your responsibility).

You pay for:

* Food
* Visas
* Local travel, including getting to and from worksite daily, in most cases
* Internet, phone, and any other communication (e.g., FedEx) before, during, and after your trip
* Vaccinations and immunizations, malaria prophylaxis, and other medications
* Recreation
* Office supplies that may be needed, including posters.

In some cases, hosts provide food—you may get a subsidized lunch, or some free meals, depending on the site. 2013 GlobalHealth Lab students estimated their expenses between \$300-1,000 depending on location, personal trips, etc. Please plan and budget accordingly.

25. *How will we get to the site, if there are no international flights to the location?*

To reach their project sites, some teams travel overland if flying from the point of international arrival to the destination is inconvenient or costly; long-distance ground travel is covered in the same manner as air travel.

26. *Can I arrive a day late or leave the project site early?*

No. Not only must you be ready to work full time for the entire two-week **on-site work** period, but you need to arrive on site a full day before your project starts. You need that day to orient yourselves, get your SIM card, figure out transport and food, recover from jet lag, and meet hosts informally.

We also require you to plan your travel so that you do not miss any classes or commitments at MIT.

27. *What kind of visa should I get?*

MIT's travel consultant, A Briggs Passport and Visa Expeditors, recommends business visas for action learning project-related travel. If you believe you need a different visa, or if you have a complex passport situation, feel free to consult John O'Brien at the Boston office of A Briggs: jobrien@abriggs.com 617-830-2535. Students arrange their own visas and are not required to use A Briggs; in the past, not all teams have had business visas.

28. *May I bring my Significant Other or friend on the trip?*

Unfortunately, no.

29. *What will the lodging be like? Will I have to share a room?*

Chances are good that you will be asked to share a room with a same-gender teammate. We ask hosts to provide or arrange for modest, safe, clean accommodations, not five-star lodgings. Living and working in the community is a key part of GlobalHealth Lab, and we hope that every team gets to experience life in the setting in all the ways that enrich their learning. In the past, some students have lived with patients for brief homestays; others have stayed with hosts or in hostels. For your team, this may mean taking public transport or preparing your own food. It's all part of the experience!

Value

30. *What do students get out of all the hard work that they put into the class?*

Past GlobalHealth Lab students have called the course "the most valuable experience of my entire MBA at MIT Sloan," noting that "this class and my trip to Africa changed my perspective on the world and had a profound impact on my life." One told us that "the professional development was real, and the personal growth was life-changing. At the end of the class I couldn't help but think this is what business school should be" while another student had a simple request: "Please fail me so that I can take this class again!"