

Art & Social Change

Many artists today are deeply committed to making work that addresses pressing social issues and changes the way we perceive the world. While some artists use traditional forms of visual, literary, or performing arts to make work that comments on, responds to, or advocates for the need for change, others are exploring new forms of “social practice” that engages communities in an interactive exchange. In the latter category, an artwork might take the form of a store, a garden, a meal, a website, a street performance, a story exchange, or an urban planning project. Socially engaged art can ignite outrage and demands for change, and/or provide a platform for reflection, collaboration, and building community. It can focus on the residents of a single city block, or reach out to a global audience.

The challenge for this category is to develop an innovative art projects that meaningfully engage with issues of advocacy, justice, and community-building. The projects may use any art form—visual/conceptual art, photography, new media, video, dance, theater/performance art, music, creative writing, or other forms. Art must be central to the project, and the proposal must reflect an informed understanding of the particular art form(s) being used, as well as of the communities being served.

Energy & Resource Alternatives

Today, more than ever, the negative environmental and economic impact of using non-renewable energy resources such as fossil fuels and the benefits of renewable energy resources, such as solar, wind, geothermal, hydropower and tidal energy, and biofuels that are grown and harvested without fossil fuels are well known. A strong consensus in the scientific community has affirmed that non-renewable energy is less accessible, reliable, safe, and clean than renewable alternatives. Global climate disruption, caused by human production of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gasses, has already had observable effects on the environment (i.e., shrunked glaciers, shifts in plant and animal ranges, accelerated sea level rise). In the long term, global climate disruption threatens agriculture, endangers clean drinking water, and aids in the spread of disease.

The challenge for this category is to encourage the adoption of clean energy and resource alternatives that are sustainable and have the potential for broad impact. The climate change crisis calls for carbon neutral solutions at scale as urgently as possible. Proposals may focus on the design, development, or delivery of sustainable energy solutions and can be aimed at campus-based, domestic or international in scope. However, all proposals should clearly demonstrate the relationship between the proposed intervention and its impact on reducing the impacts of global climate disruption.

Solutions may focus on several areas, including but not limited to: (1) clean, renewable energy technology; (2) land/watershed management; (3) climate change adaptation and resiliency; (4) ecosystem recovery and/or maintenance; (5) source reduction/waste prevention.

Financial Inclusion

Roughly 2 billion individuals and tens of millions of enterprises around the world lack access to basic financial services. For the 50% of poor households who are “unbanked,” this represents an incredible economic barrier that prevents them from accessing the credit, savings and insurance services essential to the well-being of their families and businesses. For small and medium enterprises (SMEs) who struggle to secure capital, this creates critical obstacles to their own growth, as well as the economic and employment potential they represent.

The global community is increasingly aware of the critical role financial inclusion plays in reducing poverty, promoting economic prosperity and catalyzing enterprise, and has made notable strides in promoting access to finance around the world. However, large scale innovation is still needed to ensure products, services and capital are available, accessible and appropriate to the needs of underrepresented individuals, enterprises and communities.

The challenge for this category is to propose novel products, services, tools or mechanisms that either address unmet needs of the financially underserved, or help extend existing services to populations at the unbanked “last mile.”

Food Systems

The production and distribution of food intersect with some of the most critical issues of our time: health and nutrition, poverty, energy, climate change, biodiversity, water, and labor. The world’s dominant food and agriculture systems are fraught by complex and urgent challenges, including pervasive hunger and malnutrition, as well as obesity, environmental degradation and emissions from farming activities, labor injustices, and extreme inequities in distribution of farm land and food access. Many initiatives and efforts have emerged in recent years, as attempts to address these persistent food-related problems, from local to global levels. Yet, the problems persist, and have escalated in some areas, often due to political and economic causes. Achieving food security, justice, health, and sustainability in food systems, and equitable access to nutritious food, requires significant changes, ideas, and problem-solving by people and organizations in a wide variety of disciplines.

The aim of this category is to encourage the development of innovative solutions or approaches that address challenges in food systems, or that will result in progress or changes to support food security,

sustainability and/or justice and health in food systems, and/or equitable access to nutritious food. Proposals may be aimed at campus based program, local/domestic issues or international efforts.

Global Health

According to the World Health Organization, today there is a 36-year gap in life expectancy between countries. A child born in Malawi can expect to live only 47 years, while a child born in Japan can expect to live 83 years. Each day, 21,000 children die before the age of 5 because of pneumonia, malaria, diarrhea, and other diseases. But these diseases do not equally affect all children: Children from in the poorest 20% of households are nearly twice as likely to die before the age of five as children from the wealthiest 20 percent. In Chad, for example, 20% of children die before they reach the age of 5, while in European countries, only 1% of children do not reach their fifth birthday.

Within the United States, persistent health disparities also exist between individuals of different racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups. Infants born to African American women are 1.5 to 3 times more likely to die than babies born to women of other ethnicities. African American men are more likely to die from prostate cancer than White men, and Hispanic women are more than 1.5 times more likely to be diagnosed with cervical cancer than white women.

The challenge for this category is to describe an action-oriented, inter-disciplinary project that would help alleviate a global health concern among low-resource communities. Proposals submitted to this category should a) demonstrate an evidence of a widespread health concern faced by low-income populations or low-resource communities, and b) develop a system, plan, or technology that addresses this problem that is both culturally appropriate within the target communities, and appropriate for low-resource settings.

Improving Student Life

UC Berkeley is a rich and diverse milieu of student life, academic scholarship, and initiative. UC Berkeley is a rich and diverse milieu of student life, academic scholarship, and initiative. Berkeley is home to a long and rich history of student leadership, activism, and engagement. In the 1930s, Berkeley students organized protests against totalitarianism and fascism. In the 1950s, Berkeley students challenged campus administrators on the loyalty oath required for UC employees that required each employee to declare in writing that he or she was not a member of the communist party. In 1964, a sit-in at Sproul Hall launched the Free Speech Movement. In the 1970s, students advocated for disability rights and women activists launched the "second wave" of the women's movement. Today, students on campus continue to advocate for the rights and welfare of their fellow students.

The challenge for this category is to describe a new policy, program, course, initiative, or service that improves the UC Berkeley student experience in a meaningful way. Projects can serve students on-campus and/or engage students in off-campus activities that also benefit the larger community. Proposals must also be aligned with the strategic priorities of the ASUC, as outlined in the [ASUC Student Government Preamble](#).

Information Technology for Society

Technology can be a powerful tool that can be harnessed to efficiently and effectively provide resources to those who need them. In recent years, the technology boom has provided ways to help communities plagued by unemployment, deliver life-saving and life-improving services to communities in previously out of reach areas, and enable all children to benefit from high-quality instruction and instructional materials. As technology spreads globally, the opportunity to use technology as a mechanism to solve pressing social problems grows.

The challenge for this category is to describe an innovation project that would demonstrate the capacity of IT to help address a major societal challenge. The goal of this category is to stimulate new thinking on a broad range of social benefits of information technology in areas such as: open data, health, education and life-long learning, democratic governance, response to natural and man-made disasters, transportation, delivery of government services, quality of life for people with disabilities, economic opportunity for low-income communities, arts and culture, and the effectiveness of non-profit organizations.

Mobiles for Reading

The Mobiles for Reading Competition seeks to leverage science and mobile technology to create and apply scalable solutions to improve the literacy skills of children in developing countries. Literacy unlocks human potential and is the cornerstone of development. It leads to better health, better employment opportunities, and safer and more stable societies. However, a 2013/2014 UNESCO report indicates that 250 million children across the globe are not learning basic literacy and numeracy skills. Of these, nearly 58 million children—a disproportionate number of whom are from disadvantaged backgrounds, live in conflict-afflicted countries, are disabled, or are girls—aren't enrolled in school at all.

Children who do not develop reading skills during early primary education are on a lifetime trajectory of limited educational progress and, therefore, limited economic opportunities and poorer health. Early grade reading competency is critical for continued retention and success in future grades and the educational achievement of a country's population is directly correlated with its economic growth

rate. UNESCO further reports that an increase in the average educational attainment of a country's population by one year increases annual per capita GDP growth from 2 percent to 2.5 percent.

The challenge for this category is to develop novel, mobile technology-based innovations or methods that can improve reading outcomes for children in developing countries. Innovative topics proposed may focus on the enhancement of and/or the development and creation of new tools/methods. Proposals may use existing mobile-based technologies or literacy assessment methods to improve and measure reading by adapting or applying those technologies and assessment methods in new and innovative ways.

For the scope of this competition, mobile devices include cell phones, e-readers, tablet computers, audio/visual devices, and any other mobile (i.e. portable) technologies that can quickly, efficiently, and inexpensively improve or effectively measure children's literacy skills.

Scaling Up Big Ideas

Since 2006, nearly 400 student teams have received recognition for their "Big Idea" in UC Berkeley's Bears Breaking Boundaries and Big Ideas contests. After implementing their projects and gathering feedback on their project ideas, winning teams often are ready to scale their projects to additional communities, develop solutions to related problems, or otherwise scale their projects.

The challenge for this category is for previous Big Ideas award winners to (1) demonstrate that they have generated excellent results in implementing their original winning project idea, and (2) describe plans to "scale up" their project. For the purposes of this category, "scaling up" is defined as outreaching to a new geographic area or underserved population, or adding additional services to an ongoing project serving the same geographic area described in your original winning proposal.