

## Problem Statement

We've all heard, "9 out of 10 startups fail in the first five years"<sup>1</sup>. In particular, almost 85% of all social enterprises shut down within the first three years of operations.<sup>2</sup> Social enterprises, businesses whose core purpose is to address a local, social or environmental challenge, face severe challenges when tackling complex, 'wicked problems'<sup>3</sup>. Limited access to specialized services, such as technical expertise, require continuous funding during the early, crucial stages of development, resulting in institutional and operational hurdles and limited growth<sup>4</sup>. Emerging and early stage social enterprises (Technology Readiness Level: 1 to 5<sup>5</sup>) either lack the required resources or direct them to other pressing needs to stay afloat. These services are so costly largely due to the need for highly skilled and technically trained people. Simultaneously, there is a large untapped market of students and late-career professionals globally looking for experiential learning and professional development opportunities to work with social enterprises, but they lack an accessible network and community to do so<sup>6</sup>. **Our Big Idea lies at this crucial intersection: helping connect social enterprises with technical needs (hardware and software), and a burgeoning community of students and professionals willing to fill those gaps within an impact-focused and inclusive ecosystem.**

The idea for The Impact Collective originated in 2019, when Ash Seth was spearheading product development for medical device nonprofit, [Scopi](#), in collaboration with [SmileTrain](#) and Stanford's [d.school](#). As the only engineer in a three-person team, she bore the singular toll of delivering the engineering solutions required in a lean team. Organizations such as [Kheyti](#) and [Clinic+O](#) serve as tangible case studies of this trend. Kheyti is an agtech nonprofit in India democratizing access to climate-smart farming solutions through their core product: a greenhouse. As Kheyti's first in-house engineering consultant, Ash spent the last two years observing and addressing their technology challenges. Along with Kheyti's on-ground operations and iterative product development applying on-field insights, Kheyti has scaled their work to 6 states and 1000 farmers over the past year. Kheyti won the MIT Solve Elevate Prize, and The Earthshot Prize for our efforts, increasing funding streams, visibility, and scalability of the organization. Additionally, Ash and Anjali's work with Clinic+O has been focused on UI/UX Design and technical research for healthcare digital transformation. Over the past year, Clinic+O has scaled their work to 6000 patients through a network of 60+ community health workers, has been recognized by Echoing Green and The Obama Foundation, and has developed key partnerships with the Guinean Government and private businesses, as well as funding sources to scale their work. Technical support for emerging social enterprises is a critical need for survival, validation, and scalability. The founders of Kheyti and Clinic+O were the first customer interviews (50 conducted thus far) for The Impact Collective. They highlight the need to engage in **repetitive, iterative, time-bound technical consulting engagements while staying lean as a social enterprise, and being able to validate and scale their operations.** *"This has been essential to our survival and success."* - Kheyti Co-Founder.

## Landscape Analysis

Knowledge sharing and filling the skills gap is not a novel idea - there are various players in this space. However, they are not catering to one important group effectively - emerging and early-stage social enterprises that require short-term technical expertise, and only a handful actively enable university students and industry professionals to gain experience working in the social sector. We have ranked our competitors (Graph 1) according to the company growth stage and the skills gap they are trying to fill. While a lot of them have a similar architecture of matching clients with (teams of) consultants, they either do not provide technical expertise, are not working with early stage social enterprises, or are not utilizing professionals, university students, alumni, and their resources to leverage growth. The Development Impact Lab at UC Berkeley was our closest associate, but has since stopped operating at the end of a USAID grant. We aim to learn from these organizations, and fill the gaps they lack while connecting these two untapped markets - social enterprises with technical gaps and consultants with exactly these skills.

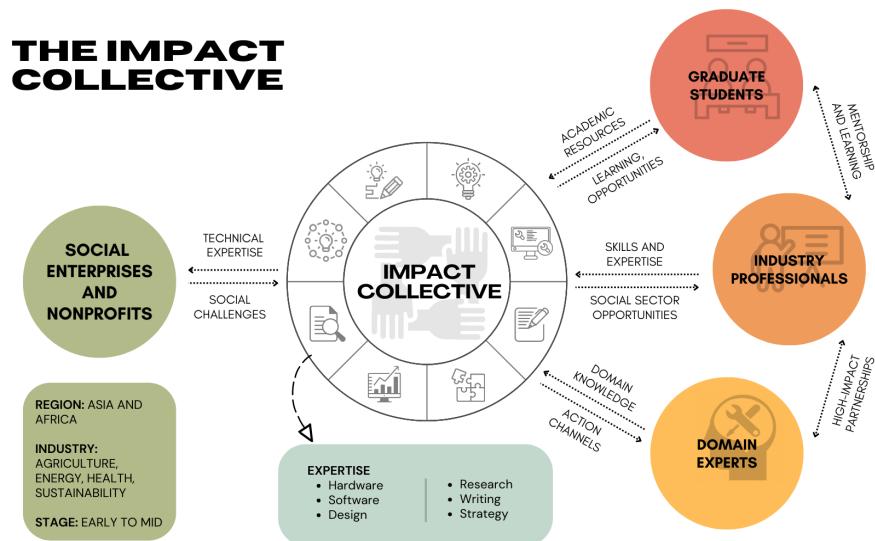
# THE IMPACT COLLECTIVE

## BIG IDEAS PRE-PROPOSAL 2022



Graph 1: Landscape Analysis

## Proposed Innovation



The proposed solution is a collective that addresses the technical resource gaps for early stage social enterprises, and provides social sector learning opportunities for industry professionals and students. The collective embodies our value of building a network and ecosystem for collective action, and brings together industry professionals/alumni, domain experts, and students from various disciplines and technical areas to form interdisciplinary teams for social change.

The Impact Collective ecosystem serves to enable these engagements: (1) an accessible talent acquisition platform for clients to tap into, and (2) a network of social sector companies and opportunities for consultants to work with and learn from. A key component of the work will also entail a “handoff” where the impact consultant can ramp up an internal resource to manage and maintain the work moving forward. **The collective’s core product is the infrastructure and scaffolding to match social enterprises with consultants from The Impact Collective to form impactful teams.** This architecture allows the collective to effectively fill the technical gaps of social enterprise clients, and support the optimum curation of expertise to meet the needs of all stakeholders. Currently, the core services of the collective include:

# THE IMPACT COLLECTIVE

## BIG IDEAS PRE-PROPOSAL 2022

- **Technology:** hardware (prototyping and manufacturing), software (development), and testing
- **Design:** industrial design, UI/UX design

### Implementation Plan



The Impact Collective internally will manage two subnetworks - one to manage relations and engagement with the client (social enterprises) and one for recruitment and engagement with the community of impact consultants. Within the client subnetwork, we will have a team dedicated to find and manage prospective and current projects that require staffing, understand clients needs and scope, and receive feedback to identify areas of improvement and progress of the project. From the community subnetwork perspective, we will have a team that will manage community experience (including feedback loops with clients and other fellow impact consultants), understand the skills, interests, and time commitments of impact consultants, onboard community members, and provide a platform for knowledge sharing and lessons learned from the consulting projects. Community members can apply to work on any project that they have the skills and interest for, and on our end, we will match members to projects based on needs and compatibility, which includes an application to become an impact consultant and a comprehensive interview process between the impact consultants and client. In our engagements with the client, we will also assess how to cover costs and payment of services.

We have started creating databases for each of the key stakeholders - students, professionals, experts, and social enterprises. Research, outreach, and enrollment are the core activities over the next year, including Slack for building the ecosystem, community and capacity, and Airtable, to manage the databases. We are manually reaching out to interested stakeholders using the groups we have access to including Social Enterprise Jobs Google group, Work for Climate Slack, Miller Center for Social Entrepreneurship, Sankalp India, etc.

For year 1, the Impact Collective's goals are to (1) scope, collaborate with, and onboard 10 clients, and define a clear statement of work for each project (2) develop and deploy a robust consulting application and hiring process initially aimed at Berkeley graduate students and alumni (global) and form a community of 50+ impact consultants, and (3) offer trainings and staff impact consultants on client projects according to a defined matching criteria. Throughout this piloting phase, we will define internal and external success metrics, collect feedback, and continue to hone the model. Additionally, through interviews and paid/unpaid experiment trials, we will determine a workable revenue model. The Collective anticipates accessing and onboarding of experts and late-stage professionals as an implementation challenge. For mitigation, we will leverage college and alumni networks including UC Berkeley, Mortenson Centre for Global Engineering, Stanford University, Indian Institute of Technology, etc.




Our 5-year goal is to engage with 50+ clients, grow our community to include 500+ global impact consultants (open to all students, alumni, and working professionals), and evolve the Impact Collective to become a resource for the entire market of social sector enterprises developing solutions to solve critical challenges in the world.

# THE IMPACT COLLECTIVE

## BIG IDEAS PRE-PROPOSAL 2022

### Team Bios

#### Current Team

	<p><a href="#"><u>Ash Seth</u></a> is a 1st year Masters of Development Engineering student at UC Berkeley. She is a social innovation strategist, mechanical engineer, designer, and educator. Her career has been focused on working with nonprofits and social enterprises developing hardware and software technologies for resource-constrained areas globally. She has worked in various industries, including agriculture, medical devices, and renewable energy - spearheading product development, building out R&amp;D teams, developing social business strategy, architecting teams to galvanize cross-sector collaboration for social impact, and designing and facilitating co-design, human-centered design, and prototyping workshops for global, cross-cultural teams. Ash currently works with Kheyti, an Indian agtech nonprofit, Clinic+O, a Guinean healthtech nonprofit, and Engineering for Change, a knowledge and community platform for the global engineering workforce developing technology solutions for people and the planet. Previously, she was an entrepreneur-in-residence at New York innovation hub, Newlab. She has a degree in Engineering: Product Design from Stanford University, is a MovingWorlds Global Social Impact Fellow, and is an avid tree-climber.</p>
	<p><a href="#"><u>Anjali Ravunniarath</u></a> is a 1st year Masters of Development Engineering student at UC Berkeley. With a background in computer science and mathematics from Colorado College, she has worked on strategy and implementation with non-profits in India before moving into Impact Measurement with Acumen, and later on at 60 Decibels. Working with numerous social enterprises around the world and measuring their impact, she developed a good understanding of what it means to develop an impactful product in low resource communities, and what is lacking for them to succeed. With a growing interest in technological interventions, Anjali was most recently a Product Manager before moving to Berkeley. Anjali aims to create simple, intuitive and impactful products that will improve the lives of people and the environment utilizing collective action. Anjali is also an alumna of United World College Costa Rica and Colorado College.</p>
	<p><a href="#"><u>Pooja Patel</u></a> is a 2nd year Masters of Development Practice student in the Goldman School of Public Policy at UC Berkeley. She has a background in Mechanical and Industrial engineering and entrepreneurship from Purdue University. Pooja started her career working in the consulting industry at Accenture and later moved into the tech world as a program manager at Microsoft. At her job, she realized her passion for sustainable development and social impact and pursued her current Masters program to learn how to understand and address the multi-dimensional aspects of the complex development issues that the world faces today and find where she can leverage her skills and interests to make a positive impact. Currently, she is the VP of Student Experiences at Berkeley Innovative Solutions Consulting Club, a program that works to link company projects with teams of interdisciplinary graduate students from the UC Berkeley campus. BIS seeks to further the UN Sustainable Development Goals by matching students to SDG-aligned clients and projects that accelerate new-economy innovations and tackle societal problems.</p>

#### Future Team

- Business/finances, Technology (software/backend), Communications and Marketing, Expertise Area Leads, HR and Onboarding (client side and impact community/consultants/teams side)
- Advisory Board: experts and professionals who have worked in development/social sector in different industries

#### Current Advisors

- Brigit Helms: Executive Director, Miller Center for Social Entrepreneurship
- Laura MacDonald: Managing Director, Mortenson Center for Global Engineering
- Sloan Leo: Founder, flow.studio
- Suma Reddy: 3x Founder in Agtech, MBA Wharton
- Dr. Pierce Gordon Otlhogile: Director, Equity Innovation Studio
- Craig Milroy: Director, Stanford Product Realization Lab
- Ayush Sharma: Co-Founder, Kheyti
- Unmesh Sheth: Founder, SoPact Impact Measurement
- Shama Karkal: Health Catalysts India
- Dr. Ashok Jhunjhunwala: Founder and Director, Indian Institute of Technology Research Park, Madras
- Paraag Sabhlok: Associate Director, Investment, Acumen India
- David Belt: Founder, Newlab
- Bobbie Casey: Autodesk Foundation

## THE IMPACT COLLECTIVE

### BIG IDEAS PRE-PROPOSAL 2022

#### References:

<sup>1</sup> Griffith, E. (2015, March 2). *Startups are failing because they make products no one wants*. Fortune. Retrieved December 7, 2022, from <https://fortune.com/2014/09/25/why-startups-fail-according-to-their-founders/>

<sup>2</sup> *3 reasons why social enterprises fail – and what we can learn from them*. World Economic Forum. (2017, June 8). Retrieved December 7, 2022, from <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/06/3-reasons-why-social-enterprises-fail-and-what-we-can-learn-from-them/>

<sup>3</sup> Kolko, J. (2012, March 6). *Wicked problems: Problems worth solving (SSIR)*. by Jon Kolko. Retrieved December 7, 2022, from [https://ssir.org/books/excerpts/entry/wicked\\_problems\\_problems\\_worth\\_solving](https://ssir.org/books/excerpts/entry/wicked_problems_problems_worth_solving)

<sup>4</sup> Rykaszewski, S., Ma, M., & Shen, Y. (2013). *Failure in social enterprises*. community-wealth.org. Retrieved December 7, 2022, from <https://staging.community-wealth.org/sites/clone.community-wealth.org/files/downloads/paper-rykaszewski-et-al.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> NASA. (2012, October 28). *Technology readiness level*. NASA. Retrieved December 7, 2022, from [https://www.nasa.gov/directorates/heo/scan/engineering/technology/technology\\_readiness\\_level](https://www.nasa.gov/directorates/heo/scan/engineering/technology/technology_readiness_level)

<sup>6</sup> *The rise of the social enterprise*. Deloitte Insights. (2018). Retrieved December 7, 2022, from [https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/insights/us/articles/HCTrends2018/2018-HCTrends\\_Rise-of-the-social-enterprise.pdf](https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/insights/us/articles/HCTrends2018/2018-HCTrends_Rise-of-the-social-enterprise.pdf)