

The Social Innovation Revolution in Higher Education

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Each year, countless STEM university students worldwide undertake research and product innovation projects as part of their academic requirements. These projects, often based on hypothetical scenarios derived from ongoing lab research, serve as a significant component of their final grades.



Students are often deeply committed to the outcome of their projects, first because it often constitutes a large part of their final grade, but also, and less cynically, because it is one of the few opportunities that they'll have to be in touch with the real world, in their academic career. Increasingly, people are motivated by purpose in their work, and thus hypothetical project work often comes with a slight disappointment for students.

The origin of inaglobe

Inaglobe was born in 2017 out of a frustration:

As a young biomedical engineer doing humanitarian work every summer, Jaime wanted to come back to university every year to work on projects that involved frugal innovation. But Jaime couldn't. There was little information available describing the problems faced in places where he had been working, and, furthermore, it was difficult to get access to stakeholders and beneficiaries that could voice the problem first-hand.

This is not just the story of Jaime, but of countless students every year. Students want to build sustainable technologies that are equitable. Inaglobe set out to provide an educational experience ensuring that impact projects were coherent with their subject of study and accredited by their university, and provided stakeholders with agency over the innovation.

Inaglobe started by providing university academics with project briefs for their students. These briefs originated and were validated in a grassroots manner, involving the stakeholders experiencing the problem deeply in the research work. Even once the project has

started, the inaglobe model insists on the continued involvement by the stakeholders. It is critical for effectively framing the problem and for the projects to have the relevance everyone expects of them. In addition, we have learned the different mentorship and supporting structures that students benefit from to become excellent innovators.

In order to support the projects and students with the outcome of the projects, inaglobe provides spinout and incubation services, both through partnerships with ecosystem players and entrepreneurs-in-residence (embedded within the spinouts). These structures are key in fostering dynamics of emergence and innovation within the frugal innovation ecosystem that we are building.

This year inaglobe has launched the Social Innovation Fellowship programme which packages the whole student experience, the ecosystem partners, and the resulting alumni network and spinout portfolio.

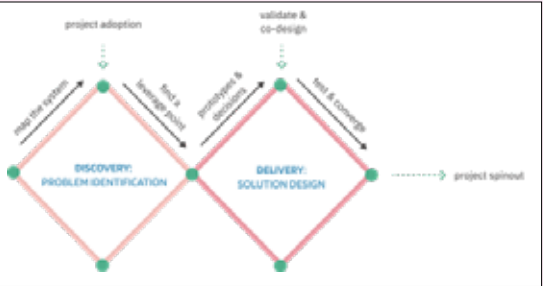
inaglobe fellowship model

The inaglobe fellowship is open to STEM students and offers an experiential learning experience (learning-by-doing), supportive ecosystem partners and stakeholders, and a community of impact innovators.

Inaglobe seeks to instil both the technical and soft skills that a globalised world requires from leaders, engineers and scientists. These are skills that are critical to tackle the UN Sustainable Development Goals and ultimately the climate crisis.

Fellows learn to build technologies for low-resource environments, they learn to work with culturally and socially diverse stakeholders, and work with an alternative information environment to the one they are accustomed to in their academic experience.

The inaglobe innovation model can be broken down



into a classic double diamond, where a problem discovery and solution delivery process with a series of engagement principles and touchpoints, allows students and stakeholders together to deliver on technological innovation that meets the needs identified.

Inaglobe fellows involve the stakeholders regularly in reviewing the assumptions, designs and prototypes; ensuring that the outcome continues to be guided by people experiencing the problem first-hand. Fellows become versed in frugal innovation design and prototyping, where they are building technologies for low-resource settings. An excellent example of a project that has seen success under this model is

The inaglobe fellowship empowers students at university to become innovators for social and sustainable futures.

that of Paige Braille, in a collaboration with Imperial College and the Kilimanjaro Blind Trust Africa. The Paige team has been building highly affordable devices that help digitalise the Braille experience for visually impaired people across the world.

inaglobe ecosystem

The ecosystem ensures that our fellows are optimally prepared, connected and supported to launch successful technologies. The supporting partners that are involved in the inaglobe ecosystem provide project support, fellow mentorship, and spinout incubation and acceleration services. There are two types of partners:

- **Humanitarian partners** are critical to the innovation model as they represent the beneficiaries of the challenges being addressed by students in their projects.
- **Ecosystem partners** are a highly specialised group of organisations that can together give the young innovators an edge to bringing their projects to fruition.

We have established partnerships with the likes of the Helvetas, SAVWA, CARE, and other humanitarian organisations of different sizes that inform the discovery and delivery phase of projects. As fellows mature the innovation, they have access to ecosystem partners such as Centre for Global Equality, the Scoby Collective and Oxford Impact Cube for both mentorship, and incubation support.

Lastly, and most importantly, the alumni and spinout network are the long-term value generated by inaglobe dynamics. The fellows that make up the network have access to each other for collaboration, inspiration and often friendships. The inaglobe alumni network is interdisciplinary, highly diverse and committed to impact. It is an invaluable collective of high-performing professionals that will become leaders in tackling the biggest challenges the world is both currently facing, and is yet to face.

Links



Frugal Innovation: What are frugal innovations? | UNICEF Office of Innovation



Paige Braille: [paigebraille.com](https://inaglobe.org/)
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