

Yale students to provide free consulting services to social enterprises

A group of Yale MBA students will travel to Cape Town, South Africa during spring break to provide pro bono consulting services to social enterprises. The 25 students are classmates in Global Social Enterprise (GSE), an elective course and student-led club at the Yale School of Management (SOM).

Founded in 2004, GSE provides students with a hands-on opportunity to design and engage in pro bono consulting projects for clients in developing countries. In the course, the students work remotely with their clients while completing coursework focused on learning about Cape Town and South Africa, entrepreneurship in developing countries, social enterprises, and business planning. The spring break trip allows students to work on-site with their clients for one week.

This is the second time that GSE has chosen to work in South Africa. "South Africa is a country that continues to experience intense income inequality, but also hosts a thriving social entrepreneurship sector," said Katy Davis, one of the three co-leaders of the GSE Club who also serve as teaching assistants for the course. "In addition, there is a wide and growing interest in Africa among the student body at Yale SOM."

Working with five social enterprises

This year, the group is working with five social enterprises: the Indalo Project, a nonprofit that connects professional designers and a seasoned marketing team with local craft producers; LEAP Science and Maths Schools, which focus on teaching excellence in math, science, and English to students with potential in high-need communities; Nexii, an investment and advisory firm that helps connect social and environmental initiatives with investors; Open Africa, an enterprise that works with communities to create tourism travel routes supported by a network of local businesses; and Township, an organization that provides women with the training and business skills to create independent sewing cooperatives.

While in Cape Town, the students and their clients will discuss the Global Social Enterprise course and their projects during a networking event hosted by the African Social Entrepreneurs Network (ASEN) and the Bertha Centre for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship at the University of Cape Town Graduate School of Business. The UCT business school is a member of the Global Network for Advanced Management, an international network of business schools recently convened by the Yale School of Management. One objective of the Global Network is to facilitate collaborations among students of member schools.

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