



WILLIAM DAVIDSON INSTITUTE  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

# Insights

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## BY THE NUMBERS

# Our Reach Since 1992

# 430+

Organizations  
& Businesses

# 80+

Countries

## OUR VISION

Solving for business because business drives economic growth and social freedom

## OUR MISSION

To equip economic decision-makers in emerging countries with the tools of commercial success

M WYLY HALL



# Letter from the President and CEO

## Taking 'Moonshots' Together

When I first arrived outside the offices at the William Davidson Institute at the University of Michigan in mid-July, campus was largely empty, with most students off to summer jobs or internships. Yet, it was impossible not to feel the history of this storied campus. U-M is well known as one of the country's top public research universities, an accolade matched with an ethos of social justice and leadership.

And as I stepped into WDI's offices on the Stephen M. Ross School of Business campus to begin my new role as President and CEO, another strong sense of history hit me. William Davidson, who founded the Institute and graduated from U-M with his business degree, went on to grow a family business into an industry titan. Davidson had seen firsthand that Eastern European countries entering the free market economy for the first time needed the tools for business success. And he was deeply inspired by the notion that business success was the path to economic growth and social freedom. Davidson doubled down on that belief, forming WDI in 1992 to support businesses in low- and middle-income countries across the world. This investment has paid dividends, as WDI rose to be one of the early think (and action) tanks not only researching how businesses can thrive in emerging economies, including at the bottom of the pyramid, but actually providing the education, skills and training to make it happen.

“... monumental and pressing global challenges require equally audacious solutions, especially if we expect to solve them in years, not decades. In short, this is an all-hands-on-deck moment that demands moonshot thinking. Businesses have important roles to play in this effort and so does WDI.”

—Wendy Taylor, WDI President and CEO

The upheavals of more than 30 years ago have been eclipsed by today's most vexing challenges—from climate change and renewable energy access to global health security and the promises and perils of artificial intelligence. Such monumental and pressing global challenges require equally audacious solutions, especially if we expect to solve them in years, not decades. In short, this is an all-hands-on-deck moment that demands moonshot thinking. Businesses have important roles to play in this effort and so does WDI.

My vision for WDI builds on our 30-year history of partnering with businesses to provide them with the tools of success. But delivering inclusive solutions at scale requires more than just sound business strategy. Businesses in emerging economies face a range of market and ecosystem challenges that must be addressed for them to thrive and deliver impact. This is where WDI can be a bold partner. As a **research and insights hub**, WDI generates cutting-edge research and translates our learning into practical and accessible tools and actionable insights. As an **enterprise accelerator**, WDI arms entrepreneurs, educators and governments with the tools and strategies to drive business success. And as an **innovation and system catalyst**, WDI helps ensure vibrant, well-functioning innovation ecosystems and markets so businesses can scale and accelerate impact.

As we further define our strategy in the coming months and galvanize our work around key moonshots in both energy and health, I'm energized by the extraordinary work already underway at WDI. Some of the work showcased in this report presents a window into where WDI can drive outsized impact over

measurement strategy so they have a clear understanding of how the environmentally-focused companies they are supporting are driving impact in their local economies and communities.

As I write this letter, U-M's campus is once again bustling with



Above: Wendy Taylor (right) with staff during a WDI team building activity.

the next decade. In Mexico, we're collaborating with companies, government and educators in the State of Chihuahua to strengthen the local ecosystem to enable e-mobility, catalyze and highlight innovation along the EV value chain, and prepare the talent pipeline for an electric future. In emerging economies across the world, we are helping strengthen entrepreneurial ecosystems through our work with business incubators and accelerators. For example, in Kenya, we're partnering with the award-winning Kenya Climate Innovation Center (KCIC) to develop an impact

students and the energy of autumn. Here at the Institute, Davidson's resilience and pragmatic optimism guide WDI's culture, the students with whom we work, the U-M faculty and research associates with whom we collaborate, and importantly, the types of partners and partnerships we pursue in taking on the complex global challenges of our times.

I'm thrilled to lead WDI forward as we take these intrepid moonshots—together. ■



A patient using the Grip Forté rehabilitation device at a clinic in India.



## Many Hands: From Idea to Product, a Commercialization Journey

### The Grip Forté Hand and Wrist Device is a Lesson in Partnership —Connecting U-M Students, Faculty and Healthcare Providers

The Grip Forté is a reasonably simple device to use. Created using a 3D printer, the 8-inch square collapsible cube is powered by springs and the patient’s strength. It was developed to help patients to rehabilitate hand and wrist strength, flexibility and control.

While the device itself isn’t complicated, the road from concept to construction wound through a series of partnerships—between teams around

the globe, various departments at the University of Michigan, and engineers and healthcare professionals. Every step required a cooperative approach to problem-solving, medical support and economic strategy—familiar commercial crossroads for the William Davidson Institute.

The concept began with a course through the Global Health Design Initiative at the U-M. Led by Kathleen Sienko, professor and

Julia Kramer, assistant professor of mechanical engineering, the immersive experience trains student engineers to work with stakeholders to identify up to 100 unmet medical needs with potential engineering solutions. After narrowing down the possibilities, the student engineers landed on just such a pairing: A mobile, small-scale device for patients needing to build strength and control following a hand or wrist injury. Sienko connected with WDI,



“At WDI, we understand and appreciate the power of collaboration in moving our mission forward and making things happen when it comes to launching new businesses and products.”

— Claire Hogikyan,  
WDI Vice President, Administration

which has consulted with hundreds of clinics and medical operations in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) in the last three decades.

“At WDI, we understand and appreciate the power of collaboration in moving our mission forward and making things happen when it comes to launching new businesses and products,” said Claire Hogikyan, WDI Vice President of Administration, who led the commercialization efforts. “As an independent nonprofit we have the ability and privilege to seamlessly reach out to other institutes and departments at the University to find projects that support their goals—while expanding economic and social freedom in LMICs. Grip Forté is one of those projects.”

WDI took a lead role in working with Ross MBA students to investigate the commercial prospects and potential business models for the device, including possible price points, the likelihood of local manufacturing and an assessment of the market. Their research indicated there was strong interest among patients and clinicians.

But building and sourcing parts for a functional product wasn’t

something WDI could do alone. The Institute teamed up with the Aerospace Engineering department of the College of Engineering. Three-dimensional printing emerged as a flexible manufacturing solution.

Faculty and students in the U-M Aerospace Engineering Department created a prototype that could be completely manufactured in LMICs. They formed the Grip Forté using common thermoplastic polyester, with 3D-printed plates and springs to replace the wood and rubber bands used in the original student design.

WDI leaned on its connections at Trinity Health Michigan to consult local physical therapists on the design. The team determined the product had potential uses in LMICs, where patients need convenient access to these low-cost therapies.

From there, WDI provided field test prototypes to Dr. Abena Tannor, a Ghanaian clinician trained in physical medicine and rehabilitation, and Dr. B. Shibu, Chief Medical

Officer and Consultant Physiatrist at Poovanthi Rehabilitation Institute in India. Initial patient reviews returned positive results.

“Traditional rehabilitation methods and devices can be expensive and inaccessible. Grip Forté’s 3D printing technology provides a more cost-effective and easily accessible solution,” Tannor said via email.

A next step in the project includes testing thermoplastic polyester filament from recycled plastic bottles to create more sustainable versions of the device. ■



Photo: Paul Clyde (left) examines prototypes at U-M Aerospace Engineering.



From left to right: Dr. Joe Kolars, the Center for Global Health Equity; Claire Hogikyan, WDI; Dr. Lee Schroeder, Michigan Medicine; Dr. Dhanalakshmi Thiyagarajan; Ioan Cleaton-Jones, WDI; Natasha Mehta, U-M undergraduate; Noel Watson, Southerly Pharma; and Dr. Shane Quinonez, C.S. Mott Children's Hospital.



Dr. Dhanalakshmi Thiyagarajan (left) and U-M undergraduate student Natasha Mehta (right) during their presentation.

## The Progress of Prevention

### Non-Invasive HPV Screening Device Wins 2024 Global Health Commercialization Competition

For the second consecutive year, WDI and the University of Michigan's Center for Global Health Equity collaborated to present the Global Health Commercialization Competition. The pioneering initiative invited faculty from across U-M's three campuses to contribute groundbreaking innovations with potential for commercial applications in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

Embracing an interdisciplinary methodology, the competition encouraged the fusion of technical

expertise and market-driven strategies to create interventions within the communities they aim to serve.

Led by Dr. Dhanalakshmi Thiyagarajan, of the U-M Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, the winning team presented a screening device designed to detect high-risk strains of human papillomavirus (HPV). The device is especially tailored for use in LMICs where women's health resources are often scarce. The contest, which concluded in a pitch competition at WDI, awarded

\$30,000 to the winning team to further develop the concept.

Next, the team plans to conduct field feasibility studies in partnership with Korle Bu Teaching Hospital, which not only serves as a major medical hub in Ghana but also stands as a key institution for healthcare provision and innovation across sub-Saharan Africa.

"Our team is mindful of the myriad challenges faced by women in LMICs when it comes to accessing healthcare," said Dr. Kwaku

Asah-Opoku, a co-investigator in the project based in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Korle Bu Teaching Hospital. "With our device, we aim to alleviate some of those barriers, although we know there's still a long journey ahead of us."

The design of the device embraces non-invasive, patient-centered principles. The simplicity of the collection process means women can gather the sample themselves at local health posts, increasing screening accessibility.

"We're under no illusion that our work is a panacea, but we do believe it represents an important advancement in making HPV screening more accessible,"

Thiyagarajan said. "Our hope is that this device can be a part of a larger solution to safeguard women's health, opening doors to preventative care for women who need it the most." ■

**"Our hope is that this device can be a part of a larger solution to safeguard women's health, opening doors to preventative care for women who need it the most."**

**—Dhanalakshmi Thiyagarajan, MD of the U-M Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology**



Participants celebrating the start of the Mini-MBA Program at FSB in Vietnam.



Participants in the Mini-MBA, which focuses on a range of vital business skills.

## Elevating Vietnam’s Business Leaders

### WDI's Advanced Mini-MBA Program Takes Root in Vietnam, a Country on the Move

Over the past 40 years Vietnam’s economic reforms and global trends have pushed its economy from one of the poorest in the world to a middle-income economy, according to the World Bank. This expansion has put Vietnam well on its way to achieving its goal of becoming a high-income country by 2045.

Over the last three years, WDI has been elevating Vietnamese business leaders’ skills through its Advanced Mini-MBA Program at the FPT School of Business & Technology (FSB). This partnership

brings together educators and business leaders to expand participants’ management skills, bolster business education opportunities and encourage economic growth in the country.

“Helping countries transition from centrally planned economies to market economies is WDI to its essence,” Amy Gillett, WDI Vice President of Education said. “When you make that transition, you need to cultivate and rely on a new level of management skills. WDI is perfectly equipped to train business leaders in these

important skills, whether it’s in Eastern Europe, sub-Saharan Africa or Southeast Asia.”

The certificate program was co-developed by Gillett and David Estrada, WDI Education Program Administrator, specifically for the Vietnamese market. It digs into how to leverage government relationships and requirements, and it also covers critical lessons on foundational business skills. WDI-affiliated faculty and FSB instructors teach executive students about strategy, sales management,

# 17,500+

Managers trained through Executive Education programs

marketing, finance, operations, entrepreneurship, leadership, negotiations, human resources and more. Through a combination of in-person and online sessions, the program pushes participants to focus on digital transformation, leadership expansion, practical decision-making and organizational-level thinking.

“The program is mutually beneficial,” said Nguyen Viet Thang, Dean of FSB. “WDI has brought us new values and perspectives, and having top WDI (affiliated) professors participate in teaching

is a great benefit for Vietnamese students and faculty. Conversely, we hope WDI gains significant value in understanding the corporate management culture of Eastern countries in general and Southeast Asia in particular.”

The four-month program includes modules deeply connected to real-world dilemmas and solutions. At the end of the program, participants complete a final group project around current management challenges they face in their own businesses. ■



“Helping countries transition from centrally planned economies to market economies is WDI to its essence.”

—Amy Gillett, WDI Vice President, Education



IKEA Foundation, KCIC and WDI staffers meet waste management entrepreneur Muhammad Iqbal at his company, Green Shizuka, in Limuru, Kenya. Image courtesy of KCIC.



“We’re well-positioned to apply expertise across sectors, industries and contexts to the complex problems associated with climate change.”

—Heather Esper, WDI Director, Performance Measurement and Improvement



Above: IKEA Foundation, KCIC and WDI staffers in Limuru, Kenya. Image courtesy of KCIC.

## Spurring Early-Stage Enterprise Growth to Mitigate Climate Change

### Leveraging Systems Thinking to Strengthen Collaboration Amongst Investors, Accelerators and Entrepreneurs

As a research partner in many different sectors and geographies, the Performance Measurement and Improvement (PMI) team at WDI helps businesses and nonprofits harness data to improve operations, inform their strategies and measure impact to achieve commercial success.

“Climate-related projects are an increasingly important component of our project portfolio,” said Heather Esper, Director of

the PMI team. “We’re well-positioned to apply expertise across sectors, industries and contexts to the complex problems associated with climate change.”

The latest example of this focus is WDI’s collaboration with the Kenya Climate Innovation Center (KCIC) on the Sustainable Waste Innovation for a Future in Transition (SWIFT) program. SWIFT is a three-year incubator and accelerator program targeting

small- and medium-sized enterprises in the waste management sector in Kenya. Funded by the IKEA Foundation, the program’s primary objective is to transform the waste management sector through innovative business models that embrace the principles of circular economy. The SWIFT program will support 110 enterprises from across the country through business advisory services, technical assistance, mentorship and access

to finance, and by fostering an enabling environment through advocacy and policy support.

WDI’s role is to design an impact measurement strategy, essential for evaluating the effectiveness of the program. The team is developing the research design, sampling strategy, surveys and analysis plan. During this project, WDI will strengthen KCIC’s measurement capabilities while actively learning about the waste management and climate change context in Kenya.

“We’re trying to solve compelling and complex problems. And there is always uncertainty when making grants regarding the quality of the intervention and the outside factors that may intervene,” said Nic van der Jagt, monitoring, learning and evaluation manager of employment and entrepreneurship at the IKEA Foundation. “By generating the evidence on the effectiveness of project interventions, we can reduce the risk in our grant making.”

The PMI team hosted a discussion on accelerators, incubators,

entrepreneurs and their funders operating in the Global South. In the dynamic session, representatives from the IKEA Foundation, the KCIC and African Management Institute discussed how rigorous research fuels innovation in program design, supercharges operational improvements and attracts more funding for startups.

“What is really exciting about our research is that we are

going beyond key performance indicators to understanding how companies are impacting their local economies and communities,” said Yaquta Fatehi, WDI Program Manager, Performance Measurement and Improvement, and lead researcher of this project.

“Bringing this data to light will help unlock innovation and impact.” ■



Diana Páez (left) and Dana Gorodetsky (right) during a visit to Chihuahua.

## Taking Charge: E-mobility Insights, Training and Partnerships

### Mobility Innovation Hubs, Talent Pipeline in Focus for WDI’s Energy Team

For more than three decades, the former Detroit train station, known as Michigan Central, sat empty and dilapidated—a symbol of the city’s decline. With a significant investment from Ford Motor Co., Michigan Central has reopened as the crown jewel in a new mobility innovation campus in the heart of Detroit.

Michigan Central represents a concrete step toward mobility innovation away from the internal combustion engine. Just a week

after it reopened to the public in June, WDI’s Energy and Mobility Team hosted a delegation of business, economic development, government and academic leaders from the Mexican state of Chihuahua for a tour and series of meetings. Like Detroit, the cities of Juarez and Chihuahua are heavily involved in the internal combustion engine vehicle supply chain. The delegation’s visit was just one example of WDI’s multifaceted “Chihuahua Charging Forward” project, which this year included

new research on retraining work forces and tools for building a robust e-mobility ecosystem.

“Preparing the talent pipeline to design, produce, assemble, test, charge and maintain EVs, regardless of the vehicle segment, is indeed a key enabler of the transition,” said Diana E. Páez, WDI Senior Director, Energy and Mobility. “This will require efforts to upskill or reskill the traditional automotive workforce focused on the internal combustion

engine, as well as efforts to equip future graduates with the skills needed for the shift to EVs.”

After conducting research in both Michigan and in select low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), WDI’s Energy and Mobility team issued a new report identifying a set of 20 training programs centered on EV technology and engineering offered by universities, community colleges and other training organizations. Tackling the question on the minds of many decision makers about how to strengthen local ecosystems of innovation to enable e-mobility, the Institute also published another report on mobility innovation hubs as platforms

for collaboration, business incubation and innovation.

“The goal is to help our clients and others in this space, regardless of their geography, to understand different business models for mobility innovation hubs, and features of the ecosystems in which they operate that can support or hinder efforts,” said Dana Gorodetsky, WDI Program Manager, Energy and Mobility.

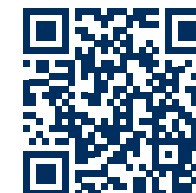
WDI also hosted a separate delegation of 12 engineering faculty from six different universities and research institutes in the state of Chihuahua, as part of a training and study visit to Michigan this summer. The visit

was part of the Zero-Emissions Vehicle academic partnership implemented by WDI with support from the U.S. Mission to Mexico Public Diplomacy Section.

“Just as we provide the talent for the traditional automotive industry, we will be well positioned to support this shift to automotive electrification in Chihuahua, a region known for its strong manufacturing base and skilled workforce,” said Fernando Alba, Undersecretary for Energy, Mining and Industry of the State of Chihuahua. “Our engagement with WDI is helping us access world-class expertise from Michigan and develop new academic and business collaborations.” ■

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—Dana Gorodetsky  
WDI Program Manager,  
Energy and Mobility



From left to right: Mariana Ramirez, of Secretaria de Innovacion y Desarrollo Economico (SIDE), with Gorodetsky and Páez of WDI.





Promotional image for Wahu! e-bikes. Image courtesy of Wahu Mobility Ltd.



Sophia Opatska taking audience questions following her presentation.



## WDI Speakers Blaze Trails in Energy, Education

*E-Mobility as Game Changer in Ghana*

“Have you ever driven a vehicle designed by Africans, for Africans?”

—Valerie Labi, CEO, Wahu Mobility Ltd.

“Have you ever driven a vehicle designed by Africans, for Africans?” Valerie Labi, CEO of Wahu Mobility Ltd. (Wahu!), which manufactures two-wheel electric bikes in Ghana, offered this question to a packed audience as a WDI guest speaker. The average age of an internal combustion engine vehicle in Ghana is 14 years old and the vast majority were designed by Japanese, American or European engineers.

Labi explained how electric mobility is challenging the past and opening a new era of competition for African innovation and engineering. In developing their line of e-bikes, Wahu! spoke with more than 1,000 Ghanaians about their transportation and economic needs. By locally designing and manufacturing connected EVs for Africa and the wider world, the value proposition of Wahu! includes

simplifying transportation, creating a path to vehicle ownership and a gateway to sustainable employment through mobility services.

“If every vehicle on the continent over the next ten years is going to change, what should it change to?” Labi asked. “This was our starting point, it’s definitely not where we’re ending.”

The talk was sponsored by WDI in partnership with the African Studies Center at U-M’s College of Literature, Science, and the Arts. ■



“We need to learn how to operate in this very challenging environment of not knowing when the end is in sight.”

—Sophia Opatska, Vice Rector for Strategic Development, Ukrainian Catholic University

### Open for Business in Ukraine

Sophia Opatska, Vice Rector for Strategic Development at Ukrainian Catholic University, understands uncertainty. Opatska, an entrepreneur and an academic, leads Lviv Business School of Ukrainian Catholic University (LvBS), which throughout the conflict has not closed. More than two years after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, Opatska explained how business leaders and business educators have persisted and even thrived through nimble and dynamic models.

WDI co-hosted the discussion with the University of Michigan Weiser Center for Europe and Eurasia. Through student programs, projects and university partnerships, WDI has worked in Ukraine for more than two decades. Before Russia’s invasion, the Institute sent multiple teams of U-M MBA students to LvBS to assess and make recommendations to improve their consulting process for small- and medium-sized businesses in the country.

“We need to learn how to operate in this very challenging environment of not knowing when the end is in sight,” Opatska told the audience.

“Markets don’t like uncertainty,” noted an audience member.

“Yes, but that’s our reality,” Opatska replied. ■



MAP team at Clínica de Familia.



## Earning Their Degrees, Seeing Their Impact

### From Rwanda to the Philippines, Student Projects Span the MAP

Eighty percent of the world’s population lives in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), and an increasing share of MBA graduates will need the skills to do business with them.

WDI’s more than 30-year collaboration with U-M’s Stephen M. Ross School of Business connects business students with the markets, cultures and people of these emerging economies.

The Institute brings these worlds together in a way that moves both forward—pushing students to bolster their practical abilities while supporting the sustainable development of companies and

nonprofit organizations operating in a host of sectors in multiple LMICs. Multidisciplinary Action Projects, or MAPs, are required action-based learning opportunities for first-year MBA students to build their hands-on skills, expand their knowledge of global business and support these organizations. Since its founding in 1992, WDI has supported over 1,500 students through more than 257 MAPs.

During the 2023–24 academic year, 49 students joined 12 MAP projects supported by WDI around the globe, from the Philippines to Rwanda to India. The projects are just as diverse. For instance, Wahu Mobility Ltd. in Kigali, Rwanda

worked with one student MAP team to develop a comprehensive market analysis and market entry strategy for the company, a Ghanaian manufacturer of e-bike and sustainability solutions. Meanwhile, at Clínica de Familia La Romana in the Dominican Republic, students created an expansion strategy for the dental practice.

All WDI-supported MAPs helped companies expand into new markets, commercialize technology, enhance customer-facing strategies and analyze financial data to improve operations. ■

### 2023–24 Davidson Field Scholars

The Institute’s Davidson Field Scholars not only complete a WDI-sponsored MAP, they also take on a WDI-supported course or self-generated internship. This year’s cohort brought diverse life and work experiences to several WDI projects.

For Nate Foxx-Drew, 2024 MBA and Davidson Field Scholar, his experiences in Ethiopia and Ghana exposed him to both economic and innovative aspects of healthcare in emerging markets.

After graduating in the spring, Foxx-Drew accepted a full-time role at UnitedHealth Group, joining its Leadership Experience cohort. ■



“During my project work in Ethiopia, I developed strategic procurement tools that optimized manufacturing processes, while in Ghana, I formulated operational models for healthcare innovation using 3D printing. These experiences have equipped me with a profound understanding of healthcare systems in diverse contexts, which will be invaluable in my next role... I am eager to apply these insights to drive impactful healthcare solutions globally.”

—Nate Foxx-Drew, 2024 MBA and Davidson Field Scholar





Patrice Gopo (left) and Minah Koela (right), who served as an interpreter in Cape Town for a WDI-funded project, with handbags made by local women business owners in South Africa.



Women in traditional dresses performing on a sunny day in Cape Town, South Africa.

## Where Are They Now: From MBA to Author

*A Life-Changing Grant From WDI Sent This Student Toward a New Career, a Family and a Renewed Sense of Global Connection*



Photo: Allie Marie Smith

"I think the people who show up in business school, particularly those doing projects with WDI, have a desire to make a difference in the world, and that desire is going to follow people. It doesn't always mean you have to stay in one space doing the same thing."

—Patrice Gopo, author, *Autumn Song*

Patrice Gopo knows better than most how deeply we're all connected. Growing up in Anchorage, Alaska, the child of Jamaican immigrants, she spent a lifetime navigating the tensions of that experience. She lived for years in the Alaskan cold, surrounded by people who could never quite understand what it meant to be different in the way she was. She vacationed in Jamaica, playing with family who would never manage the complex social

dynamics she did. She belonged in both places—and in neither. On top of that, her life “didn't always align with the typical experience that Black Americans are handed in the U.S.,” she explained. This multiplicity formed her foundation and brought unavoidable questions of belonging, place and home—ones she's been grappling with all her life.

Unsatisfied with a career in engineering, Gopo enrolled in the

Master's in Business Administration program at the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business in 2004. While there, she added on a Master's in Public Policy, set on using her degrees and skills to improve the lives of those struggling in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). “I was intent on working in microfinance and micro-entrepreneurship,” she said. “I was interested in the ways we could use business to alleviate issues of material poverty in the world.”

At the time, WDI was providing student grants to support socially focused business endeavors in LMICs. Gopo was searching for a way to contribute to self-determined development, and she discovered it in South Africa—and then applied for WDI funding. While still completing her studies, Gopo took the initiative to propose a WDI-sponsored internship with the nonprofit organization ServLife in 2007. Her assignment explored what women-owned

small businesses needed as they grew their enterprises.

With WDI support, she flew to Cape Town after graduation and spent eight weeks meeting with women to build out their business plans. Together, they considered revenue plans, laid out expenses and navigated the critical business-building requirements of entrepreneurship in LMICs.

“I was part of something larger,” Gopo said. “It was something that was already organically happening within this country and this community. I was invited to come and take these skills I had in running a small business and help empower these women.”

Gopo said her experiences with WDI helped to shape her future career as a writer. She is the author of two books of essays and a children's book. ■



## A New Case Writing Competition Plugged into the Energy for Change

When he purchased an electric motorcycle in 2022, Sammy Kalunji—a self-employed microentrepreneur in Kampala, Uganda—joined the hundreds of low-emission transportation pioneers in the heavily polluted city. Despite the low operating cost of the electric vehicle, known as an E-boda, Kalunji did not generate enough revenue to support his family. Kalunji’s predicament was at the center of the winning case study in the Energy Innovation in Low- and Middle-Income Countries Global Case Writing Competition.

Case studies encourage current and future business leaders to expand their education, question their assumptions and discover innovative strategies. With a goal of bringing more energy-related academic cases to business students around the world, the competition received submissions from 10 different countries and 14 universities.

“The global energy picture is changing at a faster rate than we’ve ever witnessed and our collection needs to reflect how managers

are adapting and innovating new business models as well as technological leaps, especially in low- and middle-income countries,” said Sandra Draheim, Manager of Case Publishing at WDI.

WDI Publishing also continued its partnership with the University of Michigan’s Ross School of Business, to manage the 2023 Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Global Case Writing Competition for the third year in a row. The competition yielded 28 case submissions from seven countries.



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—Sandra Draheim, Manager, WDI Publishing

Authors covered topics ranging from gender pay equity to conflicting DEI-related business practices within an organization. Other topics included equitable restroom access and encouraging employee support of a staff member’s gender-confirming surgery.

By publishing and disseminating the winning cases, WDI Publishing continues to build its DEI Collection consisting of valuable teaching tools focused on providing crucial

business lessons for the global economy, including to low- and middle-income countries.

“The cases we received this year were outstanding, and I was especially impressed by the ability of each submission team to tap into what’s truly going on in the business world when it comes to diversity, equity and inclusion,” said Lori Costew, retired Chief DEI Officer at Ford Motor Company and contest judge. ■

**650+**  
Cases in the Collection

**350+**  
Faculty Authors

**800+**  
Adopting Universities

### Case of the Month

Case of the Month is a new feature that is bringing more awareness to some of WDI Publishing’s most dynamic cases. The short-form videos, distributed on social media and in WDI e-newsletters, briefly tell the story of a particular case with vivid video footage, compelling narratives and music.





"Our Business Development Opportunities page provides readers with a one-link resource that can change the course of an entrepreneur's journey for the better."

—Chapin Leacock, Communications Specialist, NextBillion



## One Link, Hundreds of Opportunities

### *NextBillion.net's New Business Development Page is Catching on with Startups, Entrepreneurs*

Early-stage enterprises need support to scale up, prepare for investment and make vital connections—especially when they're working in challenging markets. To help meet that need, as part of NextBillion's ongoing redesign, the site launched the new Business Development Opportunities page. The page features accelerators, competitions, fellowships, funding opportunities, incubators, requests for proposals and training courses available to enterprises working in low- and middle-income countries.

These opportunities are curated by NextBillion's team and sourced by readers who submit opportunities of their own for consideration.

"Our readership surveys showed us that roughly half of our readers are entrepreneurs or executive-level leaders at their organizations, and we saw an opportunity to provide them with an additional service that we hope will contribute to their business success," said James Militzer, NextBillion's Managing Editor.

Managed by WDI, NextBillion.net has posted over 300 opportunities on the page since its launch in the fall of 2023, and it has quickly gained traction with readers—both on the site, and on its social media networks, particularly on LinkedIn, where the site

highlights recent opportunities in a weekly newsletter.

"Our regular features—including news excerpts, calendar events and job posts, along with original guest articles—have been important parts of our coverage since the site's early days," said Chapin Leacock, NextBillion's Communications Specialist and the primary curator of the site's aggregated content. "Like those areas of the site, our Business Development Opportunities page provides readers with a one-link resource that can change the course of an entrepreneur's journey for the better." ■

## Championing the Enterprise and the Individual

### *Paul Clyde Honored for a Decade of Leadership as WDI President*

Since WDI was founded in 1992, the number of low-income countries has been cut in half and the number of high-income countries has more than doubled. For Paul Clyde, who served as WDI's President from 2014-2024 and championed the entrepreneurial spirit that cuts across all borders, the reason for this dramatic shift is obvious.

"The private sector has played a huge role in that development, and because of that development, the private sector is in position to play an even larger role going forward," said Clyde, who completed his second consecutive term as the leader of the Institute in June.

Since joining the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business in 1997, Clyde has spent the better part of three decades working with more than 150 projects with firms in the finance, energy, management education and healthcare industries in 20 different low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). He also worked with corporations ranging in size from small startups to large organizations such as Johnson & Johnson, Novo Nordisk and Microsoft. He served as the academic director of the Part-Time MBA Programs, where he led the development of the

Weekend MBA Program. In June of 2024, Clyde was promoted to full clinical professor at Michigan Ross.

As WDI President, Clyde honed WDI's focus in Education, Energy, Healthcare and Healthcare Delivery, and Performance Measurement and Improvement. He also spearheaded efforts to coordinate the Institute's work in LMICs and student programs across U-M's campus, especially MBA students, who participate in WDI-sponsored projects.

Clyde was pivotal in creating the Davidson Field Scholars program involving MBA students who engage with more than one WDI partner project. Within U-M, he also helped start an International Investment Fund at the Ross School of Business to fund small- and medium-sized enterprises in LMICs. At the same time, Clyde facilitated several efforts to commercialize products and services within U-M and other higher education institutions in other countries—drawing in students from business, law, engineering and healthcare.



"The private sector increasingly is displacing many of the services that global development and governmental organizations have provided in the last 30 years," Clyde said. "That is good news because the private sector provides solutions that do not require outside funding to operate or grow, and it increases the agency of individual citizens in these countries to influence economic growth."

The Institute's Board of Directors recognized and honored Clyde's commitment and dedication to WDI's mission and purpose, and congratulated him for his decade of service. ■

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