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THE YEAR IN REVIEW

“To expand the scale and scope of MIT’s activities in Africa... it will be necessary to identify long-term strategic partners who can compensate for gaps in MIT’s own know-how and experience.”

- Richard Lester, Associate Provost for International Activities
“A Global Strategy for MIT,” May 2017

This year was an exciting time for MIT’s activities on the African continent. The Institute substantially broadened its engagement at the administrative, faculty, and student level. Associate Provost of International Activities Richard Lester designated Africa as a regional priority in MIT’s global strategy. This designation bolsters MIT-Africa’s mission to develop mutually beneficial relationships in research, education, and innovation across the continent.

In response to Associate Provost Lester’s prioritization of Africa in MIT’s international activities, the Africa Advisory Committee and the MIT Africa team developed the Strategic Plan for MIT Engagement in Africa. Implementation of this strategic plan will fuel MIT’s commitment to Africa and build upon the strong foundation already established by MIT-Africa programs. In this report, we focus on those MIT-Africa programs housed at MIT International Science and Technology Initiatives (MISTI) including: MIT-Africa Internships; Global Startup Labs (GSL); Global Seed Funds (GSF); Empowering the Teachers (ETT); MIT-Educator; and the MIT-Africa Interest Group (MAIG).

This year MIT-Africa continued its year-over-year rise in popularity among students and partners. We increased student placements from 32 (in 2016) to 92, an increase of 187.5%. Students travelled to South Africa, Ghana, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Togo, Guinea, Tanzania, Uganda, and Mauritius, doubling our geographic reach in 2016, working across industries and sectors.

In partnership with hosts the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa and Mauritius Telecom, the MIT-Africa Program held two Global Startup Labs courses. Each course is led by four MIT students studying either entrepreneurship or computer science, and involve forty in-country student participants. The course culminates with a pitch competition during which local and regional stakeholders and funders have the opportunity to invest in the startups developed during the program. MIT students, participants, and hosts lauded this year’s courses. We intend to carry this momentum into 2018.

We are excited for the launch of the MIT Global Partnership Fund-Africa, generously allocated by the Office of International Activities in order to spark collaboration between faculty at MIT and partner universities across the continent. This was a goal we set out to achieve in AY 2016/17. The MIT Global Partnerships Fund promotes and supports early-stage collaboration between faculty and researchers at MIT and in Africa.
Following a highly successful MIT-Educator 2016 Program with Tunisian faculty, MIT-Educator 2017 was held in July, with a revised curriculum and outstanding initial outcomes. MIT-Educator 2017, in partnership with the US State Department, US Embassy in Tunis and Tunisia Ministry of Higher Education, introduced MIT approaches of problem-solving, learning science, entrepreneurship and use of online tools. Participants developed major curriculum reform, contributing to student success and the economic trajectory of Tunisia. MIT-Educator 2017 hosted ten top faculty from across Tunisia who came to MIT with the goal of reworking their curricula and revising Life Sciences educational structure in Tunisia.

MIT-Empowering the Teachers (MIT-ETT), in partnership with Total Nigeria E & P and Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) reached an exciting milestone in which 50 Fellows participated in the program since its launch in 2011 (46 from Nigeria, 4 from Uganda). Fellows continue to make large-scale change within their universities upon return.

The MIT-Africa Interest Group had the enormous privilege of hosting President of Mauritius, Ameenah Gurib-Fakim. A chemist by training, President Gurib-Fakim visited The Institute in order explore opportunities for increased collaboration between MIT and Mauritius, and MIT and Africa in general.
MIT-AFRICA PLACEMENTS (2016-2017)

With just two graduate students sent to South Africa in our 2013 pilot year, this year we sent 92 students to placements across the continent. MIT-Africa is again the fastest growing international internship program at MIT.

Placements by Country

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Placements</th>
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<tr>
<td>7 Ghana</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Guinea</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Ivory Coast</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Kenya</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7 Mauritius</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Nigeria</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Rwanda</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Sierra Leone</td>
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<tr>
<td>50 South Africa</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6 Tanzania</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Togo</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Uganda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>92</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Placements by Class Level

- Freshman: 9%
- Sophomore: 16%
- Junior: 26%
- Senior: 40%
- Graduate Student: 9%
Placements by Department

- Undeclared/Multidisciplinary
- Sloan School of Management
- School of Science
- School of Architecture and Planning
- School of Engineering

Global Startup Labs Placements by Course

**Mauritius**

1. Architecture
1. Business
1. Computational and Systems Biology
1. Computer Science and Molecular Biology
1. Media Arts and Sciences

**South Africa**

1. Brain and Cognitive Sciences
4. Business
MIT-AFRICA SUPPORTERS

Our accomplishments in 2017 could not have been possible without the generous support of these organizations:

- South African Airways
- Ragon Institute of MGH, MIT and Harvard
- PKG Center for Public Service
- Institute for Medical Engineering & Science

PRE-DEPARTURE TRAINING

We have developed a robust procedure for preparing students for their internships. This is offered to MISTI interns, as well as to other students going to Africa. This preparation program is considered an Institute-wide program.

The preparation for students interning over the summer of 2017 was held over a half-day retreat, a pre-departure dinner and individual pre-departure checkout meeting. In addition to this, students were also required to attend a general MISTI safety and health session with 700 other MIT students traveling abroad.

During the retreat, students explored a variety of topics ranging from cultural preparation, workplace readiness, as well as health and safety in the context of their host countries. This was completed through a variety of activities, including a lecture on ‘The Historical Origins of South Africa’s Current Democracy’ by Professor Evan Lieberman; a group activity with current MIT students from South Africa, which covered important day-to-day information; staff-led reflection activities exploring potential challenges in cross cultural communication; and definition of personal goals and visions during the internships.

The pre-departure dinner with Faculty Director, Professor Hazel Sive served as a space for students to learn more on places to see in their host country, workplace navigation as well as networking in new contexts.

Lastly, all MIT-Africa interns met with Managing Director, Julia Reynolds-Cuéllar, before their departure to cover all aspects of the previous preparation sessions and answer any final questions.

Students also have access to support materials through an internal website we created to provide guidance as they go through the interview placement process and while in country.
Adam Zhao Xing Liang (Electrical Engineering and Computer Science ’20)
Host: mDoc – Johannesburg, South Africa
Project: Developed a social media marketing strategy for a healthcare startup, creating content using Adobe InDesign.

“I helped mDoc with various tasks from tech to marketing to coming up with grant funding ideas/angles and strategy for the company. I also helped design content for the pilot test that the startup is going to implement after I leave in Lagos, Nigeria.”

Isabel Espinel (Brain & Cognitive Science and Management ’17)
Host: Formula D Interactive – Cape Town, South Africa
Project: Conducted a business evaluation of a mobile/web application to assess its potential to expand beyond its current scope and gauge pros/cons of commercialization.

“My internship experience was valuable and rewarding. It helped enhance many skills I will be using in my full-time job.”
Chheangkea Ieng (Architecture ‘17)
Host: University of the Witwatersrand – Johannesburg, South Africa
Project: Wrote in collaboration with a professor as well as helping with the administrative tasks throughout the architecture department.

“It was important for me to take a step back and put myself in a different place after graduation in order to gain more perspectives as the first step after my graduation.”

Hannah Hoffman (Nuclear Science and Engineering Graduate student)
Host: University of the Witwatersrand – Johannesburg, South Africa
Project: Wrote scripts in R to analyze years of satellite data provided by NASA to study how wildfires spread. Spent two weeks in “the field” collecting data on (taking pictures of) zebra and wildebeest. Analyzed the collection of photos to identify individuals and see where/how often repeat individuals appeared.

“I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to explore a totally different field of work, develop new skills, and experience a very foreign culture.”

Alexandra Stanton (Biology and Mathematics ‘18)
Host: Africa Health Research Institute – Durban, South Africa
Project: Worked on a bioinformatics project creating an image analysis algorithm that could detect time and mode of death of cultured macrophages infected with Mycobacterium tuberculosis in time-lapse microscopy images.

“I had an excellent time experiencing the infectious disease research environment in a country that constantly sees the first-hand effects of those diseases.”
Julia Castiglia (Mechanical Engineering ’20)
Host: University of the Witwatersrand – Johannesburg, South Africa
Project: Collaborated 4th year WITS student to design a low-cost prosthetic hand.

“The hand was supposed to be almost completely 3D printed and we decided to use a MYO armband, a sensor that reads the electrical signals in the forearms’ muscles, to control it, as well as an Arduino and servo motors to move the fingers. The MYO can recognize when the user opens or closes his or her hand and waves in or out, so we programmed the Arduino and servomotors to move the hand accordingly. It was very interesting work as well as eye-opening cultural experience.”

Daniel Vignon (Mechanical Engineering ’17)
Host: African Leadership University – Pamplemousses, Mauritius
Project: Designed the lesson plan in fluid mechanics and thermodynamics. Facilitated lecture and provided students with feedback and exercises in preparation for their evaluations

“Upon completion of my internship, the students and other faculty reported being quite satisfied with the way I handled teaching the class. The students enjoyed the new style and were keener to learn the material than when I had first gotten there. The first version of the skills map I designed is also readily available and students and faculty can now use it to get a better picture of the degree, modify the curriculum and refine the map.”

Leigh-Ana Rossitto (Brain and Cognitive Sciences ’18)
Host: iTEACH / Ragon Institute – Pietermaritzburg, South Africa
Project: Analyzed data on a project employing traditional healers in rural KwaZulu Natal to test for and counsel on HIV.

“This internship allowed me to explore a new area of research, a new country, and an entirely new culture, and I found the experience extremely valuable both professionally and personally.”
Logan Abel (Nuclear Science and Engineering ’18)
Host: University of the Witwatersrand, Developmental Pathways for Health Research (DPHRU) – Johannesburg, South Africa
Project: Interviewed patients about sleep habits, eating habits, physical activity, and mental health. Assisted with various biological sample taking from participants.

“The DPHRU taught me about public health research in a caring, fun, and human-focused environment. In this warm and welcoming workplace I learned and experienced more than I could have hoped.”

Annmarie Wang (Biology ’20)
Host: University of Witwatersrand – Johannesburg, South Africa
Project: Assisted infant studies research in the greater Johannesburg metropole area. Wrote a literary review of the Bt20 cohort study. Reviewed over 40 articles and accumulated the data into a 2000 page literary review depicting the trends of growth in South African children.

“The experience of living in a place so foreign and far away from America has made the world much smaller and attainable.”

Dominiquo Santistevan (Electrical Engineering and Computer Science ’17)
Host: Makerere University Artificial Intelligence Lab – Kampala, Uganda
Project: Develop computer models to study diseases in cassava.

“I had the opportunity to develop several computer vision models for datasets ranging from binary classification convolutional neural networks to an implementation of the semantic segmentation model Enet.”
Raivo Andrian (Chemical Engineering ’17)

Host: African Leadership University – Pamplemousses, Mauritius

Project: Developed a professional development program for the students that prepared them for internships and careers in Africa.

“I got so much more than I bargained for from ALU: valuable coaching, experience, incredible memories, and colleagues turned lifelong friends. Everyone at ALU is passionate about education and thinks beyond themselves about the betterment of Africa.”

Alexa Garcia (Biological Engineering ’17)

Host: University of the Witwatersrand – Johannesburg, South Africa

Project: Studied thermoregulation in the rhombic egg eater (D. scabra) that lives in termitaria. I also studied the effect of various snake repellants on puff adders (B. arietans) and brown house snakes (B. capensis).

“Three cheers for MISTI South Africa! One for the Alexander Herp Lab, one for Joburg, and one for all the wonderful adventures I had along the way.”

Tiffany Ferguson (Urban Studies and Planning Graduate Student)

Host: University of the Witwatersrand – Johannesburg, South Africa

Project: Conducted preliminary info and data gathering for multiple research projects at the very beginning phases of the projects (literature scanning and compilation, literature review, media scanning, case study prospecting).

“Overall, it was a great experience.”
Doris Le (Chemical Engineering ’17)

Host: University of the Witwatersrand – Johannesburg, South Africa

Project: Expressed and purified an existing panel of broadly neutralizing antibodies for use in characterizing a newly developed HIV1 subtype C envelope protein. Analyzed hydrogen-deuterium exchange mass spectrometry data to study the disulfide bonds in two-domain CD4 and elucidate their roles in CD4 function.

“An amazing mix of significant scientific work, learning about different cultures, meeting incredible people, and enjoying great food.”

Zoe Hinton (Mechanical Engineering ‘18)

Host: University of Cape Town – Cape Town, South Africa

Project: Researched and designed a hinge joint for use as an elbow or knee joint in a quadrupedal robot.

“Being at the University Cape Town gave me the opportunity to interact in a similar academic environment I’m used to but from a completely different perspective. The people I met, the food I ate, and the wonderful sites and mountains I climbed made it an experience I will never forget.”

Victoria Xiao (Physical Biology ’17)

Host: Wits-DPHRU, a research unit at Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital

Project: Worked as a research assistant on a clinical research project studying risk factors for hypertension and chronic kidney disease. I would consent participants to the study, take urine samples, refer participants to clinic for UTI, take anthropometric measurements, and otherwise assist with the study. It was a great experience because I got a lot of participant interaction, which is what I was looking for, I loved my coworkers, and the experience helped me confirm my career goals.

“The experience was great: I loved my coworkers and the participants I met, I got to learn about clinical research and I learned a lot about the cultures and history of South Africa.”
Jessica Wolf (Urban Studies and Planning Graduate Student)

Host: Asiye eTafuleni – Durban, South Africa

Project: Completed 21 surveys with local informal market vendors regarding their current use and access to infrastructure (i.e. water, sanitation, waste management) and their desired level of provision in the future.

“Working with Asiye eTafuleni was an invaluable experience which provided me an example of how to complete planning and advocacy work with integrity and respect for local communities.”

Julia Cho (Biology ’20)

Host: Hope Through Health – Kara, Togo

Project: Confirmed the statuses of every patient in AIDS clinic. Contributed to data collection efforts of 5-year study on survivability of patients.

“As a non-French speaker, I was pretty nervous about going to Togo. But I met so many amazing people who guided me through my trip, educated me, and made my stay so much more memorable.”
Meghan McCormick (Management Graduate Student)
Host: Dare to Innovate – Conakry, Guinea
Project: Built a “Business Planning Tool-Kit,” an analog tool-kit designed for self-guided learning and exploration. Using the kit, start-up entrepreneurs are guided through the process of conducting market research, making strategic decisions, planning their finances, and writing a business plan.

“I focused my work in Guinea, a country with nearly 70% youth unemployment, to design a tool-kit that better prepares youth to conceive, launch and grow a business. I focused on developing context specific solutions to the problems small businesses face as they are conceived, launched, and scaled. I worked with ‘Dare to Innovate’, an organization that I co-founded as a Peace Corps Volunteer serving in Guinea. Dare to Innovate is a youth-led movement to end unemployment in West Africa through investments in the entrepreneurship ecosystem.”

Emily Young (Mechanical Engineering ’18)
Host: The Olive Branch for Children / The Okoa Project – Mbeya, Tanzania
Project: Conducted user interviews did primary market research and extensive testing to get feedback on motorcycle ambulance design.

“We developed a much larger understanding of the issues that people face revolving around maternal health, the resources available, and the desires of these patients.”

Rida Qadri (Urban Studies and Planning PhD Student)
Host: Asiye eTafuleni – Durban, South Africa
Project: Measure the physical, temporal and financial cost of access to critical infrastructure for street vendors in one of the largest informal markets in Durban.

“It was humbling being part of the monumental task of improving access to basic infrastructure for informal street market vendors through lean research and inclusive design while ensuring our methodologies were relevant for informal urban spaces.”
Raveen Nzilani (Electrical Engineering and Computer Science ’20)
Host: Practical Education Network – Accra, Ghana
Project: Researched ways to improve peer interactions among teachers and curriculum creation by conducting informal interviews and carefully constructed questionnaires.

“My internship was a continuation of my work at D-Lab Education. I had worked with my host over the spring semester to develop a theory of change for improving the rate of translation from PEN workshops to classrooms. In Ghana, I had the chance to put a lot of my suggestions to test on the ground.”

Ben Schwartz (Management Graduate Student)
Host: Startup – Wli, Ghana
Project: Worked with several local community members on skills they can use independently and with tourism startup in the future.

“Worked in a village that attracts international and domestic tourists for its waterfall and surrounding nature, we trained local workers on a host of skills in hospitality and design.”
Taeseop Shin (Architecture Graduate Student)
Host: Rwanda Housing Authority – Kigali, Rwanda
Project: Designed an affordable architecture for low-income families with the Rwanda Housing Authority and the students of Rwanda University.

“I learned about the relationship and difference between the real architecture world and the architecture world in school.”

Andrew Brose (Architecture Graduate Student)
Host: Rwanda Housing Authority – Kigali, Rwanda
Project: Developed a replicable and affordable housing typology designed by MIT students and is under construction by our partner organizations.

“As the co-leader for the workshop, it was fantastic and energizing to see graduate architecture students be a part of the construction process; an activity that rarely occurs in the design profession.”

Danniely Staback (Architecture Graduate Student)
Host: Rwanda Housing Authority – Kigali, Rwanda
Project: Design a few housing prototypes and their aggregation into a new village typology for the Rwanda Housing Authority to adopt in their future developments.

“Visiting Rwanda was an enlightening and gratifying experience, in terms of cultural exchange and field experience. We were exposed early on to all stakeholders of this collaborative project, and the input was very valuable, both for our mission and for our overall learning experience.”
GLOBAL STARTUP LABS

The rise of young tech business adds new hope for finding solutions to pressing social and economic challenges across Africa. MIT-GSL Africa was founded with the mission to cultivate, support and empower a generation of young tech entrepreneurs across the continent.

**Partners:** MIT-GSL Africa partners with top universities, telecoms, and governments across the continent to transform them into hubs of entrepreneurship by building local skills and sustainable programs.

**Technology Incubator Courses:** At each partner, MIT-GSL Africa sends a team of four MIT student-instructors to guide local students through their first real-world, hands-on mobile-tech entrepreneurship experience. Courses focus on ideation, market research, pitching, and appropriate technology platforms, culminating with a pitch and prototype competition.

**Organize Networks:** Businesses do not grow in isolation. Centered on each partner, MIT-GSL Africa student teams, organizes investor and mentorship networks of local and regional players as applicable.

**Funded Startups:** MIT-GSL Africa culminates with a pitch competition where mentors and funders have the opportunity to invest in the course startups. Over half of global MIT Global Startup Labs’ graduates go on to register their own startup after completing the workshop.

In 2017, MIT-GSL Africa workshops were held in both Mauritius and South Africa, with a planned expansion to Rwanda and Algeria in 2018.
Awa Kone (Management Graduate Student)

Dishita Turakhia (Computer Science Graduate Student)

Zhizhuo Zhang (Computational Biology Post-Doctoral Fellow)

Nupur Dokras (Management and Mechanical Engineering Graduate Student)

Erin Golden (Management and Mechanical Engineering Graduate Student)

Elahe Ahmadi (Brain and Cognitive Science ’20)

Zehreen Etwarooah (Biological Engineering ’19)

Dhaval Adjodah (MIT Media Lab PhD Student)

Chinasa Emeghara (Management and Mechanical Engineering Graduate Student)

Jayanthi Jayakumar (Management and Mechanical Engineering Graduate Student)
GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FUND-AFRICA

An outcome of the report, A Global Strategy for MIT, the MIT Global Partnerships Fund helps enable the creation of new region-specific platforms for cultivating, facilitating, and coordinating faculty and Institute-level collaborations in targeted countries and regions. The fund will allow MIT to engage with Africa and other areas where it has been less active, develop stronger collaborations with peer institutions, and explore opportunities for collaboration in education, innovation and entrepreneurship, and research.

Through an annual call for proposals, the MIT Global Partnerships Fund supports travel and meeting costs for exchange between teams at MIT and in universities and nonprofit research in Africa. The African colleague(s) must be identified in the proposal. The maximum award is $30,000 for an 18-month project period.

Priority is given to projects that:

- present a balanced exchange between the MIT and African participants
- demonstrate complementarity between the MIT and African teams
- involve MIT undergraduate and graduate students

MIT-EMPOWERING THE TEACHERS (ETT)

MIT Empowering the Teachers (MIT-ETT) strives to foster innovation in science and engineering education in tertiary academic institutions in Africa through intense engagement with faculty members from African universities.
The overarching goal of MIT-ETT is to facilitate the development of young African faculty leadership in science and engineering education who will introduce innovation and creativity into science and engineering curricular.

There are several main objectives of the ETT program:

- Provide young African professors with exposure to cutting-edge pedagogical methods in the highest-rated engineering and science departments in the U.S.
- Provide American faculty who have a deep interest in connecting with those in their disciplines in emerging economies a concrete means of engagement.
- Reform the Fellows’ current curriculum using new materials, approaches and methods that exemplify the best of MIT’s practices: problem-solving, student-centered innovation, and bringing knowledge to bear on the world’s greatest challenges.

During their semester at MIT, Fellows do the following:

- observe instruction in their own disciplines and subjects
- interact with MIT faculty teaching in their own disciplines and subjects
- develop courses based on problem-solving approach inspired by equivalent MIT course
- discuss and explore curricular enrichment and reform through both formal and informal interaction with the MIT community

This year, we reach two exciting milestones. MIT-ETT surpassed 50 Fellows since the Program’s launch in 2011. Also, Total Nigeria organized the Program’s first reunion in January 2017, which brought together all former fellows, as well as industry and government leaders from across Nigeria. During the reunion, former fellows also launched the alumni network in order to better scale their impact on education in Nigeria and have now officially registered as an NGO in Nigeria.

Professor Akintunde Ibitayo Akinwande (EECS) is the Faculty Director for the program.
MIT-EDUCATOR

MIT-Educator is aimed at global faculty, and especially groups from one university or several within one country that have the goal of reworking their curricula and revising educational structure. Faculty from new universities will find the program exceptionally useful as curriculum is devised for the first time, and state of the art approaches can be incorporated.

MIT-Educator comprises four modules each led by distinguished MIT Professors, and Instructors from multiple units including the MIT Teaching and Learning Lab, Office of Digital Learning, MIT Integrative Learning Initiative, Martin Trust, Legatum Center, Sloan School of Management, School of Science, School of Engineering and School of Architecture and Planning.

Modules include:

- Learning Science
- Digital Tools
- Entrepreneurship
- Case Studies in MIT Education

The 2017 group of MIT-Educator professors from Tunisia.
Groups and individual faculty members define their goals prior to arriving at MIT, through online, Skype and written discussion with MIT faculty and staff. At MIT, faculty members participate in intensive, hands-on workshops that encompass material in each module. Revised curricula are developed at MIT, with extensive input from faculty and staff.

The Program continues collaboratively with MIT at the home universities through online interactions, in person group programs, and a reporting structure. Groups plan implementation and implications of the newly developed material for higher education in their respective institute and country.

**Logistics**

MIT-Educator participants visit MIT for three weeks for an intense and collegial program under the directorship of Professor Hazel Sive, a distinguished educator and MacVicar Faculty Fellow. At the end of this period, faculty participants return home to finalize and implement curriculum, with ongoing MIT interaction. Each participant, and group, prepares reports to facilitate discussion and trajectory.

Groups can continue to engage with MIT for ongoing curriculum development and assessment. To ensure successful outcomes, partnerships are set up for a three-year period, with an option for renewal.

**Participants**

MIT-Educator participants are top faculty and lecturers selected following an application and interview led by a distinguished MIT panel. Proposals from groups with an overarching goal are encouraged.

Our 2017 program invited participants from Tunisia, in the second-year of a collaboration with the Ministry of Higher Education to revise the Tunisian Life Sciences curriculum. The program is supported by the US Department of State. We welcomed ten professors from Tunisia to MIT for an intensive three-week program. Upon return to Tunisia, fellows made significant changes to their curriculum and are now organizing a country-wide workshop in 2018.

Moving forward, MIT-Educator will be based out the Abdul Latif Jameel World Education Lab (J-WEL), MIT’s new educational initiative, and will be offered to members of Higher Education @ J-WEL.
LOOKING AHEAD

ARI JACOBOVITS

MIT-Africa Program Manager

In August 2017, MIT-Africa brought on a new MIT-Africa Program Manager at MISTI, Ari Jacobovits, as Julia Reynolds-Cuellar and Lauren Siegel transitioned into other roles.

Ari’s interest in Africa began while studying abroad at the University of Cape Town in South Africa. He is a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer from Kenya where he worked with a group of fishermen on building the country’s first community managed Marine Park. After completing the Peace Corps, Ari spent four years working with the State Department’s Refugee Admissions Program across Africa and in Washington, DC.

As a graduate student, Ari spent his summer managing operations for an e-commerce business in Tanzania. He is passionate about innovative approaches to economic development in Africa. Ari holds a Master of International Business with a specialization in Development Economics from The Fletcher School at Tufts University and a BA in Journalism and Music from Indiana University – Bloomington.

The MIT-Africa Initiative plans to launch a new website in 2018 that will serve as a platform for all MIT engagement in Africa. We believe this platform will provide a new entry point for collaborators and supporters. Additionally, the site will serve to connect the MIT community with people, organizations, and resources as they relate to Africa.

Major Goals for 2018

- Maintain a high level of student involvement, sending approximately 100 students to Africa on various MIT-Africa Programs
- Launch two additional GSLs in Rwanda and Algeria, bringing the total to four
- Raise endowment funds to secure the future of the program
- Increase the number of funded internships across Africa
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- Prof. Philip Khoury, Ford International Professor of History and Associate Provost, MIT
- Members of the MIT-AFRICA Advisory Committee (AAC)
- Sara Nelson, MIT-UROP
- Pam O’Neil, MIT Travel Office
- April Julich Perez, MISTI Executive Director
- Prof. Chap Lawson, MISTI Faculty Director
- Urban AFRICA
- President Joelle Itoua-Owona, African Business Club
- MIT African Students Association
- Bolaji Finnih, Sloan Fellow ’15 (in sad memoriam)
- Joost Bonsen, Lecturer, MIT Media Lab
- Julius Akinyemi, MIT Media Lab
- Dhaval Adjodah, MIT Media Lab