GENEVA GRADUATE INSTITUTE

> 10th Anniversary Report THE GENEVA CHALLENGE

GE

Tracing the Roots of the Geneva Challenge



66 The Advancing Development Goals Contest is a worthy and important initiative and will encourage and inspire young students to be key agents for development and peace.

Kofi Annan, late High Patron of the Geneva Challenge

The Geneva Challenge, also known as the Advancing Development Goals Contest, is an international competition launched by the Geneva Graduate Institute in 2014, thanks to the vision and generosity of Ambassador Jenö Staehelin and the patronage of late Kofi Annan. This contest brings together graduate students from diverse disciplinary and contextual perspectives to provide innovative and pragmatic solutions to some of the world's complex challenges. The Geneva Challenge aims to stimulate interdisciplinary problem solving and analysis on development, and encourages master students from around the world to bridge the gap between their studies and real development policy.

2023 represents the halfway point in the 2030 Agenda. In order to tackle the complex challenges and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for long-term sustainability, it is crucial to embrace the fresh perspectives, views, and innovative ideas of young minds and the future generations, who are essentially at the heart of sustainable development. The Geneva Challenge, in alignment with this mission, strives to foster inter-generational dialogues and exchanges. By facilitating such interactions, the aim is to craft comprehensive and well-balanced solutions to complex challenges. This approach ensures that the solutions not only consider diverse perspectives but also encompass a holistic understanding, thus enhancing the prospects of achieving sustainability goals.

 Today more than ever, you need to take into consideration what we, twenty, thirty year olds have to say, there is a dire need for intergenerational dialogues and youth perspectives on the ever augmenting problems. The youth today is rebellious and outspoken but are also the gogetters and the changemakers.

Participant of the 2020 edition

IN CONVERSATION WITH

Jenö Staehelin, Founder of the Geneva Challenge

The Geneva Challenge owes its initiative and patronage to the generous vision of Ambassador Jenö Staehelin, who built an impressive diplomatic career, having served notably as Switzerland's first Permanent Representative in New York. He is also former President of the Executive Board of UNICEF, an honorary member of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and was Interim Chair of the Kofi Annan Foundation Board.

66 When you talk about the future, we have to do that by including the young generation.



I am frequently asked how I came up with the idea of a worldwide contest between students, related to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. As so often happens, this initiative is the result of a mix of experiences and observations that I have made throughout my life.

As a Swiss law student, I had difficulties in connecting the university lectures I was given with real life challenges. How relevant is the theory I was introduced to in practical life?

At Harvard Law School, I got to know the student contest called "Moot court" which is a simulated court proceeding, involving drafting memoranda and participating in an oral argument. Top students spend a semester or more preparing for the intellectually challenging contest. Yet, what is the practical benefit to society of all of that?

Early in my career, I was given the opportunity to carry out tasks that some people thought I was too young to assume whereas others have put trust in my aptitude to successfully handle the responsibilities I was given.

As a Swiss diplomat, I was confronted with the disparity of living conditions between people coming from privileged parts of the world, compared to others living in less favourable areas.

As the Swiss Ambassador to the UN, I was involved in the negotiations on the Millenium Development Goals that later were replaced by the Sustainable Development Goals.

In that same position, I was following the activities of the Geneva Graduate Institute, its role in helping to solve global challenges and its approach as an educational institution. Upon my retirement I was asked to join the Board of the Institute which gave me the possibility to discuss how to combine theoretical and practical learning.

It is in that context that I suggested to the then Director to launch a student contest related to the SDGs, interconnecting theoretical and practical education. Credit must be given to him that he was willing to accept. At that time, nobody knew whether the idea would be a success. There was a reputational risk for the Institute, in case of failure. Nonetheless he accepted.

That was more than 10 years ago. Thanks to him and to the unreserved support of his successor, of the Academic Steering Committee, of the Jury, of the Team of the Geneva Challenge and of thousands of students from all over the world, the contest has from its first year on been thriving. Reason to be grateful!

But that does not mean that we should congratulate ourselves and lean back. We all read and listen to the news. So much needs to be done. To achieve the goals set for 2030 we must persevere. This is a marathon and not a sprint. Like in a relay run the "baton" has to be passed on to the next runner, to the next generation. And the younger, the faster one runs. Isn't that a source of hope?

IN CONVERSATION WITH

Marie Laure Salles, Director of the Geneva Graduate Institute



The accelerating rhythm at which we have to react to challenges in our age of radical uncertainty imposes a form of short-termism. As we put bandages after bandages on issues, societies, or individual bodies and souls, we may be doing this at the cost of urgently required radical systemic transformations. It is through this kind of paradoxical dynamics that we might be putting sustainability and inclusion on the back burner, when they should be at the core of our solutions.

Marie Laure Salles is the Director of the Geneva Graduate Institute since September 2020. Before joining the Institute, she was the founding Dean of the School of Management and Innovation and Professor of Economic Sociology at Sciences Po Paris.

Systemic and long-term sustainability is what we should aim for today. Multiple and interconnected challenges make for radical uncertainty and a vertiginous sense that we stand at the edge of an existential abyss.

What does systemic sustainability imply? First, it means an integrative perspective on contemporary challenges. This in turn calls for the courage to embrace complexity and decide under uncertainty. Second, it comes with a long-term projection and strong orientation to solutions. But what we need are solutions that break with the past and are in a deep sense (re)-generative. This again calls for courage — the courage to think critically and to combine critical with constructive thinking. Finally, systemic sustainability is impossible without the vital desire for hope and a powerful form of pragmatic utopianism.

We have to believe in the future and construct it together — and here the role of younger generations is key!

The Geneva Graduate Institute is proud to be hosting an international contest such as the Geneva Challenge. For the last ten years, the Challenge has empowered students and young people from across the world to engage in thinking, daring, dreaming and imagining sustainable futures and solutions. We feel that this is also one of the missions of Universities — to engage the future with hope and desire.

Happy anniversary and long live the Geneva Challenge!

Faces of the Geneva Challenge Community

The Geneva Challenge counts on a dual evaluation lens that combines the robust academic expertise of its Academic Steering Committee with the policy expertise of its Jury Members. This unique blend of perspectives aims to address the development goals by bridging the gap between academic research and policy. The contest recognises the value of integrating scholarly knowledge and real-world implementation to effectively address the complex challenges of the world.

- The Academic Steering Committee is an interdisciplinary group of professors of the Geneva Graduate Institute, which evaluate the contest submissions according to substantial criteria including, their academic quality and the innovative potential of the solutions presented.
- **The Jury** is an independent high level Panel composed of policy makers and experienced professionals from different backgrounds, who selects the competition's finalists.

In addition to the valuable contributions from academics, practitioners, and experts, the Geneva Challenge offers a platform for empowering young talents within its own team. By selecting graduate students from the Geneva Graduate Institute as **Project Coordinators**, the Geneva Challenge not only provides these students with an opportunity to strengthen their professional and interpersonal skills but also aims to increase youth representation by bringing their fresh perspectives and innovative ideas into the process.



IN CONVERSATION WITH

Michael Møller, Chair of the Jury



Michael Møller spent 40 years as an international civil servant in the United Nations. He was notably, among other positions, the former Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva and former Executive Director of the Kofi Annan Foundation.

As we navigate an increasingly fragmented and challenged world in search for solutions to the massive existential problems afflicting our planet, it is imperative to understand that only integrated, collaborative, networked and preventive approaches will allow us to implement these solutions successfully. The problems facing us are complex, and so are, by necessity, the solutions.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals provide our Global roadmap that shows us the way forward, both on substance and in execution. It is incumbent on everyone to take part in the search for solutions, at all levels of society and at whatever level of capacity each one of us has. This includes an intergenerational collaboration to ensure that knowledge is shared and passed on to those of us who will be responsible for the future management of our world. Only through such collaborative processes will we succeed in ensuring a sustainable and healthy environment for the generations to come.

The Geneva Challenge has proven, over the last 10 years, to be an excellent and impactful example for this much needed change in approach. The impressive number of young students from around the world who, every year, submit collaborative proposals for solutions to a range of substantial challenges in the realm of sustainable development, is a clear testimony of the ability of the Challenge to act as a catalyst for integrated approaches. Their ability to collaborate, across countries, universities and thematic interests has been impressive and a wonderful provider of hope for the future.

It has been my great fortune to chair the Jury of the Geneva Challenge for the past few years. It has reinforced my confidence in our youth and their ability to rise to the serious challenges that we, the older generations, are leaving them with. They are the change-makers of tomorrow, and I encourage them to continue to seek meaningful partnerships in their collective search for impactful and lasting solutions for our ailing planet.

IN CONVERSATION WITH

Martina Viarengo, Chair of the Academic Steering Committee



Martina Viarengo is an Associate Professor in the Department of International Economics at the Geneva Graduate Institute. She is also Faculty Associate at the Harvard University Center for International Development, a member of the World Economic Forum's Global Agenda Council on Women's Empowerment and a member of the International Growth Centre in London.

I have had the honour of being part of the Geneva Challenge since the start, and in my role as Chair of the Academic Steering Committee starting from 2014. It has been great to see how the contest has been growing over the past decade.

The Geneva Challenge has had a significant impact in three main aspects. First, in terms of outreach and participation. The number of participants in the contest has significantly increased over the past decade, with more than 10,000 graduate students participating from a large number of countries and nationalities. Second, in terms of fostering cross-country and cross-disciplinary collaborations. Students from different

disciplinary backgrounds, areas of expertise and from different countries have worked together on their projects and developed innovative solutions to address existing challenges. Third, with the creation and dissemination of knowledge. The contest has fostered an interdisciplinary dialogue, as well as the production and dissemination of knowledge.

An international competition like the Geneva Challenge allows students to be part of the effort of advancing sustainable development goals, and acquire additional knowledge and skills that can also help them in their future careers.

Over the years, we have received very positive feedback from the participants themselves, on how much they learned and enjoyed participating in the contest. Successfully addressing many of the global challenges that we are facing today requires being interdisciplinary and analysing the ways in which stakeholders can work together. The Geneva Graduate Institute is an institution of research and higher education dedicated to the study of world affairs. We aim to promote international cooperation and make a contribution to the progress of societies around the world. In this context, the Geneva Challenge aims to foster creative thinking on the major international development problems of our time, and foster global responsibility.

The Geneva Challenge through Numbers





Teams









Over the past decade, the Geneva Challenge has gathered more than 10,000 graduate students divided into 2,153 teams, reaching in more than 200 universities and representing more than 100 nationalities every year from all regions of the world.

The essence and strength of the Geneva Challenge lie in its diversity and interdisciplinary nature. Teams composed of 3 to 5 master students from all across the globe participate in the challenge. These participants come from unique academic backgrounds, educational experiences, and regional perspectives, thereby offering a cosmopolitan environment and fostering innovative and creative approaches to solve complex challenges. Over the past decade, we had team members from over 50 diverse masters disciplines.





Preparing our proposal required hours of teamwork, insightful debates and self-criticism to understand and blend the multiple perspectives entrenched in the different disciplines we represented. The Geneva Challenge allowed us to build up our proposal through informed discussions, openness to other disciplinary approaches, and patience.

Participant of the 2016 edition

To ensure inclusivity and recognise the outstanding efforts of participants across diverse continents, the Geneva Challenge has made constant efforts towards fostering an equitable and level playing field. In 2018, the Jury made a transformative decision to award five prizes, one for each continent. This approach aims to encourage a global reflection on SDGs and recognition for such efforts among students from all around the world, cultivating a platform for shared opportunity and promoting equal representation.

IN CONVERSATION WITH

Cäcilia Riederer, Project Coordinator of the 2022 Edition



66 The Geneva Challenge has the potential to bring young voices to the forefront of sustainable development and centre their experiences and ideas in development policies and practice.

• 2023 marks the mid-point in the 2030 Agenda. In light of this, why is it nowadays even more important to encourage and inspire young generations to be key agents for development?

Successful sustainable development must take into account all relevant perspectives and stakeholders to ensure the solutions being developed actually meet the needs of the people most marginalised. This includes the youth who will feel the impact of today's decisions the longest and who need to be able to step up for their own future. Still, while it is an indispensable task to encourage and inspire young people to take action, I think at least equally significant is to ensure the current decision-makers are willing to listen. The youth, their perspectives, and their ideas must be able to find space and fertile soil to develop instead of having to fight for someone to listen to them and take them seriously. This is why initiatives like the Geneva Challenge are so critical. They can provide spaces for young people to develop their ideas and standpoints and bring them together with decision-makers from International Geneva willing to listen.

• Why should we strengthen long-term sustainability from the perspective of future generations?

Ouite obviously, the future generations are the ones who will have to live in the world we are building today. So our decisions, our projects, and our ideas will impact their ability to live on this planet, their standard of living, and their ability to dream and succeed. Therefore, not planning with their perspective in sight would be a betrayal of their future and our legacy. This is why policymaking and development policies must centre youths' perspectives and prioritise long-term sustainability to give even just our generation a fighting chance for a decent life.

Themes through Time

Each year, the Geneva Challenge selects a key issue to sustainable development and encourages graduate students to submit contributions that are both theoretically grounded and offer pragmatic solutions.





66 There is no tool for development more effective than the power of women.

Irene Khan, Director General of the International Development Law Organization

First Prize – Maria Adelaida Martinez, Laura Martinez, and Catalina Correa from the University of the Andes in Colombia with their project *Empowering Female Sex Workers in the City of Bogotá: From Stigma to a Health Rights Approach*



This project has been one of the greatest experiences we had in our academic life.

Finalists of the 2014 Geneva Challenge

Their project proposed to empower female sex workers by giving them access to technology with participatory methods such as photography and video. The social exposure of the project intended to mobilise empathy and care ethics on a larger scale and question health barriers that these women and their children encounter.

2015 : Return Migration and Social Economic Development



66 The more stories we get out, the more people will realise that in effect they can make a difference and they will.

Ambassador William Lacy Swing, Director General of the International Organization for Migration



First Prize – Frances Antoinette Cruz, Janina Clare Tan, and Yvan Ysmael Yonaha from the University of the Philippines with their project *Assisting the Reintegration of Philippine Return Migrants through Mobile Technology*

Their project aimed to propose using mobile technologies to consolidate information and the needs of returning migrants who have settled in the Philippines, temporarily or for good.

2016 : Urbanisation





We talk about 1 billion people in slums and slum-like conditions. That sounds like statistics. But behind those statistics are human beings.

Aisa Kirabo Kacyira, Deputy Executive Director and Assistant Secretary-General for UN-Habitat

First Prize – Cristian G. Gil Sánchez, Abraham Hidalgo Mendoza, Arianna Espinosa Oliver, Pilar Veloza Cantillo, and David Nuñez Amortegui from National University of Colombia and London School of Economics and Political Science with their project *MINGA* – *Collective Waste Management*

Their project MINGA presented an alternative insight on how to improve waste management systems, while promoting social inclusion and environmental-friendly behaviours in Bogotá.

2017 : Employment



I see it as a basic human right to have decent work which is both safe and properly remunerated, many people in our world are currently denied that right.

Helen Clark, Former New Zealand Prime Minister and former Administrator of UNDP



First Prize – Fuaad Coovadia, Boitumelo Dikoko, Sakhe Mkosi, and Keitumetse-Kabelo Murray from the universities of Cape Town and Oxford with their project *Umvuzo, a skills-centred mobile learning solution for the South African labour market*

The problem in the South African labour market is that job seekers face a lot of time and financial cost when they are seeking out jobs, and the way they seek out jobs is usually inefficient to the jobs they would like to seek out. Umvuzo is a mobile application that links job seekers with their employers.

Finalists of the 2017 Geneva Challenge

2018 : Climate Change

6 6 Unless action is taken on climate change, sustainable development will not be achieved.

Kofi Annan, late High Patron of the Geneva Challenge





Kristian Parker, Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees at Oak Foundation, and keynote speaker of the 2018 edition.

First Prize – Jessica Arnold, Alonso Flores, Nigora Isamiddinova, Nitasha Nair, and Ji Qi from Team North America from Columbia University with their project *DASH* – *Data Analytics for Sustainable Herding*

Project DASH will disrupt the traditional approach to international development and public policy-making by unpacking the complexity of the modern-day herding, farming, and land-use nexus. DASH aims to create a blueprint for utilising big data and applying machine learning and artificial intelligence for better decision-making under deep uncertainty.

Finalists of the 2018 Geneva Challenge

2019 : Global Health





66 Health is not just an outcome of development but it is a prerequisite of development.

Zsuzsanna Jakab, Deputy Director-General of the World Health Organisation

First Prize – Yonatan Katzenelenbogen, Mor Kenigsbuch, and Fadi Sheban from Team Asia from the Weizmann Institute of Science with their project *Re Medic* — *An Integrative Solution Turning Medicine's Excess Into Access*

Project ReMedic offers an integrative approach to encourage people to return their unused medications with a reward. Out of the returned products, valid ones will be used to aid areas and populations in need. This creates a "triple win" solution-responsible disposal that will protect the environment and population health, while increasing access for those in need, in addition to the health-related benefits.

2020 : Social Inclusion



66 Putting the victims in the centre of the peace process and post-conflict is the best way to reconcile.

Juan Manuel Santos, former President of Columbia

First Prize – William Ge, Taylor Goldy, Sun Kim, and Shuying Ni from Team North America from Harvard University with their project *Project Gem: A Teletherapy Platform To Connect Elderly With Family Caregivers*

66 This project started out of a personal need that we share: we, on the team, are all very close to our grandparents, but it is very difficult during our lives to stay in touch with them all the time so we created a digital platform for family caregivers to maintain a social presence in the lives of their loved ones, even from a distance.

Finalists of the 2020 Geneva Challenge

2021 : Crisis Management



 The macro framework absolutely needs to be joined with the local context, local realities, the delivery systems, the participation and the communities, the business models on the ground to make these transformations effective.

> Jeffrey Sachs, Director of the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University

First Prize – Stefan Faistenauer, Yiwei Li, Veenu King, Elaine Lac, and Maximilian Schubert from Team North America from Stanford and Yale universities with their project *BuyBy*.

A major driver of air pollution, soil degradation, and climate change is the burning of residual stubbles after crop harvest. We want farmers to also harvest the byproducts in order to sell them and improve their own living conditions economically as well as avoid the environmental impact.

Finalists of the 2021 Geneva Challenge

2022 : Poverty Reduction



 The question with poverty reduction is not about what we will be doing later on to achieve an outcome later. It is really what we are going to do today and now in order to have the future we want.

> Elhadj As Sy, Chair of the Kofi Annan Foundation Board and former Secretary General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies





First Prizes ex aequo

Chidinma Lucy Uka, Ayanfeoluwa Oluwanifemi Akinbola, Rodrigue Jinyuy Birka, Chimwemwe Nalwesya Chibuye, and Eric Appiah Atiemo from Team Africa from the Pan-African University-Institute for Water and Energy Science with their project *JACCA Agro-Warehouse Integrated Solutions*

Project JACCA sought to address poor agrifood value chains by providing warehousing and storage facilities to reduce post-harvest losses and mitigate marketing challenges: serving as a node linking rural farmers with urban markets and subsequently, international markets.

8

Amit Kumar Mehto, Agnes Laurens, Saurabh Mamtani, and Sohee Kim from Team Europe from the London School of Economics and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine with their project *Connect*.

In order to improve the penetration of the welfare schemes already in place, **Project Connect** proposes that high school students of local communities in India identify eligible but unenrolled individuals and provide them information about welfare schemes during household visits.

2023 : The Challenges of Loneliness

66 While we rarely think about it, loneliness is one of those structural keys on which we could act with the objective of addressing a multi-dimensional set of urgent challenges.

Marie Laure Salles, Director of the Geneva Graduate Institute

Abhijit Banerjee, Ford Foundation International Professor of Economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the 2019 recipient of the Nobel Prize for Economics, will give a keynote speech on *Unraveling the complexities of loneliness*.

The projects of all finalist and semi-finalist teams can be found on the webpage of the Geneva Challenge – www.graduateinstitute.ch/TheGenevaChallenge

Catalysts of Change : Youth in the Geneva Challenge

The objective of the Geneva Challenge is to stimulate reflection, problem solving and innovation from diverse disciplinary and contextual perspectives. Hence, part of the experience is to provide participants with analytical and research skills and practical tools to produce tangible outputs. From the initial theme announcement to the culminating round of oral presentations, our mission is to empower students through our informative sessions and capacity-building workshops. In addition, we aim to maintain connections with our former participants and encourage them in implementing their projects.



The Geneva Challenge is a great opportunity for young students to realise and materialise their visions for a prosperous and sustainable world. It helped us push our limitations, challenge our comfort zone and broaden our horizons and the traditional approaches to development.

Participant of the 2017 edition

During their stay in Geneva, the finalist teams have to present and defend their proposals in front of the Jury members. Given their diverse backgrounds, the Geneva Challenge is therefore providing them with an online **Communication** workshop to enhance their presentation and pitching skills. Following a workshop on the art of delivering a message, each finalist team gets the opportunity to have a one on one session providing them personalised feedback and additional guidance fitted to their needs.



Various activities are organised for the finalist teams, including a visit to the United Nations Office at Geneva and a networking breakfast, bringing together the finalists and the Jury members. This latter intends to provide the teams with an invaluable occasion to engage in more profound discussions about their projects subsequent to the award ceremony.

 The networking breakfast was indeed an important piece of the puzzle. The importance of having to get more insights one on one from the jury members about our projects cannot be overemphasised. It enabled us to get their honest thoughts, inputs and advice on our projects especially regarding the next steps.

Finalist from the 2022 edition



The finalist teams of the Geneva Challenge are also encouraged to implement their ideas thanks to the awarded monetary prizes. Workshops on fundraising and project implementation are offered to the finalist teams to support them in developing the resources, network and project management skills needed to execute their strategies in their respective countries. These sessions help the participants understand ways to define clear and feasible project goals, closely monitor progress, proactively address challenges and uncertainties, assess the potential for partnerships, and ultimately foster the achievement of their objectives. The broader aim is to give them the confidence and motivation to start implementing their projects within their local contexts but also to provide them with practical approaches and tools useful in their future endeavours.

66 Even if we do not end up pursuing the specific solution we developed as part of the project, the content as well as the type of thinking we learned throughout the process will be very helpful as we look to tackle complex social problems in our careers.

Participant of the 2017 edition

The Geneva Challenge also seeks to provide participants with the opportunity to engage with inspiring and courageous changemakers through our partnership with the **Kofi Annan Foundation**. Through this partnership, the Geneva Challenge offers a unique chance to the participants to gain valuable insights into achieving success from young and gifted changemakers who are actively implementing tangible projects on the ground. These individuals stand as living proof that innovative thinking can be translated into impactful action, and are a constant source of inspiration for the future impact-makers.

A series of **online public lectures** have also been established in partnership with the **Right Livelihood Foundation** providing an exclusive opportunity to interact with their Laureates and engage in a discussion about the challenges and opportunities to tackle some real-world problems. The diverse voices and journeys of the Laureates seek to inspire, motivate and offer perspectives to the participants of the Geneva Challenge. Among others, Reema Nanavaty, Director of the Self-Employed Women's Association of India (SEWA), discussed how to empower women to break the cycle of poverty by owning and managing their own enterprises. Monika Hauser, founder of Medica Mondiale, shared her experiences working with survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. Each event was moderated by a young PhD researcher from the Geneva Graduate Institute giving them the chance to strengthen their moderation skills and allowing them to share their academic inputs.

The Geneva Challenge team firmly believes that learning and skill development are continuous processes. Through active collaboration and strategic partnerships, we aim to establish a dynamic platform for young minds.

66 It is important to have venues for discussion, problem definition, ideation, and implementation support. That's what the Geneva Challenge provides.

Participant of the 2023 edition



From Ideas to Action

It is good to talk, but it is better to act. So get involved and don't wait. Be impatient but patient at the same time. Be impatient in your quest for change, patient in your endeavour to really make the change.

Ambassador Jenö Staehelin, Founder of the Geneva Challenge

The Geneva Challenge is immensely proud of its past cohorts and their incredible ideas to create a change in this world. Some of the finalist teams of the Geneva Challenge took their projects to the next level, going above and beyond to execute and take further steps in their initiatives, and made a difference for communities across the world.



Project "Empowering Female Sex Workers in the City of Bogotá: From Stigma to Empowerment, a Health Rights Approach" – Team Latin America, 2014 Edition

Their project aimed to address pervasive stigma imposing barriers on health, education, mobility and employment for female sex workers and proposed a dynamic participatory photography exhibition to confront it. Following their stay in Geneva, the team created their own NGO and organised several workshops in which sex workers from different areas of downtown Bogotá shared their experiences, identified the main issues related to stigma due to their line of work, and chose how they wanted to represent themselves, owning the narrative and responding to the imaginary that many Colombians have about them. The project resulted in a very successful itinerant exhibit, which helped create a dialogue and a more critical and empathic perspective on public policies and even illegal social cleansing strategies against sex workers. The outcome of their project was published in renowned academic journals.

The Geneva Challenge for us was the chance to implement a participatory project on an issue that rarely got looked at. The project gave us national visibility and the support to work directly with community leaders in a problem they wanted to prioritise. It shifted the narrative in terms of how to work with communities.



Project Mechamind - Team Asia, 2018 Edition

After participating in the 2018 edition, Promon from Bangladesh has launched his own company. Mechamind is enabling technologies and skill based education programs for the underprivileged communities. They aim to enable underprivileged kids to solve real-life problems and develop skill sets for future tech-based industries. Mechamind has been training students of several NGO schools to build bionic hands as a part of an applied science curriculum. One of their projects aims to develop low-cost 3D printed functional prosthetic arms for poor amputees in Bangladesh.



Project RUWAFIKI - Team Africa, 2019 Edition

Water can cause devastating effects as a pathogen carrier, transmitting diseases to a large population. Water-borne diseases continue to be a global health challenge and are most prevalent in developing countries, especially in rural areas. The RUWAFIKI solution is a water filtration kit made of locally sourced, sustainable and environmentally friendly materials, designed to help in the filtration of contaminated water gotten from unsafe sources in some underdeveloped communities. Submitted as part of the 2019 edition of the contest, this project went ahead with the ambitious plans to provide rural communities with access to affordable, clean drinking water in Uganda and Zambia. Since then, the team has developed two prototypes of the project in rural communities, which produced interesting results.

C The challenge helped us kickstart our project by providing a global platform to showcase our idea. Furthermore, it gave us the opportunity to pitch before international experts and policy marketers; and we were able to network with other young innovators.



The VEFIRS Project - Team Africa, 2020 Edition

In the last decade, Uganda in East Africa has witnessed an influx of refugees from South Sudan, Burundi, and Democratic Republic of Congo. The demand for land continues to grow at a fast pace especially in Bidibidi in Uganda, the largest refugee settlement in East Africa. As a result, refugees remain susceptible to exclusion from social, economic and political affairs in the country.

The Vertical Farming in Refugees Setting (VEFIRS) aims to build the adaptive capacity of refugees and the host community in the Bidibidi settlement to land scarcity and rocky soil through a multi-storey vertical farming approach. The goal of this project is to help them become self-reliant in overcoming food shortage and poverty. The team encouraged refugees to use vertical farming to skill the youth, provide employment opportunities, and generate income from the extra harvest. Since then, the team managed to establish viable partnerships with the different stakeholders and to construct ten multi-story gardens for ten groups across ten communities.



The WADABA Project - Team Africa, 2021 Edition

Water pollution is a major concern in crowded urban environments like the city of Likasi in Democratic Republic of the Congo. This city happens to be a practical example of a locality where pollution created by a single individual can mean putting residents at risk of poor sanitation and hygiene. The Water Data Bank (WADABA) project consists of creating a database on some key physical, chemical and biological parameters that will allow the determination and monitoring of water pollution. This project also involves the use of citizen science in the data collection process, uphold community engagement and civic education. This is done through the creation of water clubs in schools for water education (treating characteristics, usage and management of water and the environment) where students partake in extracurricular activities in forms of training, field trips, volunteer work, and communities in Water Management Committees and Water Groups. An NGO named Eau-Hygiène-Assainissement Pour Tous (E.H.A.P.T) was created to establish the WADABA project under a registered structure.



Project ePASADA - Team Asia, 2022 Edition

66 The Geneva Challenge gave us a meaningful platform to voice out our ideas and proposed solutions to alleviate poverty in our community.

In the Philippines, over an estimated half a million jeepney drivers have either temporarily or permanently lost their jobs due to drastic changes in mobility options and activity systems. This in turn resulted in a disrupted source of income. The ePasada project is a multipoint platform that aims to retrofit and future proof this sector by integrating smart transportation components, resiliency training programs, and alternative income generation schemes. Since their participation in the Geneva Challenge, the team has participated in local training programs for researchers and attended public webinars related to the challenges of the transport groups in their community. The team is currently engaging with experts and professionals, as well as diligently searching for funding opportunities, to bring their project to fruition.

Project Connect - Team Europe, 2022 Edition



Project Connect focuses on government social welfare schemes and attempts to correct inefficiencies in their delivery. From January to July 2023, the team started implementing their project in Madhya Pradesh in India and identified several welfare schemes that presented significant barriers for beneficiaries due to bureaucratic complexities, time poverty, lack of information, and other barriers. As part of their pilot project, they are currently conducting on-the-ground data collection thanks to the help of student volunteers in order to identify potential beneficiaries for the identified schemes and assess their eligibility with precision. Thanks to this mediation work, they facilitate the enrolment of potential beneficiaries in the respective schemes, ensuring they can effortlessly access the benefits.

 We are amazed that without even creating new infrastructure, equipment or needing to recruit a workforce, we could engage the community to empower them and enable them to solve their own problems, in this case, accessing welfare schemes.



ANNEXE

Jury Members through the Years

Ann Aerts, Head of the Novartis Foundation (2019), Eran Ben-Joseph, Professor of Urban Studies and Planning at MIT, Azita Berar Awad, Director, ILO Employment Policy Department (2017-), Nikita Dawan, Director of the Frankfurt Research Center for Postcolonial Studies at the Goethe University in Frankfurt (2014), Michael Keating, Executive Director at the European Institute of Peace (2021-2023), Stephan Klasen, Director of the Ibero-American Institute for Economic Research at the University of Göttingen (2014), Petra Lanz, Director of the UNDP Representation Office in Geneva (2014-2015), Michael Møller, former Director-General UN at Geneva and Member of the GESDA Board (2021-2023), Janet Peace, Senior Vice President, Policy and Business Strategy Center for Climate and Energy Solutions (2018), Panu Poutvaara, Director of the ifo Center for International Institutional Comparisons and Migration Research (2015), Rachel Quick, Director Special Interest Programme at Oak Foundation (2023), Svetozar Rajak, Associate Professor of International History at LSE (2015), Misan Rewane, Chief Executive Officer of West Africa Vocational Education (2017), Florian Schatz, Advisor of the Geneva (2015-2023), Jenö Staehelin, Founder of the Geneva Challenge and former Swiss Ambassador to the UN (2014-2021), Yvette Stevens, Former Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Sierra Leone to the UN (2021-2023), Masao Takahashi, Member of the Executive Committee of the WEF (2016-2020), Renard Teipelke, Urban Development Specialist at ICF Consulting Services, Agi Veres, Director of the UNDP Office in Geneva (2023)

Academic Steering Committee through the years

Carolyn Biltoft, Associate Professor for International History and Politics, **Nicole Bourbonnais**, Associate Professor for International History and Politics, **Aditya Bharadwaj**, Chair of Department of Anthropology & Sociology and Co-Director at the Gender Centre, **Ravi Bhavnani**, Professor of International Relations / Political Science, **Filipe Calvao**, Associate Professor for Anthropology & Sociology, **Gilles Carbonnier**, Professor of Development Economics, **Graziella Moraes Silva**, Associate Professor in Anthropology and Sociology, **Sungmin Rho**, Assistant Professor of International Relations and Political Science, **Aidan Russell**, Assistant Professor of International History, **Anne Saab**, Associate Professor of International Law, **Cyrus Schayegh**, Professor of International History, **Martina Viarengo**, Associate Professor of International Economics.

Previous Years' Winners

2014

First prize: Maria Adelaida Martinez, Laura Martinez, and Catalina Correa from *Universidad de los Andes Colombia* Second prize: Luisa Ciampi, David Mulabi, and Abeer El Kayaty from *Reading University* Third prize: Kevin Vuong, Faye Simmonds, Amrita Kumar-Ratta, Anam Ansari, and Annie Tayyab from *University of Western Ontario and University of Toronto*

2015

First Prize: Frances Antoinette Cruz, Janina Clare Tan, and Yvan Ysmael Yonaha from *University of the Philippines, Diliman* **Second Prize:** Bethany Edgoose, Dave Jonas, Nathan Su, and Marielle Velander from *Architectural Association School of Architecture and London School of Economics*

Third Prize: Olga Abilova, David Braha, Isabela Cunha, and Jessica Dalton from Columbia University

2016

First Prize: Cristian G. Gil Sánchez, Abraham Hidalgo Mendoza, Arianna Espinosa Oliver, Pilar Veloza Cantillo, and David Nuñez Amortegui from *London School of Economics and National University of Colombia*

Second Prize: Krrithiya HS, Nonie Mathur, Prerak Shah, Rachna Edakand, and Shruthi Arvind from *Universities of Pennsylvania, New York, Xaviers Institute of Management, and Indian Institute of Foreign Trade*

Third Prize: Josianne Galea Baron, Benjamin Horne, Laetitia Pancrazi, Brooks Reed, and Tony Ruiz from *London School of Economics*

2017

First Prize: Fuaad Coovadia, Boitumelo Dikoko, Sakhe Mkosi, and Keitumetse-Kabelo Murray from Universities of Oxford and Cape Town's Mechatronics Research Group

Second Prize: Eleanor Brown, Hamish McKenzie, Andrew Wheeler, Toby Phillips, and Jo Rossiter from *University of Oxford* **Third Prize:** Camila Lercari, Zachary Hoyer-Leitzel, Jorge Salem, Hermila Yifter, and Manasi Nanavati from *Columbia Business School and University of Illinois Springfield*

2018

First Prize: The Team from North America / Oceania - Jessica Arnold, Alonso Flores, Nigora Isamiddinova, Nitasha Nair, and Ji Qi from Columbia University

Second Prizes: *The Team from Asia-* Syed Hassan Imtiaz, Sachina Paudel, Salman Khan Promon, and Shagoofa Rakhshanda from *BRAC University* and *The Team from Europe* - Dinesh Acharya, Prabhat Joshi, and Paribesh Pradhan from ETH Zürich **Third Prizes**: *The Team from Africa-* Lawrence Kinuthia, Thomas Mbaru, Mercy Nyakangi, Fenton Okoth, and Joyreen Wanyeki

from Kenyatta University and The Team from South America- Sara Olguin Flores, Julieta Sicardi, and Laura Yamakoshi from University of Buenos Aires

2019

First Prize: Team from Asia- Yonatan Katzenelenbogen, Mor Kenigsbuch, and Fadi Sheban from Weizmann Institute of Science Second Prizes: Team from North America and Oceania- Casey Chu, Michelle Dong, Tiffany Ni, and Nancy Wu from Universities of Yale, Harvard, McGill, and Toronto, and Team from Europe- Hillary Birch, Natalie Boychuk, Anna Fechtor, and Maria Giorda from Universities Sciences Po and Columbia

Third Prizes: *Team from Africa*- Claydon Mumba Kanyunge, Francess Gbolare Awunor, Margaret Sima Kironde, Oludare Sunday Durodola, and Victo Nabunya from *Pan African University* and *Team from South America*- Lina Morales, Mateo Bernal, Bernardo Tocua, and Alma Guaidia from *Los Andes and Konrad Lorenz University Foundation*

2020

First Prize: *Team from North America and Oceania*- William Ge, Taylor Goldy, Sun Kim, and Shuying Ni from *Harvard University*. Second Prizes: *Team from Europe*- Zelmeg Otgontogoo, Julius Tebrügge, Loucmane Pingdwende Sawadogo, and Thomas Weikert from Stockholm School of Economics, *University in Taiwan, Royal Institute of Technology in Sweden* and Team from Asia- Minal Madankar, Dr. Pooja Sawale, Dr. Anukriti Chhabra, and Dr. Harshal Shirodkar from Tata *Institute of Social Sciences* Third Prizes: *Team from South America*- Alejandra Goytia, Nicolás Irazoque, Karen Martinez, and Thaís Quiroga from *Universities of Geneva,* Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Bolivian Catholic and Universidad de Chile, and *Team from Africa*- Nelson Papi Kolliesuah, Monique Mededode Sognigbe, Iyaloo Nghinaalo Sheyavali, Marveen Nafula, and Aaron Ekipetot Nanok from Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture and Gulu University.

2021

First Prize: Team from North America and Oceania- Stefan Faistenauer, Yiwei (Viviana) Li, Veenu King, Elaine Lac, and Maximilian Schubert from Universities of Stanford and Yale.

Second Prizes: *Team from Latin America-* Mauricio José Caires Doro, Vinícius Cássio Ferreira de Souza, Jéssica Giani, Mariana Gomes de Carvalho, and Jefferson Luís da Silva from *International Relations "San Tiago Dantas", Federal University of São Paulo, São Paulo State University, and London School of Economics* and *Team from Asia-* Brigitte, Arlene, and Inez from *Universities of Saskatchewan and National Chengchi*

Third Prizes: *Team from Africa*- Benjamin Bonkoungou, Crésus Hammer Kodongo Ndrou, Ewube Kelly Laure Egbe, Brendaline Shieke Nkenen, and Christian Murhula Shaburwa from Pan African *University Institute of Water and Energy Sciences* and *Team from Europe*- Isabella Adinolfi, Miriam Ia Matina, Gaia Mussa, and Anna Rosso from University of Pavia, *University of Padua, University of Milan in Public and Corporate Communication (COM), and University of Torino.*

2022

First Prizes: *Team Africa-* Chidinma Lucy UKA, Ayanfeoluwa Oluwanifemi AKINBOLA, Rodrigue Jinyuy BIRKA, Chimwemwe Nalwesya CHIBUYE, and Eric Appiah ATIEMO from Pan-African *University Institute for Water and Energy Sciences-Including Climate Change*, Algeria and *Team Europe-* Amit Kumar Mehto, Agnes Laurens, Saurabh Mamtani, and Sohee Kim from *London School of Economics and London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.*

Second Prize: *Team from Latin America-* Gabriela Santos Cardozo, Luiza Goehler, Marcella Moretti Ferreira, and Thalita Lacerda dos Santos from *São Paulo State University*

Third Prizes: *Team from Asia* - Claudine Enduma, Madylaine Buan, Murleif Mikhael Delos Santos, and Christian Andro Madrogaba from University of the Philippines and the *Northern Alberta Institute of Technology* and *Team from North America and Oceania*-Hanna Raisya Muljawan, Muhammad Rifqi Febrian, and Siti Hilya Nabila from *Columbia University*