Impact Hub Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the Impact Hub Network?

We are the world's largest community (16,000+ members) and accelerator for positive change. With 100+ locations across five continents, in more than 50 countries, we have the local startup communities needed to fuel and mobilize amplified innovation. Impact Hub builds community for impact at scale.

2. What is an Impact Hub?

An Impact Hub consists of three distinct elements. First, it is a vibrant community of passionate and entrepreneurial people who share an underlying intention to bring about positive change and act as peers to cross-fertilize and develop their ventures. Second, it is a source of inspiration that provides meaningful content through thought-provoking events, innovation labs, learning spaces, programs and facilitated conversations that support positive impact. Third, an Impact Hub is a physical space that offers a flexible and highly functional infrastructure to work, meet, learn and connect. The magic happens where these three elements connect and are brought to life through the art of hosting.

The idea spread like wildfire and resulted in the emergence of a global movement to create Impact Hubs in more than 100 cities around the world and is still growing.

3. What do we do?

We support building ecosystems to drive collaboration and entrepreneurial innovation around the Global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through our locally rooted Impact Hubs, as well as partners and allied networks. Our Impact Hub experience has three core components:

*All elements are connected by the Hosting Practice

We want people to take collaborative action for positive impact, that's why around the world we inspire, connect and enable people to drive this change.

4. How do we build communities for driving impact at scale?

We mobilize and connect communities for global action:
- Bridge digital communities with physical ones around the world to ensure deeper transformation, dialogue, and positive action while building a collectively owned database to make insights available to the world.
- Starting to make our impact accessible to an even wider variety of actors with alumni and cause memberships.
- Build thematic clusters of interest and practice that include collective impact partnerships, programs, and campaigns across our movement.

We accelerate trans-local collaboration on key issues:
Our communities create value — but not just in their specific city. We want to strengthen our translocal infrastructure to design and deliver better programs, and to spark and extend partnerships for impact for the entire sector. This involves:

- Cultivating meaningful partnerships and programs to provide access to innovation at regional, translocal, and global levels, with locally-relevant issues at the core
- Prototyping access to capital initiatives for supporting early stage and disadvantaged entrepreneurs and emergent markets
- Providing program and initiative delivery is tailored to all regional and market contexts so that our proven entrepreneurship and innovation models are of true use in every setting. Making those insights accessible to the world for replication and acceleration

We create the support infrastructure to prototype the future of business:
We are focusing on action-led leadership and build the future of business and society by:

- Building communities for impact and entrepreneurial ecosystems with social impact — creating and scaling meaningful solutions from the ground up.
- Crowd-sourcing impactful stories and making the impact movement more visible in mainstream media to gain influence and impact the global discourse.

- Codifying and making top innovations, insights, tools, and practices available all around the world to inspire and empower the broader community to engage and take the future in their own hands — alongside a supportive community of peers.

5. What are some examples of Impact Hub's activities?

There are plenty of opportunities to drive solutions to the world's most pressing issues. We are matching these opportunities with programs to co-create the future of business:

Learning & Education - The Global SDGs have provided a common language for the issues that demand our urgent action. We now need to build awareness and share stories that inspire and engage more people in every corner of the world, including the youth who will shape our future. We also need to explore trends that can create solutions and be applied to systems that need changing, while enhancing the visibility of lessons learned and best practices honed in driving change.

Example: Impact Hub Escola
Meet Brazil's biggest innovation and workshops festival: Impact Hub Escola! Since 2010, this educational program has strived to change the world as we know it by putting social innovation into practice. Its collaborative model is hands-on, focused on dynamic learning-by-doing around specific topics, and it stimulates participants to take action on some of the most pressing issues our world is facing today. The program meets a need, with 10,000+ young people attending 15 editions so far, and it has expanded into five Brazilian cities.

Startup Support - Startups have proven to be dynamic and powerful vehicles for solutions with truly transformative impact. Entrepreneurs need support throughout their challenging journeys; as ideas form and solutions develop; as they fail, pivot, and grow. Even the most effective startups with the best solutions need support with transforming themselves to reach significant scale. Access to market and financing is key for this transformation, particularly when thinking of disadvantaged entrepreneurs in markets that demand a high level of resilience.

Example: Accelerate2030
Co-created by Impact Hub Geneva and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Accelerate2030 (A2030) is a global program for positive social and environmental impact. A2030 works with Impact Hubs in developing countries to source, select, and scale the most innovative and impactful ventures tackling the Global SDGs. We bring finalists to Geneva, connect them to leading international organizations and investors, and support them for 9 months. Starting from the bottom up, A2030 has already reached over 1 million people in 19 countries.

Institutional Innovation – Established institutions and corporations face an urgent need to innovate in a world that is faster and more interconnected than ever before. Entrepreneurs have become an important source of inspiration and learning for leading organizations on how they can think in new ways, design solutions and products, and operate in constantly-changing environments. Impact Hub immerses institutional partners in a multitude of thriving entrepreneurial ecosystems, giving them access to hundreds of high-potential enterprises and leading-edge innovation, as well as sustainability methods, tools, and experts

Example: Corporate Partnerships
Impact Hub Zurich boosts innovation with multi-level corporate and institutional partnerships. For major telecommunication player Swisscom, they created an intrapreneurship program, coaching the company's future leaders, providing them with lean work methodologies, and connecting them to startups for bottom-up innovation. Swiss candy company Ricola dared to go a step further with them. Together they built the RicoLAB, which focuses on long-term innovation. Today, it operates as an independent organization, not just driving innovation for Ricola but setting trends using groundbreaking technologies like AI and VR.

Convening - Solving the world's stickiest problems requires more than the brilliance of a few — it takes the collaboration of many. Our programs bring bottom-up innovators together with institutional players; invite new perspectives from scientists, artists, activists, and youth; and include those who are the most affected but often don't have a say. We use formats and methodologies that get the best out of such diversity and drive meaningful action.

Example: Beyond (un)employment
Beyond (un)employment is a translocal convening program which aims to tackle unemployment, not with the typical top-down approach but instead by encouraging interventions led by citizens of diverse backgrounds. Supported by the Robert Bosch Foundation, this 18-month program tackles local issues by taking 100 participants across five European Impact Hubs through three phases: uncovering issues, conceiving solutions, and piloting interventions. Beyond (un)employment works towards solving unemployment issues from the bottom up, one step at a time.

Ecosystem Development - Impact cannot happen in isolation; it takes shape in interdependent, lively ecosystems comprised of diverse actors, inspiring interactions, enabling policies, and resources. Impact Hub provides collaborative environments where many, if not all of these elements come together. Even in some of the most challenged parts of the world, we provide a safe space for the foundation of ecosystems where minimal infrastructural support exists.

Example: Africa Seed Program
In 2014, Impact Hub identified local entrepreneurs across Sub-Saharan Africa who believed that their entrepreneurial ecosystems needed local ownership and drive. Since 2015, we've worked with eight high-caliber teams from Burundi, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Sudan, and Zimbabwe, who have developed active entrepreneurial communities, successfully built accessible workspaces, and run dozens of programs and events. As of 2017, Impact Hubs in Africa have supported more than 1,100 local entrepreneurs, and our community keeps growing.

6. What kind of impact is the network generating?

Impact Hub has more than 16,000 members (social entrepreneurs, social organizations, startups etc.) from diverse and complementary backgrounds. 67% of these founded their own ventures, giving peer support equivalent to 420 FTEs and 60% of our members value social and environmental return over financial return. You can check some of their stories and actual impact their work is creating here.

7. Where are Impact Hubs based?

Locally rooted and grown, our impact communities are deeply embedded locally which makes us able to contextualize our activities and create impact where it is truly needed. Globally connected, we can codify and share these learnings for others to replicate and scale these bottom-up solutions to the Global SDGs. Check out our locations here.

You can also access our global website where you will find the list of all Impact Hubs in the world and their local websites.

8. Who are Impact Hub's partners?

Impact Hub is proud to have collaborated with a number of leading organizations from a variety of sectors. Alongside hundreds of local relationships, we have also partnered on a global and regional scale. Together with our partners, we aim to strengthen entrepreneurial ecosystems around the world, inspire collaboration around key issues between unlikely allies, and support impact-driven entrepreneurs on their journey from idea to impact at scale. Learn more here.

9. How can my organization partner with Impact Hub?

Partnerships with Impact Hubs have unique local and global reach. You can check out a number of our existing partnerships here. Contact us to explore global partnership and collaboration opportunities or simply connect with your local Impact Hub to get to know their local ecosystem and explore ways to work together.

10. Is Impact Hub a franchise?

No. The Impact Hub IP and Brand is owned by the "Impact Hub Association", a collective of all Impact Hubs. The Association is the sole owner of "HUB GmbH (Impact Hub Company)", a charitable company with the mandate to manage global operations and facilitate the development of the network as a whole, similar to hosting a local Impact Hub community. Impact Hub Company is currently run by a dispersed global team, several of which are local Impact Hub founders.

11. Where was the first Impact Hub?

The first Impact Hub opened in central London in early 2005, and remains open and active to this day! Located on the top floor of an old warehouse, Impact Hub Islington in London, UK, embodied the spirit of grassroots entrepreneurship. Everything was built from scratch, and the space was designed to provide a collaborative environment in which people could work, meet, and learn within a modular structure. It featured leaf-shaped tables that allowed for flexible co-working, a semi-open meeting room where users could hold workshops, a secluded library for quiet thinking, and a community kitchen where people could hold small meetings over lunch or coffee. There were no assigned work stations, so users would sit next to a different fellow user every time they visited Impact Hub. The main idea was to create a place where unlikely allies would meet by serendipity. The concept of

hot desks in today's world is commonly known, but more than 10 years ago, this was a completely new concept.

12.   Where can I find more information about Impact Hub?

We have launched our first [Global Impact Report](#) in April 2018, which not only showcases and explores the paths to scale meaningful collaborations to create a better future together, but it is also a powerful tool to make these collaborations happen.

In addition to inspiring stories of our members who are doing well while doing good, you will find valuable insights from our network's legacy of building communities for impact around the globe and measuring that impact. It also includes a section on the support needs of social entrepreneurs, offering a detailed outline of what is necessary for them to grow and thrive, and a clear invitation on how to get involved and contribute to scaling impact. We have deliberately designed it as a useful sales tool vs dusty report for a cupboard. Check it out [here.](#)

You can also [access our global website](#) where you will find the list of all Impact Hubs in the world and their local websites.

13.   What are some fast facts about Impact Hub?

We provide inspiring places: We are a network of 100+ Impact Hubs in 50+ countries. Impact Hubs hosted 11,000+ events in 2016 alone, across 5 continents.

We are a vibrant community: 16,000+ members from diverse and complementary backgrounds (social entrepreneurs, social organizations, startups etc.). 67% of these founded their own ventures, giving peer support equivalent to 420 FTEs and 60% of our members value social and environmental return over financial return.

We accelerate impact: Delivering over 200 programs annually, we are one of the world's largest multi-stakeholder communities and accelerators for social impact with a unique global reach across developed and emerging markets. 6,400+ startups were founded at Impact Hubs between 2012 and 2016.

If you want to learn more about our network and take a deep-dive into our learning so far, you can [access our Impact Report](#) which includes insights from Impact Hub's more than 10 years serving social entrepreneurs around the world and six years of gathering data about it.