



Announcing the Octava Social Innovation Challenge

(Singapore, 15th July 2021)

Of the nearly [650 million](#) people living in Southeast Asia, [25.7 percent](#) fall within the school-attending age group. Yet, access to quality education remains limited and unevenly distributed across the region and even students who do attend school, are not achieving minimum proficiency levels in reading and math. The pandemic further exacerbated these inequities, as an estimated over [150 million children](#) were impacted by school closures in the region.

At the same time, Covid-19 dramatically transformed the delivery of education through remote learning and accelerated the demand for edtech capabilities. In fact, it is estimated that [135 million school children](#) across the region would have lost access to education without home-based learning, preventing significant implications for long-term, downstream effects on development and economic opportunities. Looking beyond the pandemic, technology presents an opportunity to enhance aspects of the education process and complement the work of educators.

The [Octava Foundation](#) is launching the inaugural [Octava Social Innovation Challenge](#), powered by [MIT Solve](#), aimed at **identifying and supporting accessible and affordable EdTech solutions that improve learning outcomes for underserved K-12 learners in Southeast Asia**. The Challenge seeks solutions operating in at least one of Octava Foundation's target countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and/or Vietnam) that:

- Increase equitable access to quality learning opportunities through open-sourced, offline, or virtual models, especially for underserved learners in low connectivity environments;
- Improve literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional learning milestones while supporting a diverse range of learning pace and styles;
- Strengthen delivery of STEM and [21st-century skills](#) for learners to effectively build work readiness;
- Support educators, school leaders, and other system stakeholders including through adaptive learning management systems, tools for personalized instruction, and access to professional development and training opportunities; and/or
- Equip teachers, parents, and other stakeholders within the education ecosystem with the digital literacy and confidence needed to engage meaningfully with edtech and enable capacity-building.

What does the Octava Social Innovation Challenge offer?

A total pool of \$500,000 in prize funding is available for up to 8 selected winners of the Challenge. Each winning solution will receive a minimum of \$50,000.

In addition to funding, Challenge winners will participate in a ten-month tailored support program run by MIT Solve and the Octava Foundation that includes:

- A comprehensive needs assessment to determine what resources and support are most appropriate in order to accelerate your impact
- Access to a network of resource partners, mentors, and coaches across industries and sectors
- Learning and development modules aimed at refining your business model, theory of change, and plans for scaling
- Invitation to participate in Solve's annual flagship Solve at MIT event (held in May each year)
- A monitoring and evaluation track to support you in building your impact measurement practice
- A peer-to-peer network to build a community of practice with dedicated spaces to convene throughout the duration of the support program

Octava Foundation, Regional Director- Asia, Raman Sidhu said:

“The Pandemic has highlighted the role education technologies could play in supporting learning. However, adoption of technology in education has not been seamless and access is not affordable and equitable. We are excited to develop a regional challenge, powered by MIT Solve. We hope this will bring the much-needed spotlight on innovators and entrepreneurs in the region, who are blending education and technology together to enable equitable education for more children”

MIT Solve, Director of Strategic and Partners Programs, Sara Montebaro said:

“MIT Solve is thrilled to help launch the Octava Social Innovation Challenge, in an effort to address the gaps in quality education for millions of learners in Southeast Asia. Whether it's providing access to equitable learning opportunities or improving tools for personalized instruction--we are excited to see how innovators are leveraging EdTech to support K-12 learning in the region.”

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For Press Queries: info@octavafoundation.com

About Octava Foundation:

Octava Foundation is a Singapore-based private grantmaker with the mission to enable equitable education and skills development. We do so by deploying a venture philanthropy approach in supporting social innovators, entrepreneurs and not-for-profit organisations to develop solutions, strengthen their proposition and measurement to ultimately further their scale.

Since our inception in 2017, we've supported 24 programmes reaching over 7000 children and youth, across the domains of education, vocational training, transition to work and student finance.