

Hack4Good

A short summary of the first edition

5 weeks, 4 teams, 1 challenge. Yesterday, the first edition of Hack4Good reached its end point with a great closing ceremony!

It all started over a cup of coffee at Starbucks. From the initial vision to the kick-off of the program, Hack4Good was brought to life by a joint effort between the Student Project House, the Graduate Consulting Club and the Analytics Club at ETH.

Learning and hands-on data science experience lie at the core of the program. Indeed, there is a huge discrepancy between picture-perfect “sterile datasets” on which students work in class and the noisy reality of real-world data. Hence, it is of utmost importance to give them the tools and the opportunity to tackle real-world problems and to build actionable solutions. Hack4Good aims to fill this gap by challenging students with present real-world problems in the humanitarian sector.



Agile Workshop

This was the very first edition of Hack4Good, envisioned as a pilot of the project before opening the

program for even more participants in the next semesters. Over the last 5 weeks, expert sessions and 3 workshops have fostered the development of the teams. In these sessions, students were namely introduced to Agile prototyping, learned how to give and receive feedback and how to design a great pitch.

Furthermore, we had a formidable partner with an exciting challenge in the humanitarian sector: IMPACT Initiatives. IMPACT is essentially the “data science squad of the humanitarian sector”. They enable better informed decision-making for humanitarian stakeholders and work in more than 20 countries across the world. Their vision is to do sustainable data-driven changes in order to improve aid practices and change the world for the better. They are faced with a plethora of data, which also sets the scene for this Hack4Good challenge: multi-sector needs assessment in Nigeria, one of the places of the so-called “forgotten crises”.

The teams tackled this demanding challenge using a variety of analysis and visualisation methods, including the wisdom of Italian moms in the context of data cleaning “in order to find something you need to clean your room! Here are some of the key strategies that the four teams have decided to follow:

“ Using clustering and predictive methods to find people in need, while challenging the definition of sectoral needs.” – Team Red

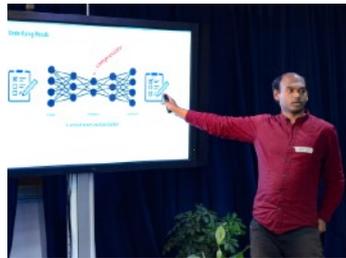


“Leveraging interactive visualization and predictive analytics to identify people in need.” – Team Green



“Saving time by asking only the most insightful question using a Bayesian generative model.” – Team Black

“Discovering key factors in the data to open new perspectives in the sectoral needs analysis” – Team Yellow



After a number of insightful presentations, stimulating discussions and a productive feedback round, the event ended with an apéro, where participants, attendees and organisers could exchange ideas and expand their networks.

Overall, this pilot showed us what can happen when bright people team up to solve a challenge in just a short period of time and how much creativity is possible when problems are ill-defined. We would like to thank all the participants for all the hard work they put in. We are grateful for the opportunity that IMPACT gave us, and their main representatives Martin Barner, Nayana Das and Sharon Orengo. Last but not least, special thanks to the main organisers of the program, Dr. Barbara La Cara from the Student Project House (Social Innovation Lab), Laetitia Vionnet and Chelsea Chen from the Graduate Consulting Club and Simon Mathis and Dominique Paul from the Analytics Club of the ETH, and to all the helpers who made this happen.

We are already excited to announce the next edition of Hack4Good for the fall semester 2019! Should you be interested in joining, organising, or participating in any

other capacity, please feel free to reach out to us!



All the participants were awarded a certificate testifying about the skills acquired during the program.

