POLICY CHANGE STUDIO
The MIP Capstone Experience

While problems can be neatly solved in the classroom through policy briefs or equations, the real world is much more complex. Uncertainty, bureaucracy, resources constraints, and politics are just some of the obstacles that await students upon graduation, yet traditional courses do not adequately prepare them for these challenges.

Policy Change Studio is designed to provide Master’s in International Policy (MIP) students with the know-how to bring about change in the real world. The two-quarter course, in which second-year students work with partner organizations to tackle global policy problems, is the capstone experience of the MIP program.

Guided by an innovative problem-solving framework, student team work with partner organizations to analyze policy problems, craft solutions, and develop implementation plans designed for success.

New Problem-Solving Framework
Too often, problem-solving is approached without the right tools or mindsets for achieving success. Trendy solutions are pursued before the problem is understood, data analysis is undertaken without an appreciation of the context, and “optimal” solutions are put into place that have no chance of being implemented.

Key Facts
- Experiential projects focused on global policy problems.
- Student teams of 3-4 partner with outside organizations.
- Students analyze problems, develop solutions, and plan for implementation.
- Projects are active from January to June.
- Students travel to field locations during spring break (late March).

The MIP Problem-Solving Framework. The framework is organized along three phases: problem identification, solution development, and implementation. However, as indicated by the circling arrows, iteration is inherent in the process.
as well as expertise and experience of Professors Francis Fukuyama and Jeremy Weinstein, the MIP Problem-Solving Framework aims to provide a road-map for successfully tackling global policy public problems. The framework teaches students to put problems first, only working towards a solution after understanding the context and causes of the problem. Students then craft evidence-based solutions designed for impact, and navigate the many challenges of implementation that are too often overlooked.

The framework provides the structure for Policy Change Studio, with each step entailing a set of tools and exercises to be applied towards students’ projects and beyond.

**Holistic Teaching Network**
Policy Change Studio students benefit from a holistic teaching network that provides multiple layers of support. The network consists of Professors Francis Fukuyama and Jeremy Weinstein, staff and TA support, project partners from outside organizations, faculty mentors with expertise in the project topic, and teamwork coaches.

**Teamwork Coaching**
Problem-solving cannot succeed without effective teamwork. Because of this, MIP has introduced Leading Effective Teams, an adapted version of the Stanford Graduate School of Business’s popular Interpersonal Dynamics training. Students apply this training to their projects with the support of individualized coaching.

**Field Work**
Field work is an indispensable part of the Policy Change Studio experience. Through field work, students are able to interact with stakeholders, collect primary data, test assumptions, and otherwise gain an understanding of realities on the ground. Each student team is supported by the MIP Program to travel to field locations during their spring break.

**Timeline**
Policy Change Studio takes place during the winter and spring quarters of MIP students’ second year in the program (January to June). Students travel to field locations during their spring breaks (typically late March). Scoping for projects begins during the spring proceeding the start of the course cycle.

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### 2021-22 POLICY CHANGE STUDIO PROJECTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ransom-ware Attacks and Government Legislation</th>
<th>Russian Hybrid Attacks and Military Provocations in Grey Zone Areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cyber Threat Alliance</strong></td>
<td><strong>International Centre for Defence and Security</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>National Renewable Energy Laboratory</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Information about Reproductive Rights and Sexual Health in India</td>
<td>Market and Policy Barriers to Emissions Reductions in Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>United Nations Development Programme</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Informal Economy and Economic Inclusion in Tunisia</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Wasabi</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>