

2020— 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

tsai center for
innovative
thinking

Yale

A Note from our Executive Director

The 2020–2021 academic year was characterized by experimentation and resilience as Tsai CITY continued to offer a full calendar of programming, funding, and mentorship to Yale students amid pandemic precautions that necessitated remote engagement for the entire academic year. Students and staff alike rose to the challenge. The result was a successful year with important achievements that we celebrate, while also recognizing how hard this year has been for everyone.

Some of this year's highlights include the following events and programs:

- Tsai CITY kicked off the fall with a very special fireside chat with Joseph Tsai (YC '86, JD '90) co-founder and executive vice chairman of Alibaba, who spoke candidly about his perspective on innovation and higher education, including the founding of Tsai CITY.
- Our newest program, Launch Pad, debuted entirely virtually in the fall semester. This program, intended for students at the very beginning of the venture ideation process, allowed us to increase by 95% the number of new ventures supported by our center.
- Several of our intensives (multi-session programs focused on a specific topic) generated broader, more diverse interest than we had previously seen. Of particular note, our intensive on Economic Architecture drew a diverse New Haven audience and our intensive on Innovation from the Inside integrated students from around the world at universities with connections to Yale.
- A new partnership with the Center for Engineering Innovation and Design on Projects2Products supported additional development of a Yale product, the Bulldog RepBox.
- Our mentorship program increased from 408 to 517 mentors and we automated much of the mentor matching process through the adoption of Salesforce.
- Our Innovator's Toolkit workshop series was recorded throughout the year and made available on-demand for anyone interested in learning.
- Our social media strategy adapted to the times by creating short “snackable” content for users who grew increasingly weary of being online all the time.
- That same sense of “Zoom fatigue” inspired our Idea Kits intensive: a box of materials to spark innovative thinking for students to explore at home on their own time.
- Unable to open our new building as scheduled, we launched a virtual tour of Tsai CITY to provide people with a glimpse of our signature new space on the Yale campus.

You can read more about these initiatives, as well as many others, in this year's annual report.

As the Tsai CITY team reassembles in person in our beautiful new building and as Yale students begin returning to campus, I find myself reflecting on the past year and all that we have learned and accomplished. The Tsai CITY team pivoted extraordinarily quickly to continue delivering quality programming by experimenting with synchronous and asynchronous content. We took seriously the modifications students suggested as the year unfolded in order to support mental health and wellness, reduce the fatigue of being so constantly online, and to strengthen opportunities for engagement and community building. The Tsai CITY team and the students who engaged with us throughout the year rose to the demands of their circumstances with grace and resilience. That, for me, is the biggest accomplishment.

Clare Leinweber,
October 2021

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"I genuinely enjoy meeting with and working alongside a growing team of inspiring innovators. I feel both empowered and appreciated for my contributions to the Tsai CITY team."

— **Alexus Coney** (YC '20, DRA '24), Student Employee

Researching

Designing, Prototyping, and Building

View Online

Solar Center: the Power of Power

Climate Solutions Generator
Spring 2021

By: Kevin, Karol, Tanya, and Tom



Kevin Jin



Students



Staff



Partners



Faculty



Student Body



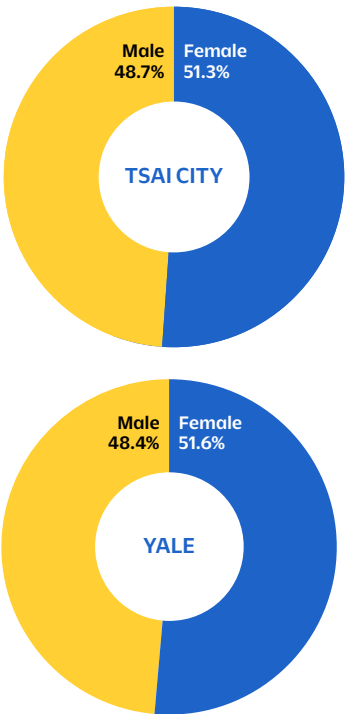
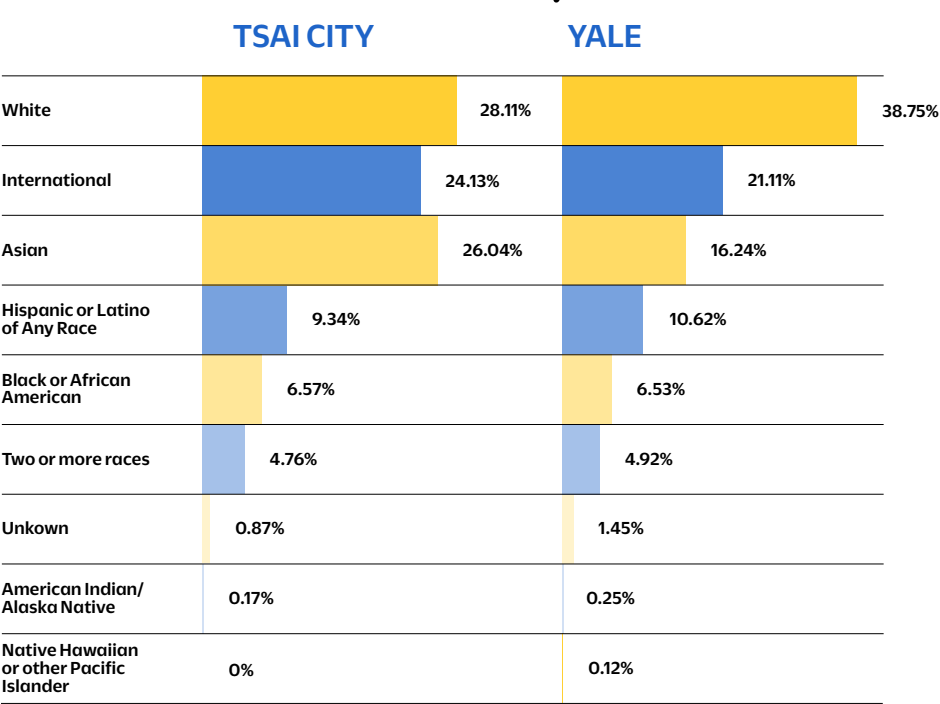
Reinhold



Institutions

Community Overview

Tsai CITY’s Student Body



14
SCHOOLS REPRESENTED

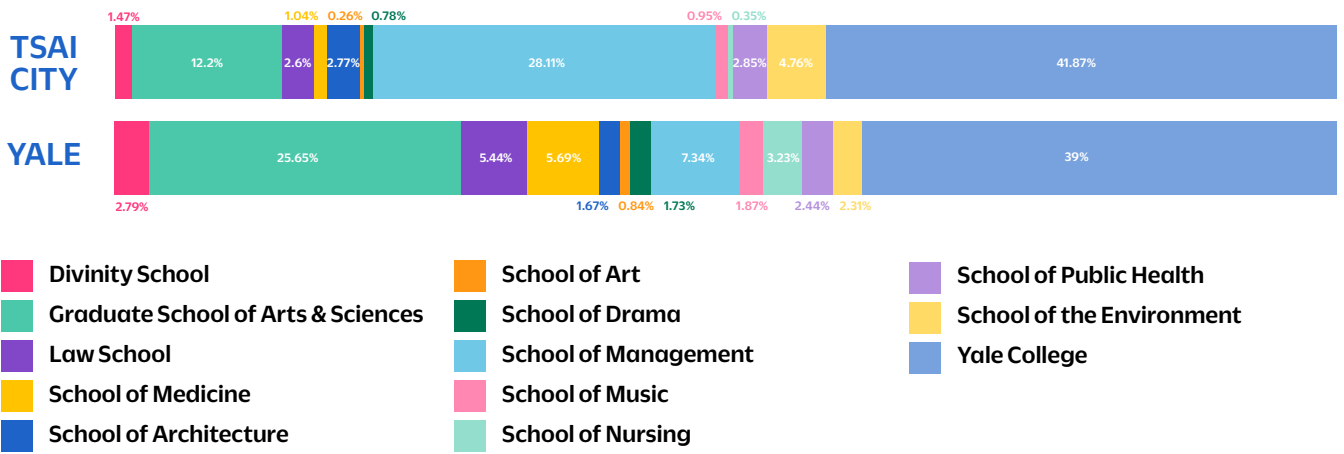
100+
MAJORS/PROGRAMS REPRESENTED

130+
PROJECTS CATALYZED THIS YEAR

* Projects are identified as for-profit, non-profit and hybrid ventures, or other displays of innovation."

As Tsai CITY navigated a fully remote year, we connected with new audiences, and found novel ways of engaging our existing community. Our workshops and talks attracted large audiences, and participants found value even over Zoom: Net Promoter Scores (NPS) for these programs averaged 9.4. Meanwhile, remote programming allowed global cohorts to join programs like our intensives, which collectively served hundreds of attendees from more than a dozen countries. Still more students engaged with Tsai CITY through office hours, funding, digital channels, and more. This breadth of community was matched by a depth of community: despite this year’s challenges, we watched our students connect across disciplines, create spaces for support, and learn from each other throughout their innovation processes.

Note: Graphs above are drawn from engagements for which data were available; this data is not exhaustive.



Student Advisory Board

Tsai CITY's Student Advisory Board (SAB), composed of students from across Yale's campus, plays a key role in shaping our work. Collectively representing a diversity of Yale experiences, these students offer insight and feedback on Tsai CITY programs, policies, and priorities.

8

SCHOOLS REPRESENTED

16

MEMBERS

A Foundation of Student Leadership

In the past, the SAB launched special projects that served as complementary to Tsai CITY's core work. This year, the SAB took a different approach by directly supporting Tsai CITY's key resources: programming, funding, and mentoring.

"It's incredibly exciting and rewarding to be at the table for conversations such as how to build a diverse mentorship network, best distribute Tsai CITY student funding, and build up the center's community emphasis."

— Claudia Meng (YC '23)



CLICK TO WATCH
Tsai CITY's Student
Advisory Board

Meet the SAB Board members



Claudia Meng (YC '23)

"Ultimately, what we're trying to create is a community of people who want to approach problems in new ways."



Stephen Breazeale (GRD '24)

"The ability to interact with students from across institutions, and even across levels, with undergraduates and graduates... was really quite attractive."



Pradhi Aggarwal (YC '21)

"It's been incredible working with staff and seeing the institutional progress of Tsai CITY."

Community Events

Community events provide low-stakes entry points to Tsai CITY and spark connections among innovators of all kinds. Take a look at a few events we hosted this year.

1713+

ATTENDEES

9.4

NPS SCORE AVERAGE

Tsai CITY Orientations

These one-hour events, offered regularly throughout the academic year, invite students from across Yale to learn about Tsai CITY resources and connect with fellow innovators.

Fireside Chats

Hundreds of audience members tuned in for fall fireside chats. Tsai CITY benefactor Joe Tsai (YC '86, JD '90) and Y Combinator partner and managing director, Michael Siebel (YC '05), each shared insights on entrepreneurship, creating value, and more.

WE@Yale Women Innovators Series

In this popular series, women and non-binary femme innovators — from fashion brand founders Rebecca Minkoff and Nell Diamond to leaders in biotech, activism, and other fields — shared lessons learned from their own journeys.

Yale Pitch Slam

Students pitched concepts of all kinds, including their most early-stage, unfeasible, or just plain weird ideas, to a supportive audience of peers.

Beyond the Studio

This collaboration with the Yale Schwarzman Center brought together artists whose practices extend beyond the studio and into entrepreneurship, civic engagement, and more.



“The foundation of excellence is diversity.”

— Joe Tsai (YC '86, JD '90)

Workshops

Tsai CITY holds a range of open workshops with expert practitioners, entrepreneurs, and Yale staff and faculty, helping students develop innovative mindsets and essential practical skills.



Innovator's Toolkit Series

This series brings experts from a wide range of industries to provide attendees with core innovation skills and tangible takeaways. All Innovator's Toolkit workshops are free and open to the public. This year's topics included design thinking, building teams, legal basics, creative entrepreneurship, and more.

Innovator's Wellness Series

This spring series, led by entrepreneur and therapist Davia Roberts, was created to encourage mental wellness for student entrepreneurs and innovators, provide an understanding of the importance of wellness in the creative and innovative process, and to foster a safe space to understand and prioritize mental wellness.



CLICK TO WATCH
[Innovator's Toolkit Workshops Playlist](#)



CLICK TO READ
[Innovator's Wellness Series](#)



As students faced burnout and the challenges of a pandemic year, this spring we offered a month-long Innovator's Wellness Series. To managing director Zoe Hunter, who designed the series, this is a key resource for student innovators. "Whether it's burnout, impostor syndrome, entrepreneurial trauma, or simply self-doubt," she explains, "we wanted to create space for students to share their experiences, create a community of wellness with one another, and help them overcome these moments to continue their incredible work."

Intensives

Intensives offer hands-on learning experiences that go deep on specific themes and topics. This year, we opened several intensives to broader audiences, allowing diverse cohorts to explore topics from financial modeling to climate innovation in multi-session programs.

550
PARTICIPANTS

8
INTENSIVES

Climate Solutions Generator

This collaboration with the Center for Business and the Environment (CBEY) allowed students from across campus to explore key challenges and opportunities for innovation on climate change.

Innovation from the Inside

This program focused on intrapreneurship, brought together a cohort of students from over 15 universities around the world. In the spring, a second iteration of the program, focused on public/private partnerships, allowed students to explore systems change.

Intro to No-Code

Over winter break, this intensive allowed students from non-technical backgrounds to create apps using no-code technology.

Hub & Spoke

This program, a collaboration with the Yale Schwarzman Center and Urban Studies department, focused on strengthening partnerships across Yale and New Haven.

Storytelling with Slides

During this four-session intensive, participants built pitch decks and got tips from entrepreneurs and investors.

Storytelling with Spreadsheets

In a fall program, participants developed financial models for startups and heard from entrepreneurs and investors. The program's content later became the basis for an online tutorial, available on demand.

Idea Kits

In an asynchronous intensive offering, we sent boxes with supplies for building on early ideas to participants, who then shared what they created.

(Re)Designing our Markets to Value Assets in Black Neighborhoods

In a collaboration with Ashoka, the Brookings Institution, and Yale's School of Public Health (YSPH), this three-session program looked at structural innovations to change the architecture of inequality.



⊕ INNOVATION

In the face of scheduling challenges and Zoom fatigue, we reached new audiences through asynchronous offerings this year. This took many forms, from shipping “Idea Kit” boxes to capturing live content and turning it into on-demand formats like an Innovation from the Inside podcast and an on-demand Storytelling with Spreadsheets tutorial.

**“When someone, whoever, brings you something nice,
some peace to your day, even for a minute, they
have all your gratitude. That person was Tracy today
for me. Thanks.”**

— Impostor Syndrome Workshop attendee

Student Pathways

Tsai CITY pathways are unique and overlapping roadmaps for Yale students to navigate Tsai CITY offerings. These pathways are intended to be guideposts and are intentionally designed to converge at points of mutual interest.

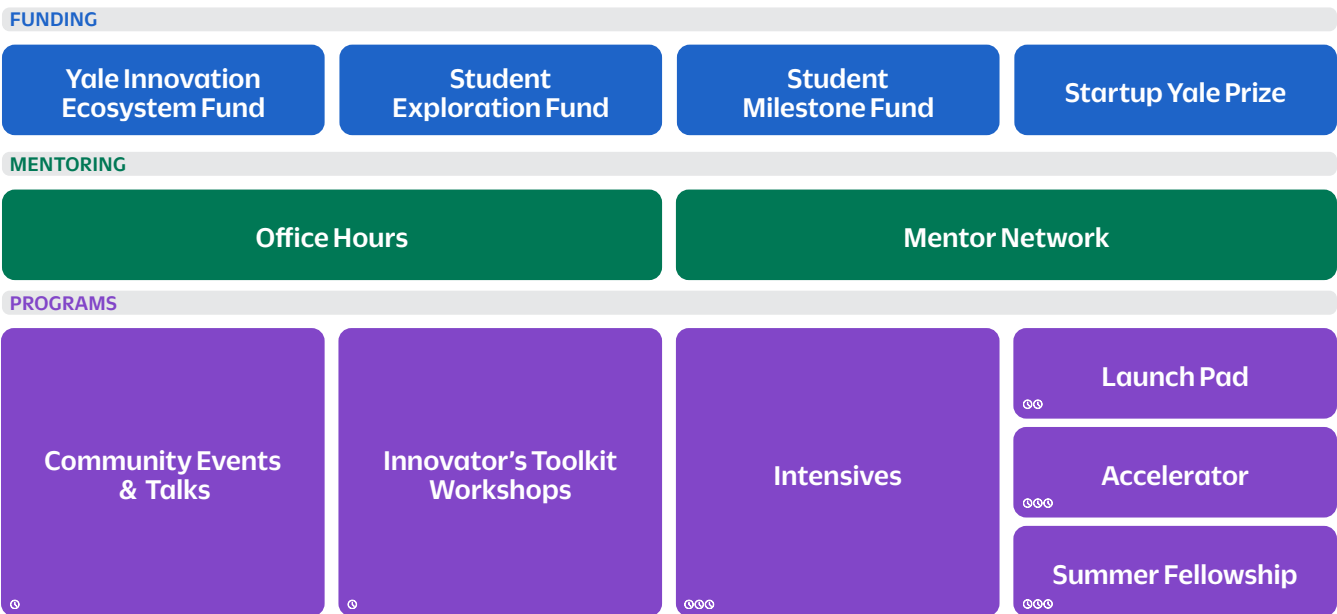
1 Entrepreneur
An entrepreneur is someone who wants to create a venture to offer goods or services that others need or want. A venture can be a for-profit business, a nonprofit organization, or a special project or initiative that could grow into one of these (or a hybrid of the two).

2 Intrapreneur
An intrapreneur is someone who is interested in innovating from within an established business or organization. Intrapreneurs apply their innovative thinking skills through immersing themselves in building or improving products, services, processes, technologies or infrastructures to advance organizational goals.

3 Explorer
An explorer is curious about new ways of identifying and solving real-world problems. An explorer may not currently be developing an idea, but is still very eager to engage in an innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem with other students. This pathway is a great place to start for anyone unsure of how to engage with Tsai CITY and broadly interested in entrepreneurship and innovation.

4 Civic Innovator
A civic innovator is someone who sees opportunities for innovation to improve the lives, deepen the knowledge, and amplify the voices of community members at all levels of civil society from local to global. Through community organization and activism, political systems change, and advocacy for awareness of diverse experiences, civic innovators are entrepreneurs or intrapreneurs using innovative thinking to improve the lives of communities.

5 Creative
A creative is an artist and practitioner who stretches the boundaries of their creative discipline in a new and innovative way. Often a creative seeks to combine aspects of entrepreneurship with their creative work to be able to identify a pathway to support their artistry sustainably over time. They innovate both within their artistic fields and also in finding ways to bring their art to those who value it most.



⌚ The clock represents how much commitment is needed for each activity.

Venture Development Programs

Tsai CITY supports student teams developing ventures, nonprofits, and other projects through a series of cohort programs. This year, we expanded our entrepreneur pathway, introducing a new program for early-stage ventures: the Tsai CITY Launch Pad.

The Launch Pad was developed in direct response to student needs, aiming to provide support for teams who have begun prototyping ideas, but have yet to demonstrate traction. The program, which offers asynchronous programming in addition to mentoring and other resources, is designed to offer both community and flexibility to these early-stage innovators.

The introduction of the Launch Pad has enabled us to serve far more student ventures: all told, we served 78 teams through our three venture development programs (Launch Pad, Accelerator, and Summer Fellowship) this year, a 95% increase from the previous year.

78
TEAMS SUPPORTED

95%
INCREASE IN TEAMS SUPPORTED



Venture Development Programs

1 Launch Pad

Tsai CITY's Launch Pad piloted in fall 2020 and was an immediate success, attracting a diverse cohort of teams. A number of these teams then continued on to Tsai CITY's Accelerator in the spring semester, in addition to connecting with other Tsai CITY resources.



Anime Central

Nathan Wu (YC '24), Max Bu (YC '21)

This team's vision is to create a complete, synergistic ecosystem for Japanese animation ("anime") creators and viewers.

Ascend Behavioral Health

Sofia Noori (MED resident), Anthony Xu (YC '22), Isobel Rosenthal (YC '12)

This project seeks to create a better entry point for trauma survivors to understand their experiences and connect with evidence-based trauma-informed care.

Drona.tech

Sneha Sivakumar (YC '24), Amita Gondi, Rutvik Rau, Anuj Unadkt

Drona.tech aims to democratize the learning experience in the Indian classroom by leveraging technology.

Fresh out the Box

Carrie Law (MBA '21)

This ingredient-and-recipe meal kit delivery service is focused on authentic

East-Asian cuisine. Traditional ingredients and recipes (including native language translation) will be included, along with a short background on the cultural significance of the dish.

Gent Skincare

Alex Holm (SOM '22)

Gent Skincare aims to create a direct-to-consumer cosmetics and skincare brand for men, helping de-stigmatize men's cosmetics, address men's mental health and body image anxieties, and tap into an entirely new market.

Job Hash

Jason Wu (YC '22)

Job Hash is a web app for applying to jobs and organizing job applications.

Inscribo

Michael Lee (YC '21), Elizabeth Lee

Inscribo is creating an educational platform that connects aspiring high school and college students with high-

achieving college students, with the goals of equalizing educational resources and fostering meaningful mentoring relationships.

Hyer

Jack Shaw (GRD '23), Matt Barrett, Aiden Jawed-Rogers, Joe Bird

Hyer aims to make life-coaching accessible and available to the masses through a subscription service.

Keadom

Jean Carlos Garcia (MBA '21), Keerthana Kumar (SOM '22), Michelle Xuemeng Wu (SOM '22)

Keadom is a platform that allows restaurant managers to analyze data from different sources and make critical decisions using natural language, resulting in actionable data in a much shorter amount of time.

Olida

Zeynep Yekeler (SOM '22), Berna Yekeler

This bundle of products, centered around olive oil, will be sold directly to the consumers online.

ONE Golf

William Morris (SOM '22)

ONE Golf is a premium men's golf apparel company that designs, develops, and sells performance polos, offering quality and innovative style that represents the modern golfer.

Prime College Counseling

Syimyky Kyshtoobaev (YC '22), Beknur Nurlanbek

Prime College Counseling aims to start a US college counseling service in the Central Asian region, designed for 11th grade students who have aspirations of studying in the US.

PFGlucose

Rohan Ahluwalia (YC '24)

This team is developing a non-invasive glucose monitor.

STEMbase.org

**Paola Figueroa-Delgado (GRD '24),
Egbert Castro (GRD '24), Taryn Olivas
(GRD '24), Lymarie Díaz-Díaz**

STEMbase.org is a free digital platform and community that connects trainees with opportunities in STEM.

Tech Transitions Bridge

Diego Angel (MEM '21)

Tech Transitions Bridge deploys climate tech projects in a vertically integrated platform by linking companies' or governments' sustainability needs and goals with emerging tech solutions, experts, and all the pieces of the puzzle for turning pilots to novel project financing.

The ModDisplay

**Joel Binu (YC '23), Ethan Kwok
(YC '23), Austin Zhu (YC '23)**

The ModDisplay is a touchscreen panel display system that consists of multiple displays interacting with each other to seamlessly create a larger display with any size, shape, and orientation, allowing for a range of custom displays.

The Simple Nest

**Sheila Grandio (SOM '22),
Juan Andres Turner**

The Simple Nest is a one-stop online platform that provides parents with everything they need to surround their babies with a natural, plastic-free, chemical-free lifestyle: products, professional services, and information.

Pediatric friendly home-based biofeedback device for pelvic floor dysfunction

**Victor Uko (MBA '21),
Ayotunde Uko (MBA '17)**

This team is working to design an innovative home based, pediatric friendly, biofeedback device that provides pelvic floor physical therapy to children and young adults with pelvic floor dysfunction.

The Student Network

Alexandra Jones (YC '22)

The Student Network will be an online/mobile application platform to connect high school students with current college students in order to provide a first-hand look at a university through current undergrads' experience.

Village

Yousef Aly (SOM '22)

Village is a digitization of the money-circle concept, creating interest-free loans and accountable savings methods for immigrant and lower socio-economic status groups. Village securitizes the monetary exchange while leveraging the power of open banking to help users build credit.

Will for Wellness

Joseph Kollo (SOM '22)

Will for Wellness aims to increase colon cancer awareness in African American communities.

Reflected above are the fall '20 participants.



CLICK TO READ

Full list of Launch Pad teams

Meet a few Launch Pad participants:



Diego Ordóñez (MBA '21)

"Going through a home-buying process led me to start Wilu, I was frustrated by the lack of a user-friendly marketplace with nondeceptive content and by the agent/buyer back-and-forth leading nowhere."



Brianna Olamiju (MD '21)

"Throughout my time in medical school, I was struck by how significantly patients were emotionally impacted by their medical conditions, particularly chronic ones. This sparked the idea to create a tool to support and encourage patients through their wellness journeys!"



Amanda Martinez (SOM '22)

"The Food Systems Education Hub idea comes from my love for farm-based education, family camp environments, and helping people to pursue their passions. In some ways, it is a culmination of my favorite parts of my pre-SOM experiences."

Venture Development Programs

2 Accelerator

Tsai CITY's Accelerator, which runs every fall and spring semester, guides students and teams with innovative ideas through the process of building effective organizations, projects, and ventures through workshops, mentorship, and funding. The Accelerator provides an enriching learning opportunity for students with innovative ideas.

\$28K

AWARDED

30

TEAMS

64

MENTORS

At School Today

**David Campbell (SOM '22),
Geoff Jordan, Daljit Bhartt**

At School Today is a parent-focused communication platform designed to improve the structure of learning in the home and to achieve better student outcomes.

Aureline

**Alley Liang (MBA '21), Amy
Gong (MBA '21), Ming Li**

Aureline is a "clean" beauty brand, with a focus on ingredients that are organic, food-grade, and non-GMO.

Omose

**Osariemen Ogbemudia (YC '21),
Isoken Omoregbee (YC '23)**

This skincare product is a love letter to brown skin.

EcoPackables

Shervin Dehmoubed (YC '25)

This eco-friendly packaging company offers compostable packaging solutions for companies to use in shipping.

K-Patch

**Nataly Moreno-Martinez (YC '21),
Sam Cabot (GRD '24)**

K-Patch is a non-invasive medical device that ensures more stable and safer bone fracture healing.

Elevation Med Prep

Brendan Adkinson (GRD '25)

Elevation Med Prep elevates medical school applicants from underrepresented, first-generation, and disadvantaged backgrounds by making admissions consulting accessible to everyone — regardless of their ability to pay.

Dcyphr

**Jeffrey Ma (YC '23), Aidan Neziri (YC '23),
Ivan Chan (YC '22), Onyedikachi Uche (YC '22)**

Dcyphr aims to make academic research more accessible to everyone by creating and publishing distillations of research papers powered by human-in-the-loop AI solutions and a crowdsourced platform with a wiki UI.

No Brainer

**Linhang Ren (SOM '23), Vera (He) Wang
(SOM '22), Michael (Minghao) Guan (SOM '23),
Wilbur (Ziwei) Zhou (SOM '23)**

No Brainer is a nonprofit fast-food chain restaurant (with only delivery, carry out and drive through options) offering a nutritious but scant menu at a competitively low price to empower local communities and create local employment opportunities.

Females for Finance

**Anisha Arcot (YC '23),
Grace Baghdadi (YC '22)**

Females for Finance (F³) is a non-profit organization that empowers high-achieving high school girls with a foundation in financial literacy, investment, and an introduction to the finance industry.

Midnight Oil Collective

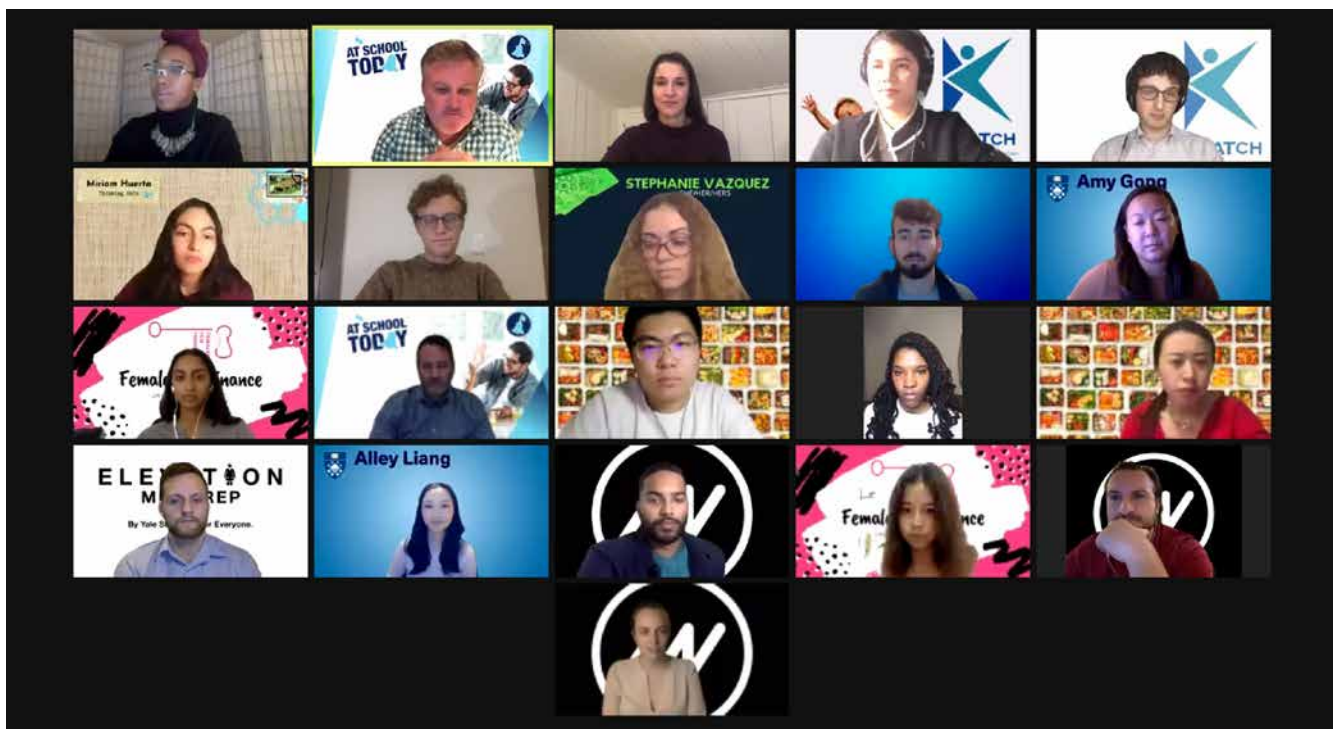
**Frances Pollock (MUS '25), Edwin Joseph
(MUS '20), Danilo Gambini (MFA '20)**

The Midnight Oil Collective seeds and produces great works of art and scholarship by centering creators — financially, artistically, and in marketing and networking — as they develop their projects.

Kelewele

Rachel Laryea (GRD '23)

Kelewele is a cultural lifestyle brand reimagining plantains in its commitment to connect the African diaspora through food, culture, and innovation.



The Bandana Project

**Conlin Bass (MPH '21),
Stephanie Vazquez (MPH '21)**

The Bandana Project is a simple yet innovative suicide prevention and mental health awareness movement.

Naberly

**Matteo Carrabba (YC '23),
Rajat Doshi (YC '23)**

This platform allows customers to search the inventory of all local stores to find the products they want and allows in-store customers to make deliveries to neighbors along their drive home, augmenting existing delivery options.

PinkU Japanese Street Food

Xiaoteng Huang (SOM '22)

This team's mission is to create the original chef-inspired, fine-casual national restaurant brand for authentic Japanese street food using the finest fish

and ethnic ingredients for a cultural, entertaining, and educational experience.

Thinking Huts

Miriam Huerta (YC '23), Maggie Grout

Thinking Huts is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit seeking to provide immediate support for jump-starting education in developing countries via 3D printed schools.

Reflected above are the fall '20 participants.



CLICK TO READ
Full list of Accelerator teams



COLLABORATIVE MENTORSHIP

Accelerator participants get access to several forms of mentoring and support, including check-ins with dedicated mentors and connections to sector-specific alumni experts. Each team is also matched with a venture advisor: an experienced entrepreneurial or innovation professional who helps guide the team through the process of growing their venture. Venture advisors serve as supportive thought partners for teams, and help develop and execute the accelerator curriculum.

Venture Development Programs

3 Summer Fellowship

15 39 315+

TEAMS

MENTORS

NYU/YALE PITCHOFF AUDIENCE

Tsai CITY's Summer Fellowship is a twelve-week, full-time accelerator for teams to launch and grow new ventures, nonprofits, and projects. The Fellowship provides \$15,000 per team and a rigorous series of workshops, sprints, mentor meetings, coaching sessions, and pitch opportunities.

⊕ INNOVATION

With the Summer Fellowship taking place virtually, we found new ways to build community and celebrate our cohort. Sometimes this took place on screens (lots of Zoom breakout rooms!), but we also turned to more tangible expressions of community. In June, for example, we sent each participant a care package of Tsai CITY swag and products from their fellow cohort members — like Upright instant oatmilk, an Aureline cleansing bar, and more.

“My participation in the summer fellowship program has made all the difference for my startup.

— Rachel Laryea (GRD '23),
Founder of Kelewele

Aureline

Alley Liang (MBA '21), Ming Li

Aureline combines the most common skincare needs with the best natural ingredient alternatives to create safe products good for skin and health.
aurelineco.com

Elevation Med Prep

**Brendan Adkinson (GRD '25),
Shane Sebastiao**

Elevation Med Prep diversifies medicine. Their mission is to make medical school admissions consulting accessible to everyone—regardless of their ability to pay.
elevationmedprep.org

Balma Health

**Sophia De Oliveira (YC '24),
Nickolas De Oliveira**

Balma seeks to develop innovative do-it-yourself public health education

to help children understand their own diagnoses/others' diagnoses in an empowering manner and to facilitate a healthy conversation between parents/guardians and children, all while sparking scientific curiosity.
balmahealth.com

CtrlTrial Inc.

Guannan Gong (GRD '24)

CtrlTrial provides Natural language processing (NLP) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) augmented software solutions to automate and improve the process of patient recruitment for clinical trials.
www.ctrltrial.com

Floe

David Dellal (GRD '24), Hector Castillo (GRD '26), Mitch Guillaume
Floe is a Yale & MIT cleantech startup creating a smart, cost-effective, &

environmentally-friendly solution to tackle the \$9.5B of damages caused by ice dams.
floesafe.com

Funbotics

**Pranav Avasarala (YC '22),
Andonny Garcia (YC '22)**

Funbotics is a national non-profit organization that provides free hands-on robotics and STEM education to underprivileged youth aged 11-12 years old.
funbotics.org

Frailty Myths

Georgia Hirsty (SOM '22), Erinn Carter

Frailty Myths applies the proven effectiveness of experiential learning to Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion programming by pairing hands-on skills with facilitated conversations in workshops that result in transformative changes in behavior and build the stepping stones to create a more just and enriching world in communities and the workplace.
frailtymyths.org

Kelewele

Rachel Laryea (GRD '23)

Kelewele is a food service and cultural lifestyle brand reimaging plantains.
kelewelenyc.com

Midnight Oil Collective

Frances Pollock (MUS '25), Edwin Joseph (MUS '20), Sola Fadiran

Midnight Oil Collective is a group of creators investing in creators, collectivizing resources and building a robust and stable community.
midnightoilco.com

OnePointFive

Winter Wilson (FES '22), Neil Yeoh (MEM '20), Matthias Muehlbauer (MAM '20)

OnePointFive is a B2B professional marketplace for high-talent, remote sustainability experts (supply-side) and organizations who have environmental business challenges that need to be solved for (demand-side).
opf.degree

Bo-yi

Tiffany Leong (MBA '21)

Qi Foods aims to bring traditional East Asian superfoods to the mainstream Western market.
enjoyboyi.com

Upright

Betty Tang (SOM '22)

Upright makes direct-to-consumer, high-protein oatmilk available in liquid and instant form.
uprightoats.com

Wiggle Room

Levi Shaw-Faber (ARC '22)

Wiggle Room uses digital fabrication technologies and high-quality, sustainable materials to create playful, avant-garde, flat-packed furniture made in America.
wiggleroom.nyc

PF Glucose

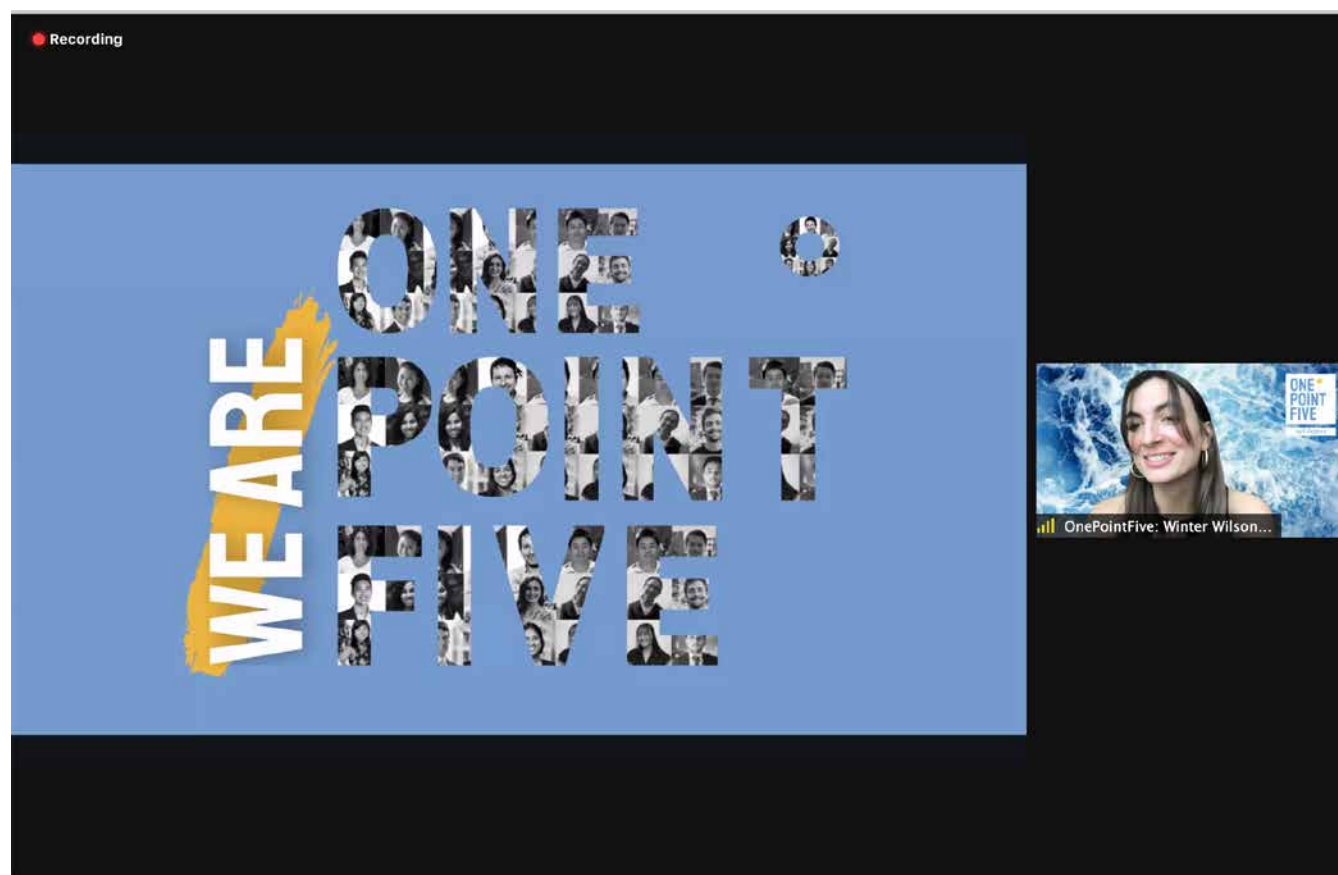
Rohan Ahluwalia (YC '24)

PF Glucose aims to offer diabetics a non-invasive glucose monitor that is painless, more convenient, cheaper, and more accurate than alternatives on the market.
pfglucose.org

Innerlytic

Jordon Rose (SOM '22)

Innerlytic is a social enterprise that partners with disenfranchised community members to co-create immersive, therapeutic learning programs that alleviate prejudice.
innerlytic.com



Mentoring

Mentoring is a key resource for our students. We offer mentoring through two primary tracks: office hours—which invite any student to chat with our core team about new ideas, feedback, or whatever’s on their mind—and more structured connections between project teams and our robust mentor network.

One key aspect of support offered to Yale students at Tsai CITY is our mentoring program which has grown to offer multiple layers of service in the form of office hours, mentor matches, thematic group mentoring sessions, and peer mentoring for student innovators from multiple disciplines and degree programs. Hundreds of students have received help from alumni and friends of Yale who volunteer their time in support of ventures, nonprofits, and projects through mentoring.

“I really enjoy being a part of Tsai CITY and, by extension, Yale. It is very energizing for me and I hope to continue to be able to contribute in whichever ways make most sense, moving forward.”

— Christina Mainero (MPH '13, MBA '15), Mentor

840

OFFICE HOURS SESSIONS

517

MENTORS IN NETWORK

80%

OF MENTORS ARE YALE ALUMNI

⊕ INNOVATION

This year Tsai CITY implemented Salesforce EDA (Education Data Architecture) to introduce automation and enable us to scale and manage our growing programs. This tool has allowed our program managers to track student engagement, project and venture readiness, and mentoring feedback, while providing a strong set of key performance indicators and dashboards to better serve Yale students. Tsai CITY has enlisted more than 500 mentors, center staff members and other supporters in our activities, all while streamlining our processes for vetting mentors, matching participants, and capturing feedback.



“[Our mentor’s] expertise in the same field that we are in has provided invaluable insight around understanding the industry and how best to navigate it. She has given us great perspective on what clients would likely be looking for and how to better frame our problem statement.”

— Georgia Hirsty (SOM '22), Co-founder, Frailty Myths

Funding

\$466,731

TOTAL FUNDING AWARDED

We help students realize ideas through several funding streams, from small grants for early-stage concepts to major entrepreneurship awards.



NEW MODELS FOR THE ARTS

In a challenging year for the arts field, several student teams used Tsai CITY funding to kickstart new models for sustaining creative practice. With support from a Student Catalyst Fund grant, Angie Jones (DRA '22) developed Jomandi International, a venture that aims to build on the legacy of Angie's family's former African American theater company and to create a broader platform for artists across media. In another example, a Student Innovation Fund grant supported The New Colossus, a documentary series from artist-led investment group (and Tsai CITY Accelerator/ Summer Fellowship team) the Midnight Oil Collective.

Student Innovation Fund (\$15,481 awarded)

The Student Innovation Fund, which offers grants of up to \$500 on a rolling basis, supports students looking to advance an early-stage idea or project.

Startup Yale prizes (\$56,500 awarded)

Tsai CITY sponsored three prizes (the Miller Prize, the Rothberg Catalyzer Prize @ Yale, and the Yale Innovators' Prize), including associated audience choice awards.

Venture Development Funding (\$282,000 awarded)

Participants in our Accelerator and Summer Fellowship cohorts received grants as part of these programs.

Student Catalyst Fund (\$112,750 awarded)

The Student Catalyst Fund is an opportunity for current Yale students to apply for up to \$3,000 to take their business, project, or intervention to the next level. This fund is designed for students who have a prototype or operational proof of concept and are invested in the long-term success of their endeavor.

During the pandemic, Tsai CITY repurposed resources that would have been used primarily for in-person programming to create more grants for student innovators pursuing projects of their own.





PERSONALIZED PRODUCTS

Tsai CITY grants supported a diverse array of teams working on kits, subscriptions, and other product bundles — from the Fabulist, a personalized period-care box, to Barista, a subscription-based coffee service that allows students to save on purchases in partnership with local coffee shops and businesses. As they built on their ideas from home, student founders found new ways to put products directly in customers' hands.

Startup Yale

7

PRIZES

\$125K+

TOTAL PRIZE FUNDING AWARDED

Startup Yale 2021 took place from April 29th through May 1st, bringing together eight events and hundreds of virtual attendees in a series of conversations and pitch-offs. For the second year, Startup Yale took place entirely on Zoom.

The event kicked off with a keynote from Yale alum Porter Braswell (YC '11), founder of Jopwell, a platform that represents and advances careers for Black, Latinx, and Native American students and professionals. From there, Startup Yale moved into its signature pitch-offs, as students from across campus pitched for Yale's biggest entrepreneurship awards in front of a live audience.

“It’s exciting every time to get that validation that someone thinks your idea is cool.”

— David Dupee (MBA '21),
ReCore Medical



CLICK TO WATCH
Startup Yale Stories:
Marina Marmolejo,
DreamKit



CLICK TO WATCH
Startup Yale Stories:
Marked Dickinson &
Betty Tang

New Haven Civic Innovation Prize

The New Haven Civic Innovation Prize, managed by Dwight Hall at Yale, awards up to \$10,000 to the best student- or community-led venture or project focused on benefiting the City of New Haven.

The Prize aims to catalyze student- and community-led innovations that address, and are informed by, community priorities. This year, the prize was opened to applications from all New Haven community members, not just students.

Prize winners: Project Lighten Up (\$7000), LawText (\$3000)

Alice Yiqian Wang (LAW '23), Bridget Algee-Hewitt, Joseph Bennett (YC '24), Stephen Cremin-Endes, Leslie Radcliffe, Lt. Colon, Alan Kendrix

The judges decided to split the prize into awards to two teams. Inspired by Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, Project Lighten Up addresses Newhallville residents' safety concerns. NHS, city officials, and local leaders have collaborated for eight years to improve street lights and install exterior house lights, and are transitioning to motion sensor solar units.

Using unsupervised and supervised machine learning such as natural

language processing, topic modeling, and sentiment analysis, LawText is an AI-powered platform designed to support immigration attorneys and asylum seekers.

Rita Wilson Prize Fund in Support of Innovation and Entrepreneurship

The Rita Wilson Prize Fund in Support of Innovation and Entrepreneurship is a \$10,000 cash prize awarded by InnovateHealth Yale to the best student-led venture focused on creating a technological solution to address a health disparity in the United States.

Prize winner: Mindful Kala

Shruti Parthasarathy (YC '24), Suba Ramesh (YC '24), Dr. David Victorson, Medha Hari, Rima Patel, Zeenat Vastrad

Mindful Kala aims to help elevate mental and social well-being by utilizing Indian Classical Dance to explore mind-body movements and cultivate intercultural relationships.

Miller Prize

The Miller Prize awards a \$25,000 cash prize to a promising student-led venture working on innovative tech or tech-enabled solutions.

Prize winner: Floe

David Dellal (GRD '24), Hector Castillo (GRD '26), Mitchell Guillaume

Floe envisions a world where we can respond to nature's winter challenges without damaging nature itself.

Rothberg Catalyzer Prize @ Yale

The Rothberg Catalyzer Prize awards \$15,000 to the best student-led venture focused on developing an innovative hardware or AI solution to a medical challenge.

Prize winner: ReCore Medical

David Dupee (MD '21, MBA '21), Marley Windham-Herman (MD '21, MBA '21), Walter Bircher (PhD '21), Lina Kacyem (MBA '21)

ReCore was created to address the growing need for cancer diagnosis around the world. They are creating reusable biopsy devices that reduce cost and increase global access to procedures that are the gateway to timely cancer treatment.

Sabin Sustainable Venture Prize

The Sabin Prize, managed by the Yale Center for Business and the Environment, awards \$25,000 to a promising student business venture that advances environmental sustainability.

Prize winner: EcoPackables

Shervin Dehmoubed (YC '24)

EcoPackables is a sustainable packaging company that manufactures and distributes compostable and recycled packaging. Their mission is to eliminate the use of virgin paper and plastics in packaging by partnering with purpose-driven brands to switch to our packaging.

Thorne Prize for Social Innovation in Public Health or Education

This \$25,000 cash prize is awarded by InnovateHealth Yale to the best student-led venture focused on social innovation in health or education.

Prize winner: Sprxng

Phyllis Mugadza (YC '21, SPH '22)

Sprxng is a reusable menstrual disc that provides menstrual pain relief. Their disc is designed for an easy insertion and a mess-free removal. Sprxng is on a mission to combat the stigma around menstruation and to improve the global menstrual experience.

Yale Innovators' Prize

Making its debut this year, the Yale Innovators' Prize is a \$15,000 cash prize awarded to the for-profit or non-profit startup that has the potential to produce the greatest impact (financially, socially, or otherwise).

Prize winner: EcoPackables

Shervin Dehmoubed (YC '24)

In remarks on Startup Yale's final day, Yale Center for Business and the Environment executive director Stuart DeCew congratulated the entire pool of finalist teams on their ability "to push through, see a pathway, and develop their ideas," characterizing them as a "really, really remarkable group of people." Looking ahead, this remarkable group of student innovators will continue to grow their ventures — and Yale's innovation community will be there to cheer them on.

“Solving problems to impact the lives of people is important.”

— Porter Braswell (YC '11)



CLICK TO WATCH
Keynote with
Porter Braswell



A Year of Innovation

This year lent itself to many innovations, experiments, and lessons. Here are some that we're taking into next year.

Reaching Broader Audiences, Locally And Globally

We offered all programs and resources remotely during 2020-2021, and this virtual programming has allowed us to reach broader audiences. In the fall, for example, we partnered with Ashoka and the Brookings Institution to run a live, online intensive on redesigning markets to value Black-owned assets, which brought together a wide range of expert speakers; intensive participants included Yale students, New Haven community leaders and residents, and others from across the country. The virtual format has also opened opportunities for international collaboration: our Innovation from the Inside intensive, which focuses on intrapreneurship, welcomed 75 students from across Yale and from 15 global universities (all of which have relationships with Yale) to its fall cohort. The program, now in its second iteration, has brought together students in countries from Kenya to Singapore for guest lectures, lively conversations, and project work.

Innovating Asynchronously

In addition to reaching broader audiences, we have also scaled the impact of our programs by producing digital content that can be accessed on demand. In some cases, this involves publishing content from live programs: we post recordings of our virtual events on YouTube and

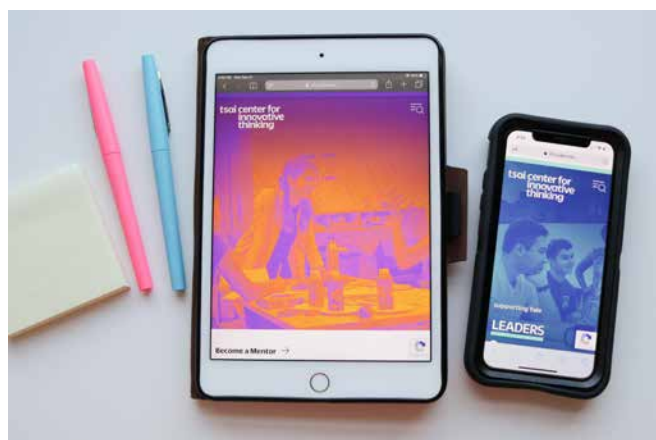
have adapted audio from the Innovation from the Inside intensive to produce a podcast. In other cases, this means offering educational content fully digitally, from a series of videos that delivers Launch Pad curriculum asynchronously to an online tutorial, Storytelling with Spreadsheets, that has garnered interest among faculty, aspiring entrepreneurs, and others.

Sharing Our Point of View

Drawing on key lessons learned, we have shared our point of view with peer organizations and public audiences this year. One major area of activity has been sharing our insights on building a culture of inclusive innovation: Tsai CITY team members presented on this topic at the fall 2020 Global Consortium of Entrepreneurship Centers, in an article and webinar hosted by VentureWell, and in an article shared through Tsai CITY and Yale channels. We have also shared perspectives from Yale on other key topics; for example, Tsai CITY/CBEY Innovation Fellow Ben Soltoff advocated for support for small business entrepreneurs, drawing on Yale student stories and program insights, in a fall 2020 Fast Company article. Finally, we have taken an active approach to sharing student and alumni highlights with senior leadership at Yale, working to embed an understanding of Tsai CITY's community and impact across the university.

“We believe that [Tsai CITY] is a leader among I&E programs nation-wide for strategies and practices that support diversity, equity, and inclusion.”

— Quality Evaluation Designs



Looking Ahead

Seeing you in person, celebrating five years, and creating new entry points for student innovators.

What's Next

In June 2021, we received special approval to welcome students into our physical space for the first time since its completion in August 2020. As we prepare to greet more students in our space, we're excited to start planning for our grand opening to welcome other key stakeholders.

As we identify opportunities to engage and welcome all in person, we've also worked to find new ways to welcome students at various entry points to innovation and entrepreneurship. This year, we're launching our Tsai CITY pathways (see page 16) which provide

unique points of entry into Tsai CITY's various offerings. In the coming weeks, you may see special graphics and tags throughout our building and on our website. Lastly, as Tsai CITY continues to scale and establish itself as a student hub for innovation we'll be paying homage to program alumni, partners, staff, and mentors who've helped make Tsai CITY what it's become over these past five years.

We will continue to support this growing and thriving community and to strengthen the entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystem on Yale's campus.



“The 2020–2021 academic year certainly posed many challenges and Tsai CITY rose to these with energy and commitment. Through creative integration of synchronous and asynchronous virtual programming, Tsai CITY offered new and continuing programs without missing a beat.”

**— Anjelica Gonzalez, Tsai CITY Faculty Director,
Associate Professor of Biomedical Engineering, SEAS**





tsai center for
innovative
thinking

Yale