

RESEARCH ALLIANCE

Katalysis is seeking to develop strategic alliances with universities interested in providing forums for their students to conduct serious and practical research that will contribute to the application of innovative product development. At the same time this experience will give Katalysis the opportunity to contribute to the development field by cultivating the growth of young professionals.

1. The Need

Effective development programs begin with the recognition that development is a complex process and that many conditions must be met before it takes permanent root. Approaches to development must take into account a developing country's widely varying needs and capabilities. And increasingly these countries, like all others, find their future being shaped by global trends and issues, which can only be addressed successfully through international cooperation. Given this complexity, well-prepared professionals are necessary to bring together the best possible combination of expertise and skills in order to navigate through these uncharted waters.

The rapidly emerging and expanding field of microfinance requires serious and thoughtful investigation into what the market offers and what it demands. For the Katalysis Partnership to assume a leading role as the premier microfinance network in Central America, it is essential that we continuously work to develop new and better ways to offer cutting-edge products and services to our Partners and their clients. In a nutshell, Katalysis must become market responsive.

However, being innovative and market responsive requires current knowledge of developments in the field. Developments in one part of the world need to be researched and tested before they are appropriately adapted to another context. Overlooking this stage in product development could result in wasted resources and failure.

2. Katalysis' Response

2.i Goal of the research alliance:

To provide a forum that can test hypotheses regarding new innovative products and services (financial and non-financial) in the field of microenterprise development.

2.ii Objectives:

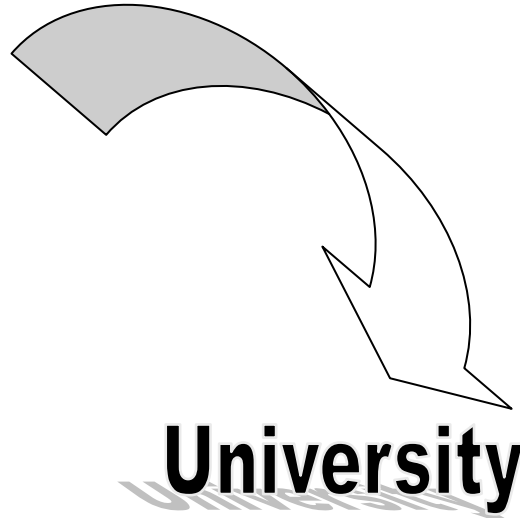
1. Offer field research opportunities on current developmental topics for upcoming microenterprise and socio-economic development professionals.
2. Develop innovative products in the field of microenterprise development in Central America based on research findings.

3. Strategic Research Alliance Advantages

Katalysis

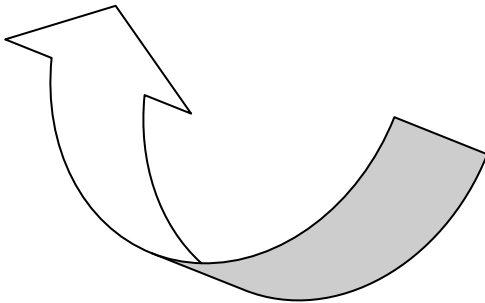
Katalysis Provides the University:

- University students the opportunity to contribute to the field of microenterprise development in a meaningful and practical way.
- Project supervision for time in field/coordinates directly with university
- Opportunity for applying practice with academic theory.
- International field research experience within an academic program
- Opportunity for work to be published



The University Provides Katalysis:

- A qualified student who can conduct research for specific projects
- A finished project which can be utilized in proposals and program development
- An opportunity to contribute to the development of field of microenterprise development
- Higher visibility in the United States



What this Opportunity Offers to Students:

- Hands-on experience in the field of microenterprise development
- An opportunity to make a real contribution to the field of international development while working with the largest microfinance network in Central America.
- Possibilities for academic credit / thesis study
- Improved conversational / professional Spanish language capability
- Improved research skills
- Unique and practical expertise in the particular project area which will undoubtedly be transferable to other types of product development research.



4. How It Works

4.i The Selection Process:

1. Katalysis sends research assignments with scope of work and budget estimates to faculty representatives of identified universities who are interested in partnering with an organization working in the field of microenterprise development.
2. Faculty representatives recommend students with the research opportunity.
3. Interested students need to send:
 - a resume
 - letter of interest
 - list of academic coursework completed
 - an explanation of financial support to conduct the scope of work
 - letter of support/recommendation from the sponsoring academic advisor/faculty rep. (The advisor should be in a field related to the scope of work the student is interested in researching.)
 - a sample of the student's academic writing
4. Telephone interview or in-house interview is scheduled and conducted by Katalysis Program Director and Associate with potential candidates.
5. Selected applicants will:
 - conference via telephone with Katalysis program development staff to review and confirm the scope of work which will include a timeline and communications schedule;
 - schedule a meeting with Katalysis Program Staff and academic advisor to sign contract.

4.ii Implementation

- The student will have open access to Katalysis Program Development staff when need be and regular check-ins will be set out in the communications schedule to ensure that the timeline is being kept and no major unforeseen challenges have impeded completion of the assignment.

4.iii Outcome

- Both Katalysis staff and the academic supervisor of the project will assess the final project. Katalysis will inform the academic advisor on the student's performance, but will not be required to determine a letter grade for the assignment.
- Efforts will be made by Katalysis to seek funds to apply related program innovation if the conclusions of the research assignment and further analysis determine that the investigated intervention would be appropriate. Katalysis defines an appropriate intervention as one that would contribute to the strengthening of microenterprise development in Central America, as well as the sustainability of the Katalysis Partners.
- Venues to publish the outcomes of the study, if of good quality, will be investigated. The author will be fully acknowledged for his/her work.

Katalysis is looking for students who are:

- serious, hardworking and interested in international socio-economic development
- graduate or undergraduate-- studying international development, economics, sociology, political science or related field
- fluent in Spanish language—both written and oral
- experienced working, living or studying in Latin America
- highly skilled in research, communication and writing
- professional, with high integrity
- able and willing to dedicate at least 2 months of time to the project
- able to cover all costs related to the research project



Potential Field Research Projects

- Is a regional health insurance program viable for microfinance clients?
- Is a regional market linking service viable?
- What elements are needed to develop effective commercialization for microfinance clients? (artisan & agricultural products)
- What are the essential elements to developing a savings program in an unregulated environment?
- Developing a culture of savings with popular education techniques.

About Katalysis

Katalysis is based in Stockton California and was founded in 1984. Our mission is to assist families in persistent poverty to become self-sufficient. We are committed to strengthening local development organizations in Central America who work with low-income microentrepreneurs. These organizations offer quality financial services and training to their clients to help them help themselves move out of poverty. They offer micro loans from \$50-1,000 for micro businesses. The majority of these Partner organizations utilize the group lending methodologies of village banks and solidarity groups, which generally do not require formal collateral for accessing a loan, and therefore are very accessible to even the poorest entrepreneurs.

To work towards this end, Katalysis has a regional field office based in Honduras with a team of Central American specialist who provide technical assistance and builds capacity with our 11 Partners in the region. Through our unique Partnering approach, Katalysis provides three essential ingredients for strengthening local organizations working in microfinance:

- 1.) Strategic technical assistance for institutional strengthening
- 2.) Resource mobilization to access loan capital
- 3.) The creation of a network of local organizations and a collaborative space for them to learn from each other through partnership exchanges, develop a united voice on issues facing microfinance in the region, and receive quality group training.

Are you Interested? Get in touch with us!



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