



Call for Concepts: Research and Innovation on Livelihood Exploration

About the Agency Fund

We make philanthropic investments in ideas and organizations that leverage data, science, and technology to support people in the navigation of economic and life choices. Our research & innovation investments focus on time-limited projects that pilot, experimentally test, scale, or iteratively improve specific innovations that advance human agency. We welcome concepts that fall within the general scope of [our approach](#). We also issue calls for concepts (such as this one) to discover opportunities in selected thematic areas that are a strategic priority for specific affiliate funders, and where the agency lens appears to have strong relevance.

Background for this Call for Concepts

Many young people in low- and medium-income countries are entering the labor market with few prospects of stable employment and are forced to patch together a living by combining unstable gig work with some form of informal microenterprise.

Confronted with this difficult reality, how might you go about figuring out what to do? For example, where might you go to seek opportunity? What might you sell, and where would you source it?

Even in settings where options are very limited, guidance can be valuable. People who are deprived of many opportunities are often also deprived of networks and structures that others can rely on for information, inspiration, and support.

Several pioneering organizations have explored ways of empowering people in the navigation of livelihood choices. For example:

- [Shujaaz](#) develops digital tools that allow Kenyan youth to share and seek advice on informal hustles.
- [Harambee](#) is developing a pathway management platform that accompanies South African youth across learning and earning opportunities.

- [J-PAL](#) and [Evidence Action](#) have tested ways of enabling and encouraging Bangladeshis from rural areas to seek work in the city during lean season, and to build useful networks and experiences in the process.

We are interested in these and similar ideas that give people access to localized, actionable insights that may prove useful to them in the navigation of their difficult economic prospects.

What and How We Fund

This call supports research and innovation projects.

- A Pilot round is suitable for untested ideas. The expected output is a proof-of-concept. The maximum contribution is \$180k.
- Advanced funding rounds are suitable for ideas with a degree of existing evidence or scale. The expected outcomes are greater evidence and greater scale. There are no defined contribution limits.

The strongest applications will demonstrate:

- Direct relevance to the planning and decision challenges of youth who enter adverse labor market conditions, and a compelling hypothesis about specific informational or psychosocial barriers that can keep them from realizing their full potential.
- A team that works at the cutting edge of social or technological innovation, follows an evidence-based approach, and has a deep understanding of the context it operates in.
- A path to scale, a framework for measuring cost and benefits at scale, and ambitious timelines.

This call is open-ended. Submissions will be reviewed on a quarterly basis.

For FAQs and to apply, visit www.agency.fund