

# Call for Concepts: Research and Innovation on Nutritional Choice

## About Us

The Agency Fund invests in ideas and organizations that leverage data, media, and technology to support people in the navigation of economic and life choices. Our innovation investments focus on time-limited projects that pilot, experimentally test, and iteratively scale & 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. This call is issued in partnership with [CRI Foundation](#) and the Green Nimboli Fund. CRI is focused on initiatives that leverage rigorous evidence and existing distribution networks to advance health outcomes in Sub-Saharan Africa cost-effectively and at large scale. The Green Nimboli Fund is a donor-advised fund with a particular interest in child nutrition in India.

## Background for this Call for Concepts

Malnutrition – both in the form of inadequate caloric intake, and nutrient deficiency from poor dietary diversity – is widespread in low- and middle-income countries. It can be a significant contributor to child mortality, and early malnutrition can affect intellectual development throughout life.

Though fully adequate and balanced nutrition is often not an option for people in poverty, decision support can still provide demonstrable benefits. For example:

- Tech-enabled advisory solutions such as [MomConnect](#), [Kilkari](#), and [Aponjon](#) have provided millions of mothers with advice on issues of maternal and child health, including micronutrient supplementation and breastfeeding.<sup>1</sup>
- [CERP Pakistan](#) is testing the use of cell phones to support Lady Health Workers who counsel mothers on breastfeeding.
- [Innovations for Poverty Action](#) has demonstrated the impact of a home-based growth monitoring

tool that allows households to notice and track stunting in their children.<sup>2</sup>

We are interested in these and similar efforts to help families, individuals, and communities make deliberate and informed nutritional choices, with a focus on macronutrient and micronutrient intake as well as undernutrition (including but not limited to pregnancy, early childhood, and adolescence). Examples of topics of interest include take-up and adherence to evidence-based practices like pregnancy supplementation, family MUAC, and breastfeeding; and better training and decision support for practices like complementary feeding for infants and Kangaroo Mother Care. We are keen to encounter completely novel approaches. We will also consider community-based efforts and group decisions such as community gardens, food fortification, etc. if these are evidence-based or seeking rigorous evaluation. While the focus of this call is on approaches that fit the Agency Fund's framework (i.e., directly engage the conscious decision-making of the most affected people), we will consider projects that include other approaches to changing nutrition outcomes if they involve research to evaluate alternatives. This call is specific to work in low- and middle-income countries, with a particular interest in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Half of the budget is earmarked for projects in India.

## 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 \$200k.
- 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:



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- Direct relevance to nutritional choices of low-income families, individuals, and communities.
- A presence in South Asia or Sub-Saharan Africa.
- A commitment to rigorous evidence with well-identified causal impact.
- 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 will close on 1 March 2022 at 11:59PM Pacific Time. For FAQs and to apply, visit [www.agency.fund](http://www.agency.fund)

### Citations

1. Peter J et al (2021): Taking digital health innovation to scale in South Africa: ten lessons from MomConnect. *British Medical Journal*
2. Fink G et al (2017): Home- and community-based growth monitoring to reduce early life growth faltering: an open-label, cluster-randomized controlled trial. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*