

## Call for Concepts: Mobility and Migration Choices

### About Us

The Agency Fund makes philanthropic investments in ideas and organizations that help people navigate difficult choices and exert greater agency over their lives. We welcome relevant ideas through our open call. We also periodically issue calls for concepts (such as this one) in selected thematic areas that are a strategic priority for specific affiliate funders, and where “agency approaches” appear to have elevated potential.

### Background for this Call for Concepts

When people consider leaving their home (be it to flee violence or to seek opportunity), they are typically confronted with difficult choices: Where might I go? What do I risk? What path might this put me on? How people answer such questions can be highly consequential for their future.<sup>1</sup>

While they may seek insights from a variety of sources – from personal acquaintances, to social networks, to media outlets, to government agencies – these are not necessarily complete and unbiased sources of information.<sup>2</sup> A number of research projects have experimented with approaches that might help people make more informed choices. For example:

- Bryan, Chowdhury, and Mobarak (2014) tested conditional grants to enable rural Bangladeshis try migrating to the city during lean season, and build useful networks and experiences in the process.<sup>3</sup>
- Hotard et al (2019) found that a well-timed information campaign can make low-income US immigrants aware of available fee waivers and help them realize their right to apply for citizenship.<sup>4</sup>
- Ferwerda et al (2020) illustrated the potential of a recommender system that can help economic migrants to Canada identify suitable destinations.<sup>5</sup>
- Scacco et al (forthcoming) are studying how potential Nigerian migrants navigate information about the risks of migrating to Europe.<sup>6</sup>

### What and How We Fund

We are interested in the testing and operationalization of approaches that help people navigate migration-related decisions. We are particularly interested in policy contexts that already afford people alternative and legal choices. We are not interested in approaches that are specifically designed to decrease or increase migration. Any project we fund will prioritize people’s own agency and aim to help them improve the basis for their own conscious decision-making.


Any number of contexts (e.g., permanent as well as seasonal migration; internal as well as international migration; economic migration as well as forced displacement) are potentially relevant. The strongest applications will demonstrate:

- Strong alignment with the Agency Fund’s [approach](#).
- A team that works at the cutting edge of big data and technological innovation, takes an evidence-based approach, and that has a deep understanding of the context it operates in.
- A rigorous measurement framework that estimates impacts on well-being outcomes (such as safety, prosperity, or rights realization).
- Awareness of the political economy dynamics surrounding the work.
- A path to massive scale (typically by leveraging existing technologies, networks, or policy mechanisms)
- A bias for action and ambitious timelines.

This call will close on 15 August 2022 at 11:59PM Pacific Time. For FAQs and to apply, visit [www.agency.fund](http://www.agency.fund)

### Citations

1. MA Clemens (2011): Economics and Emigration: Trillion-Dollar Bills on the Sidewalk?. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 25(3), 83–106
2. AC Holland & ME Peters (2020): Explaining Migration Timing: Political Information and Opportunities. *International Organization*
3. G Bryan, S Chowdhury, AM Mobarak (2014): Underinvestment in a Profitable Technology: The Case of Seasonal Migration in Bangladesh. *Econometrica*, 82(5), 1671-1748



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4. M Hotard, D Lawrence, CC Laitin, J Hainmueller (2019): A Low-Cost Information Nudge Increases Citizenship Application Rates among Low-Income Immigrants. *Nature Human Behavior*, 3(7), 678-683
5. J Ferwerda et al (2020): Leveraging the Power of Place: A Data-Driven Decision Helper to Improve the Location Decisions of Economic Immigrants. Immigration Policy Lab Working Paper 20-06
6. A Scacco, B Beber, F Foos, M Humphreys, D Yang (forthcoming): Irregular Migration and. Misinformation in Nigeria.