A Note on our Round Two Process

We are excited about the six initiatives receiving Design Grants during our second round of grantmaking. They represent some of the most promising collaborations with national and local governments that we have seen, creative pathways to transform market incentives and functioning, and thoughtful use of data for learning and adaptation. The portfolio targets critical development issues, with three strong efforts focused on the challenge of youth employment and livelihoods with a robust market-centered orientation; two focused on transforming market- and governance-systems to improve income and land security for rural people engaged in agriculture; and one aspiring to help the national government build a strong and scaled national system for Early Childhood Development.

Furthermore, we are pleased that all six new program partners are rooted in their Global South contexts, with all headquartered locally and most led by citizens of the countries in which they seek to work. They bring a sophisticated understanding of political economy in practice, and what it takes to craft coalitions that are powerful enough to make and sustain key changes.

At the same time, we didn’t achieve all of our aspirations for this round of grantmaking. In particular, we had hoped to include additional geographic diversity (especially efforts from Latin America, MENA, and Southeast Asia), and to have more design grants focused on Early Childhood Development (which science tells us is essential for healthy human development). We made special efforts to attract applications from such initiatives, but unfortunately these efforts did not yield the results we were hoping for on this occasion.

Looking forward, our third round of grantmaking has been designed to attract an even more diverse and representative set of initiatives. Our Open Call has been translated into four languages, and we are reaching out to new networks in underserved regions. We have also adjusted our selection process to ensure that 100% of our grants will be made to organizations rooted in the Global South countries in which they work, and that at least 50% of these initiatives are women-led. We will seek systems change initiatives working across a broader set of outcomes in our three focus areas of health, education, and economic opportunity, including high-potential systems change initiatives working on Early Childhood Development.