

# Fit for the future

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Fondation Botnar believes that [young people](#) (those between the ages of 10-24) are central actors in shaping a better and brighter future for themselves. The foundation acts as a catalyst, connecting diverse partners and investing in bold, innovative, scalable and high-impact projects that harness [frontier technologies](#) including artificial intelligence (AI) to improve the health and wellbeing of young people in growing urban environments around the world.



**The environment in which young people grow up is decisive.**



With the right skills and values, young people can become agents of change, transforming their cities into livable, safe environments. This is important for their wellbeing, and requires fostering critical skills such as emotional and leadership skills and digital literacy to make them fit for the future in a rapidly changing, digital society.

Young people are some of the earliest adopters of new digital applications, and at Fondation Botnar, we believe there is an untapped potential of frontier technologies to address their health and wellbeing. With the support of technology, we have the opportunity to increase resilience and transform cities into healthy and safe environments where young people can thrive. Furthermore, in a growing number of low- and middle-income countries, digital media is becoming more accessible and affordable, and can be used to accelerate development.

As a foundation, we see ourselves as taking a catalytic role in funding high-impact projects to ensure young people can realise the fullest of their potential for themselves and the future of their communities.

Therefore, we are inviting proposals for truly pioneering implementation projects that leverage this combined potential of frontier technologies - including AI, innovative digital tools and data-based platforms - to advance the health and wellbeing of young people living in cities in low- and middle-income countries. Following extensive stakeholder consultations, a study of existing development and health literature, and a survey of young people themselves, we have selected two key themes; data-driven preventative interventions and inclusive and participatory learning.

# 1. Preventative and data-driven interventions that address the social, environmental, and behavioral determinants of health and wellbeing

Preventative approaches and early stage interventions are often more cost effective and sustainable than only treatment-focused initiatives. Digital tools and platforms together with the predictive power of data have a crucial role in improving the quality and efficiency of decision-making and public service delivery, helping communities become more resilient and empowered.

With this in mind we are inviting proposals for community-based and technology-enabled interventions which could include:

- \* Enhancing the personal safety and security of young people, keeping them out of harm's way.
- \* Addressing the social and environmental determinants of wellbeing.
- \* Promoting healthy attitudes and behaviours among young people to support their physical and mental health and wellbeing (including digital wellbeing) through smart and sustainable human-centered design interventions.
- \* Engaging young people and their communities using crowdsourcing, peer-support and participatory digital platforms. For example through participatory maps together with the smart-use of social media to solve locally relevant problems in cities with a clear impact on wellbeing.





## 2. Inclusive and participatory learning in the 21st Century

As our future changemakers and community leaders, the urban youth population will rely on a set of skills that need critical investment. At Fondation Botnar, we want to support young people in the development of digital, personal, and social skills, instilling an entrepreneurial approach to problem-solving to set them up for their future.

Therefore, we are inviting projects that leverage data-driven and AI-enabled approaches for inclusive and participatory learning, and which could include:

- \* Using personalised learning platforms that make high quality educational content available to young people and augment or complement existing school and community learning systems.
- \* Addressing urban inequities in education in low-resource contexts and supporting young people at risk of dropping out of school.
- \* Raising skills and awareness levels of young people for a digital and AI-enabled future through data-driven or gamified coaching and tutoring.
- \* Engaging with young people in low-resource communities including those not served by the mainstream education systems. Fostering and supporting creativity and peer learning.
- \* Empowering teachers and coaches in low-resource urban communities.
- \* Using collaborative technology and human-centered solutions that draw from cognitive and behavioral sciences to motivate and inspire an interest in learning for young people who might not be adequately served by traditional approaches.

*Please note infrastructure investments will not be considered.*



## Geographies

Projects invited to apply under this call should be focused on implementation or piloting in urban environments in any of the following countries: Romania, Ghana, Senegal, Egypt, Morocco, Tanzania, India (Rajasthan or Odisha), Vietnam, Colombia, Ecuador or Indonesia.

In order to qualify, projects having multiple implementation sites should have at least 50% of the budget dedicated to implementation in one or more of the above countries or states. Projects targeting implementation in rapidly growing secondary [cities](#) will be preferred.

## Principles

**Sustainable:** We are interested in funding bold, sustainable and scalable proof-of-concept or pilot projects that can positively transform existing systems or catalyse new solutions using emerging technologies for the greater good.

**Human-centered:** A mature understanding of human centered design of digital and data-driven solutions, existing workflows and ecosystems and their effective mutual integration needs to be shown in the application to qualify for a successful grant. A clear added value of the proposed use of technology towards the purpose of the project needs to be demonstrated in the application.

**Participatory:** Young people need to be seen as active agents whose voice is strongly included in the design and implementation of the project.  
**Context-relevant:** All successful applications will need to be context relevant addressing a real need in the implementation geographies, driven or endorsed by local stakeholders.

**Pathway to impact:** The applicants are expected to deliver a pathway to impact supported for example by a well-developed theory of change.

**Measurable:** The applicants need to propose a solid Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) framework, integrated within project design from the very outset. An assessment of a reasonable baseline for the project intervention is expected at the beginning. Innovative use of technology to support M&E and aid continuous improvement of the proposed intervention will be favourably considered.

**Integrated:** Interoperability with existing and relevant actors in the ecosystem will be considered important for any proposed project and all technology solutions are additionally expected to respect [digital development principles](#) as far as possible.

**Collaborative:** Applicants are also encouraged to consider partnering with cross-sectoral public and private stakeholders relevant to their projects and bringing required local & global expertise for a successful execution before applying to improve the chances of a successful grant application.

**Co-funded:** Projects with any part self-funding or co-funding from other sources are preferred. In-kind contributions will be acknowledged.

## Additional requirements

- \* All applying projects developing technology and data-based solutions will be expected to have a good understanding of secure consent and data management principles and be in compliance with any local data protection laws and guidelines.
- \* Applicants will be asked to provide a brief comparative ecosystem analysis or a map of similar approaches to place the applying project in an appropriate relative context at a later stage in the application process.
- \* Smart reuse of existing solutions wherever possible or attempt to leverage learnings from other similar initiatives will be considered favorably. Designing a new digital application is discouraged where an existing solution exists and can be effectively adapted or re-used.
- \* Applicants are also encouraged to be mindful of the ecological footprint of the proposed intervention.

## Eligible organisations

The lead applicant should be registered as a not-for-profit organisation, a public institution or a reputed academic university or research institution in the country of implementation and should partner with technology, regulatory, government and other implementation partners, as required. We encourage for-profit startups, social enterprises and institutions, and NGOs not registered in the country of implementation to apply in a service provider, advisory, implementation research support and capacity enhancement role to the lead applicants. Applicants pooling required expertise in a consortium (for example a public-private partnership) are welcome to apply and will be preferred.

## Funding volumes

Proposals are expected to have a minimum funding volume of CHF 200,000 and a duration of between two to five years. The total available amount available for this call is CHF 10 million.

## Application and assessment

Submitted applications will undergo a competitive two-stage review process led by the foundation, supported by internal and external experts. More details on the application and assessment processes can be found on our website [here](#). Questions about the call or the application can be asked on the LinkedIn group [here](#).

Follow [@FondationBotnar](#) on Twitter and visit our website [www.fondationbotnar.org](http://www.fondationbotnar.org) for more updates.







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