

foundation
BOTNAR

Fit4Future

Phase II





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Fondation Botnar

Supporting the wellbeing of young people

Fondation Botnar is a Swiss philanthropic foundation based in Basel and established in 2003 to continue the philanthropic legacy of Marcela and Octav Botnar. The foundation works to improve the health and wellbeing of young people living in cities around the world. Advocating for the inclusion of youth voices and a human rights-based approach to AI and digital technology, the foundation invests in and supports innovative programs and research and brings together actors from across sectors to create dialogue and partnerships.

Fit for the Future

(Fit4Future)

Fondation Botnar launched the Fit4Future programme in 2020 to leverage data and frontier technologies to create impact for and with young people living in low- and middle-income countries. The programme supports projects that focus on young people's wellbeing at the interface of digital technologies and AI (Artificial Intelligence), education and cities. The projects funded during the first phase can be found here: <https://www.fondationbotnar.org/project/fit4future/>

Building on the achievements and experiences of the first phase (2020-2023), Fondation Botnar is now launching the second phase of the programme with a call for new proposals. In line with our commitment to human rights and inclusion, we want to prioritise the voices and actions of young people in shaping their educational and urban spaces, with a particular focus on marginalised groups that are often overlooked.



Purpose of the Fit4Future call

Fondation Botnar is seeking projects in eight of its focus countries (Romania, Ghana, Senegal, Tanzania, Indonesia, Vietnam, Colombia and Ecuador) that leverage digital technologies and AI to promote young people's human rights, wellbeing, inclusion, interconnectedness, and collective agency, enabling them to drive positive social impact within public education and city governance systems. We are particularly interested in funding solutions that promote the wellbeing and inclusion of young people from marginalised communities, those with disabilities, and those who are out of school or lack economic opportunities.



Specifically, the Fit4Future call is looking for projects that:

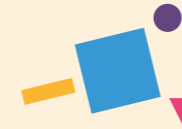
Create inclusive cities – engaging youth in shaping liveable, sustainable city systems:

Promote urban environments that welcome and engage all young people, regardless of background or identity. We are seeking projects that leverage digital technology and AI to engage young people from diverse backgrounds in discussions about the design and future of inclusive urban spaces. A prime focus should be to ensure youth voices are heard in shaping their environments, and connect them with responsible local and global actors.

Advance inclusive education – addressing current challenges and opportunities:

We are particularly interested in initiatives that help educators, learners, and their communities in overcoming inclusion challenges and in creating accessible and inclusive learning environments within public school systems. Projects should focus on eliminating barriers and combating discrimination faced by young people with disabilities, those from marginalised communities, and opportunity youth. We encourage digital platforms and AI solutions that support and empower these groups, both in and outside of school.

Examples include, but are not limited to:



Leverage data to make needs visible and actionable at scale:

Utilise participatory mapping to identify and address community needs, facilitating the provision of targeted services and support. Additionally, identify causes of digital exclusion and propose actions to address and mitigate them.



Empower young people through generative AI:

Partner with educators and urban planners to use generative AI, enhancing the agency of young people, fostering more inclusive urban environments and reinforcing young people's sense of belonging and value. Ensure decision-making processes include all youth voices and accommodate young people's needs.



Encourage interdisciplinary approaches:

Combine digital tools and data in innovative ways to creatively solve challenges, promoting collaboration across various fields to address complex issues effectively. Support educators, learners, and their communities in overcoming inclusion challenges faced by young people, and in creating opportunities for them to realise their full potential.

Approach to inclusive digital futures

For best practice in the use of digital tools in international development, see the Principles for Digital Development from the Digital Impact Alliance:
<https://dial.global/work/principles-for-digital-development/>

We are looking for innovative projects and organisations that leverage digital technology and AI to create more inclusive cities and education systems, addressing the needs of young people who are left behind. Convinced that involving beneficiaries in programme design enhances impact and better meets their needs, Fondation Botnar seeks projects that actively engage with marginalised youth. In addition, we prioritise projects that co-produce and use evidence to create meaningful social impact.

Youth-led organisations and those involving young people at governance level will be given special consideration. The call is not intended to fund the development of entirely new digital technology but rather initiatives that strengthen existing digital efforts, or deploy and adapt proven technologies to new contexts. We also favour initiatives that broaden current participatory processes, making them more inclusive of and responsive to young people's needs.



Design elements for inspiration

Proposals should deliver innovative and scalable solutions that empower young people and address both their immediate and future needs. The following points are intended as inspirational design elements for developing the projects. Although no single project can address all these aspects, we encourage alignment with these ideas and recent advancements in social impact and development thinking:

Systems thinking: Systems thinking involves tackling complex issues by examining the interrelationships and interactions within an entire system, rather than focusing on individual components. This approach is crucial for social impact projects targeting young people as it helps identify root causes and interconnected factors affecting their lives, leading to more holistic and sustainable solutions. For example, improving educational outcomes may require addressing related social, economic, and environmental factors.

Platform thinking: Platform thinking focuses on developing scalable solutions that connect multiple stakeholders and facilitate interactions, often through digital platforms. In the context of social impact projects for young people, platform thinking can foster collaborative ecosystems where educators, learners, community organisations, and technology providers share resources, knowledge, and support. It can amplify the reach and impact of initiatives aimed at inclusivity and engagement.

Design thinking: Design thinking is a human-centred approach to problem-solving that focuses on empathy, creativity, and iterative testing. It is especially relevant to social impact projects for young people as it prioritises understanding their needs, challenges, and aspirations through direct engagement. By involving young people in the design process, solutions can be more effectively tailored to their specific contexts, resulting in greater relevance and effectiveness.

Scalability and human agency: We highly encourage initiatives that utilise AI and digital solutions to operate at scale and are embedded in local ecosystems. Projects should enhance human agency and promote connectivity, collaboration, and a sense of belonging among young people while ensuring their rights are respected.

Evidence co-production and use: We encourage the collection and use of evidence through participatory processes, in which key stakeholders, particularly young people, are actively engaged throughout the project cycle, from design to collective action and learning.

Adaptive management and implementation research: In line with evidence co-production and use, projects should embrace adaptive management practices and demonstrate their ability to adjust to contextual change and learning. Project teams should also continuously review and refine their practices and strategies to ensure they remain effective and relevant.



Eligibility Criteria

We invite applications from consortia that actively manage multisectoral partnerships with local public and private sector stakeholders. Preference will be given to organisations with a proven track record of working in technology and design initiatives. Please note that organisations that have been lead grant recipients in the first Fit4Future cohort (2020-2023) cannot apply.

Engaged stakeholders

Applicants should have established relationships with young people and public sector stakeholders, demonstrating a forward-thinking and inclusive approach.

Global alliance

We encourage partnerships with local and international institutions, promoting both south-south and south-north cooperation.

Type of organisation

The lead applicant organisation must be a not-for-profit entity or social enterprise registered for at least two years.

Inclusivity and diversity

We encourage applications from organisations that employ people with disabilities and individuals from marginalised groups. Youth-led organisations that meet the eligibility criteria are also strongly encouraged to apply.

Commitment to learning and a systems approach

The applicant organisation should be committed to a collaborative learning process throughout the duration of the programme and demonstrate a systems view and practice.

Countries of operations

We support project activities focusing on the following countries: Romania, Ghana, Senegal, Tanzania, Indonesia, Vietnam, Colombia and Ecuador.

Project types

Proposals should focus on services, digital solutions, capacity building, community engagement, policy development, and other activities that do not require building or maintaining physical facilities or structures. We therefore do not support physical infrastructure projects.



Key considerations

Project proposals should be in line with the Fit4Future vision and strategic goals. Therefore, submissions should reflect the following elements to be considered for funding.

1. Set-up

Consortium approach: Pooling expertise in a consortium is highly encouraged. Subcontracting is allowed; however, the lead applicant is fully responsible and liable for the project. Strong partnership management skills and sufficient resources are essential.

Local co-funding: Projects that secure local co-funding, either in cash or in-kind, will be given preference.

2. Projects:

Local ownership/community-grounded initiatives: Preference will be given to projects that are deeply rooted in the community and demonstrate strong local ownership. Local ownership implies the involvement, responsibility and leadership of organisations and individuals in the local context and adequate consideration of the local needs. In addition, projects that have established links to local public processes and systems will be prioritised.

Budget integrity and LMIC distribution: Financial transparency and responsible budget management are expected, with a focus on equitable distribution in low- and middle-income countries.

3. Funding

The **minimum funding** for a project is CHF 200,000. We expect 5-6 projects to be selected through the funding call with a total funding of CHF 3.19 million available for this call.

The project budgets will be **closely reviewed** against the proposed activities.

A **maximum of 10%** of the project budget may be allocated to overhead costs.

4. Target age group

Projects should **focus on young people** within the age range of 10-24 years.

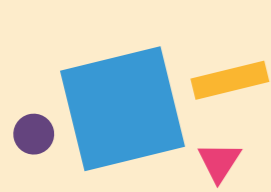
5. Funding principles and conditions

By accepting a grant from Fondation Botnar, you agree to **adhere to our funding principles and conditions**.



Application process and timeline

Fit4Future applications will undergo a two-stage review process.



Stage 1: Submission of short proposals

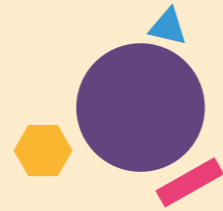
Short proposals must be submitted to Fondation Botnar via our Grant and Application Management System: <https://grants.fondationbotnar.org/>

Please note that only one application can be submitted per organisation.

Deadline for submission is **10 February 2025, 15:00 CET.**

A template for short proposals will be available upon registration in our Grant and Application Management System.

We will notify shortlisted applicants in March 2025.



Stage 2: Submission of full proposals

Shortlisted applicants must submit their full proposals via our Grant and Application Management System.

We will notify selected applicants in July 2025.

Further, we will hold a virtual information session in **January 2025** to address questions from organisations interested in applying and provide an opportunity to exchange with our programme staff.

For more information about Fit4Future, visit: bit.ly/3NlvaKw



Contact

All correspondence and questions related to this call should be addressed to Fondation Botnar:
fit4future@fondationbotnar.org





Fit4Future

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