The Legatum Center for Development and Entrepreneurship (http://legatum.mit.edu) at MIT is a global learning platform for principled innovation-driven entrepreneurs building a better world. We are committed to providing entrepreneurs with education, funding, and community resources—as well as helping them to cultivate principled leadership skills and a strong sense of purpose—in order to give them the greatest chance of succeeding as change agents in the developing world.

Our capstone initiative is a competitive fellowship program (http://legatum.mit.edu/resources/legatum-fellowships). Each year we build a cohort of the most promising 20–25 students who are committed to building and scaling ventures in the developing world. We provide them with tuition, travel, and prototyping support as well as access to mentors, targeted coursework, special seminars, and other cross-campus resources tailored to their educational and venture needs.

We also create pathways for the broader student community to engage with the Legatum Center and “entrepreneurship for development.” These pathways include seed grants (http://legatum.mit.edu/resources/seed-grant-program-developing-world-entrepreneurs) for students looking to explore and refine an idea in the developing world (e.g., by conducting primary market research or running pilots on the ground). Our Entrepreneur-in-Residence provides office hours and workshops for those seeking mentorship and guidance. In collaboration with other MIT partners we run for-credit classes, thematic conversations, practical workshops, and a campus-wide summit. For faculty and research-oriented students, we have begun to offer research grants and student research assistantships focused on understanding and shaping the conditions for systems change.

As we continue to learn the most effective methods of supporting entrepreneurs in the developing world, we also create pathways to engage with them beyond the MIT campus. We run international activities such as Open Mic Africa, the Zambezi Prize (http://zambezi.mit.edu), and convene events such as our annual regional summit. We also support research related to the transformational power of entrepreneurship in society and we are developing a library of resources including case studies and media content featuring founders from around the world.