The Legatum Center for Development and Entrepreneurship at MIT (http://legatum.mit.edu) was founded to demonstrate the power of entrepreneurship to catalyze transformation in society and to improve global well-being. The center is a community hub for MIT students, faculty, and departments who are passionate about improving lives through principled entrepreneurial leadership in the developing world. We are committed to providing education, funding, and community resources that will equip students with the skills, values, and critical thinking they need to succeed as entrepreneurial change agents in the world.

The capstone initiative at the Legatum Center is our competitive fellowship program. 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, special seminars, and other cross-campus resources tailored to their educational and venture needs with a focus on principled entrepreneurial leadership.

There are travel seed grants for students looking to explore and refine an idea in the developing world; grants are most commonly used to conduct primary market research, test business assumptions, and run pilots on the ground. In collaboration with the Martin Trust Center for Entrepreneurship (http://entrepreneurship.mit.edu), we hold Entrepreneur in Residence office hours and workshops for those seeking mentorship and guidance. We also provide resources to enable ecosystem activities, such as student club grants for conference and competitions related to our mission. In collaboration with other campus partners, including D-Lab (https://d-lab.mit.edu), we run a campus-wide conference, Scaling Development Ventures (http://sdvinfo.wixsite.com/mitrsvd). 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.

Beyond our educational offerings, the Legatum Center aspires to be a global knowledge hub, providing pathways for entrepreneurs around the world to access MIT resources, contribute to our community and research, and advance thought leadership. We run international activities, such as the Zambezi Prize and convening events, and our annual regional conference. We also support research related to the transformational power of entrepreneurship in society and are developing a library of resources, including case studies and podcasts featuring founders from around the world.

Through all of these efforts, we are shaping discourse on bottom-up development and systems change through principled entrepreneurial leadership. For more information, contact the center (legatum@mit.edu).