



Fund for Innovation
and Transformation

Fonds pour l'innovation
et la transformation

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For Immediate Release

FIT Awards \$2 Million to Innovations Advancing Gender Equality: Fourth Intake Funds 10 Projects Throughout Africa, Asia and Middle East

WINNIPEG, MB - The Fund for Innovation and Transformation (FIT) has awarded funding to 10 small and medium organizations (SMOs) from across Canada who are using innovation to improve the lives of women and girls around the world.

Each organization will receive up to \$250,000 to test their innovative solutions in partnership with local organizations over a 6 to 15 month period. Selected projects address challenges related to gender-based violence, food security, women's health and more. Examples include a female-led insect farming initiative, a campaign to debunk women's eye health myths, and digital entrepreneurship learning opportunities for refugees.

This is FIT's fourth funding intake period. Since the organization's launch in 2019, FIT has awarded over \$9.2 Million to 41 projects. This is made possible through funding from Global Affairs Canada.

"As some of our funded innovations conclude their testing period, we are starting to see some impressive results and key findings," said Christina MacIsaac, FIT's Director of Innovation. "The next phase of our program will be focused on sharing these findings with the wider development community. Our aim is to help others improve and adapt their development practises related to gender equality and women's empowerment."

FIT is unique in that it supports ideas at the testing phase. Launched in May 2019, FIT funds Canadian SMOs from different sectors to test new or improved practices, policies and approaches with local partners around the world. The fund also provides a platform for selected organizations to share their ideas and challenges with each other and eventually others in the innovation and international development sectors. The program is a 5-year, \$16.5 Million initiative of the Inter-Council Network of Provincial and Regional Councils, funded by Global Affairs Canada and administered by the Manitoba Council for International Cooperation (MCIC).

Janice Hamilton, Executive Director of MCIC, believes the program is achieving what it set out to do; cultivate an environment where SMOs and their local partners test new solutions and share their acquired knowledge with the greater development community.





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“During each intake we have seen informed, thoughtful and culturally-sensitive applications from Canadian SMOs eager to test new ideas aimed at advancing gender equality,” said Hamilton. “Canadian SMOs are well positioned to test ideas on the ground with their partners in the Global South. They are nimble and can adapt to changing environments and needs.”

FIT’s fifth intake has now closed. Funding decisions will be announced in the spring of 2022.

For more information about intake four projects and recipients, please see the attached backgrounder.



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The Fund for Innovation and Transformation is a 5-year, \$16.5 M initiative of the Inter-Council Network of Provincial and Regional Councils, funded by Global Affairs Canada and administered by the Manitoba Council for International Cooperation (MCIC).



The Inter-Council Network of Provincial and Regional Councils for International Cooperation is a coalition of the eight Provincial and Regional Councils for International Cooperation. The independent Councils are committed to global sustainable development, social justice and social change. They are rooted in communities across Canada and represent over 350 diverse civil society organizations from across Canada. Council membership varies from locally based cultural community civil society organizations to highly recognizable international organizations.



The Manitoba Council for International Cooperation (MCIC) is a coalition of Manitoba-based organizations involved in international development. Its mission is to support, connect and amplify the work of its members and partners, while directly engaging and collaborating with Manitobans for global sustainability. MCIC encourages dialogue on global issues and helps empower Manitobans to become active global citizens — individuals who understand that their actions here make a difference around the world. MCIC is also responsible for distributing Government of Manitoba and Government of Canada funds designated for international development and humanitarian projects.



Global Affairs Canada manages Canada’s diplomatic relations, provides consular services to Canadians, promotes the country’s international trade, and leads Canada’s international development and humanitarian assistance. FIT is a program undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada provided through Global Affairs Canada.





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Backgrounder

FIT Funding Announcement Intake 4: FIT has selected 10 Canadian small and medium-sized organizations (SMOs) to receive funding in the program's fourth intake. Each SMO will receive up to \$250,000 to test their innovative solutions in partnership with local organizations over a 6-15 month period.



CEED Concordia

Blended Learning Solution to Advance Gender Equality in Education in Uganda

Country: Uganda

Testing Period: 11 months

Amount: \$172,000

This project tests an innovative cost-effective, decentralized, blended e-learning solution designed for the context of Uganda; sensitive to specific gender challenges in South-West Uganda. Delivery of the solution will give opportunities to in-service women teachers to earn their Bachelors of Education degrees. The e-learning study material will be delivered digitally to target students (women teachers who don't have the accreditation) without the need for internet connectivity, where they live, and at a pace that they can self-manage.



Humber Institute of Technology & Advanced Learning

Entrepreneurship+ Digital Livelihoods+ Creative Arts: Socio-economic Empowerment of Women Refugees in Kenya (EDC-Kenya)

Country: Kenya

Testing Period: 12 months

Amount: \$198,692

This innovation tests a solution to enhance women's socio-economic empowerment and increase livelihood opportunities for refugees in Nairobi, Kenya. It will do so by integrating digital entrepreneurship components in skills development courses and utilize online e-commerce marketplaces to showcase talents in creative arts (dance, music, theatre, art, photography etc.). A group of female entrepreneurs will establish online businesses using digital tools, strategies, and practices and create peer-to-peer business relationships with female artisans in their communities.



iDE Canada

Safer Farming for Nepali Women

Country: Nepal

Testing Period: 13.5 months

Amount: \$185,303

This innovative solution will empower women smallholders in Kaski, Nepal with increased choice about how they grow vegetables. iDE has trained women to use integrated pest management (IPM) production methods which minimize or eliminate the use of chemical pesticides. They now prefer to use IPM methods for its health benefits, and do so for household-consumed vegetables. However, they do not use IPM methods for their commercial vegetables because IPM production methods are too costly for them to recoup a profit in the market. In order to make a decent living, they expose themselves to harmful chemicals.

The testing will support women farmers in Kaski to test strategies for marketing IPM-produced vegetables in one of the new produce markets in Pokhara with the objective of identifying the highest possible price premium. iDE will test the strategies on three types of vegetables—cucurbits, tomatoes, and cauliflower—over three marketing seasons, following the discrete growing cycles for each type of vegetable. iDE will work with women farmers who have already been trained in IPM production methods and actively market their produce collectively through four locally-run collection centres via their largely women-led marketing committees.



Journalists for Human Rights (JHR)

Increasing Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights through Media Development

Country: Mali

Testing Period: 15 months
Amount: \$217,100

JHR is proposing an innovation that will leverage a theme-driven approach to train, network and coordinate media, government officials and Civil Society Organizations. This will put Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) as a priority item on the public agenda, raise awareness about services, and increase government responsiveness to SRHR issues. The project will seek to change both the authorities' attitudes towards SRHR, as well as the general public. This will lead to changed behaviours in terms of the public seeking SRH services and authorities increasing the provision of such services, resulting in better health outcomes for women and girls.



NorQuest College

Empowering Women in Rural India by Debunking Feminine Eye Health Myths

Country: India

Testing Period: 12 months

Amount: \$150,134

In collaboration with Operation Eyesight India and the Rotary Eye & ENT Hospital, this innovative solution proposes to recruit, train, and equip eight local female community health workers (LFCHWs) to provide eye health services in a majority women-staffed Mobile Vision Centre that will visit 15 villages in the Chenani block of Udhampur district, in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, India. The LFCHWs will provide education on women and girls' eye health, eye care services targeting women and girls, and will also serve men and boys village-wide. These services will help to debunk sexist eye health myths which lead residents to lead to believe that women and girls who wear glasses are unhealthy, behaved sinfully in past lives, and are less desirable for marriage.



The Roll a Hippo Foundation

Skills Training + Tools + Water = Food Security for Impoverished Women

Country: South Africa

Testing Period: 7 months
Amount: \$215,925

This innovation will deliver a Food Security Training Course that provides a Survival Garden Kit (including a hippo water roller and gardening tools) to impoverished women in rural communities in KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape provinces, South Africa. The course will provide women with access to abundant water, essential gardening supplies, and time savings, enabling them to increase their food production and engage in more empowering economic and educational activities.



St Mary's Road United Church

Engaging culture and community to address and change persistent harmful gender norms and attitudes

Country: Zimbabwe

Testing Period: 13 months

Amount: \$208,546

This test is implementing a community-designed program that redefines masculinity and associated norms in a positive, supportive way at the family level, utilizing intent instead of mandate, leading to Transformative Sustainable Gender Equity (TSGE). It includes the Men Can Cook Competition (a skills-based learning opportunity taught by women) and the Men's Forum on Gender (a platform for discussing norms and attitude shifts led by trained male facilitators) which addresses the lack of opportunities to cultivate empathy and positive masculinity in men.

The innovation aims to increase overall family wellness, lightening the load of women in the home and create a platform for men to safely discuss their feelings while women serve in advising, decision-making, teaching and/or leadership role. By engaging both men and women the test aims to shift masculinity, family relationships and associated cultural norms, increase awareness and community recognition and support, and decrease gender-based violence in the home and the community.



Union for Progress Inc.

Femmes pour l'Innovation et la Transformation

Country: Democratic Republic of the Congo

Testing Period: 10 months

Amount: \$214,154

This innovation will test the integration of women in the traditionally male-dominated field of transportation by introducing the E-tricycle as a means of transport. This product responds perfectly to the needs of local and vulnerable women and offers the possibility of financial autonomy to the women driver, while respecting environmental standards and reducing gender inequality. This solution aims to position women as integral players in the transport industry while offering them the skills to become mechanics of these machines following accelerated training. The innovation is expected to empower women socially and economically in Goma, DR Congo.



Université de
Sherbrooke

Université de Sherbrooke

Innovation radicale du modèle d'affaires des systèmes agroforestiers (contexte de conservation) Cutting-Edge Innovation of Agroforestry Systems' Business Model in a Conservation Context)

Country: Cameroon

Testing Period: 15 months

Amount: \$249,987

This innovative solution involves the adaptation of agroforestry business models for impoverished rural populations in Cameroon. It aims to implement a business model that has been modified to assist producers affected by new financing approaches related to climate change and conservation. The test will allow the Université de Sherbrooke's Research Team in Innovation Management at the School of Management, to address obstacles faced by vulnerable populations (particularly women) and will increase women's access to profitable crops including honey and cocoa.



Veterinarians without Borders

Edible Insect Farming for Improved Nutrition and Income in South Sudan

Country: South Sudan

Duration: 10 months

Amount: \$242,787

This innovation solution involves enhancing food security and livelihoods through female-led farming (i.e. rearing in a confined space at or near the homestead) of highly nutritious insect species that are traditionally consumed in South Sudan and that are suitable for rearing in confinement. Farming has the potential to produce larger numbers of insects than can be harvested from the wild (with minimal effects on the environment) and can be produced throughout the year.