

A conversation with Todd Moss and Kathy Smith, November 15, 2016

Participants

- Todd Moss – Chief Operating Officer and Head Fellow, Center for Global Development (CGD)
- Kathy Smith – Director, Institutional Advancement, CGD
- Alexander Berger – Program Officer, U.S. Policy, the Open Philanthropy Project

Note: These notes were compiled by the Open Philanthropy Project and give an overview of the major points made by Dr. Todd Moss and Ms. Kathy Smith.

Summary

The Open Philanthropy Project spoke with Dr. Moss and Ms. Smith of CGD as an update on an Open Philanthropy Project grant. The \$3,000,000 grant for general support was awarded to CGD in February 2016 and will be paid out over three years. Conversation topics included updates on activities, staff, and programs funded by the grant in 2016 and CGD's plans for next year.

2016 staff and activities

Organizational advancement

This year, the Open Philanthropy Project grant has supported the following activities:

- Ms. Smith led an overhaul of CGD's customer relations management (CRM) system to centralize these data.
- CGD engaged Russell Reynolds Associates to assist with the executive transition following Dr. Nancy Birdsall stepping down as director of CGD.

Staffing

Hires

CGD hired some additional staff, which would not have been possible without the grant:

- **Dr. Cindy Huang** – formerly of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC). Dr. Huang is working on humanitarian response.
- **Casey Dunning** – has been placed at USAID, with funding from CGD.
- **Joyce Banda, former President of Malawi** – has been hired through a joint fellowship with CGD and the Woodrow Wilson International Center For Scholars. This will allow her to have multiple platforms for her work.

Dr. Donald Kaberuka and Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala have also joined the CGD as distinguished visiting fellows. While they do not have salaried positions, they are provided with research assistance by CGD.

Departures

Ben Leo is leaving CGD to focus on his data analytics startup. Another senior fellow has recently moved to China.

Program updates

CGD has moved quickly and opportunistically on the following programs this year:

- **Special project in India** – Dr. Justin Sandefur and two CGD research assistants are supporting Dr. Arvind Subramanian with research for a report on the universal basic income.
- **Post U.S. election convening** – CGD plans to organize this sometime before the end of the year, in order to facilitate thinking about projects for next year.
- **Anti-microbial resistance and livestock research** – Previously, CGD did not have funding for this project. Following the model of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, CGD is working on an actionable proposal, including the political economy and cost-benefit analysis for government and private industry. It plans to publish this later in the year.
- **Cash transfers** – A working group was planned but has not yet convened this year.
- **Energy** – Dr. Moss has been working to hire a lead for this area, but there have been delays in bringing a candidate on board.

Budget

CGD is on track to meet its fundraising target for the year. CGD's yearly budget has remained approximately the same as in past years.

In the future, government funding may be less certain if national budgets are reduced.

Plans for 2017

Organizational advancement

Ms. Smith will work with a consultant that CGD plans to hire on a strategic organizational assessment. The goals of the project are to examine the structure and role of the board of directors, the strategic vision, and possibly the mission of CGD.

Staffing

CGD does not have plans for a major expansion in staff next year. There is currently some physical constraint in the U.S. office, so when growth occurs, it will likely occur in Europe.

Planned hires

- **Research director** – While the outgoing director of CGD also served as a research director, incoming director Dr. Masood Ahmed is not a researcher and is interested in hiring for this role. The research director would have his or her own research agenda.
- **CRM lead** – When the new CRM is rolled out, CGD plans to hire someone to oversee the project and track internal metrics.
- **Fundraising** – CGD will need continued support for fundraising activities.

New director of CGD

The hiring of Dr. Ahmed was announced a few months ago. He will begin work at the end of January. Apart from hiring a research director, he is expected to continue the work that CGD is engaged in without major institutional changes.

The new presidential administration and global development work

Next year, CGD will begin assessing its development agenda in the context of the new presidential administration. CGD has historically focused on cost-effective projects with bipartisan support. It believes that many of its planned initiatives – e.g., Power Africa, global health and security – will continue to be viable.

*All Open Philanthropy Project conversations are available at
<http://www.openphilanthropy.org/research/conversations>*