

A conversation with Todd Moss and Kathy Smith, June 21, 2016

Participants

- Todd Moss – Chief Operating Officer and Senior Fellow, Center for Global Development
- Kathy Smith – Director, Institutional Advancement, Center for Global Development
- Alexander Berger – Program Officer, US Policy, Open Philanthropy Project

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

Summary

The Open Philanthropy Project spoke with Mr. Todd Moss and Ms. Kathy Smith of the Center for Global Development (CGD) as part of an update on a grant given in February 2016. Conversation topics included updates on CGD's staffing, funding, administration, programs, and the political and economic climates in some traditional "donor darling" countries.

Staffing updates

Recent staffing changes include the following:

- Dr. Cindy Huang recently accepted a one-year visiting policy fellowship at CGD. Dr. Huang is co-chair of the Clinton campaign development policy and humanitarian group, and was previously the Deputy Vice President of Sector Operations at the Millennium Challenge Corporation. She is about to launch a study group on humanitarian assistance, likely in collaboration with the International Rescue Committee (IRC).
- Casey Dunning (Senior Policy Analyst at CGD) has been placed in a temporary role at the USAID Bureau for Policy, Planning and Learning (PPL), where she will work directly for Wade Warren. The USAID leadership will likely be transitioning at the end of the year with the administration changeover, but because Ms. Dunning will be working as an outside technical expert rather than a political appointee, she will be able to stay past the end of the calendar year. She may be able to help with the transition.
- CGD has made a job offer to someone who will focus on energy access, and is about to make a job offer to someone who will focus on natural resource issues. The latter will work in the CGD Europe office. These two positions will be initially funded from the grant and later look for dedicated funding.
- CGD and the Woodrow Wilson Center are jointly hiring Malawian President Joyce Banda as a Distinguished Visiting Fellow. She will start on August 1, 2016 and work for 6 months.

- Dr. Donald Kaberuka, a member of CGD's board of directors, recently became a CGD Distinguished Visiting Fellow. This is an unpaid position, but CGD does offer him research support: a CGD research assistant from West Africa is now working full time for Dr. Kaberuka.

Caroline Atkinson, head of global public policy at Google, also recently joined CGD's board of directors. She was previously the Deputy National Security Advisor for International Economics.

Funding and administrative updates

- The CGD Europe office was revenue positive this year, largely thanks to funding from the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID). DFID is currently reorganizing the way it engages with think tanks, and it is likely that there will be a gap in DFID funding during this reorganization. It would be challenging to replace this funding, and the CGD Europe office will likely not raise 100% of its own funding in 2017.
- CGD is working on expanding its relationship with large traditional foundations.
- CGD is in the process of redesigning its use of Salesforce, which it hopes will be a central point of information throughout the organization and help to measure CGD's impact and influence.

Program updates

Pilot project on Cuba

CGD is planning a pilot project to determine what steps would be necessary for Cuba to rejoin international financial institutions, if it chose to do so. The project would include two workshops: one in Washington, D.C. and one in Havana, in which participants would consider the pros and cons of rejoining these institutions and the steps that would need to be taken. CGD does not plan to advocate for or against Cuba rejoining these institutions.

Cuba is currently a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), but does not belong to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB), or the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). It may be most realistic to suggest that Cuba start by joining the IMF.

CGD decided to take this on because of the leadership of personally interested senior fellows, especially Amanda Glassman, and because the way that international financial institutions interact with countries is at the core of much of CGD's work. CGD is also currently doing some re-engagement work in Zimbabwe focusing on how international financial institutions interact with a noncompliant member in a positive way.

Subsidy reforms

CGD is exploring the possibility of using fuel and other subsidy reforms as leverage for implementing identification and payment systems that could later be used to distribute cash transfers on a large scale.

Research on Improving Systems of Education

CGD is working to ensure academic rigor in the studies on education quality that are being done as part of the research program Research on Improving Systems of Education (RISE). The program is managed by Oxford Policy Management (OPM) and funded by DFID. DFID has allocated approximately \$20 million to the project and has made a small grant to CGD for its involvement.

US development finance corporation

CGD is pushing for the creation of a US development finance corporation, which would aim to improve on the work of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC). There is some bipartisan support for this.

"Donor darlings"

The political and economic climate in Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Uganda, which have been traditional "donor darlings" for the last 30 years, is making these countries more difficult to work in. All have fairly autocratic governments, and Uganda and Tanzania are not doing well economically. Many countries are imitating China's combination of economic modernization with closed political systems, which challenges the World Bank model and creates foreign policy challenges for shareholders.

The conversation around these "donor darlings" is beginning to shift towards governance and human rights, which is an issue that Mr. Moss is interested in making a higher priority across CGD.

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