



October 7, 2014

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Grand Challenge Partners Commit to Innovation with New Investments in Breakthrough Science

A consortium of partners including Brazil, Canada, India, Norway, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States will fund a new phase of Grand Challenge initiatives

SEATTLE (October 7, 2014) – At an event in Seattle commemorating the tenth anniversary of [Grand Challenges](#), a group of international partners today announced three new initiatives aimed at creating breakthroughs in science.

This anniversary event, attended by scientists and researchers from around the world, celebrates a decade of progress since the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's launch of the initial [Grand Challenges in Global Health](#) initiative. This original US\$450 million research initiative was created to catalyze scientific and technological innovation to achieve major breakthroughs in global health.

The three new initiatives being announced today are:

- ***All Children Thriving*** – focusing on developing new tools and holistic approaches to help mothers and children thrive in the developing world by ensuring a healthy birth for both mother and child and setting children on a path to healthy physical growth and cognitive development. All Children Thriving includes new initiatives and commitments from Grand Challenges Canada ([Saving Brains](#)); the [Saving Lives at Birth](#) partnership (including the US Agency for International Development, the Government of Norway, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Grand Challenges Canada and the UK Department for International Development); the Governments of Brazil, India, and South Africa; and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.
- ***Putting Women and Girls at the Center of Development*** - focusing on a rigorous understanding of women's and girls' needs and preferences and gender inequalities and supporting new approaches to promote women's and girls' empowerment that will enhance the ability to achieve multiple health and development goals.
- ***Creating New Interventions for Global Health*** – focusing on accelerating the translation of original and innovative concepts for vaccines, drugs and diagnostics

into safe, effective, affordable and widely used interventions for diseases in the developing world.

“We know how critical women and girls are to the health and economic prosperity of their families and communities, but we don’t have all the answers yet,” said Melinda Gates, co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. “Over the last decade, Grand Challenges has demonstrated that when we partner together and think in bold ways about possible solutions, we get that much closer to every person realizing their full potential. I am excited by the incredible opportunities that lie ahead with these new challenges.”

Ongoing research under the original Grand Challenges in Global Health initiative includes promising projects that are speeding the development of new vaccines and strategies to prevent and treat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria; new approaches to vector control and a new class of point-of-care diagnostics.

“Melinda and I have always believed that advances in science can help reduce inequity in a big way. But you have to be willing to take some risks and see some projects fail,” said Bill Gates co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. “That’s the idea behind Grand Challenges—to focus bright scientists on the problems of the poorest, take some risks, and deliver results. We’re delighted with what’s happened in the first decade, but we’re not satisfied, and we hope to see even more progress in the coming years.”

Perhaps just as important as the new challenges is the growing network of funders that are adopting the Grand Challenges approach to accelerate research. Today there is a broad family of Grand Challenges grant programs guided by a shared approach and set of principles. This includes issue-specific programs, such as [Saving Brains](#) and [Saving Lives at Birth](#), as well as accelerated, small-scale grant-making programs such as [Grand Challenges Explorations](#) and [Stars in Global Health](#), which complement the larger grants with seed funding for projects that target a range of health indicators. Additionally, challenges like Making All Voices Count, Powering Agriculture, All Children Reading and Securing Water for Food show that the Grand Challenges model can be leveraged across all sectors of development.

Grand Challenges Canada (funded by the Government of Canada) has been a founding member of the Grand Challenges network. This commitment is reaffirmed by rallying a growing list of organizations worldwide in the Saving Brains partnership, aimed to seek and support bold ideas for products, services, and approaches that protect and nurture early brain development in low- or middle-income countries.

The Honourable Christian Paradis, Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, said: “Under the leadership of Prime Minister Stephen Harper, Canada has made maternal, newborn and child health its top development priority. By investing in innovations through the Saving Brains partnership, our government is supporting women and children in the world’s poorest countries so they can survive and thrive.”

USAID is firmly committed to open source innovation and its impact on development. After 10 years, the Grand Challenges model and partnership has had a profound effect on how development is done. Open source innovation has advanced the quality of the solutions USAID has been able to bring to bear on humanity's greatest challenges, allowing it to address global challenges faster and more effectively. USAID is renewing its commitment to its original Grand Challenge, Saving Lives at Birth, and continues to pursue open source innovation in its current round of Making All Voices Count and upcoming round of Powering Agriculture.

“The Grand Challenges have transformed the way we work—bringing together the world's brightest minds to solve our biggest development challenges,” said USAID Administrator Dr. Rajiv Shah. “By working together with our partners from government, business, and civil society, we can find, fund, and scale innovations that can help bring an end to the tragedy of child and maternal death.”

Several countries are also issuing country- or region-specific challenges under the All Children Thriving umbrella. Both Brazil (through its Ministry of Health and National Council for Scientific and Technological Development) and India (through its Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council) are leveraging their deep pools of scientific talent by issuing challenges open to researchers from their respective countries. South Africa is also issuing its first Grand Challenge through its Medical Research Council, open to researchers throughout Africa. These challenges will engage local and regional investigators with firsthand experience of the global health and development problems Grand Challenges seeks to solve.

Through investments in high-risk, high-reward research, the next phase of Grand Challenges seeks bold solutions and strategies to address some of the most pressing global health and development issues of our time.

Grand Challenges

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation recognizes that solving the most pressing challenges in global health and development requires more of the world's brightest minds working on them. The Grand Challenges family of initiatives seeks to engage innovators from around the world to solve these challenges. Grand Challenges initiatives are united by their focus on fostering innovation, directing research to where it will have the most impact, and serving those most in need. www.grandchallenges.org

Grand Challenges Explorations

In addition to these new larger challenge programs, we and other funders continue to support small-scale grant-making programs such as [Grand Challenges Explorations](#) and [Stars in Global Health](#), which complement the larger grants with seed funding for projects that target a range of health indicators.

About the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. In developing countries, it focuses on improving people's health and giving them the chance to lift themselves out of hunger and extreme poverty. In the United States, it seeks to ensure that all people—especially those with the fewest resources—have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in school and life. Based in Seattle, Washington, the foundation is led by CEO Sue Desmond-Hellmann and Co-chair William H. Gates Sr., under the direction of Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffett.

About Grand Challenges Canada

Grand Challenges Canada is dedicated to supporting Bold Ideas with Big Impact® in global health. We are funded by the Government of Canada; we support innovators in low-and middle-income countries and Canada. The bold ideas we support integrate science and technology, social and business innovation to find sustainable solutions to health challenges – we call this Integrated Innovation®. Grand Challenges Canada focuses on innovator-defined challenges through its Stars in Global Health program and on targeted challenges in its Saving Lives at Birth, Saving Brains and Global Mental Health programs. Grand Challenges Canada works closely with Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), and Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada (DFATD) to catalyze scale, sustainability and impact. We have a determined focus on results, and on saving and improving lives.

www.grandchallenges.ca

About the US Agency for International Development

USAID is the lead U.S. Government agency that works to end extreme global poverty and enable resilient, democratic societies to realize their potential. USAID will mobilize a movement to achieve what technology, ingenuity and progress have now made possible: a world where the most vulnerable are emerging from extreme poverty and contributing to stable, resilient democratic societies. Building a better, safer, more sustainable world promotes the dignity and freedom of people everywhere and advances our security and prosperity.

Media contacts

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation media@gatesfoundation.org

Press images: <http://gatesfoundation.isebox.net/grand-challenges/ten-years-of-grand-challenges>

Grand Challenges Canada

Lode Roels
lode.roels@grandchallenges.ca

USAID

USAIDPressOfficers@usaid.gov