



Grand Challenges Canada™  
Grands Défis Canada<sup>MC</sup>

## News Release

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### **SMELLY SOCKS COULD BE A KEY TO PREVENTING MALARIA DEATHS IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD**

#### ***Grand Challenges Canada Announces Funding for Innovative Proposal to Help Curb Deadly Disease***

**Toronto.** Grand Challenges Canada announces a grant today to support further development of a new innovative device to attract and kill mosquitoes that can transmit malaria. Developed by Dr. Fredros Okumu (Ifakara Health Institute, Tanzania), the device is placed outside the home and is the outdoor complement to bed nets and sprays which protect people from infection in their homes.

“Despite global progress in the fight against malaria, there is still work to be done,” said Dr. Fredros Okumu, Ifakara Health Institute. “Malaria has claimed so many lives, including those of people close to me, and my hope is that this innovative device will be part of the solution.”

The scientific team at Ifakara Health Institute has learned that the most effective way to attract mosquitoes to the device is the odour of smelly socks or similar smelling synthetic bait developed at the Institute. Both the socks and the bait are highly effective and attract four times more mosquitoes than a human being does. Once the mosquitoes are in the device, they are trapped or poisoned and left to die.

“Each year, there are almost 250 million new cases of malaria; almost 800,000 people die, and most of those deaths are children,” says Dr. Peter A. Singer, Chief Executive Officer of Grand Challenges Canada. “This local Tanzanian innovation could contribute significantly to accelerating the elimination of malaria and save lives. Grand Challenges Canada is pleased to support Dr. Okumu’s important discovery and further optimize this device, test its potential for impact and if successful identify a path to further development and commercialization to ensure the device is available to communities at a low cost.”

“Through a lifetime of hard lessons, I know that discovery is not enough,” said Joseph L. Rotman, the philanthropist and businessman who Chairs Grand Challenges Canada’s Board of Directors. “Discoveries also need to be implemented in the real world through business and social innovation.”

This initiative is a demonstration of Grand Challenges Canada’s Integrated Innovation approach. Integrated Innovation is the coordinated application of scientific/technological, social and

business innovation to develop solutions to complex challenges. Through this approach, the discovery has an improved opportunity of going to scale so that many more people benefit from the innovation.

Dr. Okumu's grant, funded jointly by Grand Challenges Canada and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, will support research into testing and improving the device with the expectation it will be developed by the community in two years. Dr. Okumu's grant is one of twelve Grand Challenges Explorations Phase II grants announced today by the Gates Foundation.

"Grand Challenges Canada is a key partner in our effort to catalyze innovative scientific thinking and to encourage others to join in this effort," said Chris Wilson, the director of the Global Health Discovery program at the Gates Foundation. "Partnerships like this one will be critical in turning innovative ideas and early-stage research into new solutions for those most in need."

Grand Challenges Canada is funded by Canada's foreign aid budget. Canada is the first country in the world to take a grand challenges approach to international development.

The money to fund this Grand Challenges Canada grant comes from the Development Innovation Fund. In Budget 2008, the Government of Canada committed \$225 million CAD over five years to the Development Innovation Fund, to support the best minds in the world in a collaborative search for solutions to global health challenges.

For more information, visit [grandchallenges.ca](http://grandchallenges.ca)

### **About Grand Challenges Canada**

*Grand Challenges Canada is a unique independent not-for-profit organization dedicated to improving the health and well being of people in developing countries by integrating scientific, technological, business and social innovation. Grand Challenges Canada works with the International Development Research Institute (IDRC) and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and other global health foundations and organizations to find sustainable long-term solutions to the most pressing health challenges. Grand Challenges Canada is hosted at the McLaughlin-Rotman Centre for Global Health.*

[www.grandchallenges.ca](http://www.grandchallenges.ca)

### **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 Jeff Raikes and Co-chair William H. Gates Sr., under the direction of Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffett.*

[www.gatesfoundation.org](http://www.gatesfoundation.org)

To learn more about Grand Challenges Explorations, visit [www.grandchallenges.org](http://www.grandchallenges.org)

### **About Canada's International Development Research Centre**

*The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) supports research in developing countries to promote growth and development. IDRC also encourages sharing this knowledge with policymakers, other researchers, and communities around the world. The result is*



*innovative, lasting local solutions that aim to bring choice and change to those who need it most. As the Government of Canada's lead on the Development Innovation Fund, IDRC will draw on decades of experience managing publicly funded research projects to administer the Development Innovation Fund. IDRC will also ensure that developing country researchers and concerns are front and centre in this exciting new initiative.*

[www.idrc.ca](http://www.idrc.ca)

**About Canadian Institutes of Health Research**

*The Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) is the Government of Canada's agency for health research. CIHR's mission is to create new scientific knowledge and to enable its translation into improved health, more effective health services and products, and a strengthened Canadian health-care system. Composed of 13 Institutes, CIHR provides leadership and support to more than 13,600 health researchers and trainees across Canada.*

*CIHR will be responsible for the administration of international peer review, according to international standards of excellence. The results of CIHR-led peer review will guide the awarding of grants by Grand Challenges Canada from the Development Innovation Fund*

[www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca](http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca)

**About McLaughlin-Rotman Centre for Global Health**

*The McLaughlin-Rotman Centre for Global Health is based at University Health Network and University of Toronto. We develop innovative global health solutions and help bring them to scale where they are most urgently needed. The McLaughlin-Rotman Centre for Global Health hosts Grand Challenges Canada.*

[www.mrcglobal.org](http://www.mrcglobal.org)

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