

Press Release

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Gates Foundation Announces \$35 Million in Funding for Innovative Ideas in Family Health

Through the Grand Challenges in Global Health program, the foundation joins partners around the world in promoting creative solutions to improve maternal and child health

SEATTLE & DELHI - The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation announced today that it will invest US \$35 million in grants to expand the pipeline of groundbreaking ideas that can help women and children live more prosperous and healthy lives.

The funding, announced at the annual Grand Challenges Meeting in Delhi, India, will support two new Grand Challenges in Global Health grant programs. Grand Challenges in Global Health is a global partnership that seeks to engage the world's most creative minds to work on scientific and technological breakthroughs for pressing global health and development challenges. The new initiatives will fund research into innovative solutions for family health.

"There is a vital need for new and creative ideas to help mothers and children in the world's poorest countries," said Chris Wilson, director of Global Health Discovery at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. "We urge scientists, innovators and entrepreneurs to seize the opportunity to contribute to the field of family health through the discovery and development of medicines, medical devices, diagnostics and other lifesaving tools."

The time between the beginning of a woman's pregnancy and her child's second birthday offers a unique window to shape long-term health for mothers and their children. Each year, 150,000 maternal deaths, 1.6 million neonatal deaths and 1.2 million stillbirths occur during this 1,000-day period. The Gates Foundation and international partners are committed to addressing the causes of maternal and child mortality and morbidity through innovation.

The new family health initiatives announced today are:

- **Preventing Preterm Birth**, managed in partnership with the Global Alliance for the Prevention of Prematurity and Stillbirth (GAPPS), an initiative of Seattle Children's, will invest US \$20 million in the discovery and development of interventions to prevent preterm birth and stillbirth by limiting infection and improving nutrition.
- **Discover New Ways to Achieve Healthy Growth** will invest US \$15 million in research to discover the causes of growth faltering during the first 1,000 days of life and to identify effective and affordable interventions to promote healthy growth.

In addition, the Gates Foundation announced \$9 million in funding for a new related initiative, "Biomarkers of Gut Function and Health," that seeks to develop non-invasive measures of intestinal functioning as a way to assess infant health and development. The Gates Foundation also continues to work with USAID and other global partners through the "[Saving Lives at Birth](#)" initiative as well as collaborate with Grand Challenges Canada to promote cognitive development in infants through its "[Saving Brains](#)" program.

At the meeting in Delhi, the Gates Foundation also announced several new grant awards through the broader Grand Challenges family of programs:

- 110 grants of US \$100,000 each will support innovative proposals to improve nutrition and development in young children, as well as address infectious diseases such as polio and HIV. The funding was awarded through Round 7 of [Grand Challenges Explorations](#) (GCE), an initiative that offers scientists, inventors and entrepreneurs from around the world the opportunity to pursue unconventional ideas that could transform health and agricultural development in the world's poorest countries.
- 9 GCE projects that have shown promise in tackling global health challenges such as malaria and tuberculosis will receive additional funding of up to US \$1 million each to enable researchers to continue to advance their ideas toward impact.

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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.