



Women empowerment in times of COVID-19

Bayer supports “The Challenge Initiative” of Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health with 10 million USD

- “The Challenge Initiative” to scale up reproductive health for women and girls in urban poverty areas
- Participating cities in East Africa, Francophone West Africa, Nigeria, and India
- Integrate COVID-19 prevention and education

Leverkusen, Germany, June 19, 2020 – Today Bayer announced the support of “The Challenge Initiative” (“TCI” hereafter) with a payment of 10 million USD. Hosted at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, the initiative provides women and girls living in urban poverty in cities in Africa and Asia with family planning and reproductive health solutions. TCI is led by the Bill & Melinda Gates Institute on Population and Reproductive Health within the Population, Family and Reproductive Health Department at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School.

“We have long-standing expertise in supporting family planning worldwide and a strong network on the ground,” said Claus Runge, Head of Market Access, Public Affairs & Sustainability at the Pharmaceuticals Division of Bayer. “By empowering women with the freedom of choice with regards to their family planning, especially among the urban poor, this initiative provides a groundbreaking opportunity to create a long-lasting impact in under-served urban communities.”

Empowering women by supporting their family planning is an important part of Bayer’s sustainability commitments. By 2030, Bayer aims to provide 100 million women in low- and middle-income countries with access to modern contraception. The initiative announced today contributes to this commitment.

There is a crucial need during the COVID-19 pandemic to maintain family planning programs for women and girls living in urban slums. The initiative strengthens city governments and health systems and at the same time offers a broader platform for integrating COVID-19 prevention and education into its ongoing family planning activities.

TCI's "business unusual" approach allows cities to bring their monetary contributions, ideas and political commitment to the platform and - in return - have access to a challenge fund for additional resources, as well as technical expertise to adopt and scale up high-impact best practices that have been codified for easy adaptation through TCI University. The online "university without walls" alongside a dedicated coaching model has helped TCI continue operating during the COVID-19 pandemic.

About TCI/The Gates Institute

TCI is led by the Bill & Melinda Gates Institute on Population and Reproductive Health within the Population, Family and Reproductive Health Department at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Its implementing partners are Population Services International in India, IntraHealth International in Francophone West Africa, Jhpiego in East Africa and the Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs (CCP) in Nigeria.

About Bayer

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