

# Champions of Science Africa Innovation Challenge announced

Johnson & Johnson announced the winners of the Champions of Science Africa Innovation Challenge 2.0 at the 28th World Economic Forum on Africa (WEF) in Cape Town, South Africa. The six winning businesses and programs offer bold, entrepreneurial approaches to tackling major healthcare priorities in African communities, including blood delivery, healthcare worker burnout, hearing loss, jaundice, malaria and ultrasound access.

A total amount of US\$300,000 will be awarded to the winning teams, along with extensive mentoring and connection network building, to support the expansion and sustainability of the companies and programs.



Image supplied by WEF

The challenge reflects Johnson & Johnson's legacy of supporting entrepreneurs around the world to uncover, develop and promote solutions that improve health and wellbeing in their communities and beyond.

"The innovation ecosystem in Africa is thriving, and the ideas and energy of its entrepreneurs and innovators have the potential to create transformational change for people across the continent and around the world," said Paul Stoffels, M.D., Chief Scientific Officer and Vice Chairman of the Executive Committee, Johnson & Johnson.

"The six winners of the Africa Innovation Challenge 2.0 are addressing major healthcare challenges with novel technology and approaches. We look forward to collaborating with and investing in them as they work to create sustainable businesses

and programs that offer strong benefits to patients, families, healthcare workers and communities in markets across Africa and beyond."

The challenge received nearly 900 submissions from 39 countries, and the winning businesses and programs represent outstanding ingenuity and perseverance, as well as a pathway for scaling operations for long-term sustainability.

## **Champions of Science Africa Innovation Challenge 2.0 Awardees**

The Challenge winners were selected from a large and impressive pool of applications reviewed by a Johnson & Johnson cross-sector team representing our Consumer, Medical Devices, Pharmaceutical, Global Public Health, Corporate Equity and Johnson & Johnson Innovation businesses and groups. The winning teams each target a significant unmet need:

### **Blood Delivery**

LifeBank (Nigeria) – The lack of an established blood supply network in Nigeria can make access to appropriate blood transfusion very difficult and is contributing to the loss of life. LifeBank is working to change this dynamic. The company receives requests through a digital platform with the intent of delivering the necessary blood to hospitals in less than 45 minutes in a WHO Blood Transfusion Safety compliant cold chain.

### **Healthcare Worker Burnout**

The Hope Initiative (Rwanda) – More than 50% of emergency care workers are at high risk for burnout given the nature of their jobs<sup>[ii]</sup>. The Hope Initiative builds upon research that has demonstrated the positive influence of intrinsic hope on health outcomes of healthcare workers and their patients.

Using a validated metric, The Hope Initiative intends to measure hope among nurses and mothers to understand how hope intersects with healthcare worker burnout and perinatal health outcomes.

The initiative intends to identify interventions that positively influence hope and build both a sustainable team of healthcare workers and sustainable improvements in patient outcomes.

### **Hearing Loss**

DREET (Botswana) – More than 460 million people around the world are hearing-impaired, and two-thirds of them live in developing countries.

Hearing loss can lead to unnecessary poverty and hardship in affected families and communities. DREET is a mobile phone app that allows a child in rural Africa to have their hearing tested in real-time by a professional who may live thousands of miles away.

Their phone-based hearing device tests the hearing in children as young as three years old, allowing parents to prepare and understand impacts of raising a hearing-impaired child or counteracting potential developmental issues such as speech impediments due to hearing impairment.

### **Jaundice**

Crib A'glow (Nigeria) – An estimated six million babies do not receive treatment for neonatal jaundice because they lack access to effective phototherapy devices. If untreated, severe jaundice can cause hearing loss, mental retardation, cerebral palsy, kernicterus and even death.

Crib A'glow is a solar-powered, foldable phototherapy crib provided to hospitals, health centres and parents, even in communities where access to quality healthcare and stable electricity is poor. Crib A'glow allows jaundiced babies to

receive important phototherapy to help them regain health.

## **Malaria**

Uganics (Uganda) - Uganda has one of the highest malaria transmission rates in the world, and malaria is also one of the leading causes of morbidity and mortality in Uganda, especially among children under five years old. Commercial mosquito repellent sprays or gels are often not available in rural shops nor are they affordable for many low-income parents.

Uganics manufactures an organic, affordable soap that repels mosquitos with the intent to help prevent the spread of malaria. Uganics' soap can be utilised in a variety of ways, such as bathing, washing hands and washing clothes.

## **Ultrasound Access**

mSCAN (Uganda) – The WHO recommends at least one ultrasound scan before 24 weeks' gestation and eight total prenatal visits for expecting mothers.

Rural communities often lack access to ultrasound machines, requiring expecting mothers to spend valuable time, energy and resources on transportation to faraway clinics in order to access ultrasound services.

mSCAN's device performs ultrasounds through the use of a portable probe and a tablet, laptop, or smartphone, allowing trained healthcare workers and midwives to be prepared for potential risk-factors during delivery.

For more, go to [www.jninnovation.com/africachallenge](http://www.jninnovation.com/africachallenge).

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>