

PRESS RELEASE

Innovative Canadians for Change Receives \$100,000 Grant from Grand Challenges Canada

February 9, 2012

Edmonton, Alberta – A not for profit Alberta based organization, Innovative Canadians for Change (ICChange), received \$100,000 in funding to continue the development and implementation of the Kibera Medical Record Initiative (KMRI). The vision for KMRI is to develop and implement a standardized patient medical record system to link and consolidate healthcare services in one of Africa's largest slums, Kibera; facilitating access to medical treatment while evaluating community health and epidemiological trends in the setting of a mapped out environment.

Dr. Abdullah Saleh, Chief Executive Director of ICChange, is thrilled with the community support for the organization. “The mandate and philosophy of ICChange is to improve the quality of life and security of vulnerable populations through a sustainable model. Receiving this grant will help us realize our vision and to hopefully set a health standard within Kibera and beyond.”

From the outset, implementing an innovative health care solution in such a low-resource environment may seem counterintuitive, however KMRI Project Manager, Badeia Jawhari disagrees: “The Kibera slum presents an ideal geographic and social climate in which to implement an EMR for high yield results. Because of its dense population, disjointed health systems and multitudes of endemic communicable and chronic diseases, such an intervention can act to greatly improve the health and wellbeing of the community while opening new potentials for collaborations and research.”

On February 9, Grand Challenges Canada announced that 15 grants worth over \$1.5 million would be given to some of the country's rising stars in global health. Dr. Saleh was a recipient of one of those grants for the development of the Kibera Medical Record Initiative.

Dr. Saleh mentioned that the funding will be used for the development of the electronic medical record system and for the implementation of KMRI. The \$100,000 Canadian will be going to a variety of project expenses, such as community outreach and communications campaign, education, IT support and resources, labour and buying equipment. “This grant will assist us immensely,” Jawhari comments. “It will move the project forward and create a local presence in Kenya which is paramount for the success and sustainability of KMRI. We have partnered with an organization acting locally, Action Africa Help – International to assist us on the ground through the implementation of the project.”

Dr. Saleh stresses “what KMRI advocates is that EMR is a particularly appropriate technology due to the large number of clinics operating in isolation, trying to serve a medically and economically diverse and complicated population. An inter-clinic EMR system will improve diagnostic capabilities and management of communicable and chronic diseases in a cost effective manner with decreased medical errors and increased transparency. The use of GIS will improve the epidemiological understanding of the area, detection of outbreaks and tracking of diseases like TB as well as the implementation of educational initiatives and vaccination campaigns. Improved detection, management and prevention will have a vast impact on morbidity and mortality.”

ICChange is truly humbled by this recognition and is honored to be affiliated with the other candidates in the category. “The support we received from the community was overwhelming,” comments Jawhari. “These funds are critical in making our vision of a sustainable model for development a reality. We’ve seen first-hand the impact this initiative has on the Kibera community- and that’s what keeps us motivated to drive change.”

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About Innovative Canadians for Change (ICChange)

ICChange is an Alberta based not-for-profit organization. As an umbrella organization, it provides interdisciplinary services to over half-a-dozen initiatives, such as the well-established Kenya Ceramic Project (KCP) that creates and supports sustainable access to clean drinking water in the Western part of Kenya. By developing new technologies, fostering new relationships, and establishing creative projects, ICChange is connecting with other influential non-profit organizations, businesses, universities, and governmental bodies.

The mission and philosophy of Innovative Canadians for Change (ICChange) is to improve the quality of life and security of vulnerable populations through tangible collaborations with partners to build capacity for both effective community support and sustainability of initiatives.

ICChange creates a framework for evolving innovative ideas into reality. Each model uses appropriate technologies, systems, and processes in order to test a hypothesis through implementation. Once sufficient research and baseline assessments are complete, culturally appropriate means are taken to implement the strategy. Ongoing evaluations are instituted as each project is implemented, thereby enhancing best practices for future ICChange models of sustainable development. In these ways, projects ultimately function independently of ICChange through dependable community uptake by local partners.

For additional information on ICChange or the Kenya Medical Record Initiative, please contact:

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