



# PRESS RELEASE

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20 September 2011

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Public Information: 202-712-4810

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## Three Promising Innovations to Ensure Moms Don't Die Giving Life, Babies Have a Healthy Start

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – The three Saving Lives at Birth transition grant nominees with the most promising solutions to address the causes of maternal and newborn deaths in rural areas of the developing world were announced last night at the Every Woman Every Child reception hosted by UN Special Envoy Ray Chambers.

In March, the Saving Lives at Birth partners issued a Grand Challenge to innovators around the globe. The group asked for new technologies, new service delivery models and new ways to stimulate demand for these critical services at the time of birth. The call elicited more than 600 submissions from around the world.

In late July, partners announced 19 nominees for seed grants that demonstrated the most promising ideas after an intense technical review process which culminated in a Development Exchange event in Washington, DC. The three nominees for larger transition grants of up to \$2 million USD were chosen based on their promising innovations that demonstrate proof of concept and readiness to be tested on a much larger scale.

By bringing together leading innovators, development experts and potential funders, USAID, the Government of Norway, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Grand Challenges Canada, and The World Bank are building a diverse community of innovators to help meet this Grand Challenge for Development: Saving Lives at Birth.

The three nominees are:

The Grameen Foundation has been nominated for an award to scale up their mobile technology initiative, Mobile Technology for Community Health (MOTech), to two new districts in Ghana. The program will reach approximately 14,000 pregnant women and 46,000 children under five, increasing access to accurate health information for pregnant women, generating increased demand for care before and after birth, and providing the Ghana Health Service with detailed information on health service delivery and outcomes. This initiative aims to transform maternal and child health outcomes throughout Ghana.

Columbia University has been nominated for an award to scale up development and deployment of a novel, low-cost, and simple testing device of HIV and syphilis in Rwandan

community clinics. Currently, tests for sexually transmitted infections are often unavailable in rural Rwanda, leaving pregnant mothers unaware of their status for HIV and other infections. This frontline device will link information to a central health records database. Early detection and treatment of infections will prevent thousands of stillbirths and reduce adverse health consequences to both mothers and their children in Rwanda.

JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc. has been nominated for an award for the nationwide scale up of a promising treatment to prevent infection among newborns in Nepal. Nearly 70 percent of infant deaths occur within the first month of life, the most common cause being infection. In a pilot study, use of the antiseptic chlorhexidine for cord care was proven to reduce the risk of death by 24 percent in Nepal. Working with a local pharmaceutical firm and the Ministry of Health and Population, JSI will rapidly and sustainably increase demand, availability, and use of the product on a national scale.

These transition grant nominees will now enter into final negotiations before awards can be issued.

To learn more about this Grand Challenge: Saving Lives at Birth and the innovations, visit [www.savinglivesatbirth.net](http://www.savinglivesatbirth.net).

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