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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Leading digital health organization, D-tree International, awarded \$6 million to support Zanzibar Ministry of Health to roll out national digitally-enabled community health worker program

Zanzibar, Tanzania: June 19, 2018: D-tree International has been awarded more than \$6 million from Fondation Botnar and the Human Development Innovation Fund (HDIF) to work with the Zanzibar Ministry of Health and key partners to roll out a national digital community health system to improve maternal, newborn, and child health services. In Zanzibar, community health workers will be empowered with digital technology to manage care for families, pregnant women and children, building on the Ministry of Health and D-tree International’s award-winning *Safer Deliveries* program.

Digital health, the use of technology to address healthcare challenges, is broadly recognized for its effectiveness in transforming health systems through better health promotion, disease prevention and healthcare quality. This assertion is emphasized in the World Health Assembly’s recent [resolution](#). By introducing a nation-wide digital program, the Zanzibar Ministry of Health puts itself at the forefront of this global move to leverage digital technology to improve the quality of health services.



Community health volunteer in the Safer Deliveries program meets with woman and newborn in Zanzibar, Tanzania. Photo by Mark Leong, World Health Organization.

Re-imagining healthcare through community-based digital health delivery models

In Zanzibar, maternal, newborn and child mortality remain high, often due to lack of awareness of, and information about, essential health services and a lack of coordination between patients, health workers and health facilities. These deficits can result in delays in seeking and receiving care during critical times for families: during pregnancy, delivery and for newborns and children until 5 years of age.

In response to these challenges, D-tree International has been working with the Ministry of Health since 2011 to improve the delivery of community-based maternal and neonatal care via the innovative *Safer Deliveries* program, a community health program systematically guided by a digital system. In *Safer Deliveries*, community health workers (CHWs) conduct home-based visits with families guided by a mobile application. The CHWs create personalized birth plans, identify danger signs and link women and families with health facilities. Data from the system is used by program managers and supervisors to improve quality and modify the system in a continuous feedback loop. The program has consistently shown 50% increases in facility delivery rates and four-fold increases in postpartum follow-up.



Safer Deliveries program expansion to children under 5 in Zanzibar, Tanzania. Photo by Mark Leong, World Health Organization.

Building on the success of *Safer Deliveries*, D-tree International, the Ministry of Health and other stakeholders will utilize the new funding to expand the digital solution in order to enhance maternal and newborn health services and achieve new gains in child health at full national scale. Through a collaborative approach, Zanzibar and its 1.5 million people are on the path to sustainable and consistent quality health for women and families.

Public-Private partnerships

Working in over 12 countries since 2004, **D-tree International** is a leading digital global health organization leveraging technology to build digital solutions that strengthen health systems, improve program quality and achieve health impact. D-tree International has demonstrated that digital health systems can improve clinical decision-making, increase health worker motivation and performance, and lead to better health outcomes.

Fondation Botnar is a Swiss foundation established with the core purpose of improving the health and wellbeing of children and young people in growing secondary cities around the world. One of its key impact areas is investing in Artificial Intelligence and digital solutions to accelerate the transformation of modern healthcare as it moves from the hospital to the living room.

HDIF aims to catalyze social impact in Tanzania by supporting innovations in education, health, and water, sanitation, and hygiene through a challenge fund and technical assistance. Out of 137 applicants, HDIF awarded grants to seven organizations—including D-tree International—as part of its third round Innovation Fund.

QUOTES:

Zanzibar Ministry of Health:

“The Ministry of Health is pleased to continue our long-term partnership with D-tree International to scale up this innovative digital community health program which has already shown the potential to improve the lives of women and children in Zanzibar, support affordable collection of data and strengthen referrals systems to reduce delays causing maternal and child deaths.” – Dr. Fadhil Abdalla, Director of Preventive Services, Zanzibar Ministry of Health

D-tree International:

“Since 2011, we have demonstrated that empowering community health workers with digital tools in Zanzibar improves the quality of service delivery, connects health workers to the broader health system, and

strengthens decision-making processes to optimize resources and improve planning. We are now thrilled to work closely with the Ministry of Health and partners to scale up this system nation-wide.” - Erica Layer, CEO, D-tree International

Fondation Botnar:

“We see the opportunity to overcome the quality and efficiency gap in healthcare created by fragmented communication and poor coordination by investing in digital solutions. The project in Zanzibar fits very well in our investment focus and we are pleased to partner with D-tree International to expand its successful program.” - Stefan Germann, CEO, Fondation Botnar

Human Development Innovation Fund (HDIF):

“HDIF is proud to support D-Tree International’s work to improve the lives of women and children in Zanzibar. D-Tree International has proven itself as a leader in mHealth in Tanzania, capable of collaboratively designing technological solutions with Government partners and communities. We look forward to learning with D-Tree International and their partners and the adoption of this innovation by the Ministry of Health.” – David McGinty, Team Leader, HDIF

The Safer Deliveries program is currently funded through the generous support of the Saving Lives at partners: the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Government of Norway, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Grand Challenges Canada, and the UK Government. This press release was prepared by D-tree International and does not necessarily reflect the views of the Saving Lives at Birth partners.

CONTACT:

Erica Layer
CEO
D-tree International
elayer@d-tree.org
+255 75 525 8988