



LIEN Centre for
Social Innovation



Citigroup Inc. (NYSE: C)

Citi Foundation Announces Recipients of Inaugural Global Innovation Challenge

50 organizations granted a total of \$25 million to pilot or expand catalytic solutions to improve food security globally

SEPTEMBER 26, 2023 – SINGAPORE – Citi Foundation’s inaugural Global Innovation Challenge is providing a total of \$25 million to 50 community organizations working to improve food security and strengthen the financial health of low-income families and communities around the world.

As recipients of this inaugural Global Innovation Challenge, each organization has been granted \$500,000 to support programming across four key areas: food access, availability, affordability and community resilience. Innovations range from launching apps that will connect food supply and demand to piloting new technology and sustainable farming practices to setting up urban gardens and more.

In Singapore, the Singapore Management University’s (SMU) Lien Centre for Social Innovation has been successfully awarded the Citi Foundation grant, and the sole awardee from Singapore, to develop an applied research and trial project to assess solutions that address the root causes of food insecurity across local marginalized communities over the next two years.

Tibor Pandi, Citi Country Officer for Singapore, spoke on Citi’s sustained contribution to the community, *“Citi’s mission is to enable growth and progress to our clients and the community, and that commitment has been guiding us in making a positive difference in Singapore since 1902. Through this inaugural Global Innovation Challenge, we will leverage on Citi Foundation’s philanthropic capital to help SMU develop and scale innovative ideas that contribute towards addressing food insecurity issues in Singapore.”*

Steve Loh, Executive Director of Singapore Management University’s Lien Centre for Social Innovation, said, *“The absence of hunger is not the only indicator of food security in a food-secure nation. For a holistic view, we might want to consider the factors that enable individuals and households to sustain their food-secure status – such as Access, Availability, Utilization and Stability. We are delighted to partner Citi Singapore in our project to address these and other elements, such as wellbeing, in Singapore’s urban context.”*

Other highlights include:

- **Yayasan Kopernik** is working with small farmers in West Timor, Indonesia to revitalize indigenous farming practices and adopt food preservation technologies for a more resilient, self-sustaining food system.
- **Concern Worldwide** is providing business training, expanding access to markets and investors, delivering nutrition education, and supporting urban gardening for small-scale food vendors, especially women and youth, in Nairobi, Kenya.
- **The Global FoodBanking Network** is expanding its technical support, mentoring and delivery of financial resources to newly established food banks worldwide that are supporting communities struggling with poverty and food insecurity.

The grants span two years and over the course of the initiative, grantees will have access to a learning community facilitated by [IDEO.org](https://www.ideo.org/), a non-profit design studio. Through a digital platform and a set of curated experiences, grantees will have the opportunity to collaborate, share lessons learned and exchange best practices.

In February 2023, the Citi Foundation issued this global RFP, the first in its history. Over 1,000 submissions from organizations working in more than 80 countries were submitted.

The Citi Foundation's Global Innovation Challenge on food security complements Citi's strong track record in the space-from [working with clients](#) to develop digital payment solutions to [extending financing](#) to organizations that help smallholder farmers increasing productivity and more.

For more information on the Global Innovation Challenge and a complete list of grant recipients, please visit citifoundation.com/challenge

Citi Foundation

The Citi Foundation works to promote economic progress and improve the lives of people in low-income communities around the world. We invest in efforts that increase financial inclusion, catalyze job opportunities for youth, and reimagine approaches to building economically vibrant communities. The Citi Foundation's "More than Philanthropy" approach leverages the enormous expertise of Citi and its people to fulfill our mission and drive thought leadership and innovation. For more information, visit www.citifoundation.com.

AboutCiti

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About Lien Centre for Social Innovation

The Lien Centre for Social Innovation at the Singapore Management University was established in 2006. We are on a mission to drive social consciousness and enable partnership-driven innovation, because we believe that when socially conscious people work together, a vibrant, just and inclusive society becomes possible. The Centre seeks to be a thought leader and catalyst for positive social change in Singapore, Asia and beyond. Offering thought leadership, evidence-to-action translational research, and capacity-building programs, we amplify impact by giving voice, empowering and enabling socially conscious individuals and organizations to learn, ideate and collaborate.

Additional information may be found at <https://lcsi.smu.edu.sg> | LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/lien-centre/> | YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@LienCentreSMU> | Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/LienCentreSMU>

Appendix

The Lien Centre for Social Innovation (LCSI) at Singapore Management University (SMU) is honored to be a grant recipient, and the only one from Singapore, of Citi Foundation's inaugural Global Innovation Challenge aimed to improve food security.

This grant supports the continuation of LCSI's work on the phenomenon of food security in Singapore through which to gain deeper insight into the root causes of food insecurity in the local context and to develop a collaborative response. The project's approach is a distinct departure from the conventional strategy that relies mostly on food aid distribution, which responds to the apparent 'deficit'-hunger. In depth knowledge of the lived experiences of households will enable LCSI to innovate a solution to a radical challenge facing low-income urban communities with the objective of improving their access to food and reducing the financial burden to vulnerable families.

SMU LCSI: Piloting solutions to address food insecurity across lower income households in Singapore

Food insecurity exists even in food-secure nations like Singapore. As the public and people sectors have done much over the years to increase food support to food-insecure households in Singapore, this project seeks to concentrate efforts on addressing the root causes of food insecurity to develop more sustainable, long-term solutions to this pressing issue.

Within this context, LCSI is developing and delivering an applied research and trial project to assess solutions that address food insecurity across lower income households in Singapore, with the potential of future scalability to other urban contexts. The project will take place over two years, beginning from January 2024.

The project builds on LCSI's past and current studies on the topic, which found financial constraints to be one of the drivers of food insecurity in Singapore. By delving into and addressing the root causes of food insecurity, the project intends to contribute to Singapore's social compact and potentially serve to address social inequality.

The need to improve food security in Singapore

From LCSI's research on social inequality, the evidence points to food access remaining a chronic issue to low-income households even in developed, urban economies. The phenomenon may be exacerbated by structural and systemic barriers to upward social mobility, e.g., rapid and uneven economic growth, social inequality, and other factors that may afford little reprieve for socioeconomically disadvantaged families and communities.

In a study on food insecurity in 2019, published in [The Hunger Report](#) (2020), LCSI found that 10.4% of the 1,206 sampled Singaporean households experienced food insecurity at least once in the preceding 12 months. This means that an estimated 1 in 10 households did not have or were not confident of having 'economic and physical access to sufficient, acceptable food for a healthy life'. Of these households, 3.5% reported severe food insecurity, and the remaining 6.9% were classified as moderately food insecure. Household food security status was determined by the number of affirmative responses given to the Household Food Security Survey Module (HFSSM). In the 10-item adult HFSSM, two to five affirmative responses classified a household as moderately food insecure, while six or more would indicate severe food insecurity.