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Citi Foundation Launches Fourth Global Innovation Challenge, Committing US\$25 Million to Preparing Youth for AI

Hong Kong – The Citi Foundation launched its fourth **Global Innovation Challenge**, issuing a **US\$25 million Request for Proposals (RFP)** focused on equipping young people around the world with the skills, experiences and opportunities they need to thrive in an economy increasingly shaped by AI.

“As technology rapidly transforms the future of work, young people — particularly those from low-income communities — face both significant challenges and new opportunities,” said **Brandee McHale, Head of Community Investing and Development at Citi and President of the Citi Foundation**. “Fluency in AI is key to unlocking these opportunities. Through this Global Innovation Challenge, we are ensuring that young people develop this fluency, gain the skills they need to thrive in the jobs of tomorrow, and become the innovators and leaders of our next generation.”

According to the [World Economic Forum](#), approximately 66% of employers expect to hire talent with specialized AI skills — making AI and digital literacy more relevant than ever. AI is creating new opportunities but is also creating a new digital divide for young people who may not have the access and skills needed to succeed in the workforce.

This research also identifies the continued need for human-centric skills, with more than 60% of employers citing an increased demand for critical thinking, resilience and flexibility. Improving these soft skills, in addition to technological expertise, can strengthen overall employability and economic mobility.

To meet the moment, and help bridge the digital and AI divides for youth, the latest Global Innovation Challenge will provide **US\$500,000 to 50 community organizations** that are:

- Helping low-income youth build both AI and human-centric skills needed for employment, such as prompt engineering and digital content creation as well as problem-solving and critical thinking.
- Connecting young people with job opportunities through resources like community centers with shared devices and software platforms that work with limited internet access.
- Strengthening existing youth employment programs by integrating AI tools.
- Building and fostering cross-sector partnerships to share best practices, build capacity and meet evolving workforce needs.

The deadline for eligible organizations to submit their interest is **Wednesday, October 7 at 12:00 a.m. Hong Kong Time** and recipients will be announced in 2027. For more information on this opportunity including eligibility requirements and target geographies, please visit www.citifoundation.com/rfp.

This latest Challenge builds on the Citi Foundation's longstanding commitment to youth, including through its decade-long Pathways to Progress initiative and the 2025 Global Innovation Challenge focused on accelerating youth employment. Citi colleagues also support young people year-round through volunteerism, providing mentorship and career coaching, and delivering a range of workshops to build employability skills.



Photo: **Aveline San**, Citi Hong Kong CEO and Head of Banking (right) and **Liu Lingzi**, Community Relations, Japan, Asia North & Australia, Citi (left) at the launch of the Citi Foundation Global Innovation Challenge in Hong Kong. The program will provide US\$500,000 each to 50 community organizations to prepare youth for AI.

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About The 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.

About Citi

Citi is a preeminent banking partner for institutions with cross-border needs, a global leader in wealth management and a valued personal bank in its home market of the United States. Citi does business in more than 180 countries and jurisdictions, providing corporations, governments, investors, institutions and individuals with a broad range of financial products and services.

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