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October 22, 2025

Citi Foundation Selects Community Organization in Japan for the 2025 Global Innovation Challenge to Accelerate Youth Employability

NPO SANKAKUSHA set to receive \$500,000 in catalytic funding and access to a global learning community and network

TOKYO – The Citi Foundation (the “Foundation”) today announced the 50 community organizations around the world that will each receive \$500,000 in grant support as part of its 2025 Global Innovation Challenge. With this support, the selected organizations will help advance innovative employment solutions for low-income youth, building on Citi and the Citi Foundation’s [longstanding commitment](#) to young people and their economic futures.

In Japan, Non-Profit Organization SANKAKUSHA have been selected as grantee. They will be working locally to create a new employment support system to provide safe job opportunities for young people at risk of dark part-time jobs or crime due to isolation and economic hardship. Through Citi Foundation grant, the program aims to support 10,000 young people with safe work opportunities.

Youth unemployment is an ongoing and pervasive issue. Despite recent progress, the International Labour Organization estimates that 65 million young people globally are unemployed — which places a substantial burden on public resources, increases poverty and stifles growth, presenting a critical challenge to global economic progress.

“As young people today continue to navigate significant barriers to employment, empowering this next generation with relevant skills and meaningful opportunities is critical,” said Edward Skyler, Head of Enterprise Services and Public Affairs at Citi. “Citi and the Citi Foundation have an established track record of investing in our youth to help them access job opportunities and unlock economic growth more broadly. I look forward to seeing the work of our grantees in action as we work together to help close the job-skills mismatch.”

Young people face many obstacles in their pursuit of employment, but skills mismatch continues to be a particular area of concern. The World Economic Forum reports that 63% of employers identify this as a major barrier to securing a job, and 39% of current skill sets are expected to be outdated within the next five years. In addition, post-pandemic recovery for youth has been uneven — especially in emerging markets — and the acceleration of digital transformation is rapidly reshaping job opportunities. Projections indicate that 60% of employers anticipate broadening digital access transforming their businesses by 2030, creating high demand for new skills in areas such as AI.

The \$25 million in grant support from the Citi Foundation will enable these community organizations, which were selected through a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process, to pilot and scale employment solutions for low-income youth. The grants will support a variety of programs, such as upskilling for digital literacy (including AI), technical and vocational training, work-based learning, career guidance and resources for entrepreneurs and mentorship. These impactful solutions are designed to help young people adapt to rapidly changing economies and a job market that looks different than it has for generations before.



Programs funded by these grants will be implemented over two years and recipients will have access to a learning community of fellow grantees that facilitates opportunities to build deeper connections, share lessons learned and exchange best practices.

For more information, including the complete list of grant recipients, please visit www.citifoundation.com/challenge and follow the impact these organizations are making at #InnovationChallenge on social media.

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