

AstraZeneca commits \$35M to reduce NCDs

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AstraZeneca will extend funding for its award-winning Young Health Programme for a further five years with a pledge of \$35 million (£28 million) to help to educate young people on the steps they can take to reduce the risk of non-communicable diseases.

These diseases, which include cancer, diabetes, heart disease and heart failure, are responsible for the majority of deaths worldwide, and over two-thirds of those deaths can be directly attributed to behaviour that begins in adolescence.

The Young Health Programme was launched in 2010 as the focus of AstraZeneca's global philanthropy. It is a disease prevention programme designed to reach adolescents in under-resourced communities and work with them to reduce risk behaviours including smoking, the harmful use of alcohol, poor diet and lack of exercise.

Marc Dunoyer, Chief Financial Officer, said: "Non-communicable diseases continue to be the number one cause of death worldwide, and around 70% of those deaths can be linked to behaviour that begins in adolescence. The Young Health Programme is AstraZeneca's key philanthropic initiative that has already reached more than three million young people across the world. I'm proud to say that this extra funding will see the programme expand into Thailand, Egypt, Colombia and beyond, and reach a further five million young people by 2025."

Rose Caldwell, Chief Executive, Plan International UK, said: "Ten years ago we co-founded the Young Health Programme with AstraZeneca and at the time, we were entering a space where we knew there was a lot that needed to be done. The health of young people was not high on the global agenda and their rights were not being recognised. What we have accomplished together is a true reflection of the trust and collaboration of our partnership and learnings shared across the globe from Brazil to Indonesia. We are moving in the right direction with a marked increase in global health discussions addressing the health rights of young people and the threat of non-communicable diseases. Together over the next five years we will continue to champion the rights of young people."

The announcement comes as the One Young World Summit takes place in London, bringing together more than 2,500 young people from all over the world to highlight and discuss some of the most serious issues facing the next generation and build connections that work towards solutions. The Summit is aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals and increases awareness of the work of young people in this space.

AstraZeneca's Young Health Programme has this year provided scholarships to 25 young people from all over the world, aged 18 to 30. These scholars are global changemakers in their own right and are actively leading efforts to improve the health and wellbeing of young people in their home countries. They will attend the summit to learn, network and hear testimony from talented and motivated young people from all walks of life.