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News Release

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GRAND CHALLENGES CANADA WELCOMES BILL & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION TO SAVING BRAINS INITIATIVE

Toronto, Canada – The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has joined the Saving Brains initiative today by launching the Grand Challenges Explorations topic ‘Explore New Ways to Measure Fetal and Infant Brain Development’.

Over 200 million children in developing countries are unable to fulfill their developmental potential (Grantham-McGregor et al, *Lancet* 2007). Healthy child development is the foundation of a vital and productive society with a prosperous and sustainable future (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2010).

The Saving Brains Grand Challenge aims to unlock the potential of children by developing and scaling up products, services and policies that protect and nurture early brain development in an equitable and sustainable manner, thereby providing an exit strategy from poverty.

Saving Brains, which focuses on child development, complements Canada’s strong commitment to women and children’s health through leadership of the Muskoka Initiative. Mrs. Laureen Harper is the Honorary Chair of the Saving Brains program.

To date, Grand Challenges Canada, which is funded by the Government of Canada, has extended almost \$28 million CAD to 46 projects in the program. These investments include the development of metrics to measure results.

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation becomes the first global partner to join the initiative. In November 2013, the Maria Cecilia Souto Vidigal Foundation and the Bernard van Leer Foundation, in association with Grand Challenges Brazil, an initiative of the Brazil Ministry of Health, joined as regional partners.

“The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is pleased to join Grand Challenges Canada’s Saving Brains initiative with this initial contribution of a Grand Challenges Explorations topic on measuring brain development,” said Dr. Trevor Mundel, President of the Global Health Program at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. “I also want to congratulate Canada for working to integrate its Muskoka Initiative commitment to maternal and child survival with innovations in child development, through its Saving Brains initiative.”

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Said Dr. Peter Singer, Chief Executive Officer of Grand Challenges Canada, "I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for joining the Saving Brains initiative. Together with other partners, we will be able to unleash the power of innovation to ensure children not only survive, but also thrive. This is no less than what any parent would want for their children, anywhere in the world."

For more information, please read the [blog post](#) by Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Dr. Jeff Murray and Grand Challenges Canada's Dr. Karlee Silver, or access the [Grand Challenges Explorations topic](#).

About Grand Challenges Canada

Grand Challenges Canada is dedicated to supporting Bold Ideas with Big Impact™ in global health. We are funded by the Government of Canada through the Development Innovation Fund announced in the 2008 Federal Budget. We fund innovators in low- and middle-income countries and Canada. Grand Challenges Canada works with the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), and other global health foundations and organizations to find sustainable, long-term solutions through Integrated Innovation® – bold ideas that integrate science, technology, social and business innovation. Grand Challenges Canada is hosted at the Sandra Rotman Centre.

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FOR MEDIA ENQUIRIES

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