



Grand Challenges Canada®
Grands Défis Canada

News Release

April 15, 2015

CANADA AND INDIA ANNOUNCE FUNDING FOR INNOVATIONS TO IMPROVE CHILD HEALTH

\$2.5 million investment package through Grand Challenges partnership between Grand Challenges Canada and 'Grand Challenges India' initiative of Department of Biotechnology, Government of India

Toronto, Canada – Grand Challenges Canada, funded by the Government of Canada, and the Grand Challenges India initiative of the Department of Biotechnology, Government of India, today announced an investment of \$2.5 million (CAD) in five health innovations in India. Many of these novel projects aim to improve maternal, newborn and child health (known as 'MNCH'), which is Canada's flagship development priority, and a tremendous challenge for the Government of India.

The announcement includes a \$1.3 million investment in a Transition to Scale project providing 'crèches' (daycare centers) for children of migrant construction workers in India; and three proof-of-concept grants (totaling \$795,000) of which two are co-funded by India's Department of Biotechnology (DBT). India and Canada have also agreed to accelerate ongoing efforts towards the elimination of visceral leishmaniasis in India by jointly supporting an existing Grand Challenges Canada project in Bihar state.

The new funding package was announced during an official visit to Canada of the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It underlines and strengthens the strong ties between Canada and India on global health innovation. To date, Grand Challenges Canada has supported over 100 innovations in India, for a total investment of more than \$22.7 million. Grand Challenges Canada has also partnered with the National Council of Indo-Canadians to ensure engagement of Canada's vibrant Indian community in the Grand Challenges partnership.

This announcement builds on the Programme of Cooperation that was signed in February 2014 between Grand Challenges Canada and the Government of India's Department of Biotechnology, which was signed during the state visit to India of His Excellency Governor General David Johnston and Mrs. Sharon Johnston. That agreement promotes the development of long-term cooperation between Canada and India in the fields of global health, early child development, women and children's health and mental health.

SAVING BRAINS

Saving Brains is a partnership of Grand Challenges Canada, Aga Khan Foundation Canada, Bernard van Leer Foundation, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Maria Cecila Souto Vidigal Foundation, Norlien Foundation, and World Vision Canada. It supports bold ideas to promote healthy brain development in the first 1000 days with lasting impact on human capital in low- and middle-income countries, so children and societies can reach their full potential.

Transition to Scale Project



Grand Challenges Canada is investing \$650,000 in the organization *Mobile Crèches*, an amount that is matched by other corporations and construction companies. The investment (\$1.3 million in total) will enable Mobile Crèches to scale their approach to improving child development by training non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to deliver the well-established, free, holistic childcare program for young children of migrant construction workers, a program Mobile Crèches has been running for 45 years.

The Indian construction industry is the second largest employer after agriculture and employs 30 million workers. Three million young children of these migrant construction workers end up on construction sites, in unsafe and unhygienic surroundings, without physical, educational and emotional care, and exposed to health risks.

Mobile Crèches will work with construction companies and NGOs to create the infrastructure and employment conditions to establish crèches that provide a safe, nurturing environment, nutritious meals, opportunities to play and learn, and access to health services, including immunization and growth monitoring.

Being an innovative tripartite engagement of construction companies, NGOs and Mobile Crèches, the primary focus of the project will be on building an entire management framework to run these crèches, in partnership with current and new builder partners and service-providing NGOs, and then transferring the business operations.

URL: <http://bit.ly/1csl24M>

Proof-of-concept Projects

Three proof-of-concept projects will each receive a \$265,000 grant. Two of these three novel projects are co-funded by DBT.

- A community-based model of Kangaroo Mother Care for improving child survival and brain development in low-birth-weight newborns (*)
Society for Applied Studies (<http://bit.ly/19yjep8>)



- Implementation of the International Guide for Monitoring Child Development (IGMCD): An individualized, technology-aided approach to promoting early childhood development in a low-income setting in Mumbai (*)
Ummeed Child Development Center (<http://bit.ly/1BIQBMF>)
- Scaling early childhood development at Anganwadi Centres in India
Datta Meghe Institute of Medical Sciences (Deemed University) (<http://bit.ly/1Dn9r1h>)

(*) Project co-funded by DBT India

Elimination of Visceral Leishmaniasis (Kala Azar) in Bihar

Grand Challenges Canada and the Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology (India), have agreed to accelerate efforts to eliminate visceral leishmaniasis (VL) in Bihar, India. In 2011, Grand Challenges Canada supported a novel project to train village Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) to identify and refer individuals with VL for point-of-care diagnostics and treatment at primary health centres. The approach was able to achieve significant results: it saved



the lives of 110 people and has contributed to a major reduction of VL in four Primary Health Centres (PHCs) to date. DBT and Grand Challenges Canada will jointly invest \$465,000 in ASHA training in 25 highly endemic PHCs and case tracking in 5 PHCs. (<http://bit.ly/1CUVh2B>)

Dr. Krishnaswamy VijayRaghavan, Secretary of the Department of Biotechnology, Government of India, said: “India has historic and close links with Canada in science and technology. Disease and poor nutrition affect early growth, including the development of brains. Using our shared strengths to collaborate and address these problems will directly help the lives of many, and also demonstrate ways of scaling such interventions to populations that need it most.”

Dr. VijayRaghavan also notes: “The Department of Biotechnology, Government of India congratulates Grand Challenges Canada on partnering in the development of Grand Challenges Israel. DBT, India, is delighted to extend all cooperation to develop partnerships so that Canada, Israel and India can work together to address challenges even more effectively. Israel’s thought leadership in technology innovation and implementation will be particularly valuable in this new partnership.”

Dr. Peter A. Singer, Chief Executive Officer of Grand Challenges Canada, said: “Through Grand Challenges Canada, the Government of Canada is supporting innovative solutions to challenges of children’s health. The enhanced partnership between India and Canada will help solve these challenges.”

Mr. Sudhir Handa, Chair, National Council of Indo Canadians, said: “The longstanding relationship between India and Canada has grown to include collaboration in many fields, including global health. I am proud to see that this partnership will improve the lives of so many children in India, equipping a whole generation for a better future.”

For more information, visit grandchallenges.ca and look for us on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn.

To learn about the portfolio of innovations, visit savingbrainsinnovation.net.

– 30 –

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; we support innovators in low- and middle-income countries and Canada. The bold ideas we support integrate science and technology, social and business innovation to find sustainable solutions to health challenges – we call this Integrated Innovation®. Grand Challenges Canada focuses on innovator-defined challenges through its Stars in Global Health program and on targeted challenges in its Saving Lives at Birth, Saving Brains and Global Mental Health programs. Grand Challenges Canada works closely with Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada (DFATD) to catalyze scale, sustainability and impact. We have a determined focus on results, and on saving and improving lives.

www.grandchallenges.ca

FOR MEDIA ENQUIRIES:

LODE ROELS

Press Officer
Grand Challenges Canada
T. 647.328.2021 / 416.673.6570
lode.roels@grandchallenges.ca

TERRY COLLINS

T. 416.538.8712 / 416.878.8712
tc@tca.tc