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Grand Challenges India launches All Children Thriving initiative

Launched in 2013, Grand Challenges India (GCI), a collaborative effort of the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India; the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) - a Government of Indi

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Launched in 2013, Grand Challenges India (GCI), a collaborative effort of the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India; the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) - a Government of India enterprise; and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, is now launching its third initiative, 'All Children Thriving' after rolling out two successful initiatives: 'Achieving Healthy Growth through Agriculture and Nutrition' and 'Reinvent the Toilet Challenge'.

Undertaken in partnership with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the program aims to ensure that all children not only survive but are also are on a trajectory to live healthy and productive lives.

Dr M. K. Bhan, Former Secretary, Department of Biotechnology, Government of India announced this next phase of Grand Challenges India. 'All Children Thriving' funds for seed grants are $500,000 for up to two years and full grants are $2.5 million for up to four years and focus on innovative tools and approaches that will drastically alter the public health landscape.

"The partnership between Government of India and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) to support innovative solutions to global problems has been realized through the Grand Challenge initiatives. On the 10th anniversary of the Grand Challenges meet, we must ensure that the under-privileged have access to health services, good nutrition and proper sanitation facilities. GCI's new call opportunity attempts to make positive changes in the lives of children in India. This is a major step forward in the DBT-BIRAC-Bill and Melinda Gates Joint Mission" said Dr Vijay Raghavan, Secretary, DBT, Government of India and Chairman, BIRAC.

Over the past 10 years, the annual Grand Challenges Meetings have served as a platform for building the momentum required to tackle global health and development challenges and translating progress into impact. The annual meetings have convened world renowned researchers, government officials and donors. On the 10th anniversary celebration, the Grand Challenges Meeting was jointly hosted by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Grand

Challenges Canada, USAID and The Wellcome Trust.

“GCI’s announcement indicates that we can make a difference when we work together, and our partnership with BMGF will help us find innovative solutions to address societal needs. DBT and BIRAC are proud to take forward the vision and initiatives of global thrust in developing innovative technologies to achieve sustainable gains to solve human health, food and nutritional inequities” said Dr Renu Swarup, Managing Director of BIRAC.

Further, Girindre Beeharry Director, India Country Office, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation stated, “By unlocking creative thinking and new approaches, this challenge aims to give all children the chance to live healthy lives and fulfil their potential. We applaud the Government of India’s continued commitment to harnessing the power of innovation to overcome the problems facing India’s most vulnerable communities.”

Dr Sang E. Lee, Agricultural Development Officer, USAID India also added, “USAID is thrilled to have joined Grand Challenges India and to encourage the Government of India’s support of appropriate innovative solutions to address the most challenging development problems of our time. It is our hope that India’s leadership in this area will have broad reaching impacts in India and other countries facing similar challenges.”

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