

## **Pratham Education Foundation and ASER Centre Partner in Grand Challenges Explorations Grant Awarded to the University of Montreal Hospital Research Centre for Groundbreaking Research in Global Health and Development**

New Delhi, India – Pratham Education Foundation and ASER Centre announced today that they are partners in a winning [Grand Challenges Explorations](#) grant awarded to the University of Montreal Hospital Research Centre (CRCHUM). The innovative global health and development research project, titled Leveraging literacy initiatives to improve vaccine acceptance, was awarded on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012 to the University of Montreal Hospital Research Centre (CRCHUM).

“It is an honour and a privilege to have this opportunity to work with colleagues from Pratham Education Foundation to enhance equitable access to vaccines in underserved communities in India. We are tremendously excited about the potential of this work to improve vaccination outcomes and ultimately, child health and development,” says CRCHUM’s Dr. Mira Johri, project lead.

An initiative funded by the [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#), Grand Challenges Explorations (GCE) funds individuals worldwide who are taking innovative approaches to some of the world’s toughest and persistent global health and development challenges. GCE invests in the early stages of bold ideas that have real potential to solve the problems people in the developing world face every day. Dr. Johri’s project is one of over 80 Grand Challenges Explorations Round 9 grants announced by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

“Investments in innovative global health research are already paying off,” said Chris Wilson, director of Global Health Discovery and Translational Sciences at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. “We continue to be impressed by the novelty and innovative spirit of Grand Challenges Explorations projects and are enthusiastic about this exciting research. These investments hold real potential to yield new solutions to improve the health of millions of people in the developing world, and ensure that everyone has the chance to live a healthy productive life.”

Globally and in India, vaccination rates are lower for children from less educated families and communities. The project team proposes to leverage Pratham Education Foundation’s highly successful child literacy initiative to increase the reach of immunization in underserved Indian communities. Based on approaches pioneered by Pratham and ASER Centre, the team will develop effective grassroots communication approaches to improve vaccination rates in low-literacy populations, and strategies for community-based monitoring and advocacy to improve demand for immunization services. “This work may yield novel approaches to target the pervasive pathway between low education and poor immunization outcomes,” explains Dr. Smriti Pahwa, project lead for ASER Centre.

The University of Montreal Hospital Research Centre (CRCHUM) is the largest biomedical and health care research centre affiliated with the University of Montreal and one of the most important in Canada. Pratham is the largest non-governmental organization working to provide quality education to the underprivileged children of India. Its partner, ASER (Assessment Survey Evaluation and Research) Centre, is an international leader in the use of community-based methods to monitor and evaluate program

impact. This Grand Challenges Exploration Grant will enable the team to explore new avenues to contribute to child health and development.

About Grand Challenges Explorations

[Grand Challenges Explorations](#) is a US\$100 million initiative funded by the [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#). Launched in 2008, over 700 people in 45 countries have received Grand Challenges Explorations grants. The grant program is open to anyone from any discipline and from any organization. The initiative uses an agile, accelerated grant-making process with short two-page online applications and no preliminary data required. Initial grants of US\$100,000 are awarded two times a year. Successful projects have the opportunity to receive a follow-on grant of up to US\$1 million.

About the CRCHUM: [www.crchum.qc.ca](http://www.crchum.qc.ca)

About Pratham: <http://www.pratham.org>

About ASER Centre : [www.asercentre.org](http://www.asercentre.org)

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