Innovator's Meet

Media Coverage Report

15-16 September, 2015

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Summary

The winners of the 'All Children Thriving' grants of the Grand Challenges India initiative were awarded the certificates for funding at the 4th BIRAC Innovator's Meeting on September 15, 2015 at the Heritage Village Resort in Manesar, Gurgaon. The awards were given by Dr. K. VijayRaghavan, Secretary, Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Government of India. Seven grants were awarded at the event, six seed grants of USD 500,000 for a period of two years and one full grant of USD 2.5 million for a period of four years.

In India, an estimated 26 million children are born every year. An estimated 1.27 million children die every year before completing 5 years. 81% of under-five child mortality takes place within one year of birth which accounts for nearly 1 million infant deaths and 57% of under-five deaths take place within the first one month of life accounting for 730,000 neo-natal deaths every year in the country.

The third Grand Challenges grants program, 'All Children Thriving', was launched in October 2014. The initiative, undertaken in partnership with USAID, aims to develop multi-sectoral interventions that can reduce the burden of preterm birth, stunted postnatal growth, and impaired cognitive development in Indian children.

The Grand Challenges India initiative was jointly launched by the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), DBT and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) in 2013 to promote innovative health and development research within India, exclusively for Indian researchers. Under the initiative, the DBT and the Gates Foundation pledged an investment up to US$25 million each, over 5 years to promote innovations in vaccines, drugs, agricultural products, and interventions related to improving maternal and child health.

Media support from GHS

GHS organized the media engagement for the Innovator's Meeting. On the whole, the event was covered by 23 publications.

Three journalists from leading media outlets and agencies attended the event. Journalists from Indo Asian News Service (IANS), Live Mint and Dainik Bhaskar were present on ground. GHS organized interviews for the journalists with the 'All Children Thriving' awardees as well as with Dr. VijayRaghavan, Secretary, DBT.

Dainik Bhaskar, a widely read Hindi newspaper carried an interview with Dr. VijayRaghavan on September 16. Through the IANS news agency, the award ceremony was covered by more than 21 online news portals such as Business Standard, Zee News, Business World, Yahoo New, The Siasat Daily and India Medical Times, among others.

Please note that this report only lists the prominent publications and not all of the media outlets that covered the story.

Media Coverage

live mint

Grand Challenges grants awarded to seven projects on children's health

September 16, 2015

New Delhi: Developing methods to identify mothers at risk of premature births, finding out which children are likely to face stunting, and nutritional and environmental interventions to prevent stunting—these are some of the projects that were awarded grants on Tuesday under the 'All Children Thriving' Grand Challenges programme.

The programme, a collaborative effort by the Department of Biotechnology and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, offers seed grants of $500,000 for two years and full grants of $2.5 million for up to four years.

This year Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council awarded a full grant to one project and seed grants to six projects. The third Grand Challenges grant programme in partnership with USAID was launched in October 2014 in the US.

Nita Bhandari, director of the New Delhi-based Centre for Health Research and Development in Society for Applied Studies, was awarded a full grant for her project to improve linear growth of children in low-income settings through household supported interventions using nutritional environment and care in pregnancy and early childhood.

Bhandari is a public health researcher specialising in community based research related to child health and nutrition with special focus on nutritional intervention trials to reduce childhood morbidity and mortality, nutrition-infection interaction, and vaccine trials to prevent childhood infectious diseases.

The six seeds grantees had proposed projects ranging from genomics, agricultural interventions and counting certain blood cells to improve maternal and neo natal health. "Given that today in neonatal health, preterm and intrauterine growth restricted births are a major problem, what we have decided to take on in this study is to identify all the biological correlations and causalities regarding why preterm births take place. And that way we can develop interventions to prevent preterm births," said Arindam Maitra, associate professor, National Institute of Biomedical Genomics, Kalyani, West Bengal.

Maitra will be collaborating with Faridabad-based Translational Health Science and Technology Institute (THSTI) to conduct a study on a cohort of 8,000 women to investigate if stress causes pre-term births and which mothers are at risk of pre-term delivery due to stress.

Another group of scientists will test a new approach to investigate stunting in Indian children and which children are vulnerable.

“One of the issues we have in India is incidence rate of stunting is higher here than in parts of the world which are considered less developed like sub Saharan Africa. One of the hypothesis we have is that there is early inflammation in the intestine of the Indian kids, possibly because of excessive colonization of microbes that happens when children are exposed to many microbes when they are born,” said Uma Chandra Mouli Natchu, assistant professor at THSTI in Faridabad.

“In another study that we are doing, we have seen the neutrophil count (which are cells in blood that immediately respond to infections and try to control them), in children of 6 weeks of age is low in India,” he added.

The neutrophil count, he explained, could be an indicator of inflamed intestines in kids that are not able to absorb nutrients as well as in kids with normal intestines.

“So at 6 weeks of age, a neutrophil count can be done, costs 50 bucks to predict which kids will grow well and which won’t,” said the scientist.

BW|BUSINESSWORLD

All Children Thriving Receives Funds From Grand Challenges India Initiative

September 15, 2015

The winners of the 'All Children Thriving' grants of the Grand Challenges India initiative were awarded the certificates for funding at the 4th Innovator's Meeting on Tuesday (September 15). The third Grand Challenges grant programme, All Children Thriving, was launched in October 2014 to ensure that all children not only survive but are also on a trajectory to live a healthy productive life. '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. Six seed grants and 1 full grant were awarded the certificate for funding at the Innovator's meet.

The Grand Challenges India initiative was jointly launched by the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), DBT and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) in 2013 to promote innovative health and development research within India, exclusively for Indian researchers. Till date, the two previous grants, 'Achieving Healthy Growth through Agriculture and Nutrition' and 'Reinvent the Toilet Challenge' have collectively funded ten researchers and social entrepreneurs from across the country.

K. Vijay Raghavan, Secretary, Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Government of India said, "Stimulating an atmosphere of research is one of the major instruments to tackle the problems plaguing the country. The Grand Challenges initiative has grown tremendously in the past decade and partnerships have played a key role through knowledge sharing and cross pollination of ideas. Through the Grand Challenges programme, we aim to create a conducive 'innovation ecosystem' in the country to encourage creativity and inventiveness among young researchers."

The 'All Children Thriving' grants aim to develop multi-sectoral interventions that can reduce the burden of preterm birth, stunted postnatal growth, and impaired cognitive development. In India, an estimated 26 million children are born every year. An estimated 1.27 million children die every year before completing 5 years. 81 per cent of under-five child mortality takes place within one year of birth which accounts for nearly 10.5 lakh infant deaths and 57 per cent of under-five deaths take place within the first one month of life accounting for 7.3 lakh neo-natal deaths every year in the country.

The awardees under All Children Thriving are Nita Bhandari, Director of Centre for Health Research and Development, Society for Applied Studies, New Delhi, Balakrishnan Ramakrishna, Professor for Medical Research at SRM Institutes for Medical Science, Chennai, Uma Chandra Mouli Natchu, Assistant Professor, Translational Health Science and Technology Institute, Faridabad, Arindam Maitra, Associate Professor, National Institute of Biomedical Genomics, Kalyani, West Bengal, Poonam Verma ShivKumar, Professor, Department of

Obstetrics & Gynaecology Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences, Wardha, Shinjini Bhatnagar, Dean Professor and Head, Translational Health Science and Technology Institute, Faridabad.

Dainik Bhaskar – A widely-read Hindi daily

विज्ञान को अवाम से जोड़ने का प्रयोग

मुकेश केजरीवाल, नई दिल्ली

इस वर्ष की थीम बाल स्वास्थ्य

'ग्रैंड चैलेंजेज इंडिया' के तहत बाल स्वास्थ्य पर नए प्रयोगों को मिलेगी सहायता

प्रो. के. विजय राघवन

Business Standard

Researchers awarded grants for new innovations

September 15, 2015

Mother and child health were the main focus of the winners of the 'All Children Thriving' grants under the Grand Challenges India initiative. The winners were on Tuesday awarded certificates for their innovations.

The awards were given by K. Vijay Raghavan, secretary in the department of biotechnology under the central government.

The Grand Challenges India initiative was jointly launched by the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council under the department, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in 2013 to promote innovative health and development research within India, exclusively for Indian researchers.

"Stimulating an atmosphere of research is one of the major instruments to tackle the problems plaguing the country... we aim to create a conducive 'innovation ecosystem' in the country to encourage creativity and inventiveness among young researchers," Raghavan said.

The 'All Children Thriving' grants aim to develop multi-sectoral interventions that can reduce the burden of preterm birth, stunted postnatal growth, and impaired cognitive development.

Arindam Maitra, associate professor at the National Institute of Biomedical Genomics in Kalyani in West Bengal, who was one of the winners, said: "We are part of a larger programme which is ongoing to identify the biological underpinnings of preterm birth.

"The present study that we've proposed is rooted in this larger programme that we are working on. We are working on sustained stress during pregnancy of the mother that results in ehanced risk of preterm birth."

"We have proposed to develop a method by which we can detect those mothers who are under stress and because of which have a higher risk for preterm delivery. The original study is on 8,000 pregnant woman."

Uma Chandra Mouli Natchu, assistant professor at the Translational Health Science and Technology Institute in Faridabad, said: "My research will be on 200 infants at Gurgaon civil hospital. This reserach can help us find out which child is at the risk of being short."

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YAHOO! NEWS

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سیاست
The Siasat Daily

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India MedicalTimes
An AalaTimes Media Venture

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The Free Press Journal, Mumbai, September 25, 2015

BIRAC celebrated its 4th Innovators Meet

Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) celebrated its 4th Innovators Meet. The Meet marked the triumph of talented scientific innovators, who have taken a leap of faith into successful entrepreneurship. The prestigious BIRAC Innovator Awards were given by Prof. K. VijayRaghavan, Secretary, DBT & Chairman, BIRAC. The event witnessed keen participation from over 250 delegates representing the Government, Industry, Academia, Accelerators & Investors.

Hindustan Times, Delhi, September 24, 2015

Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) celebrates its 4th Innovators Meet. The BIRAC Innovator Awards were given by Prof. K. VijayRaghavan, Secretary, DBT & Chairman, BIRAC. The event witnessed participation from over 250 delegates.

Millenium Post, New Delhi, September 24, 2015

CORPORATE KALEIDO

DBT Secretary & Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council Chairman Prof K Vijay Raghavan presented the Innovator Awards at BIRAC's 4th Innovators Meet