

THE HEWLETT AND GATES FOUNDATIONS AWARD \$9 MILLION TO PRATHAM'S READ INDIA CAMPAIGN

Santa Clara, CA – July 5, 2007 – Sixty million children in India will get added help in basic math, reading and writing from the non-profit organization Pratham, thanks in part to a \$9.1 million grant from the William and Flora Hewlett and Bill & Melinda Gates foundations, Pratham leaders announced today.

The grant supports Pratham's Read India initiative, which is working in conjunction with Indian state governments to help ensure that children between the ages of 6 and 14 achieve basic mastery in these skills by the end of 2009.

The gift to Pratham is the first grant the Hewlett and Gates foundations have awarded in their partnership to improve the quality of education in developing countries. The two foundations previously announced that they will collaborate on a series of grants to improve the quality of education at primary and secondary schools in the developing world.

The grant to Pratham will improve basic learning skills in 100 districts of India, touching 10 million children spread over 10 states for three years. The project, which was launched in January, will be executed in two phases: first "learning to read" followed by "reading to learn." The grant also will support: a rigorous evaluation of the Read India program, the large-scale expansion of a model to rapidly improve learning levels of children in language, mathematics, physical sciences, social sciences and life skills, and an evaluation of individual learning outcomes.

Dr. Madhav Chavan, Pratham co-founder and Director of Programs, thanked the two foundations.

"Thousands of members of the Pratham network are pleased with the generous grant," Dr. Chavan said. "It is an endorsement of our mission, strategy, and ability to deliver on a large scale."

He explained that an estimated 50 percent of the children in India cannot read at a minimum level. The Read India initiative, led by Pratham in collaboration with the state governments of India, is a phased programs that will focus on four major components: introducing "learning to read" activities in all schools, creating and supplying reading and learning materials to teachers, involving mothers in their children's learning, and mobilizing youth groups in helping teachers, children, and parents.

The program will be an important step in the efforts to end the cycle of poverty perpetuated by illiteracy and poor education. As part of its mission, Pratham volunteers and supporters are working to ensure that every Indian child is in school and learning

well, enabling India to eliminate childhood illiteracy in India and to meet the UN millennium education goals.

Hewlett Foundation President Paul Brest also welcomed the collaboration.

“We are pleased that Pratham’s Read India initiative is the first recipient of the collaboration between the Hewlett and Gates foundations,” he said. “The goal is to leverage the resources of both foundations to address a key barrier facing the poor -- lack of genuine educational opportunities. It also is an implicit recognition that profound social problems are interrelated. It’s hard to reduce poverty, improve health or raise the status of women without also extending to the poor access to a quality education.”

Brest said the Read India initiative is a good example of the type of grants the foundations plan to award because it holds the promise of large-scale impact on a major societal need combined with rigorous evaluation that should allow what’s learned be broadly applied elsewhere in the developing world.

Mahalingham Ramesh, president of Pratham USA, said, "In addition to this generous grant, our goal is to raise \$15 million in additional funding in the next two years through major sponsorships and individual donations in order to provide our remaining 500 districts with the necessary resources of staff, volunteers and measurement of results."

About The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation has been making grants since 1967 to help solve social and environmental problems at home and around the world. The Foundation concentrates its resources on activities in education, the environment, global development, performing arts, philanthropy and population, and makes grants to support disadvantaged communities in the San Francisco Bay Area. A full list of all the Hewlett Foundation’s grants can be found at www.hewlett.org.

About The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. In developing countries, it focuses on improving people’s health and giving them the chance to lift themselves out of hunger and extreme poverty. In the United States, it seeks to ensure that all people -- especially those with the fewest resources -- have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in school and life. Based in Seattle, the foundation is led by CEO Patty Stonesifer and co-chair William H. Gates Sr., under the direction of Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffett. For more information please visit www.gatesfoundation.org.

About Pratham and Pratham Affiliates

Pratham, founded in 1994 in partnership with UNICEF, is the largest educational non-government organization (NGO) in India. Pratham was founded in India as a grassroots effort to end illiteracy. Its mission is to provide under-privileged children in India with an opportunity to gain the reading and education skills needed to secure a job with a living wage and to improve their lives and the lives of future generations. Pratham reaches 350,000 children each year through its direct programs and many millions more through its libraries and its catalytic programs in partnership with state governments. Pratham is supported through individual donations as well as by a number of major foundations and corporations. Additional information may be found at www.Pratham.org and www.ReadIndia.org

Pratham USA, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, was established in 1999 to support Pratham's critical work in India. Pratham USA has chapters and dedicated groups of supporters in Boston, Chicago, Dallas/Fort Worth, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, North Carolina, and the San Francisco Bay Area. Pratham USA's Four Star rating from Charity Navigator (the highest possible) reflects their assessment of financial health and operational effectiveness including a fund-raising expense ratio of less than 10%. Please visit www.PrathamUSA.org for further information

Pratham UK is a registered charity (No. 1099386) in the UK which has, since inception in March 2003, raised over £1.5 million for various Pratham projects in India through charity balls, art auctions, concerts and runs. Supporters include corporates especially international banks, foundations and well known industrialists of Indian origin. Pratham UK was last year nominated "Charity of the Year" by Merrill Lynch endorsing Pratham's cause. Leading Indian artist MF Husain recently donated a painting that was auctioned at Christie's New York raising funds for the Read India project. Pratham UK is organising a Gala dinner in September to mobilise funds for the Read India initiative. For more information, please visit www.prathamuk.org.

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