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## **Medical Student Launches Campaign To Spread Her 16-Cent Solution To Anemia**

**DURHAM, NC – [JANUARY 12, 2013]** – Iron-deficiency anemia is the world’s most prevalent nutritional disorder. It is easily treated through having an adequate amount of iron in the diet, yet it remains a massive problem in India. It affects 900 million in India and accounts for 65% of maternal and fetal deaths. Rajvi Mehta, a first year medical student at Duke University and founder of Let’s Be Well Red (LBWR), is launching a campaign to raise \$20,000 to spread her simple 16-cent solution for Anemia in India.

Mehta founded “Let’s Be Well Red” as a movement to educate urban and rural populations about the effects of anemia and importance of nutrition, but she says, “I quickly realized that people were lacking an actual solution to get the adequate iron nutrition” in their daily diet.

In September 2012, Let’s Be Well Red launched GudNeSs bars- a simple and affordable solution to the anemia crisis in India. GudNeSs is an easy to eat, tasty, iron-rich nutritional supplement bar that contains the World Health Organization daily-recommended dose of iron. The proprietary recipe uses locally sourced ingredients found in the Indian diet that are rich in iron. The bars last up to 6 months and cost a nominal 10 rupees (16 cents), which Mehta says, “puts us between a cup of chai [tea] and a bag of chips.”

GudNeSs has grown rapidly since its launch a year ago. It has spread to 25 schools, 4 NGOs and 5 retailers across 3 states. GudNeSs production has increased to 70,000 bars from 10,000 bars. LBWR is also trying to team up with local governments to provide GudNeSs in mid-day meals for over 100 schools.

One reason behind its rapid growth has been LBWR’s focus on creating a grass-roots social movement, the Health Scouts. Health Scouts are comprised of high school students who spread education and awareness about anemia in their local communities. Last year, the number of Health Scouts grew from 100 to 400. Mehta believes that the Health Scouts program is a major reason why GudNeSs will succeed where previous efforts have failed. “We believe a major step in motivating people to seek out a solution is to educate them on the problem, and government and for-profit efforts have just ignored this.”

The bulk of the \$20,000 will go towards meeting increasing demands from additional states in India. “Our goal is to provide GudNeSs to every anemic individual in India,” Mehta explains. The funds will allow LBWR to open a new production unit in south India and to purchase private transportation to cut distribution costs.

LBWR commitment to accessibility and sustainability has led it to implement a unique business model. Sales of bars in urban centers subsidize supply of bars to rural areas. Additionally, LBWR has created women-production units in villages, where women are empowered to make GudNeSs and sell it in their community as a source of income, further spreading this solution.

To support LBWR efforts, visit their [Indiegogo campaign here](#). The first 100 people to donate to the GudNeSs campaign will receive complementary GudNeSs bars. Additional rewards have been set up to thank supporters.

**About Let’s Be Well Red**

LBWR aims to end iron-deficiency anemia in India. Anemia is a big problem in India, and affects over 900 million people and accounts for 65% of maternal and fetal deaths. Yet the solution is very simple— all that is needed is the daily-recommended dose of iron. Let's Be Well Red picks up where previous government efforts have failed. It focuses on education—'Health Scouts' from various high schools spread awareness about the effects of anemia in their local communities— and on providing a solution to the problem in the form of GudNeSs bars. LBWR employs 5 full time employees, 25 part-time, and 3 working owners in India and has partnered with the Fuqua School of Business and Duke Global Health Institute.

### **About Rajvi and the Team**

Rajvi Mehta is a medical student at Duke University. She was born and raised in India, and completed her undergraduate education at Brown University. At Brown, Mehta suffered the consequences of anemia and soon realized the scope of the problem in her motherland. She founded Let's Be Well Red along with fellow students at Brown University to mobilize a Health Scouts program in India. Eventually, this led to the development of GudNeSs bars. Now the team has spread to Duke University, where 15 other medical students have been brought on to manage various aspects from business and marketing to planning research studies and anemia treatment camps.