**SONAM KAPOOR JOINS GEMS EDUCATION, UNICEF, RELIANCE GROUP AND THE GLOBAL GOALS CAMPAIGN TO LAUNCH THE WORLD’S LARGEST LESSON INDIA PROGRAMME ON NATIONAL TEACHERS DAY**

“If we want to reach real peace in this world, we should start educating children” – **Mahatma Gandhi**

**INDIA, 5th September 2015 –** In September 2016, world leaders, including Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, will mark the first anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. These Global Goals are a global plan to end poverty, reduce inequalities and combat the threat of climate change by 2030.

The World’s Largest Lesson provides a unique opportunity for children and young people to engage with the SDGs. Launched in September 2015, lessons have taken place in 160 countries. Participating schools used original learning materials about the Global Goals that were translated into 25 languages. The materials included lesson plans, comic books and an animated film introduced by Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai, tennis champion Serena Williams and international football star Neymar Jr. In India alone, the World’s Largest Lesson reached an estimated 3 million children who watched an animation film on the Global Goals.

On the occasion of **National Teachers Day**, 250 eminent educationalists, UN Global Goals champions, members of civil society, UN bodies, corporates, youth groups, students, teachers and one of the esteemed ambassadors of the World’s Largest Lesson, Indian Actor and youth icon **Sonam Kapoor**, gathered at **GEMS Academy, Gurgaon**, to launch **The World’s Largest Lesson India,** the India chapter of the programme, which aims to teach every child in India – nearly 360 million - a lesson about the Global Goals.

Powered by India partner **GEMS Education**, the world’s largest K-12 private education provider, and implemented in partnership with **UNICEF**, The World’s Largest Lesson Indiawill encourageschools to teach at least one lesson on the Global Goals, to make sure children understand and are empowered by the commitments their country has made to ending poverty, inequality and climate change by 2030. Schools are then encouraged to support students to take action to help achieve the goals.

India is a global leader economically and in technology, and has every potential to become a front-runner in ending poverty. The country is at the crossroads of transformation and several strides have been made to address national and global issues, but more can and needs to be done. With over a quarter of the world’s population being under the age of 14 years old and with India having the largest youth population in the world, children and young people will be most affected by the implementation of the goals. The World’s Largest Lesson India initiative aims to engage children and young people in the ambitions of the goals and encourage their participation in this process of change.

The World’s Largest Lesson is an initiative by **Project Everyone**, an organisation conceived by **Writer, Director, Comic Relief Co­founder & UN SDG Advocate** **Richard Curtis** to make the Global Goals famous, so that they stand the greatest chance of being achieved. Speaking about the launch of World’s Largest Lesson India, he said***,*** *“We are delighted to launch the World’s Largest Lesson India and are grateful to our founding partner GEMS Education for making this happen. We are overwhelmed with the incredible support of partners such as Reliance Group, tGELF, the very talented Sonam Kapoor and countless others for helping us to engage children in the Global Goals.*

*Children and young people are right at the heart of the Global Goals agenda. The World’s Largest Lesson is based on the idea that if children right across the world grow up knowing about the goals and feeling positive that this is practical plan with a deadline that they can fight for, then I truly believe that this will help them become the first generation to end extreme poverty, the most determined generation to fight inequality and injustice and the last generation to be threatened by climate change. The World’s Largest Lesson is just the first step in this but it’s a very important one and we’re delighted that India’s children can take part. “*

**GEMS Education** is the founding strategic partner for The World’s Largest Lesson India campaign and powers all activities in India. Speaking about their association, **Mr Amreesh Chandra, Group President of GEMS Education** said**:** *“With India accounting to nearly 17% of the world’s population, we have a strategic and resourceful advantage to reshape the world’s priorities, provided we are equipped to understand and execute them effectively. Through the World’s Largest Lesson initiative in India, we are leveraging the GEMS network - 175 schools, over 70,000 children and over 6,000 teachers in India - to spread knowledge of the global goals, pivotal to pursuing national and world development.*

*With 17 global goals for sustainable development to be achieved in the next 15 years, GEMS Education sees this as a priority to teach the next generation of world leaders. As a value driven institution, GEMS Education has already been encouraging students across its international campuses to embrace responsibility for over the last 55 years; and today we are looking beyond us, and reaching out to the country as a whole to help propagate the world’s priorities – the UN global goals”.*

**UNICEF Executive Director Anthony Lake** said: *“The World’s Largest Lesson will do more than teach children about the global goals. It will engage them in the effort to achieve those goals – educating them about the challenges that are shaping their futures and encouraging them to drive change in their own communities. Young people can help achieve the global goals by holding their leaders accountable for the promises they are making – and by holding themselves accountable for building a better future for everyone.”*

During the event a number of individuals, corporates and organisations confirmed to take action to support the World’s Largest Lesson India initiative by spreading awareness of the lesson plans through their distribution channels, networks, media reach, the children and teachers they support, and employees.

Leading the support is Reliance Group, one of India's largest business conglomerates who were also the first corporate partner for the 2015 India campaign. This year, the group shall promote The World Largest Lesson India initiative through its various customer-facing platforms. Other notable pledges came from NGOs; **Akshaya Patra**, the world’s largest free midday meal programme reaching over 1.4 million children in India, **Save the Children**; and youth and education empowerment organisations such as **The Global Education & Leadership Foundation** (**tGELF**).

With GEMS Education’s support, The World’s Largest Lesson Indiaprogramme has produced new comics and animated shorts specifically created for India’s children. Based on the popular animated superhero characters *Chakra the Invincible* and *Mighty Girl*, created by legendary icon, **Stan Lee,** Chief Creative Officer at POW! Entertainment and **Sharad Devarajan**, Co-Founder & CEO of **Graphic India**. The comics will bring to life through creative storytelling four key issues impacting India today\*: Goal 6 - clean water and sanitation (WASH), Goal 5 – gender equality, Goal 4 – quality education, Goal 13 – climate action.

The comic books will be translated into English and five regional Indian languages - Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Telegu and Tamil - and will be available to download and view for free from 15th October 2016 from The World’s Largest Lesson India website. The involvement of high-profile personalities who will co-edit some of the comic books, will add further appeal for the lesson programme amongst children.

The leading comic book includes activities for children to help their understanding of core issues and to encourage student action. One specific action being encouraged is with World’s Largest Lesson India partner **Design for Change**, an organisation that encourages students to create their own change projects In schools. In partnership with GEMS Education, the Design for Change “I Can” schools challenge will offer a prize to a school that has created a sustainable change project in their community and can link this to the ambition of a specific Global Goal.

**Quote from Sharad Devarajan, *“****Superheroes like Chakra the Invincible and Mighty Girl have the power to connect with kids all across India and the world through great stories that can not only take them into a place of wonder – but also deliver strong social messages of optimism, hope and change for a better tomorrow. Both Stan Lee and I are thrilled to partner with The World’s Largest Lesson to have our characters support the Global Goals in this exciting way.”*

The World’s Largest Lesson initiative has already attracted support from influential leaders and public figures including **Emma Watson**, Actor and UN Women Global Goodwill Ambassador and **Sonam Kapoor**, Indian Actor and youth icon.

**The World’s Largest Lesson India champion, Sonam Kapoor** said: “*The children of today are the leaders of tomorrow. Values and lessons taught early in the childhood can lead to a better understanding and emphasis for a child on his/her future. This is exactly what the World’s Largest Lesson India sets out to do – to engage children in the effort to achieve the UN’s Global Goals by educating them of the challenges impacting their futures and encouraging them to drive change in their own communities. In my capacity as an ambassador, I seek to add further momentum to reach the children of India for this noble cause.”*

***Today, The Worlds Largest Lesson India is calling on every person and every organisation to help deliver The World’s Largest Lesson India initiative, in schools across the country. It is calling people to start delivering these lessons from 19th September, the start of the global week to celebrate the one-year anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Let’s work together to make sure every child learns about the commitments their government has made to end poverty by 2030.***

***The World’s Largest Lesson India comic books are available to download in English from The World’s Largest Lesson India website:*** [***http://worldslargestlessonindia.globalgoals.org/***](http://worldslargestlessonindia.globalgoals.org/) ***Regional Indian language versions of the comic books will be available to download from the website from mid-October 2016.***

***If you are interested in partnering with The World’s Largest Lesson India, please email*** ***wllindia@sterlingmedia.co.uk***

**-ENDS-**

**For further information, please contact:**

**Natasha Mudhar**

**India Director, Project Everyone**

**Tel: +44 20 7801 0077**

**Email: wllmedia@sterlingmedia.co.uk**

**NOTES TO EDITORS:**

**Further information about The World’s Largest Lesson India**

**Social Media Handles:**

**Hashtag:** #worldslargestlessonindia

**Facebook:** www.facebook.com/worldslargestlessonindia

**Twitter:**  @WorldsLesson\_IN

**Instagram:** WorldsLesson\_IN

**Website:** <https://www.globalgoals.org/worldslargestlessonindia/>

**YouTube:** www.youtube.com/theglobalgoals

**About the World’s Largest Lesson**

In 2015 the World’s Largest Lesson was developed, as part of Project Everyone, to introduce children around the world to the Global Goals for Sustainable Development in a lively, engaging way. Lessons took place during the week of 28 September 2015 around the world, with 160 countries getting involved! In partnership with UNICEF and many other global education organisations, it succeeded in capturing the attention and inspiring the enthusiasm of millions of students in classrooms around the world. In 2016 the World’s Largest Lesson continues around the world and with new support from GEMS Education there will be a specific, focused drive to reach children across the whole of India. Launching on September 5th 2016 the initiative will work with a range of partners over one year to reach as many children as possible.

 **http://worldslargestlessonindia.globalgoals.org/**

**Quote from Sonam Kapoor, The World’s Largest Lesson India champion**: “*We learn vital lessons every day in our lives and many of these lessons were taught during our childhood. Children are the future of today’s world - they must not only be nurtured but be empowered to be the change they wish to achieve for themselves and others in this world. And this is what The World’s Largest Lesson India programme sets out to do; it will engage children in the effort to achieve the UN's Global Goals, educating them of the challenges impacting their futures and encouraging them to drive change in their own communities.*

*With India having the world's youngest population, India has the potential to lead this change and be a global benchmark country that eradicates poverty. But this can only happen if children join this effort which means they must be made aware of the goals that were agreed by our leaders, if inspired to act, they can truly be a super-heroic force of positive change. I pledge my commitment to add further momentum, to spotlight the Global Goals and find opportunities to educate children of this, through everything I do.”*

**\*World’s Largest Lesson India Comic Books:**

The comics will bring to life through creative storytelling four key issues impacting India today:

1. **Overview of the Global Goals** – children will be given an introduction to the Global Goals 193 world leaders agreed to achieving through the lens of Goal 6 – clean water and sanitation (WASH). Only 33% of the population in India has access to traditional sanitation[[1]](#footnote-1) with 77 million people lacking access to safe water.[[2]](#footnote-2) Furthermore, diarrhea is the third leading cause of childhood mortality in India, and is responsible for 13% of all deaths/year in children under 5 years of age. Comic book synopsis: Chakra The Invincible and Mighty Girl learn about the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and meet a real life superhero from Bangalore who is trying to help India conserve water.
2. **Gender Equality** - Gender inequality in India persists despite high rates of economic growth, and is particularly apparent among marginalized groups. The government has launched several commendable schemes to save and educate the girl child and the national average has risen from 943 females per 1000 males. However, in many parts of India it continues to remains low.[[3]](#footnote-3) Comic book synopsis: Through a twist of fate Chakra: The Invincible switches bodies with his best friend Leela and learns how differently Leela is treated at home and in the world.
3. **Climate Change** – Climate change is altering our environment affecting agriculture, water availability, and sea-levels. It is increasing the intensity of natural disasters, the rate of species extinction and the spread of vector-borne diseases. India has committed to reduce the emissions intensity of its GDP by 20 to 25% by 2020 however India is still recognised as one of the world’s biggest polluters. Comic book synopsis: Chakra The Invincible and Mighty Girl discover that Climate Change is affecting far more than just the weather and learn that urgent action is needed to switch to renewable energy.
4. **Education** - All girls and boys have the right to a complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education. Since 2000, when countries committed themselves to the global education goals, India has reduced its out of school children by over 90% and Universal Primary Education has been achieved[[4]](#footnote-4) but there is a lot more to be done. There are still an estimated 1.4million children out of school between the age of 6-11yrs.[[5]](#footnote-5) Child labour is a significant barrier to children staying in school, with nearly 12% of children undertaking some form of child labour[[6]](#footnote-6) which children will read about through the comic book. Comic book synopsis: Chakra The Invincible and Mighty Girl discover how a vast number of children in India are not getting the quality education they deserve and learn what can be done to help ensure education for all.

**Further information about The World’s Largest Lesson India’s Partners:**

**About Project Everyone & the Global Goals campaign**

At the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit on 25 September 2015, 193 world leaders adopted a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals. These ‘Global Goals’ are a plan of action to end poverty, combat climate change and fight injustice and inequality. Project Everyone was devised by filmmaker and campaigner, Richard Curtis and founded by two women, Gail Gallie and Kate Garvey to make the Global Goals famous, so that they stand the greatest chance of being achieved -­ if people know about the Goals they can hold their governments, businesses and other institutions to account. In the 7 days after world leaders formally agreed the Goals on 25th September 2015, it is estimated that news of the Global Goals reached 40% of the world’s population, which is over 3 billion people. Key drivers of this success were a text sent to 925 million people, radio programmes in 75 countries on 700 stations, millions of school children in 160 countries receiving a lesson on the goals and why they matter, a 1-hour TV programme shown in over 150 countries and homepage takeovers of Google, YouTube, Baidu, MSN, Bing and many others. There was significant advertising presence with 140,000 poster sites around the world, and a film shown in cinemas in 35 countries.

**www.globagoals.org www.project-everyone.org**

**About UNICEF**

UNICEF promotes the rights and wellbeing of every child, in everything we do. Together with our partners, we work in 190 countries and territories to translate that commitment into practical action, focusing special effort on reaching the most vulnerable and excluded children, to the benefit of all children, everywhere.

**Follow UNICEF on** [**Twitter**](http://twitter.com/UNICEF) **and** [**Facebook**](http://facebook.com/unicef)

**About Graphic India**

Graphic Indiais one of India’s leading character entertainment companies focused on creating superheroes, comics and stories through mobile and digital platforms.  Founded by media entrepreneur Sharad Devarajan, Graphic India is owned by Liquid Comics and The Chernin Group. The company’s partners and investors bring together decades of experience in building businesses in character entertainment, media and India. The Company is working with leading global partners including, Disney, Cartoon Network, Rovio and many others on the creation of new characters and superheroes for the Indian market.

**About POW! Entertainment**

POW! Entertainment, Inc. (OTCQB: POWN), a multi-media entertainment company, was founded by noted comic book writer Stan Lee, together with award-winning producer Gill Champion and the late intellectual property specialist Arthur Lieberman. POW!’s principals have extensive backgrounds in the creation and production of original intellectual properties, including some of the most successful entertainment franchises of all time. POW! is utilizing Stan Lee’s historical background by perpetuating his legacy while creating and developing all new live-action films, television, digital games, merchandising, licensing and related ancillary markets, all of which contribute to global expansion. POW! partners with third parties and strategic alliances, including studios and networks, in the production and distribution of new POW! character franchises.

1. <https://thewaterproject.org/water-crisis/water-in-crisis-india> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <http://water.org/country/india/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. http://www.in.undp.org/content/india/en/home/countryinfo/challenges.html [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. UNESCO 2015 statistic [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/india-report-oosci-2014.pdf> (UNESCO 2014) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. (UNICEF 2013) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)