

TEMPLATE: PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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[TARA Akshar+] is a Finalist for the 2011 Buckminster Fuller Challenge

[Madhya Pradesh, 12th May 2011]- [TARA Akshar+] led by [Col. M.S.Ahluwalia] has been selected as a Finalist in the [Buckminster Fuller Challenge](#), the prestigious annual design science competition named "Socially-Responsible Design's Highest Award" by Metropolis Magazine. The Challenge awards \$100,000 to support the development and implementation of a whole systems-based solution that has significant potential to solve humanity's most pressing problems.

[TARA Akshar+ (www.taraakshar.com) is a scalable solution to adult illiteracy through a highly innovative programme, using sophisticated learning techniques and memory hooks, through minimally trained, computer-aided instructors. The programme enables almost to become functionally literate by learning to read, write and do simple arithmetic in just seven weeks of two-hour classes daily. The programme has a 95 per cent success rate.]

["It is very satisfying and a great honor to be amongst the semi finalists of the coveted award. Winning it would be a great impetus to the program," says Col Ahluwalia. The immediate goal of the program is to reach out to at least one million rural women. The prize money from the award can play a crucial role in enabling TARA Akshar to train another 1,100 rural people and would enhance the results and credibility required to mobilize a larger amount of money needed to reach the targeted one million women. The programme mostly depends on the grant for the first year primarily for infrastructure, mobilization, tie-ups and for creating a business model. The program intends to set up financing mechanisms].

[Since entering the Challenge, the TARA Akshar+ program has been evaluated in three different locations of Northern India by the Department of Education of the Ministry of Human Resources Development. The program passed the evaluation parameters successfully and is now in the process of being incorporated under the National Literacy Mission, Government of India as an ICT based solution to adult literacy. The programme has also been approved in principle by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India to make 35,000 women tribal women functionally literate in eight districts of Madhya Pradesh in Central India. A pilot of the program for 500 women has already started in one of these districts.]

After a rigorous vetting process by the Buckminster Fuller Institute's multi-disciplinary review team, which included an in-depth interview, followed by a review by a distinguished jury [link to jury page: <http://challenge.bfi.org/jurors>], [Name of project] was chosen from a pool of hundreds of entries from more than 35 countries, to be one of only four Finalists this year. It is featured in BFI's Idea Index and the Buckminster Fuller Challenge Website.

On Wednesday, June 8th {TARA Akshar+} will be presented to jury members and an audience in New York City. On Friday, June 10th the Winner will be revealed at a conferring ceremony. Both events will take place at The Graduate Center, CUNY.

More information is available [here](http://www.bfi-internal.org/2011Ceremony/2011INVITE.html). (<http://www.bfi-internal.org/2011Ceremony/2011INVITE.html>).

The Buckminster Fuller Challenge is the premier global competition recognizing initiatives that take a comprehensive, anticipatory, design approach to radically advance human well being and the health of our planet's ecosystems. The 2011 Finalists are providing visionary, workable solutions to some of the world's most significant challenges including poverty, food supply, health, illiteracy, and ecological preservation. The Challenge is a program of [The Buckminster Fuller Institute](#) which aims to deeply influence the ascendance of a new generation of design-science pioneers who are leading the creation of an abundant and restorative world economy that benefits all humanity.

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