

**Press Release****Rs. 2 Million for Kisan Sanchar & EduVARTA**

mBillionth Vodafone 'Mobiles for Good' Grant Fund Prize 2011 recognised 10 Innovations in social sector using mobile and picks two best to offer grant prize

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New Delhi**

Some of the best NGO practice in mobile usage to serve communities came to light during the Vodafone 'Mobiles for Good' Grant Fund Prize Competition 2011. Key finalists, ten in total, came up with highlights of their NGO practice during the 'Mobiles for Good' special consultative session-cum-expert panel jury meet on July 23, 2011 in New Delhi. The session-cum-jury emerged with the final winning list of two winners, eduVARTA and Kisan Sanchar, representing Maharashtra and Haryana State.

The Vodafone 'Mobiles for Good' Prize 2011 platform has come at a no less deserving and opportune time. Its launch comes amidst hundreds of innovative mobile practices ongoing in India, run by NGOs and Not-for-Profits and always wanting its stories, examples, impacts to be told and aired to the wider world. The launch is in a time frame when such hundreds of practices deserves and keen for recognition, felicitation and to be well appreciated for their hard efforts.

The Vodafone 'Mobiles for Good' Prize 2011, instituted by Vodafone India Foundation (VIF) in association with Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF), is a fund grant to motivate and encourage innovations in mobile content and services delivery benefiting communities. The fund grant is for innovative practice from the Non-Governmental Organization / Not-for-profit organization / or educational institute in India with the motivation and purpose that the innovation is benefitting the society and empowering societal needs at large.

Through Vodafone 'Mobiles for Good' Prize 2011, Vodafone India Foundation in association with Digital Empowerment Foundation, recognised 10 mobile innovative practices from the nominees and honoured two winners with a grant fund of Rs. 20, 00,000.

The selection of the final two winners, eduVARTA and Kisan Sanchar, was based on jury decision on consensus post 'Mobiles for Good' session. The jury panel was drawn from diverse expert backgrounds – Dr. Ajay Kumar, Joint Secretary, Department of IT, Govt. of India; Ravinder Takkar, Regional Director – Asia Pacific & Middle East, Vodafone Group; Arvind Rao, Chairman-CEO-Co Founder of OnMobile; Dr. Subho Ray, President, Internet & Mobile Association of India; Ms. Geeta Malhotra, Country Director, READ India. Ms. Laura Turkington, Director (Interim), Vodafone India Foundation and Osama Manzar, Founder Director, Digital Empowerment Foundation, played the role of session moderators.

In this session address, Session Chair Dr. Ajay Kumar said, “The role of civil society agencies is critical in enabling mass technology platforms like mobile phones reaching out to the masses with need based content and information. Support services to these agencies are always critical in a country like India to address development challenges.” In this brief address, Session Co-Chair Ravinder Takkar said, ‘Good NGO practices in mobile platforms will help to address challenges of information and digital divides to a great extent in an emerging nation like India.’”

Going by the sheer numbers of nominations received for the Vodafone ‘Mobiles for Good’ Prize 2011 competition, it is doubly confirmed that there is no dearth of innovative deployment of mobiles for social and community purpose. Total number of valid nominations received is 43. The geographical distribution, nominations received from as many as 15 States in India demonstrates that our diverse civil society agencies are playing contributory role of technology enablers and transformers on grounds. And this is proved beyond doubts.

The presentations of the finalists were decisive one in terms of selection of winners finally. ***Tracking livelihood Entitlements for Rural Communities (TERcoms)*** is a mobile phone based information management and monitoring system for tracking the efficacy of entitlement delivery under social protection schemes to rural poor in Orissa, carried out by Women’s Organization for Socio Cultural Awareness (WOSCA). ***Information to Solution Services (Soochna se Samadhan in Hindi)*** is an agro-advisory service to farmers launched by Development Alternatives as a pilot in mid 2005 in Madhya Pradesh. The project provides voice based information to rural communities via a phone and voice mail-based Q & A service available from both landline and mobile phones.

Operation ASHA has recently deployed a biometric based attendance system that ensures compliance with the DOTS protocol of TB treatment and is also used to track and rectify missed doses. The biometric device consists of the shelf components like a simple netbook computer, a commodity fingerprint reader and a low cost mobile phone. ***Eduvarta*** is a mobile based SMS newsletter service especially customized for the unemployed youths of rural Maharashtra and also for the pass out students who are looking for jobs and opportunities.

Maternal and New Born Health and EmONC Trial is a prospective, population-based project whose purpose is to quantify and understand the trends in pregnancy outcomes in defined low-resource geographic areas over time, in order to provide population based information on stillbirths, newborn and mother’s mortality via mobile phones. The project uses mobile phones for obtaining timely and high quality data over a wide and challenging geographic area.

CommCare is a mobile phone application that serves as a job aid tool. It contains illustrations and audio messages covering need-to-know topics in antenatal care, which a Sahiya (Community health volunteers are often called Sahiyas in Jharkand) can use to educate pregnant women in her village, regardless of their level of literacy.

Kisan Sanchar has been conceptualized to provide a scope for documenting and disseminating time bound authentic actionable knowledge related to agriculture, animal husbandry and allied professions, market intelligence to the small & marginal Farmers. This project is purely based on the direct intervention of innovative usage of mobile phone for increasing the income of small and marginal farmers. **Chala Skul Ku Jiba** (Let us go to school) is an initiative by Radio Namaskar to bring back all the dropout students to their respective schools in Konark district of Orissa using a distinct mobile phone number service.

The **IVRS based Daily Monitoring System (DMS)** envisages an automated MIS where data of children availing mid day meal is made available on daily basis in Uttar Pradesh. This system is conceived on the basis of an interface between computer and mobile phone.

Flood Early Warning System (EWS) has been developed for the Bahraich district of Uttar Pradesh to strengthen the existing EWS in the region. The system works on the simple technique of “auto-dialing” in which, pre- recorded voice messages are sent to the list of phone numbers already fed in software at the push of the button.

As a process in continuum, post grant fund result the winners are being guided to scale up and expand project to achieve new set goals and beneficiaries for the next one year with mentoring support from organizers.

The overwhelming response from audience during this pane jury led session highlights one key fact. This is, urban and developed India is equally keen that advancement in modern mass techno platforms like mobiles serves its optimum capacities to provide wider support services to millions in rural India.

For more details: <http://mbillionth.in/mobilesforgood/>

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