



Press release from Digital Empowerment Foundation

Nineteen initiatives were announced Winners and four others received Special Mentions at the Social Media for Empowerment Awards 2016 amid much discussion, debate, networking and celebration at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, on March 15, 2016.

The day-long 3rd Social Media for Empowerment Awards and Summit programme was organised by Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF) and the Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF), with the strategic partnership of Twitter.

Earlier in the day, a packed house was welcomed for the inaugural session by DEF Founder-Director Osama Manzar who broke some myths with his first few sentences. “We often here that we’re all on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. However, only 10 per cent of this country is active on Facebook or Twitter. According to a recent study, 72 per cent of Indian women do not have access to mobile phones. Forget WhatsApp and Facebook, they don’t even have the basic calling facility. It’s actually only 40 per cent of India’s population that is using one billion sim cards,” Manzar said. “Yet social media has become a powerful medium of mass communication in the last few years. This is for two reasons. Firstly, it is extremely interactive and engaging. Secondly, social media allows users to exercise their democratic rights without the boundaries of geographical locations, caste, sex or religion.”

Keynote speakers FNF Regional Director (South Asia) Dr. Ronald Meinardus; Head (Strategy) at the National eGovernance Division Mr. Deepinder Singh; Deputy Commissioner of Bokaro Mr. Rai Mahimapat Ray; and Founder & CEO of Crowdsourcing Week Epi Ludvik Nekaj shared their views on the challenges of digital divide in India, and the impacts that social media tools are creating at grassroots, administrative, political level and international levels.

The Awards Gala in the evening started with a scintillating folk musical performance by Meherdin Khan Langa and Umar Farukh, following which the Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, R Jaya, addressed the crowd.

“These awards recognise the power of social media, which is giving a voice to the voiceless, the muted and the unheard. Eventually, leading to a such a loud noise that cannot be ignored,” she said, adding there are so many stories — of farmers or rural women — that have been heard, courtesy the various social media platforms.

Politician and economist NK Singh discussed the power of digital platforms, which is visible when in the reach of the voices though social media, which is far beyond the reach of mainstream media. He added, “The challenges of education cannot be addressed unless we look to innovative solutions in the training of teachers, in the learning process for children and in making available quality resources to children.” In the same way, we need not just digital but innovative digital solutions across sectors. “‘Twin Flame’ or the partnership between passion and compassion is what will make a difference,” added Singh.

This year, SM4E received 266 entries from eight countries. These entries were then filtered by a Virtual Jury and a shortlisted set of nominations were sent to the Grand Jury for the final process. The winners were selected after a rigorous Jury process that saw a lot of debate and discussion to ensure that only the best and most promising initiatives win across each of the 10 categories.

Listed below are the names of winners of SM4E 2016:

Citizen Journalism
Winners
OurKPK.com – Pakistan
Shramik Bharti – India
Communication, Advocacy & Development Activism
Winners
Aangan Trust – India
CHILDLINE India Foundation – India
The Catalyst – TC – Pakistan
Special Mention
Goonj – India
Community Mobilization
Winners
Annakshetra Foundation Trust - India
District Administration Kozhikode – India
Special Mention
Agni Foundation – India

Crowd Funding
Winners
BitGiving – India
Transparent Hands – Pakistan
Wishberry.in – India
Special Mention
Puppetica Media – India
Online Safety
Winners
Chhattisgarh Infosec Society – India
The Cyber Blog – India
Public Relations
Winners
Indian Institute of Management, Rohtak – India
Uttar Pradesh Tourism Department – India
Social Apps
Winners
Hyderabad City Police – India
Social Commerce & Enterprise
Winners
Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation – India
Special Mention
Desta Global - India
Women Empowerment
Winners
Breakthrough – India
My Choices Foundation – India
Red Dot Foundation – India

For more details, please visit www.sm4e.org.

Thank you

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