

Young Global Leaders Use Mobile Telephony to Tackle Poverty

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- Young Global Leaders to pilot an initiative giving 1 billion mobile phone users living in poverty access to educational phone apps
- Mobile technology is a powerful platform for those who do not have access to quality education and basic skills training
- The Young Global Leaders is a World Economic Forum community of 700 exceptional individuals that address specific challenges of public interest to shape a better future

Davos, Switzerland, 23 January 2012 – A group of Young Global Leaders will pilot a non-profit initiative this spring, which aims to give the 1 billion mobile phone users living in poverty access to educational phone apps.

Currently under development, AppBridge is an online platform to encourage talented software developers to link up with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community organizations to produce apps that will tackle poverty among the “ bottom billion ” .

About 74% of people living in poverty throughout the world have access to mobile phones. Thus, the platform will allow an ecosystem of people and organizations – NGOs, local partners, software developers and telecommunications companies – to engage and communicate directly with one another in identifying community needs, creating apps to address these needs and distributing apps to the target communities.

AppBridge is the brainchild of a group of Young Global Leaders, a World Economic Forum community of more than 700 exceptional leaders and social entrepreneurs under the age of 40 from business, government, civil society and academia who share a commitment to improving the state of the world.

Young Global Leader Margo Drakos, a cellist turned technology entrepreneur, is developing this initiative with fellow YGLs, Neeraj Bharadwaj, Pawan Patil, Subhash Dhar, and Members of the World Economic Forum ’ s Global Shapers community.

“ We are encouraged not only by the vision of these Young Global Leaders to improve the state of the world, but by their ability to translate it into scaled action, ” said Professor Klaus Schwab, Executive Chairman and Founder of the World Economic Forum, and Founder of the Forum of Young Global Leaders. “ We at the Forum are committed to supporting AppBridge and their partners on this remarkable journey. ”

An early version of AppBridge is under development in partnership with founding educational institutions, telecommunication companies, non-profit organizations and Global Shapers of the World Economic Forum. This spring, AppBridge will launch a pilot programme in tandem with Babson College, a business school in Boston, USA. Students will work together to develop mobile apps that address a specific need identified by local communities.

President Leonard Schlesinger of Babson College, a founding partner of AppBridge said, “ Babson College is enthusiastic about our partnership with AppBridge to extend and apply our methodology of Entrepreneurial Thought and Action to accelerate economic and social value creation everywhere. ”

The AppBridge initiative will also include an Ideas & Apps Global Challenge Competition, to turn ideas into reality

and encourage talented mobile application developers to build creative, powerful tools to improve the lives of those in poverty.

For further information, and to view a short video, visit the temporary website at www.AppBridge.org, or contact Margo Drakos at margo@appbridge.org.

Notes to Editors

More information about the Forum of Young Global Leaders at www.younggloballeaders.org

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