

Asian Social Entrepreneurs of the Year 2009

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At the Closing Remarks of the World Economic Forum 's Annual Meeting of the New Champions 2009, the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship honoured five Social Entrepreneurs as leading social entrepreneurs in Asia.

"We need new ideas, new initiatives on the micro as well as the macro level. All attempts to rethink, redesign and rebuild the world on the macro level will have to be paralleled by positive change on the local and individual levels.", said Hilde Schwab, Co-Founder and Chairperson of the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship.

Three of the victors are Asia regional winners, and two are country winners from Singapore and Indonesia from year-end 2008. The Social Entrepreneurs will receive their awards during the closing plenary session.

Hilde Schwab, Co-Founder and Chairperson of the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship, said " Social entrepreneurship is a key factor in helping us work through the financial crisis, especially today with Asia playing such a critical role in economic progress and development. "

Social entrepreneurs have an important lesson to share in today 's economic crisis. They emphasize long-term sustainability instead of short-term gain. Their primary focus is to maximize benefits for society and the environment through innovative and effective business models. Their approach to entrepreneurship is one of sustainable economic growth.

The following are the five winners in Asia:

Disnadda Diskul – Doi Tung (Thailand) Doi Tung represents a holistic and participative approach to rural development. With initial seed funding through local government, for-profit business units are created with the long-term goal of community ownership. Doi Tung was first conceived to help impoverished migrant hill tribes living at the northern Thai border, which was then plagued by opium cultivation as well as human and weapon trafficking.

The Doi Tung model was so successful at eradicating poverty in Thailand that it is currently being replicated in Afghanistan and Indonesia. Doi Tung focuses on three integrated development pillars: health, livelihood/skills development and education.

Timothy Ma – Senior Citizen Home Safety Association (China) Today, the number of elderly living on their own is growing. The Senior Citizen Home Safety Association (SCHSA) seeks to address the issue of ageing.

Using integrated information and communication technologies, SCHSA provides elderly subscribers with 24-hour live operator assistance. In addition to emergency notification services, SCHSA also offers social services, as well as consulting to families with elderly members requiring special arrangements. Social services include telephone contact and hospital/home visitations by trained volunteers.

In addition, SCHSA has two retail shops selling products specialized for seniors, plus a monthly newsletter with information on daily living. SCHSA is based in Hong Kong; its model is currently being replicated in partnership with Chinese cities, including Shanghai, Guangzhou, Macau and Shenzhen.

Sebastien Marot – Friends-International (Cambodia) There are over 150 million street youth in urban areas worldwide; many are exposed to a lifestyle of crime and/or drug addiction. Started in 1994 in Phnom Penh,

Friends-International (FI) addresses this issue by holistically improving the lives of street youth and their families. Services include temporary housing, medical care, counselling, substance abuse recovery programmes and primary education access.

FI offers a healthy social network where street youth develop personal and professional skills. Through its social businesses (restaurant, café, mechanic shop, hair salon), FI provides practical vocational training and subsequent job placement to graduates. FI ' s social service programmes are developed in close collaboration with its beneficiaries, local partners and government agencies. Beyond Cambodia, the FI model has expanded into Laos, Indonesia, Thailand and Central America.

Sarah Mavrincac – aidha (Singapore).

The mission of aidha is to enrich lives through financial education. The target population encompasses migrant women from the Philippines, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and India working in Singapore, oftentimes as domestic helpers.

By leveraging migrant women ' s exposure to a developed economy ' s environment and by providing them with classroom learning, accountability groups and hands-on business training, aidha helps these women to return to their home countries with the social, intellectual and financial capital necessary to spearhead new businesses.

Ambrosius Ruwindrijarto, Silverius Unggul – Telapak (Indonesia) Telapak is an association of NGO activists, business practitioners, academics, media affiliates and leaders of indigenous people working together to promote ecological justice, cultural integrity and economic empowerment.

Telapak sustains its activities through cooperatives and community enterprises. Current initiatives include printing, mass media, local politics, fisheries and forestry. These interrelated business units synergistically support each other and collectively raise public awareness to promote sustainable logging and marine farming.

About the Schwab Foundation

The Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship was started by Klaus Schwab, Founder of the World Economic Forum, and his wife, Hilde. Since its inception in 2000, the Foundation has been identifying the world ' s leading social entrepreneurs in over 40 countries around the globe. Social entrepreneurs implement innovative and pragmatic solutions to social problems by tackling the root causes and creating social transformation. Selected social entrepreneurs of the Schwab Foundation network participate in World Economic Forum events, thus providing unique opportunities for them to connect with business, political and media leaders.

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World Economic Forum, 91-93 route de la Capite, CH-1223 Cologny/Geneva
Tel. +41 (0)22 869 1212, Fax +41 (0)22 786 2744, <http://www.weforum.org>