

Finalists for Social Entrepreneur of the Year (SEOY) India 2017 Award

New Delhi, Wednesday, September 13, 2017

The Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship, the sister organisation of the World Economic Forum and the Jubilant Bhartia Foundation of Jubilant Bhartia Group today announced the finalists of the [**Social Entrepreneur of the Year \(SEOY\)- India 2017 Award**](#). The finalists for the Award were identified on the basis of rigorous due diligence process. The finalists are:

- **Madhu Pandit Dasa, Akshaya Patra, Bengaluru**
- **Safeena Husain, Educate Girls, Mumbai**
- **Urvashi Sahni, Study Hall Educational Foundation, Lucknow**

The SEOY India Award puts a spotlight on the most remarkable change makers from the country. The finalists are addressing the needs of underserved communities in both scalable and sustainable ways. Their efforts span poverty, hunger, gender inequality, women empowerment and education. The efforts of all the finalists are aligned with United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals. This year's SEOY winner will be chosen by a distinguished jury and announced at an Award ceremony in the first week of October in New Delhi. The event coincides with the India Economic Summit organized by the World Economic Forum (WEF) and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

SEOY India Award has emerged as one of the longstanding recognition of global reputation for country's social entrepreneurs. The Award celebrates the finest model in social entrepreneurship and the entrepreneur who dream of creating value for their community. The three finalists of 2017 are working through government as well as private partnerships to bring grassroots changes through their enterprise model.

According to **Mrs Hilde Schwab, Co-founder & Chairperson, Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship**, "The work of social entrepreneurs is more important than ever in a world marked by rapid change, and I congratulate the impressive achievements of the three finalists for the Social Entrepreneur of the Year India 2017 Award. Their work represents a strong commitment to make a lasting impact on issues like healthcare and education in India, and we hope that these entrepreneurs will serve as an inspiration to future generations of social innovators in India and beyond."

Congratulating the finalists, **Mr. Shyam S Bhartia, Chairman & Founder and Mr. Hari S Bhartia, Co-Chairman & Founder, Jubilant Bhartia Group and Founder Directors of [Jubilant Bhartia Foundation](#)**, said, “We are proud to be associated with the Schwab Foundation for last eight years in bringing this prestigious Award to India. The finalists of this year have overcome several challenges and addressed some deep-rooted social issues. We are committed to promote social innovation and hope that the annual Social Entrepreneur of the Year India Award continues to spark more entrepreneurs to find innovative solutions that drive transformative change and serve communities.”

The [SEOY](#) India 2017 Award opened in March this year and received over 100 applications of exceptional quality. Through a five-stage selection process, the finalists were shortlisted after on-site visits, background research, reference checks and multiple rounds of deliberations.

Brief Descriptions of the Finalists



Madhu Pandit Dasa
Chairperson
Akshaya Patra Foundation (AP)

Founded in 2000, with a mission that “no child in India should be deprived of education because of hunger”, Akshaya Patra (Sanskrit for ‘inexhaustible vessel’) provides nutritious, and hygienic meals to children in government schools through India’s ambitious mid-day meal scheme (MDM). In less than a decade, it has established itself as the world’s largest MDM provider – feeding 1.6 million children a day across 12 states.

To deliver meals on time with the highest quality of hygiene, nutrition and culinary preferences across urban geographies, Akshaya Patra has designed kitchens that operate on the backbone of technology to produce 100,000 meals per day, with minimum human handling. 13 out of AP’s 26 urban kitchens are ISO 22000:2005 certified for excellence in Food Safety Management System (FSMS). Improvement strategies like Kaizen, Continual Improvement Projects and Six Sigma are constantly being implemented in APs’ kitchens to ensure food safety, efficiency and cost reduction.

For its founder Madhu Pandit Dasa, every child in school is a child free from labour. Under his leadership AP has scaled rapidly, setting an ambitious target to feed 5 million children by 2020.



**Safeena Husain,
Educate Girls (EG)
Mumbai, Maharashtra**

Safeena Husain and her venture, Educate Girls are working indefatigably to address the gender inequality in education.

At the heart of EG's model is a highly motivated, mission driven cadre of 10,000 volunteers called 'Team Balika'. Drawn from the village community, they are local role models, going door-to-door to identify out of school girls and convincing parents through multiple strategies to send them to school. Tackling the issue of poor infrastructure, they work with School Management Committees to prepare school improvement plans, including building toilets for girls. Trained by EG to deliver its creative learning and life skills kits, they promote girls leadership through lifeskills training.

From a pilot project in Pali and Jalore districts in Rajasthan, EG has grown in ten years into a 16000+ schools program, with over 1,50,000 girls enrolled in school till date (with 90% retention), and reaching over 3.8 million total beneficiaries. Safeena is also piloting the Development Impact Bond – an innovation that has the power to transform how government, business and civil society invest in the long-term to ensure that no girl is out of school in India.



**Urvashi Sahni,
Study Hall Education Foundation (SHEF)
Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh**

Study Hall Education Foundation has shaped and scaled a model of education that includes, empowers and builds leaders among India's most disadvantaged girls. SHEF runs a network of schools, based on two critical innovations. The first is 'feminist pedagogy' or a gender-empowering method of education. Delivered through 'critical dialogue', it enables girls and boys to go beyond academics, understand and build the agency needed to transform their worlds. SHEF's second innovation is the Universe of Care practice. Recognizing that care itself is a vehicle for empowerment, SHEF creates classrooms where teachers and learner are held in relationships of respect, trust and empathy; where teacher and student are equal and learning is conducted through dialogue; where art, music, sport are integral to schooling.

To ensure that women from ultra-poor communities have the resources to keep their daughters in schools, Urvashi Sahni has spun off Didi's – a catering and tailoring venture that is run by urban poor women. Didi's has captured the Lucknow market for corporate meals and has doubled the incomes of its women employees.



Aided by technology, policy push and partnerships with the state governments of Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, SHEF has scaled its model of education to 900 government schools, trained 5000 government teachers and impacted 1,50,000 girls directly and 2,70,000 girls indirectly in the hotbeds of poverty and gender discrimination. More than 1412 videos of transformative classroom sessions, created by SHEF are being accessed and practiced across remote rural government and private schools of India.

Note to the Editors:

Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship was co-founded by Prof. Klaus Schwab, Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum, and his wife, Hilde. The Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship provides unparalleled platforms at the regional and global level to highlight and advance leading models of sustainable social innovation. It identifies a select community of social entrepreneurs and engages it in shaping global, regional and industry agendas that improve the state of the world in close collaboration with the other stakeholders of the World Economic Forum.

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World Economic Forum, committed to improving the state of the world, is the International Organization for Public-Private Cooperation. The Forum engages the foremost political, business and other leaders of society to shape global, regional and industry agendas.

Jubilant Bhartia Foundation (JBF), established in 2007, is the not-for-profit organization of the Jubilant Bhartia Group. It focuses on conceptualizing and implementing the Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives (CSR) for the Group. The Jubilant Bhartia Foundation's activities include various community development work, healthcare programs, cultural and sports events, environmental preservation initiative, vocational training, women empowerment, educational activities and promotion of Social Entrepreneurship. www.jubilantbhartiafoundation.com

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