



**Kubera - Edelweiss
Social Innovation Honours**





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Director's Message

Welcome to the first annual Kubera Edelweiss Social Innovation Honours, rewarding innovative work to improve the lives of young girls in India.

Nearly a decade into the new millennium, over fifty percent of girls in India are still failing to enroll in schools. In rural areas, one in seven is married before the age of thirteen. These statistics highlight the pressing need for fresh thinking on the issue of the Indian girl child and prompted Kubera Partners and EdelGive Foundation to conceptualise and initiate this project. The objective is to showcase and support organisations with original approaches to tackle the myriad challenges facing the girl child in India.

This year, we have prioritised education, employability and health and nutrition as themes for the awards. Our winners, Samata, Azad Foundation and Anjali have excelled in these areas and share our focus on innovation and sustainability at the heart of their work. We are proud to promote their work this year in the hope of inspiring others.

“Statistics highlight the pressing need for fresh thinking on the issue of the Indian girl child.”

We would like to thank our eminent jury who strove to ensure excellence as the standard for these awards.

We are also grateful for the invaluable support we received from our partners, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), who provided their development expertise for field visits, and to Ernst and Young who helped design and analyse our rigorous four-stage evaluation process.

Although only three winners will take away funding to continue their ongoing projects or start new ones, we would also like to acknowledge the commitment demonstrated by all the applicants and the thousands of other organisations who are working on this issue across India. We hope to see some of them at next year's awards.

Vidya Shah
*Executive Director & Head,
EdelGive Foundation*



Process

We developed a stringent process to help us find and reward innovative NGOs that work to improve the lives of young girls.

Criteria

We sought organisations whose work with young girls was innovative and sustainable; and assessed the applicants on the impact of their initiative, the cost of implementation and its potential for replication.

Applications

We received more than hundred applications from across seventeen states.

Working through direct referrals, online databases and development networks, we used four regional languages to ensure diversity of applicants.

Evaluation

The pool of applicants was shortlisted to fifteen organisations, selected by Vidya Shah, Executive Director and Head of EdelGive Foundation; Surinder Jaswal, Dean of School of Social Work, TISS and Sharvari Karandikar, Faculty Member, TISS. Interviews and discussions with staff, beneficiaries and other stakeholders were undertaken during field visits to the fifteen organisations. They were rigorously assessed and scored on innovation, contextual relevance, and sustainability.

A final shortlist of nine was agreed by TISS and invited to present their projects to the jury. The jury then made their final decisions.

The Jury

We would like to thank our expert jury for their time and commitment to the Awards process.

Devaki Jain, Development Economist and Activist. She is also a noted Gandhian.

Farida Lambay, Vice-Principal of Nirmala Niketan College of Social Work. She is also the co-founder of Pratham.

Harsh Mander, Human Rights Activist and Author. He has previously served in the Indian Administrative Services.

Ramanan Raghavendran, Managing Partner, Kubera Partners.

Shekhar Gupta, Editor-in-Chief, The Indian Express.

Shivnath Thukral, Managing Editor, NDTV Profit.

Zia Mody, Managing Partner, AZB & Partners, a leading corporate law firm.

Awarding Innovators

Winners & Runners up



Kubera - Edelweiss Social Innovation Honours 2009 Award for Innovation in Education

Samata

Samata has introduced a groundbreaking education and research programme based on tribal knowledge systems and practices, to tackle child marriage, child labour and early motherhood amongst young tribal girls in Andhra Pradesh. Founded in 1990, the organisation works for the protection and development of tribal communities in India and for ecological sustenance of the Eastern Ghats.

The need

The tribal female population in the state of Andhra Pradesh is more than a quarter of a million. With little or no primary education facilities available to these girls, child marriage, child labour and early motherhood are common. Maternal mortality rates are also high.

Illiteracy, combined with the realities of increasing migration and industrialisation, compounded by the inability to engage constructively with non-tribals, results in the abuse and exploitation of tribal women by traders, moneylenders, landlords and government officials.

Samata identified a pressing need in the region for high quality and relevant education for tribal children, especially given the fact that there was no existing educational curriculum or format relevant for local tribal cultures

The innovation

Based on ongoing research into tribal knowledge systems, literatures and practices, the programme delivers contextual, tailor-made curriculum in 40 tribal community schools, known as Balamitra schools in two districts of Andhra Pradesh, Vishakapatnam and Srikakulam. Balamitra schools are conceived and locally managed by tribal youth and women, who deliver the curriculum themselves in local languages.

The Dhaatri Resource Centre for Adivasi Education established by Samata is the only resource centre for Adivasi education in the region and provides an incubation space where the highly innovative curriculum and teacher training methods are tested prior to implementation. The Centre is also the training ground for tribal youth and women to become teachers.



The benefits

The integration of tribal knowledge has made schooling a far more attractive opportunity to parents and children. Tribals now perceive attending the Balamitra schools as an exciting first step for their young girls to discover their potential.

High levels of school attendance have meant a renewed interest in learning; the confidence and self-esteem of girl pupils has increased and they are better able to deal with non-tribals. Many go on to enroll in government high schools after completing their primary education, and some train to become barefoot teachers at the Resource Centre itself. Improved health and well-being of young girls and of the wider community has also been noted.

The programme has also played a crucial role in reviving tribal knowledge and strengthening tribal identities.

“The Balamitra schools were not conceived by education experts, but evolved from the work of tribal women and youth.”

*Kalluri Bhanumathi, Director,
Dhatri Resource Centre for Women and Children*

Sustainability

Samata's unique approach to primary education centers around the training and skills imparted to the teachers and community organizers. This enables the local women to lead, managed and monitor the entire programme. With key decisions about the Centre's activities, from curriculum content to its delivery being taken by the local community, the whole programme is community led. As a result, there are high levels of support and ownership for the process.

Furthermore, all the educational materials produced are cost-effective, since they are produced by the communities and are made from natural and locally-sourced materials.



The award money will go towards training of more than 40 new tribal teachers and support the creation of permanent infrastructure for the tribal academy.



Kubera - Edelweiss Social Innovation Honours 2009 Award for Innovation in Employability

Azad Foundation

Azad Foundation is developing a bold new livelihood option for young women from Delhi's slums by training them as professional taxi drivers. Since 2007, Azad has sought to level the employment field for disadvantaged young women in Delhi by improving their economic and social status.

The need

In terms of gender equality in the economic sphere, India ranks amongst the ten lowest countries in the world. Furthermore, Delhi has the third highest crime rate in the world.

Many of these crimes are committed against poor women, who are insecure in both public and work spaces. These women are often uneducated and unskilled.

Azad Foundation is broadening the economic opportunities of these women by equipping them with driving expertise and other life skills that enhance their security, independence and empowerment.

The innovation

Azad's rigorous and comprehensive training programme covers vehicle maintenance, map reading, and motor legislation. However, this innovative programme goes beyond the realm of just employment skills. Women acquire knowledge on self-defence, sexual and reproductive health, domestic violence and basic legal understanding through Azad's training curriculum.

Following training, the drivers complete paid apprenticeships before taking up employment, which is sought, mediated and negotiated with Azad's support.



The benefits

An Azad graduate can expect a starting monthly salary of Rs 4500 – double the average slum family monthly income.

Currently at a batch of nine girls, by the end of this year, Azad aims to have trained 60 women drivers and will directly impact more than 100 young girls.

More broadly, Azad's trainees are providing positive role models for their daughters and the wider female community.

The initiative is also playing a key role in providing safe and secure transport for women and children across the city, and is helping to establish women support networks.

Sustainability

Over the next two years, Azad will be establishing a new business venture to launch a women's taxi service in Delhi. The for-profit taxi company will be launched by 2010 in time for the increased demand during the Commonwealth Games and aims to be financially sustainable within five years. The service will be owned and managed by women and will also serve as a potential employer to recently qualified women drivers from Azad's driver training programme.

“With Azad I really wanted to focus on an activity that would link livelihoods with the dignity of women. To look at empowerment through a business lens.”

Meenu Vadera
Director, Azad Foundation

The Delhi Transport Corporation has already expressed a desire to hire more women drivers to ensure greater road safety amongst the city's female population.



The award money will be used to fund a 'Learning Journey' by more than 50 trained women drivers to visit other social enterprises to improve understanding and inspire more innovative initiatives. It will also go towards the setting up of a finance facility to allow the very poor to participate in the driver training programme.



Kubera - Edelweiss Social Innovation Honours 2009 Award for Innovation in Health

Anjali

Anjali is developing innovative practices to help women and girls take charge of their mental well-being and support the mental health needs of their communities in Kolkata. Since 2000, they have worked to mainstream mental health in wider society and have partnered with the Government to help 'humanise' the health care system.

The need

One in five children and adolescents may suffer from mental health problems. Of these, it is estimated that two thirds are failing to get the help they need.

Despite the importance of mental well-being of young girls in their communities, this issue continues to be neglected and stigmatized.

In situations of extreme scarcity, adverse effects on the health status of the girls are greater than on boys.

To ensure mental well-being and realise their full potential, girls require services and facilities which enable them to become capable citizens.

The innovation

A unique and intensive leadership development programme for adolescent girls has been designed to promote their personal growth. This enables them to act as young change agents advocating for mental health issues. This Incubator programme identifies emerging leaders from amongst young girls and equips them with the knowledge and skills to launch Mental Health Kiosks in their communities.

These innovative kiosks seek to nurture more healthy communities by providing the only resource of knowledge, information and counseling on mental health problems in a local area.



The benefits

Anjali works with over sixty girls in and around Kolkata every year, and over a hundred and twenty women have been trained as barefoot mental health professionals.

The programme is transforming the lives of women and girls by creating non-judgmental 'safe spaces' and peer support networks where young women discuss, counsel and support each other. The programme is also creating livelihood opportunities and training local women as barefoot mental health professionals. It is developing a new group of skilled, educated and experienced young leaders who are working to improve the lives of their wider community.

Sustainability

By training and developing young women as ambassadors for mental health issues in their own communities, local participation and support for the programme remains high.

Once training of the young women is completed and the kiosks are established, the kiosks remain self-governed and are locally-run by the trained community members with little or no external assistance.

This active participation from women and the broader community in Anjali's initiative combined with the high levels of need means that little external support is required.

“The stigma of mental health continues to 'invisibilise' persons with mental health problems, even as statistics highlight a daily increase in sufferers.”

Ms Ratnaboli Ray

Founder / Managing Trustee, Anjali



The award money will take forward an Incubator initiative to provide an intensive leadership development programme for young girls. The programme will take them on a personal journey to explore their traumas and emerge as more self-aware and informed individuals.

Participants that display excellent leadership skills during the programme will be encouraged and trained to create their own Mental Health Kiosks located in municipality areas outside of Kolkata.



Kubera - Edelweiss Social Innovation Honours 2009

Runners up

Ibtada, Alwar

Ibtada have set up special schools for girls called Taleemshalas. These provide education on a flexible basis for girls who cannot attend regularly or full-time. Their activity-based education has created a positive learning environment for educating girl children, resulting in high rates of attendance amongst young girls.

Kolkata Sanved

Kolkata Sanved uses Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) for the rehabilitation of victims of violence and trafficking, domestic workers and persons with mental illness. Dance is used as a vehicle for healing and empowerment, and the young girls are trained as trainers of DMT for subsequent groups and external organisations.

Society for Social Uplift Through Rural Action (SUTRA), Solan

SUTRA are raising awareness of uneven sex ratios to tackle the issue of sex-selective abortions. They display local sex ratios on large hoardings in front of gram Panchayat offices, informing both the public and the Gram Sabha of imbalances. 'Early registration of pregnancy' campaigns reduce the chances of abortions, while support groups of older women help daughters-in-law to resist forced sex detection.

Organisation for Awareness of Integrated Social Security (OASIS), Bhopal

The Museum Schools, started by OASIS, use progressive teaching models to help children outside regular education to develop their personal abilities. Museums are used as stimulating teaching aids, keeping costs low by reducing infrastructure costs. Besides academic inputs, there are inputs on personal hygiene, entrepreneurship and performing arts.

Society for Rural Industrialisation (SRI), Ranchi

SRI empowers women whilst improving access to technology in tribal and rural areas. Women from self help groups and adolescent girls become trainers in their community, improving their employability and developing their leadership skills. In addition to income generation the scheme improves young women's social standing in the community.

Society to Uplift Rural Economy (SURE), Barmer

SURE undertook an integrated programme of health and development by forming Balika mandals and Kishori mandals. The orientation for these adolescent groups educates new members on life skills, knowledge about reproductive health and family planning. This learning is enhanced at monthly meetings and spread to peers and family members by word of mouth, promoting female health issues and building networks of women in a strongly patriarchal context.



In closing

When we started working on these awards, we were aware of the disturbing statistics surrounding gender issues in India. Widespread illiteracy, early marriage and childbirth and a lack of basic freedoms are well documented truths that confine a large number of Indian women to limiting roles and deny them the right to determine their own lives. However, despite this, the experience was a remarkably uplifting one. We were heartened by the number of applications, their geographical spread and the variety of gender issues covered. The process offered hope and faith that education would lead to changes in long-held mind sets; that private and public partnerships would lead to opposing positions being set aside for common good, and that the strength and dedication of organisations working on the ground would lead to greater harmony within communities and between religions.

We would like to share some learning around the complexity and interconnectedness of India's gender issues that are of interest to policy makers and other development actors. We need to address gender education not only for the poor and

marginalised, but also for those millions who are emerging out of poverty. We also need to support those women vulnerable to health-related malpractices through ignorance and illiteracy. While tackling the much-highlighted issues of maternal health, nutrition and HIV/AIDS, we must not neglect the widespread suffering caused by mental health issues. And finally, we need to concern ourselves not only with education for girls belonging to isolated communities, but also in the way it is delivered and managed. This must preserve precious cultures and traditions and be accepted by the broader community. Indeed, this challenge is pre-dominant for all programmes - that of being inclusive and non-confrontational.

Finally, we are committed to hosting these awards year after year. For 2010 we are seeking new partners to help us find and recognise the most inspiring, outstanding and unique organisations working on this issue across India. We look forward to sharing our journey with you next year!



Partners and Consultants

These Awards have been coordinated and managed by EdelGive Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Edelweiss.

We are grateful for the support of our following partners, especially Kubera Partners, who conceived and initiated this project:

KuberaPartners

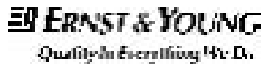
Kubera Partners

Kubera Partners is a private equity firm that invests in cross-border companies, primarily in the US-India corridor. The firm is differentiated by the track record and complementary experiences of its team, who have several decades of investing and operating capabilities in building cross-border businesses. The firm's investment philosophy is predicated on backing great management teams and helping them maximize the potential of their business.



Edelweiss Capital Limited

Established in 1995, the Edelweiss Group today has emerged as one of India's leading integrated financial services conglomerates. The Edelweiss group offers one of the largest range of products and services spanning varied asset classes and diversified consumer segments. Its businesses are broadly divided into Investment Banking, Broking Services, Asset Management and Loans. The company's research driven approach and consistent ability to capitalize on emerging market trends has enabled it to foster strong relationships across corporate, institutional and HNI clients.



Ernst & Young Pvt. Ltd.

Ernst & Young is a global leader in assurance, tax, transaction and advisory services. Ernst & Young's process and environment competencies support organisations in managing and mastering risks.



Tata Institute of Social Sciences

Established in the year 1936, TISS is the first school of social work in India. It is known to promote sustainable, equitable and participatory development, social welfare and social justice through professional education, social research and social intervention.

About EdelGive



EdelGive Foundation is the not-for-profit subsidiary of Edelweiss Capital Limited. EdelGive Foundation was formally registered as a Section 25 company in May 2008, in order to create an effective and efficient institutional platform within the Edelweiss family to provide structure and direction to the philanthropic activities of Edelweiss, its employees, its clients and associates.

EdelGive Foundation, whose primary focus is on creating educational, employment and sustainable livelihood opportunities for underprivileged youth, brings an “investment banking and venture capital” rationale and thinking to the social sector. Edelweiss’ strengths - the ability and expertise to act as a bridge between providers and users of capital - are leveraged to achieve the objective of addressing the needs of this sector.



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KuberaPartners



This report profiles the three winners of the first Kubera Edelweiss Social Innovation Honours. It also outlines the selection process, the jury and some lessons learned from the process.