



Media Release

PROJECT INSPIRE SEMI-FINALISTS ANNOUNCED

20 social entrepreneurs promoting women's safety in Asia Pacific shortlisted for crowdfunding under multi-award winning social entrepreneurship challenge, Project Inspire.

SINGAPORE, September 19, 2016: Singapore Committee for UN Women and MasterCard revealed the top 20 social enterprises promoting women's rights in Asia Pacific, where the search for entrepreneurs began earlier in the year as part of the sixth edition of Project Inspire – a global youth entrepreneurship challenge. This year, the organisers looked for entrepreneurs empowering women and girls through safety and security. The theme comes at a time where women's rights around the world are at a pivotal turning point. Entrepreneurs that are working to improve safety and security for women and girls through economic participation, financial inclusion, increased access to health and sanitation, technology and through education programs were among those that qualified for this year's challenge.

From a pool of over 270 applications from around the region, 20 social innovators have been chosen to progress to the semi-final stage of the competition, where they will participate in an international crowdfunding campaign, courtesy of official Crowdfunding Partner Impact Guru. The project that garners the most number of backers for their crowdfunding campaign will secure a finalist spot and People's Choice Award to pitch their idea in Singapore in November. Crowdfunding begins on 26 September, 2016 and concludes on 26 October, 2016 at <https://projectinspire.impactguru.com>.

Trina Liang-Lin, President, Singapore Committee for UN Women said, "We view digital platforms as a way to encourage social innovation, and crowdfunding draws potential supporters with a call to action that involves them in the success of the projects. We look forward to partnering with Impact Guru to increase exposure for the 20 outstanding ideas from our Project Inspire semi-finalists that are empowering women and girls in Asia Pacific."

Georgette Tan, senior vice president, Communications, Asia Pacific, Mastercard, said, "Mastercard is committed to building safer and more inclusive communities for women and girls. As a technology company, we understand the value that digital platforms provide in amplifying ideas and driving support for social issues. We are delighted to partner with liked-minded organizations like the Singapore Committee for UN Women and Impact Guru, as we work towards creating better futures for people in the region."

Impact Guru Spokesperson, Piyush Jain, Co-Founder and CEO said, “We are excited to partner with the Singapore Committee with UN Women and Mastercard to help raise funds to create a safer world for women and girls across Asia and Pacific. This collaboration demonstrates the reach and impact of our work so far leveraging our strong presence and track record in India and Southeast Asia.”

10 finalists will convene in Singapore in November, 2016 for a week-long bootcamp of mentoring and workshops, culminating in the Grand Finals on 24th November 2016, where they will pitch live to the general public, supporting organisations and a panel of esteemed judges and industry experts. Finalists stand a chance at taking home MasterCard’s Grand Prize of US\$25,000 and a Financial Inclusion Award of US\$10,000 thanks to Mazars and MasterCard.

Project Inspire is co-organised and co-founded by Singapore Committee for UN Women and MasterCard. Knowledge Partner, INSEAD and Strategic Partner, Bain & Company have been long-term supporters of the initiative. Mazars joins the competition for 2016, in support of women’s empowerment and social entrepreneurship. This year, the initiative also welcomes back returning Program Partner, Independent Project Analysis, new Program Partner, Own Your Brilliance, and Crowdfunding Partner, Impact Guru.

**Singapore Committee for UN Women and MasterCard Presents
*Project Inspire: 5 Minutes to Change the World 2016 Semi-Finalists***

Organisation Name: Little Sisters Fund, Inc.

Project Name: Education Support for Disadvantaged Girls

Project Location: Nepal

About: Their project wants to support economically disadvantaged and marginalized girls and young women in Nepal by offering scholarship schemes that will effectively delay child marriage.

Organisation Name: A New Vision Limited

Project Name: Women's Right to Sight

Project Location: Indonesia

About: This project wants to restore the sights of blind women and girls in Indonesia so that they can go about their daily lives independently, and also educate women who are working or are about to work in community health care services on basic eye care.

Organisation Name: Hope Kolkata Foundation

Project Name: Transforming Lives of Vulnerable and At-Risk Girls and Women

Project Location: India

About: Through their project, they want to reduce the number of vulnerable mothers and girls on the streets of Kolkata by providing protection that caters to their physical, psychological, and social health through immediate delivery of care based on their needs.

Organisation Name: Generation 414

Project Name: Be Her Change

Project Location: Thailand

About: They want to provide economic alternatives and leadership development, educational opportunities, an emergency shelter, rehabilitation, child care and basic necessities to both national and international victims of trafficking and prostitution.

Organisation Name: Apne Aap Women's Collective

Project Name: Preventing Inter-Generational Cycle of Prostitution

Project Location: India

About: AAWC wants to solve second generation prostitution among the daughters of women in brothel-based prostitution through early intervention, and assisting girls in selecting an optimistic and well-meaning profession for a safer future.

Organisation Name: Silver Oaks Schools & College

Project Name: Challenging Gender Discrimination through Education

Project Location: Pakistan

About: To tackle the patriarchal mindsets of the Pakistani society that have paved ways to violence against women, their project aims to address the root cause by training women teachers to educate girls and their peers in their formative years on gender equality based on values of respect and fairness.

Organisation Name: Days for Girls

Project Name: Mindanao Micro-Enterprise

Project Location: Philippines

About: Days for Girls Mindanao Philippines wants to launch a micro-enterprise in Mindanao that distributes environment-friendly, washable, menstrual hygiene kits, provides comprehensive reproductive health education to disadvantaged young girls, and employs local women to run the micro-enterprise.

Organisation Name: Colorss Foundation

Project Name: Mission 1000

Project Location: India

About: Mission 1000 wants to empower 1000 under-privileged girls by training and equipping them with self-defence skills.

Organisation Name: Giving It Back to Kids

Project Name: Empowering Single Moms

Project Location: Vietnam

About: This project wants to launch a program for single mothers in Vietnam by providing stigmatized young pregnant women and their babies with a safe shelter, proper care, nutrition, medical and emotional support, education and financial training.

Organisation Name: CoDesign Studio

Project Name: Street by Street

Project Location: Australia

About: A curriculum and training program that mobilises local women to lead public space improvement projects in their neighbourhood would be developed through this project. Improved spaces would make neighbourhoods safer and more inclusive for women.

Organisation Name: Village Volunteers

Project Name: MUKTI

Project Location: India

About: This project runs a biodegradable sanitary pad company which empowers vulnerable women who have lived a life of abuse, either trafficked or born into inter-generational prostitution, by employing them.

Organisation Name: RAW 2014 Limited

Project Name: RAW Entrepreneurship Model

Project Location: New Zealand

About: Their project wants to empower women released from prison by equipping them with tailored business skills that will allow them to pursue a life of financial and livelihood independence.

Organisation Name: CareNx Innovations Pvt Ltd

Project Name: Care Mother Pregnancy Care

Project Location: India

About: Through their program, effective antenatal care and better healthcare access to pregnant women living in villages during 0-9 months of pregnancy will be provided by making use of mobile phone technology.

Organisation Name: The Global Women's Project Limited

Project Name: Women Get Mobile

Project Location: Nepal

About: This project provides a skills training program that increases women's economic security by teaching them to repair mobile phones and supports them to use these new skills to generate an income for themselves and their families.

Organisation Name: Hue Help

Project Name: Swimming for Safety

Project Location: Vietnam

About: This project wants to train girls with a specific set of survival swimming skills via professional swimming instructors. Since drowning is a leading cause of child mortality in Vietnam, providing these skills needed for girls to stay safe around water would reduce their risk of drowning.

Organisation Name: Humanitarian Organization For Migration Economics (HOME)

Project Name: Leaders Amongst Us

Project Location: Singapore

About: Through this project, female foreign domestic workers in Singapore will undergo 40 weeks of training in order to become para-counsellors, ensuring open communication, better mental and emotional health, safe employment, and reduced risk of abuse and self-harm.

Organisation Name: Sport and Leadership Training Academy (SALT Academy)

Project Name: Mighty Girls

Project Location: Cambodia

About: The Mighty Girls program selects girls aged 12 to 18 from rural communities across the Northwest region of Cambodia at risk of trafficking, early marriage or from dropping out of school and who shows promising football skills, to provide them with a safe shelter, quality education and football training.

Organisation Name: Centro de Cuidado a Criança - Casa Vida

Project Name: House of Life Training Center

Project Location: Timor-Leste (East Timor)

About: This project provides shelters to young women survivors of violence and sexual abuse, and empowers them by giving professional training in the areas of hospitality and housekeeping.

Organisation Name: URJA Trust

Project Name: SOCH - Journey with Homeless Young Women

Project Location: India

About: This project wants to run a separate holistic intervention/shelter for young women who are homeless and suffering from trauma. It also wants to train these young women to acquire skills and be job ready so that they are independent.

Organisation Name: Mukti Energy Pokhara Pvt. Ltd

Project Name: Income Generation with Solar Food Dryers

Project Location: Nepal

About: This project wants to provide rent-to-own solar food dryers to women in need of food and economic security, and equip them with business and marketing skills on producing and selling dried fruits.

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About Project Inspire

A joint initiative by the Singapore Committee for UN Women and MasterCard, Project Inspire is a social entrepreneurship challenge for youth to pitch their inspired ideas that empower women and girls in Asia Pacific. Up to 20 semi-finalists will be selected to go through a crowdfunding stage, with up to ten finalists winning an all-expenses-paid trip to Singapore in November, 2016 for the Grand Finals. Finalists will also receive exclusive boot-camp, mentoring sessions, and the opportunity to be awarded grants. #ProjInspire

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