BUILDING BLOCKS OF SOCIAL NETWORKS
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Building Blocks of Social Networks is a book published by Digital Empowerment Foundation, under its Social Media for Empowerment Awards platform, to explore and share how some of the best social media initiatives from South Asia are leveraging the power of social media to reach out to a wider global audience and initiate a change.

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Welcome to the 5th edition of Social Media for Empowerment Awards 2018! This is a platform that was launched with much love in 2013 when we realised that social media could no longer be an awards category under our flagship initiative, the Manthan Awards. It was time that social media be given its due and an exclusive platform that would recognise and honour the best social media practices from South Asia.

Today, social media has become synonymous with our digital lives. While it has strengthened communication in more ways than one, it has also made us aware of its vices. We must understand that conversations on the Internet, particularly social media, are nothing but a reflection of the conversations that one has offline, with the advantage of not being restricted to a small group of people physically present around you or the need to necessarily reveal your identity—both these “advantages” can be used for the best and for the worse. However, it is our responsibility, as conscious netizens, to decide how we choose to use this platform.

India, with around 30 per cent Internet penetration (World Bank 2016), already has more than 241 million users of Facebook alone (The Next Web Report, 2017). At least 136 million Indians are active social media users (Yral Report, 2016), across platforms. Twitter has more than 41 million users in India (Statistica 2018). And when we're talking about social media, we cannot ignore the penetration of WhatsApp, which has reached more than 200 million users in India (Mashable 2017). This means 200 million users in India are exchanging messages on a daily basis in real time. Thus, as one of the most popular channels of communications today, social media plays a significant role in both fighting hate speech and magnifying it. It is, in fact, a tool as powerful as the television with its audio-visual advantages.

Social Media empowers you in a way that it gives you a platform to communicate your perception, views, thoughts, ideas, feelings, emotions in a simple or artistic way. It acts as a bridge between the business and the consumer. It is an enabling mass communication tool for community mobilisation and advocacy. It has made governments acces-
sible to the common man. It has reached the interiors of the country and given birth to citizen journalists at the last mile. It has empowered women to voice their opinions and it has empowered women to grab the opportunities social media offers. Artistes, innovators, entrepreneurs, civil society groups have found a new platform for raising funds. It has even turned young minds, with expertise in the fields of food, travel, fashion and more, into thriving bloggers who have found their careers in their passion. It has offered so much more to us, and we all see some benefits or the other in it.

However, it is we, the users, who have to consciously decide how we leverage the power of social media. And so, I would like to congratulate all the Finalists for contributing towards a better connected and a better informed society.

In the end, I would like to extend my gratitude to all the jurors for going through a rigorous process to select the best among the best. This time, for the first time, SM4E saw an all-women Jury, and it was refreshing to see how conversations over nominations are different when there are more women on the panel. I would also like to thank the SM4E team for organising the event with such dedication, and the nominees for sharing their success stories. Lastly, we are extremely glad that Facebook saw relevance in this platform and decided to come on board. Their constant support as co-organisers of SM4E 2018 has been extremely helpful.
Devika Srimal Bappa, an animal lover and PETA volunteer started Kanabis, a brand for fashionable, affordable, high quality and PETA-approved vegan footwear in 2015 as a substitute to leather-based shoes. Her entire business is run on social media. In 2014, four women founded a social enterprise called Coppre which revived a 400-year tradition of handcrafted metalware to help create livelihoods for artisans across India by selling their unique products online. Coppre has no physical store. Dirty Feet is another interesting project led by two Indian women who built a company that offers hands-on, rural field trips to primary school children. The entire operations are conducted on social media.

This is the power of social media. Currently, only 24 per cent women have access to the Internet in India (as opposed to around 50 per cent in developed markets). The Internet is the invisible force driving advancement for women around the world, subtly breaking down social and cultural barriers to women’s empowerment. Social media allows women to be on an even playing field; and directly benefits the GDP. The Indian government has projected that Indian digital economy will grow from USD 450 billion to USD 1 trillion by 2022 (Source) to become a $5 trillion economy by 2025. India’s digital economy is predicted to generate 30 million employment opportunities by 2025, which is double today’s figures.

Thanks a to social media, women entrepreneurs are using the Internet to build businesses while also managing to hurdle over the top three reasons that make most women leave the workforce—family pressures, wage disparity and fear of owning and growing a business. If women participated in the economy at pace with men, India’s GDP would increase by up to 60 per cent, or $2.9 trillion, by 2025. Women currently contribute merely 17 per cent to the GDP, way below the global average of 37 per cent. But just think of the untapped potential in India. Of 1.3 billion Indians, 450 million are already Internet users¹. Of these, 432 million are mobile data users and as many as 730 million Indian mobile Internet users are predicted by 2020².

Social media allows entrepreneurs to connect with their audiences across the country and the globe, virtually. And the greater the participation of female entrepreneurs, the greater the impact on the global economy. Across the world, it is estimated that approximately a technology is the equaliser for the marginalised. Social media and the global community provides the opportunity for people to build their skills, build a business or build something for their community—this is the power of communication in an increasingly connected world.

¹ Source: IAMAI Report
² ‘The Future of Internet in India’ report by Nasscom and Akamai Technologies.
third of business organizations are owned by women. A recent research conducted by Facebook over a year across South Asia, and India in specific, has shown that there is a growing entrepreneurial spirit among women. It was found that women in South Asia start a business mainly to have a source of income, to pursue an interest or hobby, to be more independent, and to be more creative. Also, the proportion of single-led businesses is significantly higher among women (56 per cent) compared to men (43 per cent). In India, industry-wise, women are significantly more dominant in retail, social services, and personal services.

Contrary to the country’s statistics of women dropping out of the workforce, in the last five years (between 2012 and 2016), the number of new women-owned small medium business enterprises on Facebook in India has increased seven-fold, growing 85 per cent from 2015 to 2016.

Social media is the equaliser for women and gives women access to new opportunities, new markets, new ideas—all from their own home. Bringing more and more women into the digital workspace. Technology and the Internet today, unlocks opportunities and empowers people to dream big and build products to improve their communities. Social media and the global community provides the opportunity for people to build their skills, build a business or build something for their community—this is the power of communication in an increasingly connected world.
NOMINATION STATISTICS

180 TOTAL NOMINATIONS
169 FILTERED NOMINATIONS
60 SHORTLISTED
19 WINNERS
04 SPECIAL MENTIONS
### COUNTRY-WISE NOMINATIONS (180)
- Afghanistan - 03
- Bangladesh - 09
- India - 154
- Nepal - 01
- Pakistan - 09
- Sri Lanka - 04

### COUNTRY-WISE SHORTLISTED (60)
- Bangladesh - 04
- India - 51
- Pakistan - 04
- Sri Lanka - 01

### CATEGORY-WISE WINNERS (19)
- Blogging & Vlogging - 02
- Crowdsourcing, Crowd Economy and Crowd Funding - 03
- Community Mobilisation - 03
- Citizen Media & Journalism - 03
- Communication, Advocacy & Development Activism - 03
- Social Commerce & Enterprise - 02
- Women Empowerment - 03

### CATEGORY-WISE SPECIAL MENTIONS (04)
- Citizen Media & Journalism - 01
- Communication, Advocacy & Development Activism - 01
- Women Empowerment - 02

### CATEGORY-WISE NOMINATIONS BREAK-UP (180)
- Blogging & Vlogging - 08
- Crowdsourcing, Crowd Economy and Crowd Funding - 13
- Community Mobilisation - 43
- Citizen Media & Journalism - 20
- Communication, Advocacy & Development Activism - 33
- Social Commerce & Enterprise - 28
- Women Empowerment - 35
INDIAN STATE-WISE NOMINATIONS (154)
Assam - 02
Andhra Pradesh - 05
Bihar - 02
Chhattisgarh - 02
Delhi - 41
Goa - 01
Gujarat - 04
Haryana - 06
Jammu & Kashmir - 01
Jharkhand - 01
Karnataka - 12
Kerala - 03
Madhya Pradesh - 05
Maharashtra - 26
Meghalaya - 01
Odisha - 01
Pondicherry - 02
Rajasthan - 03
Tamil Nadu - 06
Telangana - 04
Uttar Pradesh - 23
Uttarakhand - 01
West Bengal - 02

SM4E 2018 WINNERS (19)

Blogging & Vlogging - 02
Endlessly Green - INDIA
Aurat Raaj - PAKISTAN

Crowdsourcing, Crowd Economy and Crowd Funding - 03
Karwan e Mohabbat - INDIA
The Missing Public Art Campaign - INDIA
CrowdNewssing - INDIA

Community Mobilisation - 03
English Language Learning By Using Social Network - BANGLADESH
One Sign Per Day - INDIA
Shunyaikal - INDIA

Citizen Media & Journalism - 03
Skin Stories - INDIA
Land Conflict Watch - INDIA
Voice of Azamgarh Community Radio - INDIA

Communication, Advocacy & Development Activism - 03
MahaVoter - INDIA
National Multimedia Initiative for Ending Child Marriage - BANGLADESH
Factly - INDIA

Social Commerce & Enterprise - 02
Haqdarshak - INDIA
Nearpeer - PAKISTAN

Women Empowerment - 03
MedHealth TV - INDIA
#BHL (Bigdi Hui Ladki / Bigda Hua Ladka) - INDIA
Sehat Kahani - PAKISTAN
SM4E 2018
SPECIAL MENTIONS (04)

Citizen Media & Journalism – 01
Bhadipa – INDIA

Communication, Advocacy & Development Activism – 01
300m Challenge! – INDIA

Women Empowerment – 02
Saahas – INDIA
LahuKaLagaan – INDIA

SM4E 2018
SHORTLISTED (37)

Blogging & Vlogging – 01
Baat Pate ki – INDA

Crowdsourcing, Crowd Economy and Crowd Funding – 04
Fight Drought – INDIA
One Library Per Village – INDIA
Women Weave Crowdfunding Campaign – INDIA
Bringing Hope to Education – INDIA

Community Mobilisation – 06
Smart Social Circle – Horana – Olaboduwa South – Sri Lanka
Menstrual Hygiene Day 2017 – INDIA
Goa Affordable Art Fest – INDIA
‘Hello Check! – Now It’s Your Turn to Say’ – BANGLADESH
Prayaas – INDIA
‘I Am India’-Huts to Homes, – INDIA

Citizen Media & Journalism – 06
Positively Penned – INDIA

#AchhiLadki Campaign, #HumLeKeRahenge – INDIA
Tape A Tale – INDIA
FREE/DEM Online – INDIA
Appan Samachar – INDIA
Veliya Vaanga Kurale Koodunga – INDIA

Communication, Advocacy & Development Activism – 09
#TheInvisibles – INDIA
YourStoryTeller - Strengthening Voices, Empowering Communities – INDIA
Bas Ab Bahut Ho Gaya – Enough is Enough – INDIA
#AbilityNotDisability – INDIA
TweeSurfing – INDIA
#AborttheStigma – INDIA
School for Justice (SFJ) – INDIA
EverydayChildhood – INDIA

Social Commerce & Enterprise – 06
VMEDO – INDIA
Sign up Haryana – INDIA
ParentCircle – INDIA
Khoj – BANGLADESH
LEAP – Look for Employees in Andhra Pradesh – INDIA
Villcart – INDIA

Women Empowerment – 05
Training SHG Women to Become Community Journalists – INDIA
Asaan Taleem – PAKISTAN
Help Kiran Decide – INDIA
Illustrate for Impact – INDIA
Making good Women Drivers – INDIA
On the following pages, you will read brief descriptions about 60 initiatives, projects or initiatives from all over South Asia that have leveraged the power of social media to reach out to a wider audience or target groups.
NOMINATIONS

ENDLESSLY GREEN
WINNER

AURAT RAAJ
WINNER

BAAT PATE KI

BLOGGING & VLOGGING
Endlessly Green is an environmental blog run by former journalist Savita Hiremath. It offers end-to-end integrated solutions to problems of the environment with a focus on source segregation, composting, organic gardening and food safety, among others. To support her awareness and advocacy efforts online, she holds public meetings and interactions with government and other stakeholders to create consciousness around efficient solid waste management.

Endlessly Green leverages social media well, particularly Facebook, to reach out to a wider audience and awaken the conscious of citizens to lead environmentally sustainable lives. The Facebook page also shares best practices from around the world to encourage solid waste management and efficient energy consumption, besides low-cost alternatives to activities that harm the environment. Most recently, Endlessly Green was made available to readers via WhatsApp through a dedicated group where members discuss composting at a large scale and alternate solutions for a healthier environment. The success of the blog invited Greenpeace to invite the author, Savita, to promote composting pan-India in October 2017 and host a workshop for influencers in Mumbai.
Aurat Raaj is a feminist platform in Pakistan that inspires and educates girls and women through innovative digital content in an effort to deliver progressive ideas about women empowerment. Through blogs, videos, workshops, mobile screenings, chat bots and an animated character called Raaji, it addresses issues of self-defence, body confidence, consent, reporting abuse, seeking help for harassment, hygiene, reproductive health and sex. These are topics that educators, parents and often even siblings do not consider important enough to discuss or feel too shy to talk about.

Aurat Raaj uses social media channels, particularly Facebook and Twitter, to share news and updates about the conditions, problems and successes of Pakistani women; to share progress of their initiatives; to find a wider audience for their articles and videos; to recruit writers, volunteers and other human resources; to share career and educational opportunities for girls and women; and to highlight and celebrate role models and mentors; among other things. This has motivated hundreds of girls to build confidence, and even discuss their health, hygiene and body issues through safe private communications.
BAAT PATE KI

Baat Pate Ki is a video blog series initiated by the reporters of Gaon Connection. This blog series offers useful everyday information to rural citizens through the parent website, its social media handles and WhatsApp. Reporters get in front of the camera and talk to the virtual audience, in a conversational style of delivery, about government schemes and policies.

SHORTLISTED

Gaon Connection Pvt. Ltd.
www.gaonconnection.com
@GaonConnection
@GaonConnection
India
NOMINATIONS

SKIN STORIES
LAND CONFLICT WATCH
VOICE OF AZAMGARH COMMUNITY RADIO
BHADIPA
POSITIVELY PENNED
#ACHCHI LADKI AND #HUMLEKERAHENGE
TAPE A TALE
FREE/DEM ONLINE
APPAN SAMACHAR
VELIYA VAANGA KURALAI KODUNGA

WINNER
WINNER
WINNER
SPECIAL MENTION

CITIZEN MEDIA & JOURNALISM
Skin Stories is the online publication of the sexuality and disability programme at Point of View. The uniqueness of this platform is that it is solely dedicated to publishing first person narratives on disability, sexuality and gender. A community of growing writers does not only talk about sexuality but a myriad of other aspects of living with disabilities and debilitating conditions such as navigating friendships, family, relationships, workplaces, homes, fears, discrimination, stigma, and more. Together, the essays deconstruct notions about what it means to live with disability, and bust harmful myths surrounding this issue.

Point of View uses its presence on Facebook and Twitter to drive traffic to the weekly Skin Stories and to create room for dialogue on difficult issues around sexuality and disability, all through keeping the social media posts sensitive and respectful. Point of View also organises tweetathons and Facebook Live chats, using #SexDisChat, once a month with authors of Skin Stories, members from partner organisations, activists and influencers from across the world. Through this and more, Skin Stories reach 1,30,000 readers every month.
In the last couple of decades, India’s aim for industrial and infrastructure growth has led to its acquisition of more and more land, often by ignoring and sometimes bulldozing land rights of vulnerable communities. Some of these conflicts turn violent and violate human rights. However, there is no national database of land conflicts, and many of these conflicts go unreported in national media. To bridge this gap, a journalist-duo, Ankur Paliwal and Kumar Sambhav Shrivastava, started the Land Conflict Watch in 2016.

Land Conflict Watch is an independent, research-based data-journalism project that maps and documents land conflicts involving communities across India to initiate political debate and policy discourse on land rights. Land Conflict Watch is a website that uses extensive amounts of public data to document cases of conflicting claims over land use and ownership. So far, it has documented over 550 ongoing conflicts across 2 million hectares of land, which affect more than six million people and investments worth ₹14.3 trillion. These cases are also profiled on social media as and when they are reported, thus bringing attention to the scale of such conflicts and engaging people in a dialogue on the same.
Voice of Azamgarh Community Radio Station was started in 2011 with the vision of holistic development for the community members of Anjan Shaheed village of Azamgarh in Uttar Pradesh. Devoid of any other radio station in Azamgath, this community radio station has become the real voice of the community and has dedicated shows to create awareness regarding pertinent everyday issues, identify local latent, preserve regional culture, and empower the marginalised people, especially women and youth.

Besides using the community radio as a prime medium for dissemination of information, Voice of Azamgarh uses social media platforms, particularly Facebook and Twitter, to build an online community of conscious citizens, create awareness among community members about pertinent issues, empower them with information, and encourage a problem-solving approach among community members. They use their social media presence to talk about health, hygiene, voters’ rights, democracy, government schemes and other local issues, thus encouraging community dialogue and participation.
Bharatiya Digital Party aka Bhadipa was the first exclusively Marathi YouTube channel that continues to be one of the biggest players in the online Marathi market even today. Launched with the realisation that there wasn’t enough Marathi content that youth could relate to, Bhadipa aims to give a platform to Maharashtra’s youth creators to bring back the ‘cool quotient’ in regional language entertainment industry.

Bhadipa hosts all its content on YouTube where it has organically reached 1,40,000 subscribers. Further, it uses Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat to maximise the reach of its audio-visual content and engage with the audience. It frequently uses polls, interacts with followers through comments and hosts live Q&A with fans. These and other efforts have helped Bhadipa to build a growing and strong fan base that not only views the audio-visual content but even feels motivated to buy its merchandise. Bhadipa is determined to continuously deliver innovative and creative content to the state’s youth.
Positively penned was a nationwide photo story campaign initiated by The Optimist Citizen to share, recognise and celebrate day-to-day positive actions of ordinary people around us. The campaign was built to inspire the youth in both production and consumption of positive content on social media, particularly Facebook. Positively Penned created an open platform of more than 350 crowdsourced photo stories from 40 Indian cities for people to share about the good in each other, thus creating an abundance of positive stories.

Kahaani Wale is an artist collective based in New Delhi that runs two empowering campaigns — #AchhiLadki and #HumLeKeRahenge. While the former aims to reclaim the term ‘achhi ladki’ (good girl) by questioning gender stereotypes through creative visuals that evoke emotions using sarcasm, wit and humour; the latter documents the culture of protests in India through a series of short documentaries, photo stories and blogs.

---

**SHORTLISTED**

**The Optimist Citizen**

- Positively Penned
- The Optimist Citizen
- www.theoptimistcitizen.com/positively-penned
- @theoptimistcitizen
- @optimistcitizen
- India

**Kahaani Wale**

- #Achchi Ladki and #HumLeKeRahenge
- Kahaani Wale
- www.kahaaniwale.com
- @Kahaaniwale
- @Kahaaniwale
- India
FREE/DEM Online is an online space for grassroots communicators and citizen journalists to express themselves in print, audio or video about issues that they are concerned about. In an era of fake news and unverifiable claims, it aims to become an authentic space where communities that participate self-regulate and self-verify the content on social media in the greater interest of free speech and self-expression, thus creating a safe space.

SHORTLISTED

FREE/DEM Online
Ideosync Media Combine
www.freedem.in
@freedemonline
@freedemindia
India
APPAN SAMACHAR

Appan Samachar is a community news programme that is entirely run by rural girls and women who are equipped with digital tools. The platform aims to empower women in labourer and farmer households with relevant knowledge and information to transform them into local agents of change. Appan Samachar uses social media as a tool of empowerment to establish a connection between backward or illiterate rural communities and mainstream urban societies.

SHORTLISTED

Appan Samachar

Appan Samachar

www.appansamachar.com

@AppanSamcharInd

@AppanSamchar

India

VELIYA VAANGA KURALAI KOODUNGA

Veliya Vaanga Kuralai Koodunga (Come Out and Let Your Voice be Heard) is an initiative of the Rathinavani 90.8 Community Radio to give people a platform to voice their grievances. Given the political turmoil in Coimbatore, the city has not had local body elected officials for the last one year. Realising this gap, the community radio station began inviting grievances through WhatsApp and Facebook where community members send complaints regarding drinking water, street lights, sanitary conditions and non-functional governing bodies.

SHORTLISTED

Veliya Vaanga Kuralai Koodunga

Rathinavani90.8 Community Radio

www.rathinamcollege.com

@rathinavani

@rathinavani908

India
# NOMINATIONS

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<tr>
<th>MAHAVOTER</th>
<th>WINNER</th>
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**COMMUNICATION, ADVOCACY & DEVELOPMENT ACTIVISM**
MahaVoter is an initiative spearheaded by the Litmus Test Project (LTP) in collaboration with various social media platforms and youth-led creative groups. It was launched ahead of the 2017 local body elections to reach out to youth with a dedicated awareness campaign on ‘why’ and ‘how’ to vote.

The need for such an initiative was realised after abyssal voter turnouts was witnessed during the local body elections in Mumbai for consecutive election years. Further, mainstream news channels and newspapers, too, could focus very little on the local needs and election awareness since most prime time debates and front page headlines would be focused on national or state news, rather than city news.

Through its website, chat bots, on-ground activities and hashtags VoteKarMaharashtra and GetInkedMumbai, MahaVoters was able to engage millions of youth on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and WhatsApp, and redirect them to relevant information about voting rights and guidelines. Strategic partnership with Facebook and Twitter turned out to be game changers for them and the 2017 local body elections saw 55 per cent turnout, the highest in 70 years and 12 per cent higher than last time.
Ending Child Marriage is a national-level multimedia campaign designed to make prevention and active rejection of child marriage everyone’s responsibility in Bangladesh. UNICEF Bangladesh’s campaign uses strategic media and communication, primarily distributed through social media channels, to challenge the social norms that perpetuate child marriage; promote a new reality of the desired ‘normal’; and address perceived social pressure, beliefs and expectations through accelerating public intolerance.

The major component of the campaign is a series of short videos that use dramatic situations that are relatable to audiences to convey the part that individuals in the community can play to challenge social norms and stop child marriage. These 95-second high-quality videos, circulated through Facebook and YouTube, are effectively packaged to show a compelling scene that begins in a familiar way that would lead to marriage until the daughter, or groom, or neighbour speaks up and is joined in by everyone around clapping hands to show their agreement. Significantly, the father then accepts the censure, thus representing social and behavioural changes among families.
FACTLY

FACTLY is a fact-based initiative that aims to create meaningful evidence-based content using public data and information. It creates extensive content in long and short forms, uses illustrations or info graphics, and produces audio-visual explainer content on various key issues for the consumption by common citizens, journalists and policy makers.

The platforms advocates for availability of public data in public domains rather than in inaccessible government files. It also attempts to change the formatting of presenting the information with tools and aids that technology has made available with the purpose of reaching even a layman with relevant and easy-to-comprehend information and details.

Social Media is an important part of the distribution and campaign strategy for FACTLY’s content that reaches millions of people through the platforms of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. In the last two years, FACTLY website has been able to receive more than three million views, its YouTube channel has over a million views and 12,000 subscribers, and it’s Facebook page has over 70,000 likes. Some of their stories have reached millions of people, triggering change, conversations and even leading to questions in Parliament.

WINNER

#SM4E2018
Katha’s 300 Million Challenge is an initiative to ensure all 300 million children enrolled in schools in India are drawn to education by making learning fun through story pedagogy. The organisation has successfully leveraged its social media presence to bring in thousands of volunteers to introduce 5-10-year-old children to reading through colourful books, community libraries and various digital interventions. These community-owned libraries, too, have been established through crowd funded efforts that helped Katha raise over ₹2 lakh.

The #300mChallenge initiatives uses technology as a lever to create an alliance of corporates, non-profits, schools, organisations and colleges that work together to make each child read. Through its social media-driven digital marketing, Katha was able to successfully host book donation drives across Delhi where it collected more than 30,000 books for children’s community-owned and operated libraries. Further, it used its social media presence to educate audiences about the importance of reading. It was also able to engage a pool of volunteers through its active social media presence.
#THEINVISIBLES

Over 20 lakh children are living on India’s streets with little access to education, clean water, sanitation and nutrition. Realising it was time to change this scenario, Save the Children initiated #TheInvisibles campaign on social media in collaboration with Youth Ki Awaaz to put spotlight on the issues of street children, raise awareness and inspire public action in support. The campaign used creative visuals, blogs and videos to engage a wider audience.

SHORTLISTED

Save the Children

#TheInvisibles

Save the Children

www.savethechildren.in

@india.savethechildren

@stc_india

India

SMILE FOUNDATION

Smile Foundation is an NGO in India that directly benefits over 6,00,000 children and their families every year through more than 250 welfare projects on education, healthcare, livelihood and women empowerment, in over 950 remote villages and slums across 25 states of India. It uses social media platforms to inspire goodness, kindness, positivity and humanity; to spread awareness on the issues of education, healthcare, livelihood and women empowerment; to share stories from the ground; and to raise support for its initiatives.

SHORTLISTED

Smile Foundation

www.smilefoundationindia.org

@smilefoundation

@smilefoundation

India
YOURSTORYTELLER

YourStoryTeller is a digital platform set up by ZMQ Development to produce and disseminate short and impactful digital stories, as multilingual animated comics, on critical development and social issues of grassroots communities. YourStoryTeller shares via social media inspiring stories of local champions, and even serves as an input to researchers, development sector experts, and policy makers to better understand grassroots issues of the poor.

SHORTLISTED

YourStoryTeller - Strengthening Voices, Empowering Communities

ZMQ Development

www.zmqdev.org

@yourstorytellers

@YSTZMQ

India

BAS AB BAHUT HO GAYA

Bas Ab Bahut Ho Gaya (Enough is Enough), initiated by the Population Foundation of India, aims at combating gender-based violence among youth in India through a celebrity-centred digital edutainment approach. The intervention was piloted in partnership with actor-director Farhan Akhtar’s MARD (Men Against Rape and Discrimination) and director Feroz Abbas Khan, and went on to engage several other celebrities through short videos, tweets and live chats on social media.

SHORTLISTED

Bas Ab Bahut Ho Gaya - Enough is Enough

Population Foundation of India

www.populationfoundation.in

@PopFoundIndia

@PFI3

India
#ABILITYNOTDISABILITY

Through its #AbilityNotDisability campaign, Jai Vakeel Foundation is trying to break taboos that the society has towards people suffering from intellectual disabilities. It does so by bringing to light the ‘normal’ activities that they perform, such as sports, arts, dance and academics. The campaign aims to sensitise the society and spread awareness, thereby guiding people on how to behave around people with intellectual disability and accept them into mainstream society.

SHORTLISTED

Jai Vakeel Foundation and Research Centre
www.jaivakeel.org
@jaivakeel
@JaiVakeel
India

TWEESURFING

TweeSurfing is a fresh and youthful take on cyber safety in India, connecting with users in a fun and interactive manner. Its positive messaging helps users see themselves as Twitter stars capable of becoming leaders in their respective fields with a large audience. Initiated by the Centre for Social Research, this is a one-of-a-kind initiative that champions the average Indian user as an individual capable of impacting change on a large scale.

SHORTLISTED

TweeSurfing
Centre for Social Research
www.csrindia.org
@csrindia.org
@TweeSurfing
India
AbortTheStigma is a campaign initiated by CREA to normalise conversations about safe abortions. The stigma and shame surrounding abortion hinders access to safe and legal services, and CREA was determined to dispel myths and misconceptions about abortion services in India and embrace reproductive justice for all. To reach a wider audience, hashtag #AbortTheStigma leveraged the power of social media to disseminate creative and powerful visuals.

A brainchild of the global NGO Free A Girl, School for Justice (SFJ) is an initiative that educates girls rescued from child prostitution to encourage them to become lawyers and public prosecutors, with an aim to counteract injustice of impunity. The programme enables the students of the SFJ to help others that have gone through a similar traumatic past. SFJ was conceptualised to not only spread awareness on the problem of child prostitution via social media but to also serve as a necessary solution to break the cycle of impunity.
EverydayChildhood is a curated photo project initiated by child rights organisation Leher that brings alive the essence of childhood through the eyes of a photographer, chronicling the lives of children in India. It is driven by the fact that images have the power to impact people’s minds. As a curated platform, EverydayChildhood aims to motivate people to view children and their issues through a childhood lens, build a network of photographers, photo journalists and visual storytellers, and highlight the cross connectedness of children’s issues and other global issues.

SHORTLISTED

EverydayChildhood

Leher

www.leher.org/campaigns/

@everydaychildhood

NA

India
NOMINATIONS

SEARCH ENGLISH
ONE SIGN PER DAY
SHUNYAKAL
SMART SOCIAL CIRCLE - HORANA - OLABODUWA SOUTH
MENSTRUAL HYGIENE DAY 2017
GOA AFFORDABLE ART FEST
HELLO CHECK! - NOW IT'S YOUR TURN TO SAY
PRAYAAS
I AM INDIA

WINNER
WINNER
WINNER

COMMUNITY MOBILISATION
Search English is a platform for Bangladeshi people of all ages, genders and professions to learn English. Through constant practice, users of the platform develop their level of proficiency in English reading, writing, speaking and listening. Without the fear of being ridiculed or intimidated, users can also engage in peer-to-peer learning through a closed community group on Facebook.

Search Engine’s Facebook group has created an environment to practice English writing and speaking. In the beginning, a user is encouraged to post one-word or one-line comments, up to 30 a day. As users become more comfortable in reading and writing in English, they are encouraged to comment on 50-100 posts a day. This way, over a period of three to six months, learners overcome their fear and hesitation about writing in English. Meanwhile, to develop spoken English skills, members are encouraged to post video messages regularly on Facebook to exchange views.

The group has more than 3.5 million members, most of them aged been 18-24 who publish more than 600 posts every day.
One Sign Per Day is a virtual initiative to spread knowledge of Indian sign language to make the society more inclusive for persons with disability. A subscription-based initiative of Bengaluru-based Enable India, One Sign Per Day broadcasts a micro video of a new word in the Indian sign language every day through a WhatsApp broadcast. This broadcast system, rather than a group, also ensures the privacy and security of subscribers who are spared messages by other members. Enable India also uses Facebook to share these videos and reach to a wider audience. The initiative caters to parents of deaf children, special educators, employers and anybody else who would want to communicate with persons who are hearing impaired.

The need for such an initiative was realised because there are only 250 sign language interpreters in a population of 8 million deaf people in India alone. So far, One Sign Per Day has been able to register more than 1,000 subscribers. Interestingly, Enable India has noticed an increase in demand for these subscriptions from corporates due to the positive change in policy of hiring persons with disability.
Zero Hour holds great importance in the Indian parliamentary system. It gives members of Parliament the chance to raise important issues without prior permission. Realising the importance of this hour, Shunkyakal is a platform that gives the common man, especially the marginalised and oppressed communities, their Zero Hour. Driven through its social media presence on Facebook and Twitter, Shunkyakal allows largely voiceless people, who find no space in mainstream media for themselves or their issues, to raise pertinent issues through a bottom-up approach.

Shunkyakal also aims to become a platform where the administration and the government can directly listen to the voices of the people from the ground. Shunkyakal is an initiative that is run from no office space but relies completely on volunteers to curate these voices and make them public via social media platforms. In one sense, Shunkyakal is the Zero Hour for the Parliament of the common people, by the common people and for the common people.
SMART SOCIAL CIRCLE – HORANA – OLABODUWA SOUTH

Initiated by the Information and Communication Technology Agency of Sri Lanka, SMART Social Circle – Horana - Olaboduwa South aims to empower citizens of Olaboduwa South by providing essential competencies to effectively use digital technologies to improve their livelihood. It aims to improve social awareness, exploit opportunities and resolve critical issues related to their lives. This initiative also provides the much needed facility for villagers to actively engage in policy making with governments and contribute towards good governance through active partnerships between citizens and the government on social media platforms.

SHORTLISTED

Smart Social Circle – Horana – Olaboduwa South
Sri Lanka (ICTA)
www.icta.lk
@SSColaboduwasouth
@icta_srilanka
Sri Lanka

MENSTRUAL HYGIENE DAY 2017

WASH United initiated Menstrual Hygiene Day on May 28, 2013. Since then, it uses the occasion to raise awareness about the importance of menstrual health management, catalyses advocacy and highlights solutions that help achieve good menstrual health management for all women and girls, both globally and at the country level. Supporting its on-ground activities with an online campaign, WASH United uses social media to get urban India to start talking about menstruation to initiate attitudinal, behavioural and quantifiable changes among individuals.

SHORTLISTED

Menstrual Hygiene Day 2017
WASH United
www.wash-united.org
@MHDayIndia
@MHDay28May
India
Hello Check! – Now It’s Your Turn To Say

Hello Check! – Now It’s Your Turn To Say is a social media initiative funded by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) under the Accelerated Gender Equitable Adolescents Maternal and Child Intervention that aims at improved reproductive health outcomes and reduced gender-based violence in Bangladesh. The initiative provided information to urban youth and facilitated active audience engagement on issues of family planning, health information for first-time mothers, gender-based violence, sexual harassment and child marriage via social media, particularly Facebook.

Goa Affordable Art Fest (GAAF) is an annual platform to engage the common man to appreciate, connect and collect art at affordable prices. It is a space to provide emerging artists from around the world an opportunity to showcase their art work. Hosted at the Museum of Goa, GAAF attracted thousands of people over a span of two months in 2017. Social media channels were used to reach out to artists and collectors; to create a virtual art gallery for people to view and engage with the art online; and to market and sell art.

SHORTLISTED

Goa Affordable Art Fest
Museum of Goa
www.museumofgoa.com
@museumofgoa
@MuseumOfGoa
India

SHORTLISTED

Hello Check! – Now it’s your turn to say
BBC Media Action, Bangladesh
www.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/where-we-work/asia/bangladesh
@bbchellocheck
@bbcmidiaction
Bangladesh
**Building Block of Social Media**

**I AM INDIA**

I Am India–Huts to Homes is not just a social media initiative by Mahindra Rural Housing Finance Limited, but a movement to transform rural India and build the nation, brick by brick. It is an educational campaign to inspire low-income groups living in unsafe huts to build their own *pukka* houses and live a life of dignity. To achieve this, stories of people are shared on social channels to encourage others to build safe homes.

**SHORTLISTED**

**I AM INDIA**

Prayaas

IIM Raipur

[www.iimraipurmarathon.com](http://www.iimraipurmarathon.com)

[@iimraipurmarathon](https://twitter.com/iimraipurmarathon)

[@IIMRp_Marathon](https://twitter.com/IIMRp_Marathon)

India

**SHORTLISTED**

**PRAYAAS**

The Indian Institute of Management in Raipur, in association and with collective support from society, initiated a marathon in November 2017 in the city of Raipur to increase awareness about the national campaign on Beti Bachao Beti Padhao. The marathon also aimed at providing a platform for the masses to connect with various organisations working for similar causes. The objective was achieved by conducting a series of offline and online activities in the months prior to the event as well as during the final day of event.

**SHORTLISTED**

Prayaas

IIM Raipur

[www.iimraipurmarathon.com](http://www.iimraipurmarathon.com)

[@iimraipurmarathon](https://twitter.com/iimraipurmarathon)

[@IIMRp_Marathon](https://twitter.com/IIMRp_Marathon)

India
# NOMINATIONS

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**CROWDSOURCING, CROWD ECONOMY AND CROWD FUNDING**
KARWAN E MOHABBAT

Initiated by Aman Biradari in the light of rising crimes against minorities in India, Karwan e Mohabbat is a journey of shared suffering, of solidarity, of atonement, of justice, and of love. In September 2017, Karwan began its journey across eight states to meet families who had been hit by mob lynchings and hate attacks.

Ahead of, during and post this journey, Karwan’s social media presence on Facebook and Twitter was used aggressively to reach out to the inner circle of Aman Biradari and to the outer circles to create awareness about the rising intolerance in the country. Further, social media helped take the stories from the grounds—of families affected by communal violence and hate—onto the phone screens of thousands of readers. The campaign also raised ₹18 lakh in a month’s time through a dedicated social media campaign, which brought together more than 50 travellers, writers, poets, photographers and videographers. The fact that the Karwan has not come to an end but continues to meet families—and offer them their love, solidarity and atonement—is a testament to its success.
MISSING PUBLIC ART CAMPAIGN

There are an estimated 27 million adults and 13 million children around the world who are victims of human trafficking. Approximately 75 to 80 per cent of human trafficking is for sex. MISSING seeks to bring this issue into the open in a non-preachy but, interactive and thought-provoking manner. MISSING is a public art and awareness campaign that focuses on creating a sensitised awareness about sexual trafficking. It uses simple but powerful silhouettes of women against an urban skyline or in a public space to engage people. MISSING successfully combines art and technology in innovative ways to engage public in a highly visual, non-preachy and impactful manner through combination of installations, interactive murals, art and gaming environment. Recently, the creators of MISSING built a public art project that allows users to talk to the art using a Facebook chat bot.

Social media, primarily Facebook and Instagram, has played a pivotal role in helping MISSING reach a larger audience and build a digital community that has access to relevant information on trafficking and are willing to solve the issue. In 2015, MISSING raised ₹16 lakh on Wishberry, and another $50,000 on Kickstarter in 2017.
CrowdNewsing is a campaign organisation that mobilises a community of supporters for journalistic, social and political interventions. The online community then helps raise funds and amplifies the message on social media to drive maximum impact. Since its launch in March 2017, CrowdNewsing has been trying to intervene in three broad areas to reclaim democracy. These areas are independence of journalism, clean and transparent political funding, and awakening citizens’ consciousness on pertinent issues.

Through Crowdnewsing is present across all relevant social media platforms, they have experienced highest action rates on emails, followed by WhatsApp, Facebook messenger, Facebook timeline and Twitter, in that order. With a membership of close to 4,000 people now, Crowdnewsing maintains a unique WhatsApp group for each campaign and uses customised strategies for each of them. The platform is credited for spearheading several social change campaigns like #NotInMyName and for initiating protests in Delhi against the killing of journalist Gauri Lankesh.
FIGHT DROUGHT

The Better India organises large scale on-ground campaigns with the vision of solving various development issues. One of these was #FightDrought, a crowdfunded campaign organised to restore two ponds in Nagapattinam, one of the worst-hit districts in Tamil Nadu, to help 20,000 villagers in the drought-hit district to get enough water to meet their needs. The Better India leveraged its social media presence to spread the word about the campaign, form a community for people to come together, and raise funds.

SHORTLISTED

Fight Drought
The Better India
www.thebetterindia.com
@thebetterindia
@thebetterindia
India

ONE LIBRARY PER VILLAGE

One Library Per Village is non-profit organisation dedicated to reducing the digital divide by setting up the libraries and empowering the readers with latest technological tools. In an effort to increase the source of reading for children, it initiated two campaigns — #SaveLibrary and #BookBucket Challenge. While the former led to the donation of three lakh books for Chennai libraries that lost five lakh books to the floods, the latter became a social media phenomenon that sparked a dialogue about literature and reading.

SHORTLISTED

One Library Per Village
www.olpv.org
@olpv.org
NA
India
Deepshikha is a public health nutritionist working with the NGO Kshamtalaya Foundation that supports school children in disadvantaged settings. During her field visits, she realised that the children didn’t have a place to study effectively, resulting in bad body postures. And so she planned to give students of the Rajkiya Madhyamik Vidyalaya, Akha Ji Ka Tiba in Rajasthan, PROSOC-designed Deskits through a crowdfunded campaign that was able to raise ₹1.5 lakh through dedicated social media messaging.

### SHORTLISTED

**Women Weave Crowdfunding Campaign**

Yes Global Institute’s Women Weave initiative aimed at catalysing the power of the crowd and private sector capital for India’s social development through innovative financing mechanism — crowdfunding. It aimed at raising funds for WomenWeave’s Balaghat initiative to revive the cluster as a weaving hub of India, and drive sustainable social and economic development of women and traditional handloom weavers in the area by creating a market for yardages, stoles, **dupattas**, and sarees. Through a dedicated social media campaign, the initiative was able to raise more than ₹11 lakh for the initiative.

**Bringing Hope to Education**

Deepshikha is a public health nutritionist working with the NGO Kshamtalaya Foundation that supports school children in disadvantaged settings. During her field visits, she realised that the children didn’t have a place to study effectively, resulting in bad body postures. And so she planned to give students of the Rajkiya Madhyamik Vidyalaya, Akha Ji Ka Tiba in Rajasthan, PROSOC-designed Deskits through a crowdfunded campaign that was able to raise ₹1.5 lakh through dedicated social media messaging.
NOMINATIONS

HAQDARSHAK
NEARPEER
VMEDO
SIGN UP HARYANA
PARENTCIRCLE
KHOJ
LEAP - LOOK FOR EMPLOYEES IN ANDHRA PRADESH
VILLCART

WINNER
WINNER

SOCIAL COMMERCE & ENTERPRISE
Haqdarshak is a multilingual repository of welfare schemes from all over the country, tailored exclusively to meet the entitlement needs of India’s rural and marginalised population. Through an app-based platform, Haqdarshak is trying to bridge the information and access gap between government welfare schemes and citizens. Further, the technology is built such that it personalises information based on a person’s eligibility; and uses easy-to-understand videos to disseminate information about public schemes.

Haqdarshak uses Facebook to engage citizens with its videos and connect with audiences outside its network to increase brand visibility. It uses Twitter to share impact stories from the 10 Indian states where it’s present and to push announcements, job postings and other updates. And it uses Instagram, and its carefully curated hashtags, to share photo stories from the hinterlands with audiences from India and the rest of the world.
Nearpeer is a Web-based platform that offers online courses for students to study at their own convenience and significantly improve learning outcomes. The mission of Nearpeer is to make quality education accessible to each and every student in Pakistan where more than 20 million children are out of school. The platform leverages artificial intelligence on its platform to classify students into categories and offer low-cost tailor-made solutions for individual students, thus eliminating students’ need of attending expensive and far flung academies.

Nearpeer uses social media, primarily Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, for various purposes such as community mobilisation, community engagement, market validation and marketing. It uses Facebook groups for each vertical Nearpeer is operating in and populates it with thousands of students who engage in discussions on different topics relevant to their studies and education in general. Social media platforms also enable them to connect with students personally and give them free-of-cost guidance.
VMEDO

VMEDO is a healthcare technology start-up focused on solving emergency healthcare and medical transportation problems in India by leveraging the power of technology and social media. By following a quadrilateral approach—awareness, accessibility, affordability, and availability—to solve this problem, VMEDO reaches out to a wider audience using social media to create a sense of emergency preparedness and awareness about blood donation, healthcare knowledge and other relevant information.

SHORTLISTED

SIGN UP HARYANA

With the overarching objective of the Haryana Election Department to encourage youth to vote and to keep them informed about the available government schemes and entitlements, the department deployed geo-fence technology to identify and tag young voters, especially in the age group of 18 to 21 years. The department then used social media as a platform to reach out to this group with targeted messaging to encourage voting.

SHORTLISTED
PARENTCIRCLE

In a rapidly changing world, parents are constantly searching for answers to issues related to not just the physical development of children, but also the emotional, social and intellectual development. ParentCircle wants to empower parents to understand and make informed decisions about their children. It does so by reaching out to parents through magazines, online micro communities, parent engagement programmes at the grassroots level, and high-impact content through social media platforms.

SHORTLISTED

ParentCircle
ParentCircle
www.parentcircle.com
@ParentCircleMagazine
@Parent_Circle
India

KHOJ

Khoj is a crowdsourced platform to find missing people. The idea was conceived after a report on missing people stated that over 20,000 people go missing each year in Bangladesh and only a miniscule percentage returns home safe. Khoj, which initially started as an app but soon switched to Facebook, gives users a platform where they can report about missing friends or relatives, along with their photos. The general public then reports back if they have any information on the missing person.

SHORTLISTED

Khoj
Project Be
www.youthprojectbe.org
@youthprojectbe
@youthprojectbe
Bangladesh
**LEAP – LOOK FOR EMPLOYEES IN ANDHRA PRADESH**

Initiated by the Andhra Pradesh Information Technology Academy, LEAP is a platform through which the state government intends to reposition all its endeavours in the areas of employment, entrepreneurship, start-ups and hackathons. The focus of LEAP is to become a mediator between the industry and the students, and it utilises the power of social media to expand its reach.

**SHORTLISTED**

- **LEAP – Look for Employees in Andhra Pradesh**
- **Andhra Pradesh Information Technology Academy (APITA)**
- www.apita.ap.gov.in
- @apita.ap.gov.in
- @APITAcademy
- India

**VILLCART**

VillCart aims to build a strong network of village-level entrepreneurs who are equipped with digital tools and technology, spreading awareness about goods, products and services that can ensure a standard of living for the communities. As a model for social entrepreneurship, VillCart uses a digital platform that serves as a catalogue-cum-data bank for village level entrepreneurs. The entrepreneur is provided with Smart Tabs that function online and offline; awareness for this is created via popular social media platforms.

**SHORTLISTED**

- **Villcart**
- **Pahel Development Services Pvt. Ltd.**
- www.pahel.in
- @PahelOnline
- @pahelonline
- India
NOMINATIONS

MEDHEALTH TV

#BHL (BIGDI HUI LADKI / BIGDA HUA LADKA)

SEHAT KAHANI

SAAHAS

#LAHUKALAGAAN

TRAINING SHG WOMEN TO BECOME COMMUNITY JOURNALISTS

ASAAN TALEEM

HELP KIRAN DECIDE

ILLUSTRATE FOR IMPACT

SHECANDRIVE

WINNER

WINNER

WINNER

SPECIAL MENTION

SPECIAL MENTION

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT
MedHealth TV is a YouTube channel with more than 280 short animated and multimedia videos addressing issues of women health, pregnancy and postnatal care. The platform provides engaging and informative video-based content in Hindi, Telugu, Kannada and Tamil. It is because of its easy-to-understand content that has got the channel more than 22 million unique views in the last two years, and monthly viewership of 2.5 million.

Besides providing access to health videos via YouTube, MedHealth TV’s website enables peer-to-peer learning through a forum where users can communicate with a physician. As much as 90 per cent of MedHealth TV’s content is accessed from mobile devices across South Asia, primarily India and Pakistan, and the Middle East, earning the channel more than 100 shares on social media every day. The platform has recently started an online and telephonic chat service that provides users with relevant information on a chargeable basis.
In spite of modernisation and development, India, as a society still carries a lot of baggage from a traditional past that limits the identity, agency, autonomy and therefore, the future of its young people. They continue to live in the shadow of parental authority, in a patriarchal society with deep rooted gender discrimination, that forms a force-field of social expectations around them. This force-field is perpetuated by a string of gender stereotypes that harm both boys and girls and a culture of silence that punishes any form of non-conformity. It is further perpetuated by unreasonable standards of ‘good’ behaviour, which are distinctly different for boys and girls.

#BHL was a gender-agnostic hashtag campaign that aimed to identify and deconstruct gender stereotyping labels such as Bigdi Hui Ladki or Bigda Hua Ladka among boys and girls aged between 16 and 25. It used the social media platforms of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and WhatsApp over a period of 11 weeks to spark relevant conversations about gender stereotypes and labels, thus reaching out to over 13 million people.
Around 40 million people live below the poverty line in Pakistan and 30 per cent of the country lacks access to even primary health care facilities. Sehat Kahani is a tele-health start-up that aims to democratise healthcare in Pakistan through a network of all-female health providers to deliver quality healthcare solutions through access, prevention and efficiency. The platform connects out-of-work female doctors to underserved patients in low and middle income markets across three provinces through the establishment of 14 eHealth clinics, which have reached out to more than 53,000 patients.

Sehat Kahani uses all popular social media tools, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, Pinterest and WhatsApp to reach out to a wider audience and initiate dialogues around ‘taboo’ topics like doctor bribes, rape and even paedophilia. Through Twitter and Instagram, Sehat Kahani has been able to assist patients who were previously clueless about medical assistance. Its Facebook Female Health Provider Network allows 1,200 health professionals (doctors, nurses, community health workers and medical students) to interact with each other.
Survivors who have faced violence either don’t know where to go for help, or don’t have resources to find out where to go for help. Sometimes, their situation prevents them from finding help, and that can be extremely dangerous to their safety and confidence.

Saahas is a Facebook chat bot and a mobile and Web-based app, conceptualised by the Red Elephant Foundation, that provides services for survivors of gender-based violence, and child support. The name Saahas, in Hindi, translates to ‘courage’, and it is courage that it aims to give the users of the app and the chat bot. The Saahas directory of support comprises over 40,000 organisations across 196 countries offering medical, legal, education and employment services, besides food, shelter, clothing and emergency support. Its Facebook-enabled chat bot, especially, is aimed at empowering survivors to find help and counselling immediately. Users can also visit the Facebook page to pull up information and help-line numbers. So far, the Saahas has been able to reach out to 3,000 survivors worldwide, primarily through Facebook.
"#LaHuKaLagaan is a global campaign for tax-free sanitary napkins that was launched in 2017 to support SheSays India’s campaign worldwide for the same, which was started in 2016. The awareness campaign was successful in breaking several taboos associated with menstruation and making it a mainstream topic of conversation among the masses and in media. The hashtag, which got over 24 million impressions on Twitter in less than 24 hours, encouraged women to make their own videos, asking the Indian Finance Minister to drop the tax on sanitary napkins.

The campaign was an instant hit and spread like wildfire with several well-known personalities taking to social media to speak up on the issue. Soon enough, celebrities like Vishal Dadlani, Aditi Rao Hydari and Mallika Dua were posting on social media, especially Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, urging the Government of India to make sanitary napkins tax-free. The message was simple, sanitary napkins are an item of necessity and not of luxury. While the government did not succumb to the pressure, the campaign made ‘tax-free pads’ a household topic."
TRAINEING SHG WOMEN TO BECOME COMMUNITY JOURNALISTS

In an effort to encourage community journalism, Gaon Connection organised journalism trainings for women from self-help groups associated with the non-profit Mahila Samakhya across 19 districts in Uttar Pradesh, impacting women across 5,923 villages. The idea was to build a pool of rural reporters who could create awareness about pertinent issues and, at the same time, share positive stories via social media.

SHORTLISTED

Gaon Connection Pvt. Ltd.
www.gaonconnection.com
@GaonConnection
@GaonConnection
India

ASAAN TALEEM

Asaan Taleem is a Pakistan-based ed-tech start-up that connects qualified women (tutors, professionals and home makers) to teach young girls through live video classes, thereby empowering women by providing them employment opportunities while also equipping young girls with quality education at their flexible timings, eventually helping both groups become financially independent. The initiative used Facebook, Linkedin and Instagram for outreach, discussions, networking and sharing updates.

SHORTLISTED

Asaan Taleem
Asaan Taleem
www.asaantaleem.org
@asaantaleem
NA
Pakistan

Women Empowerment
HELP KIRAN DECIDE

Initiated by White Swan Foundation, Kiran is a fictional character created for Twitter who took over the foundation’s Twitter handle for a month. Through her stories, Kiran implored people to think about their choices for a better year. Instead of making a new year resolution, which most people are unable to keep, Kiran wanted people to focus on “good” and “healthier” choices for better mental health in 2019.

ILLUSTRATE FOR IMPACT

Oxfam India piloted Illustrate for Impact for its urban gender campaign #FforFreedom. The idea was to revive the artiste community who once published their opinions, thoughts in a way that reached masses and sometimes sparked conversations that changed the course of history. Oxfam piloted this campaign with 10 artistes and topics strategically during November 2017. Oxfam used Twitter to share positive stories, YouTube to engage with individual donors and Linkedin to reach out to corporate donors.

SHORTLISTED

Help Kiran decide
White Swan Foundation
www.whiteswanfoundation.org
@whiteswanfoundation
@mentalhealthind
India

SHORTLISTED

Illustrate for Impact
Oxfam India
www.oxfamindia.org
@oxfamindia
@OxfamIndia
India
“Women Can’t Drive” is a common mindset in our patriarchal society. She Can Drive was launched to counter this mindset. Under this initiative, over 700 women have been trained by professional lady instructors, in the last six years, through a 10-day course. This has not only empowered women but also created job opportunities for many. Social media, particularly Facebook, was used to create awareness about #SheCanDrive and to receive feedback from driving students.
GRAND JURY

The Grand Jury for the 5th edition of the Social Media for Empowerment Awards 2018 was successfully held on 13th April 2018. This year, we received 180 good nominations across 07 categories. The Virtual Jury members managed to filter 169 valid entries to 85 for the final evaluation by the Grand Jury. A panel of 17 Jury members looked into the filtered nominations. This year, for the first time in the history of SM4E, an all-women Jury got together to shortlist the best among the best.
Osama Manzar is a global leader on the mission of eradicating information poverty from India and global south using digital tools through Digital Empowerment Foundation, an organisation he founded in 2002. A British Chevening Scholar and an International Visitors Leadership Program Fellow of the US State Department, Osama is a social entrepreneur, author, columnist, impact speaker, angel investor and mentor. He is member, advisory board, at Alliance for Affordable Internet and sits on several government and policy committees in India and on international organisations working in the areas of Internet, access, and digital inclusion. Osama is also the chairman of Manthan and mBillionth Awards, and has co-authored NetCh@kra-15 Years of Internet in India and Internet Economy of India. Osama writes a weekly column in Indian financial daily Mint and tweets at @Osama Manzar.

Gayatri Mishra Oleti, Ph D, heads operations of Larsen Toubro Public Charitable Trust. A social development professional, she is an alumna of the London School of Economic and XIMB Bhubaneswar. With over 20 years of experience in the social and corporate sectors, her core expertise lie in building collaborations with the governments, civil society groups and corporates to leverage resources and accentuate programme impact; designing evidence-based multi sectoral programmes to reach last mile; data analytics in the social sector to empower stakeholders to make data-driven decisions. Gayatri has worked with SAIL, UCAL Fuel Systems Ltd, USAID, World Bank, DFID and the Children Investment Fund Foundation-UK. She is also the co-founder of a not-for-profit entity, The Enabler Foundation, that works in the areas of social policies relating to digital and financial exclusion.
With an academic and industrial experience of more than 32 years, Gayatri Subramaniam is Associate Vice President – CSR (L&D) at HDFC Standard Life Insurance Company. Before joining HDFC Life, Gayatri was associated with the Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA), under the aegis of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, where she was contributing towards policy advisory, capacity building and knowledge dissemination in the field of corporate social responsibility. She has been an integral part of the processes of the new legislation on CSR in India. In her previous role at IICA, she was instrumental in establishing the National Foundation for Corporate Social Responsibility, a unique platform created for governments, corporates and NGOs. From 2009 to 2011, Gayatri was also involved in the development of the National Voluntary Guidelines for social, economic and environmental responsibilities of business and the Business Responsibility Reporting Framework that was mandated by SEBI for top 500 companies listed under the Bombay Stock Exchange and the National Stock Exchange.

Mahima Kaul heads Public Policy and Government at Twitter India. In this role, she oversees the company’s relationships with policymakers, elected officials, government agencies and NGOs in India and directs policy programmes in these areas. She also manages the #TwitterForGood programme under which she engages NGOs in using Twitter for civic engagement, including disaster and crisis management. Previously, she headed the Cyber Initiative at the Observer Research Foundation, one of India’s leading think tanks, where she wrote extensively on Internet policy issues. She is also co-chair of the CyFy conference run by ORF. Mahima has a Master’s degree from the University of Westminster in Communication Policy and a Bachelor’s from McGill University in Political Science.
Manju Dhasmana is Director – Community Affairs at Microsoft India where she drives the company’s philanthropies mandate of digital inclusion—from digital skills training and helping youth get jobs and start businesses to educating the next generation of innovators through greater access to computer science education for all youth. She also leads the portfolio of partnerships with non-profits and NGOs to deliver the benefit of technology to the underserved communities. In her role, she has the privilege to work on Microsoft’s vibrant employee engagement programme, which supports more than 100 NGOs through financial and time contribution match. Manju has over 18 years of experience to build and deliver strategic CSR programmes aligned to national and local priorities, design and implement sustainable community development programmes in collaboration with multiple stakeholders. In 2009, she joined Microsoft from United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and was with Oxfam GB before that. With her diverse experience of working with corporates, non-profits, bilaterals and governments, she is a firm believer in the power of public – private partnership for inclusive growth.

Naghma Mulla, the Chief Operating officer at EdelGive Foundation, holds a Master’s degree in commerce and is Chartered Accountant by profession. In her current capacity, she spearheads three verticals—Investments & Programmes, Fundraising & Partnerships, and Employee Engagement. She actively works towards creating and maintaining a sustainable philanthropy network to support EdelGive investee portfolio. She is responsible for strategizing and promoting collaborations between different stakeholders in the social space i.e, the NGOs, the donors, corporates and Edelweiss employees. Naghma is deeply involved with the Capacity Building Model wherein she works towards sourcing high quality solutions in aid of critical organisational issues being faced by investee organisations. Prior to this, she had a stint with Bajaj Allianz where she was part of the core finance team. Naghma is also mentor to NSRCEL – IIM Bangalore.
Natasha Badhwar is an independent film-maker, media trainer and columnist. She is the author of My Daughters’ Mum, a heart-warming book on essential subjects, from selfhood and faith to parenting and marriage. At its core, it is searingly personal, and yet the emotions and experiences are astonishingly universal. She writes a weekly column on relationships, family and society in Mint Lounge. Natasha began her career in broadcast journalism with NDTV as the first female videographer in news television in India. She quit 13 years later as Vice President, Training and Development.

Nazia Erum is the author of a bestselling book titled ‘Mothering a Muslim’, which has opened up prime-time discussions on the telly, columns in newspapers and reams of reviews. It has been called an ‘important book’ for our times that ‘fills a gap in Indian literature’. Previously, Nazia has handled communications for the Global Fund, lead projects for development organisations, including the United Nations, and has also been an entrepreneur with her work wear brand, TheLuxuryLabel.in. Nazia is a columnist with CNN-News 18 and India Today (Daily O mag) where she writes on the cross sections of gender, inter-faith and politics, mostly work on bringing to the fore that which was under-represented, under-reported or perspectively missing from discourse.
Namita Bhandare is a journalist with nearly 30 years of reporting experience for various publications, including magazines like Sunday and India Today, and the dailies like The Hindustan Times. She was appointed India’s first gender editor for Mint newspaper, and continues to write a fortnightly column on gender and social issues for The Hindustan Times. Namita has a Master’s degree in journalism from Stanford University and was Katherine Howard Miller Leader-in-Residence at Scripps College, California, in 2015.

Nida Hasan has been part of the Change.org India team since 2014. She currently heads Campaigns for Team India and is responsible for executing the vision for the Women and Girls project. In this capacity, she leads a team of campaigners to support women leaders through content, mobilisation and strategy support, which has led to some of the most iconic digital campaigns in the country. She is also responsible for establishing a strong environment and infrastructure that facilitates citizen community and movement building. She initiates and nurtures strong partnerships with women leaders, civil society organisations working on women’s rights and other stakeholders in government.
Priya Ramani is an editor and columnist based in Bengaluru. She has worked in a variety of news organisations, including Reuters, India Today, Cosmopolitan and The Indian Express. She was on the team of editors that founded Mint and conceptualised and ran Mint Lounge, its weekend magazine for eight years. She has also been a commissioning editor at Juggernaut, India’s only mobile-first publishing house.

**Priya Ramani**  
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*Editor, Columnist*

Stephanie Raison is a communication specialist with UNICEF India Country Office in Delhi where she is responsible for digital communication, campaigns, content production and brand. Over the past two years she has managed several key social media campaigns for UNICEF India, including the #StaySafeOnline Campaign on online safety and #EarlyMomentsMatter focusing on early childhood development. Prior to joining UNICEF Stephanie led UN Women’s advocacy and communication in Tanzania. An award winning broadcast journalist, Stephanie has reported from around the world and has covered three Olympic and Paralympic Games. She started her career volunteering in community radio aged 15. Born in Australia Stephanie speaks Italian, Swahili, Chinese, French and is trying to learn some Hindi. As a vegetarian who loves the hot weather and doesn’t mind a game of cricket Stephanie feels at home in India and is hoping for a bright future #ForEveryChild wherever they are.

**Stephanie Joy Raison**  
@StephanieRais  
*UNICEF Delhi*
Sakina Baker heads CSR at Bharti Infratel, one of the largest telecom tower companies in India. She has 18 years of professional experience in development and corporate sector and has worked on different social concerns, including healthcare, disability, education, water and sanitation, skill development and good governance in voluntary sector. Prior to joining Infratel, she was heading CSR at Fortis Healthcare and also managed operations of Fortis Foundation. Her experience in the voluntary sector, both at the national and international levels, included working with the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, the National Centre for Promotion for Disabled People, Katha and the Voluntary Action Network India. Sakina is a recipient of the prestigious Commonwealth Professional Fellowship in Scotland and was felicitated as one of the ‘50 Most Talented CSR Professionals of India’ by the World CSR Congress.

Sowmya Kidambi is the Director of the Society for Social Audits, Accountability and Transparency (SSAAT), Department of Rural Development, Government of Telangana. She was the Director for the SSAAT-Andhra Pradesh till 2017. She holds a Master’s degree in Social Work (Urban and Rural Community Development) from TISS Mumbai and a Diploma in Human Rights from the Columbia University in New York. In 1998, she joined the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS) in Rajasthan, an organisation that has played an important role in the formulation and passage of the Right to Information Act and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Acts in India. She continues to be a member of the MKSS. She has previously worked with the International Budget Partnership, Washington DC, and has also trained groups in countries like Kenya to Social Audit the Constituency Development Fund and South Africa to audit the Janitorial and Sanitation services.
Seema Chowdhry is the editor of Business of Life, a daily features section and Philanthropy and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) at Mint, a business newspaper. She has been a part of Mint since its inception in 2007. Some of her recent writings have included topics related to women in the workplace, social entrepreneurship, and CSR. From 2016 to 2017, she was a scholar pursuing Master in Public Administration Programme, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore, where she undertook courses in urban interventions, media and public opinion, environmental economics and sustainability, and decentralization.

A television journalist for more than 20 years, Radhika Bordia is Senior Features Editor at NDTV. She has worked on several docustyle series, such as 24 Hours, Witness and India Matters, each of which has looked at issues through the combined lenses of current affairs and culture.

Veena is an HR professional with nearly 20 years of experience in Wipro and Schneider Electric. She has worked in various capacities in the area of Human Resource & Sustainability. She holds a Masters in Personnel Management & Industrial Relations from the Xavier School of Management, and has been volunteering for the last five years with various organisations and considers herself gainfully unemployed. She is an avid reader and passionate about environment. She enjoys exploring nature with her family.
After graduating in in Sociology Honors from Hindu College, Yasmin Kidwai followed up with two post-graduate diplomas in film-making and Journalism from the Xavier Institute of Communications in Mumbai. Having gained experience assisting directors like Mahesh Bhatt and Simi Garewal, Yasmin briefly worked with NDTV before beginning her career as an independent documentary filmmaker in Delhi. In the last 19 years, she has made 50 films, with a focus on rural and social development issues. Her work has effected changes in government policy and pioneered methods of funding and showcasing films. She has worked extensively with the Ministry of External Affairs, state governments such as Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh, and with NGOs like Helpage India. In 2001, she made a documentary on the Bhuj earthquake, and went on to make integral films that explored greater protection for senior citizens, women’s role and rights when reservation in Panchayati Raj was introduced, Gujarat riots and the Barefoot Grandmamas in India. Besides being a film-maker, Yasmin also works with artisan communities around India to develop new styles in Indian women’s clothing using age-old techniques of cloth weaving. Yasmin is an elected councilor to the South Delhi Municipal Corporation and is Secretary of the newly formed All India Professionals Congress. She was recently nominated as member All India Congress Committee.
ORGANISER

Digital Empowerment Foundation

Established in 2004, Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF) aims to connect unreached and underserved communities of India in an effort to bring them out of digital darkness and equip them with access to information. With the belief ‘Inform, Communicate and Empower,’ DEF finds sustainable digital interventions to overcome information poverty in rural and remote locations of India, and empower communities with digital literacy, digital tools and last mile connectivity. Over the last 15 years, DEF has gained experience and success in building community-oriented infrastructure and information hubs to create digitally literate, information-empowered and equitable communities across the country. These digitally integrated resource centres primarily offer digital literacy, digital skills, digital services, information services, citizen services and business development services to create information-rich societies under a sustainable model. Through this and various other projects, with a similar vision, DEF has been able to mark its presence in 345 locations across 100 districts of 22 Indian states.

www.defindia.org

CO-ORGANISER

Facebook

Founded in 2004, Facebook’s mission is to give people the power to build community and bring the world closer together. People use Facebook to stay connected with friends and family, to discover what’s going on in the world, and to share and express what matters to them.

https://newsroom.fb.com/company-info/

INSTITUTIONAL PARTNER

World Summit Award (WSA)

The World Summit Award (WSA) is a global activity to select and promote the world’s best e-Content and most innovative ICT applications. It offers a worldwide platform for all who value the creative use of ICTs and who are committed to making today’s information society more inclusive. WSA was initiated by Austria in 2003 in the framework of the United Nations’ World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and is organised by a global partner network, coordinated by the International Center for New Media. WSA partners come from governments, private sector and civil society in over 178 UN member states.

www.worldsummitawards.org

STRATEGIC PARTNER

Mint

Mint is one of India’s premium business news publications – 76% of Mint readers do not read another business paper, making Mint a critical reach vehicle for the top end audience. Mint is the clear No. 2 among business papers in terms of readership. Representative of an integrated newsroom, www.livemint.com is Mint’s online portal and is among the fastest growing news websites in India. Livemint provides daily national, international and business news, tracks market movements and detailed of significant events. The site has evolved multimedia features like videos, podcasts and slideshows. Mint comes out with a premium weekend magazine Lounge that focuses on the lifestyle, passions and other related interests of readers. Lounge is known to avoid run on the mill stories and is immensely popular.

www.livemint.com
**EVENT PARTNER**

**Inomy**

INOMY is a Media and Technology company providing services like e-content e-learning, documentary film-making, web and online software development, Web designing, designing, printing and content development at various levels. It was formed in 1999 to focus on the emerging new economy, information economy, knowledge society. INOMY started with publishing e-newsletter and later expanded itself in publishing e-books, and other formal electronic.

[www.inomy.com](http://www.inomy.com)

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**LIVE STREAMING PARTNER**

**Go News**

GoNews is India’s first-of-its-kind app-based television news channel that delivers personalised news to viewers on their smartphones and Smart TVs at a time of their choosing. The recently launched channel is collaborating with content generators in rural India to offer news and stories, not more than 90 seconds long, which often go unreported or which are not available at other commercial news outlets. The narratives are specific, crisp and compelling; and cover a wide variety of Indian and global subjects from politics to public policy; from agriculture to the arts; from technology to travel; from environment to entertainment; from economy to enrichment of life. It is also the first digital news platform in the country to adhere and abide by the self-regulatory mechanism of the News Broadcasters Association.

[www.gonews24x7.com](http://www.gonews24x7.com)

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**OUTREACH PARTNER**

**Salaam Namaste Community Radio**

The first Community Radio of Noida and Ghaziabad, Salaam Namaste [a Unit of Institute of Management Studies, Noida]. Catering to community needs and community service, the radio station broadcasts educational programmes, social awareness programmes, local talent programmes and creates a powerful vocal platform where local dignitaries solve grievances of local people. This Radio station brings voices of Junior RJ’s connects people with culture and heritage, and also share inspiring stories of community. A radio which becomes ‘Voice of the Voice less’!

[www.salaamnamaste.in](http://www.salaamnamaste.in)
DIGITAL EMPOWERMENT FOUNDATION

Digital Empowerment Foundations’ YouTube channel is a repository of thousands of videos from rural India that represent transforming lives, courtesy digital tools and technology.

Want to see how weavers of Chanderi are using advanced design software? Want to see how Internet has connected the people of Nichalagarg? Want to know which app is initiating a change in the society? Then visit DEF India’s YouTube channel!
Building Blocks of Social Networks is a book published by Digital Empowerment Foundation, under its Social Media for Empowerment Awards platform, to explore and share how some of the best social media initiatives from South Asia are leveraging the power of social media to reach out to a wider global audience and initiate a change.