

Tigo digital social entrepreneurs creating better world for Tanzania

Tigo Tanzania (www.Tigo.co.tz) in partnership with a local NGO, Reach For Change, have once again announced two winners of the Tigo Digital Changemakers competition.

The competition is a social entrepreneurship programme aimed at identifying and empowering young Tanzanians with innovative digital solutions that can help to solve some of the country's most pressing community needs.

The winners of 2015 bring to nine the total number of social entrepreneurs that have received funding from Tigo Tanzania through digital program in the past four years - each winner is given US\$20,000 to implement their project idea. The seven existing Changemakers had until end of 2014 impacted the lives of over 10,000 children of the East African country, according to Tigo Tanzania Chief Commercial Officer, Shavkat Berdiev.



The Swedish Ambassador to Tanzania, Katarina Rangnitt (second right) awards a certificate to the winner of the Tigo Reach For Change competition, Neema Shosho in Dar es Salaam as Tigo Chief Commercial Manager, Shavkat Berdiev (right) and the Resident Chief Executive Officer of Reach For Change, Peter Nyanda (left), look on.

This year's winners announced in Dar es Salaam on Wednesday, 16 December are Neema Shosho and Bihaga Edward. They were among the 15 finalists who in 2015 made the cut in a grueling duel that usually pits hundreds of applicants with project ideas to improve the lives of children and the larger society using digital toolkit.

Each of the two winners benefit from a grant of \$20,000 and a business management mentorship from Tigo to enable them

achieve their dreams of putting their innovative solutions and technology into practice as change agents for the under-privileged in the society.

Renown as Tanzania's leading digital lifestyle telecom operator, Tigo has been investing heavily in corporate social responsibility initiatives, the Digital Changemakers program being of them. The telecom, which has over 10 million subscribers, also supports programs in the health sector, education and sports.

"Our support for community development projects demonstrates our commitment to drive digital transformation not just for our customers but to the larger Tanzanian community as well. We are proud that by helping these social entrepreneurs, our organization is helping to solve some of the community's challenges through digital solutions," says Berdiev.

What the Digital Changemakers have done

The seven past winners of the Tigo Tanzania Digital Changemakers program are: Tadei Msumaje, Joan Avit, Leka Tingitana, Debora Shuma, Faraja Nyalandu and Carolyne Ekyarisiima.

Tadei Msumaje, who hails from the picturesque, Tanzanian northern city of Moshi that's located on slopes of the panoramic Mt. Kilimanjaro, Africa's largest mountain, has pioneered Majengo Kids and Youth Technological School that integrates the use of ICT with other learning structures such as nursery education and entrepreneurship to ensure that the benefits of ICT spur learning processes to children in Tanzania.

For Joan Avit, hers is, 'to assist in improving the quality of early childhood education for children through an easy-to-learn child-friendly and interactive technology literacy tool-kit' called GraphoGame. GraphoGame is a Kiswahili-Finnish game-based, child-friendly innovation designed to help children read more easily and effectively by themselves. Her initiative has impacted more than 900 children. Through Tigo's US\$20,000 award, Avit was able to purchase GraphoGame devices and circulate them to more than 4,200 children in more than 20 schools in Moshi and Rombo in northern Tanzania's Kilimanjaro region.

"Looking back", says Avit; "Tigo's support has helped a great deal in realizing the dreams of the children especially those with slow-learning abilities".

It's an innovation that conforms to Jean Piaget's models of cognitive learning that conclude that children learn best if allowed to discover things for themselves.

In a country whose maternal mortality rate stands at a not-very-inspiring 454 per 100,000 live births and an infant mortality rate of 44 in 1,000 live births (according to Tanzania Demographic Health Survey, TDHS-2012), any intervention aimed at mitigating the situation is highly welcome.

That is why, thanks to Tigo's support, Leka Tingitana's mobile communications platform, eAFYA is providing a life-line to expectant mothers in Mwanza, a beautiful lake-shore city overlooking the world's second largest fresh-water body, Lake Victoria.

With his budding digital company, LXT Technological Solutions for Africa, Tingitana's innovation aims to 'support the emerging network of community health workers (CHWs) who are at the fore-front in providing health-care support to expectant and new mothers in the Lake Zone'.

Tingitana proudly says of his life-saving digital project: "eAfya connects physicians and health-care providers by allowing the transformation of electronic data across a wide network of systems bringing about an organized way of diagnosis and creating sustainable dissemination of information on health matters thus allowing doctors and health workers to get access to important medical tests and results in a centralized registry!". The project could be a game-changer in the health sector if the government through the relevant ministry leverages on it and spreads it all over the country.

Gabriella Rehabilitation Centre, another program by the Tigo Changemakers program, provides on-site occupational therapy in which therapists and teachers provide assessment, education and disability awareness to parents, care-givers, mentors and the community at large. The centre founder Debora-Shuma conceived the idea that rehabilitates disabled children as well as working towards eliminating stigma against them and integrating them with their abled-bodied counterparts through vocational training.

Computer literacy in Tanzanian primary schools is in its nascent stages. This is the area that another Tigo Digital Changemakers, Faraja Nyalandu, has ventured into. Nyalandu has developed a digital toolkit that creates digital educational content that empowers youth and children via desktop and mobile learning services.

"Through my company Shule Direct, mobile learning services have impacted over 7,300 children within one year, thanks to support from Tigo," Nyalandu says.

Similarly, Carolyn Ekyarisiima's project of teaching basic and complex computer skills to young girls aged 10-18 years had by the end of 2014, impacted over 700 pupils.

Tigo Tanzania social investment is happening in parallel with the company's investment on its infrastructure. In 2015, according to Berdiev, the telecom has invested US\$ 120 million on its network expansion and improvement which include scaling up its 3G sites and fibre network as well as launching Tanzania's biggest and fastest Tigo 4G LTE network.

Tigo Tanzania is the biggest commercial brand of Millicom, an international company developing the digital lifestyle in 12 countries with commercial operations in Africa and Latin America and corporate offices in Europe and the USA.

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