

## **Inaugural text messaging competition selects non-profit winners from Kenya, Uganda, Mexico and Azerbaijan**

*nGOMobile initiative helps global non-profits in the developing world reap the benefits of mobile technology*

**Cambridge, UK, Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> February, 2008:** Mobile technology organisation kiwanja.net today announced the winners of nGOMobile, a competition aimed at encouraging grassroots non-profits in the developing world think about how they could benefit from text messaging in their work.

The explosive entry of mobile technology into the developing world has opened up a raft of opportunities for the non-profit sector.

Text messaging has proved itself to be remarkably versatile, helping remind patients to take their medicine, providing market prices to farmers and fishermen, distributing health information, allowing the reporting of human rights abuses and promoting increased citizen participation in government.

While the list may be long, not everyone has been able to reap the benefits.

The inaugural **nGOMobile** competition ran for three months from October 2007, and was aimed exclusively at grassroots non-profit Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) working for positive social and environmental change. “Behind the scenes, these often unsung heroes of the NGO community battle against the daily realities of life in developing countries, where it can take all day to fulfil the simplest task” said Ken Banks, Founder of kiwanja.net. “These people don’t lack passion and commitment, they lack tools and resources” said Banks.

Grassroots NGOs around the world were invited to submit short project ideas explaining how greater access to mobile technology – and SMS text messaging in particular – would benefit them and their work.

## TEXT MESSAGING AID FOR NGOs

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The top four entries, selected by a panel of distinguished judges, are being awarded a brand new Hewlett Packard laptop computer, two Nokia mobile phones, a GSM modem, kiwanja.net's own entry-level text messaging platform – FrontlineSMS – and a cash prize of US\$1,000.

Sponsors of the competition included Hewlett Packard, Nokia, ActiveXperts, 160Characters, Wieden+Kennedy and kiwanja.net.

The winning projects, selected from a pool of over seventy entries, come from **Kenya, Uganda, Mexico and Azerbaijan.**

In Kenya, the **Centre for Training and Integrated Research for ASAL Development (CETRAD)** will begin using SMS to work with local communities to promote the protection and sustainable use of environmental resources.

In Uganda, **NETWAS** will launch an SMS-based service for rural communities allowing them to ask a range of water-based questions on topics such as sanitation, hygiene, water harvesting and water technologies.

In Mexico, **The Equilibrium Fund** will deploy a range of SMS services to help rural Central American and Mexican communities solve problems of deforestation, poverty, malnutrition, unemployment and the marginalisation of women.

In Azerbaijan, **Digital Development** will begin helping grassroots and politically excluded people understand their human and legal rights, and to engage them further in the political process, through their mobile phones.

According to Bill Thompson, a member of the Judging Panel, "Mobility has clearly evolved into a force for social change, and the incredible array of entries showed how far the tools and thinking in the space have progressed. But beyond the tools themselves and the functionality they enable, we were struck by the humanity of the whole process - the passionate hope, the depth of conviction and the sheer resolve to do good all our entrants showed. Now the winners get the tools to bring their visions to life over the course of this year, and we look forward to their success, and sharing their stories to inspire next year's entrants!"

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The competition website, with full profiles and photographs of the winners, can be found at [www.ngomobile.org](http://www.ngomobile.org)

A second round of **nGOMobile** will be announced in the coming weeks.

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### **About [kiwanja.net](http://kiwanja.net)**

Since 2003, [kiwanja.net](http://kiwanja.net) has been helping local, national and international non-profit Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) make better use of information and communications technology in their work. Specialising in the application of mobile technology, it provides a wide range of ICT-related services drawing on over 22 year's experience of its Founder, Ken Banks.

*[kiwanja.net](http://kiwanja.net) believes that all non-profits, whatever their size and wherever they operate, should be given the opportunity to implement the latest mobile technologies in their work, and actively seeks to provide the tools to enable them to do so.*

<http://www.kiwanja.net>