

## Twenty Global Youth Leaders Receive YouthActionNet Awards from International Youth Foundation and Nokia

### Awards spotlight youth-led efforts to create positive social change

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Baltimore, Maryland, USA – A formerly homeless youth working to help street children create new lives in Nairobi, Kenya, a Palestinian youth who uses the power of music to promote peace, and a young American who is mobilizing citizens and communities throughout the U.S. to put an end to genocide are among the winners of this year's YouthActionNet awards.

"Each of the twenty winners has developed creative solutions to urgent social challenges," said YouthActionNet Manager Ashok Regmi. "Their efforts reflect a growing global youth movement as young people work across national borders and harness the power of technology to contribute to their local and global communities."

Launched in 2001 by the International Youth Foundation (IYF) and Nokia, YouthActionNet is a program that invests in the power and promise of young people to create positive change.

Among the winners of the 2006 YouthActionNet awards are:

- Twenty-three year-old Selene Biffi, who established Youth Action for Change, a web-based initiative in Italy, that has trained thousands of young people in over 80 countries to be change-makers in their communities;
- Michael Eskenazi, 25, of Israel, who is leading efforts to promote greater understanding and dialogue among Israeli and Palestinian young professionals; and
- Gautam Gupta, age 23, who founded Activists in Action for Women, AIDS & Justice in India, to advocate on behalf of victims of domestic violence and rape.

Ranging in age from 18 to 28, the award winners come from diverse backgrounds, but share a common goal to mobilize their peers and others in solving urgent social challenges. They were chosen following a peer review process in which previous recipients of YouthActionNet awards select the next round of awardees. Each winner is awarded US\$500 to support his or her work, receives visibility through electronic and print materials, and becomes eligible to participate in international meetings sponsored through YouthActionNet.

IYF first announced the YouthActionNet awards competition in January 2002. To date, nearly 100 young change-makers have received awards, with applications having been submitted by more than 2,700 young people representing over 60 countries. Recipients are selected on an annual basis, with applications currently being accepted for the next round of awards to be announced in July 2007.

Through its awards program, dynamic website, advocacy, training, and networking opportunities, YouthActionNet offers young leaders ideas, resources, and connections to like minds around the world. To learn more about YouthActionNet, and for further information on this year's award recipients, please visit [www.youthactionnet.org](http://www.youthactionnet.org).

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### About the International Youth Foundation (IYF)

IYF believes young people possess the power to shape the future. To learn, work, thrive, and lead, they need access to programs and resources that inspire and challenge them. IYF is a global nonprofit organization that makes this possible. Today in 70 countries, IYF collaborates with businesses, governments, and civil society organizations that share a common desire to improve the life conditions and prospects of young people. Together, IYF and its partners build effective, sustainable, and scalable programs that positively impact the lives of young people worldwide.

### About Nokia

Nokia has a positive impact on society that extends beyond the advanced technology, products and services the company creates. Through its cooperation with the International Youth Foundation and other regional philanthropic and social responsibility programs, the company prepares young people to embrace opportunities created by the global economy and new technological advancements. The company has been an active regional contributor to youth and education causes for many years, with Nokia employees making their own contributions as volunteers in a range of programs throughout the world. More information about Nokia is available at [www.nokia.com](http://www.nokia.com).

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