

SAB Social Innovation Award winners 2013

The R1-million winner of the third Annual SAB Foundation Social Innovation Awards held in Sandton late last week is 'Vula' Eye Health Mobile Phone App.

Innovators William Mapham and Professor Kovin Naidoo created the app to improve eye care in South Africa's low-income communities by educating people about different eye conditions, providing access to eye sight tests and connecting them to eye care professionals. The prize money will be used to grow and commercialise the product, which is aimed at making an impact amongst blind people in low-income areas, with a focus on rural areas.

"There are more than 640 million people in South Africa who are blind or visually impaired simply because they cannot afford a pair of spectacles...this prevents them from amongst other getting a job. With the Vula app we hope to alleviate the plight of the blind and visually impaired," says Professor Naidoo.

Other winners

Second place winner of R500,000 is Altis Osteogenic Bone Matrix, an injectable bone regeneration product developed by Nuno Pires. The grant will be used to help roll the product out in local state hospitals as an affordable and less painful alternative to traditional bone graft procedures.

In joint third place with a grant of R300,000 each is ProYouth Naturals SNE Complex 54, body care products using medicinal African plants; SawvyLoo, a waterless toilet for rural and temporary settlements; and Repurpose Schoolbag, a schoolbag made of 100% recycled plastic shopping bags.

Seed grants of R150,000 each were awarded to:

- Power in a Bottle, a mobile solar energy power pack housed in a 5 litre plastic container
- Know Your Child, an IT platform which sends learner homework requirements from teachers to parents via mobile text messages
- Bulk Brick Layer, a brick building template which eliminates the complexities of the skill
- FerbiGas, a bio digester which converts decomposed organic matter into methane gas for cooking and other energy uses
- Light of Dawn, an eco-friendly LED battery operated lamp made from recycled cold drink bottles
- Motor Monitor Cam, internal and external recording device package for vehicles
- SMART Stand-by, a device that monitors electrical power usage
- The Terrawatt Raptor Renewable Energy Device, a wind turbine energy storage device
- Tour2.0, an online tour operator offering tour packages in local communities

"The final decision was a tough one to make, because of the high calibre of the innovations that made it to the final round of judging. The winners are representative of innovations we believe will bring high impact benefits to the SAB Foundation's core beneficiaries, South African society's most vulnerable," says SAB Foundation manager, Nicola Jowell.

All winners will receive their grant funding in tranches determined by their growth plan to commercialise and upscale the service and product.

The SAB Foundation was founded in 2009 as a beneficiary of SAB's broad based black economic empowerment deal, SAB Zenzele, in which it holds 18% shares. Since the first dividend payout in 2010, the SAB Foundation has received R58.7 million of which more than R27 million has been invested in 169 businesses and innovations.

The SAB Foundation Social Innovations Awards was first launched in 2011 and recognise and invest in pro-poor products and services that address the challenges faced by the SAB Foundation's targeted beneficiaries - women, the youth, people living with disabilities and people living in rural areas.

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