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Ashraf Patel named social entrepreneur of the year

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- Patel, who was representing Pravah and ComMutiny, was presented the award by Union minister Smriti Irani

Two organizations that train the youth for leadership roles, Pravah and ComMutiny, on Thursday won the Social Entrepreneur of the Year (SEOY) award instituted by the Schwab Foundation and Jubilant Bhartia Foundation.

The award was presented to Ashraf Patel representing Pravah and ComMutiny by Smriti Irani, minister of women and child development and textiles, at a virtual event.

The other finalists were Sujoy Santra of Kolkata-based iKure, which works on primary healthcare, wellness and prevention services through innovative technology, and Sandeep Patel of NEPRA, an Ahmedabad-based waste management solutions company.

The finalists were picked from among 100 entries and applications from 23 cities across India. This year's jury members for the award included Shobhana Bhartia, chairperson and editorial director, HT Media Ltd; Hilde Schwab, chairperson and co-founder, Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship; Sudha Pillai, board member, Jubilant Life Sciences Ltd and former member, Secretary, Planning Commission; and Uday Kotak, president of the Confederation of

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The SEOY award “recognizes entrepreneurs who implement innovative, sustainable and scalable solutions to solve India’s social problems. In 2010, the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship and Jubilant Bhartia Foundation came together to promote social innovation in India through the Social Entrepreneur of the Year (SEOY) India award,” a statement on behalf of the two foundations said.

Established in 1993, Pravah has been facilitating the development of a generation of empathetic, sensitive youth change-makers in India through psycho-social interventions, helping them build more inclusive identities and societies.

ComMutiny which was formed in 2008, works on the idea of making collectives out of organizations like Pravah. The two were also selected as finalists last year.

Patel, who has been associated with both organizations, said that it was “a recognition for leadership of social action and investment in youth”.

“This recognition for youth leadership has come at a moment when it was needed the most. The world right now is beset with inequality, conflict and environmental issues. Never before have we needed more collaboration and shared leadership with young people to create a better world,” she said.

Patel added that it had been a challenging task to “place this agenda within a development paradigm”. The task was especially difficult as there were no clear or quantifiable indicators of the work done or achievements made, she said. Building of constitutional values was “one very, very important piece that is missing in development work”.

Applauding the work done by the finalists, Shyam S. Bhartia, chairman and founder, and Hari S. Bhartia, chairman and co-founder, Jubilant Bhartia Group, and founder directors of Jubilant Bhartia Foundation, said: “It is heartening to see that the finalists have brought disruption in their own fields with their innovative ideas and approach. They have done path-breaking work in the fields of healthcare, youth development and solid waste management.”

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In her remarks, minister Irani said she appreciated “the contribution of Schwab Foundation and Jubilant Bhartia Foundation in celebrating social entrepreneurs... This award today highlights to the rest of our country, that compassion is not only the most endearing but also an equally profitable business skill.”