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WOMEN'S EDUCATION PROJECT
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Kalyani Subramanyam of Maitrayana Charity Foundation and Meenu Vadera of Azad Foundation & Sakha to Receive Women's Education Project's Red Bangle Award at its 10th Annual Forum
December 5, 2023 at 10:00AM EST VIA ZOOM

(New York, NY) Kalyani Subramanyam CEO, Maitrayana Charity Foundation and Meenu Vadera Founder, Azad Foundation & Sakha will receive the 2023 Red Bangle Awards at Women's Education Project's 10th Annual Forum held virtually on December 5th, 10:00AM EST.

Women's Education Project presents the Red Bangle Award annually to a woman who "by her life and accomplishment demonstrates the indomitable eloquence of the human spirit." Inaugurated in 2014, the award recognizes women leaders globally who share WEP's vision and inspire its students, young Indian women, to higher goals.

This year's recipients each embody the spirit of the Red Bangle Award through their deep personal commitment and sustained professional work on issues of gender equality.

At the Forum on December 5th, Marissa Wesely, Co-founder of Win-Win Strategies (WWS), and 2021 Red Bangle recipient, will present the awards. Following the ceremony, Kalyani and Meenu will join Zoë Timms, WEP's Founding Executive Director, in a discussion of their personal journeys building organizations working towards gender equality. Young women of each organization will join to share stories of their own.

On receiving the award, Kalyani stated "I am humbled to receive the Red Bangle Award which has been previously received by so many amazing and inspiring women across the world. This award is testimony and recognition of the courage and journeys of the young women leaders in my organization, Maitrayana, who are striving to empower girls in their communities."

Meenu added "This award celebrates the *indomitable spirit* of the women drivers we have and continue to work with; who have overcome extreme odds to be able to transform their lives. This work is slow, difficult and time consuming; for truly transforming one's lives is never easy. Any of us who has done so with our lives will know that this doesn't happen overnight, it takes long, deep, sometimes painful and often reflective work. That is the kind of work that the women drivers, community change agents have undertaken along with Azad & Sakha. We hope that the award will give more visibility to the idea of women in non-traditional livelihoods as a new and effective pathway to women's substantive empowerment. I am grateful to Women' Education Project for shining the light at our humble and collective efforts in this direction."

Kalyani Subramanyam, CEO at the Maitrayana Charity Foundation, has 25 years of experience of working on issues of HIV and sexuality. Prior to her work in Maitrayana, She worked 18 years at



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The Naz Foundation (India) Trust. As a strong advocate for women's rights, she has been responsible for the development of the 'Young People's Initiative': A Women's Empowerment initiative, that uses sport, life skills education and leadership development to empower adolescent girls and young women to access their rights and achieve their potential. The YPI has reached out to more than 130,000 girls across the country. In 2017, Kalyani was honored with the Goal Lifetime Achievement Award for her commitment as a pioneer to providing safe spaces for girls to play and participate in life skills education.

Kalyani is a member of UNICEF's International Safeguarding Children in Sport Advisory Board. Her experience and understanding of women's empowerment have enabled her to serve as the NGO representative on Standard Chartered Bank and its subsidiaries Internal Committee (IC) for the POSH policy. She is a Vital Voices Lead Fellow and an alumnus of the Dasra Leadership Program.

Meenu Vadera is the Founder of Azad Foundation, a social enterprise that supports resource poor women to gain "livelihoods with dignity". Meenu also is the Founder of Sakha Consulting Wings, a unique social enterprise that creates safe employment options for women professional drivers. For more than 30 years Meenu has been a grassroots worker, trainer, implementer and a leader. She has been involved in development initiatives as the Country Director in ActionAid Uganda (1998-2003). In India she has also led an innovative initiative of Aagaz Academy-Schools of Leadership for elected women panchayat leaders. She has written and published many articles on women's rights and has been the recipient of multiple awards including the 'International Inspiration' Award by IBM iX everywoman in Travel Awards, 2018 and was featured amongst the 'Seven Women Changing the World for Good in 2019'. Sakha Consulting Wings received an Emerging Social Enterprises recognition in 2018 by Shared Value Initiative, under her leadership.

PAST RED BANGLE AWARD RECIPIENTS

Elizabeth Howard, WEP (2014), Kayce Jennings, Girl Rising (2015), Shabana Basij-Rasikh, School of Leadership Afghanistan (2016), Saba Ismail, Aware Girls (2017), Esther Subhashini, WEP-Hyderabad (2018), Anjlee Prakash, Learning Links Foundation (2019), Vandana Goyal, Avanti Fellows & Ramya VenkataRaman, Centa (2020) and Marissa Weseley, Win-Win Strategies (2021), Anita Bhatia, UN Women (2021), and Sonali Khan, Managing Director of Sesame Workshop India.

ABOUT WEP

At Women's Education Project (WEP), young women ages 15 to 24 attend an experiential, vision expanding program to gain knowledge, skills and a broad understanding of their opportunities. As self-reliant and confident leaders, these young women make positive change for themselves, their families and communities and informed choices to earn in careers of their own choosing. To do this, WEP supports NGO partners with an incubator program for female grassroots leaders, to provide young women in their areas a community-rooted, locally-resourced, holistic curriculum: the Leadership Academy.

To attend the forum visit: www.WomensEducationProject.org

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