INDIA

2016 Statistics

» **Life expectancy: 68.1 years**
» **Population: 1.3 billion** (2015 est.)
» **GDP per capita: US$6,200** (2015 est.)
» **Mobile broadband penetration: 18.2%** (est.)

Sources: CIA World Fact book (https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/in.html); Internet penetration data provided by www.internetworldstats.com based on data published by Nielsen Online, the International Telecommunications Union, GfK and local regulators; mobile penetration data provided by Informa UK Limited and based on market intelligence.

SoochnaPreneur program aims to connect rural citizens to information about government entitlements and other digital services while creating technology-based entrepreneurship opportunities for rural youth.

In India, approximately 70% of the nation's 1.3 billion people live in rural areas. Largely due to poverty and illiteracy, many of these citizens may be unaware of government entitlements — that exist to help them — and may not have access to the Internet that could give them more information about these programs. Qualcomm® Wireless Reach™ is collaborating with the Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF) on the SoochnaPreneur program to equip rural youth with advanced wireless technologies that will enable them to become entrepreneurs and deliver the much-needed information about entitlements to citizens as a fee-based service. Ultimately, this program aims to demonstrate how advanced wireless technologies can be used for social and economic empowerment, which will help bridge poverty gaps through last-mile information access and delivery services. SoochnaPreneur aligns with the Government of India's Digital India plan, which aims to empower citizens through ubiquitous access to the Internet and use of mobile phones and services.

Challenge

» Poverty and illiteracy keep many rural citizens unaware and without access to numerous existing government entitlements for which they are eligible.
» 3G and 4G LTE-enabled smartphones and tablets, as well as data plans, continue to be unaffordable to a vast majority of rural citizens.
» Rural youth need new entrepreneurial avenues to earn a livelihood, help lift their families out of poverty and enable them to contribute to their communities.

Solution

» MeraApp, a mobile application developed by DEF, will contain details about a number of government schemes and entitlements to provide timely and relevant information to rural citizens about available benefits.
» MeraApp will cover over 500 government entitlements available in the states of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Odisha.
» 100 rural youth will be provided 3G and 4G/LTE-enabled tablets preloaded with the MeraApp along with data connectivity, data plans and training in how to use the technologies to deliver the information as a fee-based service to rural citizens.
» The participants will be connected to IT and digitally-enabled Community Information Resource Centres (CIRCs) in their block (sub -district) to provide various digital services like mobile phone talk-time recharges, bus and rail ticket reservations and facilities to photocopy or scan documents, among others.
» Participating youth will be known as 'SoochnaPreneurs.' The name is derived from the words "Soochna" which means 'information' in Hindi and "entrepreneur." They will be located in the West Champaran district of Bihar; Guna district of Madhya Pradesh; Alwar and Barmer districts of Rajasthan; Ranchi district of Jharkhand; and Bargarh district of Odisha.
» The SoochnaPreneur program is based on the model of Soochna Seva, a program that is funded by the European Union and implemented by DEF to enable the delivery of government entitlements through the CIRC network.

INDIA

Impact

» Digitization of valuable information, containing more than 500 government entitlements for India's rural poor, will make this information much more accessible to the people who need it most.

» 100 SoochnaPreneurs will be able to reach out to approximately 300,000 households.

» Participating male and female youth will acquire new skills that will increase their employability.

Technology

» MeraApp mobile application

» 3G and 4G LTE tablets

» 3G and 4G LTE connectivity

Program Stakeholders

» Digital Empowerment Foundation is responsible for the program's implementation, including its overall design, management, development of MeraApp, selection and training of SoochnaPreneurs. DEF-operated Community Information Resource Centres (CIRCs) will provide DEF the support needed for implementing digital interventions for development.

» The state governments of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Odisha will provide information on entitlements.

» Qualcomm Wireless Reach is the primary program funder and will provide program management support and technology expertise.

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