

Media Release

Three best entrepreneurs win VentureOut Challenge by infoDev / World Bank for bringing their innovative services across the borders

Chisinau, 1 November 2013 – Three mobile startups were awarded the ‘VentureOut’ prize during the finals of an international competition held in Moldova today for having the most innovative and internationally-oriented solutions.

The three firms, from Croatia, Senegal and Trinidad & Tobago, were selected by a jury consisting of angel investors and technology experts. The winners were selected out of 100 applicants and judged through a “Dragons’ Den” style pitching contest on the criteria of commercial potential, long-term viability and international scalability of the services.

*“In congratulating the winners of the VentureOut Challenge I want to praise their innovative spirit and their power to lead by example”, said **Abdoulaye Seck, World Bank Country Manager for Moldova.** “The quality of their apps is an inspiration to many technology graduates and is a clear testimony of the vast amount of opportunities that the ICT industry offers to young people from Moldova and beyond. Youth employment is an area of great interest to the World Bank Group and we’re happy to see young people come up with great ideas and turn them into viable business ventures.”*

The three mobile entrepreneurs selected by the [VentureOut Challenge](#) judges will receive US\$10,000 in prizes and mentorship to strengthen their business strategies. The winners were **Jimmy Kumako** and his mobile app Marodi TV that allows users in Senegal and Cameroon catch their favorite TV shows anytime online or through their mobile app (www.marodi.tv); **Ana Burica and Josipa Majic** and their mobile app Teddy The Guardian (www.teddytheguardian.com), that is plush teddy bear with built-in medical sensors that tracks a child’s vital signs and sends them wirelessly to a physician’s tablet or web application; and a mobile app, entitled M.A.D.E., developed by **Ade Inniss-King and Elisia Madonna Corrian** that delivers actionable, location-specific information about natural disasters and emergencies.

*“Our project is about taking a totally different approach to children and hospitals and making hospitals a child-friendly place”, said **Josipa Majic, developer of Teddy The Guardian app.** “We are disguising state of the art medical sensors in child-friendly teddy bears. Winning the InfoDev competition puts us on a global map which helps us in terms of new customers and potential investors.”*

VentureOut was launched by the World Bank’s [infoDev](#) and [CRDF Global](#), an international organization that promotes international technical collaboration, to aid mobile app entrepreneurs in expanding internationally. Outreach to the global marketplace is particularly important for entrepreneurs coming from relative small domestic markets as is the case in the Caribbean, some Eastern European and Central Asian (ECA) countries and parts of Sub-Saharan Africa.

Mobile-based entrepreneurship has proven to be particularly attractive for youth and young graduates and can therefore be an important element of youth development, which is a cornerstone of the World Bank’s social inclusion agenda in the regions involved.

Besides the competition, the [Supporting Access to International Markets for Startups and SMEs conference](#) included teaching and training on the latest market strategies in internationalization from the panel of experts. The panel also facilitated a dialogue on the topic of entrepreneurial community-building in Moldova, where participants brainstormed about strategies to support the development of mobile application technology in the Eastern European and Central Asia region.

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