

Vodafone Foundation : Social Media

In March, a three-wheeled auto-rickshaw, painted red to represent strength and female solidarity, went on a 10-day rickshaw journey through India- a 1,800-kilometer journey from the hustle bustle of India's capital to the deserts of Rajasthan, spectacular Western Ghats to the bright lights of Mumbai, called the Red Rickshaw Revolution.

Along the route we discovered and encountered ordinary women doing extraordinary things across India. Using innovative technology, this entire expedition could be experienced online. Our goal was to raise awareness about inspirational women across India and share their achievements and raise crucial funds for 3 NGOs that are working to empower many more – Apne Aap Women's Collective (AAWC), Breakthrough and Corp India.

From learning self-defence to setting up new enterprises, we had the opportunity to roll out dynamic programmes to empower women. The project started as a way to raise money for the [Apne Aap Women's Collective](#), which works with sex workers in Mumbai's red-light district, and grew into a much larger project. As the idea evolved, the campaign grew to include two more nongovernmental organizations. [Breakthrough](#), which is based in Delhi and New York, appeals to men and boys through the media and pop culture to help end domestic violence. The [Community Outreach Programme](#), also known as C.O.R.P., will use its share of the money raised to open a new vocational training center for women and expand its outreach efforts.

Through a mix of individual and corporate donations, we raised 5.1 million rupees (\$92,000) to be split between the three nongovernmental organizations. In addition, the Vodafone Foundation has pledged 12.5 million rupees.

To raise awareness and help raise funds we used technology to spread the news of the campaign and these extraordinary women, wide and far with an interactive [Web site](#), which showcases the profiles of 30 Indian women who fit the criteria of "ordinary women doing extraordinary things." We visited 10 of these women in their hometowns and shared their stories on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

Some of the women we met on the journey were Vijaylaxmi Sharma, 24, who works to end child marriage in her village, Jhodinda, in the state of Rajasthan, and Mittal Patel, who has secured identity cards for 60,000 people from nomadic tribal communities in Gujarat, marking the first time they have ever been officially recognized by their government.

As a social media and corporate brand communications specialist working at Vodafone, I was approached by the director of the Vodafone foundation and the amazing lady behind the idea for the Red Rickshaw Revolution- Laura Turkington when this was just an idea, to see if I would be interested in driving the wheels of all the social media magic for this campaign. I loved the idea from the start, especially given the incident that had taken place in Delhi and shaken all of us up. This was an opportunity to focus on the empowered woman, celebrate her achievements, and use the power of digital to do so. As the digital strategist and social media head of this project I worked with an incredible team that worked tirelessly to spread the word and raise a call for action, celebrate ordinary women doing extraordinary things, and raise funds to empower more. This was a journey of a life time, and an inspirational one too.