



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

## **NIGEL WALLER NAMED AS POPTECH SOCIAL INNOVATION FELLOW – CLASS OF 2009**

LONDON, UK September 10, 2009 - Movirtu CEO Nigel Waller was yesterday named a 2009 PopTech Social Innovation Fellow. PopTech's announcement describes the class of 16 Fellows as, "*a corps of visionary change agents incubating high-impact approaches to some of the world's most pressing social, economic and environmental challenges*".

PopTech's Social Innovation Fellows Program "*arms high-potential social innovators with the tools, training and relationships to take transformative programs to scale*" and their 2008 program "*helped catapult fellows to major grants, awards and press recognition.*"

Waller is passionate about delivering the benefits of technological innovation to end-users living close to the poverty line and the social economic benefits this can bring about. "*I am thrilled and honored to have been selected as a PopTech Fellow,*" says Waller. "*I am very excited to be walking in the steps of such a prestigious group of people.*"

Movirtu was launched in 2008 to provide access to basic mobile phone services for people earning less than two dollars a day. Under Waller's leadership, Movirtu designed a virtual mobile phone system that enables anyone to make and receive phone calls, text messages and mobile payments utilizing other people's phones. By granting access to mobile communications even to those without their own phone, Movirtu enables people to find work, build micro-enterprises, access healthcare and better support themselves and their families.

### **About Movirtu**

Movirtu is a for-profit social enterprise that provides innovative mobile technology and business models for wireless telecommunication service providers servicing rural poor communities in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia to help them realise shared access to basic mobile phone services for people earning less than \$2 a day. The company's MXShare product enables subscribers, who cannot afford to buy a handset, to own a virtual phone account with their own telephone number which they can access from other people's mobile phones. By enabling basic phone services Movirtu is helping people access jobs, raise incomes, access displaced family members and, increasingly, is acting as an enabler to send remittances over the mobile phone network. Movirtu is a private company, headquartered in London, UK with offices in Johannesburg, South Africa. <http://www.movirtu.com>

The full Social Innovation Fellows Announcement from PopTech appears below.

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## PopTech Presents 2009 Class of Social Innovation Fellows

*Cutting-Edge Program Arms High-Potential Social Innovators with the Tools, Training and Relationships to Take Transformative Programs to Scale*

*2008 Program Helped Catapult Fellows to Major Grants, Awards and Press Recognition*

**Camden, ME & New York, NY – September 9, 2009** – PopTech ([www.poptech.org](http://www.poptech.org)), the renowned annual ideas summit and social innovation network, today unveils its 2009 class of Social Innovation Fellows: a corps of visionary change agents incubating high-impact approaches to some of the world's most pressing social, economic and environmental challenges. The 16 Fellows are working on potentially transformative solutions to a wide range of global challenges, in categories such as energy, healthcare technology, wildlife conservation, environmental technology, international development, agriculture and economic development.

This year's Social Innovation Fellows program builds on last year's strong debut, which helped propel participants to major accolades and recognition. Leveraging the power of the PopTech network, conference platform and Fellows program, 2008 alumni have been recognized with prestigious honors and fellowships by the Tech Awards, Harvard University, WeMedia and the Draper Richards Foundation; secured significant funding from organizations such as the Knight Foundation, Hewlett Foundation and MacArthur Foundation; and been profiled in top-tier media outlets including The New York Times, Fast Company, CNN, BusinessWeek, the BBC and many more.

*"PopTech gave us the rare opportunity to sit, think, share, and compare with outstanding teachers and compatriots to hone our skills and execute to our full potential,"* said 2008 alumnus Chip Ransler of Husk Power Systems, which won the 2009 Draper Fisher Jurvetson/Cisco Global Business Plan Competition. *"Combine all that with the mind-bending conference that showed us all what real thought leadership was all about – it was a fantastic experience that fundamentally changed the way our company operated."*

PopTech will continue its mission to accelerate the positive impact of this year's Fellows' projects by connecting them with world-class thought leaders, as well as the latest tools and thinking in finance, leadership, branding, media relations, social/Web2.0 media, digital storytelling, design for impact and organizational development.

*"Like PopTech itself, each Social Innovation Fellow is committed to turning great ideas into action,"* said Andrew Zolli, futurist, curator and executive director of PopTech. *"The program will give them the skills, network and exposure to accelerate their impact."*

The program's faculty will lead the Fellows through an intensive five-day "boot camp" just before PopTech 2009: America Re-imagined (October 21 – 24, 2009, Camden, ME). Fellows will then each present their ideas on stage to over 700 conference attendees and thousands who participate via live stream, beginning their entry into PopTech's rich network of mentors, influencers, contributors and resources.

The 2009 PopTech Fellows program will be led by iconoclastic social innovators and world-class category leaders, including **James L. Koch** (founding director of the Center for Science, Technology and Society, director of the Global Social Benefit incubator), **Cheryl Heller** (CEO, Heller Communication Design; PopTech board), **Robert Fabricant** (executive

creative director of Frog Design), **Nancy Duarte** (principal of Duarte Design), **Lisa Witter** (CEO of Fenton Communications), **Beth Kanter** (social media trainer, consultant and blogger) and **Kristen Taylor** (digital content/community manager for PopTech), among others.

*“PopTech Fellows have big ideas about how emerging technologies can benefit people in the ways that matter the most,”* said faculty member and Mulago Foundation director **Kevin Starr**. *“The fellows curriculum is designed to help refine their ideas for maximum impact, build organizations that can deliver them, and develop that absolutely essential capacity to communicate their work to those who might support it, participate in it, and benefit from it.”*

PopTech received over 200 nominations from over 30 countries for this second Social Innovation Fellows program, and 16 Fellows have been selected to take part.

This year’s program has been made possible by a grant from the American Express Foundation. *“One of American Express’ three platforms for its philanthropy is Developing New Leaders for Tomorrow,”* said Timothy J. McClimon, president of the Foundation. *“Under this giving initiative, American Express is making grants focused on training high potential emerging leaders to tackle important issues in the 21st century.”*

### **PopTech Social Innovation Fellows – Class of 2009**

#### **Aviva Presser Aiden and Hugo Van Vuuren – Lebônê Solutions, Inc.**

*(Cambridge, MA and South Africa)*

Aviva and Hugo co-founded Lebônê in 2007 to help meet the need for off-grid energy and lighting in the developing world. Using microbial fuel cells sold by local entrepreneurs, Lebônê’s technology generates electricity from soil microbes to power LED lights, cell phones, radios and other devices. By extracting energy and light from dirt, Lebônê is providing a tool that improves results for rural health workers, students, small businesses, farmers and families. [www.lebone.org](http://www.lebone.org)

#### **Jason Aramburu – re:char**

*(New York, NY)*

Jason launched re:char in 2005 to develop low-cost technologies that fight climate change while improving the quality of degraded soils. re:char’s systems convert agricultural waste into renewable fuel and into biochar, preventing the emission of CO<sub>2</sub> via decomposition. The biochar is used to improve soil on farms, locking away emissions for thousands of years. By producing energy, sequestering atmospheric carbon and improving soil quality, re:char brings the promise of distributed, carbon-negative energy to underserved communities worldwide. [www.re-char.com](http://www.re-char.com)

#### **Eben Bayer – Ecovative Design**

*(Green Island, NY)*

Ecovative Design is developing a family of green materials using a growing organism to transform low-value agricultural byproducts into strong biological composites. Ecovative’s MycoBond™ platform serves as an affordable rigid-board insulation for commercial construction and as a biodegradable replacement for packaging materials like Styrofoam™. Eben’s long-term vision is to apply the technology to multiple markets, providing an eco-friendly replacement to conventional plastics and foams in applications from wind-turbine-blade core materials to boat hulls, structural insulating panels and lightweight vehicle panels, and eliminating unsustainable plastic and synthetic products from product and waste streams.

[www.ecovatedesign.com](http://www.ecovatedesign.com)

#### **Paula Kahumbu – WildlifeDirect**

*(Nairobi, Kenya)*

As executive director of WildlifeDirect, Paula is helping build a global online wildlife conservation community. Through online diaries and blogs, WildlifeDirect brings supporters and conservationists together and enables individual donors around the world to

communicate directly with the people that they are funding. The goal: a movement powerful enough to respond to any conservation emergency anywhere swiftly and efficiently, reverse the catastrophic loss of habitats and species and secure the future of wildlife in Africa, Asia and around the world.

[wildlifedirect.org](http://wildlifedirect.org)

### **Deb Levine – ISIS, Inc.**

*(Oakland, CA)*

Deb founded ISIS – Internet Sexuality Information Services – in 2001 to build better tools to promote sexual health and prevent disease. Using the web, mobile phones and mash-ups, ISIS gives people private, convenient and accurate access to information on today's major health issues, from HIV prevention to unplanned pregnancies to access to healthcare. ISIS is creating the latest and best ways to help youth and adults lead safe, healthy and fulfilled lives.

[www.isis-inc.org](http://www.isis-inc.org)

### **Derek Lomas – Playpower Foundation**

*(San Diego, CA)*

The Playpower Foundation was created in 2008 to foster development of affordable, effective and fun learning games for under-privileged children around the world. Motivated by the availability of ultra-low-cost computers, Playpower has cultivated a global network of developers, designers, academics, NGOs and businesses to participate in the research, development and distribution of learning games that will help bring education to children in Bottom-of-the-Pyramid settings.

[www.playpower.org](http://www.playpower.org)

### **Josh Nesbit – FrontlineSMS:Medic**

*(Stanford, CA)*

Having pioneered the use of mobile phones for healthcare in a remote region of Malawi, Josh co-founded FrontlineSMS:Medic to bring these innovations to the rest of the world. The model features a central clinic laptop running FrontlineSMS software, enabling community health workers to use mobile phones to coordinate patient care. Pushing the technology to enable better patient management, electronic medical records via mobile phone, cheap mobile diagnostics and mapping of health services, the FrontlineSMS:Medic team is proving that text messages can help save lives.

[medic.frontlinesms.com](http://medic.frontlinesms.com)

### **James O'Brien – Brooklyn Community Arts & Media High School**

*(Brooklyn, NY)*

As principal and founder of BCAM, James partnered with the Institute for Student Achievement and assembled a staff of like-minded educators to create the new school in 2006. With a challenging college-preparatory, inquiry-based curriculum that relates to real life issues, and multiple opportunities for exploration and expression through the arts, BCAM stimulates students' intellects and excites their imaginations while providing them with marketable skills. BCAM brings together partnership with family and community, performance-based academics, and professional training in the media and arts as an effective model to prepare teenagers for success in the 21st century.

[www.bcamhs.org](http://www.bcamhs.org)

### **Ory Okolloh – Ushahidi**

*(Kenya and South Africa)*

A lawyer, activist and blogger ([www.kenyanpundit.com](http://www.kenyanpundit.com)), Ory is the co-founder and executive director of Ushahidi, a free, open source, Web / mobile-based platform capable of crowd-sourcing, sharing and mapping information in near real time. The project was born as a way to track the atrocities and human rights violations that erupted after the 2008 Kenyan presidential election. Ushahidi has since been used to help monitor elections, respond to humanitarian crises, track swine flu outbreaks, enable citizen journalism and monitor crucial pharmaceutical supply levels.

[ushahidi.com](http://ushahidi.com)

**Trevor Paque – MyFarm**

*(San Francisco, CA)*

Trevor is founder and president of MyFarm, growing food right in the back yards of the people who will be eating it. MyFarm plants the seeds, grows and harvests the crops, leaves boxes of produce on the back porch each week, and sells the surplus to neighbors through a CSA option. By increasing ultra-local organic food production, MyFarm is creating a secure and sustainable food system that provides great-tasting food grown about as close to home as you can get. [myfarmsf.com](http://myfarmsf.com)

**Emily Pilloton – Project H Design**

*(San Francisco, CA)*

Emily founded Project H Design to mobilize product design ingenuity for social good. Having built nine chapters and a community of over 300 committed designers in just over a year, Project H Design has already launched over 20 projects in 6 countries – water transport solutions, a playground for active math education, designs for foster care therapy and more, all aimed at having a quick and real impact on people's lives. Add to this her new book "Design Revolution: 100 Products that Empower People," and Emily is clearly leading the way in designing with – not for – communities, transforming lives and strengthening economies.

[www.projecthdesign.org](http://www.projecthdesign.org)

**Hayat Sindi – Diagnostics For All**

*(Cambridge, MA and Saudi Arabia)*

Diagnostics For All is creating point-of-care diagnostic devices microfabricated in paper, a game-changing technology for delivering low-cost medical care in the developing world. Reliable, safe and easy to use, these devices allow healthcare workers to diagnose and monitor treatment for the 60% of people living beyond the reach of urban hospitals and medical infrastructures. In addition to extending the reach of high-quality healthcare through her work with nanotechnology and Diagnostics For All, Hayat is a powerful advocate for science education and careers for women in the Middle East.

[www.dfadx.org](http://www.dfadx.org)

**Taylor Stuckert and Mark Rembert – Energize Clinton County**

*(Wilmington, OH)*

Taylor and Mark co-founded Energize Clinton County in 2008 as a grassroots movement and community center for sustainable economic development. The sudden departure of a major employer forced the area surrounding Wilmington, Ohio to confront either collapse, or reinvention. Leading the effort that established the city as the country's first Green Enterprise Zone, Energize Clinton County has transformed the crisis into an opportunity to become a model and testing ground for technologies and development strategies that will lead America's economy through the 21st century.

[energizecc.com](http://energizecc.com)

**Nigel Waller – Movirtu**

*(London, UK)*

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[www.movirtu.com](http://www.movirtu.com)

## **About PopTech**

PopTech is a renowned ideas summit and unique innovation network dedicated to accelerating the positive impact of world-changing people, projects and ideas. We are known for our thriving community of thought-leaders, breakthrough innovation programs, visionary annual conferences and deep media and storytelling capabilities.

PopTech creates transformational experiences that showcase the ideas, trends, challenges and opportunities that are shaping the future. We are a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that fosters breakthrough, multidisciplinary collaborations through which individuals, companies and organizations work together to change the world. More info at: [www.poptech.org](http://www.poptech.org)

## **Sponsor**

### **About American Express**

American Express Company ([www.americanexpress.com](http://www.americanexpress.com)) is a leading global payments and travel company founded in 1850. At American Express we believe that serving our communities is not only integral to running a business successfully, it is part of our individual responsibilities as citizens of the world. The mission of our Corporate Social Responsibility program is to bring to life the American Express value of good corporate citizenship by supporting diverse communities in ways that enhance the company's reputation with employees, customers, business partners and other stakeholders. We do this by supporting visionary not-for-profit organizations that preserve and enrich diverse cultural heritage; develop new leaders for tomorrow; and encourage community service where our employees and customers live and work.

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