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Young Leaders from Five Countries Announced as Finalists of Staples/Ashoka Youth Social Entrepreneur Competition

*Excellence Award Winner to be announced June 29 at National Summit;
Staples Foundation for Learning Renews Support with \$500,000 Grant to Ashoka*

ARLINGTON, VA — June 22, 2009 — Ashoka, the world's community of leading social entrepreneurs, and Staples Foundation for Learning (SFFL), a private foundation created by Staples, Inc. (NASDAQ: SPLS), have announced the five Youth Venture Finalist Teams in the third annual Staples/Ashoka Youth Social Entrepreneur Competition. The global competition recognizes youth who are addressing social issues affecting their communities and is part of Ashoka's Youth Venture[®], a global initiative that identifies and fosters young entrepreneurs who are creating positive change. SFFL has helped Youth Venture expand to seven countries in North America, South America and Europe and this year, has awarded another \$500,000 grant to continue building its global presence.

The five finalist teams who were selected for their outstanding impact, innovation and potential include:

- **DeuKische Generation** (Germany) – A group of German youth of Turkish descent seeking to improve the image of fellow young immigrants in German society. The Venture has successfully rallied support for social change at both the local and national political levels.
- **Empower India** (India) – A team of Mumbai youth that provides educational programming for children, and also hosts community events that bring housing society residents together to learn about how they can provide everyone with a formal education and empower young people in their communities.
- **Minnesota Campus Energy Challenge** (United States) – A competition that invites academic communities to work together to decrease energy use and carbon emissions, as part of its overall effort to reduce the actual energy used by higher education institutions in the United States.
- **Movimento MudaBrum** (Brazil) – A team that increases awareness about conservation and preservation by educating the Brumadense community on environmental issues. By developing workshops for both rural and urban schools they have reached over 2,000 students and recruited over 500 volunteers.
- **Pachamama** (Mexico) – A group that develops and teaches low-income families throughout Tepeolulco, Mexico about eco-friendly agricultural alternatives and optimizing resources to produce organic crops. Pachamama has worked with over 200 youth to promote environmental awareness.

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On Monday, June 29, 2009 at 10:00 a.m. all five teams will be honored for their work during a special ceremony at the Youth Venture National Summit to be held at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. During the ceremony, Staples and Ashoka will announce the overall winner of the competition and present them with the Staples/Ashoka Youth Social Entrepreneur Excellence Award and a grand prize worth \$5,000. The four remaining teams will receive Achievement Awards and prizes of \$500.

“This year’s Staples/Ashoka Youth Social Entrepreneur Competition has set a new benchmark by reaching across the globe to recognize our top Youth Venturers, who every day are making a real difference -- from Brazil to India,” said Bill Drayton, chief executive officer and chairman of Ashoka. “Echoing Staples’ entrepreneurial spirit, they are also role models encouraging hundreds of other young people to dream their dream, build a team, and leave their world changed for the better.”

“The partnership between Ashoka and Staples Foundation for Learning focuses on providing young people with the tools and support necessary to act as positive changemakers confronting important social issues,” said Ron Sargent, president of Staples Foundation for Learning and chairman and chief executive officer of Staples, Inc. “Together, we encourage youth to take initiative and lead social change and honor them for their commitment to addressing challenges within their own communities.”

Since 2006, Staples has provided Ashoka with \$2 million in support of their worldwide efforts to invest in and catalyze a movement of young changemakers who increase the ability of a global society to solve problems and thrive. For additional information on the Staples/Ashoka Youth Social Entrepreneur Competition, please visit the competition web site at: www.GenV.net/StaplesYV.

About Youth Venture

Ashoka’s Youth Venture is a global movement of young changemakers. Youth Venture inspires and invests in Teams of young people to start their own sustainable social Ventures and connects them into a powerful global network. Collectively, these young changemakers are redefining the youth years as a time of initiative and positive change. For more information, please visit www.genv.net.

About Ashoka

Ashoka is the world’s community of leading social entrepreneurs—individuals with innovative and practical ideas for addressing social needs. Working with these social entrepreneurs, Ashoka builds communities of innovators who work collectively to transform society and design new ways for the social sector to become more productive, entrepreneurial and globally integrated. For more information, please visit www.ashoka.org.

About Staples Foundation for Learning

The mission of Staples Foundation for Learning, Inc. is to teach, train and inspire. Founded in 2002, the foundation has contributed nearly \$15 million to national and local charities that provide educational opportunities and job skills for all people, with a special emphasis on disadvantaged youth. Staples Foundation for Learning has also developed lasting relationships with Boys & Girls Clubs of America, Earth Force, Hispanic Heritage Foundation and the Initiative for a Competitive Inner City. In addition, Staples Foundation for Learning supports Ashoka, an organization that develops and supports social entrepreneurs around the world, in eight countries: Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Spain and the United States. For more information about the foundation or how to apply for a grant, please visit www.staplesfoundation.org.

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