

Newsletter

Contents

- **What's the Idea?**
- **A Blessed Beginning**
- **Our Team**
- **The Way Forward**
- **A Peek into the Past**



Computer Shiksha

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What's the Idea?

It was 15th March 2012 when we came together to articulate our dream of social service and got to the drawing board. We are a team of professionals with a varied background, most of which lies in the domain of Management, Education and IT. For long, individually each of us has been driven by an innate need to do something for the community but could never get down to it. The main reason why most things ended as a non starter was because of most of what we wanted to do required engagement with communities at the grass root level - something we did not know how to start and where to start from. It was once driving past Ghar Angna a pavement school in Sector 56 Gurgaon that one of us got this idea that why not put our might into what we could do well – which is IT, Education and Management and offer Computer Education as a service to those who are already gainfully and successfully engaged with communities similar to a B2B model in business. A small meeting with Ghar Angna made it look possible and very exciting too. And thus was born what we call Computer Shiksha today. And from there this idea of a N2N (akin to B2B) initiative came. Now we partner with other NGOs already running educational establishments for communities and take computer education to their doorsteps. Our dream is to ensure computer literacy for all. We intend to provide Computer Knowledge and Training from Pavements to High-rises, children to adults, villages to metros, with passion and commitment, to deliver value in the form of Computer

trained people, who use this skill for betterment of their lives in every possible way.

A Blessed Beginning



5th May was the first day for our initiative. We began with three batches of 15 students each at “Nai Kiran” a community school run by the Nanak Seva Trust. (www.nanak.co.in) This school prepares children to apply for admission to main stream schools in Gurgaon. Last year 70 students got admitted into schools like DPS, Shalom International and Amity International etc. The first day began with a prayer led by Mr. Hardeep Singh to seek the Supreme's blessing for a successful start and run of the initiative.

Each session was planned to be of 45 minutes. The children started with MS Paint to begin understanding the world of computers. Module 1 of MS Paint is designed for 6 weeks. Since the classes are conducted on Saturday and Sunday – the first day i.e. Saturday is used to teach them a concept and the second day the children are given a task to accomplish on their own with help from the trainer. Thus Module 1 constituted of twelve 45 minute sessions.

After the first week (i.e. 5th and 6th May) Nai Kiran requested us to start

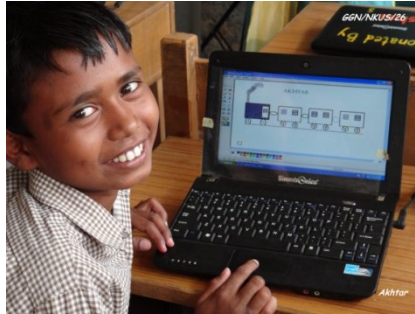
an additional 4th batch and thus we started catering to 4 batches of 15 students each with one batch at a phase lag of one week.

We also believe that apart from rendering Computer literacy we can also contribute to the wider motive of education for these children. Therefore apart from teaching them the obvious we are also using the sessions to instill other values in children. To begin with before the children sit at their desks they are taken outside to first wash their hands with soap, then use a sanitizer and then sit at their desk for the roll call. The first class also stressed on the importance of keeping nails clipped and clean. At the end of the course one of the school administrators, Mr. Hardeep Singh also mentioned to us that the children insist on the floors getting washed and the tables wiped clean before the start of the computer lessons – and they do this by themselves!

On 10th June all children had their assessment on MS Paint Module 1. Out of 60 children who were enrolled in the class – 47 children have made it to the next level. The ones who couldn't were those who could not attend classes due to various reasons.



Seeing the success of the classes we felt that increasing the batch size of



students from 15 to 25 would increase Computer Shiksha's footprint and we would be able to cover more students. So in June we acquired 10 more notebooks and now in July our class size is 25 😊

Since the month of June is when all schools have vacations we took a break of 4 weeks to consolidate our learning and prepare to expand. The expansion was aimed at covering more number of children at Nai Kiran and also adding more partner schools. 47 out of 60 successfully qualified to go into Module 2. Another 92 children (13 out of the previous batch) started with Module 1. Thus In July the number of students doing computer at Nai Kiran has gone up to 139 now.

Our Team

Dr. Rakesh Suri, an engineer from BITS Pilani, is a man with many missions. After 29 years in the IT industry with the last assignment being CEO of IT division, DCM Ltd. Dr. Suri launched his own Investor backed US market focused RPO in February 2007. He also engages in teaching in business schools subjects like Entrepreneurship and Business Ethics. He has been the Initiator of Computer Shiksha and continues to be its prime driver. Amongst his colleagues he is known for his incredible sense of humour

and innate ability to laugh (mind you not smile!) his way through all kinds of situations however tricky they might be! He also imparts experiential training on Leadership Development.

Swapnalekha Basak is an engineer, manager, counselor and a writer – all rolled into one. She has been a practicing manager of Human Resources in top corporations of the country across diverse industries like media, telecom and IT. In her over 15 year career, she has been in HR leadership roles in global organizations like STAR TV, Reliance, and GTL. Her last corporate assignment was as Head – HR, SAS India. Now with a Certificate in Counseling from Oxford University she divides her time between counseling students and executives, teaching at various management schools and writing. She devotes a large chunk of her time to General Management of Computer Shiksha. She continues to lead Computer Shiksha's efforts at fund raising, furthering partnering arrangements and all forms of Internal & External communication.

Madhu Bahl is an Electronic & Telecommunication engineer with more than 25 years of experience in teaching IT skills to a wide range of audience ranging from school kids to senior corporate executives. As a Trainer and Training Consultant she has been associated with schools like City Montessori School, training institutes like NIIT, Polytechnics like Pant Polytechnic and management campuses like IIPM and corporate. She has been the one to conceptualize the entire Course curriculum and standardize the delivery of courses. She remains the most spirited member of the group, be it training the trainers or value

adding to the various processes in building the NGO.

Anshul Jain is an enthusiastic young man, the kinds India can do with more of. He is an MBA and currently working with NIIT Ltd with a corporate training responsibility. With a little over 5 years experience in the industry, Anshul is a picture of calm and poise in a harried situation. He spends his weekends at our partner schools, teaching, facilitating, suggesting process improvements, at times photographing all with equal verve and enthusiasm.

Brijesh Pathak is a Masters in Computer Science and an expert at delivering secure resilient systems on time and budget to meet diverse business needs. Brijesh has been instrumental in acquisition of all our IT hardware and establishment of systems for smooth functioning of the class complete with notebooks, LCD projector, extension boards, wireless network, inverter, generator etc. He is our first port of call for any advice as well as issues on technology. His quiet unassuming demeanor totally understates his crucial role in our success in delivering education in a seamless manner.

Deepak Mali is a young MBA with an artist's hand and a Samaritan's heart. Deepak has been the creative arm of Computer Shiksha. He has been the one photographing the various events, painting names of donors on the notebooks, making films on our partner schools In all, anything that needs creativity becomes his deliverable.

Lochan & Co. (www.lochanco.com) is a large firm which provides services to the Corporate Sector, International Agencies, Central Government, State Governments and Non Profit Organizations in India and at International level as well. They have worked for agencies like United Nations, World Bank, Global Fund and various Governments all over the Asia Pacific and Africa region. They have conducted projects audits of numerous international NGOs like Action Aid Myanmar, HelpAge International, Link Emergency Aid and Development, The Lutheran World Federation, Mercy Corps, Oxfam Great Britain, Relief International, Save the Children, Solidarites, CARE and World Vision. Lochan & Co. takes care of Computer Shiksha's entire legal and statutory compliance as well as accounting process.

The Way Forward.....

In June we went and visited potential partner schools and now are in the process of starting new batches in new schools.

With the support that we have got from all of you our vision in the next year is to institutionalize our processes so that as we scale the quality of our work sustains. In addition to this with our many visits to potential partner schools we have realized that setting up a class and dismantling the IT infrastructure takes about 1+1 i.e. 2 hours. At times doing this for one group of 25 students seems like an inefficient process. Hence our dream is to have a mobile class (a bus with the class set up) to go from school to school wherever the numbers of students are less.

In addition to the funding challenge our next challenge is to get committed folks to partner with us in our dream!

A Peek into the Past



Learners Trainers Managers at the end of Module 1



Our class size has increased to 26©



Aakash with his creation at the end of Module 1