

THE FOUNDATION POST

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SHIV NADAR FOUNDATION

Skills to lead

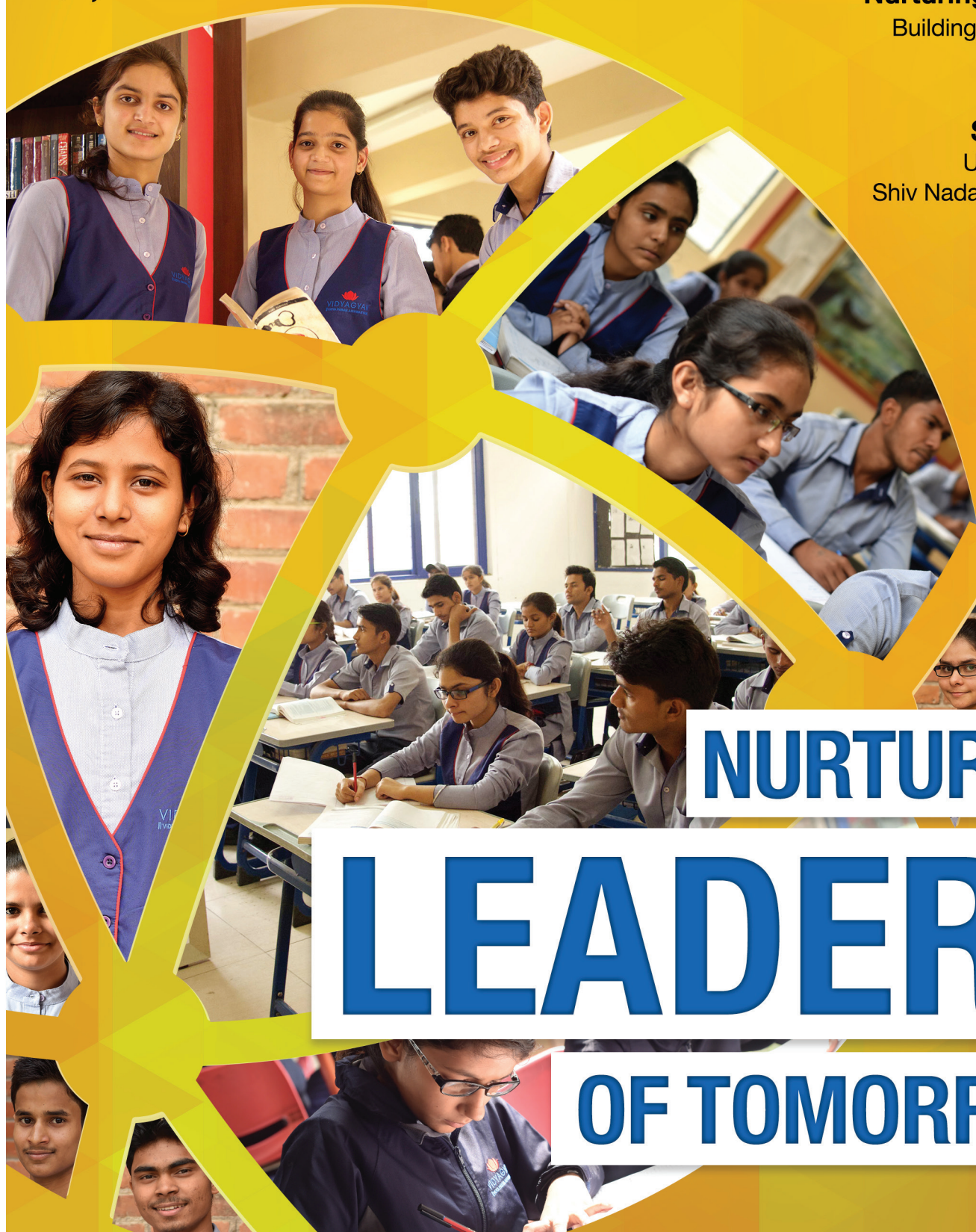
Leadership skills for a changing global order

Nurturing potential

Building leaders from rural India

Snapshots

Updates from Shiv Nadar Foundation



NURTURING

LEADERS

OF TOMORROW

LETTER FROM THE **EDITORIAL DESK**

Be it heading an organization, leading a military unit, or running a nation, effective leadership is the aspect that differentiates a good organization from a bad one. It is not uncommon for organizations to grapple with the right leadership. However, the good news is that leaders can be nurtured and developed. All they require are the right set of qualities, whether innate or acquired, and an environment that inspires them to grow.

Gandhi, Mandela, Lincoln, Thatcher, Steve Jobs, Malala have been the names to reckon with for their leadership qualities. Be it Gandhi's peaceful resolve to take India towards its freedom, or Malala's compassionate grit to put a stop to restrictive practices against women, all these leaders have left a mark that inspires other people to follow and bring about a change.

Their environment and upbringing played a huge role in nurturing the skills required for the leadership roles they eventually took on. Each one of them had a vision to achieve more, dream bigger, imagine a better future, and fight harder to make it come alive. These are the qualities of a true leader!

Over time, challenges have changed, socio-economic contexts have transformed, and so have leadership styles. The need for leadership remains, but it now requires a different breed of leaders, who can address and tackle the challenges of future 'now'.

We need to shape our leaders keeping this in mind. We need leaders who are not only well-aware of the present, but also have a vision for a brighter future. In this issue, we talk about the qualities and skills that would be required for our children and youngsters to take on leadership roles in tomorrow's world.

Happy reading!

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SKILLS TO LEAD

“WE CANNOT ALWAYS BUILD THE FUTURE FOR OUR YOUTH, BUT WE CAN BUILD OUR YOUTH FOR THE FUTURE.”

Franklin D. Roosevelt

The world is experiencing unprecedented change today. Across all spectrums of life, we are witnessing hyper-transformations, changing the very notions of how we live, think and interact. And the speed of change is only expected to grow in the coming years. As the world moves towards this unpredictable future, the need for strong leadership has never been more important.

Everyday in our schools, colleges, and workspaces, we endeavour to nurture today's generation to be tomorrow's leaders. The question that is often asked is what are the skills that are required for them to succeed in an uncertain future. It is but a forgone conclusion that conventional ideas and tools of leadership are no longer sufficient. We need to look at those unique qualities and skills that align with the emerging global order.

Ability to Adapt



One of the key skills for thriving in a changing environment is adaptability. As the pace of change steps up across the world, we are expected to witness the next big breakthrough much faster than the previous one. Imagine the abilities that a leader would need to continuously keep up with the changing trends which will define the needs and wants of tomorrow's world.

Different skills and expertise may be required at different times. But a mind that is flexible and willing to adapt would be valuable at all times. And this is a skill that comes with being exposed to different situations and environments. For example, people who move around a lot as children develop strong abilities to adapt to any sort of setup.

Being Disruptive



It has been repeated often enough but there is no doubt that disruptive thinking will continue to be the need of the hour. Adapting to change often requires creative thinking – the courage and will to explore uncharted territories. There are inherent opportunities in any sort of change. To recognise these, one must be able to think out of the box.

Children who have a sense of curiosity are more prone to venture into new areas; to go beyond the conventional in search of their answers. This ability to question and investigate is a powerful way to build disruptive capabilities. Minds who question are minds who innovate.

A Global Mind-set



Much has been said about developing global leaders – both within the business arena and without. What distinguishes them is their ability to work across geographies, cultures and languages, armed with an intelligent and varied global perspective. This is a capability best built at a young age. At a time when the mind is absorbing and learning from every experience, varied exposure is a must to build a truly broad world-view.

At the same time, we want our youngsters to step out into the world with tolerance and acceptance. Building a global mind-set needs more than a knowledge of international affairs and events. It needs a respect for other people's views and an ability to look at different sides of the coin. Exchange programs and international events & competitions provide the exposure and interactions for children to build this ability.

Social Responsibility



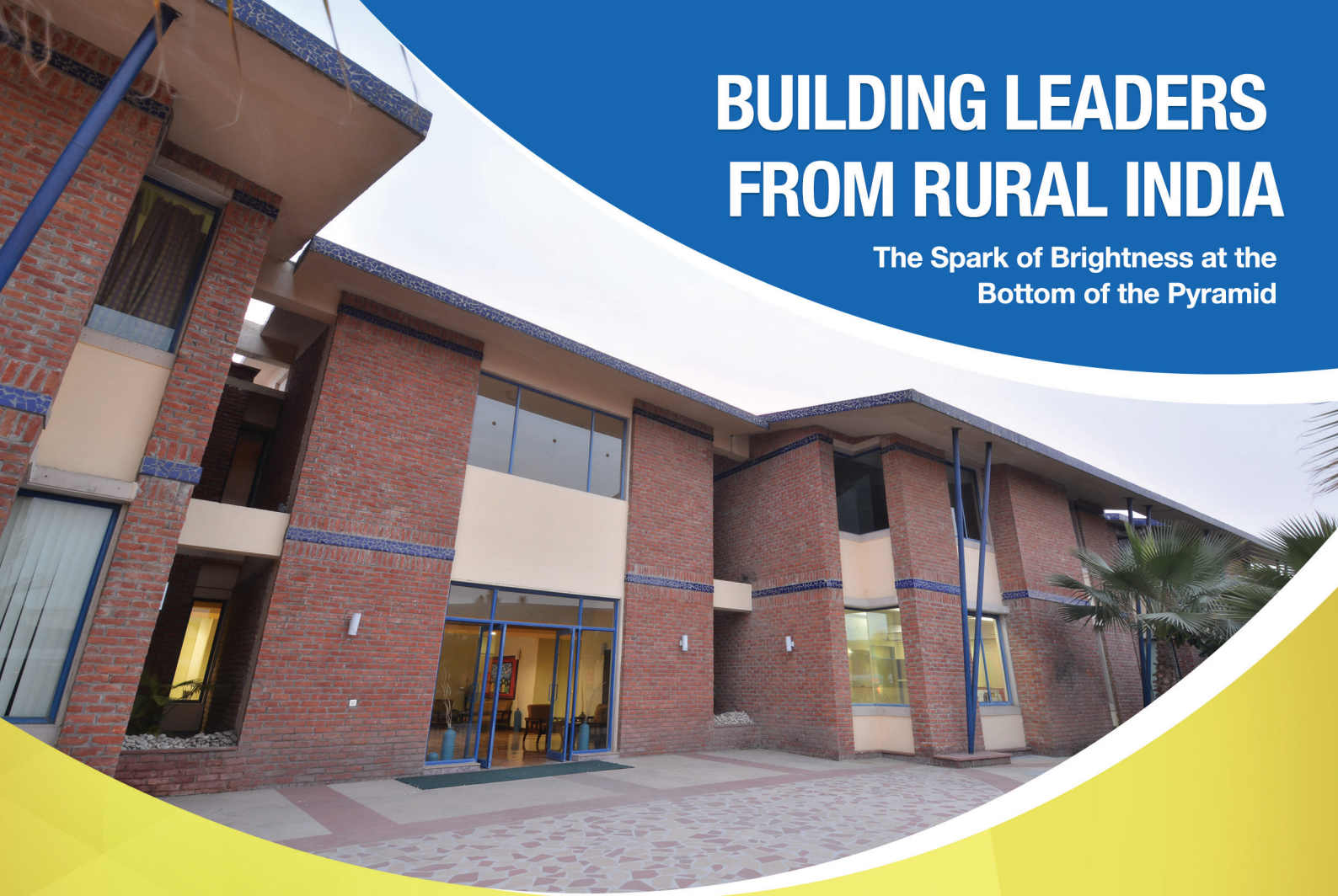
It is no longer enough to be socially conscious. We also need to understand and take on the responsibilities this entails. From poverty to climate change to gender inequality, these are some of the most pressing challenges faced by the world today. As we evolve, everything from technological advancements to political upheavals will continue to affect these issues in the future. We need leaders who make social impact a priority.

Such an attitude can only come when one feels a sense of responsibility towards one's community and people. It is only when we nurture such values in our children today that they would grow up with a spirit to create an impact tomorrow.

These are just some of the key skills and qualities we need in tomorrow's leaders. The larger picture is to start looking beyond technical and professional skills towards those softer aspects of personality development that are critical to deal with unprecedented and uncertain change. Good leaders develop their own styles. But with the right training, we can provide our children with the aptitude and attitude to lead.

BUILDING LEADERS FROM RURAL INDIA

The Spark of Brightness at the
Bottom of the Pyramid



When it comes to rural education in our country, most efforts have long been focused on quantum rather than qualitative outputs. Government programs have indeed helped boost the enrolment of children in rural schools. The Gross Enrolment Ratio in primary rural schools went up by almost 6% between 2001 and 2014. But just bringing children back to school does not ensure a secure future for them. A closer look at the statistics shows a grim picture of the quality of education these children are getting.

For example, according to the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) released in 2015, every second child in Class 5 in rural schools cannot read class 2 textbooks. Only 26% of the children in the same class were able to do simple division. The situation continues to get worse as one climbs to higher classes. Without the correct basics in place, children are not able to keep up with more complex studies. Many drop out and those who make it through seldom pass with the kind of learning or knowledge expected from a high school pass out.

Where is the gap?

While there are more schools to enrol children, the quality of education imparted here suffers on many counts. Teachers are often untrained and over-burdened. There is no focus on teaching aids and creating a conducive learning environment. With the above missing, the softer elements that children need to succeed in today's world – exposure to new ideas, digital learning, a spirit of curiosity, role models to look up to – do not even fall in the consideration set.

Even an “educated” child in rural India ends up becoming a farmer or taking up common jobs they have seen around them – a teacher, a driver, maybe a doctor. These are the future of our nation. Don't they deserve a fighting chance to dream bigger and aim higher?

This is the effort being made at VidyaGyan, an academy that chooses the brightest children from the bottom of the pyramid and trains them to be leaders of tomorrow.

Why leadership?

Talent and potential can be found anywhere. But only the right intervention can help hone it and turn it into strong leadership. This is especially needed in rural India, where conscientious and capable leadership is hard to come by.

Young leaders in rural areas have the potential to create a ripple effect in their communities. They build aspiration for other children to expand their horizons. They inject new thinking and knowledge into their communities – from social to technological to cultural, and more. Above all, if instilled with the right approach, they can be harbingers of social change and impact for their communities. Imagine the kind of impact many such leaders can have in one village, one district, one state and then the entire country.

This can only happen if we make fostering values and aspirations to be a leader in rural children a priority. At VidyaGyan, this journey has been started with the meritorious – the children who have shown the most potential and ability to learn and lead.

The secret sauce

When meritorious students enrol in class 6th at VidyaGyan, they come from various backgrounds, mostly lacking in confidence and rarely at par with urban class 6th learning. At VidyaGyan, they first get an environment to learn in a fully residential school with teachers, staff and even elder students acting as guides and mentors. Facilities at par or better than any urban school. And trained teachers, equipped with the aids and techniques befitting 21st century learning.

Then they are offered a variety of learning, training and grooming inputs to build not just a knowledge-base but the mind-set and personality traits to lead. For example, career counselling and mapping is provided to students. They are encouraged to be part of global leadership programs, student exchange and diversity initiatives. Apart from these, essential life skills such as effective communication, presentation techniques, team work, etc. are also taught to build interpersonal skills necessary to succeed in the outside world.

The demand for such quality education is indeed high amongst rural parents. Children come from varied backgrounds – be it farming communities or even tribal groups from some of the most isolated regions. A rigorous and meritocratic selection process is carried out to choose only the most promising candidates. All this to reach the bottom of the pyramid with the quality of education usually reserved only for the urban elite.

What has this led to?

The founding class of VidyaGyan graduated in 2016, and the results are a resounding testament to the success of this model of education. Students received admissions to some of the best universities in India and abroad, including Delhi University, NITs, NIFT, Delhi College of Art and even University of Massachusetts, US. The grade XII topper is a girl with 97% marks who is now studying Psychology at a premier college in the University of Delhi. Students also got selected to study at the prestigious London College of Fashion to become fashion entrepreneurs of tomorrow.

The training, tutoring, mentoring and exposure provided to these students has given them a launch-pad to come out of their shells, build self-confidence, expand their learning and find new opportunities. When they step out of the school today, they dream big – they dream of being an aeronautical engineer, studying international relations and setting up night schools for the women in their villages. They dream to be the change they want to see in the world.

Leaders in making



Vaishali, a girl from the village of Faidpur Jaskoli in the communally sensitive district of Moradabad, has proven that given the right platform, there is no goal that is too difficult for girls to conquer. Vaishali is the first student from VidyaGyan to study internationally at University of Massachusetts, Amherst, US, where she is pursuing an undergraduate course in Political Science. She scored 95.4% in her Grade XII exams and has already become a source of inspiration, not only for other students at VidyaGyan, but her entire village.



Shikha comes from a rural underprivileged background. Her father is a marginal farmer and her family struggles to make ends meet. However, she topped the school with 96.6% in Grade XII examinations and is now pursuing an undergraduate course with majors in Psychology from one of the most reputed and coveted college in Delhi University, the Lady Shri Ram College.



Arun has become a beacon of hope for his community, which has started valuing education as the means to improve their social-economic standing. He broke the barriers for his entire community by securing 96% in Grade XII examinations. He is now pursuing his under graduation in Computer Science from the National Institute of Technology.

SNAPSHOTS

SHIKSHA – Literacy for All in Kasmanda, Sitapur

Shiksha initiative works with the vision to eradicate illiteracy from India by creating lifelong learners and enhancing the learning process utilizing a technology-enabled learning program.

With this objective, Shiksha, after an in-depth research and survey of Government Primary Schools, launched its intervention in Kasmanda block of Sitapur district. The first phase of equipment installation in schools was done on November 8, 2016. The aim now is to extend it to 145 government schools and select private schools.



Shiv Nadar University felicitated by FICCI as University of the Year; flagship events held

Shiv Nadar University was felicitated by FICCI as University of the Year (in existence for less than 10 years category) for demonstrating overall excellence in the areas of quality of faculty, student training, research studies, improved technology for education delivery, employability, governance, and infrastructure, amongst others.

The FICCI Higher Education Excellence Awards recognize the achievements and work done by institutions and individuals in improving the quality of Higher Education in India.

Shiv Nadar University also hosted a number of flagship events including its annual Inter-College-Sports-Techno-Cultural Festival, Breeze 2016; the maiden chapter of TEDxShivNadarUniversity; Open House and Science Fair; School of Management and Entrepreneurship's annual business festival, MOQSH 2016.



SSN makes its mark in Sports

The Ranji Trophy, an annual first-class cricket championship played by the finest cricketers in the nation, was held at SSN, an institution of the Shiv Nadar Foundation. The match was held between Delhi and Vidarbha from 29th November to 2nd December 2016. Since its inception, the Ranji Trophy has been played at the most premier playing grounds in the country. SSN is proud to host the championship at its Campus.

18-year-old Arun Sathianarayanan, a student of the SSN College of Engineering, won bronze at the 17th Asian Roller Skating Championship in Lishui City (China) in October 2016. Apart from representing India at 2012, 2013 and 2016 editions of the World Championships, he has also raked in a haul of 31 gold, 34 silver, and nine bronze medals from district, state and national championships.



Teachers from Shiv Nadar School shine at the CENTA Teaching Professionals Olympiad

More than 5,000 teachers signed up for a first-of-its-kind initiative for teaching professionals, by the Centre for Teacher Accreditation (CENTA), the CENTA Teaching Professionals Olympiad. Teachers from Shiv Nadar School also participated in the event and 10 of them were featured in the All India Top 100 list.



SHIV NADAR FOUNDATION

www.shivnadarfoundation.org

Connect with us!

foundationconnect@shivnadarfoundation.org

