

THE FOUNDATION POST

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SHIV NADAR FOUNDATION



CATALYSING CHANGE

THE WORKFORCE BEHIND SOCIAL IMPACT

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Letter from the Editorial Desk

How often do you come across people who exemplify change? The facilitators of new thinking, new actions and new behaviour. Those driven to change the status quo with a zeal for doing things differently. From Mahatma Gandhi to Malala Yousafzai, the world has seen many great men and women who have stood up for cause, unwilling to compromise on their vision despite unwieldy obstacles. Their motivations were many, their goal was one – change. They fought for the rights of individuals, the upliftment of communities and the empowerment of entire generations of people. Them, and others like them, are visionaries who have inspired and spurred a million revolutions. Such is the impact of a Change Agent.

It is tough to come across such examples in our daily lives. They are often people covered in media, confined to history books, borne out of difficult circumstances and nurtured on personal turmoil and experiences. Or so we think. If we just look beyond, we can find such change agents right amidst us. An engineer building an economical solar power panel to power a village. Or an architect helping local artisans build sustainable houses. Or a teacher telling fascinating stories from history to young kids. Anyone, anywhere can be a change agent. At Shiv Nadar Foundation we are lucky enough to work with numerous such change agents, who strive everyday to make a difference, to one person or many. They are not successful every single day. But they continue to strive for the satisfaction at the end of the metaphorical tunnel. The satisfaction that arises out of seeing one's work creating a change in the lives of fellow human beings.

For us, work and impact are only as strong as the people. Those people behind every success story, behind every child who sees new opportunities, or every community made a little more capable through knowledge. It is the people who are the true facilitators of change in any organization looking to create wide-spread social change. This is the idea we are exploring in this issue of The Foundation Post. Hope you enjoy reading it.



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B





Change Agents, not Employees

We spend a majority of our waking hours either at work, or commuting to work, or thinking about work. For many of us, that means chasing a barrage of To-Dos with an incessant focus on reaching the final numbers, that large goal at the end of the quarter or month or week or day! But for some of us, the charter does not end with numbers but how these numbers can be utilized to empower people and communities. This happens in a work environment where people are not just target audience or consumers but in fact the very anchor of day-to-day tasks. Where every day starts with the challenge of enabling more people and impacting change in their lives. Such is the driving force for organisations working in the social impact space.

By its very nature, the social impact sector needs individuals who can drive change – whether it is in identifying and filling gaps, reaching out to communities, or devising solutions to their problems. Organisations that work in this space are not only offering a platform for individuals to create change but also providing an environment

that helps shape and bring alive the change agent within them. Everyday challenges are such that one must inevitably find new ways of doing things. Each person then has the potential to be a catalyst for change and also has the ecosystem to do it.

“ Each person in social impact organizations is a change agent in his/her own right.”

More and more youngsters are transitioning today towards work where they can create wider impact than just their immediate surroundings. While they are attracted to the social sector for a variety of professional reasons, from multi-functional exposure to diverse experiences to opportunities of constant innovation, it is the personal growth that makes them stick. Social impact after all comes with an innate sense of job satisfaction. The possibility of seeing one's hard work improve someone else's life is by far one of the most gratifying

experiences of working in the social impact sector.

The path to change does not always need a torch bearer leading a mass revolution. Each person in social impact organizations is a change agent in his/her own right. For instance a night guard working an extra shift to ensure that students get enough time to study; or a teacher walking miles to talk to one family to ensure that one more girl child comes to school tomorrow; or an education worker hacking together a solar panel to power computers in a village are all real examples of change agents.

In our day-in and day-out multi-tasking lives, one often loses sight of how our work is creating impact. But in the social sphere, the work can be easily visualized in terms of the impact it is creating. Every day throws up another opportunity to change something for the better. Work is not a task then, it is a never-ending opportunity to help make the world a better place. Could there be a better reason to come to work each day?

Snapshots

Roshni Nadar Malhotra featured in Vodafone Foundation's Women of Pure Wonder

Roshni Nadar Malhotra, CEO, HCL Corporation and Trustee, Shiv Nadar Foundation featured as a Woman of Pure Wonder in Vodafone Foundation's latest publication, launched on the occasion of International Women's Day 2016. An undertaking by Vodafone Foundation, this list of 50 women of pure wonder celebrates female leaders who took the road less travelled and made it big. The book chronicles the struggles, survival and ultimate success of such extraordinary women.



Kiran Nadar Museum of Art Goes Global

The Kiran Nadar Museum of Art recently collaborated with the prestigious Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid (23rd September 2015 – 11th January 2016) and Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (18th March – 5th June

2016) to present a retrospective of the Indian modernist Nasreen Mohamedi. In its first iteration, the exhibition was presented at KNMA in Delhi in 2013. Nasreen Mohamedi is one of the inaugural exhibitions of the new Met Breuer

and by far the most comprehensive exhibition of any Indian artist in the United States to date. The exhibition opened to widespread critical acclaim, in such notable publications as The New York Times, The New Yorker, South China Morning Post, Huffington Post and the Wall Street Journal. The walk-through led by KNMA Chief Curator, Roobina Karode, received resounding applause from the audience. These collaborations emphasise the continued pioneering work of Kiran Nadar to share the wealth and breadth of Indian art here and abroad.



SSN Organized 4th Edition of Youth Conference – SYCon 2016

SSN, the first institution established by Shiv Nadar Foundation, organized SYCon 2016 on 29th March. It is an initiative of the Entrepreneurship Development Cell of SSN College of Engineering. The conference saw a packed auditorium with over 1000 students from SSN and other colleges. Prominent guest speakers such as Jayachandran Palazhy (Internationally renowned dancer and choreographer), Venugopal

Chandrasekhar (Former national table tennis champion and Arjuna Award winner) and Shekar Dattatri (Leading wildlife film-maker) graced the event as guest speakers and engaged the audience with their enchanting stories. The enthralling second segment offered diverse perspectives, from Neerja Malik (Counsellor for cancer patients, associated with the Pinkathon) to Shekar Dattatri taking participants on a wild spin

of emotions and self-discovery. Mr. Dattatri and Archana Ramachandran (TFI Fellowship) focused on going back to one's roots and emphasized that 'With great privilege comes great responsibility' – be it giving back to the society in terms of education or natural resources and wildlife conservation. The Indie Jazz band, Humphrey and The Aglets (HATA) also kicked up the energy with their stellar performance.



Shiv Nadar Foundation Leadership Conclave 2016

On 13th February 2016, the leadership and select participants from the Shiv Nadar Foundation and HCL converged for the inaugural Shiv Nadar Foundation Leadership Conclave at the HCL Technology Hub in Noida. The theme of the day was saying 'Hello!' to start conversations and exchange of ideas across the Foundation and the institutions. The event was graced by the presence of eminent personalities from different walks of life, including Dananjaya Hettiarachchi (World Champion for Public Speaking 2014) narrating his mantras for success and Anish Andheria

(President, Wildlife Conservation Trust) speaking on his conservation efforts, and why it's important to teach conservation in schools. The audience were also charmed by the presence

of celebrated Tamil and Hindi movies actor R Madhavan, who candidly spoke about his successes and failures while giving his take on philanthropy.



In conversation with

Dilip Kumar Srivastava

President - HR, Shiv Nadar Foundation



In your view, what are the three (or more) things that attract talented professionals to social impact sector?

I think satisfaction of being able to give back to the society is the key. The chance to be a change agent and see the impact of one's work in people's lives first hand. In the social impact sector, it's not the technology or product which drive growth but the human capital which becomes the growth capital. Secondly, there is a lot of room for experimentation and innovation. The organizational structure is usually non-hierarchical which gives one the power to execute new ideas. And lastly, the opportunity to work on challenging and complex projects provides diverse learning, which is a big attraction for professionals who want to push the boundaries of learning.

What are the 5 (or more) steps that HR Heads in social impact organizations should take to attract and retain high calibre talent?

Let me highlight some of the important ones:

- Emphasize on the growth opportunities, social impact of the profile, and the culture and vision driving the organization
- Invest in quality leadership as this goes a long way in attracting and retaining talent
- In social organizations, innovation and ideas flow from bottom to top, as it's the employees in the field that understand the target audience the best. Hence, it is important to give them space for discovery with accountability and appreciate their work
- Provide competitive compensation package as this is one of the biggest barriers in this space
- Leverage the comparatively flat hierarchy and give employees a chance to work across roles and explore opportunities, so they get a chance to make even more impact

What are the three (or more) qualities you look for in candidates joining your organization in a leadership position?

While we take into consideration a lot of factors, I am highlighting a few here:

- Passion: to bring about meaningful change and to work in the social sector
- Can-do attitude: If one has the Can-do attitude then he/she can reinvent/develop the skills to excel in any organization
- Clarity: One should have clarity of his/her own goals, intention and motivation for working in the social impact sector.

Are these different from the qualities that you look for in candidates who join your organization in an on-the-field role?

We treat all our employees as leaders or future leaders whom we want to nurture into leadership roles tomorrow. Hence, broadly the qualities remain the same. For the young employees, additionally we look for a team player attitude (place his/her team's good in front of his/her own self) and ability to work in the field and get his/her hands dirty.

One Act of Change

In Conversation with Change Agents of Shiv Nadar Foundation



Rupamanjari Ghosh

Vice Chancellor, Shiv Nadar University

“The introduction of the OUR (“Opportunities for Undergraduate Research”) program at the Shiv Nadar University has been a great success – it is indeed a differentiator! This adds an extra dimension to our efforts to enable our students to actively **learn “by doing”**, replacing the traditional form of dry and passive lecturing by teachers. The students get engaged, and we inspire and challenge them to find their true potential.”

Sumantra Sen Gupta

Professor, Shiv Nadar University

“With India changing so rapidly, I would like to see myself working with children from underprivileged backgrounds and together learning ‘**people skill/sense**’ through art, design, music and theatre. I always believe that people skill/sense is a very important aspect of the learning process, especially when these underprivileged children/youth will transit from ‘nothing’ to ‘something’. Arts, along with digital media, can help them better understand the complexities of life, and thus participate as equal citizens of India.”



Gopal Karunakaran

CEO, Shiv Nadar School

“Since the very start of the school, I have been engaging with the senior batches through **social sciences and life skills** lessons. In these lectures, I try infusing not just textual knowledge, but also **broaden the minds** of students to incorporate more practical and **critical thinking skills**, and infuse the right kind of attitude and habits. The senior-most sections will be looked up to as role models by the rest of the school, and I want to ensure that they **lead by example**. I have covered diverse topics, like the value of habits, how we make choices in our lives, understanding the complexity of Indian Elections and this year with Grade X, why and how urbanization happens around the world.”

S.K. Maheshwari

Project Director, VidyaGyan

"In collaboration with Government agencies, we have institutionalized VidyaGyan admissions process as an **impeccably fair and transparent** multi-tier selection system to ensure eligible students are sieved through underprivileged layers of rural society. The selection process has acquired cult status as U.P. states' largest talent search exercise across rural areas, igniting healthy competition amongst students aspiring for admission in VidyaGyan institutions."

Anita Paul

Vice Principal, VidyaGyan, Bulandshahar

"Being part of the Foundation, literally as a **family member** who is present with the children 24X7, has brought me closer to understanding their needs and helped me realize the dreams and aspirations of these young citizens who are the future of the nation. Not only do I feel proud of them as achievers but I also feel connected to them as they go forward to achieve their goals. My role is that of a **facilitator and guide** who is there to boost their morale and never let them feel alone."

Monica Sagar

Principal, Shiv Nadar School, Gurgaon

"In my role as Principal of a fledgling school, in its infancy for the first four years, the celebration of the **joy of sharing** during the Founder's week has helped teach the children a lot of life skills! The students conducted activities like car-seva (cleaning staff and parent cars), art and craft workshop & a musical piece. They learned the importance of creativity, perseverance, goal-orientation, entrepreneurship and philanthropy!"

S. Salivahanan

Principal, College of Engineering, SSN

"Students who have natural talents in fields like sports, arts, leadership and public speaking should be encouraged along with academics. Underprivileged students require mentorship to excel. At SSN, my focus is on **360-degree development** of students as well as the surrounding communities. As part of this initiative, students undertake social work and have adopted schools in nearby villages where they teach computer skills and English. I am also involved in **knowledge creation by authoring** books on technical subjects in lucid language for students across the world."



Rajeev Kumar Singh

Assistant Professor, Shiv Nadar University

“My belief is that every student is different and has the potential to do well in something or the other. We need to provide mentoring and I call this a **Mentor Driven Education System**. The classes are designed to motivate students and let them choose the type of problems they want to work on. They are encouraged to take courses from branches other than their majors so that they are ready for the next generation of jobs/entrepreneurship which requires **interdisciplinary knowledge**. Only with proper mentoring will we be able to find the Bill Gates and Steve Jobs of India.”

Ram Sharma

Associate Dean Student Affairs, Shiv Nadar University

“**Students are at the centre of whatever we do** at the Shiv Nadar University. Every bit of my role such as mentoring, advising, counselling, and motivating has potential to impact students and their future course of academic/personal lives. Learning and Academic Support Center (LASC), which I initiated as a collaborative learning platform, is helping students cope with academic pressures at the university and is playing a significant role in improving academic performance for many of them.”



Anju Wal

Principal, Shiv Nadar School, Faridabad

“The Faridabad school built a **strong reading program** for the children. The unique feature of this program, crafted in year 1 of the school, is the involvement of children from Nursery and Kindergarten, who take a storybook home every Friday for the parents to read to them. This gives the child engaging time with the parents, taking their interactions beyond feeding/sleeping/dos and don'ts. Parents have confessed that it has given them a **broadier perspective** of their child. Students in the Faridabad school are encouraged to read across grades, however the defining thing has been to get ‘early childhood years’ hooked onto books.”



SHIV NADAR FOUNDATION

www.shivnadarfoundation.org

Connect with us!

foundationconnect@shivnadarfoundation.org

