Chapter 3

Lost On the Amazon
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vision NASSCOM Foundation</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT for a better world</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NASSCOM Knowledge Network</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BiG program</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BiG Tech</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-GET Involved Program</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty Alleviation Programs</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Partners</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation Partners</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Studies</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NF Publications</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronyms</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the Press</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustees and Team NF</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Stirring up Ideas
“The need of the hour is to find functional solutions through the use of information technology that can radically alter the social fabric of our society by empowering the underprivileged.”

—Saurabh Srivastava, Chairman, NASSCOM Foundation

Leading the IT industry for social development

It is now a well established fact that information technology can help bridge class and gender divides, and eliminate other limiting forces, to enable the dissemination of knowledge to all. NASSCOM Foundation (NF) was set up to support the Indian IT industry’s role in nation building and to promote the underprivileged to help them become self-reliant and productive participants in the country’s progress.

NASSCOM Foundation’s untiring commitment to serve the society is evident in the programs and efforts undertaken by it. Every year, we reach out to more people by adding to the number of our knowledge centers and improvising our methods by keeping abreast with the latest technology. Our knowledge delivery methods are designed to meet specific needs of each individual to make him/her self-reliant.

It is imperative to find low cost solutions through effective partnership models. NF constantly urges and encourages its members to extend support and means for development to ensure a better tomorrow for the underserved in our community.

In 2007-08, NF focused on scaling up its NASSCOM Knowledge Networks and forging key partnerships. We also launched BiG Tech—a technology philanthropy program with the objective to provide technology support to non-profit and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

There are many more milestones to cross. NF continues to forge ahead in its zeal towards development of the marginalized people in our country through knowledge.
Joyous Tomorrow
“I have discovered a whole new world thorough the Internet and now I know what is going on in the animation industry. I also have more general information.”

—Saira Begum, student, Faluknama NF-TFTP Knowledge Center

ICT for a better world

Over the last two decades, ICT has significantly impacted economic prosperity in the country. It has also been contributing towards social change. ICT facilitates knowledge sharing and helps generate employment, disperse skills and knowledge, and empower the common man. It also helps in expanding and enlarging the reach of social programs to all corners of the country at a much reduced cost.

NASSCOM Foundation (NF) is effectively harnessing ICT to spread knowledge, increase employability, eradicate poverty, bridge the gender divide, and dispel isolation. It encourages its partners to do the same to brighten numerous lives across the nation.

In this regard, NF has three crosscutting functional areas—ICT for development, providing technology access and promoting corporate social responsibility within the IT industry.
Disseminating Knowledge
“I wanted to buy some advanced farming equipment and a tractor to boost my productivity. The center coordinator told me about a few websites where I found information on advanced tractor models. I picked up the one that fit into my budget and it is performing really well.”

—Shrimant Magdum, farmer, Kolhapur NF-S Knowledge Center, Maharashtra

ICT for development

ICT can help underserved communities access information, services and opportunities that collectively build their capacities to realize their dreams. NF brings together implementing agencies, industry, government bodies and people at the grassroots for integrated development through the use of ICT. NF has developed various robust programs like NASSCOM Knowledge Network (NKN) and Building capacities at the Grassroots Program (BiG). NASSCOM Knowledge Network, through its knowledge centers across India, imparts relevant skills to the underserved to make them self-reliant and self-sustainable.

ICT and health

Health is at the heart of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in recognition of the fact that health is central to the global agenda of reducing poverty as well as an important measure of human development (WHO, 2005). Improving the health of individuals and communities, and strengthening health systems, disease detection and prevention are crucial to development and poverty reduction. Three of the eight MDGs are directly health-related:
- Reduce child mortality (goal 4)
- Improve maternal health (goal 5)
- Combat HIV and AIDS, malaria, and other diseases (goal 6)

ICT has the potential to impact almost every aspect of the health sector. In public health, information management and communication processes are pivotal, and are facilitated or limited by available ICT. ICTs have clearly made an impact on healthcare. Around the world, ICT projects have:
- improved dissemination of public health information and facilitated public discourse and dialog around major public health threats
- enabled remote consultation, diagnosis and treatment through telemedicine
- facilitated collaboration and cooperation among health workers, including sharing of learning and training approaches
- supported more effective health research and the dissemination and access to research findings
- strengthened the ability to monitor the
incidence of public health threats and respond in a more timely and effective manner
• improved the efficiency of administrative systems in health care facilities

Lack of access to information remains a major barrier to knowledge-based health care in developing countries, as well as in many parts of the ‘developed’ world (Godlee et al, 2004). However, research has shown that ICTs can be used to raise awareness of an issue, develop dialogue within a community, increase demand for services, and encourage people to seek support and accurate information as demonstrated by projects across the globe. Results from these projects have shown that ICT material led to reinforcement and deepening of the issues (being discussed), emotional identification created through the characters and formation of alliances, and local skill-building in order to achieve a longer-lasting impact. A key lesson emerging was that it takes time to do this effectively and it is never a straightforward process, but a set of successive steps. Exploring issues in depth and detail rather than changing themes constantly allows people the time to engage with the information and internalize it. Finally, recognizing that it was not possible to provide individual access to such information, researchers have recommended developing community access points, such as telecenters for more effective outreach in the community. Use of such services could be increased by either basing or placing such centers close to primary client organizations—those that were likely to make extensive use of the service—such as the media, schools, and health clinics.

Keeping the MDGs, research and the NKN outreach mechanism in mind, NF has made a focussed yet strong beginning in the area of dissemination of information about key health issues, keeping India’s realities in this sector in perspective. The focus of NF’s health initiative at the moment is two-fold:
• Maternal and child health and nutrition
• HIV/AIDS

NF partnered with UNICEF, Johns Hopkins University and ZMQ Software Systems to provide crucial messages to rural communities through interactive CD-ROMs in local languages. The NKN center coordinators are comprehensively trained on how to use this educational material. The response from the NKN communities has been very encouraging so far.

**Technology Access Program**
There is a huge digital divide in the country, between people who have access to technology and who don’t. This is especially true of a country like India, where a large part of its population lives in rural areas and is economically and socially ill-equipped. NF’s BiG Tech program in partnership with Technology for the People (TFTP) is an initiative to make technology accessible at low cost to these sections and provide them with technical tools to overcome the barriers that hamper their progress. NF’s corporate partners provide technology at low cost through software donation.

**CSR initiatives**
NF encourages its partners to engage in more capacity building initiatives by transferring technical and other skills to the under-privileged to enable long-term development. It aids its members to plan their CSR initiatives, capturing best practices, and promoting and assisting their implementation. NF’s I-Get involved program is a complete CSR policy kit encapsulating various modules including skills building, CEDAT—a program for the differently abled, and Research. NF’s initiatives involve integrative ICT learning frameworks, with wide outreach. We aim to bring about a wider understanding of contribution to development that will lead us closer to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).
Building Life Skills
The focus of the NASSCOM knowledge network is to draw up a long-term sustainability plan for the centers and address the needs of the local communities. The aim is to help make significant impact on social development indicators of the communities in which the

NASSCOM Knowledge Network: Impacting Lives

The NASSCOM Knowledge Network (NKN) is a dynamic network of telecenters or knowledge centers across 11 states of India. NKN centers are run by NGOs with support from NASSCOM Foundation and its resource partners.

NKN brings together donors, content providers and implementing agencies, and enables grassroots organizations to start successful ICT projects. The design focuses on community needs, using a bottoms up, non-prescriptive approach.

Knowledge Centers, under the NKN program are “a physical space that provide public access to (value-added) Information and Communication Technologies for educational, personal, social and economic development.” The centers have three to five computers, connectivity, content and co-ordinators. They render multi-purpose services to communities such as education, health, e-governance and other services by facilitating access to information and essential services, providing opportunities through capacity building and training tools using ICT as outreach platform.

IMPACT

• More than 10,000 underserved community members have been trained in the Microsoft Unlimited Potential curriculum
• Over 20,000 people trained in literacy, livelihood, health and other skills the last two years

COMMUNITY BASED APPROACH | LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY MODEL FOR KNOWLEDGE CENTRES | FOCUS ON LOCAL LANGUAGE CONTENT & APPLICATIONS | GENDER SENSITIZATION TO EMPOWER WOMENFOLK | EQUIPPING THE LOCAL COMMUNITY WITH BASIC COMPUTER LITERACY SKILLS

5 POINT APPROACH
NF chose the community-based model for the NKN program. While NF facilitates the content and the connectivity component, a private donor (NASSCOM member) along with the NGO partner brings in the computers and co-ordinators or centre managers.

NF’s other major concern is that of sustainability. This was reinforced by the report ‘Enabling ICT for Rural India (November 2005),’ which said, “…despite high user interest, availability and affordability of relevant content and information network remain major problems. As a result most projects are not financially viable and have not met

The programme entails the actual implementation of NKN to be done by grassroots organizations. NF has identified several implementation partners. These are Ambuja Cement Foundation, Byrraju Foundation, Forum for Integrated Development & Research, Grameen Sanchar Society, GTL Foundation, Indian NGOs.Com, Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan, M S Swaminathan Research Foundation, Pathways, Population First, Rotary Club Gurgaon, SEWA, SIFFS, Students Partnership Worldwide – India Project Trust, Sanskriti Samvardhan Mandal, Suraj Foundation and Technology for the People (TFTP) who along with NF put in the hardware and peripheral devices to set up knowledge centers as their contribution to the partnerships.

NF has also tied up with other organisations for content, service and implementation. Microsoft Unlimited Potential has funded a part of this program on a national level for two years. Apart from the funding, Microsoft is providing free of cost software upgrade for all the centers along with their Unlimited Potential courseware. NF has also received the support of Azim Premji Foundation, Cause an Effect Foundation, International Development Research Center, Rural –IT.Com, Tata Consultancy Services, UNDP and UNICEF.

India resides in its 6,00,000 villages spread across more than 600 districts accounting for 65% of the total population. Reaching out to these rural communities requires an innovative and creative channel, and a firm commitment to address the critical challenges that plague the underserved in rural areas.
user or provider expectations on content or usage.” NF works towards making the NKN centers viable in the long term.

**Need of NKN**

India is today one of the fastest growing economies of the world with a million-plus strong middle class with increasing purchasing power. A highly talented, skilled and English-speaking human resource base forms its backbone. The digital revolution has irrevocably changed the way human beings function – everything from how we live, and work to play. However, the fruits of the digital age benefit only a tiny percentage of the population.

Rural India still suffers from substantial poverty. The Planning Commission has estimated that 27.5% of the population was living below the poverty line in 2004–2005, down from 51.3% in 1977–1978, and 36% in 1993-1994. 75% of the poor are in rural areas primarily comprising daily wagers, self-employed households and landless laborers. The development gap between the rich and the poor among and within the country has widened. In such a context, timely access to relevant information and knowledge on education, health, livelihood, can go a long in improving the lives of the underserved.

Information and communication technologies are tools that can diminish distances and eradicate isolation, speed up developmental processes and enhance the overall quality of life. A knowledge center is a model for providing such tools to under served and marginalized communities in order to help them access relevant information and opportunities to better their quality of life. A knowledge center has many functions and one of the main ones is to provide ‘information services’ to the groups it serves.

**Making each STEP count:**

**Sustainable Triple E-Education, Employability and Entrepreneurship**

NF has initiated a partnership with TMI First where youth from underprivileged backgrounds from the geographical locations adjoining NKN centers are

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1. The source for this was the 61st round of the National Sample Survey (NSS) and the criterion used was monthly per capita consumption expenditure below Rs.356.35 for rural areas and Rs.538.60 for urban areas.
trained and placed in entry-level jobs in retail, hospitality and other sectors.

NF, along with Pune University, has identified undergraduate students from backward communities for part-time jobs with SerWizSol. NF has taken the SerWizSol partnership forward and has linked them with TARAhaat in Punjab for providing jobs to underprivileged youth. NF will form similar linkages with its local partners.

Lessons learnt in the process
The three years since the inception of the NKN has seen NASSCOM Foundation identify certain approaches to ICT for development (ICT4D) programs. Some of the most important ones are:

Stakeholder participation: NF involves community members at every stage – from initial needs assessment to monitoring. This participatory and demand-driven approach increases the impact of ICT4D activities, and is essential to avoid top-down and supply-driven interventions. Technology should follow community needs and a functional use of ICT. For this reason NF identifies community-based organizations which have worked with targeted communities and have an in-depth understanding of their concerns.

Local ownership and capacity development: Physical access is just one element of effective ICT access and use; for ICT projects to be sustainable, they must also be accompanied by human and organizational capacity development. Many of the NKN centers have local managing committees which monitor how the center is run and give regular inputs and feedback on its management. Further, NF encourages its partners to nominate and train local youth to manage the centers.
as they are closest to their communities’ needs.

**Multi-stakeholder partnerships:** This is an appropriate response to the complexity of setting up ICT programs in communities. Further, in view of the need for increased resources, development is the responsibility of all sectors of society with multi-level linkages. With this in mind, NF has varied partnerships with different categories of organization, from implementation partners to resource partners. This mix of partnerships helps NF provide the best possible mix of infrastructure, content and services to targeted communities.

**Institutional ownership and leadership:** Although successful ICT pilot programs are often driven by committed individuals, there must also be an institutional base to extend a project’s outreach and increase the number of people involved. For this reason, NF partners with grassroots NGOs with a history of working in target communities.

**Financial and social sustainability:** In order for projects to be financially sustainable, all potential costs and revenue generation should be kept in mind from the start. The issue of social sustainability is of equal importance, and is secured through local ownership and capacity building. It is essential that social and financial sustainability are both considered. From 2006 onwards, NF has regularly organized workshops for the center managers and leaders of its NGO implementation partners on topics ranging from involving communities, entrepreneurship to social marketing and communication, etc. These workshops have been widely appreciated and accepted by NF’s partner organizations.

**NKN EVENTS**

NF’s effort towards building the capacities of its partners has been a primary activity from the very beginning. This is because the concept of multiple partnerships is sound, particularly when stakeholders with unique complementary strengths or core competencies add value to development efforts and pool their resources and assets in solving problems. However, many such partnerships struggle to work effectively.

The central challenge seems to revolve around the nurturing of a working

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“I was so excited to see my 12th standard results. I accessed my result and also searched for prospective colleges to join a B.Com course through the Internet.”

—Girish Tirodkar, student, NF GTL Knowledge Center, Maharashtra
NKN is based on a partnership model. After an NGO is identified to implement and manage the NKN center, NF through its cadre of master trainers helps and trains the new partner NGO to set up and run the center.

Training plays an extremely important role in all of this and as the central facilitating agency, NF has to assume this role. With this in mind, 2007-08 saw a full calendar of events from partner meets for senior management of partner agencies to capacity building workshops for the NKN center staff. Here is the complete list:

**Partners Meet, Delhi, April 2007:** The first partners meet of NF wherein the partners shared their experiences and were told about new services like Common Service Centers (CSC) and Community Radio.

**Entrepreneurship Training, Honnavar, Karnataka, July 2007:** This was the first in a series of sustainability workshops. The centers that participated in the workshop were from Karnataka. The workshop aimed at breaking the traditional mould of the centers and focusing more on how they could be social entrepreneurs.

**Partners Meet II, Secunderabad, October 2007:** This focused on sustainability planning for the knowledge centers. This was an awareness and buy-in for the NGO head program.

**National Consultation II, New Delhi, December 2007:** This was a multi-stakeholder meet as well as a training program for the center coordinators. The stakeholders present were Microsoft, Hughes, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, and Intel. The focus was on synergizing programs.

**Other events**

**Rural ICT Seminar, Delhi, June 2007:** It was a program focusing on rural India as a potential ICT market. It brought different stakeholders together for a lively discussion on the opportunities and threats of ICT in rural India.

**CSR Conclave, Mumbai, February 2008:** As part of NASSCOM Leadership Summit, NF hosted this meet that involved global leaders talking about ICT in development. Participants included...
The NKN was designed to be adopted easily by NGOs and the NASSCOM members, thereby allowing room for scalability, both functional and quantitative. NF intends to scale the program upto 350 centers in 2008-09.

Planet Finance, SDC, corporates and NGO stakeholders.

**Current Status**
- 142 NKN centers established across 11 states of the country
- Impacting lives of over 90,000 community members
- Direct employment created for over 300 community members
- Two Connectivity Partners, Eight Resource Partners, 15 Implementation Partners
- Over 150 Knowledge Center Coordinators
- 10 Master Trainer workshops held
- 50 number of master trainers trained
- Over 30,000 people trained
  - 10,000 number of people trained in IT Skills
  - 14,000 children supported on computer aided school support curriculum
  - 2,000 community members trained in livelihood skills
  - Over 1,000 adults trained on Computer based Adult Literacy Program
- 700 community members trained in health awareness
- 200 girls trained for self employment and skills in animation

The model NF adopted seems to be working well, motivating partners to scale up on their own.

(Disclaimer: This map is not to scale. It is only for indicative purpose)
Mission Empowerment
The BiG program focuses on building skills related to using information and communication technologies in small and medium sized NGOs for development.

NF introduced the ‘Entrepreneurship Skills’ development program first through a partner to partner (P-P) meet and then through a coordinators training workshop. The P-P meet provided NKN partners an opportunity to share their experiences. As an outcome of this P-P, NKN partners were not only able to identify and better understand the gaps in their processes and possible solutions to the same, but were also able to think afresh on how the NKN centers could be made more robust and sustainable.

NF conducted an entrepreneurship workshop in Honnaver, Karnataka attended by organizations in the region. NGO leaders Andhra Pradesh shared inputs on building a sustainable structure for knowledge centers. NKN telecenter managers and coordinators in Delhi learnt entrepreneurship skills.

Women often face cultural blocks and are deprived from reaping the benefits of ICTs. NF has addressed gender issues in the country by empowering women with ICT training. Muslim girls with traditional skills of mehendi enrolled with the NKN Telecenter in old Hyderabad city. These girls were forced to drop out of school to earn a living. TFTP, an NF partner, brought in a new lease of life by combining education with an alternate livelihood skill for these girls. Many girls have now completed their tenth class and are also churning out production work for an animation company that pays them between Rs 3,000 - 8,000 per month.
Dreaming BiG
training workshop for select NKN coordinators in south Maharashtra and Karnataka. It successfully introduced the principles of entrepreneurship for the first time and helped imbibe in them the value of balancing profit-making with community development.

Program module
The BiG program comprises a series of training workshops such as:

- Designing and launching ICT for development projects (knowledge centers and community radio)
- Making ICT for development projects sustainable (entrepreneurial skills)
- Grassroots marketing and communication
- Community development and information services

Current status
- NF was contracted by IDRC’s telecenter.org initiative to put together the Info-mediary Skills module, a part of the larger Training Commons project. This project has been satisfactorily brought to a close, with NF receiving appreciation from the IDRC and the external reviewers of the project. NF’s module on Info-mediary skills, has been applauded as one of the best modules in the entire curriculum.
- NF’s training and capacity building is highly appreciated by communities, NGO and corporate partners.
- NF has tied up with Vishwa Yuvak Kendra and this collaboration will result in NF’s NGO network extending to 3000 partners.
- Planning is on for the next workshops.
Platform for Technical Synergy
BiG Tech program, launched in August 2007 in partnership with TechSoup, is the key technology philanthropy program of NF. Under this, NGOs receive software and hardware at very subsidized rates. The program was conceived to assist NGOs to cut their ICT budget as well as functionally scale up their operations by providing them access to the software donation programs of the donor partners. Donors can come on board by deciding their respective criteria for giving. This makes the platform open and transparent.

The BiG Tech portal (www.bigtech.in) is a convenient and transparent portal that enables Indian as well as foreign technology companies to reach out to the million plus NGO community in India. Technology companies can use the BiG Tech portal as a part of their CSR objective by donating hardware and software. Microsoft was the first donor on this platform for India and several others are on the anvil. NASSCOM Foundation delivers our program in India in partnership with TechSoup, a US-based organization. Bytes of Learning will be the second donor for this project.

How it works
An NGO that is interested in getting software donations applies online to NF. After a due diligence check on the applicant’s need and based on the set criteria, NF qualifies the NGO(s) for the grant. For the technology company that is interested to donate products, this becomes an effective channel for a scalable model of private-civil society partnership for their CSR efforts, at the same time enhancing the outreach of their technology products.

IMPACT
Vidya Poshak, a non-profit organization based in Dharwad utilized the software received through BiG Tech, to train and place around 100 students on desk top applications along with teaching them communication (spoken English) through their Graduate Finishing School.

“\The software donation from Microsoft through NASSCOM Foundation will be very useful to train all the senior students of our Students Home (Orphanage)\”
—Swami Deshikatmananda, Secretary of RMS Home
A will to do good
I-GET Involved Program

NF’s I-GET Involved program is an endeavor that makes it easy for individuals and corporates to carry forward their will to help the underserved in our society. The program intends to tap individuals’ passion, institutional CSR practices and every Indian’s resolve (hence the highlight on the ‘I’) to get involved and support NASSCOM Foundation and its activities. The I-Get-Involved program not only aims to create a linkage to harness corporate resources and human capital for under served communities but also to initiate alliances and encourage members to do more, capturing best practices and thus promoting and assisting the replication of both good work and CSR practices.

NASSCOM has over 1200 member companies and the industry employs over 2 million people. With over 75% of its member base belonging to small and medium companies, NF endeavors to sensitize these companies to contribute in whichever way they can to the social issues in India. NF provides consulting support on how companies can set up either CSR departments or their own foundations. In addition, NF can recommend programs and projects that could be adopted by them.

NF, through the I-Get-Involved program, aims to create platforms for such collaborations. Employee Volunteering and Payroll Giving are two such initiatives. NF also encourages companies to consider employees for secondments to non-profits. This helps companies to offer alternatives to those employees who either want a break from their routine work for a short period of time as well as build professional capacity of non-profits through such an exchange program.

Fund-raising
Sustainability is the key to success for any enterprise – be it for-profit or
non-profits. NF therefore puts a lot of effort in building capacity of its NGO partners to work towards sustainability of their projects and programs. NF is also internalizing this practice. However, NF is a young organization. It needs initial support for institutional capacity building. NASSCOM provides this assistance with an annual grant that partly supports NF secretariat expenses and program expenses.

We have to create programs that are self-sustaining as well as fund-raisers to enable scaling up of projects. Some of the fund-raising programs developed by NF are:

- Events: CSR forums and Roundtables
- Honors and Recognition
- Marathons: Mumbai and Delhi

**How you can help**

At the moment NF has been involving corporates by providing multiple avenues to member companies, in terms of their CSR initiatives and aims.

*Corporates can help by supporting Knowledge Centers,* i.e., corporates can sponsor NKN centers. The NASSCOM Knowledge Network program aims to establish, revitalize and foster a national grid of NASSCOM knowledge centers at strategic locations in the country. Each center would have 3-5 multimedia enabled computers with connectivity and provide need-based services to the community in areas such as education, health, governance, information and communication.

**Corporate employees are encouraged to take up** projects as a part of personal development and an attempt to share their success with the rest of the society. There are various programs that they can choose from based on their interest and concern.

*Creating Library—*Often we just throw away old books, magazines and journals or sell them for paltry amounts to *kabariwalas*. Instead, they can be donated for the use of underprivileged children and others who do not have means to buy these books. This does not require a lot of effort and facilitates sharing knowledge with others, by helping them gain access to information.

*Designing basic computer hardware-*
*maintenance courses*—If you have knowledge about computer hardware and basic networking, you can help design a basic hardware and computer maintenance course for lay persons. With knowledge centers coming up across the length and breadth of the country, the need for content and training modules is becoming increasingly important.

*Basic IT training*—Have time on your hands and a clear understanding of basic IT? NGOs are always in need of trainers who can teach their members basic computer operating skills.

*English language training*—Corporate employees can donate a little time and get involved in volunteer English language training programs. A one-to-one interaction with the people will help sensitize corporate trainees and make them a partner in progress.

**Skills development and employability**

There is a shortage of skilled manpower across several industries whether it’s IT, animation and gaming, retail, insurance, banking or infrastructure. The industry can play an important role in identifying certain jobs where we could build up skills and capacities of people from underserved communities keeping in mind the environment, their capabilities, academics and other constraints. NF has identified three categories of people for this initiative: women, adolescents and People with Disabilities (PwDs).
Channeling Manpower
We are all aware of the shortage of skilled manpower across several industries whether it is IT, animation and gaming, retail, insurance or banking. IT Industry can play an important role in identifying certain jobs where we could build up skills and capabilities of people from the under-served communities.

**Animation Skills Training**
Today, computer generated animation content is being used in varying fields such as films, advertising, publishing, simulation, gaming design and website designing. Annually, the animation and gaming industry in India is said to be registering a 50% growth. Clearly the fledgling Indian animation industry could become a sunrise sector of the Indian economy besides being a star foreign exchange earner for the country.

NF’s animation skills training is a unique training program consists of 200 modules. The essence of this model is equal training opportunities for every student irrespective of the rural or urban backgrounds. It implements offline teaching and online evaluation. Media Train, a joint initiative of Star Feature, Technology for the People—a NF partner NGO and NF, brings top professional animators from nearly every major feature animation studio through satellite or online to the students training place. Students thus have the same opportunity to learn animation as those earning from leading training institutes.

The candidates are prepared to meet the growing market in animation and also cater to the existing vacancies in the print/content media. The course is designed to map the potential of each student and match it to the industry they will best be suited for.

The animation production is foreseen as a cottage industry in the near future. The key production can be executed in small
Promoting Ability
villages, along with the training. This will considerably reduce the manpower cost.

**Initiative for the differently-abled**
The Center for Executive Development and Training (CEDAT) is a 100 hour weekend program for training people with disabilities (PwDs) in conversational English, and IT skills and Personality Development. NF has collaborated with MBA Foundation, an NGO that has the domain expertise on working with PwDs. We have successfully trained the first batch of 14 students and had a 100 percent placement in this batch. The second batch is due to enroll. The focus areas of this course were:

- Portions for English Language Proficiency
- Basic Computer Skills
- Personal Effectiveness
- Executive Effectiveness (Managerial Calibre)
- Administrative Skills

The methodology used for this course was classroom teaching, audio/video, group discussions, case-studies, projects and practical hands-on training.

The program is supported by Essar Group, Rotary Club of Mumbai-Pier, Ammada Trust, Educate the Children and other supporters of the movement for rehabilitation of PwDs from the corporate, government and civil society sectors.

**IMPACT**
- Confidence levels of the differently abled buoyed up by Computers and Executive Development (CEDAT) program.
- Training imparted in basic computer application, personality skills and proficiency in English language.
- Employment provided with various organizations.
- Industry sensitized on the capabilities of the differently-abled.

The 58th round of National Sample Survey Organization’s (NSSO) survey had estimated 18.49 million disabled persons in India in 2002; out of these 10.89 million were males and 7.59 million were females. About 57.50% disabled have locomotors disability, while 10.88% were blind, 4.39% have low vision, 16.55% have hearing impairment, 11.65% have speech disability, 5.37% were mentally challenged and 5.95% are mentally ill. Global figures are along similar lines.
The CEDAT course was started with a batch of 14 students with the objective of overall improvement and development of candidates, resulting in fruitful employment.

NF’s plan for affordability of Tools & Applications

- Conducting research to understand who among the current IT members of NASSCOM are actively engaged in creation of software tools for the disabled.
- Working with them and other IT companies to sensitize them on the needs of the disabled. The aim is to move towards cost reduction and affordability.
- Facilitating partnerships to achieve the affordability aims.
- Facilitating the distribution of these software tools and applications.

Current status

GTL Foundation has sent a proposal to NF to take over their screen-reading project which was incomplete due to the dismantling of the development team. Media Lab has agreed to look at this proposal. NF has started promoting the accessibility of websites with help from NF’s online partner, Iridium Interactive.
Arming Our Endeavors
Resource Partners

Telecenter.org/IDRC

NF partnered with telecenter.org/IDRC for the Training Commons Projects? The ‘Infomediary Skills’ module of the ‘Training Commons’ handbook for telecenter managers, prepared by NF from its experience of running over 100 telecenters, is meant to be a ready reckoner for all who would like to train or be trained as an infomediary to deliver information services to the community through a telecenter.

TechSoup: One-stop technology support

TechSoup.org offers NGOs a one-stop resource for technology needs by providing free information, resources, and support. It is powered by CompuMentor, one of the America’s oldest and largest nonprofit technology assistance agencies. In addition to online information and resources, they offer a product philanthropy service called TechSoup Stock which offers NGOs donated and discounted technology products, provided by corporate and nonprofit technology partners. NF is the nodal organization enabling these donations in India. This program was launched in August 2007.

UNDP Solution Exchange

Solution Exchange (SE) is the brainchild of Madam Maxine Olson, UN Resident Coordinator, also Chief Coordinator System (UN) in India. It enables individuals, institutions (Government, Private or NPOs), policy makers and program specialists to share their ideas for socio-economic development with a good social networking model. UNDP India has contracted NF to build a portal for this which is an online platform for development professionals in sectors such as education, poverty, health,
environment, ICT for development, HIV/AIDS and others. The new portal will be a truly global knowledge base of solutions, contacts and resources for development practitioners around the world.

**UNICEF**

NASSCOM Foundation has formed a partnership with UNICEF for integration and translation of Sishu Samrakshak local language content in heath and HIV/AIDS. It has progressed well.

**NASSCOM**

National Association of Software and Service Companies provides core support to NASSCOM Foundation for its various programs to take NF’s social development objective forward.

**Microsoft Unlimited Potential**

It provides fund as well as curriculum support to NASSCOM Knowledge Centers.

**TATA Teleservices and Qualcomm**

Qualcomm along with TATA Teleservices provide Internet connectivity through CDMA for select NKN centers.

**Intel**

Intel helps NF build capacities of NGOs and NKN partners.

**Cognizant**

Cognizant provides fund support to NKN centers.
Mphasis provides fund support to NKN centers.

Xansa provides fund support to NKN centers.

Azim Premji Foundation provides support in the form of school curriculum.

TATA Consultancy Services provides support for curriculum support for adult literacy programs and training.

NIIT National Institute of Information Technology provides IT curriculum and training support to NF programs.

Cause An Effect Foundation provides content for livelihood training programs undertaken by NF.

Hughes partners with NF to provide VSAT connectivity to select NKN centers through their Hughes FusionNet program.
Together We Can Do It!
IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS

Suraj Foundation
Suraj Foundation became an NKN partner in 2006. They have set up seven knowledge center in Karnataka and five in Maharashtra. It is currently upscaling the network in Maharashtra and Karnataka to 45 knowledge centers.

www.surajfoundation.com

SEWA Academy
The SEWA Academy is the focal point for all of SEWA’s capacity building and research efforts. It provides SEWA’s members their first introduction to a formal learning environment. It has been a partner to the NKN program since 2007. SEWA runs and manages one NKC in Manipur village in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

www.sewa.org

Population First
Population First has been a NKN partner since 2006 and runs one VKC Shahpur block in Thane where it works with village adolescent girls and boys. The knowledge center there is also a hub of activity on reproductive and child health.

www.populationfirst.org

Ambuja Cement Foundation
The Ambuja Cement Foundation works with the rural communities surrounding Ambuja’s manufacturing sites. Ambuja Cement is an NKN partner since 2006 and manages one NKC in Chandrapur district in Maharashtra. Ambuja has plans to scale up to three more center in Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Punjab.

www.ambujacementfoundation.org

GTL Foundation
Corporate Social Responsibility at GTL has been institutionalized as a way of life for many GTLites. Among numerous projects, GTL foundation has started one Village Knowledge Center (VKC) in Pinguli, Sindhudurg district, benefiting 200 people (women, senior citizens, Graduates, school children).
IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS

S S Mandal
SSM has set up the Maharshi Kanad Village Knowledge Center at Sagroli with the object to help and update the rural community through ICT. The project is supported by NASSCOM Foundation. The center has Internet access, and is geared to function as an information facility and resource center in the area.

TFTP
Technology For The People facilitates innovative ways in which technology can be leveraged to bring about economic empowerment to marginalized communities. TFTP has partnered with NF to set up rural knowledge centers in 10 locations across three states in South India. These centers are designed as sustainable business models linking communities to knowledge and required services.

SIFFS
South Indian Federation of Fishermen Societies is a non-governmental organization working in the marine fisheries sector. SIFFS started knowledge centers with NF as an alternative livelihood option for over 50,000 fish workers and empowerment of fishermen families and fishermen.

PMSSS
PMSSS has initiated steps to bring information technology to the tsunami affected villages. Its Village Information Centers (VICs) help by warning people in advance of any imminent disaster. VICs have been established in 20 target villages of Pondicherry, Karaikal and Cuddalore regions. PMSSS carries out literacy programs, health awareness campaigns and the SHG training programs through the NKN telecenters.

Byrraju Foundation
The Foundation currently works in 198 villages in six districts of Andhra Pradesh. It is currently using advancements in ICT, its applications and implementation to facilitate its development programs. It has set up five Village Knowledge Centers with the help of NASSCOM Foundation, and 46 other centers are using the content provided by NF to train people to enhance their opportunities.
FIDR

FIDR has set up telecenters in different parts of the country with NF. These telecenters are named Gyan ‘O’ Soochna Kendras where Gyan stands for Knowledge and Sochna for Information dissemination. Initially started with 15 GSKs in Orissa, it has now expanded to 20. Plans are on the anvil to work with more NGOs in West Bengal and Bihar.

SST

Srinivasan Services Trust, an organization initiated by Sundaram-Clayton Limited and TVS Motor Company for charitable purposes, has been promoting holistic and sustainable development of rural communities in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Himachal Pradesh. It has partnered NF for providing computer education and computer-based education to augment its educational activities.

Rotary Club

The NF-Rotary knowledge center in Gurgaon is based in the village of Sikandarpur. Sikandarpur has an essentially migrant population. These migrants work as daily wage labourers in the construction and allied services market, while some work in providing support services to the urban consumers of Gurgaon, and many others work in Delhi.
Lighting up Lives
Twenty-nine year old Biswas Ajapur belongs to a family of farmers. The Biswas family’s total monthly income was a paltry Rs 1500 which made survival difficult. They were in deep debt to the local moneylender. The family had to sell jewelry made for his sister’s marriage to make ends meet.

In this scenario, higher studies for Biswas was a distant dream. The situation took a turn for the better, however, when he learnt about the Microsoft Unlimited Potential curriculum from his Panchayat’s pradhan. Biswas completed the course from the NASSCOM Foundation-GRASSO Knowledge Center in Ajapur. Biswas is now a changed man. Learning to operate a computer and the Internet has opened a whole new world for him.

Through the center, he learnt of the Common Service Centers (CSC) scheme. He became very interested in becoming a village level entrepreneur. The Ajapur Gram Panchayat helped him in this and his knowledge of computers helped him start the CSC. This changed the fortune of the Biswas family. His income from this center is around Rs 2500 per month, which he receives against his services as a computer trainer. This job has brought back hope in Biswas’ life. He hopes to buy back his sister’s jewelry and pay back his family’s debts very soon.

Bivas Biswas
Ajapur village
Bardhaman district
West Bengal
Mahesh Akkatai Appaji is an aspiring young man who dreams of a bright future. His mother used to be a devdasi. As she grew older, however, she had no means of supporting herself and her only child Mahesh. She somehow managed to eke out a living earning Rs 35 a day working as a field laborer. She did not want her son to be held back because of his origins. She sent Mahesh to an organization called Vimochana Sangha, which works for the upliftment of devdasis and their families.

At Vimochana, Mahesh got a good education and was well looked after in their residential school. Given his background, his inclination towards social welfare was not surprising. He took up a Bachelors program in Social Work as his undergraduate degree.

Mahesh was first introduced to computers in the Vimochana school. But he did not get an opportunity to learn how to use one until Vimochana tied up with Suraj Foundation, one of NASSCOM Foundation’s partners to set up a knowledge center in Athani.

This was the boost that Mahesh had been looking for. He is a fast learner and soon his skills improved considerably. Learning how to use the Internet broadened his horizon. Now he works with computers with ease and searches for jobs online. When Vimochana Sangha management offered him a part-time position to instruct new students in IT and computer operating skills, Mahesh took it up gladly, more for the experience than the money.

Mahesh knows this is just the beginning. He has a lot to achieve in life; his mother’s dreams live on.
Susil Panda has one elder sister and one younger brother. His brother is still at school and his sister has finished her studies and helps out his mother in household tasks.

Until recently their father was the only earning member of the family. Susil being the elder son felt it was his duty to help his father support the family but opportunities in his village were scarce. After completing his senior secondary examinations, he took admission in a private computer institute. But he was not satisfied with the quality of education imparted there. His sister suggested that he visit the NASSCOM Foundation-Utkal Club Gyaano Soochna Kendra (GSK) at Bilipada. The GSK coordinator, Abinash Aich, briefed him about the computer course. Susil was interested and enrolled himself immediately. Since the course was free there was no burden of fees on his father’s shoulders.

Susil was pleasantly surprised to get the MSUP certificate from the center, as he was not aware that the GSK would certify his learning. His newly learnt skills along with the MSUP certificate helped him land a job with Dibyani Food Industries in Himachal Pradesh as a purchases and maintenance store in-charge. Says an elated Susil, “MSUP training is a great opportunity for rural youth to gain skills and get good jobs in the future. NASSCOM Foundation can spread this education opportunity to more areas and improve rural life in Orissa.”
Harshda was a young village girl with dreams in her eyes of a happy domestic life. She came from a poor family where her father was the only bread earner working in a typing institute. Harshda was the eldest of three siblings. She studied till HSC and then fell in love with a young man. Despite parental opposition on both sides, she eloped and got married at the age of 19. Marital life, however, held no bliss for her. Her in-laws burdened her with all the domestic chores as well as work in the family fields. When there was no work, her mother-in-law would lock her in the house. Soon her husband started physically abusing her. She withstood the torture for a year until she ran away and came back to her parents’ home. Her parents took her back in.

For a while, Harshda was confused about her future. A neighbor told her about the NASSCOM Foundation-GTL Foundation Village Knowledge Center in Pinguli. Curious, she went there to explore if there was something she could pursue. Gauri Parab, the young center coordinator and IT curriculum instructor struck up an easy friendship with her. Harshda became interested in computers and took up the MSUP course. The nominal fee charged to become a member of the center was something her family could afford.

On completion of the course, she took the decision to go to Mumbai to look for a job. Her determination to succeed and her skills with computers due to the MSUP course paid off and she got a job with the Mahanagar Gas Limited as a Computer Operator. Encouraged by her success, her father and the rest of her family members followed her to Mumbai and have found jobs themselves. She is now happily settled in Mumbai and attributes her recent successes to the Pinguli Knowledge Center and the MSUP course.
There’s no stopping us!

Garoda Geeta, Joshi Janki and Marvada Parti were three girls who used to come to Vang Knowledge Center to learn computers. They learnt computers at the center for three months. They were the only girls in the area to complete studies up to class ten. They wished to study further but were disallowed by their parents. The matter came to the notice of the coordinating committee at the Vang Knowledge center supported by NASSCOM Foundation. They asked the girls to bring their parents to center so that they could talk to them. When their parents came to the center they were overjoyed to see their daughters working on computers. However, they were still reluctant to send them for higher studies. The center management team assured them that the center would take full responsibility of their daughters. The parents consented and now the girls are studying in class 11 at Bhuj.

Artisans Meet

Village level women leaders also conduct a meeting at the Vang Knowledge center supported by NASSCOM Foundation every month. In the meeting they discuss different issues and share their problems. Leaders from Khardiya, Godiyar and Bibbar villages demanded linkages of their handicraft work. The Vang center team coordinated with Qasab Production unit in Bhuj. Three hundred and seventy six artisans were selected by village leaders and they got a Quilt project from Qasab. Now these women work from home and earn good returns for their work. This became possible due to the coordination by the Vang center team.
Case Study

Transcending Boundaries
Executive Development Program for People with Disabilities

Newfound confidence
Kailash Shantilal Parmar is a commerce graduate who is married and comes from the lower socio-economic strata of society. Kailash had a good work experience in the area of administration and clerical work. His right leg is affected by Polio.

Though sincere and hardworking, Kailash lacked communication skills, specifically in spoken and written English.

He joined the weekend CEDAT program offered by NASSCOM Foundation in partnership with MBA Foundation at NF’s office in Mumbai. Kailash underwent the six months course on Basic Computer Application, Personality Development skills and proficiency in English language.

On completion of the course, there was a remarkable improvement in Kailash. His confidence improved. He got a job in TCS and works with a team doing US based data clearing. Kailash says “I was not confident enough to talk to people in English. After CEDAT, I have got a job in a good company and I have learnt proper communication etiquettes. My language has improved substantially. I talk to people in English with confidence. I thank MBA Foundation & NASSCOM Foundation for believing in me and my strengths.”

With assistance from NF companies can come forward and run such weekend courses in their premises for small groups of PwDs or other underserved groups. This will not only help individuals gain confidence but can also help diversity within companies especially when company employees and trainers can volunteer to become instructors for the course.
Ham honge kaamyab ek din…
Manisha Subhash Bhurke is a 38 year old woman affected with Orthopedic Cerebral Palsy. She is bound to a wheelchair and needs support for all her daily activities. She lives in MBA Foundation’s Life Care Center at Powai, Mumbai.

She joined CEDAT program offered by NASSCOM Foundation in partnership with MBA Foundation. While undertaking the Computers and Executive Development (CEDAT) program she got a job with Transocean SEDCO FOREX International Drilling Inc. as Administration Assistant.

After she completed her course, she was able to organize her administration work in a better way. Communication in English has also improved considerably.

Manisha says “After completing CEDAT, I feel confident to talk to people and I have learnt a lot of office related procedures due to which I work in a more organized manner.”

It is this determination that drives people to change in their lives. NGOs such as MBA Foundation in true partnership spirit also play a crucial role in developing the course, curriculum and awareness on the sensibilities involved in managing PWDs.

NASSCOM Foundation is looking forward to gaining support from industry in providing computers, courseware, trainers and mentors for such skill building programs.
Second innings for Niranjan Date, after an accident

Imagine a 41 year old, able bodied commerce graduate’s life undergoing a complete turn due to an accident! This is exactly what happened to Niranjan Date. He had work experience in the area of typing and as an office assistant. After the accident, he worked as an Accounts and Admin trainee with MBA Foundation who were parallelly counseling him for his new life.

After the completion of the Computers and Executive Development (CEDAT) program, he is more confident of himself, haslearnt office work and etiquettes and more importantly learnt to overcome his disability. Niranjan says “I had hesitation in talking to people. But after CEDAT, I feel confident and my communication skill has improved tremendously. CEDAT has proved that people with disabilities also can work like normal people and achieve results.”

It is NF’s endeavor to sensitize industry on the capabilities of People with Disabilities. PwDs can be an ideal talent pool that the industry can employ or atleast consider for internships. NF looks forward to such partnerships with interested companies.
Advocacy

The NASSCOM Foundation Forum was held in conjunction with the NASSCOM Leadership Forum. It aims to provide a platform for the key innovators and leaders who have impacted social development in the country. It focused on developing livelihood opportunities that either leverage on the skills of the communities or equip them with new skills.

Supported by Intel Community, the workshop helped participants think as entrepreneurs even as they work under the aegis of NGOs. It worked on conceptualizing community-knowledge center and business linkages towards available entrepreneurship model to run knowledge centers.

The Consultation included panel discussions and workshops aimed to build entrepreneurship skills of the NKN telecenter managers. The 3-day consultation, supported by NASSCOM and Intel, was attended by IT industry and NGO leaders and over 100 grassroots telecenter managers from the NKN telecenters.
NASSCOM Foundation, in association with RMAAI (Rural Marketing Agencies Association of India), organized this seminar to explore innovative approaches and channels to reach the rural markets, thus providing quality service with minimal damages and costs. The aim was also to find ways to provide appropriate ICT-based solutions for problems related to the rural market within the peripheries of the rural setup.

Rural ICT: A one-day seminar organized by NF and RMAAI
13 June 2007
New Delhi

NASSCOM Foundation, along with MBA Foundation, launched G.O.D.S’ C.E.D.A.T (Center for Executive Development and Training) on 14 April 2007, to provide Executive Development Training courses for people with disabilities.

G.O.D.S’ C.E.D.A.T: Admissions in progress for PwDs and Underprivileged Communities
14 April 2007

Each one had the vision to make it big and action it by spreading the knowledge about Corporate and Social Responsibility. Today increasing number of companies in India are taking Corporate Social Responsibility seriously and working towards a transparent policy. NASSCOM Foundation is one of the sponsors and a part of the jury for these awards.

Social and Corporate Governance Awards, 2007
14 December 2007
Mumbai
ANNUAL REPORT
2007-08
www.nasscomfoundation.org

Publications

Partnerships that create change
Programs that impact lives

You can support development through inclusive growth and become a part of catalysing change @ grassroots

GET INVOLVED!

5 Ways to Catalyse Change
Adopt a Locally Empowering Centre
Support education, health and livelihoods of underprivileged communities through the NASSCOM Knowledge Centre Network
Train NGOs to smoothly sustain through the NASSCOM Knowledge Centre Network
Adopt a Local Centre
Train your staff at a workshop

NASSCOM FOUNDATION

INDIAN IT/ITES INDUSTRY IMPACTING ECONOMY AND SOCIETY 2007-08

CATALYSING CHANGE 2006-07

Education

Info-mediaries, the Backbone of Knowledge Centres

Infomediary Training Handbook

Microsoft

telecentre.org

IDRC

CRDI

International Development Research Centre

Schweizerischer Energiefonds

Corporation for National Research Corporation

Corporation for National Research Corporation

Enriching Human Capital

EMPLOYABILITY

EDUCATION

INTEGRATION
NF Publications

During the last three years, NF has released out four publications dealing with its projects and the state of play of corporate social responsibility in the IT sector in India.

1. NASSCOM Knowledge Network: This document details NF’s model for its 100+ strong telecenters network in India and the approach taken by NF and its partners to make this program a reality. The document gives details of partners and has interesting profiles and case studies from the field.

2. Catalyzing Change, 2005-06: This publication was the first document released by NASSCOM Foundation on the role of corporate social responsibility in the IT industry in India. The publication contains some path-breaking project case studies.

3. Catalyzing Change, 2006-07: The Catalyzing Change report in 2007 was focused on CSR activities in the field of education and details the kind of projects undertaken by NASSCOM member companies.


5. NASSCOM Foundation Infomediary Training Handbook: This handbook is aimed at the NKN Telecenter managers and staffs.
Acronyms

**BIG:** Building ICT Capacities @ the Grassroots  
**C.E.D.A.T:** (Center for Executive Development & Training)  
**CSC:** Common Service Centers  
**CSR:** Corporate Social Responsibility  
**CoP:** Communities of Practices  
**GSK:** Gyaano Soochna Kendra  
**HR:** Human Resource  
**IDRC:** The International Development Research Center  
**IGNCA:** Indira Gandhi National Center for the Arts  
**MDGs:** Millennium Development Goals  
**NAB:** National Association for the Blind  
**NASSCOM:** National Association of Software and Service Companies  
**NF:** NASSCOM Foundation  
**NGO:** Non governmental organization  
**NKN:** NASSCOM Knowledge Center  
**RKN:** Rural Knowledge Network  
**RTI:** Right to Information  

**RMAAI:** Rural Marketing Agencies Association of India  
**STEP:** Sustainable Triple E – Education, Employability & Entrepreneurship  
**SPW:** Students Partnership Worldwide  
**SEWA:** Self-Employed Women’s Association  
**SIFFS:** South Indian Federation of Fishermen’s Societies  
**SE:** Solution Exchange  
**TCS:** Tata Consulting Services  
**TFTP:** Technology for the People  
**UN:** United Nations  
**UNDP:** United Nation Development Program  
**UNICEF:** United Nation International Children’s Fund  
**VKC:** Village Knowledge Center
In the Press

**NASSCOM seeks establishment of partnerships for setting up telecenters in state** - The Navhind Times, 5 March 2008

**Harness opportunity in ICT sector, NASSCOM Foundation urges NGO, SHGs** - The Herald, 18 March 2008

**NASSCOM Foundation provides technical aid to call centers** - Gomantak Times, 20 March 2008

**NASSCOM arm seeks partners to boost ICT initiatives** - The Times of India, 20 December 2007

**NASSCOM body launches online donor scheme** - The Hindu Business Line, 27 August 2007

**Microsoft seeks to boost philanthropy in India** - New Zealand Press Association, 27 August 2007

**Microsoft boosts software supply to Indian charities** - M&C (tech.monstersandcritics.com) 28 August 2007

**New NASSCOM program to aid NGOs** - India PRwire (www.indiaprwire.com), 27 August 2007
Trustees

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   Chairman - NASSCOM Foundation

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   Trustee - NASSCOM Foundation

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   President - NASSCOM Application and Service Operation - Hewlett Packard Company

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