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A 'private' effort

WITH THE CORPORATE WORLD EAGER TO SERVE SOCIETY, SAKSHI KHATTAR REPORTS ON A FEW CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR) INITIATIVES IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION

BUDGET schools can help provide 'world-class education' to children from class II or III tier towns. A case in point are the Vidya Prabhat Schools being set up by Educomp to provide 'affordable schooling' to children.

Says M S Uma Maheswaram, senior vice-president, Educomp: "There is a dearth of quality education today, especially when it comes to class II or III tier towns. Hence, to provide quality and affordable education to children of the farming community, local artisans, etc, we are setting up five Vidya Prabhat Schools by July this year." The first five schools will come up at various locations in North

India including Bazpur, Kashipur, Bahl Parav and Gadarpur in Uttarakhand.

The curriculum will have "high quality digital content, specialised teacher training and assessment mechanisms," adds Maheswaram. Further, environmental practices will be incorporated to conserve energy as well as costs.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

To bridge the education-employability gap and create a talent pool in urban slums, NIIT recently announced the setting-up of NIIT Yuva Star, a career development centre (CDC) at Jahangirpuri, New Delhi, in association with Navjyoti India Foundation (NIF), an NGO.

The centre will serve as a vocational training centre, providing employability skills to youth in the age group 17-25 years. Rajendra S Pawar, chairman, NIIT says, "We are trying to equip the unemployed youth with relevant skills to make them employable for various sectors. We plan to set-up 20 such centres that are replicable, self-sustainable and scalable."

This is the second such centre to be established after their flagship centre at Tughlakabad Village in New Delhi.

The students are provided with internship and placements.

Kiran Bedi, general secretary, NIF, says: "There is no dearth of talent, but a lack of opportunities. Hence, we are trying to provide a platform where we can address their needs. Also, we take pride in the fact that we are enabling children from even below poverty line (BPL) families to directly join the IT sector and wish to replicate the model elsewhere too."

IT IN EDUCATION

Similarly, the programme, 'Bridge the gap,' is leveraging IT expertise to six NDMC schools with access to networking facilities, allowing the schools to participate in the benefits of the information society. The programme is teaching environmental education, citizenship values as well as apprenticeship skills to students who are otherwise not exposed to such opportunities.

The initiative is part of Nokia Siemens Networks (NSN) in partnership with three educational institutes — Sweccha, NDMC and Amity University. The programme also includes 'The Saturday Skill School' wherein every alternate Saturday, employees of NSN interact with students and help teach the students various employable skills.

UP-GRADING SCHOOL

EXL service, in partnership with British Gas (UK), recently inaugurated a project to continue with the development of children at the Om Foundation School, a public charitable trust. The school has been upgraded to the secondary level. Till now, the school only had the primary wing with 96 students from nursery to class V.