Employability Enhancement for India’s Youth: A Case for Mainstream Integration with the Education System

Byomkesh Mishra & Christopher Turillo

1. Introduction

Like many countries in the process of economic transition – from primarily agriculture-based to industrial or knowledge-based – India is currently facing a shortage of skills in its labor force as the education and training infrastructure struggles to keep pace with changing market demands. Based on current estimates, while over 75% of India’s labor force is employed in skill-based jobs, only 3% have received any form of technical or vocational training (Teamlease, 2007). This low average skill level in the workforce leads to lower relative returns to education, higher unemployment and underemployment, and increased inequality (World Bank, 2008). While these data are concerning, given the current demographic scenario in India – the working age population is expected to grow to from 720 million today to 950 million by 2026, adding between 10 million and 17 million people per year – the future situation may in fact be more alarming.

To address this issue, both public and private sector players have increased resources and training capabilities over the last ten years, however these efforts have been inadequate with recent estimates by the World Bank, International Labour Organization, and various private research firms putting the overall training output between 3 million and 4 million people per year (approximately 1.5 million in the public sector and between 1.5 million and 2.5 million in the private sector) (IDFC-SSKI India, 2009) (World Bank,

1 Co-Founders, Medha
In addition to the low overall incidence of training, empirical studies suggest the quality of training is extremely poor when measured on both internal and external efficiency scales (ILO, 2003).

To address this huge challenge on a systemic level, Medha was launched in early 2011.

The concept for Medha comes from its founders’ shared experiences while working in the microfinance industry in India. While passionate about the impact of income generating loans, over time they began to see the significant effect on economic and social development the industry had through job creation and employment. In 2007, the microfinance company for which they worked hired over 300 rural youth per month, trained them in computers and accounting, and provided them with well-paying jobs and opportunities for professional development. On their frequent visits to rural branches, they saw firsthand how these 10th-pass students with few marketable skills were transformed into mature, driven professionals as a result of the opportunities they were given to work and provide for their families. The ability to control their own destiny through hard work and dedication had an unbelievable impact on their self-esteem and economic independence. Living and working in this microcosm of employment generation for low-income populations inspired us to explore employability issues more generally, and look for ways in which to accelerate these opportunities throughout the country.

After conducting informal research throughout 2008, they were convinced that India, not unlike many high-growth countries, was suffering from an “unemployability” problem as described above, and that the situation was only projected to get worse given the current demographic conditions. They knew that if they could find a way to bridge the gap between the skills demanded in the labor force and the skills obtained in the education system, it could significantly improve employment outcomes for young professionals while at the same time improving efficiency and effectiveness for employers. To understand the root cause of this problem however, they needed to look more closely at the various stakeholders involved in delivering “employability training” (and more broadly education) throughout the country.

They approached this research both academically – trying to understand the historical, social, economic, and political environment in which the training field operates, as well as practically – what models have been proven in the marketplace, and who is positioned to scale and why. At the conclusion of this exercise in the middle of 2009, they were confident that they had a better understanding of the various stakeholders, the incentives by which they operated, and the models and methodologies that had been most “successful.” However, they knew that they lacked in practical experience,
and as a result didn’t fully understand the “whys” behind many of the conclusion in their research. Therefore they volunteered to work for an NGO in Jharkhand to help them re-launch their employability training program. Working hand-in-hand with the management team and training staff of the NGO, they gained a better appreciation for the realities on the ground, and the various obstacles to improving employment outcomes for disadvantaged youth.

From 2009 to 2010, they worked on taking the learnings from the aforementioned experiences and refining the concept for Medha. This included more formally articulating the organization’s intentions and vision, operational plan and procedures, and funding requirements. Subsequently, they received feedback from various stakeholders on different aspects of the proposed program.

It is important to note that over the course of this initial exploration, they always took the approach that they would start a program themselves if, and only if, they felt the current offerings failed to adequately meet the needs of certain segments of the population. They did not believe in replicating the efforts of others, or starting an organization to make marginal improvements to the current offerings. During those years of research, they became increasingly convinced that a new and unique approach to employability training was absolutely essential, and set out to start Medha in early 2011.

Over the last four and a half years, Medha has grown from just an idea, to an organization of 35 full-time staff that serves 2,500 students across six districts in one of the most disadvantaged parts of the country – Eastern Uttar Pradesh. They have faced, and continue to face, significant challenges in growing the program and ensuring high impact, but remain confident that the approach is not only unique and innovative, but required to address the employability crisis in the country on a systemic level. The remaining sections of the case will outline 1) the problem in detail, 2) innovation, theory of change, and program, 3) the outcomes and impact thus far, 4) the key challenges faced, and 5) plans for future.

2. Key Stakeholders

2.1 Students

*I had no choice but to look for work in a daily labour market because I couldn’t find work in the formal sector and the cost of living is so high these days. I have to support my family somehow.*

– Anonymous MA graduate, Jaipur (NDTV, 2010)
With the overall need so great, the range of students requiring employability development in the market today is extremely diverse. They range from 8th-pass students from low-income backgrounds in rural areas, to college graduates from high-income backgrounds in Tier I Cities. Medha chose to initially focus on low-income college students from Tier II and Tier III cities and towns the following reasons:

- This population is currently underserved by existing providers (see Industry Overview section)
- Employment growth is highest in the formal sector which currently requires a graduate (college) degree for most positions
- College students have a significant educational foundation in which to build on
- College students are easier to identify and access due to aggregation at a campus environment
- Experience gained with these students and employers will better prepare Medha to “scale down” its offering for secondary and higher-secondary students
- While college students were the initial focus, Medha has a medium-term vision of working with students who have only completed intermediate or higher secondary school. They believe their unique program can be tailored for this population’s specific needs, and through the success of our college program they can demonstrate to employers the value of a Medha-educated student irrespective of their formal education level. Accordingly, they initially identified the following two primary segments in the table below:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Group</th>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Household Income Level</th>
<th>Career Opportunities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Unemployable Graduates” 7.2 million students²</td>
<td>Graduate degree candidate in government college or government-aided college – BA, BSc, BCom, etc.</td>
<td>• Below Poverty Line – Rs. 100/day</td>
<td>Informal sector employment – family business, daily wage labor, agriculture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Low-Income – Rs. 100 – 500/day</td>
<td>Formal Sector Employment – Entry (customer service, sales, operations, administration) and low-level management positions in the following industries:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Financial Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Hospitality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Retail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Missing Middle” 40 million students³</td>
<td>Higher secondary/intermediate</td>
<td>• Below Poverty Line – Rs. 100/day</td>
<td>Informal sector employment – family business, daily wage labor, agriculture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Low-Income – Rs. 100 – 500/day</td>
<td>Formal Sector Employment – Entry level position in the following industries:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Financial Services</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hospitality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Retail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>IT &amp; Allied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Aviation &amp; Shipping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Healthcare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Education &amp; Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Automotive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Construction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

² Based on 20% of general stream graduates over three years – 20% deemed “employable” according to IDFC-SSKI study in 2009, and graduate data is from India Census 2001 and UGC 2004-2005.

³ Based on intermediate graduates over three years – India Census 2001
2.2 Employers

*The issue is no longer about finding jobs for people, but of ensuring that there are enough people with relevant skills for the jobs at hand – KV Kamath, Former MD, ICICI*

The remarks by Mr. Kamath are unfortunately widely shared by his peers across industries and corporations. Based on industry surveys with leading formal sector employers, over 80% of college graduates from general streams are deemed “unemployable” (IDFC-SSKI India, 2009). Additionally, empirical studies find that 53% of employed youth suffer some form of skill deprivation, while over 55 million “unemployable” youth require “structural repair”\(^4\) (TeamLease, 2007). Combining these data with the overall college student market, the total market need is estimated at 7.2 million students over the next three years:

\(^4\) 1-2 years of additional skill development and training
To verify these estimates with industry demand, the table below presents the labour force requirements for four growing industries:

**Table 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff Training Requirements</th>
<th>Current Employment</th>
<th>CAGR (%)</th>
<th>Employment last 3 years</th>
<th>Addition over 3 years</th>
<th>Per year addition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Airlines</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>269,528</td>
<td>209,528</td>
<td>69,843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>880,000</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>3,953,070</td>
<td>3,073,070</td>
<td>1,024,357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitality</td>
<td>70,000</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>192,080</td>
<td>122,080</td>
<td>40,693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Services – Direct</td>
<td>220,000</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>541,283</td>
<td>321,283</td>
<td>107,094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Services – Agents</td>
<td>600,000</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1,476,225</td>
<td>876,225</td>
<td>292,075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,830,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>6,432,186</td>
<td>4,602,186</td>
<td>1,534,062</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


At these projections, these four industries alone absorb over 30% of the projected student supply over the next three years. Based on existing market research, demand in these four industries is projected to result in a $900MM training industry annually:

5 Based on 75% entry-level positions requiring a graduate degree. Total demand over next three years = 3,451,639 employees.
At Medha, the focus is on providing employability development services to students who do not have the ability to pay up to $2000, however these estimates demonstrate the significant size of the overall market. To reduce the financial burden on students, they generate financial contributions from both the private and public sectors.

With respect to the public sector, the Government of India recognizes the importance of skills development as a driving force behind economic growth and social development. In 2010, the skills development capacity was officially 3.1 million people per year, however that has increased in recent years due to initiatives like NSDC and the Skill Development Mission. To reach the larger vision of 500 million skilled workers by 2022 however, a different kind of approach is required.

### 3. Primary Alternatives

To address the overall market need, there are a number of public and private sector players working with different segments of the population. This section provides an overview of the key players and their respective segments. At Medha we also believe there are short and long-term opportunities to collaborate with existing providers and have identified areas to work together:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry Demand</th>
<th>% of Employees Requiring Training</th>
<th>Per Year Universe</th>
<th>Average Training Fee ($)</th>
<th>Market ($MM)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Airlines</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>55,874</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>256,089</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitality</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>20,347</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Services – Direct</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>53,547</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Services – Agents</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>219,056</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>604,913</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>899</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: CLSA 2008*
There are currently over 5,000 institutes across the country. Areas of Overlap:

- Working with same population – There is some overlap, however Medha will start at the college level and most students in ITIs did not enter college after high school.
- Working on same issue area - broadly true but ITIs are primarily focused on training for the manufacturing sector.
- Using a similar model of change - education program but focus on hard skills only.

The possible explanations for the limited success of these institutions are:

1. Limited growth in the manufacturing sector combined with these programs’ strong focus on teaching engineering skills.
2. Use of existing physical infrastructure and human resources. We leverage the existing resources by placing the program.
3. Bridge between employers and employees. We close the gap between supply and demand by engaging both sides in curriculum development and delivery, on-the-job training, and career services.

Medha innovation provides these limitations in the following ways:

1. Focusing on general management tools. Our program is based on core principles applicable and transferable across industries and functions. Besides skill enhancement, this improves the individual’s ability to adapt to rapidly changing market conditions.
2. Curriculum design
3. Teacher and administrator training
4. Career services to existing students

Our core program on general business management is flexible enough to be delivered through this channel as well.

Medha has worked and continues to work on the overall professionalization of ITIs and Polytechnics through a public/private partnership model. Under this arrangement, Medha provides assistance through a partnership with the Department of Technical Education in Uttar Pradesh.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider</th>
<th>Brief Description</th>
<th>Medha Innovation</th>
<th>Partnership Opportunities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private Sector Vocational</td>
<td>To fill the massive quality and quantity gap left by the public sector, the private</td>
<td>Medha addresses these limitations in the following ways:</td>
<td>In the long-run, we hope Medha's approach to skill development and employability enhancement will catalyze a shift (from the manufacturing to services sector) in the public vocational training paradigm in India, and we look forward to working in partnership with the Government of India to implement these changes in a number of capacities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Institutes</td>
<td>vocational training industry has mushroomed over the last decade (by some estimates it is currently a $1.2BN industry). These institutes deliver training in the latest growing industry, recently this has included: 1) IT/ITES, 2) organized retail, 3)</td>
<td>1. We take the employability enhancement program to the student, working within existing schools and colleges. This will reduce costs and increase access.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples: NIIT, Aptech, Jetking, CMS, ICA, IIJT, Veta, Frankfin, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. With firms we consider to have strong expertise in a particular industry, and meet a quality standard, we could explore a referral system in which a select number of our graduates pursue further studies in their institutes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Areas of Overlap:</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Working with same population - some overlap however they focus on a higher-income segment.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provider</td>
<td>Brief Description</td>
<td>Medha Innovation</td>
<td>Partnership Opportunities</td>
</tr>
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</tbody>
</table>
| • Working on same issue area – employment in the formal sector.  
• Using a similar model of change - education program but sector specific and outside the formal education system.  
hospitality, 4) aviation, and 5) banking and financial services. Profit driven, these firms react quickly to employer demand and changing market conditions, but as a result are also more sensitive to market contractions. Barring a few institutes that cater to the IT sector, most private institutes have failed to achieve significant scale or impact (CLSA 2009). Although performing moderately better than the public sector in terms of job placements, private institutes continue to underperform due to: 1. Limited industry interaction 2. Undiversified course offerings which make them vulnerable to market conditions 3. High costs due to overhead and equipment | 2. We offer a curriculum that is applicable across industries and developed in collaboration with employers. This increases flexibility and keeps the program demand driven.  
3. We augment existing performance metrics and financial incentives to include employability outcome measures. This increase accountability and aligns employer and educator incentives.  
4. We continually refine pedagogy and have a dedicated team for teacher training. Medha was established with a long-term vision of affecting the vocational education system in the country. Although we firmly believe that securing gainful employment has a large impact on the average youth’s life, our interventions in this | This would be at the student’s request, and only in situations where they feel deeper domain expertise is required for their career choice.  
2. It is important for our program to have the right economic incentives in place for students, education providers, and employers. If there are areas in which we can learn from the private sector on this issue we will explore it.  
3. In the future, there may be an opportunity to work with one of the larger, credible firms with a social mission, in a public-private partnership model. We could provide the curriculum and teacher training, and the government could subsidize the cost of delivery. This has the |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Poor facilities and training quality</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In addition, when a particular industry contracts, graduates from these programs are commonly left with few transferable skills and as a result employment options. Finally, many ‘fly-by-night' operators take advantage of information asymmetries between students and employers and hurt the overall reputation of these firms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The sector will hopefully also be applied to self-employment issues in the future, and transform the way all youth prepare for life after school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Potential to enhance scalability and the efficiency of the overall system.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We will partner with them on ongoing research and development to improve our current offering and meet the needs of students and the labor market. While not collaboration, Medha will put forth a sustainable and efficient business model that will fiercely compete with some of these players. We feel this will improve the quality of service to the end student and eliminate some of the weak and poor quality players in the market.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provider</td>
<td>Brief Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Civil society initiatives: NGO and CSR Programs</strong>&lt;br&gt;Examples:&lt;br&gt;Jan Shikshan Sansthan-JSS (government funded program implemented through NGOs for the informal sector), DRF-LABS Program (CSR wing of Dr. Reddy’s Labs)</td>
<td>Similar to private sector players, civil society has tried to fill the gap left by the public sector. Most of these programs are funded by private donor organizations, or in some cases through government schemes. In keeping with their mission for social and economic change, these programs typically target low-skilled or migrant workers, illiterate women and adults, and school dropouts. Programs focus on various informal sector trades like carpentry, tailoring, masonry, electrician, and domestic help and are commonly short-term (3-months in many cases). Anecdotal evidence suggests positive impact of some of these programs, but they also suffer from a number of drawbacks:&lt;br&gt;1. Outside the core competency of the NGO or Corporate in the case of CSR. Many NGOs/ CSR programs engage in a number of different</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Using a similar model of change - education program but informal sector specific and outside the formal education system.

activities, resulting in a lack of focus, expertise, and investment in employability training specifically.

2. Focus on the informal sector. Most programs are geared towards local, informal sector jobs where productivity is low and as a result wages are low. The employment share of the economy is also shifting towards formal sector employment throughout the country.

3. Heavy dependence on subsidies. Most programs rely on private or government grants, resulting in ongoing fundraising efforts and uncertainty about the future of the program.

Lack of scalability. Most NGOs operate within a specific geographic region and lack the expertise or resources to scale up their programs. Combined, these factors increase costs and restrict the overall impact of their programs.

4. We work in close collaboration with them on policy advocacy to increase and improve the level of funding and delivery channels for employability training.

5. We partner with them on ongoing research and development to improve our current offering and meet the needs of students and the labor market.

6. We leverage our contacts with Microfinance Institutions, CSR programs, and state banks to explore scholarship programs for students who cannot afford the cost of our program.
4. Medha Intervention

Based on the aforementioned market and industry analysis, Medha set out in 2011 to change the way employability education was imparted in the country. The first step was to build a program that was both demanded by students, while at the same time addressed industry demands. After significant time on the ground working with both parties, Medha built a curriculum that aimed to bridge this gap and brought it to colleges. In their first year, Medha approached 25 educational institutions, one agreed to let them run their program!

They were discouraged by the response but determined to test their program, Medha conducted marketing events at the college and enrolled students. They thought it was an easy sell – improve your employability skills and your chances of getting a job for the very reasonable fee of Rs. 2000. 11 people registered! More discouraging news. But they continued to push on, working with those 11 students as hard as they could, determined to change their lives and better prepare them for life after school.

They had very strong results and impact with that first batch. All students completed internships with local companies, 80% of them were either employed or pursuing higher studies within six months of graduation, and they even had some star students get into competitive programs like Teach for India and IMT Ghaziabad. But they knew they wouldn’t survive unless they increased their outreach. It was time for their first big learning – student mobilization.

Initially, Medha operated as an ‘after school’ program, running its training and career services after regular class hours on campus. This approach ended up limiting the number of students they could work with primarily because of scheduling and other conflicts. In response, they started to set up permanent Career Service Centers (CSCs) on campuses to address the issues they were facing. These centers are open during regular class hours, for the duration of the academic year, and are staffed by a Medha Center Manager and Center Assistant. In addition to the training sessions, the center is open for ‘drop-in’ services and one-on-one counselling. Their permanent presence on campus has lead to an over 500% increase in student enrollments and certifications. In addition to significantly increasing their visibility and availability to students on campus, it has also allowed them to build stronger relationships with the college administration and faculty.

After four years of work and improvements to our program and curriculum, their current offering includes:
4.1 Student Services

Medha provides skills training, career preparation, and industry exposure to students from its Career Service Centers (CSC) at existing educational institutions. A summary of services offered includes but is not limited to:

![skills training](image1)

![career preparation](image2)

![industry exposure](image3)

**Figure 4**

4.2 Employer Relations

Medha provides workforce planning, recruiting, and on-the-job training services to leading employers. A summary of services includes but is not limited to:

![recruitment & placement](image4)

![internship/short-term projects](image5)

![academic collaboration](image6)

**Figure 5**
4.3 Educational Institutions

Medha works with the existing education system to enhance employability within the gates of the campus. In return for access to their students and infrastructure, Medha provides industry-linked on-campus events, improved employment outcomes for their students, and employability-based extra-curriculum hours.

5. Milestones & Impact

By the numbers:
- >3000 students trained and certified
- >2000 internship and full-time placements
- >100 employer relationships
- >25 college & university partners

Medha students…
- find a job 60 days faster
- are 70% more likely to be in the formal sector
- earn 50% more per month
- qualify for government jobs 2x more often
- increase chances of advanced studies by 50%

*see case studies in annexure*
Figure 7: Program Growth

Figure 9: Geographic Expansion
6. Challenges to Scale

In addition to the challenge of student mobilization mentioned in the previous section, Medha has faced two other significant challenges over the last four years:

6.1 Government Adoption

Medha’s vision is to mainstream its employability program into the existing public sector education system. To achieve this ambitious goal, they have always taken the approach of working within the education system itself, delivering their program on campuses at both government and government-aided institutions. This approach has presented a significant challenge, as the education bureaucracy is frequently changing priorities, staff, and is in general conservative when it comes to working with NGOs and third parties. Based on the initial and continuing success of the program on that campus, they have been able to expand their relationship with the Government of Uttar Pradesh to now include access to 15 government institutions (10 degree colleges and 5 polytechnics) across seven districts.

6.2 Employee/Employer Expectation Matching

Despite the unsatisfactory level of knowledge, skills, and attitudes imparted in the existing education system, students coming out of general stream degree programs still have high expectations regarding employment outcomes. At the same time, employers have high demands in terms of the capabilities of their entry-level employees. This creates a significant mismatch between student and employer expectations that presents a huge challenge to full-time job placements. To address this gap, Medha structures 4-6 week internships where both students and employers have the opportunity to evaluate one another. This strategy has lead to a 60% conversion from internship to full-time job offers, and significantly cut down on the employee/employer expectation mismatch.

7. Conclusion

After extensive research, program development, and pilot testing, Medha has been implementing and scaling its innovative program across Uttar Pradesh for the last three years. From 11 students in one college in 2012, to 2,500 students across 25 colleges today, Medha has experienced tremendous growth and had a significant impact on the lives of young people. However, to have the kind of long-term impact and systemic change Medha hopes to achieve in the future, it still has a long way to go.
In addition to scaling its program across three states and 25,000 students over the next three years, Medha is working on a number of strategic initiatives it believes are crucial to its long-term success. Some of those initiatives are listed below.

Are these the right things to be focusing on? Will they enable Medha to have its intended impact? Will they cause truly systemic change in the way youth are prepared for life after school? These are some of the remaining questions Medha and others in the ‘employability education’ space are still facing and will continue to face for years to come.
Annexure 1

Case Studies:

Kanchanlata
BA, Hindi, Economics, Sociology
Maharaja Bijli Pasi Degree College

‘During my internship I went door-to-door with the sales team, conducted surveys, and interacted with customers.’

I come from an agricultural family in Kalari, a village north of Lucknow. My father is a farmer and mother a housewife. I have two siblings, one elder sister and one younger brother. There is still a lot of gender discrimination in my village which makes me sad, but also motivates me to set an example of a successful woman entrepreneur and challenge the male domination in my society.

As a part of Medha I selected an internship at Eureka Forbes in the sales function. I went door-to-door, conducted surveys, and interacted with potential customers. I successfully completed my internship and have been employed at Eureka Forbes for four months now. I also plan to do an MBA part time from a good institute in few months.

Shireen Rizvi
BA, Psychology
Avadh Girls Degree College

‘When I enter my [Teach for India] classroom everyday... I am overwhelmed with pride, and know this is where I belong’

When I entered college, I had no idea where my life was headed. Even my chosen degree wasn’t something I was passionate about. In my final year, I joined Medha’s employability training programme. For the first time, I began to discover myself, and was exposed to my strengths and weaknesses. Towards the end of the programme, Medha introduced me to Teach For India.

I joined Teach for India last summer, and have been teaching 40 beautiful kids in class three in Delhi. When I enter my classroom everyday and see these pocket-size geniuses converse in English, I am overwhelmed with pride and know this is where I belong.

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Alka Singh  
BA, Hindi, Economics  
Maharaja Bijli Pasi Degree College

'I enjoyed the way everything was taught through activities, and my communication and computer skills improved dramatically.'

I am from a village in Unnao district, between Lucknow and Kanpur. My father is a medical practitioner and my mother a housewife. I am the eldest of three siblings and enjoy playing badminton, reading books, and gardening.

I enrolled in the Medha program because I wanted to get a job after college and didn’t know how to go about it. I really enjoyed the way everything was taught through activities, and my communication and computer skills improved dramatically. I was placed with First Flight Couriers for my internship and joined them full-time after graduation. I plan to work for a few years before pursuing my MA.

INTERNSHIP & PLACEMENT:

Mohammad Fahad  
Area HR Head  
Eureka Forbes

'Medha students are more productive and stay with our company longer. This increased retention will reduce our costs over time.'

I am the Area HR Head for Eureka Forbes, a leading consumer product company specializing in water purification systems. We have been working with Medha for over a year on various aspects of their program, from industry panel discussions to full-time placements.

In 2013-2014, we hosted five Medha interns from two colleges. After working with them for over a month, we offered four of them pre-placement offers. Our experience working with Medha and their students has prompted us to change our strategy regarding hiring women for entry-level sales positions.