

MAD ABOUT CHANGE

Vinod Rajput

With the entire nation rallying behind social activist Anna Hazare to strengthen the movement against corruption, software giant HCL too is set to do its bit to bring change. Its initiative, Make a Difference Ltd (MAD), formed in October 2010 to ignite activism in the youth, declared Delhi University student Shyamli Rathore the leader of MAD.

The initiative will lead a pack of young minds with innovative ideas to bring about change around them. MAD Ltd has reached out to over 100,000 students across India through MAD attacks conducted in six cities across 60 colleges of the country to select its leader.

There were ideas sought



from the participants and a jury which consists of writer Chetan Bhagat, Jessie Paul and Shubho Sengupta who chose the finalists out of 500 students who sent out their unique ideas. Rathore's idea is to connect kids, adults and plants (KAP) through her plan, which works to make a posi-

tive difference in society. Ideas were invited at the portal www.madltd.com.

"Our objective was to provide a platform to youth where they can implement their ideas for national-building," said the spokesperson of HCL who started off MAD Ltd.

MAD LTD 2012 Winner

- **Name:** Sneha Kunasani
- **City:** Hyderabad
- **Winning Idea Title** – N2 : No To Food Wastage, No To Starvation
- **More details of the Idea :**



Through the program N2, Sneha aims to bridge the gap between the malnourished slums and the daily surplus food in hotels, corporate canteens and mess.

- **More details on the background of the Winner?**

Sneha has been working on the project in the city of Hyderabad. While participating in MAD LTD, she was in final year of her engineering at Aurora Institute of Technology in Hyderabad.

- **Why/how did the winner think of this idea?**

The astounding statistics of the number of people dying of malnutrition and the increasing number of slum population around drove her attention to the launch a campaign to support the underprivileged.

Few volunteers and Sneha started campaign programs in Hyderabad starting with the hotels, mess present across the city. They conducted awareness programs in more than 30 hotels, mess, restaurants. A few came forward and told them regarding how they tackle the excess food that is being prepared at their hotels.

She found that messes had a good amount of edible food remaining at the end of the day which they throw away.

We distributed N2 foundation cards to all the hotels where we campaigned and asked them to call us whenever they can give us food.

- **What was his/her first success in this direction?**

The manager of one of the reputed hotel group has told Sneha that the hotel throws away large amount of edible food and it increases during parties and events in their banquet halls.

He supported the N2 initiative and considered it as a solution to curb unwanted food waste from their hotel. Also, some small hotels had minimum amounts of food remains and they had their ways of managing food waste by sending to piglet farms and cattle barns. Some were ready to call us and give the foods at late nights after 11 o clock.

- **When did he/she think of applying to MAD LTD?**

Sneha applied to MAD LTD after coming to know about it during a college event.

- **What have been the success milestones so far?**

While approaching people at hotels Sneha found that they showed great interest in the foundation and appreciated the ideas of N2 Project. Some people who listened to our theme have said they are ready to donate food from their home instead.

This made Sneha to improvise her concept by adding this idea to the project. Many people were ready to donate foods made at their houses. As small amounts of domestic food is also being wasted from houses everyday this can also be utilized.

Though N2, Sneha aims to create a network between citizens who are willing to donate and N2 volunteers who can collect food from these houses every day.

Later Sneha approached caterers in different places in Hyderabad. Some of the most reputed caterers in Hyderabad accepted to be our volunteer.

- **Way ahead**

After associating her idea with MAD LTD, Sneha has now made progressions towards:

- Conducting campaigns at function halls, schools, colleges, and more hotels and caterers using her winning title
- Building up the transport facility and other necessities like vessels to carry food and preserve food for longer time
- Gathering more number of volunteers

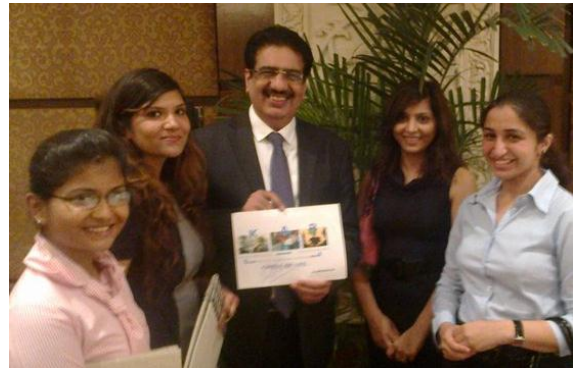
HCL is helping Sneha to realize her objectives via the following actions:

1. Register N2 as a formally register an NGO focusing on the proposed action.
2. Connecting her to the respective NGOs, who are partnering with UNICEF to address Malnourishment among the children, (orphanages to benefit the program and also few old age homes)
3. We will have an MIS to track the beneficiaries and their development.

4. Matrices to be measure the outcomes with relation to MDG-Millennium development goals
 5. Development of a Sustainability plan.
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MAD LTD Season 1 Winner

- **Name:** Shyamli Rathore
- **City:** New Delhi
- **Winning Idea Title :** KAP – Kids Adults & Plants – The Circle Of Life
- **More details of the Idea**



KAP is a social program which connects adults who have time and the will, to give love and time to orphans and street kids. Together they grow plants & make this planet a better place.

- **More details on the background of the Winner**

Shyamli Rathore comes from a Rajasthani family, based in Delhi. She is a commerce graduate from Delhi University.

She has been working on KAP relentlessly, driving and encouraging more and more people to join KAP and share their time & experience with children who need it. Her differentiator is her strong will to make a positive impact on the world for issues close to her heart. She strongly believes in leading by example and has the will and energy to serve society at large through exceptional contributions. This is the reason; she has a strong following - from school kids to grannies!

A die hard optimist, she is ready to take on the world with her enthusiasm & passion.

- **Why/how did the winner think of this idea**

What triggered Shyamli to think in this direction was her Mother's potential of art and writing. She noticed that smilier to her many housewives are passionate about something or toehr but other family members are generally too busy to explore the passion.

At that time Shyamli realized doing something productive would propel women come out of their boundaries.

She contacted a lot of NGO's offering such work but soon came to accept that most of NGO need only money rather than your time.

KAP is a brilliant, but simple social program that addresses multiple socio-economic issues while addressing ecological issues.

The high level objective of KAP initiative is to mobilize and harness the power of children, youth and Indian talent pool at large to combat illiteracy, ignorance, gender discrimination and associated evils of these core issues, with an ultimate aim of crime prevention and social development.

The number of orphans in India stands at approx. 47 percent out of a total of about 55 millions children of ages 0-12 years, AND India is home to the world's largest population of street children, estimated at 18 million. MAD LTD and KAP aims to change this number, even a little would matter a lot for few.

- **What was his/her first success in this direction**

Shyamli came across Arya Samaj Mandir near her place where boys who are orphan, or from under privileged families live and study. So she started going there, devoting her time teaching them. Soon she realized that these kids need love more than any other basic amenities and since then I do whatever possible to make them feel wanted and loved. While doing so I inspired other housewives and elderly people to find happiness in spending time around such kids. Kids were very happy to find nurturing environment. Their results and morale improved.

Since then her family, few neighbors and others started celebrating their B 'days with them. At times we collect money from our house & neighborhood to give away these kids basic things.

Since then Shyamli was seeking platform to launch KAP (Kids- Adults Plants)- to educate people on how they can deal with their depression or use their lives more purposefully and teaching under privileged kids. In her search, she came across MAD LTD

- **When did he/she think of applying to MAD LTD**

Shyamli learned about the MAD LTD initiative at a college event at Amity University.

- **What have been the success milestones so far**

After winning MAD LTD, her idea of KAP has taken off and met new horizons. KAP started being recognized at a national level after winning MAD LTD.

Some significant points to mention:

- Times of India featured KAP
 - The Hindu did an editorial coverage of KAP boosting interest from other parts of the country
 - Vineet Nayar, CEO of HCL Technologies talked about KAP, Shyamli & MAD LTD which brought in interest of others to join the initiative
 - After getting associated with HCL, Shyamli shared stage with Dr. Kiran Bedi to spread KAP
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No child's play

A RECENT NATIONAL INITIATIVE OFFERED A PLATFORM FOR TOMORROW'S LEADERS TO SHARE THEIR IDEAS. **DIPTIMAN DEWAN** SPEAKS TO THE WINNER

FOR Shyamli Rathore, life today is all about connecting. It is this conviction that made her idea a winning one in a recently-held national initiative.

"My idea is called Kids, Adults, Plants (K-A-P). It elaborates on the fact that there are two existing groups in our society — children, mostly orphans, who have neither people nor resources; and adults — housewives, the retired population, etc. who have a lot of time on their hands, who, besides flipping through TV channels or surfing the internet, wonder where life is taking them," says Rathore a 25-year-old graduate from Delhi University.

Her idea is to build a connect between these two segments. The adults volunteer to guide and mentor these kids and in turn are rewarded with companionship and love and together they grow plants to make this planet a better place. Rathore calls it the 'Circle of Life'. "This is also an easily replicable idea. So, while I am taking steps to implement it in Delhi, there are other states in the country that K-A-P is already happening."

As to the contest in which she participated, Rathore came across MAD LTD on Facebook. "The process of participation involved presenting your



Shyamli Rathore

idea in black and white. Organising it into a format helped me plan in greater granularity and it evolved in a step-by-step manner. The leadership programme of HCL, 'Employees First Customers Second' (EFCS) also helped me redefine my idea, implementing all the steps as outlined in EFCS programme," she says.

The initiative was conducted in six cities and reached out to more than 60 colleges. Getting an idea was just half

the battle, the other half was to bring it to life and prove one's leadership abilities. Before the finale, Rathore recalls, "We had an interaction with Vineet Nayar, CEO, HCL Technologies. He defined evolution of processes, and explained that a great idea is one that creates an impact, thus making a positive difference. The interaction was akin to a life-changing experience for us all."

"I realised, it is the impact, originality and how you put your idea into action, including how motivated and persuasive you are, which ultimately decides how successful your initiative is," she says.

Rathore reiterates that unlike popular misconception, this generation does care. Her vision, she says, is to turn it into a nation-wide movement, so that no child or orphan is in want of company or mentors, while adults and even people in old-age homes can fruitfully utilise their time and make a meaningful contribution.

Chosen by a panel of experts to become the CEO of MAD LTD, a democratically managed, full-fledged, no holds barred enterprise, Rathore will now work as an employee of HCL Technologies for six months and will run MAD Foundation.

Ganesh Chandra

HIGH FLYER

FOR CAREERS IN THE FAST LANE

THE ECONOMIC TIMES NEW DELHI • TUESDAY • 19 APRIL 2011

● **Srimathi Shivashankar**, Associate VP, Diversity & Sustainability, HCL Technologies

>> **Entrepreneurship, a competitive edge**

"Today, it is not just enough for leaders to be effective strategists and decision-makers."

Nurturing leadership qualities among the youth is an overriding concern for an emerging knowledge economy like India, particularly in view of the fact that more than half of the country's billion plus population is

creating processes, services and products that make a difference and enrich the value chain.

>> **Gen Y, the new leader**

"Young leaders can be instrumental in fostering collaboration."

It's vital to understand that the traits of leadership are required of professionals at every stage of their career. Hence, many companies are undertaking to nurture these qualities among its junior most employees. When employees pertaining to the

ably translate to a cohesive and larger organisational good. This is because Gen Y is essentially collaborative by nature and people belonging to this age group, have grown up in a genera-

"It is important to understand that one can pursue one's entrepreneurial abilities, even while pursuing a career within an organisation."

lly made a positive contribution to the organisation by thinking differently. So far, they have around 377 innovative ideas. The final ideas were presented by the respective ideation teams before Vinod Nayar, CEO, HCL Technologies and other jury members who chose the winner. Simultaneously, they are extending this responsibility through MAD to the society at large. MAD is an online forum that

audience and group of viewers at a grand finale held last week.

● **Hamsaz Vesuna**, VP- HR, Development, Credit Bank

>> **Entrepreneurship, a competitive edge**

"One's entrepreneurial ability is a key parameter today while hiring."

In the earlier times, employers would reach leadership positions after several years of experience, right? Today's times are more demanding and offer more opportunities to the youth for a fast-tracked career. It is thus the responsibility of the organisation to hone and build their leadership skills to ensure they succeed in reaching their potential.

>> **Gen Y, the new leader**

"Today's youth needs more visibility."

Today's Gen Y is interested in all things fast and new. They are bold, confident, impatient and have high expectations.

The addiction to social networking sites and a high number of reality shows goes to prove that they like being "visible". They see leadership as a means of getting more visibility and recognition.

>> **Case in Point**

At DCH, they have a programme called 'LEAP'. The

objective is to make learning more effective by actually putting the participants through some grading, mulligan, time-bound tasks for six months. At the end of the programme, the best five out of 20 participants get promoted to the next level after completion of the six months. Some of the assignments were:

- a) Collect large sum donations for an NGO. They had to spread out in all directions, use their network, cold
- b) Collect large sum donations for an NGO. They had to spread out in all directions, use their network, cold

● **Venkatesh Valluri**, Chairman and President, Ingersoll Rand India

>> **Entrepreneurship, a competitive edge**

"By 2050, India is expected to have the largest working-age population."

In India, we have a "higher education system" with more than seven million graduates of which 3.1 million join the workforce each year. However, there is little focus provided in fostering innovation and creation during these

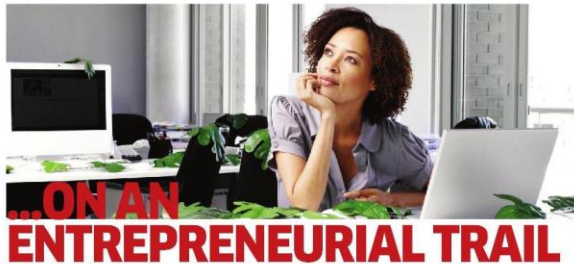
of change gets faster, today's corporate environment demands newer ways of creating businesses. One of the most crucial qualities of a great leader is the ability to change and transform.

>> **Case in point**

Ingersoll Rand India has launched a new initiative called 'Entrepreneur Creation Programme (ECP)' to encourage and support an entrepreneurial mindset. New hires or "entrepreneur partners" will be trained and mentored by Ingersoll Rand India leaders and placed on a fast-track learning path through diverse relations across multiple businesses, markets and functions within the company. The first six months will constitute the "business understanding phase" where trainees will be rotated across Ingersoll Rand's various businesses and functions for an in-depth understanding. In the second phase or the "business insight phase", trainees will learn to create business and make it financially profitable for a period of six months. The third phase is the "supported phase" where students start executing their plans for creating markets and generating sales and solutions. In the final phase, young entrepreneurs are ready to create their own infrastructure and operate as an independent business.



Srimathi Shivashankar Venkatesh Valluri Hamsaz Vesuna



ON AN ENTREPRENEURIAL TRAIL

Experts say that the force that drives most Gen Y leaders today is entrepreneurship and the role it plays towards fostering economic growth cannot be denied. India Inc institutions, in order to capitalise on the youth's leadership/entrepreneurial abilities, are introducing several entrepreneurship programmes, discovers Viren Naidu

below the age of 25. Apart from these hallmark traits, they also need to be good innovators - a characteristic that stands them in good stead as far as entrepreneurship is concerned. It is important to understand that one can pursue one's entrepreneurial abilities, even while pursuing a career within an organisation - by

Gen Y segment demonstrate leadership traits, their organisations stand to gain a lot. For instance, these young leaders can be instrumental in fostering collaboration among the different functions of the organisation that can invari-

ably translate to a cohesive and larger organisational good. This is because Gen Y is essentially collaborative by nature and people belonging to this age group, have grown up in a generation that is used to consulting peers on every small and big decision.

IN FOCUS

>> **Case in Point**

HCL has instituted a platform called 'Make A Difference Jamboree' or 'MAD JAM' that recognises the contribution of those employees who

is envisaged to nurture young leaders who are passionate about specific causes and want to create a community of like-minded people. Since its inception in October 2010, over 520 participants have submitted their unique ideas on the website. Around 16 innovative ideas were shortlisted and all 16 finalists presented to a select

crucial learning years. Research shows there is a dramatic change taking place in the way the work is getting done - the attention span is shorter as they continue to get bombarded with new knowledge and approaches at a very rapid pace.

>> **Gen Y, the new leader**

"Change is mandatory." As the access to knowledge becomes prevalent and speed

“The aim of Make a Difference, Lead the Difference (MAD LTD) is to work with colleges to add a new dimension and freshness to the otherwise standard practices used in the education system.”

MAKE A DIFFERENCE, LEAD THE DIFFERENCE AND HCLT FOUNDATION

These two initiatives illustrate how different drivers can lead to different education interventions for one company. This information technologies (IT) services company is working with colleges to help students develop work skills, and hence to boost recruitment, while also working with NGOs and public-sector schools in an employee engagement scheme which aims to improve poor children's education and life skills by donating time, expertise and funding.

Partners

The core partner in these two education-related initiatives is HCL Technologies¹⁹. They are working with NGOs and government aided schools trying to help children gain qualifications for a better start after education. HCL is involved in a number of education-related activities, and these two projects, both based in India, are examples of their work.

Aim

The aim of Make a Difference, Lead the Difference (MAD LTD) is to work with colleges to add a new dimension and freshness to the otherwise standard practices used in the education system.

The main purpose of the education-related element of the HCLT Foundation programme is to support the Millennium Development Goals and is based on HCL's EFC philosophy with a programme to improve children's quality of life, healthy living and hygiene, infrastructure, extra-curricular activities through the HCLT Youth Clubs opened in various HCL locations. It was specifically designed to benefit urban areas, unsettled colonies, and children who have problems with health, hygiene and education.

Timescale

MAD LTD has been running for two years, and the Power of One educational project for nearly a year.

Background

HCL Technologies was keen to develop links with colleges in order to boost the recruitment of graduates. After the first year, the MAD LTD programme widened its horizons towards building a sustainable relationship with the student-college communities. HCL wanted to position itself as a brand that helps the youth of today to become the new leaders who can make a difference.

The Power of One programme is a broader employee-engagement initiative which gives HCL Technologies staff a choice of pre-identified social and environment-related community service activities to support for a day each year. One of these is a programme to support school going and Slum children to help reduce the dropout rate.

There are big gaps in the education provided for poor children. School leavers cannot access jobs or university as their education is not adequate. Many schools lack computers and good teachers, and finding good quality teachers is very difficult.

Drivers/Motivation

The MAD LTD initiative grew out of the desire of HCL to increase its graduate intake, give its current employees an opportunity to contribute to a cause through voluntary work and improve the employability of Indian students. The main purpose of the project is to make HCL the preferred organisation to work for within the student community at the targeted colleges. It was also to help the company assume leadership amongst the growing competition by gaining the confidence of students, colleges and college staff.

The second initiative is specifically designed to give HCL's current employees an opportunity to make a difference in society through volunteering, and to establish HCL as an organisation and a brand that treats its employees as its most important asset. The initiative also fits well with HCL's Community Service Council philosophy which is based on HCL's EFC (Employee First) philosophy.

Partnership Model

HCL works in partnership with a range of NGOs to bring a holistic development in the children in HCLT Youth clubs. By finding a common cause that brings them all together, the quality is much better than working with just a small number as each NGO has its own area of expertise

Programme Activities

MAD LTD encourages students to submit innovative ideas, and for each season a winner is picked from

¹⁹ HCL Technologies Limited is a global IT services company, with headquarters in India. It is the fourth largest IT services company in the Country.

Partnerships for Education:
Building the foundations of a green,
prosperous and equitable global economy



among the leading entries. The winner is then given support and mentoring so that their idea can be implemented.

Activities in the schools-based initiative so far include the setting up of youth clubs in schools, together with a focus on sports and vocation-training, IT labs, and teaching about how to lead a healthy lifestyle. The project also provides extra educational support for the more academically capable children through the “Young Einsteins” initiative, as poor children do not normally have an opportunity to get the grades necessary for access to higher education.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Matrixes have been developed for monitoring of the schools project, together with external monitoring of processes and outcomes. There is not at present a framework in place for evaluating the longer-term impacts of the interventions or the quality of learning.

Results to Date

The MAD LTD initiative has completed two seasons and cumulatively touched nearly 35,000 students across 60 Campuses. MAD LTD as a concept promotes innovation and “out of the box” ideas. It not only identifies the leaders but also promotes their concepts and pushes them a step closer to realisation. As one of the main positive outcomes of the initiative, MAD LTD has helped HCL establish a sustainable dialogue with campuses. They are moving up the preferred list of Campus Recruiters through student demand.

The education initiative has helped the employee volunteers to make a difference, and – as IT staff whose roles can be rather detached from the world – it has helped them engage with wider social issues. Schools have been positive about HCL’s involvement, but a few of them tend to expect money rather than participation. The programme is still in its early stages, but since it began the children’s grades have gone up, and they take more pride in their schools.

Challenges

A key challenge for the projects is the time it takes to change lifestyles and to help people live dignified lives. There is a growing awareness through the volunteer project, but things cannot change quickly. Another challenge is that the work can be affected by the change in political parties.

Sustainability of the Project

Plans for the next phase of MAD LTD are to expand it to Management Campuses along with Engineering Campuses in its third season. Also, the initiative will spread to overseas campuses (particularly the United States and Singapore) in the upcoming season.

The education programme is planned to be supported for three years until it becomes self sustainable.