

Your latest digest of news and information from Medha

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Friends of Medha,

After switching to a more visual and concise version of our newsletter the last few updates, we thought it would be nice to go old school and send a letter this time. As we come up on our four year anniversary, otherwise known as when Chris moved to Lucknow and Byomkesh realized, 'oh shit, I have to quit my job now?!,' we want to share with you some of our biggest learnings from the last few years and our plans for the future.

'300 students' - when we put our initial plans together, we thought we would work with 300 students in our first year. It turns out we worked with 24. You can call this 'entrepreneurial optimism,' 'naivety,' or simply stupid, but we realized pretty quickly this work was gonna be a lot harder than we thought. I mention this point because *this year* we will work with 300 students! And despite it taking us longer than expected to reach that goal, we still consider it a significant milestone, and in the process of achieving it have learned a great deal. We are applying those strategies and techniques to our future growth plans which have us working with 1000 students next year and 3000 the year after.

'risky venture' - when we first started meeting potential advisors back in early 2011, one of our most trusted and respected mentors (to remain unnamed but they know who they are) told us we were getting involved in a 'risky venture.' We thought this was funny at the time, and to be honest we still get a good laugh when we think about it, but it was more about the way he said it than what he was saying. All start-ups are risky, and we certainly haven't been immune to the emotional, mental, and physical ups and downs of starting an organization from scratch. But while there is still significant risk involved, and at times each day feels like a new battle, if we look at where we are today v. just six months ago, or a year ago, or two years ago, we are increasingly confident this endeavor is getting less and less 'risky.'

'life's work' - Something else we heard a lot when starting out was how foolish we were to try to work with the public sector education system (these people also know who they are). We were told it was a losing battle, things will never change, and that we are setting ourselves up for failure. This is another reality we have had to face over the last three years. Countless hours sitting in the Uttar Pradesh Secretariat building, more Principal Secretary transfers than we can count, and even a scolding from the highest ranking bureaucrat at 9pm in his office (yeah, that was a fun evening). Despite all this, we continue to try to work with them. You can call this 'entrepreneurial optimism,' 'naivety,' or simply stupid :) but we are now working in three government colleges in Lucknow, will hopefully have a new MoU signed this year for ten more, and are in discussions to expand into ITIs and Polytechnics. We still believe the system needs to be reformed, and we still believe this is how we can have the biggest impact on youth employability in the country.

All entrepreneurs have these stories. There isn't anything particularly unique or special about our roller-coaster ride, but we wanted to share with you some of them because we haven't done a great job of that over the last few years (I'm sure many of you are probably happy you haven't heard much from us). We're working to change that so all of you - our friends, partners, supporters, and students - have a better idea of what is going on with Medha and our work. It certainly hasn't been easy, but we are still 'enjoying the process' and believe we are making good progress. We have started getting more active on our [twitter](#) and [facebook](#) accounts and hope many of you will follow us.

As 2014 comes to a close, we are working in six colleges across Lucknow, have trained and placed over 200 students, are partnering with 40 key employers, and have a team of 15 people. We have kept the

announcements below brief due to the length of this note. For those of you who made it all the way through, we thank you for your continued support, and look forward to hearing from you. For the rest of you, enjoy the pictures!

The Medha Team



2014 Classes Running

155 [students](#) are currently enrolled in Medha's program across six colleges in Lucknow. 42 have completed the program and 27 are working at their internships. We are running both [CABs](#) and [CSCs](#) and are well on our way to 300 students this year!



EdelGive Foundation is a new partner

We are honored to announce our latest partnership with [EdelGive Foundation](#). EdelGive is a leading Indian-based foundation and the strategic philanthropic arm of [Edelweiss Group](#). You can read the full announcement on [our blog](#).

Aanchal joins the team!

We are excited to welcome Aanchal Aggarwal to the team. Aanchal is a [William J. Clinton Fellow for Service](#) in India with [American India Foundation](#). She will be with us for 10 months and focus on Monitoring & Evaluation and User Experience. You can read more about Aanchal on our [team page](#).



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