



BusinessWire

## Oscar Favorite Slumdog Millionaire Inspired by NIIT's 'Hole in the Wall' Initiative

02.17.09, 11:34 AM ET

After having bagged 4 Golden Globe Awards and 7 BAFTA recognitions, Slumdog Millionaire, is pitted as a hot favourite to win the Oscars on February 22, 2009 with 10 Academy Award nominations under its belt.

The movie based on the book 'Q&A', written by Vikas Swarup is originally inspired by India's Hole-in-the-Wall Education Ltd (HiWEL) initiative.

Based on the principle of Minimally Invasive Education technology, HiWEL encourages learning through self exploration, by providing children in the slums unsupervised access to computers with internet connection. Comprising of computers installed through the walls in the slums- the Playground Learning Centres, give children their own private window to access the knowledge of the world.

Referring to HiWEL as the inspiration for his book Q&A, Vikas Swarup, Deputy High Commissioner of India to South Africa and the author of the book said, "My book is about hope, optimism and triumph of the human spirit. I was inspired by the Hole-in-the-Wall project, where a computer with an internet connection was put in a slum in Delhi. When the slum was revisited after a month, the children of that slum had learnt how to use the worldwide web without any supervision. That got me fascinated and I realised that there's an innate ability in everyone to do something extraordinary, provided they are given an opportunity."

The modestly budgeted movie, showcases the hopes and struggles of an orphan in Mumbai, who rises from terrible hardship through a continued process of self learning, to become a winner at the Indian version of 'Who Wants to Be a Millionaire'.

HiWEL has also been awarded the coveted Digital Opportunity Award' by the World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA) in 2008. It is the first Indian company to receive the award for its groundbreaking work in developing computer literacy and improving the quality of education at a grass root level.

### About HiWEL

Based out of New Delhi in India, Hole-in-the-Wall Education Ltd. (HiWEL) is a joint venture between NIIT Ltd. and the International Finance Corporation (a part of The World Bank Group).

Coinciding with Republic Day in 1999, NIIT decided to do yet another meaningful act for the society, by first testing this innovative technology in a slum in South Delhi, located adjacent to one of its software factories. As an experiment, a Hole in the Wall was made, through the centre's compound wall and a computer screen was installed, facing the slum. The effects were monitored by the R&D lab located in-house. It was observed that children were doing a number of interesting things with the computer, without any assistance. It was haphazard, but it had a sense of discovery & learning. This laid the foundation for further research which helped NIIT finally develop Playground Learning Stations (PLS), to give children their own private window to access the knowledge of the world.

With the formation of HiWEL in 2001, a national research program was started, in which Learning Stations were set up in 23 locations across rural India. In 2004, the Hole-in-the-Wall reached Cambodia through the

With the formation of HiWEL in 2001, a national research program was started, in which Learning Stations were set up in 23 locations across rural India. In 2004, the Hole-in-the-Wall reached

Cambodia through the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India.

Today, more than 300,000 children have benefited from 300 Hole-in-the-Wall stations over last 8 years. The number is going to double with more than 200 stations being installed in 2009. Besides India, HiWEL also has projects in African countries like Uganda, Rwanda, Mozambique, Zambia, Swaziland, Botswana, Nigeria and in Cambodia.

For more information on the project visit [www.hole-in-the-wall.com](http://www.hole-in-the-wall.com).

About NIIT Group NIIT Group comprises of NIIT Ltd. - Asia's No. 1 IT trainer and leading Global Talent Development Corporation, offers learning and knowledge solutions to over 5 million students across 40 countries and NIIT Technologies- a global IT Solutions organization. Assessed at SEI-CMMi Level 5, NIIT Technologies serves clients across North America, Europe, Asia and Australia.

SOURCE: Hole-in-the-Wall Education Ltd.

CONTACT: Media: India - NIIT Limited Prateek Chatterjee Cell: +(91) 99102 01085 Direct: +(91) 12442 93041 [prateek.chatterjee@niit.com](mailto:prateek.chatterjee@niit.com) or United States- Gutenberg Communications Aquin Dennison-Mathew Direct: 646-763-8853 [aquin@gutenbergpr.com](mailto:aquin@gutenbergpr.com) or United States- NIIT Technologies Aninda Bose Direct: 732-915-8530 [Aninda.Bose@NIIT-Tech.com](mailto:Aninda.Bose@NIIT-Tech.com) Copyright Business Wire 2009 -0- KEYWORD: United States

<http://www.forbes.com/feeds/businesswire/2009/02/17/businesswire120687009.html>