LEADERSHIP
IN GLOBAL TALENT DEVELOPMENT

NIIT

NIIT
In The News

TOP **100** BIZ OPPORTUNITIES 2009

Domestic | Established

NIIT

INJECTING IT INTO THE EDUCATION SPACE

STARTING AS A DREAM TO 'BRING PEOPLE AND COMPUTERS TOGETHER SUCCESSFULLY', NIIT HAS CARVED A NICHE FOR ITSELF SINCE THE EARLY '80S.

NIIT

Established in: 1981
Started franchising in: 1982
Area required: 1,500-2,500 sq ft
Investment required: Rs 12 lakh-40 lakh

G.Raghavan, President, Individual Learning Solutions

"A large part of this success has been possible due to our ability to expand quickly through our unique franchisee model."

With the vision to allow the world to reap benefits of IT education by creating a talent pool of bright, young minds that could empower the engines of the growth of global economy, the foundation of NIIT was laid.

NIIT, Global Talent Development Corporation, offers learning and knowledge solutions to over five million people including individuals, corporates, enterprises and institutions across 40 countries, with wholly owned subsidiaries in the Asia-Pacific, Europe, Japan and the US. NIIT centres impart industry-endorsed programmes in IT like GNIIT, Integrated Programmes for engineers (NIIT Edgeineers), Infrastructure Management Programmes (NIIT GlobalNet+) and domain specific modules, through its franchise model.

NIIT Imperia offers Executive Management Education Programmes for working professionals through Synchronous Learning Technology. NIIT Institute of Finance Banking & Insurance offers programmes for individuals and corporates in banking, financial services and insurance, whereas NIIT Uniqua, a NIIT-Genpact venture is designed to address the demand for talent in the BPO industry. NIIT works closely with global leaders such as Adobe, Cisco, EMC, Intel, Microsoft, Oracle, SAS and Sun, and provides training on their platforms.

Tryst with franchising

Talking of its expansion mode, G.Raghavan, President, Individual Learning Solutions declares, "A large part of this success has been possible due to our ability to expand quickly through our unique franchisee model."

NIIT has nearly 800 centres the world over and a majority of them are franchisee centres. The brand is present in about 40 countries and plans to reach out to all unrepresented areas in the coming years.

NIIT equips franchisees with cutting-edge curriculum and courseware that makes it a preferred choice of individuals and enterprises. Its detailed operations manuals and processes help the franchisees in the day to day running of operations. Besides offering its franchisees a wide array of products, NIIT allows the franchisees to grow by providing them the facility of operating multiple education centres.

54 | February 2009 - **THE FRANCHISING WORLD**

Deccan Herald
BANGLORE
FEBRUARY 22, 2009

'Hole-in-the-wall' experiment is *Slumdog...* inspiration
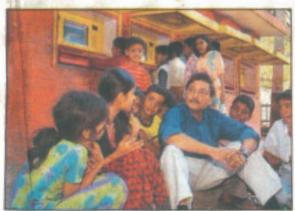
FROM KALYAN RAY
DH News Service

NEW DELHI: *Slumdog Millionaire*, undoubtedly, is the toast of the season. But, barely anybody knows that a gang of illiterate slum children from Kalkaji in South Delhi and a prodigious computer scientist were the inspiration behind the book that this much talked-about film is based on.

It started on the Republic Day in 1999 when NIIT scientist Sugata Mitra created a hole in the wall that separated the NIIT headquarters in Kalkaji from a slum and put up a freely-accessible computer for anybody to use.

Slum kids were attracted almost immediately. Most of them did not have formal education; they did not know English and had hardly ever seen a computer. They thought it was a new toy and started playing with it.

To everybody's surprise, it was found that those illiterate kids had taken just a few weeks to learn how to operate a computer. Without any assistance they were able to use various applications such as word processor and paint brush.

Encouraged by the success of the Kalkaji "hole-in-the-wall" experiment, Mitra and his team went ahead in setting up two more "hole-in-the-wall" computers in Shivpuri (a town in Madhya Pradesh) and Madantusi (a village in Uttar Pradesh).

The findings from Shivpuri and Madantusi confirmed Kalkaji results — the children picked up computer skills on their own.

At this point, the International Finance Corporation (an arm of the World Bank) tied up with NIIT to spread the hole-in-the-wall experiment to other parts of the country as well as outside.

One of the interesting findings was in any place, the learning pattern for the slum kids is the same.

The experiment raises questions on the role of the teacher in a computerised environment, and how children can learn themselves, if provided with computer and Internet connections.

More than 3,00,000 children have benefited from 300 hole-in-the-wall stations in the last eight years. The programme has reached other parts of South Asia, besides Africa.

While writing his novel *Q&A*, the source of the acclaimed film, its author, Vikas Swarup, was inspired by the pedagogy experiment.

"I was inspired by the experiment. It got me fascinated, and I realised there was an innate ability in everyone to do something extraordinary, provided they were given an opportunity," Swarup said.

"The experiment was meant to create a mechanism for giving opportunity to young people who did not have formal education. The novel's success and the film validate that seed of idea," NIIT chairperson Rajendra Pawar told *Deccan Herald*.

Sugata with slum children and the experiment set-up.

People
NATIONAL
FEBRUARY 27, 2009

People
HEROES
AMONG US

The most popular site for kids like Rukhsana is Disney because the children are drawn to animations and cartoon-oriented storytelling and games.

NO HOLES
IN THIS PROJECT

NIIT's hole-in-the-wall experiment has converted over 100 million kids from slums and villagers into computer users, and inspired Vikas Swarup's *Q & A* which became *Slumdog Millionaire* **BY REENU BAHL**

After a busy morning cooking and washing clothes, Rukhsana puts on her mother's well-worn chappals and heads towards Sarvodaya Kanya Bal Vidyalaya, a government school near Wazir Pur, New Delhi. Holding her notebook, pencil and eraser in a tight grip, she jostles for space among the 15-odd children assembled near the computer kiosk built next to the compound wall. 'Bhaiya', the caretaker, is teaching them the alphabet on the keyboard.

"I want to study on the computer and be able to operate it one day," says the girl who can't read the words 'Home' or 'Exit'. But she knows how to move the 'teer' (cursor) over the machine. "Bhaiya taught me this," she says, with a shy smile.

Rukhsana is one among the many

People
NATIONAL
FEBRUARY 27, 2009

> " We don't know what the limits to this kind of learning are"
>
> —DR. SUGATA MITRA

Kids at the Sarojini Nagar kiosk. (Inset) Dr. Mitra, who has liked *Slumdog Millionaire*, has emailed and thanked Vikas for mentioning the HiWEL

underprivileged children across India and abroad who are benefitting from Hole-in-the-Wall Education Ltd. or HiWEL, a joint venture between the National Institute of Information Technology (NIIT) and the International Finance Corporation (a part of The World Bank Group). The basic premise is that poor children can teach themselves how to use a computer, if they have easy access to one. Their curiosity acts as their guide and they teach themselves to use it.

The project was kicked off by NIIT's Dr. Sugata Mitra in 1999, but has been in the news because of *Slumdog Millionaire*, the Oscar-nominated film adapted from Vikas Swarup's novel *Q&A*. Swarup, in an interview to PEOPLE magazine, revealed the book's protagonist Ram Mohammad Thomas (renamed Jamal Malik in the film) was inspired by this innovative project. "This programme basically tells you that children from disadvantaged backgrounds can learn entirely unaided provided they have the resources... just like Ram did," says Vikas.

In this case, resources meant carving a hole in the wall separating the NIIT premises from the adjoining slum in Kalkaji, New Delhi, and placing a computer there. On Jan. 26, his team installed the first of these machines at 9 AM and by 1 PM the children were already surfing and using the computer. "I was surprised, to put

it mildly," says Dr. Mitra, who is based in the U.K and no longer associated with the project. NIIT India chairman Rajendra S. Pawar, who has taken it forward, recalls the findings from their preliminary experiments. "We were pleasantly surprised to observe children doing a number of interesting things with the computer, and that too without any assistance," says Pawar, revealing that kids logged on to the Internet and downloaded games.

The response encouraged the NIIT team to develop more Playground Learning Stations (PLS, which is what they named these kiosks). Today, HiWEL is running 55 centres in Delhi alone, 250 more across India and 20 projects in African countries like Uganda, Rwanda, Mozambique, Nigeria and Cambodia. The plan is to take this not-for-profit establishment to countries like Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Nepal.

Since the PLS is open beyond school hours (from 9 AM to 5 PM), even school-going children play with it. HiWEL's follow-up research noted improvement in these kids' academic performances. Says Dr. Mitra, "This is a good way to organise learning

environments in places where good schools don't exist and good teachers don't want to go." Pawar says that collaborative constructivism, where children learn from each other, was another important finding.

And though most kids don't know the English terms like mouse, cursor, etc, they have invented their own — teer (arrow) for the cursor, damru for the hourglass. Over the years, the HiWEL team has incorporated puzzles and interactive programmes in Hindi as well as English. "Mitthu batata hai kya karna hai," Simran, 9, who uses the Sarojini Nagar kiosk, says while detailing one of the games meant for class 2 students. Polio-afflicted Mukesh, 12, from the slum near JJ Colony, who walks with the help of a stick, dreams of becoming a banker. "I learn from these games and stories and will use this knowledge to work in a bank," he says.

Dr. Mitra estimates that HiWEL has converted over 100 million 'users' from slums and villages over the last 10 years. But he doesn't believe the project has reached its full potential. "We don't know what the limits to this kind of learning are." He is excited about the future. "Imagine 100 million children growing up inside the cyber space as opposed to their 1,000 BC villages." He adds, "It would change our society for ever." ●

The Financial Express
NEW DELHI
FEBRUARY 19, 2009

How HCL wrote the growth programme for the industry

THE changing character of computer usage in India—from mainframes and minis to micro-computers—at the start of the 1980s threw up new demands for computer education. In the mainframe era, the role of a computer user was limited. The software was written by IBM and the machine was also serviced by IBM. The same happened in electronic data processing centres and the RCCs. With the introduction of microcomputers, the situation changed.

HCL, which pioneered this shift, had to educate customers on how to use its computers. One of its early advertisements said, 'Even a typist can use our computers,' emphasizing that companies don't have to depend on outsiders to operate their computers.

The origins of computer training in the private sector can be traced to HCL. Rajendra Singh Pawar, a 1972 electrical engineering graduate of IIT Delhi, joined HCL in September 1976, after a stint with Larsen & Toubro and DCM Limited.

In 1979, he was entrusted with corporate planning at HCL. He began exploring how the sale of HCL microcomputers could be boosted. A number of companies had entered the market which was already very sluggish. This exercise led to the identification of two constraints that were hindering the growth of the computer industry in general: lack of awareness and ability in corporate and government sectors on the use of new technologies and shortage of skills in the market to put these technologies to use. This brainstorming led to the conclusion that computer training was necessary to propagate microcomputer use in the country. It was this analysis that led the creation of a new business in 1981—training.

Pawar, along with his IIT buddies Vijay Thadani and P Rajendran, and the backing of HCL founder Shiv Nadar, founded India's first computer training effort in the non-formal sector. The venture was named the National Institute of Information Technology (NIIT). It also helped bring to the public mind a relatively new phrase 'Information Technology' in place of 'Computing' and 'Data Pro-cessing' which were in vogue till then and were used in the context of older generation URMs and mainframes.

Around the same time, the government had accepted the Rajaraman Committee's recommendations but it took time for the MCA courses to be started in various universities with financial aid from the DoE.

Meanwhile, NIIT started its first Computer Education Centre in a rented office at Mittal Court, Nariman Point, Bombay, in February 1982, with a single computer, a colour television set and a second-hand multi-system video cassette recorder. Pawar placed a small advertisement— measuring 40x6 column cm—in The Times of India, but nobody showed up for a few days.

Then there was only one student for sometime. The numbers grew slowly. Several Indian companies began importing kits and assembling computers locally.

There was a lot of talk of using computers for a variety of purposes by various organizations, including banks, Railways, and so on. All this created actual and perceived demand for graduates skilled in operating a computer. This was good news for NIIT.

(Clockwise from right) Rajendra Pawar, Shiv Nadar and Vijay Thadani: pioneers

NIIT

The Times of India
BANGLORE
FEBRUARY 1, 2009

Geethanjali Education Society, has under its umbrella Geethanjali Montessori, Geethanjali Vidyalaya and Gitanjali International School Bangalore (GISB). NIRMALA GOVINDARAJAN explores aspects that make learning at these institutions unique

Naganatha Murthy, Gautham and Sridhara Murthy with Vishwanathan Anand

Karate champs at Geethanjali Vidyalaya

'MY CHILD IS IN SAFE HANDS!'

Kashmir Times

JAMMU
FEBRUARY 17, 2009

KC Public School student shine in national chess championship

KT NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU, Feb 16: Rahul Dhar, students eight standard of KC Public School excelled in the National Chess championship-Chess Master 2009, organised by NIIT Mind champions Academy at Jaipur.

J&K state champion, Rahul Dhar played matches against champions from other state and also got an opportunity to play a friendly match against World Chess champion Viswanathan Anand. His performance was highly appreciated by one and all present on this occasion.

Chief guest on this occasion, Jyotiraditya Scindia, union minister of state for communication and IT,

The nationwide chess contest witnessed widespread participation by over 2,00,000 students from over 3400 government and private schools spread across 24 states and union territories.

The winners from the four zones also got an opportunity to play simultaneous chess with the world chess champions, Viswanathan Anand.

Rahul Dhar, student of KC Public School receiving prize from World Chess champion Vishwanathan Anand in Jaipur.

State Times
DELHI
FEBRUARY 17, 2009

'Chess Master 2009' held

ST NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU: Rahul Dhar, student of class 8th of KC Public School excelled in the National Chess Championship 'Chess Master 2009' organised by NIIT Mind Champions Academy a joint initiative of NIIT, a leading Global Talent Development Corporation and Asia's No. 1 trainer and world Chess Champion Vishwanathan Anand at Jaipur. J and K State champion Rahul Dhar played match against champions from other states and got an opportunity to play friendly match against Vishwanathan

CHESS CHAMPION:
Rahul Dhar being awarded by World Chess Champion Vishwanathan Anand at Jaipur.

Anand. Chief Guest on the occasion Jyotiraditya Scindia

Union Minister of State for Communications and IT,

recognised the commendable performance of the young Mind Champions in the game of chess and encouraged them to continue to exhibit the same zeal and brilliance.

Vishwanathan said that it is a proud feeling to see these young children actively taking part in the championship. The grand finale of Mind Champions Academy Chess Master 2009 saw winners from North, East, West and South Zones for the National Level Championship. The winners from the four zones also got an opportunity to play simultaneous chess with Vishwanathan Anand.

The Times of India
LUCKNOW
JANUARY 31, 2009

Govt engages institutes, firms to harness job skills in rural youth

MAULSHREE SETH

LUCKNOW, JANUARY 30

IN a major step at reducing the unemployment rate, the state government has decided to engage private players in promoting skill development and arrange job placements for the rural youth living below the poverty line.

The Rural Development department has already empanelled around 40 renowned institutes and companies for the said purpose. Around 50 more companies will be required to provide high quality vocational training to the BPL youth.

Soon after coming to power, Chief Minister Mayawati had declared that the unemployment allowance scheme launched during Mulayam Singh's regime was not feasible. Later, she announced that the government would rather provide jobs than an unemployment allowance.

In the preliminary phase, around 1,000 BPL youths of the state are already being trained by around six private and semi-government companies and institutes, which includes companies like Larsen and Toubro Ltd, NIIT, Educomp Solutions Ltd and G4S security systems.

According to the Memorandum of Understanding signed with the state government, these companies and institutes have to give an undertaking of facilitating 75 per cent placement of the trained youth with a remuneration not less than Rs 2,500 per month.

"Under the Swarnajayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana scheme, we were giving Rs 5,000 for the training and the placement of the rural BPL youth. But this training was provided in just the state-run institution, which did not help them much," Manoj Kumar Singh, Commissioner, Rural Development Department.

"We thought that since we were already spending Rs 5,000, it is better that we use it in a better manner and them with adequate training," he added.

"The idea is to bridge the gap between the recruitment process of the big companies and the eligible rural youth. The response in the preliminary phase is very encouraging," said Singh. "Under the scheme, around 100 BPL youth from the state are being trained by L&T in their Delhi office and similarly by another five other institutes. Educomp has come forward to provide English and computer training as well."

The selection of the candidates under the scheme has to be done district-wise and each District Magistrate as well as Chief Development Officers have been informed about the 40 empanelled companies and has been asked to provide the BPL list to the companies.

In case, any particular company requires special qualification, the Block Development Officers have been directed to arrange the meeting between the eligible youth in their blocks and the company's representative in their office.

State Times
Delhi
February 16, 2009

NIIT organises Bsc IT Scholars Party

■ST NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU: NIIT Bari Brahmana organised a Scholars' Party where the BSc (IT) students of the centre were also present. The Guests of Honour were their parents. NIIT Bari Brahmana students excelled by securing 86 per cent result, which is highest amongst all other centers.

Director of NIIT Bari Brahmana, Col.(Retd) Prem Singh congratulated all the Scholars for the roaring success in the latest examination held by the university. He said that NIIT launched its first rural centre at Bari Brahmana with an aim to bring the IT education closer to the rural youth of the area. With a dedicated team of teachers and management, we have

successfully been doing so for the past 12 years. He further said that the institute has been working for all sections of society for these many years and will continue to serve in future. The ultimate aim of the institute is to have 100 per cent place able professionals on the day they complete graduation. The centre is also placing financially weak students even before the completion of their course, to give them a financial boost.

Parents of all the BSc(IT) students attended lectures by the faculty of the centre handling these BSc(IT) students. They gave a detailed feedback of their wards and apprised the parents of the latest activities and events happening at

NIIT and how it affected and enhanced their ward's qualification. Resume-preparation, interview handling skills, group discussions, placement preparedness, English speaking were some of the drives launched by the centre. In the past month, huge incentives were given to the students for spoken English courses that were joined by 22 current students besides new entrants. The director congratulated them on their purposeful decision. He also presented a gift to Richa Kumari for her excellent performance in the examination. The technical trainers of NIIT faculty Aparna Bhanotra, Shivani, Dheeraj Rana, Amit Sharma and Jyoti Pandita were also present.

Business Standard
NEW DELHI
FEBRUARY 20, 2009

Indian Express
CHENNAI
FEBRUARY 17, 2009

NIIT launches programme for IFRS

New Delhi: NIIT has launched a new certificate programme in International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) to help companies have a smoother IFRS convergence IFRS compliance will be mandatory from 2010. The course, which is meant for senior finance professionals, will be offered through 22 NIIT Imperia centres for advanced learning in 19 major cities of India. With an objective to provide finance professionals with the necessary information to restate Indian Financial Statements as per IFRS, the course will help them to understand accounting and disclosure requirements under IFRS and differences in Indian GAAP and IFRS.   *BS Reporter*

'VISH'FUL THINKING

NIIT announces the launch of 'Vish Come True', a National Chess Competition for school children. Winners of this competition get a chance to play chess with World Chess Champion Viswanathan Anand. The competition aims to reach out to 1500 schools covering 2,00,000 students from classes 6-10 In an endeavor to encourage intellectual stimulation supporting improved learning of school students, Global Talent Development Corporation, NIIT is holding this National Chess competition for school students to showcase their talent in the game of Chess. Students participating in the competition can register by logging on to www.niit.com/vct .

The Telegraph
KOLKATA
FEBRUARY 17, 2009

The Times of India
CHENNAI
FEBRUARY 23, 2009

Chess meet

■ **Calcutta:** A national competition for school students, sponsored by NIIT, will provide an opportunity to 30 shortlisted players to play online chess with world champion Viswanathan Anand. Every centre will select around three schools with one winner qualifying from each school, and three winners from each region.

Play to dream

NIIT is holding a national level chess competition that will allow winners to play with World Chess Champion Vishwanathan Anand. The aim of this competition is to promote chess. Students can re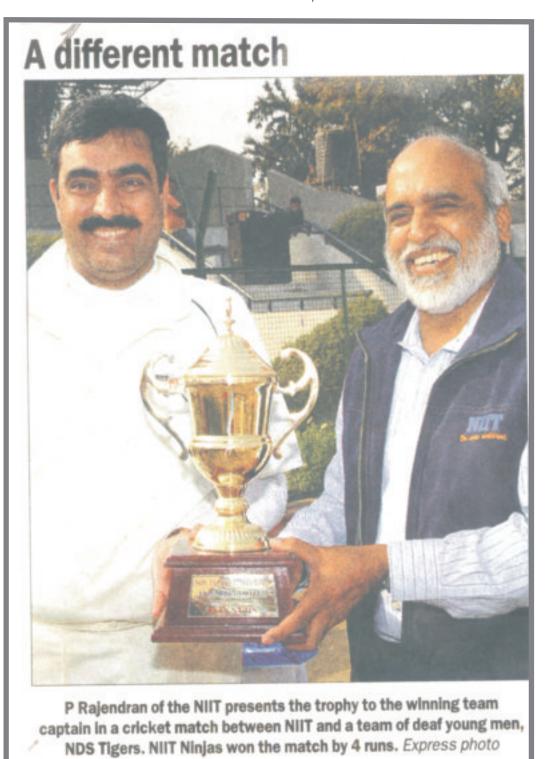gister to play in any one of the following dates: March 8, March 15, March 22 and April 12. The competition will be held at the NIIT centre in the city. To register, go to www.niit.com/vct.

The Indian Express
New Delhi
February 17, 2009

Financial Chronicle
Hyderabad
February 24, 2009

A different match

P Rajendran of the NIIT presents the trophy to the winning team captain in a cricket match between NIIT and a team of deaf young men, NDS Tigers. NIIT Ninjas won the match by 4 runs. *Express photo*

NComputing, govt tieup to help 1.8m students

Sharang Limaye
Hyderabad

AROUND 1.8 million school students in Andhra Pradesh will soon have access to world class computing systems, thanks to a tie-up between the state government and NComputing.

In all, 5,000 government schools across the state would soon have two servers and 10 working stations each. NIIT would be the third partner in this public-private venture, which would have trained instructors imparting computer know-how to students, with constant power supply ensured by the authorities.

The project, which has been set up within four months of its launch, would adopt a shared computing model using NComputing's desktop virtualisation technology. The funding for the Rs 400 crore project comes from the central and state governments under the ICT@schools plan.

"We believe that NComputing's low-cost and energy efficiency make it the ideal computing platform for the public and private sector, especially in these difficult times," says Raj Shah, chief marketing officer, NComputing. "In just two years, over 40,000 organisations around the world have installed NComputing to expand computing access at an affordable cost."

sharanglimaye
@mydigitalfc.com

January 21, 2009

Why hole in the wall may win an Oscar for Slumdog

Professor Sugata Mitra's experiment withchildren and the internet in India turns out to be the inspiration for Slumdog's success

Jack Malvern

Ten years ago an Indian academic knocked a hole through the wall of his laboratory so that children in the adjoining slum could play on one of his computers.

Sugata Mitra's experiment, to see whether unschooled children would teach themselves how to use the internet, if left to their own devices, was intended as an educational tool.

It has turned out to have had an unexpected impact in Hollywood and has provided a boost to the British film industry. Professor Mitra learnt this week that his "hole-in-the-wall" project was the inspiration for *Slumdog Millionaire*, the British film that swept to victory at the Golden Globes and is now the favourite to pick up the Best Picture award at the Oscars.

The film, about a street urchin who reaches the final of *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* with knowledge accrued throughout his tough upbringing, may not feature a hole-in-the-wall computer, but the author of the original novel has cited Professor Mitra as his inspiration. Vikas Swarup announced this week that he wrote *Q&A,* which was adapted for the screen by Simon Beaufoy, as a direct result of hearing about street children using Professor Mitra's computer.

RELATED LINKS

Slum tours get Slumdog Millionaire boost
My week: Vikas Swarup

"I was inspired by the hole-in-the-wall project, where a computer with an internet connection was put in a Delhi slum," he told *India Express.* "When the slum was revisited after a month, the children of that slum had learnt how to use the world wide web."

Professor Mitra, who is now Professor of Educational Technology at the University of Newcastle, told *The Times:* "It all started more than ten years ago in New Delhi. I had the idea of making a computer accessible to slum children and in order to stop them breaking it I put it in a wall."

He expanded the project to 23 villages in India where children had never had access to a computer.

"At the end of five years the schools started reporting that their English, maths and science scores were all going up." There are now about 600 hole-in-the-wall computers around the world.

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.

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. Asse ssed at SEI-CMMi Level 5, NIIT Technologies serves clients across North America, Europe, Asia and Australia.

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

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http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article5555651.ece

Forbes.com

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.

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

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

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http://www.cnbc.com/id/29237902/

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

Last update: 11:34 a.m. EST Feb. 17, 2009

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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.

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

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Tuesday February 17, 2009, 11:34 am EST

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http://www.marketwatch.com/news/story/oscar-favorite-slumdog-millionaire-inspired/story.aspx?guid= {ED64B012-4EE7-4DD1-BA3C-F1388610D505}&dist=msr_4

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