

**“ I ALSO WANT TO SHARE
STORIES AND EXPERIENCES
FROM LIFE SKILLS AND
WORK SKILLS CLASSES
WITH AS MANY PEOPLE AS
POSSIBLE AS I THINK THESE
CLASSES HAVE REALLY
HELPED ME SHAPE MY
PERSONALITY.”**

- Aswathi.



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**EMPLOYABILITY
DIARIES**



As part of **Skills to Succeed**, QUEST Alliance leverages the strengths of partner organizations while equipping them with tools and the capacity to significantly lift the quality of training delivery in vocational training centers. QUEST's blended learning approach focuses on empowering the student to learn through a mix of digital self learning and facilitator led tools. Students access a variety of rich content in Life Skills, Conversational English, Work Readiness and Retail Customer Interaction Skills.

Through its Skills to Succeed corporate citizenship focus, Accenture is committed to equipping 700,000 people around the world by 2015 with the skills to get a job or build a business.

Equip Youth, seeks to increase employability among youth in India, by enhancing skills of young people who are being trained in industrial and mechanical trades at the Industrial Training Institutes (I.T.Is). It includes training in life skills, along with English to improve their communication skills. It also provides the students with orientation and understanding of the world of work in order to help them get work ready and plan their future.

The International Youth Foundation and the Caterpillar Foundation launched EquipYouth to address the challenges young people face when entering the labor force or starting their own business.

1

NANDISH**Govt ITI-Computer Operator
& Programming Assistant Trade**

An extremely warm and friendly person, Nandish comes from a small village near Talgatpura on Kanakpura road. Nandish's father is a coolie and mother is a house keeper. He has 2 sisters older to him, one of them is married and the other one is working in an electronics factory.

“My English is not very great” - he says, clearing his throat. “I studied in a village till 7th grade in Kannada medium school and did my high school in an English medium school in the same village; where even English was taught in the local language”, he laughs. While most of them in the village understood the importance of learning English, none of them had the necessary exposure to the language itself. He shared that “The Equip Youth classes are like a ray of hope and have opened up great opportunities for us. When I joined the ITI, I thought I would take any job that pays well, but certain lessons in Life skills and work skills got me thinking about my career aspirations. I realized that I didn't just want to make money but also wanted to up-skill myself with each passing year. I wanted to earn a better position and name in society. These classes have increased my confidence in my own potential. I was never interested in taking up higher studies and thought it would be a waste of time. But Vani ma'am's influence and stories during life skills lessons changed my perspective.”

“I don't know if I can say that there is no one like me, but I can for sure say I am not like most of my friends”, he states confidently. He wants to do something for his family and himself. His mother has been a great inspiration and it is she who really motivates him, ‘She dreams to see me in a supervisor's position”.

2

ASHWATHI

**Govt ITI - Computer Operator
& Programming Assistant Trade**

Ashwathi, is traditional yet progressive by nature and comes from a very closely knit family. Her father works as a plumber and a social worker. Ashwathi's mother, a housewife, encouraged her to join COPA trade as she felt that learning about computers and associated technologies could prove to be very useful for Ashwathi in the future.

Ashwathi admits that she was never comfortable with communicating in English as she found the language challenging.

But she is a lot more confident now. "I make sure that I use the words and phrases that I learn during these classes in my day to day conversation with my sisters and close friends" The take aways for Ashwathi were not limited to English language skills; she found the lifeskills sessions equally engaging and useful. "I feel that through these classes I have grown into a mature and sensitive person" she shares.

"Balancing Relationships was one of the most important lesson from the Life skills session for me. It taught me to forgive and helped me overcome the bitterness I had accumulated due to bad experiences with friends. Earlier I never wanted friends around me and disliked working in groups. I did not trust anyone outside of my family, which made it difficult for me to make friends."

"I also want to share stories and experiences from Life skills and Work skills classes with as many people as possible as I think these classes have really helped me shape my personality."

3

TEJASHRI

**Sir M Visvesvaraya ITI - Electronic
Mechanic Trade**

After struggling through her first year of electronics class, Tejashri had lost all hope for her future. Today, she is over the moon for being chosen as the subject of a success story aimed at inspiring other students, on a recommendation by her teacher. 'I can't believe, he chose me out of a 100 students' she beams.

Tejashri comes from a small village near Chikballapur. Her father works as a watchman at a local company and her mother is a housewife. She has a younger brother who is studying in class 5. Her father had always wanted Tejashri to be an engineer.

"After completing my 10th grade my father wanted me join an ITI and take up Electronic Mechanic trade. It is very rare for girls in our community to join ITI's, as the courses that are offered are mostly suitable for boys."

After completing the course at the ITI, Tejashri's father expected her to pursue higher studies in electronic communication. She never had any qualms about walking the path her father had chosen for her, as she was also interested in this technical field. But soon she started feeling bogged down by her father's expectations, and started losing interest in the subject and ended up scoring very low marks in her first year exams.

Having done badly the previous year, she was feeling immensely discouraged and was dreading the new academic year. A few months in to her second year the Equip Youth classes started.

‘For the first time I saw my class teacher in a very light mood’, she said looking amused.

The Life Skills and Work Skills classes helped her reflect on her own self and her life path. She thanked her class teacher for bringing out this awareness in her through these classes. She feels that youth coming from similar background as hers lack knowledge and awareness about themselves and that the Equip Youth program plays a very important role, as it enables the students to make better decisions for themselves.

“ We all had to stand in a circle and share our life experiences, it was a very new experience for all of us”.

4 VENUGOPAL Acharya ITI, Electronic Mechanic Trade

Venu being the eldest son of the family was naughty by nature since his childhood. He hails from a very traditional family. His father Nagarajun runs his own mobile business and Mother Vijaylakshmi is a homemaker. Venu also has a younger brother Harshith, who is a school dropout.

Although Venu studied in English medium school, he was never comfortable in communicating in English. An average student, he always aspired about joining the Indian army. His family, on the other hand expected him to take care of the family business after his studies. Venu showed little interest in studies till the 7th grade. This changed once he was promoted to class 8, where his class teacher Ms. Rosy told him about the importance of education in life. From then on Venu studied well and scored a distinction in class 8 and 9. Becoming over confident drastically brought down his scores in class 10. Around this time his younger brother met with an accident and became home bound for 6 months. Forced to discontinue his education, his brother started taking care of the family business. This was the turning point for Venu that made him reflect on his life and career.

Venu’s uncle, who works for a PSU, suggested that he join an ITI, as it would help him get a job easily. Venu joined an ITI, but was still not very interested in his studies. Somehow he managed to complete 1st year. At this stage Venu was clueless about his career. In his 2nd year, he was introduced to EQUIP YOUTH sessions. He realized the value of the Life skills, Work skills and English curriculum. After enrolling into EY program Venu’s friends and family noticed a lot of changes in him. “The EY program has helped me and my friends gain confidence to face the world of work. I have also become very clear about my career path after attending the work skills sessions. I am thankful to QUEST Alliance for introducing this program in our institute” he says. Venu’s dream is to be an Entrepreneur going forward.

5

RAMESH B**Sir M Visvesvaraya ITI - Electronic
Mechanic Trade**

With the final exam for Electronic Mechanic trade just a few weeks away, Ramesh is surprised that he is not stressed. “ This is not how I am usually”, he says.

Ramesh belongs to a village near Chikballapur. His is a small family;his father is a farmer and mother is a housewife. An elder sister who is currently pursuing engineering from a nearby college and a grandmother are also part of the family. ‘My parents are illiterate madam, but they are not uneducated as they understand the importance of education’, he says proudly. But despite the encouragement, one of the biggest challenges he and other youngsters in his community face is the lack of mentorship. “There are very intelligent boys in the village but there is no one to guide us”, he says.

After completing his 2nd PUC, Ramesh took up diploma in engineering. Unfortunately he suffered from severe appendicitis in the 2nd semester and had to discontinue his education. However, he was not very keen on wasting a year. After his operation and few weeks of rest he joined an ITI and took up the Electronic Mechanic course.

‘After I joined the course, I learnt that the certificate would be valuable and that there is a lot of demand for ITI students’.

But because he had to discontinue his education earlier, he became under confident as he felt that all that he had planned for himself had fallen apart.

In his second year Ramesh was introduced to Life skills, Work skills and English communication. Gradually he began to see a new side to himself, and started picking himself

up. With the help of Work Skills work sheets he started planning his career from scratch.

“Life skills helped me understand my strengths, opportunities and my future prospects. Unlike earlier, I stopped expecting immediate financial benefits and instead aimed at up-skilling through apprenticeships and higher studies.”

Ramesh is now looking forward to his life after ITI. He plans to do his diploma in correspondence while simultaneously working as an apprentice in a company.

“These classes changed the way I looked at myself and my career”,

6

VASAVA KALPANABEN SOMBHAI

Centre- Dediapada, Narmada district,
Gujarat Aga Khan Rural Support
Program (India)

Kalpanaben hails from the small town of Dediapada in Narmada district. Most people in the town would educate their daughters up to standard 12 and then get them married. Kalpana's parents were no different; they too started worrying about her marriage once she finished school. But Kalpana, had other plans.

She heard about the Skills To Succeed program and visited the Yuva Junction center, in Dediapada to enquire about the course. There, an Skills To Succeed facilitator gave her relevant information regarding the program, and counseled her on the importance of getting a job.

The trip to the center inspired Kalpana to enroll in the program. She impressed the facilitator with her enthusiasm. She was very regular with the classes and was ready to learn. As the program came to an end, she started looking for a job in the cities. Her parents were not very supportive of this as they wanted her to stay with them.

Soon enough, Kalpana got a job offer from a local super store. She aced the interview and was selected for the post of a sales assistant.

Today Kalpana is earning 4500/- per month. Her parents are extremely proud of her and are thankful to the Skills To Succeed program for ensuring a bright future for their daughter.

7

JAGRUTI

Centre- Mangrol, Junagadh district,
Aga Khan Rural Support
Program (India)

Jagruti's family of 5 members resides in Sangavada, a remote village 17 kilometers from Mangrol. Her family's main occupation is farming, with the family income dependent on each harvest cycle. Not deterred by her (motor) disability Jagruti joined a computer course at the Yuva Junction Center in her village, as she had a keen interest in technology.

The initial days of the training proved to be difficult for her as she felt restrained because of her handicap. But as the course progressed, Jagruti gathered herself, and with some motivation from the trainer she successfully completed the course. At the conclusion of the course, her trainer suggested that she join the Skills to Succeed training program.

Here too, the initial days were fraught with challenges. Apart from feeling shy, she also felt uncomfortable, as a lot of the class activities proved to be physically strenuous for her. This time, her Skills to Succeed trainer came to the rescue, and motivated her to participate to the best of her abilities. Her trainer also changed his classroom strategy and conducted activities that would be less physically demanding for Jagruti. After successfully completing the training, Jagruti started looking for a job. As she did not want to leave her hometown, her facilitator found her a job as a computer teacher at a local school. She was apprehensive about being able to cope with the job, but after some encouragement from the trainer, she appeared for the interview. Today, Jagruti is a computer teacher and an inspiration, She says.

“The S2S program and my trainer helped me overcome my fears and achieve my goals. They have given me a new life”.



8

TOUFISH**Centre- Talala**, Junagadh Gujarat

Aga Khan Rural Support Program (India)

All of us have some special skill, but somehow we are not aware of it.

The Skills to Succeed program provides the students with a platform to recognize this skill, says Toufish, an Skills to Succeed alumni. Toufish comes from Bhalchhel (gir), Junagadh Gujarat. His father TajddinBhaiis a farmer, and his mother Yasmin Ben, is a housewife.

Toufish wanted to work overseas in order to provide a better life for his parents. After completing his graduation, he felt lost and did not know how to realize his dreams.

When Toufish joined the Skills to Succeed program, he did not know that it would be a platform for him to pick up all the skills he needed in order to fulfill his dreams. Through the Skills to Succeed sessions helearnt the importance of goal setting and ways by which he could achieve them. The Life Skill lessons helped him identify his talents and motivated him to face life's challenges head on. The English lessons, comprising of role-play and other such activities helped him conquer his fear of communication. Retail training proved to be the most crucial part of his training, as he mastered customer interaction and sales strategies. TodayToufish, earns Rs. 15000 per month,as a sales representative at a medical store in Kampala, Uganda (Africa).

Toufish believes that the Skills to Succeed program played a very important role in his life. It was through this program that he identified his own special skill and was able to realize his dream.

9

BENSON**Centre- Aluva**, Ernakulam

Don Bosco Tech

Benson hails from a town named Aluva. His parents are daily wage earners, and struggle to make ends meet. Benson recently completed his higher secondary education, but due to financial and health issues he could not pursue higher studies.

Benson heard about the Skills to Succeed training program from his neighbor Reshma, who was an alumnus of the course. She had completed her training from DB Tech, an institute that offered the course and also offered placements, free of cost. Benson saw this as his chance to finding a better job, and signed up for the retail management course.

The course helped Benson overcome his lack of confidence and self esteem. He started participating in all academic and extra curricular activities, and soon became one of the most dynamic students in his class.

After completing the course successfully, he appeared for an interview at the Cafe Coffee Day outlet. Today Benson is a Customer Associate at the outlet, and earns a sum of Rs. 7000. He is happy with his work and hopes for a bright future at the Café.

“ I was working as a daily wage earner after finishing school. It was what I wanted but there was no money to pay the college fee.”

10

SINDHAV BAHADUR

Centre - Maliya, Junagadh Gujarat
Aga Khan Rural Support
Program (India)

Sindhav Bahadur's parents always felt that they could not do enough for their children. His father was a farmer, who had no land to his name, while his mother worked as a daily wage earner in the village. All through school, Sindhav helped his father in the farm in order to contribute to the family income and to raise money for his own education.

After school, he joined college and completed his B.Com with a distinction, but the path forward seemed uncertain. He did not have enough money to pursue higher education and was unaware of his career prospects.

It was at this point, that Sindhav heard about the S2S training program from a friend and decided to enroll for it.

During the course he learnt spoken English, a variety of job skills and computer operating skills. After completing the course successfully, Sindhav appeared for an interview at Sai Auto Force and was eventually hired as a computer operator.

His starting salary was Rs. 8500, which was enough for him to contribute to his family income and support his brother through college.

Today, Sindhav is a prized employee at the company and is in line for a promotion. He is thankful to the S2S training program for showing him the right career path.

11

AJIT VAISHNAV

Talala, Junagadh Gujarat
Aga Khan Rural Support
Program (India)

Gir is known for its lion and wild life reserve. Ajit has grown up around tourists visiting the sanctuary, and developed an interest in becoming a guide with the forest department

Although he had always been a good student, Ajit lacked English speaking and communication skills which would be crucial for him to interact with the tourists.

Ajit eventually enrolled for the Skills to Succeed training program in the nearby city of Talala. The course helped him improve his spoken English and the retail lessons taught him the nuances of professional interaction.

After completing his training, Ajit was selected by Kalyan Jewelers as a sales representative. Although this was a welcome source of income for him, Ajit still wanted to realize his dream of working with the forest department. In order to do this, he started preparing for the entrance exam alongside his full time job.

Today Ajit is working with the forest department as a location tracer and is thankful to the Skills to Succeed program for helping him realize his dream.



12

VASAVA DIVANJIBHAI PARSINGBHAI

Dediapada, Narmada Gujarat Aga Khan
Rural Support Program (India)

Divanji Bhai belongs to a village called Mota Sukaamba of Dediapada taluka. There are six members in his family. His father is a farmer and despite of financial hardship, he helped Divanji Bhai study till class 12th education, but gave up as Divanji was not interested in doing so. During this time, there was a youth meeting in his village through Yuva Junction. It was during this meeting that he heard about the Skills to Succeed training program and decided to enroll. His father also wanted Divanji to pursue higher for it at the Yuva Junction Dediapada.

Initially Divanji was a shy student, but gradually as the course progressed, he broke out of his shell and started participating in all activities.

When he joined the course Divanji was not interested in taking up a job, but the course inspired him to work towards a brighter future for himself. His parents noticed this change in him too, and also realized that the program was helping him become a more focused and confident person.

After completing the course, Divanji appeared for an interview with Cafe Coffee Day. He passed the interview with flying colors and was hired as a crew member at the company. Today he earns 6000/- per month. In recognition of his hard work and determination Cafe Coffee Day awarded him a thousand rupees in cash, and honored him with a silver bracelet for being the best company employee in the South of Gujarat. He thanks Skills to Succeed for giving him the opportunity to make meaning of his life or make value out of his life.

13

VASAVA KUSUMBEN PRATAPBHAI Netrang, Bharuch AKRSPI KAMLESH DHARASANDA Maliya, Junagadh AKRSPI

Financial hardships and a struggle to pursue their education is a common thread in the lives of Kamlesh and Kusum. Both come from agrarian families which depended on daily wages to sustain themselves. Kamlesh and his sister had to discontinue their schooling and look for work. Kamlesh somehow managed to finish his graduation by taking up odd jobs. He then enrolled in an I.T.I to learn relevant skills that will get him a job. Kusum, on the other hand pursued her education to become a teacher.

The yearning to learn more and build a better future prodded them and led them to the AKRSPI centres in their neighbourhood. Kamlesh joined the centre after working for a year, during which he realized he had no future with the company he was working for. For him this was a great opportunity to grow his career. Kusum's engagement with the centre started slowly but within a month's time she had shown remarkable progress and was able to overcome her fear of public speaking.

Their perseverance yielded results as, based on their dedication and abilities, both were offered jobs at AKRSPI. Kamlesh works with AKRSPI's youth training project and is able to support his family financially. Kusum managed to clear the interview with flying colors and works as a Development Organizer at AKRSPI's Netrang centre.

14

CHIRAG KANTIBHAI SUTHARIYA**Meghaninagar, Ahmedabad Gujarat****Saath Charitable Trust**

Chirag's father worked as a mason and his mother worked in the vegetable market in their village in Modasa, Gujarat. They were not able to support Chirag's education through the family income of Rs. 8000/month and hence decided to send him to a hostel in Himmatnagar run by an organisation for supporting education of children.

Recalling his experience Chirag says, "At the hostel my accommodation, food and study expenses were all paid by the organisation. This reduced the burden on my parents a lot. My parents used to send me Rs. 300-400 per month for my expenses." After Chirag failed his class 10 exams, he decided to work for a year. At first he worked as a waiter, and eventually moved on to a sales job. The money he earned was enough to sustain in the city, and the job also gave him enough time to prepare and appear for the tests he had previously failed. After a failed attempt at the class 12th exams, he decided to move to Ahmedabad.

He eventually cleared his higher secondary exams and started doing embroidery work to make a living. It was during this period that he heard of the Skills to Succeed training program through a roadshow conducted by Saath Charitable Trust. "The trainer informed me about the course and the job opportunities I would have access to after. I wanted to start studying again and this seemed like a good way to do so," he says. Through the course Chirag acquired basic computer skills, and also improved his knowledge of spoken English. After the completion of training Chirag joined the M. P. Shah Hospital where he works as a computer operator and also provides nursing assistance to patients.

"Currently I really like my work through which I'm earning Rs. 6,000 per month and as I'm also doubling as a nursing assistant, this will help me further when I'll join the nursing course"

15

JOURNEY WITH QUEST ALLIANCE NAGMOHAN, FACILITATOR Sir M Visvesvaraya ITI - Bangalore

“After being a part of the QUEST Intervention, I started preparing for my classes, and gradually transformed into a facilitator. I became aware of my behaviour and made significant changes to the way I interacted with the students; I even changed my dress code. Today I do not get angry very often, and I can empathize with my students. I feel energized every time I conduct QUEST classes. I enjoy conducting the ‘My strengths and Abilities’ sessions the most. I am very happy with my life and career,”

PUSHPLATHA, FACILITATOR

“With QUEST I became aware of my roles as a trainer. I realized the importance of knowing my learners. I have become more self aware. One day there was an inspection visit to our ITI center. The visiting authority on hearing that I follow the QUEST curriculum cancelled the inspection. He said that he was convinced that a classroom following the QUEST curriculum would have high levels of learning. He also congratulated me and encouraged me to keep up the good work. This was a great moment for me.”

16

VINU AMRITBHAI PARMAR Odhav, Ahmedabad Gujarat Saath Charitable Trust

19 year old Vinu comes from the Santra village of Patan. He graduated with a bachelors in Commerce, but the possibilities for pursuing a higher education seemed bleak.

“I wanted to study law after my graduation, but my parents could not afford to send me to a law school. Although my parents were against it, I decided to move to Ahmedabad to earn money for my tuition fee,” he says.

Waiting to find something more suitable, Vinu decided to assist his elder brother in his work as an electrical fitter. He got to know about Skills to Succeed through Saath’s mobilization drive and decided to join the centre. “Initially the training was difficult and

Vinu felt very alone. His English was weak, communication skills were poor and he did not participate in class for the fear of being ridiculed. But with some encouragement from his facilitator, he started showing improvement.

After the course, Vinu joined MyRecharge , as an independent retailer, and is earning between Rs.4000 to Rs. 5000 a month. “The work needs a lot of networking and being interactive. I have to constantly market my services as anyone could be a potential customer,” Vinu adds proudly. Vinu is confident that these two jobs will help him save money for law school.

Recently Vinu appeared for interview organized by Saath, for a position in the Reliance Insurance Company.

“The interview was a new experience in which I was asked to sell a pen, which I did successfully. From tomorrow I’m starting a new job as a Customer Service Executive through which I will earn Rs. 6,000 per month. This will be additional to the work at MyRecharge,”



