

Initiative with Shoolini University ICF Foundation Periodical 2022

India has the largest millennial population (400 million) in the world. This makes education the most critical insertion point for India and an important driver for future readiness. It is further essential that Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 - Quality Education is accessible not only to those in metropolitan cities but smaller tier two cities and towns for creating an inclusive and thriving future for all. The vision for this project encompassed supporting millennials to be future ready and enabling students from smaller towns to have the confidence and mindset to integrate successfully into larger organizations and their work culture. Coaching as an approach, could enable this. It could facilitate millennials develop an adaptive mindset, which is extremely relevant and needed for the fragile and changing times we live in.

What inspired engaging with and developing the Shoolini Ignite project was the focus on millennials of tier two cities. India was also recovering from the second wave of the Covid crisis, which was exceptionally hard, filled with gloom and compromised mental wellness for the majority. During the past 18 months, most students were learning online, robbing them of the connections, networking and social capital that makes university so significant in the individual growth journey. At this juncture, the gift of coaching to the students and their educators seemed significant as it created a safe space for them to connect with their inner resources and co-create a plan to move forward in a direction that added meaning to their life. This also was an opportunity for the students to discover and sharpen their leadership skills that enhanced their overall efficiency and productivity.

The Ignite Project with 100 ICF Credentialed Coaches for 300 Shoolini University students and 35 Faculty focused on this SDG and its key objectives. This was a pioneering initiative in making coaching accessible in higher education. Students from different departments and degrees, from MBA students to PhD students, became part of this project. The intent was to inspire and enable the students to take charge of their life, increase their self

awareness, which in turn would equip them to build on their strengths while working on their area of improvement keeping the end goal in mind.

We were also motivated to create a community of socially inclined coaches who are aware of ICF Foundation's work, Ignite initiatives and its amazing project design, structure, toolkit and templates that enables coaches to deliver excellence in a consistent manner. The larger motivation beneath this was that all coaches are aware of the Sustainable Development goals and consciously engage and take ownership which develops a culture of inclusive social responsibility in the coaching fraternity.

The outcome of the project was rewarding. As per the end of the coaching survey of this project, 98% of the participants said that they were motivated to take action from the learning from coaching while 94% of participants had a better clarity regarding their goals. Within such a short period, participants demonstrated significant improvement in influencing & negotiation skills, communication, problem solving, time-management, operational efficiency and teamwork.

This experience of coaching gave young adults the opportunity to reflect and tap into their own resources, learn a way of leading SELF that is very different from the "telling" paradigm prevalent in most education institutes. India being a relationship oriented culture, the skills to be both assertive as well as relationship savvy are essential to success in all domains of life. Their increased confidence to be able to speak up, influence others, share their perspectives and needs, and communicate effectively was a significant outcome of the project. Moreover, several students specifically talked about how coaching transformed their life in multiple ways starting from increasing their confidence, translating knowledge to action, increasing self-belief, enabling them to identify their strengths, courage to face the world etc.

The overall impact was a real sense of joy in the coaching community. Being able to positively support our future generation in extraordinarily challenging times to feel more confident and future ready resulted in a huge sense of satisfaction for each individual

engaged in this project. The sense of meaningful contribution amongst the coaches was tangible. We were immensely grateful and humbled to have the opportunity to lead this Ignite project and contribute to making coaching accessible to millennials and their educators.