



SKILLING HEALTHCARE WORKERS

As India is facing a healthcare epidemic of a different kind, of unskilled workers, Wadhvani Foundation, Bangalore, is ready to address the crisis

BY EI BUREAU

You've been taken to the hospital with a neck injury after being involved in an auto accident. The hospital is overwhelmed and you haven't been able to see a doctor or a nurse for several hours. The only person attending to you is a nursing assistant. She's pleasant, takes your blood pressure (incorrectly), and asks some of her colleagues to help her move you to a new bed. Unbeknownst to you, she has not received the proper training for moving patients and her technique actually makes your injury worse. Now, multiply this experience several-fold. India is facing

a healthcare epidemic of a different kind: unskilled workers.

This is India's - and most other industrialised nations' - reality in nearly every sector; the nation is facing a critical shortage of skilled labour. A recent study predicted a shortfall of 350 million skilled workers by 2022 in 20 high-growth sectors, ranging from infrastructure to textiles and clothing, from automobiles to healthcare.

Yet, this staggering figure does not include the additional need for skills upgrading to raise productivity, gender equality, and social cohesion. It has been nearly 5 years since India's National Skill Development Policy was unveiled in an effort

to mitigate the skilled labour crisis, targeting the creation of 500 million skilled workers by 2022. To call it an ambitious plan would be an understatement, once the previous figures are married with the fact that India has 10 million post-secondary school dropouts a year.

Wadhvani Foundation

Enter Wadhvani Foundation (WF). With over 10 years of experience accelerating economic growth in India, WF entered the skills development arena with a bang. In its inaugural collaboration with the Bangalore-based leader Narayana Health and Healthcare Consortium (NH), WF's Skills Development Network is turning vocational training, or applied learning, on its head.

With the challenge of providing training to new nurses, as well as refresher material for existing nurses and healthcare support staff (like nursing assistants) across 20 multi-speciality hospitals of Narayana Health, WF leveraged technology to repurpose existing training content into a groundbreaking online, offline education model (alternatively referred to as blended learning.)

NH provided domain knowledge and expertise, while Wadhvani Foundation's instructional design team and developers created an industry-driven curriculum module by module, resulting in over 160 hours of content. Sixty-minute lesson segments revolve around job-specific and functional healthcare industry knowledge via a 'how to' approach, including video-based instruction, activities, games and simulations, and peer-learning.

Diverse areas

The WF model has trained over 1,500 nurses in a variety of areas. For example, the competency-based modules developed for General Duty Assistants and Nursing Assistants include medical procedures (infection control, movement, clinical care, patient hygiene, lab processes, nutrition, etc.), occupational health, environment, and safety, functional English, life skills (interpersonal skills, workplace skills, health communication skills), basic IT (computer basics, productivity

tools, health systems), and medical mathematics.

All of Wadhvani Foundation's courses are accessible online and open source, meaning that they can (and are) being rolled out to new healthcare markets, as well as universities, colleges, and individuals seeking self-learning opportunities. Designed to ease the burden facing training institutes and instructors, WF's courses are self-paced and student-centric. They are intended to precede class time and hands-on training - a flipped classroom approach, allowing teachers to operate as facilitators or coaches in the classroom and eliminating the need for additional in-house trainers.

Successful collaboration

Dr Devi Shetty, Padma Bhushan winner and founder of Narayana Health, says: "Our strategic collaboration with Wadhvani Foundation is a step in the right direction. India's healthcare sector is facing an acute shortage of support staff, and I am glad that the skill development initiative of Wadhvani Foundation has already skilled over 1,500 competent staff. This happened despite full-shift schedules, because these learner-centric e-modules do not drain experienced teaching nurses' time but instead allow the trainees flexibility in taking courses inside and outside the classroom. Since we seek to expand from 5,000 beds to 30,000 beds in 3 years, rather than running disparate and traditional teacher-driven training courses, this approach of creating and deploying repeatable, modular self-driven and peer-driven lessons can help us realise this goal without diluting the skills of our people or quality of our care."

Hospital administrators are reporting positive results, citing relief that precious people resources do not have to be diverted from patient care to training; they can accomplish their objectives simultaneously. Based on the success of the collaboration with Narayana Health, Wadhvani Foundation aims to scale its e-learning initiative to reach 3 million students by 2020 in association with new skills colleges, also known as community colleges, across India. ■



BASED ON THE SUCCESS OF THE COLLABORATION WITH NARAYANA HEALTH, WADHWANI FOUNDATION AIMS TO SCALE ITS E-LEARNING INITIATIVE TO REACH 3 MILLION STUDENTS BY 2020 IN ASSOCIATION WITH NEW SKILLS COLLEGES, ALSO KNOWN AS COMMUNITY COLLEGES, ACROSS INDIA