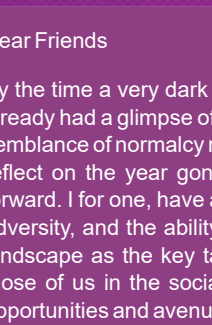


## LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD

### KEYNOTE



#### CHETAN KAPOOR

Editor-in-Chief  
TMF-Samvaad

Dear Friends

By the time a very dark 2020 gave way to its successor on January 1, we already had a glimpse of some light at the end of the proverbial tunnel. As a semblance of normalcy returns around us, this is the right time to pause and reflect on the year gone by and pick up the learnings we should carry forward. I for one, have assimilated a huge dose of resilience in the face of adversity, and the ability to promptly and collectively adapt to a changed landscape as the key takeaways for the road ahead. And of course, for those of us in the social sector, the year has left behind a floodgate of opportunities and avenues where we need to focus our attention towards.

One such opportunity is to create more warriors for our healthcare ecosystem, a goal towards which the Foundation has assiduously worked over the past year. The pandemic has redoubled our resolve to move in this direction, and I am pleased to share that Tech Mahindra Foundation will soon be adding two more healthcare academies to its existing three. We have also used the locked-down months to build and refine our e-learning strategy, particularly attending to the needs of teachers in our Shikshaantar program. Accordingly, we have embarked on a campaign to equip over 3000 teachers with Digital Literacy skills. Another campaign to upgrade the skills of frontline healthcare workers through a structured training program on Hospital Hygiene is also underway.

With this edition of *Samvaad*, we are starting a series of dialogues with individuals who have made a space for themselves in the social development sector. The series begins with an interview with Ujwal Thakar, a celebrated banking professional who successfully transitioned to the social sector nearly two decades ago, and therefore has comprehensive experience of the corporate as well as the NGO world. In his interview, Ujwal gives valuable insights into how these two worlds must come together to create a better future for our children.

This edition also marks the first anniversary of *Samvaad*. We had initiated this newsletter to spread awareness of TMF's work to the social development sector, and I am pleased to share that 5 editions later, we now have a circulation of over 125,000 – including the entire team of Tech Mahindra Limited. The editorial team has worked long hours for every publication, so you can get to meet the team here. We will onboard a few new members to this team soon, while the existing team continues to guide and inspire the new members. For all of us, any feedback from you is the bounty we eagerly look forward to – so do drop us a line of suggestion or critical appreciation at [samvaad@techmahindrafoundation.org](mailto:samvaad@techmahindrafoundation.org).

With best wishes of peace & well-being for each one of us.

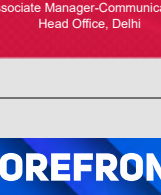
#### Editorial Team-Samvaad



**Shormi Roy Choudhury**  
Location Head-Kolkata & Bhuvaneshwar

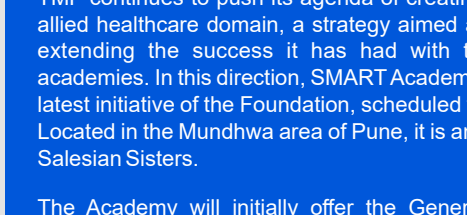


**Prachi Gaur**  
Project Director-ITEI, NDMC



**Supriya Das**  
Associate Manager-Communications  
Head Office, Delhi

### SKILL DEVELOPMENT AT THE FOREFRONT: LAUNCHING THE PUNE ACADEMY



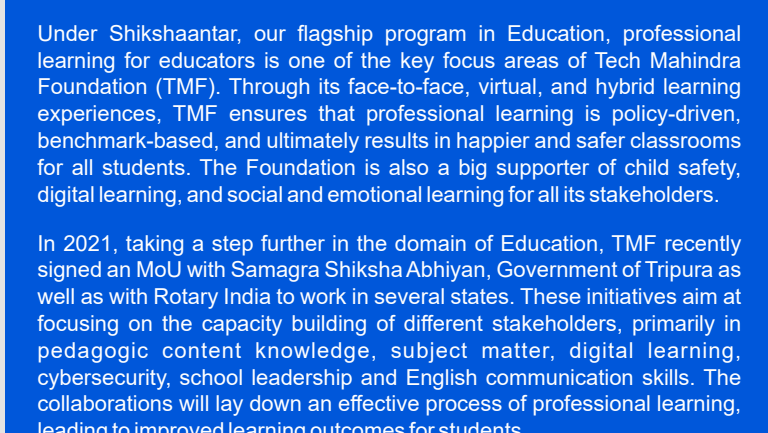
**COMING SOON**  
TECH MAHINDRA SMART  
ACADEMY FOR HEALTHCARE  
PUNE

TMF continues to push its agenda of creating trained paramedics in the allied healthcare domain, a strategy aimed at scaling up the model and extending the success it has had with the three other healthcare academies. In this direction, SMART Academy for Healthcare, Pune is the latest initiative of the Foundation, scheduled to be launched by mid-2021. Located in the Mundhwa area of Pune, it is an initiative in association with Salesian Sisters.

The Academy will initially offer the General Duty Assistant, Hospital Hygiene Assistant and Hospital Front Office & Billing Executive courses certified by HSSC (Healthcare Sector Skill Council). Apart from healthcare training, students will undergo training in the Foundation Skill courses such as English, Basic IT and Soft Skills. A dedicated placement team will facilitate students with job opportunities upon the successful completion of the course.

[KNOW MORE](#)

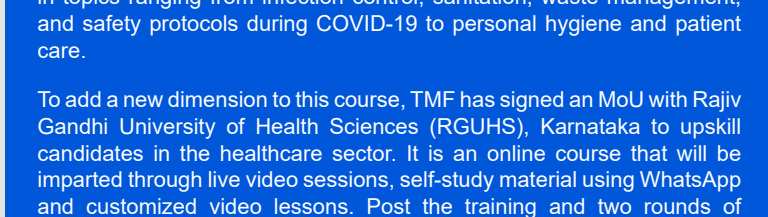
### EXPANDING THE WORK IN EDUCATION



Under Shikshaantar, our flagship program in Education, professional learning for educators is one of the key focus areas of Tech Mahindra Foundation (TMF). Through its face-to-face, virtual, and hybrid learning experiences, TMF ensures that professional learning is policy-driven, benchmark-based, and ultimately results in happier and safer classrooms for all students. The Foundation is also a big supporter of child safety, digital learning, and social and emotional learning for all its stakeholders.

In 2021, taking a step further in the domain of Education, TMF recently signed an MoU with Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, Government of Tripura as well as with Rotary India to work in several states. These initiatives aim at focusing on the capacity building of different stakeholders, primarily in pedagogic content knowledge, subject matter, digital learning, cybersecurity, school leadership and English communication skills. The collaborations will lay down an effective process of professional learning, leading to improved learning outcomes for students.

### COVID FIGHTBACK: ONLINE SKILLING ON HYGIENE AND SANITATION



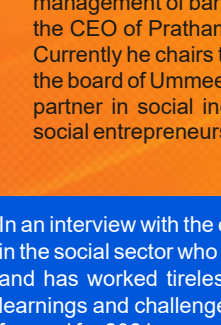
**HOSPITAL HYGIENE  
ASSISTANT PROGRAM**

To mitigate the demand for high-level hygiene and sanitization in hospital premises, TMF initiated the Hospital Hygiene Assistant (HGA); a skill development program, in its allied healthcare domain. This project has skilled 182 candidates (and counting) from 8 NGOs across 5 states in India in topics ranging from infection control, sanitation, waste management, and safety protocols during COVID-19 to personal hygiene and patient care.

To add a new dimension to this course, TMF has signed an MoU with Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences (RGUHS), Karnataka to upskill candidates in the healthcare sector. It is an online course that will be imparted through live video sessions, self-study material using WhatsApp and customized video lessons. Post the training and two rounds of assessments the candidates would be certified by TMF and Healthcare Sector Skill Council. It will fill the gap for trained paramedics and other staff needed in medical colleges and hospitals under RGUHS.

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### THE SAMVAAD INTERVIEW



#### UJWAL THAKAR

Ujwal Thakar has been a leader in the Banking, Consulting and Not-for-profit world. He spent a decade as a member of the top management of banks like SBI, SCB, Timesbank and BNP. He was the CEO of Pratham, India's largest NGO in the education space. Currently he chairs the board of Educate Girls, an NGO; and sits on the board of Ummeed, Arogya World, Shoshit Sewa Kendra. He is a partner in social incubator NCore and a mentor to many young social entrepreneurs.

In an interview with the editorial team of *Samvaad*, Ujwal Thakar, a veteran in the social sector who successfully crossed over from the corporate world and has worked tirelessly in the social development sector, shared the learnings and challenges of 2020 for the corporates and NGOs and a way forward for 2021.

*Some exclusive excerpts from the interview...*

**1. As someone with over 40 years of experience behind you, equally divided between banking and social development sectors, what have been some of the biggest takeaways for you from 2020?**

The year was all about responding to COVID-19... both the corporate and the NGO sectors responded well to the crisis, the degrees and methods being different. The NGO sector, despite challenges of corpus & liquidity came forward and did a lot of relief work. The corporate sector is relatively more accustomed to handling challenges, though nothing of this kind. Today if there is relative harmony in the country, it is because of the work of both sectors, along with that of the government.

**2. Are you satisfied with the way that the social sector in India has responded to the crisis brought about by the pandemic? In hindsight, what could have been done differently?**

As I said, there's lots that the social sector did, but they could definitely have done more and responded differently. One, by learning valuable lessons from corporates...their business continuity, their liquidity plans, disaster recovery plans and how to work in a crisis. In the social space such planning is lacking. Most NGOs do not have a corpus and the CSRs could make donations in corpus after doing the necessary due-diligence. NGOs need to build corpus to respond better during an emergency. Historically, there has been a lack of trust between the corporates and the NGOs, and understandably so, but at the end of the day, if we have to solve large problems, it has to be with the interdependence of the government, corporate and social sectors.

Second, NGOs must plan well. While they generally work from the heart, they have to be prepared for a stringent due diligence and answering tough questions on the part of the funders.

**3. How do you see the world of philanthropy in general, and Corporate Social Responsibility in particular, changing in the post-COVID era? Do you see this as a sustainable, long-term change?**

A lot of CSR funds have been pre-empted by PM Cares which was perhaps necessary at that moment but might impact the CSR pool going forward. Profits are going to be low for corporates, especially the smaller ones and there could be a 20-30% reduction in the CSR funds. Working on a lower budget would require prudent planning and one could look at trust-based partnerships and creating collaborations. NGO sectors are usually hesitant to collaborations, and that ought to change.

Tech Mahindra Foundation has the ability and the financial strength to think through problems in the verticals of education and employability post pandemic and could look for possible solutions by creating alliances among foundations, identifying strengths to come together to impact larger common issues.

**4. Let's talk specifically about Education, the space you have been the most associated with, and one which has perhaps been hit the hardest in the pandemic. How do you see the education sector in 2021 and beyond?**

Education sector was the worst hit because of the pandemic. A year without schooling has ensured a large gap for many students, especially the girl child, and children from the rural and underprivileged backgrounds. While technology offered help, but expecting ed-tech to be magic solution for the current times is not advisable. Physical solution is the need of the hour. We also need to focus on nutrition, on the objectives of ensuring everyone has access to school and all segments are attending the classes. Psychosocial issues, drop-out rates, child-marriages, gaps in learning of slow-learners have to be addressed.

**5. Finally, what is your message for youngsters who are contemplating a career in the social sector at this point in time?**

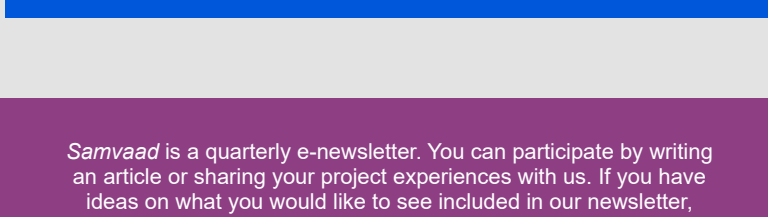
In a scarcity economy of the past, risk-taking opportunities were few. Circumstances have changed for the youth today who could invest 3-5 years of their lives to solve the problems of real India, through CSR wings of companies, sabbaticals and so on. My advice to the youth would be to take risks, be innovative, creative and work on the problems of real India. In them lies hope for India.

*Disclaimer:* The views and opinions expressed in this interview are of the individual interviewed and do not in any way reflect the opinion of Tech Mahindra Foundation.



Watch the full interview here

### HONORED AND HUMBLER



TMF has touched over 13 lakh lives through 310 COVID-19 relief interventions across 14 states in the country during the ongoing pandemic. As a recognition for this, the Foundation is honored to receive awards in two separate categories for relentlessly supporting the most vulnerable population including healthcare workers, security personnel, sanitation workers, migrant workers, farmers, transgenders, elderly people, daily wagers, persons with disability and more.

Samvaad is a quarterly e-newsletter. You can participate by writing an article or sharing your project experiences with us. If you have ideas on what you would like to see included in our newsletter, then we are all ears!

Please e-mail us your thoughts and ideas at  
[samvaad@techmahindrafoundation.org](mailto:samvaad@techmahindrafoundation.org)

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