

Building Entrepreneurial Ecosystems



Start At the Very Beginning



About Me

- Social Innovation Professional
- India Program Director at Acara - University of Minnesota
- 16 years of experience
- Mentor, coach, teacher
- Mental health advocate

What do I propose?

- Understand the granularity of the ecosystem
- Start with the unitary component - people
- Comment on the education system
- Opportunities available for students - cross-geographical perspective
- What are the next steps?
- What is achievable?
- How can the diaspora contribute?

Let's Start with Two Stories





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1. Contact our sales team



2. Order inventory over the phone or online with "Rainmaker" on



3. Have it delivered to your store

So, I propose the following

- Diaspora focus is on big-splash macroeconomic investments
- Focus on microcosmic trends - what do young people need?
- How do we beef up the ecosystem to inject innovation in curriculum?
- How do we provide a supporting environment?
- How do we support ecosystem enablers?
- What creative progression path do we provide young people?

The Landscape

- Big push towards entrepreneurship
- Startup India Policy
- Ministry of Skill Development focus - social entrepreneurship
- Technology Business Incubators
- Models - Kakatiya Sandbox, Startup Village
- Entrepreneurship cells in colleges
- Awards and competitions

However...

- Tech-spearheaded innovation
- Curriculum not relevant to the fleet-footedness of innovation demands
- Educators imprisoned by demands of centralized management
- Lack of interdisciplinarity in course of study
- Opportunities for cross-cultural learning enabled by financial, not merit-based factors
- Minimal support from corporate sector

Moreover...

- Ecosystem of binary components - investors and mentors
- Diverse support not intertwined with curriculum
- Elite institutions - bouquet wider and more colourful
- English is the language of “opening doors”
- Global North templates fit into Global South contexts



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While the shortcomings in education are a national concern, school is still the best experience that children get throughout India...

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Clarion “push factor” calls to young people

Scant pull factor from the “establishment”

Binary perception of ecosystem

Dearth of mentor-champions



Big push, not small fry initiatives

What can the diaspora do?

For Students

- Create corpus funds to de-risk innovation
- Provide opportunities for “sandboxing”
- Integrate innovation into the curriculum
- Inter-cultural and cross-geographical learning opportunities
- “Spread the joy”

For Educators

- Backbone of innovation ecosystem
- Diversity of opportunities
- Research and publications
- South-South teaching opportunities
- Localization in content delivery

In General

- Shore up innovation in higher education
- Education-industry relevance
- Pull factor from industry and corporate sector
- Opening up your purses to the “feel good”
- Unlock pathways for cross-geographical talent flow

Questions?