

About Uddami

The aim of Uddami is to reduce poverty through workforce development and capacity building using information and communication technology (ICT). That's a fancy way of saying that we teach computer skills to poor students so they can get a job that pays them a decent wage. We also help other organisations do this for the people they work with.

Across India 80% of all students who enrol in school drop out of the formal educational system before they finish Class 12 (equivalent to a US high school degree). Even for those students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds who manage to achieve a 10th or 12th grade education, entering the mainstream job market is difficult. Their education (mainly rote learning of useless and outdated information) just doesn't prepare them for a job in an overcrowded, competitive job market.

Practical computer skills combined with soft skills (communication, problem solving, creative thinking) give our students access to wider economic opportunities. These are the skills we focus on to empower our students' potential.

UCTC (Uddami Computer Technology Centre)

UCTC has three main components:

- Computer training
- Workforce development
- Capacity building

Computer Training

We teach practical, job-oriented computer skills to the underserved in Kolkata. Our our method of teaching as well as our approach to learning is focused on teaching how to think. The basic UCTC course is free as long as the students attend classes regularly, come to class on time, respect everyone at our centre and maintain a 70% average. Our students are youth (aged 18-26) who know computer skills will get them a better job, and women who would like to acquire employable skills that would give them some financial security. All of our students are from economically disadvantaged backgrounds or there are special circumstances which have considerably lowered their economic status.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- 47% of our graduates (2000-2006) are working; 36% have gone on to further education
- June-August - Michelle ("Mich") Sherbondy, deaf intern from Gallaudet University, taught ASL (American sign language) to a group of deaf students and our teachers. She gave a workshop and ongoing classes in computer skills including basic web design using Dreamweaver for our deaf students and deaf students from two local schools. These classes took place at UCTC and at THE DAYWALKA FOUNDATION, one of our partners.
- New curriculum - during the last year we have given our curriculum a major overhaul to try to better meet the needs of our students. The Uddami curriculum is regularly evaluated and edited because we feel that as technology and the job market changes, we need to revise our lessons and the skills that we teach.

UCTC WEBSITE

Two Uddami teachers work on the website - Rabia Khatoon keeps the website updated and Nivedita Pal writes the copy for the articles. Our students who are learning HTML create web pages about themselves which we add to the site so that you can learn more about them and their dreams. <http://www.uddami.org/uctc/MeetTheStudents.html>

UCTC LIBRARY

Our library, started in 2003, continues to be popular with all our students and teachers, past and present. Our library now has over 200 books, in English and Bengali.

Workforce Development

TEACHER TRAINING

We train graduates of UCTC as computer teachers for other organisations.

Five teachers were trained to work in four new partner organisations:

- GURIA GOWALA, 2001 and SUKLA MAJUMDAR, 2005, for Narendrapur Home (Sanlaap India)
- SUMITRA GHOSH, 2005 - Soma Home (New Light)
- REENA SINGH, 2005 and SUJATA GAYEN, 2006 (Shiksamitra)
- Provided a teacher (KHOKON DAS, 2001) and teacher training for a nonprofit in Gariahat

INTERNSHIPS

We offer on the job training through our for-profit UDDAMI SOFTWARE SERVICES so that students can get real work experience in a supportive yet professional environment.

- This year we have one full-time employee (KHOKON DAS, 2001) and two part-time paid interns (POLASH MONDAL, 2001 and SAMSONI SARKAR, 2006)

Capacity Building

UDDAMI PARTNERS PROGRAM

- SANLAAP INDIA – started a computer school in their Narendrapur home. Uddami provided curriculum, technical advice and two trained teachers.
- NEW LIGHT – started a computer program in Soma Home for girls at risk from the red light area of Kalighat. We provided a computer teacher and curriculum.
- SHIKSAMITRA – is an alternative school working with drop-outs from the regular school system. We are providing software, technical assistance and advice and a computer teacher. We are working together to create a curriculum relevant to the needs of their students and school.

WORKSHOP ON COMMUNICATING WITH THE DEAF

This workshop was given by MICHELLE SHERBONDY (Mich) in American Sign Language with translation she provided that was read by Alison (Uddami Program Director). This workshop was hosted by our partner *The Daywalka Foundation* and included members of six other Kolkata nonprofit organisations. Mich discussed deaf history, her own life as a deaf person and ways that hearing people can communicate with deaf people.

TECHNICAL TRAINING

Bryan (our volunteer technical advisor) and Khokon (Uddami Software Services employee) taught a course in hardware maintenance for staff members of *International Justice Mission*.

Help for Individuals

UDDAMI sometimes helps our female students and others in our community if they need financial aid for education. We look at each person individually and if we feel it is appropriate to help, we look for a sponsor. Because our teachers develop personal relationships with our students they know and understand the circumstances of individual situations.

MEGHA MAZUMDAR – *Kevin Barker* (one of UDDAMI's angels and longtime supporters) sponsors Megha's education.

GURIA GOWALA – *Lynda Leigh* and *Kevin Barker* both support Guria. Lynda helped Guria with living expenses when she was forced to leave her home and both sponsors are helping Guria achieve her dream of learning computer programming. She is currently working as a computer teacher for Sanlaap India and she is also attending classes at Brainware to learn beginning programming.

100 Friends sponsored educational expenses for MONIKA GHOSH, REENA SINGH & SABINA KHATOON.

PRASANTA DAS - This year Prasanta turned seven in July and he is attending St. Sebastian's School. *Sonya Anderson* is sponsoring his education and other necessities as Prasanta is from a very poor family. For the month of November he was also lucky enough to have Max, a college student from the US, volunteer to help him with English. Max was a good choice because as he can't speak Bengali, Prasanta was inspired to learn English more quickly to be able to speak with Max.