

IC3 Institute Case Study 2

Note: Student names have been changed to maintain confidentiality.

Breaking Boundaries

The below case study provides a deeper view of how career counselors from IC3 Institute are not only helping marginalized students achieve employment but building the foundations for resilient livelihoods and career development capabilities.



School: Pitts Modern School, Gomia, Jharkhand

Counselor Name: Ganesh Kumar Aranya

Student Profile: First-generation learners, Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, Below Poverty Line, Other Backward Classes

Mr. Ganesh Kumar Aranya, a former teacher, embarked on a transformative journey by joining the IC3 Institute's Flagship Program (Empower) with a mission to expand his students' career awareness and opportunities. Recognizing the detrimental effects of parental fixation on

Engineering and the Medical field, Ganesh firmly believed that limiting career awareness to a few fields could hinder young learners' potential.

Working with Parents and Enhancing Awareness

Inspired by his experience in the Empower program, Ganesh initiated efforts to educate parents about the vast array of career opportunities and their connection to classroom learning. He organized sessions with students and parents, aiming to raise awareness levels among all stakeholders.

Organizing Internships and Cultivating Industry Connections

To provide students with firsthand knowledge of the industries in their area, Ganesh facilitated paid internships and arranged factory visits. Leveraging the school's alumni network, he established a special group called "guru bhai," which created opportunities and paved new career pathways for students. Looking towards the future, the school is currently exploring an online platform to foster a stronger connection between alumni and current students.

Empowering Students and Exploring Diverse Career Paths

Starting with a group of 23 students, Ganesh worked tirelessly to enhance their spoken English skills and successfully secured internships for them in local industries. These students, in turn, became mentors to their peers, helping them follow the same path. Ganesh guided students in exploring various job options available in the region, encouraging them to broaden their horizons and consider unconventional career paths beyond Engineering and Medicine.

Promoting Career Podcasts and Magazines

In a stroke of innovation, Ganesh motivated students to initiate their own career podcast. The podcast featured interviews with entrepreneurs, successful personalities from the region, and even comedians. This initiative not only fostered research and communication skills but also increased overall community awareness. The podcast was screened in school and watched at home by parents, students, and other stakeholders. Students formed groups to watch the podcast, sharing the knowledge they gained. Additionally, Ganesh encouraged the creation of a 60-page career magazine, which the school plans to publish and distribute in the region, aiming to enrich knowledge and promote career exploration.

One of the podcasts can be viewed [here](#).

The magazine assignment shared by the counselor with his students can be viewed [here](#).

Parental Engagement and Overcoming Stigmas

Recognizing the significance of parental involvement, Ganesh established a WhatsApp group and initiated regular meetings with parents. Although only two parents attended the initial meeting, the remarkable outcomes achieved by students who embarked on careers in entrepreneurship and paramedical fields resulted in increased participation. By building trust and emphasizing his genuine intentions to help students, Ganesh effectively addressed parental restrictions and established a supportive environment. Sharing success stories played a vital role in balancing student aspirations and parental expectations. Ganesh encountered challenges in creating buy-in due to the stigma surrounding "counseling." To overcome this, he diligently educated the community about the distinction between career counseling and other forms of counseling, dispelling the misconception that counseling is only for struggling students.

Counseling Approach with Marginalized Learners

Recognizing the unique struggles faced by marginalized learners, Ganesh focused on providing individual counseling sessions. Understanding that these students often felt embarrassed to speak in group settings due to their socioeconomic status, Ganesh provided personalized guidance and support.

Identifying Challenges and Paving the Way

Ganesh identified parental restrictions, financial constraints, limited awareness, and the lack of financial assistance options as the primary challenges marginalized students face. Through his efforts in engaging parents, building trust, and sharing success stories, he successfully tackled some of these challenges, fostering an environment that encourages students to explore diverse career options.

Encouraging and Facilitating Entrepreneurship

Ganesh facilitated the ideation and funding for several startups founded by his 12th-grade students who sought transitions straight into resilient livelihoods after school. This included a career counseling startup and several other ventures that benefited the community. Furthermore, the counselor supported students transitioning into paid internships followed by jobs in the local industry. This included students doing internships in the paramedical field and starting their own practice.

Ganesh's students are now setting an example for the rest of the learners from the community through the stories of their success and the support they provide through the 'guru bhai' platform. One such success story is the story of Neeraj Kumar.

Neeraj's Story

Neeraj hailed from a family of farmers. With a father working as a farmer and a mother as a housewife, Neeraj's upbringing instilled in him a strong work ethic and a passion for community engagement. Always wearing a smile on his face, Neeraj actively participated in various school

sports, cultural events, and activities. The hardships of the family due to them falling below the poverty line led Neeraj to decide that he needed to break the cycle of poverty.

Neeraj's academic performance in the All India Secondary School Examination (AISSE) was commendable, earning him a partial scholarship to continue studying science, specifically Biology, in classes 11 and 12. It was during this crucial phase of his education that he received guidance from the school's Counseling Laboratory™ [1], which suggested various subjects aligned with a biology background that required minimal financial assistance.

Following this advice, Neeraj pursued a Bachelor's degree in Pharmacy (B.Pharma) from Marwari College in Ranchi, Jharkhand. This transition into a vocational program was facilitated by the counselor, who understood Neeraj's context and needs. However, his journey was not solely focused on academics. Neeraj understood the importance of serving society, especially during challenging times. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, he joined the 104 Peramal Swasthya Call Centre, where he selflessly dedicated his time to helping those in need.

In the year 2023, Neeraj successfully completed his final year exams in B.Pharma, marking the culmination of his academic journey. Concurrently, he concluded his tenure as a Covid warrior at Piramal Swasthya, having contributed significantly to the battle against the pandemic. Despite his academic and professional achievements, Neeraj's vibrant spirit led him to explore other passions, including acting, social work, and even actively participating in blood donation drives. His leadership qualities were recognized, and he took on the responsibility of leading the college student union.

Reflecting on his career journey, Neeraj firmly believes in following one's passion and doing what one believes in. He credits the timely and appropriate guidance he received for paving the way to a brighter future. Without such guidance, Neeraj acknowledges that he could have easily lost his way.

Neeraj's memories of his career journey are filled with gratitude for the support he received. The right guidance at the right time steered him towards a fulfilling career while also allowing him to positively impact society and pursue his diverse interests. As he embraces his present and looks toward the future, Neeraj's story stands as a testament to the transformative power of career guidance to build resilient livelihoods in marginalized communities and the future leaders of the community.