

# StudentStory

Student Forum, Entrepreneurship Stories, Contests, Resources

## Navigation

## Two IIT Grads Attempt To Change Education In Small Towns

by **Shreyansh Singhal** on [May 20, 2013](#) in **Resources, Spotlight, Success Stories**

Share 3



Countryside, a playschool and Gyankriti, an education technology consultancy are the brainchild of Yograj Patel and Akshay Gupta. Both have been educated in conventional state board schools and were totally unaware of use of technology in education. However while undergoing their studies at IIT Bombay, they realised the potential that technology could make in the field of education – especially through the use of interactive whiteboards, wireless classroom microphone and more. They decided to make learning fun in Tier 2-3 cities and rural areas with the use of such tools – however they wanted to make sure it did not turn out to be an expensive affair for students and parents. With Yograj in college completing his graduation and Akshay who has passed out, they plan to start up in Indore.

While the original plan was to start a school from kindergarten to 12th, they could not fulfil their dreams because they were unable to procure the funds needed to setup the infrastructure. Instead, they decided to start a preschool, which was also a lucrative space, owing to the huge demand-supply gap and an increase in number of working parents. However their original dream to work in the preschools to K-12 space was not completely shelved. Yograj researched on the subject of education technology to better understand its potential in the market.

During one such discussion with schools, they got their first break, when a trustee of an Indore school agreed to try out their idea in his school. Suddenly they had their hands full. Akshay now leads on the front-end operations and pre-school business, while Yograj handles back-end operations and GyanKriti.

Countryside playschool competes with entrenched players like Vedanta, Kidzee, Bachpan, Treehouse. When asked how Countryside will be different from the many out there, Yograj is closely guarding his secret USP until their next pre-school opens. Similarly Gyankriti has huge competition from more than 200+ companies in India like Educomp, Mexus, Tata etc. In case of Gyankriti, Yograj says they will use open education resources and services across various schools and shall charge them only one time fees instead of royalty.

These two youngsters are being guided and shown the way by people who have considerable experience in the field of education. That includes their seed investor, Narayan Sultania and others like [Vardhan Kabra](#) and [Kiran Bir Sethi](#) – both who have long been attached to the field of education. Aftab Seth, former Indian ambassador to Greece, Vietnam and Japan; Miltiadis (Kamal) Verma, an experienced person in international trade and Ravi Ajmera, former director Deutsche Bank Group and Nomura Securities, India – act as board of advisors for both Countryside and Gyankirti. Akshay was recently invited by Aftab Seth to an Indo-Japan round table conference, which helped him enhance his ideas and networking skills – and is an opportunity

trade and Ravi Ajmera, former director Deutsche Bank Group and Nomura Securities, India – act as board of advisors for both Countryside and Gyankirti. Akshay was recently invited by Aftab Seth to an Indo-Japan round table conference, which helped him enhance his ideas and networking skills – and is an opportunity that Akshay deeply cherishes.

Yograj says they hope to work for 10-15 affordable private schools by installing Gyankriti and open about 20 Countryside preschool branches in the next three years. With their first preschool, Countryside going live in June at Indore, Akshay and Yograj have their fingers crossed. While the official opening of Countryside will happen in June, they had run a summer camp in the same campus with two kids, which has now grown to 18 kids.

One school in Indore has roped in Gyankriti to provide education technology to their campus and based on the effectiveness of the solution, the said school has promised to sign contract for another three schools they have. Akshay says they are also in discussion with 2-3 schools in Kota and Mumbai.

With the new academic year just round the corner, we wish Countryside Playschool and Gyankriti a good response from all the schools and students.

[Share](#)

3

**About Shreyansh Singhal**[View all posts by Shreyansh Singhal →](#)