

01

FIRST · IN · SERIES

Discoveries from the Roundtable

Beyond Campus *Boundaries.*

Building high-impact education ecosystems for
innovation, talent, and growth.

A note before you begin

What follows is a record of a conversation — not a report about it.

Every meaningful gathering leaves behind ideas worth carrying forward. This playbook captures one of them.

On 12 June 2026, leaders from higher education, industry, government, and the innovation ecosystem came together in Visakhapatnam for **Digii100x Andhra Pradesh**—a regional gathering of India's invite-only higher education leadership community.

Across the day, conversations unfolded through keynote addresses, panel discussions, masterclasses, workshops, and curated roundtables, bringing together diverse perspectives on the future of higher education.

This playbook captures the collective wisdom that emerged from one of those roundtables: **Beyond Campus Boundaries**. It brings together the experiences, practices, debates, and ideas shared around the table into ten discoveries—each grounded in what leaders have built, tested, and learned through experience.

How this reads

10

Discoveries

17

Voices around the table

15 min

To skim; longer to sit with

Read it as a window into the conversation, and as an invitation to continue it within your own institution.

Why this conversation mattered

The next chapter of higher education will be written *beyond the campus.*

The strongest institutions are no longer defined only by what happens within their walls.

Their impact is increasingly shaped by the **strength of the ecosystems they build around them**—bringing together industry, government, innovators, investors, communities, and learners to create opportunities that no institution can deliver alone.

This shift has moved beyond aspiration. It is becoming a defining characteristic of future-ready higher education.

It is this idea that shaped the conversation captured in this playbook.

“

The question is no longer how campuses grow. It is how the *ecosystems around them grow* alongside them.

The backdrop

Three numbers that measure **how far we still have to go.**

01 · Industry–Academia Gap

66th

India's global rank

NITI Aayog now flags academia–industry collaboration as one of the largest brakes on Indian higher education's global standing.

Source · NITI Aayog
Internationalisation of Higher Education in India, 2025

02 · Employability Deficit

42.6%

Indian graduates job–ready

Graduate employability fell to 42.6% in 2024, from 44.3% the year before — proof that classroom outcomes alone do not produce workforce-ready talent.

Source · Mettl
India's Graduate Skill Index, 2025

03 · Startup Ecosystem

1.59^{L+}

DPIIT–recognised startups

From ~500 in 2016 to 1.59 lakh DPIIT–recognised startups by January 2025 — an entrepreneurial wave looking for campuses as launchpads, not spectators.

Source · PIB, Government of India
Nine Years of Startup India, 2025

Indian campuses are full of partnerships.
The next leap is turning them into **measurable outcomes.**

The frame the room was working within

Four distinct outputs the ecosystem must produce.

Every discovery that follows sits inside one of these four — or, more often, across two of them.

01

Knowledge

Industry–Academia Partnerships

Joint research, IP, and Centres of Excellence — **partnerships that produce curriculum, patents, and publications**, not just signatures.

02

Ventures

Innovation & Startups

Labs, incubators, mentors, and risk capital — so a student idea has a clear path **from prototype to first cheque**.

03

Talent

Regional Workforce Development

Read the regional demand signal and rewire credentials around it — **verifiable proof of skills**, not four years of transcript.

04

Public Good

Collaboration for Societal Impact

Anchoring the institution in regional civic life — **jobs created, problems solved**, community labs at scale.

HEIs need to move from MoUs to a **living ecosystem strategy**.

Around the table

Seventeen voices, to highlight one thing that worked.

Drawn from diverse institutions and industries, every speaker contributed experiences that shaped the ideas captured in this playbook.

 Dr. K M Suceendran Head — Academic Alliances Tata Consultancy Services Chair	 Dr. M. P. Shyam President Rashtreeya Vidyalaya (RV) Institutions Chair
 Ms. Richa Bajpai Founder & CEO Campus Fund Chair	 Shri Abdul Qadir A. Rahman Buhari Pro Chancellor Crescent Institute of Science & Technology
 Shri Ajay Kumar Chief Investment Officer Elevate Campuses	 Shri Arjun Varadraj Founder & CEO Arivupro
 Shri Balamurugan S. P. Co-Founder HCL GUVI	 Shri Chaitanya Chitta Senior Vice President, South Asia Cintana Education
 Dr. Dilip Kumar Chekuri CEO, Medi Valley NITI Aayog Incubator of AMTZ	 Ms. Gomathi Venkatachala CEO Anaadi Foundation
 Dr. Madan A. Sendhil Chairman Rathinam Group	 Prof. P. Venkatramana Vice Chancellor (I/C) Mohan Babu University
 Shri Pravesh Dudani Founder & Chancellor Medhavi Skills University	 Cdr. Dr. Pramod R. Kulkarni Vice Chancellor REVA University
 Shri R. V. Balasubramaniam Vice President Jio Platforms Limited	 Dr. Sai Prakash Leo Muthu Chairman & CEO Sairam Institutions Group
 Shri Siddharth Sinha Associate Vice President Greenko Group	

Every institution in the room brought something worth listening to.

17 · VOICES

The room, before the conversation

Every meaningful conversation **begins with the right question.**

As one of the Session Chairs, Dr. K. M. Suceendran opened the discussion with a simple invitation. He asked every participant to reflect on one initiative that had made a meaningful difference within their institution and to share the journey behind it in just two minutes.



Dr. K M Suceendran
Head — Academic Alliances
Tata Consultancy Services

Session Chair

“What is the **one thing** you initiated, what outcome did you get, what challenge did you face, and what is your future aspiration?”

One by one, leaders shared the initiatives they had championed, the outcomes they had achieved, the challenges they had navigated, and the aspirations driving their next chapter. Together, their experiences formed the ten discoveries captured in this playbook.

Contents

Ten discoveries. from the conversation

- 01

Make industry the syllabus — from Semester 2 to the offer letter.

Interns from the second semester; the final project runs inside the partner company — and nine times out of ten, the offer letter follows it.

Knowledge
- 02

Make room for the job creators — alongside the job seekers.

Not every student will found a company. But exposure, gap years and credit for building let the ones who can — while teaching itself gets commoditised.

Ventures
- 03

Fund the student idea in three cheques — ₹1 lakh, ₹10 lakh, ₹40 lakh.

A first cheque when the idea appears, a second when it shows momentum, a third at the incubator — Crescent's route from ₹520 Cr to ₹3,161 Cr of startup value.

Ventures
- 04

Turn MoUs into outcomes — and design degrees for a forty-year career.

Nobody can name the job today's eighth-grader will hold. So stop optimising four-years for a first job title — build the ability to keep learning instead.

Knowledge
- 05

Build the labs before the students — industry will move in.

Medi Valley put plug-and-play manufacturing and testing labs on empty forest land first. 185 companies and 500 startups followed; the campus came last.

Public Good
- 06

Give degree credit for what students build before college.

The NEP credit framework stops at the university gate. Anaadi's teenagers already run startups — extend the framework downward, and their work counts.

Talent
- 07

Give every student one honest number — the Career Readiness Score.

Marks, CoE scores and skills combined into one score that tells the student what package they are ready for today, and what to improve to move up.

Talent
- 08

Teach engineers to design — India can make, but not yet design.

Forty years of designing warships showed Kulkarni the gap: graduates who can analyse and assemble, but lack the capability and confidence to design whole products.

Knowledge
- 09

Build the Academia–Student bridge — and raise the Acharya.

The recruiter and the teacher are strangers to the student between them — and the country underpays the teacher it claims to revere.

Talent
- 10

Get many partners behind one Centre of Excellence — not one lab per company.

Oxford's Equinox pooled universities, companies and investors into one coalition — more money in, and credibility no single vendor's lab can carry.

Ventures

Discovery 01

01

The conversation opened with a simple idea: industry partnerships create the greatest impact when they become part of the learning experience itself. At RV Institutions, that decision was made more than twenty-five years ago.

Make industry the syllabus — from Semester 2 to the offer letter.

Case study: how RV made industry the second semester — and the last one.

Narrated by



Dr. M. P. Shyam

President

RV Institutions, Bengaluru

Session Chair

The story

Twenty-five years ago, RV set up **twenty-five centres of excellence** — one per branch of engineering — and built each shoulder-to-shoulder with the industry it served.

What followed became a template. **Four hundred industry MoUs** — Tata, Bajaj, Microsoft, Google, Domo on green hydrogen — each opening a **skill lab** on the campus. The proof: RV students have already built **the first student-built satellite** launched into space from an Indian engineering campus.

A second-semester student walks into a company as an intern. In final-semester project work, that student sits inside the partner company with a mentor. **Nine times out of ten**, the offer letter follows.

How you might start

01

Which three programmes could place students inside a partner company by Semester 2 — and what's in the way this intake?

02

Which industry partner would open a skill lab on your campus if asked — and what would you commit alongside it?

03

Could every final-semester project run inside a partner company — the step that turns nine of ten projects into offer letters?

“What is important is to give skills to the students — and to **work very closely with the industry captains** so we inculcate what is required.”

Dr. M. P. Shyam · RV Institutions

Discovery 02

02

The conversation expanded beyond employability to entrepreneurship. Richa Bajpai challenged institutions to think beyond preparing students for jobs—and to create environments where they can build companies of their own.

Make room for the job creators — alongside the job seekers.

Case study: what if the institution's job is not teaching — but producing job creators?

Framed by



Richa Bajpai
Founder & CEO
Campus Fund

Session Chair

Overview

As Founder and CEO of Campus Fund, Richa Bajpai invests in student entrepreneurs, recent graduates, and young founders building companies at the earliest stages of their journey. Her perspective comes from working closely with young people who choose to create opportunities, not just pursue them.

She challenged the room with a simple idea: **India's future depends not only on producing employable graduates, but also on nurturing the next generation of entrepreneurs** who can create jobs, solve problems, and drive innovation.

That requires institutions to go beyond delivering knowledge. They must expose students to new possibilities, build the confidence to experiment, and create the flexibility to pursue entrepreneurial ambitions.

She pointed to examples already within reach—from BITS Pilani's flexible attendance model to the NEP 2020 provision for academic breaks that allow students to build ventures—showing that **many of the policy enablers already exist**. The opportunity now lies in making them part of institutional practice.

“It is the responsibility of academic institutes to help create **folks who become job creators, rather than job seekers.**”

Richa Bajpai · Campus Fund

Discovery 02

02

Bajpai's challenge landed on the desk of the person who has run further with it than most — and who also, on one point, disagreed with her squarely.

Make room for the job creators — alongside the job seekers.

How Medhavi treated the NEP credit framework as a Brahmastra — and folded industry into half the degree.

Narrated by



Shri Pravesh Dudani
Founder & Chancellor
Medhavi Skills University

What Medhavi did

Dudani founded Medhavi to serve the three-out-of-four students who never reach graduation. His conviction was that capabilities cannot be built inside classrooms.

When NEP 2020 landed, Medhavi read the credit framework as a permission slip. Every programme now runs with **30–50% industry integration** — apprenticeships, on-the-job training, internships — earning real credits toward the degree.

As a partner of the National Council for Vocational Education & Training, Medhavi co-developed **more than 400 qualifications** with industry and edtech partners — each mapped so credits transfer cleanly into higher education.

On one point he departed from Bajpai entirely — for the students Medhavi serves, **attendance must stay compulsory**. The freedom she praised at BITS Pilani presumes a student the sector cannot yet take for granted.

What emerged

30–50%

of every programme's credits earned **outside** the classroom.

400+

industry-recognised qualifications, transferable as national credits.

3 months

of industry immersion for every student after Year 1.

“Knowledge is getting commoditised — AI has brought its cost to almost zero. What will matter now are the **life skills, the softer skills, and the moral compass.**”

Shri Pravesh Dudani · Medhavi Skills University

Discovery 03

03

Bajpai's reframe hung in the room. Dr. Suceendran turned to Chennai for someone who had actually done it.

Fund the student idea in three cheques — ₹1 lakh, ₹10 lakh, ₹40 lakh.

Case study: how Crescent turned ₹1 lakh of student courage into ₹3,161 crore of startup value.

Narrated by



**Shri Abdul Qadir
A. Rahman Buhari**

Pro Chancellor
Crescent Institute of
Science & Technology, Chennai

The story

Buhari is an investor of fourteen years, and it shows. He opened with a portfolio update instead of a policy point.

In 2021, after COVID, Crescent had **120 student startups** valued at ₹520 crore between them. A year later, ₹760 crore. Then ₹1,077. Then ₹2,394. Today, **₹3,161 crore**.

“For comparison,” he said, without irony, “IIT Madras is ₹55,000 crore. But we will get there.”

His conviction is that the trajectory isn't luck. It's a **process** — the three-step capital ladder that the next page walks through.

The five-year trajectory · 120 startups



Figures as stated in session; 2022 figure corrected against the audio.

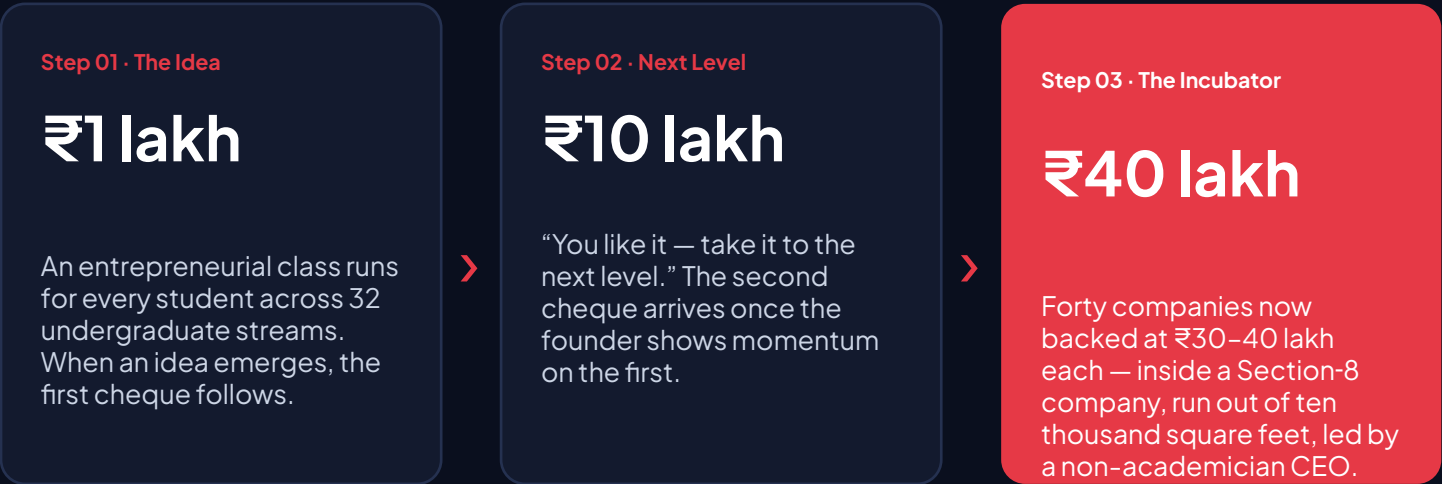
03

Discovery 03

Buhari walked the room through the process, cheque by cheque.

Fund the student idea in three cheques — ₹1 lakh, ₹10 lakh, ₹40 lakh.

The ladder



What emerged



How you might start

- 01

Can your parent trust make a small first-cheque pool — ten ₹1 lakh grants — this academic year?
- 02

Would your board approve a Section-8 vehicle, run by a non-academician CEO, sitting outside faculty structures?
- 03

Which local investors would take a look if you brought three student founders to their table?

“Our aspiration is to create **unicorns**. It will not happen overnight — but there is a process.”

Shri Abdul Qadir A. Rahman Buhari · Crescent Institute of Science & Technology

Discovery 04

04

Buhari's story was about outbound Indian ambition. The next voice reframed the same question from the opposite direction.

Turn MoUs into outcomes — and design degrees for a forty-year career.

Case study: bringing foreign university capacity onto Indian campuses — instead of sending students out.

Narrated by



Shri Chaitanya Chitta
Senior Vice President, South Asia
Cintana Education

The story

Cintana operates in forty countries. Chitta's job is to bring foreign universities into partnership with Indian ones — and he has a specific frustration with how those partnerships are usually built.

“They tend to be MoUs,” he told the room. “Earlier the models were more **optics**. Now we need to move into actual, demonstrable outcomes.”

Cintana's work is built on its founding partnership with **Arizona State University**. In India its partners include **Shiv Nadar University** in Delhi NCR — building joint programmes, dual degrees and 3+1 pathways that give Indian students international credentials without needing to leave.

The bigger opportunity, he argued, is bringing foreign capacity into the areas India is now scaling fast — semiconductors, quantum, health sciences. Offer the ASU curriculum. Roll the programmes onto Indian campuses. Let students who once left for a Master's abroad **come back to build here**.

“Instead of MoUs, MoUs — how do you turn them into **actionable results?**”

Shri Chaitanya Chitta · Cintana Education

Discovery 04

04

Chitta returned to the microphone in the closing minutes with the sharper version of his argument.

Design the four years for the last job, not the first one.

The reframe

“This is not just India,” Chitta said. “Globally, higher education has been designed to give people the *first job*.”

He offered a personal admission. His son is in the eighth grade, and asked him what to study. “I don't have a perfect answer.” None of us do — because nobody knows what work will look like when today's eighth-grader graduates.

The reframe he offered the room: **stop designing the four-year degree for a specific first job. Design it for the last one.** Which means asking, inside every programme: what does this student need to be able to **keep learning** for the next forty years?

Everything — the international partnerships, the dual degrees, the technology overlays, the AI integrations — is downstream of that question.

The shift he named

The old design

Prepare the student for a first job.

A four-year curriculum optimised for a job title that exists today — which may not exist in five years.

The new design

Prepare the student to keep learning.

A degree that builds the learning quotient itself — so the graduate can navigate whatever the last job turns out to be.

How you might start

01

In your flagship programme, what portion of credits is spent building *how* to learn, versus *what* to know?

02

Do you have foreign-university partners for emerging areas — semiconductors, quantum, health sciences?

03

Which of your current MoUs would survive a year-end test of *demonstrable outcomes*?

Discovery 05

05

The room was in Visakhapatnam because of the man who spoke next. His campus sits an hour away.

Build the labs before the students — industry will move in.

Case study: how Medi Valley built the ecosystem first — and let the students, companies and schools follow.

Narrated by



Dr. Dilip Kumar Chekuri
CEO, Medi Valley Innovation Center
NITI Aayog Incubator at AMTZ

The story

In 2018 Chekuri took possession of **270 acres of forest land** at Nadupuru, beside the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant. No road. No network. No inbound talent.

“The big challenge was to bring people to Vizag,” he told the room. “That was the toughest job.”

Their inspiration came from an unlikely place — the 1989 film *Field of Dreams*. Build it, and they will come.

In **342 days**, Phase 1 was live: plug-and-play manufacturing units, testing labs, fabrication facilities. India's first integrated medical-technology zone. Then the tenants started arriving — **185 multinational companies on the ground, and 500 startups supported** from it.

The final piece is the newest: a university and a school on the same campus, so students can walk into the labs of the companies they're studying to join.

Discovery 05

05

The regional lesson, in one line: density is manufacturable.

Build the labs before the students — industry will move in.

Every campus wants its students to graduate into a live industry ecosystem. Most wait for one to arrive. Medi Valley didn't. The order of operations mattered — **build the plug-and-play infrastructure first**, and the tenants (companies, students, schools) organise around it.

For an HEI in a tier-2 or tier-3 city, this is not an abstract policy story. It is a template for what to do when there is no immediate ecosystem to plug into.

What now sits on that ground

270

Acres of forest land

Beside the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant. No road at start.

342

Days to Phase 1 live

Manufacturing plug, labs, fabrication.

185 + 500

Companies · Startups

On the ground, and supported. A school and university sit alongside.

How you might start

- 01

What industrial or infrastructural asset already sits within an hour of your campus? Can you anchor an offering to it?
- 02

If you built a plug-and-play lab companies could rent by the month — which sector would pay first?
- 03

Is there a state or NITI Aayog scheme (like AMTZ) that could underwrite the build if you brought the demand?

“The big challenge was to bring people to Vizag. We were inspired from the film **Field of Dreams**. If you build it, they will come.”

Dr. Dilip Kumar Chekuri · Medi Valley · NITI Aayog Incubator of AMTZ

Discovery 06

06

The next speaker walked into the room from the opposite end of the higher-education question — from what happens before a student ever arrives at a university.

Give degree credit for what students **build before college.**

Case study: what happens when a Gurukulam decides the campus's job starts at age eleven.

Narrated by



Ms. Gomathi Venkatachalam

Chief Executive Officer
Anaadi Foundation, Palani

The story

Anaadi's founders are two former software engineers who left industry to teach. They now run a free Gurukulam in Palani, Tamil Nadu, built on an **IKS-STEM curriculum** — Indian Knowledge Systems folded together with STEM.

Their premise: a student's development has to happen across **all five sheaths** — body, breath, mind, intellect, and bliss — not intellect alone. Current higher education has optimised for one sheath and forgotten the other four.

The result is startling. “By sixteen,” Gomathi told the room, “they are ready to become **institution heads.**” Not employees.

As a test-market last year, thirty-to-forty volunteers took the content to **50,000 students across 19 states.** Two startups have launched from the sandbox — one on a *gobar* (cow-dung)-derived rocket-fuel alternative.

“Rama was identified to become the king of Ayodhya at sixteen. **We are wasting a lot of their time.**”

Ms. Gomathi Venkatachalam · Anaadi Foundation

Discovery 06

06

Gomathi's ask of the higher-education leaders in the room was specific: the students Anaadi is developing at sixteen should not have to wait until they are eighteen to earn academic credit.

The NEP credit framework, applied earlier.

The NEP 2020 credit framework — the same document Dudani called a *Brahmastra* two discoveries ago — could carry credit down into pre-university learning. That would let a sixteen-year-old with a working startup formally count that work toward a degree. Right now, the framework stops at the university gate.

The frame she brought

Panchakoshiya Vikas

Development across all five sheaths

Body, breath, mind, intellect, and bliss. Current higher education optimises for the intellect (*Vijnanamaya Kosha*) alone — and the other four sheaths break down. That imbalance, Gomathi argued, is at the root of the mental-health crisis among JEE aspirants.

The IKS-STEM platform

Test-marketed last year

50,000 students reached across 19 states, on a shoestring team. Two startups launched from the sandbox — one, notably, a gobar-to-rocket-fuel replacement for petroleum. The stated ambition: *touch one billion lives*.

How you might start

- 01

Is there a Gurukulam, school foundation or IKS platform your institution could formally partner with this year?
- 02

Could you offer credit for demonstrable pre-18 work — a startup, a published solution — via NEP credit transfer?
- 03

Where does student wellness sit today — inside intellect only, or across the other four sheaths?

“The credit framework under NEP 2020 is a phenomenal **Brahmastra**. If we intelligently tune it to society's needs, we can empower nation-builders much earlier.”

Ms. Gomathi Venkatachalam · Anaadi Foundation

Discovery 07

07

Coimbatore came next. Rathinam's chairman had spent his recent time on the disruption AI has caused inside classrooms — and how his institution has responded.

Give every student one honest number — the Career Readiness Score.

Case study: how Rathinam tells a student, honestly, what package they are ready for.

Narrated by



Dr. Madan A. Sendhil

Chairman
Rathinam Group, Coimbatore

The story

Sendhil saw what many campuses saw: the classroom lecture had become the weakest part of the student's day. YouTube was better. AI could answer more. The classroom had to be broken open — but into what?

Their answer splits every student's learning into two parallel tracks. The **Main** — the statutory academic curriculum, delivered inside the classroom. And the **CAD** — a Competency Acceleration Track, delivered outside it through CoEs connected to certification programmes.

Marks, CoE scores, and every skill acquired along the way combine into one number: the **Career Readiness Score**. That number tiers the student — and tells them honestly what package they are ready for today, and what to improve to move up.

The Rathinam framework



How you might start

- 01

Split learning into Main and competency tracks — what sits in each, and who owns the second?
- 02

Could you combine marks, CoE scores and certifications into one number per student?
- 03

Who tells students honestly what package they're ready for today — and what to improve?

Discovery 08

08

The next speaker was new to education. He had spent forty years in the Indian Navy designing warships and submarines. That perspective changed the shape of what he said.

Teach engineers to design — India can make, but not yet design.

Case study: why REVA put design at the centre — and named what was missing from every engineering curriculum.

Narrated by



Commodore Dr. Pramod R. Kulkarni

Pro Vice Chancellor
REVA University, Bengaluru

The story

Kulkarni spent four decades designing complex products for the Navy. In 2014 he heard the Red Fort call for Make in India. Fine, he thought — but Make in India needs *Design in India*. And Design in India needs design engineers.

“Our education system,” he told the room, “is producing engineers who cannot design.” They have neither the capability nor the confidence. The way he would flag it in a design review: **they lack the design spine.**

REVA's response: design at the **centre** of every programme's outcomes — not as a specialisation, but as the theme running through the whole degree.

Their Centres of Excellence are treated as *mini factories* — the university invests, the students attach as part of the curriculum, and they leave with skills forged on real production.

The four pillars of competence

01

Qualification

02

Training

03

Skill

04

Experience

Kulkarni's line: “We are specialising only in qualification.”

How you might start

01

In your flagship programme, where does a student first design something whole?

02

Which CoE could run as a mini factory — university-invested, skills forged on real production?

03

Of the four pillars, which does your degree certify, and which does it merely hope for?

Discovery 09

09

Jio came next — the company that democratised the internet across Indian campuses. Its VP arrived with a harder question about what happened next.

Build the Academia–Student bridge — and raise the Acharya (the teacher).

Case study: the bridge everyone forgot — from Academia–Industry to Academia–Student.

Narrated by



**Shri R. V. Bala
subramaniam Iyer**

Vice President
Jio Platforms Limited

The story

In 2015, Iyer took Jio around every campus in the country to offer free Wi-Fi. He was met with suspicion. In 2026 he returned to offer free cloud, free compute, cloud-PC access. *Same suspicion.*

His point wasn't about connectivity. It was about a bridge that never got built. Every conference stages a panel on *Academia and Industry*. Nobody is staging one on **Academia and Student**.

The recruiter and the teacher are, structurally, strangers to the student between them. The child gets pushed like a shuttle toward a career nobody in the ecosystem can name.

Iyer's second thread was harder. Teachers in India are paid so poorly that even if every form of taxation were removed, they would still remain **below par in the country**. Meanwhile Canadian and US teacher-pension funds invest globally — including in Indian companies. *“Their teachers live off our money — and ours do not.”*

“We want to do something in this lifetime by which **Acharya Devo Bhava** is no longer just a catchphrase.”

Shri R. V. Balasubramaniam Iyer · Jio Platforms Limited

Discovery 09

09

Iyer's challenge on faculty landed on two people who had already tried to answer it — one on incentives, one on Gen Z.

Send the faculty to industry — and guide Gen Z better.

Response 01 · On faculty



Shri Arjun Varadraj
Founder & CEO, Arivupro

“We ensure students get three months in industry,” Arjun said. “We should do *three months for faculty* to go to industry too. That will make them relevant.”

In his own commerce-education business, he holds direct expenses to under 30% and returns 40% of gross to faculty. That is how he retains chartered accountants who leave private practice to teach.

“When we start attracting the best talent, we would start building the **best institutions** also.”

Response 02 · On Gen Z



Shri Balamurugan S. P.
Co-Founder, HCL GUVI

Bala runs a Gen Z-heavy team (73% of GUVI's ~800 people). He rejects the language of nightmare. “I look at it as an **opportunity**.”

His method is deliberate. Don't sit with them and dictate steps. Set the direction. Stay out of the way. Watch whether guardrails are in place — those matter more than the daily instruction.

“Gen Z doesn't need hand holding. Set direction, place the **guardrails**, and they do get things done.”

How you might start

- 01

Could you send five faculty to industry for a paid three-month sabbatical next summer — what would it cost, and change?
- 02

What is your faculty compensation as a fraction of tuition revenue? What would it take to move to 40%?
- 03

Where is your Gen Z policy today — attendance rules, or clear guardrails with autonomy inside them?

Discovery 10

10

The last voice at the table brought the sharpest structural reframe of the day. His seat was Greenko. His hats were Oxford, Yale, and NITI Aayog.

Get many partners behind one Centre of Excellence — not one lab per company.

Case study: what Oxford's Equinox did that a Centre of Excellence with one partner cannot.

Narrated by



Shri Siddharth Sinha

Associate Vice President
Greenko Group
Fellow, Oxford & Yale
Ex-OSD NITI Aayog

The story

Sinha's frustration was with the default HEI move. “Normally,” he told the room, “when we build a Centre of Excellence, we get *one company*. An NCL person. One Greenko lab. One Siemens lab.” The name changes; the model doesn't.

Then he pointed to Oxford. Their **Equinox** initiative did the opposite. Oxford pulled in *other universities* — including competitors. Then finance companies. Then investors. Then research institutions. What was going to be another lab became a coalition.

Two things happened. The money multiplied — more universities meant more companies wrote cheques. And whatever Equinox produced became **more credible** because it wasn't associated with a single vendor's name.

Sinha's closing line to the room did the argument's real work.

“Companies can no longer wait for a perfect graduate. You have to **co-create a perfect graduate.**”

Shri Siddharth Sinha · Greenko Group

Discovery 10

Sinha's coalition argument raised a practical question: what would that coalition actually build? Sairam's chairman offered a four-year answer.

Case study: how Sairam turns four years of engineering into 17 goals and 169 targets.

Narrated by



Dr. Sai Prakash Leo Muthu

Chairman & CEO
Sairam Institutions Group

The story

Since 2017, Sairam has anchored its four-year engineering programme in the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals** — all 17 of them, and the 169 targets underneath.

Under the Government of India's *Unnat Bharat Abhiyan*, the campus has adopted ten villages as its real-world problem set.

Every student walks a four-year ladder — Idea-a-thon in Year 1, Solve-a-thon in Year 2, Innov-a-thon in Year 3, Inspire-a-thon in Year 4. It's the coalition Sinha named, applied to community.

The four-year ladder

Y1

Idea-a-thon

Students identify problems they already know.

Y2

Solve-a-thon

Their first attempt at a solution.

Y3

Innov-a-thon

Engineered solution to the problem.

Y4

Inspire-a-thon

Shared across campus, inspiring the next cohort.

How you might start

01

Could three neighbouring HEIs plus two industry partners co-fund one initiative — instead of each building their own?

02

Are there villages, MSME clusters or district-level problems within an hour of your campus to anchor Y1-Y4 project work?

03

What is stopping you from anchoring the degree in the SDG framework — a national commitment with meaning?

“If you force them, nothing is going to happen. If you guide them, **anything can happen.**”

Dr. Sai Prakash Leo Muthu · Sairam — echoing Balamurugan's point

Bringing it all together

Four threads worth carrying home.

As the discussion drew to a close, Dr. K. M. Suceendran reflected on the ideas that had surfaced repeatedly across the room. Though each leader brought a different perspective, four themes consistently emerged—pointing to the priorities that will shape the next chapter of higher education.

01

The tier question

Inclusiveness, not just metros.

Tier-2 and tier-3 cities were named again and again. And the market is meeting them there: “Now companies — services, GCCs — require even arts and science graduates with the right technology skills. *Not just engineering.*”

02

Design x Innovation

Two hands of the same craft.

“Design and innovation go hand in hand. Because the startup ecosystem, design, everything is hand in hand. How do we bring that out?”

03

The faculty question

The faculty is the key stakeholder.

From industry immersion for teachers to the return of *Acharya Devo Bhava* — how do we bring the Acharya up? What we do about it will decide everything else.

04

The student question

What does the student actually want?

Attendance vs. autonomy. Moral compass. The Gen Z that Bala treats as opportunity, not nightmare. How do we constantly engage them — and hold the guardrails?

“We all are speaking the same language in different words. Hopefully **ten years from now**, when we gather again, we will be a very different country.”
— Richa Bajpai, closing

Continue the conversation

Beyond These Pages

Every discovery began with a conversation. Every conversation was shaped by the people around the table.

The ideas captured in this playbook were drawn from the collective experiences of leaders who have built institutions, created ventures, shaped policy, and strengthened the connection between higher education and industry.

These pages distil their insights into ten discoveries. The complete roundtable and individual speaker conversations offer another way to experience the thinking behind them.

 Watch on YouTube

The Roundtable Playlist

Hear directly from each leader through the curated playlist on the Digii100x YouTube channel.

Available on

Digii · YouTube

Playlist: Beyond Campus Boundaries — Roundtable 01, Vizag 2026

Digii100x · Andhra Pradesh · 2026

Thank you.

For the honesty, the specifics, and the exchange that
will travel further than any one of us can carry it.

The next chapter

**The conversation continues — in your institution,
and in the next Digii100x edition.**

To reach the Digii100x team, or to nominate your institution for a future edition:

team@digiiicampus.com