



# Leading Lights

by Rani Singh  
Special Assignments Editor

## Sanju Pal, 29

Sanju Pal is a Management Consultant at global technology consulting firm Accenture. She is also the Founder of RISE (Rural India School Enterprise) a charity she set up to address educational disadvantage in rural West Bengal and promote global citizenship in the UK, after completing the Teach First graduate programme and teaching Maths at Mulberry School for Girls in East London. Sanju has a First Class honours bachelor degree in Mathematics and a Masters in Operational Research and Finance. She is a Virgin Media Pioneer, part of an enterprising community supported by Virgin Media to 'get inspired, get connected and get ahead'.

### Q: Where were you born and what is your family background?

A: I was born and brought up in as was my elder sister who is a Paediatric Consultant at the in . My father, a retired Chartered Electrical Engineer and my mother, a retired Cytogeneticist at Guy's and 'Hospital came to the after they married in 1967.

### Q: How did you come to be involved with ?

A: I grew up taking trips with my family to West Bengal every year, spending summers in a village called Shondanga in the District of Nadia where my father migrated to from the then East Pakistan after the partition of India. I developed an understanding of the challenges of village life and as a teenager in 2000 after floods devastated the area I set up an appeal at my school, for Girls, to raise money to help rebuild the homes. When I became a teacher it felt natural to devise an idea to help the rural communities of .

### Q: When did you decide to set up RISE?

A: I set up RISE in 2009 after the success of a project I started as a teacher called the Enterprise Challenge, the aim of which was to promote social enterprise by connecting my students in London with students in rural West Bengal, to enable them to develop an understanding of village life in India, as I had done growing up. I won the 2008 Teach First Learmonth School Project Award for the Enterprise

Challenge programme and felt compelled to work on scaling up which I did with support from Teach First, UnLtd and HSBC.

### Q: How does the Challenge fit in with your education project in ?

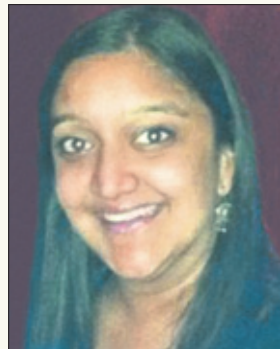
A: In defining the RISE mission during the first year of setting up the charity I realised that tackling educational disadvantage in rural West Bengal, where over 25% of children drop out of school before age 10,

### Tackling educational disadvantage in rural West Bengal is at the core of RISE

was at the core and in 2010 I began developing plans for our Yearn to Learn literacy intervention programme. Through the Enterprise Challenge, students develop key life skills as young social entrepreneurs and the funds they raise will go towards supporting the education of children at the school they are partnered with in rural Yearn to Learn.

### Q: In what ways has it been helpful to be a Virgin Media Pioneer?

A: I became a Virgin Media Pioneer in the first year of founding RISE and it was particularly great to have support in the early phases of developing the charity. Last year I attended a 'Spark Your Ideas' workshop led by Lara Morgan, Founder and Ex-CEO of Pacific Direct which was truly inspiring.



Sanju Pal

### Q: Where are you now with your charity?

A: RISE is a small charity with all members of the team in the and working in a volunteer capacity. Over the past 6 months we have been able to make significant progress because of the commitment, energy and drive of a team of 20 at Accenture who have been volunteering their time to support RISE since May.

### Q: What do you want to happen next?

A: It is an exciting time for RISE as we build momentum across our three projects (Yearn to Learn, the Enterprise Challenge and Survival Week) and employ full time members of staff to support our operations in the and . In 2013 we aim to work with 250 students in the through the Enterprise Challenge and support 500 students in with their literacy through Yearn to Learn.

**For more information about RISE visit [www.rise-online.co.uk](http://www.rise-online.co.uk).**

**If you have any questions or would like to support the charity in any capacity please email [sanju.pal@rise-online.co.uk](mailto:sanjupal@rise-online.co.uk).**

## Are UK immigration laws splitting families apart?

The government's promise to reduce net migration by 2015 includes measures that have made it more difficult for people from outside Europe to join family members in the UK, creating tough choices for some British residents.

The Home Secretary, Theresa May, told Parliament in June that it has been "too easy for elderly dependent relatives to join their migrant children here and then potentially become a burden on the taxpayer."

Dr Avinash Kanodia was recruited by the Department of Health from India in 2003 because of doctor short-

ages in the NHS, he works as a consultant radiologist in Perth. He, his wife and two children are now British citizens.

An only child, he checked before committing to move to the UK that his mother would be allowed to join them if her health deteriorated. Under the new rules she would not be granted a visa because Dr Kanodia can afford to pay for nursing care in India. He told the BBC "The rules are morally wrong. I don't want to leave my mother in the care of a stranger thousands of miles away. I was lured here with the promise of citizenship.

"But look how I am being treated as a citizen of this country. This is the worst thing the government could have done to me."

Dr Kanodia is now considering whether to move his family back to India before his daughter starts secondary school in 2013. "I pay over £40,000 in income tax every year. I don't see how driving people like me away will help the economy of this country."

According to the Home Office, 2700 adult dependent relatives were granted visas in 2010. Of those, 1350 were aged 65 or over.

## Delhi and Mumbai at the bottom of the city brand rankings



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A report out recently conducted by communications agency Ogilvy and Public Affairs Asia scored the Indian cities of Mumbai and Delhi near the very bottom of their city brand rankings.

The perception of cities in the Asian region is very important and highly competitive these days. The desire to attract tourists, foreign investment and skilled labour is more competitive than ever before.

'Location branding' are the new buzz words that are flying around. The ability for a city to be famous for something

and be placed in potential consumers minds is a must.

Asia is now the hub; it is urbanising faster than any other part of the world. With the expectation in the next couple of decades that 20 out of 37 global megacities will be located in the East.

Much like products, cities require a set of brand values to lever themselves on decision makers minds.

The task of branding a city or region is very complex. While a product or service might have a few features that makes it distinct or attractive; a city will have multiple factors.

The trouble with branding a developing Asian city is twofold. Firstly selecting which positive features that should be communicated and that are compelling and distinct enough from other competing cities. Secondly, how to deal with the negative aspects which also present themselves in these cities.

This is the issue that has faced India. While having a relatively stable

government, and generally being free from major natural disasters; issues such as pollution, corruption and poverty strike the headlines.

That is why the Indian cities of Mumbai and Delhi struggle when compared to places like Singapore, Hong Kong and Sydney, which appear at the top of the Asian City brand rankings.

India I feel will find it hard to compete on similar values that a place like Hong Kong espouses.

In many ways India is in quite a confused space. Once famous for being a place of holy pilgrimage, backpackers and a way to escape the strains and stresses of modern life. India now is more intense and commercial than ever before. It's been stripped of its simplicity and spiritual vibes which had made it so unique to tourists.

It will be interesting to see in the coming years whether India catches up with the leading Asian cities or falls further behind.

## Annual event of the UK (London) Chapter of ICAI held in Central London



Mr Manoj Agarwal, Mr Satish Sonthalia- ICAI London, Mr Richard Heald, CEO - UK India Business Council, Ms Fiona Crisp, Council member - The Association of Corporate Treasurer, Mr George Raju, First Secretary (Economic) - High Commission of India in UK, Mr Anil Gadodia, Mr Amit Lahoti, Mr Ajay Agrawal - ICAI London.

UK (London) Chapter of The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India organised its Third Annual event on 27 October, 2012 at Hotel Crowne Plaza London - St. James. The event was attended by 150 people including members, guests from business houses, financial institutes and senior functionaries from accountancy profession. This was the third such annual event of the chapter after the success of last two year's events which brought together members of the Institute of chartered accountants of India in the UK, their family and friends.

The Guests of Honour for the evening were Mr Richard Heald, CEO-UKIBC, Mr George Raju, First Secretary (Economic) High Commission of India in London. The event had a session of seminar in the first half focusing on

investment opportunities in Real Estate in India and educational presentation by HDFC and ACT. The second half of the event was a fun filled evening with Bollywood music & dance, Magic shows and stand up comedy entertainment performance by Kspark Entertainments of Karan Pangali- of Just Dance fame.

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI), one of the largest accounting bodies in the whole world, is recognized globally for its contribution in the fields of education, professional development, maintenance of high accounting, auditing and ethical standards.

UK (London) Chapter of ICAI is one of the largest and most active chapters of the 21 overseas chapters of ICAI and has more than 600 registered members. The Chapter was formed

11 years ago with the mission of promoting the Indian Chartered Accountancy Profession in UK.

The Chapter, from time to time provides opportunities to the members to meet, exchange views and interact with one another for furtherance of their technical competency and knowledge. This is also achieved by hosting seminars and events. Also, by organising social and cultural events the Chapter strengthens the community ties among the members.

The Chapter has from time to time has also partnered with various businesses and leading accounting bodies and has organised various activities of professional interest to not only its members but also to the wider group of professionals engaged in professions other than accountancy.