

# CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY REPORT 2021





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## Letter from our CEO

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At Avasant, our business of providing advisory services is guided by our core objective of empowering beyond - empowering people, businesses, communities, and countries to reach beyond the status quo and challenge their potential to acquire new levels of success.

As a UN Global Compact member since 2011, Avasant has aligned its corporate vision and business practices with the ten principles of the Global Compact which spans issues such as human rights, labor laws, environmental concerns, and anti-corruption.

For Avasant, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) means that we integrate this responsibility every day during the regular course of our business. Amidst the unprecedented turmoil of COVID-19, Avasant has made protecting the health and safety of employees a top priority. COVID-19 has served as an important reminder of the lesson that without harmonious cooperation with the society and the environment, no enterprise can be sustainable.



**Kevin S. Parikh**  
Global CEO,  
Avasant Foundation Chairman

Avasant works closely with governments and investment promotion agencies in emerging regions to bring sustainable investment and promote economic growth. Avasant has been accredited for its efforts in attracting investments that have resulted in employment generation, increased taxation revenues and skills development for local youth. Avasant has assisted multiple governments in creating frameworks for the development of IT and BPO industries by crafting and implementing frameworks of standards, policy and human capital. These engagements have earned Avasant global appreciation for its philanthropic efforts, such as recognition in the [Vault Consulting Survey 2016](#), recognition as [Impact Sourcing Influencer from IAOP in 2018](#), recognition from the [American India Foundation in 2018](#), recognition from the [Stevie Awards for Women in Business 2018](#) and recognition from [IAOP and HCL Red Ladder Awards in 2020](#) for promoting women empowerment and diversity.

In addition, Avasant has incorporated a not-for-profit organization to spearhead its community involvement initiatives. [Avasant Foundation](#) (AF) empowers youth in underdeveloped and emerging economies by creating employment opportunities through skill development training programs, while supporting local efforts toward developing science, technology, engineering, arts and math (STEAM) education and entrepreneurship. AF also launched its fully online, computer-based skills training model in response to the learning challenges emphasized by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is the firm's responsibility as a global corporate citizen to develop and provide programs to create jobs for youth in the US and around the world.

Avasant is strongly committed to environmental sustainability and is an equal opportunity employer that does not tolerate any kind of discrimination among its employees. By extension, we also treat our partners and vendors with dignity and deploy fair practices in the selection and procurement process.

I am pleased to inform that Avasant remains firmly committed to enhancing its CSR efforts and ensuring that it conducts its business in a socially responsible and ethical manner.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K. S. Parikh'.

Kevin S. Parikh  
Global Chief Executive Officer

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Avasant's mission is to empower people, businesses, communities and countries to achieve sustainable economic growth and development, and create a connected, open, accessible and equal society. As a leading management consulting firm, our economic, human, physical and social resources give us enormous reach and potential to make a significant impact on people and communities around the world.

All our actions align with our purpose, from the way we run our business to our employee engagement program which supports our social impact arm - Avasant Foundation. This means our focus is on how we connect our capabilities to help our clients achieve their goals, to fuel economic growth, and connect communities to the tools they need to be sustainable. Avasant Foundation leverages best practices and knowledge base from its parent organization Avasant, to empower economically disadvantaged communities and utilizes Avasant consultants' expertise in the development of training materials using technology and innovative skills.

This Corporate Social Responsibility policy focuses on three (3) primary areas: (1) Avasant's commitment to UN Sustainable Development Goals, (2) Avasant's Women Centric Focus; and (3) Environment and Social Governance (ESG) and Climate Resilience.



## OUR VISION: EMPOWERING BEYOND

### About Us

Avasant is a leading management consulting firm providing digital transformation, sourcing advisory, country capacity development and governance services to Fortune 1000 clients around the globe. Our talented team of consultants, technologists and lawyers average over 25 years of industry-honed experience and have conducted over 5,000 engagements in more than 50 countries worldwide. Avasant drives customer value by utilizing its proprietary consulting and advisory methods, which have been refined over decades of real-world transaction and engagement experience.



Avasant advises governments and private enterprises in developing and implementing business strategies and improving process efficiencies. It also helps small and medium-sized organizations increase their market share by enhancing their process efficiencies and customer reach. Avasant's management consultants and advisors offer focused advisory services on market-expansion strategy, business process assessment, public-private partnerships as well as operations and compliance.



Avasant has been at the forefront of the global expansion of outsourcing services. Our credentials include being recognized by the International Association of Outsourcing Professionals (IAOP) as being among the World's Best Outsourcing Advisors' for ten consecutive years, 2009-2021 receiving a 5-star rating across all categories: Size and Growth, Customer References, Certifications, Programs for Innovation, Programs for Corporate Social Responsibility.

Kevin S. Parikh, Avasant's Global Chief Executive Officer, has been recognized by *Corporate Vision* magazine as 'California CEO of the Year', *Industry Era* among the 10 Best CEOs of 2018, and has been distinguished as a Top-Rated CEO by the new community-based insights platform, *Owler*.

Avasant has extensive experience working with various governments and donor agencies such as The World Bank, USAID, The Commonwealth Secretariat and The Rockefeller Foundation, among others to promote and expand markets in countries like Ghana, South Africa, Rwanda, Uganda, Jordan, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Belize, Albania, Moldova and China.

In 2012, Avasant, with The Rockefeller Foundation, produced a report designed to enhance the understanding of the Impact Sourcing sector and specifically focuses on key initiatives that will help to develop and sustain the sector.

As a strategic advisor, Avasant plays a unique intermediary role between multinational and government clients seeking consulting and implementation services, and the global service providers who offer them. With our deep relationships in "buyer" markets like the US and UK, we maintain close relationships with many Fortune 1000 companies, as well as a strong presence in leading service provider geographies such as India and China.



## Social Responsibility at-a-Glance

At Avasant, we not only care about what we do but also how we do it. We care about our culture. Our work is governed by principles that generate value for our clients, our professionals, and society as a whole. 2020 saw us reaffirming our people-focused policies, business ethics, environmental sustainability, and empowering women and youth. As a consulting firm, we deliver on engagements that have a direct and significant impact on people in our clients' geographies. To combat one of the world's biggest challenges, youth unemployment, we support workplace development at local organizations and build partnerships in the US and emerging countries. Our projects in Africa and Latin America have been focused on science, technology, engineering, arts and math (STEAM) education, particularly in IT/BPO sectors, which in turn create large numbers of knowledge-based jobs for the youth.

Avasant has worked in over 50 countries including Palestine, Albania, Moldova, Uganda, Kenya, South Africa and Ghana in Africa and in Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and Haiti in the Caribbean region.



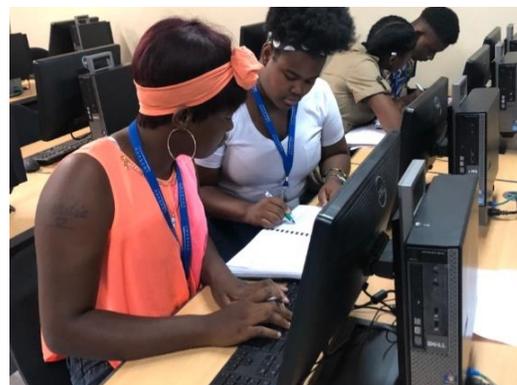
*Proud graduates in Jamaica*



We support the local communities in the countries in which we operate. We believe that our involvement with society should go beyond the economic development and job creation aspects inherent in our activity. A firm's social responsibility must not be limited to its outreach initiatives. It should be an all-encompassing concept covering all stakeholders including employees and vendors. Additionally, the basis should be rooted in moral, ethical and justifiable business principles such as fair trade, non-discriminatory policies, and zero corruption. As a consulting firm which requires employees to travel to client sites, we support "net-zero"

greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions goals. We do this by minimizing travel and using tech-collaboration tools where possible. This is one of the many ways that Avasant contributes to the environmental sustainability of our business

Avasant works with leading institutional bodies, including the World Bank, Inter- American Development Bank, African Development Bank, European Bank of Reconstruction and Development, Asia Development Bank, United Nations Agency for International Development (USAID), United States Trade Development Agency (USTDA), Rockefeller Foundation, Clinton Global Initiative, American India Foundation, Girl Rising, United Nations and SDG Funders Philanthropy Platform in their pursuits to end poverty and enable societies globally to realize their potential. Avasant enables an environment for the use and adoption of ICTs for economic development, which directly results in increased employment opportunities in the IT and ITES sector.



Through Avasant Foundation (AF), our not-for-profit venture, Avasant directly impacts the lives of thousands in emerging economies across the globe by providing education, enabling employment opportunities, and building entrepreneurial skills. Avasant and its foundation are aligned in supporting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, especially goals 1- No Poverty, 4- Quality Education, 5- Gender Equality, 8- Decent Work and Economic growth and 10- Reduced Inequalities.

AF's Avasant Digital Youth Employment Initiative (ADYEI) provides deserving youth with job-related skills training to enable employment in the leading ICT BPO industries in the Caribbean. This initiative has provided over 800 deserving youth with vocational and life skills trainings and connected over 94% of them to employment through Impact Sourcing practices. We do this by educating the business partners on Impact Sourcing job hiring, which complements the traditional outsourcing model to provide business value along with an added advantage of social benefit.



Avasant Foundation Chairman Kevin Parikh and Executive Director Chitra Rajeshwari were recognized by the Clinton Global Initiative in 2015 and 2016 for their hugely successful youth employment initiatives in the Caribbean.

Kevin Parikh, AF's Chairman, and Chitra Rajeshwari, AF's Executive Director, were recognized two years in a row by the Clinton Global Initiative in 2015 and 2016, for enabling employment for over 94% of the deserving youth in Jamaica and Haiti who graduated from AF's Digital Youth Employment Initiative.

Avasant also supports organizations that have been working around the globe for economic stability and betterment of lives. Avasant and AF have made charitable contributions to organizations including: the Clinton Global Initiative, Rockefeller Philanthropies, Association Haitienne pour le Developpement des Technologies de L'Information et de la Communication (AHTIC), Sharefest Community, American India Foundation, TIE Foundation, Project HANDUP and the Business Process Industry Association Jamaica (BPIAJ).

In 2017, Avasant partnered with IAOP to analyze the current results of the Women Empowerment survey at OWS 2017. The purpose was to gather data on the perceptions of gender equality, empowerment and opportunities for women in the outsourcing industry and to identify where and how outsourcing has empowered the lives of women internationally, both inside and outside of the workplace.



Avasant Foundation Executive Director, Chitra Rajeshwari is now the lead chair of the Women Empowerment, Leadership and Diversity chapter. In 2018, Chitra was awarded Gold in the Transformational Sourcing Relations Leadership category in Stevie Awards for Women in Business. Chitra was the recipient of the Women Empower Women award at HCL's Red Ladder Awards 2020. This event recognizes high performing and high potential women leaders and holds them up as role models for other aspiring women.



In August 2020, Avasant collaborated with the University of Southern California (USC) for their initiative, More Than a Business: Empowering Women, Securing Communities. The program's goal is to provide financial and entrepreneurship training to women from low-incomes areas in Los Angeles County who would like to launch start-ups. The first cohort of 35 women were empowered with the skills and tools required to grow their businesses which focused on a wide range of areas including photography, painting, and food. The program will launch a second cohort in November, continuing to support the community's next group of successful business leaders.

As part of our participation in the UNGC, Avasant has pledged our commitment to the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) – an initiative that is at the cornerstone of our company mission. Through the recognition of gender equality, we contribute to critical predictors of stability, economic growth and security, and entrepreneurialism,

As part of our commitment, as the CEO of Avasant, Kevin S. Parikh has signed the CEO Statement of Support, committing to the development of the “initiate, implement, report” framework, as a guide and benchmarking tool for Avasant’s SDG success.



Avasant also pledged support to the Clinton Global Initiative’s efforts to digitally transform regions in the Caribbean, including Dominica, and the US Virgin Islands in conjunction with the World Bank and other similar organizations. An additional training program was recently launched in Guyana in partnership with University of Guyana to provide entrepreneurial and digital skills training to over 200 youth, including women, in Guyana. This program is being delivered fully online, leveraging the Avasant Learning Portal in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. A training program was also recently

launched in The Bahamas to train 500 Bahamians with some degree of working experience to upscale their professional career and enable them to participate in the digital economy. To support workforce development for the digital economy, Avasant created and delivered a Digital Skills Curriculum for Jamaica. Avasant Foundation also concluded its first training cohort of 49 students in Trinidad and Tobago benefitting from Digital Skills for Global Services. This Digital Skills Curriculum will primarily be used to support digital skills development within the Global Services Sector. Avasant developed a digital services platform to support the Haitian BPO sector.

## Corporate Social Responsibility Through the Years

- 2006 Avasant LLC founded by CEO Kevin S. Parikh.



- 2008-2020 Avasant's Global Development team works for capacity building, strengthening investment attraction, identifying market growth opportunities, and developing strategy for the expansion and promotion of the sourcing industry. These efforts lead to job creation, skill development and economic growth in South Africa, Uganda, Rwanda, Malawi, Nigeria, Kenya, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Jamaica, Haiti, Belize, Colombia, Barbuda, Barbados, Jordan, Philippines, Albania, Moldova, and more.



- 2011 Avasant receives a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation and conducts a study to scale the Impact Sourcing sector.

- 2011 Avasant becomes a participant member of the UN Global Compact and is committed to upholding the ten principles with respect to human rights, labor, the environment and anti-corruption.

- 2011 Avasant Foundation is formed with Kevin Parikh as chairman and Anupam Govil and Dr. P.K. Mukherji as co-chairs.

- 2014 Chitra Rajeshwari hired as Avasant Foundation's executive director.

- 2014 Avasant Foundation begins hosting "[Golf for Impact](#)," an annual charity golf tournament to fund their initiatives.

- 2014 Avasant Foundation funds the American India Foundation Digital Equalizer Program in India. Through the Digital Equalizer program, we provided 80 educators the technology tools they need to support 16,874 Indian students in 50 public schools in Delhi, Odisha and Bangalore with access to technology education.



- 2015 Avasant Foundation gets a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation for their DJA (Digital Jobs Africa) Initiative and

2015 Avasant Foundation starts the Avasant Digital Youth Employment Initiative (ADYEI) in Jamaica, training high potential, deserving youth and connecting them to employment.

- ✔ 2015 Avasant Foundation is recognized by Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) for the high impact and growth of its Avasant Digital Youth Employment initiatives in Jamaica
- ✔ 2015 Avasant Foundation becomes an associate member of GISC- Global Impact Sourcing Coalition- an association of businesses, service providers and NGOs with a goal of expanding the global supply chain through Impact Sourcing.



- ✔ 2015 'Golf for Impact' continues in its second year drawing even more sponsors than the first year.
- ✔ 2015 Kevin S. Parikh joins the advisory board of the gender equality NGO GIRLRISING.
- ✔ 2016 ADYEI pilot in Haiti, graduating 30 youths, with 100% gaining employment in the telecommunication sectors.

- ✔ 2016 Avasant Foundation receives the CGI recognition for a second year in a row for the Avasant Digital Youth Employment initiative in Haiti.
- ✔ 2016 ADYEI continues training, graduating a total of 153 youth, 93% of find jobs immediately after the training.

- ✔ 2016 'Golf for Impact' helps raise funds again for youth employment and skills development programs.



- ✔ 2016 In Trinidad & Tobago, Avasant Foundation launches Digital Works, a new initiative as part of their commitment to ensure job creation and skills enhancement for high caliber graduates.

- ✔ 2016 Kevin S. Parikh is a founding VIP member of Womensphere, a not-for-profit for the advancement of women.

- ✔ 2017 ADYEI in its third-year trains 247 youth in Jamaica (more cohorts under way). 94% of the students get hired immediately after the training.

- 2017 Avasant Foundation is a founding funder for India of the SDG Philanthropy Platform focused on SDG#5 gender equality



- 2017 'Golf for Impact' continues attracting sponsors and attendees. USD 782,167 raised thus far.

- 2017 Avasant and IAOP present the results of the [Women Empowerment Survey](#) at OWS17.

- 2017 Chitra Rajeshwari is the Lead Chair for the IAOP Women Empowerment Leadership and Diversity Chapter.

- 2018 Kevin S. Parikh honored by American India Foundation (AIF) for his contributions to educational and job creation programs for deserving youth across emerging economies.

- 2018 Avasant Foundation partners with Massy Group and CTS College to provide professional and digital skills training to 50 students in Trinidad and Tobago.



- 2018 Avasant commits to Women Empowerment Principles, with Kevin S. Parikh signing the CEO Statement of Support, committing to the development of a guide and benchmarking tool for Avasant's SDG success.



- 2018 Kevin S. Parikh commits to supporting the Clinton Global Initiative's efforts to digitally transform regions in the Caribbean, including Dominica and the US Virgin Islands in conjunction with the World Bank and other similar organizations.

- 2018 - Avasant Foundation is the first recipient of IAOP and the Rockefeller Foundation's Global Impact Sourcing Award as an influencer.

- 2018 'Golf for Impact' attracts a great round of sponsors and attendees. USD 997,167 raised thus far.

- 2018 Avasant Foundation Executive Director, Chitra Rajeshwari awarded Gold in the Transformational Sourcing Relations Leadership category at this year's Stevie Awards for Women in Business.

- 2019 Avasant Foundation's Executive Director, Chitra Rajeshwari, was honored in 2019 as Member of the Year by the International Association of Outsourcing Professionals (IAOP). The Foundation's span of accomplishments under her directorship have included chairing IAOP's Women's Empowerment, Leadership and Diversity chapter, active membership of the CSR and Impact Sourcing team and serving to judge for 2019's Global Impact Sourcing Award.

- ✔ 2019 'Golf for Impact' continues attracting sponsors and attendees. USD 1,072,167 raised thus far.
- ✔ 2020 The "Golf for Impact" event reimagined to provide a more diverse and inclusive experience for attendees. The rebranded "Impact the Future," Avasant Foundation's annual charity offers a premium whale-watching experience as an alternative to the traditional 12-hole golfing experience. [Impact the Future](#) expected to be our most successful fundraiser to-date was postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- ✔ 2020 Avasant Foundation executed the Skills Development for Global Services Sector in Jamaica project. The project delivered an industry validated comprehensive soft, cognitive and digital skills curricula. Conducted one in-person and four online train-the-trainer workshops equipping 25 master trainers with the capacity needed to train 1000 other trainers in the updated curricula.
- ✔ 2020 Digital skills training for youth in Guyana launched. The training solution will hone the digital skills of economically disadvantaged youth including women and young professionals within Guyana. It will also deliver entrepreneurial skills training to support the development of local entrepreneurship.
- ✔ 2020 Digital skills training for correctional facility candidates in Guyana piloted. The training designed will offer digital skills training for catalyzing job placement for youth incarcerated within the justice system for minor infractions. It will also support sustainable job development through the delivery of digital entrepreneurship training to correctional candidates.
- ✔ 2020 Digital skills training for Upskilling/Retooling Workforce in Bahamas affected by hurricane Dorian and COVID-19 pandemic initiated. The Digital Skills and Entrepreneurship training will support the ability of the at-risk workforce in Bahamas to use and engage with digital technologies for learning, working and sustainable economic development.
- ✔ 2020 Although 'Golf for Impact' was delayed due to the ongoing pandemic, a virtual event called 'Gratitude and Cheers' was held and USD 150,000 was raised.
- ✔ 2021 Digital youth skills training has reached over 200 students compared to a target of 150 trainees. 75% of participants have secured jobs thus far.
- ✔ 2021 CSSP digital skills piloting training reached 30 correctional students with 100% completion of the program.



- ✔ 2021 Digital skills training for upskilling/retooling displaced workforce in Bahamas currently has 55 enrolled students.
- ✔ 2021 'Golf for Impact' resumed to an in-person event this year where USD 250,000 was raised bringing the total to USD 1,472,167 raised through this annual event.

# AVASANT'S COMMITMENT: GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

## Global Partnerships

Avasant supports numerous eminent global initiatives aimed at creating opportunities for youth employment.



## Commitment to the Global Community

### Case Studies

#### Malawi Post COVID-19 strategy for *Capacity Building for Tourism Sector*

Malawi is one of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) having the 4th lowest per capita income in the world. The economy is primarily agrarian, and the country does not have any manufacturing base. The Government of Malawi has identified the services sector as an engine of growth. The country is well endowed with natural assets that hold the potential to turn Malawi into a sought-after tourist destination. Tourism exports would lead to socio-economic development and help to bridge the current account deficit. However, the national infrastructure of Malawi needed major upgrades to enable tourism to flourish. In the wake of these hurdles, the COVID-19 Pandemic brought greater difficulties for the already struggling tourism sector. Avasant was selected for developing a postCOVID-19 strategy for capacity building in the tourism sector.



#### Intervention

Avasant designed its strategy across five sub-activities and produced outputs that included the Tourism HR Development Strategy, the Tourism Quality Development Strategy, and the Tourism Enterprise Investment Development Plan. These outputs and other important assessments and analysis of the phase were consolidated into the "Tourism Capacity Development Plan." Avasant executed the following activities during the course of this plan.

- Identified gaps between the current state of tourism department staff and desired level of knowledge required
- Developed training strategy for the Tourism Department staff across Malawi
- Analyzed marketing capacity of small and medium enterprises to leverage digital technologies within the tourism sector to reach out to their target audience. Analysis included use of digital technologies and tools including computers, search engines, online advertisement, and social media adoption..

- Analyzed operational capacity of SMEs to leverage digital technologies within the tourism sector to streamline operations
- Identified major areas of concern within the services of tourism sector and conducted knowledge and service quality gap analysis across service providers in the tourism sector
- Defined training needs and course curriculum for service quality enhancement for various private sector players
- Developed training initiatives with centralized training for stakeholders within the tourism sector, with emphasis on investment promotion in the tourism sector
- Formulated capacity building strategy by leveraging above elements for stakeholders in tourism sector



### Impact

- Developed appropriate capacity to support projects worth \$25Bn recommended in the National Investment Masterplan of Malawi.
- Developed curated capacity development strategy for over 100 projects suggested as a part of the National Investment Masterplan of Malawi.

## Jamaica Digital Competitiveness Strategy



The digital service sector has emerged as a key development driver in the post-COVID recovery landscape. Economies with a higher degree of digital adoption will be able to significantly limit both the social and economic impact of the pandemic while having a much shorter recovery cycle. Avasant performed a strategic intervention for the government of Jamaica to improve digital competitiveness across key pillars – human resources, digital ecosystem, infrastructure, business environment, and financial attractiveness. This engagement will help Jamaica develop its Digital Services Sector Strategy for 2020-2025. The strategy will enable the island to move up the outsourcing/digital value chain specifically focusing on:

- Creating the optimal eco-system that aids the development of the digital services sector
- Ensuring availability of better/higher skilled resources for higher value services
- Improving Jamaica's institutional capacity to attract FDI into the sector and increase exports

### Intervention

- Avasant leveraged its proprietary Digital Competitiveness Index - DCI™ framework to assess the overall digital competitiveness of Jamaica. The framework helped identify sector development gaps in comparison to other locations and technological advancements within the outsourcing services sector.
- Avasant conducted extensive data collection and assessment through online surveys, focus groups and one-on-one interviews with local services providers, educational institutions, investment promotion agencies, and IT/Digital SMEs to identify key challenges faced by these stakeholders.
- Avasant developed a well-rounded plan that would ensure a holistic development of the domestic outsourcing sectors.
- Avasant developed a Career Progression Framework, an online tool that enables a person to select the most suitable career option within the Global Services Sector before moving on the talent development platform for training and assessment.



### Impact

- The Jamaican GSS sector now has mechanisms to add up to 3,000 trained resources every year to the outsourcing services sector for the next 5 years.
- The outsourcing sector was able to reach 80% of its full operational capacity from a state of complete shut down in less than three weeks.

## Service Sector Development in Zanzibar

Zanzibar, being an island economy, imports most commodities creating a significant current account deficit. The government of Zanzibar wanted to identify the priority sectors of the economy that would attract foreign exchange and investment dollars not only to offset the deficit, but also for growth and job creation.



### Intervention

Avasant identified and developed the Sector Development Strategy for the priority sectors that included capacity building, private sector strategy, ease of doing business, financing, SME development and value chain integration. Avasant also benchmarked policy incentives with competing destinations and recommended best practices for promotion of investment.

### Impact

Based on Avasant's recommendations, the government of Zanzibar is re-aligning their policies for the development of the sectors we identified.

Zanzibar is also implementing the recommendations that would attract investment of more than 1B USD over the next 5 years and create 10,000 direct jobs and more than 25,000 indirect jobs in the archipelago.



## Global Services Sector Digital Talent Pool Development

Though the Jamaica Promotions Corporation (JAMPRO) Avasant assisted the government of Jamaica in strengthening its digital talent pool for the Global Services Sector (GSS). This initiative will play a significant role in closing the skills gap for the global digital services in Jamaica. The project will also help Jamaica compete in higher value-added segments beyond business process outsourcing (BPO). The initiative focused on upskilling and preparing persons working in the sector for higher-end jobs in areas such as information technology-enabled services (ITES), knowledge process outsourcing (KPO), and legal process outsourcing (LPO). Avasant's intervention is geared to strengthen the skills development framework and is intended to increase employment within the outsourcing sector in Jamaica from 36,000 to 50,000 by 2023.



**Intervention**

Avasant updated the job-readiness curricula to provide an enhanced pipeline of talent with the appropriate job-readiness skills. This included the enhancement of HEART Trust/NTA's job-readiness curricula to align training to GSS entry-level standards. Avasant executed the following activities during the course of this Soft, Cognitive and Digital Skills Curriculum Development:

- Conducted needs analysis with industry leaders ITEL BPO Smart Solutions, Hinduja Global Services (HGS) and IBEX.
- Identified recommendations for the Soft, Cognitive and Digital Skills Curricula based on needs analysis, industry trends and expertise
- Created job-readiness curricula core training materials for instructors and students
- Developed training plans and supporting material
- Conducted train-the-trainer workshops using in-person training for soft skills and online training workshops for digital skills with 25 master trainers



**Impact**

- Delivered an industry validated comprehensive Soft, Cognitive and Digital Skills Curricula
- Conducted one in-person and four online train-the-trainer workshops
- Equipped 25 master trainers responsible for training 1000 other trainers in the updated curricula with Soft Skills and Digital Skills training certification

## Investment Promotion in Ghana

Though the International Finance Corporation (IFC) had been assisting the government of Ghana in strengthening its ICT sector, they engaged Avasant to provide additional support to the government so that it could better position itself as a preferred destination for investors. The objective of the project was to present the findings from the feasibility study conducted by Avasant and provide recommendations for the ICT sector.



These recommendations are now being pursued by the IFC and the Government of Ghana to leverage successes in the ICT sector and position Ghana as a preferred destination to leading international and domestic investors. With inward investments, the ICT can help Ghana lower prices by reducing operating costs for B2B, B2C, B2G businesses and generally contribute to the efficient functioning of both domestic and export markets.

Lower costs will lower barriers to entry and foster healthy competition, which can lead to higher productivity and more investments in Ghana's ICT sector. The feasibility study identified global ICT investment trends, assessed the overall market size for ICT inward investment into Africa and the relative value proposition for Ghana, and benchmarked against key competitors in the region (Nigeria, Kenya, Morocco, Egypt, South Africa and Mauritius). The study has also identified the key drivers for improving ICT business, competitiveness and location attractiveness of Ghana; assessed the readiness of the Accra Digital Centre (ADC) for ICT investors as an example of an investment-ready location; and developed an investment promotion strategy of Ghana's ICT sector to attract and retain investors.



A workshop was also conducted with key stakeholders from the IFC, the Ministry of Communication of Ghana, NITA – Ghana, Ghana Investment Promotion Center (GIPC) and major Ghanaian entrepreneurial ventures from the ICT sector. The findings of the study conducted by Avasant were discussed in the workshop and the recommendations were shared to promote investment in the Ghanaian ICT sector.

## Investment Promotion in **Palestine**

In July of 2018, Avasant was engaged by the DfID to consult on its Palestine Market Development Program (PMDP) for the Occupied Palestinian Territories (oPt). Avasant collaborated with DAI- Europe and assessed the supply side capabilities of the technology sector and key service providers in West Bank and Gaza. The findings from this assessment resulted in the development of the Palestinian outsourcing value proposition which was leveraged to solicit UK market demand for services supplied by Palestinian ITO and BPO services. The business linkage activities that followed resulted in the identification of 11 potential and active opportunities. The active opportunities are now being pursued by the DfID to foster buyer-service provider relations between UK-based buyer companies and Palestine ICT providers and broader economic development in this region.



A key challenge for the Palestinian economy is that it has never been perceived as a business destination. Though political troubles and travel restrictions are a reality, Palestine is bolstered by a thriving economy driven by a burgeoning educated youth. Leading universities in Palestine (Berzeit, Al Quds, Bethlehem, etc.) have been producing technology professionals through alliances with leading global universities. Despite this growing technical pool, the world has largely been unaware of its presence.

Despite the best efforts of the Palestine Authority to attract new investments and business, they failed to present a holistic picture of the region to specific buy-side markets. In the past, their efforts focused on presenting a view of the region that was aimed more at attracting non-governmental/NGO funding or private sector organizations with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) functions. The HM Department for International Development (“DfID”) wanted to grant the UK corporate sector access to the Palestine ICT sector in order to facilitate the government’s approach to the region as a form of economic diplomacy. For close to 3 years, the DfID failed to present a commercially viable value proposition to potential buyers while the CSR approach floundered due to an absence of long-term market interest. Appealing to the “feel good factor” was not yielding results as expected and corporations continued to overlook Palestine in favor of regions in Africa to meet their CSR goals.



Our solution approached the problem differently. We recognized that the sustainable long-term solution to the challenges of Palestine lay in creating a holistic value proposition for the economy as a destination open for business. The objective database for the economy developed through our solution gave potential investors/corporations looking to do business with Palestine IT service providers the ability to build a holistic picture of the economy and compare it with nearby destinations like Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt.

The importance of the first 11 opportunities identified through our solution cannot be understated in terms of establishing a first level awareness of the region. Their impact does not merely lie in the numbers, but because they individually and collectively confirmed the validity of Palestine's portfolio of value propositions and the value of our solution. The opportunities represented each of the different target stakeholders corresponding value propositions. These target stakeholders included those who sought to outsource providers at scale, niche specialist product development technologists, staff augmentation services, professional services (e.g., translation, documentation and archival). They also included companies that offered product/service localization to facilitate entry into the Arab market established delivery capability in Palestine.

These opportunities gave the DfID confidence in our methodology and initial hypothesis that it was essential to adopt a granular approach to understand the data and information requirements of each target group before building a holistic picture of the region. Though it is difficult to quantify the impact at such an early stage of the process, these opportunities have triggered a range of conversations between the two sides of the market.

## BPO Sector Development and Capacity Development in **Haiti**

Avasant was engaged by the Centre de Facilitation des Investissements (CFI-HAITI) and Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) in a project focused on developing the BPO Sector and promoting capacity development and entrepreneurship skills that ended in January 2018.

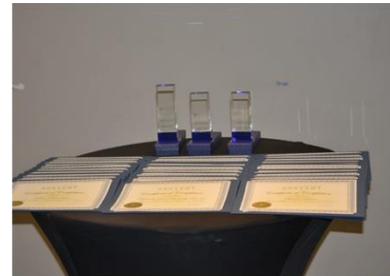


### Key Objectives

- Promote Haiti as an ideal outsourcing destination and spur development in Haiti's BPO Sector.
- Build capacity in the local workforce enabling faster uptake into newly created jobs within the sector.



- Support the development of incubation capabilities to promote entrepreneurship in the country.
- Organize a national-level job fair initiative that brings young students, professionals & experts from the IT-BPO industry under one roof on the same day. The objective of the job fair is to attract candidates who are interested in working in the IT-BPO sector in Haiti and familiarize them with the industry and the opportunities that are available to them.
- Develop an online platform that brings together BPO investors/employers and job seekers who are interested in working in the sector.



## AVASANT FOUNDATION OBJECTIVES

Avasant Foundation leverages its expertise in the digital economy to bring together diverse stakeholders and create opportunities for youth to succeed in the workforce of today and into the future.

### Our Mission

To improve lives and communities by empowering youth in emerging economies through education, employment, and entrepreneurship.

### Our Vision

That all youth are afforded opportunities to become contributing members of the global community and succeed in the new digital economy.

### Our Strategy

Avasant Foundation leverages the expertise and relationships of Avasant, a global business management & ICT strategy firm, in the design and delivery of initiatives.

### Our Values

S

**Service:**

to humanity

T

**Teamwork:**

working together for better results

R

**Responsibility:**

taking accountability for our actions

I

**Integrity:**

doing the right thing

V

**Vision:**

working with purpose

E

**Excellence:**

in our commitment

## Our Commitment to Sustainable Development

As a UNGC member, Avasant is committed to achieving sustainable development goals. Of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the UN's 2030 Agenda, Avasant Foundation works primarily on three: Quality Education, Gender Equality and Decent Work & Economic Growth, all of which are squarely aligned with our vision and mission.

### SDG 4- Quality Education

## Quality Education

Avasant Foundation delivers training in emerging regions to bridge the Digital Skills Gap

- 

Online and blended training leveraging the Avasant Learning Portal and Avasant consultants' expertise in curriculum content creation
- 

Innovative learning experiences and technologies to meaningfully engage candidates
- 

Delivery of digital skills training which matches market demands






SDG 5- Gender Equality

## Gender Equality

Our training programs promote gender equality and social inclusion in developing countries

- 

Advancing equality by empowering women and girls with quality education and digital skills
- 

Encouraging women centric startups and entrepreneurs in developing economies across the globe
- 

Selecting over 50% female participants for all training programs





SDG 5-Decent Work & Economic Growth

## Youth Employment

Catalyzing youth employment and enabling economic growth in developing regions

- 

Equip candidates with relevant Digital Skills to be employed in the new digital economy
- 

iGNITE entrepreneurial training empowers youth to start and run sustainable businesses
- 

Over 90% of candidates receive employment within 2 months of graduation





## COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS AND FAIR-TRADE LABOR PRACTICES

Avasant is committed to the [UN Global Compact](#) principles 1 through 6 and 10 as they relate to human rights, labor practices and fighting corruption. Our commitment to labor principles spans across our supplier base and employees, which includes ensuring no use of child labor and no use of forced or bonded labor in the value chain. Our organization is transparent in its management and commercial relations. It is accountable to its stakeholders and respects the sensitive and confidential nature of commercial information supplied. Avasant focuses on the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of marginalized small suppliers, and does not maximize profit at their expense.

Avasant is committed to a consistent and fair tender process and to facilitate this, all potential suppliers receive a request for quotation/proposal RFP/RFQ letters which invite suppliers to participate as well as Intent to respond and non-disclosure documents.

Upon completion of these documents, suppliers who wish to offer a tender will receive the RFQ/RFP, which



includes process timeframes and response formats to which suppliers must strictly adhere. All tenders provide an opportunity to allow suppliers to respond with questions and give an identical time-period for all to respond.

Through this process, Avasant ensures that the supplier bidding process is fair and is conducted through an effective mechanism, which creates a win-win situation for both suppliers and Avasant.

Avasant envisions a more integrated and inclusive supply chain that aligns our corporate social initiatives. Fostering the social betterment of underprivileged communities helps Avasant create positive economic growth and an employable workforce in emerging nations where we are directly engaged with governments.

As an equal opportunity employer, Avasant believes that its inherent strength lies in the intellectual and cultural diversity of its workforce. It strongly believes that employees are its biggest asset. Respect for employees is the cornerstone of Avasant's Business Code of Conduct. Avasant's workforce contributes towards the firm's goal of guiding its clients through often difficult, uncertain, and ambiguous situations with their extensive knowledge, implicit understanding and passion. The firm, through its policies, upholds human and employee rights and strongly believes in acknowledging and respecting individuals' dignity, rights and ambitions. Avasant maintains a zero-tolerance policy towards any kind of harassment, discrimination, coercion and misconduct.

Avasant does not discriminate in hiring, remuneration, access to training, promotion, termination or retirement based on age, race, caste, national origin, religion, disability, gender, sexual orientation, union membership, or political affiliation.

Avasant conducts formal 360-degree feedback sessions twice a year along with informal, interactive “happy hour” sessions at least twice a month. Through these interactions, employees voice their concerns and suggest changes to any policy or practice that helps nurture and develop them personally and professionally. Ideas are principally focused around areas that integrate teams globally and provide equal opportunities. Any idea supported by the majority is then taken up in a time bound initiative. Avasant’s 8-week training program and mentor-mentee initiative is aimed at grooming the associates through regular one-on-one sessions on career progression, firm development and honing consulting skill sets.



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Avasant adheres to health and safety standards for its employees, contractors, partners and clients. We also support flexi-working, which allows our consultants to work from his/her home so that they can focus more on their demanding workload and less on unproductive and often stressful office commutes. We encourage our workforce to maintain a healthy work-life balance and offer them more control of their own time. At all our offices across the world, employees take breaks to catch a gym workout, a set of tennis or a badminton match, all of which is subsidized by Avasant through a monthly fitness reimbursement. Avasant also offers health insurance to all its associates, offering products of choice for their families through company reimbursement. Avasant also took the lead to implement a COVID policy to promote remote working, worker safety, and instituted policies to create a safe office environment for regions which were able to re-open.

We continually receive positive feedback on these programs from our employees and believe that it has created goodwill, not just among our employees, but also our stakeholders and clients. Based on the feedback from Avasant employees, the Vault Consulting Survey has recognized Avasant among the [Best Places to Work For](#) management consulting firms from 2014-2016. The [Vault Consulting Survey 2020](#) has also ranked Avasant among the top management consulting firms offering “Internal Mobility” and “International Opportunities,” as well as for “Innovation,” “Challenge,” “Firm Leadership,” and “Informal Training.”



*Avasant employees at a team-building outing during the all-company offsite.*

In 2016, the Vault Consulting Survey recognized Avasant as one of the [Best Consulting Firms for Diversity](#). This recognition was based on our representation of minorities, military veterans, and individuals with disabilities in our workforce. Avasant fully complies with local labor laws applicable to its global workforce.

Avasant strongly adheres to a zero-tolerance policy against bribery, extortion, human trafficking and other corrupt or criminal practices. We strictly follow and adhere to the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act of 1977 (FCPA) following a disclosure by the Securities and Exchange Commission of the extensive practice by American businesses operating abroad of making payment to foreign government officials, for the

purpose of obtaining or retaining business. We have a centralized whistle-blowing cell that takes strict action against any reported malpractices observed by employees, stakeholders or clients or activities in deviance from those suggested by FCPA.

## COMMITMENT TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

### Avasant's Point of view on gender equality and economic development for women

As part of our participation in the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), we pledged our commitment to the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) –an initiative that is at the cornerstone of our company mission. Through recognition of gender equality, we contribute to critical predictors of stability, economic growth and security, and entrepreneurialism, that positively impact our business in a myriad of ways. Avasant is proud of its ability to retain over 90 percent of its female talent, to motivate its female workers, to understand and respond to the needs of female employees and address complex problems by incorporating more diverse views.

At Avasant, we take active measures to comprehensively address structural barriers and gender-discriminatory practices that deny women their socioeconomic rights, restrict their economic, social and political opportunities and undermine their resilience to all forms of shock. Avasant enables women's economic empowerment as it includes all female employees the ability to participate equally in existing markets; allows access to and control over productive resources, access to decent work, control over their own time, lives and bodies; and increased voice, agency and meaningful participation in economic decision-making at all levels from within the organization.

The company acknowledges that women's economic empowerment boosts productivity, increases economic diversification and income equality in addition to other positive development outcomes. We recognize the benefit from increasing employment and leadership opportunities for women, which is shown to increase organizational effectiveness and growth. It values the fact that companies with three or more women in senior management functions score higher in all dimensions of organizational performance. At Avasant, we promote the inclusion of women at senior management and as a result the firm has been annually listed by Forbes as one of the best consulting firms to work for ([Click Here](#) to check out the feature).

Through the Avasant Foundation (AF) the firm focuses on education, upskilling and re-skilling of girls and young women, especially to keep pace with rapid technological and digital transformations affecting jobs which are critical for women's and girl's health and wellbeing, as well as their income-generation opportunities and participation in the formal labor market. Our training and mentoring programs help females to develop their skills while sponsorship programmes are important in the promotion of women and the development of a strong pipeline of female talent. AF works with companies to partner with the public sector and with civil society organizations to protect and empower female workers in their global supply chains with an emphasis on developing nations and countries.



**Chitra Rajeshwari, Avasant Foundation's Executive Director, at the UN Week (September 2019)**

## Adherence to ESG

Avasant's corporate and operational policies support environmentally responsible objectives and adhere to the UN Global Compact Principles 7 through 9. Avasant has an enterprise-wide commitment both internally and with respect to the projects its supports to Environment, Social and Governance (ESG). Avasant prioritizes these key factors to measure the sustainability and societal impact of an investment in a company or a business. In addition, Avasant complies with all statutory and regulatory requirements, national and international standards, and industry practices. Avasant has committed itself to raising employee awareness on



environmental issues and utilizing industry best practices. Avasant leaders have regularly promoted green sourcing through industry forums related to the importance and benefits of 'green information technology sourcing.'

Avasant undertakes environmentally friendly initiatives and sets annual targets which it shares regularly with its employees and stakeholders. Avasant also strives to reduce its carbon footprint by minimizing travel to client locations and promoting video conferencing facilities using UberConference and Microsoft Teams with its clients. Some of the key environmental initiatives we have taken within the firm include:

- Increasing the use of video conferencing and web-collaboration tools (screen sharing, chat, Microsoft SharePoint, Microsoft Teams, and Yammer) to reduce international workforce travel.
- Providing a flexible work policy to reduce long office commutes.
- Utilization of recycled paper and published material in all our global offices
- Using online record keeping as a de-facto standard instead of maintaining a paper-based bookkeeping and record inventory. For example:
  - Avasant maintains, stores, and updated employee files on Bamboo HR, our HR software tool, instead of maintaining a paper-based record.
  - Avasant utilizes an online tool, Projector PSA, for employees to submit expenses, invoices, and timesheets, instead of maintaining a paper-based record.
- Using double-side printing unless absolutely necessary.

- Maximizing the use of email and communication tools like Yammer and Microsoft Teams to communicate externally as well as internally.
- Adoption of best practices in our offices such as switching off fans, lights and devices when not required, recycling of water and carpooling.

Furthermore, in response to COVID-19, Avasant has re-imagined its operations and business delivery to focus on virtual events, virtual conferences, and remote working, which has had a net positive environmental impact. Through our implementation of technology solutions, we have increased interaction among the Avasant team and our clients while reducing the company's carbon footprint.

Avasant continually promotes green sourcing as one of its practice areas, where it provides consulting services centered around the purchase of environmentally responsible hardware and server components. This includes conducting significant research and analysis before selecting an outsourcing service provider or partner. Our sourcing practice aims at:

- Identifying green compliance risks in sourcing strategies
- Inviting providers with a green record
- Incorporating regulatory guidelines into contractual language
- Assessing financial impact
- Incorporating the use of well-defined checklists of agreed environmental considerations to ensure operational compliance.



Avasant spearheads green sourcing initiatives within the IT outsourcing industry. Its leadership team has been a proponent of green sourcing at multiple industry conferences around the globe and has been coaching organizations on the need to move towards green solutions. As a result of our green initiatives, we have been able to:

- Reduce the usage of paper in our day-to-day business operations.
- Reduce staff travel, both internationally and locally
- Reduce electricity and water consumption.
- Adopt best practices by employees at their homes leading to further decline in electricity, water and fossil fuel consumption.
- Build awareness among our clients and stakeholders that 'going green' makes a viable business case.
- Spread awareness in the industry of the importance and advantages of green sourcing

## IMPACT THE FUTURE 2021

Avasant Foundation hosts an annual charity golf tournament to fund its initiatives. In order to prioritize the health and well-being of our stakeholders, we made the decision to delay our 7th annual Impact the Future event for 2020 but was able to raise USD \$125,000. The goal of Impact the Future is to raise money to empower high potential youth in developing and emerging economies to create better futures for themselves, their families and their communities.

Thanks to our many sponsors, Avasant Foundation has been able to make a significant impact for youth education and employment. Through seven consecutive years of hosting this event, the Foundation has raised USD \$1,472,167.



## SDG FUNDERS NETWORK

Avasant Foundation supports progress on the 17 SDG goals, with a focus on Goals 1, 4, 5, 8, 10 and 17.

	<p>Avasant, Avasant Foundation and all our affiliates support the mission of No Poverty via the Avasant Digital Youth Employment Initiative, Digital Jobs Africa, Digital Equalizer India, and the Skills for Global Services Programme in Trinidad and Tobago.</p>
	<p>Avasant, Avasant Foundation, the American India Foundation, Rockefeller Philanthropy, Pratham, Akshay Patra, and the Sharefest Community support Quality Education via the Avasant Digital Youth Employment Initiative, Digital Jobs Africa, and Digital Equalizer India.</p>
	<p>Avasant, Avasant Foundation, Plan International Girl Rising, IAOP Women Empowerment, Leadership and Diversity, FIWi Jamaica and UTech Jamaica support Gender Equality via the Women Empowerment Survey, Technopreneurship Program in Uganda, and the Avasant Digital Youth Employment Initiative.</p>
	<p>Avasant, Avasant Foundation, Jampro, BPIAJ, UTech Jamaica, Rockefeller Foundation, GISC, Sutherland, VXL, Ibex Global, Microsoft, ITel BPO Solutions, Conduent, TelePerformance, The Massy group, Alorica SDG Philanthropy Platform, TIE Foundation, GISC support Decent Work and Economic Growth via Digital Jobs Africa and the Avasant Digital Youth Employment Initiative</p>
	<p>Avasant, Avasant Foundation, Plan International Girl Rising, IAOP Women Empowerment, Leadership and Diversity, American India Foundation IDB, World Bank, DfID support Reduced Inequalities via the Avasant Digital Youth Employment Initiative.</p>
	<p>Avasant, Avasant Foundation and its vast network support partnerships for the goals in aligning efforts across the value chain for employment opportunities, sponsorships, funding, and other support mechanisms for youth empowerment.</p>

Avasant Foundation is a founding member of SDG Funders, a global philanthropic platform founded by Rockefeller Philanthropic Advisors. Of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the UN's 2030 Agenda, Avasant Foundation works primarily on three: Quality Education, Gender Equality and Decent Work and Economic Growth, all of which are squarely aligned with our vision and mission. As programs have expanded and the Avasant Digital Youth Employment Initiative has been able to scale and benefit more youth, we have been able to extend our SDG focal points to add No Poverty, Reduced Inequalities and Partnerships for the Goals.

## AVASANT COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAMS FOR 2020-2022

### Avasant Digital Youth Employment Initiative (ADYEI): Empowering deserving youth in the Caribbean



Avasant Foundation is involved with the government of Jamaica in drafting policy interventions that will enhance Jamaica's outsourcing sector, develop related skills, and create employment opportunity for the youth in Jamaica. The Foundation, in partnership with the Jamaica Promotion Corporation (JAMPRO), BPIAJ (Business Process Industry Association Jamaica), the University of Technology Jamaica, the FiWi Jamaica Project and leading ITC employers, launched its [Avasant Digital Youth Employment Initiative](#) in June 2015 to foster employment opportunities in Jamaica. The [Initiative](#) continues providing deserving youth with job related skills training to enable employment in the leading ICT BPO industries in the Caribbean.

For its 2015 Commitment to Action, Avasant Foundation developed a sustainable and scalable technology training program to prepare high potential, disadvantaged youth aged 18-28 for employment in the expanding ICT and BPO industries in Jamaica. This [pilot training initiative](#) was part of Avasant Foundation's 2016 Commitment to Action for the Clinton Global Initiative on tackling youth unemployment in Haiti.

2020 marked its sixth consecutive and highly successful year, and the initiative continues to make an impact through skills trainings and getting youth hired by companies committed to Impact Sourcing



*Kevin S. Parikh, Avasant CEO and Avasant Foundation Chairman speaks with students in Kingston Jamaica on a 2019 visit to their classroom site.*

#### Key Accomplishments

- Model partnership with University of Technology, Jamaica, USAID and the FiWi Jamaica project graduating 30 youth in 2015, 123 youth in 2016, 250 youth in 2017, 250 youth in 2018, 180 youth in 2019. 150 youth are on track to graduate in 2020.
- Success of pilot initiative in Port-au-Prince, Haiti to train and connect 30 youth to employment opportunities in partnership with Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Center for Facilitation of Investments, BIMA, NATCOM, Digicel and other leading employers.
- 95% of trainees secured ICT/BPO employment within two months of graduation with companies like Conduent, HGS, IBEX, VXI, iTEL BPO Solutions, Sutherland, TelePerformance, ACT, Scotia Bank, and Alorica.

- The Foundation received recognition from the Clinton Global Initiative in both 2015 and 2016 for achieving over 90% employment for its Jamaican and Haitian youth trainees.



## Skills for Global Services in **Trinidad and Tobago**

In 2019, Avasant Foundation graduated the first cohort of 49 students in the Skills for Global Services program, an Inter-American Development Bank funded initiative with the Ministry of Planning and Development of Trinidad. Candidates received transversal and digital skills training in modules including Professional Skills and Customer Service, Microsoft Office, Web Design, Data Analytics, Project Management, Cybersecurity, Agile and more.



The Digital Skills for Global Services program was made possible in Trinidad and Tobago in partnership with CTS College of Business and Computer Science and The Massy Group, a diversified regional conglomerate with operations throughout the Caribbean basin, Colombia and South Florida. Massy Group employs over 11,000 people over 60 operating companies across six business segments comprising Massy Holdings. By partnering with Avasant Foundation on the Skills for Global Services program, Massy Group has affirmed the value of Avasant Foundation's digital training experience and effectiveness as they plan to expand into other geographies. With members of their own staff enrolled in the Skills for Global Services program, Massy Group has doubled down on its investment with Avasant Foundation because of the high-value recognition of the training program.

The general objective of the program is to advance the country's position as a preferred source for Information Technology-enabled Services (ITeS). The goal of the Skills for Global Services program is to shape, inspire and motivate the development of ITeS sector for Trinidad and Tobago. To further strengthen its commitment to workforce development in the Caribbean, Avasant Consulting Trinidad & Tobago offered internships to 3 graduates from the program. The interns received hands on experience and supported global consulting operations.



## Digital Equalizer Program with American India Foundation in **India**

Avasant Foundation supports efforts in India to increase access to technology and a quality education as well as sustainable livelihoods through employment and entrepreneurship. With 70% of India's one million public schools lacking basic computing technology, the country is facing significant challenges to prepare its youth for success in the 21st century global economy.

Avasant Foundation, in partnership with the American India Foundation, helps equip students with practical digital literacy skills that play a life-changing role throughout their academic journey.

### Key Accomplishments

- Provided over 16,874 students with access to technology across 36 schools in Odisha and Karnataka through the [Digital Equalizer Program](#).
- Trained over 100 teachers in interactive and dynamic approaches for incorporating technology into instruction to replace rote learning.
- Incorporated basic computer literacy, internet research and refreshed teaching methodologies into teacher training programs.



*Student learns digital skills in Odisha schools aided through AIF.*



*Students perform practical experiments to further their understanding of the subject.*



*Teacher calls on student to answer questions based on what they have learned*

## Digital Skills Training for Youth in **Guyana**



In 2020, Avasant Foundation launched its engagement in Guyana to deliver a training program in relevant digital and entrepreneurial skills, featuring a mix of transversal and technical skills needed to succeed in the increasingly digital and knowledge-based economy. The program partners with the University of Guyana and other key local stakeholders to support economically disadvantaged youth

including women and private sector firms. This intervention has been designed not only to develop the digital skills of over 250 women and youth from socio-economic challenged backgrounds within Guyana, but to also support their engagement in decent and value-added work within local private companies seeking to expand and upgrade their workforce.

The project objective is to create a digital talent pool in Guyana and demonstrate a digital skills training model that supports bridging the labor skills gap. In this regard, Avasant Foundation will engage trainees aged 18-32 from different communities in Guyana in digital skills training and job placement within Guyana's private sector firms. The program will graduate 250 candidates by 2022 of which at least 50% will be female.

As of 2021, the program has enrolled 180 students with 82% of them having secured jobs thus far. The training is being offered virtually using the Avasant learning portal through which candidates can gain access via the laptops provided to them to enable participation.

## Skills Development for Global Services Sector (GSS) in Jamaica

In 2020, the Avasant Foundation was contracted to improve the skills development system in Jamaica. The main benefit of an enhanced skills development system is the ability of Jamaica to provide the Global Services Sector with better skilled workers, particularly in higher value-added segments. Project activities focused on improving the system's ability to guarantee relevance of training to increase the share of activities that are higher up the value chain from 60% BPO to 40% KPO. The activities will also improve the quality of training.

Phase 1 of the project established the enhancement of the job-readiness curricula for the GSS. Job-readiness skills encompassed soft skills such as teamwork and persistence; cognitive skills such as numeracy and literacy; as well as foundational digital skills to prepare workers to enter the labor market. The objective of this subcomponent is to strengthen the capabilities of the HEART-Trust/NTA and skills development system for the provision of Job-Readiness trainings for the GSS in conjunction with the delivery of industry-oriented training.



Phase 2 identified skills needs, set standards, and charted career pathways, among other functions. It also validated the updated job readiness skills curricula and the digital skills curriculum based on industry and global trends. Avasant Foundation assisted in designing a training plan for trainers and supported the roll out of a train-the-trainer program that enabled the delivery and certification of the updated job-readiness curricula at different levels - HEART-Trust/NTA, high school teachers, grades 11, 12, 13 and selected tertiary institution lecturers.

Trainer sessions held for both Phase-I and II findings show that all trainers are well-equipped and enthusiastic to provide training required for each component of the curricula proposed. Training initially took the form of in-person sessions, however, due to unforeseen restrictions in travel due to the occurrence of COVID-19, the adoption of the consultant's (AF) online learning platform deemed highly effective for delivering the Digital Skills module proposed. From feedback provided, 100% of individuals found the online platform easy to use, convenient, reliable, and readily accessible.

Overall, the consultant (AF) was able to successfully enhance the skills development system in Jamaica, through development of an updated Job Readiness Curricula. The country is more able to provide the Global Services Sector with better skilled workers, particularly in higher value-added segments. Finally, with the increased institutional capacity as a direct result of the curricula developed, greater potential exists for growth in the labour market capacity to support micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME's), as well as to attract foreign direct investments (FDI) and increase exports.

## Digital Skills Training for Correctional Facility Candidates in **Guyana**

Avasant Foundation has been engaged with the Citizens' Security Strengthening Programme in Guyana to pilot a digital skills training program for incarcerated youth in Guyana to support their rehabilitation and social transformation when they exit the prison system. The training will offer digital skills training for youth incarcerated within the justice system for minor infractions of the law upon their release. It will also support sustainable job development through the delivery of digital entrepreneurship training to correctional candidates.



Beneficiaries of this initiative will include incarcerated Guyanese youths between the ages of 18 to 30 with an aptitude for learning digital and entrepreneurial skills. The curriculum will encompass a combination of transversal and technical skills which are transferable to any industry. The program will use a holistic approach that combines career training, support services, employability training, digital skills training and social skills training.

The training program is being implemented as a pilot for 30 correctional candidates both male and female. With success, the model can be used as a prevention or intervention program for incarcerated youth and can be implemented in additional residential juvenile correctional facilities.

As of 2021, the program has been successfully completed.

## Digital Skills Training for Upskilling/Retooling Workforce in **The Bahamas**

Avasant Foundation will be supporting workforce development in the Bahamas for individuals affected by hurricane Dorian and COVID-19 pandemic. In recognition of the high number of at-risk jobs and the risks to business continuity of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the Bahamas' tourism and other vulnerable sectors, the Avasant Foundation will deliver digital, transversal and entrepreneurship training and mentorship to support reskilling/ upskilling. The training will support the ability of the at-risk workforce in the Bahamas to use and engage with digital technologies for learning, working and sustainable economic development in a responsible, confident, and critical manner. The program will deliver enrichment to the current skillset of the workforce.

Training will focus on delivery of skills required by companies/sectors to combat the adverse effects posed to the economy by the threats of natural disasters and risk to health and wellbeing of the Bahamian workforce. The program will support employment and empower trainees to navigate their own unique career path as well as to support transformation of smaller businesses in adapting to market and business conditions.

Candidates will be provided with mock interviews and mentorship workshops to assist them with developing their skills, strategies and capability to tackle the organizational hurdles more effectively.

The mentorship will leverage the expertise of senior Avasant employees and Avasant fellows.

The first cohorts have begun training on June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021, and eventually, 500 fully funded scholarships will be awarded.

The program will use online learning tools, including the Avasant learning portal and concentrate on the following areas: re-tooling and up-skilling the at-risk workforce; mentorship designed to help transform business operations and adapt to market conditions as the economy re-opens; and training to digital skills to promote individual entrepreneurship opportunities.



## The Young Entrepreneurs (TYE)- Fostering Youth Entrepreneurship

Avasant Foundation supports TYE in their extra-curricular program dedicated to fostering the next generation of leaders through the transformative experience of building a startup. Teenagers (grades 9-12) are taught business basics and the essentials of entrepreneurship. Through the TYE program, students develop self-confidence, presentation skills, leadership, and creativity.



### 2021 Winning Team – STELLA

*“Stella is a novel learning management system that will utilize a plethora of innovative features to increase the quality of and access to digital education. Over the past year, our team has had first-hand experience with the chaotic structure of currently available learning management systems. Using our experience, we created the ideal LMS for both students and teachers. Stella integrates collaborative opportunities through our various socialization features ranging from anonymous question boards to peer discussion opportunities. Stella further includes a unique customization feature, that allows both students and teachers to design and organize their platform in whichever way suits them. These features are designed in order to improve the educating and learning experiences for all parties involved. Our platform also offers detailed analytics on student retention, grade trends, and class engagement so that educational institutions can use Stella to grow themselves and their students to their full potential. Overall, Stella is a unique and effective solution to the many problems we have seen arise with online learning over the past year, and our team was confident that Stella would take the growing market for learning management systems to the next level. With Stella, we were able to win the local TYE competition, sponsored by the Avasant Foundation. We were also able to go on and win the award for "Best Teamwork" in the TYE global.”*

Avasant Foundation, in partnership with The Indus Entrepreneurs (TiE), addresses the need for bringing entrepreneurship, innovation and design thinking concepts to young adults. During the yearlong TYE program, students go through workshops focused on different aspects of entrepreneurship and create products/companies around their ideas. Students are also mentored by coaches and startup founders from the local entrepreneurial community. As a result of the TYE program, many students also receive summer internships with successful startups in their local community.

TYE is a unique program that takes place in the TiE ecosystem, which brings together seasoned entrepreneurs and professionals, distinguished professors and speakers, TYE teenage student alumni – who share their passion of educating youth with life skills and innovative spirit.

## THE ROAD AHEAD: FY21-22 CSR TARGETS

We understand that the CSR commitment to all stakeholders should be measurable and lasting. The following list provides a sample of some CSR-related activities that Avasant will be undertaking over its next fiscal year:

- Raise cash and other support equivalent to \$1M for Avasant Foundation to support community initiatives
- Continue to expand CSR initiatives in APAC, EMEA and LAC
- Partner with USC to launch Women Empowerment and Employment generation opportunities within the local community
- Assist the governments of 8 countries in developing their services sector through consulting engagements leading to investment, employment, skill enhancement, and improvement of living standards and tax revenues
- Provide employment, STEAM, and entrepreneurship skills training to students globally through in-person and online instruction through Avasant Foundation
- Enable employment for disadvantaged youth globally by working with key stakeholders including service providers
- Develop a plan for smaller Caribbean islands to recover from the socio-economic impact of COVID. Provide necessary support for reviving tourism, IT and other services sectors
- Continue membership and support of the UN Global Compact and the UN Sustainable Development Goals with a focus on youth education and gender equality
- Continue to support IAOP's efforts on its Women Empowerment initiative to catalyze changes in the global outsourcing industry to empower the lives of women both inside and outside the workplace
- Continue playing a leadership role in Womensphere Foundation's efforts to empower women and girls
- Increase awareness of Impact Sourcing through online channels such as YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter
- Expand our skills and iGNITE entrepreneurship training model to disadvantaged youth globally



- Fund technology instruction for students in India through the American Indian Foundation's Digital Equalizer program
- Provide career mentorship and business coaching to budding entrepreneurs across the globe and arrange funding for 10 tech start-ups in Africa, the Caribbean and India
- Safeguard the workforce in Bahamas affected by COVID-19 and hurricane Dorian by providing digital skills and entrepreneurship training to upskill/retool employees impacted
- Bring our youth employment and entrepreneurship training model to new countries including Belize, Dominica, El Salvador, Colombia, Rwanda, Malawi and South Africa
- Bridge the skills gap for youth in Guyana through the continued delivery of digital skills and entrepreneurship training
- Assist regional implementers to scale Impact hiring in the BPO and hospitality sectors across the globe through Global Impact Sourcing Coalition
- Support workforce development for incarcerated youth through partnership with the Citizen Security Strengthening Program in Guyana and Citizen Security and Justice Program in Bahamas
- Continue working for disadvantaged youth in all our impact regions to ensure that youth get quality education which leads to decent work and economic growth
- Support progress on the 17 UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) and especially in India as a founding supporter of SDG Philanthropy Network
- Fund thousands of mid-day meals for school children in India through Akshara Patra
- Continue to support education and empowerment efforts of girls in India through Girl Rising
- 2021 has seen new-founded partnerships with USC & UCLA
- Continuous expansion of CSR initiatives into Suriname and Belize



- Further reduce each Avasant employee's water and electricity usage
- Increase time spent per employee on usage of collaboration and communication tools which will lead to a proportionate reduction in travel
- Provide solar powered solutions to disadvantaged communities that do not have access to electricity
- Engage employees in planting trees across the globe



Avasant remains committed to enhancing its Corporate Social Responsibility and ensuring that we conduct our business in a socially responsible way that adheres to the ten UN Global Compact principles.