

- [Home](#)
- [Guest Posts](#)
- [TC-I Call to Action](#)
- [TC-I Changemakers](#)
- [Resources](#)
- [Contact](#)
- [About](#)



[Entries RSS](#) | [Comments RSS](#)

• Archives

• Categories

• Tags

[Acumen Fund](#) [Andhra Pradesh](#) [Atanu Dey](#) [Avashya](#) [Bangalore](#) [BoP](#) [CGAP](#) [Chennai](#) [climate change](#) [CSR](#) [Development](#) [Education](#) [Energy](#) [Entrepreneurship](#)
[Environment](#) [farmers](#) [Fellowship](#) [Google](#) [Google.org](#) [Government](#) [Health](#) [ICT](#) [Let Me Know](#) [MFIs](#) [Microcapital.org](#) [Microfinance](#)
[Migration](#) [Mobile Phones](#) [NextBillion](#) [NextBillion.net](#) [PPP](#) [PSD Blog](#) [RBI](#) [rural India](#) [Sanitation](#) [SKS](#) [microfinance](#) [SMEs](#) [Social Entrepreneurship](#) [Tamil Nadu](#) [Tata Nano](#)
[Technology](#) [VC Circle](#) [water](#) [women](#) [World Bank](#)

• The Team

-  [thinkchangeindia](#)
-  [Vinay](#)
-  [Santhosh](#)

-  [Shital](#)
-  [prernasri](#)
-  [Aishwarya](#)
-  [Badhri](#)

• Creative Commons License

[Creative Commons License](#)

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 United States License](#).

• Blog Networks



• Meta

- [Log in](#)
- [Entries RSS](#)
- [Comments RSS](#)
- [WordPress.org](#)

• TC-I Jobs

[Tech Winners Starting Small, Scaling Up](#)

Posted on November 13, 2008 by Shital

Remember the [Tech Museum Awards](#)? The award “honors innovators from around the world who are applying technology to benefit humanity.” The 25 winners were announced yesterday, with two innovators from India. [MercuryNews.com](#) covered the ceremony in San Jose, California and met with the winners, including [DESI Power](#) and [Digital StudyHall](#).

First, DESI Power is based in Bangalore and utilizes affordable and reliable electricity:

Hari Sharan employs 19th-century biomass gasification technology to bring electricity to rural Indian villages. His company, DESI Power, converts vegetation — such as rice hulls and corn husks — into energy. Not only does that provide power to poor communities, it also creates opportunities for micro-enterprises that keep residents from migrating to the slums of big cities.

TC-I covered another unique way of converting vegetation to energy via [rice husks](#). There is tremendous potential to scale up with these plants, and DESI Power is already operating four plants and increasing to twenty next year.

Another creative use of technology aims to strengthen education. MercuryNews reports on Digital StudyHall, which is actually a research project out of a US university.

Randolph Wang, who studied computer science at the University of California-Berkeley, abandoned teaching at Princeton University to launch Digital StudyHall in India.

“It’s a very simple idea. You can call it Netflix for poor children,” said Wang, who already had his elevator pitch down.

His nonprofit, which is associated with the University of Washington, provides video classroom lessons from top-notch teachers to poor schools, which usually are no more than dirt-floor rooms supervised by young teachers with little training.

“We have seen dramatic student performance improvements, from 100 percent to 300 percent,” he said.

According to the organization's website, there are currently "pilot 'hubs' in Lucknow, Calcutta, Pune, and Dhaka, covering approximately 30 schools." The lessons cover a variety of subjects and languages. We touched on [Digital Green](#) before, from which Digital StudyHall uses a similar approach. Again, there is potential here for scale. The [website](#) says:

To avoid retracing the missteps of earlier "wire-the-schools" projects, we follow two important principles: (1) cost realism, essential if we are to scale the system up to a significant number of schools and students; and (2) building systems that solve end-to-end education problems, so the twin pillars of technology and pedagogy must develop side by side, and content and people relationships must play leading roles.

Some fundamental questions of the utility of such technology may arise. Prerna [wrote about laptops](#) and technology in classrooms; this is a great example of how technology can be used to [bolster pedagogy](#), but not replace classroom necessities, such as a teacher and targeted activities.

Keep an eye on both these technologies as they widen their impact.

Filed under: [Awards](#), [Education](#), [Energy](#), [NGOs and Non-profits](#), [Social Entrepreneurship](#), [Technology](#) | Tagged: [corn husks](#), [DESI Power](#), [Digital Green](#), [Digital StudyHall](#), [Education](#), [electricity](#), [Tech Museum Awards](#), [Technology](#)

« [TC-I Call to Action: MSME Business Plan Challenge - Sankalp 2009](#) [Bridging the Wikipedia Divide: Wikipedia Academy](#) »

One Response to "Tech Winners Starting Small, Scaling Up"

1. [2008 Tech Awards: "Let's Put Poverty into A Museum" \(Yunus\) « Next Now Collaboratory](#), on [November 15th, 2008 at 2:58 am](#) Said:

[...] Change India: Tech Winners Starting Small, Scaling Up By Shital (no last name posted) <http://thinkchangeindia.wordpress.com/2008/11/13/tech-winners-starting-small-scaling-up/> Possibly related posts: (automatically generated)Tech Laureate Venture Network Showcase - 7 [...]

Leave a Reply

<input type="text"/>	Name
<input type="text"/>	Mail (will not be published)
<input type="text"/>	Website
<input type="text"/>	

Submit Comment

• International Conference on Social Entrepreneurship in India

Attend this premier gathering of leaders in the social change sector

4TH – 5TH Dec 2008 at Dakshinachitra, near Chennai, India

Organised by UnLtd India and Centre for Social Initiative and Management (CSIM). Supported by CSO Partners

For Registrations, [Click Here](#)

• Top Posts

- o [Sex Worker Bank in Mumbai](#)
- o [SELCO India: Solar energy pioneer ready to scale](#)
- o [Bridging the Wikipedia Divide: Wikipedia Academy](#)
- o [About](#)

- [Measuring the Social Performance of Microfinance Institutions \(MFIs\)](#)

• Recent Comments

- Deepak Bhorkhade on [Training Programme on Basic and Advanced Data Analysis using SPSS](#)
- Prof. Dr. Mostafa Ashour on [SELCO India: Solar energy pioneer ready to scale](#)
- Gayne Preller Schmidt on [Soundbites from Nancy Barry, former President and CEO of Women's World Banking](#)
- Moin Qazi on [Pioneers in Microfinance, Part 2: MYRADA](#)
- G KIRAN KUMAR on [SELCO India: Solar energy pioneer ready to scale](#)

• Development

- [Atanu Dey on India's Development](#)
- [Dani Rodrik's weblog](#)
- [fractured.earth](#)
- [Global Development: Views from the Center](#)
- [India Development Blog](#)
- [infoDev Highlights](#)
- [Marginal Revolution](#)
- [PFM Blog](#)
- [ProPoor.org: Development Portal For South Asia](#)
- [Rural Development of India](#)
- [Technology, Health & Development](#)
- [The Indian Economy Blog](#)

• Innovation/VC

- [Avashya](#)
- [Little Devices That Could](#)
- [pluGGd.in](#)
- [Startup Dunia - Indian startups and Entrepreneurship](#)
- [TED | TEDBlog](#)
- [VC Circle](#)
- [Venture Intelligence Blog - Tracking Investments and Business Opportunities in India](#)
- [VentureWoods](#)
- [WATBlog.com - Web, Advertising and Technology Blog in India](#)

• News

- [Citizen Direct at India Together](#)
- [Inderscience news](#)
- [India Together - The news in proportion.](#)
- [India-The Times of India](#)
- [Interact on India Together](#)
- [OneWorld South Asia - Top Headlines](#)
- [The Hindu - Front Page](#)
- [The South Asian](#)

• On The Ground: Blogs From People in India

- [A Techie speaks](#)
- [Chalavadi Suman Kumar \(My Life Line\)](#)
- [Everyday Entrepreneurs](#)
- [Harisays....](#)
- [Himanshu - Technology, Entrepreneurship & Business](#)
- [Joy Of Innovation](#)
- [Me and My Views](#)
- [Sramana Mitra on Strategy](#)
- [The Startup Guy.](#)
- [\[V\] My India Report](#)

• Social Entrepreneurship

- [Acumen Fund Blog](#)
- [AIF Service Corps Fellowship 2007/2008](#)
- [Ashoka Press Releases](#)
- [Audeamus - How dare we...](#)
- [Defeating Global Poverty](#)
- [Digital Provide: From Good to Gold](#)
- [Echoing Green Blog](#)
- [End Poverty in South Asia - It can be done in one generation...](#)
- [Enterprise Resilience Management Blog](#)
- [Fellows In The News](#)
- [FLiP - Future Leaders in Philanthropy](#)
- [GDL - Piramal Foundation](#)
- [Grameen Foundation - Fighting poverty with microfinance](#)
- [GreenBiz.com](#)
- [Have Fun • Do Good](#)
- [HBS Working Knowledge](#)
- [How to Change the World](#)
- [Indicorps Magazine](#)
- [iPienso](#)
- [Kiva Chronicles — Social Edge](#)
- [Let Me Know](#)
- [MicroCapital.org](#)
- [Microfinance and Technology Blog - CGAP](#)
- [microfranchising](#)
- [NextBillion.net - Development Through Enterprise](#)
- [NYU Wagner Public Service Today](#)
- [Official google.org Blog](#)
- [PSD Blog - World Bank Group](#)
- [Riches For Good](#)
- [Sagar Gubbi](#)
- [Social ROI: A Social Entrepreneurship Blog](#)
- [Spare Change](#)
- [SSIR Articles](#)
- [teaching the world to fish](#)
- [The Indicorps Blog](#)
- [The NonProfit Times](#)
- [The School for Social Entrepreneurs](#)
- [The Silicon Valley Microfinance Network \(SVMN.net\)](#)
- [The Triple Bottom Line](#)
- [Triple Pundit](#)
- [Unitus Microfinance Blog](#)
- [Unreasonable People](#)
- [WBCSD-SNV Alliance: Creating inclusive business opportunities by linking local communities with big business](#)
- [World is Green](#)
- [WorldChanging: Tools, Models and Ideas for Building a Bright Green Future](#)
- [xigi.net](#)
- [XL Group Blog](#)

[Blog at WordPress.com.](#) Theme: Digg 3 Column by [WP Designer](#)

5