2021

Impact Report

Cognizant Foundation

Welcome Note

IN A WORLD UNDERGOING SEISMIC TRANSFORMATIONS—from the economic landscape to the global workforce, to the systems that educate and train individuals for the workforce—corporate philanthropy, too, is evolving. Over the past decade, corporate philanthropy has shifted from a way to support local communities and build goodwill to a mechanism for driving systemic change. Today, it plays an instrumental role not just in how consumers view companies, but in how those companies deliver on their brand promise and demonstrate an ability to make the world better.

This evolution comes at a time when the corporate world's greatest asset—and its greatest challenge—is people. We have seen the Great Resignation of 2021 spread to countries around the world, creating millions of unfilled positions for thousands of companies. Recruiting and retaining workers is the top priority for employers. And as workers increasingly expect their employer to deliver a positive social impact, corporate philanthropy's role in demonstrating a company's values has perhaps never been more important.

As our work in 2021 showed, the Cognizant Foundation has embraced this approach to corporate philanthropy, investing in solutions that change policies, change systems and change lives. We do that by supporting organizations that provide access to technology training and pathways to economic mobility.

As we think about our impact—and that of our grantees—we want to ensure that we're not just measuring the number of people reached but instead focusing on the life-changing metrics of economic mobility and the long-term success of our grantees.

Take, for instance, our work with CodePath. In 2019, we made a small investment in a small organization that makes computer science courses more accessible to historically excluded and underserved populations. In turn, CodePath used our initial investment to increase its budget by a factor of 10 and reach its next level of growth and impact.

We're also focused on extending our impact in communities around the world—with 2021 marking our expansion beyond the U.S. That expansion has enabled us to serve historically excluded populations in the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and Germany, tailoring our investments to support each community differently.

Since our founding, we have committed to modernizing the systems that educate, train and upskill members of our most vulnerable communities. The ongoing crises people face entering and moving within the workforce prove that we must leverage this precise moment to ensure that those who create technology reflect the breadth and diversity of those who use technology.

As we continue our work to prepare people to succeed in the workforce of today and tomorrow, we are proud of our investments' positive impact in 2021 and excited to highlight our grantees' amazing work. We are proud to seize on the opportunity to deliver systemic change that benefits communities around the world, and our hope is that these combined efforts fuel your commitment to expand access to education and advance economic mobility—as they have ours.

Kristen Titus
Executive Director

Impact in Action

In 2021, Covid-19 continued to present challenges around the world as new variants kept impacting both the education and workforce landscapes. Low-income communities and other historically disadvantaged populations were again disproportionately impacted by layoffs, temporary shutdowns and financial hardships.

Then we saw the tide of another workforce challenge: the Great Resignation. An estimated 38 million workers in the U.S. voluntarily left their jobs over the course of the year, citing factors from the desire for higher-paying and/or remote jobs to exhaustion and frustration. The technology sector wasn't immune—by year's end, there were 340,000 unfilled positions in information technology, an 11% increase over the 12-month average.

While 2021 brought with it some unexpected pressures, many of those were trends already in play, amplified by the continuing pandemic. The digital transformation of industries kicked into overdrive out of necessity as workers transitioned to—and in some cases remained—remote. Emerging technologies, many of which were adopted during the pandemic, dramatically reshaped the nature of work in some industries, with unequal impacts. As much as 42% of the Black workforce holds positions that could be impacted by tech disruption between now and 2030, for example.

Developing equitable opportunities for economic mobility requires rethinking the pipelines, pathways and systems that have long funneled talent to employers.

Education and training opportunities that are available and financially accessible are a key component of that work.

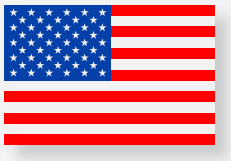
To that end, the Cognizant Foundation spent the past year supporting organizations working to expand access to industry-aligned education and job training and to advance opportunities for economic mobility. We concentrated our efforts in five countries: the U.S., the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and Germany.

Through partnerships with 35 organizations, we estimate that the foundation impacted nearly 1.45 million people from historically excluded, underrepresented, underserved or underemployed populations in 2021. Those efforts include giving more people the tech and digital skills they need to meet the demands of the future.

2021 Highlights

UNITED STATES

We **awarded $13.5 million to 25 organizations** that are democratizing pathways to tech careers. Our grants **supported initiatives across 40 states**, and as a result:



319,507 Students
were introduced to STEM concepts and computer science education

9,008 People
received industry-aligned training and job placement

1,108,742 Educators
and entrepreneurs gained access to resources and networks to helped them succeed

GLOBAL

We **supported 10 organizations**, all of them receiving support from the foundation for the first time. We **committed $1.68 million** to these efforts, including:

$550,000
to three initiatives in Toronto, impacting 3,300 people

$660,000
to three initiatives in London, impacting 1,818 people

$250,000
to two initiatives in Frankfurt impacting 6,000 people

$225,000
to two initiatives in Sydney, impacting 1,090 people

Our work to expand access to technology education and training, along with supporting programs that advance economic mobility, will transform the workforce and stabilize—and even grow—economies across the globe. The foundation's output in 2021 reflects the commitment we share with our partners to fulfill that mission.

Expanding Access to Education

We believe all people should have access to the education and training that will prepare them for the jobs of the future. That's why the foundation supports organizations that are democratizing access to educational opportunities in computer science, coding, programming and related fields. Those are the skills that will drive our future workforce—and our global economy.

Across the globe, educators, employers and government leaders recognize that the demand for highly skilled workers in high-tech jobs will grow exponentially in the next 30 years. Despite that reality, 49% of high schools in the U.S. fail to offer a single computer science course, according to a 2021 report from Code.org. And in schools that do offer computer science education, there's a disturbing lack of participation among economically disadvantaged and historically excluded populations. For instance, Hispanic high schoolers are 1.4 times less likely than white and Asian students to enroll in a computer science class even if their school offers it.

Similarly, high school girls are underrepresented, making up just 31% of enrollment in computer science classes. This participation gap is why the foundation invested in Girlstart in 2021. Girlstart is a nonprofit that develops and deploys innovative programs for girls to promote their early engagement in STEM.

More than 150,000 girls have taken part in Girlstart programs, building their interest in—and aptitude for—careers rooted in STEM subjects.

With funding from the Cognizant Foundation, Girlstart operated about a dozen Girlstart Afterschool Programs, where leaders provided more than 250 girls with weekly STEM experiences. Girlstart also leveraged the grant to create the Girlstart Summer Camp, giving 75 girls in grades four through eight a three-week immersive experience in technology and engineering.

Through programs such as Girlstart and others, the foundation is working alongside partners around the world to identify and scale the opportunities that will help connect more people to the skills needed to turn academic achievement into economic mobility.

Photo credit:
Girlstart, students in Austin, Texas

Advancing Economic Mobility

Economists say that for the foreseeable future, careers in the technology sector will pay some of the highest wages, offer the greatest stability and provide the most opportunities for advancement. But those opportunities have not been evenly distributed. For example, despite making up 13% of the U.S. population, Black workers hold only 4.5% of software development jobs across the country. And in the U.K., tech workers from ethnic minorities are twice as likely as their white counterparts to work in nonpermanent positions.

There are many arguments for why this opportunity gap seems to persist—from the affordability of education or training options to the challenges of being what Shonda Rhimes calls an F.O.D. (first, only, different) within an organization.

The Social Mobility Foundation (SMF) supports young people without existing professional social capital through its Aspiring Professionals Programme, which provides insights into high-growth fields in the U.K., helping students build social networks.

With financial support from the Cognizant Foundation, SMF has piloted a program to support third-year technology students and develop new relationships with 50 talented first-year university students from disadvantaged backgrounds—all of whom aspire to careers in technology. For the pilot, which kicked off in 2021, SMF provided students with mentoring from professionals in high-tech fields; created workshops on pathways to tech jobs; and assisted participants

Photo credit: Turing School

TURING
SCHOOL OF SOFTWARE & DESIGN

COLORADO

Goal: Increase enrollment among veterans and/or military families and double the number of women students.

Since 2014, Turing School of Software and Design has offered seven-month online software development training programs in front-end and back-end engineering. Of the more than 1,500 program graduates, 95% are working in the tech industry, with the average alumni getting a job paying $75,000 within 65 days of graduation. With support from the Cognizant Foundation, Turing launched an initiative to boost enrollment among veterans and military families, underemployed women, mothers returning to the workforce and women dissatisfied with their careers. To date, Turing has leveraged the grant to offer individualized prep and support to these students before their first day of classes and has provided more opportunities for customized coaching during enrollment. Turing also matched students with alumni mentors, increased emergency and short-term loan funds, and developed continuing education programs for female graduates. Together, Turing and the foundation are helping students from diverse backgrounds succeed in high-fulfillment technical careers so that the people who create technology will look like the people who use it.

with applications and interview preparations. The foundation's grant will also enable SMF to co-convene industry and partner convenings on topics related to social mobility and equitable pathways into the tech sector. In collaboration with the foundation, SMF is giving young people in the U.K. insight into a world that can open up opportunities for fulfilling, financially secure careers in the future.

But building pathways to economic opportunity is not just the responsibility of individuals—or even employers. The public sector has an important role to play in building the systems that incentivize and support equitable pathways to economic mobility.

The National Governors Association (NGA), which represents 55 states, territories and commonwealths, wanted to develop model state-level policies that help workers who have been impacted by technological advances or displaced by challenges related to Covid-19. With support from the Cognizant Foundation, NGA launched the Workforce Innovation Network (NGA-WIN) in 2021 to share equitable, innovative workforce development practices with state leaders. NGA-WIN helps policymakers prioritize critical workforce and economic recovery issues, such as building an inclusive workforce, enhancing job quality and upskilling workers in high-growth fields.

With equity and inclusivity at its core, NGA launched the initiative with a cohort of states that represent regional, demographic and political diversity. The partnership between NGA-WIN and the foundation brings attention to the critical workforce issues that NGA members must address to create prosperity not just for workers, but for employers and the overall economy as well.

Photo credit: The Marcy Lab School, fellowship graduates

THE MARCY LAB SCHOOL

NEW YORK CITY

Project: Expand the software engineering fellowship and fulfill the school's larger goal of providing economic mobility to underrepresented youth.

As part of its mission to end the cycle of generational poverty, Marcy Lab expanded its software engineering fellowship, which helps young people from low socioeconomic backgrounds land jobs as entry-level software engineers. To date, 100% of graduates—half of whom are women and 82% of whom are Black and/or Hispanic—have found software engineering jobs with companies such as Asana, JPMorgan Chase and The New York Times. They earn an average annual salary of $100,000, well beyond the national average of about $56,000. The grant from the Cognizant Foundation has helped Marcy Lab recruit, train and support 75 fellows for the 2021-22 class; fill three new full-time positions to support the fellowship program; and launch a program to help alumni after graduation. Marcy Lab is using these fellowships, and its partnership with the foundation, to transform education and workforce training and create innovative and accelerated pathways to rewarding, high-tech careers.

Conclusion

The coming months represent a crucial time for our education and workforce partners, whose teams are busy reimagining what the evolution of the "new normal" means for their programs and people. Over the next year, the Cognizant Foundation will continue to invest in this challenging but vital work, guided by our belief that the technology sector must help shape the transformation. That is why we began 2022 just as we did in 2021: determined to shore up our PK-12 pipelines to careers in technology; support clearer pathways for creating a highly skilled, nimble workforce; and rebuild the sector's education and training systems to match 21st-century demands. The foundation's successes over the past year are fueling our commitment to making economic mobility a reality for every opportunity seeker.

We're on the cusp of exciting changes, and corporate philanthropy plays a critical role in whether we will be well prepared for them. Even as our economy rebounds from Covid-19, we must continue to ensure that technology is a rising tide that lifts all boats. The foundation's grantmaking—in 2022 and in the years ahead—will continue to support this mission through bold thinking, innovative approaches and timely responses to the challenges ahead of us.

The private sector's employment challenges cannot be solved without private-sector solutions. Cognizant remains deeply dedicated to fulfilling its corporate social responsibility by unlocking these education and workforce opportunities for all. Our focus won't waiver from the task at hand: remaking the pipelines, pathways and systems on which the future depends.

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To learn more about the foundation, please visit www.cognizantfdn.org.

Grantee Partners

We partner with our grantees to rethink the pathways into and through the tech sector, grow more diverse talent pipelines and fundamentally reimagine the education and workforce systems in which we operate. And while our work is far from over, we are proud of the positive impact our investments have made since the foundation was established in 2018. Below is a selection of the foundation's grantee partners.

Achieving the Dream
Ada Developers Academy
Arizona Science Center
Aspen Institute
Blind Institute of Technology
Braven
Break Through Tech
CareerTrackers
Career Karma's Reskill America Initiative
Center for the Future of Arizona
Children's Museum of Atlanta
Christensen Institute
The City University of New York (CUNY)
Civic Hall Labs
CodeDoor
Code First Girls
Code Nation
CodePath
Code Platoon
ColorStack
Creating IT Futures
Computer Science Teachers Association
Connecticut Science Center
Flatiron School
Girls Inc. of Metro Denver
Girlstart
Goodwill Industries of the Southern Piedmont
Junior Achievement Central Ontario
Jobs for the Future
Last Mile Education Fund
Leonardo's Basement
Maker Ed
Management Leadership for Tomorrow
The Marcy Lab School
National Council for Community and Education Partnerships
National Governors Association Center for Best Practices
National Skills Coalition
National Student Clearinghouse
NCWIT
New York Hall of Science
Northeastern University
NPower Texas
Opportunity@Work
Per Scholas
The Prince's Trust
Reboot Representation
ReDi School of Digital Integration
Resilient Coders
Rework America Alliance, a Markle Initiative
Road to Hire
Social Mobility Foundation
Teach for America
Tech Corps
Thurgood Marshall College Fund
Turing School of Software and Design
U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation
United Way Greater Toronto
University of Technology Sydney
University of Toronto
Urban Institute's WorkRise Network
Vector Space
Workforce Matters
WorkingNation
Wounded Warrior Project