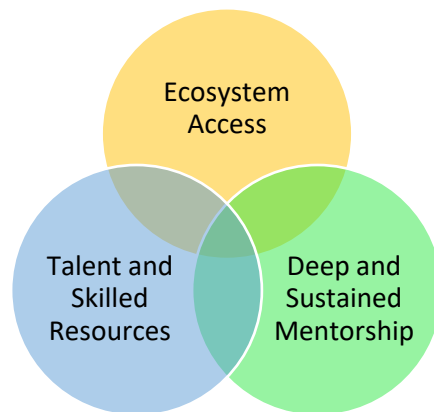


## RFI for Collaboration with Digital Impact Square - Incubation of Assistive Tech Social Startups.

Over the last six years, we at Digital Impact Square (DISQ), a TCS Foundation Initiative , ([www.digitalimpactsquare.com](http://www.digitalimpactsquare.com)) have created a robust pre-incubation / early incubation set up for very social startups. With a strong ecosystem of domain partners and academia, DISQ has nurtured more than 14 viable social startups across multiple domains such as Healthcare, Agriculture, Environment, Education, Financial Security and Citizen Empowerment.

Over these 6 years, we have come to realize that a startup and its co-founders have their best chance to succeed when they are able to get **timely** access to the following three enablement systems:



- **Deep mentorship** – Most early-stage startups fail because they struggle to get the right set of mentors who are aligned and invested in the success of the startup and their innovation. This means that while they do get many connects during their journey, they are unable to get dedicated mentors who can hand hold them for long periods of time. Startups also need different kinds of mentorship at different points of time in their journey.
- **Ecosystem Access** – Another reason for most early-stage startups to fail is their inability to identify the right problem to solve. Even when they do figure it out, they find it extremely difficult to get a “safe” ecosystem of user communities where they can quickly experiment, co-create and fail fast and learn from it.
- **Talent / Skills** – This is a significant hurdle for startups that aspire to move from early stage towards the GROW phase and eventually the SCALE phase. Their ability to spot, on board and leverage the right skills is often their biggest point of failure even after getting everything right.

## **DISQ Focus on Assistive Tech Startups**

Over the last 4 years, DISQ has had the opportunity to nurture and help build sustainable startups in the space of Assistive Solutions with focus on the Disabilities and the Geriatric Sectors. You can have a look at our Assistive Tech Startup portfolio in the document attached with this RFI

DISQ has also developed a robust ecosystem of partners in this journey including **Enable India** (<http://www.enableindia.org/>), **Disabilities Network Alliance** – a network of 130+ NGOs focused on the disabilities sector ( <http://www.dnaindia.org/>) and many more. These partners provide a very strong domain ecosystem that enables Assistive Tech Startups to connect with experts, co-create with users and build strong traction in the communities of impact.

## **RFI for DISQ –Collaboration with Academic Institutes**

We believe that currently there is a large untapped opportunity to create impact at scale in the field of Assistive Technology. We, therefore, aspire to reach out to all academia and explore opportunities for collaboration and nurture young, passionate, social entrepreneurs to start their journey with a strong enablement and network of Digital Impact Square. Most of our Assistive Tech Startups started their journeys in an academic set up – while working on college projects or in the incubation labs of various universities. There are opportunities for Academia and DISQ to collaborate

### **Opportunities for engagement for Academia with DISQ**

- Academic Assistive technology Labs, CoEs, Expert Groups - that offers internal and external student access to build, test prototype technologies. You can enable access to labs which can provide young minds an opportunity to experiment and build prototypes using cutting edge technology
- Professors and Researchers that are working on assistive technology project and initiatives – Opportunities exist of academic licensing, , mentorship and be part of DISQ advisory council for assistive technologies.
- Incubation centers with focus on Social Impact and covering Assistive Technologies as focus area. - co-incubation of initiatives with DISQ. DISQ can provide field immersion, mentorship, and incubation at DISQ

### **What DISQ can offer to its academic partners:**

- Conduct Master Classes in different aspects of Social Entrepreneurship for E-Cells
- Conduct mentoring session for professors / local mentors who are working with teams
- Organize interesting “Ideathons” –trigger teams to solve problems
- Participate as Jury Members / Key Note Speakers in Innovation Events as Industry Experts

Please share you interest to collaborate or request for a meeting with DISQ by writing to us @ [digital.impactsquare@tcs.com](mailto:digital.impactsquare@tcs.com) with the subject line:

**“DISQ Academia Collaboration for Assistive Tech Startups”**