

Organisation behind the practice:
Win Over Cancer

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Not only medicine, we need means, and meaning too

'Win over cancer' helps cancer survivors train themselves for new jobs

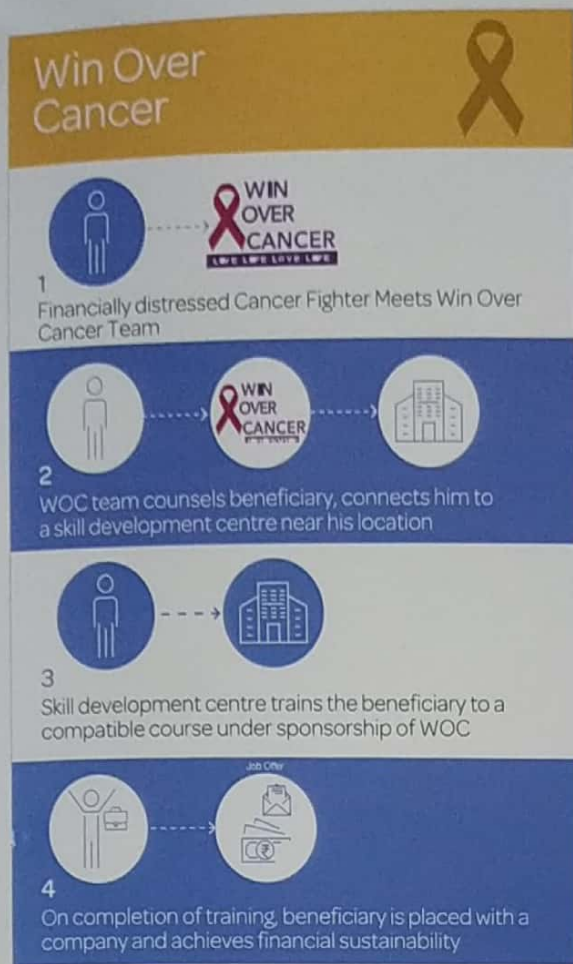
Surviving cancer is a great thing. Albeit it leaves broken lives and mangled finances in its wake. Win Over Cancer, founded by a cancer survivor CA Arun Gupta has developed an IT solution to help cancer survivors find vocational trainings that could help them rebuild their lives.

The lesser known cancer pain

A lot has been written and discussed about the medical misery that cancer patients go through. The excruciating pain of the disease, and the more excruciating pain of the therapy, the slim chances of survival and the stories of late detection are all too common. All too common also are the heroic stories of those who beat cancer.

The lesser known misery though is the pain of rebuilding a life once the cancer is gone. Cancer treatments leave the suffering families financially broken, often indebted, and possibly without the jobs that the survivors held before the disease set in. With non-existent medical financing, poor insurance covers, and no health safety net, the survivors and their families move out of the fear of death to stare into the abyss of a financially challenged life.

More than adulation, the survivors need rehabilitation into vocations and jobs.



Helping cancer survivors survive their new lives

CA Arun Gupta was stricken with cancer sometime in 2010. He and his wife Kavita were fortunate to have the means and the will to fight the disease. They came out winning against cancer but not before the disease had claimed Arun's job and most of his means. Arun discovered that the financial plight was not his alone but was the shared fate of cancer survivors around the world.

Arun set out to make it easier for cancer survivors to find new vocations. He and Kavita founded the NGO Win Over Cancer (WOC) in 2011.

WOC developed a mobile application, or app, that helps cancer survivors find vocational training institutes near the survivors' homes. The app has listings of over 65,000 growing institutes around the country. Available in six languages, the app provides skill development opportunities in over 800 disciplines.

WOC not only helps the survivors find relevant trainings but in many cases helps arrange scholarships



After my husband passed away from cancer, it was very difficult for me to sustain my kids and myself financially, since I was just a housewife. After the three months training programme taken from Win over Cancer, I trained in IT, Accounting and GST and started a job.

Sakwan Gaitely, beneficiary of financial rehabilitation program

as well. WOC's job portal helps the trained survivors or their family members find mainstream jobs.

The wisdom of not recreating the wheel

The brilliance in WOC's approach is their idea of leveraging widely available training facilities in the country instead of choosing the very capital intensive way of creating their own institutes.

Leveraging existing institutes had many advantages. The beneficiaries find institutes near their homes saving them significant costs; WOC needed to invest only in the enabler, the app. The idea of creating a central training institute for cancer survivors would have been financially impractical. The initiative has also helped training centres fill their seats.

Most of the trainings are given by the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) centres for free. For paid trainings from other institutes, the survivors on an average spend INR 10,000. The skills learnt from these centres are enabling the survivors earn upto INR 20,000 a month.

Build only once, reap forever

The model established by WOC has promise for more people in distress due to other factors, natural calamities for example. The software is developed only once and beneficiaries keep reaping the results for years without much recurring investment. Not needing much investment, the model can be easily replicated in other situations as well.

WOC ensures people gain a life after beating cancer and not merely survive another disaster ■

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