Acceleration Centers: Delivering on our purpose and inclusion strategy around the world

FY21 PwC Purpose Report - Acceleration Centers Snapshot
Under The New Equation, we’ve evolved into a community of solvers coming together in unexpected ways. We are bringing the strength of our people, capabilities and technology together to support our clients in building trust and delivering sustained outcomes for their businesses. And the Acceleration Centers (ACs), established by the US firm in different parts of the world, play a critical role in delivering on our strategy.

Located in Mumbai, Bangalore and Shanghai, our international US ACs represent a highly diverse, global talent pool of nearly 7,000 professionals working together to create value for our clients and people.

Following are highlights of the impact our ACs are having in putting our purpose into action and bringing our values to life.
Building on a culture of belonging

Fostering, communicating and promoting a culture of belonging is central to how we attract and retain talent—including diverse talent. Despite the many challenges this year has presented, our unwavering determination and commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) enabled us to make progress in several areas throughout our ACs in FY21:

- We launched a cross-AC DEI strategy focused on gender, valuing differences and one of the three following priorities—LGBTQ+, Disabilities, and Generational Diversity—which each of our ACs selected based on relevance in their respective geography.

- Our AC leaders activated our strategy in each geography, with customized programs such as Inclusive Leadership, Women in Technology, Candid Conversations, Mentorship, Leadership Development Experience (LDE) and Diversity and Inclusion training.
• With programs like specialized women hiring drives, promoting diversity in interview teams, curated mandatory training for career coaches, flexible work options, showcasing employee stories and celebrations like International Women’s Day, Pride Month and Diversity & Inclusion Week to engage all professionals—we directed our efforts at improving diversity and addressing culture change.

• Our efforts helped enhance gender diversity across different levels. Over the last three years, as the headcount of the ACs increased significantly, the overall population of females in ACs grew by 75%.

• In FY21 females as a percentage of the AC workforce stood at 35% for senior associate, 26% for manager, 20% for senior manager and 27% for director levels—all increases in representation over the last three years.
At the international US Acceleration Centers, we demonstrated that while our exceptional diversity makes us unique, living our values makes us even stronger. Through our Responsible Business Leadership program, we continued our contributions to social change by supporting nonprofit organizations and giving our AC professionals opportunities to use their skills to solve important problems in their communities. These included:

- Working with nonprofit organizations across a broad spectrum of areas like healthcare; education; environment; entrepreneurship development; empowering youth and people with disabilities; and promoting gender diversity—to help create tangible, sustainable social impact.

- Supporting nonprofits focused on leveraging education, technology literacy and upskilling to enable persons with disabilities, women and youth from the underserved sections of society to attain self-reliance. For example, our professionals in Bangalore and Mumbai worked with eight nonprofits to help provide better quality education and skill-based training to thousands of beneficiaries.
As COVID-19 impacted our people across the world, our primary focus was on caring—from the perspectives of physical, mental and financial well-being; flexibility; and social responsibility. For example:

• When our professionals in India were severely impacted by the second wave of COVID in the summer, our firm and our people stepped up to support our AC colleagues, their families and communities. PwC US and the PwC Charitable Foundation contributed $2 million to aid in relief efforts, helped purchase 1,500 oxygen concentrators and provided direct support to local charities. PwCers from the US and Mexico personally donated over $200,000 and helped provide 500 oxygen concentrators for our staff and their families, as well as the communities we operate in.

• We also facilitated voluntary care groups of our own AC professionals who served as first responders to our staff and their families impacted by COVID-19 to guide them to the right resources at the right time—helping save lives.

• To help our people through the crisis, we ran vaccine drives; reimagined benefits programs like leave and medical insurance; enhanced the employee well-being and assistance program to provide 24/7 counseling support, as well as regular wellness education sessions; and provided telehealth consultations. We also provided financial support for home offices and technology infrastructure for seamless connectivity and remote working.
We leveraged digital technologies to empower our people in the ACs to enhance their competencies, achieve operational efficiencies and create a better experience for our clients. For example:

- We aligned the Learning & Development experience of our AC teams to their US counterparts.
- Our people had access to customized functional, technical, digital and industry-focused training, including automation/visualization skills, leadership development, new and emerging technologies and certifications like information security compliance. Thanks in part to these programs, our AC team members automated 1.67 million hours of work and created 260+ digital assets to help serve our clients and run our business more efficiently.
- We significantly enhanced the onboarding experience in our ACs with programs like Consulting Solutions Start and Business Essentials.
• We delivered a wide range of digital upskilling, automation and innovation programs, expanding our learning library and issuing more than 3,600 knowledge badges to our people. We had more than 60% user engagement in our Digital Lab (our digital asset/technology-sharing community).

• We launched our Women in Technology (WiT) program in the ACs to connect and empower female professionals to innovate, build their digital brand and make a meaningful impact in their communities. WiT attracted close to 1,000 participants and 130 allies and featured tech talks, professional development workshops and community outreach initiatives.

Our ACs are a reflection of our relentless commitment to keeping our people at the center of everything we do. We will continue to advance our agenda of being bold, intentional, transparent and unwavering in our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. We’ll direct our technology development efforts toward greater inclusion and operational excellence. And most importantly, we’ll care for our AC team members across the globe as we navigate whatever challenges lie ahead.
“The last 18 months have been some of the most challenging we’ve faced—extraordinarily difficult times marked by exceptional strength, kindness, gratitude and resilience from each and every one of our AC team members. At the end of the day, what matters most is our people and living our values and I couldn’t be more proud of how we’ve cared for each other.

Our ACs continue to play an integral role in delivering on The New Equation—putting our clients at the center of everything we do, and bringing the best people, capabilities and technology together to support them. Working together, we will continue to make more possible for our clients, our firm, each other and society.”

Hari Kumar  
Managing Partner, Acceleration Centers

We engage our Internal Audit and Assurance teams to review our reporting processes and controls as related to the Diversity & Inclusion KPIs.