About SBI Youth for India Fellowship

SBI Youth for India, recognized as the flagship program of SBI Foundation, is a 13-month long Rural Development Fellowship Program in partnership with 10 reputed NGOs spread across India.

The Fellowship provides a framework for India's best young minds to join hands with rural communities, empathize with their struggles and catalyze their needs and aspirations. Our vision is that one day every village has the necessary capacities to develop themselves sustainably.

Our Supporters
I am extremely happy that the e-newsletter of ‘SBI Youth for India’ which offers readers insights into the SBI Youth for India Fellowship Program, has resumed from this quarter.

State Bank of India’s vision of ‘Service Beyond Banking’ is a responsibility taken up and owned by its CSR arm, SBI Foundation, which is directing all its efforts to realize this vision by way of several CSR programs. SBI Youth for India, is one such program that offers a platform to educated urban youth to connect with rural aspirations by creatively resolving rural issues and bringing positive change in remote villages.

Having had the opportunity to personally witness some of the milestones of this pioneering fellowship program, I’m confident that this program will strive to deliver on its goals of enabling innovative creative solutions to developmental challenges whilst offering diverse talent with varied skill sets and expertise to the impact sector.

I am sure that this e-newsletter with its stories of change brought about by highly educated urban young change-makers in rural India will inspire each of us and also strengthen the culture of giving back to society.

Shri Alok Kumar Choudhary, Deputy Managing Director (HR) & Corporate Development Officer, State Bank of India, joined the Bank as a Probationary Officer in the year 1987. Shri Choudhary has served the Bank in various capacities for more than 32 years.

Shri Choudhary is also the Chief Sustainability Officer (CSO) of the Bank reporting directly to the Bank’s Board. The subject of Sustainability is quite close to Shri Choudhary’s heart and he very keenly follows varied sustainable interventions. Being the CSO of the largest Public Sector Bank in India, he is keen to drive further the sustainability initiatives in the Bank.
From an Environmental Science graduate to a menstrual hygiene advocate, I started my journey in the impact sector when I joined the SBI YFI Fellowship in the year 2014. During the fellowship, I worked with school children and also trained frontline health workers to bring about a behavioural change among the community to promote hygienic practices. As I delved more into the problem, I realised that poor MHM is not only the result of social taboos but also a direct consequence of lack of infrastructure (toilets in schools and public places) and access to safe and affordable absorbents.

After the fellowship, I worked with many stakeholders i.e. sanitary pad manufacturers, CSOs, district and state governments etc. I feel that the grassroots experience of working directly with the community to understand their issues and concerns helped me throughout my journey in multifaceted roles that I played working with different organisations.

Winning the recently concluded 3M-CII Young Innovators Award along with Satwik Mishra, SBI YFI Alumnus- who is currently working with the Ministry of Home Affairs, is a great honour for the both of us. The validation received for my work over the last 5 years will enable me to further enhance this initiative in the coming years.

I am grateful to SBI & SBI Foundation for offering this platform to enable the development of many such aspiring change-makers.

Komal Sharma worked towards creating awareness about menstrual hygiene and the importance of nutrition in daily diet. Through the support of our partner NGO- BAIF Development Research Foundation, she carried out her fellowship project in Netrang, Gujarat.

Komal is currently pursuing her Masters in Public Policy at the Willy Brandt School of Public Policy, University of Erfurt, Germany. She can be reached at- komalramdey105@gmail.com.
An MBA in finance and armed with a few years' experience in the corporate sector, Aubrey King-Lee always knew his calling lay elsewhere. Not entirely surprising since he says he grew up listening to stories of the hardships of people working in tea gardens. His calling came in the form of SBI Youth for India (YFI) Fellowship where he got to work with the Aga Khan Rural Support Program (India) on a livelihood project in Madhya Pradesh. The project aimed to create employment opportunities, mostly for women, through a soap-making project from cow and goat milk. He shares an experience from the early days on the project. “We set up a stall at a local village market but failed to make even a single sale. However, the women weren’t disappointed. Their enthusiasm refused to die down. Many instances like that showed me why rural India is a goldmine.”

What surprised him the most was that people in rural areas, at least in the villages he worked in, faced hardships due to rampant corruption. Yet that didn’t make them challenge the inequities. “Here, I see a livelihood project as a change agent and not just an income generation opportunity. Because you tend to work closely with them, you are able to able to engage in conversations by taking them into confidence that will help them challenge the sad reality that they live in.”

Aubrey King-lee pursued his fellowship with Aga Khan Rural Support Program (India), our partner NGO. Aubrey is currently carrying forward his fellowship project of making milk-based bathing bars through a village-centric ownership model; which he describes in his own words is based on the principle of ‘the village giving back to itself.’ He can be reached at- kingleexperience@gmail.com
FROM WORKING WITH AN URBAN CONGLOMERATE TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT

- SHIVA CHITTA, SBI YFI FELLOW 2016-17

Working in the IT industry, I realised my calling lies in doing something for the society. I came to know about SBI YFI Fellowship Program through my colleague at Amazon. I eventually got the opportunity to do this fellowship for 13 months. The journey has been transformative ever since. Being posted at one of the most difficult locations to live in, Kotda block of Udaipur district in Rajasthan helped me gain a very deep insight into the lives of tribal people of Rajasthan and rural India.

Agriculture for me was a distinct subject of study but after living with the people of Kotda, I understood agriculture and the challenges associated with it. My fellowship project was on integrating technology and agriculture to improve last mile extension services in rural India. Motivated enough by the experience I decided to transition into the development sector and continued my work with Seva Mandir, my host NGO, as a consultant in monitoring and evaluation.

This is when I got the wonderful opportunity to apply my experience of working at the grassroots with district administration in the form the aspirational districts fellowship program. As an Aspirational District Fellow with the Ministry of Home affairs and Tata Trusts, we get to work directly with the district administration of aspirational districts identified by Niti Aayog. The empathy that I developed by living with community as an SBI-YFI fellow has given me a very grounded and practical approach towards my work as an ADF. I am currently working as an ADF in Ramgarh district of Jharkhand.

Shiva Chitta, an engineer by qualification and with experience of working in the IT industry pursued his fellowship with Seva Mandir, our partner NGO based in Udaipur, Rajasthan. Currently, he is pursuing the Aspirational Districts Fellowship Program with the Ministry of Home Affairs in Ramgarh District, Jharkhand. He can be reached at - prasad.shiva550@gmail.com
Starting from “who am I” to “how we all are similar yet unique”, our Orientation Journey was a tremendous one.

Every day was a new day where I got a chance to explore myself. The days which I spent in Orientation, were one of the best days of my life where I got an opportunity to learn the values of leadership, mindfulness, togetherness and self-awareness. Listening to the eminent speakers, change-makers and knowing their insights on the development sector was amazing and thought-provoking.

- JINCY THAKRAL, SBI YFI FELLOW 2019-20

On a drizzling afternoon and heavy down-pouring thoughts, I arrived at BAIF Campus Pune, alone, not knowing what waits across. For who knew the 32 of us standing on the same spectrum, would contribute in making that 'safe space', towards the journey of a new start.

Tight schedules, interesting modules, learning by unlearning and sleepless nights. Giving, sharing and receiving, understanding perspectives, the 9-day long Orientation, seemed short towards its completion.

With a stronger hold on our respective missions, hoping to not get 'lost in translation'. With heavy hearts, filled with gratitude and elation, embracing the bitter-sweet moment, we were all set for the journey to reach our NGO destinations...

- SHREYA DEEP BANSOD, SBI YFI FELLOW 2019-20
EVENT HIGHLIGHTS FROM SBI YFI 2018-19 BATCH-
AUGUST COHORT VALEDICTION CEREMONY
HELD AT STATE BANK LEARNING CENTRE, BENGALURU

An SBI YFI Fellow presenting her work from the 13-month long grassroots experience.

Hon'ble Lt. Governor, Puducherry Dr. Kiran Bedi interacting with the SBI YFI Fellows via video-conferencing.

The delegation present at the Valediction Ceremony comprised of representatives from CSRs, NGOs & other stakeholders from the social sector community.

Mr. Abhijit Majumder, CGM- Bengaluru Circle, State Bank of India addressing the gathering.

25 SBI YFI Fellows graduated in the presence of dignitaries - Dr. Kalpana Gopalan IAS (Addl. Chief Secretary, Govt. of Karnataka), Mr. Mahendra Kumar Rekhi (MD & CEO, SBI Foundation), Mr. Nixon Joseph (President & COO, SBI Foundation), Mr. Amiya K Sharma (ED, RGVN), Mr. Liby Johnson (ED, Gram Vikas) and Dr. Oliver Israel King (Director, MSSRF).
JOIN US - SBI YOUTH FOR INDIA FELLOWSHIP

Working on bringing about positive change across rural India

The Fellowship is an opportunity for young aspiring leaders to develop their social entrepreneurship and leadership skills while working alongside their rural communities.

250+
YFI Alumni
Join a growing community of SBI YFI fellows

70%
Social Leaders
Most fellows continue their social work even after

ARE YOU THAT CATALYST

‘You will live miles away from home in an unfamiliar community, empathizing with their problems and innovating solutions that fuel change. You will live in a mud house relishing the local food, experience local culture and learn human values that are slowly diminishing in the pretext of development’ – though it sounds interesting, it is equally challenging. Can you give up on the urban comforts to adapt to a much backward lifestyle?

Passion, dedication, empathy, sincerity and enthusiasm – a bit of each ingredient makes our ideal fellow.

Here’s your chance to make a positive difference in hundreds of lives.

visit- www.you4.in

For more information about the SBI YFI fellowship, please write to contactus@youthforindia.org
For feedback on the newsletter, please write to media@youthforindia.org