

SBI Youth for India Fellowship begins orientation for its 2021- 22 Batch.

Ushering in the next batch of fellows were leaders across SBI, leading NGOs, and also featured eminent international cricketer, humanitarian and entrepreneur, Mr. Yuvraj Singh. Udaipur, Rajasthan (6th August 2021)

The SBI Youth for India Fellowship, one of the nation's leading fellowships for the youth, focused on rural development, proudly inaugurated the latest batch for its 2021 - '22 cohort. Having only recently celebrated 10 years of the Fellowship, in offering India's youth an opportunity to work on rural development projects across India, often in some of the remotest parts of the nation — in close partnership with leading NGO partners. The orientation event, conducted at Seva Mandir's Kaya Centre in Udaipur, features an eight-day series of events and activities commencing on the 6th of August and concludes on the 13th of August.

International cricketing icon, Mr. Yuvraj Singh, joined the orientation's opening ceremony and inspired the fellows, "Each one of you is a custodian of a great nation, and I want you to give your best or at all times. Always remember, the pain you feel today is the strength you feel tomorrow. I wish you all the best. And hope your life will make a difference to many other lives. We'll all have individual goals which we want to achieve. Sometimes, when the team has a bigger goal, you have to take a backseat." Further reinforcing the perseverance and belief needed to succeed he shared, "But as I said, look for the bigger picture, you have to sometimes do that. And your team's victory is the biggest victory."



So at times in life, everybody will have an obstacle to overcome. And, you know, that's the time when you are left with no choice. And that's the time when you bounce back from it. It makes you mentally stronger."

Speaking of the SBI Foundation, he said, "With the support of the SBI Foundation, I'm confident that YouweCAN will continue to work together and spread smiles through our future initiative. There were times I felt I could not carry on anymore. But I was always encouraged to keep going and not to give up."



The inaugural day featured leaders joining both in-person and remotely to welcome the new fellows, or the 'August Cohort' to the program. Speaking at the occasion, the SBI Chairman, Shri. Dinesh Kumar Khara said, "By coming up with the backbone project year after year, what really inspires me is to see that many amongst you have taken a break from their professional careers and have chosen to spend a year in the service of the nation." Speaking on the accomplishments of the program, he further added, "This just demonstrates that the youth of the country is, to my mind, determined towards building a holistic and conscious community, which really is the need of the hour, and it is really heartening to see that over 70% of the fellows that have successfully completed the fellowship, go on to pursue meaningful careers in the social sector, which reflect that the program has succeeded in its goal of generalizing the energy and add to the other of the youth in the sectors like rural entrepreneurship."

Further mentioning the 10 years of the fellowship, and impact on rural communities, he added, "Rural communities as we know, are the backbone of this country. They need to be nurtured, and deserve our respect and support. So that together we grow as a nation. It also makes the foundation as well as the SBI Bank, proud of the small contribution it has made to society. This year marks the completion of 10 years of fellowship – dedicated to building thriving communities around us. That speaks volumes about the impact of the program."

Welcoming the fellows, and leading the lamp-lighting ceremony, SBI Foundation's MD & CEO, Smt. Manjula Kalyanasundaram spoke to the growing appeal amongst the youth for the program, "This year, we had 80,000 plus applications. So you can tell yourself that you are one among the chosen few. We had a very rigorous selection process, and we went through three or four stages."

Appreciating the passion of the young fellows, even in times of the pandemic, she said "If you have applied for this fellowship during the pandemic, knowing very well that there will be something coming up a second wave or third wave, we don't know. But all of you are up for the challenge to make a difference in society. And I congratulate each and every one of you and wish you to advance in your journey with us. Thank you."

Shri. Lalit Mohan, President & COO of the SBI Foundation, shared how the orientation was planned to give the fellows an in-depth insight into the fellowship experience. “In this eight day program from 6th to 13th Aug, the fellows will be given exposure to the various facets of the social and development sector and challenges. They are all starting from day one through the Naranpur Express, a program designed by IRMA (Institute of Rural Management, Anand) gives a glimpse of challenges and the struggles of marginalized rural households. Simulation program and cultural sensitivity, gender centered sensitivity for social work projects, entrepreneurship, and individual well-being amongst other aspects. Daily interactions with YFI alumni and how fellows would adhere to the Code of Conduct throughout the orientation program are a few of the learnings planned for the incoming fellows.”

Janat Shah, President of Seva Mandir, said “If we want real progress, we will have to find a meaningful way to engage with the community. Especially if we're going to talk about solving problems in rural India. We need people who work with local communities to come up with interesting, innovative ideas. And that's where the fellows play a very important role. You come with a fresh mind with curiosity, and look at they're hard problems which surely makes a difference.”



Fellows participate in Community Interaction during their field visits in Udaipur, Rajasthan.

