



school for
social
entrepreneurs
india

Social Start-Up Fellowship 2017

Fellowship Participants

Profile Booklet

“Doing Learning Differently”

Supported by:



Venue Partner:





Jaivir Singh

Chairperson | SSE India

Welcome aboard

I am thrilled to share that the flagship programme School for Social Entrepreneurs India (SSE) for 2017 cohort has begun. With our 2016 cohort, we have further strengthened our capacities to be able to nurture the 18 fellows selected in cohort 2017. I congratulate these 18 budding social entrepreneurs selected for the Social Start up programme who will start their 9-month journey of evolving both as a person and a professional.

Hailing from different parts of India, our fellows are determined and passionate people, each coming with their story, skills, and commitment to making a positive social change. I am happy to report the diversity this cohort brings. Be it gender equality or sectoral diversity, our fellows truly embody the spirit of what SSE India wishes to achieve through its programmes.

I am glad to share that the fellows from Cohort 2016 are extending their support to the new fellows by becoming part of the “Witness” sessions and sharing their struggles as also their successes. We are humbled by the support received from the senior management of PwC India and thankful to other partners for their commitment as mentors and in delivering expert sessions.

I'd like to express gratitude on behalf of SSE India to all our supporters and well-wishers for joining hands with us and hope to see many more becoming a part of the cause and nurturing the School and its fellows. It is the spirit of working together and making a difference that truly matters and I continue to be inspired by all the people that SSE has brought together over the last few years.



Shalabh Mittal

Chief Executive | SSE India

Namaskar!

I am pleased to bring this short compilation of the profiles of our Social Start-Up Fellowship Participants 2017. They are nothing short of 'remarkable'.

3 months, 176 applicants, 3 levels of selection, 51 candidates interviewed, 13 interview panels, 19 panelists and 18 finalists selected into the programme.

We are delighted by the response we have received, and inspired by the engagement of everyone involved in the selection process. I personally thank everyone for their commitment to School for Social Entrepreneurs (SSE) India. And at this juncture, I would like to mention about the founder of SSE in UK - Michael Young. He introduced the term 'meritocracy' and over the years it has become a reality though many have disputed his idea. SSE India works to demonstrate that structures that could enable excluded communities and individuals find inclusion as well as to have happier, richer and more rewarding lives. This is truly demonstrated in our cohort, and the diversity they bring in. You would like to read about them, and we will regularly bring updates to you on their journey. So, I request you to stay connected.

I have an idea of utopia. Similarly, you too have an idea of it. For many it means equality, social justice, universal human rights, world citizenship, freedom from oppression - for 'YOU' it may be something more attainable than just being more modest. Everyone has their own set of utopian social values, some pursue their passion and demonstrate leadership to gather people for achieving common good; while others just remain intellectuals. And, these are such leaders in our fellowship programme who deeply inspire us and I dedicate the following lines to them, which I read not so long ago and which have stayed with me:

मंजिलें भी ज़िद्दी हैं, रास्ते भी ज़िद्दी हैं
देखते हैं कल क्या हो, हौंसले भी ज़िद्दी हैं

I wish them all the very best in their pursuits!

Dhanyawad!

About SSE India

WE BELIEVE IN YOU...
CREATING SOCIAL
CHANGE TOGETHER

All of us see the world's problems and wish things were different. We envision an equal and just society with better livelihood, education, and healthcare opportunities for all. We try to find our own ways to contribute to take the world a step ahead. Some do it with their time and energy, some with their monetary resources, and others with both. A lot of us have creative ideas to address these issues. At the School for Social Entrepreneurs (SSE) India, we mobilize the experience of people who have identified an unmet social need and support them to use entrepreneurial approaches to create a sustainable solution to address the issues.

We strongly believe that 'Everybody has the capacity to be remarkable'. Michael Young, a social entrepreneur himself, founded SSE in 1997 in UK with the idea of creating a platform for social entrepreneurs to learn from each other and transform their individual vision into collective action.

“SSE is a place where my failures found reason to succeed.”

- Archana Relan, Miraculous Millets (SSE India Fellow 2016)

SSE India, launched in February 2016, is built around the same vision. **We invest in individuals** so that they are better equipped to establish and sustain organizations that create positive change for people and communities.

Our 9-month Fellowship programme promotes entrepreneurial approaches to solving complex social problems. The social entrepreneurs are supported to deal with the inevitable challenges they face along the way.



94% of the Fellows feel that the programme helped them develop a strong sense of purpose.

A social entrepreneur's journey can be very lonely and exhausting, and SSE India walks a bit of the journey with them, building a sense of possibility, inspiring them with success and failures, and teaching them new skills.

In the 23 days over the 9-month programme, we transform their ideas into real social outcomes, in the form of sustainable solutions to poverty and disadvantaged communities. Our programme is committed to jargon-free learning. We focus on developing the individual and strongly believe that with the right support and investment in the entrepreneur, the enterprise is likely to succeed. SSE India follows an action-oriented approach to learning.

'Experts' from various industries help develop and refine certain hard skills such as branding and marketing and project management. There

are interactive sessions with experienced social entrepreneurs. 'Witnesses' share their journey of struggle and success and 'Mentors' from our partners guide and ensure the development of the Fellows, during the course of the fellowship and beyond. We use 'Action Learning' as our core pedagogy; our Fellows dedicate time to working on the project in between the Fellowship sessions

Our first cohort of 16 social entrepreneurs are already transforming the landscape, addressing the challenges with their social enterprises, in a wide variety of areas from agriculture, and education to energy, to waste management.

Our Fellows have impacted about 3000 people with employment, skills and an improved livelihood. This proves that social entrepreneurship can be the much-needed answer to India's social problems.

100%

of the Fellows say that the programme has helped them in achieving their professional goals.

of Fellows would recommend SSE India to others

of Fellows say the Expert and Witness sessions during the programme enabled them to get the information they needed to develop as an entrepreneur

of Fellows recommend the SSE India programme

Profile

18 Fellowship Participants



Age Group



Project Focus



States Represented



Thematic Areas

- Healthcare
- Skill Development
- Livelihood
- Education
- Rural Development Art and Community Wellbeing
- Khadi - Handicrafts

Target Groups

Tribals | Urban Poor | Artisans | Senior Citizens | Migrants | Urban and Peri-Urban Middle Class | Children | Women



Mohit Arora

Learning Manager | SSE India

It was this time, last year, that we welcomed the founding cohort at SSE India, and here we are again, with the 18 budding social entrepreneurs ready to join the SSE India family.

As our cohort from 2016 continues its journeys of being the best they can be to create the desired social impact, they did leave behind a stronger learning programme for the incoming cohort, with their continuous feedback to the SSE India team with the intent to make it the best programme, focused on the individual.

As we say, **'they are not for the programme but the programme is for them'**.

SSE India believes in having minimum barriers to entry for its programme meant for all individuals irrespective of their backgrounds. This allowed us to have a simple, lean and engaging selection process which led us to diversity – of two kinds.

One, in the selection process, where 19 individuals, playing different roles in the social entrepreneurship ecosystem, formed the final interview panel helped SSE India in identifying the 18 fellowship participants for its second cohort. Two, in the cohort, with equal number of women & men, with youngest one being 22 years & the oldest 48 years from all across the country coming together to form a community in supporting each other to create social impact.

This must be celebrated and acknowledged as this diversity lead to the depth in the selection process and will lead to depth in their learning as individuals.

They are here as a part of the SSE India's Social Start-Up Fellowship 2017 for **not only who they are, but for all that they can be.**

As they will, we continue to learn from their experiences and those of our many supporters. The never ending learning journey continues...



Prem Kumar, 48 years, Bihar

“The best preparation for tomorrow is doing your best today”

- By H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

After completing M.Sc. I put in 22 years of service in the Government Secretariat, Banking, ITES, Information Technology, and Development Sector. After gathering enough experience in all these sectors, one day I just decided to break free of the mad race for a flamboyant position, a fat pay packet, rising above the corporate ladder and joined the development sector by choice. I worked for more than five years in the development of tribal areas, financial inclusion, agriculture development, skill development, and Livelihood generation. The land and climate in the hilly areas of Lakhisarai, Munger, and Jamui district is extremely suitable for adopting Lac culture as a commercial venture. With the help of KVK, we conducted awareness camps and mobilized tribal farmers from these two districts for adoption of this commercial venture and the initial response was very encouraging. We are planning to establish four to five clusters with a group of 50

families each to launch the pilot. The farmers' effort will be collaborated with the establishment of a centralized processing plant. We are in discussion with potential bulk buyers to ensure proper marketing and remitting competitive prices to farmers. Marketing viability will also generate farmers' interest in developing Lac culture farms and thereby provide new livelihood opportunities. An orchard of 50 plants will provide an additional income of Rs 15,000 to Rs 20,000 to each family. Even though resources are in plenty in the form of land, forest, and manpower, not channelizing these resources in economically viable ventures has resulted in a precarious condition for the tribal farmers. This project is targeted towards promoting Lac cultivation in tribal farmers, processing of produce and effective marketing to provide livelihood opportunity to farmers and improve their living conditions. The project targets more than 1500 families in the above-mentioned districts.

Bharti Singh, 37 years, Rajasthan

“A successful woman is one who can build a firm foundation with the bricks others have thrown at her”



I pursued a Post Graduation from the Rajasthan University. I belong to Jaipur (Rajasthan). Born and brought up in a middle class family, an incident in the family resulted in challenges for my education and safety. This made me stand firm as a professional and a social activist.. I am married and have a eight-year-old son. I have about 15 years of experience working with the Print Media and the Telecom Industry. I have been volunteering with various NGOs since the age of 16.

After thorough ground work, I started a remedial Education Center and Life Skill Development Program called the Laadli Community Development Centre for

Girls in Jaipur in August 2016. These girls belong to families that are below the Poverty Line, have been discriminated against, are into labour work, and not going to school. These girls have also been subjected to child marriage and abused. I wish to create this as a first model center for girls which prepares community leaders and upcoming role models and also play the role of a second guardian. I look forward to guidance from SSE in understanding all legal guidelines, processes, structures, legal formalities, association processes from CSR, etc. which can help make true my dream of converting this centre into a model center and later scale up across India.



Anirudh Gaurang, 30 years, Telangana

“Life is either a daring adventure or nothing at all”

- By Hellen Keller

I am a dentist by training and hail from a family of doctors. After BDS, I completed an MA in Social Entrepreneurship from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. I then worked with the Public Health Foundation of India on an India-level training programme aimed at improving the public health infrastructure. I have started an organization, which is a for-profit social enterprise aimed at making healthcare more accessible to all. Our main focus is on rural/semi-urban markets and geriatric markets. We are creating avenues of doctor consultations using smartphone apps, through which the beneficiary can contact any doctor of their choice and consult with them. This will ensure that our target audience, who are otherwise reluctant

to avail health services or are unable to avail healthcare services, will be able to do it. Our impact would be the radical improvement of the health status of our beneficiaries along with a reduction in their economic and psychological burden. I have witnessed firsthand the inadequacies in healthcare while my rural posting as a doctor. I strongly believe in the concept of right to health as a fundamental right for every citizen. I have also personally experienced how important healthcare services are if a family member needs attention but isn't given the same. Therefore, I wish to alleviate the suffering of people who are otherwise unable to access health services. As a trained doctor, I find this cause to be my calling both professionally and personally.

Sonali Patwe, 30 years, Maharashtra

“Tough times never lasts, tough people do”



I am a simple girl with many dreams, coming from a very humble background, born and brought up in a typical middle class family and residing in a small town in Maharashtra. My mother passed on five years ago of cancer and I am the only child. My father is very supportive of my dreams. I have done a Masters of Engineering (ME) with specialization in Computer Engineering from PICT, Pune university. I went on to pursue an MBA in Information Management from the University of Wales, UK. I have about 6 years of experience working with MNCs like KPIT Cummins, Symphony services, Sears Holdings, and IBM. While working on commercial projects, I always wanted to do something with technology which will touch the common man and solve the problems in the society. Hence, we established a software company focused on developing software for social causes, called

Perseverance Infosystems Pvt. Ltd. As and when time permits, I like to go back to the educational institute and work in the area of bridging the gap between the industry and academia. This is made possible through seminars, workshops, lectures, and paper presentations in the upcoming technologies. The motive is to give back to the society in all possible ways. I want to develop a complete software product which can act as a personal assistant for visually impaired people. With this software, they will be able to do various activities like personal banking, online shopping, read books, news, send and receive emails, browse the internet, appear for competitive exams, and read sign boards/ routes/ bus and train boards. There are about 37 million across the globe who are blind and 15 million of these are from India. With this application, even if we can contribute a little to their life, it will be a great achievement.



Binayak Acharya, 29 years, Odisha

“If you want to SHINE like a sun, first BURN like a sun”

- Dr APJ Abdul Kalam

I belong to Odisha, which unfortunately has one of the worst human development indexes. My thinking of what we want to do in life has been influenced by my firsthand experiences of the massive societal inequality happening in and around me. Born and brought up in a middle-class family and being fortunate enough to receive a good education has helped me realize its power. A corporate stint as a SAP Consultant, studying rural management at XIMB, working with the World Bank, and VC fund Unitus along with many real life experiences have made me take up the challenge of lessening the divide between ‘Bharat’ and ‘India’. Our social enterprise ThinkZone empowers women to provide quality and affordable education to children from low-income communities through a technology-enabled “school in a box” approach. We implement a comprehensive, scale-driven lean model that enables us to implement standardized early-childhood and primary education programmes at minimal costs.

ThinkZone’s model has the potential to improve the reading and arithmetic levels of 1 lakh children by 100%. The intervention will lead to 60% less dropout of children from higher grades and will also provide direct livelihood opportunities to 2,000 local men and women, thereby improving their family incomes by more than 50% on an average. It might sound a bit clichéd, but I always wanted to be a part of something that could positively affect the Bottom of the Pyramid. Continuing with the plush corporate job would have been ideal in most cases but taking a life changing decision to work in the left-wing extremism affected place and rural hinterlands on several pro-people initiatives has in fact given me a wider perspective on the true meaning of ‘sustainable development’. Education is the foundation of a healthy, stable, and growth-oriented society and so its development in the underserved areas has become very dear to me.

Hemanta Gogoi, 27 years, Assam

“When you want to be in a place where no one was before, you need to do the things, which were done by no one before and travel the path which was traveled by no one before”



Born in the small town of Lakhimpur in Assam, in a lower middle class family, I never had anything easy. Since childhood, I liked to experiment with new things, and thus, liked myself to be called a “scientist”. When I grew up, my interest was slowly diverted to social activities. While studying, my interest grew stronger towards social activities than the machine called ‘computer’ and the language called ‘programming language’. So at the end of the day, I merely graduated to be called as a Computer Engineer.

I wanted to earn well having gone through tough times financially in my childhood. Even my childhood dream of becoming a scientist was somewhere repeatedly clicking in my mind. I couldn’t even divert my mind from social activities. But by now, I was quite aware of the term “entrepreneurship”. Slowly, I started working on my own venture “wowNE”, facing hardships but gaining new learning experiences.

As I was spending a lot of time in field work, I realized the potential of indigenous products like handloom, handicraft, and food products of North East India. I started “wowNE” to bring the indigenous products of North East to the highways of the global market. Successful implementation of this project would create multiple social effect. Apart from preserving the indigenous products and creating a market value for it, it would create a livelihood for the people of rural areas. “wowNE” helps students showcase their talents in certain fields like designing and photography. Now the venture has a team of young students who plan to involve rural people to create livelihood.

So, my plan is to bring up “wowNE” to the level where we can call it a “people’s brand” involving people by creating livelihoods and setting it up as a platform for the students to showcase their talents.



Lourdes Soares, 27 years, Goa

“Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it.”

- Johan W.V. Goethe

I believe I am an ordinary person looking at improving the health conditions of those ailing, especially from cancer. I am an engineering graduate and management post-graduate by qualification. I have close to 3 years of experience in the corporate sector – Sales and Marketing domain in varied industries.

My family lives in Goa, India – my mother is a retired French and English teacher and my father a retired Sales and Marketing Manager, I have two elder sisters – an Architect and a Recruitment Director, respectively. I am looking at assisting cancer-ailing patients by supporting their ongoing oncology treatment with a solution to bridge their needs to the right specialists.

Cancer treatment can be a long and cumbersome road and sometimes most patients have to tread this path alone. Through my project, I wish to equip such people with three fundamental solutions: 1) the right medical

treatment, 2) a way to document their tests/scans/ consultations/symptoms; and 3) the right psychological and nutritional assistance along their road to recovery.

Through this project there would also be a way to assist the caregiver with the right information and emotional attitude to help the person they are caring for.

Having had first-hand experience in caring for my mother who is suffering from advanced cancer, I understand the plight of most cancer patients as well as their caregivers.

With the advancement in technology and information, it is very sad to see so many patients fighting this battle clueless and ill-equipped, and mostly, alone. Many of these patients go into deep depression with psychological and nutritional help being inaccessible. I hope that this project reaches those most in need of care and support.

Sumedha Kushwaha, 27 years, Delhi-NCR

“When it rains- look for rainbows! When it’s dark- look for stars!”



I am a young Public Health Dentist, working on tobacco and cancer awareness and prevention since the past 7 years. I have worked with various NGOs. Currently, I head the division of public health for a health innovation firm, run my NGO, and own a dental clinic. My parents have always emphasized on chasing my dreams. They both help me in the NGO. My husband, also a dentist, follows up and manages patients detected positive in our outreach activities.

I dream of a tobacco- and cancer-free world by empowering people with adequate knowledge about quitting tobacco in different forms. I intend to initiate START (Stop Tobacco and Relive Today) Clinics which will provide affordable, mobile, and tech-friendly

solutions for cessation and health tests for cancer screening engaging the youth. This social enterprise aims to reduce the health-related, psychosocial, and economic burden due to tobacco and cancer in our country and provide financial engagement to the youth.

I understood the mission of my life 6 years back, when I saw a 13-year-old child getting oral cancer due to tobacco chewing. On further enquiry, neither did he know about the harmful effects of tobacco nor the way to quit it. I further went to learn cessation and completed Global Tobacco Control Course at PHFI. Tobacco Cessation as a facility is not available at many health centres and if available, it is very expensive for the patient.



Raunaq Pradhan, 26 years, Chhattisgarh

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world”

- Nelson Mandela

Hailing from a small town named Rourkela in Odisha, I have had a great time studying in schools and colleges of good repute with people from all across the country. I pursued a Bachelors from the National Institute of Technology, Rourkela, followed by a PhD from Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. The experiences I have had so far, the people I have been around, and the place I grew up in, has had a strong influence in making me the person I am today. A willingness to explore, ask questions, dance, and love for travel and food define me.

The desire to empower people around me with a good educational experience, without financial worries under the purview of existing government policies with the help of technology is my vision of creating a change. With this vision in mind, I have started work

towards institutionalizing a closed-loop solution to provide holistic education for all children by providing admissions with a centralized lottery in private schools under the purview of RTE Section 12(1)(c).

The objective is to create inclusive classrooms with quality education for all, resulting in lower dropout rates and improved learning outcomes for students. This can be enabled by working with all stakeholders in the education system: government education department, school principals, media, and parents; thereby providing us with a unique insight of the problems faced and how technology as a tool can be used as an intervention and at which levels. On a different note, it will also enable us to develop a predicate on how to implement public policies better at the ground level.

Abhishek Juneja, 25 years, Delhi-NCR

“Sometimes it is the people no one imagines anything of who do the things no one can imagine”



I am a person who believes that education is the most powerful tool to foster change in the society. Having been a part of the education space for the past seven years, I have identified the potential of quality education and its consequential strength. My family has always been my source of strength and I seek perseverance from them. I have done Mechanical Engineering but would want to dedicate my entire life to education.

Adhyaay Foundation aims to research, advocate, address, and explore the importance of Learning through Experiences. Experiences and their appropriate expression engages the student in 4Cs of learning:

- Critical Thinking
- Creative Thinking
- Collaboration
- Communication

Through the Adhyaay Foundation, I would want to:

- Introduce and sensitize learners about the significance of being self-aware, developing their own thought

processes, and appreciating perspectives via exposure to variety of experiences.

- Create appreciation for learning through experiences and shift focus towards offbeat career opportunities that connect with the dreams, passions, and interests of the students.
- Design and research innovative and interactive teaching pedagogies and implement them in our workshops to facilitate learning, and create an open space for new ideas.

It matters to me because I want to be the part of the society where desirable exposure and awareness is offered to every learner so that they can make an informed choice. It matters to me because I can't see so many suicides happening owing to uninformed career choices. It matters to me because I want everyone to comprehend the true essence of education. It matters to me because now, I know the immense power of creativity and self-motivated learning and I want everyone to be aware of it. I wasn't fortunate enough to have this kind of mindset during my school days.



Riddhi Dastidar, 25 years, Delhi-NCR

“... and when we speak we are afraid our words will not be heard nor welcomed but when we are silent we are still afraid. So it is better to speak remembering we were never meant to survive”

- Audre Lorde, *Litany for survival*

I grew up in an upper middle class Bengali NRI household, extremely shy and consumed by books, music, and daydreams. As is typical of Good Indian Children, I took up Science. I pursued a Bachelors in Molecular Genetics in Canada, I was working in a stem-cell lab at Harvard when I realized that despite being good at my work, I felt no joy in it. I decided to take a break from academics and moved to Delhi to become a Teach For India Fellow. I taught a class in the slums of Sangam Vihar for two years. It was then that my innate love for arts and social-justice emerged, and I finally felt a deep joy in my work that had been lacking all this while. In my second year, I set up Riyaaaz, my social enterprise with Ragini. This was what brought me to where I am today: an early-stage social entrepreneur, and Staff at TFI's Alumni Team, working on Innovation and Communications.

Riyaaaz encourages people to bring about a change

through the arts. We use music as a Tool to introduce Big Ideas and drive self-expression, life-skills, and values. Our primary aim is not to create musicians but to truly integrate the Arts and the essential things they bring with them into learning and action. Therefore, our 3 phases are: Self, Collective and Community.

We run leadership development circles for musically talented children from marginalized communities where they learn about themselves, the power of collective, and what they can do for their community. Currently, we work with 150 children across low-income communities in Delhi. We also do workshops for other NGOs working with youth and train educators on effective facilitation and arts-integrated learning.

Through Riyaaaz, we wish to take our children from helplessness to empowerment. As a child, I grew up immersed in books and music.

Abhishek Jhavar, 25 years, Madhya Pradesh



“Take life as it comes and shape it the way you want”

I'm an engineer by education, entrepreneur by passion, and educationalist by choice. I come from a small village in Madhya Pradesh. My family is involved in farming, resale of grains, vegetables, and grocery. I've travelled to different parts of India for learning purpose and even now, I keep traveling to learn and explore life. I believe the best lessons can be learnt from people and situations we face while traveling. I believe that if we can help in developing a strong self-image in a child, they can do something amazing as self-confidence plays a very significant role. A person's confidence increases when they do things they haven't done before. The National Abacus & Life skills development programme is a bunch of some mental arithmetic

and key skills which will help our young geniuses in developing themselves as well as shape them the way they want.

I believe that if each and every child of our nation gets that clarity in life with which they come out of confusion and know what exactly they want to do, nobody can stop them to achieve it in their life. Coming from a small village, I faced many difficulties while learning and developing myself, and I don't want other children to face the same difficulties. I want to create this impact because I know it will help our nation in getting good citizens and leaders. Academics and Life skills together can make it very big for our children.



Ayushi Shukla, 24 years, Madhya Pradesh

“When you are insane, you are busy being insane - All the time.”

- Sylvia Plath

I come from a family of professors in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh. The idea of being an Artist-Entrepreneur is alien to the people around me. I can associate myself with Kafka when he says, “I am free, and that is why I am lost.” I studied Finance and Taxation for four years, but my love for cinema drove me to be the co-founder of ‘Sanima’. I enjoy painting and playing musical instruments.

Sanima aims at creating a space where local artists can collaborate and create their own kind of cinema; a space where passion rules. Currently, we are working on screenplays for films and plays. Budding actors, directors, writers, cinematographers, and editors have collaborated with us. We want to reach to other

forms of art like poetry, dance, music, and puppetry. We also wish to connect passionate young artists to experienced artists, for mentoring. When every artist will live his/her dream, that’s when we can imagine a beautiful world of Art.

I always wanted to become a Cinematographer, but never got a platform to learn the skill and achieve my dream. When I look around, I see people just like me; in my town and many tier 2 and tier 3 cities, where only “safe” career options are acceptable. We aim at proving them a chance to pursue their dreams. I strongly believe that Art can create Empathy, which is the only way to Change the World.

Inderpreet Singh, 24 years, Punjab



“Maturity constrains our action, but we are actually a flock of creatures that are impatient, insensible and inconvenient in this ordinary world. One has to figure out one’s passion and simply follow it. Do not let the world bother you.”

My journey started in a village named ‘Chabhal’. After elementary education in a rural area, my family moved to the city of Amritsar and I completed my graduation in Social Sciences. Being the youngest in a conservative middle class family, I was blessed to get a very supportive atmosphere.

Despite my parent’s lack of understanding of the social sector and how one can make a living out of doing social work, paired with their concern for me to be able to earn enough to have a healthy lifestyle, they have been supportive of my dreams and passion to work for the elderly in the community.

The rising number of senior citizens and the changing lifestyles of families moving from the joint to the nuclear

family set up are leaving them in a lurch. As the younger ones get busy with their demanding careers, or simply not having the intention to support/take care of their parents, the elderly are left to fend for themselves. This in turn results in the loss of their well-being, be it social, psychological, or economical, as also their health and dignity.

This angers me.

I’m working towards creating an active community of elderly/senior citizens where all their needs are met along with keeping them engaged in productive activities to ensure their dignity is intact.

This is my purpose in life and I am working hard towards fulfilling it.



Neharika Mahajan, 24 years, Delhi-NCR

“Only those who will risk going too far can possibly find out how far one can go.”

- T.S. Eliot

Born and brought up in Delhi, I completed schooling from CJM, and a graduation in management from CBS, DU. I started out by working in solar EPC at SunSource, then managed the rural programme at Youth Alliance in UP. I have till recently, managed not-for-profit risk-capital funds in Delhi and Bihar at Be Fund.

The idea that I am working on is about being able to create and set up environmentally sustainable materials and processes for products of common use. After studying the value chain of this industry from fibre to fabric to final product, I want to initiate an intervention which strives to reduce our carbon footprint, and improve the working conditions and

incomes of stakeholders like farmers and factory workers. The purpose is to create a fair-trade model which is economically feasible, market-driven, and contextually scalable.

My grandfather's stories are the seeds to my working towards social awareness. My work helped me witness industrial complexes in Gurgaon that are surrounded by slums and dirty drains, and those in Bihar where handloom-families are housed on the edge of a polluted water body. These experiences have pushed me to explore livelihoods which are dignified and do not harm the health of the environment and its people.

Umang Shridhar, 24 years, Madhya Pradesh

“Be the change you want to see in the world.”

- M.K.Gandhi



I was born and brought up in a small village of Madhya Pradesh named 'Kishunganj'. Having done my schooling from International Public School Bhopal, graduation from Shaheed Bhagat Singh College [University of Delhi], and Diploma from NIFT Bhopal, I spent 7 years in Social Work and 3 years in the Design Sector.

Belonging to an upper class family while building up my core values in a small village, I have seen many differences in the society like biases between the upper class, middle class, and the so-called 'lower caste and classes.

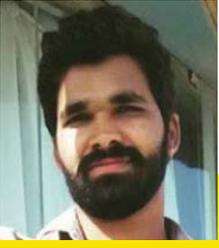
I started an NGO called "Umang Social Welfare Society" in December 2013. Primarily, I worked with women in slums focusing on the skills they were considerably best at. During my research period, I found that 'stitching' was a common skill among the women. As

India is known for its intricate textiles, I decided to study fashion and become a Fashion Designer. At NIFT, I participated in a competition where I presented a home furnishing collection of digitally printed Khadi and won second prize at the national level.

This is my story of "Why? How? And What?" which led me to found a Fashion Brand named "KhaDigi" in 2015.

KhaDigi brings together primitive Khadi and its modern-day counterpart digital printing. It is an idea that weaves Indian tradition of Khadi with modern technology meant for the new economy while empowering women in rural India.

KhaDigi aims to provide vocational training to them and hence make them self-sufficient for earning a livelihood.



Vilas Gite, 24 years, Gujarat

“If we have to build the nation we have to start from the village”

I was born and brought up in GondhanKhed, a small village in Maharashtra, and the life of rural India is engrained in me. I did Bachelors in Computer Science and my desire to solve the problems of villages led me to becoming a Gandhi Fellow. Thereafter, I worked with Gram Seva, Trust in Surat and We start SLIP (Sarpanch Leadership Internship Program) with 8 interns in the Surat tribal area and Samagara Sanitation in Pune. Presently, I'm working with Sarpanch Leadership at Aurangabad and Surat.

Sarpanch Leadership, a Fellowship programme, aims to nail the multidimensional objectives of providing effective delivery of government schemes by empowering the Sarpanch of a village. This will be

achieved by assisting the Sarpanch with a fellow, who'll spearhead the “Change-story” in that village. This will in turn help the fellow in realizing his innate talents and at the same time increase participation of the youth in offering solutions to rural problems. With this unique synergy of Sarpanch, village, and fellow it's possible to speed up the delivery of the various implementation schemes. Further, it aims to work in collaboration with educational institutes, government ministries, and rural start-ups.

I visualize changing the scenario of the Indian villagers through my interventions. Undoubtedly, it imperative for us to make our villages “global” and make India great again!

Devaja Shah, 22 years, Gujarat



“The mark of the immature man is that he wants to die nobly for a cause, while the mark of the mature man is that he wants to live humbly for one”

- J.D. Salinger

I'm an engineering graduate from DA-IICT and have been working as a writer for various organizations across the world, one of them being the FOSS Community KDE. I am passionate about issues involving gender-based violence and discrimination and animal cruelty. I often indulge in writing about matters close to my heart. I also enjoy critically analysing cinema and reading in my spare time. I hope to make the world a friendlier place to live in someday.

My social enterprise aims to provide relief to people who have faced severe emotional and mental trauma and need a safe place to vent out their issues and to help them get the necessary support and solutions to get out of their current conditions. I wish to impact rural areas where the

concept of asking for help is still primitive and there is a lack of proper knowledge about various forms of abuse and psychological issues. My two-pronged solution is to create technological utilities like dedicated counselling apps providing anonymity and round-the-clock remote support along with in-person sessions and awareness workshops for people without access to technology.

I've seen many people close to me struggle with serious issues and unable to ask for help due to unawareness and lack of financial resources. With my personal experiences, I helped some of them get better, but there are millions still in need of help. I believe that getting support is a basic human right and I want to make it happen through my project.



SSE India 2016 Fellows - Graduation Ceremony, December 15, 2016, New Delhi

The fellows of the Social Start-Up Fellowship 2016 during their Graduation, in the presence of Dr Jitendra Singh, Minister of State (Independent Charge), Prime Minister's Office. The Members of the SSE India Board, Jaivir Singh, Ness Wadia, and Sharmila Karve, were present to celebrate and encourage the graduating fellows to continue doing the good work in their respective fields. Deepak Kapoor (Former Chairman – PwC India) and Richard Everitt (Director - Education & Society, British Council) wished the graduating cohort all the best for their work towards creating a social impact.

The School for Social Entrepreneurs India is a registered Sec 8, not-for-profit company.

We work in partnership with the government, corporates, trusts and foundations. Our partnerships help us to reach people with practical ideas for change, leverage a wide range of skills and experience to benefit our students, and provide vital funding to ensure people from all backgrounds are able to access our programmes and support.

When we work with partners we invite them to:

- Support a fellowship participant
- Support an innovation
- Get involved with the programme

We work collaboratively to create social change and welcome opportunities to work with additional partners to support our inspiring and growing community. We highly value the commitment of time and resources from people who offer pro bono services to us, and welcome offers of support. We customize our programmes for organisations, design new programmes to suit the needs of people at different stages of their social enterprise.

Come forward to help us create an impact by supporting social entrepreneurs.

Contact us:

shalabh@the-sseindia.org | mohit@the-sseindia.org

www.the-sseindia.org