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# Harvard, IIT grads among SBI Youth for India fellowship candidates

BY SREERADHA DASGUPTA BASU, ET BUREAU | OCT 09, 2018, 09.30 AM IST

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Graduates from some of the world's most prestigious universities such as [Harvard](#) and the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) have been shortlisted for the 2018-19 [SBI Youth for India fellowship](#).

The 13-month fellowship, a flagship of the [SBI Foundation](#), allows India's brightest young minds to work for the development of rural communities across the country in partnership with experienced NGOs.

"We received 6,779 applications and 88 candidates have been selected," Prashant Kumar, deputy managing director (HR) & corporate development officer at State Bank of India, told ET.

Some of those selected have given up their jobs with top global firms such Goldman Sachs, Deloitte, KPMG, SAP, Thomas Cook, Infosys and BCG to work on the programme.

In its eighth year, the programme will allow the fellows to work on diverse projects in 12 broad areas—education, environmental protection, health, food security, rural livelihoods, alternate energy, traditional craft, social entrepreneurship, self-governance, women's empowerment, technology and water.

"With 70% of the fellows continuing in the development sector after the fellowship, the programme is preferred as a stepping stone to the development sector," Kumar said.



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Over the years, Youth For India has developed a strong network of alumni from diverse backgrounds who are working with government bodies as well as CSR initiatives of organisations such as Tata Trusts he said. Some of them have even gone back to their project villages to launch their own social enterprises.

Kumar said there are some projects that can be replicated and scaled up every year. For example, Digital Night School—a project launched on pilot basis in 2015-16 in five schools for making education accessible to school dropouts—is now being implemented in 50 schools across Rajasthan.

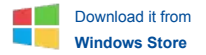
Similarly, a waste management project started with 80 families in a village in Rajasthan in 2016-17 has since been replicated in the entire village of 400 households. Another such project is D-hive, which aimed to inculcate design thinking among rural children in Lobhi village of Maharashtra, is now being proposed to be replicated in Madhya Pradesh.

"We also have social enterprises started in Dangs district of Gujarat and Champawat district of Uttarakhand, which are being scaled up thus providing livelihood opportunities to rural craftsmen," said Kumar, adding that SBI is the only public sector bank having a fellowship programme of this kind.

"More than increasing the intake, our focus is on the impact the fellows are making at the grassroots level. We identify replicable and scalable projects from each batch to be supported by the SBI Foundation, so that the reach and impact can be highly increased. The social enterprises being started by our fellows are also supported to enable their growth," he added.

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