Youth Co:Lab India 2022-23

Winner Profiles
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Youth Co:Lab, co-created in 2017 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Citi Foundation, aims to establish a common agenda for countries in the Asia-Pacific region to empower and invest in youth so that they can accelerate the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through leadership, social innovation, and entrepreneurship.

In India, Youth Co:Lab was launched in 2019 by UNDP India in collaboration with Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog. Through this collaboration, Youth Co:Lab India has conducted five national theme-specific youth social innovation and entrepreneurship challenges, including several forms of engagement such as panels, workshops, dialogues, and webinars. Youth Co:Lab supports social entrepreneurs through a long-term incubation programme, and select entrepreneurs to represent India at the regional summit.

PROGRAMME LEARNINGS AND OUTCOMES:

Shortlisted teams undergo an intensive National Springboard Programme implemented by UNDP and AIM. This program equips them with entrepreneurial and leadership skills.

- Enhances their business knowledge, and facilitates connections with mentors, incubators, investors, and government.
- Teams have a chance to be selected for the Youth Co:Lab Regional Springboard Programme, where they get a chance to represent India at the Youth Co:Lab Regional Summit.
- Teams receive an opportunity to incubate and strengthen their ideas, solutions, or products with team support.
- The best-performing teams are provided a seed grant as recognition for their achievements.
Digital and Financial Literacy for Youth
To ensure inclusive development, financial innovation must prioritize the 65% rural population and bridge the digital divide, enabling vulnerable groups such as the elderly, less educated, SME owners, startups, and women to leverage digital technology and participate in the mainstream economy.

Gender Equality and Women Economic Empowerment
Gender equality and women economic empowerment encompass their equal participation in markets, control over productive resources, access to decent work, and meaningful engagement in decision-making.

FinTech Solutions focused on Biodiversity Conservation
The unprecedented decline in biodiversity and ecosystem services has profound implications for economies worldwide, emphasizing the urgent need for action. Governments, regulators, financial institutions, and multilateral development banks play a critical role in mobilizing private finance to transform our production and consumption patterns, protecting nature, and promoting sustainable poverty reduction by bridging the intention-action gap in financing green initiatives and directing financial flows towards biodiversity conservation and restoration projects.

Promoting Biodiversity–friendly Lifestyles through Technological Solutions in Finance
FinTech is a rapidly growing sector in India, with the highest adoption rate and attracting significant investments globally, providing an opportunity to allocate resources towards biodiversity conservation. By leveraging FinTech, innovative solutions can be developed to promote green behavior and investments, such as enhancing the use of e-wallets, leveraging social media for conservation impact, and creating biodiversity trading opportunities.

Accelerating Circular Economy through Upcycling Innovations
Transitioning from recycling to upcycling is essential to retain the value of resources, and achieving this requires innovative approaches and circular business models that focus on transforming by-products and waste materials into new usable materials.

Behavioral Nudges for LiFE (Lifestyle For Environment)
At the UNFCCC COP26, Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi launched Mission LiFE, aiming to shift from a wasteful “use-and-dispose” economy to a mindful and deliberate circular economy. By leveraging social networks and creating a global community of “Pro-Planet People” (P3), the mission seeks to encourage and sustain environmentally friendly behaviors worldwide to combat climate change.
JOURNEY OF THE SPRINGBOARD PROGRAMME

- National Innovation Dialogue
- Investment strategy workshops
- Knowledge sharing sessions
- Pitch Day
- One-on-one mentoring sessions
- Peer-to-Peer pitch sessions
- Capacity building workshops
- Expert talk series
- Finale
Persons with disabilities comprise almost 15% of the global population, yet digital products and platforms have limited accessibility for individuals with disabilities. SaralX offers accessibility solutions for individuals with disabilities by effectively communicating this information to assistive technologies by leveraging artificial intelligence that extracts and understands text, layout, and semantic information from images. The dedicated SaralX team, consisting of experts in accessibility and usability, designers, and engineers, including persons with disabilities, provides comprehensive feedback and remediation for websites, mobile apps, and documents. SaralX helps brands meet legal compliance, expand their reach, and improve SEO, while demonstrating a commitment to inclusion and equitable access for people with disabilities.

**USP**
- Empowers users to independently convert content into accessible formats with exceptional precision.
- Differentiated by high-quality output and superior service delivery in the industry.
- Premium offering includes a smart remediation editor to swiftly address any errors missed by automation.

**Achievements**
- The accessibility service has been adopted by over 2000 users and 5 organizations.
- More than 6 lakh pages converted into accessible formats.

**Grants and Awards**

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**Founder**
Akashdeep Bansal

**Co-Founder**
Sunil Choudhary

“Empowering organizations with inclusive experiences, extended reach, and ethical impact”
Edubild Technologies is a Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) & iStart Rajasthan recognised startup based in Jaipur, Rajasthan working in EdTech Sector. It is an AI based platform which helps students find the right live projects, internships & job opportunities, and in turn helps Companies find the right candidate. They offer three broad services – Internships, experienships and jobs through skill assessment tests, courses for upskilling, automated CV generation and virtual AI based interviews helping students prepare for future employment prospects. Leveraging a large network of over 10,000 industries, Edubild helps students gain experience by working on live projects through the experienship programme. With this, the platform has already supported over 650 students gain professional experience through internships who received an average stipend of INR 7,500. future employment prospects. Leveraging a large network of over 10,000 industries, Edubild helps students gain experience by working on live projects through the experienship programme. With this, the platform has already supported over 650 students gain professional experience through internships who received an average stipend of INR 7,500.

**USP**

- Skill Assessment Tests: EduBild has over 70+ skill assessment tests offered across multiple domains from research, management, business administration, technical skills to vocational skills like Machine Operator, Mechanic, etc.
- Courses Library (SkillBild): EduBild hosts a number of courses & also has affiliation with many course providers to offer upskilling courses to registered candidates for becoming experts in their areas of interest.
- Automatic CV generation: A professional CV is generated automatically & it updates every time a user undertakes a skill assessment test or completes a course.
- Employability Readiness Score: Edubild checks the Employability Readiness of the students, which is a dynamic number calculated for each student based on their CV, Skill Assessments and previous work experiences.
- AI enabled virtual interview: AI will judge student on Vocabulary, Pronunciation, & content relevance. There’s no need for an interviewer to take interview, they can just see the candidate’s assigned score to select.

**Achievements**

- Shortlisted for National Education Alliance for Technology 3.0.
Women in India face immense challenges in their lived experience when it comes to menstruation. About 60% of them don’t have access to sanitary facilities, 71% don’t know about menstruation before they get their first period and about 23 million women drop out of school at the onset of periods annually. To tackle this issue, Project Baala innovates, educates and empowers women on menstrual hygiene by developing unique re-usable sanitary pads, targeted awareness campaigns and developed a sustainable value chains. Through this, they have been able to benefit 500,000 women, prevented the use of 112 million plastic sanitary pads and distributed over 1.5 million eco-friendly sanitary pads across India, Nepal, Tanzania and Ghana.

**USP**
Project Baala works towards both demand & supply of the problem by manufacturing sustainable menstrual absorbents and generating awareness. Understanding that they work with communities that struggle with access, their interventions require no additional expenditure to be incurred by the users.

The carbon footprint of Baala and Baala’s stakeholders is minimal. Maximising efficient resource consumption, the team actively works in partnership with SHGs, local bodies and grassroot level organisations. Their interventions are easily adaptable to several settings, and training of trainers and direct dissemination of workshops take place both in-person and virtually. We take advantage of existing public systems, including sewage, disposal, transport, production etc to reduce unnecessary doubling of efforts and instead focus on actions that are sustainable, internally as well as externally.

**Awards**
- Awarded by HITLAB (Second runner up, Audience choice award), and Acumen Angels Program (received early stage capital).

**Founder**
Soumya Dabriwal

**Co-Founder**
Aradhana Rai Gupta

“Armed with a dedication to study and now, a solution to my mother’s foreboding, I am confident that periods will not deter my pursuit of education” - Sanchita, 15
Faced with increasing labour shortages, farmers in India spend arduous labour with their hands in growing crops. Due to this, over one lakh farmers give up farming every year due to lack of technology, tools and an ever-increasing cost of labour. With fragmented land holdings, 82% of farmers in India are small & marginal (own less than 2 ha of land). Machines that exist today to reduce their burden are expensive and not designed keeping in mind the needs of female farmers. To solve this issue AgrowSure Products and Innovations designs and manufactures Agriculture and Post Harvest Food Processing Equipment to help small and marginal farmers increase land productivity.

They provide a complete farm mechanization solution for small and marginal farmers, especially for women farmers which helps them save money and time, increases farm productivity, and thus empowering farmers by generating additional income. Their products bring down the cost of cultivation by 50-60% per acre. Most of their products are adapted to be used for multiple crop irrespective of crop pattern and soil type. With this solution, AgroSure has helped over 1,500 farmers across India.

**Achievements**

- Area under sustainable cultivation: Approx. 22000 acres
- Rural Entrepreneur createds: 46
- Jobs created (Direct and Indirect)- 20
- Smallholder profitability - Economic Value created: Approx. 1.5 Cr

**Awards**

- 2023: Selected for Investment Readiness Program, (accelerator program for young social entrepreneurs) by UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) – an initiative launched by UN Secretary General.
- 2023: Selected for Youth Co.Lab program by UNDP in collaboration with Atal Innovation Mission by Niti Aayog.
- 2022: Selected for Social Innovation Lab by CITI, IIT Kanpur and T-Hub to receive grants and mentoring for our cutting-edge solutions, aimed at creating a positive impact on society.

**Founder**

Akshay Dipak Kawale

**Co-Founder**

Akshay Ramesh Wairale
Gepo Aali
To nurture back the lost indigenous crop variety of the region using ancestral farming practices

Arunachal Pradesh

Diets are becoming increasingly delocalised leading to an erosion of the symbolic meaning associated with food and farming practices as well as the disappearance of specific taste and material culture associated with the production of food. Gepo Aali is working with small women farmers to revive lost indigenous crop varieties and ancestral farming practices while preserving tribal identities and cultural elements associated with food cultivation. They are currently working on reviving the Adley millet, commonly known as the job’s tears because of its hard shiny tear shaped structure, which is a climate smart cereal and a superfood. Gepo Aali is working at the intersection of language and food crop to preserve this identity and the biodiversity through promotion of healthy farming practices such as agroecology.

USP
• Conserving biodiversity through the promotion of indigenous crop variety, native to the Himalayan landscape.
• Supplying a healthier alternative to rice, with low glycaemic index, same cooking time and shelf life, almost similar taste, and high nutrition value.
• The products are hand-pounded to preserve their nutritional value and packaged in reusable bags.

Achievements
• Over 25 farmers engaged in nurturing back a lost indigenous crop variety that is gluten free and a rich source of vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin B complex, magnesium, calcium, and phosphorus.

Grants and Awards
• Arunachal Pradesh Entrepreneur Challenge champion.
The quantity of preservatives is increasing in food products leading to various health issues. NuttyVillage is supporting small farmers through sustainable agriculture, emphasizing groundnut and millet cultivation using organic methods. They also add value to these crops by producing peanut butter, plant-based protein, and energy bars to improve smallholder farmer incomes and enable transparency in organic farming practices. NuttyVillage is implementing a blended finance model by creating a producer group of smallholder women farmers, facilitating primary infrastructure for processes such as de-shelling, sorting and grading of groundnut, post which the women of the SHG do the value-addition, making peanut butter and energy bars that are preservative and palm oil free.

**USP**
- Offering fair prices and promoting sustainable farming practices.
- Creating a fairer food system and enhancing the livelihoods of farmers through value-addition.

**Achievements**
- Invited to participate at 2 food expo’s.

**Grants and Awards**
- Recognized by Startup India and StartinUP.
- Impact Investment from (Alsisar Impact Investment).

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**Founder**
Aman Kumar

**Co-Founder**
Sushant Barma

“We are working with small farmer on grassroot level to solve the challenge of ensuring sustainability.”
With a growing consciousness around reducing carbon-footprint, consumers are looking for clean, plant-based alternatives, but the market in India is limited. ProMeat is revolutionising protein consumption by providing a healthy, climate-friendly and sustainable alternatives to conventional meat. It aims to facilitate a shift from unsustainable protein options to smart protein by combining technology with indigenous and under-utilized crops, to deliver high-protein, plant-based chicken with amazing texture. By reducing reliance on traditional meat production, ProMeat is contributing to a healthier planet, while also contributing to healthier food choices that are cholesterol-free, low in saturated fats, and rich in essential nutrients. They prioritise transparency and quality by using clean ingredients, free from artificial additives, preservatives, and GMOs, ensuring a healthier and safer food choice.

**USP**
- Contributing to animal welfare by opting for a cruelty-free alternative, aligning their values with their dietary choices.
- Making plant-based protein accessible to a wide range of consumers by offering affordable price points.
- Developing plant-based chicken that can be used in a wide variety of recipes and cooking styles, empowering individuals to explore and create delicious plant-based meals.

**Achievements**
- Successful tasting sessions done with India’s leading chefs.

**Grants and Awards**
- Top 3 Winners globally in the Innovation Channel by Unilever at Future Food Tech Summit.
- Winner of Envirocare Green Award.
- Received 8 lakh rupees in grant from Startup India.

“We are working with small farmer on grassroot level to solve the challenge of ensuring sustainability.”
MyPlan8

Incentivising spend on low carbon sustainable alternatives

MyPlan8 is an app that helps people make a positive impact on the environment. Their innovative and proprietary technology effortlessly bridges the gap between people and opportunities to do good for the environment by providing a holistic view of tracking, reducing, and offsetting carbon footprints. The process helps in generating a person’s “Green score” with proprietary intelligence that automatically calculates users’ environmental impact based on their lifestyle choices.

Further, the app allows users to create a flexible impact creation portfolio through Green credits (linked to exchangeable carbon credits), building a reward ecosystem. The brand is soon to launch “Bharat’s first green money card™” which targets urban customers for a direct impact on their spending habits and build actionable insights.

The company has four co-founders: Nidhi Mehra- IIM-C Alumni, Koushik Sur -Ex Co-founder of Findvise & ISB Alumni, and Rajat Vishwakarma - Ex-Cofounder of Findvise. The founding team holds more than 50 years of experience.

Founder
Rajat Vishwakarma

Co-Founder
Nidhi Sagar Mehra
India generates 150 million tons of C&D waste & 3.5 million tons of plastic waste every year and sadly the recycling rate is below 15%. Construction is one of the most polluting industries both in terms of solid waste & emissions. Dump in Bin ultimate goal is to solve the crisis of waste and bring back wasted resources to mainstream economy creating a harmonious manufacturing and consumption environment. The first step towards this goal is to utilize most dumped and ignored resources and create long life products from it. That led to the innovation of Plave, a 100% recycled material that replaces cement-based pre-cast products (like pavement blocks, barriers, speed breakers, etc.)

**USP**
- Replace current consumption with recycled material.
- Introduce sustainable and bio-inspired alternates.
- Improve & innovate material for future.

**Achievements**
- Till now- Recycled over 3000 tons of plastic waste.
- Developed product from landfill waste (plave).
- Made process innovation for fast and bulk manufacturing.
- Leading to patentable machine design and components.
- Upcoming- Setup of first scale manufacturing plant of Plave by July end.

**Founder**
Rishabh Patel

**Co-Founder**
Nitin Yadav

“We made pavement transformative, sustainable, and carbon neutral.”
Econscious
Functional and aesthetic recycled plastic products

New Delhi

Econscious is converting waste plastic into functional and innovative products using compression moulding technology developed in India. Econscious® is a social impact startup who process plastic waste and create functional products for public spaces: recycled plastic park benches, dustbins & artworks are sustainable and raise awareness. Their vision is to create a society where nothing goes to waste rather seen as a new resource.

USP
• Combined feature of waste collection and product offering.

Achievements
• 1000+ products and recycled 1,00,000 + Kg plastic waste.

Founder
Sonal Shukla

Co-Founder
Vaibhav Verma

“Live more, Waste less.”
DigiSwasthya Foundation is a healthcare non-profit organization. DigiSwasthya is making healthcare accessible and affordable across rural India by leveraging technology. We have a phygital hybrid model helping the rural community avail healthcare services via tele consultations with doctors from tier 1 hospitals. The patient navigator at the centre measures the vitals using digital devices, shares them with the doctors, facilitates a consultation through a telemedicine platform, generates an electronic medical record, generates a prescription, translates the instructions, etc.

**USP**
- Awareness campaign in rural area.
- The panel of healthcare professionals includes doctors across all specializations and languages.
- Referal networks with Hospitals.

**Achievements**
- Five telemedicine centers in rural India where healthcare provisions are scarce, and facilities are difficult to avail.
- Provide referral pathways for our patients and provide them with pro-bono or subsidized healthcare services, including tie-ups with pharmacies and diagnostic labs.
- From July 2020 to May 2023: 26132 patients served.

“We aim to bridge the gap in healthcare infrastructure and services in terms of accessibility, affordability and awareness in rural India”
Sputnik Brain

Non-invasive brain modulation for stress management

Karnataka

Sputnik Brain is an Emergent Ventures, that’s building a Nonsurgical Neuralink to solve the $300 billion suffering of stress and democratise happiness for the human species regardless of socioeconomic barriers through biomarker driven brain modulation in a clinically validated technology.

USP

• Non-invasive Brain Modulation to alleviate the $300 billion suffering of stress.
• Multiple research points out that the entire modern economy is functioning on one single human need.
• Getting pleasure and avoiding pain biologically. Integrated productization of this need through our device can liberate large scale populations from suffering and give access to what entire societies, nation states and markets have been running after, we aim to deliver exactly that.
• Human happiness, at the convenience of a tap.

Founder

Shankar Sri

“Let’s abolish human suffering through a biomarker driven technology and revolutionize mental health”