

YOUNG LEADERS
IN TECH POLICY

Fellowship Program

A Program by :



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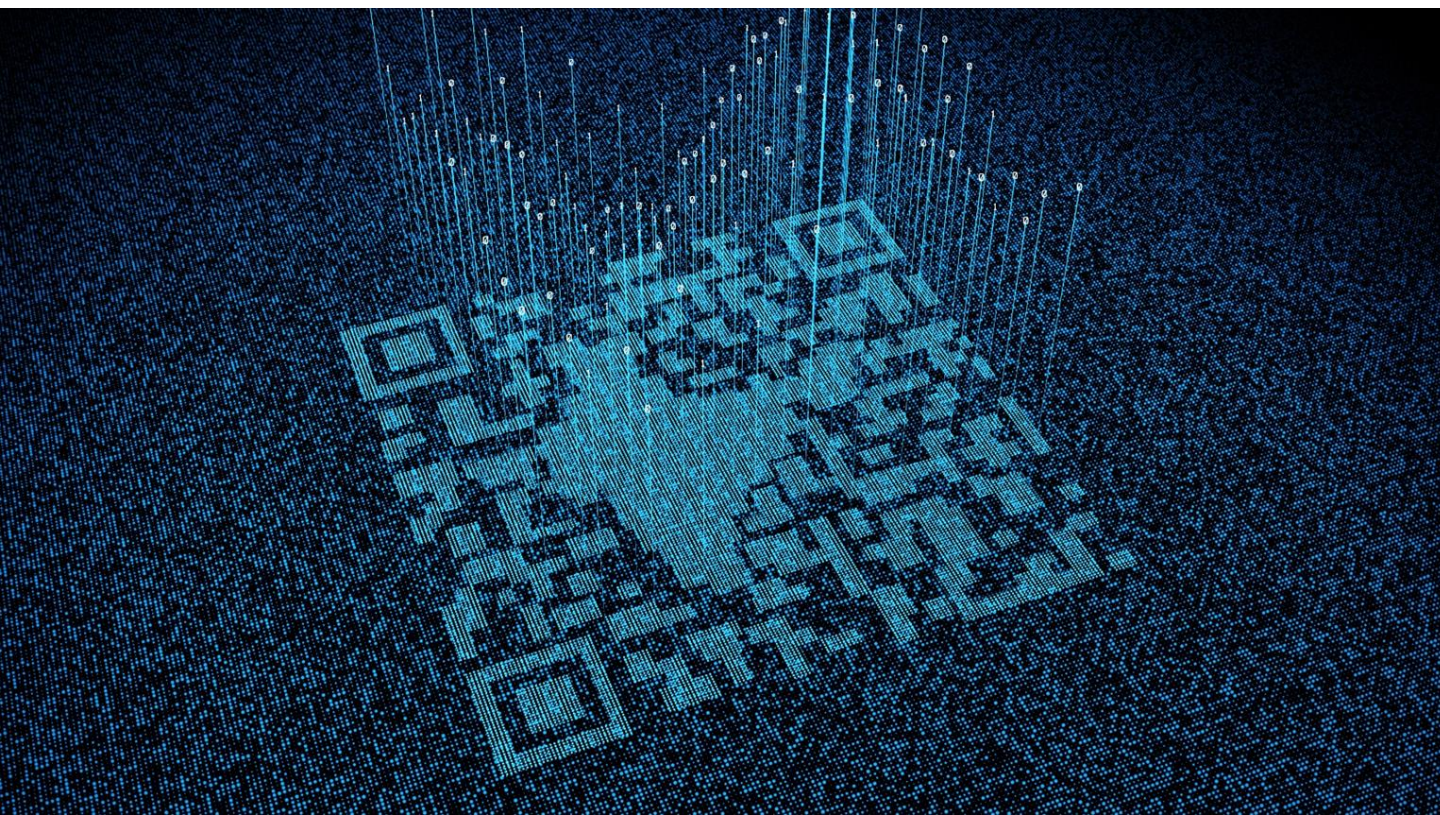
Introduction

Technology has fundamentally reshaped the way we lead our lives. Artificial intelligence, machine learning, and blockchain have evolved into critical everyday realities. At the same time, risks and challenges such as algorithmic bias, lack of privacy, digital exclusion, cyber crime, misinformation, and online hate speech, have emerged. Unless contained, these issues can unhinge all the benefits of technology. Policies and practices to govern technology are being written now.

Tech policy **deals with laws and practices governing the application of emergent technologies** like AI/ML, blockchain and data analytics in both the public and private sector. It **enquires** how technological development is changing our society, governance and markets and makes **suggestions on how tech can be used for social good** through responsible design.

Engaging with these developments in tech policy is especially **critical right now.**

- Technology is **affecting millions** of us
- World is **at the threshold** of this technological change
- India is at the **forefront of tech policy** discussions globally
- There is lack of **multi-disciplinary talent** in policy research
- New opportunities for engineers to apply knowledge for **societal benefit**
- Public policy experience can become **a key career differentiator**



Fellowship overview

A fellowship by the **International Innovation Corps**, the **Young Leaders in Tech Policy Fellowship** fosters the next generation of thought leaders to inform policies for a people centric digital future.

This will be an opportunity for Fellows to work on issues that will define the digital future of the country; and a platform to engage with thought-leaders across industry, government, and the media, and build a public profile.

The core features of the fellowship are :

- Two-year fellowship
- The Fellowship places young professionals with a degree in engineering, in leading policy think-tanks and other organizations working at the intersection of tech solutions and policy.
- Fellows will work as an integral part of the organizations, providing input on policy recommendations, implementation, and advocacy by leveraging their technical skills and interest in impact.
- Mentorship by both IIC and the host organization

In addition, the fellowship has been designed to contribute to provide a unique opportunity for fellows to grow professionally and learn new skills that will be useful even if they transition to other sectors.



Vision and Mission

The YLT fellowship intends to **create a cadre of young professionals that become leaders in tech policy in India**. To this end, the fellowship has a three-fold mission:



Attract top talent to the space: Build the fellowship in a way that it is viewed to be a premier tech policy fellowship in the country. Attract top (engineering) talent to be a part of this cohort of young leaders.



Train and equip leaders to advance in tech policy roles: In collaboration with the host organisations, create holistic learning for fellows to advance their careers and find meaningful roles in the tech policy space in India.



Bring tech policy conversations to the fore: Create meaningful engagements and conversations online and offline that bring forth the value and importance of tech policy conversations in India. Add well researched and holistic opinions to the discourse and spread awareness among citizens



Fellowship Roadmap 2020-21

On site at the host organisation.

In person training and retreat at the ONI Bangalore Office

On site the host organisation.

End of year review and gearing up for year 2



Fellowship begins.
Online induction and placement of fellows with hosts.

On site at the host organisation.

Mid year step back
*Next cohort recruitment begins



Each fellow also has the option to be a part of an international tech policy conference on the basis of their work and interest.

Quarterly reviews by the host organisation and YLT

Fellowship experience



1. Explore a critical new sector: The fellows will be part of an extremely selective cohort and will work at independent organisations at the forefront of tech policy.

- They will **engage with cutting-edge issues** like AI, ML, and data privacy.
- They will be **mentored by leadership at their hosts, IIC, and funders.**
- Fellows will get **access to conferences, consultations,** and interactions among leading thinkers in the space.

2. Engage with the wider tech ecosystem: The fellows will be part of the funder's and IIC's network.

- **Meet tech stalwarts** who have build tech-based businesses
- **Meet a diverse group of tech stakeholders** in academia, media, civil society, government, grassroots organisations and other non-profits
- **Be part of funder network,** which includes leading tech start-ups like [Neogrowth](#) and [Railyatri](#), and tech non-profits like [eGovernments Foundation](#)
- **Attend portfolio events by the funders** such as Omidyar Network's [ON Haat](#) and [ON Jalsa](#).

3. Evolve as a professional: The fellowship will be accompanied by a rigorous professional development program, including quarterly in-person meetings, fortnightly check-ins, and training in both soft and hard skills.

- Fellows will be encouraged to contribute to the space from day one, and to think about how their work **makes a positive difference on the lives of ordinary Indians.**
- The fellowship will provide opportunities for the fellows to **build their personal brand as young thought-leaders in the space.** This will include:
 - Meetings with and presentations to important stakeholders
 - **Participation in events** organised by the host, IIC and funders
 - Training in and opportunities to **write op-eds and blogs**

Fellow Training



Training and equipping fellows to take on leadership roles within the tech policy space in India is a cornerstone of the YLT fellowship.

I. Monthly training sessions

- These monthly sessions are curated in a way that they combine an eclectic mix of sessions with various stakeholders and experts in the ecosystem:
 - **Tech think tanks and experts** leading cutting edge research speak to the fellows about their work, key findings, methodologies, and so on. Some of our network organisations who have spoken to the fellows include experts from Aapti Institute, IDinsight, Ikigai Law, Carnegie India, and Centre for Civil Society etc.
 - **High ranking bureaucrats** that lend an understanding of the policy and legal implications of tech advancements and the evolution of the collaboration of tech and governance.
 - **Start-ups, big tech companies and tech stalwarts** that are building products and technologies that have far-reaching impact. It is imperative for the fellows to understand technology in order to inform the policies to govern these advancements.
 - **Soft skill sessions and personal capacity building** opportunities to enable fellows to work in diverse teams, become leaders, and eventually managers of large organisations. Some of these sessions include story telling with data by Gurman Bhatia from Thompson Reuters, Theory of Change and Stakeholder Mapping by Amani Institute.

II. Personal development plan

YLT fellows are each given an opportunity to make the most of personal mentorship by the leadership at the International Innovation Corps and funding partners. Current opportunities include:

- Quarterly development conversations with the Country Director, IIC.
- Quarterly development conversations with funders (Principal, ONI)
- Informal quarterly check-in with senior leadership at ONI, including MD and partners.
- Monthly check-ins with the engagement manager at IIC.

III. Networking Sessions

These are sessions which are designed with the intent of creating space for fellows to hold informal conversations with aspirational professionals in the field of tech and Institute tech policy. These happen a few times each quarter and are intended to help build a personal network that the fellows can bank on in the long term.

IV. Peer to peer learning

A valuable resource for all YLT fellows is the cohort that they start with along with the larger IIC community that is working on a range of high impact projects across urban governance, tech and data, gender, health, and education. The fellowship promotes peer to peer learning through:

- **Monthly townhalls** where one or more teams present the developments in their projects and major updates so far.
- **YLT Happy hour** which is a bi-monthly semi-structured time for all fellows to work on collaborative project and share learning from their respective workstreams.



Host Organizations

The fellows are placed with independent (i.e. non-government) organisations that engage with public policy related to data and technology. There are two kinds of host organisations under the fellowship:

- **Tech non-profits** that develop implementable technologies and solutions for public good, and therefore engage in policy discussions on these topics.
- **Think-tanks** that participate in tech policy discussions through public consultations, research, events and presentations, op-eds and mass media appearances.

The IIC makes the final determination of which host organisation each fellow is placed at, based on skills and cultural fit. However, the prospective fellows and host organisations get the opportunity to interact with each other, and indicate preference, before the final offers are made.



The host organisations for the 20-22 cohort are as follows:



CivicDataLab

CivicDataLab works with the goal to use data, tech, design and social science to strengthen the course of civic engagements in India. The organization aims to harness the potential of open-source movement to enable citizens to engage better with public reforms.

The YLT Fellow will primarily be contributing towards CDL's work in strengthening transparency and accountability of public finance in India. S/he will be advocating for the adoption of more open source tools, open data and data-driven decision making by the various tiers of government



eGovernments Foundation

The eGovernments Foundation focuses on using technology to improve urban governance: to decrease the friction in transactions involving the government, improve transparency and increase the efficiency of services delivery to citizens.

eGov is currently exploring new problem areas such as FSM, social protection, and last mile access; where the YLT Fellow is supporting external consultations with domain experts, helping with the interpretation of systemic challenges into technical requirements for product development.



FOUNDATION FOR ECOLOGICAL SECURITY

Foundation for Ecological Security

Foundation for Ecological Security (FES) is an NGO that works with smallholder and landless farmers to enable improved governance of shared resource systems. FES fosters participatory local decision making and sustainable rural livelihoods.

The India Observatory (IO) a project of the FES, with which the YLT Fellow is attached, is a transformational ICT intervention that puts information in the hands of the people and enables desirable collective action. The Fellow will work on participatory design and processes for community-led tech development and deployment and will help evolve data governance that draws from and is rooted in FES's strong ground footing and trust with local communities and institutions.



IT for Change

IT for Change is an NGO based in Bengaluru which aims for a society in which digital technologies contribute to human rights, social justice and equity.

It works in the broad areas of guiding techno-social discourse within this context, advocacy for appropriate policies and demonstrating working models on the ground.

The YLT Fellow will aim to contribute to their work across fields of design of inclusive IT systems for public service delivery and AI governance, among others.

This Fellowship is a fantastic opportunity for Fellows to come on board and work on democratizing information and technology. We highly valued the talent that the call attracted along with the rigorous recruitment process and the well-rounded interviews. We found the candidate that we were looking for - a sound combination of heart, head and hands. It is an unparalleled opportunity for her and us to contribute to the shaping of tech policy through the eyes of rural people in India.

Jagdeesh Rao, Chief Executive, Foundation for Ecological Security

YLT Recruitment

From May through August, YLT conducted its first recruitment cycle to select the inaugural cohort of 5 fellows to work with the respective host organisations. The recruitment process saw over 250 applications from candidates from top tier schools and major companies, doing extremely interesting work. Spread over 8 weeks, the fellow selection process comprised 4 rounds with each eliminating fellows on certain metrics:

- **Innovation Proposal/ Cover Letter/ Resume submission:**

Candidates were asked to make a 6 slide/ 2 page proposal suggesting a solution to an over arching tech issue facing India. [The proposal prompts for the year 20-22 can be found here.](#)

The applicants were evaluated on metrics including logical thinking, coherency of argument, writing and research, motivation, relevance of experience and so on.

- **Behavioural Interview:**

The selected candidates went through a behavioural interviews to check for a cultural and behavioural fit in the larger IIC cohort and potential host organisation. Interview questions were formulated to measure logical thinking, team work, motivation, leadership abilities etc.

- **Call with the Country Director:**

The Country Director spoke in a 20 minute one-on-one with each of the short listed candidates as a final check before fellows went through a panel interview with the hosts.

- **Panel interviews :**

Each fellow interviewed with up to three host organisations in a collective panel, moderated by a team member from IIC. Every host is given an opportunity to ask questions to the fellow to gauge skill and behavioural fit. Each host finalised a list of top three applicants.

- **Final offers:**

Selected fellows were made offers basis in-depth discussions and feedback received from multiple selection points.

The fellows for the 20-22 cohort are as follows:

Deborah Thomas

Deborah is an Engineering graduate from Govt. Model Engineering College, Cochin University, with a Master's degree in Public Policy and Governance from Azim Premji University, Bangalore.

She has worked as an Applications Engineer at Oracle and as a student researcher at Aapti Institute and the Indian Institute for Human Settlements (IIHS). She is passionate about the changes that technology is driving in governance and policy and understanding what this means for democracy, participation and collective action. At the Young Leaders in Tech Policy Fellowship, Deborah is keen on learning as well as contributing to the development of tech that is genuinely of, by, and for the people.

Gaurav Jain

Gaurav worked at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, a multilateral investment bank, conducting analyses on Eastern and Southern Europe, Central Asia, and the Mediterranean region.

He has worked closely with the Indian Ministry for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, designing and implementing policies and projects around skill training. There he also led policy initiatives on regulatory reforms, standards-setting and data-driven decision making. He has also done a short stint with the British government on their National Data Strategy, allowing him to work closely at the forefront of policy making on the intersection of technology with people, government and economies.

Tanay Mahindru

Tanay was a Young Professional in NITI Aayog's Frontier Technologies team, where he contributed to multiple papers, projects and pilot implementations. Specifically, co-developing a national strategy on Artificial Intelligence.

He has also previously worked in McKinsey and Company's digital practice, where he contributed to projects for global private and public sector clients. Combined with his degree in engineering, he has an extensive experience in technology strategy and implementation, skills that will be extremely useful to his work with us.

Upasana Hembram



Upasana is passionate about creating a social impact with equity. Prior to the YLT Fellowship, she was a social impact consultant where she supported partner organizations on strategic advisory, impact assessments, and program design and implementation.

Her previous experiences also include working as a research associate for an ex-MLA and a think tank. She is keen on using her consulting skills and design thinking approach to drive impact. Upasana holds a dual degree in Electrical Engineering from Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay.

Vibhor Dubey



An academic project on affordable tech for Kirana retailers got **Vibhor** interested in tech solutions for process improvements. Over time, this interest evolved into a drive to understand decision-making in complex systems and identify pathways for improvement.

After graduating from National Institute of Technology Bhopal, Vibhor worked in Business Development for a SaaS company, handling requirement analysis for international enterprise clients. A desire to experience the deep end of systemic challenges took him to Teach for India, where he experienced intricacies of the public education system, noticing the gaps that impair policies in execution. Humbled, overwhelmed, and intrigued; he moved to Indian Institute for Human Settlements where he was trained to unpack complex urban issues and develop balanced propositions.



About Us

About the International Innovation Corps (IIC):

The International Innovation Corps (IIC) is a social impact program that operates out of University of Chicago Trust in India. The IIC recruits and places high-performing young professionals with up to five years of experience, on teams that work on-site with state and central government partners to implement large-scale projects to address India's most critical development challenges.

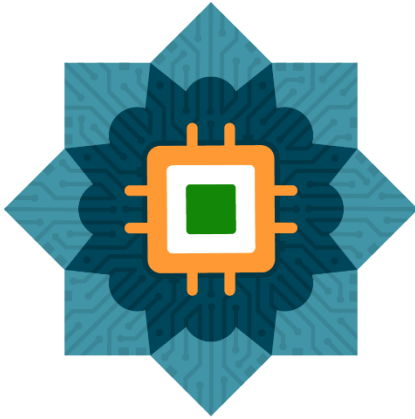
The program aims at creating scalable, sustainable, and long-term social impact. Through having direct impact on the ground in complex multi-stakeholder environments, the IIC ultimately seeks to cultivate future leaders for international development.

The Young Leaders in Tech Policy Fellowship was incubated with a three-year grant from Omidyar Network India.

About Omidyar Network India (ONI/Omidyar):

Omidyar Network India invests in bold entrepreneurs who help create a meaningful life for every Indian, especially the hundreds of millions of Indians in low-income and lower-middle-income populations, ranging from the poorest among us to the existing middle class. To drive empowerment and social impact at scale, ONI works with entrepreneurs in the private, non-profit and public sectors, who are tackling India's hardest and most chronic problems.





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