AIF William J. Clinton Fellowship for Service in India
Nineteen young leaders from the U.S. and India embarked on a life-changing journey in 2018. As AIF Clinton Fellows, they worked with development organizations across India to understand what goes behind creating a lasting impact at the grassroots level. This event marked the culmination of their ten months of relentless service and dedication, and showcased a snapshot of their successful journeys through exhibition stories, art forms, and presentations.
AIF’s William J. Clinton Fellowship for Service in India aims to nurture the upcoming generation of young leaders committed to impactful change. This year’s cohort worked across 15 states of India and made important contributions towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through their ten-month long unwavering commitment. They worked on education, livelihood, and public health to tackle pressing development challenges.
Guest Speakers

Eminent leaders from the development sector graced the event and lauded the Fellows on their first successful step in the impact space. Sharing their personal experiences, they emphasized how qualities like empathy, compassion, and kindness are crucial to become partners in progress and create lasting change.

Mark A. White
Mission Director, USAID/India, American Embassy

Shabnam Siddiqui
Director - Centre of Excellence for Governance, Ethics and Transparency, United Nations Global Compact Network India

Ishteyaque Amjad
Vice President - Public Affairs, Communication & Sustainability, Coca Cola India & South West Asia
Chief Guest Mark A. White congratulated the Fellows for choosing to challenge themselves by being a part of the AIF Clinton Fellowship. He also encouraged Fellows to continuously reflect on their work and develop ways to assess impact. His words of wisdom will serve as important reminders for the Fellows as they begin the next phase of their careers.

Mark A. White
Mission Director, USAID/India, American Embassy

“To fulfill the aims of your Fellowship - serve, learn and lead, you need to stop, listen, and look. Stop pre-judging. Strip yourself of your preconceived notions. Stop and just stand there. To look doesn’t mean just to stare, but also to observe. Observe your environment. Listen, because a lot of times we speak too much. Listen to what people are saying even when they are quiet. In silence, there are a lot of answers; there is a lot of noise. Stop, Look, Listen are the three things I will encourage you to do throughout your journey.”
Excellence is approaching something with a very open mind. It is about challenging your own notions. Also, if you are just a bit kind, I think you will be much better change agents, much better social agents - because at the end of the day, you want people to listen to you at some point, to listen to your stories and change themselves.

Drawing upon her personal experiences of studying in the U.S. and Pakistan, Ms. Shabnam Siddiqui highlighted how it is important to break barriers to enhance people-to-people connection. She also emphasized compassion and empathy as important qualities to cultivate excellence and become better change agents.
Highlighting the role of small ideas in catalyzing partnerships and collaborations, Mr. Ishteyaque Amjad spoke about changing ecosystems in the country. He used the example of Coca Cola’s collaboration with AIF for the ‘Support My School’ programme through which toilets for girls were built in schools, which made a significant difference for their education.

Ishteyaque Amjad,
Vice President - Public Affairs, Communication & Sustainability, Coca Cola India & South West Asia

“Look into the mirror and ask yourself: Are you standing on the side of the problem or are you gradually moving to the side of the solution? We can all partner together - be it universities, corporate sector, or the development sector, and come to a solution for the world.”
Role of Men in Women’s Health: An Inclusive Approach Towards Gender Sensitivity

Mahir Bhatt, AIF Clinton Fellow at Jagori Rural Charitable Trust

Women’s health is systematically undermined in India. From an analysis of health profiles of 80 women in the Dharamsala region, three key steps to improvement emerge: teaching gender equity starts at home, men need to learn about menstrual health, and sexual and reproductive health education needs to be included in school curricula.

Find Your Voice, Claim Your Rights: Students Putting Democracy into Action in Bihar

Ananya Saha, AIF Clinton Fellow at Quest Alliance

Igniting curiosity and creativity is foundational to encourage youth to express basic needs. By empowering Bal Sansads (student governments) in primary schools and challenging them to speak up about claiming their rights, students are able to unlock possibilities for their education and identities.
Panel Discussion
Connecting Communities, Bridging Cultures

Nishant Gokhale, Anecia Evans, Molly Morrison, Tessa Romanski, Rachel Aier
Moderated By: Prashant Anand (2017-18 AIF Clinton Fellow)

How do you facilitate change in a community when you enter as an outsider? From a cross-country shift to an urban-rural switch, a varied range of experiences came forth as Fellows shared how they transitioned from being a ‘guest’ to a ‘community member’ to create an impact. Negotiating their personal identities to spread awareness about inclusion was a common thread which emerged from their experiences.
Messages from the AIF Team

From the first day, members of the AIF team have served as pillars of support for the Fellows. The mentors and staff members who have witnessed their transformation through these ten months, shared their reflections.
“The relationship between two countries is a connection between peoples and that’s the connection we want to strengthen. Stereotypes do not necessarily exist. It’s only when you go and interact that you see the love that flows between cultures. There are many people who are in need and any one organization cannot match up to the requirements in India. So we all are partners in that progress. The AIF Clinton Fellowship Program is a unique program where this bridge-building exercise comes into being as Fellows work in multiple areas of social development.”
Amanpreet Kaur, Program Officer, AIF Clinton Fellowship

“From day one, the Fellows demonstrated their passion for the development sector, tremendous resilience, compassion, and empathy. From jumping into a pond full of algae with the locals, to a city boy travelling in a local bus, their stories are inspiring, enriching, and unforgettable. I have been fortunate to witness their stories of change and be a part of their transformative journeys.”

Chandni Wadhwani, Senior Program Manager, AIF Clinton Fellowship

“The Fellowship aims to strengthen the capacity of the development sector in India by tapping into the power of people-to-people linkages. The stories of joy, passion, struggle, and personal change bring to life the power of human connectivity and cross-cultural partnerships.”
A Curriculum of Happiness: How Life Skills Initiative Helped One Young Man Find His Voice

Christopher Carpenter, AIF Clinton Fellow at Dream a Dream

Creativity and confidence cultivated through mindfulness can lead to an empowered life. The film screening about Ashwini highlights a young boy who overcomes his social anxiety to share his poetry with his school. Discovering a platform for self-expression and seizing the power of voice is often greater than we imagine.

Finding Your Way Home: Understanding Rural Communities in Darjeeling Through Health Education

Diana Chavez, AIF Clinton Fellow at Broadleaf Health and Education Alliance

From playing football matches, attending weddings and funerals, to adapting to the harsh challenges of daily life in Darjeeling, building human connections is essential to community integration. Learning about the joys and difficulties of any community are central to participating and helping bring about positive change.
Group Activity

Catch A Break, Have Some Fun

Tessa Romanski and Alexandra Barteldt

Chits containing names of animate and inanimate objects with instructions not to reveal the contents were distributed. Through questions, answers and guesses, attendees tried to figure out who or what was written in their partners’ chits. This activity was often used by Fellow facilitators while engaging with the students at their respective host sites and proved to be a great ice-breaker!
Launch of ‘Community Across Cuisines, Cooking Across Cultures’ by Ishteyaque Amjad, Vice President - Public Affairs, Communication & Sustainability, Coca Cola India & South West Asia
Edited by Daniel Soucy and Illustrations by Molly Ann Morrison
In this cookbook, fifteen AIF Clinton Fellows share their favorite recipes and inspiring stories from the host communities where they lived, worked, and cooked during their ten months of service.

Launch of ‘2018-19 Yearbook’ by Shabnam Siddiqui - Director- Centre of Excellence for Governance, Ethics and Transparency, United Nations Global Compact Network India
A documentation of the stories, achievements, and challenges during the Fellows’ journeys and projects in partnership with local development organizations. It also highlights unique contributions made towards Sustainable Development Goals this year.

Launch of ‘People-Powered Partnerships Vol. 2’ by Mark A. White - Mission Director, USAID/India, American Embassy
Edited by Andrew Kerr and Prashant Anand
This publication features compelling examples of how the AIF Clinton Fellowship has supported innovative, localized solutions this year. The five essays bring to life the experiences of projects and initiatives that value and prioritize place and people.

Click here to view and download the publications: https://aif.org/fellowship/publications/
Their Narratives - Our Story: Stories of Indian Female Prisoners and Artisans Going from Strength to Strength

Shivani Sharma, AIF Clinton Fellow at Fair Trade Forum
Nithya Vemireddy, AIF Clinton Fellow at Prajwala Sangham

Can statistics alone reveal everything about the efficacy of development projects? We need to go beyond the numbers and listen to beneficiaries’ stories to assess true impact and create spaces of equity.

The Song of Seasons: Strengthening Communities through Environmental Education in Ladakh

Alexandra Barteldt, AIF Clinton Fellow at Snow Leopard Conservancy, India Trust

At a time when Ladakh is undergoing significant change due to relentless development, how do we reconnect communities to traditional knowledge practices and the local ecosystem? By exploring the power of creative art forms and collective participation, we can reflect on our relationship with the elements of the earth.
Wishing the AIF Clinton 2018-19 Fellows all the best for their future endeavors!

In the picture: AIF Clinton 2018-19 Fellows, Mark A. White, AIF staff, and Alumni of the AIF Clinton Fellowship Program