

rie

AYESHA TABASSUM DECCAN CHRONICLE

Out of 600 young achievers from across the world, 10 Bengalureans have the "WOW" factor in them. Called Sandboxers, they are the only youngsters from India who have made it to the reputed Sandbox community which is a global community of extraordinary young achievers and innovators all below the age of 30, across 48 countries. But what exactly do the Sandboxers do? A Sandboxer is a young achiever who has the potential to be the next big leader.

From Bengaluru, 28-year-old Achyutha Sharma is the person who kickstarted Sandbox in India. "There are many Indians who are Sandboxers, but there weren't any in India. So that's when I decided to make Bengaluru the hub," says Achyutha, Indian ambassador of the Sandbox network recently added two more members — Shashank Khanna and Gaurav Makkar to his team totaling the number to 10.

"Curating the right kind of people with the right kind of attitude to help make a difference and be a change maker is the main aim of a Sandboxer," says Achyutha. So his team is an interesting mix of young people from IT, photography, consulting and business backgrounds who are all achievers in their respective fields.

They talk, discuss, and go out on informal group events like coffee meetings, dinners and other activities and network. Networking is of two kinds — online and offline. "The idea is to create an ecosystem where youngsters create an impact by helping each other," says Gaurav Makkar, founder of a non-profit organisation and the newest Sandboxer. But it isn't a boring process, where you need to meet targets and achieve certain goals. It is a dynamic initiative that challenges these youngsters to think out-of-the-box. "It isn't a transaction. We meet interesting people from across continents and collaborate

SANDBOXED with genius

Innovation, out-of-the-box thinking and achievements bring these individuals together to further their skills and knowledge



Sandboxers at the first Sandbox demo in Bengaluru

with them for various projects," says Supriya Sehgal, who runs an experiential photography initiative called Photography on the Move. "A few months ago, 25-year-old Barry Townsend, a filmmaker conducted a workshop in the city where we learnt about social videos and about the process of making them viral. It was an eye-opener for participants," adds Supriya. While the video workshop is just a one-of-a-kind initiative, there are various activities that Sandboxers conduct. But it isn't an easy task to qualify as a Sandboxer. One of the members needs to recommend the name and then there is an application process. "The headquarters in Zurich tests the applicants on various parameters. After sending the application you need to send a WOW — something that is wacky yet interesting. When I sent mine, I didn't get a response from them for two months and thought I wasn't selected," says Nishant Sarangi, a consultant. But once selected, a young achiever (up to 30 years of age, after which one becomes an alumna) has immense opportunities to network and achieve more. The sky is the limit!



(Clockwise from top left) Nishant, Gaurav, Achyutha, Shashank and Aakash

THE CHOSEN TEN

- Achyutha Sharma (28)**, director of a creative arts and design development Trust, India Ambassador, Sandbox Network. "It is an open platform for opportunities to make a difference."
- Chandan S Raj (28)**, vice president of a Business Development firm. "I work like a family. The power of the network is when each person helps the other in various instances."
- Nishant Sarangi (27)**, consultant at a boutique management consulting firm. "I can think of only three words to describe all of us, we are go-getters, innovators and extremely passionate."
- Karthik Naralasetty (26)**, founder, socialblood.org. "The entrepreneur can be made in institutions."
- Shashank Khanna (26)**, experience designer and social innovator. "We all come from different fields but the enthusiasm to make a difference is the common thread that binds us."
- Supriya Sehgal (26)**, organizer of Photography on the Move. "The highlight of my one year at Sandbox was when we got featured on BBC as young achievers from Bengaluru, a healthy city for entrepreneurship."
- Jyothi Ramanath (28)**, founder of a creative gifting initiative. "Every Sandboxer is doing something big at an individual level. We collaborate with new opportunities and open up to working towards something bigger."
- Gaurav Makkar (27)**, founder of a non-profit social entrepreneurship forum. "Earlier people wouldn't buy our idea because they used to stereotype young people as the frivolous lot. But now with the networking and resources, we are showing the world how to get their act of young minds."
- Aakash Raman (25)**, founder of a global photography company. "I am living my dream. I wanted to be happier and that's what I am doing and being a change maker and an achiever."
- Vallabh Rao (26)**, consultant at a media web site for entrepreneurs. "Our group is a diverse mix of individuals from different backgrounds who have come together to focus and help social entrepreneurship projects."