

## Havard YLC Experience

Winter break of 2023 was special, as I was able to attend *YLC*, one of the most prestigious events in youth leadership. YLC is hosted in collaboration with *professors and mentors from Harvard University* and the conference offered invaluable access to learning and growth.

### Experiential learning

During the program I learned how to look at complex social issues, created a full-fledged “CapStone Project” and practical aspects of leadership. I benefitted from program structure which was dynamic, practice oriented and project-based to understand leadership in action rather than conventional instruction-based approach. I got exposure to critical leadership competencies such as strategic thinking, effective communication, and ethical decision-making via hands-on exposure to fundamental concepts. I learned about leadership by experiencing, practicing and living it.

### Capstone Project - A Social Impact Project

I was able to apply leadership and project management skills to debate and collaborate to identify societal issues involving communities at concept level and the develop actionable solution/plans to execute them. Our group worked on “Project Heal”, which involved creating awareness about hygiene in city slums (Mumbai being slum capital of the world, this is a real problem) using innovative solution involving local corporates and student community and by incentivizing slum dwellers. I was tasked with creating a sponsorship module for the initiatives and was glad to present real ideas highlighting tangible benefits for “Corporates”, “Food Banks” and “Pharmaceutical Companies”. The program culminated with a final presentation to a panel of esteemed judges. Project Heal was my first real exposure on how social issues could be addressed while leading a successful commercial enterprise.

### Take-aways

The program encouraged me to explore solution for real-world problem, navigate challenges, inspire teams, and lead initiatives as a leader. I now appreciate what Barack Obama meant by “Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.” Project Heal empowered me to believe that I can make tangible positive changes in the community and laid building blocks for my work in public education for underprivileged children.

### Appendix A: YLC Program Outline

The intense five day multi module program covered (Module 1) Defining Modern Leadership, Strategic Leadership Analysis, Stakeholder Perspectives, Power of Persuasion, Team Activity: Leadership Scenarios, Social Impact Project: Ideation; (Module 2) Adapting Leadership for the Digital Age, Personality Types and Leadership, Personal Leadership: Self Reflection Exercise, Root Cause Analysis, Conflict Resolution, Mastering Collaborative Problem solving, Team Activity: Problem solving, Social Impact Project: Activation; (Module 3) Introduction to Data Driven Decision Making, Art of Negotiation, Applying Data Insights, Social Impact Project: Prototype; (Module 4) Core Concerns Framework, Forum theatre for Leaders, Mastering the Dynamics of Change, Social Impact Project: Final Draft; (Module 5) Mastering the Elevator Pitch, Strategising Personal and Organisational Branding, Reflective Journey and Program Synthetics.