



YOUNG PROFESSIONALS PROGRAMME FOR LEGAL EMPOWERMENT





OUR PHILOSOPHY

An aphorism often widely debated in law schools is the idea of 'law as an instrument for social change'. But there are few who actually work towards using the agency of the law to empower lives and facilitate socio-legal revolutions. In order to contribute meaningfully as young legal professionals working for human rights, one has to be cognizant of the wide gulf between the law in action and the law as found in statute books, judgments and scholarship.

Therefore, whatever may be the course chosen, a direct/lived experience of poverty and discrimination, an understanding of how things work on the ground and experiencing the practical relationship of law with vulnerability is essential for any lawyer, policy-researcher or legal academician.

The Young Professionals Programme or Legal Empowerment (YPPLE) was started by the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) in 2014 with the objective of equipping young

legal professionals to become powerful change agents by giving them the opportunity to develop a holistic understanding of how legal empowerment at the grassroots plays catalytic role in bringing social change.

YPPLE is now entering its seventh year. In the first six years of the programme, CSJ placed 21 young aspiring researchers in its field areas, where they engaged with grassroots realities and in the process grew immensely both professionally and personally. The programme allowed these young minds to pursue their true interests, with each individual finding something that they can call their own, be it: a particular sphere of law, a work profile or a social cause they care about.

Many YPPLEs continue to be associated with CSJ beyond the duration of the programme and are helping CSJ work towards realising its vision for a more just and equitable society.

PROGRAMME DETAILS

A group of about six to eight young legal professionals will be placed for minimum period of one year in field where CSJ is implementing its interventions. A learning/performance road map will be developed jointly with the selected candidates. Each individual will spend two-three weeks every month in the field areas and the remaining time will be dedicated towards research and writing, reflections, inputs and capacity building.

ELIIBILITY:

The Programme is open to young law graduates/legal professionals who wish to pursue a career in the field of human rights as lawyers, practitioners, researchers or academics.

Willingness to engage with field realities, to live in challenging conditions and to travel extensively, are things every candidate must be willing to do.

Candidates must above all display a strong drive, motivation and commitment towards working for social change.

The primary responsibility candidates will be to:

- Conduct field based research on law and policy issues for formulating interventions and creating policy documents
- Coordinate training and capacity building programmes and develop training materials
- Supervise data collection for research programs/projects
- Collaborate/coordinate programmes with stakeholders including representations with various government authorities
- Contribute to the public engagement work of the organisation
- Organise events to initiate public debate on issues
- Bring in creative approaches and perspectives to the existing work of the organisation

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS:

A stipend of Rs. 30,000 per month will be paid to the selected candidates. Please note that the Programme is designed as a two-year engagement. At the end of mandatory one-year commitment, candidates would have the option to either continue working with CSJ or opt out.

SELECTION PROCESS

Candidates interested in applying for the Programme must submit an online application. As part of the online application, candidates are required to attach the following documents:

- a) A 1000-1500 word personal statement of purpose detailing their motivations and reasons for applying to the Programme. Candidates must also be clear about their areas of interest and expectations from the Programme.
- b) An updated CV along with details of any similar prior work experience.
- c) Two writing samples on a field/theme related to Human Rights (academic/opinion/analysis essays or papers)

Applications containing the above mentioned documents should be filled in at the following link <https://bit.ly/31QB17J> not later than **15th March, 2020.**

Short-listed candidates will be contacted with further queries and thereafter shall be invited for a two-day selection process at Centre for Social Justice, Ahmedabad.

The final selected candidates will be invited for a one-month probation period. Based on an appraisal of their performance during this month, the organisation will confirm the selection of the candidates into the Programme.

For any queries, please write to us at ypple.csj@gmail.com.



ABOUT CSJ

Established in 1993, the Centre for Social Justice (“CSJ”) is a human rights organisation fighting for the rights of the marginalised and the vulnerable, principally in the sphere of access to justice. CSJ has been active in more than ten States across India creating human rights interventions using law as a key strategy through an intimate engagement with grassroots realities. Over the last 25 years, CSJ’s experience in the access to justice field has led to the development of a unique conceptualisation of vulnerability founded in the interface between individual and collective identities. This has meant that CSJ not only assists in the empowerment of vulnerable communities through the enforcement of socio-economic and civil-political rights, but more crucially, engages with reordering social relations that perpetrate discrimination and violence with a view towards a long-term realignment of intra- and inter-community dynamics of power.

Central to CSJ’s efforts are its institutional interventions in legal reform and research which bridge and symbiotically combine grassroots activism, law and policy-making on a wide gamut of issues concerning the rights of women, Dalits, Adivasis, minorities and other socially vulnerable groups. This has only been possible because of the Centre’s tireless efforts – through its wide network of law centres – in training and strengthening community lawyers and paralegals; thus, building capacities for paradigm-altering leadership within their communities. The law centres – consisting of a team of lawyers, paralegals and researchers – not only provide litigative support and outreach to communities but become nodes for the propagation of a more holistic conception of Human Rights that incorporates a vision for peace and justice. It has, at the moment, 14 centres in the State of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand. CSJ, today, responds to almost 2000 cases annually through this network of centres.



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