



Photo by Claude Renault

Following independence, India created a strong centralized federal government. However, over three quarters of the Indian population continue to live in rural villages - all diverse communities separated by geography, religion, and language. The large, bureaucratic federal government struggled to coordinate and manage these communities, creating a huge gap between the state and its citizens. This has led to problems with the quality of such things as health-care, schooling, and labor rights in many rural communities.

Forms of local governance have emerged to ensure that justice and equality are afforded to all Indian citizens. Success in grassroots governance is largely due to the work of many NGOs that focus on community development in rural areas. Road construction, rights for migrant laborers, and improvements in waste management are all examples of recent achievements that village community groups were recently afforded after collaboration with local organizations.

Interns in Rajasthan will have the opportunity to work directly on community development in a place where many remain ignorant about their legal rights and isolated from their political system. FSD works to empower local communities by assisting grassroots organizations to form village-level seminars, provide training programs, and organize rallies. These organizations work in the communities to establish local management committees, which generate awareness and encourage political and social change. These non-governmental organizations are extremely effective agents for change, but continue to need help with public relations, impact-assessment reports, and facilitation of educational workshops within these communities.

Internship/Volunteer opportunities in community development in India include:

- Help secure access to safe drinking water and assist in finding employment for local community members through watershed management and community capacity-building initiatives.
- Draft impact assessments on past projects such as solutions for displacement, farmer education initiatives, obtaining access to governmental programs, models for demanding rights, and improving literacy.
- Support a capacity building program by setting up management systems, preparing training modules, offering workshops, and undertaking research studies related to understanding the social actors of governance.
- Assist promotion of renewable energy technology such as smokeless woodstoves, bio-gas plants, solar stoves and lamps in rural communities.
- Help local industries develop industrial greenbelts and start recycling bio-degradable wastes.
- Support an organization's migrant labor programs by providing shelter, health and financial services for migrant groups in destination centers.
- Research successes of local, grassroots development organizations and propose collaborative networks that may attack common problems in the communities.

For more opportunities in community development in India, visit our website or contact us directly.