



Photo by Bartek Pogoda

India is currently experiencing rapid and widespread environmental degradation. Tremendous pressure is placed upon the country's land and natural resources to support the rising population. Mismanagement and over-use of India's once abundant forests has resulted in desertification, contamination, and soil depletion throughout the sub-continent. This has serious repercussions for the livelihoods of hundreds of millions of Indians that live off the land. Without continual access to forest products such as fruit, honey, or firewood, communities experience debilitating hunger and are reduced to total poverty. Drought also has severe consequences for local people, affecting the availability of safe drinking water, the success of the livestock population, and basic food security.

In Rajasthan, numerous non-governmental organizations focus on environmental issues as they are extremely pressing concerns for this region. FSD works with organizations that have been enormously effective in protecting natural resources and minimizing the effects of drought. Other FSD partner non-governmental organizations conduct research projects on topics such as soil stabilization, organic farming, erosion prevention, and protection and management of forested lands. These organizations search for feasible solutions to environmental problems and then provide the local community with the necessary funding and infrastructure. Aid from environmental organizations has become an invaluable way for the poor to improve the condition of their local environment, directly affecting their quality of life.

### Internship/Volunteer opportunities in environment in India include:

- Conduct research projects on topics such as soil and water conservation, use of common and private land plantations, seed banks, crop cultivation, irrigation, and well deepening efforts.
- Support tribal rehabilitation projects which include tree-based farming that produces drought tolerant fruit species – improving the productivity and employment potential of degraded lands.
- Assist a National Environmental Awareness Campaign (in conjunction with the Ministry of the Environment).
- Secure access to safe drinking water resources and employment for local community members through watershed management and community capacity-building initiatives.
- Analyze the success of efforts to increase local self-governance and end the privatization of natural resources.
- Support implementation of various watershed development projects, invention of new methods for harvesting rain water, and ensuring equitable distribution.
- Assist community education programs that support the use of traditional medicine, seed banks, and composting to generate income and minimize depletion of natural resources.
- Help construct field bunds, gully plugs, check dams, farm ponds, and/or community lift irrigation schemes to protect communities from the devastation caused by drought.

For more opportunities in environment in India, go to our website or contact us directly.