



Photo by Tom Allwood

In India, human rights concerns frequently intersect with youth advocacy issues. Child labor, for example, has a longstanding history in the country as many families living in poverty need their children to work instead of attend school. High levels of seasonal migration exacerbate this issue. As parents leave in search of work, financial responsibility shifts to the children of the household so that many youth are forced to abandon their education altogether.

The Hindu caste system has also been a source of social division and oppression for centuries. This system created rigid social stratification and established a clear hierarchy in social status. Lower castes are taught to accept their inferior place in society, resulting in exploitation and subjugation by upper castes. As a result, members of lower castes experience high rates of poverty and are locked into their socio-economic status over successive generations.

FSD collaborates with many human rights organizations. These organizations work to curb child labor and raise families out of poverty by providing them with rehabilitation centers and proper nutrition. Additionally, several NGOs in Udaipur provide housing and education for orphans, host famine relief camps, and assist those suffering from drug addictions. All these projects are extremely effective, but additional assistance and funding is necessary for lasting change. Many living in both rural and urban areas have not yet had the opportunity to benefit from these projects. NGOs need the resources to target those in greatest need.

Internship/Volunteer opportunities in human rights in India include:

- Enhance the legal knowledge base of the people in the Udaipur region about constitutional rights, land and forest related legal provisions, and welfare schemes.
- Support a Child Rights and Youth Program which monitors communities and conducts meetings in an effort to raise awareness and organize grassroots rights movements.
- Assist in legitimizing migrant laborers and their plight by supporting registration, communication services, preparation, and tracking. Provide counseling, legal and sex education, and help build migrant networks to support each other.
- Work with both formal and informal institutions to get villagers to begin demanding rights relating to: Man Sarovar Dam displacement, mine problems such as water pollution and displacement, and forest based livelihoods threatened by government policies.
- Conduct research on policy-related work for the protection of unorganized, migrant laborer's rights. Assess efficacy of current initiatives.
- Empower village-level institutions by helping them become aware of government schemes and recognize their own power in placing pressure on local forms of government. Assist in the formation of village level groups, staged rallies, seminars, meetings, training programs, educational tours, and coordination camps.

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