

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Strengthening women-led development: Applications open for WomenLeaders India Fellowship 2024-25 powered by Reliance Foundation and Vital Voices Global Partnership**

- *The **WomenLeaders India Fellowship** is looking for true catalysts for change, who are building climate resilience, enhancing access to sports, advancing educational initiatives, and strengthening livelihoods.*
- *Over ten months, the programme aims to empower 50 exceptional women social sector leaders and social entrepreneurs from across India, each dedicated to driving transformative change within their communities.*
- *In 2023, India's G20 Presidency shifted the focus from women's development to women-led development. This Fellowship aims to strengthen this vision by providing leadership capacity building for talented women leaders.*

**WASHINGTON, D.C., USA & MUMBAI, India, July 1, 2024:** Following the success of the inaugural WomenLeaders India Fellowship powered by Reliance Foundation and Vital Voices to nurture women leaders in the social sector in 2022-23, Reliance Foundation and Vital Voices are thrilled to launch the call for applications for the 2024-25 cohort.

In 2023, India's G20 Presidency shifted focus for the first time, from women's development to women-led development. India's collective and unwavering dedication to champion 'Gender Equality and Empowering All Women and Girls' secured a firm place in the G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration.

In line with this vision, the **WomenLeaders India Fellowship** will provide leadership capacity building for talented women leaders, including social sector leaders and social entrepreneurs. The WomenLeaders India Fellowship is looking for true catalysts for change, who are building climate resilience, enhancing access to sports, advancing educational initiatives, and promoting economic self-sufficiency through livelihood strengthening.

Over ten months, the programme aims to empower 50 exceptional women leaders from across India, each dedicated to driving transformative change within their communities. The future cohort will be selected for their ground-breaking work in Climate Resilience (including Disaster Risk Reduction), Sports for Development, Education (by strengthening early childhood care and education or addressing foundational literacy and numeracy), and Livelihood Generation at the grassroots. All Fellows will also work on their innovative projects aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through the Fellowship, benefiting from mentor and peer support.

**The applications are open from July 1, 2024 to July 28, 2024, 23:59 IST.**  
(Apply now: <https://reliancefoundation.org/womenleadersindiafellowship>)

The Fellowship starts in September 2024, beginning and ending with in-person convenings in India. In the intervening months, the programme includes a blend of virtual webinars and community gatherings focused on leadership and skills development with leading Indian and international experts. Each selected Fellow will also benefit from personalised mentorship to support their leadership journey, as well as peer-to-peer engagement.

The Fellowship training focuses on leadership capacity building and skills development and is designed to ultimately strengthen the leadership of the participants and increase the success of their ventures and efforts. The Fellows will also benefit from joining a vibrant WomenLeaders India Fellowship alumni community. This will provide opportunities for visibility and networking at the national and international levels, through the Reliance Foundation and Vital Voices network.

The programme will culminate with a final in-person gathering, where Fellows will present their impactful projects aligned with the SDGs, where selected winning projects will receive a grant award to help scale their project further.

In December 2022, fifty inspiring women from India's social sector were identified for the inaugural Fellowship. The Fellows in the inaugural cohort were selected for their work on Education, Rural Transformation, strengthening livelihoods, as well as Sports for Development. This dynamic, and intergenerational cohort hailed from various organisations, working at the grassroots level across rural and semi-urban areas of the country. The Fellows included social sector leaders and social entrepreneurs working on a range of issues and geographies from waste management in southern coastal villages to affordable energy sources in north-east India. Watch this video to see the glimpses from the previous cohort's convening and graduation ceremony: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ieHp6nPAWpo>

Together, we look forward to elevating a new generation of women-led development in India.

**Applications close on July 28, 2024, 23:59 IST.**

**To learn more and apply, visit:**

<https://reliancefoundation.org/womenleadersindiafellowship>

**About Reliance Foundation:**

Reliance Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Reliance Industries Limited, aims to play a catalytic role in addressing India's development challenges through innovative and sustainable solutions. Led by Smt. Nita M Ambani, Founder and Chairperson, Reliance Foundation is relentlessly working for the overall well-being and enhanced quality of life for all, focusing on rural transformation, education, health, sports for development, disaster management, women empowerment, urban renewal and arts, culture and heritage, and has touched the lives of nearly 76 million people across India, in over 55,550 villages and urban locations. More on [www.reliancefoundation.org](http://www.reliancefoundation.org)

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**About Vital Voices Global Partnership**

Now celebrating 27 years since its founding, Vital Voices Global Partnership has directly invested in more than 20,000 changemakers across 184 countries and territories since its inception in 1997. Driven by the universal truth that women are the key to progress in their communities and nations cannot move forward without women in leadership positions, Vital Voices has provided early support for leaders who went on to become Nobel Peace Prize Laureates, U.S. Youth Poet Laureates, Prime Ministers, award-winning innovators, pioneering human rights defenders, and breakthrough social entrepreneurs, including Amanda Gorman, Malala Yousafzai, and more. In an effort to advance and expand this work, in 2022 Vital Voices opened the doors to the world's first global embassy for women, the Vital Voices Global Headquarters for Women's Leadership —a first-of-its-kind space that allows for convening, innovation, planning, and action — all in the pursuit of tackling the world's greatest challenges. Serving as a “venture catalyst,” Vital Voices identifies leaders with a daring vision for change and partners with them to make that vision a reality. It provides connections, increased capacity, a peer network, financial support, skills training, and increased visibility for their work, which ranges from gender-based violence and climate justice to economic inequities and political disempowerment, and more.

*Learn more: [www.vitalvoices.org](http://www.vitalvoices.org)*

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**Annexure:**

<https://bit.ly/WomenLeadersIndiaAnnexure>