

The background features a cluster of colorful circles in shades of green, orange, blue, and yellow at the top left. From this cluster, several wavy, vertical lines in shades of orange, yellow, and light blue flow downwards and to the right, creating a sense of movement and energy.

# Young Professionals Programme

*for* **Legal Empowerment**

**Centre for Social Justice, Ahmedabad**

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# Young Professionals Programme for Legal Empowerment

An aphorism often widely debated in law schools is the idea of 'law as an instrument for social change'. As law people, many have studied, opposed or defended this principle. But there are few who actually work towards using the agency of the law to empower lives and facilitate socio-legal revolutions. While some young legal professionals choose the more challenging and lesser tread path of engaging directly with communities, others opt for a more indirect engagement by working with research organizations, policy institutions and academia.

However, 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 academic. The Young Professionals Programme for Legal Empowerment (YPPLE) anchored by Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) is designed to equip young legal professionals to become powerful change agents by giving them the opportunity to develop a holistic understanding of how legal empowerment can contribute to social change through an intimate engagement with field realities.

## Programme Details

A group of about six to eight young legal professionals will be placed for minimum period of one year in the field areas where CSJ is implementing its programmes. 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 reflections, writing, inputs and capacity building.



The primary responsibilities of the selected candidates will be to:

- Conduct research on law and policy issues for making 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 advocacy work of the organisation
- Organise events to initiate public debate on issues
- Bring in creative approaches and perspectives to the existing work

## Eligibility

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. A willingness to engage with field realities, to live in challenging conditions, and travel extensively are pre-requisites for every candidate. Candidates must above all display a strong drive, motivation and commitment towards working for social change.

## Fellowship

A fellowship of Rs. 25,000 per month will be paid to the selected candidates. Please note that an engagement for a minimum period of one year is mandatory for all those selected to the Programme.

## Selection Process

Candidates interested in applying to the Programme must send in the following in their application:

- a) personal statement of purpose detailing the candidates motivations and reasons for applying to the Programme. Candidates must also be clear about their areas of interest and expectations from the Programme.
- b) updated CV along with details of any similar prior work experience.

Applications containing the above mentioned documents should be sent to **ypple.csj@gmail.com** not later than **25<sup>th</sup> May 2014**. Candidates shortlisted for the second round will be contacted for an interview.

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**.

**Centre for Social Justice** established in 1993, is a human rights organisation fighting for the rights of the marginalised and vulnerable. Inspired by Freirian thought, CSJ has been active in more than ten States across India making human rights interventions using law as a key strategy through an intimate engagement with grassroot realities. CSJ fulfils its mandate by training and strengthening community lawyers and paralegals by building their capacities to deliver change-inducing leadership in their communities through a network of law centres. A pioneer in the field of access to justice, CSJ has also made path-breaking institutional interventions in the form of research, legal reforms and initiatives bringing together grassroots activism, law and policy-making on a wide array of issues affecting women, dalits, adivasis, minorities and other socio-economically vulnerable groups.

At present, the Centre is engaged in action-research, advocacy, training, and capacity building across the following thematic:

- Law, Society & Culture in the Adivasi Context (Dang District, Gujarat)
- Rights of Persons living in Coastal Areas (Gujarat)
- Socio-Economic Rights of Minorities (Rehnuma Centres in 12 States)
- Socio-Economic Rights of Vulnerable Groups (Law Centres in Chattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh)
- Action-Research Study towards Building Rule of Law Communities in Villages (Gujarat and Rajasthan)
- National Campaign on Access to Justice



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