



GOONJ.. a voice, an effort
www.goonj.org

Goonj FELLOWSHIP

Exploring the World of Possibilities



2018-2022





Founder's Note

“When Goonj was not a fellowship organization, many people suggested that we start one. Over the years we experimented and invited many youngsters to be a part of our work in urban and rural India. Some people still think that we collect and reach clothes to those who need it but people who understand our work know that it is a systemic idea of creating a human dignity based parallel economy, that's creating a stronger connection between urban and rural India. Our first fellowship in 2018 was about integrating youngsters from the society who were desirous of working in the social sector, instead of creating a whole new program for it. Over the years Goonj's widespread grassroots urban and rural network, ongoing work with people on different issues, is our biggest strength and with the fellowship we have turned it into a beautiful learning journey for young minds. Goonj Fellows come from diverse backgrounds but with one singular passion; they want to be a part of the change work. The fellowship journey offers them an opportunity to explore the world of possibilities; by doing, by looking through different lenses, by valuing and understanding grassroots wisdom and people, especially the so-called 'beneficiaries' who really are a powerful and skilled backbone of our society.

We have a lot of hopes from our youth.. They are powerful.. they have the ability to take big risks, to change the world for the better..”

Lagey Raho!!

Anshu Gupta
Founder Goonj, Gram Swabhimaan



Our Fellowship Journey

In a country that has the world's largest population of youth – about 66% of the population under 35, what do you do to harness that huge potential to bring about a change? Goonj started Fellowships to fulfill our Founder, Anshu Gupta's vision, "This world is a world of volume. Problems are in volume. We do need solutions in volume and the people who work on those are also needed in volume. Right now India doesn't need more thinkers, it needs more doers."

started recently, in 2018, with the first cohort of 'Urban Fellowship'. The 'Grassroots Fellowship' started in 2019 while the 'Sanjha Fellowship' and 'Next Generation Fellowship' were launched in 2020. Each of these one-year fellowships fills a gap we noticed in the larger ecosystem.

Fellowship Timeline

Urban Fellowship
2018-22,
63 Fellows

Sanjha Fellowship
2021-22,
36 Fellows

Grassroots Fellowship
2019-22,
38 Fellows

Next-Generation Fellowship
2021-22,
13 Fellows

Goonj Fellowship Urban

We started with the Urban Fellowship to provide urban youth, isolated from rural realities, exposure to deep rooted urban and rural development issues, with a positive, action oriented perspective. The one year journey is designed to open up the minds of fellows, to a world of possibilities and potential, as they travel and work with Goonj teams, partners, volunteers, and masses across urban and rural India. In a hands-on experiential learning journey, fellows travel and live in urban and rural India in different conditions, cultures and geographies to understand, value, and respect diverse contexts, issues and ecosystems of people.

Key Elements:

- Engaging with diverse urban stakeholders
- Immersing in rural development work.
- Understanding differing social narratives
- Planning and executing focussed campaigns
- Immersion in urban development work
- Peer and sectoral learning and collaboration



Testimonies



“As someone who deeply feels her calling lies in the social sector, the Goonj Fellowship felt like the right platform to work with the community. This journey will take me closer to the urban and rural realities, a variety of communities and make me hear different voices.”

Deshna Suryanarayan
Batch 3



“The fellowship journey has been about meeting new people, listening to different stories and experiencing and exploring new prospects. I have also gained a ‘safe space’ with my fellow ‘fellows’, sharing our experiences and learnings and so much more in between. This feeling of camaraderie and belonging is very important and valuable to me.”

Myingthunglo M Lotha
Batch 2



“Goonj has given me perspectives to think deeply and understand people, places and situations. It's a very empowering experience to get a space where you can create ideas, explore where you can take action and utilize what you know. The most important thing it has taught me is to be kind. The lessons from here, be it big or small, have taught me to stay true to my authentic self. A wonderful journey indeed!”

Aiswarya P.
Batch 4

Goonj Fellowship Grassroots

A vast majority of India's youth still lives in its villages, facing the challenge of livelihood, education, skills, and exposure to the world. They are our best bet to save our forests, rivers, and land from climate change and devastating disasters as they are a repository of knowledge about our grassroots culture, language, socio-economic structures, etc.

Goonj started the Grassroots Fellowship for capacity-building and nurturing of India's rural youth. In their one year journey, fellows immerse in various development initiatives in geographies across rural India. Our overarching goal is to build a bridge of capacity and confidence for these youngsters so that they go back to do better and bigger work in their own villages/ towns.

Key-elements

- Strengthening understanding of rural issues and realities
- Learning about development work
- Working with people
- Capacity building and skills
- Ideas, pathways and plan making



Testimonies



“Grassroots Fellowship is a first time opportunity for me. This journey has transformed me from a common citizen to a responsible development representative. Now I am keen to devote myself for community development work, using the ideas, resources and skills I learnt here.”

Anup Kumar Mondal
Batch 3



“This fellowship taught me a lot of things. “कोविड के समय में मुझे मौका मिला अपनी काबिलियत को और निखारने का”.

Rohit Pawar
Batch 2



“I am the first girl from my village to graduate and study in Kolkata. My family and I faced a lot of backlash from our community for my education. This fellowship provided me an opportunity to work for the people in my village. I hope someday through my work with my community, they will understand the value of education.”

Kamala Besra
Batch 1



Goonj Fellowship Next-Generation

This fellowship emerged from our Founder's dream that the children of our processing teams; mainly women coming from nearby slums of big metros, should grow and blossom way beyond their parent's journey. This just-started one-year fellowship identifies the brightest kids and engages them in experiential learning with exposure to new ideas and skills, as a stepping stone to achieving their dreams.

Key Elements:

- Shadowing Urban operations
- Verbal and written communication skills
- Exposure to rural India
- Customized Learning journey
- Exposure and interaction with diverse communities

Goonj Fellowship Sanjha

In the midst of the pandemic, we witnessed many grassroots organizations in our pan India network go through a very tough time. We designed this fellowship to stand with the leaders of these organizations, mobilizing them to come together, nudging for their capacity building on fundraising and cross-learning, in a year-long journey.

Key Elements

- Networking
- Co and Cross learning
- Developing a capacity building pathway
- Exposure to cross sectoral innovation
- Facilitating engagement with the larger ecosystem



States our fellows have worked in-

Andhra Pradesh

Assam

Bihar

Chhattisgarh

Karnataka

Kerala

Maharashtra

Odisha

Rajasthan

Tamilnadu

Telangana

Uttarakhand

Uttar Pradesh

West Bengal





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You too have a stake in this work.. Join us..

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