



GRASSROUTES FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

ABOUT GRASSROUTES:

In today's world, we are plagued by societal and environmental problems that impede our progress. It is very disheartening to see the lethargy and lack of opportunities for young, educated people to understand and address these problems. Meanwhile, there is a silent revolution of change happening around us, at the grassroots due to the amazing work done by activists, social workers and volunteers.

Grassroutes (<http://grassroutes.in>) is a social venture by a non-profit society Youth Factor (<http://yofa.org>), which aims at capturing the stories of these change-makers and showcasing them to the larger Indian society to inspire, and challenge them to do their bit.

To achieve this objective, Grassroutes hosts a national fellowship program for outstanding, passionate Indian youth to travel to the places where these organizations work, meet the people involved, experience first-hand the impact of their work and finally, bring to fore the amazing stories of achievement that is being seen at the grassroots.

Such an approach, we believe, will sensitize the youth to the challenges faced in the social sector, and the interactions with change-makers will inspire them to participate in the change.

Grassroutes will finally help the youth produce quality documentaries, interviews and podcasts about the work being carried out at the grassroots and the people behind them. Such media will be hosted on the Grassroutes portal and the fellows will work towards inspiring the larger Indian society to contribute their two cents to the movement.

STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRAM:

Phase 1: The Run-up (Nov 15 - Dec 15, 2008)

- The Grassroutes Program invites applications from teams of passionate young people (4-6 members) for the fellowship and based on a rigorous selection procedure, a few teams are selected for the Program.
- The Fellows are mapped to different non-profits by the Grassroutes team and introductions are made between the non-profit members and the Fellows who will visit them.
- This phase will involve discussions between the team and their assigned non-profit organization to pre-plan relevant issues before the actual trip.

Phase 2: The Road-Trip (Dec 15 - Dec 30, 2008)

- Each team undertakes a road-trip to their assigned location and spends a period of 8 days interacting with members of the non-profit, assisting them and gathering their stories.
- During this trip, the team will have to achieve specific objectives laid down by the Grassroutes team in order to make the trip a very effective learning experience. This would involve activities such as capturing video footage of the activities of the non-profits, conducting interviews of the change-makers and the community, understanding the on-ground challenges and the impact created etc.
- All teams will have the freedom to plan the activities they undertake during the period of one week in consultation with the non-profit.

Phase 3: The Production (Jan 1 - May 30, 2009)

- Teams will work with the technical team at Grassroutes to publish and produce high-quality documentaries/interviews based on footage/research they undertook during their visit. These media will be hosted online on the Grassroutes website.
- The Fellows, facilitated by the Grassroutes team and the website, will serve as ambassadors for the organization and try to use the power of social media to create opportunities for people to contribute to the activities of the non-profit.
- With the data gathered from the trip, the Fellows will work with Grassroutes partners to evaluate ICT solutions for the organizations or work on other projects that might be of help to the non-profit.

WHAT DOES THE NON-PROFIT GAIN ?

- The biggest and most tangible benefit that Grassroutes intends to deliver is to bring **larger public attention** and media coverage on the non-profits by the dissemination of real-life inspiring stories from their work. The Fellows will also provide the non-profit with a **media-kit** which can be used by the non-profit to showcase its work elsewhere.
- The Grassroutes website would act as a platform to **engage interested people** to contribute towards the organization's work in clear and measurable ways determined by the organization.
- By encouraging youth to be involved hands-on with the work of the organization, the Grassroutes program aims to broaden the reach of the organization to **attract volunteers and program leaders**.
- The Grassroutes Fellows will have prior knowledge of various Internet and Communication Technologies (ICT) being used in India these days, and they will help **evaluate/setup ICT solutions** for the organizations.

HOW CAN A NON-PROFIT PARTNER WITH GRASSROUTES ?

- Host a team of 4-6 young people for a period of 8 days, during the second half of December 2008, at a pre-decided activity hub of the organization. Also, assist in securing accommodation/food for the Fellows.
- Take the fellows on a tour of the organization's activities, the leaders of the organization and the areas they work in.
- Disseminate information through interviews and assist the fellows in filming the work being carried out, the people being affected by the impact of the work etc.
- Communicate crisp ways in which the organization wishes to seek support from the Fellows in specific, and the society in general.

GRASSROUTES TEAM:

Grassroutes, and its parent society Youth Factor has been started by a group of young 20-something engineers from BITS Pilani. The team shares a common passion of creating innovative programs to inspire youth to participate in change.

The team is backed by a Board of Advisors which includes Dilip D'Souza, noted writer and journalist, who will constantly advice and support the implementation of the initiative.

CONTACT:

If you are willing to participate in the Grassroutes program, or wish to know more, please do email us at team@yofa.org.

We would love to hear your take on Grassroutes and discuss ways in which we can add value to the non-profit, the community, the Fellows and the youth at large.

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