

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **A CALL TO CULTIVATE WOMEN LEADERS IN INDIA**

#### ***Reliance Foundation and Vital Voices Join Forces to Launch WomenLead India Fellowship to Nurture Women Leaders in the Social Sector***

- **50 women fellows will be selected from across India for 10-month fully funded fellowship programme, including virtual and in person training**
- **Applications now open and will close by 3 October 2022**

**WASHINGTON, D.C., USA & MUMBAI, India, 26<sup>th</sup> August 2022:** Few can argue with the fact that great leaders are made during the most trying of times, and by those who set ambitious, urgent and innovative goals to solve complex global issues.

However, every great leader needs a strong support system.

The **WomenLead India Fellowship** aims to be that system of support for women leaders in India who are taking on the world's greatest challenges. Launching today with a nationwide call for applicants, **WomenLead India** is a 10-month long fellowship programme powered by **Reliance Foundation** and **Vital Voices Global Partnership** to strengthen the leadership capacity of female catalysts of social change in any of the following sectors:

- **Rural Transformation:** Developing holistic, sustainable solutions to address the main development concerns of rural communities, such as economic empowerment, nutrition security, water security, ecology, governance capacity of local organisations, and women's empowerment.
- **Education:** Addressing inequalities in access to Early Childhood Care and Education, primary, secondary, and higher education across income, gender, social group and geography; improving quality of educational services imparted across all levels; and developing or strengthening educational institutions.
- **Sports for Development:** Building character and leadership skills among the youth in India by using sports as a medium to encourage lifelong learning and by also expanding access to sports in rural and marginalised communities.
- **Arts, Culture & Heritage:** Preserving and promoting India's art, culture, and heritage; advancing the knowledge of Indian arts, culture, and heritage domestically and globally; sustaining and making art and culture relevant to the younger generation.

The Fellowship will provide tailored leadership capacity building and skills development to 50 women leaders who will be selected to participate in the inaugural cohort. Selected fellows will also benefit from mentoring support and peer-to-peer engagement.

“We believe in the collective and creative power of women to empower not just themselves, but also their families and communities. When women lean on women and rise together, they build a network and system of leadership that can help transform the world around them. It is our mission to drive and support this leadership amongst women. The **WomenLead India Fellowship** powered by Reliance Foundation and Vital Voices is an important step in nurturing inspirational women leaders who will be at the forefront of driving social change in India,” said **Mrs Nita M Ambani, Founder-Chairperson, Reliance Foundation.**

“Every problem solver needs a support network and we aim to be that for these women leaders by making a long-term investment in both the woman and the important work that she is doing to advance and empower the people of India and beyond,” said **Ms Alyse Nelson, Co-Founder, President, & CEO, Vital Voices.** “We are thrilled to partner with Reliance Foundation to make this investment in India’s next generation of women leaders.”

Reliance Foundation and Vital Voices are looking for innovative and collaborative women leaders who have a minimum of three years of work experience in enacting social change in their communities in one or more of the sectors outlined above; women who are driven by a clear sense of mission and who are committed to advancing the status of women and girls and women who are committed to transparency and good governance.

The **WomenLead India** fellows will be mentored in one of the following tracks based on their prior experience.

- Economic Empowerment and Entrepreneurs
- Social Sector Leaders
- Changemakers

The 10-month fully funded programme serves as just the start of a relationship between the Fellows and the vast network of women leaders and global influencers who make up the Vital Voices and Reliance Foundation networks.

Applications close by 3 October 2022. Those interested in learning more about how to become a part of this transformative new programme are encouraged to visit:

<https://www.vitalvoices.org/program/womenleadindiafellowship/>.

### **About Reliance Foundation**

Reliance Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Reliance Industries Limited, aims to play a catalytic role in addressing the nation's development challenges through innovative and sustainable solutions. Led by Founder and Chairperson Smt. Nita Ambani, Reliance Foundation is relentlessly working towards facilitating transformative changes to ensure overall wellbeing and higher quality of life for all. Reliance Foundation is focused on addressing the nation's development challenges in rural transformation, education, health, sports for development, disaster response, urban renewal and arts, culture and heritage, and has touched the lives of more than 63 million people across India, in more than 50,800 villages and several urban locations.

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

### **About Vital Voices Global Partnership**

Now celebrating 25 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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