



## Youth Advocacy Scheme (Training, Materials, Transport etc.)

### Background/Basis

India has one of the fastest growing populations of young people (aged 16 to 21) in the world. Whilst some young people (often in urban areas and from more affluent families) have developed the skills and ability to advocate for themselves, rural communities often lack the confidence, skills and belief in their ability to affect change.

For Gandhi, true self-advocacy was inseparable from social responsibility. He stated that he was a lover of his own liberty, and therefore would do nothing to restrict that of others. He argued that one should serve oneself (through self-discipline) so that they can be better equipped to serve others. He believed in empowering every individual, regardless of their position, to stand up for their own dignity and rights.

*“You must be the change you wish to see in the world”* is often cited as a summary of his thought that we must change ourselves before changing the world. Gandhi believed that if you change your own nature, the world’s attitude towards you will also change. He believed that true advocacy for others must come from someone who has first conquered their own vices and limitations.

### The Plan

We want to develop a youth advocacy scheme, starting in just three rural villages initially. The youth advocacy scheme would bring together groups of male and female young people (aged 16 to 21) and help them to advocate on behalf of their community and to affect change from within.

We would introduce a training, support and mentor-ship programme for one year initially. The aims would be:

- develop self-confidence

- understand how to represent the views of others in a fair and balance way
- ensuring equity in representation (caste, income, gender, age etc.)
- develop speaking and advocacy skills

The training would include:

- what makes good leaders
- communication skills
- opportunity and engagement
- humility & dealing with disappointment
- be clear about :

Mission: the purpose

Vision: your direction

Values: your character

- working in teams
- self awareness (your own strengths and weaknesses)
- developing resilience
- handing on the baton to others
- presentation skills
- conflict resolution
- managing meetings & summarising agreements and actions
- knowing where the power lies in your communities

Participants would meet at least three times per year with members of the support team. This would allow them to reflect on their successes and disappointments as well as providing them with support for the next phase of their advocacy.

Support materials would be provided. These will take the form of a leadership and advocacy guide

as well as other identifiable materials (t-shirt etc.).

### To Accompany the Training

We will provide each village with a peer supporter. These will primarily be university students who can offer advice and support via messaging apps (e.g What's App) throughout the programme.

Training, safeguarding and other key support would be provided to enable a positive experience.

Providing support from others of their own age will give them access to others who will also have met challenges they have needed to overcome.

### Key Principles/Ethics

Gandhi's approach to self-advocacy was not about selfish assertion, but about cultivating inner strength, dignity, and self-rule, which would then empower the individual to stand against injustice and contribute to the greater good.

Gandhi advocated for Swadeshi, which meant relying on oneself and local resources rather than being dependent on foreign or external forces.

He encouraged using the charkha (spinning wheel) as a symbol of economic self-reliance, which empowered individuals to stand on their own feet and break free from exploitation.

He insisted that people must learn to rule themselves – both morally and politically – before they can be truly free.

Our project is not about enhancing post-colonial power or influence, but is about using the skills and knowledge we have to enable communities to speak up for themselves - true Swadeshi.

### The Budget

What	Description	Costs
Advocacy Handbook	Cost of Printing (Colour and Bound)	£1000
Translation	Costs of Translation from English to Marathi	£500
Support Materials	Production of Posters (or similar)	£500
Training Materials	Training Costs for UK based peer supporters	£1000
	Training Costs for Indian Participants (venue, people etc.)	£1000
Website	Online Digital Hub Access to Leadership and Advocacy Materials	£500
Total		£4500

