

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Fifty exceptional women leaders selected for the 2024-2025 WomenLeaders India Fellowship powered by Reliance Foundation and Vital Voices**

*“When women lead, we make impossible change a reality”, says Ms Isha Ambani*

- **Women social sector leaders and social entrepreneurs from across India, selected for their work in Climate Resilience, Education, Livelihoods and Sports for Development**
- **The Fellows will be engaged in a 10-month structured programme with access to a network of global leaders and experts**
- **Through the second round of this Fellowship, Reliance Foundation is taking forward its agenda for women empowerment to enhance India’s development sector ecosystem**

**Mumbai, September 13, 2024:** Reliance Foundation and Vital Voices are excited to announce the selection of 50 exceptional women chosen for the 2024-2025 WomenLeaders India Fellowship. This second cohort of the Fellowship identifies women with deep commitment to driving change and change within their communities as social sector leaders and social entrepreneurs.

During India’s G20 Presidency in 2023 the focus shifted for the first time, from women’s development to women-led development. India’s collective and unwavering dedication to champion ‘Gender Equality and Empowering All Women and Girls’ secured a firm place in the G20 New Delhi Leaders’ Declaration.

In line with this vision, the WomenLeaders India Fellowship will provide leadership capacity building for talented women leaders, including social sector leaders and social entrepreneurs.

The WomenLeaders India Fellowship 2024-2025 kicked off with an in-person convening in Mumbai on September 13-14, 2024, where the Fellows had the opportunity to connect and learn from a range of experts in the social sector from India and around the world.

Speaking on the launch announcement, **Ms Isha Ambani, Director, Reliance Foundation**, said, “When women lead, we make impossible positive change a reality, we bring new ideas and perspectives to the table. Congratulations to the 50 Fellows selected for WomenLeaders India Fellowship 2024-25 powered by Reliance Foundation and Vital Voices! The strong networks, joy and learning that women bring to other women, is the foundation of this Fellowship to strengthen and amplify social sector impact. We are privileged to be part of this programme in creating transformations together for the social sector.”

“We are thrilled to partner with Reliance Foundation to support India’s next generation of women leaders who are truly at the forefront of driving social change. We believe that by harnessing and leveraging our collective network and resources, we are able to provide women leaders with support, mentorship and guidance as they strive to be a catalyst for change in India and beyond,” said **Ms Alyse Nelson, President and CEO of Vital Voices Global Partnership**.

Throughout the next ten months, the Fellows will work on their own personalized project to advance the SDGs (sustainable development goals), and will be supported with leadership development webinar trainings with Indian and global experts, to enhance their unique skill set and build their network. Additionally, each Fellow will have access to mentors for personalised guidance for the duration of their journey, as well as having the opportunity for peer-to-peer learning from the current and alumni Fellows. The WomenLeaders India Fellowship will end with a final in-person gathering where Fellows will reflect on their overall progress on their SDG projects and celebrate their accomplishments. WomenLeaders India seeks to build a strong community of women leaders in the social sector and ignite sustainable change across India by leveraging the power of women-led development across India.

The WomenLeaders India Fellows 2024-25 are recognised for their impactful work across four critical areas: Climate Resilience, Education, Sports for Development, and Livelihood Generation, using innovative solutions to address some of India's most pressing challenges. From empowering future generations to transforming communities, these Fellows are leading efforts for lasting economic, social, and environmental change, advancing gender equality and strengthening community resilience through collaborative, forward-thinking initiatives and are true catalysts for change.

In the inaugural cohort in December 2022, Fellows were selected for their work on Education, Rural Transformation, strengthening livelihoods, as well as Sports for Development from various organisations, working at the grassroots level across rural and semi-urban areas of the country. Working on a range of issues and geographies from waste management in southern coastal villages to affordable energy sources in north-east India the first cohort Fellows reported increased leadership opportunities, enhanced confidence and improved participation in SDG-related projects in their work.

Learn more about the Fellows and follow the programme on social media using #WomenLeadersIndia.

### **About Reliance Foundation**

Reliance Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Reliance Industries Limited, aims to play a catalytic role in addressing India's development challenges through innovative and sustainable solutions. Led by Smt. Nita M Ambani, Founder and Chairperson, Reliance Foundation is relentlessly working for the overall well-being and enhanced quality of life for all, focusing on rural transformation, education, health, sports for development, disaster management, women empowerment, urban renewal and arts, culture and heritage, and has touched the lives of over 77 million people across India, in over 55,550 villages and urban locations. More on [www.reliancefoundation.org](http://www.reliancefoundation.org)

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

Now celebrating 27 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)