



# Regional Fellows Program

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### ABOUT THE APPLICATION CRITERIA & SELECTION PROCESS:

#### Who becomes a Regional Fellow?

Fellows come from all walks of life, from different socioeconomic, cultural, political, and religious backgrounds. Most importantly, each class of Fellows will be comprised of individuals with experience across many different sectors – from business, to non-profit, to government. We seek to create the most diverse class possible, rich in experience and potential. Specifically, we are looking for applicants who fit the following profile:

- + An entrepreneur or intrapreneur (a leader within an organization) who has been driving some kind of social change work\* for the last 2-3 years
- + An individual with a deep passion and commitment to their respective country/region
- + An individual with a proven track record of leadership and management responsibilities
- + An individual with unrelenting perseverance, personal integrity, and critical thinking skills

I am not a citizen of Pakistan, India, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, or South Sudan ... Can I still apply?

The Regional Fellows Programs are for passionate individuals who are committed to building a brighter future for their country or region. However, we do realize that identity is complex and that citizenship is not the only factor that determines one's commitment. Should you have such a concern, please let us know through the online application form as to how you consider yourself to be from the country of the program you're applying for. If you're able to demonstrate commitment and concrete connection (i.e. long-term employment, residency as well as the long-term focus of your social change project) to one of these countries, we will consider your candidacy.

#### Is there an age or education requirement for the program?

You must be 18 years of age or older to apply. There is no education requirement for the program. The most important requirement is that you have been driving a social change project for at least 2-3 years.

#### What exactly is 'social change work' and why are Fellows required to be engaged in it?

Social change work refers to any project, initiative, program, or organization that addresses a pressing social issue with an innovative solution that has a positive impact in the lives of the community. It can take the shape of a social enterprise, a grant-funded program, a socially-focused project within a for-profit corporation, or a government initiative. Fellows can either be entrepreneurs who founded their own organizations, or intrapreneurs working on a project or department within a larger organization. Social change work can address a need for sanitation services, or a lack of affordable housing, or a violation of human rights. It can leverage advances in agricultural techniques, an innovative business model, or the latest mobile technology. And it is by no means limited to these examples.

We seek out individuals who have experience driving such work because we believe that by developing and connecting these innovative leaders, we will create a powerful network of changemakers who not only impact countless lives in their own country but also influence international development on a global level.

#### Does the applicant need to be currently involved in a Social Change Project?

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Yes. We can only accept individuals who are currently driving a social change project on a full-time/part-time basis. If you are taking on a new project that is less than a year old, you should have significant prior experience in social change work in order for us to consider your application. If you believe that you fulfill the above criteria, we encourage you to apply for the program.

### Is internet connectivity a requirement?

The primary method of communication will be email. Therefore, all Fellows must have regular and reliable internet access.

### Is English proficiency a requirement?

Yes. Because all seminars and trainings are conducted in English, proficiency is a necessary requirement. We would like to ensure that Fellows get the most out of their experience; however we do not expect applicants to be native English speakers. Many will, in fact, speak other native languages that reflect the diversity of their country.

### What does the selection process entail?

After reviewing all of the applications, we will select a subset of candidates for 30-minute phone interviews, to be conducted between late September and October 2013. Following these phone interviews, the team will further select a group of finalist candidates who will be invited to attend a day-long in-person interview day (called a "Selection Conference") which will be held on:

- + 23 November 2013 in Mumbai (for the India Fellows Program)
- + 16 November 2013 in Nairobi (for the East Africa Fellows Program)
- + 29 November 2013 in Karachi (for the Pakistan Fellows Program)

Once all candidates have been interviewed, the selection team will make a final decision. We expect to extend offers by December 2013. The first seminar of the program will take place in January or February 2013.

*(Please note that this timetable is subject to change, due to travel schedules and unforeseen circumstances.)*

### Can I apply for both the Regional Fellows Program and the Global Fellows Program?

No. While both the Regional Fellows Programs and Global Fellows Program share the same core curriculum, there are a few key differences between the two programs. Therefore, candidates may only apply to one program per year and should choose the program that makes the most sense for them. Two of the most important differences between the two programs are their eligibility requirements and how they are structured.

*Eligibility:* Regional Fellows are local leaders dedicated to alleviating poverty in their own country/region, and must be from the country/region of the program they are applying for. For example, an applicant to the Pakistan Fellows Program must be Pakistani. On the other hand, Global Fellows can be from any country in the world.

*Structure:* The Global Fellows Program is a full-time fellowship where Fellows leave their jobs for an entire year and undergo a field placement with an organization in South Asia or Africa – often times in a foreign country. On the other hand, the Regional Fellows Program is structured like an executive MBA where Fellows remain in their jobs and come together for week-long seminars through the year. The Regional Fellows Program is a "part-time" commitment so that these Regional Fellows – many of whom are entrepreneurs and cannot take a year away from their project – can continue to manage the social impact initiative that they are leading, while still receiving periodic training.

Please consider the eligibility requirements and how much time you are able to commit and then decide for yourself which program is a better fit for you. If you still have questions, please send a brief email to [fellows@acumen.org](mailto:fellows@acumen.org) telling us a little bit about yourself – including where you are from, what you are currently working on, and what you hope to gain by being an Acumen Fellow – and we'll help you figure out which program you should be applying for.

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Can alumni of one program apply and participate in another? (i.e Can a Global Fellow join a Regional Fellows Program?)

No. Each cohort of Acumen Fellows – whether Regional or Global – must be comprised of individuals who have not previously taken part in an Acumen Fellows Program. While the programs are structured differently and have different eligibility requirements, the core curriculum is still the same across both programs. Participating in the program again would be redundant. In addition, regardless of what program an Acumen Fellow graduates from, they join a single worldwide Alumni body and have access to the entire Fellows community and Acumen network. For example, an East Africa Fellow automatically has access to the Global Fellows network and vice versa. You would still have the same contacts, whether or not you repeated the program. However, it is possible for individuals who have participated in a +Acumen course/chapter or an internship at Acumen to apply for the Global or Regional Fellows Programs. These groups have not gone through the Fellows leadership curriculum, and are not currently a part of the Fellows community. So they would have much to gain from becoming an Acumen Fellow.

### ABOUT THE ONLINE APPLICATION:

#### What does the online application entail?

There are 3 main components to the online application:

- + Background information questions
- + Your resume/CV
- + Short & long answer questions

You do NOT need to submit a letter of recommendation.

To access the application, go to one of the following links:

- + [East Africa Fellows Program](#)
- + [Pakistan Fellows Program](#)
- + [India Fellows Program](#)

You will need to create an account by entering an e-mail address (this will act as your username) and password.

The application process for the Regional Fellows Program opens on 15 July 2013 and will close on **23rd September 2013 at 5:00PM GMT**. All applications must be completed and submitted online by this deadline. It is recommended that you submit your application well in advance of the deadline to avoid any last-minute technical difficulties or connectivity problems.

#### What makes for a good application?

A good application will be well-written, clear, and to-the point. All responses should answer each question as directly and succinctly as possible. Do not feel compelled to write 100 words just because the word limit is 100 words – if you can answer the question effectively using just 50 words, please do so. Keep in mind that this is first and foremost a leadership development program. In addition to learning about your professional achievements, we also want to know about you as a person, learn about the ideas that inspire you, and about the experiences that have shaped your attitudes and aspirations. Please be authentic, and resist the urge to position yourself in a way that you think the program demands. True leaders possess the humility and self-awareness to recognize their own weakness and learn from their failures.

#### I am having trouble accessing the application form and/or uploading my resume... what should I do?

The problem that you are having usually occurs if you don't have JavaScript or Flash enabled. If you can enable them, or download the necessary application, then you should be able to upload your resume without any snags.

Also, it is recommended to use Google Chrome as your browser, if possible. You could also try applying from

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a different computer or a different location, as there may be issues with your computer or internet connection that you may be unaware of. If you continue to experience issues, please send an email explaining the problem that you are facing to the appropriate email address: [eastafricafellows@acumen.org](mailto:eastafricafellows@acumen.org); [pakistanfellows@acumen.org](mailto:pakistanfellows@acumen.org); or [indiafellows@acumen.org](mailto:indiafellows@acumen.org)

I didn't get a confirmation email after I submitted my application... is there a problem?

We automatically send you a confirmation email, so if you did not receive an email immediately after submission, you may want to check your email settings to make sure that our emails are not getting caught in your spam filter. We will send you emails through either: [mailer@wizehive.com](mailto:mailer@wizehive.com); [wizehive.com@sendgrid.me](mailto:wizehive.com@sendgrid.me); [eastafricafellows@acumen.org](mailto:eastafricafellows@acumen.org); [pakistanfellows@acumen.org](mailto:pakistanfellows@acumen.org); or [indiafellows@acumen.org](mailto:indiafellows@acumen.org).

## ABOUT THE REGIONAL FELLOWS PROGRAM:

**What is the purpose of the Acumen Regional Fellows Program?**

The purpose of the Acumen Regional Fellows Program is to build a community of future leaders who will develop innovative social change projects to address the needs of their own communities, and who will work across sectors to ultimately bring about lasting social change on a regional and global level. There is a great need for local leadership from business, non-profit, and government backgrounds with the ability to collaborate with others despite differences, the courage to defy the status quo, the drive to execute, and the moral imagination to build a more inclusive economy and social system.

**Does the Regional Fellows Program provide scholarships or funding?**

No. The Regional Fellows Program is a leadership development and training program. While all costs associated with participating in the program are covered (such as travel and accommodations), we do not provide scholarships or funding. If you are interested in learning more about Acumen Fund's investment criteria, you can visit this website: <http://www.acumenfund.org/investments/business-plan-submission.html>

**How is the Acumen Regional Fellows Program structured?**

The Regional Fellows Program is structured like an executive MBA where each of the 20 Fellows remain in their jobs and come together for six week-long meetings throughout the year. The Regional Fellows Program is designed to develop the Fellows' leadership skills and strengthen the project that they are driving.

The year-long program is comprised of four multiday seminars, one learning trip, and culminates in an innovation conference. The seminars will give Fellows access to world-class speakers, trainers, and mentors who will allow Fellows to deepen their skills in leadership, social change, and innovation. The learning trip will give Fellows the opportunity to learn about new models of social change models within the region. The innovation conference is meant to be a chance for Fellows to put into practice the skills they've learned over the course of the year, as well as provide a platform to showcase their projects to a larger community of leaders.

After they complete the program, Fellows will remain connected as part of the Acumen Fellows Alumni network that includes all Fellows who have participated in either our Global Fellows Program or one of our Regional Fellows Programs. Our hope is to create an interconnected web of global leaders who can leverage each other's connections and experiences for continual collaboration.

**What is the total time commitment required for the program?**

As there are six separate meetings, and each is about 5 days long, the total time commitment required for the program is about 30 days. This includes all seminars and program meetings spread throughout the

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fellowship year from January 2013 to December 2013. To participate in the program, Regional Fellows are required to commit to attending every single day of every single meeting – missing even one day from one seminar is grounds for expulsion. We realize that this is a significant time commitment, and so whenever possible we've scheduled most seminars to occur from Wednesday to Sunday, so that 2 days out of each seminar will fall on a weekend. In addition, it's important to note that the 30 days does not include travel time, and so participants may have to set aside some additional time for travel depending on the location of the training venue (for example, an additional day prior to travel to the seminar, and an additional day afterwards to travel back home). Before joining the program, you should make sure that you are prepared to make this time commitment, and have a conversation with your employers, colleagues, and/or family to set expectations accordingly.

**In which locations will the different seminars and meetings for the Regional Fellows Program be taking place?**

Unfortunately, we're unable to provide you with exact locations as they change every year based on various program demands and scheduling constraints. However, the trainings will typically be held in or around major cities. In the past, we have held seminars for the East Africa Fellows Program in Nairobi and Kampala. For the Pakistan Fellows Program, we have held seminars in Karachi and Lahore. For the India Fellows Program, we will likely hold seminars in Mumbai and Delhi.

**How is the Acumen Regional Fellows Programs (East Africa, Pakistan, and India) different from the Acumen Global Fellows Program?**

The Regional Fellows Programs are structured like an executive MBA, where Fellows remain in their current jobs and come together for week-long seminars and meetings at 6 points throughout the year. On the other hand, Global Fellows leave their current jobs and participate in the fellowship full-time, with 3 months of intensive training and 9 months in a field placement. Global Fellows receive a stipend and insurance, but since Regional Fellows remain in their current jobs they receive neither – although all travel and accommodation costs associated with attending program meetings are included. In addition, the Regional Fellows Program selects up to 20 Fellows each year, while the Global Fellows Program only selects 10-12. At the end of either the Global or Regional Fellows Programs, no job placement service will be provided.

**What does each seminar look like? What kinds of activities do Fellows participate in?**

The seminars will focus on developing the skills necessary for social change, and on understanding each Fellow's role in the development of their country or region. Over the course of the year, Fellows will explore their own leadership abilities through interactive modules. Fellows will work one-on-one with prominent leaders and trainers from across sectors on creative problem solving and on how to scale their social initiatives. They will also study readings and have discussions about social justice, the role of government, equality, and human rights.

**What are the benefits of joining the Acumen Regional Fellows Program?**

The Acumen Regional Fellows Program is creating the unique opportunity for Fellows to receive:

- + High-quality training in leadership and social development from influential leaders across sectors
- + The tools necessary to accelerate social change initiatives
- + Access to a network of regional and global leaders who are developing innovative solutions to poverty
- + The opportunity to build the leadership, communication and execution skills necessary to create lasting change
- + The chance to design and participate in a learning trip to somewhere in the region

**Which costs does the program cover?**

Fellows will have all program-related costs covered during the year-long program. This includes all costs associated with the seminars and regional trip including lodging, food, and transportation, and visa costs.

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**Does the program offer a stipend or health insurance?**

No. As Fellows will still be engaged in their current jobs, no stipends or health insurance are provided for by the Program.

**What if I am unable to attend one of the seminars – will I still be able take part in the program?**

Upon admission to the program, all Fellows are asked to commit to attend ALL meetings for the Regional Fellows Program – including all four seminars, the regional trip, and the innovation conference. If candidates are unable to commit to full attendance, then they become ineligible to participate in the program. As there are a very limited number of meetings in the curriculum and because Acumen is investing a significant amount of time, effort and resources into this program, it is extremely important that each Fellow attend every session.

**What happens in between each program meeting?**

In addition to program meetings (i.e. seminars and collaborative projects), Fellows will be expected to dedicate a significant portion of your non-working hours towards program-related activities and assignments. We ask that all Fellows should be able to balance other commitments with participation in this program, whether those are personal or professional commitments.

**What do Fellows do after completing the program? What type of professional and personal development support does the Acumen Regional Fellows Program offer?**

Acumen is invested not only in the Fellow's growth over the course of the year-long program, but also in their development as a lifelong agent of social change. After graduating from the program, Fellows may receive continued mentorship toward the scaling of their social change initiative. We also have a very active alumni network, where we engage alumni from both the Global Fellows Program and the Regional Fellows Program through events, a newsletter, and the recruitment process. In addition, graduates of either program have access to Acumen Fund's network and connections with other leading social sector organizations.