Application Instructions for the Regional Fellows Program

Acumen is accepting applications to join the 2014 class of the Regional Fellows Program in East Africa, Pakistan and India. We are looking for candidates with bold ideas and strong leadership capabilities.

Applicants must submit their applications online (East Africa, Pakistan, India). In case you experience problems submitting an application online, please email: eastafricafellows@acumen.org /pakistanfellows@acumen.org / indiafellows@acumen.org

All applications must be received by **5:00 PM GMT on Monday 2 September 2013**. Late or incomplete submissions will not be accepted. For questions, please visit http://acumen.org/leaders/regional-fellows/. If you still have questions after reading the Frequently Asked Questions, please email eastafricafellows@acumen.org /pakistanfellows@acumen.org / indiafellows@acumen.org.

Application Instructions

The application for the Acumen Regional Fellows Program consists of:
- *Background information on both you and your social change project*
- *Your responses to short & long answer questions*
- *Your resume or CV (to be uploaded)*

Please complete this application in English. Fields marked with an * are required. You will not be able to exceed the character limits. It is strongly recommended that you compose your essays in a word processor with a character count feature.

Next Steps after Submission of Application:
- Update to all applicants – Mid September
- Phone interview – September and October
- Selection Conference – Late October to November
- Final Selection of 20 Fellows – Late November to December
- First Seminar – January or February 2014

General Tips

Before you fill out your application for the Regional Fellows Program, make sure you carefully read through these tips as they're designed to help you submit the best application possible:

+ **Be concise.** We're looking for as much information about you as possible, but we realize we don't give you a lot of space. We're more interested in what you have to say rather than how you say it. Please also be mindful of our character limits (they do include spaces) – or you will not be able to able to submit your application in full. As a general rule, 5 characters = 1 word, so think of 150 characters as 30 words, and 500 characters as 100 words, and so on.
+ **It's NOT based on academic performance.** The Regional Fellows Program is not an academic fellowship. Your class rank or GPA will not determine selection. We're more interested in your experience – what you've done, what you're currently doing, and what you want to do. You don't need to have attended college or have a university degree to apply for the program.
+ **Show off a little!** We understand it may be difficult for you to talk about your accomplishments, as it might not be polite. However, we need to understand why you're different, exceptional and a mold-breaker.
+ **Apply early!** Applications are open for just under one month – don't wait till the last day to submit your application! Submit your application well in advance to avoid any last-minute technical difficulties or connectivity problems.
+ **Save an offline copy.** We recommend you look at the application form first, and then spend some time offline composing your answers in Google Docs or Microsoft Word or a similar word-processing program. Be sure to save an offline copy, in case of a broken connection or other error. Acumen will not be responsible for any text that gets lost.

Step-by-step walkthrough

In this section, you will be asked to answer some basic questions about your personal information, social change project, academic experience, and professional experience. Below are some details about select sections:

Personal & contact information

We will be using your name, email address, and phone number throughout the selection process, so be sure to use the name which you prefer to be called, and the email address and phone number which you use regularly so that we can get in touch with you for updates regarding your candidacy. We also ask for your citizenship, date or birth, and gender for demographic information.

Social Change Project

After you have entered your profile information, you will be asked a few basic questions about your social change project. A social change project is any project, initiative, or program 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 government initiative, or a socially-focused project within a for-profit corporation. Social change initiatives 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.

Your initiative's main area of focus describes the social issue you are trying to address, such as 'Education' or 'Human Rights'. The length of time you have been driving this project should start from when you actually began doing something, and the time you spent simply thinking about and planning your project does not count. Note that one of the requirements of the program is that you have been driving the project for at least 2-3 years.

Work experience

By work experience, we mean a period of full-time, paid employment. Volunteer experiences, internships, or temporary employment will not be considered. Your main area of expertise should be a field in which you have spent a significant amount of time, and in which you have become quite skilled. For each position, include the key responsibilities that describe the position accurately and succinctly, for example:

Title: Director of Finance and Administration
Organization: Nonprofit XYZ

Location: Kampala, Uganda
Years Employed: 2-3 years
Key Responsibilities: Manage cash flow and forecasting for an organizational budget of about $3 million; Analyze and present quarterly financial reports to the Board of Directors; Coordinate and lead the annual audit and budgeting process
Academic experience

From this section, we want to get a snapshot of your educational experience, and so we ask for your highest educational qualifications only. If we need to learn more about your academic background, we can find it on your resume or CV.

Resume Upload

Your resume should concisely summarize your work experience, academic background, significant achievements, and any other skills or interests that you feel are relevant. **Your resume should be a maximum of two pages long.**

You may only upload a .doc, .docx, .pdf and .rtf file with a maximum size of 5 MB. Please try to limit your resume/CV to one page, single sided. Please keep formatting to a minimum.

If you can't see the Resume Upload button you do not 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. If you continue to experience issues, refer to the Frequently Asked Questions<link>

Academic experience

While there is no education requirement for the program, we ask for your academic experience to get a sense of your background, especially how it relates to your ability to lead your social change project. For example, if you are driving a project that heavily leverages data management software then training in information systems would be important for a leader of that organization.

Additional Information

Awards and Recognitions
We included this section to give you the opportunity to tell us about any special accolades that you have received. Some examples may include members of professional associations, other fellowships, prizes from competitions, honors at graduation, awards for public service, honors received from your employer, or anything else that you think might belong in this category.

References
You must next provide the names and contact information of two references. These references should be people who know you well, preferably in a professional rather than an academic setting and should NOT be personal contacts. Your references can be a boss or colleague, but we strongly recommend that your reference is not a teacher, a family member, or a friend. We prefer that at least one of your references be someone who is also familiar with your social change project. We may contact either of your references at any time during the selection process, so please make them aware that you have applied to this program. For each person, please be prepared to provide: Full Name, Title, Organization, Email Address, Phone Number (with correct country code), and How you know them. Note that there is NO letter of recommendation required for your application so you do NOT need to reach out to your reference to ask them to submit a letter on your behalf – we will not accept this.

Address
Please tell write the address where you currently live.

Referral Source
Please let us know how you heard about the program. We track this information to let us know which recruitment channels are the most effective at finding the right applicants.

Terms and Conditions

Please read the terms and conditions carefully before agreeing. It might be tempting to just select "Yes" without even reading the text, but we included it on the application to let candidates know about some important program information up front. All selected Fellows must attend all program meetings and complete assignments between meetings, or else they face possible expulsion from the program. Fellows must also continue driving their program for the duration of the one-year program. In addition, if any information included in an application is false or plagiarized, then we will automatically disqualify that candidate from the program.

Short and Long Answer Questions

Please answer the below essays as directly and concisely as possible. Please note: you will not be able to go over the character limits. It is strongly recommended that you compose your essays in a word processor with a character count feature.

As you write your responses, be authentic. We don't want you to write what you think we might want to hear! Use anecdotes and details to "show" us, not simply "tell" us, about yourself. For example, don't just say you are a very curious person, illustrate that with examples and concrete details.

Use the essay portion of the application as an opportunity to tell us more about yourself from a personal perspective, as well as learn about your social change project. We already know about your skills and experience from your background information and resume - now we want to get to know you on a deeper level.

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. What do you consider to be your greatest achievement? Why? (150 characters or about 25 words)
What are you most proud of? Don't be afraid to show off here! If can be anything from landing your first job, the launch of your project, or the birth of your first child. But be sure to explain the significance of the achievement.

2. What do you consider to be your greatest failure? Why? (150 characters or about 25 words)
What do you regret, or wish you had done differently? Be honest. It takes strength to acknowledge your weaknesses and flaws, and self-awareness is one of the most important aspects of a true leader.

3. If you could be on the cover of any magazine in 10 years from now, which magazine would you choose? What would the headline be? (150 characters or about 25 words)
Dream big! Fast forward 10 years and imagine what you want to be known for? Get creative – there are no wrong answers!

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS – ABOUT YOUR PROJECT

1. Explain your idea. In one paragraph, please describe the social problem you seek to address, and explain how the project you are working on addresses that problem. (500 characters or about 100 words)

We heard your one sentence explanation already, and now we want to hear more! Flesh out some of the important details to help us understand why your idea is so compelling, so ingenious, and so innovative that it just might change the world.

2. How do you know you're making a difference? How many lives have you impacted through the project you are working on, and how long has it taken you to reach this number? Explain how you measure impact, using specific timeframes and metrics. (500 characters or about 100 words)
By people impacted, we want to know how many individual lives your intervention has affected in a positive way. This can be the number of students your school has educated, or the number of patients your clinic has received, etc. Measuring social impact can be difficult, so please be as detailed as possible within the space provided.

3. What is the greatest challenge that you are currently facing with regards to your social change initiative? (500 characters or about 100 words)
What is keeping you up at night? What are the main obstacles you are facing right now that you need to overcome in order to reach the next level? Describe to us what is the most important challenge your are grappling with and explain why it is so essential to move your project forward.

4. What are your plans for the future of your project? Where do you see your project in one year and in five years? (500 characters or about 100 words)
To bring about widespread change, we need leaders who can not only create innovative solutions, but also expand those solutions to serve the masses. Tell us what steps will you take to increase your impact, build your initiative, and bring about change in East Africa?

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS – ABOUT YOURSELF

1. What's your story? Tell us a story about why you are motivated to do this work. What past personal experiences or struggles have led you to dedicate your life to social change in Pakistan? (1500 characters or about 300 words)
Acumen Fund believes that storytelling is an important aspect of leadership, and that the ability to tell your own story has the power to motivate those around you to go above and beyond themselves. Inspire us with a story that tells us about your personal history, and explains why you made the decision to pursue the path of a changemaker.

2. Why are you applying? Why do you want to join this program, and why now? What aspects of yourself do you hope to improve or develop during the course of this program? (1000 characters or about 200 words)
Tell us specifically what aspects of the Pakistan Fellows Program you believe will help you become a more effective leader and changemaker, and how you will leverage those skills to develop not only your social change initiative, but also your career.

3. What is your dream for Pakistan? How do you hope that Pakistan will change over the course of your lifetime, and how do you plan to contribute to this change? (1000 characters or about 200 words)
At Acumen Fund, we believe that leaders must balance the humility to recognize the world for what it is, but also the audacity to imagine the world for what it could be. We want to know about your greatest wish or dream for your country. Remember that dreams are always grounded in reality, but tell us how you hope Pakistan will change, why that dream is so important to you, and what role you will play in your country's future.