

Global Group Entrepreneurship Investments

Is your field in need of innovative global leadership to achieve wide-scale change?

Do you share a common challenge with Fellows around the world that could be tackled collectively?

Do you have a social change idea that requires global mobilization?

Have you reached a plateau in your work and need collective action to get to the next level?

Have you been developing new collaborative ideas with some of your Ashoka colleagues?

Ashoka's Group Entrepreneurship Investments are designed to enable Ashoka's global network to achieve social transformation through collective innovation.

Ashoka is committed to global collaboration as a powerful tool for accelerating social change. Global Group Entrepreneurship Investments provide financial and/or other support to three or more Fellows from different countries to collaborate to achieve a particular objective with critical impact for their field (e.g. healthcare delivery) or for the enhancement of the citizen sector more broadly (e.g. sustainability strategies). Ashoka awards Global Group Entrepreneurship Investments to creative, collaborative projects of three or more Fellows from different countries. A panel of staff and Fellows selects the highest impact proposals to receive the investment of up to US\$10,000.

Please read the following guidelines carefully and contact Fellowship Support Services with any questions. We invite you to apply!

Application Deadlines

**April 1
October 1**

Final proposals are due on the above dates, but we request that all proposals be discussed with your local Ashoka Representative and/or Fellowship Support Services (FSS) as they are developing. Ashoka staff can assist in developing ideas, identifying Fellows who should participate, and determining the most appropriate request to help maximize the chances of the evaluation panel selecting your proposal for investment.

If circumstances necessitate the review of a proposal in-between these dates, please contact Fellowship Support Services.

Submit applications to: Fellowship Support Services, Ashoka
Email: fss@ashoka.org
Fax: 1-703-527-8383
Post: 1700 N. Moore Street, Suite 2000,
Arlington, VA 22209, USA

Decisions are made within a month of the application deadlines. The date of any meetings or other activities included in the budget for the proposed collaboration must be scheduled no sooner than two months after the application deadline. We recommend setting the date three months after the deadline to ensure enough time for coordinating activities and making travel arrangements.

Guidelines

Ashoka is always open to new ideas in collaboration. However, we hold strongly to a core principle that entrepreneurs are most effective when they are *doing*, not just meeting. We have learned many lessons over the years about what makes for successful collaboration. From this experience, we have developed the following guidelines to help Fellows develop strong proposals and help us evaluate those proposals. Group entrepreneurship initiatives work best with:

- ***Strong leadership from three or more Ashoka Fellows from multiple countries whose work is at a stage that allows for collaboration.*** An initiative may involve additional Fellows as well, and we encourage the participation of other non-Fellow actors where appropriate. We also encourage international, multi-regional participation. Finally, we have learned that participants' capacity to divert sufficient attention from their own projects is critical for the success of group entrepreneurship. Some Fellows have realized in hindsight that they tried to engage in such initiatives before they were ready.
- ***A high-impact output that tackles a pertinent global or regional challenge by building and experimenting with new approaches and/or spreading best practices.*** Group entrepreneurship is much more than the sharing of ideas and experiences. It is entrepreneurs innovating together to accelerate social impact. Group entrepreneurship initiatives grow out of a need for collective action within a particular field or the citizen sector more broadly. They are highly relevant endeavors tackling significant challenges that are best addressed collectively—e.g. stopping child trafficking in Southeast Asia, developing and disseminating best practice models for communities confronting harmful large-scale development projects, facilitating technology transfer between areas of the world with similar region-specific challenges.
- ***A robust plan for at least twelve months of activity.*** A group entrepreneurship initiative is not a discrete gathering, but rather an ongoing strategy for collective impact. It may have a distinct project timeframe, or it may be indefinite. Either way, it should be more than a global meeting. One or more gatherings of the collaborating Fellows will likely be necessary to launch the initiative, but we encourage creativity in the design in order to best leverage limited resources. There should be a strong communication strategy that will allow the initiative to remain active in-between any meetings.

- **Substantive communication between the collaborating Fellows prior to any meeting or event.** Group entrepreneurship initiatives take time to build. While a physical meeting may seem like the easiest first step, we have learned that significant (generally several months worth) preliminary communication leads to much more productive meetings. It also helps establish who is committed to seeing the initiative through.
- **A plan for sharing the results and/or extending the collective effort, including public events and localized activities.** The most effective collaborations are those that take the results to a wider audience, for educational purposes and to recruit others to adopt the objectives. One particularly important strategy for achieving this end is the staging of a public event in conjunction with any global meeting of the collaborators to promote the initiative and to insure relevance to and input from other stakeholders. Another is for the collaborators to implement related activities in their home countries with local networks of Ashoka Fellows and others.
- **Contributions from the collaborators themselves.** Group entrepreneurship initiatives require a consistent flow of resources to sustain momentum. Although most Fellows have tight budgets, the willingness to devote some of their resources to a group entrepreneurship effort reflects the relevance of the undertaking to their own organizations' objectives and their commitment to pursuing it. Such contributions could be financial or in-kind. For example, we highly recommend holding any meetings or events at a Fellow's project site. If collaborators are unable to supply their own resources, they can contribute instead by participating in fundraising efforts for the initiative.

In some cases of demonstrated high-impact group entrepreneurship initiatives that feed into Ashoka's institutional goals, we will partner with collaborating Fellows after our initial investment to help identify the resources necessary to take the initiative to the next level.

Application Requirements

Please use the following template when submitting your Global Group Entrepreneurship Investment proposal:

- Project title:
- Date submitted:
- Investment requested (local currency amount and any other resources):
- Please indicate any Ashoka staff who have been consulted in the development of the proposal:
- Proposal submitted by (names, organizations and current contact info for the Fellow leaders):
- Additional Fellow collaborators (names, organizations and current contact info):
- Additional non-Fellow collaborators (names and organizations):

Please attach no more than 4-5 pages that include the following information:

1. Brief updates of each of the Fellow's work if elected to the Fellowship more than 3 years ago.
2. Objectives of the collaboration, expected outputs, and how you will measure your success.

3. Brief history of the genesis of the initiative—including how the participating Fellows got connected, how long you have been in contact with each other, and the nature of the conversation that has led to this proposal.
4. Expected timeframe for achieving the objectives of the collaboration and the tentative agenda of activities for pursuing them (agenda should include at least the next 12 months). We understand that activities may change as the collaboration progresses, but please be as specific as possible.
5. Please elaborate on the activities for which you are seeking Ashoka's investment. Specifically, if you are requesting funding for a meeting of the collaborators, please detail the meeting objectives, agenda and expected outputs and how you envision each participant will contribute to the event.
6. Collaboration communication strategy. How will you insure the ongoing nature of the collaboration?
7. Brief individual statements from each Fellow, indicating what each intends to add to and gain from the initiative.
8. Budget for the launch of the proposed initiative, clearly indicating what you are requesting from Ashoka (maximum funding is US\$10,000) and how our investment would be matched either by the participating Fellows or other contributors. Please also indicate who will manage the funds and how you plan to sustain the initiative over the course of the proposed timeframe.

Ashoka's investment in the initiative need not be limited to funding. We encourage you to think creatively and speak to Ashoka staff about what other Ashoka resources could be of use—e.g. Ashoka staff time, meeting facilitation, pro-bono contributions from our strategic partners (such as management consulting from *McKinsey and Co.*, public relations help from *Hill and Knowlton*, legal assistance from the *International Senior Lawyers Project*), etc.

Selection Process

Proposals are reviewed for creativity, social impact and cost-effectiveness by a small global panel of Ashoka staff and/or Fellows. Proposals are evaluated against the guidelines provided above and, if there are several pending proposals, against the others being reviewed at that time. We fund as many proposals as we can that demonstrate creative potential for large social impact.

Reporting

If your proposal is supported, we require two concise written reports—one within a month of any major meeting or activity for which Ashoka's investment is used and a second six months later. We will provide a reporting template upon approval of the proposal. Reports should include copies of any publications or other products that result from the collaboration. We will also check in with you periodically after 12 months to stay updated on the initiative's activities and to understand the longer-term outcomes.

These reports and additional updates are critical to Ashoka for several reasons. They allow us to 1) share the learnings with the rest of the Fellowship and other partners and document best practices for future collaboration; 2) help Fellows maximize the impact of the collaboration by identifying where the outcomes might intersect with

other initiatives in global Ashoka and other sources of funding for ongoing activities;
3) demonstrate to our own investors the power of this opportunity and thus be able to continue providing it

Questions and Counsel

We request that you review Group Entrepreneurship ideas with your local Ashoka Representative and/or Fellowship Support Services before submitting a proposal. We are more than happy to work with Fellows to develop collaboration ideas and help identify other Fellows with whom to collaborate. Please contact either your local office or FSS with questions.

Group Entrepreneurship in Action - Examples

Protecting Children: Finding Solutions to End Child Trafficking and Prostitution in Asia and Around the World

The Protecting Children initiative was started by sixteen Ashoka Fellows from India, Thailand, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Indonesia to work on collaborative solutions for ending child trafficking and prostitution in Asia. The collaborating Fellows started the Border Helplines and Information Project, a joint effort to create rescue services at borders identified as high-risk routes for child trafficking, such as the Mekong Delta region and the porous India-Nepal frontier. The group is replicating the "Childline" model, founded by Ashoka Fellow Jeroo Billimoria, to make telephone rescue services available to child trafficking victims in these critical regions, and providing training to border police on how to prevent trafficking and repatriate victims. The group also continues to lobby for improvement in regional government anti-trafficking policy through its collective presence at national and international fora.

Social Entrepreneurs Doing Sustainable Development

In the lead-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in South Africa in 2002, a group of forty-seven Fellows working on sustainable development in twenty-four countries began a lively and robust six-month e-mail discussion designed to surface experiences, challenges, and insights. As the WSSD neared, a workshop was convened at a South African Fellow's project site to finalize a paper capturing the highlights of this discussion and to incubate collaborative projects among the Fellows in attendance. Over twenty Fellows from four continents attended. The paper, which introduces readers to the concept of social entrepreneurship and presents major themes found within the projects of Fellows working on sustainable development as well as the challenges faced by these social entrepreneurs, was distributed at the Summit. This critical mass of social entrepreneurs, supported by the Green Paper, made a very strong statement in favor of outcomes and community-based solutions amid the rhetoric of the Summit. Individual Fellows made dozens of presentations at official and parallel events and staffed an Ashoka booth in one of the major pavilions. Ashoka's Environmental Innovations Initiative is working with the sponsoring Fellows to actualize the most promising of the new collaborative ideas that developed out of this process.

Other articles in this topic may be viewed at www.MyAshoka.org under "Resources" then "Exchange and Collaboration" or from your local Ashoka office.

