




## ASHOKA FELLOWS CHANGING SYSTEMS



*“Social entrepreneurs are not content just  
to give a fish or teach how to fish.*

*They will not rest until they have revolutionized  
the fishing industry.”*

– BILL DRAYTON, FOUNDER & CEO, ASHOKA

Percent of Fellows Who Have Changed a System at a National Level in at Least One Way Within 10 Years of Election

83%

MARKET DYNAMICS &  
VALUE CHAINS  
*(more on page 5)*

48%

PUBLIC POLICY &  
INDUSTRY NORMS  
*(more on page 9)*

51%

BUSINESS SOCIAL  
CONGRUENCE  
*(more on page 13)*

72%

FULL CITIZENSHIP &  
EMPATHETIC ETHICS  
*(more on page 17)*

53%

CULTURE OF  
CHANGEMAKING &  
SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
*(more on page 21)*

44%

*If our goal is to change the fishing industry (or any other industry), how will we know we have succeeded?*

We define impact as system changes resulting from the social entrepreneurs, ideas and networks we support that affect (or have the potential to affect) large numbers of people.

Our Fellows change systems in five different ways: redefining interconnections in market systems (market dynamics and value chains), changing the rules that govern our societies (public policy and industry norms), transforming the meaning of private vs. citizen sector (business social congruence), fully integrating marginalized populations (full citizenship and empathetic ethics) and increasing the number of people who are social problem-solvers (culture of changemaking and social entrepreneurship).

The results on the opposite page reflect the percentage of Fellows surveyed who have changed these systems at a national level within 10 years of election. 83% of Fellows (76% five years post election) have changed systems at a national level in at least one way. On average, Fellows change systems in three different ways.

## Letter from Ashoka President Diana Wells



*At this historic moment it is clear that many of the old ideas have failed, and more than ever before, Ashoka is a place where people can find answers to the world's most pressing questions. The world is looking to new leaders and new kinds of leadership with qualities Ashoka has always sought in our social entrepreneurs, our global team and our partners. For thirty years, Ashoka has built a global community distinguished by its attention to system change and ethical, entrepreneurial leadership.*

The knock-out test for electing Ashoka Fellows and for starting new Ashoka initiatives is the same: there needs to be a system change idea in the hands of an entrepreneur. Rather than looking to someone who is building one school or one hospital, Ashoka looks for individuals who are changing the way children learn or the way healthcare is delivered. In other words, rather than investing in incremental innovation, Ashoka thinks the most leveraged way to invest in social innovation is to invest in the people who have system change ideas.

How do we know whether we have changed systems? How do we understand, define and measure changes in a system? We recently significantly revised our global survey of Ashoka Fellows to tackle these questions. In collaboration with the Corporate Executive Board, we surveyed a sample of 172 Ashoka Fellows from 32 countries in 10 languages and we found that 83% of Fellows have changed a system at a national level in at least one way.

### *What is a system?*

*A system “is an interconnected set of elements that is coherently organized in a way that achieves something.”\* A system must contain elements, interconnections and a purpose. Meadows gives the example of a football team as a system. The elements are the players, coach, field and ball. The interconnections are the rules of*

*the game and the purpose is to win games. Changing the elements of a system has the least effect on the system. A football team remains a team even if every player, coach and field are changed though it may play better or worse. However, changing the interconnections of a system has profound effects; for example,*

*changing a game of football to a game of basketball. A change in the purpose of the system also has profound effects on the system – for example making the purpose of the game to allow every player a chance to play.*

*\*Donella Meadows, Thinking In Systems, 2008*

We have learned that Ashoka Fellows change systems primarily through the power of their ideas. Most build organizations as vehicles to advance their ideas and significantly contribute to strengthening the citizen sector. Ashoka Fellows recognize that achieving large-scale change spreads and advances their ideas through complex and diverse networks. Through the results of this survey we have further identified five ways that Ashoka Fellows change systems. The following pages seek to begin a conversation to understand these five avenues, how social entrepreneurs actually change systems, and what is different as a result.

With these many examples in our ever-growing community, we hope to inspire the rest of the world’s citizens to better understand how to most effectively engage in social change and to be effective changemakers. With the ever-increasing rate of change before us, it is now more critical than ever to ensure more individuals are mastering the skills and concepts to be changemakers. The only answer to more problems is more problem-solvers. I hope that you find the following stories and images to be a step toward achieving this end.

With hopes that you will join us in this pursuit and add to the discussion.

Sincerely,



Diana Wells  
President  
March 2010

## Ashoka Continues to Identify and Support People With System Changing Ideas.

These people are incredibly focused on achieving their goals with

93%

pursuing their original objective after 10 years.

80+%

of them are seen as leaders in their field and

90+%

of their ideas are replicated by other groups.



**SYSTEM CHANGE I**  
REDEFINING MARKET SYSTEMS' INTERCONNECTIONS

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## Market Dynamics & Value Chains

All business people confront common challenges: accessing goods and services, increasing price efficiencies and receiving information. Poor communities are challenged to access the market as producers or distributors. These variables interact in an intricate web, so when one changes, it alters how the entire market system operates.

FELLOW	WILLY PESSOA
YEAR ELECTED	2003
LOCATION	BRAZIL
ORGANIZATION	AGÊNCIA MANDALLA DE DESENVOLVIMENTO HOLÍSTICO SISTÊMICO E AMBIENTAL

“One of the causes of poverty is wastage” says Ashoka Fellow Willy Pessoa. Willy is reducing the wastage in the system of how food is produced, processed, distributed and sold in rural Brazil, leading to a viable economy that creates jobs throughout the production and marketing system.

Beginning with reducing the wastage of natural resources, Willy invented and experimented with agricultural technologies and integrated the successful ones into a mandalla, a sustainable rural farming system. A mandalla, designed in concentric circles that represent integration, simultaneously sustains a small farmer’s nutritional and economic well-being. A small farmer uses three circles to grow subsistence crops, the next four to grow market crops and the final circle to enable environmental restoration. Each mandalla can feed a family of 5 and generates R 1,800/month.

Next Willy turned to reducing the waste and inefficiency within the value chains. Individual mandallas are connected in a micro region to aggregate sales and form franchises. Mandalla Social Trade (a social enterprise) established the Mandalla brand of organic food and consolidates trade of the mandalla franchises. By integrating the entire value chain from raw inputs to retail product branding and marketing, the Mandalla brand of organic foods captures value of products and provides higher incomes to everyone along that value chain.

Willy is training Mandalla disseminators so that more franchises can be established with an explicit focus on training youth: “If we really want to make a change in the paradigm, we need to train [youth], show them new alternatives.” There are currently more than 2,800 mandallas in 18 Brazilian states with the expectation that in 5 years, they will be nationwide in partnership with around 900 organizations. This model has been replicated in 6 countries.



POOR USE OF  
NATURAL RESOURCES

JOB LOSS



WASTAGE



DISORGANIZED  
VALUE CHAIN

MIGRATION AWAY  
FROM RURAL AREAS

Before

After

MANDALLA SYSTEM FOCUSES  
ON SUBSISTENCE, CASH CROPS,  
ENVIRONMENTAL EQUILIBRIUM

GROWTH OF A  
RURAL ECONOMY



EFFICIENCY



MANDALLA BRAND OF  
ORGANIC FOOD CAPTURES  
VALUE OF PRODUCTS

INTEGRATION OF ENTIRE  
VALUE CHAIN FROM RAW  
INPUTS TO RETAIL PRODUCT  
BRANDING AND MARKETING

MARKET DYNAMICS  
& VALUE CHAINS

48%

How did we measure changes in market dynamics and value chains? We asked Fellows about 5 key elements. It is interesting to note that Fellows elected 5 years ago are making more progress in changing market dynamics than Fellows elected 10 years ago. This may be due to increased understanding and attention to these issues globally in recent years. Their national level impact is shown below.

NATIONAL LEVEL IMPACT



*Increased access to goods, services, or trade in the existing market*



*Created value for a product or service where one previously did not exist*



*Created a new market that allows people to trade or access a product or service they previously could not*



*Provided ways for low-income people to generate income*



*Changed or increased the flow of market information*



## SYSTEM CHANGE 2

CHANGING THE RULES THAT GOVERN SOCIETIES AND INDUSTRIES

### Public Policy & Industry Norms

When societies change public policy and industry norms, they change the interconnections within the social system; they change the rules of the game.

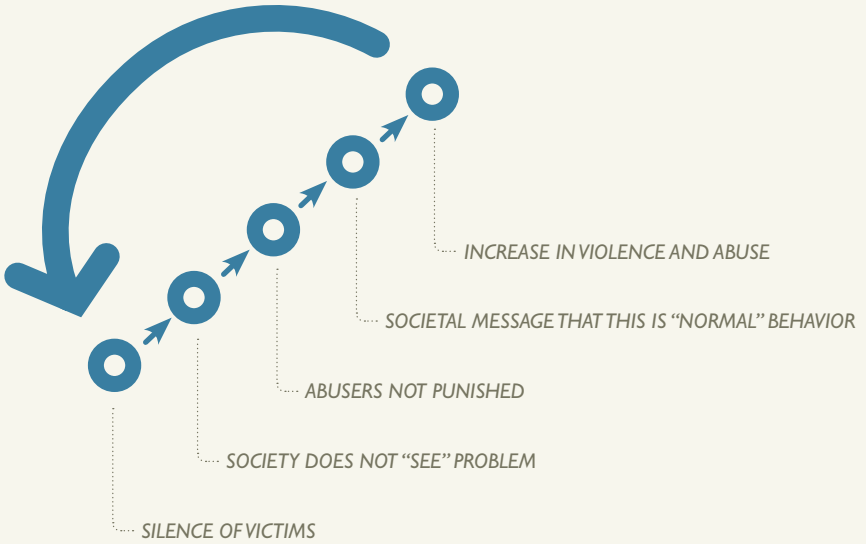
FELLOW	LESLEY ANN FOSTER
YEAR ELECTED	1997
LOCATION	SOUTH AFRICA
ORGANIZATION	MASIMANYANE WOMEN'S SUPPORT CENTRE

*When Ashoka Fellow Lesley Ann Foster began working, less than 3% of rapes were reported in South Africa which has one of the highest reported rates of domestic and sexual violence in the world. There were often language barriers and outright hostility between women and the police, no services for rape victims, and intense social stigma. A bubble of silence surrounded rape and domestic violence victims. Lesley is bursting that bubble of silence.*

Lesley tackles the silence around violence against women on two fronts: by providing direct services and working to change public policy. Through the Masimanyane Women's Support Centre, Lesley provides services for thousands of victimized girls and women and raises awareness about the epidemic's toll on women's quality of life. She gives women a reason to speak out about their abuse.

The Centre's advocacy work has transformed society's stance toward violence against women. Staff members have attended meetings of local and national governments and have advised them on how to address the issue. Taking advantage of the creation of new laws in post-Apartheid South Africa, the Centre played an influential role in implementing the Domestic Violence Act, which – among other things – stipulates that men can be evicted from their homes if they are violent. The Norwegian government later used this law to redesign its own domestic violence act.

Lesley and the Masimanyane Women's Support Centre have influenced public policy in South Africa and abroad, and through their efforts, societies are legally committing themselves to protect women against violence.



Before

After



PUBLIC POLICY &  
INDUSTRY NORMS

51%

How did we measure changes in public policy and industry norms?  
We asked Fellows (10 years after election) about how they work with public policy in several ways.

HOW DO YOU (OR YOUR ORGANIZATION) WORK WITH PUBLIC POLICY?

17%

*Drafted key pieces of legislation or executive policy statements*

37%

*Provided testimony or research*

50%

*Organized citizen action to influence government officials*

NATIONAL LEVEL IMPACT

33%

*Achieved changes in the code of conduct, mission statement, or official policy of a large organization or industry at a national level*

50%

*Created change in government policy or regulations at a national level*



### SYSTEM CHANGE 3

ERASING THE LINES BETWEEN THE PRIVATE AND CITIZEN SECTORS

## Business Social Congruence

As businesses are becoming more socially aware and citizen organizations are becoming more business savvy, the distinction between them is disintegrating. Soon a new system which assesses its economic and social impact will evolve: the business social sector.

FELLOW	VINEET RAI
YEAR ELECTED	2006
LOCATION	INDIA
ORGANIZATION	AAVISHKAAR

Ashoka Fellow Vineet Rai is working to create sustainable change in rural India through the provision of venture capital financing and management support to socially-conscious, commercially viable ventures that have limited access to financial institutions. His approach is sustainable, meets international venture capital standards and is in full conformity with the Securities and Exchange Board of India regulations.

Thousands of innovations are created in rural India to ease the burdens on local communities. The creativity of these innovators and their innovations, however, remains confined to their immediate communities. Along with professional expertise and mentoring, timely availability of capital is a crucial missing ingredient. In general, availability of funds from financial institutions for new enterprises is scarce. High transaction costs make such investments uneconomical.

Vineet's model reduces risk by partnering with rural incubators and government agencies working with rural innovators to develop a transparent and detailed investment process. He establishes exposure limits on an absolute and percentage basis and designs exit options prior to making investments. A diversified portfolio is achieved by limiting the maximum investment in any one project or projects to 20 percent of the corpus fund. Vineet's model is financially sustainable while also achieving social impact.

Vineet firmly believes that rural innovations and appropriate technologies can be leveraged to create viable and sustainable micro enterprises. This spurs economic activity, creates productive jobs and improves quality of life in rural India. Such a model has the power to create a "virtuous cycle" of sustained growth and development in India and, eventually, around the world.



BUSINESS SECTOR

HIGH RISK



NO VIABLE MODEL



NOT SCALABLE

SOCIAL SECTOR

Before

After

2X  
BOTTOM  
LINE



DOING WELL  
BY DOING GOOD

BUSINESS SOCIAL SECTOR

BUSINESS SOCIAL  
CONGRUENCE

72%

How did we explore business social congruence? We asked Fellows about 4 key elements shown below.

NATIONAL LEVEL IMPACT (after 10 years)

59%

*Earned revenue through a for-profit element*

25%

*Average percent of budget covered by revenue from for-profit elements*

29%

*Have a common vision with the business sector for social impact*

27%

*Have a joint venture with a business*



**SYSTEM CHANGE 4**  
FULLY INTEGRATING MARGINALIZED POPULATIONS

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## Full Citizenship & Empathetic Ethics

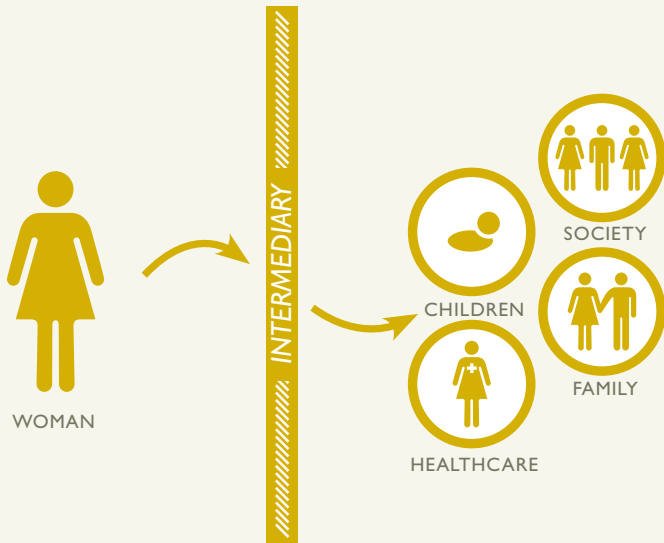
Completely including people disadvantaged by class, disability, ethnicity, gender, poverty or religion may seem like a small ripple within society. However, their voices and actions can powerfully realign social interconnections to create a more equitable system for all.

FELLOW	RAQUEL BARROS
YEAR ELECTED	2001
LOCATION	BRAZIL
ORGANIZATION	LUA NOVA

*“Lua Nova works with the women that nobody wants. The ones who steal. The ones who are abused. The prostitutes. The ones who live in the streets. The ones nobody trusts. So, from the start I knew that in order to open real opportunities for them to fully re-integrate in mainstream society, Lua Nova needed to work with other organizations, with other partners. If I wanted their silent voices to be heard, if I wanted to attract society’s attention, Lua Nova couldn’t be alone.*

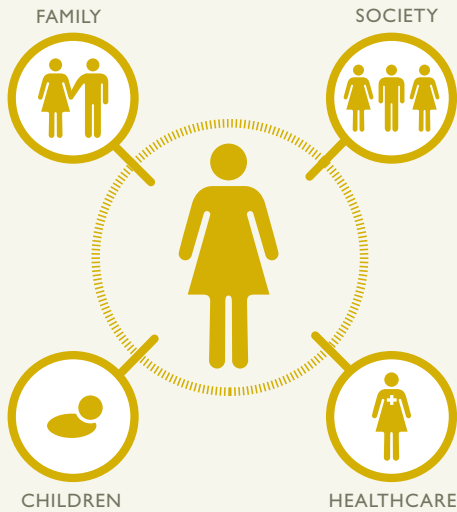
I know that if I want Lua Nova women to be part of the society, they need to create concrete bonds with society. So I have designed a whole community network to build relationships with every other group in the community – schools, parishes, health centers, municipalities, art and sports organizations, companies, etc. This leverages women’s chances of success in their own lives when they leave Lua Nova.

I once brought four Lua Nova women to a fundraising seminar. The speaker was saying that ‘fundraising is not about begging for money’ – a typical concept you hear in every fundraising seminar. Suddenly Maria, from Lua Nova, raised her hand and said that she herself had been a beggar and was not ashamed. In fact, she drew a parallel between begging and fundraising. The audience was stunned. But this is real and happens often. We speak on behalf of low-income communities, of at risk people, without truly knowing their reality. That’s why I care so much about giving Lua Nova women their own voice, enabling them to speak for themselves in places they would probably never have access.” — Raquel Barros



Before

After



FULL CITIZENSHIP &  
EMPATHETIC ETHICS

53%

How did we explore full citizenship and empathetic ethics? We asked Fellows about 3 key elements shown below.

NATIONAL LEVEL IMPACT (after 10 years)

55%

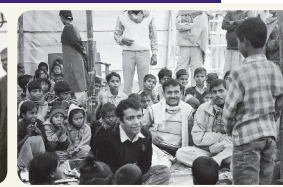
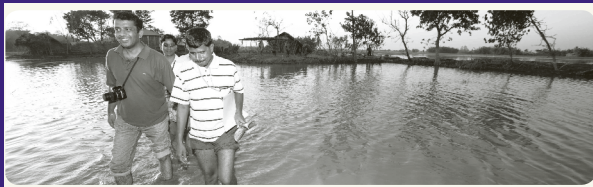
*Achieved the full inclusion of disadvantaged groups into society*

34%

*Connected critical parts of society*

60%

*Increasing empathy toward marginalized groups is a major focus of their work*



## SYSTEM CHANGE 5

INCREASING THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE  
WHO ARE SOCIAL PROBLEM-SOLVERS

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### Culture Of Changemaking & Social Entrepreneurship

Each person possesses the potential to change his/her community for the better – directly by tackling social problems and indirectly by supporting others' ideas. When societies embrace and promote this belief, a new global system will emerge: an Everyone a Changemaker™ world.

FELLOW	ANSHU GUPTA
YEAR ELECTED	2004
LOCATION	INDIA
ORGANIZATION	GOONJ

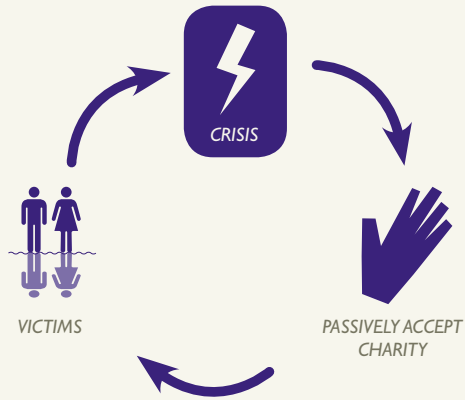
A disaster can be a boon for an impoverished area because of the attention and aid it generates.

But, once the intensity of media coverage diminishes, the people who live in those areas are “just as poor as they were yesterday.” Through Goonj, Ashoka Fellow Anshu Gupta builds the perception among villagers that they can join together to meet their own needs. Having demonstrated that they can be remarkably competent partners, they can collectively approach the government from a position of strength.

For example, during the floods in Bihar in 2009, Goonj concentrated on showing people that they already had the skills to build new wells and bridges that had been lost in the floods.

With Goonj there to advise and organize, and with clothing as an incentive, the villagers proceeded to dig their own well. Even women joined in the digging. People were able to build the well all the way up to the top section, which needed to be reinforced and finished off with a concrete lip. Then the community “pressured the government to do the rest.” Seeing what the community had already done, the government officials provided the materials and skilled labor to complete the well. In other communities, villagers built a road, bridges and schools. Through these successes, these community members found strength and capability at their time of greatest need. They recognized their own ability to be changemakers; skills that will last long after the cameras and donations have disappeared.



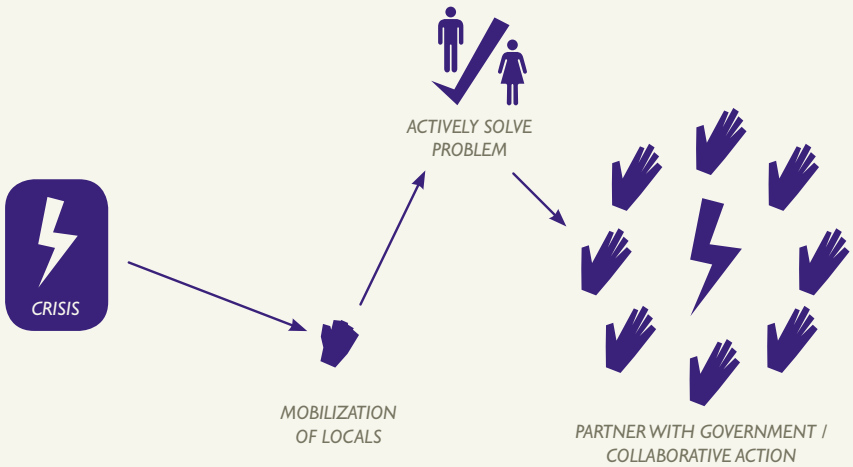


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CYCLE OF VICTIMIZATION

Before

After



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BUILDING CHANGEMAKERS

CULTURE OF  
CHANGEMAKING &  
SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

44%

How did we explore the culture of changemaking and social entrepreneurship?  
We asked Fellows (10 years after election) about 5 key elements shown below.

NATIONAL 85%

INTERNATIONAL 44%

*Gained media coverage*

NATIONAL 57%

INTERNATIONAL 35%

*Received awards or recognition*

83%

*Directly trained individuals to build the specific skills to solve social problems*

52%

*Partnered with institutions to create programs that promote social entrepreneurship*

65%

*Gave speeches about social entrepreneurship*



A FRESH VIEW ON CHANGING SYSTEMS

How do Fellows change systems?  
How does Ashoka support the Fellows?





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## How do Fellows change systems?

- They develop ideas at the right moment in history
- Lead sustainable organizations to advance their idea
- Develop strong multi-sectoral networks for scale and replication

## IDEAS WITHIN A HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXT

Ashoka Fellows develop system changing ideas by focusing on specific problems within their context. They break free from traditional silos with over **60%** of Fellows saying their work does not fit neatly into one field.

## LEADING THE GROWTH OF THE CITIZEN SECTOR

**85%** of Fellows started an organization to implement their idea and **58%** report that their organization is stable. **25%** feel their organization's stability is threatened. **43%** report the organization would continue to operate without them.

In addition to the social impact of the citizen sector, these organizations are increasingly critical economic drivers. Fellow Matthew Spacie gauges his success by the percent of his staff who are graduates of his youth sports program: "**38%** of our staff are our graduates. In 6-12 months it will be an institution that can run without us."

## NETWORKS FOR SCALE AND REPLICATION

Ashoka Fellows create, cultivate and tap into diverse networks to increase the impact of their idea. They work with government, media, business, academic and citizen sectors. **63%** of Fellows have a strong relationship with 3 or more of these sectors.

For example, Thope Lekau works in one of the poorest townships in South Africa and involves the community, the business sector, the tourism industry, and transportation companies to keep money inside the community. These multi-sectoral networks lead to increased scale with **45%** of Fellows achieving multi-national, continental or global scale within 10 years of election.

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# How does Ashoka support the Fellows?

*“The category ‘social entrepreneur’ changed my life. I finally had something to call myself. Ashoka’s rigorous approach to that has helped me have something to aspire to.”*

— Eboo Patel, US Fellow

*“Ashoka gave life to our organization. We were struggling between life and death. Ashoka is encouraging and helping me to identify my strengths and to connect to related organizations. It is guiding us to take part in different competitions which are relevant to our work.*

— Lucky Chhetri, Nepal Fellow



After 5 years,

**78%**

of Fellows said Ashoka's support was "critical" in

**3 or more areas.**

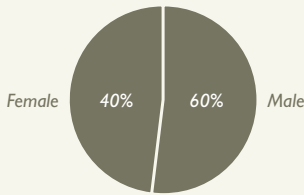
The highest rated areas:

- unconditional acceptance
- increased impact
- and new perspectives

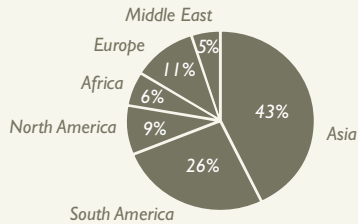
### Methodology

During June-August, 2009, a survey was conducted of all Fellows elected in 1998, 1999, 2003, 2004. The survey was implemented through the internet with follow-up from country staff. The total number of Fellows with current contact information from those years is 315. We received completed surveys from 172 Fellows for a response rate of 55%. These Fellows come from 32 countries and completed the survey in 10 languages. In addition, 18 in-depth case studies of Fellows in Latin America, Africa, and India were completed.

### Gender Distribution of Respondents



### Geographic Distribution of Respondents



### Field of Work Distribution of Respondents

Civic Engagement	54%
Economic Development	42%
Environment	43%
Health	41%
Human Rights	47%
Learning/Education	63%
Agriculture	20%
Invention	15%

### Percentage of Fellows Serving These Populations

Rural	67%
Urban	65%
Poor	40%
Children	48%
Youth	63%
Women	62%
Disabled	20%
Conflict/Disaster Victims	22%
Ethnic/Religious Discriminated	36%
Sexual Orientation Discriminated	10%



### *Indicators of 5 Types of System Changes*

Proxy indicators were developed for each type of system change. These are not simple concepts and none of them are easily “measurable.” Yet Ashoka remains committed to understanding how we know we have changed the system. The list of indicators for each type of system change is shown below. If a Fellow reported a national level impact on these, they scored positively for system change in that category.

#### *Market Dynamics & Value Chains*

- Increased access to goods, services, or trade in the existing market
- Created value for a product or service where one previously did not exist
- Created a new market that allows people to trade or access a product or service they previously could not
- Provided ways for low-income people to generate income
- Changed or increased the flow of market information

#### *Public Policy & Industry Norms*

- Changes in the code of conduct, mission statement, or official policy of a large organization or industry at a national level
- Change in government policy or regulations at a national level

#### *Business Social Congruence*

- Revenue earned through a for-profit element
- Have a joint venture with a business

#### *Full Citizenship & Empathetic Ethics*

- Achieved full inclusion in society of disadvantaged groups at national level
- Connected critical parts of society at national level

#### *Culture of Changemaking & Social Entrepreneurship*

- International media coverage
- International awards or recognition

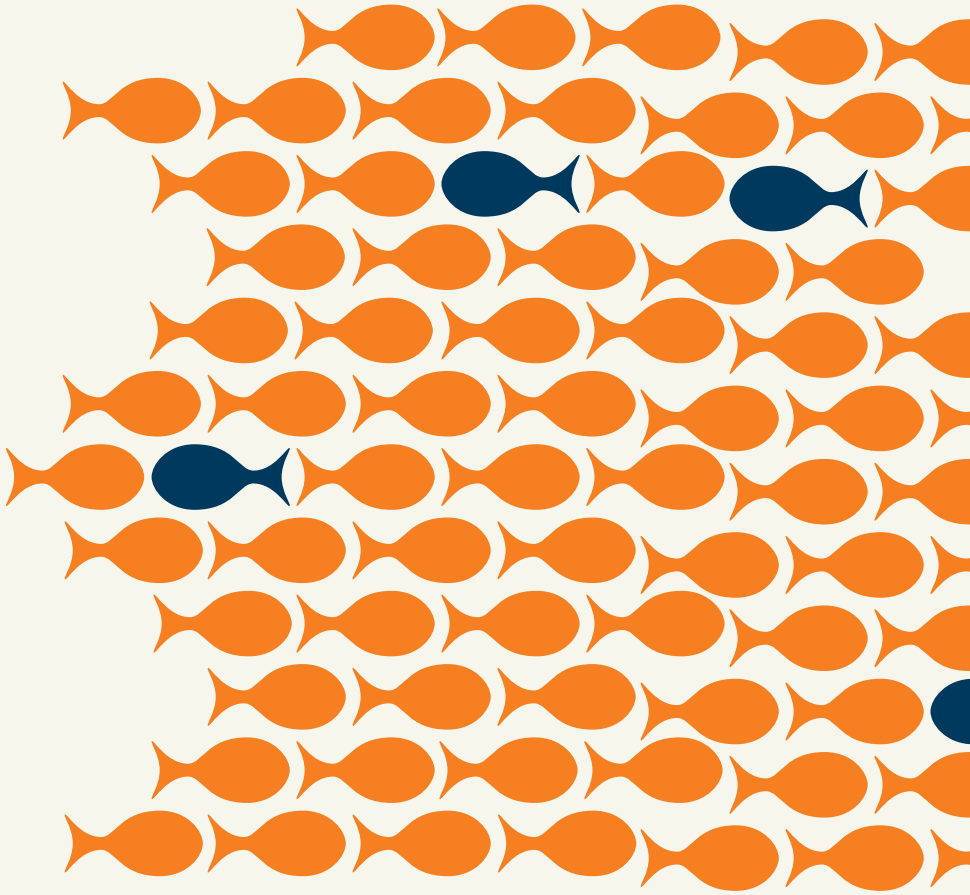
“If you can put into people the ability not to be afraid, the understanding that they’ve got nothing to lose, they can do anything. I create monsters — they are in vulnerable positions when you find them, but once you identify the hero in them; you unleash something powerful. I can just spot a hero ten miles away.”

– Jackie Branfield, Ashoka Fellow



### *Acknowledgements*

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