



Rams

EMERGING INSIGHTS

08

ACCESS

Challenging the status quo



GLOBAL ISSUES

In many respects, initiatives for access, diversity, and inclusion are having a moment in 2019.

Many companies understand the need for, and are implementing policies that ensure employees feel seen, cared for, and respected. There are more trainings and sensitization workshops than ever before and there appears to be a shift in the standard operating procedures in governments, schools, and workplaces worldwide.

In inclusive workplaces, schools, governments or civic arenas, people from differing ethnic backgrounds, gender identities, disabilities or sexual orientations would be present, represented and feel welcomed. This extends to those from different socio-economic backgrounds as well. But in many of the places that our Fellows work, these ideals are still not being met.

THE HEADLINES

LGBT rights in Europe: Some countries 'moving backwards on equality for first time in a decade'

EuroNews 5/14/2019

Xenophobia threatens to undermine Sudan's revolution

Al Jazeera 12/28/2019

India's government fails to act on violence against women and girls

The Guardian 8/8/2019

The 116th Congress is young, diverse and deeply divided. And it has a huge job to do.

New Statesman 1/3/2019

NEW IDEAS

Will it ever be possible to create systems that enable everyone the opportunity to do and be well? **In 2019, Ashoka Fellows were once again leading the way to bring society's vulnerable, marginalized and invisible into positions where they can express their voice and agency.** 18 of the 78 Fellows elected in 2019 are working on issues related to inclusion, diversity and access.

Inclusive policies and practices

The shift of a public policy or public institutions is a goal for many Fellows in the Ashoka network as these are key steps to making systemic change. In the access, inclusion and diversity sector, this often means enlightening decision makers into how legislation and policies are actually written and designed exclusively and without the input, perspectives or connections of the people who will be most impacted. Germany's **Kristina Lunz** co-founded the Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy (CFFP) with an idea that feminist foreign policy is people-centered policy that considers more comprehensive and intersectional issues. Through knowledge products, convenings, and advocacy, CFFP is becoming the premier organization to help governments, political parties and universities define new approaches to developing laws.

Likewise, many public institutions in the United States fail to live up to the promise of serving the public's needs. **Nina Simon** built OF/BY/FOR ALL to provide tools and resources to a movement of civic organizations that are committed to inclusiveness. The network includes libraries, theatres, museums, and public parks who work through self-assessments, bootcamps, and participation in a Change Network to build better programming to become "of" the community in which they serve. Of the 21 organizations who participated in the pilot, 20 are making major changes in how they work, recruit, hire and engage the community.

Expanding gender equity

46% of trans men and 42% of trans women, across a wide range of demographics and life experiences, have attempted suicide globally.²⁰ Many societies around the world have historically treated trans individuals as diseased, requiring psychiatric treatment. Trans people suffer from chronic stress associated with family rejection, poor health outcomes, bullying and harassment, or feel unsafe for simply being themselves. **Rosa Almirall** of Tránsit is de-pathologizing the healthcare system for trans people in Spain and showing that transgenderism is another way of building gender identity that is just as valid and legitimate as any other and cannot be treated as a disease, disorder or abnormality. Tránsit allows the patient to lead their own identity process where they can determine the type of support they need psychologically

and within society, giving them complete autonomy and right over their gender. Rosa is creating a trans-positive vision by offering support services to all those who are in a close circle to the trans person to make sure that the social transition is positive. She is changing the larger discourse by working closely with the patient's wider community, the media, educational institutions, and the healthcare system.



Exposure as a tool for economic and educational access

Brazil's six richest men have the same wealth as the poorest 50% of the population, making it one of the most unequal societies in the world. This physically manifests in favelas, Brazil's overcrowded and under-resourced neighborhoods where over 11 million citizens reside on the periphery of major urban centers. Two Ashoka Fellows in Brazil are working to create access to entrepreneurship, employment and education for these residents. With a background in arts and social change movements, **Marcelo Rocha** (aka DJ Bola) is focused on exposure, moving the hub for social innovation to the favelas and promoting inter-neighborhood partnership and collaboration. Over the last seven years, he has created exchange programs for young people from poor and rich neighborhoods to interact, built partnerships with influential organizations to trigger investment, and co-created a social business accelerator (Aceleradora de Negócios de Impacto de Periferia) to promote social innovation.

João Souza is working to improve education for entrepreneurs in the sprawling favelas as well. His educational methodology through Fa.Vela introduces and translates the language of business for acceleration to local contexts. Using a gamified method, entrepreneurship is presented as a learning journey in problem-solving and self-confidence for people who have not had a traditional or standard education. With 20 partners, Fa.Vela has reached 16 municipalities in the country with this innovative approach.

20. Haas, Ann P., et al. Suicide Attempts among Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Adults. Findings Of The National Transgender Discrimination Survey. The Williams Institute, 2014.



IN MEMORIAM:

Shamnad Basheer

This year, Ashoka gained and lost a giant in the field of access and inclusion. Professor **Shamnad Basheer**, a lawyer, academic and social entrepreneur, was elected to the Fellowship in 2019 with a new idea centered around inclusiveness in the field of law in India. He was a brilliant legal mind who championed systemic changes in internet equality, intellectual property rights, public interest litigation, and rights for sexual minorities and the differently abled. By all accounts, it was his empathy and kindness that drove his passion for inclusion.

Shamnad's organization, Increasing Diversity by Increasing Awareness (IDIA) was designed as a corrective to the historical exclusion of young people from rural, poor, or minority populations in law education and practice in the country. IDIA focuses on increasing the number of lawyers from diverse

backgrounds and influencing the legal ecosystem to demand diversity in their hiring process. Shamnad built a vast network of over 500 law school volunteers at the top 30 schools in the country. Volunteers actively recruit new talent through tutoring and preparation, and support those who pass the exam and win places at the schools. By recruiting the next generation of legal professionals and incentivizing them toward inclusion, he changed their mindsets during formative years – an effect that should last a lifetime. At the time of Shamnad's election, over 250 students had been trained for the entrance exam and 65 scholars were placed in the country's top 30 Law Schools. Over 20,000 law students were sensitized to the importance and necessity of diversity in the law. IDIA's work continues in the hands of a dedicated staff, supportive legal professionals and the next generation of student volunteers in 19 state chapters.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Collaboration is a common strategy at the heart of Ashoka Fellows' work, and we see that their work is enhanced by peer exchange. In October 2019, in partnership with American Express, Ashoka's office in Mexico and Central America brought together 27 Ashoka Fellows for a Leadership Bootcamp to promote the wellbeing of these systems changing entrepreneurs. The bootcamp created a space where Fellows could reflect on their leadership journey, focus on wellbeing, and explore potential points for connection and exchange together. They left the event with new pathways, practices and questions to bring with them on these journeys, and new tools to empower others to create positive impacts in the world.

ABOUT ASHOKA

Ashoka launched the field of social entrepreneurship in 1980 and today is the largest global association of systems changing social entrepreneurs in the world.

Ashoka believes the most powerful force for change in the world is a new idea in the hands of the right person. Our social entrepreneurs embody these values and continue to forge new paths, transform domains and showcase unexpected ideas to create large-scale social impact.

Leading social entrepreneurs are not heroes working in isolation. Their success depends on creating roles for ordinary people — parents, refugees, computer scientists, farmers, young people — to play an important part in the solution. With each new leading social entrepreneur that we nurture, Ashoka is creating a different kind of future: one where each of us looks inside ourselves and sees a changemaker.

As Ashoka turns 40, we reflect on what it means to be truly successful. For us it means an *'Everyone a changemaker'* world.



METHODS

ASHOKA'S APPROACH TO SUPPORTING TOMORROW'S SOCIAL INNOVATIONS

After 40 years of electing the world's leading systems changing social entrepreneurs, Ashoka knows how to find new ideas. For this analysis of our 2019 Fellows, we tapped into the resources of Ashoka's selection process to mine the reports, interview notes, reflections, and writings of our teams across the globe who are expert innovation spotters and who have deeply examined the work of potential Fellows. The learnings, patterns, and insights we cull during the rich Fellow selection process provided the baseline data for this report.

ASHOKA FELLOW SELECTION PROCESS

The average Fellow candidate will speak to 8 people during their process of election and it can take up to a year to be elected into the Fellowship. The process includes the following steps:

1

Nominate

Ashoka receives nominations from staff, volunteers, partners, Ashoka Fellows, and nominators, based on the five criteria for Ashoka Fellowship. While Ashoka's primary source for nominations is through our network of volunteer nominators, we also actively search for new ideas in emerging and under-represented fields, and welcome self-nominations from social entrepreneurs who believe they meet Ashoka's criteria.

2

First Opinion

The local Ashoka Venture team reviews the nominations to identify a key social innovation. In order to ensure that the candidate is a good fit for the Ashoka criteria, they conduct site visits and meet with the candidate, and then review their work in-depth with other experts in the field.

3

Second Opinion

A senior Ashoka representative with extensive experience in the field of social entrepreneurship reviews the work of the candidate with the local Venture team. The Second Opinion interviewer will always come from a different continent than the candidate so they can bring objectivity to the process and assess the potential of the idea to be applied elsewhere. The Second Opinion interviewer will have an in-depth conversation about the innovation in the idea, its potential for sparking sector-wide system change, and the candidate's fit for the Ashoka criteria.

4

Panel

In addition, three to four leading social and business entrepreneurs from the same country/region will interview the candidate. These entrepreneurs can assess the innovation and its potential impact in the local context. The panel then convenes as a group and, facilitated by the Second Opinion interviewer, decides by consensus whether they recommend that the Ashoka board elects this candidate as an Ashoka Fellow.

5

Board Review

Ashoka's Global Board of Directors reviews the candidate's case in light of observations made by the local Venture team, Second Opinion interviewer, and panelists. After assessing the candidate's fit with the criteria and alignment with Ashoka's mission, they make a final decision about whether to select the candidate as an Ashoka Fellow.

5 CRITERIA FOR THE ASHOKA FELLOWSHIP

Ashoka's selection process is anchored by our five criteria against which all Fellow candidates are evaluated:

- 1 A NEW IDEA:** Candidates must have a new idea—a new solution or approach to a social problem—that will change the pattern in a field. We evaluate the idea historically and against its contemporaries in the field, looking for innovation and real change potential. Candidates must have a truly transformational innovation, not just a tweak to how things are done currently.
- 2 CREATIVITY:** Successful social entrepreneurs are creative both as goal-setting visionaries and as problem solvers that can engineer their visions into reality. Among the questions we might ask are: Does the candidate have a history of creating other new visions?
- 3 ENTREPRENEURIAL QUALITY:** Successful social entrepreneurs are driven by the vision of solving the problem they are working on. They typically will not rest until their idea is the new pattern for society. At the same time, they are willing to grapple relentlessly with many practical “how to” challenges. A successful candidate, if given the means, would dedicate themselves full time to launching and growing their idea.
- 4 SOCIAL IMPACT OF THE IDEA:** The candidate's new idea has the potential to change the field significantly and will trigger nationwide impact. The idea itself needs to be sufficiently new, practical, and useful for people working in the field to adopt it and turn it into the new norm sector wide.
- 5 ETHICAL FIBER:** Social entrepreneurs introducing major structural changes to society will have to inspire that change at a wide scale and across different stakeholder groups. If the entrepreneur is not trusted, the likelihood of success is significantly reduced. Ashoka insists that every participant in the selection process be assessed for ethical fiber.

Throughout the five stages of our election process, we gather data and information about the Fellow through application forms, field visits, and semi-structured interviews. We see the process as generative; as much as we are seeking to understand the insights and motivations of our Fellows to make systemic and lasting change in their communities, we are also hoping that our questions, frameworks, and perspectives will enable the candidates to feel they are gaining new approaches and networks.

Based on a 2018 study of Ashoka's impact, 93% of 858 Fellows in 74 countries agreed that the Ashoka selection process helped strengthen and articulate their idea.

POST SELECTION PROCESS ANALYSIS

The materials we gathered from 78 profiles this year were then taken through a qualitative analysis. We generated codes in four categories:

HOW

the approaches, how-to's and strategies Fellows use.

WHY

the motivation and insight into why a Fellow founded their organization or began their work.

WHO

the core constituent groups who Fellows target.

SECTOR

the field of work or externally recognized sector Fellows operate within.

We ran a network analysis, grouping the codes by type and looking for patterns and intersections across geographies, sectors, approaches and constituencies. The process also allowed us to explore a deeper understanding of each Fellow's unique ability to connect with multiple approaches to work at a systems level.

NEXT NOW

Pathways for an Emerging Future

Next Now is focused on changing the course of history by uniting visionary changemakers around bold goals.

Together, this ecosystem of leaders will build a brighter future. One that addresses and anticipates the world's most urgent social challenges and one in which no one gets left behind. What comes Next – our most desirable future – must start Now.

Next Now is piloting a new type of collective action around four pressing global challenges: Tech and Humanity, Aging, Gender, and Planet & Climate. Our path to success depends on our ability to:

- 1 Invest in new social innovators shaping each field**
- 2 Set audacious and collective goals with visionary changemakers**
- 3 Team up across sectors to achieve these goals (Teampreneurship)**
- 4 Amplify insights and lessons learned to inform the next set of audacious goals**

Tech & Humanity

All aspects of our lives are now impacted by technology. Examples of radical breakthroughs of positive change abound – such as personalized learning, health care, micro-loans and the sharing economy. But these same technological advances bring challenges. Unprecedented levels of surveillance are threatening civil rights. Technology embeds bias and discrimination through opaque algorithms. Countless other ethical and moral dilemmas emerge.

Next Now: Tech & Humanity audaciously aims to change the course of history by uniting leaders around goals to develop ethical frameworks that change the policies that govern the public and private sectors.

Aging

Demographic change will define this century. By 2030, it is estimated that there will be more people over the age of 60 than children younger than 10. This is a phenomenon with deep social and economic implications. The narrative on aging has been largely alarmist and portrays Seniors as burdens on social systems. But the shift also represents a unique opportunity to shape the future of humanity. Insights from the nearly 60 Ashoka Fellows working on aging shows that systems-changing social innovations solutions can radically reimagine aging culture, seniors' contributions to society, and how seniors are cared for.

Guided by these and future insights, Next Now: Aging aims to change the course of history and unite leaders around audacious goals that promote intergenerational harmony, dignity and purpose for all seniors.

Gender

Gender equity is a moral and a business imperative. Unconscious bias remains prevalent across geographies, and in every venue imaginable—from classrooms to board rooms. Fortunately, some key innovators are identifying the jujitsu points capable of shifting entire systems to address challenges for women and individuals who identify as LGBTQ. Their solutions like combining behavioral design with empowerment, focusing on sectors of strategic importance, and re-framing and deconstructing gender.

Next Now: Gender will unite extraordinary changemakers around audacious goals to build equitable, diverse and accessible societies.

Planet & Climate

Of the many global challenges we face today, few are as essential to each of us as climate change. While humans have enjoyed the convenience and comfort brought about by the Industrial Revolution, many of us have also lost touch with nature and as a result, directly and indirectly contributed to global warming and climate change.

Next Now: Planet & Climate aims to change the course of history by uniting extraordinary changemakers around audacious goals that bring people and planet to a new equilibrium.

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We also appreciate the countless local experts and panelists who provide critical feedback during selection panels worldwide.



Fellows Elected in 2019



 INDICATES A FELLOW FEATURED IN THIS REPORT

AFRICA

FEMI KAYODE

Vetsark / Nigeria

Femi is saving livestock in Nigeria through an innovative tracking system that maps the location of animals and widespread diseases. Farmers and veterinarians using this application can collaborate to predict outbreaks before they happen, and when an endangered area is detected vaccines can quickly be distributed to protect animals and people.

ISAYA YUNGE

Somaapp / Tanzania

Isaya is making higher education accessible to underprivileged African students by opening new funding resources and breaking the myth that advanced education is only for the wealthy. Using the app he created, students can find scholarships they have a high chance of winning, as well as support tools and resources for writing a quality application.

MUZALEMA MWANZA

Safe Motherhood Alliance / Zambia

Muzalema is reducing neonatal and maternal mortality in Zambia by positioning Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs)

as the drivers of standardized and quality care at the point of birth. The TBAs become skilled practitioners trained by the Ministry of Health and serve as a bridge between public clinics and mothers.

NGU MORCHO

YakoMedical Africa / Nigeria

Ngu is transforming the healthcare system in Nigeria to be more accessible, affordable and people-centered by incorporating digital technology to empower patients and other stakeholders. He is convening healthcare services together in one facility, so patients can get the treatments and screenings they need without any delay.

NNEKA MOBISSON

Mdoc / Nigeria

Nneka is reducing the number of deaths in Nigeria caused by noncommunicable diseases like diabetes and cancer, by connecting doctors and patients together to circulate medical knowledge within rural communities. Through coaching and a shared learning platform, people can learn more about early prevention and how to manage their conditions with lifestyle adjustment.

PETER AWIN 

Cowtribe / Ghana

Using mobile technology to connect on a national scale, Peter is providing rural livestock farmers with in-depth information about animal healthcare and early disease prevention. Veterinarians also get involved by visiting hard-to-reach places to examine livestock. His innovation has significantly reduced animal mortality, which is critical for farmers whose livelihoods depend on their livestock.

ARAB WORLD

ACHRAF AOUDI

IWATCH Organization / Tunisia

Achraf is mobilizing Tunisian citizens, especially young people, to lead a decentralized anti-corruption movement in the country. By providing them with the tools to fight corruption and the autonomy to create their own strategies, Achraf is positioning the citizen sector to become a powerful driving force for greater transparency, governance, and accountability.

DAN DRISCOLL 

The Anou Cooperative / Morocco

In Morocco, market access in the artisan space is controlled by middlemen. Dan is eliminating this exploitative process by creating an artisan-led and owned cooperative model, where he empowers craftsmen with bottom-up solutions such as online sales accessible for illiterate artisans, innovations in the logistical chain, and access to high-quality non-toxic materials.

MICHAEL ELNEMAIS FAWZY 

Hope / Egypt

Michael's comprehensive program "Hope" builds resilience in high-risk, underserved children in Egypt to prevent the development of serious mental health issues later on. He also provides tools and support for children struggling with poor mental health, working directly with parents, teachers, social workers and psychologists.

DAJANI RANA

We Love Reading / Jordan

Dajani's initiative offers a new, practical, cost-efficient, and grassroots approach to foster the love of reading in children. Her ultimate goal is to enable children and youth to think for themselves, to be able to empathize with others, and to peacefully and respectfully communicate their thoughts through reading for pleasure.

EUROPE

ALBERTO ALEMANNO 

The Good Lobby / Belgium

Alberto is empowering citizens in Belgium to advocate for change in public policy. Through the Good Lobby, he trains citizens in key civic and legal skills and matches them with expert volunteers to support the lobbying needs of civil society organizations.

ALP TOKER 

NetBlocks / Turkey

NetBlocks supports citizens and advocacy groups' rights to information by monitoring internet across regions and publishing data on shutdowns and outages to reveal the causes (storms, power cuts, technical issues, blockage by authorities, censorship, etc.). Alp is making it possible for data-driven internet activism to safeguard knowledge access through openinternet.

BURAK ARIKAN

Graph Commons / Turkey

Graph Commons is a collaborative platform for mapping, analyzing and publishing data-networks. Burak is empowering civil society organizations and citizens with user friendly technology to share and make sense of their data in a way that was previously only available to large institutions.

CLARA JIMENEZ CRUZ

Maldita / Spain

Clara is fighting "fake news" by harnessing citizens' desires to combat misinformation. Her platform provides citizens with accessible channels to flag suspicious stories, and then circulates the fact-checked versions in easy-to-read formats.

ELENA CALISTRU

Funky Citizens / Romania

Elena is using technology, social media and non-formal education to build a citizens' movement that strengthens Romanians' participation in public life. People "train their civic muscles" by participating in a variety of civic activities, from monitoring elections to reviewing public budgets, while younger generations are educated about democracy through age appropriate tools.

EMMANUEL VINCENT 

Science Feedback / France

Emmanuel is tackling online misinformation about scientific issues. His platform flags questionable content, shares it with his network of strictly selected scientific experts, and compiles a range of reviews into one final veracity rating. He then works with major digital platforms such as Facebook and Google, helping them limit the viral spread of false claims.

JENNIFER LEXMOND 

EasyPeasy / United Kingdom

Jan's platform, EasyPeasy, sends inspiration for developmental play straight to the mobile phones of parents with young children. These games develop key school-readiness skills, helping bridge the socio-economic achievement gap sparked by discrepancies in early childhood development.

KRISTINA LUNZ 

Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy / Germany

Kristina's "Think and Do Tank" is focused on making foreign policy more feminist, transparent, and intersectional. It aims to look beyond the traditional foreign policy approach, mainly focused on military force, to include the viewpoints of the most marginalized groups. The research created by the Think and Do Tank then serves as the basis for informed advocacy.

MARIE MADELEINE GIANNI

BET SHE CAN Foundation / Italy

Marie is dismantling gender stereotype barriers and changing girls' perceptions of career opportunities available to them. In her trainings she works with both pre-teen girls and teenage boys as role models to spread this message, helping girls realize their limitless potential while providing them with tools to develop skills critical for flourishing in any career of their choice.

MINE EKINCI

Rural Schools Transformation Network / Turkey

Mine is training young teachers in rural communities in Turkey, prioritizing socio-emotional and cognitive skills in learning and best practices specific to rural settings. Her program is the first holistic education movement in rural Turkey, aiming to not only improve the education but also the overall life quality in smaller villages.

RAMON ROCA

Guifi.net / Spain

Ramon is bringing internet access to isolated areas by offering community owned and operated networks where each user co-owns and co-manages the infrastructure. This alternative to privately-owned networks drives costs down and helps spur economic development in these regions.

RICARDO MARTINO

Unidad Hospitalaria de Cuidados Paliativos para Niños en el Hospital Niño Jesús / Spain

Ricardo has designed and implemented the first pediatric palliative care system in Spain. His model helps children enjoy the best possible quality of life, focusing on staying at home with family instead of being hospitalized.

ROSA ALMIRALL

Transit / Spain

Rosa is pioneering a new approach to the way transgender people receive medical treatment in Spain, advocating for transgender identities to no longer be viewed as mental illnesses. Her organization also offers treatment, advice and counselling both online and by phone.

SIMONA SINESI

Never Give Up / Italy

Simona and her sister co-founded Never Give Up to support people struggling with eating disorders, destigmatizing an issue buried in Italian society. Focusing on teenagers and young adults since they are most at risk, Never Give Up helps them overcome issues around weight, food and body image while making it easier and more socially acceptable to seek treatment.

STEFFI BIESTER

Kickfair / Germany

Steffi is combating the socioeconomic divides in Germany's education system through a street football program in which students engage with others across racial and cultural lines. Her educational model is grounded in socially responsible behavior, and she works closely with schools to ensure that these norms are adapted into their curricula.

SUE RIDDLESTONE

Bioregional / United Kingdom

Sue has been a major national and global influencer in the sustainability movement for a quarter century. Her One Planet Living guidelines, which were key in developing the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals, provide individuals and institutions with actionable ways to reduce environmental impact on the planet.

LATIN AMERICA

ABEL CRUZ

Movimiento Peruanos Sin Agua / Peru

Abel is solving the drastic water-shortage problem in the Andean region by designing an integral system of fog water collection, desalination and groundwater collection technology in extreme drought areas. Able is not only providing water for human and animal consumption, but also transforming desert areas into farming lands by enabling communities to take responsibility in their own hands.

ARTURO HERNÁNDEZ ORTEGA

Los Supercívicos / Mexico

Los Supercívicos is creating a movement of active, engaged citizens in Mexican society and more accountable governments by making civic participation easier and more accessible using humor and technology.

CAROLINA CONTRERAS

MissRizos / Dominican Republic

Carolina is working to end discrimination against the curly hair characteristic of Afro-descendant populations in regions where it's severely condemned. Through workshops, social media and an all-curly hair salon, she is teaching women and girls to celebrate their black beauty and equipping them with the confidence and knowledge to respond to discriminatory actions.

CLAUDIA THOMAS RICHE

NCEH – CIEH / Haiti

Claudia is creating a network of nurses in Haiti and providing them with the confidence, skills, and knowledge to promote behavior that keeps people healthier and prevents disease within medical clinics and in communities at large.

GERMANA SOARES

União das Mães de Anjos / Brazil

Germana has spearheaded a movement to guarantee access to healthcare and education for children with Zika Virus Congenital Syndrome. She has created a community-based advocacy network, through which parents can raise awareness and share information about ensuring access to benefits.



JOÃO SOUZA

Fa.Vela / Brazil

João is pioneering an adult education model in Brazil's favelas that helps residents restore their self-confidence, creativity, and socio-emotional skills. His course—adapted to an audience with low levels of formal education—empowers residents to become more active in their communities, from engaging in civic processes to launching their own businesses.

JULIANA GUTIERREZ

Low Carbon City / Colombia

Juliana is reducing urban carbon emissions in Colombia by educating and mobilizing citizen activists, as well as giving tools to companies and local governments for lowering their carbon footprints. She has developed six different solutions targeted to different stakeholders, bringing holistic, participative approaches to the issue.

MARCELO ROCHA

A Banca / Brazil

Marcelo is helping economically develop and socially integrate the isolated communities of Brazil's favelas. His organization transmits cultural products of the favelas, such as music and art, to wider audiences. It also works to raise and distribute seed funding to initiatives run inside favelas.

MAURICIO PARILLI

Aprendo y Emprendo / Venezuela

Mauricio is promoting a new generation of entrepreneurs by empowering young people in Venezuela and advocating for the legal sanctity of businesses run by youth under 18. He has created a network of young entrepreneurs in Venezuela, enabling youth-driven sustainable social innovation models to thrive.

MAURO ANTONIO VARGASURÍAS

GENDES / Mexico

Mauro is inspiring a cultural shift towards gender equity and the inclusion of gender perspectives by engaging Mexico's municipal, state and federal government. By positioning men as protagonists of this movement, he is challenging traditional machistai deals in favor of creating a safer and more equal society.

PABLO LECUONA

Tiflonexos / Argentina

Pablo has created a global community of visually impaired readers who are exercising their leadership to replace the paradigm from dependency to autonomy. Through Tiflonexos, a virtual library of more than 9,000 users from different parts of the world, he is advocating for new legislation based on empowerment of visually impaired people.

VINCENT LAGACÉ

Nuup / Mexico

Vincent is working with multi-level stakeholders to transform Mexico's systems for producing and distributing agricultural products. Nuup is improving the livelihoods of smallholder producers by involving them, organizations that serve them, and the corporations that buy their produce in a shared effort to design better, fairer value chains.

NORTH AMERICA

ADAM FOSS

Prosecutor Impact / United States

Adam is addressing the US's mass incarceration crisis by leveraging the influential role prosecutors play in the criminal justice system. His organization provides intensive training for new prosecutors that encourages empathy and spreads awareness of the potentially devastating consequences a ruling can have on families and communities. The ultimate goal is to lower incarceration rates through cultural knowledge change.

ALISON LINGANE

Project Equity / United States

Alison is combatting the wealth gap in America by encouraging small businesses to adopt a more equitable business model by becoming employee-owned companies. Project Equity works directly with owners and employees to facilitate this transition, which grows community wealth and is linked to lower turnover rates, creation of local jobs and higher job satisfaction.

BRETT MATTHEWS

My Oral Village / Canada

Brett is pioneering the science and design of 'Oral Information Management' bridges to the digital world, which enables illiterate or innumerate adults to safely and independently use modern financial instruments such as mobile wallets, account statements and enterprise records. Using tools like digital images of cash notes and oral iconography, he is making financial inclusion possible for 'oral' adults.

GEORGE MCGRAW

DigDeep / United States

Two million Americans are living in homes without clean drinking water or indoor sanitation systems, but there is little awareness of this issue and therefore limited support. Through DigDeep, George is working with these marginalized communities and the water services sector to spark innovation that will build infrastructure to access water and sanitation in an open, participatory way.

JEFFREY CYR

Raven Indigenous Capital Partners / Canada

Jeff is fostering impact investment in Indigenous populations in Canada through a fund management firm, a research and development incubator, and an education arm rooted in Indigenous epistemologies. Additionally, he has stewarded the development of new tools that allows the Federal government to "purchase" social outcomes produced by Indigenous-led social enterprises to pay back the original investors.

JESSICA SCHREIBER

FABSCRAP / United States

Jessica launched FABSCRAP to keep textile waste out of landfills, in response to the alarming environmental cost of the fashion industry. By building relationships with leading apparel brands, she is able to recover textile waste at scale for reuse or recycling, while also influencing decision-makers in the apparel industry to shift towards more sustainable practices.

KRISTINA SAFFRAN 

Project HEAL / United States

Project HEAL aims to radically improve access to care for people suffering from eating disorders, especially those who aren't reached by current options. Through its peer support network and work with insurance companies to promote mental health parity, Kristina is eliminating barriers to seeking treatment.

LAURA WILSON PHELAN 

Kindred / United States

By building authentic relationships between diverse groups of parents through structured dialogues about their backgrounds, race and equity, and goals for their children, Laura has developed a proven model that allows school communities to embrace the goal of "collective wellbeing," champion equity, and change children's life outcomes far into the future.

MICHELLE MILLER 

Coworker.org / United States

Concerned by the rising inequality and poor conditions for workers, Michelle co-founded Coworker.org to give them a powerful voice. They help individuals and groups of employees launch, join and win campaigns to improve their jobs and workplaces. The goal is to reduce inequality in the workplace by having a more democratic communications platform.

NINA SIMON 

OF/BY/FOR ALL / United States

Public institutions such as museums and libraries are struggling to remain culturally relevant in the rapidly changing social climate. To reconnect people with these civic and cultural centers, Nina is helping them transition from traditional service providers into vibrant community-building platforms powered by the people in their communities.

SCOTT STRODE 

The Phoenix / United States

Scott created a national network, The Phoenix, to support communities of people recovering from alcohol and drug addiction. Meeting at brick-and-mortar gyms, members form meaningful relationships through social and physical activities that help them develop a healthy sense of self-esteem.

SHELLY ELVERUM 

Ikaarvik Project / Canada

Shelly is engaging Inuit youth in a program that weaves together Western science and traditional Inuit knowledge systems to generate more relevant research and knowledge generation in the north of Canada. This empowers Inuit youth to take ownership over data traditionally held outside their communities, and helps reshape Southern perceptions of Arctic Inuit excellence and youth potential.

SIXTO CANCEL 

Think Of US / United States

Sixto is transforming the foster care system by ensuring that young people develop self-reliance before 'aging out' of the system. Without support navigating the transition to adulthood, many of them face poverty and homelessness. Sixto's platform gives them the agency to build their own path toward independence while connecting with caring adult mentors of their choice.

SONYA PASSI

FreeFrom / United States

To free abuse survivors from the financial insecurity that prevents them from leaving abusive relationships, Sonya is working with shelters, support staff and the legal system to reimagine a domestic violence support system that focuses on stability-building instead of only crisis response. The ultimate goal of FreeFrom is to help abuse victims escape harmful situations and put them on track for an independent life.

SWAPNA REDDY 

Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project / United States

Swapna is building a new model of legal representation for asylum seekers facing deportation from the United States. Her online platform connects individuals and families seeking asylum with one another, and then connects clients with remote legal representation. She then monitors these cases to identify the most impactful policy or regulatory changes to advocate for.

VANESSA LEBOURDAIS 

Planet Protector Academy / Canada

Vanessa is tackling the disconnect between climate change and deep-seated consumerist norms by empowering kids to be environmental change agents within their family units. Through joy, humor, storytelling and arts-based play, Vanessa holistically cultivates lasting changemaker identities through the public-school system in partnership with municipalities.

WILLIAM JACKSON 

Village of Wisdom / United States

Will is empowering Black families to help create culturally affirming learning environments for Black students in their children's schools. His toolkits include a measure of a school's cultural responsiveness, a racial equity capacity assessment for schools, and a tool that helps parents codify their child's cultural practices for teachers to incorporate into lesson plans.

YESHIMABEIT MILNER 

Data for Black Lives / United States

Yeshimabeit is bringing experts and organizers together to empower social justice movements to use data to create social change. Her network of over 4,000 changemakers is advocating for changes in public policy, educating people about how algorithms impact their lives, and promoting the accessibility of data, in an effort to shift the power of data science into the hands of marginalized communities.

SOUTH ASIA

ABHINAV AGARWAL

Anahad Foundation / India

Abhinav is helping create a sustainable folk music industry in India. He helps artists own their own production processes, providing economic viability, as well as protecting their legal rights and enabling them to collaborate with one another. He also advocates for the study of folk music and ethnomusicology in local universities.

AKASH SETHI

Quest Alliance / India

Aakash has developed a youth-centric approach to employability training that is rooted in self-learning for 21st century skills, preparing young people for a fast-changing world in which they will need to acquire multiple different skillsets throughout their careers.

ALBERT MOLLAH

Access Bangladesh Foundation / Bangladesh

Albert is working to ensure that persons with disabilities are included in all aspects of development planning in Bangladesh. He monitors and tracks the impact of infrastructure projects proposed by development organizations such as the World Bank, identifying gaps in project proposals and resolving them through disability-friendly practices and strategic interventions.

ANDREW CROSS

Everwell Health Solutions / India

Andrew has built a user centric model of care that tackles the issue of non-adherence to medicine regime by enabling the entire healthcare value chain (treatment stakeholders such as patients, health professionals, public/private healthcare facilities, and policy makers) to use his technology platform, that unifies emerging healthcare innovations seamlessly to offer patients a supportive environment to ensure adherence.

AHSAN RONY

Green Savers Association / Bangladesh

Ahsan is creating a culture and industry of urban gardening in Bangladesh. Through various tools such as an open-sourced database on urbangreenscapes, a crowdsourced and collectively-owned greenscape fund, and trainings in schools and communities, he is building a sustainable and inclusive system to counter the rapid decrease of green spaces in Bangladesh.





B.S. NAGESH

TRRAIN (Trust for Retailers and Retail Associates of India) / India

Working in retail is perceived as a shameful rather than dignified profession in the Indian society. To remedy this, TRRAIN engages with influential retail companies to remove barriers that hinder opportunities for employees, while fostering a culture of respect, inclusion and fairness in the retail sector.

MANU GUPTA

Sustainable Environment and Ecological Development Society (SEEDS) / India

SEEDS empowers local communities to proactively prepare for natural disasters such as heat waves, floods and hurricanes, by putting them at the center of all decision-making instead of passively relying on outside aid. Additionally, Manu is influencing national and international governments to craft effective strategies towards mitigation, relief, recovery, and reconstruction.

NAZMA AKHTER

Awaj Foundation / Bangladesh

Nazma is advocating for the rights of female factory workers in Bangladesh. Her organization offers eight training programs, for both workers and factory management, that teach women to recognize their rights, negotiate to better their working conditions, and improve general life skills such as financial literacy and nutrition management. Nazma also administers medical care and legal aid to individuals involved in workplace disputes.

PAVITRA MOHAN

Basic Healthcare Services / India

Pavitra is building a network of affordable and decentralized primary healthcare clinics led by professional tribal nurses. The nurse-led clinics drill deep into remote and inaccessible communities to improve their health-seeking behaviors, empowering once-voiceless communities to have a stake in their own wellbeing.

SAMIR BORDOLOI

SPREAD North East / India

Samir's organization brings together urban youth and rural farmers in the North East Region of India and trains them in low-cost ecological farming techniques. This simultaneously catalyzes the local food economy, attracts youth to the farming profession, and builds a network of indigenous food advocates and entrepreneurs who are bridging the urban-rural divide.

SHAMNAD BASHEER

Increasing Diversity by Increasing Access (IDIA) / India

Shamnad is building an ecosystem for a new generation of changemakers emerging from poverty or other hardships to become influential leaders in India's legal system. To bring these badly-needed perspectives into the elitist legal system, IDIA recruits outstanding youth from marginalized communities and supports them to pursue careers in law.

SOUTHEAST ASIA

BENJAMIN ABADIANO

Pamulaan Center for Indigenous
People's Education / Philippines

Benjamin is empowering indigenous peoples in the Philippines to become leaders of progress rooted in their culture and heritage. He has established a formal indigenized education system that integrates indigenous knowledge and culture within standard course material, and promotes long-term sustainability and improvement efforts for indigenous communities and cultures.

DEWIS AKBAR

Lab Komputer Mini (Lab on Bike) / Indonesia

Dewis created a traveling computer lab that delivers basic programming education to disadvantaged communities in rural Indonesia lacking such resources. By visiting these far-flung regions, educators are ensuring that all Indonesians have the chance to flourish as self-learners in the age of digitization.

DINNY JUSUF

Torajamelo / Indonesia

Dinny is breaking the long-standing pattern of outward migration amongst economically vulnerable Indonesian women by reviving weaving as a reliable source of income. By increasing the socially perceived value of traditional fabric, Dinny enables these women to provide for their families, gaining dignity and economic stability without having to leave their homes.

REGI WAHYU

HARA / Indonesia

Using the power of blockchain technology, Regi is improving Indonesian farmers' crop yields and incomes by enabling them to access accurate agricultural and market data as well as unlock funding sources like loans. In this "data economy," a wide range of stakeholders work together as stewards of accurate data that is owned by the farmers.

RYAN GERSAVA

Virtualahan, Inc. / Philippines

Ryan is enabling socially excluded populations (such as persons with disabilities, persons deprived of liberty, former drug dependents and sex workers) to access formal work in the global digital economy. His organization offers virtual digital literacy and life coaching, as well as wellbeing and community building sessions to aid scholars in overcoming the debilitating effects of social and economic exclusion.

SAZZAD HOSSAIN

SDI Academy / Singapore

Sazzad wants migrant workers to benefit from their time abroad by creating new pathways for migrant workers to have a better quality of life. Through Social Initiative Development Academy (SDI) Sazzad has empowered them in fostering a growth mindset, developing their English skills, and opening doors to professional development opportunities while they're living abroad. In the future the migrant workers can implement these new skills when they go back to their home country or when they transit to a new country.

EAST ASIA

DAVID YEUNG

Green Monday / Hong Kong

David is "taking a bite out of" climate change in Greater China and East Asia by promoting plant-based alternatives to meat to Chinese and East Asian customers. In this way he is reducing meat consumption while making consumers more conscious of the environmental impact of their food choices.

DEAGON YI

Book Village Harry / South Korea

Deagon Yi's citizen-led storytelling and publishing initiative is revitalizing rural towns threatened by depopulation. Using closed schools as a meeting place, he invites ordinary citizens to celebrate their cultures through sharing stories that are later published. This unique approach is reviving communities by creating new cultural voices for the country.

JIN-KYEONG CHO

Stand Up Against Sex-Trafficking of Minors / South Korea

Jin-Kyeong is changing the Korean legal system's views around sexual exploitation of underage girls. Instead of punishing them for criminal involvement, she is advocating for law reform that would protect and support girls. Her organization intervenes when it identifies a girl at risk, provides legal, medical and psychological support, and assists her with housing, education and employment.

SCOTT STILES

Fair Employment Agency / Hong Kong

Scott is working to end debt bondage which traps many migrant workers in a cycle of forced labor. To disrupt the migrant domestic worker recruitment system in Asia, Fair Employment has built an ethical recruitment agency and training center model that shift initial fees to the employer instead of the migrant worker. Scott's goal is to make exploitative recruitment unprofitable.

Partners

Generous funding from the following partners made the election and support of Ashoka Fellows possible this year:

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We are always looking for new allies to help us support Ashoka Fellows around the world and advance systems change in emerging fields.

Please contact Sameen Piracha (spiracha@ashoka.org) for more information on how you or your organisation can partner with us to grow the largest global network of systems changing social entrepreneurs.

DONATE TO ASHOKA'S GLOBAL VENTURE FUND

Ashoka invests in people. The Global Venture Fund is a pool of philanthropic funds from our supporters who understand the power and impact of flexible funding to ensure Ashoka can support Fellows across areas of greatest need. The Fund prioritizes supporting the search and selection of social entrepreneurs in emerging or underrepresented areas of innovation and in underrepresented geographies. Your support will help Ashoka use resources where they are most needed and allow us to find Ashoka Fellows with the most unforeseeable ideas. Please visit ashoka.org/donate and indicate **Global Venture Fund** in your donation.

VOLUNTEER WITH US

Ashoka would not be able to find systems changing social entrepreneurs without the help of volunteers who serve as our eyes and ears around the world. Volunteers who are a part of our global nominator network play a critical role at every stage of an Ashoka Fellows' trajectory. Other volunteers serve on selection panels and play a critical thought leadership role in helping Fellows maximise their scale and impact.

RECOMMEND A CANDIDATE

Do you know a systems-changing social entrepreneur who could benefit from the financial and network support of the Ashoka Fellowship? Nominate them at ashoka.org/engage/recommend/fellow.

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