



**EMERGING
INSIGHTS**

Ashoka Fellows

2019





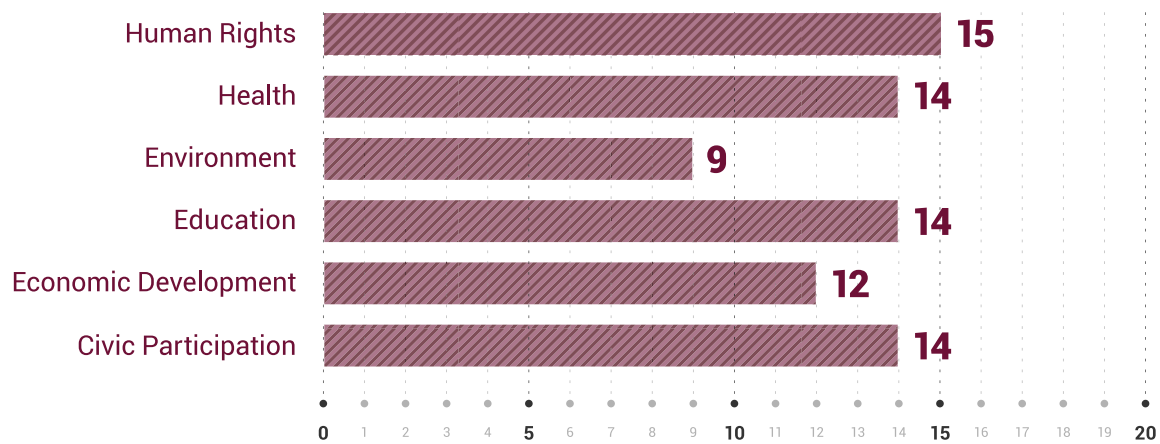


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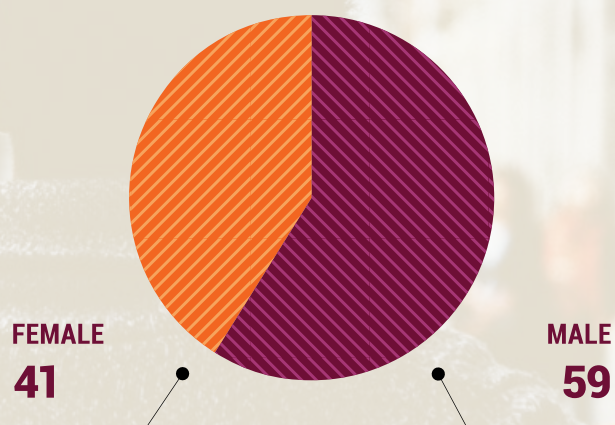
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snapshot

FIELD OF WORK

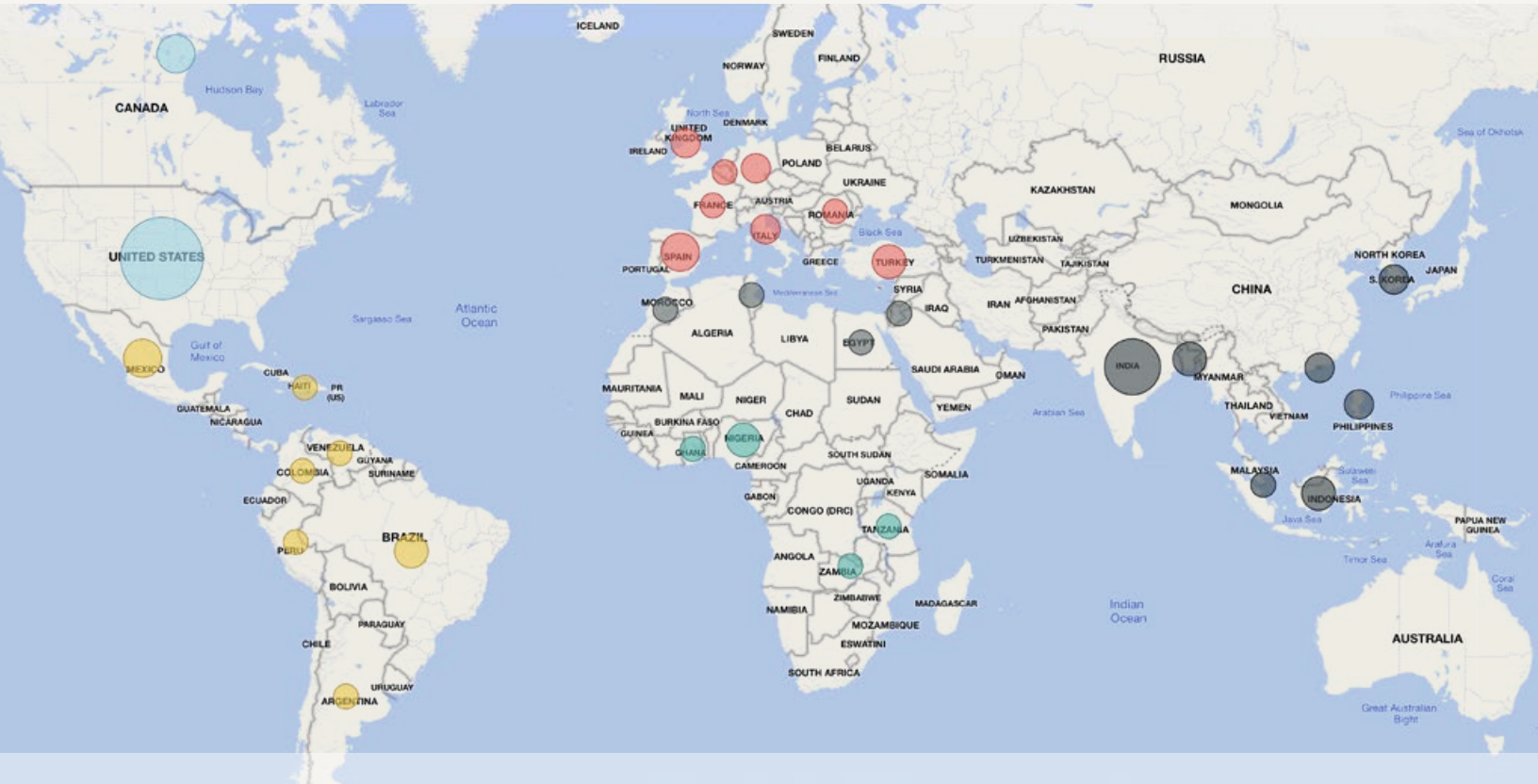


FELLOWS BY GENDER

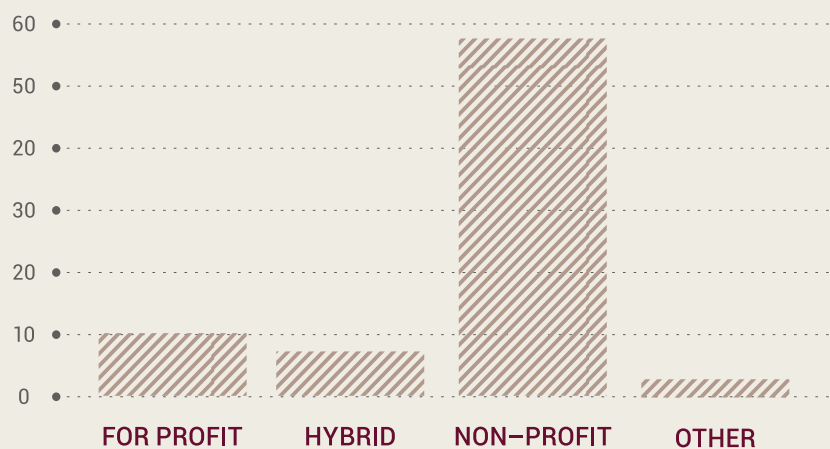


Ashoka Fellows 2019

MAP OF FELLOWS BY COUNTRY



FELLOWS BY BUSINESS MODEL



INTRODUCTION

WHAT WILL IT TAKE FOR THINGS TO ACTUALLY CHANGE?

This is the question that Ashoka has been asking for 40 years. Our search for social entrepreneurs has been, at its heart, a quest to find the individuals among us who see what's underneath social challenges and work to change the systems that are at the root of these problems.

For Ashoka, the focus has always been to look for powerful new ideas with the potential for national, regional or global impact and for the individuals with entrepreneurial mindsets who work tirelessly, through multiple iterations, to build social movements, programs and initiatives that create a social change for the better.

Once again, this year's report showcases how our newly elected Ashoka Fellows work in collaborative and holistic ways. We look at both the urgency of issues the Fellows are working on and at the tangible and replicable solutions they have developed. In analyzing the work of 78 Fellows elected over the last 12 months, we looked for patterns in their visions for social change and in the strategies and tools they have been using to achieve them. Organized across eight complex global issues, we see patterns in how these Fellows actually create change in their communities and beyond.

Ashoka Fellows in 2019 are:

- 1. Movement makers:** Building networks for buy-in, adoption and replication are strategies that come naturally to Ashoka Fellows. 33 of the 78 Fellows elected this year are explicitly working with models that rely on the development of strategic networks. It is through the collective that Ashoka Fellows create movements to move ideas into action.
- 2. Culture shapers:** From education to the environment, making cultural and social changes that influence the ethos or mentality of whole communities is an important strategy for 32 of the newest Fellows. This includes Fellows who are working to create culturally responsive education, acknowledging and advocating for those who have been excluded, and shaping new societal norms.
- 3. Data drivers:** 21 of the 78 Fellows elected this year are explicitly focused on redefining how data can be used as tools for social change. They use data mapping, big data collection, and build platforms for data dissemination in order to effect social change. They recognize that it is not enough to just collect data, but to overcome the challenges of collecting biased and incomplete data to tell a more accurate story of social reality.
- 4. Tech adapters:** As we will see in our insights on science and technology, the possibilities of technology for social good are limitless. 21 of the 78 Fellows in 2019 are working directly in the tech sector or have been developing new technology infrastructures like platforms for knowledge sharing and to increase health or education services to those who previously did not have access.

What it will take for things to actually change is the recognition that disruption and innovation need to be paired with an understanding of humanity, and all its complex histories, cultures and institutions. Ashoka Fellows provide frameworks, guides and tools to help us navigate the murky waters of social change and inspire us to see our own potential as changemakers.

An electronic version of this report is available at:

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EMERGING INSIGHTS

01

ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE

Sustainability and awareness for resilience

GLOBAL ISSUES



According to a study launched by the United Nations, the current world population of 7.6 billion is expected to reach 8.6 billion by 2030, and 9.8 billion in 2050.¹

Humanity is devouring our planet's resources in increasingly destructive volumes. In 2019, we consumed a year's worth of carbon, food, water, fiber, land and timber in a record 212 days and to maintain our current appetite for resources, we would need the equivalent of 1.7 Earths.²

1. "World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision | Multimedia Library - United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs." United Nations, United Nations, 21 June 2017.

2. Watts, Jonathan. "Earth's Resources Consumed in Ever Greater Destructive Volumes." The Guardian, Guardian News and Media, 22 July 2018.

THE HEADLINES

'Listen and help us': Kids worldwide are on strike for the climate

National Geographic 9/20/2019

Australia's bushfires intensify the debate about climate change

The Economist 1/2/2020

Record-breaking temperatures around the world are 'almost entirely' due to climate change

Time 8/15/2019

Appetite for artificial meat growing in China amid swine fever outbreak

South China Morning Post 10/23/2019

It is becoming increasingly clear that policy change and advocacy alone are not enough to shift the current reality of a warming planet. Social and individual responsibility will be key factors. By putting young people, and the most affected vulnerable communities in charge, our Fellows are leading the way to showcase a new generation of leaders in climate change and the movement for the environment.

NEW IDEAS

Creating actionable goals that are participatory and can be embodied at every level is a key method to offset our current consumption patterns. This year's Fellows are making environmental impact by localizing solutions, developing research agendas that lead to action, and helping communities to shift their production and consumption habits.

Addressing over-consumption and unsustainable production

Currently, humans consume renewable resources and pollute the planet at a rate higher than it can sustain. The deterioration of the environment around the world has escalated because of factors like industrialization and urbanization, as well as the global supply chains



that lead to mass production and over-consumption. Over the last 25 years, the UK's **Sue Riddlestone** has been a leader in the sustainability movement. She's grown multiple successful businesses that provide models for sustainable living. Her company, Bioregional, pioneered the One Planet Living Framework that consists of ten simple principles that make it easy to plan, deliver and communicate a commitment to sustainability. The framework is used by individuals, communities, corporations and national governments to act. From one community in her country she has spread this model to the UN and played a pivotal role in the development of Sustainable Development Goal 12: Sustainable Consumption and Production.

The global battle to change human consumption patterns is happening worldwide. Hong Kong leads the world in meat consumption.³ The methane produced by the livestock that feed Hong Kong is the most potent greenhouse gas and accounts for 14.5 to 18 percent of human-induced emissions.⁴ Through his organization Green Common, **David Yeung** is convincing a significant part of the population of China to reduce meat

consumption without giving up their preferred diets. He is making plant-based diets aspirational by both creating and distributing meat alternatives like Beyond Burger, Beyond Bao and Just Scramble through his Green Common stores. Chinese consumers can experiment with plant-based options without necessarily having to alter their diets and tastes. He currently owns and operates six stores in Hong Kong, with an additional 200 outlets distributing his products.

Raising awareness from the grassroots up

Tens of millions of Americans are exposed to unsafe drinking water each year.⁵ The most vulnerable tend to be in communities of color in rural areas who can only wait for governmental infrastructure to catch up. With a background working on community-led solutions in South Sudan and Cameroon in the Water and Sanitation for Health (WASH) sector, **George McGraw** helps American communities build and manage low-cost systems that bring safe hot and cold water into homes, schools and community centers. His organization DigDeep equips Americans with the tools to develop and manage their own water access projects like a first-of-its-kind micro communal water system with central cisterns that bring clean indoor running water to nine towns in the Navajo Nation. Currently serving 550 families in New Mexico, Utah and Arizona, DigDeep helps them to install stand-alone Home Water Systems, while engaging in research and raising awareness on national platforms about the roots of water poverty across the United States.

Cities hold a promise of helping us to combat the global climate crisis, especially where sustainability has gone hand-in-hand with urban development, but they also create risk. Urban centers around the world occupy just 3% of the earth but are responsible for 70% of its carbon emissions. 70% of Latin Americans live in cities and most feel poorly informed about the science and evidence of their environmental impact. To inspire a more informed citizenry with the tools for change, **Juliana Gutierrez** founded the Low Carbon City Foundation in her hometown of Medellín, Colombia, which has evolved into a citizen-led global platform that educates, connects and helps citizens to create tools to enhance low carbon lifestyles. This is predominantly through Low Carbon Districts where residents work together to support low carbon transportation, zero-waste solutions, green spaces, urban gardening and sustainable markets. Global initiatives include connecting a network of over 30 Ambassador cities, advocating for change through citizen-led global forums, and linking innovators who are developing low carbon solutions worldwide.

3. "HKU Earth Science Study Finds Hong Kong's Appetite for Meat Causes the City to Be One of the World's Highest Greenhouse Gas Emitter - All News - Media - HKU." The University of Hong Kong, 30 Mar. 2018.

4. Friedman, Lisa, et al. "The Meat Question, by the Numbers." The New York Times, The New York Times, 25 Jan. 2018.

5. Rice, Doyle. "Tens of Millions of Americans Exposed to Unsafe Drinking Water Each Year." USA Today, Gannett Satellite Information Network, 13 Feb. 2018.

HOW TO:

Strengthen resilience

Natural disasters like floods, cyclones, droughts, heatwaves and landslides all regularly threaten human life around the world, but most especially in countries in the Global South where disaster management is often not a priority. **Manu Gupta** brings a life-cycle and humanistic approach to disaster management in India. Currently, natural disasters are addressed in a top-down, decentralized manner. Different government bodies provide relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction. No single agency focuses on the entire life-cycle of a disaster in a comprehensive way and communities are largely left out of the process. Manu is changing this system by centering disaster response around the communities themselves. His organization SEEDS collects

solutions directly from community members and facilitates the implementation of these solutions with local leaders. SEEDS also helps communities develop creative early warning systems and local disaster management plans and conducts regular mock drills. He has partnered with Google and Facebook to create live flood maps and to track disaster-induced migration to aid in this process. He also works closely with government agencies to implement locally-sourced solutions for reconstruction. By harnessing the creativity of those most affected by disasters, Manu is piecing together India's fragmented disaster response system while giving a voice to previously neglected at-risk communities.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Of the nearly 3,600 Fellows who have been elected over the last 40 years, 12% are explicitly working to change systems to improve human impact on the environment. Beyond finding the latest innovations, Ashoka develops programs to support the expansion and replication of new ideas through trainings and strategic connections. This year, in partnership with social change consulting firm iPropeller and support from the Flanders government, Ashoka created ACCESS – Accelerating Climate Change Solutions in Africa. Although the African continent contributes just 4% to global greenhouse emissions, it is being hard hit by its effects.⁶ Driven by the urgency of this issue, social entrepreneurs were brought together for a social investment accelerator program to refine financial plans and pitches to impact, philanthropic, and institutional investors. This accelerator will be followed by a Social Change Marketplace in 2020 where innovators will be matched with corporate players and receive one-on-one consultations with potential partners, enabling a greater visibility and investment in solutions for this pressing problem.

6. Selormey, Edem. E and Carolyn Logan. "African Nations Are among Those Most Vulnerable to Climate Change. A New Survey Suggests They Are Also the Least Prepared." The Washington Post, 23 Sept. 2019.



EMERGING INSIGHTS

02

YOUNG PEOPLE

Preparing youth for an uncertain future

GLOBAL ISSUES

Around the world, children and youth are considered both a promise of a better tomorrow and a threat to the current world order.

In 2019, there was no greater display of this phenomenon than in the simultaneous adulation and admonishment of Greta Thunberg’s activism on the climate crisis. Heralded



by some for her fiery passion and her audacity to address global leaders to demand new practices to slow down an environmental crisis, she was also subject to the critique of those who hold steadfast to the idea that young people should say little and do less.

Over the last 40 years, Ashoka has witnessed that many of the most effective social entrepreneurs in our network learned to lead early which in turn means they too incorporate youth leadership into their strategies. Demographic shifts in regions of the world like South Asia, the Middle East and Africa – where youth populations burgeon, and unemployment rates rise – indicate a pressing need to create programs that result in productive, active, and positive youth citizenship.

THE HEADLINES

The 11-Year-Old Dissident: Hong Kong’s Schoolchildren Fuel Protests

Wall Street Journal 11/15/2019

How Lebanese youth stand alone, speaking their truth to power

Christian Science Monitor 11/6/2019

When over half of your youth population is unemployed, how do you start to fix it?

Forbes 8/12/2019

World’s youth are being left behind

Inter Press Service 2/22/2019



NEW IDEAS

It should come as no surprise that youth-led movements for social change were a significant part of the work of Ashoka's newly elected Fellows. From engaging young people as co-leaders in their own education, mainstreaming climate readiness and responsibility into classrooms to helping create networks and systems for foster youth to graduate into adulthood, these Fellows are ensuring that the next generation is equipped to deal with a rapidly changing world.

Ensuring professional opportunities for a better future

The jobs of the future are still unknown, but what is clear is that young people today need new types of skills to be

been adopted in 1,000 government schools and reached 300,000 adolescents and youth. More remarkably, the learning tools connect with and serve young people from wide socio-economic backgrounds and ethnicities.

Unemployment and economic uncertainty have led to a different kind of issue in Latin America. In Venezuela, close to 3 million people are estimated to have migrated out of the country between 2015 and 2018. Of the young people who have remained in the country, one-quarter are not employed or even pursuing education or training. Over the last 10 years, **Mauricio Parilli** has led initiatives to create avenues to bring young people into economic participation. His contribution is an enterprise development initiative, *Aprendo y Emprendo*, which promotes youth-led mindset shift and an enabling policy-driven



able to meet the challenges of a changing world. India, like many countries in the Global South, is experiencing youth population growth and facing challenges of high unemployment. The school to work pipeline trains young people with specialized skills for industries that are replacing jobs with technology. They are being equipped for specific jobs, but not for a lifetime of employment transitions. **Akash Sethi's** Quest Alliance has a vision to teach young people to be self-learners and equip them with the skills of adaptation. The curriculum is powered by digital tool kits, simulations, and workbooks. Since 2011, Quest Alliance has reached seven states, developed 50 non-profit partnerships to spread the model, has

entrepreneurial ecosystem. The Young Entrepreneur program involves training camps, prize competitions, and networks of entrepreneurs. Most importantly, he has evolved the program to solve for family barriers to participation as well as the formidable legal constraints faced by young people. Bringing together community centers, universities, public and private high schools, media and investors, Mauricio is advocating for new legislation that enables young people to start companies, manage funds, and more easily enter the market by bringing together players from diverse sectors, such as community centers, universities, public and private high schools, media, and investors.



Child-led earth protectors

Several Fellows are giving young people the tools to better care for the planet and spread messages outside the classroom to influence peers, parents and the larger society. In Dhaka, Bangladesh, the world's most densely populated city, **Ahsan Rony's** Green Savers is focused on creating a new generation dedicated to environmental responsibility. His approach is to create a demand for urban green spaces and then supply the demand with gardeners and workers who can help set up gardens across the city. In schools, he created The Oxygen

Bank program that teaches children through school initiatives and media to participate in the school and roof gardens. He is simultaneously creating a new city-wide cottage industry of "Plant Doctors," microentrepreneurs who provide maintenance, emergency support, and workshops for residents and help start urban gardens.

To influence the next generation of young people to be environmental stewards, **Vanessa LeBourdais** uses a holistic approach – involving mind, heart, body and spirit – with her Planet Protector Academy, an

interactive environmental program that trains 5-10-year-olds to be superheroes for the planet. Designed to integrate with current Canadian school curriculum, the Planet Protector Academy emphasizes that young people can be change agents at home and in their communities. As of this year, 850,000 children have been reached through live theatre and classroom programming. 97% of teachers recommend the program and 90% of children say they take the messaging home to practice with their families.



SPOTLIGHT ON:

Building personal advisory Boards

The United States foster care system is broken.

SOME FACTS:

- + **20,000 young people will age out of foster care without a family** or network to help support their transition to adulthood and independence.
- + **1 in 5 will become homeless on their 18th birthday;** 1 in 4 will be homeless within six months.
- + **50% of former foster children find employment** and of those, half make less than \$10,000 a year.

It's an oppressive system that is not designed to help young people gradually gain the same skills for independence as their peers with strong networks of adult support. Instead, the system reinforces patterns of behavior connected to living with no control, trauma, and lack of knowledge. **Sixto Cancel**, who overcame these barriers as a child in the foster system, founded Think of Us while still in college. Think of Us focuses on a significant period of growth, development and identity formation for youth – when they age out of foster care, typically at age 18 or 21. The platform enables young people to set up "personal advisory boards" of adults they choose. These may be social workers, older peers who have successfully navigated the transition, or others. He is also working on hacking the 30+ year old foster care model. The platform collects data on the real needs of foster care children, enabling a broader reform – not just for those aging out. In California and Nebraska, for example, Sixto has piloted new case management systems that are more human-centered, responsive and tuned into the diversity of foster care needs.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Youth do not have to wait until they are grown up to learn that they are leaders. One-third of the Fellows we've elected know and support building programming to promote youth leadership as the essential foundation of a future where more people are problem-solvers than problem-seekers. To complement Ashoka's Venture program, which finds and supports the world's leading social entrepreneurs, we have also been building a carefully selected network of Ashoka Young Changemakers.

These Ashoka Young Changemakers have found their power to create change for the good of all, and who are engaging their peers and the entire world. With cohorts in the US, India, Bangladesh and launching soon in Indonesia and Brazil, Ashoka's betting on collaboration with young people as an essential component of an everyone a changemaker world.



EMERGING INSIGHTS

03

HEALTH CARE

Networking for better mental health and inclusion

GLOBAL ISSUES



In 73 UN member countries, the right to medical services is codified as a constitutional right and the situation is trending upward.⁷

The reality on the ground, however, is much different. Whereas many governments may publicly support health care for all, resourcing for adequate health care remains a challenge. Only 18 countries, which include Canada, Australia and several European countries, offer true universal health care coverage. Others aspire to meet the medical needs of their citizenry, but often fall short in resourcing. Only 14% of countries worldwide guarantee public health.⁸

While life expectancy and child mortality continue to steadily improve, more people are seeking treatment for issues related to mental health. The World Health Organization reports that one in four people in the world will be affected by mental or neurological disorders at some point in their lives. The Centers for Disease Control estimates that depression is the second most common cause of disability in the world (after heart disease) with secondary effects on family, friends and communities. Yet services for mental health are poor, and there are worldwide shortages of professionals like psychiatrists and nurses and mental health institutions. Connecting with care is an uphill battle – from both an institutional and individual perspective.

7. "A Constitutional Right to Health Care: Many Countries Have It, but Not the U.S." ScienceDaily, 2013.

8. A Constitutional Right to Health Care: Many Countries Have It, but Not the U.S." ScienceDaily, 2013.

THE HEADLINES

Eating disorders grow more prevalent and skew younger

Penn Today 11/21/2019

The opioid crisis has affected more than 2 million children

US News and World Report 11/13/2019

President Lungu declares maternal and prenatal deaths a public health emergency in Zambia

Lusaka Times 5/9/2019

Austerity and inequality is fueling mental illness, says top UN envoy

The Guardian 6/24/2019



NEW IDEAS

The challenges of access to treatment and stigmas were a prominent issue being tackled by 24 of the 2019 Ashoka Fellows. From mental to maternal health, Fellows are improving community cohesion, problem-solving, and awareness across the globe.

Destigmatizing mental health and addiction

Around the world, mental health issues affecting children are often overlooked and often stigmatized. Parents are embarrassed by children who are differently abled or who display mental health challenges and very few understand the roots of mental issues and lack

work together to buffer and protect the child in all the settings where they have interactions. Each segment of individuals is equipped with tools like positive reinforcement, safety and inclusion, child psychology or positive parenting. Michael has influenced 3,000 people to set healthy living and learning environments for children in eight governates across Egypt. He's also creating a Resource Bank of tools to enable people to replicate the model across the Arab World.

Drug and alcohol addiction is a public health crisis that affects over 21 million individuals in US.⁹ As a disease of isolation, what is most needed for individuals to improve is to rebuild positive connections devoid of



the knowledge of what support would truly look like. In Egypt, mental health professional **Michael ElNemais Fawzy** realized that customs, taboos and culture need to be taken into consideration while building a new healthcare model that targeted parents and teachers. HOPE is a dynamic resilience program to help children who need mental health support. Recognizing that parents would not trust strangers to treat their children, he works holistically with family, teachers and other key individuals in a child's life. Parents, teachers and social service providers are trained to know the difference between challenging but typical developmental behaviors and those that can cause concern. When there is reason for intervention, the different parties

stigma. **Scott Strobe** builds healing communities of people in recovery and uses fitness tool to harness the transformative power of human connection. His series of Phoenix gyms provide activities like rock climbing and yoga which in turn create spaces for physical and emotional safety, inclusivity and accessibility. The only membership fee to join a Phoenix gym is 48 hours of sobriety and the gym is entirely staffed by people in recovery who were trained to address their own trauma and can serve as peer role models for others. This approach increases the numbers of caregivers and builds community to support those working to overcome addiction.

9. National Institute on Drug Abuse. "Nationwide Trends." Drugabuse.Gov, 2019.

Networking providers for systemic change

In Zambia, only 47% births are attended by a skilled health worker at a health institution. In addition to limited governmental healthcare facilities and a doctor-patient ratio of 1 to 12,000, mothers who give birth at healthcare institutions are also required to bring birthing materials. This leads to many women deciding to give birth at home attended to by an experienced family member or a community birth attendant. **Muzalema Mwanza's** Safe Motherhood Alliance is growing a network of trained Traditional Birthing Assistants who are supplied with affordable pre-packaged birth kits that contain essential sterile birthing material. With the National Ministry of Health, they train attendants in modern birthing practices and support the delivery of babies. The network has increased community knowledge on birthing practices, demystified unsafe practices and increased connections for expectant and new mothers with clinics. 1,000 babies have been delivered safely in 5 health centers and clinics by 30 traditional birth attendants since the birth kit was

promoting effective handwashing techniques, installing alcohol-based hand sanitizer dispensers, soap dispensers and other equipment in clinics. She advocates for nurses to have access to the same or similar trainings as doctors. Through NECH-CIEH, nurses not only provide hospitals and clinics with needed materials for necessary proper hand hygiene, they are at the forefront in changing behaviors toward greater hygiene for patients and guests.

Germana Soares contracted the Zika virus during her pregnancy with her first child who, subsequently, was born with microcephaly. Recognizing the challenge of raising a child affected by Zika, she set up União das Mães de Anjos – the Union of Mothers of Angels. It is an association of mothers and children that acts as a support network to exchange information and experience, raise awareness about rights, challenge the current healthcare system, and address gaps in medical care



launched. Muzalema's partnership with the Ministry has enabled her to begin expansion to all 3,500 clinics around the country.

Health and medicine are a mirror on society, and this is evident in Haiti where a fragmented healthcare system underutilizes the rich resources of nurses. **Claudia Thomas Riché** creates change by transforming nurses into change agents who lead innovative solutions to address Haiti's public health challenges. The Education Collaborative for Haiti (NECH-CIEH) is a network of nurses who are expanding their knowledge and bridging health and community development within and beyond clinic walls. Nurses at NECH-CIEH train others in the field to become hygiene ambassadors and educators by

and government aid. These mothers are powerfully pressing for change and providing solid data about Zika to influence public policies. Germana's work has led to the approval of laws that provides free anticonvulsive medications for people with disabilities and makes children with the congenital syndrome of Zika virus a social priority. After struggling to find a daycare with appropriate facilities, she worked within the courts to make it obligatory for schools to accommodate children with developmental disabilities. Her network is also socializing families to send their children to school. This has the two-fold effect of improving their cognitive development and creating a wider culture of tolerance that embraces the children as they grow.



SPOTLIGHT ON:

Innovation in eating disorder support

Without good information or effective communication strategies, young adults often struggle with another common, but complicated mental health challenge – eating disorders – and do not know how or when to ask for help. The Never Give Up organization, founded by **Simona Sinesi** works to reframe eating disorders and destigmatize an issue that is prevalent in Italian society. Self-discovery is the most important tool for young adults and teenagers to dig deeper into their personal habits while dealing with food-related illnesses. The Never Give Up Experience is an emotional audio-visual food workshop that is held at public spaces like concerts and schools, to create acceptance around the issues of food-related disorders. The program breaks down the stigma of asking for help by providing free, on-site support from a psychotherapist team, with an assurance to respond to emails within 24 hours. While still in early stages, Never Give Up is focusing on advocacy, early diagnosis and evidence-based treatment and post-treatment resources.

In the US, 1 in 10 individuals experience an eating disorder in their lifetimes. To eliminate the barriers to treatment, **Kristina Saffran's** Project HEAL is challenging the mental healthcare system to think differently about access. She brings together key stakeholders like insurance companies and treatment providers so that those who are afflicted with eating disorders have more financially accessible options. The current coverage model for eating disorders only pays for a certain number of therapy sessions or a limited duration of time in in-patient treatment programs. Kristina proposes a treat-to-outcome model, which commits to providing treatment until wellness milestones are reached.

THE OPPORTUNITY

As part of a continuing commitment to systemic change in the field of health, Making More Health, Ashoka's long-term partnership with Boehringer Ingelheim, continues to host the popular online professional development course on Social Intrapreneurship for Innovation in Health. Drawing from the insights of Ashoka Fellows working in health and focused on topics like the business case for social intrapreneurship, co-creation, challenges and opportunities, and strategies for advancing social intrapreneurship within institutions, the course has enabled health professionals from a diverse mix of public and private sector health professions, social entrepreneurs, students and business executives to connect. Nearly 500 participants participate annually with 70% pledging to start an intrapreneurial project or action after the course.





EMERGING INSIGHTS

04

EDUCATION

Bridging the gaps for more equitable learning

GLOBAL ISSUES



In some parts of the world, social innovations in educational access and design are bringing technology into the classroom, enabling students to engage in real-world simulations and preparing them with skills that will enable success in the 21st century.

Technology can democratize learning and enable young minds to have vast amounts of information available to them within milliseconds. This is not without its problems – digital environments mean that students can find themselves disconnected and place-less.

Unfortunately, in other places, including in the backyards of some of the world's wealthiest countries, access to quality, relevant and inclusive education eludes many. Children on the margins – from immigrant, indigenous or other minority communities – continue to find it difficult to assimilate or find representation in outdated curriculum.

THE HEADLINES

Overworked and undervalued: France's teachers slam poor working conditions

France24 5/13/2019

South Korea holds grueling 'make-or-break' college entrance exam

UPI 11/14/2019

Engaging our youth through experiential learning in Israel

The Jerusalem Post 12/23/2019

500,000 poor kids could lose eligibility for free school lunch

US News and World Report 7/29/2019



NEW IDEAS

16 Ashoka Fellows in 2019 are examining historical structures and gaps to implement new access models that improve educational outcomes. Fellows have developed tools and strategies to bring the experience of all children into the fold, including culturally sensitive pedagogies, empowering networks, and maximizing the potential of technology to fill gaps in knowledge and experience.

Increasing knowledge through culture

As more and more people migrate to urban South Korea – 50% of the country’s population resides in the Seoul metropolitan area – young people who remain in the countryside find themselves at an increased disadvantage in education and learning. Schools are shutting down in these regions at an alarming rate, leaving families with the difficult decision of where to educate their young people. **Deagon Yi** is working to revitalize diminishing communities through his Hae-ri Book Village model which focuses on “read, experience, write and publish together” as a main methodology for democratizing publication offering a replicable solution to address rural alienation. Since launching his publishing camp, nearly 100 books have been published from the Hae-ri village, a town of just 3,000 residents.

Representation and redirecting the eye of the public is important in **Shelly Elverum’s** work with Inuit youth in Canada. Young people in Nunavut Territory find themselves hugely disadvantaged, with statistically low levels of education and the cultural confusion of experiencing hybrid identities from both native and western upbringings. Shelly is filling a large gap in Arctic science by training young Northerners to combine local knowledge and science to drive new research about the environmental changes which are rapidly taking place in the region. Her SciQ program is already tipping knowledge hierarchies, creating viable employment opportunities and reshaping perceptions of Inuit youth’s potential, while harnessing and celebrating native knowledge.

Utilizing tech to bridge the educational access gaps

In Indonesia, there is a wide digital skills gap, especially among young people who come from rural areas that make up half of the country’s population. While there are positive signs like increasing mobile telephone infiltration, students are not being equipped with digital literacy that would enable them to tap technology’s full potential. **Dewis Akbar** created Lab on a Bike as a decentralized model of ICT education. Equipped with a motorbike that can be set up as a popup computer lab, off-duty teachers reach last mile communities to inspire and enable creative thinking, problem solving and lifelong tech learning. In the United Kingdom, **Jennifer Lexmond** uses tech to help parents, especially those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, prepare their young children for success in school. A mobile app, EasyPeasy,

helps parents come up with new educational games to play with children at home. Jennifer’s partnerships with Lego and the UK Department for Education and Skills are enabling more parents in the country to access the tools for free, with a target of 10,000 households to be reached as part of a research partnership.

In Tanzania, **Isaya Yunge** creates viable opportunities for low-income families to enable young people to access quality higher education. He built Somaapp, a mobile phone and web application, which tailors scholarship opportunities to the specific talents and qualities of applicants. In addition, the app provides support to applicants through sample essays and applications and engages an ecosystem of high schools, student communities, scholarship providers and universities. Within its first twelve months, Somaapp enabled 1,000 Tanzanian students to connect to short course, full study and conference scholarships. 15,000 students in Tanzania, Zambia, Rwanda, Nigeria and South Africa used the application to win a total of \$850,000 in scholarships.



Bolstering public education

In Germany’s stratified public education system, migrant children face hurdles to advance into upper-level or higher education. Upper schools (Gymnasiums) which feed into universities are often homogenous – whereas 47% of the attendance at lower schools, or vocational training programs, is made up of children with migrant or lower-economic backgrounds. To ensure that all children feel they have the potential to integrate, **Steffi Biester’s** Kickfair uses self-learning and peer support through street football to help young people experience cohesive and comprehensive kinesthetic, cognitive and emotional learning both on and off the field. Street football is a democratic game where young girls and boys are given the ability to negotiate and define the rules of the game before play and then are able to discuss compliance after it is over. Youth leaders help to guide and connect with younger players and become the leaders and organizers for future events. In one year, Kickfair has reached over 13,000 students during 730+ events in 40 locations across Germany. Steffi’s organization has been integrated into the curriculum at several schools and is targeting new networks to share the model for national adoption.

HOW TO:**Fight for equity
in US Schools**

In 2019, Ashoka elected two Fellows in the United States who are focused on bridging the achievement gap in public schools to ensure that young people of color are able to overcome the roots of systemic racism and succeed in their educational goals. **William Jackson's** Village of Wisdom works to reform the education system to reposition Black families to have more comprehensive decision-making in their children's education. **Laura Wilson Phelan** built Kindred out of a frustration that there were few authentic dialogue spaces where parents from diverse backgrounds could advocate and communicate their families' educational issues and needs.

Laura and William's work teaches us lessons in how to better structure an education system where everyone can be successful:

- 1. Make parents powerful:** Black parents often struggle to navigate racial bias and advocate for their children in schools. Village of Wisdom's flagship tool, Black Genius Profile, enables parents to assess their child's strengths and needs to share with their children's teachers. They also ensure that parents are equipped to advocate not just for their own children, but for culturally responsive education for all black youth. Kindred focuses on bringing parents of diverse backgrounds together and encourages them to take collective action to address inequity in their schools.
- 2. Have the hard conversations:** At their core, Kindred and Village of Wisdom focus on sparking dialogue on issues that are too often unspoken. Village of Wisdom uses a culturally affirming climate survey to assess student perceptions about a school. This data is then used to think critically about adjustments the school can make to change focus. Kindred's dialogue-to-action groups are safe spaces to talk about the difficulty of diversity, beyond the buzz word. These dialogues are designed to enable parents to move beyond bias and fear to really be able to push for the change that is needed to make public schools more equitable.
- 3. Build a community:** Both Kindred and Village of Wisdom use models that are strengthened by parents, educators and the community being able to work together to improve the spaces in which young people learn and grow. The end goal of Kindred's interventions are vibrant and engaged equity-driven parent groups whose voices are collectively amplified with tangible policy and norm changes in their children's schools. Village of Wisdom engages parent and student organizers as technical assistants who ensure that minority voices are heard by school leaders as they make decisions.

**THE
OPPORTUNITY**

Understanding the root causes to drive systemic change is something that Ashoka Fellows do with confidence. Within their institutions and organizations, there are no limits to their capacity to find and make change. One of the most persistent limitations, however, remains in the disconnect between funders and changemakers. Ashoka embarked to identify insights and recommendations to solve this chasm with publishing partners Catalyst 2030, Co-Impact, Echoing Green, Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship, and the Skoll Foundation with support from McKinsey and SystemIQ. The resulting report "Embracing Complexity: toward a shared understanding of funding systems change" is a collective effort to bring together leaders in the field of social innovation and identify core principles such as embracing a systems mindset, supporting evolving paths to systems change, working in true partnership, preparing for long-term engagement, and collaborating with other stakeholder. Ashoka welcomes thought partnerships that help to provide tools and resources to the wider ecosystem for lasting and sustained change.

The background of the page is a photograph of several Buddhist monks in traditional maroon robes standing behind a large array of solar panels. The monks are looking towards the camera with various expressions, some smiling. The solar panels are blue and mounted on a metal frame, extending from the foreground into the background.

EMERGING INSIGHTS

05

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Fighting censorship & misinformation

GLOBAL ISSUES

Technology is meant to make our lives better, easier, and more efficient. It is heralded as the great equalizer because it enables more direct communication, globalized networks, and transparency.



It has led to great advances in health and improved quality of life for many. But some argue that instead of creating a global world where more people access opportunity and advantage, it has done the opposite. In-country income inequality, as measured by the Gini coefficient, is higher than at any time since WWII.¹⁰ Robotics, automated processes, machine learning, big data and artificial intelligence are major culprits of this increase in inequality.

There is clearly no true picture of the advantages or consequences of technology, only that there is great urgency to improve our understandings of scientific discovery and technological use.

NEW IDEAS

In 2018, Ashoka signaled a rise in sci-preneurship – where scientists have begun to employ entrepreneurial strategies to combat fake news and promote the understanding and influence of science on the general public. This year's Fellows continue to devise solutions that help us to understand the complexity of the world we live in.

10. UN University. "Is Technological Innovation Making Society More Unequal?" United Nations University, 21 Dec. 2016.

THE HEADLINES

Smartphone 'addiction': Young people are 'panicky' when denied mobiles

BBC 11/29/2019

Artificial intelligence is threatening our freedom. But what can we do about it?

The Telegraph 6/20/2019

Malicious bots and trolls spread vaccine misinformation – now social media companies are fighting back

The Conversation 9/18/2019

Blockchain technology may (eventually) fix healthcare: just don't hold your breathe

Forbes 3/29/2019

They are battling censorship and fighting for control of the internet, helping to collect less biased and more nuanced big data, and developing technological solutions to advance agricultural industries around the world.

Censorship and internet freedom

As of October 2019, 58% of individuals around the world are active internet users, making it now impossible to imagine a world without rapid access to communication

and information.¹¹ In 2016, the United Nations Human Rights Council declared internet access a basic human right which is integral to enabling freedom of expression. And yet, countries around the world regularly slow down or shut off internet access to their citizenry as a form of social and political control.



Where the internet is available, the battle against censorship and misinformation rages. In France, **Emmanuel Vincent** recruits scientists to tackle false data on issues of scientific importance. Journalists and media organizations have begun to address incidences of “fake news,” but these are mostly connected to current events or politics and not the proliferation of false information about scientific issues that can have real world consequences. Scientists on their own cannot address the issue, so Emmanuel developed Science Feedback which provides a platform for academics to score and annotate the credibility of scientific information as it is reported in the news. Already two platforms – Climate Feedback and Health Feedback – have been launched for a network of over 350 scientists. Science Feedback is working with Google, Facebook and YouTube to integrate community fact-checking as part of its efforts to curb the spread of misinformation.

Data collection is no longer an innocuous task, especially since revelations surfaced about how personal data could be weaponized for political gain. In the United States, **Yeshimabeit Milner** believes that data science needs to be used for good – specifically to shine a light on and amplify the disenfranchised. Her movement, Data for Black Lives, is doing just that. She raises awareness in black communities about the mechanics of big data, like credit scores, and show them how algorithms can impact their daily lives. She also works to collect better and more useful data that can address issues of importance to the black community. Better data, for example, was used to improve maternal health care at the largest public hospital in Florida, an issue which disproportionately affected black women.

Data for agricultural transformation

Several Fellows have found that technology and data can transform one of the world’s oldest industries – agriculture. 49 million Indonesians, representing 41% of the country’s labor force, work in smallholder

agriculture. Agriculture makes up 14% of the country’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Perhaps unsurprisingly, despite their numbers and importance, farmers are some of the lowest paid and least connected citizens. **Regi Wahyu** thinks the problem is data. Changing weather patterns have made agriculture even more risky, making it harder for farmers to secure loans to advance their farming techniques. Regi is working on a blockchain model, HARA, that enables farmers to more actively participate in the whole agricultural ecosystem by helping to gather and put value on the data they collect. HARA involves four participants – the data providers (farmers and others), data buyers, data enrichers (who add value), and data qualifiers. HARA pays data collectors for their contributions and sells the data to banks and other lenders who are better able to assess risk and develop



financial products to serve this population. A transparent system because of its distribution on the blockchain, the platform has given 6,000 farmers better access to financing and increased their yields by 15% so far.

Mexico’s 17 million subsistence farmers face many of the same challenges as those in Indonesia, particularly fragmentation in the supply chain. Knowledge on the origin of much of the food consumed and produced by small holder farmers is lost, leading to the production of alternatives which undercut the prices of legitimate producers – for example, corn syrup is sold as honey – hurting the industry at large. **Vincent Lagacé’s** Nuup creates dialogues between the various agricultural stakeholders to define sector issues and propose solutions, impacting over 10,000 farmers, 18 companies, 17 civil society organizations, and 6 financial institutions to improve honey, coffee and fruit and vegetable value chains. From a technology perspective, Nuup is testing data tools like a web platform, mobile applications, and bots for WhatsApp and SMS that enable farmers to quickly share and discuss their needs and recommendations for production improvement, and develop greater understandings of market needs, conditions, technical product requirements, and financing options. A partnership with Technoserve and Walmart uses technology to capture and visualize the data of 8,000 small-scale fruit and vegetable farmers to monitor their development, advances in training and market readiness.

11. Clement, J. “Global Digital Population 2019.” Statista, 20 Nov. 2019.



SPOTLIGHT ON:

Technology and animal health in West Africa

Two Fellows in West Africa are devoted to disrupting the subsistence livestock industry. In Ghana, livestock plays a key economic role in families and is an important form of social security, but keeping livestock healthy is a challenge. Despite governmental interventions to promote vaccinations, rural farmers still fail to access and afford veterinary services for their animals. Nigeria loses 29.2 billion Naira to livestock diseases annually as there is no system for identifying and tracking disease epidemics. Many precautions that could be put in place before a disease spreads fail because of a lack of a centralized system.

Peter Awin's CowTribe tackles the problem in Ghana with the creation of an on-demand mobile subscription service that connects livestock farmers with veterinarians and delivers animal vaccines and other livestock healthcare services to farmers in Ghana.

Femi Kayode's Vetsark developed the Alpha Prime Disease Surveillance Technology that is predicting, preventing, and controlling pests and disease outbreaks in Nigeria to protect crops and livestock.

Both are using the power of technology to solve the challenges of livestock production and industry in regions of West Africa that have not been prioritized or seen the potential of a streamlined, efficient, and more healthy value chain in livestock.



THE OPPORTUNITY

Social innovation and technology go hand and hand. Ashoka has been at the forefront of iterating new ways to use technology to share ideas, spread movements, and find and support new innovators. Partnerships with companies who have supported online changemaker challenges like T-Mobile - a national mobile network in the US, the credit card company American Express, HSBC Bank, the Purina pet food company, among others have helped to source, highlight and support emerging innovators around the world. Our partners are helping to spread changemaking around the world and creating a pipeline for future Ashoka Fellows.



EMERGING INSIGHTS

06

LABOR & MIGRATION

Protecting a mobilized labor force

GLOBAL ISSUES

While there is evidence to suggest that worldwide unemployment rates have been steadily declining, this trend has not coincided with a similar decline in low-quality and dangerous working conditions.



In 2018, 3.3 million people did not enjoy economic security, material well-being or equality in opportunity and 700 million people continue to live in poverty even though they are employed.¹²

Labor and migration go hand-in-hand. Lack of employment and labor conditions are a big reason that workers make the journey across international borders to seek economic opportunity. In 2018, there were 164 million migrant workers, most of whom should be the most vibrant and productive members of their home country's workforce.¹³

12. International Labour Office. World employment and social outlook: trends 2019. Geneva: International Labour Organization, 2019.

13. ILO Global Estimates on International Migrant Workers – Results and Methodology (December 2018) - World. International Labour Organization, Dec. 2018.

THE HEADLINES

Union membership in the US keeps on falling, like almost everywhere else

Quartz 2/5/2019

Picked by slaves: coffee crisis brews in Brazil

Reuters 12/12/2019

Japan loves robots, but getting them to do human work isn't easy

New York Times 12/31/2019

Hong Kong's domestic workers feel caught between both sides in information war

The Washington Post 10/23/2019

NEW IDEAS

This year, Ashoka Fellows are working to solve many of the fundamental issues at the heart of labor migration.

They are tackling the complicated networks of cross-border employment by going to employment agencies, companies and domestic employers to shift mindsets toward equitable pay and fair conditions. They are also working to revive and create industries in their home countries, to provide opportunities that provide an antidote to migration. Their work shows new avenues to overcome unequal and unfair labor practices worldwide.

Globalized movements for migrant workers

There are an estimated 11.5 million migrant domestic workers around the world; 380,000 workers, mainly from the Philippines and Indonesia, work in Hong Kong. By law, migrant workers are required to use employment agencies in order to seek employment in Hong Kong, a system that is rife with abuse. A 2016 report by the Justice Centre found that 1 in 6 domestic workers in Hong Kong was forced into labor and 31% do not feel they are able to change their employer due to a high debt burden that begins before they've even arrived.¹⁴ **Scott Stiles** is working to change this pattern of debt bondage and exploitation with his organization, the Fair Employment Agency (FEA). He has removed the fee for migrant job seekers and focuses on quality and professionalism as a means of attracting employers to cover the costs. Since its founding,

Democratizing labor rights

The rise of new forms of labor and disruptive industries has led to a decline in traditional labor protection systems worldwide. This problem has been especially acute in the United States where organized labor has been drastically weakened as gig economies take hold. **Michelle Miller** is solving this problem with her organization Coworker.org which empowers any worker to be able to advocate for improved working conditions and wages. The platform enables workers to start campaigns to advocate for changes in their workplace. Employees can join together and win change for themselves and others. Since its inception, worker-led victories have included expanded family paid leave at Starbucks, in-app tipping with Uber, a wage increase for REI employees and the elimination of product sales goals at Wells Fargo.



FEA has become the largest migrant worker recruiter in the country, taking 5% of the market share. Scott is now focused on building a recruitment agency in Manila to tackle the migrant labor problem at its source.

In Singapore, foreigners, including both expatriates and domestic workers, make up 40% of the labor force, from Bangladesh, China, Thailand and Indonesia are mainly employed in construction, manufacturing and shipping and are in the country with 8-10-year legal work passes. Despite having legal status, they tend to live on the margins of Singaporean society, in substandard housing and without access to education or other tools to improve their skills or knowledge. **Sazzad Hossain** developed the Social Development Initiative, or SDI Academy, to help migrants and refugees improve their personal development during the time they spend in the country. The academy focuses on English language acquisition, IT and computer literacy, and entrepreneurship training that makes them more efficient and productive workers and equips them with skills to take back to their countries of origin. Since 2013, over 7,500 students have been trained and more than 120,000 people have been engaged in building out more supportive ecosystems for workers to thrive in Singapore and beyond. Sazzad is working with accelerators in Bangladesh to promote entrepreneurship for returnees.

In Bangladesh, **Nazma Akhter** is democratizing the fight for labor rights with the Awaj Foundation, which catalyzes women-led organizations to address issues in the ready-made garments industry. The sector accounts for 20% of Bangladesh's GDP, but is also home to disparaging working conditions, weak labor laws and human rights violations. Garment industry trade unions began to organize in the 1980s, but the leadership in these organization did not represent women who make up the majority of workers in the sector. Nazma has taken a holistic approach to encourage women-led change in the field of labor rights. Workers' cafes provide women with legal aid and health services trainings, train workers and managers on legal rights and responsibilities, and build coalitions between factory workers, owners and the government to advocate for workers' rights. Awaj Foundation is the largest provider of legal aid in the country and has helped over 16,000 individuals access support.

Maintaining tradition for economic vitality

Dinny Jusuf is working on the other end of international labor migration, revitalizing a traditional industry to enable potential migrants to have economic opportunity at home in Indonesia. Driven by poverty and limited economic opportunities, 9 million Indonesians work

14. "Coming Clean Report." Justice Centre Hong Kong, Mar. 2016.



overseas; 67% of them are women.¹⁵ Dinny's organization Toraja Melo is tackling this out-flow by revitalizing the market for traditional weaving. By working alongside fashion consultants in Jakarta to market the product, Dinny has organized women's cooperatives in four locations in the countryside where women engage in peer-to-peer support and learning. 1,000 women across these locations have joined Toraja Melo and some are even returnees from domestic work abroad. Weavers have seen 200-300% increases in income. Combined with community-based tourism and other models

of economic empowerment, Toraja Melo plans to expand by five-fold over the coming year.

Similarly, **Dan Driscoll** knows that tradition can bring modern solutions to economic inequality. The artisan sector in Morocco has seen a steady decline in participation, with an average 17% dropping out each year – from 1.1 million artisans in 2007 to just 300,000 artisans in 2016. The decline in participation in the artisan sector does not match the demand for hand-made Moroccan products. The discrepancy can be explained mainly as the result of deep-rooted and legalized middleman exploitation where brokers often keep 96% of the final price – a reality which

has been supported by unfair legislation that made it illegal for an artisan to sell products internationally on their own. Dan's solution has been to dismantle these structural barriers through technology (a platform for artisans' work), policy changes and advocacy, cooperative restructuring and supply change reform. The company, Anou, is artisan-led, linked by technology, engages in collective bargaining, and drives changes in legislation and middle-men negotiations. They have a network of 70 cooperatives, 600 artisans, see annual sales over 2 million Moroccan Dirhams, and control 2.5% of Moroccan exports to the United States.

15. Missbach, A. (2018). Indonesia: A country grappling with migrant protection at home and abroad. Migration Information Source. September 19, 2018.

HOW TO:

Make retail work aspirational

India is a country of shopkeepers: retail is the second biggest industry in the country after agriculture. As an industry of \$1.3 billion, it is one of the largest in the world. Despite this, working in the retail sector is often cast as a low-wage, undesirable position. It has been stigmatized as a job for desperate, uneducated and unskilled members of society. In this environment, retail owners have not had many incentives to upskill or create pathways for advancement for their workers.

B.S. Nagesh had an early passion for retail management. With new technology and improved systems and processes, Nagesh built one of India's largest retail conglomerate, Shoppers Stop, and founded the professional Retail Association of India. At the height of all his success, he was troubled by the opportunities available for workers. He founded TRRAIN (Trust for Retailers and Retail Associates of India) to change mindsets nationally and to create professions rather than jobs. The "Retail Employees' Day" celebrates retail employees and their contributions and annually holds Retail Awards where CEOs of India's biggest retailers, along with celebrities and media, share in the stories of service. He is spreading his Pride-Respect-Inclusion-Skill model and hundreds of retailers across the country are seeing the business sense in lifting up retail associates.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Why work with one social entrepreneur when you can bring together many? Ashoka's Venture program finds and identifies social entrepreneurs around the world to help them achieve their vision for systemic change, Ashoka's Fellowship program connects Fellows within countries, regions and across the globe – for peer support, for ideas exchange, and for collaborative enterprise. In 2019, fellowship events around the globe included the European Changemaker Summit in Barcelona where 50 fellows from across Europe connected, celebrated, learned and collaborated with 1500 participants. Partnerships with Google, BMW Foundation, Boehringer Ingelheim, Glovo, Sage Foundation, Danone and Caixa Bank enabled the multi-perspective, multi-day event. In Nairobi, Fellows from across the continent met for two days of collaboration and leadership in partnership with the British Council and supported by Boehringer Ingelheim, Mars Wrigley, CTA, UNDP, and Thomson Reuters. Across the United States, Fellows embarked on a Welcome Change tour with themed events in five cities, where they met and helped to give context to issues like legal innovation, building changemaker movements, racial healing, rural innovation and climate change. Connecting Fellows to each other to expand their opportunities is core to Ashoka's vision.



EMERGING INSIGHTS

07

CIVIL SOCIETY

Accountability & transparency for the public

GLOBAL ISSUES

Civil society organizations carve out a unique sector beyond governments and business and are often considered to be the foundation of a free and democratic society.



Civil societies promote plural ideas, advocate for the unheard, drive social change, and seek justice. Unfortunately, civic spaces and associational life have been under increasing threat in a number of countries and this plays out in a number of ways: public attacks that discredit civil society groups, restrictive laws, or co-optation of previously independent associations to serve political ends.

After gains throughout the 20th century, 2018 saw the 13th consecutive year of decline in global freedom. The problem is widespread – affecting countries in every region of the world.¹⁶

16. House, Freedom. "Freedom in the world 2019: Democracy in retreat. Washington DC: Freedom House." 2019.

THE HEADLINES

Democracy is fighting for its life

Foreign Policy 9/10/19

How digital disinformation spread through the 2018 Latin American elections

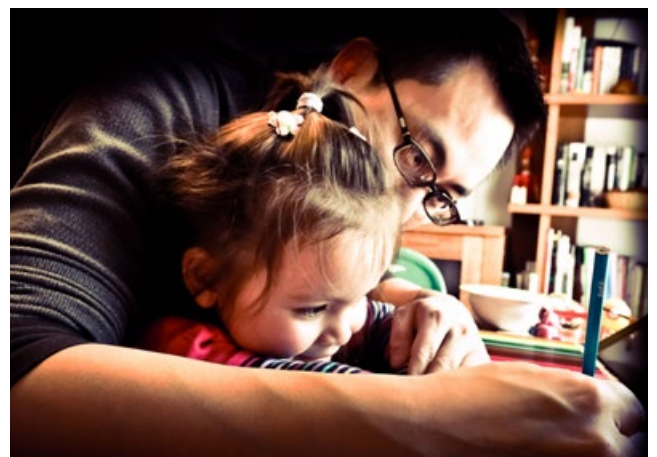
U.S. News and World Report 8/2/19

Hong Kong's Protest Movement will not back down empty-handed

The Economist 8/23/19

Is Africa going backwards on Democracy?

BBC News 2/22/19



NEW IDEAS

To counter this decline, this year's Ashoka Fellows are working for reforms in justice systems and creating new avenues for civic engagement. Major strategies involve creating networked communities who are armed with knowledge to advocate for transparency within systems that have become closed. From making the process of obtaining legal advice easier for asylees in the United States to holding local governments accountable in Mexico, social entrepreneurs are at the frontlines of ensuring vibrant and active civil societies.

Adam Foss is addressing the United States legal system from a different angle. With 2.3 million people imprisoned across the country, the US incarcerates people at a higher rate than any other country.¹⁷ 68% of released prisoners will be re-arrested within 6 years.¹⁸ One of the most powerful actors in the system are the prosecutors who can determine the fates of the millions of women and men who pass through the system. Many, fresh from law school, are not able to break out of a system that prioritizes winning cases over identifying root causes



Public and human rights defense

It is no secret that the legal system in the United States is complicated. Two Fellows this year are working to mitigate a system that unfairly discriminates and excludes.

One of the biggest recurring news stories in 2019 was the treatment of families seeking asylum at the southern United States border. As reports of gross mistreatment of asylees and the detention of their children have rolled out, so have reports of the complex and rapidly changing asylum laws that have made winning a case extremely difficult. In fact, only 3% of asylum seekers who face the court without a lawyer are granted asylum. **Swapna Reddy's** Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project (ASAP) is working to address many of these issues through a model that provides a private, online community for asylum seekers to ask questions from experts, learn about immigration enforcement changes, and share stories and strategies. These online communities also provide a Legal Emergency Room where asylum seekers can get short-term legal aid during crises. ASAP also litigates cases as part of their efforts to uncover patterns of injustice. Since 2015, they have expanded to assist asylum seekers in more than 40 states.

like trauma, poverty, homelessness or mental illness that bring many people to court. Adam's organization, Prosecutor Impact, works to address these critical issues through trainings for new prosecutors, culture change planning, continuing education and a national peer network of support. By exposing prosecutors to the systemic and root cause issues of the crimes they will see in their jobs before they begin, Prosecutor Impact provides them with tools to develop solutions that are more just, fair, and better protect the communities they serve.

Reigniting civic engagement

These days, it can feel like civility – the idea that societies are linked through common interests and collective responsibility – is lost. Several Fellows are building tools that encourage and ignite civic engagement. A history of corrupt and authoritarian governments in Mexico has made the population especially apathetic to civic engagement.¹⁹ And this has led to a mutually reinforcing

17. Ye Hee Lee, Michelle. "Yes, US locks people up at a higher rate than any other country." Washington Post (July 7), 2015.

18. Alper, Mariel, Matthew R. Durose, and Joshua Markman. 2018 update on prisoner recidivism: A 9-year follow-up period (2005-2014). US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2018.

19. Ellingwood, Ken. "Disenchantment may keep Mexico's young voters on sidelines." The Los Angeles Times 12, 2012.

apathy between the government and its citizens. Misuse of public funds is left unchallenged, the impunity of public servants and private companies is unmitigated, and law and order are unenforced. Civic values are trampled on daily as citizens struggle to understand their role in a democracy. **Arturo Hernandez Ortega** founded Los Supercívicos as a national strategy to generate civic consciousness. Using humorous viral videos, an interactive platform for citizens to report, and alliances with city councils, Arturo is building social awareness campaigns that people

pay attention to which shed light and hold politicians accountable. With over 2 million social media followers, Los Supercívicos has seen the unexpected impact of city councils across Mexico competing to resolve the greatest number of citizen reports.

Romania has typically scored low on Transparency International's corruption index. Civic engagement has been slow to pick up since the fall of communism 30 years ago. One answer to this issue has been the establishment of Funky Citizens, a Romanian

initiative that is the brainchild of **Elena Calistru**. The initiative is based on four principles – good branding to make “civic fitness” a lifelong habit; a large and engaged community that develops their own civic projects; a focus on topics of expertise; and a network of partners to replicate their model. Data-driven, online advocacy tools focused on issues like good governance, public spending, open justice, and anticorruption are supplemented with engaging visuals, infographics, and videos that encourage youth to be a part of democratic decision-making.

SPOTLIGHT ON:

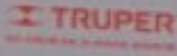
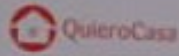
Protagonists for Change

“Lobbying is neither good nor bad: it’s just a tool,” says founder of The Good Lobby **Alberto Alemanno** – and he’s working to ensure that lobbying, a tool used for good. Policy making rarely includes the people for which the policies are written – 75% of meetings include shareholders or corporate elites and fail to include the wider population. As a result, lobbying has come to be associated with something negative or dirty. The reality is that most everyday citizen know little of the processes of how policies are created, and politicians quickly become detached from the needs of their constituents. Citizen-led campaigns on platforms like change.org or avaaaz.org can rally people behind a cause, but often do not lead to actual legal changes or policy shifts.

The Good Lobby was created as a means to engage citizens more effectively as contributors. Arturo believes that lobbying can become as commonplace as a hobby and that lobbyist communities can become regular spaces for people to exercise their citizenship. In Europe, the Good Lobby hosts workshops and shares content from a ten-step citizen lobbying toolkit, which arms citizens with tools for legal, strategic, administrative and communicative aspects of the lobbying process. From these workshops, diverse citizen groups composed of a mix of professionals and non-experts come together and take on five to six citizen-led lobbying projects. He also matchmakes civil society organizations to these groups to bolster their advocacy needs. More than 1,100 citizens have been trained and linked, and roughly 60 legal and advocacy projects are incubated and completed each year. An annual Good Lobby Awards celebrates projects and initiatives led by citizens lobbying for change.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Learning and insights on the future of social good are key objectives for Ashoka teams throughout the world. With over 3,600 Fellows in the network, we have the experience, expertise, and data to understand key trends, new strategies, and innovative approaches in diverse fields. That’s why the Ashoka Learning and Action Center (LAC) was launched in 2018 to produce and disseminate practical research that cuts across Ashoka’s programs and initiatives. In 2019, the LAC team produced *Doing Democracy: How Social Entrepreneurs Bridge Divides, Fight Apathy and Strengthen Civil Liberties*, based on an analysis of 25 Fellows who are explicitly focused on promoting societies based on democratic values. Stay tuned for more tools and insights from the Ashoka network.



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:

<p>1</p> <h2>Nominate</h2> <p>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.</p>	<p>2</p> <h2>First Opinion</h2> <p>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.</p>
<p>3</p> <h2>Second Opinion</h2> <p>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.</p>	<p>4</p> <h2>Panel</h2> <p>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.</p>

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.



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

Jen'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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PARTNER WITH US

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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