



**FROM A SINGLE SEED,
A FOREST GROWS.**

**THE ROLE OF ASHOKA IS
TO FIND THE FEW, TO HELP
THE MANY, SEEKING OUT
THOSE WITH THE ENERGY,
COMMITMENT AND IDEAS
TO TRANSFORM LIVES.**

We call them Ashoka Fellows. By helping them connect with like-minded people they change systems, laws, and find new solutions to old problems.

On average one Ashoka Fellow impacts the lives of 800,000 people.

FROM A SINGLE SEED, A FOREST GROWS.



FINDING THE FEW



What makes Ashoka unique are the lengths we go to find the social entrepreneurs who can truly make a difference.

WE FIND 1 FELLOW FOR EVERY 10 MILLION PEOPLE.

Potential Fellows must show: the originality of their solution, creativity, entrepreneurial quality, social impact and trustworthiness.

A five-stage selection process involves rigorous due diligence by Ashoka's team (at local and global levels) that includes assessment by independent, leading social and business entrepreneurs from the host country.

Being rigorous up front means we find the best people and the best ideas to create the biggest impact.

By preparing the soil, we ensure the seed will grow.

SUPPORTING THE FEW



Having selected a Fellow, we don't leave them alone, we bring others to the table – funders, decision-makers, experts, to make sure their efforts come to fruition.

We offer strategic guidance, mentorship, connection to funders, new partnerships, access to new team members, support for their well-being, and contribute to media visibility. Most importantly, Ashoka Fellows join a global peer-to-peer community, collaborating across borders to help their ideas grow.

Each Fellow is funded for three years. But we don't stop there. Even when the stipend finishes, we continue to support them to scale their ideas. It's a lifetime commitment to bringing about change.

They are supported at every stage, from seed to forest.



HELPING THE MANY

Since we started in 1980, Ashoka has found over 4,000 Fellows, impacting lives in 98 countries. On average the idea of each Fellow is replicated in four to six countries.

650 MILLION PEOPLE ACROSS THE WORLD BENEFITED FROM THE WORK OF ASHOKA FELLOWS SURVEYED IN 2021.

The work is so far reaching that Ashoka has been ranked in the top ten NGOs since 2015.

“Before receiving Ashoka’s support, we reached approximately 140,000 inhabitants annually; this year we are approaching four million.”

Albina Ruiz, Founder of Ciudad Saludable and Ashoka Fellow Peru



[Read Ashoka’s global impact survey here](#)



HELPING THE MANY, ACROSS THE WORLD

GLADYS KALEMA.
FELLOW SINCE 2006.

“Supported by Ashoka, I’ve helped create a safe co-existence between gorillas and humans. Local communities were poor; hunting gorillas for ‘bushmeat’ was the only way to feed their families. To protect the gorillas I worked with locals to become guardians of these endangered animals. By improving human health we could improve animal health. Many thought my idea was naïve, too complicated, undeliverable. But Ashoka believed in me. They continuously supported me, sharpening my strategy, finding new funders, and linking me with a community of like-minded people.”



When I started there were **650** gorillas left in Uganda's National Parks. Today there are **1063**

"My support for the local community has also reaped health benefits. They have the lowest birth-rate of any Ugandan rural community. Tuberculosis and other infectious diseases have diminished, reducing the impact of these diseases on gorillas."

"Without Ashoka's unwavering support I wouldn't be where I am today."

[**WATCH GLADYS' TESTIMONIAL HERE**](#)



OUR GOLD STANDARD

How we select the few.

The process of selection is a transformative and enlightening experience. Candidates articulate their innovations, and how they have the potential to change sector-wide systems. They scrutinize their strategies and methods, and reflect on how they engage as individuals and leaders in today's world. A five-stage selection process involves rigorous due diligence.

1

NOMINATION

Ashoka actively searches and receives nominations from staff, volunteers, partners, Ashoka Fellows, and nominators, based on the five criteria for Ashoka Fellowship.

2

FIRST OPINION

The local Ashoka team reviews the nominations to identify a key social innovation. They conduct site visits and meet with the candidate, and then review their work with other experts in the field.

3

SECOND OPINION

A senior Ashoka representative from outside the region interviews each candidate in-person, applying Ashoka's criteria, probing a candidate's life history, and relying on their deep understanding of social entrepreneurship.

4

PANEL

Three leading social and business entrepreneurs from the same region interview the candidate to assess the innovation in the local context. The panel, facilitated by the second opinion interviewer, decides by consensus whether they recommend election.

5

BOARD

Ashoka's Board of Directors reviews the candidate's case in light of the observations made by the local team, second opinion interviewer, and panelists. They make a final decision about whether to select the candidate to be an Ashoka Fellow.

92% of Fellows said that the selection process strengthened their idea.

For more information, download the [Report The Art of Finding Changemakers](#)

OUR GOLD STANDARD

How we select the few.

Ashoka's selection process is anchored by our five criteria against which all Fellow candidates are evaluated in every step of the selection process:

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 and can demonstrate proof of impact.

CREATIVITY



Successful social entrepreneurs are creative both as goal-setting visionaries and as problem solvers that are capable of engineering their visions into reality.

ENTREPRENEURIAL QUALITY



Future Fellows 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.

SOCIAL IMPACT OF THE IDEA



Is the idea likely to solve an important social problem at the continental level? Is the idea itself sufficiently new, practical, and useful so that people working in the field will adopt and replicate it?

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.

HOW WE SUPPORT THE FEW



Ashoka invests in exceptional people. Our support is unconditional and life-long and supports Ashoka Fellows alongside the life cycle of their work: from proof of impact to scaling to unleashing global systems change.



We connect Fellows with our global community of peers and supporters, for example through the Ashoka Changemaker Summits, that connect our communities across whole continents.

Fellows take part in training to accelerate their changemaking skills. They are guided to develop system changing strategies, build multi-stakeholder collaborations and scale their ideas across borders.

We facilitate collaborations between Fellows and supporters and help to build alliances between them to achieve systems change on issues like biodiversity protection, migration or health.

HOW WE SUPPORT THE FEW



- ▶ They receive a 3-years stipend at the start to fully focus on scaling their new idea.
- ▶ They can tap into tailored pro-bono support through partners like Accenture, Microsoft, Google, PwC or Hogan Lovells.
- ▶ We help them tell their story, enabling their new ideas to become mainstream.
- ▶ We even support them in times of crisis on their wellbeing and physical security.

Link to our Fellowship & Community Program [here](#).



IMPACT ON FELLOWS



88%

Of Ashoka Fellows report that Ashoka changed how they see themselves as a leader.

88%

of Fellows in Europe who responded feel strongly connected to the Ashoka community.

77%

partnered with at least one other Fellow.

74%

developed new partnerships through connections made within the community.

IMPACT OF FELLOWS

Every three years, Ashoka conducts a study to understand how its Fellows are driving lasting social change. In 2021, we quantified how Ashoka Fellows shift mindsets, change policies, and activate others as Changemakers.

71% of Fellows brought about legislative change or influenced government policy.

82% have had their innovations replicated by others.

88% of Fellows encourage people to think differently.

89% of Fellows are putting young people in charge.



RAJ JAYADEV

FELLOW SINCE 2014

"I noticed how those from poor backgrounds in the US are at an extreme disadvantage when it comes to criminal justice. Under-resourced public defenders often don't have the time or money to defend those accused of a crime. With the backing of Ashoka I helped create a participatory defence movement, which involves recruiting the friends, colleagues and neighbours of the accused to provide the support and information needed to help defend their case. To date the movement has helped save over 7,000 years prison time."

[WATCH RAJ'S TESTIMONAL HERE](#)



BART WEETJENS

FELLOW SINCE 2006.

“When I was nine years old, I was given a hamster as a present. Little did I know this small creature would not only begin a lifelong fascination with rodents but become the catalyst for an idea that would change the lives of so many. In later years I became aware of the terrible toll of landmines. They cause up to 20,000 casualties every year, often harming innocent people. I saw that de-mining techniques were often slow, expensive and dangerous. A new approach was needed. Using my knowledge of rodents, I trained Giant Rats to detect landmines. The benefit is they’re light so won’t activate the mines, they’re also inexpensive and can cover areas much faster than traditional de-mining techniques.”



The Giant Rats have made
Mozambique landmine free and

**HAVE FREED
2,193,378**

people from the terror of
mines.

Ashoka has been instrumental in funding,
supporting and spreading the idea across the
world.



[WATCH BART'S
TESTIMONIAL HERE](#)





**THANK YOU - GRACIAS - OBRIGADO - TACK
ASANTE - תודה - AHÉHEE' - ENKOSI - MERCI
SALAMAT - DANKE - شكرا - GRAZIE - DZIĘKUJĘ
TERIMA KASIH - KÖSZÖNÖM - धन्यवाद
MULTUMESC - QUJANNAMIİK - ありがとう**

SOME OF THE LANGUAGES SPOKEN IN THE 98 COUNTRIES WHERE ASHOKA IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE.



ASHOKA

A close-up photograph of a forest floor. The ground is covered in a thick layer of dark green moss. Scattered around are several fallen leaves in various stages of decay, ranging from bright yellow to brown. In the center of the frame, a single green acorn with its cap is resting on the moss. The background is softly blurred, showing more of the forest floor and some green foliage on the right side.

From a single seed, a forest grows.