

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

#### WHAT IS THE MISSION OF THE GLOBAL FELLOWS PROGRAM?

The mission of the Acumen Global Fellows Program is to build the next generation of social sector leaders by providing them with skills, tools and opportunities to reach their full leadership potential. Each year, Acumen recruits highly talented and passionate young professionals to reflect on their role as leaders, build their leadership capacity, and provide management support to a company in our ecosystem.

#### HOW IS THE FELLOWS PROGRAM STRUCTURED?

##### **Leadership Training: September - November, Acumen NYC**

The Program begins with two months of intensive training at the Acumen offices in New York. Our training curriculum takes a systems-change approach towards solving the problems of poverty, enabling Fellows to learn tools and techniques essential to helping early-stage social enterprises grow, scale and better serve their target markets. Over 8 weeks Fellows attend trainings and workshops that focus on moral imagination, emphasize collaborative leadership and orient their thinking towards a systems change approach. Acumen partners with some of the foremost organizations to deliver this leadership curriculum.

##### **Field Placement: November - August, Field Placement**

For nine months, Fellows work at a company in Acumen's ecosystem as key staff members. Fellows work directly with entrepreneurs, interact with customers, and grapple first-hand, with the complex issues of addressing the needs of the poor.

##### **Debrief and Beyond: September – onwards, Acumen NYC**

Fellows return to New York to share their insights and lessons learned with the Acumen staff and community. The Debrief period ends with the Fellows Celebration, where we honor each Fellow's dedication and commitment to finding new and innovative ways to tackling global poverty. Post-Fellowship, Fellows join our growing Alumni community and remain connected to our global network of Fellows through gatherings, newsletters, participation in future selection processes, and other opportunities.

#### WHO BECOMES A FELLOW?

Acumen Fellows are drawn from a pool of talented, passionate individuals from all geographies, sectors, backgrounds, religions and ages. Ideal Fellows include those who have already decided on a career in the social sector. Fellows are both entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs creating disruptive change and addressing problems of global poverty.

#### IS THE PROGRAM ONLY OPEN TO US CITIZENS OR DO YOU WELCOME FOREIGN APPLICANTS?

Acumen seeks Fellows who will bring diverse backgrounds, training and experience to create a dynamic team environment. We welcome applicants of any nationality, and we are prepared to do what is possible and reasonable, within the guidelines of US and international immigration authority, to address Fellows' visa and immigration needs in order to ensure that we include the most promising future leaders in our upcoming cohort.

### IS THERE AN AGE OR EDUCATION REQUIREMENT FOR THE PROGRAM?

There is no specific age or degree required for the program. However, we seek individuals with 4–7 years of work experience. On average, our Fellows cohort has 7 years' work experience.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

### WHAT DOES ACUMEN LOOK FOR IN FELLOWS APPLICANTS?

We are looking for individuals who are adaptable and disruptive, and have the passion to challenge current systems to create more inclusive ones that provide access and dignity to more people. We are seeking candidates who will navigate fast-paced and resource-constrained environments with enthusiasm, patience, and imagination. We prefer individuals who have previously taken on significant leadership and management responsibilities, and who have had experience working in ambiguous environments - ideally in the developing world. While each Fellow comes from a diverse background and brings a unique skill set to the Fellowship, we have identified some key indicators of a successful Fellow:

- + Demonstrated passion and commitment to creating positive social change
- + Proven track record of leadership and management responsibilities
- + Experience living and working in emerging markets
- + Grit, courage, and perseverance
- + A minimum of 4 years work experience
- + Strong business experience: finance, operations, sales, marketing, and/or consulting

### WHAT DOES THE ONLINE APPLICATION FOR THE FELLOWS PROGRAM ENTAIL?

There are five parts that constitute the initial application process for the Fellows Program:

- Background Information
- Your Resume/ CV –no longer than 3 pages
- Applicant Summary and Overview
- Two Professional References
- Essay Questions

Through our online application system, you will first need to create an application account. When you do this, you will be asked to upload your resume and to create an applicant profile. Your personal profile will include your personal contact information, basic information about your professional and educational

background. You will also be asked to provide the contact information for two professional references that know you well.

In addition, you will be asked to complete short and long essay questions. These questions will give Acumen a better sense of who you are, what you are passionate about, and how the Fellows Program will further your growth and development. Please view the Application Instructions for more details about preparing each part of the application.

The application process for the 2017 cohort open on Tuesday, November 10, 2015 and close on **Tuesday, December 8, 2015 at 11:59pm EST**. All applications must be completed and submitted online. It is recommended that you submit your application well in advance of the deadline to avoid any last-minute technical difficulties or connectivity problems.

### WHAT DOES THE SELECTION PROCESS FOR THE FELLOWS PROGRAM ENTAIL?

- **November 10:** Online application process opens
- **December 8 at 11:59 PM EST:** Online application process closes
- **January:** Skype/Phone interviews conducted with selected candidates
- **February – March:** In-person interviews conducted with selected candidates
- **April- May:** Final candidates selected and offers made

#### Skype/Phone Interviews

Our global selection team will review all applications and will select a subset of candidates for 30-45 minute Skype interviews, to be conducted in January 2016. In case you internet bandwidth does not allow for Skype calls we will call you on the phone, however Skype video interviews are preferred.

#### In-person Interviews

Following these interviews, the team will select a smaller subset of finalist candidates who will be invited to attend a full day of in-person interviews at one of several interview locations around the world. In-person interviews will include a case study, panel interview, group activities, and a community dinner. These interview events will be held between February and March 2016.

Once all in-person interview events are completed, the selection team will make their final decisions. We expect to extend offers to join the 2017 cohort by April 2016. *(Please note that this timetable may be subject to change, due to travel schedules and other unforeseen circumstances.)*

### CAN I APPLY FOR BOTH THE REGIONAL FELLOWS PROGRAM AND THE GLOBAL FELLOWS PROGRAM?

No. While both the Regional Fellows Programs and Global Fellows Program share the same core curriculum, there are a few key differences between the two programs. Therefore, candidates may only apply to one program per year and should choose the program that makes the most sense for them. Two of the most important differences between the two programs are their eligibility requirements and how

they are structured.

**Eligibility:** Regional Fellows are local leaders dedicated to alleviating poverty in their own country/region, and must be from the country/region of the program they are applying for. For example, an applicant to the Pakistan Fellows Program must be Pakistani. On the other hand, Global Fellows can be from any country in the world.

**Structure:** The Global Fellows Program is a full-time fellowship where Fellows leave their jobs for one year and undergo a field placement with an organization in South Asia, Africa or Latin America – often times in a foreign country. On the other hand, the Regional Fellows Program does not have an immersive field placement and Fellows remain and come together for week-long seminars through the year. The Regional Fellows Program is a “part-time” commitment so that these Regional Fellows – many of whom are entrepreneurs and cannot take a year away from their project – can continue to manage the social impact initiative that they are leading, while still receiving periodic training.

Please consider the eligibility requirements and how much time you are able to commit and then decide for yourself which program is a better fit for you.

### CAN ALUMNI OF ONE PROGRAM APPLY AND PARTICIPATE IN ANOTHER? (I.E. CAN A GLOBAL FELLOW JOIN A REGIONAL FELLOWS PROGRAM?)

No. Each cohort of Acumen Fellows – whether Regional or Global – must comprise of individuals who have not previously taken part in an Acumen Fellows Program. While the programs are structured differently and have different eligibility requirements, the core curriculum is still the same across both programs. Participating in the program again would be redundant.

In addition, regardless of what program an Acumen Fellow graduates from, they join a single worldwide Alumni ecosystem and have access to the entire Fellows community and Acumen network. For example, an East Africa Fellow automatically has access to the Global Fellows network and vice versa. You would still have the same contacts, whether or not you repeat the program.

However, it is possible for individuals who have participated in a +Acumen course/chapter or an internship at Acumen to apply for the Global Fellows Program. These groups have not gone through the Fellows leadership curriculum, and are not currently a part of the Fellows community. So they would have much to gain from becoming an Acumen Fellow.

### DO I NEED TO PROVIDE A RECOMMENDATION LETTER?

No. You only need to provide the contact information for two professional references. They should be people with whom you've worked with - not family, friends, or a spouse. Ideally one of these references should be a former supervisor. Your referees may be contacted by the selection committee at any point via the email addresses and/or phone numbers you provide. You DO NOT need to provide a letter of recommendation as part of your application.

I'VE ALREADY SUBMITTED MY APPLICATION, BUT I'D LIKE TO MAKE SOME CHANGES. IS THIS POSSIBLE?

Unfortunately, no – it is not possible. It is clearly stated on the application form and on the website that after you click the submit button you will no longer be able to make any changes. Once you've submitted your application, it is not possible to "unsubmit."

### FIELD PLACEMENT

CAN FELLOWS BRING THEIR SPOUSE, PARTNER AND/OR CHILDREN TO THEIR OVERSEAS PLACEMENT?

While the focus of the Program is to invest in individual leaders, Acumen Fellows are permitted to bring family or loved ones overseas at their own expense and are responsible for making the appropriate arrangements themselves. Acumen will assist in arranging travel, visas, work permits and other related items only for the recipient of the Fellowship.

It should be noted that Fellows will be expected to travel frequently and - if need be - at short notice, sometimes to difficult environments. The program is intensive, time-consuming and requires significant commitment and flexibility. When in the field, access to Internet and phone systems will be available wherever possible, but applicants must expect that there may be times when frequent communication with family and friends may not be particularly accessible or affordable.

WHAT STIPEND AND OTHER FORMS OF SUPPORT ARE PROVIDED DURING THE FELLOWSHIP? DOES THE PROGRAM OFFER HEALTH INSURANCE AND VISA ASSISTANCE?

Acumen provides Fellows with a stipend that covers basic monthly living costs for the duration of the yearlong program. The stipend is designed to cover only costs associated and incurred during the program. You should not expect to save any money during this year or to use this stipend to cover previous expenses (e.g., student loans). Stipend amounts will vary for the country placement portion of the Fellowship, adjusting for the cost of living in different countries, but these stipends are also designed to cover the basic costs associated with safe yet frugal living.

Travel to New York for the first portion of the program, travel to and from field placements, travel to and from the mid-year meeting, and costs associated with necessary visa arrangements will be covered by Acumen. Acumen will also arrange appropriate travel insurance and computing services including a laptop for use during the fellowship year.

WHAT IS THE SELECTION PROCESS FOR FIELD PLACEMENTS? WILL THE FELLOWS' COUNTRY PREFERENCE OR SECTOR PREFERENCE BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT?

Fellows' field placements will be announced during the summer, approximately two months prior to the start of the training program. This allows time for company's within Acumen's ecosystem to report on their current needs, and for Acumen to match Fellows to these roles. Acumen considers each Fellow's

# ACUMEN GLOBAL FELLOWS PROGRAM

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

preferences, interests, background, and skill-set when matching them with company needs to make it a truly rich experience for all involved. ***However, a condition of accepting the Fellowship offer is a willingness and flexibility to accept placement with any company in Acumen's ecosystem, and to be placed in any of its geographies.*** Currently, Acumen's portfolio companies operate in India, Kenya, Pakistan, Tanzania, Uganda, Peru, Colombia, Ethiopia, and Rwanda among others.

Due to the fast-paced and unexpected nature of the ecosystem in which we operate, unforeseen changes to plans and assignments are not uncommon. All successful Fellows candidates should be comfortable moving quickly in a changing environment, and should be flexible about geographic placements and sector involvements.

### WHAT DO FELLOWS DO DURING THEIR FIELD ASSIGNMENTS?

Prior to departing New York, Fellows will be in touch frequently with their company to begin developing plans for their work with that company. The Fellows Manager and members of Acumen's Portfolio team will support the Fellows and the company in developing these work plans by helping to identify priorities for the company and key areas where the Fellow may add the most value. A few work plans in the past have included:

- Developing a model for expanding access to low-cost drip irrigation systems in India, Pakistan and Kenya.
- Branding and marketing for a microfinance organization in Pakistan, to ensure that it develops a unique and strong competitive position in the market.
- Creating and implementing a Customer Relationship Management strategy to support the expansion of a chain of maternity hospitals in India.
- Leading an expansion effort for a solar solutions company in Uganda to West Kenya.

In addition to their field placements, Fellows are responsible for contributing to Acumen's efforts to collect insights and knowledge from our work and presenting these insights in a shareable form with a broader audience via blogs, white papers, case studies, photo essays, videos, etc.

### WILL THE FELLOW BE WORKING FOR ACUMEN OR FOR THE PLACEMENT COMPANY?

All Fellows will learn and apply a wide range of skills in the areas of business consulting, leadership and social change during the Fellowship year. In-country placements are made directly with a company in Acumen's ecosystem. As an employee of the company, the expectation is that each Fellow will report directly to the management of that company.

### WHILE IN THE FIELD, WILL THERE BE REGULAR TRAVEL BACK TO NEW YORK OR TO MY HOME CITY?

No. The field placement portion of the fellowship is nine months, and frequent travel that is unrelated to placement work is not allowed. Each Fellow will be allowed to take a reasonable number of days off during their placement but must arrange all vacations with the company. Acumen will arrange a mid-year meeting at a central location with the entire cohort in the spring, and a reconvening and debriefing period in New York at the end of the program.



### POST FELLOWSHIP

WHAT DO FELLOWS DO AFTER COMPLETING THE FELLOWS PROGRAM? WHAT TYPE OF PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT DOES THE FELLOWSHIP OFFER?

Acumen makes a substantial investment of time and resources in our Fellows cohort, and an integral part of the program is offering each Fellow the opportunity for both personal and professional growth. We have developed a rich curriculum for the training in New York and ongoing learning and reflection in the field. The current members and alumni of the Fellows cohort are part of a growing ecosystem of change agents who learn and grow throughout the year and from each other.

After completing the fellowship, the vast majority of Fellows have continued to pursue careers that are in or directly impacting the social sector, ranging from continued work with social enterprises on the ground to starting up social enterprises of their own. Fellows have built lasting relationships with each other and with Fellows from previous classes, often collaborating on projects within the social enterprise space. Acumen's global team also shares post-fellowship opportunities, such as the chance to be a part of Acumen's Funders Circle, to help Fellows achieve their post-fellowship goals.