ASHOKA BELGIUM

YEARBOOK 2026-2027



EVERYONE A CHANGEMAKER

“ASHOKA IS A LIVING ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SOCIAL INNOVATION IN EVERY FIELD AROUND THE WORLD."

JIMMY WALES, WIKIPEDIA FOUNDER, ASHOKA FELLOW

“WHAT’S MOST IMPORTANT ABOUT ASHOKA... IS THAT THEY MAKE PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT CHANGE IS POSSIBLE”

ANNE WOJCICKI, 23ANDME CEO & CO-FOUNDER



THE MOST POWERFUL FORCE FOR GOOD IN THE WORLD IS THE SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR.

Ashoka

Bill Drayton founded Ashoka in 1980 on the idea that the most powerful force for good in the world is the social entrepreneur. A person driven by an innovative idea that can help correct an entrenched global problem. The world's leading social entrepreneurs pursue system-changing solutions that permanently alter existing activity patterns.

Our mission

For four decades, Ashoka has been identifying and mentoring social entrepreneurs, learning from the patterns in their innovations, and mobilising a global community that embraces these new frameworks to build a world where everyone is a changemaker.

BUILDING AN EVERYONE A CHANGEMAKER WORLD

An Everyone a Changemaker World

An Everyone a Changemaker World is, by definition, one where everyone has the capacity and opportunity to contribute and to create positive change. In this world, everyone is powerful, everyone has a voice, everyone has access to needed resources, and everyone can thrive.

A Changemaker

A changemaker is someone who imagines a new reality, takes action and collaborates with others to bring that new reality into being for the good of others.

What does this world look like?

When everyone is a changemaker, there is no place for systems of oppression and hierarchy because no groups dominate or exploit others. In fact, when everyone is powerful, the systems that perpetuate inequity get dismantled and rebuilt to enable equal access to opportunities and embrace the incredible range of perspectives, narratives, and lived human experiences.


CHANGE MAKERS CLUB
I AM A
CHANGE
AMBASSADOR



IMPACT SNAPSHOT

4000 Ashoka Fellows

99 Countries

6TH most influential NGO in the world (thedotgood)

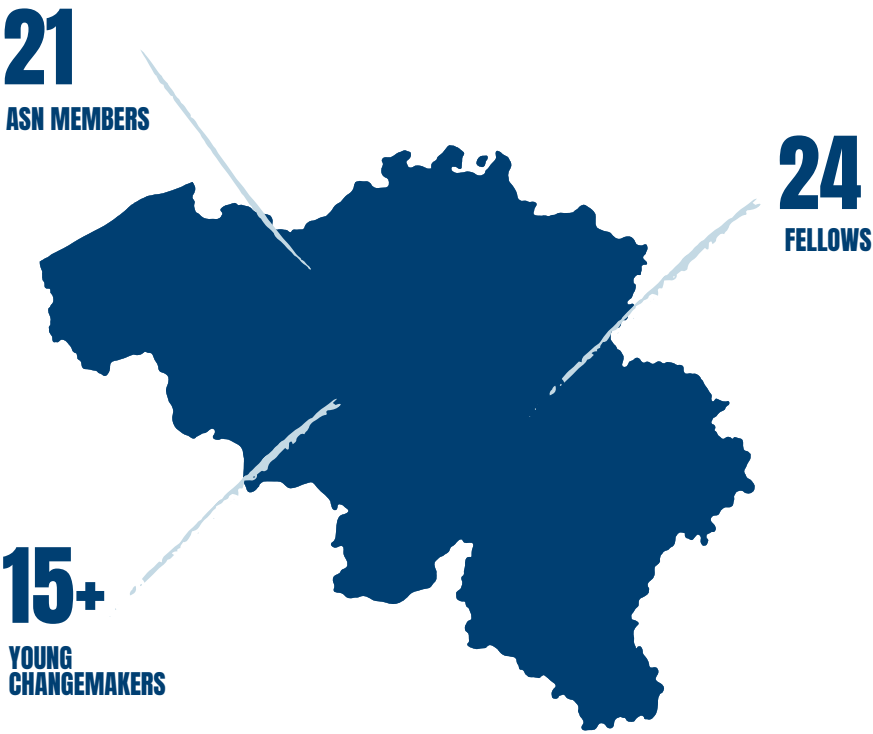


Our changemaker community consists of 4000+ Fellows, 100+ Young Changemakers, 250+ change institutions, and 300+ partners across 99 countries. Together, we form a strong, diverse, and vibrant ecosystem of changemakers collaborating and co-leading to positively transform societies and cultures around the world.

ASHOKA BELGIUM

Founded in 2008, Ashoka Belgium is part of this global network. Since then, we have selected 24 social innovators as Ashoka Fellows, supported 15 Young Changemakers, and are backed by 20+ philanthropic business leaders as part of our Ashoka Support Network.

Together, we work to transform institutions and cultures so that they support changemaking for the good of society. We strive to make the global economy more socially responsible and respectful by creating meaningful collaborations with strategic stakeholders. Our key programmes are the Ashoka Participation Hub and Unlock Education.



MEET THE TEAM



ROMAIN GUSTOT
Ashoka Belgium Director



PERRINE DE LE COURT
ASN Global Lead



LAURA BATALLA
Participation Hub Lead



YANNICK FISCHER
Participation Hub Coordinator



ASHLING HOARE
Finance & Operations Manager



ARIANNA D'ASCOLI
Communication & Community Manager



ASHOKA FELLOWS

Ashoka Fellows are the world's leading social entrepreneurs. They champion innovative new ideas that transform society's systems, providing benefits for everyone and improving the lives of millions of people. Once selected, Ashoka Fellows join a lifelong community with tailored financial and strategic support to scale their impact.



MyMachine Expo, Košice, Slovakia. Photo by Dávid Hanko

NEW

ASHOKA BELGIUM FELLOW **2026**

PIET GRYMONPREZ

Piet co-founded MyMachine to help young people build the creative confidence to act on their ideas. As an innovation consultant and at Howest University of Applied Sciences, he saw how many adults had learned to talk themselves out of an idea before saying it aloud.

Primary school children dream up a machine. University students turn it into a concept. Technical and vocational students build a working prototype. Anything goes: a machine that travels to other planets, a robot that helps children express their emotions, a device that detects earthquakes in advance. Along the way, young people discover that their ideas matter, and that they can bring them to life together.

800+ working prototypes

35,000+ students have taken part across 15 chapters in 14 countries, from Belgium to South Africa

ASHOKA BELGIUM FELLOWS



PIET GRYMONPREZ

MYMACHINE GLOBAL FOUNDATION

Piet, co-founder of MyMachine, sees creative confidence as the foundation of a changemaker society. He breaks the silos of education, uniting pupils, technical and university students to build children's dream machines together. Over 35,000 young people have joined, in 14 countries.



THOMAS DE GROOTE

RIVER CLEANUP

Thomas, founder of River Cleanup, has mobilised over 300,000 volunteers across 100 countries to stop plastic pollution from reaching rivers and nature. His holistic Clean River Model combines education, waste collection and policy advocacy, with the goal of plastic-free rivers.



KATIA MELIS

CASA LEGAL

Katia, co-founder of Casa Legal, saw as a lawyer that people seeking legal aid faced a fragmented system. She created Belgium's first nonprofit law firm, where lawyers, social workers and psychologists work together to address interconnected problems under one roof.



KOEN TIMMERS

TAKE ACTION GLOBAL

Koen, co-founder of TAG, connects students across borders to share how climate change affects their daily lives and what they can create together. His six-week Climate Action Project has reached over 10 million students and teachers in more than 145 countries worldwide.



MAXIME ZAIT & SAM ROSENZWEIG

COMMUNA

Maxime and Sam, co-founders of Communa, noticed cities full of empty buildings while vulnerable people struggled to find housing. They pioneered "Temporary Use with a Social Purpose", transforming vacant properties into hubs that combine housing, workspaces and social projects.



THEO VAES

ARMENTEKORT, WOONDERWIJS, ATHENA

Theo realised that people trapped in generational poverty often lack the self-esteem to break free. He co-founded ArmenTeKort, which pairs them with volunteer buddies who stand by them, helping them rebuild their confidence, discover their strengths and take back control of their lives.



ALBERTO ALEMANNO

THE GOOD LOBBY

Alberto, founder of The Good Lobby and professor of EU Law at HEC Paris, saw that lobbying skills and resources sat with corporations, leaving civil society outmatched. He democratises advocacy by equipping citizens and nonprofits with the tools and expert support to shape public policy.



FRÉDÉRIC SIMONART & MATTHIEU LE GRELLE

DUO FOR A JOB

Frédéric and Matthieu, co-founders of DUO for a JOB, saw young migrants lacking the professional networks to find work while retirees craved purpose. They pair them as mentees and mentors, doubling employment rates while building bridges across generations and cultures.



SANDRINO GRACEFFA

SMART

Sandrino saw autonomous workers falling into a precarious gap between traditional employment and unprotected self-employment. Under his leadership, SMart became a European cooperative offering shared services and social protection, proving freedom and security can coexist.



GEERTRUI SERNEELS

SOLENTRA

Geertrui, founder of Solentra, saw as a clinical psychologist that refugee and migrant children were falling through the cracks of a mental healthcare system blind to war trauma. She brings culturally sensitive therapy into communities and trains thousands of professionals.



BACH KIM NGUYEN

BEEODIVERSITY

Kim co-founded BeeOdiversity to turn bees into environmental sentinels. Each hive collects billions of samples a year, providing low-cost, large-scale data on biodiversity and pollution that empowers farmers, cities and companies to improve their local ecosystems.



MARJAN GRYSON

TOUCHÉ

Marjan, co-founder of Touché, saw as a prison psychologist the limits of treating aggression as something to suppress. She helps inmates re-channel it towards positive goals, making concrete plans for life outside prison and building bridges for their reintegration.



ISABELLA LENARDUZZI

JUMP

Isabella, founder of JUMP, works to transform the cultures, systems and power structures that sustain inequality. Using gender equality as a central lens, she helps organisations challenge structural barriers and create fairer workplaces where everyone can realise their full potential.



INGRID DE JONGHE

TEJO

Ingrid, a therapist, saw young people in mental distress facing months-long waiting lists for public counselling. She founded TEJO to offer immediate, anonymous and free therapy sessions to young people aged 10 to 20, mobilising professional therapists as volunteers.



GENEVIÈVE MOREAU

SIIN

Geneviève, founder of SIIN, realised as a general practitioner that she was only treating symptoms. She turns doctors, pharmacists, chefs and food producers into ambassadors of intelligent nutrition, and has trained over 3,200 professionals in Europe and Canada.



ARNOUD RASKIN

MOBILE SCHOOL

Arnoud, founder of Mobile School, saw that shelters were failing street children. He meets them where they live, equipping street educators with a fold-out blackboard on wheels and over 300 games. The model runs in 20+ countries, funded by StreetwiZe, his leadership training company.



EMILIE MEESSEN

INFIRMIERS DE RUE

Emilie, founder of Infirmiers de Rue, noticed as a nurse that homeless people avoided traditional health centres and only received care in emergencies. She meets them directly on the streets, using hygiene as a stepping stone to gradually rebuild self-esteem and autonomy.



TOBIAS LEENAERT

PROVEG INTERNATIONAL

Tobias, founder of EVA and Thursday Veggie Day, saw that reducing meat consumption was essential but moralising wasn't working. He co-founded ProVeg International, now active in 12 countries, working to halve global animal product consumption and transform the food system.



IGNACE SCHOPS

HOGE KEMPEN NATIONAL PARK

Ignace led Europe's first citizen movement to create a national park from the bottom up: Hoge Kempen, in Belgium. His (Re)connection Model now inspires communities across Europe, the United States and Asia, and in 2008 he was awarded the Goldman Environmental Prize.



DIDIER KETELS

DROITS QUOTIDIENS

Didier founded Droits Quotidiens after seeing, as a lawyer, disadvantaged people trapped in legal bureaucracy for problems that never needed a court. He trains social workers as legal intermediaries to resolve housing, debt and family issues quickly and fairly.



OLIVIER GAILLARD

TRANS-MISSION, IA DAYS

Olivier founded Trans-Mission for Belgian youth who wanted to engage in social projects but didn't know how, using peer-to-peer inspiration in schools. He co-founded the Civic Service Platform and now leads IA Days, helping creatives navigate AI critically.



BART WEETJENS

APOPO, INNERPRENEURS

Bart founded APOPO after seeing that landmine detection relied on expensive imported technology. He trained African giant pouched rats to sniff out explosives, helping Mozambique become mine-free in 2015. He later co-founded Innerpreneurs for changemakers' inner wellbeing.

MEET 4000 ASHOKA FELLOWS WORLDWIDE

Our Belgian Fellows are part of a global network of social entrepreneurs changing systems in 99 countries.

SCAN TO DISCOVER
all Ashoka Fellows

ashoka.org/en-be/our-network







ASHOKA SUPPORT NETWORK

The Ashoka Support Network (ASN) is a global community of 300+ committed business leaders, philanthropists and entrepreneurs with a passion for creative and entrepreneurial change. They share Ashoka's understanding that entrepreneurs are the engine for economic and social development. They meet and engage with phenomenal social leaders sharing their skills, resources and networks to create more transformative impact together.

ASHOKA BELGIUM ASN



ORIANE DELLA FAILLE

Oriane brings experience in business, customer experience and people-centred transformation across the financial, consulting and service sectors. Engaged in initiatives supporting families, health research and community development, she puts her skills, energy and connections behind projects that create lasting change.



OLIVIER ONGHENA - 'T HOOFT

Olivier founded GINPI, Young Leaders–Inspiring Mentors, Forbidden Colours and Wisdom Encounters. An author and adviser to business leaders, family enterprises and public decision-makers, he champions purpose-driven leadership and people-centred governance, an outlook shaped by his kidnapping by the FARC in Colombia.



HAROLD BOËL

Harold is CEO of Sofina, a Belgian investment holding company with a global presence. He brings an international perspective and a practical approach to business planning, problem-solving and evaluating investment returns, which he applies to initiatives aiming for systemic impact.



MARINE DE WAZIERS

Marine founded ROOM, a network that empowers women investors through carefully curated connections and shared values. She brings strategic vision, entrepreneurial experience and an understanding of social dynamics to initiatives that seek to create systemic change through investment.



DOMINIQUE MOORKENS

Dominique is the former CEO of Alcopa, a family business in the automotive distribution sector. During his tenure, he led the company's international expansion, structured its governance and family shareholding, and helped consolidate the family business.



SABINE EVERAET

Sabine is a technology and digital executive with experience in consulting and international consumer goods. She serves on the boards of ING Belgium, Charities Aid Foundation and WAKO, advises Bain & Company, Sequoia Business Community and Equalytix, and coaches women CIOs.



YVOINE RÉMY

Yvoine leads Eurofins' environmental testing activities in Europe. She began her career by founding an education NGO in the Philippines and later held roles in business development and general management, spending around 15 years based in the Asia-Pacific region.



OLIVIER GILLEROT

Olivier is an external adviser and independent board member with more than 30 years of experience in consulting, technology and industry. He was previously a senior partner at Bain & Company, where he specialised in financial services and technology.



OLIVIER ORBAN

Olivier spent more than 20 years in the reinsurance industry as an underwriter and team manager. In those roles, he worked across a range of risks, including those associated with agriculture, natural hazards, transport and accidents.



SÉVERINE DE SADELEER

Séverine is an anthropologist and public health specialist with ten years of experience in international development and social health in Africa. She co-founded three education projects, chairs Nextgen Sibelco and serves on the board of her family's holding company.



MYLEEN VERSTRAETE

Myleen is a philanthropist and impact investor who co-founded PYM and organises PYM Impact Day Belgium. Committed to systemic change, she uses her network to bring communities together around sustainable fashion, gender equality and the circular economy.



MIGUEL DEL MARMOL

Miguel began his career in refinery economics and petroleum product trading before taking on leadership roles at PetroFina, Total and CEPSA. His work in the global energy industry took him to New York, Singapore and Madrid. He now focuses on renewable energy.



GÉRARD BLOCH

Gérard trained as an engineer at ENSEEIHT in France and earned a master's degree from Caltech. He was vice-president of the French Chartered Institute of Patent and Trademark Attorneys and lectured at the University of Angers and the Paris Institute of Research in Industrial Property.



EDOUARD JANSSEN

Edouard is Chief Financial Officer of D'Ieteren Group and co-founder of Trusted Family. He studied at Solvay Brussels School and holds an MBA from INSEAD. His experience includes the European Commission, the European Investment Bank, Morgan Stanley in London and corporate finance at Solvay.



MICHEL VANDENKERCKHOVE

Michel graduated from ICHEC Brussels and was a founding partner of Capital & Finance in 1989. In 2007, he joined Delen Bank as Chief Executive Officer of Cadelam, the bank's asset management company.



NICOLAS JANSSEN

Nicolas serves in the Parliament of Wallonia and the Parliament of the Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, where he sits on the Education Committee. He helped launch Ashoka's Changemaker Schools programme and led parliamentary reviews of youth mental health.



MICHEL DELLOYE

Michel held managing director roles at RTL Group and Central European Media Enterprises. He also served as Chief Financial Officer and General Director of Groupe Bruxelles Lambert and has been active in several companies with international growth ambitions.



MARC NOLET DE BRAUWERE

Marc is CEO of PhysIOL and an independent director at Bone Therapeutics. His board roles include MyMicroInvest, Endo Tools Therapeutics, Biotech Coaching, Etex Group and Marley Eternit. He previously worked as an engineering manager at PetroFina and as an associate at McKinsey.



BERNARD MEEUS

Bernard is co-founder and chairman of Alcogroup, a Belgian company that produces and distributes ethanol worldwide, including bioethanol. He trained as a mechanical engineer at the University of Louvain and holds an MBA from the University of Chicago.



PIET COLRUYT

Piet studied architecture and philosophy at KU Leuven. He co-founded several impact funds and serves on the boards of Korys and Colruyt Group. He founded Impact Capital, an investment holding focused on social impact, and Impact House, an impact coworking hub.

WANT TO BE PART OF OUR VIBRANT COMMUNITY?

Reach out to Perrine de le Court at pdelecourt@ashoka.org







PARTICIPATION HUB: CO-CREATING THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY

The Participation Hub is Ashoka's new flagship initiative designed to accelerate systemic change through collaborative policy and democratic innovation.

Our vision

Our vision is for every citizen and resident in Europe to drive positive change, for governments to actively collaborate with changemakers, and for innovative solutions to be co-created by the people and for the people.

To do so, we work closely with our community of changemakers to create pathways for social innovations to become policy reality, with true participation at the core of decision-making at local, national and European level.

NEXT STEPS

1. Identifying and scaling proven innovations
2. Building a powerful cross-sector community
3. Unlocking youth leadership at scale
4. Transforming public institutions
5. Redesigning democracy in practice

DEMOCRACY FELLOWS



DIANA FILIMON

FORUM APULUM

Diana saw how online echo chambers left young Romanians polarised and disengaged. She founded Forum Apulum and co-founded Gen, știri and Gen, revistă, two outlets that work with young people to produce journalism that sparks curiosity and encourages civic engagement.



KRISTINA KRÖMER

METRO_POLIS

Kristina founded metro_polis to help people practise democracy in everyday life. Her team brings strangers together for moderated conversations on trams in Saxony. More than 15,000 conversations with 70,000 passengers have brought people's experiences and ideas into local policymaking.



JAVIER PÉREZ

POLITICAL WATCH

Javier saw how hard it was to use Spain's public political data. As director of Political Watch, he develops tools that make parliamentary activity easier to track, helping civil society organisations use that information in their work with public institutions.



BERNARDO GONÇALVES

MYPOLIS

Bernardo founded MyPolis to reconnect young people with the institutions that represent them. Through classroom games, students investigate local problems and present their own solutions to elected officials. MyPolis has brought this approach to more than 60 territories across Europe.



REBEKKA DOBER

YEP – STIMME DER JUGEND

Rebekka founded YEP after seeing how rarely young people were asked about decisions affecting their lives. Since 2018, YEP has run over 350 participation projects that give young people a say in decisions made by schools, companies and other institutions.



AUDE FAVRE

FAKE OFF!

After the Charlie Hebdo attacks, Aude saw conspiracy theories spread. Through Fake Off!, she brings journalists into schools to teach pupils to verify information, reaching nearly 55,000 young people since 2019. CitizenFacts trains citizens to investigate disinformation.



JEREMY DRUKER

TRANSITIONS

Jeremy co-founded Transitions to strengthen independent journalism in post-communist Europe. Since 1999, the Prague-based organisation has published independent reporting and trained over 5,000 journalists, students and citizens. Its work helps young local reporters hold those in power to account.



LORENZO MARINI

VERIFICAT

Lorenzo co-founded Verificat, Catalonia's first fact-checking organisation, to make media literacy accessible to all. It combines a professional newsroom with education programmes designed with learners of different ages, and advocates for media literacy to be taught in schools.



CHRISTIANA BUKALO

STATEFREE

Born stateless in Munich, Christiana knows what it means to live without the rights citizenship provides. She co-founded Statefree to connect stateless people with peers and allies, and to give them a political voice on an issue affecting up to 15 million people worldwide.



MARK SWIFT

WELLBEING ENTERPRISES

Mark saw that communities had little say in how local health services were designed. He founded Wellbeing Enterprises to give residents a role in shaping health and care. It has supported more than 20,000 people to improve their health and wellbeing.



ELIOT HIGGINS

BELLINGCAT

Eliot saw that anyone could help investigate conflicts using photos and videos shared online. He founded Bellingcat to share investigative tools and show how it verifies evidence. More than 100 active volunteers now contribute to the network's open-source research.



UGO VALLAURI

THE RESTART PROJECT

Ugo co-founded The Restart Project to help people repair their own technology through community events and open repair data. He also co-leads the European Right to Repair campaign, whose coalition helped shape the EU's new legislation on repair.

LET'S DO IT TOGETHER

Looking to supercharge your organisation's impact?

Ashoka is your ideal partner! The insights we've gained are universal and ready to drive transformative social and environmental change in every sector.

Our Fellows are eager to collaborate with industry leaders and ignite a collective movement toward a better future. Together with the world's leading social entrepreneurs, we'll explore new possibilities and turn bold ideas into lasting change.



PARTNERS

We're proud to be supported by a group of forward-thinking companies. From financial backing to hands-on collaboration, these partners are vital in turning our shared vision into action.

ASHOKA BELGIUM SUPPORTING PARTNERS

AXA
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CANDRIAM INSTITUTE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
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accenture
eurofins foundation
Schneider Electric
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TALENTED YOUTH NETWORK
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Bird&Bird
Réseau Entreprendre
POSITIVE CHANGEMAKERS
BE THE CHANGE

ASHOKA EUROPE & GLOBAL PARTNERS

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Boehringer Ingelheim
skoll FOUNDATION
Deutsche Welle
Made for minds.

AXA Foundation for Human Progress
by Mutuelles d'assurances and AXA Group

ASHOKA
EVERYONE A CHANGEMAKER™

UNLOCKING THE FUTURE FOR THE NEXT GENERATIONS

In a world facing polarisation and social fragmentation, education is a powerful tool for building trust, understanding and collaboration. By nurturing critical thinking and exposure to diverse perspectives, we can help future generations build cohesive, resilient communities.

The partnership

A three-year partnership between the AXA Foundation for Human Progress and Ashoka to expand innovative education solutions that help young people develop empathy, resilience and collaboration.

3
Years
of partnership

7
Countries,
Belgium
among them

30
Ashoka Fellows
transforming
education





LET'S CHANGE THE WORLD TOGETHER.

ASHOKA

SCAN TO SEE OUR LATEST EVENTS

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