

# **A GUIDE TO THE NOMINATOR NETWORK**

**BUILDING A WORLD WHERE  
EVERYONE IS A CHANGEMAKER**



**ASHOKA**

**BELGIUM**

# WELCOME TO THE NOMINATOR NETWORK



Dear Friend of Ashoka,

Thank you for your interest in the Nominator Network. We are delighted that you share our belief that social entrepreneurs are the primary engine for social change. As a catalyst to support this change, Ashoka selects and supports Ashoka Fellows – leading social entrepreneurs who we recognize to have innovative solutions to social problems and the potential to change patterns across society.

Ashoka Fellows demonstrate unrivalled commitment to bold new ideas and prove that compassion, creativity, and collaboration are tremendous forces for change! Our vision is that the Ashoka Fellowship will help shape a society that is more able to tackle the problems it faces.

Thank you for being part of Ashoka,

With warm wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Perrine de le Court", is written over a light gray grid background.

Perrine de le Court

*Country Director of Ashoka Belgium*

# ABOUT ASHOKA



Ashoka is the **first and largest network of leading social entrepreneurs in the world, with +3700 Fellows present in over 80 countries.**

We strongly believe that **social entrepreneurship** is key to tackle the world's biggest issues. Social entrepreneurs are society's real change agents. They are forceful, creative, selfless, action-driven, open-minded and irresistibly contagious people who stand out by virtue of their commitment to the greater cause. Thanks to their visionary commitment, they come up with innovative solutions that disrupt the system, make a real difference in people's lives and transform our world for the better.

In addition to our +3700 Fellows, we have built a large **Ashoka Community of Changemakers** gathering +300 Changemaker schools and universities, 350 visionary business leaders (**ASN**), corporate partners, public influencers, media. Through our changemaker network, we aim to build bridges across sectors to create systemic change.

In 2021, the NGO Advisor ranked us as the **5<sup>th</sup> most influential NGO in the world.**



## BELGIUM

SINCE 2008

**20** ASHOKA FELLOWS

**19** ASN MEMBERS

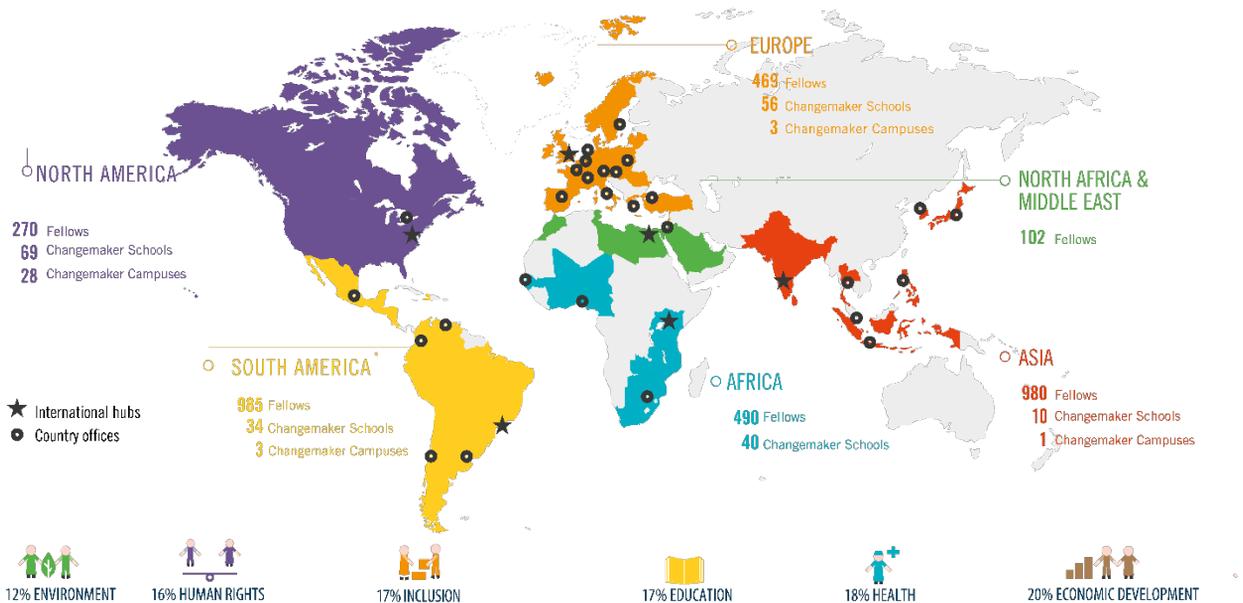
**14** CHANGEMAKER SCHOOLS

# ASHOKA FELLOWS



Ashoka invests in people. We search the world for leading social entrepreneurs and elect them into our **global fellowship where they join a network of +3700 peers in over 90 countries**. This network connects Ashoka Fellows to the people, ideas and resources needed to grow and deepen their impact.

A Fellow is a leading social entrepreneur who has completed **Venture**, the Ashoka Selection process, and who has accepted the offer to become an Ashoka Fellow.



Some data on the impact of our fellows:

- **57%** of Ashoka Fellows have changed a national policy within five years of election.
- **83%** have changed a system at a national level in at least one way within ten years of their election.
- **91%** have their ideas replicated by other groups.
- **80%** feel that being elected to the Ashoka Fellowship has been critical to their success of creating change.

# SELECTION CRITERIA



One of Ashoka's strengths is its rigorous selection process of leading social entrepreneurs. Each year we receive hundreds of nominations for potential candidates which are reviewed by Ashoka staff and assessed in relation to five core criteria:

## THE NEW IDEA



Ashoka only elects individuals who possess a systems-changing new idea: an innovative solution to a social problem that will change the pattern in a field at least at the regional or national level. The organization should be a fundamentally new way to look at a problem.

## SOCIAL IMPACT



The entrepreneur's idea must be powerful enough in its approach and applicability for practitioners in the field to want to copy it. That is, the idea must be replicable on its own merits. Ashoka only elects candidates that can show proven track record of impressive social impact at a national level.

## CREATIVITY



Ashoka supports entrepreneurs who are sufficiently creative as both goal-setting visionaries and problem solvers. Entrepreneurs must use their creativity in building solutions and overcoming barriers.

## ENTREPRENEURIAL QUALITY



Ashoka elects people who, at their core, are driven by an idea, and who will persevere in testing, refining and spreading their idea until it has become the new pattern for society as a whole. These individuals do not stop until they have transformed a whole system.

## ETHICAL FIBRE



Above all, the candidate must be entirely ethical and trustworthy. Ashoka asks every participant in the selection process to evaluate each candidate for this quality rigorously.

### Additional eligibility

- The candidate is the founder of the organization.
- The candidate is working full time on the new idea.
- Dual candidacies are extremely rare.
- For-profit businesses need to have ensured a deep mission lock
- No academic/research projects.

# THE VENTURE PROCESS



WE SOURCE NOMINATIONS



CARRY OUT STRICT DUE DILIGENCE



LEAD STRATEGIC CONVERSATIONS ON IMPACT



ENABLE EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT



GET APPROVAL OF GLOBAL BOARD



PUBLICLY REPRESENT AND PROMOTE NEW FELLOWS

## 1. WE SOURCE NOMINATORS

We **open up calls** for nominations and **do not limit them by topic** as one can hardly predict where innovative ideas may live. We also proactively reach and **seek nominations ourselves**. Every year we source up to **several thousand nominations** in diverse fields across Central and Eastern Europe, and many more throughout the world.

## 2. CARRY OUT STRICT DUE DILIGENCE

Local staff **shortlists** candidates based on the initial analysis of solutions for **innovation and systems-change potential**. We then do **deeper research** into the solutions proposed by shortlisted candidates. Are these ideas truly innovative? Could they help transform entire sectors? Their answers help us decide which candidates to invite to move forward in the process.

## 3. LEAD STRATEGIC CONVERSATIONS ON IMPACT

We carry out deep **in-person conversations** with the shorted list of candidates. We probe their motivations, assess entrepreneurial spirit ethical fiber, and creativity, and clarify their **impact model and systems change aspirations**. The next round of in-depth interviews is done by a senior **Ashoka staff** member from **another continent**.

## 4. ENABLE EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

We invite three **external partners** with strong entrepreneurial and social innovation track records and/or **Fellows** to become members of our panel. Every candidate has a separate **conversation** with each panelist. Then panelist and **senior Ashoka staff members** from another continent take a **consensus-decision** on whether candidates fits defined criteria

## 5. GET APPROVAL OF GLOBAL BOARD

The Global Board of Ashoka critically assesses profiles of all advanced candidates from across the world and provides an **informed international perspective on the novelty and impact** of presented solutions. Upon the Board's approval, a candidate enters a **lifelong Fellowship** within the international Ashoka network.

## 6. PUBLICLY REPRESENT AND PROMOTE NEW FELLOWS

Local Ashoka offices **greet and celebrate** newly elected Fellows and promote their profiles as good examples of social entrepreneurship. As social entrepreneurs gain **lifelong access** to wide opportunities of support.

# SYSTEM CHANGE



“Social entrepreneurs are not content just to give a Fish or teach how to Fish. They will not rest until they have revolutionized the Fishing industry.”

– BILL DRAYTON, FOUNDER & CEO, ASHOKA

Ashoka supports and promotes new ideas that bring about dramatic **system changes**:

**93%** Have seen their work being replicated by others.

**83%** Have changed the system at a national level within 10 years of election.

**50%** Have influenced national policy within 5 years of election.

Although system change is not cited as a criteria, in order to qualify as Ashoka Fellows, **candidates must have a deep understanding of the root causes of the problem they are tackling**, and a systemic vision to tackling the problem.

Rather than finding a quick fix solution to an observable, “symptomatic” problem, system changing organisations usually consider the **root causes** and **stakeholders** relevant to a societal problem. Their activities often result in **policy change** or widespread **adoption of their methodology** resulting in change in a field. **For example**, micro-credit was a fundamentally new innovation for populations to lift themselves out of poverty. Another example is Wikipedia which completely democratized the way information is shared online.

## DIFFERENT KINDS OF SYSTEM CHANGE



MARKET DYNAMICS  
AND VALUE CHAINS



PUBLIC POLICY AND  
INDUSTRY NORMS



FULL INCLUSION  
AND EMPATHY



BUSINESS-SOCIAL  
CONGRUENCE



CULTURE OF  
CHANGEMAKING

# FELLOW CASE STUDIES

## WHY DID WE ELECT THEM?



### MARJAN GRYSOON TOUCHE



**A NEW IDEA:** Through **aggression management practices** among inmates in and outside prison and with youngsters, Touché creates new opportunities for integration. Marjan is building pioneering programmes that transform aggression into a positive force.

**SOCIAL IMPACT:** Touché programmes are active in 5 prisons in Flanders. In 2016 (at the time of her election), the therapeutic programmes were offered to 327 prisoners, ex-convicts and people outside of prison: 1295 individual sessions and 44 group sessions have been provided.

**SYSTEMS CHANGE:** Marjan breaks down barriers between different stakeholders working with prisoners. Currently she is building, with support of the Ashoka Aspire programme a social movement to support the transition from prisoners to active citizen and to ease the process of reintegration and reduce recidivism.



### PAUL SINTON- HEWITT PARKRUN

**A NEW IDEA:** Parkrun events are free, open and volunteer-led 5K runs in local parks; parkrun has a framework and software which equips and empowers volunteers to organise the runs. The idea bridges the need for inclusive social spaces with a common desire for health and activity by creating a universal, inclusive movement

**SOCIAL IMPACT:** parkrun brings together 140,000 runners of all fitness levels and 10,000 volunteers around the world every Saturday. Paul is currently expanding the model to reach a younger audience in schools.

**SYSTEMS CHANGE:** The parkrun framework events means that it has spread quickly. With 2.5m runners globally, Paul has gained the attention of politicians, consulting with them on public health and community inclusion; his long-term ambition is the incentivisation of physical activity.



### LILY LAPENA MYBNK

**A NEW IDEA:** At the core of MyBnk's approach is the insight that finance can be used not only to encourage saving but also as a springboard to launch new ventures; their central programme is a youth-focused, youth-led micro-finance scheme which helps shape the participant's relationship with money and enterprise.

**SOCIAL IMPACT:** Coupling micro-finance- inspired literacy with entrepreneurship equips young people to thrive in a fast-changing workplace, as well as take control of their finances. Over 20,000 people aged 9-25 have been exposed to MyBnk projects.

**SYSTEMS CHANGE:** Lily wants to transform the way society relates to financial services. Her national strategy includes a franchising model and understanding how their programmes influence young people's choices at critical moments in their lives.

# THE ASHOKA BELGIUM FELLOWSHIP



**GEERTRUI SERNEELS, Solentra** –

Transforming mental health care into more integrated and efficient support systems for culturally diverse populations.

**MARJAN GRYSON, Touché** - Transforming the way society views and deals with aggression.

**INGRID DE JONGHE, Tejo** - Providing the missing link to help young people suffering from psychological difficulties.

**DIDIER KETELS, Droits Quotidiens** - Helping disadvantaged groups resolve legal disputes.

**TOBIAS LEENAERT, EVA** - Decreasing the over-consumption of meat and its impact on the environment, human wealth and animal welfare.

**ISABELLA LENARDUZZI, JUMP** – Mobilizing men and women alike to establish true organisational balance.

**EMILIE MEESEN, Infirmiers de Rue** - Hygiene as the entry point of social rehabilitation of homeless people.

**GENEVIÈVE MOREAU, SIIN** - Bringing an intelligent nutrition to all, providing a healthy planet and humanity.

**ARNOUD RASKIN, Mobile School** -

Revolutionizing assistance to street kids, increasing their chances of successful reintegration into society.

**IGNACE SCHOPS, R.L.K.M.** - Marries environment and the economic and social progress for the Best.

**ALBERTO ALEMANNI, The Good Lobby**- Empower the citizen sector to professionalise their lobbying and advocacy activities

**FRÉDÉRIC SIMONART & MATTHIEU LE GRELLE, Duo for a Job** – Connecting senior citizens with vulnerable youth to create intergenerational exchange with the aim to find employment

**SANDRINO GRACEFFA, Smart** – Providing access to social security for gig economy workers and artists

**THEO VAES, ArmenTeKort** – Tackling endemic poverty through a buddy methodology and citizen movement.

**SÂM ROSENZWEIG & MAXIME ZAÏT, Communa** – Repurposing abandoned buildings in collaboration with local communities to create more circular, equal and democratic cities.

# NOMINATE A FELLOW



## HOW TO NOMINATE A FELLOW?

Ask yourself the following 6 pre-check questions:

- Is the candidate the founder of the project?
- Does the candidate have an innovative solution to a root social problem?
- Does the project already have some social impact?
- Does the project have the potential to change a system?
- Is the project replicable?
- Is the candidate entrepreneurial enough to develop the project?

If you have answered the 6 questions, it means the social entrepreneur you are thinking about might answer our criteria.

Please email **Yannick Fischer** at [yfischer@ashoka.org](mailto:yfischer@ashoka.org) or fill out this [form](#).

### WHAT PROJECTS SHOULDN'T YOU NOMINATE?

- A project that is still in pilot phase and/ or has very little impact.
- A duplication from another project.
- Direct service delivery.
- A project that is not replicable, that is niche or that is very local.
- A project to which the social entrepreneur does not dedicate all his/ her time.

## WHAT NEXT?

Once you have nominated a candidate, the Ashoka venture team assesses the candidate with regards to the criteria through research or an interview. When we have established whether or not the candidate might fit the criteria, we will send you a **feedback form** that summarises the candidate's fit to the criteria and the status of the candidacy. Depending on the candidates, we will try to send the feedback form in the following 2 months.

For any pending questions, please do not hesitate to **contact Yannick Fischer**, working on the **selection of the social entrepreneurs** at Ashoka Belgium by email: [yfischer@ashoka.org](mailto:yfischer@ashoka.org)



**ASHOKA**