

THE PROGRAM

What is the VV GROW Fellowship?

The VV GROW Fellowship is a highly competitive one-year accelerator program for women owners of small and medium businesses in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and North Africa, and sub-Saharan Africa. The program includes customized business skills training, technical assistance, leadership development, and access to networks to grow their businesses and increase their leadership impact. Through global and regional online and in-person trainings, fellows focus on strategy and long-term business value paired with action-oriented plans. They amplify their role as leaders in their businesses and their communities to create jobs, stimulate long-term economic growth and produce wider social benefits.

What does the fellowship include?

Global Virtual Learning: Over 4 months, fellows complete a series of weekly webinars, assignments, online courses, assessments, and one-on-one calls with peers, Vital Voices staff, and trainers. Fellows begin to build their knowledge about marketing, networking, business planning, financial management and leadership, the core topics of the program. Fellows assess the current state of their business and leadership in order to determine where they are; analyze their business and the external environment to identify opportunities for growth; and define specific business growth goals to identify where they want to go.

Regional In-Person Training: Each year, fellows from each region gather in one country in their region to participate in a four-day, in-person training workshop that will guide them in creating an action plan outlining how they will accomplish their business growth goals. Fellows also get the opportunity to meet, network with, and learn from other fellows from their region, Vital Voices staff and trainers.

Growth Services and Support: Following the in-person training, fellows implement and revise their action plans, while evaluating their progress toward their business growth goals. Throughout the last 6 months of the fellowship, Vital Voices staff connects fellows to individualized growth services and support based on the goals and action items in their action plan

What results have you seen?

Growth in Sales + Job Creation: 2013 fellows have grown sales on average by **42%** and **40%** of 2013 fellows have increased the number of employees in their business.

Improved Business Management: **100%** of 2013 fellows made changes to their business to improve productivity, including improving marketing and communications, implementing a strategic growth plan; improving financial record keeping, developing at least one new product, and improving quality controls.

Networking for Business Growth: **85%** of 2013 fellows used at least one connection made during the fellowship to grow their business (*useful business advice; access to other business contacts; professional services and encouragement*)

Multiplier Effect: Fellows from the first three cohorts of the fellowship have gone on to mentor 1,899 people, train 7,673 people outside their business, and have reached 22,544 audience members through speeches or presentations on women's empowerment.

Why did you create this program?

There are an estimated 12 million women owned small-and medium-businesses around the world, 7 million of which are in developing countries. These businesses and the women who lead them have the potential to be a powerful force for building prosperity through inclusive economic growth and job creation. While the potential for economic contributions are significant, women business owners face challenges in accessing the support services they need to grow, including networks, training, financing and markets. With generous support from the ExxonMobil Foundation, Vital Voices created the VV GROW Fellowship, the only accelerator of its kind to partner with women business leaders to address their key obstacles to growth and enhance their leadership impact.

ELIGIBILITY

Who can apply?

Women business owners in **Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and North Africa, and Sub-Saharan Africa**, who:

- Own a business that has been in operation for at least 3 years,
- Employ at least 3 full time staff, and
- Generate at least USD \$40,000 in annual sales
- Reside in the same country as your business for at least 7 months out of the year
- Are proficient in spoken and written English

Interested applicants:

- Are motivated to build the skills and make the changes needed to grow their business
- Have the authority to make critical decisions within their business
- Have demonstrated leadership within their community
- Are enthusiastic about participating in a one-year business accelerator program
- Are willing to have Vital Voices track their business growth for 1 year during the fellowship, and up to 5 years afterwards and are committed to participate in data collection methods including online surveys and phone calls.

Can non-profits apply?

The VV GROW Fellowship is exclusively for women who lead or own a for profit business.

Do I have to be a fluent English speaker to participate?

All content covered throughout the VV GROW Fellowship is delivered in English. English language proficiency is a requirement to participate in the program.

COMMITMENT

What are my responsibilities as a VV GROW fellow?

- Active participation throughout the program
- 4-7 hours per week dedicated to webinars, assignments and calls during the global virtual learning stage (January-May 2018)
- Attending the entirety of the 4-day regional in person training workshop in May-June 2018
- 2-3 hours per week during the growth services and support stage of the program (June-December 2018)

- Collaborating with Vital Voices on tracking your business growth for up to five years via completion of brief, periodic online surveys, and phone calls

As a VV GROW fellow what will I receive?

- Strengthened knowledge, skills, and confidence in 5 core areas: business planning, leadership, financial management, networking, and marketing
- Access to highly qualified staff and business consultants
- Access to 12 online business management and leadership courses through Harvard Business School Publishing's online platform, Harvard ManageMentor (HMM) for one year
- Interactive webinars led by expert trainers from across the globe
- A 4-day in-person, regional training workshop
- Joining a network of women business leaders from across the globe
- Referral(s) to business support services based to your needs
- A certificate of program completion
- Entry into the Vital Voices Global Leadership Network upon graduation

APPLICATION PROCESS

How can I apply?

You can fill out an application for the program here:

<http://VitalVoices.2018VVGROWFellowshipApplication.sgizmo.com/s3/>

If I've applied in the past, do I need to reapply?

Yes. Applicants interested in participating in the fellowship must fill out an application regardless of whether they have applied previously.

How long will the application take?

This application should take approximately 60-90 minutes to complete; however, you will be able to save your answers and return to the application at any time. To do this just click the "Save and continue survey later" message that appears at the top of the application and provide your email address. You will then receive an email with a personal link which you should use to return to your application.

When is the application due?

The application deadline is August 31. Late applications will not be considered.

Who can I contact if I have any questions about the application?

If you encounter questions or problems with the application, please send an email to Marrayam Khera at marrayamkhera@vitalvoices.org with the subject line: **VV GROW Fellowship Application**.

What happens after I apply?

Applicants selected for an interview will be contacted for a 1-hour Skype interview. All applicants, whether or not selected for an interview, will be notified of a decision by December 15, 2017.