



Fellow Selection Criteria

What characterizes a leading social entrepreneur? How does Ashoka decide which candidates to nominate and which to turn away?

Ashoka's selection process is anchored by our five criteria against which all Fellow candidates are evaluated:

The Knockout Test: A New Idea

Ashoka cannot elect someone to the Fellowship unless he or she is possessed by a new idea—a new solution or approach to a social problem—that will change the pattern in a field, be it human rights, the environment, or any other. We evaluate the idea historically and against its contemporaries in the field, looking for innovation and real change potential.

Creativity

Successful social entrepreneurs must be creative both as goal-setting visionaries and as practical problem solvers. They must use their creativity day after day to succeed. Creativity is not a quality that suddenly appears, so we look for individuals with a proven track record of developing new ideas and solutions. Some of the questions we might ask include: Does the individual have a vision of how he or she can meet a human need better than it has been met before? How unique and innovative is the problem solving behind this idea?

Entrepreneurial Quality

Perhaps our most important criterion, it is this defining characteristic that separates the Ashoka Fellow from the administrator, manager or academic. Ashoka is looking for men and women that are possessed by a concrete idea of a different future for his or her field; and who are willing to spend the next ten to fifteen years making that change take place. True entrepreneurs are the ultimate realists. They are as interested in the practical implementation or "how to" questions as they are with the vision itself. Entrepreneurs want their ideas to work; that is what counts.

Social Impact of Idea

This criterion focuses on the candidate's idea, not the candidate. Ashoka is not only looking for an extraordinary individual but also a powerful, practical new idea that will spread on its own merits. Ashoka is only interested in ideas that it believes will change the field significantly, triggering nationwide impact or, for smaller countries, broad regional change. For example, Ashoka will not support the launch of a new clinic or school unless it is part of a wider strategy to reform the education or healthcare system at the national level or beyond.



Ethical Fiber

The ethical fiber criterion refers to the trustworthiness of the candidate. Social entrepreneurs introducing major structural changes to society have to ask many people to change how they do things. If people do not trust the entrepreneur, the likelihood of success is significantly reduced. To achieve the genuine positive change that Ashoka seeks, we want to bring Filipino social entrepreneurs with the utmost integrity into our global fellowship.