

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 4-6 months fellows complete a series of 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 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 regional, 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, connect with, network with and learn from other fellows from their region, Vital Voices staff, trainers and members of the local business community.

Growth Services and Support: Following the in-person training, fellows apply and revise their action plans, as well as evaluate their progress towards their growth goals. Throughout the last 6 months of the fellowship, Vital Voices staff work with fellows to connect them 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: 65% of 2013-2014 fellows experienced positive growth in year-on-year quarterly sales during the fellowship period. Fellows also saw a 9% growth in the number of full time and part time employees.

Improved Business Management: 99% of 2013-2014 the fellows made changes to their business to improve productivity, such as improving their marketing and communications, creating or implementing a strategic growth plan, improving financial record keeping, developing or modifying a product, and improving costing or pricing.

Networking for Business Growth: 97% of 2013-2014 fellows made connections that they believed were going to be useful in growing their business. Within six months of completing the program, 65% of 2013-2014 fellows already began using the connections they had made.

Multiplier Effect: 2013-2014 fellows provide employment for 722 full time and part time employees. 2013-2014 fellows' efforts to train and mentor others benefited an additional 965 people and 718 people, respectively.

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?

Vital Voices seeks applications from women business owners from **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

As an interested applicant, you:

- Are motivated to build the skills and make the changes needed to grow your business,
- Have demonstrated leadership within your community
- Have the authority to make critical decisions within your business
- Are excited to participate in a one year business accelerator program, and
- Are willing and committed to have your business growth tracked by Vital Voices for 1 year during the Fellowship, and 2 years afterwards through 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?

- 4-7 hours per week of webinars, assignments and calls during the global virtual learning phase (June-September 2016)
- Attending the entirety of the 4-day regional in person training workshop in October
- Active participation in the growth services and support (November 2016 – May 2017)
- Collaboration with Vital Voices on tracking your business growth for up to three years via completion of brief, periodic online surveys

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 12 business management and leadership courses through Harvard Business School Publishing's online platform, Harvard ManageMentor (HMM) for one year
- Up to 17 interactive webinars led by expert trainers from across the globe
- Participation in a 4-day in-person, regional training workshop
- A network of women business leaders from across the globe
- Access to highly qualified staff and business consultants
- Opportunities for referrals to business support services tailored to your needs
- A certificate of completion

APPLICATION PROCESS

How can I apply?

You can fill out an application for the program here <http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/2416747/VV-GROW-Fellowship-2016-Application>.

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 one hour 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 January 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 Caryn Ellis at vitalvoices.economicempowerment@vitalnetwork.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 May 2016.