

**OPEN SOCIETY
FOUNDATIONS**

2019 Young Feminist Leaders Fellowships Guidelines and Application

**YOUTH EXCHANGE PROGRAM
(IN PARTNERSHIP WITH WOMEN'S RIGHTS PROGRAM)**

March 11, 2019

Executive Summary

The Youth Exchange, in partnership with the Women's Rights Program, seeks applicants for its Young Feminist Leaders Fellowships.

The Young Feminist Leaders Fellowships will support dynamic youth activists aged **22 to 30** and based in Latin America to advance a project of their own design that imagines new feminist realities and fosters more just, inclusive, and accessible feminist spaces. Through the lens of the upcoming 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in April 2020, successful projects should reflect on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration, address current realities, and propose a concrete idea for imaging a feminist future that advances women's rights and gender justice.

This fellowship explicitly recognizes the threats of discrimination to an open society, and seeks to create a leadership pipeline that promotes young people who have direct experience with the challenges they try to address.

Full proposals are due on **May 3, 2019** (11:59 p.m. EDT) and must be submitted via email to youth.exchange@opensocietyfoundations.org.

This document describes the fellowship guidelines, eligibility criteria, and information on how to apply.

1. General

The Youth Exchange is based within the Open Society Foundations' Strategy Unit team and seeks to support meaningful engagement with youth across the Open Society Foundations. The Youth Exchange seeks to support dynamic youth activists who impact change and uplift the mission and values of an open society.

The Women's Rights Program supports efforts to advance the case for gender justice, promote economic advancement, protect the sexual and reproductive rights of women and gender-nonconforming communities, and build intersectional and intergenerational movements.

2. Overall Guidelines and Eligibility Criteria

2.1 Context

The Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace was the name given for a conference convened by the United Nations during 4–15 September 1995 in Beijing, China. The conference set a defining framework for change with regards to advancing women's rights by producing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

The Beijing Declaration imagines a world where each woman and girl can exercise her freedoms and choices, and realize all her rights, such as to live free from violence, to go to school, to participate in decisions and to earn equal pay for equal work. The Beijing process connected many women's rights movements on a global scale and elevated their

stories, experiences, and realities to create a clear agreement on how to achieve equality and empowerment.

To date, no country has successfully finished the Platform for Action agenda. Moreover, women, trans and intersex people and communities are experiencing patriarchal oppression in both new and old ways. Combined with growing momentum of fundamentalism and authoritarianism, the barriers to advancing women's rights and gender justice are significant.

2.2 Background

The Youth Exchange and the Women's Rights Program aim to support young feminist organizing that addresses two problems that actors in the field have consistently identified as major challenges: (1) a lack of resources for younger feminist leaders aged 18-35; and (2) the lack of intentional multi-generational spaces in women's rights movements across the globe. Resources here not only refers to funding, but also targeted support for the needs of young feminist activists, including:

- Leadership and professional development and mentorship that is aligned with the ways that young feminists work;
- How to confront the manifestation of new risks/threats (including digital violence, online harassment, etc.); and
- Improvement of advocates' technical expertise (including lack of project and financial management skills).

2.3 Project Focus

The Young Feminist Leaders Fellowships attempt to place young people's voices at the heart of on-going activism and organizing that seeks to articulate feminist visions for just and inclusive societies, to develop innovative solutions to make such visions a reality, and to foster more just, inclusive, and accessible feminist spaces. In particular, the fellowships have the following goals:

- Amplify alternative and missing narratives and realities of feminist activists;
- Strengthen the feminist movement by elevating voices and experiences that are currently suppressed and excluded, and recognize groups of young feminist activists who face discrimination at several levels, both inside and outside their community;
- Build the leadership capacity of young feminist activists and support them with the necessary tools to disrupt oppressive anti-rights policies;
- Promote more inclusive discourse around young feminist leadership development, identifying and developing talent, and expanding the conversation to curate a more accessible platform for inclusion in the movement.

The projects we seek to support should reflect on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration, address current realities, and propose a concrete idea for imaging a feminist future that advances women's rights and gender justice.

2.4 Project Approach

Applicants may employ, either alone or in combination, a number of different strategies to achieve the goals and objectives of their project, including: participatory action research, advocacy and public education campaigns, exploration of how to address existing violations, best practices and positive models of behavior, etc.

Regardless of the strategy employed or the issue addressed, all Young Feminist Leaders Fellowship projects should aim to address a specific challenge to women's rights and gender justice.

2.5 Young Feminist Leaders Fellowships Do NOT Fund:

- **Enrollment in an academic institution** for degree or non-degree study, including dissertation research. Also, as indicated in the "Time Commitment" section, fellows cannot be full-time students during their fellowships.
- **Lobbying or political activity.** Potential applicants should carefully review our [Tax Law Lobbying Rules](#) before submitting their application. If awarded a fellowship, applicants must agree to refrain from restricted lobbying and political activities during the term of the fellowship.

2.6 Awards

The fellowships come with a stipend for full-time, 12-month projects (prorated for part-time projects). The stipends awarded will be based on the time committed, and project funds may be approved by Open Society Foundations. In addition, fellows will have access to health insurance, as well as a variety of training, networking, and professional development opportunities.

The purpose of the fellowship is to support individual fellows; therefore, the program will only cover individual expenses, and funds cannot be used in support of an individual's employment salary. Please note, grants to fellows are considered public information and fellows' names, addresses, and project descriptions will be included in the Open Society Foundations' tax returns, as per IRS regulations.

2.7 Structure of the Fellowship

The Young Feminist Leaders Fellowships for 2019 will offer five to seven fellowships. All of these fellowships will require collaboration with one of the following partner organizations: the [Association for Women's Rights in Development \(AWID\)](#), [El Instituto de Liderazgo Simone de Beauvoir](#) (The Leadership Institute of Simone de Beauvoir- ILSB), and the [Equipo Latinoamericano de Justicia y Género](#) (The Latin American Team of Justice and Gender- ELA).

Based on the proposed projects and candidate interviews, Open Society Foundations will place selected fellows with the host organization most aligned with their project proposal. Successful applicants will collaborate with their respective fellowship hosts to create and advance a project of their own design, which is aligned with the broader focus areas of the host organization. The projects should thus reflect the expertise and experience of the fellows, as well as the interests of the fellowship host. The host organizations will provide mentorship, resources, and network support to the Fellows as they carry out their projects.

Please note that this fellowship is NOT an internship or employment with the host organization. Current employees of AWID, ELA, ILSB, and entities within the Open Society Foundations' network are not eligible to apply.

Please find an appendix attached to this call outlining the strategic areas of work in which each host is engaged.

2.8 Eligibility Criteria

1. **Age:** Applicants should be between 22 and 30 years of age at the start of the fellowship.
2. **Project focus:** Applicants must propose projects that focus on advancing feminist organizing and leadership within their communities and across other movements, or recognizing alternative or missing narratives around topics and issues that may polarize their communities and movements.
3. **Professional development:** Applicants should be at an early stage of their careers and want to learn more about what it takes to be optimally effective as an activist and organizer in a specific place or on a specific issue. Applicants should have demonstrated experience in community organizing or activism whether on a local, national, or regional level.
4. **Directly affected individuals:** Applicants directly affected by, or with significant direct personal experience of, the challenges, policies, practices, acute forms of discrimination, and systems that perpetuate dominant narratives or identity-based stereotypes are strongly encouraged to apply.
5. **Potential and attitude:** We are looking for candidates who have not had easy access to existing leadership pipelines or other paths to achievement and accomplishment, but who nonetheless have the drive, aptitude, and tenacity to seize upon an opportunity for growth and development when it presents itself.
6. **Time commitment:** Fellowships are intended to be 12 months in duration and can begin between August and November 2019. Projects can be either full-time (minimum of 35 hours/week) or part-time (minimum of 20 hours/week). Fellows cannot be full-time students or have full-time jobs during their fellowships, even if the fellowship is only part-time.
7. **Project location and language:** Applicants must be based in Latin America and demonstrate proficiency in English, Spanish, and/or Portuguese.
8. **Host organizations:** Applicants will be required to work with a host organization. Host organizations—the three designated host organizations are listed in the previous section—will provide access to resources such as space, technology, and networks, as well as mentorship and guidance. The fellowship program encourages host organizations to provide in-kind contributions such as office space and necessary overhead. The fellowship program does not provide the host organization with supplemental funds.

3. Application

3.1 How to Apply

To apply, applicants must send the following to youth.exchange@opensocietyfoundations.org by **May 3, 2019**:

- **RESUME OR CV** (maximum 2 pages)
- **FULL WRITTEN PROPOSAL**: applicants should complete the attached proposal template in writing (maximum 5 pages, single-spaced)

Applicants can only submit one written proposal for a single proposed project.

Applicants who send multiple submissions or propose several project ideas in a single submission will not be considered.

After the full proposals and resumes/CVs have been reviewed, a limited number of applicants will be invited to conduct interviews with the selection panel.

Those invited for interviews will be notified at least 2 weeks in advance.

Complete guidelines in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and English Easy-to-Read are available in the Download Files section on this webpage. If you have questions or experience technical difficulties with the online application form, please contact the Youth Exchange at youth.exchange@opensocietyfoundations.org.

4. Appendix I: Strategic Priorities

4.1 Association for Women’s Rights in Development (AWID)

AWID Initiatives

Advancing Universal Rights and Justice (AURJ)

- We monitor, document and make visible how anti-rights actors are operating and colluding in multilateral spaces and support feminist, women’s rights and gender justice movements and allies to counter their influence and impact.

Building Feminist Economies (BFE)

- Working on extractivism, tax justice and corporate accountability, we build knowledge on corporate power and influence; advocate for corporate accountability and equitable distribution of wealth; and amplify feminist proposals for just economies.

Co-Creating Feminist Realities (CFR)

- We unearth and amplify feminist realities, proposals and narratives and in doing so, contribute to making feminism visible in practice, inspiring exchange and joint action, and providing spaces for strategizing, thus increasing the collective impact and power of feminist alternatives.

Resourcing Feminist Movements (RFM)

- We analyze and aim to influence funding trends to drive quality, sustained resources to feminist organizing. We deepen understanding of how feminist movements are organizing in the current context and their related resource strategies and needs.

AWID Tactics

Knowledge Building (KB)

- We collaboratively create, build and share feminist knowledge in multiple forms and platforms to fill knowledge gaps that expose cracks in systems of oppression. We work with feminist movements and allies to co-create and make visible strategies and interventions that advance our narratives and agendas, and that counter the influence of oppressive discourses and tactics.

Arts & Creative Expression (A & CE)

- AWID integrates arts and creative expression across all of its programmatic work and partnerships. Taking a holistic approach, we work closely with artists and artist communities to build a network of engaged feminist actors using art and creative expression as a tactic for change.

Solidarity

- We mobilize our members and movements we support to strengthen collective action in solidarity with feminist causes and defenders at risk. We build long-term partnerships, engage in active listening and ongoing, long-term, solidarity and work with defenders to build a body of knowledge and support networks of solidarity on protection and wellbeing.

4.2 Instituto De Liderazgo Simone De Beauvoir (Leadership Institute of Simone De Beauvoir- ILSB)

Sexual and Reproductive Rights

- We seek to advance the decriminalization of abortion in Mexico and the provision of sexual and reproductive health services with a cultural perspective to prevent unwanted pregnancies in adolescents. In addition to the federal advocacy, we strengthen the leadership of youth people in 13 states of the country, with an impact at the local level.

Agenda for Indigenous and Afro-Mexican Women

- We promote social leadership and the articulation of indigenous and Afro-Mexican women to influence the public space by promoting their own agendas, mainly on sexual and reproductive health issues, and political participation.

Domestic Work and Paid and Unpaid Care

- We promote the labor rights of domestic workers in accordance with international standards and the creation of a public care system that allows to balance work and personal life of workers and promote family, social and governmental co- responsibility.

Women's Political Participation

- We strengthen the leadership of women to promote their electoral political rights and promote the equality agenda; and we make visible the structural obstacles that women face in accessing public office positions.

Rural Women and Livelihoods of Forest Communities

- We promote the gender perspective in movements, organizations and forest communities that carry out activities for the prevention and defense of the territory.

Gender and Rights

- We promote reflection on gender and the creation of discursive strategies and political action among members of civil society organizations, the academia and the community of activists, to counteract the impact of conservative and religious groups and movements.

4.3 Equipo Latinoamericano De Justicia Y Género (The Latin American Team Of Justice And Gender - ELA)

Social and Political Participation

- Promoting strategies to enable and promote women's full participation in the country's political and social life, free from discrimination.

Violence Against Women

- Promoting full implementation of legislation in force and contributing towards social condemnation and eradication of all forms of violence.

Productive Work and Care Policies

- Promoting public policies and co-responsibility so that care work is no longer a barrier to women's inclusion in the labor market.

Sexual and Reproductive Rights/Abortion

- Ensuring women can decide over their sexuality and reproduction free from any discrimination.

5. Appendix II: Glossary

Feminism: Belief in and desire for equality between the sexes. Feminist activist Bell Hooks calls it "a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression."

Intersectional feminism: If feminism is advocating for women's rights and equality between the sexes, intersectional feminism is the understanding of how a person's overlapping identities — including race, class, caste, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, ability, and age — impact the way they experience oppression and discrimination.

Kimberlé Crenshaw introduced the concept of "intersectionality" to feminist theory in a seminal paper for the University of Chicago Legal Forum, describing the "intersectional experience" as something "greater than the sum of racism and sexism."

Intersectionality: The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. A theoretical framework, which studies how individuals experience privilege and oppression differently according to their combination of different social identities, such as ethnicity, gender, sexuality etc.

Gender-nonconforming: A broad term referring to people who do not behave in a way that conforms to the traditional expectations of their gender, or whose gender expression does not fit neatly into a category.

Transgender person: A person whose gender identity differs from the cultural expectations of the sex they were assigned at birth.

Intersex person: is a general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male.

Patriarchy*: A hierarchical-structured society in which (often white, cisgender, heterosexual) men hold more power. A system of society or government in which men hold the power and women are largely excluded from it.

Oppression*: cruel or unjust treatment or control, unjust exploitation, or domination of others.

*Patriarchal oppression defined in part

Cis/Cisgender: Denoting or relating to a person whose sense of personal identity and gender corresponds with their birth sex.

Heterosexual: (of a person) sexually attracted to people of the opposite sex.

Fundamentalism: strict or extreme adherence to the basic principles or core rules of any subject or discipline.

Authoritarianism: the enforcement or advocacy of strict obedience to authority at the expense of personal freedom.

Open society: Vibrant and tolerant democracies whose governments are accountable to their citizens.