



Miller Center

for Social Entrepreneurship

Remote engagement action research projects in the 2021 Global Social Benefit Fellowship December 15, 2020

Regardless of the pandemic, this fellowship will run in 2021. We have designed 2021 action research projects to be conducted via remote engagement (e.g., via Zoom) without the immersive component of travel to the field. All applicants should enter and proceed through the application process with the assumption that no international field placements are currently planned. The situation with domestic US placements is slightly different; see below.

All action research projects in GSBF 2020 were via remote engagement using digital tools. The pandemic required a number of adjustments and revisions to the original goals of the projects but the fellows were able to gather various kinds of data and successfully complete their research projects. The loss of the immersion component of the fellowship, like so much of what has been taken from us by the pandemic, is unfortunate. However, the fellows were still able to:

- engage deeply with Miller Center's social enterprise partners,
- learn about social entrepreneurship from practitioners,
- create research projects of practical value to those social enterprises, and
- reflect upon their own life path and leadership development goals in the spirit of social entrepreneurship.

And, in some cases, fellows identified additional learning opportunities within the pandemic. To learn how some fellows describe the value of action research in a remote engagement mode watch [2020 fellows Lauren Cherry and Izzy Silber explain 5 key things you should know about the fellowship.](#)

Remote engagements make the continuation of the fellowship possible, but they are demanding in several ways. Fellows must find a way to create a collaborative research team with local social enterprise staff and partners. They must accommodate a substantial time zone difference. Fellows report that work on Zoom is more tiring than in person work. Fellows are not able to learn as much about the social context of the work of these entrepreneurs. Like so much of life during the pandemic, the work proceeds more slowly. These extra challenges have to be balanced against the opportunities provided by the fellowship, and the reality that much of university life in 2021 will still be via zoom.

Public health institutions in the US are in the process of distributing vaccines. There is widespread hope that later in 2021 Santa Clara University will be able to return to in-person classes, and some semblance of normal life in the US. However, vaccines will be distributed in the developing world much more slowly. Most of the countries

Miller Center for Social Entrepreneurship
500 El Camino Real, Santa Clara, California 95053-0639
408-551-6043 | www.scu.edu/millercenter



Santa Clara University

where our social enterprise partners work will be slow to open up. Santa Clara University policy determines when Miller Center can again offer international travel, and this policy is guided by US Federal Government guidelines (provided by, for example, the Centers for Disease Control, Department of State). It is theoretically possible for there to be an opportunity for international travel for fellows, perhaps late summer 2021, but this seems like a remote possibility as of this writing. Were there to be an opportunity for international travel, Miller Center would initiate a consultation and planning process. Unlike prior years with the full eight week immersion experience, the 2021 fellows with remote engagements will have an opportunity to work part time during the summer, balancing this with their remote engagement action research projects.

US domestic travel will become possible sooner than international travel. Miller Center believes that domestic projects placements are possible during 2021, perhaps later in the summer. For this reason, Miller Center has sought out additional domestic placements for this year, all of which are located on the East Coast. These will begin with remote engagements, but will likely include some immersive components.

Miller Center for Social Entrepreneurship
500 El Camino Real, Santa Clara, California 95053-0639
408-551-6043 | www.scu.edu/millercenter



Santa Clara University