

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

What is the VV GROW Fellowship?

The [Vital Voices](#) GROW Fellowship is a leading global accelerator program for women owners of small and medium-sized businesses that are making a social impact. The program provides customized business skills training, leadership development, technical assistance, and access to networks and connections. Going into its 9th year, this program aims to elevate women business leaders as drivers for economic growth and social change in their communities, countries and the world by helping them grow their businesses and expand their social impact. Through online trainings, fellows focus on long-term business strategy paired with action-oriented strategic plans to grow their businesses. They amplify their roles as leaders in their businesses and their communities creating jobs, stimulating economic growth and producing wider social benefits.

Through the program, participants gain knowledge and skills in strategic planning, financial management, marketing & sales, strategic networking, leadership, human resources and communications. They receive valuable technical assistance and support, and become members of a valuable global network of women business owners and the broader Vital Voices network of more than 18,000 of women leaders around the world.

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 disproportionate challenges in accessing the support services they need to grow, including networks, training, financing and markets. With generous support from our platinum partner, FedEx, the VV GROW Fellowship partners with women business leaders to address their key obstacles to growth and enhance their leadership impact.

What does the fellowship include?

- 1. Virtual Learning:** Through a series of webinars, assignments, one-on-one and small group calls, fellows learn about core topics and assess their businesses in order to develop and implement a strategic plan for growth. Throughout the 12 months of virtual learning, fellows gain skills and knowledge to strengthen business operations, identify and prepare for opportunities for growth and successfully achieve long-term sustainable growth.
- 2. Virtual Convening:** Fellows participate in online sessions focused on select topics including leadership and personal development. Through dynamic interactive sessions, fellows connect virtually with each other, program partners, guest speakers, Vital Voices trainers and staff, thereby also strengthening their Vital Voices global network.
- 3. Growth Services and Support:** During the year, fellows learn about various topics and resources that are critical to achieving their business growth goals. They are connected to opportunities and individualized growth services and support provided by Vital Voices and our partners.

What results have you seen?

- **Growth in Sales + Job Creation:** Sales growth has accelerated for our fellows since their participation in the program. Past cohorts of the program had on average up to 43% increase in their sales after going through the fellowship.
- **Improved Business Management:** 100% of fellows made changes to their business to improve productivity as a result of their participation in the program. The changes most commonly cited include developing new products, implementing a strategic growth plan, improving quality controls, upgrading capital equipment and opening a new store, office, production or warehouse facility.
- **Networking for Business Growth:** 81% of fellows used at least one new connection to grow their business (*useful business advice; access to other business contacts; professional services and encouragement*)
- **Multiplier Effect:** The women that we worked with not only lead successful growing businesses but also believe in mentoring and giving back to others in their communities and beyond. To date, program fellows have reached over 400,000 people in their communities. They mentored more than 7,500 people, trained over 36,000 and have reached over 385,000 people through speeches or presentations on women's empowerment.

What will I receive as a VV GROW Fellow?

The VV GROW Fellowship is a highly competitive program that provides customized business skills training and support valued at over US \$20,000 per participant. Through the fellowship, participants will:

- Increase their knowledge, skills, and confidence in strategic planning, financial management, marketing & sales, strategic networking, leadership, human resources, communications and other business related topics
- Receive guidance, training and support from global expert business trainers and coaches
- Develop valuable relationships with a group of women business leaders from around the world (VV GROW Cohort 9)
- Receive referral(s) to business support services and other growth opportunities
- Receive a certificate of program completion
- Become a member of the Vital Voices Global Leadership Network upon graduation

To learn more about the VV GROW Fellowship's unique value and impact, learn about the journey of five VV GROW fellows and their experiences with the program [here](#).

Also, learn about other VV GROW fellows from [Nigeria](#), the US in [California](#) and [Baltimore](#).

ELIGIBILITY

Who can apply?

Women entrepreneurs or social entrepreneurs who:

- Own a qualifying business that...
 - Have been operating this business for at least 3 years
 - Employs at least 1 full time staff (this can include the applicant)
 - Generates at least US \$40,000 in annual sales
- Are proficient in spoken and written English
- Have demonstrated leadership and key decision making authority within their business, and manage the business on an ongoing basis
- Have a commitment towards making a positive social impact
- If you are involved in more than one business, the above business criteria must apply to the business that you would like to focus on during the fellowship

Interested applicants:

- Are enthusiastic about participating in a one-year business accelerator program
- Are motivated to learn new skills and make changes to grow their business
- Have the authority to make critical decisions in their business
- Are willing to commit to working with Vital Voices to track their business growth during the program and for up to 3 years afterwards by being responsive and participating in data collection activities including online surveys and phone calls
- Are interested in collaborating with and supporting the other women in their cohort

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?

Participation costs:

If accepted into the program, there is a participation fee between US \$1,500 to \$5,000, based on the size and revenue of your primary business. Payment plans and some need-based scholarships will be available.

Scholarships

A limited number of scholarships will be available. If you are interested in being considered for a scholarship, please select "Apply for a scholarship" and answer the corresponding questions. Successful applicants will be informed of the result of their scholarship application upon notification of program acceptance.

Additional information about the participation fee will be provided upon the completion of your application.

Fellows commit to:

- Dedicate 2-7 hours per week (January - December 2022) for webinars, homework assignments and phone calls
- Attend the entire 3-day virtual convening in summer 2022 (date TBD)
- Submit surveys and participate in phone calls with Vital Voices

APPLICATION PROCESS**How can I apply?**

You can fill out an application for the program here: <https://bit.ly/vvgrow2022>

If I have 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 to 90 minutes to complete. You will be able to save your answers and return to the application at any time. To do this, click the "Save and Continue Later" box that appears at the top right corner of the application in each section and provide your email address. You will then receive an email with a personal link that you should use to return to your application.

When is the application due?

Applications will be considered until **October 18th, 2021**.

How can I learn more about the fellowship and applying to the 2022 program?

We hosted two informational webinars on the VV GROW Fellowship and the application for the 2022 program. These webinars will be an opportunity for potential applicants to learn more about the program's structure and expectations, hear from VV GROW fellows, introduce the application and ask questions. You can find out more information the program and application from our [August Information Session Recording](#) and [September Information Session Recording](#).

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 Dalin Nhean at DalinNhean@vitalvoices.org with the subject line: **2022 VV GROW Fellowship Application**.

What happens after I apply?

Applicants may be asked to participate in a 1-hour Skype interview. All applicants will be notified about final decisions by **December 31, 2021**. Early applications are strongly encouraged.