

ABOUT THE PROGRAM & YOU

You have a vision for impact

You got into business for a deeper reason, to create sustainable change in the world around you. And while your business model is now validated, you yearn to see your expansion go so much further.

But it is a real challenge

From time to time, balancing all the pieces your business requires is a struggle. You desire to systematize your operations and be able to grow forward confidently, with a clear strategic plan. You would like to have access to the right networks and business resources to achieve the change needed to solve the problems you care about. You may need more resources to increase the impact and make your initiative even more sustainable.

Your purpose-driven business must scale

We understand your challenges, because we've been there before ourselves as an organization and have supported 442 entrepreneurs through this same journey, shifting from feeling overwhelmed to empowered, from breaking even to profitable expansion, from getting by day to day, to creating a strategic vision and plan.

At Vital Voices, over the last 24 years, we have built a network of 20,000 changemakers across 184 countries, each of whom is daring to reimagine a more equitable world for all. And this starts with YOU and your business. Our shared desire to see a more equitable world starts within every single one of our businesses.

Calling all impact-driven, change-making women business leaders called to create greater impact through sustainable business growth

If you are a visionary change-maker leading a for-profit, purpose-driven business that offers innovative solutions to the world's greatest challenges and/or advances the UN Sustainable Development Goals, if you desire to ensure that your business creates lasting change through the people, places and planet that it serves, we are here for you.

VV GROW: Your Vision for Change and Growth Accelerated to the Next Level

The VV GROW Fellowship is a 10-month virtual program that fosters growth and skills advancement in strategic planning, financial management, marketing and sales, strategic networking, leadership, human resources, and communications to support you in creating a holistic, sustainable foundation for which your vision and impact can grow.

Takeaways

The program will equip you with all the tools and skills to take your business to the next level. You will end up with:

- A Strategic Plan for growth in your business and impact.
- A new network of peers and informal advisors.
- An official certification as a Vital Voices GROW Fellow

- Join the Vital Voices network of global women leaders

Through the VV GROW fellowship you will:

- Have gained a new-found confidence in your ability to lead, as well as in your businesses' ability to thrive.
- Have a framework for measuring your organization's impact which can be used to measure your performance, and can also be engaged in your marketing and in securing investors.
- Be empowered with the knowledge and tools to evaluate and identify opportunities for growth in business and leadership.
- Strengthened resiliency and ability to navigate change, and contingency planning strategies and approaches to guard against future economic or other shocks.
- Have knowledge in how to leverage the Vital Voices network of alumnae, partners and supporters to provide access to unique and high impact opportunities to further your own leadership and business impact.
- Understand how to strengthen network connections and engage partners to provide insight and support to you and your business

The Vital Voices difference

While many accelerator programs focus solely on the participant's business, the VV GROW Fellowship works to support the leader within the business, ensuring that you are supported from the inside out. The program is focused on supporting women owners of purpose-driven, small and medium-sized businesses to sustainably increase their business' impact to lead positive change in the world, from local initiatives to global action, and everything in between.

Now in its ninth year, the program partners with women entrepreneurs to drive inclusive economic growth and social change by helping them grow their business and social impact. Vital Voices works with them to address key obstacles to growth and enhance their leadership and management skills through customized business and leadership training, technical assistance, and access to networks.

Past fellows have said that the fellowship is like a mini-MBA program, providing immense value, delivered by trainers with lived business experience, just like you. This program gives you practical skills to apply to your business and create sustainable growth by using a learn-do-achieve methodology. The content is built directly from the research conducted from small business associations all over the world and the lived experience of thousands of women business owners from around the world who have led change. Learn more about other VV GROW fellows from Nigeria (<https://www.vitalvoices.org/story-impact-maymunah-yusuf-kadiri-grateful/>) the US in California (<https://www.vitalvoices.org/grow-female-founders/>) and Iraq (<https://www.vitalvoices.org/news-articles/news/how-shapol-majid-is-pioneering-empowerment-one-undergarment-at-a-time/>)

ELIGIBILITY**Who can apply?**

1. Applicant is a woman (inclusive of the following identities: cisgender women, transgender women, and non-binary people that are comfortable in a space that centers the experiences of women).
2. Applicant owns and leads a for-profit business that leads a purpose-driven business that offers innovative solutions to the world's greatest challenges and/or advances the Sustainable Development Goals (<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>).

3. Applicant holds a key leadership and management role with decision-making authority in the business.
4. Applicant's business is beyond the startup phase, meaning they have proven their business model and product/service, they have a committed customer base, and the business is carrying out marketing activities.
5. Applicant's business at least breaks even in terms of annual revenue.
6. Applicant has at least 1 full-time employee (inclusive of self).
7. Applicant is proficient in spoken and written English.

Ideal candidates:

- Know their mission and the impact they want to have and are motivated to make a positive impact.
- Have proven their business product/service through a baseline of sales and is now ready to move past the rollercoaster of starting up and hanging on by a thread, to build out a sustainable model and functioning team.
- Are enthusiastic about participating in this program and joining VV global network.
- Are excited about the opportunity to collaborate with and support other leaders in the program cohort.
- Do not plan to exit their business within the next 5 years.
- If applicant is involved in more than one business, the requirement criteria above must apply to the business that the applicant would like to focus on during the fellowship

Can non-profits apply?

The VV GROW Fellowship is exclusively for women who lead or own a for-profit purpose-driven 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 of US \$1,500. Payment plans and 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.

Program expectations:

- Applicant is 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.
- Applicant is willing to participate in required online sessions: 3-4 hours/month from January - October 2023 and completion of required assignments (1-2 hours/month from January -October 2023).
- Applicant is willing and able to participate in the Virtual Leadership Convening.

APPLICATION PROCESS

How can I apply?

You can fill out an application for the program here: <https://bit.ly/2023VVGROW>

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 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 31st, 2022**.

How can I learn more about the Fellowship and applying to the 2023 program?

We will be hosting two informational sessions on the VV GROW Fellowship and the application for the 2023 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. The dates and times of the informational sessions and links to register can be found below.

- Thursday, September 15th from 10:00am-11:00am EDT. Register here: <https://vvgrowfellowshipinfosession.splashthat.com/>
- Thursday, October 6th from 10:00am-11:00am EDT. Register here: <https://vvgrowinfosession.splashthat.com/>.

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 vvgrowfellowship@vitalvoices.org with the subject line: **2023 VV GROW Fellowship Application**.

What happens after I apply?

All applicants will be notified about final decisions by **December 23, 2022**. Early applications are strongly encouraged.