

# ProInspire

## SOCIAL IMPACT FELLOWSHIPS:

*Building Talent in the Social Impact Sector*

*By Monisha Kapila and Nicolas Takamine*

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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### Report Co-Authors

**Monisha Kapila**, CEO, Prolnspire

**Nicolas Takamine**, Prolnspire Fellow, 2009

### Survey Distribution Partners

ProFellow

Prolnspire

### Contributors to Research

**Stephen Bauer**, Public Allies

**Stephen Beale**, Atlas Corps

**Dionne Galloway**, Prolnspire

**Batool Hassan**, Acumen

**Bethany Rubin Henderson**, City Hall Fellows

**Vicki Johnson**, ProFellow

**Catherine Kent**, Prolnspire

**Gene Kunde**, Prolnspire

**Andrew Nurkin**, Princeton AlumniCorps

**Martha Searby**, Prolnspire

### Survey Respondents

Acumen

Annie E. Casey Foundation

Ashoka

The Aspen Institute

Atlas Corps

BizCorps

Broad Center

Butler Koshland Fellowships

Center for California Studies

City Hall Fellows/Community Partners

Code for America

The Duke Endowment

Echoing Green

Education Pioneers

Evelyn & Walter Haas, Jr. Fund

Exponent Philanthropy

Fuse Corps

Global Health Corps

Grameen Foundation

Greenlining Institute

Harvard Business School

IDEO.org

Impact Business Leaders

Independent Sector

Inspiring Capital

Kiva

LeaderSpring

LGT Venture Philanthropy

Management Leadership for Tomorrow (MLT)

National Urban Fellows, Inc.

New Sector Alliance\*

Nonprofit Roundtable of Greater Washington

On Purpose

Presidio Institute

Princeton AlumniCorps

Princeton in Asia

Prolnspire\*

Public Allies

Quarterback

Rockwood Leadership Institute

Stoneleigh Foundation

Watson University

Woodrow Wilson Natl. Fellowship Foundation

Young Nonprofit Professionals Network

\*Respondents submitted separate responses for the organization's different fellowship programs

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Despite exponential growth in fellowship programs in the social impact sector<sup>1</sup>, little data exists about this rapidly evolving field. In 2014, Prolnspire and ProFellow conducted a survey and analysis of fellowship programs to gather the first benchmarking dataset in the field. In total, 46 fellowship programs participated in the survey, including well-known programs like Acumen Fellows, Ashoka, Atlas Corps, Broad Residency, Code for America, Echoing Green, NGen Fellows, Prolnspire, and Public Allies.

Our research revealed that fellowship programs have emerged to address gaps in how the social impact sector recruits, develops, and supports talent. The social impact sector, particularly the nonprofit sector, has struggled with creating effective mechanisms for expanding talent pipelines and growing talent across the career life stage. The resulting gaps have created demand for structures to support the social impact sector around talent, resulting in rapid growth of the fellowship industry over the past 15 years. In fact, 76% of programs in our survey were started in 2000 or later.

This research effort resulted in the first common definition of a social impact fellowship:

***A social impact fellowship enhances the value created by talent in the social impact sector, as a structured, professionally-oriented, time-bound and selective program in which talent enrolls.***

With this definition, we can better distinguish social impact fellowships from other offerings. A social impact fellowship excludes, for example, research focused fellowships, university programs that use the term 'fellowship' to describe extracurricular activities, university professorships including the title 'fellow', and post-residency medical fellowships.

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<sup>1</sup> In our research, we defined social impact organizations as those with a mission to create value that accrues to society as a whole, as opposed to organizations whose purpose is to create private wealth. The social impact sector may include nonprofits, non-governmental organizations, public agencies, foundations, social enterprises, and organizations classified as being in the 'fourth sector.'

### Fellowship Types

We developed a framework for understanding the characteristics of the fellowship industry and the different types of programs available. The framework identifies four main fellowship types, each distinguished by its value proposition to talent and to the sectors:

- **MATCH MAKERS** facilitate matching of fellows with public and social sector employers to serve in substantial full-time roles.
- **LAUNCHPADS** bring new organizations and models to the world by helping fellows launch new ventures.
- **PEOPLE ACCELERATORS** amplify the impact of existing leaders through leadership and professional development.
- **STRATEGIC EMPLOYERS** advance their own mission through the work of fellows in a structured program offering exposure and sector experience.

## Key Survey Findings

- 1. Fellowships focus primarily on emerging leaders.** Our survey found that fellowship programs focus mainly on 'emerging leaders,' which we define as individuals under the age of 40.
- 2. Few fellowship programs have reached large scale.** Only six fellowships of the 46 respondents had greater than 100 fellows in 2014. Two key factors seem to impact the ability for fellowship programs to scale: high per person costs of fellowship programs, and lack of funding for fellowship programs.
- 3. Fellowships can enhance diversity in the sector.** Over half of programs that track diversity metrics indicate that 50% or more of Fellows in their program are non-white.
- 4. The fellowship industry approaches metrics and evaluation with inconsistency.** Only 26% of respondents have performed a program evaluation. In addition, there is little consistency in metrics being tracked by programs in each category.
- 5. Fellowships desire more industry collaboration.** Nearly 100% of respondents indicated they would like to find more ways to collaborate with other fellowship programs.

## Opportunities and Next Steps for the Industry

- 1. Pursue collaboration at the program level and development of the field overall.** Fellowships can pursue tactical programmatic collaboration by planning joint activities, establishing referral networks, and sharing resources. The fellowship industry can also formalize itself by establishing industry structures such as a conference, learning communities, and collaboration mechanisms.
- 2. Tap into alumni networks.** In total, over 26,000 fellows have participated over the lifetime of the programs represented in our survey response set. This figure does not include alumni of very large fellowship programs that did not participate in the survey. Tremendous potential exists if the sector can leverage alumni of these programs as a collective force for impact.
- 3. Better understand the value and cost of fellowships.** This survey marked the first collection of benchmarking data on both the costs of fellowship programs (to fellowship providers and organizations hosting fellows) and the value created by the programs (for fellows and host organizations). Benchmarking data will grow in value and reliability with a consistent approach to estimating fellowship value and cost figures.
- 4. Gain a deeper understanding of customer needs.** Further research is required to validate the value propositions laid out in our framework for different types of fellowship programs. This research should solicit the input of current, past, and prospective fellows, as well as social impact organizations that benefit from fellowships. Potential areas for further research include developing a deeper understanding of how each fellowship type can better meet the career and talent development goals of its target population, and identifying how fellowships are addressing the needs of social impact organizations and playing a role in their talent strategies.

# UNDERSTANDING THE FELLOWSHIP LANDSCAPE

## Growth of the Fellowship Industry

Scan any aggregate listing of nonprofit professional and career opportunities, and the term ‘fellowship’ is likely to appear in many of the postings. Increasingly, fellowship programs are emerging to address gaps in how the social impact sector<sup>1</sup> recruits and develops talent. The social impact sector, particularly the nonprofit sector, has struggled with creating effective mechanisms for expanding talent pipelines and growing talent across the career life stage. According to The Bridgespan Group, leadership development and succession planning were singled out by the nonprofits they surveyed as the most glaring organizational weakness by a margin of more than two to one.<sup>2</sup>

Based on Prolnspire’s review of research and interviews with alumni from our programs, nonprofit leaders, and funders, these challenges are rooted in a few key factors:

- Lack of prioritization by funders and nonprofits in creating a **TALENT-ORIENTED CULTURE**.
- Inadequate **CAPACITY FOR SENIOR LEADERS** to invest time and resources in managing talent. According to McKinsey, “chronic underinvestment in leadership development within the US social sector, accompanied by 25 percent growth in the number of nonprofit organizations in the past decade, has opened a gap between demands on leaders and their ability to meet those needs.”<sup>3</sup>
- Limited understanding of how current talent practices particularly impact **PIPELINES FROM A RACE AND EQUITY PERSPECTIVE**.
- Inconsistent use of **TALENT MANAGEMENT PROCESSES AND SYSTEMS** due to size and scale of organizations.

Evolution in the talent marketplace has put greater pressure on the social impact sector to fill pipeline and development gaps. This pressure arises from:

- Strong interest from professionals across generations to **ENTER THE SECTOR**.
- Desire for more **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, SUPPORT, AND GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES** from younger workers.
- General **MOBILITY OF TALENT**, with average job tenures of three years for workers ages 25–34.<sup>4</sup>
- Increased openness to career paths that **MOVE IN AND OUT OF THE SECTOR**. According to Young Nonprofit Professionals Network, “Only a third of the professionals we surveyed stated that they are 100% committed to building a nonprofit career.”<sup>5</sup>
- Awareness of **BARRIERS THAT NEXT GENERATION LEADERS FACE** to pursuing executive leadership.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In our research, we defined social impact organizations as those with a mission to create value that accrues to society as a whole, as opposed to organizations whose purpose is to create private wealth. The social impact sector may include nonprofits, non-governmental organizations, public agencies, foundations, social enterprises, and organizations classified as being in the ‘fourth sector.’

<sup>2</sup> Kirk Kramer and Preeta Nayak, “Nonprofit Leadership Development: What’s Your ‘Plan A’ for Growing Future Leaders?,” The Bridgespan Group, 2013. <http://www.bridgespan.org/Publications-and-Tools/Career-Professional-Development/Develop-My-Staff>

<sup>3</sup> Laura Callanan, Nora Gardner, Lenny Mendonca, and Doug Scott, “What social-sector leaders need to succeed,” McKinsey & Company, November 2014. [http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/social\\_sector/what\\_social\\_sector\\_leaders\\_need\\_to\\_succeed](http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/social_sector/what_social_sector_leaders_need_to_succeed)

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Employee Tenure Summary,” September 2014. <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/tenure.nr0.htm>

<sup>5</sup> Dan Doblin and Trish Tchume, “Good in Theory, Problems in Practice,” Young Nonprofit Professionals Network, 2011. [http://ynpn.org/wp-content/uploads/YNPN\\_National\\_Report\\_FORWEBSITE.pdf](http://ynpn.org/wp-content/uploads/YNPN_National_Report_FORWEBSITE.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Marla Cornelius, Patrick Corvington, and Albert Ruesga, “Ready to Lead? Next Generation Leaders Speak Out,” CompassPoint Nonprofit Services, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, The Meyer Foundation, and Idealist.org, 2008. [https://www.compasspoint.org/sites/default/files/docs/research/521\\_readytolead2008.pdf](https://www.compasspoint.org/sites/default/files/docs/research/521_readytolead2008.pdf)

The resulting gaps have created demand for structures to support the social impact sector around talent, resulting in rapid growth of the fellowship industry over the past 15 years. In fact, **76% of programs in our survey were started in 2000 or later, and three of the four categories of social impact fellowships we identified had a median founding year between 2007 and 2009.** In addition, many organizations were founded for the specific purpose of operating fellowship programs. In our survey, 49% of programs represented are run by what we call ‘fellowship-focused’ organizations, as compared to organizations that dedicate less than half of their staff to the fellowship program.

## Defining Social Impact Fellowships

Despite the growth in fellowship offerings, the sector still lacks a common definition for the model. At present, the term ‘fellowship’ is used in many ways. The word ‘fellow’ historically refers to companionship, and is commonly associated with a group of people who share similar interests, activities, and experiences. The term is used in the context of academic programs, church groups, medical training, and myriad career and professional development opportunities in the social impact sector. In order to better examine the role of fellowships in the social sector, it is important to align around a common definition for what constitutes a fellowship.

For the purposes of our research, we created a definition to specifically describe a social impact fellowship and to identify its distinct characteristics.

“*A social impact fellowship enhances the value created by talent in the social impact sector, as a structured, professionally-oriented, time-bound and selective program in which talent enrolls.*”

Social impact fellowships enhance the value created by talent in the social impact sector:



Social impact fellowships exhibit four distinct features. They are:

- **Structured** programs in which individuals enroll
- **Professional** in orientation
- **Time-bound** in their program components
- **Selective** in acceptance

With this definition, we can better distinguish social impact fellowships from other offerings. A social impact fellowship excludes, for example:

- Research focused fellowships, such as fellowships supported by National Science Foundation
- University programs that use the term ‘fellowship’ to describe extracurricular activities, such as Board Fellows programs offered by Business Schools
- University professorships including the title ‘fellow’
- Post-residency medical fellowships

While we expect gray areas at the boundaries of this definition, we hope it serves to bring into sharper focus an understanding of the social impact fellowship offering, thereby promoting the industry’s learning and collaboration.

## Fellowship Categories

Having a common definition of social impact fellowships makes it easier to categorize the types of social impact fellowships available and understand how the sector can use them to leverage talent and scale impact. We sought to accomplish this by devising a framework through which to assess each offering. Our research revealed four major categories of social impact fellowships, each of which can be defined by its primary value proposition to a) talent and b) the public and social sectors.

A deeper examination of each category of social impact fellowship, found in the Appendix, further illustrates the opportunities they present.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Value to Talent</b>	<b>Value to Sector</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Match Makers	Facilitate matching of fellows with social impact sector employers to serve in substantial full-time roles	Structured way to get work experience in the social impact sector, with program support for placement and cohort experience	Access to full-time employees with skill sets or backgrounds not widely available in the traditional talent pool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Atlas Corps</li> <li>• Education Pioneers</li> <li>• Prolnspire</li> <li>• Public Allies</li> </ul>
Launchpads	Bring new organizations and operating models to the world by helping fellows launch new ventures	Training, resources, and support structure to help launch a new venture	Creation of new organizations and new models to drive impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ashoka</li> <li>• Echoing Green</li> </ul>
People Accelerators	Amplify the impact of existing leaders through leadership and professional development	Leadership and professional development to enhance personal impact in a current or future role	Amplification of impact made by high-potential talent in existing organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amex NGen</li> <li>• Aspen Ascend LeaderSpring</li> <li>• Presidio Cross Sector</li> </ul>
Strategic Employers	Advance own mission through the work of fellows in a structured program offering exposure and sector experience.	Structured way to get work experience by working directly with a social impact organization and benefiting from program support	Advancement of organizational mission through the work of the fellow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acumen Global Fellows</li> <li>• Duke Endowment Fellow</li> <li>• Greenlining Institute</li> <li>• Kiva Fellows</li> </ul>



# KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

Our research revealed five key findings related to the fellowship space.

## Key Finding 1:

### Fellowships focus primarily on emerging leaders

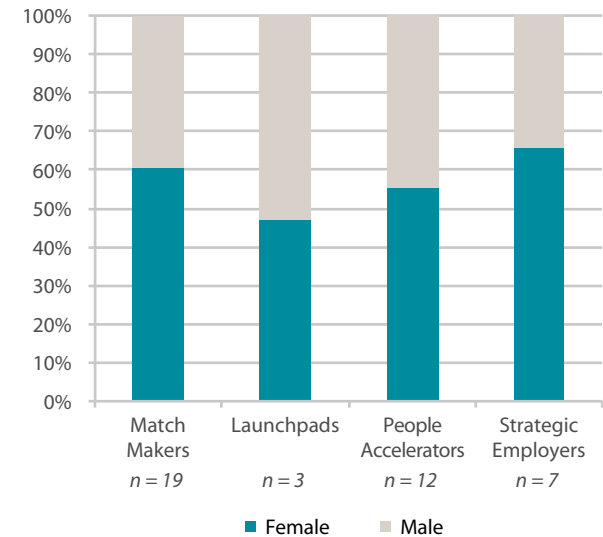
Our survey found that fellowship programs are primarily focusing on ‘emerging leaders,’ which we define as individuals under the age of 40.

Both Match Makers and Strategic Employers have the youngest participants with median ages of 26 for Match Makers and 29 for Strategic Employers. These fellowships serve as entry points into the sector, and are often targeted to people graduating from college or graduate school, or to younger ‘sector switchers’ looking to gain experience in the social impact sector. The age of fellows in these programs may also be reflective of the desire among Millennials to work in jobs focused on social impact, and of the general lack of entry paths into the sector.

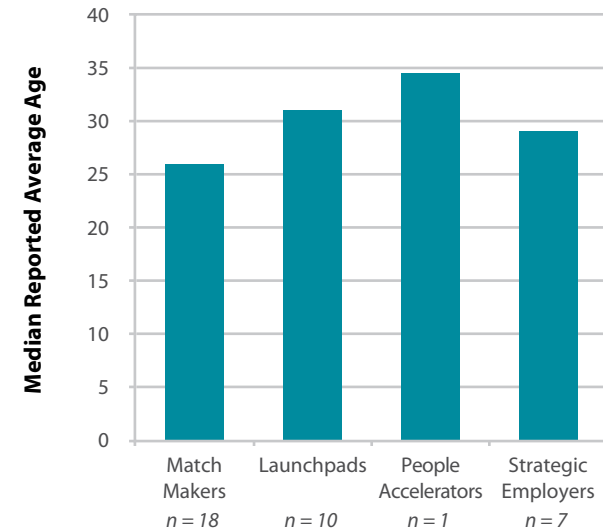
People Accelerators have a median age of 35, a logical statistic as these programs are targeted to professionals who have already been identified as high potential talent. Limited age data is available for Launchpads.

While the majority of fellows are female, the gender breakdown is more balanced than in the nonprofit workforce overall. 58% of fellows in our survey response set are female, compared to 75% in the US nonprofit workforce overall.<sup>7</sup>

### Gender Proportion by Fellowship Type



### Average Age of Fellow



<sup>7</sup> Tiffany Lennon, “Benchmarking Women’s Leadership in the United States,” Colorado Women’s College—University of Denver, 2013. <http://www.womenscollege.edu.edu/benchmarking-womens-leadership/>

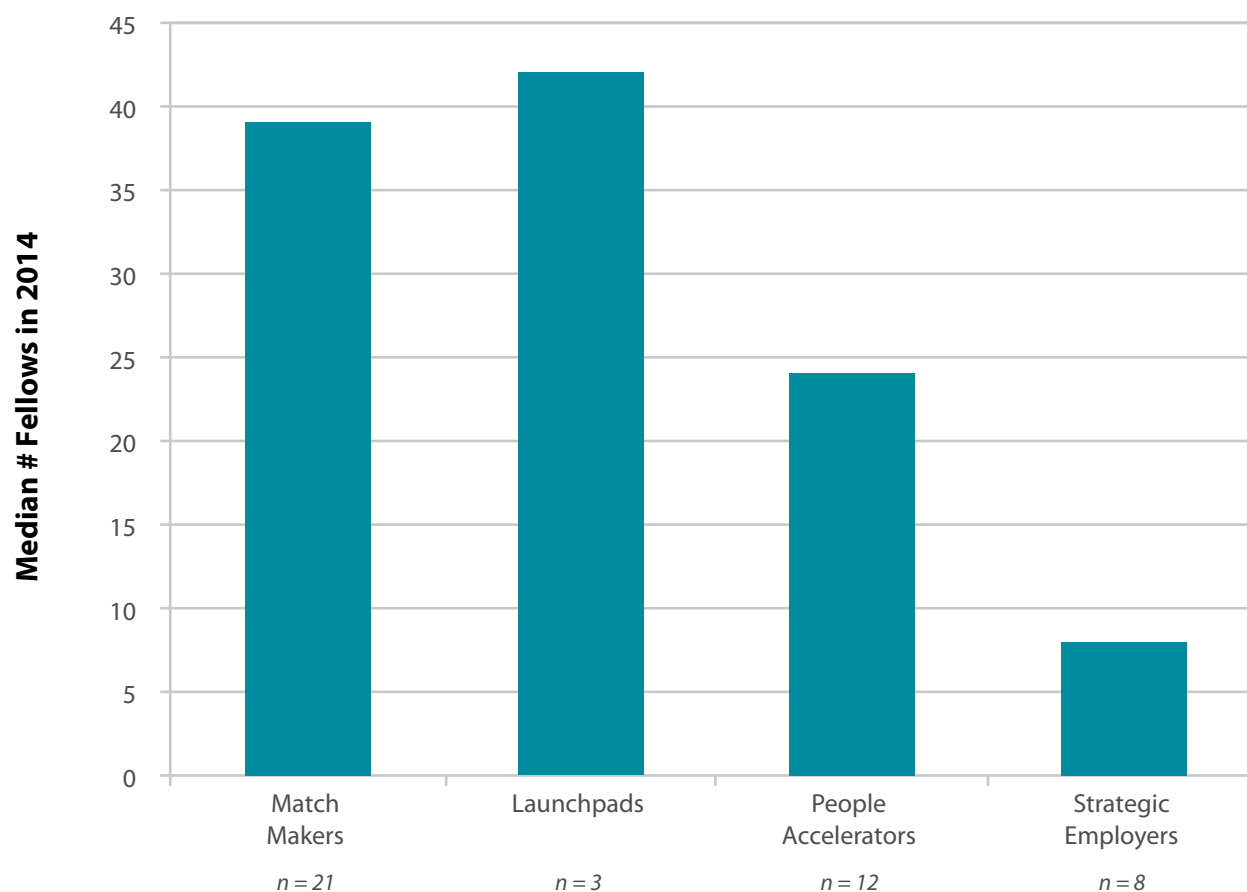


## Key Finding 2:

### *Few fellowship programs have reached large scale*

Another key finding from the survey is that most fellowship programs are concentrated at smaller sizes. Match Makers, Launchpads, and People Accelerators have median program sizes of 24–42 fellows per year. The median program size for Strategic Employers is significantly lower at eight fellows. Only six fellowships of the 46 respondents had greater than 100 fellows in 2014.

**Program Size**

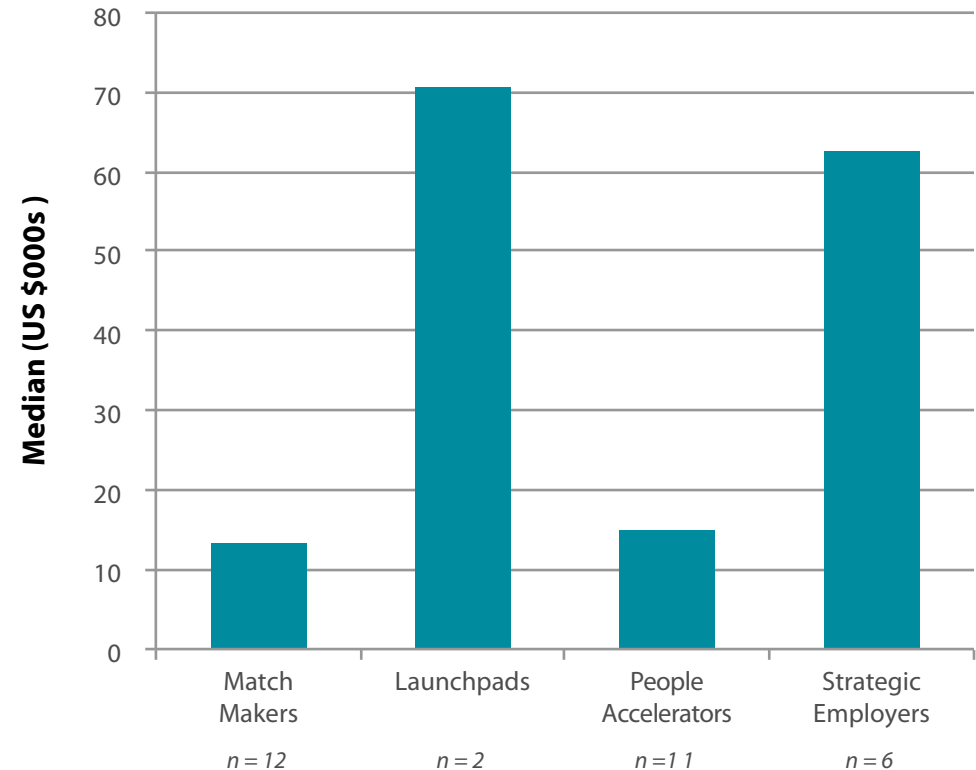


## Why is it difficult to scale?

While some fellowship programs remain intentionally small, two main factors seem to impact the ability to scale:

- High per person costs of fellowship programs.** Fellowships that support multiple social impact organizations (Match Makers and People Accelerators) are spending more than \$10,000 per fellow in program costs. The costs are primarily due to staff costs for running the fellowship program. Organizations that provide Match Maker fellowships spend an average of \$24,000 in program costs per fellow, with a median of \$13,000. This does not include salary or benefits the fellow may receive from their employer. People Accelerators spend an average of \$31,000 in program costs per fellow, with a median of \$15,000. According to McKinsey, leadership spending is approximately \$120 per employee annually in the private sector, and \$29 per employee in the social sector. Thus participants in fellowship programs are benefiting from significantly higher levels of investment than most social sector employees.<sup>8</sup>
- Lack of funding for fellowship programs.** Another factor influencing size of fellowship programs is the lack of clear funding sources. 54% of respondents indicated that funding and sustainability is one of their biggest challenges. Fellowship programs that have grown to significant scale seem to have major support from federal government programs (such as AmeriCorps) or major foundations. These fellowships also report greater funding diversification. Whereas smaller programs generally report receiving more than 60% of their funding from one type of source, this figure is consistently less than 60% for large programs. Furthermore, large fellowships report receiving funding from four or more types of sources, whereas most smaller fellowships report receiving funding from fewer sources.

## Estimated Total Cost to Fellowship Provider



Costs to fellowship provider for Launchpads and Strategic Employers typically includes salary or stipend, in addition to program costs.

<sup>8</sup> Laura Callanan, Nora Gardner, Lenny Mendonca, and Doug Scott, "What social-sector leaders need to succeed," McKinsey & Company. November 2014. [http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/social\\_sector/what\\_social\\_sector\\_leaders\\_need\\_to\\_succeed](http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/social_sector/what_social_sector_leaders_need_to_succeed)

## Key Finding 3:

### *Fellowships can enhance diversity in the sector*

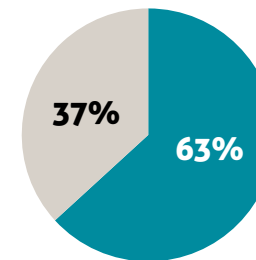
Diversity is an important topic in the social impact sector, and fellowships have made this a priority as well. 68% of respondents currently track metrics related to diversity of fellows. While those metrics vary widely, evaluation of open responses suggests that racial and ethnic diversity is a key focus. Over half of programs that track diversity metrics indicate that 50% or more of fellows in their program are non-white. This has implications for how fellowships can be used more effectively as a tool to support social impact organizations and funders in increasing diversity.

In an open response question asking about the diversity metrics employed, fellowships reported a *variety of ways to view and track diversity*.

- 1st generation college students
- Field of work (education, human rights, etc.)
- Gender
- Military veteran
- Persons of color
- Racial background
- Sector (government, nonprofit, etc.)
- Sexual orientation
- Underrepresented minorities
- US regional origin

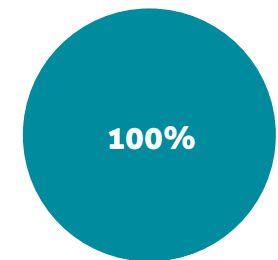
## Tracking Diversity

**Match Makers**



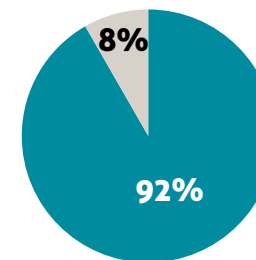
n = 19

**Launchpads**



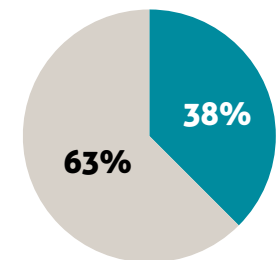
n = 2

**People Accelerators**



n = 12

**Strategic Employers**



n = 8

■ Yes

■ No

## Key Finding 4:

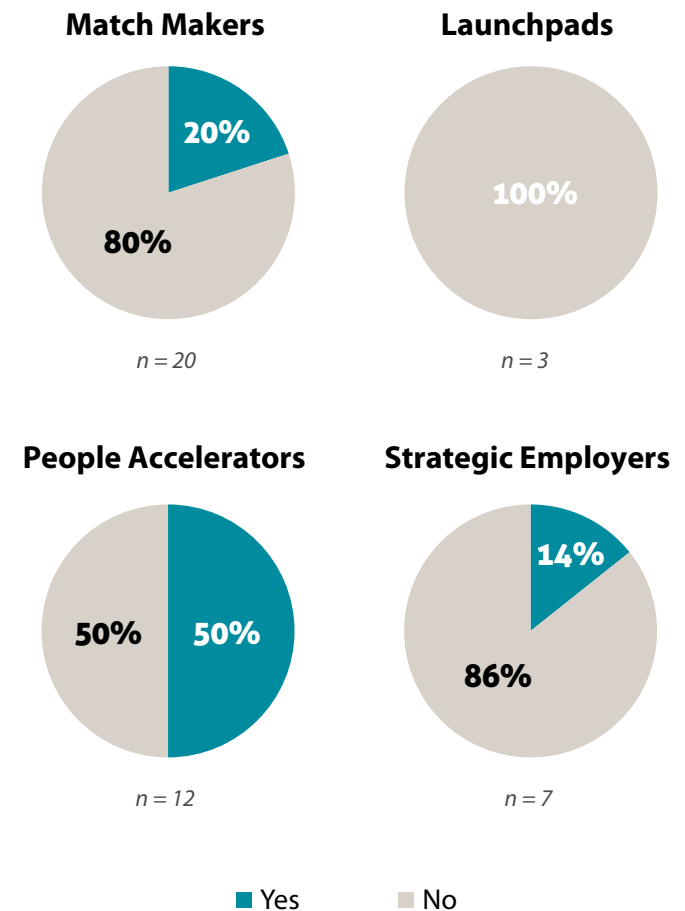
### The fellowship industry approaches metrics and evaluation with inconsistency

After funding concerns, evaluation was the most-cited challenge by respondents to this survey. Only 26% of respondents have performed a program evaluation. External program evaluations are most common for People Accelerators (50% have had one). Only 20% of Match Makers, 14% of Strategic Employers, and 0% of Launchpads have had an evaluation.

In addition, there is little consistency on metrics being tracked by programs in each category. Currently tracked metrics include:

<b>Match Makers</b>	<b>Launchpads</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % fellows who would recommend program to others</li> <li>• Cost savings to partners</li> <li>• Partner rating of fellow impact</li> <li>• Partner retention rate</li> <li>• Post-fellowship intent to work in social sector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % fellows changing systems at the national level</li> <li>• Budget growth of fellow's organization</li> </ul>
<b>People Accelerators</b>	<b>Strategic Employers</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership competency development</li> <li>• Career advancement in sector</li> <li>• Adherence to action plans</li> <li>• Value of network</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutionalization of fellow's work</li> </ul>

## Program Evaluation Performed?



## Key Finding 5:

### *Fellowships desire more industry collaboration*

There is a strong desire for collaboration within the fellowship industry. Nearly 100% of respondents indicated they would like to find more ways to collaborate with other fellowship programs. Interest in collaboration fell into two key areas: **tactical programmatic collaboration** and **field-wide advancement**.

Tactical programmatic collaboration refers to joint activities (such as trainings) or partnerships (such as referral networks) that support fellowships' current programs. Field-wide advancement refers to conversation at the industry level aimed at helping fellowship programs learn from one another or pursue common goals such as identifying universal metrics.

<b><i>Tactical Programmatic Collaboration</i></b>	<b><i>Field-Wide Advancement</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hosting joint alumni events</li> <li>• Hosting joint social events</li> <li>• Hosting joint trainings</li> <li>• Joining a fellowship program affinity group</li> <li>• Recruiting alumni from other programs</li> <li>• Recruiting for each other</li> <li>• Referring declined applicants</li> <li>• Sharing training materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attending a conference for fellowship program organizers</li> <li>• Discussing common challenges</li> <li>• Identifying common metrics</li> <li>• Joining a fellowship program community of practice</li> </ul>

# OPPORTUNITIES AND NEXT STEPS FOR THE INDUSTRY

*The research revealed clear opportunities for the fellowship industry.*

## 1. Pursue collaboration at the program level and development of the field overall

The fellowship industry has an opportunity to develop more mature structures and relationships to support the collaboration avenues identified in this survey. Fellowships can pursue tactical programmatic collaboration by pursuing joint activities, establishing referral networks, and sharing resources. The fellowship field can also establish industry structures such as a conference, learning communities, and collaboration mechanisms.

A key opportunity for collaboration is to align on a core set of common metrics. This baseline industry survey revealed a wide range of metrics being tracked. Aligning on a core set of common metrics for each fellowship category will allow organizations to identify what program components work well, build on those successes, and evolve their offerings to better meet program goals. It will also enable funders to better evaluate results for their investments.

## 2. Tap into alumni networks

In total, over 26,000 fellows have participated in the programs represented in our survey response set. This figure does not include alumni of very large fellowship programs that did not participate in the survey, such as Teach for America and City Year. Tremendous potential exists if the sector can leverage alumni of these programs as a collective force for impact.

Alumni engagement was the third-most-cited opportunity by survey respondents. Overall, trends around alumni engagement are consistent across fellowship categories. In our survey, recruiting, mentoring, and

selection rank as the top three ways in which fellowships engage alumni, cited by 76%, 63%, and 61% of respondents, respectively.

Further industry research to understand the interests and needs of alumni can guide fellowships in how best to activate the energy, experience, and skill set of this talent pool.

## 3. Better understand the value and cost of fellowships

This survey made an initial exploration into gathering benchmarking data on both the costs of fellowship programs (to fellowship providers and organizations hosting fellows) and the value created by the programs (for fellows and host organizations). We found that many organizations either did not provide these figures or noted they previously had never estimated them. Examination of the responses showed high per fellow costs of programs. Additionally, the assumptions and methodologies behind cost estimates varied widely. Benchmarking data will grow in utility and reliability with a consistent approach to estimating fellowship value and cost figures.

In particular, funders can play an important part here to understand the role that fellowships are playing in the social impact sector, identify opportunities to increase value and/or gain cost benefits, and fund growth of fellowship programs that align with their philanthropic goals.

## 4. Gain a deeper understanding of customer needs

We have developed a theoretical framework describing different types of fellowship programs based on differing value propositions. These can be validated and refined with research that directly solicits the input of current, past, and prospective fellows, as well as that of social impact organizations that benefit from fellowships.

## Areas for Potential Research

In addition to the immediate opportunities and next steps, the fellowship industry can benefit from further research in the following areas:

### ***Talent Pools (Fellows and Alumni)***

- Learn about the career visions of talent in the target population to understand how each type of fellowship can better meet its needs.
- Evaluate data on fellowship alumni to understand how fellowships impact long-term career prospects.

### ***Social Impact Organizations***

- Evaluate the role fellowships play in addressing talent needs for social impact organizations to clarify the role the industry plays in the sector.
- Understand the talent strategies of social impact organizations, and the challenges they experience in pursuing them, to identify unaddressed needs.

It is clear that the evolving fellowship industry is playing an important role in enhancing the value of talent in the social impact sector. We hope this research will spur conversation on how the industry can progress to drive more impact and support the sector to recruit, develop, grow, and retain talent.



# APPENDIX

## Understanding Value Creation by Social Impact Fellowships

### *Match Makers: Creating efficiency in the market for talent*

Match Makers facilitate matching of fellows with public and social sector employers to serve in substantial full-time roles. Talent seeking to enter the social impact sector and organizations seeking to access talent currently experience a number of barriers to successful hiring. Match Makers increase the flow of talent into the social impact sector by reducing search costs, information asymmetry, and risk for both fellow and employer in the hiring process.

- **Reducing search costs.** For organizations in the public and social sectors, identifying, attracting, and vetting candidates from non-traditional talent pools is a costly process—in terms of time, effort, and financial expense. For job-seekers, too, identifying attractive public and social sector job opportunities across a large and diverse sector, oftentimes with global opportunities in mind, is daunting. Match Makers reduce this search cost for both parties by serving as a clearing house for both job opportunities and interested applicants.
- **Reducing information asymmetry.** Successful hiring can be hindered by information asymmetries between employer and job candidate. Employers ask, “How do I know this candidate’s non-traditional experience will be valuable in my context? How do I know the candidate will be a fit?” Job-seekers ask, “Will this job really help me reach my career goals?” As trusted sources of insight and expertise in the successful placement of non-traditional talent, Match Makers help each party gain the information they need to engage in a match.
- **Reducing risk.** Structured programs reduce uncertainty and limit downside. Reduced risk for the fellow derives from: time-bound commitment; vetted job content, responsibilities; fellowship brand adds resume value, improves “exit options”; strong professional development; social and professional network; and clarity about compensation level. Reduced risk for the employer derives from the time-bound nature of the commitment; the vetting of fellows; and the clarity of compensation level.

## Match Makers: Career Builders

### **Multi-Sector Platforms**

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#### ***Placements in high-income country***

Atlas Corps

HBS Fellows

New Sector RISE

OnPurpose

Prolnspire Fellowship

Princeton 55

Public Allies

#### ***Placements in low-income country***

BizCorps

Impact Business Leaders

LGT iCats

Princeton in Asia

### **Sector-Specific Platforms**

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#### ***Government***

Capital Fellows

City Hall Fellows

Code for America

Fuse Corps

#### ***US K-12 Education***

Broad Residency

Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellowship

#### ***Global Health***

Global Health Corps

Match Makers come in two forms: Career Builders and Enrichment Providers.

- **Career Builders** offer full-time roles generally lasting nine months or longer (e.g. Prolnspire Fellowship). For a fellow, this represents a significant career move and a choice to make social or public sector work a major part of his or her career. For an employer, a Career Builder fellowship presents a unique alternative to a traditional full-time hire.
- **Enrichment Providers** offer projects or internships generally lasting three months (e.g., Education Pioneers Graduate School Fellowship). Fellows utilize Enrichment Providers to gain sector exposure and experience, often during structural breaks and transitions in their career (such as between jobs, during summer internships, or post-graduation). Employers gain short-term, generally project-based support leveraging the fellow's non-traditional skill set.

Match Makers also differentiate based on their sector and geographic focus.

- Some Match Maker fellowships, such as Public Allies, work with organizations across the social sector, while fellowships such as The Broad Residency focus on one issue area, in this case education.
- Match Maker placement is often geo-specific. Some programs place Fellows only in a particular city, while others focus on international placements.

As these opportunities represent full-time employment, most Match Makers offer compensation in the form of a salary, stipend, or living allowance; in our survey, 95% of Match Makers reported offering some compensation. To be sure, financial compensation is often lower than what fellows could earn through other endeavors. These stipends or living allowances typically provide compensation that makes the fellowship term feasible, but are not considered sustainable for long-term employment. Many Match Makers fund these living stipends through grants from the U.S. Government's Americorps program, which aims to engage Americans in service to their communities.

## Match Makers: Enrichment Providers

### Multi-Sector Platforms

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New Sector Summer Fellowship

Quarterback

Inspire Impact

### Sector-Specific Platforms

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Education Pioneers Graduate Fellowship

## Launchpads: Getting social entrepreneurs off the ground

Launchpads bring new organizations and operating models to the sector by helping fellows launch new ventures. Social entrepreneurs often struggle to find support for new ventures from traditional funding sources, such as foundations. Launchpad fellowships help fill this gap by identifying high-potential social entrepreneurs and offering them robust support structures and early-stage funding to help bring their ideas to fruition.

Launchpads increase an entrepreneur's odds of success through support structures including:

- Leadership and professional development
- Technical support and pro bono partnerships
- Peer learning
- Networking and connections
- Mentorship
- Financial investment

These fellowships play an important role in the development of the social impact sector. Traditional for-profit startups can rely on a mature ecosystem of investment, matching investors' appetites for risk with the appropriate maturity stage of the enterprise. Social entrepreneurs, on the other hand, face gaps in the equivalent ecosystem of support, particularly at the early stages. While funding for low-risk, more mature social sector organizations is available through foundations and individual donors, securing financial support for an early stage idea is much more difficult.

In recent years, numerous incubators and accelerators focused on social entrepreneurs have arisen to play a similar role in the ecosystem. Assessing the characteristics that distinguish Launchpad fellowships from other programs focused on social entrepreneurs was beyond the scope of this research.

## Launchpads

Ashoka

Echoing Green

Watson University

## People Accelerators: Amplifying the impact of public and social sector talent

People Accelerators increase the efficacy of existing leaders through structured leadership and professional development. Increasingly, sector talent seeks meaningful and impactful leadership and professional development opportunities; while organizations recognize the importance of such opportunities, they struggle to provide them. Scale, specialization and the cohort experience allow People Accelerators to create unique value in an efficient manner, giving fellows and their organizations a compelling option for leadership and professional development.

The People Accelerator models generally include leadership and professional development; skills training; mentorship and coaching; networking; and a cohort experience. They deliver unique value in an efficient manner, offering the following benefits:

- **Scale.** Many social sector organizations lack the scale to effectively provide leadership development support to their employees. People Accelerators draw fellows from multiple organizations, delivering strong programming and expertise at a lower cost.
- **Specialization.** Some People Accelerators specialize to address a particular sector, skill set, or leader demographic. They build a deep understanding of the needs of their fellows, resulting in programming that is specific and highly relevant.
- **Cohort experience.** People Accelerator fellows complete their program as a cohort. This enhances a leader's development by virtue of bringing together cohorts of fellows from different backgrounds, roles, organizations, and sectors. Cohorts also provide valuable social and professional support to further accelerate a leader's development.
- **Real time application.** Most People Accelerator programs run concurrent with fellows' full-time employment, which lends immediacy and applicability to program content. This truth also aligns with the 70/20/10 model of learning and development, which states that 70% of learning happens on the job and not in the classroom.

## People Accelerators

### Multi-Sector Platforms

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Butler Koshland  
Independent Sector Amex NGen  
LeaderSpring  
Management Leadership for Tomorrow  
National Urban Fellows  
Nonprofit Roundtable Future EDs  
Presidio Cross Sector Leadership  
Prolnspire Managing for Success

### Sector-Specific Platforms

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Aspen Ascend  
Exponent Philanthropy Next Gen  
Rockwood Institute National Leading from  
the Inside Out Yearlong  
Stoneleigh

## Strategic Employers: New models for engaging talent

Strategic Employers advance their own mission through the work of fellows in a structured program offering participants exposure and sector experience. Social impact sector organizations can struggle to access high-quality full-time talent at low cost. Through a fellowship program, Strategic Employers offer fellows access to leadership, involvement in high-level strategic projects, and strong mentorship that is not typically available in a traditional employment arrangement.

In employing this model, organizations benefit in the following ways:

- **Lower-cost labor.** Because of the value of intangible compensation in fellowships, Strategic Employers can often access skill sets or backgrounds at a lower financial cost than otherwise possible. Though the stipends and living allowances offered by Strategic Employers frequently fall below typical entry-level salaries, fellows are willing to make the trade-off in order to access the intangible, non-monetary benefits of the program.
- **Flexibility.** The time-bound nature of fellowships allows Strategic Employers more flexibility in hiring commitments and a chance to ‘try out’ talent before offering a traditional full-time position.

The Strategic Employer model offers sector-wide benefits, as well:

- **Expanded talent inflow.** Strategic Employer fellowships help to expand the pipeline by attracting talent pools with an abundance of valuable skills and interest in the sector, but little to no direct experience. The intangible benefits of exposure, experience, and mentorship offered through Strategic Employers is highly valued within this population.
- **Enhanced potential of future leaders.** Strategic Employer fellowships also represent an opportunity to strengthen the sector overall by equipping and inspiring the next generation of leaders in the field.

Some Strategic Employers use fellowship programs as a core element in their operating model, enlisting fellows on a volunteer basis to support their operations, programs, or partners, often across a highly geographically dispersed portfolio. Acumen and Kiva are two organizations that employ a fellowship in this way in their operating model.

## Strategic Employers

Acumen Global Fellows

Duke Endowment Fellowship

Grameen Fellows

Greenlining Institute

Haas Jr. Foundation Program Fellow

IDEO.org Fellows

Kiva Fellows

YNPN Launchpad Fellowship

## METHODOLOGY

In order to better understand the social impact fellowship industry, ProInspire developed an online survey with input from ProFellow and several fellowship program providers, including Acumen, Atlas Corps, City Hall Fellows, and Public Allies. The survey was distributed via email in November 2014 to 83 fellowship programs identified by ProInspire and ProFellow and through the networks of survey responders. The target response population included fellowship offerings of various sizes, purposes, and geographic locations.

We received 46 survey responses. Two organizations submitted multiple responses to share data for two separate fellowship programs, so in total the survey results and analysis represent data and learnings from 46 distinct fellowship programs offered by 44 fellowship providers.

ProInspire developed a framework to conceptualize the fellowship landscape and used this framework to organize an analysis of the survey data in the first quarter of 2015. As part of a baseline survey, many questions allowed open responses. We examined all such responses and, when appropriate, translated them into the numerical format required for analysis. In limited instances, we utilized publicly available information to fill in data that respondents did not provide (e.g. year of founding).

It's important to note that while the analysis is representative of the 46 participating fellowships, the data cannot be extrapolated to the full population of fellowship programs due to the relatively small sample size of the survey.

## ABOUT PROINSPIRE

ProInspire is a nonprofit that develops leaders at all levels for organizations addressing the world's greatest challenges. Through fellowships, leadership development, and research, ProInspire strengthens individuals and organizations to catalyze social sector performance.

Founded in 2009, with offices in Washington, DC and the San Francisco Bay Area, ProInspire partners include Accion, Community Housing Partnership, Global Giving, National 4-H Council, Share Our Strength, Tipping Point Community, and Year Up, among others.

The Chronicle of Philanthropy named ProInspire as one of 7 Nonprofits to Watch in 2015. For more information about ProInspire, including information on program applications, please visit [www.proinspire.org](http://www.proinspire.org).

## CONTACT US TO LEARN MORE

### WASHINGTON D.C.

Monisha Kapila  
Founder and CEO  
[mkapila@proinspire.org](mailto:mkapila@proinspire.org)  
703.741.0899

### SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA

Gene Kunde  
Bay Area Executive Director  
[gkunde@proinspire.org](mailto:gkunde@proinspire.org)  
415.259.9448

