

LATIN AMERICAN ADVOCACY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM ON DRUG POLICY REFORM

DEADLINE OF SUBMISSIONS: April 19, 2013

ABOUT THE FELLOWSHIP

The Global Drug Policy and Latin America Programs at Open Society Foundations are proud to announce Latin American Advocacy Fellowship Program on Drug Policy Reform. The first phase will be hosted by Release, the UK's centre of expertise on drugs and drugs law. This new program supports those working in sectors related to drug policy in order to improve their advocacy skills and enhance their ability to deal with the media when addressing drug policy issues. It thus seeks to add to the core group of existing high-profile drug policy activists in the Latin American region, including among persons not necessarily working full-time on drug issues.

FELLOWSHIP OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the fellowship are that the participants:

- Increase their knowledge of global drug policy reform issues with a focus on Latin America;
- Increase their understanding of the international drug control system and system incoherence within the UN;
- have a greater awareness of the drug policy reform movement and in particular the key players within that movement;
- establish connections with those working in drug policy, particularly in the UK;
- build and develop their communications skills, including for media interviews, press releases, press databases, public speaking;
- have an understanding of the tools for debate, so that they can confidently challenge anti-reform positions;
- Improve their confidence as drug policy advocates both through participation in the program and through ongoing support from the host organization.

FELLOWSHIP AGENDA

This two-week program will be based with the drug policy organisation Release in London, United Kingdom. Release is the UK centre of expertise on drugs and drugs law – providing free and confidential specialist advice to the public and professionals. Release also aims to

raise awareness of how UK and international drug policy affects those who use drugs in our society. Release has had significant success in both service delivery and campaign work. In particular, the organisation has been very effective in engaging traditional and social media as a forum to promote drug policy reform within the UK and further afield.

The program includes the following topics:

- Global overview of drug policy reform
- Overarching issues relevant to drug policy reform
- International drug control system
- Overview of international human rights in the context of drug policy
- Drug policy developments in Latin America
- Effective campaigning
- Media and public engagement

There will also be an opportunity to meet key drug policy organisations, experts and leading policy advocates based in the UK.

ELIGIBILITY

Successful candidates will have a track-record of public engagement in the issues of drug policy reform or another relevant field at the local, national or international level.

Applications are welcome from those working in drug policy NGOS, law enforcement agents who demonstrate an interest in drug policy, and government employees or academics working in this or related policy areas and who are based in the Latin American region.

Please note: the purpose of this program is to promote the capacities of new advocates in drug policy. Current recipients of the Global Drug Policy Program's and joint Global Drug Policy and Latin America Programs' grants are not eligible to apply for the fellowship.

HOW TO APPLY?

To be considered for the program, applicants should submit the following documents in English or Spanish (as .doc or .pdf attachments to email) by **April 19, 2013** to drugpolicyfellow@opensocietyfoundations.org:

- **Statement of Purpose** – the statement should describe the applicant's interest in the program, his/her expectations, skills and qualifications, and the opportunities that may arise to apply what is learned after taking part in the fellowship.
- **Curriculum Vitae (CV)** – should specify the applicant's academic and professional background, a detailed description of previous employment, a list of academic and policy projects in which the applicant has been involved, public engagement record, a list of scholarships, fellowships and other honors.

- **Writing sample (optional)** – the sample may be in either in English or in Spanish and should demonstrate candidate’s expertise in a field related to drug policies.

FELLOWSHIP TERMS

The Latin American pilot fellowship program provides funding to a maximum of four people to attend the two-week program on drug policy reform. On completion of the course, each fellow will be paired with a mentor at the host organisation (Release) who will support him or her for a period of six months. Mentoring will involve supporting the individual in press outreach; strategic development of public messaging; social media and any other relevant issue that needs to be addressed, with an agreed time limit as the mentor will be someone with a full-time job.

TERMS OF THE AWARD

The placement decision will be made by the program selection committee comprised of staff from the Open Society Foundations Global Drug Policy and Latin America programs, host organization representatives and external reviewers.

TIMELINE

- I. **Applications open: March 22 - April 19, 2013.**
- II. **Pre-selection:** Applicants will receive a response by **April 30, 2013.**
- III. **Course:** Fellows will attend the two week program in London in the second half of **June 2013.**
- IV. Continued mentoring for 6 months after completion of the two week program: **July 2013 - December 2013**

The Open Society Foundations work to build vibrant and tolerant democracies whose governments are accountable to their citizens. To achieve this mission, the Foundations seek to shape public policies that assure greater fairness in political, legal, and economic systems and safeguard fundamental rights. On a local level, the Open Society Foundations implement a range of initiatives to advance justice, education, public health, and independent media. At the same time, we build alliances across borders and continents on issues such as corruption and freedom of information. The Foundations place a high priority on protecting and improving the lives of people in marginalized communities.

Investor and philanthropist George Soros established the Open Society Foundations, starting in 1984, to help countries make the transition from communism. Our activities have grown to encompass the United States and more than 70 countries in Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America. Each Foundation relies on the expertise of boards composed of eminent citizens who determine individual agendas based on local priorities.

The Global Drug Policy Program aims to shift the paradigm of drug policies around the world from today's punitive approach to one rooted in public health and human rights. With very few exceptions, national drug laws and policies seek primarily to punish illicit drug production, possession, use and even dependence. In the worst cases, drug users are made to be scapegoats for a wide range of social problems, and sanctions are vastly disproportionate to the supposed offenses.

Implementing military strategies in producer countries (aerial spraying to eradicate crops is perhaps the most egregious example) has harmed the well-being of communities, damaged the environment, and violated basic human rights. Relying on the criminal justice system to solve the drug problem is at minimum ineffective and expensive, and is ultimately irrational.

The long term goal of the Global Drug Policy Program is to help drive reform for international and national drug laws, policies and programs to make them based on public health and to respect human rights.

The Latin America Program works to strengthen democratic governance by fostering open societies that are safe, inclusive, and responsive to their citizens' needs and aspirations. The program believes in the need for a vibrant civil society that holds government accountable. It encourages the participation of Latin Americans in global and regional debates on issues of vital importance to their countries, such as citizen security, accountability and transparency, and the defense of human rights.

Through grantmaking and advocacy efforts, the Latin America Program supports the work of civil society organizations and their constructive engagement in the development, implementation, and oversight of public policies. The program counterparts are NGOs, grassroots networks, and applied research and training organizations.