

LATIN AMERICAN ADVOCACY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM ON DRUG POLICY REFORM

DEADLINE OF SUBMISSIONS: August 31, 2013

ABOUT THE FELLOWSHIP

The Global Drug Policy and Latin America Programs at Open Society Foundations invite applications to the Latin American Advocacy Fellowship Program on Drug Policy Reform. Fellows will be hosted in drug policy organizations in Amsterdam (Transnational Institute) or in New York (Harm Reduction Coalition). This 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 persons not necessarily working full-time on drug issues.

FELLOWSHIP OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the fellowship are for the participants to:

- 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
- 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;

FELLOWSHIP AGENDA

Fellows will attend a two-week program with one of two drug policy organizations: Transnational Institute (TNI) in Amsterdam, Netherlands or Harm Reduction Coalition (HRC) in New York City, United States.

Since 1996, TNI's Drugs and Democracy Program has been analyzing trends in the illegal drug economy and global drug policy, and their effects on conflict situations and democracy. TNI is one of the very few non-governmental organizations also concerned with issues facing producer and transit states in relation to the drugs issue. Over the past decade, the program has gained a global reputation as one of the leading international drug policy reform advocates and as a critical watchdog of United Nations drug control institutions. The goal of the program is to work toward a reassessment of the conventional repressive drug policy approaches, and in favor of pragmatic policies based on harm reduction principles for consumers as well as small producers.

HRC is a capacity building organization promoting progressive change through advocacy and policy work. The organization seeks out opportunities to engage, train and mentor advocates and service providers. Since its incorporation in 1994, HRC has advanced public policy by prioritizing areas where structural inequalities and social injustice magnify drug-related harm. Harm Reduction Coalition plays a critical role in local, state, and national debates on drug-related health issues and drug policy, by ensuring that the specific health needs and social justice concerns of current and former drug users are included within public discourse.

The program includes the following topics:

Transnational Institute

- UN drug control treaties: the basic structure, history and application of this legal base for drug control;
- Global drug control: the working of the INCB, CND and UNODC within the UN system;
- The Dutch drugs market and policy model;
- Drugs and conflict: the interaction between conflicts and drug markets;
- Harm reduction on the supply side: developing policy to reduce the harms of drug markets;
- Drugs and crime: organized crime within the global drug market;
- Communications skill training: how to work with the media

Harm Reduction Coalition

- The training will prepare the participants to better understand the dynamics of drug policy reform, barriers to altering the status quo and strategies for supporting reform efforts substantiated in new visions of drug policy, to be carried out through applicable initiatives in Latin America. The areas to be covered will include the following:
- Introduction to the international drug policy reform movement and main stakeholders;
- Drug policy developments in Latin America and around the world;
- Presentation skills, including engaging with mass media, and tools for the debate;
- Study visits to key drug policy organizations;

- Meetings with experts and important leaders.

ELIGIBILITY

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

Applications are welcome from those in the Latin American region working in drug policy NGOs, public health experts or law enforcement agencies who demonstrate an interest in drug policy, and/or government employees or academics working in this or related policy areas. 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 **August 31, 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 fellowship program provides funding to a maximum of eight people, four at each host, 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 organization (Transnational Institute or Harm Reduction Coalition) 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 issues that need 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:** August 6 - August 31, 2013.
- II. **Selection:** Successful applicants will receive a response by September 11, 2013.
- III. **Course:**
 - Two-week program in **New York 4-15 November, 2013;**
 - Two-week program in **Amsterdam 7-18 October, 2013.**
- IV. Continued mentoring for 6 months after completion of the two week program:
 - New York fellows: **November 2013 - April 2014;**
 - Amsterdam fellows: **October 2013 – March 2014.**

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.