



## Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Anniversary Inclusive Education Fellowship Program

Develop leadership skills to support educational inclusion in your country

The ADA Anniversary Fellowship Program in Inclusive Education will enable 28 participants from **India**, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and Armenia to participate in a 6-week intensive fellowship program at a wide variety of organizations in Minnesota or Arizona that support the educational inclusion of children with disabilities. The program, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, is administered by the University of Minnesota (UMN) and Arizona State University (ASU) in collaboration with international partners including Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) in India, Nazarbayev University & Bilim Central Asia Education Center in Kazakhstan; Armenian State Pedagogical University in Armenia; and National Precarpathian University and the Odesa Development Fund in Ukraine.

Truly inclusive education means that *all* children, including those with disabilities, are educated with their peers without disabilities in general education classrooms in their local schools. It involves more than such children being physically present and includes their active participation in all aspects of classroom life.

Prior to the fellowship experience, participants will work with coordinators at the UMN and ASU and in their respective countries to develop *person-centered fellowship plans*. These plans will tailor fellows' experiences in the U.S. to ensure that they meet their needs and interests. After their experience in the U.S., fellows will use what they have learned to enhance the implementation of inclusive education in their own countries.

### Program Activities

During their fellowship experience participants will learn about:

- Strategies to enhance the educational development of *all* students within inclusive classrooms;
- The critical roles and responsibilities of regular and special education teachers and specialists, parents/families, and students themselves in the inclusive education process;
- How to develop and work effectively within multidisciplinary inclusive education teams;
- Strategies that will enhance the ability of children and youth with disabilities and their families to more easily access education within inclusive classrooms;
- Approaches to effectively work with program administrators and policy-makers to increase support for educating *all* children within inclusive classrooms;
- Steps to support the development of family-based inclusive education advocacy groups; and
- Much more!

Over the course of their stay in the U.S., fellows will work and form connections with mentors from host organizations whose work focuses on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in varied settings. Participants will learn about the work of their mentors as well as contribute to an inclusion-based project being implemented within the organization. Based on their experiences in the U.S. and the inclusive education needs in their countries, fellows will develop both a concept and action plan for an *Inclusive Education Grand Challenge Project*. This is a project, focused on enhancing policy supportive of inclusive education, improving educational practice, increasing public awareness, or other topics, will be implemented by teams of fellows working collaboratively in their home country with partner organizations as well as U.S. mentors.

## Funding and Support

Fellows will receive full funding for their Fellowship travel to and within the U.S. including:

- Round-trip airfare between home country and U.S.
- Airfare to Washington D.C. prior to the return to home countries
- Accommodations either in the form of home stays or hotel lodging
- A living allowance (or equivalent supports) to cover the costs of meals and incidental expenses
- Reimbursement for expenses related to obtaining J-1 visas including transportation to a U.S. embassy or consulate for necessary interviews
- Accident and health insurance for the duration of the Fellowship in the U.S.
- Disability-related accommodations, if needed
- Ground transportation while in the U.S.

## Fellowship Program Requirements

In order to take part in the program participants need to be:

- A citizen and resident of Kazakhstan, Armenia, Ukraine, or India
- An early to mid-career professional between 25–45 years of age (born between January 1<sup>st</sup> 1972 and January 1<sup>st</sup> 1992)
- Eligible to receive a U.S. J-1 visa
- Not currently participating in an academic, training, or research program in the U.S. Preference will be given to candidates who have not previously taken part in U.S. government sponsored exchanges
- Available to travel to the U.S. between mid-April and late May 2017 for 6 weeks
- Committed to returning to their country for a minimum of 2-years after completing the program
- Proficient in spoken and written English;
- Willing and able to collaborate with other team members to implement an *Inclusive Education Grand Challenge Project* following return to one's home country

## Other Important Information

The ADA Inclusive Education Fellowship Program is a merit-based competition open to candidates in Kazakhstan, Armenia, Ukraine, or India who meet eligibility requirements. All applications will be reviewed by a selection panel that includes representatives from both the U.S. and partnering organizations from the home country. Semi-finalists will be interviewed and must pass an English language proficiency test.

Applicants will be considered based on the following criteria:

- Program requirements listed above;
- Professional goals aligned with the inclusion of persons with disabilities in educational settings;
- Professional experience in inclusive education and/or disabilities;
- Work experience with or for non-governmental organizations (NGOs), government, universities, schools or community-based organizations focused on the inclusion of persons with disabilities;
- Demonstrated leadership and collaboration skills;
- Ideas for an inclusive education project to be implemented in one's country following the exchange;

People with disabilities are encouraged to apply as reasonable accommodations will be provided as needed. Application materials are available in alternative formats (e.g., Braille) upon request.

For additional information or to request a hard copy of the application, contact Sandhya Limaye at [limaye.sandhya@gmail.com](mailto:limaye.sandhya@gmail.com). Information can also be obtained by contacting Brian Abery ([abery001@umn.edu](mailto:abery001@umn.edu)) at the Univ. of Minnesota or Renáta Tichá ([tich0018@umn.edu](mailto:tich0018@umn.edu)). Applications are available at: [https://umn.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV\\_5tdDI3bjRniENcp](https://umn.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_5tdDI3bjRniENcp) and will be accepted from December 15<sup>th</sup> 2016 through January 27<sup>th</sup> 2017.