

2023-2024

FIRETREE SENIOR FELLOWSHIP



IMPORTANT NOTE

The Firetree Senior Fellowship is in a pilot phase and we expect it to evolve as we learn along the way. During this initial phase, we intend to work closely with trusted partners and nominators of Firetree Philanthropy to identify candidates. For more information, please visit: <https://www.firetreephilanthropy.org/firetree-fellowship>

ABOUT THE FELLOWSHIP



OUR VISION

- **An on-going community of support for values-aligned leaders who are working towards lasting, positive impact in their communities**
- **A group of experienced social impact leaders who are journeying together to explore their career transitions and test new ideas**

Sometimes a quiet walk with trusted friends can help you reflect and plan the next steps of a longer journey.

The Firetree Senior Fellowship hopes to support **experienced social impact leaders** who are in a key transition phase in their careers and would like to explore a new idea or different approach to solving a social problem.

We have found that senior leaders typically struggle to **find the appropriate context or timing for their career transitions**. In search of support and time, some may resort to looking for more flexible project-based work or applying to graduate school, while others may feel pressured to quickly pitch an idea for start-up funding. This led Firetree to explore if we could help fill this gap and create a **flexible fellowship** that provides leaders in this transition stage with the time, community, and resources that they need.

Each year, we hope to select a **small cohort of values-aligned leaders** whose work complements Firetree's main focus areas of **children, youth, and their families in Southeast Asia**.

Our support will be a combination of financial resources, peer support (through online and in-person convenings), and connections with Firetree's trusted community of partners.

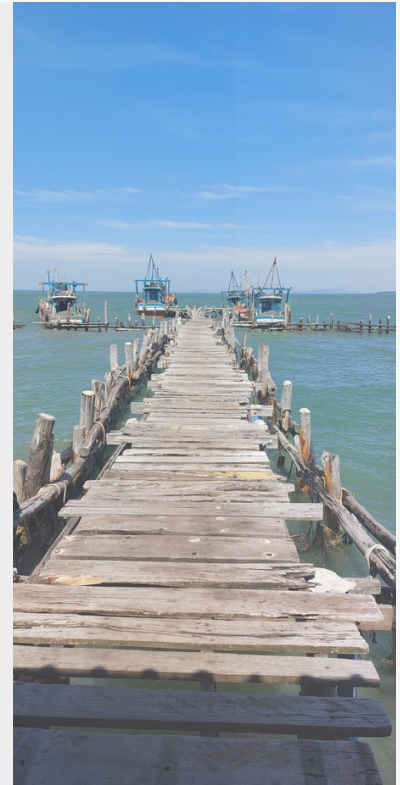
WHO IS JOURNEYING WITH US?

We know that transitions & exploring a new idea are all about timing.

This is why we designed the fellowship to be able to invite leaders on a rolling basis to join and walk with us **when it makes sense for them** rather than imposing a strict selection timeline for the year.

At any given point in time, our community will have:

- **1-2 Firetree Facilitators** who are curating the experiences and conversations
- **4-8 Active Fellows** in different phases of their transitions and idea exploration
- **3-4 Partners** who are engaging the fellows in a mutual learning experience by joining the conversations



OUR ROLES & COMMITMENTS

FELLOWS

Firetree Senior Fellows are experienced and values-aligned leaders who are exploring their transitions and would like to test an idea. As a fellow, they commit to:

- **Actively engaging in the different spaces and conversations** curated for the fellowship; this usually means connecting with the group at least every 2 weeks. Fellows are also invited to lead some of these learning sessions.
- **Supporting the other members** in the fellowship community when possible and appropriate
- Work closely with the Firetree facilitators to design and implement their **exploration plans**

FACILITATORS

Firetree Facilitators are the members of the Firetree team who are responsible for **curating and organizing the fellow experience** and facilitating connections among the different participants. The lead facilitator also manages the setting and **disbursement of fellow stipends**.

PARTNERS

Partners are members of the larger Firetree community who have been invited to join and support the fellowship journey. As partners, they commit to:

- **Actively engaging** in relevant fellowship spaces and conversations
- **Supporting fellows** through one-on-one conversations when needed



WHO DO WE HOPE TO SUPPORT?

EXTENSIVE EXPERIENCE & LONG-TERM COMMITMENT TO SPECIFIC COMMUNITIES

Senior leaders who have several years of experience in a particular field of social change and have demonstrated a **clear track record** and **long-term commitment to the communities that they serve**. We anchor our trust in this leader based on knowing that they will always prioritize the needs of their communities. We deeply respect the knowledge and experience that they have built while serving these communities.

VALUES-ALIGNMENT

This is one of our most important criteria for the fellowship. We are looking for leaders who share and **practice Firetree's values**. As leaders, they **engage communities and partners with humility and respect**. They practice **empathy** and are able to **build trust**. They are open to **collaboration** and committed to continuous learning and being held **accountable for their work**.

KEY PERIOD OF TRANSITION & EXPLORING A NEW IDEA

Leaders who are in a key transition phase of their social impact journeys where they are **exploring a new idea or a shift in approach** and need the space to reflect and test this idea.

The idea itself doesn't have to be fully formed yet. The fellowship is there to give leaders the space and time to work on this. But we are looking for people who **already have a general sense of what they want to explore** based on their experience and are not starting from a blank canvas. We are also looking to support leaders whose ideas could somehow benefit **children, youth, and their families in Southeast Asia**.

STRONG TRACK RECORD OF LEADERSHIP & ACTION

This senior fellowship is for leaders who already have significant experience in **building and leading social impact organizations**. They are **highly motivated** and are comfortable with emergence and exploration. They are willing to proactively engage the fellowship community and **offer support to their peers**.



OUR PACE / OUR CADENCE

- **Throughout the year**, the Firetree Fellowship team is in regular contact with nominators and gradually building new nominator relationships to keep an eye out for leaders who may benefit from the fellowship experience. As we find leaders who fit the criteria, we invite them to join the fellowship **when it makes sense for them and the fellowship community**.
- **Each fellow works with a Firetree facilitator** to curate how they will be supported by and contribute to the fellowship community. **The maximum length of a fellowship period is one year**.
- **Every two weeks**, the Firetree team facilitates online Fellowship Circles for fellows and partners to meet, share, and learn from each other. On the weeks when there are no fellowship circles, fellows hold one-on-one check-ins with their facilitator.
- **Midway through a fellow's journey**, fellows are encouraged to **test key insights of the idea** that they have been exploring. When appropriate, the learning and insights from this test will be shared with the fellowship community.

First 3-6 Months of the Fellowship

- Reflecting on your personal & professional journey
- Learning & focused research on your idea

Last 6 Months of the Fellowship

- Testing your idea & assumptions
- Sharing your insights & co-leading fellow discussions

OUR SPACES & CONVERSATIONS

Welcome Circles

Every time a new fellow joins the community, we convene a session that welcomes them and gives them the space to be able to introduce themselves and their journey. It is also a space for them to meet the other fellows, partners, and facilitators.

Online Fellowship Circles

When we are not hosting a welcome or closing circle, the regular bi-weekly calls (every other week) take the form of community check-ins or learning sessions. The Firetree facilitators curate the agenda for that call based on needs expressed by the fellows. The topics could include (but are not limited to) some below:

- A **workshop or discussion** on a common topic requested by fellows. This could be partner or fellow-led (e.g. Storytelling & Narratives, Partnership Strategy, etc)
- **Problem-solving or brainstorming session** hosted by a fellow who would like the help of the community (e.g. challenges of Community-Building & Trust)
- A discussion on a current event or issue affecting the different community members
- A check-in session where the fellows share their **current progress and challenges** in terms of their exploration and testing

One-on-One Check-ins

Every other week, Fellows connect one-on-one with their facilitator or partner-mentor to discuss their individual exploration.

Community Journal

This is a living collaborative document that is shared among the active community members. When a new fellow or partner joins the circle, this is a good starting point to help them learn about the other members' stories and work.

In-Person Fellowship Circles

If possible, Fellows attend the Firetree Team & Partners retreat to meet the larger Firetree community. We also organize in-person fellow gatherings in the region.

Closing Circles

When a fellow is "graduating" from their one-year journey with the fellowship, we convene a session where they share what they have learned and their plans for the next phase in their journey.



COULD YOU BE OUR NEXT FELLOW?

Check out the reflection questions below:

- Do I have significant experience leading an organization and supporting long-term positive impact in a community?
- Have I left my previous organization and am I exploring the possibility of building a new initiative?
- As I explore this next step, is there a specific community or group of people that I am committed to serving?
- Could my idea somehow benefit children, youth and their families in Southeast Asia?
- Am I looking for a community of support as I pursue this exploration? Do I have the time and willingness to support others who are in a similar journey?



"What I value the most about being a Firetree Senior Fellow is the opportunity to connect with new people, listen to them and explore different possibilities to solve big issues..."

-- Sarakk Rith (Siem Reap, Cambodia)
Firetree Senior Fellow 2023-2024

WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEARN MORE?

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about the Firetree Senior Fellowship. We are committed to continuously learning and adapting the program to best serve the needs of local leaders.

If you have any questions, feedback or nominations, please reach out to **fellowship@firetree.org**.