

# FAQs: Firetree Senior Fellowship

## Frequently Asked Questions

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**Welcome!** Thank you for your interest in the Firetree Senior Fellowship. For detailed information on the fellowship, please download the overview document here: <https://www.firetreephilanthropy.org/firetree-fellowship>.

We believe that this programme must continuously evolve to best support the needs of senior leaders in transition. As this is a relatively new programme, we are committed to continuously learning and adapting our approach. We are looking for fellows who are willing to patiently accompany us on this journey as well.

As part of this learning process, we are compiling here the most frequently asked questions about the fellowship as well as key insights or feedback that we have received.

We know that it is impossible to fully communicate the context and nuance of the process in a written document. As with all things, we believe that it is best to connect over conversations. Please feel free to contact us at [fellowship@firetree.org](mailto:fellowship@firetree.org) if you have any questions.

Thank you!

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### **How do I nominate myself or someone else for the Firetree Fellowship?**

Currently, we are working closely with trusted partners and nominators of Firetree Philanthropy to identify fellowship candidates. You may reach out to us at [fellowship@firetree.org](mailto:fellowship@firetree.org) if you would like to nominate a leader.

If you are interested in nominating yourself for the fellowship, please see the following reflection questions below. You may send your responses to these questions to [fellowship@firetree.org](mailto:fellowship@firetree.org).

- *Do you have a strong alignment with [Firetree's values](#)?*
- *Do you have significant experience (more than 7 years) leading a social impact organization and supporting long-term positive impact in a community?*

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- *Have you left your previous organization and are you exploring the possibility of building a new initiative?*
- *As you explore this next step, is there a specific community or group of people that you are committed to serving?*
- *Could your idea somehow benefit children, youth and their families in Southeast Asia?*
- *Are you looking for a community of support as you pursue this exploration? Do you have the time and willingness to support others who are in a similar journey?*

Due to our limited team capacity, please note that we are unable to give detailed individual feedback to applications and inquiries.

### **Do you accept nominations from all Southeast Asian countries?**

Yes, we do accept nominations from all Southeast Asian countries. However, we prioritize countries where Firetree has more established networks and is therefore better equipped to support local leaders. These countries include: Cambodia, Thailand, the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, and Hong Kong.

### **What exactly do you mean by “leaders in transition”?**

We know that there are many ways one could interpret the word “transition”. We’ve chosen to use this word specifically because it is inclusive and allows us to consider the many different contexts and narratives that experienced leaders may have. We’ve tried to provide examples or personas before but found that people end up latching on to these and limiting their imagination of possible contexts that we could support.

We hope to support experienced leaders who are in the process of transitioning out of the organizations that they have led. They are looking for a supportive community to accompany them on a new journey. They are contemplating their next steps and part of this involves exploring the creation of an initiative (more on this in the next question below).

## **Is this fellowship for leaders who want to transition to new roles or is it for leaders who are building a new initiative?**

This fellowship is specifically designed for people who need the time and space to build or create a new initiative or approach to address social challenges in their community. We hope to provide leaders with a chance to explore their idea and test it with the support of other leaders who are going through a similar journey. We are focused on senior or experienced leaders who have already built up their knowledge and expertise over many years of engaging and serving their communities.

Therefore, this fellowship is not a good fit for leaders who are contemplating a shift in career by looking for a new job in a different organization.

The fellowship is designed for leaders who are ready to engage in the proactive exploration and development of a new idea. As such, we believe it is important to also highlight that the programme is not equipped to support leaders who may be looking to take more of a break in order to address issues of personal burnout.

## **What kind of ideas are fellows working on? Do they have to be “new” as in they are innovative approaches in their field? Or do you mean “new” as in a different approach from what this leader was doing before?**

This is not an innovation fellowship. The ideas don't have to be new or novel in the field. We hope to support senior leaders who strongly believe in exploring an approach that may be different from what they were doing before but is still anchored in their expertise and their commitment to the communities they serve.

Some fellows may have already taken the first steps in piloting and building their idea but still need support in this early stage. While others may still be refining their idea and need the space to test their assumptions.

## **Am I allowed to work or take on consultancies during this fellowship?**

We acknowledge that every leader's personal context is different and that a one-year stipend is not enough to guarantee their long-term financial security. Fellows may choose to take on part-time projects or stay on as advisors in their previous organizations. However, we ask for transparency and accountability

over how much time they can actually commit to exploring and testing their idea within the fellowship. This will also be taken into account in the individual stipend-setting conversations for each fellow.

### **What kind of outcomes are you expecting from fellows after this fellowship? What is a fellow committing to do after their fellowship period?**

Success for us means that fellows leave the fellowship feeling that they were well-supported by the community; they learned more about themselves; and that they gained new insights and further developed their idea through thoughtful testing and iteration. We hope that these insights and learnings can be shared externally (if appropriate).

After their fellowship period, we do hope that fellows would consider continuing to support each other and engage with the Firetree community when the opportunities arise - but this is completely voluntary.

The Firetree Senior Fellowship is managed separately from Firetree Philanthropy's funding activities. After their fellowship period, there should be no expectation from Fellows that their initiatives would receive further funding from Firetree Philanthropy.

### **What are some of the key insights you have learned so far from designing this fellowship?**

- **We need to be flexible.** In terms of programme design, it would be much easier to run a single cohort-based fellowship where all fellows go through the selection, onboarding, and programme activities together at the same time each year. But we quickly realized that if we want to truly support leaders who are in transition, we need to be able to support them when they need it most rather than making them wait or adjust to our annual timelines.
- Inviting fellows to join us on a rolling basis and tailoring our support for each of them will take a lot of time and resources. This is why we commit to engaging only between 3-5 fellows at a given time so that we are able to support each one effectively, especially while we are in a pilot phase.

- **In a community, people's roles will evolve.** We see this fellowship as a long-term community of values-aligned leaders that Firetree hopes to support and build. We are looking for values-alignment not just in the fellows but also in the facilitators and partner-mentors that we engage.
- As we meet more values-aligned leaders, we realize that not everyone will be in a point of transition and that some of them may be nominators, mentors, and facilitators.
- As we build trust and shared values, we hope that over time the lines between facilitator, fellow, and mentor will blur so that – regardless of their roles – everyone is learning from each other.