



Action research planning for the Global Social Benefit Fellowship

A program of the Miller Center for Social Entrepreneurship

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Types of action research we offer to GSBI social enterprises

1. Social impact assessment, and the development of monitoring tools
2. Customer satisfaction surveys, including social science surveys
3. Knowledge formalization, such as sales training manuals or operation manuals
4. Social documentation, beneficiary profiles, promotional materials, photography, and videography
5. Market assessment, marketing campaign planning, and business plan development

All action research is conducted by inter-disciplinary teams of students of 2 or 3, depending upon the scope of work and number of deliverables. We only send qualified students to work with social enterprises in the developing world.

Support from social enterprises necessary for a successful project

1. A vision for action research
 - a. Is the CEO able to describe what the enterprise would like as a deliverable?
 - b. Can the CEO and staff select and customize an appropriate type of action research project (per above)?
 - c. Is the CEO comfortable with a version of the final product being posted on the [Miller Center webpage](#) to share with other social enterprises?
 - d. Can the CEO or staff designate meet twice by skype in May with the fellows to prepare them for their field work?
2. An experience of direct contact with those who benefit from the social enterprise
 - a. Is the enterprise able to structure a sustained student experience of direct contact with the poor in the developing world? Experience has shown that this aspect of the fellowship is the best predictor of a successful project.
3. Logistical research support by a designated enterprise employee
 - a. Can the enterprise commit to making an employee available onsite at the beginning of the research to provide an orientation for the students?
 - b. Can the enterprise help students access safe local transportation? This is necessary so the students can access the communities served. See #2 above.
 - c. Can the enterprise commit to helping the students access competent translation? (if needed; the Miller Center pays)
 - d. Can the enterprise assign an employee to meeting weekly with the students to troubleshoot during the field research? (in person, or Skype)
4. Operational support for students in the field
 - a. Can the enterprise help to organize safe and affordable housing in advance?
 - b. Can the enterprise help the students devise a strategy for accessing safe food?
 - c. Can the enterprise help the students identify a range of health care facilities upon arrival, should these be needed? We rely on the advice of our enterprise hosts.

Timeline for social enterprise engagement with the fellowship

September-November. With the social enterprise, we negotiate the scope of work for the action research proposal, and the necessary student skills.

October-November. The Miller Center drafts initial action research proposal collaboratively with the enterprise, and posts this on our webpage to recruit students with appropriate skills.

January. Fellowship application deadline. If needed, the enterprise provides an update on the scope of work.

February. The Miller Center interviews qualified applicants. If, in negotiation with the enterprise, a team of qualified students is recruited and awarded the fellowship, and the students accept the fellowship, the research proposal is confirmed as an Action Research Plan. If a team of qualified students cannot be found, the Miller Center will inform the enterprise that the project is a no-go.

March. The Miller Center formally welcomes teams of students at an event. The Center initiates travel planning. The enterprise confirms in-country arrival/departure dates. Budget planning for each project begins. Social enterprises share 10-20 high resolution photographs with the Miller Center to use for promotional material.

April 1. Student fellows begin intensive spring course. This course will prepare the students by: orienting them to the field of social entrepreneurship, training them in the GSBI method and its impact on their host enterprise, and preparing them for action research. Students write a short essay to introduce themselves to the enterprise.

May 1. Student teams meet with the GSBI mentors who mentored the host social enterprise to learn about the business model.

May 1. Student teams analyze the business plan of their host enterprise, and arrange for their first skype call with the enterprise.

May 25. Student teams prepare complete full action research plan, share it with their host enterprise in the second skype call. The enterprise now has chance to provide a course correction in light of student arrival in 20 days.

June 1. First budget transfer to enterprise, if needed.

June 15. Fellows depart Santa Clara University any time after this date.

August 10. Fellows return to campus.

August 13-23. Fellows in residence at GSBI-Accelerator. Fellows develop a plan for completing the project to the enterprise.

August 23-September 20. Fellows on vacation (little work gets done).

September 20. Fellows begin fall course, and provide updates to the enterprise on the completion of project.

October 25. Projects complete, and passed off to enterprise for review.

November 1. Enterprise approves elements of the project for the Center to post on the Miller Center webpage.

This fellowship is fully funded thanks to a generous benefactor. However, in our experience, the social entrepreneurs who invest time in providing guidance to our student fellows receive much more valuable research products in return.