

GUIDELINES

Disability Rights Scholarship Program

Open Society Scholarship Programs

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS: NOVEMBER 2, 2015

The **Disability Rights Scholarship Program** offers awards to individuals from China, Tunisia, and selected other countries in Africa and Latin America for a one-year Master of Laws (LLM) or a 1.5-year Master's in Education degree.

The program's objective is to provide disability rights advocates and lawyers with the necessary expertise to develop new legislation, jurisprudence, policy, research, and scholarship to harness the innovations and opportunities offered by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The CRPD, which entered into force in May 2008, presents a paradigm shift in the field of disability rights and provides a framework for promoting the inclusion and full participation of persons with disabilities in their communities.

With the knowledge and networks gained through the program, we expect that Fellows will deepen their understanding of international law with a focus on disability rights, and gain the tools necessary to engage in a range of CRPD implementation strategies, such as: challenging rights violations in their home countries by drafting enforceable legislation consistent with the CRPD; utilizing enforcement mechanisms set forth in the Convention; taking forward disability rights litigation requesting CRPD-compliant remedies; engaging in disability rights advocacy; and developing law, education, or other academic curricula informed by the CRPD.

Participating Institutions

Fellows will be clustered at select institutions that demonstrate cutting-edge capacity for legal education in disability rights or leadership in inclusive education, and that are interested in forming a consortium of schools dedicated to developing this field and deepening their own capacity with an international perspective. In nurturing such a network, the Program strives to encourage faculties to incorporate disability rights into existing human rights curricula and participate in collaboratively-designed workshops and research efforts in the field.

New Opportunity: Inclusive Education Scholarships

Starting this year, we offer two awards for Master of Education degrees, focusing on **Inclusive Education**. This eighteen-month interdisciplinary program is hosted at Syracuse University School of Education and includes courses in the College of Law. Participants will build a foundation in the principles, values, and practices of inclusive education, and upon completion of the program will be equipped to lead reform of education policy and practice in their home countries. We welcome applicants from various professional backgrounds--please see eligibility requirements elsewhere in this announcement.

Eligibility

The Program does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, sex, religion, sexual orientation, or disability. Candidates with disabilities are particularly encouraged to apply. The competition is merit-based and open* to those meeting the following criteria:

- be a citizen and legal resident of **China; Malawi, Mozambique, Sudan, South Sudan, Tanzania, Tunisia, Zambia; Argentina, Mexico, Peru, Colombia** at the time of application;
- have work experience in the legal profession or advocacy focusing on human/disability rights and/or work in education with a demonstrated interest in advancing inclusive education;
- have an excellent academic record with a Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.; in exceptional circumstances, those without a LL.B but with substantial relevant experience may be considered). For Inclusive Education, a degree in teaching, public administration/policy, anthropology, social work, psychology, or related field;
- have demonstrated leadership in the field of disability rights or education;
- be proficient in spoken and written English or French and able to meet university-designated minimum scores on standardized language tests;
- be able to participate in an intensive academic writing program in Summer 2016;
- be able to begin the graduate program in August or September 2016;
- be able to receive and maintain visa or study permit required by host country;
- demonstrate a clear commitment to return to home country to contribute to advancing the inclusion and full participation of persons with disabilities in their communities, or to advancing the implementation of inclusive education.

*Employees of the Open Society Foundations and employees of local administering organizations (and their immediate family members), who are directly involved in the administration of scholarships are not eligible; nor are individuals receiving other Open Society Foundations--funded support during the fellowship period.

Fellowship Terms

The fellowship provides:

- tuition and mandatory university fees;
- monthly stipend for room, board, and other living expenses;
- program-related travel;
- accident and sickness insurance during the program;
- funds for educational materials and professional development;
- all costs associated with pre-academic summer program and annual conference;
- support for students with disabilities to obtain reasonable accommodations necessary for participating in the program of study.

The fellowship does NOT provide funding for dependent family members.

Selection

Competition is merit based, and selection is made on the basis of academic excellence, professional aptitude, leadership potential and proven commitment to work in the field of disability rights or to advance inclusive education in the home country. Selection proceeds as follows:

Preliminary Selection and Testing: Applications are first reviewed by representatives from the regional program administration, host university consortium, and Open Society Foundations. Applicants chosen to continue in the competition as semifinalists are required to take an official TOEFL or IELTS, the costs of which are covered by the program. Most participating universities require a minimum TOEFL of 90-100 (Internet-based exam) or IELTS of 6.5.

All applicants should research local options for TOEFL or IELTS testing to ensure results are available by February 2016. Students with disabilities should contact the testing agency as early as possible to make the necessary arrangements for accommodation during testing.

Interviews and Final Selection: Semifinalists are interviewed by representatives from the Open Society Foundations, host universities, and other experts. The interviewing panel then recommends candidates for finalist status and subsequent placement based on the quality of the written application, interview evaluations, and standardized test results.

University Placement

Fellows are matched with universities according to their chosen area of specialization, academic profile, and professional aspirations. Final decisions concerning host university placement are made by the program selection committee, which includes university admissions staff and faculty, although finalists may be asked their preference.

Visa application: Upon receiving the university placements, students are responsible for securing required visas for both the summer school in Turkey and for the host university.

Participant Responsibilities

Pre-Academic Summer Program: Grantees are required to participate in a four-week intensive pre-program in Istanbul, Turkey before starting study at host universities in August or September 2016. The program consists of classes in academic writing, social science, and humanities-based seminars.

Fellowship: Immediately after the summer program, finalists attend a pre-departure orientation (held in Istanbul). During the second semester of studies, finalists participate in a program workshop. Fellows must uphold the academic standards of the host institution and undertake full-time study for the program's duration. Failure to maintain academic and professional standards as defined by the host university may result in dismissal from the program. Failure to follow the laws governing foreign students in the host country will result in dismissal from the program.

Application Guidelines

Application and Recommendation Forms are available from the contacts listed below:

www.opensocietyfoundations.org/grants/disability-rights-scholarship-program-20150820

Deadline

Please submit completed application forms and all necessary accompanying documents, along with a copy of your passport to the Program Representative above by the deadline of **November 2, 2015**.

REGIONAL COORDINATORS

Residents of Malawi, Mozambique, Sudan, South Sudan, Tanzania, Tunisia, Zambia:

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