



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Six Canadian social entrepreneurs elected Ashoka Fellows
as Ashoka celebrates seven years in Canada**

Ashoka Canada Fellowship now numbers 27

TORONTO, ON (December 9, 2009)

Ashoka Canada welcomes six new Fellows to its Canadian Fellowship. Ashoka is a global association that identifies and supports the world's leading social entrepreneurs. In Canada, Ashoka supports *Early Launch Fellows* who are in the early stages of their projects and *Senior Fellows* who have a long history of making social change and contributing to large scale impact. Fellows are elected for life and benefit from being part of the Ashoka Fellowship, which includes financial support, training and an array of professional services, primarily through partnerships with McKinsey and Company, Hill & Knowlton, Egon Zehnder International, and Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP.

Ashoka's newly-elected Fellows address an array of social problems, from employment issues to hunger, poverty to democratic engagement. Through innovative ideas and entrepreneurial strategies, they have succeeded in garnering widespread support and achieving amazing social impact. They are based in B.C., Ontario and Quebec but their impact is national and international.

This year, six new Fellows will bring the Canadian Fellowship to 27. "The diversity of the social issues addressed by our new Fellows is representative of the Ashoka global network. It shows that social innovation in Canada is vibrant and that innovation and entrepreneurial skills are key to addressing any social problem," says Nicolina Farella, who leads the selection process at Ashoka Canada.

Poverty and hunger are tragic issues – **Jean-François Archambault** is actively working at the root of the problem. He works with chefs to recover and redistribute high quality food from hotels and restaurants, and to become role models for youth. He is reinventing the chef profession to include a response to food distribution issues. "It's amazing how one group of people can come together and unite to solve a major social issue, the image of showing how to fish instead of serving the fish is pretty relevant to illustrate our mission!"

The poorest countries in the world share similar challenges related to basic human needs such as malnutrition, health, and environmental issues. **Daphne Nederhorst** (Sawa Global) is identifying grassroots leaders addressing these challenges (from the world's 50 poorest countries) and using new media technologies to spread their stories and projects to local and global audiences. She builds local media networks and uses a web platform to create short videos that showcase the Heroes' successes and disseminate their stories globally.

A more structured and powerful social sector is necessary to increase the impact of individuals devoted to social change, and one Fellow is working to build powerful social networks to strengthen the sector. Fellow **Tonya Surman** empowers social innovators in Canada by incubating their ideas in a dynamic and emergent environment, the Centre for Social Innovation (CSI) in Toronto. "The Ashoka Fellowship is not only a great honour, but provides the Centre for Social Innovation with vital support at just the right time as we work to achieve global scale in an open source world," says Surman.

Citizen participation is key to having public policies that will effectively combat social problems: Fellow **Iлона Dougherty** is increasing youth involvement in democracy through her organization Apathy is Boring, and Senior Fellow **Dr. Arnold Noyek** Canada International Scientific Exchange Program (CISEPO) is building peace through health initiatives in the Middle-East, Canada and globally. "Being elected a Senior Ashoka Fellow is a dream come true. It offers the chance to fulfill immediate (and

perhaps otherwise unattainable) peacebuilding objectives in my lifetime” says Noyek. Dougherty adds, “being named an Ashoka Fellow has given me a sense of possibility. I am looking forward being able to push Apathy is Boring and myself further knowing that I have the support and confidence of such an amazing organization behind me.”

Youth are a critical component of the development process and Senior Fellow **Johann Olav Koss** (Right to Play) brings behavioural changes that enhance children’s holistic development through the medium of sport and play in more than 23 countries.

“With the financial crisis, social problems are increasing everywhere in the world, and many Canadians are going through tough times,” says Celia Cruz, Director of Ashoka Canada. “Jean-François, Ilona, Tonya, Arnold and Johann have developed innovative projects that change the lives of thousands of people in Canada and abroad. They are passionate social entrepreneurs and decided to develop social organizations to change the systems in place.”

Ashoka Fellows receive pro bono services (consulting, legal, communications, and governance), training, access to Ashoka’s global network of business and social entrepreneurs, and become a part of Ashoka’s global movement to create systemic social change. In addition, Early Launch Fellows receive a living stipend for three years.

About Ashoka Canada

Ashoka is the leading global organization that identifies and invests in social entrepreneurs. Over the last seven years, Ashoka has provided 18 social entrepreneurs in Canada with funding and support to advance their organizations. All Ashoka Fellows go through a rigorous selection process where they are evaluated according to five criteria: innovation, creativity, entrepreneurial quality, systemic social impact and ethical fibre. For more information, visit www.ashoka.canada.org.

About Ashoka International

Since its founding in 1981, Ashoka has built a network of more than 2,000 leading social entrepreneurs in more than 63 countries. Ashoka envisions a world where Everyone is a Changemaker™: a world that responds quickly and effectively to social challenges, and where each individual has the freedom, confidence and societal support to address any social problem and drive change. For more information, visit www.ashoka.org.

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New Ashoka Fellows



Jean-François Archambault, La Tablée des Chefs, Montreal

Jean-François is combating hunger and introducing healthy eating through substantially modifying the food consumption chain. He is identifying and empowering the most critical key players, chefs, to become leaders in food redistribution and in educating children and youth in healthy cooking. In 2004, Jean-François created La Tablée des Chefs (Cooking for Life) to engage chefs to address social and environmental issues: chefs lead the food management process (preparation, storage and processing) to help reduce food waste and to redistribute high quality leftovers to food banks and shelters. As a result, huge quantities of previously wasted food are now distributed efficiently to underserved populations. Jean-François is also engaging chefs as educators who transfer their cooking and nutritional knowledge to food banks, citizen sector organization (CSO) leaders, and marginalized youth and families through workshops and summer camps. He empowers youth to adopt healthy and affordable food preparation habits. Jean-François is currently working in the province of Quebec and is planning the Cooking for life's expansion to other major Canadian cities through partnerships with culinary schools and national food service organizations.



Ilona Dougherty, Apathy is Boring, Montreal

Ilona is fostering democratic literacy by engaging youth through a process that creates opportunities for civic participation. To do so, she has created a multi-layered strategy using concerts, workshops and a youth-oriented online platform to cultivate volunteerism and increase democratic involvement. Ilona's organization - Apathy is Boring (A is B) - created in 2004, targets youth that are not involved in citizen sector organizations (CSOs) or are apathetic to the democratic process. These youth come from underserved as well as middle class neighborhoods, from diverse backgrounds. She aims to increase youth voter turn out, encourage youth to volunteer, and build a dialogue between youth and elected officials. Through concerts organized across Canada, featuring popular Canadian musicians, young audiences gain awareness about the democratic process and volunteerism. A is B also mentors elected officials to develop platforms and messaging tactics that resonate more with youth in order to increase their interest in the democratic process and their representation at all levels of community leadership..



Daphne Nederhorst, SAWA Global, Vancouver

Daphne is targeting the world's fifty poorest countries to combat poverty through identifying local change makers (called "SAWA Heroes") and giving them the tools to spread and scale their initiatives. She is doing so by educating videographers to film, promote and link the Heroes to mentors and consultants. She is influencing development aid strategies as well as educating local populations by promoting the work of their role models. To further support the work of Heroes, and to help them sustain, expand, and scale their projects, Daphne is connecting Heroes to resourceful mentors from its Canadian and global network of advisors. This creates a network of support and mentorship for Heroes to increase their impact and knowledge of their work.



Tonya Surman, Centre for Social Innovation, Toronto

Tonya created the Centre for Social Innovation (CSI) in 2004 in Toronto, to bring a diverse group of citizen sector organizations (CSOs) together to enable collaboration opportunities. In Canada, CSI is pioneering the creation of shared space for socially minded organizations and adding value to them to enable higher social impact. Through CSI, she is building a network of local and global shared spaces for social innovators designed to foster cooperation among diverse players with the aim of creating new initiatives responding to pressing social issues. In order to scale her model of hubs for social innovation at national and global levels, Tonya's work involves utilizing the power of networks and the principles of collaboration and entrepreneurship. To do this, Tonya plans to put all of CSI's knowledge, tools and systems in an open source platform on Creative Commons. This information and license will be freely available to other shared space practitioners and planners, so they can take advantage of what CSI has achieved and thus contribute back to a global community of practice.

SENIOR FELLOWS



Johann Koss, Right to Play, Toronto

Through *Right To Play*, an athlete-driven international organization, Olympic medalist Johann Olav Koss is working with children, youth and adult coaches in some of the most difficult circumstances in the world, such as refugee camps. His programs aim at bringing about behavioural changes and enhancing children's holistic development through the medium of sport and play. Having expanded his programs to 23 countries, Johann is now leveraging his experience and organizational capacity by working with the United Nations to include sports in the Millennium Development Goals, and by helping national governments include sport in their social development policies.



Dr. Arnold Noyek, Canada International Scientific Exchange Program, Toronto

By creating collaborative exchange and continuing education programs for medical students, health professionals and health centres from Israel, Palestine, Jordan and Canada, Arnold Noyek is creating a model of cooperation in the Middle East which is improving the professional capacity of these practitioners and medical care in these regions. As a result, he is creating cross-cultural dialogue, understanding and peaceful co-existence across religious, cultural and political borders.