



**ASHOKA**

*Everyone A Changemaker™*

## **Three leading social entrepreneurs named Ashoka Fellows**

*Ashoka's national fellowship reaches 43 leading social entrepreneurs*

**TORONTO, ON (May 20, 2012)** – Ashoka announces its first three Ashoka Fellows this year, whose new ideas are building economies in conflict-prone countries, engaging businesses to create realistic environmental action and building capacity among sustainable agricultural producers in developing countries to access financing.

**Scott Gilmore**, founder of Building Markets, is elected as a Senior Ashoka Fellow. He is stimulating economic growth in the most conflict-prone countries in the world, such as Afghanistan and Haiti, by building the market for local entrepreneurs and vendors. His solution to the lack of demand and financing was to work with international aid and humanitarian agencies and multinational corporations, changing the buying practices of foreign missions to support the local economies in which they operate. Building Markets was the only Canadian organization to win the G20 SME Finance Challenge in 2010. Senior Ashoka Fellows, at the time of election, have had continental impact and made a 'scratch on history'. Scott is based in Ottawa.

**Mike Morrice** created Sustainable Waterloo Region in light of inadequate national and global responses to pressing environmental problems. Through a community-led approach, Sustainable Waterloo Region inspires and facilitates organizations to co-create ambitious yet realistic public commitments to reduce their environmental impact, measuring and reporting back on their accomplishments.

**Jason Potts**, founder of Finance Alliance for Sustainable Trade (FAST), is facilitating access to finance for sustainable small and medium-sized enterprises located in developing countries. Through FAST, he is developing innovative tools that help socially oriented financial institutions and commercial lenders to provide finance more efficiently to those most in need. Jason is based in Montreal.

These three social innovators are the new Ashoka Fellows, joining a network leading social entrepreneurs implementing systems-changing solutions for tackling major social challenges in Canada. There are more than 3,000 Fellows in 72 countries who are building better communities around the globe.

"Ashoka Fellows are creative innovators who have developed ground-breaking projects that address social issues at their roots. They impact thousands of people in Canada and the world. We believe that a new idea in the hands of a social entrepreneur is the most powerful force for social change in the world. We are thrilled to elect Mike, Scott and Jason, particularly as we celebrate 10 years of Ashoka in Canada" says Elisha Muskat, Executive Director of Ashoka Canada.

Ashoka believes that the only solution to the world's social problems is more problem-solvers. The organization identifies and supports people (rather than projects) as top changemakers who inspire and motivate others to be changemakers, showing the world it is possible to solve social issues.

"This election is an incredible honour – I'm humbled to join such esteemed company as an Ashoka Fellow," says Mike Morrice. "To have the support of Ashoka Canada and to learn from other Fellows will go a long way towards efforts to scale our impact in Waterloo Region and as we share our model with other communities."

As a global association of social entrepreneurs with the vision of creating a world where everyone can be a changemaker, Ashoka helps everyone realize their potential to be changemakers: to have the confidence, resources and societal support to do so. As part of its Fellowship program, which Scott, Mike and Jason are elected to for life, Ashoka supports them to grow their systems-changing new ideas to broaden and deepen their

impact. Ashoka provides support and professional services through its international strategic partners, such as McKinsey & Company, H+K Strategies, Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP and Egon Zehnder International.

### **About Ashoka Canada**

Ashoka is the leading global organization that identifies and invests in social entrepreneurs. Over the last 10 years, Ashoka has selected and supported 43 social entrepreneurs in Canada, from stipend support to capacity building and consultancy from leading companies. All Ashoka Fellows go through a robust 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.canada.ashoka.org](http://www.canada.ashoka.org) or [www.quebec.ashoka.org](http://www.quebec.ashoka.org).

### **Ashoka's Vision**

**Ashoka envisions a world** where everyone can be 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.canada.ashoka.org](http://www.canada.ashoka.org)**

Scott Gilmore: <http://canada.ashoka.org/fellow/scott-gilmore>

Mike Morrice: <http://canada.ashoka.org/fellow/mike-morrice>

Jason Potts: <http://canada.ashoka.org/fellow/jason-potts>

<http://www.buildingmarkets.org/>

<http://www.sustainablewaterlooregion.ca/>

<http://www.fastinternational.org/>

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