

## **For Immediate Release**

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## **Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Fellowship Program to Bring 28 International Leaders in Inclusive Education to Minnesota and Arizona *University of Minnesota partnership with India, Kazakhstan, Armenia and Ukraine is seeking international applicants and local partners***

MINNEAPOLIS (January 19, 2017) – The Global Resource Center at the Institute on Community Integration (ICI), University of Minnesota, has been awarded a \$500,000, 18-month Fellowship Program by the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, to enhance the skills of international educators to work in inclusive settings and build partnerships with colleagues from the U.S. and internationally. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Anniversary Inclusive Education Fellowship candidates must be between the ages of 25 and 45; from Kazakhstan, Armenia, Ukraine or India; and exhibit proficiency in spoken and written English. The Fellowship Program is open now through January 27, 2017 for international applicants working in inclusive settings or otherwise supporting children and youth with disabilities. For full announcement and to apply, please visit [globalinclusion.org/projects.htm](http://globalinclusion.org/projects.htm).

The ADA Anniversary Fellowship Program in Inclusive Education will enable 28 participants from Kazakhstan, Armenia, Ukraine and India to participate in a 6-week intensive fellowship program at a variety of Minnesota or Arizona local agency partners who support the educational inclusion of children with disabilities. Prior to the fellowship experience, participants accepted into the program will work with coordinators at the University of Minnesota and Arizona State University and in their respective countries to develop person-centered fellowship plans. Starting in April 2017, selected fellows will travel to Minnesota (20 fellows) and Arizona (eight fellows) to gain knowledge in the field, collaborate with other international fellows, and upon their return home, implement a “Grand Challenge” project with assistance from the project team and U.S. mentors. After the fellows’ U.S. visit, 16 U.S. mentors will travel to the respective countries for two weeks to follow-up on each country's grand challenge, conduct workshops on inclusive education, disability policy and advocacy, and provide technical assistance. The University of Minnesota and Arizona State University were selected for this Program based on their long-standing

expertise with inclusion and inclusive education of children and youth with disabilities as well as for their experience leading international exchange programs.

“The ADA Anniversary Fellowship Program in Inclusive Education will create an international community of learning based on inclusive education, experiential learning, disability advocacy and policy, as well as the value of community inclusion,” said Brian Abery, Principal Investigator (PI) and Director for the program. “We have experience working in these particular post-Soviet countries (and in India) and each has made significant improvements in inclusive education for children with disabilities and we are excited to keep that momentum going. This Fellowship aims to empower these young professionals to be champions of inclusive education back home.”

Inclusive education means that all children, including those with disabilities, are educated with their peers without disabilities in general education classrooms in local schools. It involves more than such children being physically present and includes their active participation in all aspects of classroom life.

The program is administered by the University of Minnesota and Arizona State University in collaboration with partners from Nazarbayev University & Bilim Central Asia Education Center in Kazakhstan; Armenian State Pedagogical University in Armenia; National Precarpathian University and the Odessa Development Fund in Ukraine; and the Tata Institute of Social Sciences in India. University of Minnesota project staff include: Renata Ticha, Co-PI, Director, Global Resource Center; Christopher Johnstone, Co-PI, Assistant Professor, Department of Organizational Leadership and Policy Development; and Sherry Grey, Director, International Fellows and Scholars Program, Humphrey School of Public Affairs.

**Editor’s note:** The University of Minnesota is interested in identifying more potential local agency partners (i.e., schools, nonprofits, government). For a list of current partners, please visit <http://globalinclusion.org/projects.htm>. If you are interested in being a site for the Fellowship Program, please contact Brian Abery at [abery001@umn.edu](mailto:abery001@umn.edu).

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The Institute on Community Integration is a federally-designated University Center for Excellence in Disabilities at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. Through collaborative research, training, and outreach, the Institute improves policies and practices to ensure that all children, youth, and adults with disabilities are valued by, and contribute to, their communities of choice. To learn more visit <http://ici.umn.edu>

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