

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is the NCDI Poverty Network?**

The [NCDI Poverty Network](#) aims to prevent and reduce the death and suffering of those doubly afflicted by extreme poverty and NCDIs – especially children and young adults who suffer avoidable deaths each year from NCDIs. The Network accomplishes this goal by supporting National NCDI Poverty Commissions in countries with a high prevalence of extreme poverty – and is building a larger movement around ensuring that service delivery for NCDIs is a key component of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) for the poorest populations.

The NCDI Poverty Network is a growing platform for global, regional, national, and local leaders to promote technical cooperation, policies, research, advocacy, and resource mobilization for health sector interventions to improve the lives of people living with NCDIs (PLWNCDIs) in settings of extreme poverty. The Network is currently focused on strategic initiatives around awareness-raising and expanding the Network to new National Commissions and partners; research and innovation to improve integrated care delivery; implementation, service delivery and training; and financing and resource mobilization.

The NCDI Poverty Network was [launched in December 2020](#). We look forward to working with Voices Fellows to help us shape the vision and reach of the Network in coming years!

### **What is PEN-Plus?**

PEN-Plus is an integrated care delivery strategy that builds on the World Health Organization's Package of Essential Noncommunicable Disease Interventions (WHO PEN), focused on increasing the quality of services for severe chronic NCDs at primary referral facilities (e.g. district hospitals). PEN-Plus also seeks to accelerate decentralization of services for common NCDs at primary care facilities (e.g. health centers). Conditions addressed by PEN-Plus providers typically include relatively complex diseases such as type 1 diabetes (T1D), advanced rheumatic and congenital heart disease (RHD/CHD), and sickle cell disease (SCD), among others. PEN-Plus providers also train and mentor WHO PEN providers addressing conditions such as type 2 diabetes, uncomplicated hypertension, and asthma at health centers.

The PEN-Plus Partnership is a key strategic initiative of the NCDI Poverty Network. PEN-Plus, if scaled nationally in low- and lower-middle income countries, would greatly improve access to care for people living with some of the most severe and most difficult to manage NCDs. PEN-Plus also offers an exciting opportunity for various disease-specific communities to collaborate on integrated advocacy and resource mobilization efforts around more equitable health systems.

### **What are some of the key principles of the NCDI Poverty agenda?**

- **Prioritizing severe NCDIs that disproportionately impact children and young adults living in extreme poverty**

Existing advocacy and policy frameworks within the global NCD community have often been limited or incomplete when considering the lived reality of PLWNCDIs in settings of extreme poverty. This population is composed disproportionately of younger individuals under the age of 40, who are

afflicted by NCDIs as part of a nexus of hunger, toxic environments, infectious diseases, and lack of health care. PLWNCDIs in low- and lower-middle income countries often experience NCDs that are more severe and more varied than those captured in well-known NCD frameworks like the “4x4” or “5x5”. Access to quality health care options is also often very low. In this way, the term “poverty” intends not to classify or stigmatize a particular population, but rather to call immediate attention to neglected issues within the NCDI response that require urgent prioritization.

We will be working with Fellows throughout the duration of the fellowship to explore language, messaging, and approaches that resonate most closely with PLWNCDIs in moving these goals forward.

- **Mobilizing around global solidarity and the Right to Health**

Members of the NCDI Poverty Network are united in our belief that all communities impacted by NCDIs have the right to quality health care, regardless of where you live or your socioeconomic status. Furthermore, we believe that we should work together in global solidarity to advocate for those who are the most marginalized and most vulnerable. Families and communities impacted by NCDIs among the poorest billion have often been left out of global NCDI conversations.

Through this fellowship, we will work with Fellows to amplify the many voices of NCDI Poverty and to more effectively respond to the needs and priorities of those most impacted.

You will often hear the Voices of NCDI Poverty team use the phrase “accompaniment” or talk about “accompanying” people living with NCDIs or other people and organizations who are engaged in shaping and implementing NCDI service delivery, policies, and advocacy campaigns. Accompaniment means to walk alongside each other in our work and advocacy. We look forward to following your leadership as Fellows and learning from the larger community involved with Voices of NCDI Poverty. We will, in turn, do our best to provide Fellows with significant support and mentorship throughout the duration of the fellowship.

## How will the fellowship be structured?

Three advocates will be selected for the 2021-2022 Voices of NCDI Poverty fellowship, with diverse representation across interests, regions, conditions, and gender. Each Fellow will work closely with the Voices of NCDI Poverty team to identify individual goals or a project, and the three Fellows will also work collaboratively on an integrated advocacy campaign.

Financial support will be provided to selected Fellows, and all expenses for travel, IT, or other costs related to the fellowship will be provided by the Voices of NCDI Poverty team. Please see below for more information.

Given the global nature of the NCDI Poverty Network, Fellows can be based in any location. Most collaborative work is expected to be virtual (especially given COVID-19), although we may pursue opportunities for in-person meetings or travel later on in the 2021-2022 fellowship schedule. We also expect that there will be speaking engagements or other opportunities for Voices Fellows to represent the NCDI Poverty Network in regional or global events and conferences throughout the fellowship.

The Voices of NCDI Poverty team will set schedules and ongoing mentorship according to the work plan and time commitment of each Fellow, which may be variable.

## What will Voices Fellows be responsible for as participating members of the Steering Committee of the NCDI Poverty Network?

The three fellows selected as part of the Voices of NCDI Poverty Fellowship will be named to the [Steering Committee of the NCDI Poverty Network](#) and will have a voting role in the governance of the Network. They will remain Steering Committee members and participate in quarterly Steering Committee meetings over the full duration of their fellowship.

Once selected, the Voices of NCDI Poverty team will help onboard incoming Fellows to the Steering Committee process and provide the support needed to be contributing members of the leadership structure for the Network. Voices Fellows will join leading experts from across National NCDI Poverty Commissions, Ministries of Health, and other key stakeholder organizations to oversee and advise on the structure, strategy, and activities of the NCDI Poverty Network. Steering Committee members will also be invited to lead or participate in working groups for key strategic initiatives and may also be invited to represent the Network in speaking engagements or presentations. Steering Committee meetings for the NCDI Poverty Network are held quarterly, in addition to an annual meeting.

Please see the [NCDI Poverty Network Charter](#) for more information.

## What kinds of activities will the Voices Fellows be focused on?

Goals and workplans for each fellow – and collaborative advocacy activities across fellows – will be co-developed in the initial planning phase of the fellowship (spring and summer 2021).

We look forward to developing campaign strategy and work plans that reflect the interests, skill sets, and creativity of those involved. That said, we foresee overarching project goals such as:

- Developing a more tailored and accessible set of messages around NCDI Poverty and “PEN-Plus” that resonates with PLWNCDIs and broad regional and disease-specific networks
- Using personal experiences and narrative to frame calls to action around policies and financing in effective ways, targeted to policy makers, funders, and other stakeholders
- Strengthening south-south collaboration between PLWNCDI communities across the NCDI Poverty Network and building strategic connections and solidarity between HIC and LMIC patient organizations
- Working with the NCDI Poverty Network Steering Committee to identify avenues for Voices Fellows to influence or support partnerships and fundraising efforts related to the PEN-Plus Partnership

## How will Voices Fellows be supported throughout the fellowship?

The structure of financial support to participate in the Fellowship will depend on the location and status of selected Fellows.

At this time, options include:

- Scholarship support, academic credit, or a paid internship for those enrolled in university (applicants must be 18 years of age or older)

- A part-time fellowship or individual contract for those who would prefer a <10 hour/week commitment or already have other employment or commitments
- A half-time or full-time fellowship position or contract (>10 hours/week), options would differ depending on the location of the Fellow and if there is a potential “hosting institution” within the Network that is available to employ the advocate in the country where they are residing

Please be honest about your current situation and which option(s) you would be most interested in or available to pursue. We will then work closely with finalists to determine if there is a fellowship arrangement that works for all involved. We cannot guarantee that all requests can be accommodated. Please reach out to the NCDI Poverty team (Lauren Brown, [lbrown@pih.org](mailto:lbrown@pih.org)) with questions at any time in the application process.

This is a paid fellowship opportunity, and all expenses for travel, IT, or other costs related to the fellowship will be provided by the Voices of NCDI Poverty team.

In addition to financial support, the Voices of NCDI Poverty team will be working with Fellows to establish regular check-ins and platforms for virtual collaboration, peer-to-peer learning, and training opportunities among Fellows and the Voices of NCDI Poverty team. We will also be working with Fellows to make connections with local mentors and National Commissions and, as relevant, to provide professional development opportunities.

## **What if I am or know a potential applicant who is not comfortable participating in English?**

At present, we do not have the in-house capacity within the Voices of NCDI Poverty team to support Voices Fellows participating in a non-English language.

We acknowledge the efforts of colleagues and collaborators who have worked with our team to support and accompany non-English speaking PLWNCDI advocates in sharing their experiences and advocacy messages through video narratives, and by participating in speaking opportunities, consultations, and other advocacy activities. We hope to continue those collaborations in coming years, especially as the NCDI Poverty Network grows. Please do not hesitate to reach out to our team, we would love to hear from organizations and advocates who are passionate about this work in any language.

For those that are interested in connecting with the Voices of NCDI Poverty team or to local National NCDI Poverty Commissions who represent your country or region, please reach out to Lauren Brown ([lbrown@pih.org](mailto:lbrown@pih.org)). We also encourage you to become a member of the NCDI Poverty Network, where we will be continuing to review opportunities for more accessibility across languages.

## **How does the Voices of NCDI Poverty Fellowship connect with Our Views, Our Voices at NCD Alliance or other initiatives focused on meaningful involvement of PLWNCDIs?**

The Voices of NCDI Poverty team has worked closely with NCD Alliance, NCD Child, and other groups who have been leading impressive efforts around meaningful involvement of PLWNCDIs. This fellowship is not meant to compete with or contradict other efforts, and we will be continually exploring where to most strategically collaborate with these initiatives and across the larger NCD community.

That said, the goals and activities of the Voices Fellowship will remain specifically focused around NCDIs

in settings of poverty. Please see the section above on Key Principles of the NCDI Poverty Network to determine whether this fellowship is a good fit for you.

If you are a PLWNCDI advocate who is interested in the Voices of NCDI Poverty program but are already working in a significant capacity with another NCD organization – please don't hesitate to consider signing up for NCDI Poverty Network instead! There will be a number of other ways to engage with the NCDI Poverty Network beyond the fellowship if bandwidth is a concern.

### **What if I am excited about this opportunity, but I am not selected as a Fellow?**

We will unfortunately only be able to select and support three Fellows in the first round of a structured Voices of NCDI Poverty fellowship program. That said, the fellowship is intended to be a starting point for much broader advocacy efforts! We will be encouraging applicants to stay in close touch with our team, as well as join us in campaigns and advocacy that the Fellows lead.

Please see [here](#) for more information about how to join the NCDI Poverty Network and to stay updated on relevant events and opportunities.