



SEED Volunteer Business Coach Program

The **Stanford Institute for Innovation in Developing Economies** (SEED) is a Stanford-wide institute that aims to stimulate the creation of economic opportunities through innovation, entrepreneurship, and the growth of businesses that change the lives of people who live in poverty around the world. SEED's integrated approach to spur private sector growth and economic prosperity leverages direct action on the ground with the resources and unique culture of innovation and entrepreneurship of Stanford University and Silicon Valley.

WHAT DOES SEED DO?

One of our signature initiatives is the **Transformation Program**, administered through SEED's regional innovation centers (the first of which was launched in West Africa in 2013). The Program aims to transform high-potential, small and medium-sized companies into industry leaders.

Unique aspects of the Transformation Program include:

- ▶ Curriculum designed and led by Stanford faculty, focusing on core barriers to innovation and scale.
- ▶ Experiential learning sessions covering product innovation, marketing, strategy, leadership, supply chain, ethics and governance, as well as other topics of high significance in the regional business context.
- ▶ Hands-on coaching by executives who bring significant experience in intra/entrepreneurship and who work with companies on enterprise transformation.
- ▶ Building and supporting regional networks and an entrepreneurial ecosystem.
- ▶ Catalyzing mindset shift and creative confidence building of participating companies.

WHAT IS THE VOLUNTEER BUSINESS COACH OPPORTUNITY?

SEED Volunteer Business Coaches spend up to one year in Africa where they immerse themselves into the local business ecosystem and work side by side with a select number of high-potential small and medium-sized companies in general management. Applying a hands-on approach, coaches will engage with client executives on business topics and challenges with the goal of transforming companies into industry leaders and job creators.



Jan Swanberg coached companies in a variety of sectors, including retail services, pharmaceuticals, manufacturing, and housing. Above: Swanberg with Benedicta Mawuena Osei, co-owner of GHS Housing, a developer of affordable housing in Ghana.

WHAT DO SEED'S VOLUNTEER BUSINESS COACHES DO?

A day in the life of a SEED Volunteer Business Coach might include:

- ▶ Immersing themselves with clients on-site.
- ▶ Developing and guiding the implementation of a company's Transformation Plan.
- ▶ Providing input and recommendations during SEED's monthly Portfolio Review process.
- ▶ Facilitating Transformation Program classroom sessions at SEED centers.

Coach impacts have included:

- ▶ Creating new businesses and new products and services that have helped put companies on the path to transformation.
- ▶ Assisting a healthcare company in pursuing a merger to expand operations and reach new markets.
- ▶ Helping a furniture company launch an online retail store to streamline order process and increase revenue.
- ▶ Assisting an energy company in securing low interest debt and equity financing for a large project and operational expansion.
- ▶ Guiding companies in recruiting board members.

HOW DOES SEED SELECT ITS PORTFOLIO COMPANIES?

SEED brings into its portfolio so-called “diamonds in the rough”—companies that are relatively small but have promise for significant scale and leadership that would have major social and economic impact—and aspires to transform them into “diamonds” that are attractive to investors.

In particular, SEED targets companies with the following business models:

- Companies creating affordable products and services that meet the needs of the poor; and/or
- Companies employing large numbers of lower-skilled workers; and/or
- Companies that include the end products of the poor in their value chains.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF BEING A VOLUNTEER BUSINESS COACH?

The SEED Volunteer Business Coach position is a unique opportunity for business professionals to join a vibrant and determined community of regional businesses set on challenging the status quo, solving the big and difficult problems, and making a difference in the lives of others.

After completing their volunteer assignments, many SEED coaches report that they set out to transform companies, and found themselves transformed through the experience.

WHAT ELSE DOES SEED PROVIDE TO ITS VOLUNTEER BUSINESS COACHES?

SEED typically provides the following (subject to change without notice):

- Round-trip airfare to and from Africa
- Housing for the duration of your assignment
- Per diem or stipend
- Settling in allowance
- In-country support by SEED program staff
- International health insurance
- Transportation and lodging to visit portfolio companies
- Training at Stanford University

WHAT ARE THE MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE VOLUNTEER BUSINESS COACH PROGRAM?

SEED’s Volunteer Business Coaches are individuals who have demonstrated a passion and drive for building and managing successful high growth companies. They have accomplished extraordinary things and are looking for the next big opportunity to make an impact in the world.

Minimum qualifications include:

- At least 10 years of professional business experience, including several years of hands-on management in senior level positions.
- Demonstrated success in managing companies or significant operational divisions that had aggressive goals.
- Experience related to business building in fast growth companies or entrepreneurial environments.
- Successful track record of conceiving and executing strategies to grow businesses rapidly or to create new products and services that underlie new businesses.
- Demonstrated track record for innovation.

WHAT IS THE APPLICATION PROCESS FOR THE VOLUNTEER BUSINESS COACH PROGRAM?

Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis—you are encouraged to apply as soon as you decide that you are interested. The online application generally takes 30-90 minutes to complete. Competitive candidates undergo telephone interviews, followed by an in-person interview and reference checks. All coaches will be required to participate in a training program at Stanford University as well as a cultural orientation program in the region where they’re serving.

ARE THERE OTHER OPPORTUNITIES TO VOLUNTEER WITH SEED?

In addition to the Volunteer Business Coach program, SEED also offers a Volunteer Business Advisor program that involves remote advising on specialized business and industry topics. Advisors support SEED’s coaches in identifying customized and creative business solutions for African entrepreneurs. Engagement options vary, depending on the needs associated with specific projects.

MORE INFORMATION

<http://seed.stanford.edu/volunteer>

View profiles of SEED Volunteer Business Coaches

<http://seed.stanford.edu/volunteer/meet-seed-business-coaches>