

PROSPECTUS

2026

DGMT INNOVATION FELLOWSHIP

A few questions

Click on the question to jump to the answer!

- What is the DGMT Innovation Fellowship?
- What are the aims of the Fellowship?
- How is the Fellowship structured?
- What is the Fellowship timeline?
- How would the Fellowship benefit me?
- What do I need in order to qualify?
- What does the Fellowship cost?
- How much time should I set aside for the Fellowship?
- How does the Fellowship benefit organisations?
- What are talking partners for organisational leaders?
- Which other organisations have already undertaken the Fellowship?
- What is the Fellowship Alumni Network?
- How can I find out more?

Got a different question?

Email us at
fellowship@dgmt.co.za

A portrait of a young Black woman with red braids, wearing a blue patterned headwrap and a black top. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is blurred, showing green foliage and a white railing.

“

The Fellowship helped in
linking with others
who work in the sector
and, as such,
increased my networks.

Lebogang Mahlalela
The Small Enterprise Foundation

Our Theory of Change

Improved social and economic outcomes for the most **vulnerable** in **South African society**,
rooted in **values of care, inclusivity and social justice**

Enhanced **leadership** and **innovation** in participating organisations contributes substantially to **improved access** and **rights** of the most **vulnerable** in **South Africa**

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

Graduates of the DGMT Fellowship move into **leadership roles** in their organisation, the Alumni network and civil society, contributing to **fresh approaches to leadership and development**, and bringing new socially and politically responsive **voices** to the **issues** in **civil society**.

Organisations that have participated in the Fellowship see the **benefit of innovation** and **developing** new **leadership**, and have become more **effective** and **relevant** in their **approaches**, adopting **new ideas** and practices, and/or creating further leadership **opportunities**

SHORT AND INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

Fifty young people over three years and from approx. **thirty** orgs **graduate** from the Fellowship programme and are able to demonstrate some of the **skills, mindsets** and **resilience** to **lead** and **innovate** in their organisations

Organisational leaders see the **benefit of developing young leaders** within their organisations and create a **supportive environment** for the uptake of new skills, ideas and behaviours

Alumni continue to **learn, build** their **careers**, take on leadership responsibilities and extend their influence **beyond the Fellowship**, growing as innovative **leaders**

A dynamic social media presence attracts **interaction, uptake** and **attention** around new/useful leadership and innovation practices and approaches

OUTPUTS

Select and **recruit** 18 **young people** each year (from 11 NGOs) recommended by organisational leaders for their leadership potential.

Design, deliver and **monitor** a 12-month applied learning and development **programme**, comprising **immersions, field assignments** and **coaching** – that both **challenges** and **nurtures**

Build and **maintain** a **relationship** with organisational **leaders**, and offer organisational (leadership) **mentoring**, during and after the 12-month programme

Facilitate the **development** of an active and connected **Alumni-led community**, that is **learning** together and leading on **new practices** in their organisations and civil society

Communicate the work of the Fellowship, Alumni and Alumni organisations to demonstrate **impact** and new/useful leadership and innovation practices and approaches

What is the DGMT Innovation Fellowship?

The DGMT Innovation Fellowship **develops young leaders** across South Africa who are working in the civil society sector. It caters to those aged 25 to 40.

Over **one year**, and through a series of **immersive workshops, coaching** and **assignments**, **two Fellows** from each **participating organisation** are supported in becoming **innovative change agents** within their organisations and the wider sector.

The Innovation Fellowship is **free of charge** for participating Fellows, and all costs associated with the Fellowship are covered by DGMT.

The programme encourages **connections** and **collegial bonds** between the Fellows, and supports them as they graduate into our Fellowship Alumni network.



What are the aims of the Fellowship?

At DGMT Innovation Fellowship, we believe in a world where civil society can assert itself as an **equal partner** alongside business and government. The DGMT Innovation Fellowship works to **enhance leadership** and **innovation** within the **civil society** sector. Ultimately, this enhanced leadership and innovation will help develop South Africa's **future** - especially for the most vulnerable of our nation.

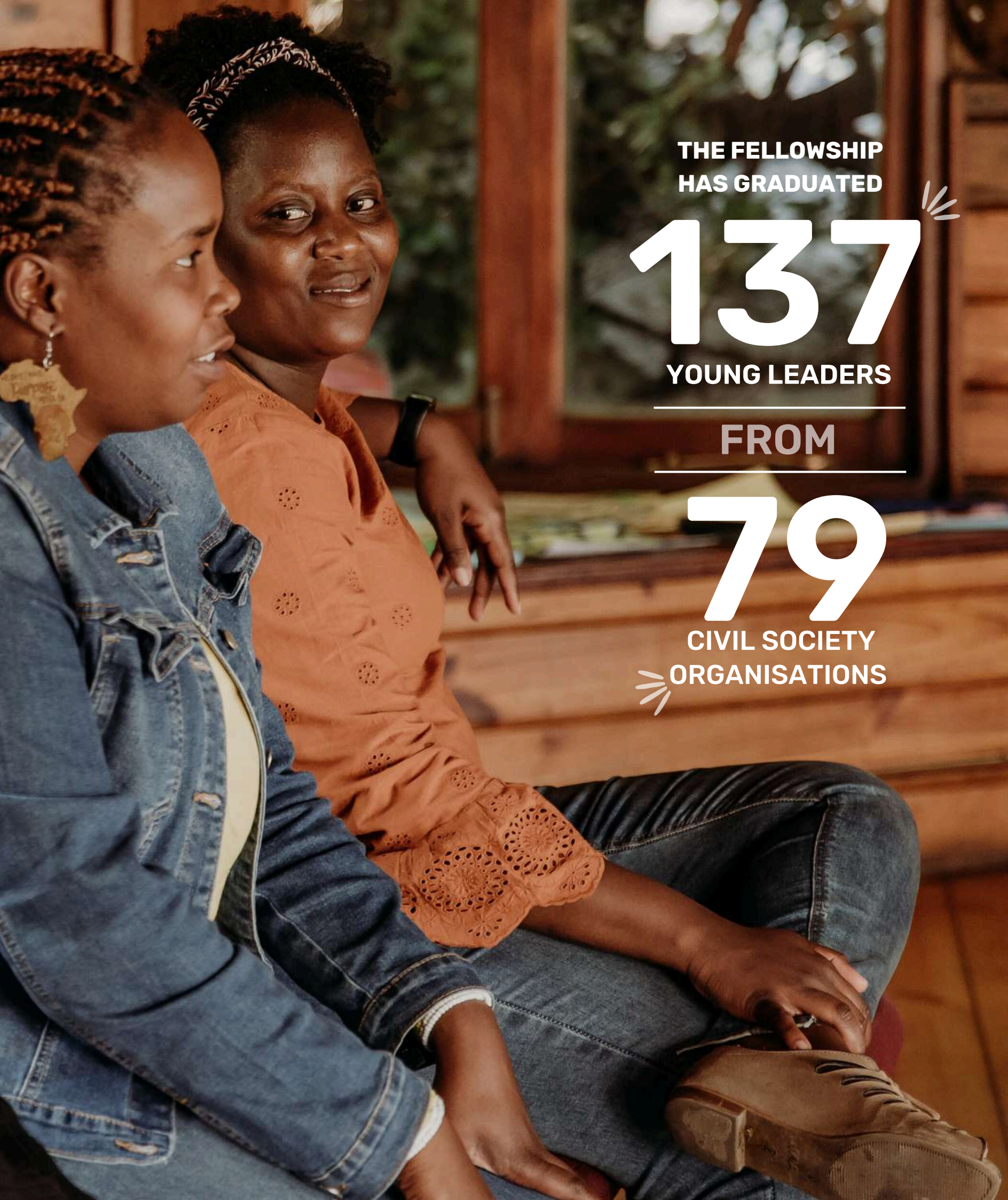
In terms of the **organisations** whose two team members join the Fellowship, the Fellowship is tailored so that they:

- **benefit** from **innovation** and developing new **leadership**
- become more **effective** and **relevant** in their approaches, adopting new **ideas** and **practices** and,
- create further leadership **opportunities**.

In terms of **Fellows**, the Fellowship aims to enable them to:

- move into **leadership roles** in their organisation, the Alumni network and civil society
- contribute to **fresh approaches** to **leadership** and **development** and,
- bring **new** socially and politically responsive **voices** to the issues in **civil society**.



A photograph of two young women sitting and talking. The woman on the left is wearing a denim jacket and has her hair in braids. The woman on the right is wearing an orange patterned top and jeans. They are both looking towards the right side of the frame.

THE FELLOWSHIP
HAS GRADUATED

137

YOUNG LEADERS

FROM

79

CIVIL SOCIETY
ORGANISATIONS

2026 focus

For the next Innovation Fellowship, we particularly welcome applications from provinces and sectors previously under-represented in the Fellowship. We have expanded the age range, welcoming applications from those aged **25 to 40 years of age**.

We are seeking to increase applications from **qualifying civil society organisations** based in the following **provinces**:

- Mpumalanga
- Limpopo
- North West
- Free State
- Northern Cape and
- KwaZulu-Natal

And that work in **sectors** previously under-represented in the Fellowship, which includes (but is not limited to) organisations working in:

- advocacy
- employment
- SGBV
- LGBTQ+
- resource access
- race
- environment and,
- human rights.

To work towards a more
inclusive, innovative world,
we need
strong leaders
in the
**civil society
sector.**



How is the Fellowship structured?

The Fellowship runs over the course of **one year**, during which DGMT hosts **three immersive workshops** (two residential workshops that take place in a conference venue and one online workshop). In between these immersive workshops, Fellows return to their workplaces to **experiment** and **share** what they have learnt. Fellows are **coached** by a team of experienced coaches over the course of the year.

IMMERSIVE WORKSHOPS

These consist of lectures, peer groups, discussions, group work, creative sessions and expert guest speakers. The residential immersions allow for plenty of time for Fellows to connect informally. These intensive, hands-on sessions allow participants to step away from their day-to-day, connect with each other and deeply engage with the subject matter. Fellows collaborate, build skills, foster relationships and apply concepts in real-time, creating a transformative learning environment.

FIELDWORK & MENTORSHIP

This occurs during the time between immersive workshops in which Fellows return to their workplaces and put their learnings into action. Fellows undertake assignments and written reflection pieces. In addition, during fieldwork, organisational leaders engage with Fellows and support them in their assignments. Fellows can also access our Peer Mentorship Programme. Mentors are Fellowship Alumni, who have been trained to walk the Fellowship journey with selected Fellows. The programme provides support to Fellows whilst building connections and social capital between the current cohort and Alumni network members.

COACHING



5

One-on-one individual coaching sessions



3

Coaching sessions as a pair of Fellows



3

*Organisational mentoring sessions**

**These are sessions that include the whole organisation (or key people) together with the Fellow pair and the DGMT coach.*

What is the Fellowship Timeline?

Five months prior to the Fellowship starting, DGMT receives applications from potential Fellows and interviews shortlisted candidates. Selected Fellows are then enrolled onto the Fellowship, starting with Immersion One, as outlined below.

MODULE 1

INVESTIGATOR'S MINDSET

IMMERSION 1

MONTH 1

A five-day, residential workshop series that introduces Fellows to one another, to the faculty team and to concepts relating to self-development and innovation within the context of their organisation and professional life. Fellows formulate a question that they would like to address within their organisation and they use this as the basis for an ongoing case study throughout the Fellowship. The cost of travel, accommodation and food is covered for the Fellows.

 **Five days at a conference venue**

FIELDWORK + COACHING

MONTH 1 - 4

Assignments give Fellows the opportunity to apply the learning from the previous workshop and lay the groundwork for the next workshop.

 **Around 5-20 hours per month***

MODULE 2

LEADER'S MINDSET

IMMERSION 2

MONTH 4

An online, 4 day (32-hour) workshop spread over two weeks. This workshop seeks to develop Fellows' leadership skills within their organisation. Fellows reframe their question set out in Immersive Workshop One as a goal for their organisation. They start developing a strategy for how to reach this goal.

 **32 hours of online workshop over two weeks**

FIELDWORK + COACHING

MONTH 4 - 9

Assignments give Fellows the opportunity to apply the learning from the previous workshop and lay the groundwork for the next workshop.

 **Around 8 hours per month***

see next
page

Throughout the year, leaders of participating organisations can also access a talking partner. To find out more, see [page 16](#) of this Prospectus. For more information on the time required to undertake the Fellowship, see [page 14](#) of this Prospectus.

**Ideally, the Fieldwork + Coaching time is woven into organisational time as the assignments are linked to the organisational question.*

Fellowship Timeline continued

MODULE 3

INNOVATOR'S MINDSET



IMMERSION 3

MONTH 9

A four-day, residential workshop. This workshop develops Fellows' skills and thinking in systems thinking while building on the themes of innovation and leadership from the previous immersive workshop. Fellows plan the details of how they will roll out the strategy to address the goal within their organisation, as developed through their Innovation Question. The cost of travel, accommodation and food is covered for the Fellows.

Four days at a conference venue



FIELDWORK + COACHING

MONTH 9 - 11

Assignments give Fellows the opportunity to apply the learning from the previous workshop.

Around 8 hours per month*



CLOSING SESSION

MONTH 12

The Fellows graduate into the Fellowship Alumni, celebrating their success! Fellows meet and network with other Alumni members.

1-day Graduation Ceremony



ALUMNI NETWORK

On graduation, Fellows enter the Alumni Network, in which various events and opportunities take place, ensuring that the learnings from the Fellowship are shared and continue to be practised in the workplace.

Throughout the year, leaders of participating organisations can also access a talking partner. To find out more, see [page 16](#) of this Prospectus. For more information on the time required to undertake the Fellowship, see [page 14](#) of this Prospectus.

**Ideally, the Fieldwork + Coaching time is woven into organisational time as the assignments are linked to the organisational question.*

A portrait of Carla Watson, a woman with long dark hair and glasses, smiling. She is wearing a dark blue patterned shirt with colorful floral designs. A small rainbow flag pin is visible on her left lapel. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with greenery.

“

This Fellowship reminded me how important it is to be **self-aware** and **embrace** one's **autonomy** in their **leadership**.

Carla Watson
Jakes Gerwel Fellowship

How would the Fellowship benefit me?

The Fellowship aims to develop you as a **person**, your **career**, the **organisation** at which you work, and the **wider civil society sector** around you!

LEADERSHIP

The Fellowship develops your skills as a leader. Whatever your position is within an organisation, you can contribute to the flourishing of your organisation and the wider sector itself as a strategic champion. Through self-development, we explore ways in which you can improve your ability to address critical issues, suggest changes and lead within your sphere of influence at work.

INNOVATION

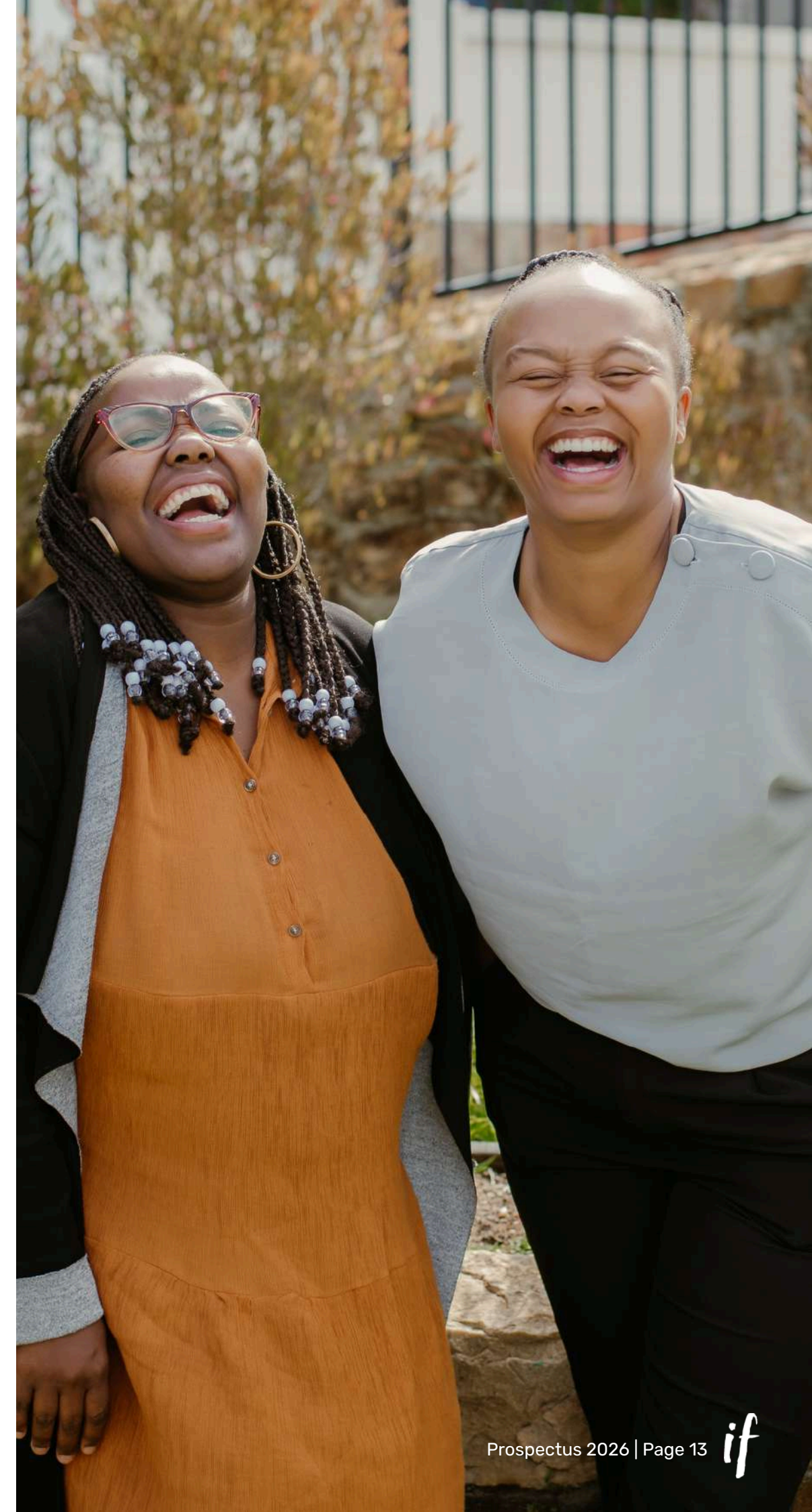
The Fellowship develops your abilities to innovate new working ideas that can improve the organisation you work in. This includes how to communicate and implement innovative ideas that are based on a strategy of change and influence the people you work with.

THE CHALLENGE

Over the course of the Fellowship, you are invited to address a specific question or challenge that is central to your work and your organisation. You will be supported to develop a plan to address this question within your workspace, allowing for your growth and your organisation's growth.

[Read an alumni's story here](#)

[Watch an alumni's story here](#)





What do I need in order to qualify?

To qualify for the Fellowship, you must:

- be **employed** in a **registered** non-governmental organisation or not-for-profit organisation,
- be between the ages of **25** and **40** and
- have a **desire** to **expand** your **leadership** and **innovation skills**!

The first step in the process is to be nominated (or to nominate yourself) for the Fellowship. Nominations that meet the minimum requirements (registered as an NPO in South Africa and with 2 potential candidates between the ages of 25 and 40 years) will be sent the necessary application forms once the recruitment process begins. Shortlisted candidates will be invited for an interview with DGMT. Nominations can be submitted all year round. Each year, we close applications shortly before the interview process. Applications submitted after this process will be considered for the following year's cohort.

[Apply for the Fellowship here!](#)

What does the Fellowship cost?

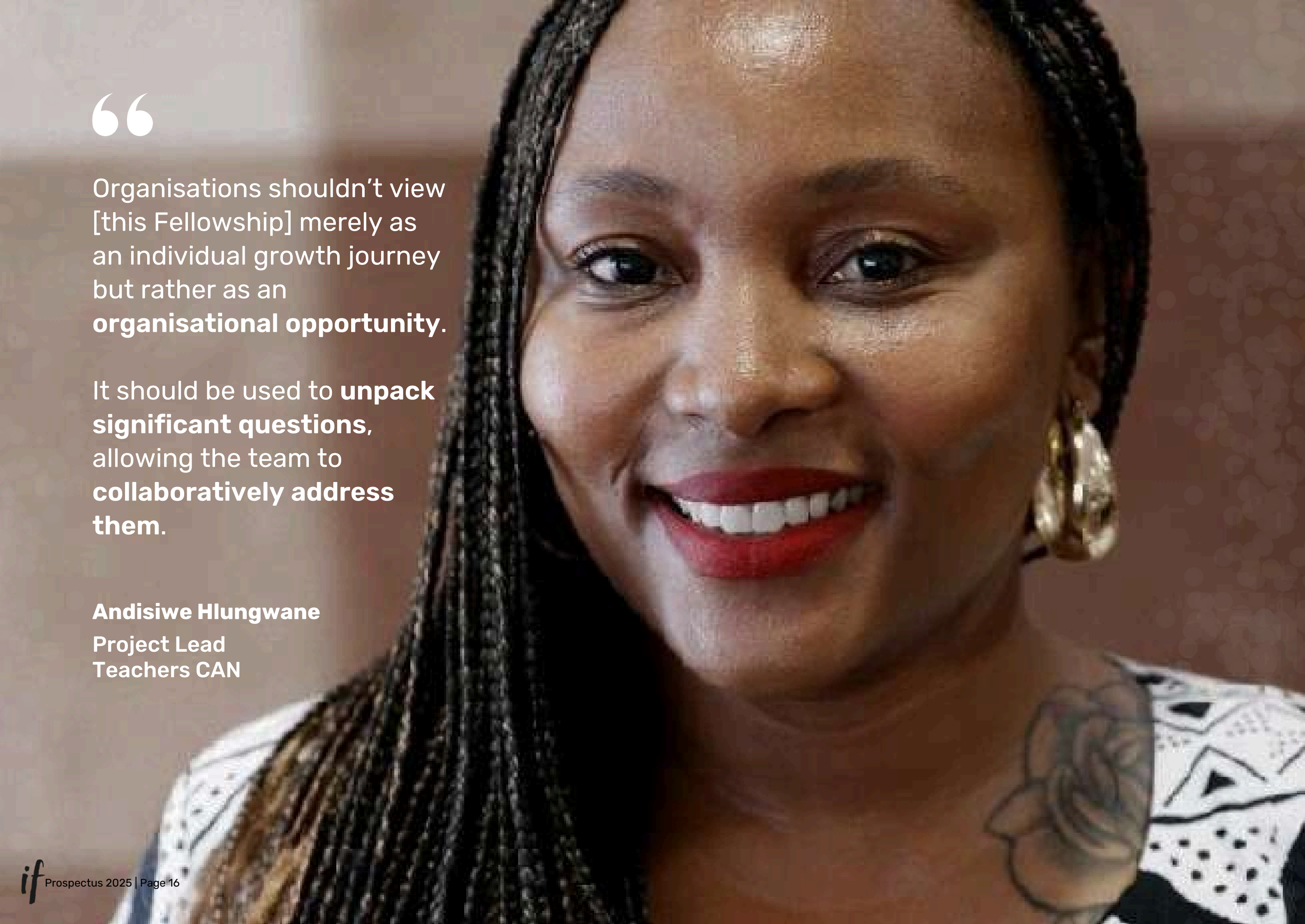
DGMT covers all **Fellowship-related expenses** during the year. This includes all costs associated with attending in-person immersive workshops including **travel, accommodation** and **meals**. In addition, Fellows who require it are provided with support for their **data** costs during the online immersive workshop. The cost of individual and organisational coaching is also covered by the Fellowship.

How much time should I set aside for the Fellowship?

The three immersive workshops will require approximately **14 days** of the Fellow's time over the year (three 4-day workshops plus travel time). In addition, Fellows are expected to undertake **fieldwork assignments** and to engage in one-on-one and paired coaching throughout the year. We estimate that these additional activities will require **5-20 hours per month** over the year. Some fellows have been able to weave this work into their existing workload. This depends on the kind of organisational question you choose for your case study, and how it links to your role and work in the organisation. It is important to discuss this with your director (and relevant manager) during the application process. The organisation is also expected to participate in 3x 2-hour sessions facilitated by the Fellows and supported by their coach.

For more information, email us at fellowship@dgmt.co.za.



A close-up portrait of Andisiwe Hlungwane, a Black woman with long, thin braids, smiling warmly. She is wearing large, ornate gold earrings and a patterned top. The background is a soft, out-of-focus brown.

“

Organisations shouldn't view [this Fellowship] merely as an individual growth journey but rather as an **organisational opportunity**.

It should be used to **unpack significant questions**, allowing the team to **collaboratively address them**.

Andisiwe Hlungwane
Project Lead
Teachers CAN

How does the Fellowship benefit organisations?

The DGMT Innovation Fellowship not only benefits Fellows: it is a **strategic organisational intervention**.

Organisations and their Fellows enter the DGMT Innovation Fellowship with a strategic **challenge**: one that sits at the heart of their mission and limits impact, sustainability, or growth. (It is this challenge that should guide the nomination and application process.)

Over the course of the year, the Fellowship then **supports organisations** to work on this challenge, **strengthening leadership, developing learning**, and **shifting systems** over time. As such, the Fellowship is a deliberate **investment** in **organisational capability** and **adaptive leadership**.

Through this process, organisations gain a deeper insight into a **priority challenge**, greater familiarity with **experimentation** and **uncertainty** and **new perspectives** through **peer learning** across sectors. Fellows become **emerging leaders** with **stronger learning** and **adaptive leadership capabilities**.





What are talking partners for organisational leaders?

One of the objectives of the Fellowship is that the growth and development of the Fellows and the work that they do on the innovation challenge, **benefits** the **organisation** that is **sending them**. The Fellowship is a significant **investment** of time and resources – and its focus on leadership development and innovation should translate into **deeper thinking** and **practices** for the **organisation** as a **whole**.

While the Fellows are supported by a **coach**, to date there has been limited support to the organisational leader for their own thinking about organisational innovation and agility; and growing leadership and management capacity from within. The Innovation Fellowship will offer **3 sessions over 12 months** with an **organisational development consultant**. This will be in addition to the briefing and debriefing sessions at the beginning and end of the Fellowship that the organisational leaders participate in. With this in mind, the Fellowship is now offering 3 sessions to organisational leaders over 12-months. The talking partner sessions provide an opportunity for the organisational leader to:

- To **explore organisational issues** linked to the purpose of the Fellowship i.e. focused on organisational innovation and agility, and development of leadership in the organisation, and how to leverage the Fellowship to strengthen the organisation's work and approach in these areas
- To **discuss** the **innovation** question (and process) and ways in which to support or challenge the Fellows to develop this further and,
- To **help prepare** for or debrief **after** the **organisational mentoring sessions** so that these are effective sessions for both Fellows and the organisation.

Each of these meetings will be **60 minutes**, and should ideally be scheduled between **modules 1 and 3**.



“

The Innovation Fellowship creates an **intentional space for growth.**

Equality Collective as an organisation deeply appreciated the **new learning space** and the culture of reflection of the Fellowship.

Having a big question for the Fellows to explore can be very powerful. **I can see how committed the Fellows are now to growing as leaders.**

Tess Peacock

**Innovation Fellowship Alumni +
Founder and CEO of Equality Collective**

Which other organisations have already undertaken the Fellowship?

Since 2018, the Fellowship has worked with Fellows from 79 different organisations. These organisations have included:





Fellowship Alumni Network

On completion of the 12-month Fellowship, Fellows automatically graduate into the Alumni Network. Many of these Fellows remain **connected** through the **collegial bonds** and **friendships** that the Fellowship encourages.

The **DGMT Fellowship Alumni Network** works to create a **space** and **platform** for Alumni to continue to **grow** themselves, their **leadership** and their **practice**; to be able to **communicate** their **work** to a **broader audience**; and to harness their efforts in the interests of **broader agendas**.

The Alumni Network is led by the **Fellowship Alumni Committee**. This committee acts as a bridge between Alumni and the broader Fellowship, ensuring Alumni voices and experiences shape the network. Through peer leadership, they help build **social capital** and **sustain relationships** beyond the formal Fellowship year. At its core, the committee exists to help Alumni **grow together** as **value-driven leaders**.

THE ALUMNI NETWORK INCLUDES



PROVINCIAL MEET-UPS

In-person provincial meet-ups to renew connection and continue growing your leadership skills.



MASTERCLASS SERIES

Learning sessions with Through Leaders and experts in the civil society sector on key topics



CURIOUS CONVERSATIONS

A podcast series profiling Alumni and exploring their journeys in leadership



WE CAN CHANGE THE WORLD

Our aim is to spark *innovation*
and nurture young leaders
in South African civil society.

Contact us

E-mail | fellowship@dgmt.co.za
Website | www.innovationfellowship.dgmt.co.za

