Frequently Asked Questions

What is Seed?
The Stanford Institute for Innovation in Developing Economies, known as Stanford Seed, is a Stanford Graduate School of Business initiative helping to lead regions to greater prosperity through the Seed Transformation Program (or STP), a yearlong, on-the-ground leadership program for established business leaders in emerging markets focused on scaling businesses and creating jobs. STP first launched in West Africa in 2013 and subsequently expanded to East Africa in 2016, and India and Southern Africa in 2017.

Stanford Seed also includes Seed Student Programs, a combination of educational opportunities and summer internships at STP companies, through which Seed introduces Stanford students to the challenges and opportunities of doing business in developing economies.

Tell me more about STP.
STP is a yearlong, on-the-ground leadership program for established business leaders in developing economies focused on scaling businesses and creating jobs. The ultimate goal: to create and activate a detailed action plan to help participants scale their businesses and generate jobs.

STP is comprehensive, innovative, and collaborative:

- **Immersive class sessions** are taught locally by Stanford University and Stanford GSB faculty.
  - Participants attend four intensive, week-long sessions over the course of nine months.
  - Topics include leadership, strategy, business ethics, accounting, marketing, and value chain innovations.

- **In-company workshops** are led by trained local Seed facilitators to share knowledge and provide training with the entrepreneur's leadership team.

- **Ongoing leadership labs**, or small peer groups with support from Seed facilitators, provide networking, resources, and ideas to help participants implement their transformation plan.
Following completion of STP, participants may apply to receive high-touch coaching and are given access to Seed interns and no-cost consultants.

What makes the Seed Transformation Program unique?
Start with world-renowned Stanford faculty, add in Silicon Valley innovation and a cohort of like-minded, inspired business leaders and you have all the ingredients for transformation.

- **High-performance leaders.** The company you keep makes an enormous difference. Learning with other like-minded, highly motivated peers — established business leaders, rather than early stage entrepreneurs — creates an invaluable network that enriches the experience, enhances outcomes, and supports participants.
- **Hands-on learning.** Unlike a traditional classroom, STP is about learning by doing. Stanford faculty use hands-on teaching methodologies, brainstorming, and peer collaboration to enhance learning.
- **High-touch experience.** STP is about more than acquiring business skills in a classroom. It’s about making a long-term impact through business and job growth. So our faculty, facilitators, peers, coaches, consultants, and students walk with participants throughout the journey.

Who should apply to the Seed Transformation Program?
STP is a very selective program for high potential leaders from established businesses who are dedicated to growing their businesses and generating new jobs. More specifically, we encourage the following people to apply:

- Founders and senior leaders of for-profit companies who want to grow and scale their companies, thereby creating jobs, products, or services that benefit those living in their community.
- Senior leaders of companies, across all industries, that have an annual revenue between US $150,000 and US $15 million and that are headquartered, legally registered, and currently operating within the region.
- Seed is particularly interested in recruiting founders of for-profit social enterprises and women business owners.

What is the impact/tangible benefit from the Seed Transformation Program?
Of the 441 entrepreneurs and 1,000+ senior leaders trained in the Seed Transformation Program:
- 99% remain in business
- 63% create new jobs
- 62% increase revenue
- 86% grow their customers
45% expand into new geographies
46% open a new physical location
60% introduce new products/services
55% expand their senior management team
86% expand their vision of what their companies can achieve
58% do business with each other (We call this the Seed Network Effect.)

23,400 intern volunteer hours
48,480 coach volunteer hours
25 Stanford professors travel abroad to teach and train local leaders

In addition, Seed also contributes to poverty alleviation through research. In partnership with the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research (SIEPR), Seed created the Stanford Center on Global Poverty and Development, reaching 47 countries.

**Will Seed really have an impact if you are working with a small number of leaders?**
Yes, we believe it will — one leader and company at a time. We know from experience that a single company’s growth can have a significant impact on a region. For example, how many jobs, both direct and indirect, has Facebook spawned? So, in the absence of infinite resources, we are dedicating our resources to a select number of companies and leaders in a high-touch fashion because we think they can have a great impact.

**Do you have investors who will invest in the participants’ companies after the program?**
As a university, Stanford isn’t in the business of investing in companies. However, Stanford Seed knows that access to capital is important, so STP participants will learn how to access capital, even though we don’t actually provide funding. Once you have completed the STP, you will be better poised to access capital and infinitely more attractive to VCs. Participants from the cohorts in East Africa, Southern Africa, West Africa, and India have generated $25+ million in capital. You may also learn through STP that external capital is not the best growth strategy for your business.

**Why does participation cost $5,000?**
While this may be a significant investment for your company, it is a fraction of the cost of other Stanford Executive Education programs with similar content and the same faculty. These year-long programs typically cost $75,000. STP is heavily subsidized by philanthropic contributions to make it more affordable.
What are the program dates?
- **East Africa, Southern Africa, and West Africa:** 27 Jan 2019 – 01 Dec 2019
- **India:** 02 Dec 2018 – 01 Nov 2019

When is the application deadline?
The application for the Seed Transformation Program will open in March 2019. For information about upcoming opportunities in East Africa, Southern Africa, West Africa, and India, visit [seed.stanford.edu](http://seed.stanford.edu).

Participant Stories
- **Ciiru Waweru** is the founder and owner of FunKidz, a first-of-its-kind children’s brand out of Africa. FunKidz designs and manufactures innovative products for children from Kenya with a global reach. Waweru is an interior architect by training and has a passion for design. When she discovered that she could manufacture as well, FunKidz was born. FunKidz faces operational challenges, and being able to visualize growth — figuring out the best way to tap into other markets, how to export on a global scale, and how to keep momentum going — is the heartbeat of the business. Taking FunKidz to the next level is a priority for Waweru, and she is participating in the Seed Transformation Program to ensure that FunKidz can manage growth responsibly with the goal of exporting on a global scale.
- **Wandia Gichuru** is the founder and CEO of Vivo Activewear. Vivo — which means “alive” in Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese — provides the largest range of locally designed and manufactured stylish, affordable, and comfortable women’s clothing and activewear in Kenya. Gichuru started her business with a focus on modern African women and a desire to help her clients look and feel their best. The company has 11 stores across Kenya and a vibrant, interactive online shop. Gichuru is participating in this year’s Seed Transformation Program with the goal of growing her business in order to provide clothing for every type of personality and body type.
- **Dinesh Tembhekar** is the founder and managing director of Lean Energy Solutions, an alternative energy manufacturer and consultancy firm that discovered a new use for agricultural waste by repurposing it into “Lean Briqs,” a cleaner and more environmentally friendly alternative to high-carbon-emitting energy sources such as gas and diesel. Lean Energy is currently growing at a rate of 30% to 40% every year, but Tembhekar believes the company can grow at a rate of 200% annually. Tembhekar is participating in the Seed Transformation Program because he believes the guidance and networking
opportunities the program offers will prepare Lean Energy Solutions for the future.

**Stanford GSB Overview**

**Who We Are**
Stanford GSB is a place where anything and everything is possible. It’s where the boundaries of knowledge are pushed beyond what’s imaginable. Where diverse ideas and perspectives aren’t just accepted, they’re encouraged and embraced. And in this unique environment of innovation and collaboration, principled leaders emerge. Faculty, students, staff, and alumni develop the courage to take risks, the passion to lead, and the motivation to make a positive impact — on themselves and the world.

**What Makes Us Different**
Since 1925, Stanford GSB has been home to bold thinking, rigorous teaching, and breakthrough research. Stanford University and Silicon Valley are integral to how we think and who we are — entrepreneurial, open-minded, and eager to tackle problems — in business and beyond. Whether it’s through the two-year MBA program, the one-year MSx program for experienced leaders, the PhD program, or a week of Executive Education, Stanford GSB offers immersive and experiential academics combined with personal and leadership development with the power to transform both careers and lives.

- **Outstanding Students and Faculty:** The Stanford MBA program, with a 6% admission rate, attracts high-potential individuals from across the globe. The faculty includes Nobel laureates and cutting-edge thinkers in disciplines such as economics, organizational behavior, and operations, as well as areas such as big data, social sciences, and engineering. The school convenes a full panoply of CEO speakers and global leaders who add to the dynamic learning community.

- **Cross-School Collaboration:** An integral part of Stanford University, Stanford GSB fosters collaboration across the university’s seven schools — business, Earth sciences, education, engineering, law, medicine, and humanities and sciences — which encourages diverse and dynamic perspectives and allows ideas to flourish. Stanford GSB leverages this collective community to create joint programs, courses, and initiatives for students across a broad range of interests. One in five MBA students pursues a joint or dual degree. Group projects help students hone their team skills.

- **Strategically Small:** The entering class size, typically half that of other leading business schools, creates distinct advantages. It allows for a high-touch and immersive experience, and offers small-group leadership exercises and
coaching. Students develop deep relationships with their classmates that stay with them into their careers and lives.

- **Alumni Network:** The intimate size of programs means relationships are strong and alumni can rely on support from each other that endures for a lifetime. The strong culture fosters a commitment to contributing expertise and mentoring to the Stanford GSB community beyond graduation. Our high-touch, multidiscipline approach offers lifelong opportunities for leaders to learn, grow, and share.

- **Innovation in Our DNA:** Stanford University began with the pioneering spirit of Leland and Jane Stanford, who established the institution for the growing Western United States. Stanford grew into a university with a reputation for breakthrough research as a catalyst for change. Stanford GSB now shares a special relationship with Silicon Valley as a place where people, potential, and ideas come together to achieve the unimaginable.

- **Global Orientation:** Global problems are management problems. Through global study and social innovation trips, programs, and internships, students view issues through an international lens in and out of class. Stanford GSB’s online program LEAD and global certificate programs such as the Seed Transformation Program enable people around the world to collaborate, innovate, and apply new skills to their organizations.

- **Positive Impact:** Stanford GSB is an accelerator for creating changes that solve everyday problems as well as intractable global, social, and environmental challenges. Through a rigorous understanding of the issues, students pursue ideas, collaborations, and approaches that have not yet been discovered. Our alumni are the stewards of the school’s ongoing commitment to making a positive impact, and take actions beyond the boundaries of traditional business.

- **Diversity and Inclusion:** Stanford GSB is committed to fostering diverse perspectives and bringing together people to learn from one another. Through offerings such as the LGBTQ Executive Education leadership program and Interpersonal Dynamics (“Touchy-Feely”) curricula, the school cultivates an atmosphere of collaboration, with rich social conversations that lead to transformation of the whole self.