

# Campus Toolkit

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## About Acumen Fund

Acumen Fund is a non-profit global venture fund that uses entrepreneurial approaches to solve the problems of global poverty. Acumen seeks to prove that small amounts of philanthropic capital, combined with large doses of business acumen, can build thriving enterprises that serve vast numbers of the poor. Acumen was founded on April 1, 2001, and our investments focus on delivering affordable, critical goods and services – like health, water, housing and energy – through innovative, market-oriented approaches. The key is patient capital. Acumen uses philanthropic capital to make disciplined investments – loans or equity, not grants – that yield both financial and social returns. Any financial returns we receive are recycled into new investments.

### Acumen Fund's Philosophy

**Charity alone isn't the answer...** Poor people seek dignity, not dependence. Traditional charity often meets immediate needs but too often fails to enable people to solve their own problems over the long term. Market-based approaches have the potential to grow when charitable dollars run out, and they must be a part of the solution to the big problem of poverty.

**Marketplace alone isn't the answer...** Very low-income people are too often invisible to businesses and society. Businesses see no significant market opportunity and governments view low-income areas as having insufficient tax revenues to pay for basic services like clean water, healthcare, housing and energy. Building new models that provide these critical services at affordable price – in the face of high costs, poor distribution systems, dispersed customers, limited financing options and, at times, corruption – requires imaginative business solutions and partnerships supported by investors willing to take on a risk/return profile that is unacceptable to traditional financiers.

**Changing the Development Paradigm...** Acumen Fund believes that pioneering entrepreneurs will ultimately find the solutions to poverty. The entrepreneurs we support are focused on offering critical services – water, health, housing, and energy – at affordable prices to people earning less than four dollars a day.

## Acumen Fund Campus Engagement

We believe that sharing what we learn with others will extend our impact. We see students as a key group that can work with Acumen Fund to change how poverty is addressed now and in the future.

Creating a new model for addressing poverty will require new curriculum, new campus communities, new donors, new talent, new investors and new entrepreneurs. We want to work with students to bring about change by sharing knowledge and supporting the cause of social enterprise directly. In doing so, we aim to build leaders in the sector and change how young people think about poverty alleviation.

### We're talking to you

If you're convinced that we live in one world, and that ignoring the needs of two thirds of our people doesn't make sense, then we're talking to you. If you think that your talents and passion could be used to transform the world, we're talking to you. If you think that being a well-intentioned "do-gooder" won't cut it when addressing the world's most intractable challenges, that development work needs to be smarter, we're talking to you.

Students today are looking for new approaches to tackle poverty. Many are already coming to Acumen Fund for answers, and we want to share knowledge and resources to help you develop new skills and new perspectives on poverty. Whether you pursue a career as a teacher, financial analyst, social activist, engineer, doctor, writer, lawyer or artist, we believe that you have a part to play in changing how the world solves poverty.

### We can do this, together

We want students to be able to access the tools and resources you need to:

- + Embrace the idea of using business models to address social issues and change how the world tackles poverty
- + Develop the skills and knowledge needed to contribute to the social enterprise sector, and find opportunities to get more directly involved
- + Connect with other like-minded young people to build strong networks and share ideas
- + Become leaders that can share this powerful idea with others and inspire change

## *What this looks like*

### The first step...Connect with us!

- + Visit our [Get Involved](#) section on the website or sign up directly to connect with us:
  - + Visit our [Student page](#) and sign up for the [Student Listserv](#)
  - + Follow us on Twitter @acumenfund: [www.twitter.com/acumenfund](http://www.twitter.com/acumenfund)
  - + Become a fan of Acumen Fund on [Facebook](#)
  - + Join the Acumen Fund [LinkedIn](#) group

### Next you can...

#### a) Learn

Educate yourself about patient capital and Acumen Fund's unique approach to poverty. Become an expert on this field so you can spread awareness on your campus about a compelling new model. At Acumen Fund, we continue to learn everyday as new successes and failures surface in this field and as we wrestle with big questions about how market-based solutions can compliment traditional approaches to global development. Check out the resources we recommend in the next section to educate yourself on our approach and stay up-to-date as new learnings surface.

#### b) Teach

Help us spread this powerful new idea on your campus. You are in a position to share stories, images, and new ideas that can redefine the way your peers think about poverty alleviation, and we want you to become an active part of the Acumen Fund community increasing the recognition of patient capital. Instead of two isolated buckets—'for-profit' for making money and 'non-profit' for doing good—you can show students at your campus how to merge the two and choose their path with greater awareness of this field.

#### c) Give

Donations make our life-changing work possible. Give directly to Acumen Fund or give your time and energy by taking advantage of your unique position as a student to fundraise for Acumen Fund on your campus.

Giving to Acumen Fund is different than giving to a typical non-profit—while there is no financial return on funds contributed, we believe that investing in market-based approaches to fighting poverty generates the highest available social return on philanthropic dollars and demonstrates a powerful new way to tackle the challenges of poverty. Every dollar counts and because we build sustainable solutions that scale, every dollar goes further in making a lasting difference.

## Learn

To learn more about us, take a look at these Acumen Fund specific resources first:

### Acumen Fund Resources

- + [www.AcumenFund.org](http://www.AcumenFund.org): General information, updates, articles, videos, and blog posts on Acumen’s approach to poverty, our investments, and ways to get involved.
- + [\*The Blue Sweater: Bridging the Gap Between Rich and the Poor in an Interconnected World\*](#), by Acumen founder and CEO, Jacqueline Novogratz tells the story behind Acumen Fund
- + [Acumen Blog](#): Highlights news and offers commentary on patient capital, entrepreneurship, Base of the Pyramid (BoP) business strategies, and projects related to Acumen Fund’s mission to build transformative businesses to solve the problems of poverty.
- + [Acumen Fellows Blog](#): Acumen Fund recruits highly talented and passionate young professionals to spend a year with one of our investees reflecting on their role as leaders, building their leadership capacity, and providing management support. The fellows use this blog to share their experiences on the ground.

To learn more about the field as a whole, look at our recommended books, articles, blogs, videos, etc:

### Blogs/Magazines/Journals

- + [Nextbillion.net](#): A blog co-managed by Acumen Fund and World Resources Institute that explores the connection between development and enterprise. Nextbillion.net also has a career center with job postings.
- + [Social Edge](#): An online community managed by the Skoll Foundation where social entrepreneurs and other practitioners in the social sector connect to network, learn, inspire and share resources.
- + [Stanford Social Innovation Review](#): A quarterly magazine that explores strategies, management tools, and ideas for nonprofits, foundations, and socially responsible businesses.
- + [Innovations: Technology, Governance, Globalization](#): A journal jointly hosted by George Mason University’s School of Public Policy, Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government, and MIT’s Legatum Center for Development and Entrepreneurship. It features case studies, commentary, essays from leading academics, globally recognized executives and political leaders.
- + [Change.org](#): A blog with an excellent section on social entrepreneurship run by Nathaniel Whittemore.

### Books/Reports

- + *The Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid*, C.K. Prahalad
- + *Capitalism at the Crossroads: The Unlimited Business Opportunities in Solving the World’s Most Difficult Problems*, Stuart L. Hart
- + *In the River They Swim: Essays from Around the World on Enterprise Solutions to Poverty*, Michael Fairbanks, Malik Fal, Marcela Escobari-Rose, Elizabeth Hooper
- + *Creating a World Without Poverty: Social Business and the Future of Capitalism*, Muhammad Yunus
- + *How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas*, David Bornstein
- + *Portfolios of the Poor: How the World’s Poor Live on \$2 a Day*, Daryl Collins, Jonathan Morduch, Stuart Rutherford, Orlanda Ruthven
- + *The Power of Unreasonable People: How Social Entrepreneurs Create Markets that Change the World*, John Elkington and Pamela Hartigan
- + *The Price of a Dream: The Story of the Grameen Bank*, David Bornstein
- + *The Search for Social Entrepreneurship*, Paul Light
- + [“Emerging Markets, Emerging Models,”](#) The Monitor Group
- + [“The Next 4 Billion: Market Size and Business Strategy at the Base of the Pyramid,”](#) *World Resources Institute*, Allen Hammond, William J Kramer, Julia Tran, Rob Katz, Courtland Walker
- + [“Creating Value for the All: Strategies for Doing Business with the Poor,”](#) *United Nations Development Program*
- + [Blended value publications](#), Jed Emerson

## Conferences

- + [Skoll World Forum on Social Entrepreneurship](#): Prominent figures from the social, academic, finance, corporate and policy sectors engage for three days and nights in a series of debates, discussions and work sessions focused on accelerating, innovating and scaling solutions to some of the world's most pressing social issues.
- + [Social Capital Markets](#): Conference in San Francisco to build “the market at the intersection of money and meaning.”
- + [Pop!Tech conference](#): Five hundred visionary thinkers in the sciences, technology, business, design, the arts, education, government and culture come together for a three-day summit that “explores the cutting-edge ideas, emerging technologies and new forces of change that are shaping our collective future.”
- + [Global Engagement Summit](#): Student conference at Northwestern University that trains students participating in on-the-ground international development and social entrepreneurship, puts driven students in touch with one another and with innovative leaders, and develops a resource network to support student global change projects.
- + [StartingBloc](#): National conference/network that educates, empowers and connects emerging leaders to drive positive social change across sectors.
- + [Harvard Social Enterprise Conference](#): Creates a forum for both students and professionals to explore the synergies between for-profit, non-profit, and public sector approaches to addressing critical social issues.

## Videos

- + [Acumen Fund YouTube Channel](#)
- + [Pop!Casts](#): Videos and podcasts from Pop!Tech conference speakers.
- + [“Social Entrepreneurs Are Pioneering Social Change”](#): Skoll Foundation video that overviews social entrepreneurship.
- + [Global X](#): A video blog run by Social Edge. Social entrepreneurs tell moving stories that had a significant impact on their personal and professional lives.
- + [SocialEarth:Video](#): A online media channel featuring over a hundred videos which cover an array of issues within the social entrepreneurship field.
- + [TEDTalks](#): A nonprofit devoted to “Ideas Worth Spreading.” The best talks and performances from TED conferences are available on TED.com for free. More than 450 TEDTalks are now available, with more added each week. Favorites include:
  - + [Jacqueline Novogratz](#) on escaping poverty
  - + [Jacqueline Novogratz](#) on patient capitalism
  - + [Paul Collier](#) on the bottom billion
  - + [Katherine Fulton](#): You are the future of philanthropy
  - + [Andrew Mwenda](#) takes a new look at Africa
  - + [Hans Rosling's](#) new insights on poverty
  - + [Iqbal Quadir](#) says mobiles fight poverty
  - + [Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala](#) on aid versus trade
  - + [Nandan Nilekani's](#) ideas for India's future
  - + [Seth Godin](#) on the tribes we lead

## Teach

There are MANY ways you can spread knowledge about Patient Capital and Acumen Fund on your campus. By increasing awareness of our approach, you will transform the way students on your campus think about the poor and help us build a new generation of leaders who are truly equipped to tackle poverty. We encourage you to think creatively about how to spread this knowledge. Below are a few of our ideas:

### 1. Use The Blue Sweater

*The Blue Sweater* is a new book by Acumen Fund's founder and CEO, Jacqueline Novogratz, and a powerful tool that you can use to tell the story behind our work. The book takes the reader through a thought-provoking journey about leadership, human nature and human dignity, the limits of traditional forms of development, and the power of entrepreneurial solutions to poverty.

Use the book to change the conversation on your campus. It can help to shift the development debate away from a polarization between traditional aid and private sector approaches, to a more nuanced discussion of a solution that exists at the intersection.

Reference our *Blue Sweater* online discussion guides for a more in-depth reading:

<http://community.acumenfund.org/page/discussion-guides>

### 2. Hold Trainings and Education Sessions

Learning about this field can have a powerful impact on a variety of group, whether finance students understanding how to leverage their skills for social impact, students volunteering abroad encouraging financial sustainability in local NGOs, or business students understanding the promise social entrepreneurship. By exposing students to Acumen Fund's model through trainings and education sessions, you will show them there is a new way to address the issues they care about.

#### *Who to train and educate?*

Many different campus groups benefit from learning about market-based solutions to poverty. Here are a few groups that we had success with in the past:

- + Student returning from Study Abroad programs in the developing world
- + Student groups focused on issues of global poverty
- + Entrepreneurship clubs
- + Investment groups
- + Business and finance departmental groups

#### *What content to use?*

- + Use the materials and resources we point out in this packet to facilitate discussion groups (for example—choose a provoking article on patient capital and facilitate a discussion with the investment club about their impressions)
- + Go to Acumen Fund's "[Knowledge Center](#)" to find relevant articles, videos, and case studies that you can use as material

- + Hold a case competition or discussion using one of the Acumen Fund case studies on our website. Break into teams and have each team recommend a whether and how Acumen should invest.

### 3. Social Enterprise/Social Investing Career Events

- + Change how students at your school think about their career options—encourage your career development center to hold an information session or host organizations working in social enterprise and/or social investing.

### 4. Speaker Events

- + Host a speaker from Acumen Fund or one of our peer organizations to increase awareness and excitement about our approach.
- + It's great to combine this event with others on the list, such as trainings or fundraisers

### 5. Curricular Change

- + Bring patient capital into the classroom—encourage your professors to incorporate *The Blue Sweater*, Case Studies on social enterprises/patient capital, or articles about market-based solutions to poverty. Eventually, every business strategy class should discuss social enterprise and every global development class should discuss market-based solutions. You can help make this happen!

### 6. Start a Social Enterprise Club

- + If your school does not have a social enterprise club, start one! Bring together students on campus with a passion for this approach and work together to elevate the conversation on your campus.

## Give

### 1. Donate

Find creative way to give to Acumen Fund. A few that we've had success with include:

- + **Firstgiving.com:** You can set up a page like this one (<http://www.firstgiving.com/kevinkwan>) that Kevin Kwan built to raise money for Acumen. Kevin is using the platform to raise money for Acumen as he trains for a triathlon, but you certainly don't have to run a triathlon to set up a page like this and raise some money!
- + **Facebook Causes:** Remember those wall posts you get on your birthday from random third grade classmates? Leverage that for a cause you care about by asking them to also donate to Acumen Fund.
- + **Any other ideas?** Feel free to try them out and let us know how it goes.

### 2. Fundraise

Fundraising for Acumen Fund can be different than your typical campus fundraiser. Each dollar you raise goes farther, and you use the event to simultaneously support our life-changing work and increase awareness of a new way to tackle poverty.

You know better than we do how to best fundraise on your campus, but here are a few ideas:

- + **Benefit Dinner**—Organize a dinner where you serve food from the countries where we work, talk about Acumen Fund, and show a video and/or photos. People can pay for their plate of food to raise money.
- + **Dance-A-Thon**—as many student teams as possible get sponsored for at least one team member to dance at all times during a 24 hour period (check out Stanford's example-- [www.dancemarathon.stanford.edu/](http://www.dancemarathon.stanford.edu/)) It's like a giant dance party that raises money for Acumen Fund!
- + **Benefit dance/formal**—Partner with a fraternity or sorority to organize a formal where a portion of the ticket sales comes back to Acumen Fund.
- + **Benefit Concert**—Ask a local band or performance group to perform for free. You can spend time between songs or acts explaining what we do and showing short videos of our work. You can raise money through the ticket sales.
- + **Auction for Acumen**—Go out into the local community and ask for in-kind donations from businesses in town to auction off. Be creative and utilize talents of your team members: auction off a pass to yoga classes, free dance lessons, etc. Ask your athletic department for tickets, or Professors/administration for dinner invites or special tours.
- + **Change for Change drives**—Get people to donate their spare change over the course of a week or so.
- + **Restaurant benefit**—Approach a local business and request they host a night where a % of the restaurant's proceeds are donated to Acumen. The restaurant could provide coupons for you to distribute on campus, and you could have a booth and educate customers about our work.
- + **Customized shirt sales**—Sell plain t-shirts and provide the supplies to screen-print them with a message about Acumen Fund and entrepreneurial approaches to poverty.

- + **Live Without Luxury Week**—Encourage students to give up a luxury or vice (coffee, beer, cigarettes, magazines, etc.) for a week and put the money saved towards raising loans for a specific portfolio. Set up tables with donation jars where students often congregate, make signs, and post statistics about people living below the poverty line. Connect this within classes and ask professors if you can incorporate this into the course.
- + **Sports**—Host a charity sports game or tournament, and charge admission to play or watch.
- + **Dorm Competitions**—Contact dorm staff and pitch the idea of having a creative fundraising competition between dorms.
- + **Corporate Matching**—Reach out to local businesses and see if they will match the amount that you fundraise on campus in exchange for publicity. Double your impact!