

**ICAN**  
INTERNATIONAL  
COMMUNITY  
ACTION  
NETWORK

Building a rights-based movement for social change:  
**ICAN Graduate Fellowship Program**



2014–2016

**ICAN MSW Application  
and Admission Guide**

**ICAN**  **McGill**  
INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY ACTION NETWORK

# The ICAN Graduate Fellowship Applicant Guide

The purpose of McGill's International Community Action Network Graduate Fellowship is to teach a model of rights-based social work practice developed in and for conflict zones. The leaders of ICAN are women and men from the Middle East - 53 Alumni in all - who were trained at McGill University in our model of community organizing and movement building. Much of this organizing is inspired by traditions of the civil rights movement, the environmental movement, and the struggle to bring women, the aged, and people with disabilities into the mainstream of community life.

## Table of Contents

Topic.....	Page
Introduction to the International Community Action Network.....	2
Introduction to the ICAN Graduate Fellowship Program.....	3-4
General Program Details.....	5-6
Academic Details.....	7
Research Details.....	8
Living in Montreal.....	9
Meet our Graduate Alumni.....	10
How to Apply.....	11-12



# The International Community Action Network

Founded in 1997 at McGill University in Montreal, Quebec, the International Community Action Network (ICAN) is committed to the belief that the reduction of inequality and the promotion of social justice builds the most reliable foundation for strong, healthy societies.

ICAN has advanced these beliefs through the establishment of eleven rights-based community practice (RBCP) centres in low-income neighbourhoods in Jordan, Palestine and Israel. These centres assist more than 100,000 people each year and pioneer scores of innovative community programs that have empowered individuals, changed public policies and advanced social justice.

## Rights-Based Community Practice

What unites all of our partner organizations is our shared rights-based community practice (RBCP) approach to community development. In RBCP, the means are as important as the ends: the right of low income people to participate in processes and decisions that affect their lives, as individuals and communities, is as important as gaining access to the rights themselves. Our partners operate as grassroots community advocacy organizations, comprised of volunteers, students, social workers, lawyers, and activists.

Through our fellowship program at McGill, we share best practices and our experience that even within conflict zones, communities have the ability to collectively challenge inequality, injustice, and disempowerment.

## Growing the movement: ICAN's 2014–2016 Cohort of Eight Fellows

The ICAN Graduate Fellowship program, launched in 1994, brings academic training and the experience of almost twenty years of community-led change together in a two-year Masters of Social Work program at McGill University in Montreal, Canada. Students from Israel, Palestine, and Jordan are recruited jointly by McGill and partners in the field. In exchange for the fully funded graduate fellowship, Fellows commit to work in RBCP centres and with academic partners in their home country for four years after earning their degree.

This has ensured the dissemination of ICAN's model through both practice on the ground and university teaching. The adaptability of the model and rigorous training of Fellows in Montreal are driving factors behind the model's successful implementation in such diverse social and cultural contexts as Canada, Israel, Jordan and Palestine.

Queen Rania of Jordan tours an Amman centre with ICAN Fellowship alumni. L to R: Subhi Ejeh ('06), Dalia Zatarah ('06), Ruweida Shakhshir ('06), Queen Rania, Qais Tarawneh ('06), David Leduc, Director of Global Operations, Centre Director Talal Qdah ('02), and Canadian Ambassador Margaret Huber.



# Fellowship Selection Requirements

✓Prior to being accepted applicants are required to submit a personal statement, written independently in English, describing their interest in the program, as well as their thoughts and ideas about civil society and social justice, outlining their own conceptions as to how inequality can be reduced and civil society promoted. For this statement, applicants are expected to choose a social issue related to inequality with which they have familiarity, describe the problem and suggest how it can be alleviated.

✓Applicants must show a commitment to the goals of this program through their previously demonstrated personal and professional activities.

✓Each Fellow must satisfy all immigration requirements for both Canada and Quebec. These include:

- Valid passport
- Medical examination
- Background check
- Certificate of Acceptance of Quebec (CAQ for studies)
- One year visa for the Fellow and accompanying family members, if any (translated into English)

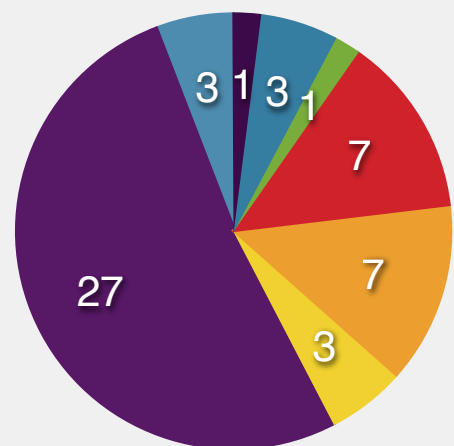
✓Those selected to receive this most prestigious and generous Fellowship award have been identified as future leaders of their country and will act as ambassadors of their institutions and their communities. They will commit to a further four years at the practice centres upon completion of their two-year Fellowship.

✓International students may not apply as individuals to the International MSW Program, rather, ICAN partners identify applicants who they deem suitable for the Program. Each member of the cohort must then be selected by the MSW Admissions Committee and meet McGill Graduate Studies admissions criteria.

✓Members of the cohort who do not hold a BSW participate in a spring qualifying period for credit before entering the regular non-thesis MSW program. The cohort takes all required MSW courses as well as other complementary courses designed for their specific program (more on pages 5 and 6).

## A snapshot of our alumni over the past 5 years

- RBCP Centre Director
- ICAN Management Committee
- National Board
- Lecturer in Partner Institution
- At another local NGO
- In Governmental Ministry
- Role with ICAN Partner
- Pursuing PhD currently



# Fellowships: At the Core of ICAN's Success

## What will I gain from this fellowship program?

This program is a truly incredible opportunity. The two years you spend pursuing your degree through the fellowship can turn into many years of involvement in social change, and will include-

Hands on experience in social work and ICAN's rights based community practice model;

The experience of learning and working with Fellows from diverse communities in Israel, Palestine and Jordan;

Opportunities for researching a topic that is important to you and people in your community;

A Masters degree from McGill University, a highly respected international institution;

Opportunities to draw from community organizing in the Montreal area and to explore creative social change models outside of the conflict zone;

Development of management skills needed to run a sustainable participatory community organization;

Post-graduation employment in one of our centers, where you will work to expand the reach of our network, helping low-income people access their rights;

And the inclusion into our network of community-minded activists and academics working for greater participation in the democratic process through raising the voices of the most disenfranchised.

"I was raised in a culture that looks five generations into the future to understand what kind of impact the decisions we make today will have. When I decided to come here, I asked my father, who was a high-ranking member of the Jordanian army and had participated in war between Jordan and Israel, what he thought about me coming here to participate in a program that consisted of people from Jordan, Palestine and Israel. My father replied, "Do you believe in it?" I told him, "yes father." My father then said, "I want you to do this if this is what you truly believe in. And if you do this, I want you to dedicate yourself to this noble cause, because we made mistakes in the past and I don't want you to make the same mistakes."

-Qais Tarawneh ('06) worked for Oxfam in the refugee camps on the Iraqi-Jordanian border during the invasion of Iraq in 2003. He is a founding board member of ICAN's newest centre in Jordan, WAQA, and holds a senior position at ICAN partner the Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development. He is a member of Jordan's Special Commission on People with Disabilities.



# How does the program work?

Carefully selected civil society leaders from Jordan, Palestine and Israel are trained at McGill University in inter-disciplinary community practice during a two-year fellowship program, leading to a Masters of Social Work (MSW) degree. Today, more than fifty alumni are working across the region to advance civil society and social justice in their respective countries.

## **In the first year of your MSW program (2014–2015), you and other Fellows will study at McGill University in Montreal, Canada.**

Beyond your coursework at McGill, there are five distinguishing aspects of the first year of the program:

### **1. Community Practice Seminar**

The Community Practice Seminar provides Fellows with the opportunity to draw on their own knowledge and experience, and to relate these to the RBCP Centres back in the region

### **2. Interdisciplinary Seminar Series**

Interspersed throughout the academic year, leading academics and practitioners involved in the social, cultural, economic and political dimensions of both movement building and community development lead in-depth seminars

### **3. Year-Long Narrative Exchange Seminar**

Fellows participate in a year-long exchange seminar sharing personal narratives with the goal of humanizing one another, understanding the very different sociopolitical environments they come from, and learning how to use human relationships in community development and movement building

### **4. Field Practicum**

During the first year of the program in Canada, Fellows observe the work of several organizations and opt to volunteer in one carefully selected community-based agency, public institution, voluntary organization, or policy development body

### **5. Non-Profit Management Seminar Series**

In order to ensure that the organizations they build and strengthen back home have the capacity to develop sustainably, Fellows participate in non-profit management seminars over the course of the program

**In the second year of your MSW program (2015–2016), you and other Fellows will return to work in the Middle East** at one of our partner centers, completing field placements in your home communities. Before you leave McGill, you will define your planned research projects in Rights Based Community Practice, which form the biggest component of the second year of your program. The topic of your choice will be relevant to both the goals and objectives of the RBCP centre, and to your own fields of interest. Upon completion of the research project and final requirements for your degree, you and other fellows will graduate from McGill University with a Masters in Social Work.

## **After the Fellowship concludes, you and other Fellows will continue to work in ICAN centres.**

With 11 RBCP centres and more than 50 graduate alumni in the region, there will always be a place you can get involved, and you will always have the opportunity to work with and for your community, empowering the most disadvantaged to access their rights to housing, legal aid, clean water, electricity, dignified work, education, and justice.

# Application Timeline and Materials

October 1 - November 15 2013	Open application period - applicants prepare and submit their application to regional RBCP centres
<b>November 15 2013</b>	<b>Application deadline #1: Applications due to regional RBCP centres</b>
Week of December 9 2013	Interviews are completed and applicants informed of decision, made jointly by ICAN Montreal and the regional centres
December 2013 - January 6 2014	Applicants prepare their application materials for McGill University admission
Month of December	Applicants prepare application materials for McGill University and take the TOEFL exam as early as possible (All materials due to ICAN office by January 6)
<b>January 15 2014</b>	<b>Application deadline # 2: Applications due to McGill University Graduate Admissions office</b>
March 2014	Applicants notified of McGill University admissions decision
March 2014 - April 2014	Admitted students prepare and submit immigration documents to Canadian and Quebec Governments
March 2014 - April 2014	Admitted students apply for scholarships and grants recommended by ICAN office
June 2014	Admitted students travel to Montreal to begin fellowship program
Summer 2014	Coursework begins for the accelerated BSW qualifying period

## Required for Application Deadline #1:

*Submit the following to your local RBCP centre by Nov. 15  
Contact information is on back cover*

- A current resume/CV
- A personal statement of interest, detailing your volunteer and community work experience (2 pages)
- Official copy of all previous academic transcripts (Bachelors degree required in any field, minimum CGPA of 3.0 required for consideration)
- Two letters of recommendation

*For more information, contact the centres directly using the contact information on page 12.*

## Required for Application Deadline #2:

*Submit the following to the ICAN office by January 6*

- CV filled out with form provided by the McGill School of Social Work
- Program Application Face Sheet
- Plan of Study
- Personal statement of interest
- Two letters of recommendation
- Previous academic transcripts
- Proof of English proficiency, typically a TOEFL score (minimum score of 96, with each individual component of reading, writing, listening, and speaking at a minimum score of 24)

*More information, including information on the TOEFL, can be found at*

[www.mcgill.ca/socialwork/prospective#msw](http://www.mcgill.ca/socialwork/prospective#msw)

# Academic details

## What will I study at McGill?

A specific program of study will be designed for each Fellow to reflect his or her personal and professional interests as well as priorities identified by the partner institutions based on the needs of the Practice Centres. If you do not hold a BSW you must take (9) qualifying credits during the summer, eight courses (24 credits) during the academic year in Montreal and complete the practicum (12) credits and Independent Study Project (9) credits during the second year. The following are required courses for fellows:

### MSW Non-thesis International: Year One at McGill University

<b>Qualifying Period</b>	<b>Credits</b>
SWRK 353 Intro to Practice	6
SWRK 350 S.W. Skills Lab.	3
Program Specific Activities	--
Intensive English	--
<b>Required courses</b>	<b>(6 credits)</b>
Two Research Methods Courses:	
SWRK 643 Quantitative Research Methods	3
SWRK 653 Qualitative Research Method	3
Program Specific Activities	--
<b>Complementary Courses</b>	<b>(18 credits)</b>
6 Courses/Tutorials from	
SWRK 500 or 600 some of which may be	
Tutorials specifically designed for the cohort	
Up to 6 credits may be taken outside department	

### MSW Non-thesis International: Year Two in Home Community

<b>Required courses</b>	<b>(21 credits)</b>
SWRK 650 - Field Work Practicum 1	3
SWRK 651 - Field Work Practicum 2	3
SWRK 660 - Field Work Practicum 3	6
SWRK 690 Independent Study Project	9
<b>Qualifying Credits</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Social Work Credits</b>	<b>45</b>



# Research Details

The individual research project is a nine-credit supervised and evaluated project, with the guidance of a research advisor, whereby Fellows elaborate on a topic of their choice that is compatible with the goals and objectives of the partner institution.

Once the Fellow has identified a research topic, a research advisor will be assigned. The research advisor and the academic advisor may or may not be the same person. The Fellow assumes responsibility to consult with the research project before leaving McGill as well as determine, with the research advisor, the modality (email, Skype) and frequency of long-distance communications, as the Fellow will be based in the region and the advisor will likely be in Montreal.

The research to be completed during the second year of the program in the country of origin. Failure to do so will result in additional tuition costs and penalties which will be the responsibility of the Fellow. This is true of all requirements and not specifically of the research piece.

Alumni have conducted valuable research on many topics regarding the ICAN centers as part of their McGill studies, including:

- The history and evolution of empowerment programs in the Bedouin community*
- The history and evolution of the CSC housing program in Nablus*
- The influence of technology on gender roles* – This thesis studied the process of community building and education around the alternative–electricity infrastructure installed in a village working with the Nablus CSC, elevating women’s roles in the community.
- Issues of funding and community ownership facing a community-based food cooperative in Gilo*
- Theories of peace building and disempowerment: Common threads with community work*
- Housing: A basic right and the basis for social inclusion* –The thesis reviewed the relationship between basic housing rights and mechanisms of social inclusion in Palestinian society.
- NGOs, Micro-credit and Women's Empowerment* – The project studied the link between micro-credit programs employed by three local women’s institutions and women's empowerment.
- Child Labour in Jordan: Prevention and mitigation* – This research focused on the complexities of the continued phenomenon of child labour in Amman and avenues for tackling the issue.
- Prospects for a Rights Based Community Practice Impact Study: A review of Community Advocacy* – This reviewed records from storefront clients and suggested mechanisms by which the center could use the data for an impact study to track trends in community issues and community organizing activities the centre supports.
- Perceptions of volunteerism among Al-Quds University students who volunteered for the Students Volunteer Bureau as Placement Officers.*
- Community work within Israel’s cultural divides* – This thesis explored challenges to social work and community building within Lod’s rich cultural diversity, examining the idea of “culturally competent service”.
- Palestinian feminism and its influence on women’s empowerment in the Old City of Jerusalem*– the research looked at women’s empowerment programs at the CAC as current manifestations of the women’s movement in Jerusalemite society.

# Living in Montreal

McGill's downtown campus is set in the heart of Montreal, at the foot of beautiful Mount Royal Park. Lively, sophisticated, fun and affordable, Montreal is home to one of the largest student populations on the continent. Montreal is known for its thriving arts and cultural scene, *joie de vivre*, the old-world charm of historic architecture set in a modern metropolis, and the multicultural buzz of one of the world's great French-speaking cities.

**Montreal features four distinct seasons**, from a colourful autumn, snowy winter, and cool spring, to a hot summer.

**The city has an affordable and efficient** public transit system, with more than 200 bus routes connecting to 68 subway stations. It's also a great walking city!

**Montreal has recently adopted** a new public bike system. But if the weather isn't cooperating, just duck into the underground city. You can walk, shop and people-watch in comfort for miles and miles.

**It is a diverse, open and friendly place** where you will make friends from all over the world. You can eat your way around the globe, too; Montreal offers a range of restaurants to suit every taste.



## What services will be available for me in Montreal? How will the McGill and ICAN office in Montreal support me?

When you and other fellows arrive in Montreal, ICAN will match you with host families in the city, where you will live for the first weeks while seeking accommodations. You will also have English tutors available, mentors in social work, services available from the Office for Students with Disabilities, services from the International Student Office, field supervisors and placements, faculty advisors, and opportunities for public speaking workshops and engagements, to name but a few. Further, ICAN Fellows share a large room in the School of Social Work with computer terminals and common space, which they have exclusive access to over the course of their year in Montreal.



# Meet some of our ICAN Fellowship Alumni

To date, Fellowship Alumni number 18 Palestinians, 16 Jordanians and 19 Israelis. These Alumni are at the forefront of civil society and peace building in their respective societies. They established and operate the ICAN practice centres, serve as public-interest lawyers, lead government bodies and large-scale NGOs, and teach on the cutting edge of social work, public policy and peace building at universities across the region. Below are a few of our distinguished alumni:

**Talal Qdah (Jordan '02)**, director of the Amman Center, participated in the International Visitor Leadership Program sponsored by the U.S. State Department, alongside directors of NGOs from across the developing world. The relationships he built there have continued to bolster his work, which included the launch of a third ICAN center in Amman.

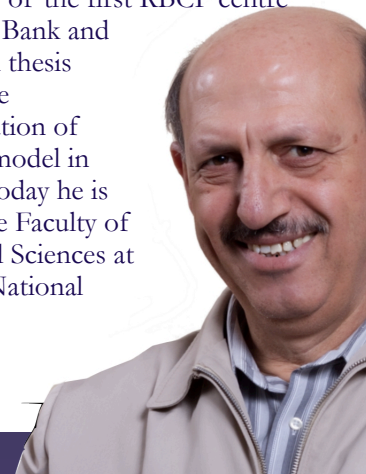
**Nuha Dweikat-Shaer (Palestine '09)**, is both an architect and social worker, focused on affordable, sustainable housing in Palestine. She began her career at one of the leading architectural firms in Palestine, leaving as the reason she studied architecture was to improve the housing situation of disadvantaged people. She has taught social work, co-coordinated a program that has revitalized more than 600 homes of low income people in Nablus and is now pursuing her PhD in social work at McGill.

**Michal Gomel (Israel '09)**, has been a leader in organizing poor people to advocate for increased food security in Israel, as well as to promote urban renewal projects that protect disenfranchised people. She recently presented the right-based model to a wide audience at this year's TEDxMcGill conference.

**Amal Al Sana (Israel '99)** is one of the key shapers of public opinion regarding the status of the Arab minority and the status of women in Israel. In 2010, she was chosen by The Marker (Israeli business publication) as 1 of the 101 most influential people in Israel; was one of the women leaders recognized in 2005 by the World Association for Small and Medium Enterprises for her contributions to economic empowerment programs for Bedouin Arab women. She has also been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. She is the founding director of AJEEC - Arab Jewish Center for Equality, Empowerment and Cooperation and co-director of NISPED - Negev Institute for Strategies of Peace and Development. She is currently pursuing her PhD back at McGill.



**Sami Al Kilani (Palestine MSW '00, PhD '10)** began his career as a physicist and poet, and was an Amnesty prisoner of conscience in the 1980s. He was a delegate to the Madrid Conference and has been a strong advocate for non-violence since the 1980's. Sami is one of the founding members of the Arab non-violence movement, which meets for one month each summer in Beirut and has evolved into the first Arab University for Non Violence (AUNV). It aims to institutionalize the culture of non-violence in Lebanon and all the Middle East. Sami is the founder of the first RBCP centre in the West Bank and his doctoral thesis explored the implementation of the RBCP model in Palestine. Today he is Dean of the Faculty of Educational Sciences at An Najah National University.



**Hmoud Al Olimat (Jordan '99)**, was the founding director of the Graduate Social Work Program at the University of Jordan, an academic program created in partnership with MMEP. He has also served as Director General of Jordan's Ministry of Social Affairs.

**Rad Al Hadid (Jordan '02)**, served as: Regional Disaster Management Officer at the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies; as MMEP Fellowship coordinator; and recently, led the recruitment of Jordanian students for an MMEP offshoot program in Israel. Fifteen Jordanians are in a three year emergency medicine program at Ben Gurion University of the Negev, leading the way for a joint Israeli-Jordanian emergency response system. Rad is pursuing a Master's in Disaster Management at York University.

# How to Apply

## Applications are first accepted through the ICAN-affiliated RBCP centres in the region.

Starting in October 2013, the centres will begin actively recruiting candidates for the Fellowship program, and by December 2013 will have selected applicants who will then apply through McGill.

Applicants MUST be accepted first by an ICAN partner. After the initial acceptance, they will receive permission to apply directly to the School of Social Work at McGill University. Applicants must be accepted by both a center AND McGill in order to participate in the Fellowship program.

## The following RBCP centres are accepting applications for this fellowship:

### In Jordan:

-Waqe3 in Amman, Jordan

Contact: Talal Qdah [talal\\_qdah@yahoo.com](mailto:talal_qdah@yahoo.com)

### In Palestine:

-Jerusalem Community Action Network (JCAN) Atur Centre in East Jerusalem

Contact: Varsen Aghabekian [varsen2003@yahoo.com](mailto:varsen2003@yahoo.com)

-Jerusalem Community Action Network Sur Baher Centre in East Jerusalem

Contact: Varsen Aghabekian [varsen2003@yahoo.com](mailto:varsen2003@yahoo.com)

-Community Service Center (CSC) in Nablus

Contact: Sami Al Kilani [smkilani@hotmail.com](mailto:smkilani@hotmail.com)

### In Israel:

-Arab-Jewish Centre for Equality, Empowerment, and Cooperation (AJEEC) in the Negev

Contact: Kher Albaz [kheralbaz@gmail.com](mailto:kheralbaz@gmail.com)

-Community Advocacy Lod

Contact: Barbara Epstein [barbara@advocacy.org.il](mailto:barbara@advocacy.org.il)

-Community Advocacy Beer Sheva

Contact: Barbara Epstein [barbara@advocacy.org.il](mailto:barbara@advocacy.org.il)

-Sderot Social Rights Centre at Sapir College

Contact: Merav Moshe Grodofsky [meravmo@sapir.ac.il](mailto:meravmo@sapir.ac.il)

Application  
Deadline:  
November 15

## Following acceptance by the RBCP centres in the region, applicants may apply directly to McGill University's School of Social Work.

Details can be found at [www.mcgill.ca/socialwork/prospective#msw](http://www.mcgill.ca/socialwork/prospective#msw), but applicants accepted by regional RBCP centres will receive detailed instructions on this second application process in mid-December.