



**Thousand Currents and NoVo Foundation proudly announce
the Buen Vivir Fund Finance Fellowship –
a two-year Fellowship for experienced mid-career
finance, investment, and/or social finance professionals.**

*“It’s not business as usual...
it’s not even social impact investment as usual.”*

**Application Deadline: April 2, 2018
Fellowships Begin: July 2018**

INTRODUCTION	2
THE MINDSET AND COMMITMENT NEEDED	2
ABOUT THE HOST ORGANIZATIONS	3
THE BIRTH OF THE BUEN VIVIR FUND	4
ABOUT THE FELLOWSHIPS	5
BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION	8
COMPENSATION	8
QUALIFICATIONS AND QUALITIES OF IDEAL CANDIDATES	9
OTHER REQUIREMENTS	10
HOW TO APPLY	10



INTRODUCTION

Together, Thousand Currents and NoVo Foundation are excited to launch the Buen Vivir Finance Fellowship (“the Fellowship”). This is a unique two-year professional development opportunity for talented, mid-career - investment, financial services, or social finance professionals who are hungry for something profoundly different -- something that will enable them to bring their whole selves to the task of investing in a better world.

As the field of social impact investing continues to evolve, there remains a systematic exclusion of local communities in decision-making, design, and evaluation of the very investments that are intended to improve their lives. In direct response to this exclusion, Thousand Currents partnered with grassroots leaders from Africa, Asia, and Latin America, and financial investors, including NoVo Foundation, to co-create the [Buen Vivir Fund](#) (“the Fund”), described in more detail below. The Fund intends to contribute a radically different skill set and worldview to the work of progressive social impact investing.

The Fellowship is the next step in this initiative. Co-created by Thousand Currents and NoVo Foundation, the Fellowship will serve as a powerful vehicle for developing a growing alumni network of influential investment professionals with the vision, capacity, and relationships to reimagine investment in service of social, economic, and environmental balance, interdependence, and well-being. The Fellows will be rising professionals committed to applying the model and values of the Fund as thought leaders and influencers for years to come.

THE MINDSET AND COMMITMENT NEEDED

Two full-time Fellows will be selected in this inaugural cohort. The successful candidates will be motivated by a yearning to apply their valuable skills and knowledge in a more meaningful way. They will have a desire to radically rethink the assumptions that govern traditional investment practices because they truly believe that financial return on investment – though important – is *only one* dimension of value creation.

Fellows will be eager to roll up their sleeves and apply their hard-earned financial management and investment skills while learning alongside the staff, advisors, and grassroots partners of two highly respected, progressive, and influential organizations.



Fellows will be deeply motivated by the opportunity to engage in a reciprocal process of curiosity and learning with our global grassroots partners and will gain a window into their deep experience and fine-tuned and rooted financial and economic practices. In return, Fellows will be committed to expanding the capacity and knowledge of our financial investors, inspiring them to embrace economies of well-being.

Most importantly, they will be ready to commit to a career path devoted to influencing and building viable opportunities for investment that advance social and environmental solutions while amplifying the model and values of the Fund within the sector.

ABOUT THE HOST ORGANIZATIONS

Thousand Currents (thousandcurrents.org) is a public foundation funding grassroots work that addresses the interdependent issues of food sovereignty, alternative economies, and climate justice around the world.

For over 30 years, Thousand Currents has invested in more than 750 community-led initiatives in 37 countries. Thousand Currents envisions a world in which self-determined and connected people share and uphold the abundance of life. There is enough ... for all and for future generations.

Too often, resource and investment decisions are made without the input and participation of women, youth, and Indigenous Peoples – those who contribute the least to, and are most impacted by, large-scale global problems like climate change, inequality, poverty, and broken food systems.

Thousand Currents has intentionally flipped this dynamic, choosing instead to build long-term partnerships with organizations and movements led by women, youth, and Indigenous Peoples. This means honoring their leadership, local knowledge, models, and investing in rooted, effective, and transformative solutions to global challenges.

In addition to providing flexible long-term financial resources to our grassroots partners, Thousand Currents strengthens their impact by working with them to scale their successes, build their leadership capacity, and by linking them to broader social change movements at the regional, national, and global level. At the same time, Thousand Currents uses its position and influence as a vocal and visible advocate for grassroots-led social change, bridging emerging approaches and learnings from the Global South with philanthropic models and practices from the Global North.



The values that underpin and shape the work and approach embraced by Thousand Currents are courage, humility, creative collaboration, experimentation, and interdependence. These values have allowed Thousand Currents to create new, *respectful* models of partnership and collaboration. The Buen Vivir Fund is one example of this. To learn more about the exciting work of Thousand Currents, including its grassroots and philanthropic partnerships and collaborative initiatives, see: thousandcurrents.org/what-we-do/

Thousand Currents has experienced steady and sustainable financial growth. Fiscal year 2017 ended with a staff of 15 and revenue of just under \$5 million. Moreover, it grew its reserve fund to facilitate long-term financial sustainability.

The **NoVo Foundation** (“NoVo”) (novofoundation.org), created in 2006 by Jennifer and Peter Buffett, is a social justice foundation dedicated to the transformation from a world based on domination and exploitation to one that operates on the principles of mutual respect, collaboration, partnership, justice, and equity.

This vision is pursued through initiatives that advance adolescent girls’ rights, end violence against girls and women, increase social and emotional learning, promote local living economies, and support Indigenous communities. These initiatives, though varied, share a commitment to building authentic relationships with grantee partners and other funders, investing in and centering feminist leadership, and taking calculated risks. With a staff of 26, NoVo makes grants to organizations and initiatives totaling over \$100 million annually.

NoVo has been a critical thought partner and investor in Thousand Currents’ work over many years and is the inspiration behind and co-creator of this fellowship.

THE BIRTH OF THE BUEN VIVIR FUND

The Buen Vivir Fund (thousandcurrents.org/buen-vivir-fund/) was launched in 2017 as a collective response to the call for a truly transformative approach to impact investing. Together, a “founding circle” of progressive investors, grassroots groups, and ally-advisers from all over the globe worked side by side for a combined total of [2,934 hours](#) to co-design a radically new approach – one that would uplift financial models and practices that support communities’ holistic wellbeing – a departure from more traditional ones that focus solely on maximizing individuals’ capital accumulation.

This visionary circle of founders set out to delve deep into the following questions:

- What if investors weren’t the ones dictating the terms of investment?



- What if investments didn't extract resources from the earth and instead upheld human rights, food sovereignty, and climate justice?
- What if we could create an investment fund where a community's decision-making processes and ways of life would not be disrupted in the process?
- What if returns were defined in ways that went beyond financial terms – measuring and valuing other forms of return vital to building a world of well-being and balance?; and
- What if we do this in a way that goes beyond current social impact investing models - by breaking down the silos of funder/investor/recipient - and together create a new vision for investing and decision-making?

These questions, and more, drove 81 people with vastly different economic experiences, to co-create the Buen Vivir Fund. Its name is inspired by a Latin American concept embraced by Indigenous movements that implies “right living” or life in balance with community, natural systems, and future generations. This concept is at the heart of the Fund's approach and model -- one that supports grassroots economic solutions and initiatives that build wealth, community power, and wellbeing.

The Fund's investment model (controlled collectively by the financial investors of the Fund, grassroots partners, and Thousand Currents) is built upon identifying lending practices, which were developed by grassroots groups themselves and are already proving effective on the ground, and then uplifting and applying these practices to the level of a global investment fund.

Now, entering its second year, we are in the final stretch of operationalizing the Fund. With \$1 million raised and 19 members at present, we are poised to grow the Fund's membership to 50 and increase investments to \$5 million within the next three to five years.

ABOUT THE FELLOWSHIPS

The Fellows will play a critical role in supporting the implementation, development, and expansion of the Fund over a two-year period, while also documenting and sharing the model and lessons of the Fund more broadly.



At the same time, the Fellows will be immersed in the model and practices of the Fund and of Thousand Currents and NoVo, ready to apply what they learn to the next steps in their professional life, and to play a role in influencing the field of impact investing.

In year one, Fellows will work on-site at the head office of Thousand Currents based in Oakland, California. In year two, Fellows will have the opportunity to work from the office of NoVo Foundation in New York City. Together, Fellows will work collaboratively with support towards the following goals:

1. Develop a deep understanding of the operational, programmatic, and aspirational work of the Buen Vivir Fund and Thousand Currents:

- Work in close partnership with the Director of the Buen Vivir Fund and Director of Philanthropic Partnerships at Thousand Currents to gain a strong grounding in the history, core values, and framework that guide the Fund and its approach to social justice giving and investing;
- Partner with, learn from, and serve the Fund's key stakeholders (founding partners and investors, advisors, and the Fund's legal counsel);
- Serve as a thought partner to the management team of the Fund contributing to proactive planning, particularly related to finance and investing;
- Participate in organization-wide learning, cross-program partnership, and administrative efficiency, and develop a deep understanding of Thousand Current's and the Buen Vivir Fund's mission, values, approach, and impact.

2. Support fund management (financial and legal systems and processes):

- Work jointly with Thousand Currents' Directors of Finance and Philanthropic Partnerships to gain first-hand experience of nonprofit finance, funding, and stewardship, while contributing their skills to improve and/or enhance our systems and practice;
- Research, recommend, secure, and implement financial management and reporting tools to support Fund portfolio management;
- Research and recommend a currency strategy for fund management and risk mitigation;
- Apply finance and investment skills and knowledge to further operationalize, shape, and manage the Fund portfolio in collaboration and consultation with its stakeholders and decision-makers;
- Finalize and document fund management processes in partnership with the Thousand Currents Director of Finance and Administration, to ready the organization for Fund expansion.



3. Evaluate and share lessons from the Fund to inspire thought leadership and replication of Buen Vivir Fund practices within philanthropy and social impact investing:

- Document the Buen Vivir Fund model, core values, practices, and processes;
- Conduct real-time evaluation of the Fund;
- Share lessons learned and concrete approaches to the Fund’s application and replication;
- Develop an online knowledge and resource bank with infographics, practical tools, and “how to” materials;
- Collaborate with Communication and Philanthropic Partnership Teams to translate the Fund’s approach to wider audiences; author articles, blog posts, and other pieces that capture stories from partners and examples of the co-design model in practice;
- Participate in strategic conferences (where possible) to share the model and the Fund’s learning.

4. Design an investment strategy for applying Buen Vivir Fund lessons and its finance and investment model to a specific entity:

- Research and identify relevant trends, models, and key actors in social impact investing that are important to learn from and engage with;
- Research and interpret laws that govern investment management practices for philanthropic endowment management and others;
- Build a community of practice with partners, thought leaders, and allies interested in reimagining investments in a new economy, and building strategic collaborations with partners to influence practices in impact investing;
- Design and implement a Buen Vivir investment strategy for a foundation endowment, a family office, or an investment firm to widen the circle of investors building an economy of *buen vivir*.

5. Gain valuable insight into the day-to-day management of a unique private foundation:

- Work closely with NoVo’s Chief Operating Officer and Director of Finance and Accounting to understand how resources and relationships are managed;
- Serve as a thought partner to NoVo, contributing strategy related to strategic financial investment and resource management;
- Participate in organization-wide learning, and attend meetings and workshops.



BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION

This is a full-time, supervised, paid professional development opportunity targeting mid-career professionals. Fellows will learn from some of the brightest thinkers in the social justice and impact investing fields -- building relationships with grassroots partners and connecting with a community of forward-thinking progressive social change funders, investors, activists, and leaders.

In addition to gaining deep knowledge of the field and the Buen Vivir Fund model, they will develop an understanding of the gifts, responsibilities, and challenges inherent in managing a 501(c)3 nonprofit. They will also gain a window into the workings and investment strategy of a private foundation that is committed to having its investments reflect its values as closely as its program activities do.

In addition, Fellows will expand their professional and leadership skills through participation in the [Thousand Currents Academy](#), as well as attendance at conferences, retreats, and other development offerings. And, they will have the opportunity to experience two highly reputable and influential organizations at the forefront of the progressive social change movement.

Most importantly, at the end of the Fellowship they will have gained the knowledge needed to apply the practices of the Buen Vivir Fund model to the day-to-day work of investment screening, managing, and strategy for a prominent foundation, family office, or other institutional investor.

While no guarantee of a placement at the end of the Fellowship is made, Thousand Currents and NoVo will leverage their influence and significant networks for Fellows who demonstrate exceptional integrity, capacity, and alignment. We will facilitate connections with foundations and/or other institutions that may be interested in exploring and or expanding their capacity to apply the *buen vivir* values and model to their social impact investing.

COMPENSATION

Fellows will receive \$150,000 total (paid monthly) over two-years, plus work-related travel reimbursements, and a stipend towards relocation in year-two. If relocation from the Bay Area to New York City is not possible, the fellow will be expected to commit to significant time at the NoVo office in New York City and will receive a stipend to help with the cost.



In addition to the above, Thousand Currents and NoVo are both committed to a culture that prioritizes staff well-being holistically while also encouraging a strong work ethic. Benefits include 100% employer paid health insurance premiums, partner/child coverage, a health reimbursement arrangement, flexible holidays, and internal systems that engender a culture of mutual accountability to personal ecology, transparency, open communication, and opportunities for professional, personal, and leadership development.

QUALIFICATIONS AND QUALITIES OF IDEAL CANDIDATES

We seek highly qualified candidates with as many of the following areas of knowledge, ability, skills, and experience as possible:

Professional Skills

- ✓ BA degree or equivalent experience; MBA or financial services credentials preferred
- ✓ Track record of resourcefulness in guiding investments, setting priorities, and proposing efficiencies
- ✓ Demonstrated excellence in planning, management, financial modeling, and program implementation
- ✓ Demonstrated ability to instill confidence in external environments and internal operations roles
- ✓ Well versed in laws governing investment practices in the U.S. and beyond
- ✓ Outstanding analytical and strategic thinking skills
- ✓ Strong judgment and discretion in dealing with sensitive information
- ✓ Demonstrated ability to build and maintain thoughtful and respectful relationships and to motivate and inspire people
- ✓ Excellent verbal and written communication skills
- ✓ Rigorous executer –able to get things done
- ✓ Proficient in Salesforce or equivalent database skills
- ✓ Fluency in written and spoken Spanish preferable

Characteristics

- ✓ Values aligned with Thousand Currents, the Buen Vivir Fund, and NoVo Foundation
- ✓ Strong self-awareness, cultural competence, and emotional intelligence
- ✓ Collaborative, mature, grounded, and flexible with a high degree of integrity and transparency
- ✓ Entrepreneurial spirit – creative, optimistic, can-do attitude
- ✓ Personal commitment to well-being in the spirit of *buen vivir*



OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Must have flexibility and capacity to travel by plane to meetings at locations nationally (and possibly internationally.) Maintenance of a valid passport is required. Must also be able to relocate in year two from the Bay Area to New York City or to be on-site periodically for substantial periods of time at NoVo Foundation.

HOW TO APPLY

This is a highly competitive process. Only two candidates will be selected.

Candidates who meet the criteria described in this announcement, may apply by submitting a resume and completed Buen Vivir Finance Fellowship Application form to fellows@thousandcurrents.org no later than **April 2, 2018**. The application can be downloaded at: thousandcurrents.org/buen-vivir-fund/fellowship/. All applications submitted by the deadline will be acknowledged.

Interviews will be held late April and/or early May 2018, and Fellowships are expected to commence July 2018.

This search is being supported by Cory Pohley and Paula Morris of Bandwidth Consulting.