

Ember Call-Out 2021

Ember is calling for applications from community-based mental health initiatives working in low- and middle-income countries. Successful applicants will be enrolled in a 12-month partnership with Ember designed to support, strengthen or grow the project, as appropriate.

Applications are open until 6pm BST on Tuesday 24th of August. Here's all the information you'll need to work out whether this partnership is for you. *Lee esto en Espanol [aquí](#).*



Once you've read all the information, you can fill in [this application form](#).

What is Ember?

Ember is a collaboration between the [SHM Foundation](#) and the [Mental Health Innovation Network \(MHIN\)](#) that supports community-based mental health initiatives in low- and middle- income countries with mentorship and small amounts of financial support in order to strengthen their work and promote their expertise. We believe that people working at community level have a big role to play, and a huge amount of insight to offer, in addressing the gaps in mental health care and awareness globally.

However, our own journey has taught us, first-hand, about the many challenges facing community-based projects, particularly as they begin to grow, such as accessing funding, building an evidence base and creating robust networks. We know that the Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated many of these challenges, at a time when mental health care is needed more than ever. We witnessed how quickly and creatively community-based initiatives responded to increased mental health needs throughout the pandemic. **Ember was created to help mental health innovators find ways to overcome these barriers, so that they can become more sustainable and maximise their impact.**

How does Ember work?

- We **select a cohort** of excellent community-based mental health initiatives through a global call-out and simple application process, using our diagnostic tool, The Ember Health Check, to understand their strengths, challenges and goals.
- We **build strong and open relationships** with those in our cohort and gain a deeper understanding of their work
- Then we **deliver a 12-month package of in-kind support** based on their needs, alongside a stipend to contribute to the time dedicated to the partnership. This might include working

on strategy, communications and impact evaluation; building new skills and collaborative networks; and finding opportunities to showcase their work to new audiences.

- We **connect the initiatives with others** in the cohort and our wider network to exchange insights and join a community of expertise and solidarity.
- We **promote the stories and expertise** of our partners through creative projects, such as podcasts, photo essays and films, and publications such as insights pieces, articles and dissemination events.
- After 12 months of mentorship, we may choose to provide funding to some of the initiatives in our cohort

We work in partnership with the initiatives we select in order to strengthen, sustain and/or grow their work; and also to learn from them and showcase their expertise globally, so that others can benefit from it. The foundation of each partnership is a strong relationship that is honest, empathetic, and balanced.

Who are we?

The [SHM Foundation](#), of which Ember is a central programme, is an agile and forward-thinking philanthropic organisation that works globally to bring about positive social change in the areas of health, the arts and education. The SHM Foundation have been innovators and implementers in the field of mental health for over a decade. The [Mental Health Innovation Network](#) is a platform that facilitates the development and uptake of effective mental health interventions worldwide.

Within Ember, we are a small team of people with a diverse range of professional and personal backgrounds, who are passionate about mental health. The skills and expertise in our team includes implementation, evaluation, social anthropology, research, business, technology, education, design, psychology, social work and communications. We are a global team, located in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe.

What does a partnership with Ember include?

The Ember team will work with the successful applicant to identify your strengths, challenges, and vision for the future. Then we work together to overcome those challenges, draw on those strengths and help your initiative progress on its journey, whether that means growing, developing a more sustainable business or operational model, transitioning from a volunteer organisation to a professional one, or replicating your work in a new setting. We don't expect applicants to design new programmes or projects in order to apply to the Ember call-out. We are interested in knowing more about the work you do, your experiences in day-to-day life, and the story behind your initiative.

The support Ember provides is tailored to you and your needs, and rooted in an ethos of collaboration, respect, and mutual learning. No two initiatives have the same Ember journey, because no two initiatives have the same situation, story and goals. At Ember, we do not have all the answers, but we do have great people and tools, and we are passionate about working together to overcome obstacles and help your initiative achieve its potential.

Ember provides:

- A **space for reflection**, as well as personal and organisational growth.

- In-kind support to strengthen priority areas, such as fundraising, communications, impact evaluation and operations, by **building key skills and assets**.
- A **platform** to raise awareness about your work and build a network, through creative publications, events and networking opportunities.
- **Opportunities to connect** and exchange insights with other initiatives in Ember's cohorts, past and present
- A **backer**, who will promote you and your work at every possible opportunity
- **Wellbeing support** for you and your team
- An unrestricted **stipend of £5000 GBP** for the year, split into two instalments

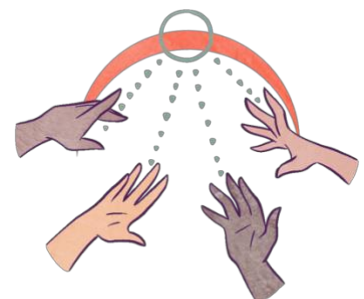
Take a look at our website to get a sense of what this looks like in practice: [this page](#) shows the initiatives we have partnered with in the past, and [our online showcase](#) shares some of what we worked on together and achieved.

How does the partnership work practically?

- We work remotely via tools like Whatsapp and Zoom
- We spend an average of 1-2 hours per week working together directly through calls, online workshops, creative sessions etc
- If possible, we also make a one-week visit to each of our partners at some point during the year
- We conduct partnerships either in English or Spanish, so require that at least one team member be comfortable working in either language. Though Ember's team collectively speaks 14 languages, our model of involving multiple people from our team in each partnership limits the number of languages we can work directly with innovators in. This is something we are hoping to expand as we grow.
- Ideally, we work with multiple people from across the team, rather than just the founder or the senior management, as we know this builds stronger relationships and delivers greater impact.

What does Ember expect from its partners?

- Applicants need to be prepared to dedicate time to the collaboration: approximately 3 hours per week over 12 months.
- We look for partners who are committed to engaging with us openly, honestly and in a spirit of collaboration.
- We welcome opportunities to work with multiple people in the team, across different levels of their work, as we think this leads to particularly strong outcomes. However, we understand this isn't always possible, so it should not be a barrier to applying.



What do our partners say about us?

The people who are best placed to give you a sense of whether an Ember partnership is right for your organisation, are the teams who've been part of our previous cohorts. Here are a few things they have said about partnering with us:

“You could describe Ember as an organization that really cares about improving and strengthening the organisations it supports, based on the resources they already have and focusing on what their real challenges are. But I think Ember does not come with a recipe, but rather, from a place of respect and care, they are willing to listen to what we have to say as organisations and work from there.”

“Ember has a pool of many professionals which are used according to what are perceived as gaps within the organizations with which Ember is working, in order to strengthen them. I think this is the most important thing about Ember.”

“We were very happy when it was also indicated to us that besides linking us with funders, Ember would also assist us in our personal development as an organization in things like proposal writing, developing a name for ourselves, you know, and getting a taste of what it is to be playing on the global field.”



“When we started to work, the pandemic happened, and we were left there as if we had had a heart attack in front of a supervisor or someone. But it was nothing further from the truth, because the entire Ember team dedicated itself to taking care of us. And not only of us, we know that the rest of the innovations also were taken care of.”

“The partnership has provided the opportunities to think boldly.”

“We are really grateful about how it has changed how we view ourselves as well, you know. It may not mean a lot for an external person, but being recognised as partners and as legitimate people with a collective voice and having such visibility etc., it has boosted our self-esteem individually as well as a group. And this is really a very lasting impact on us.”

What are the criteria for applying?

To be successful in this process, applicants must:

- **Work in the field of mental health.** We take a broad definition of what it means to work in this field – we’re not only looking for those who explicitly provide mental health services, because we know that mental health intersects with many dimensions of life.

- We are particularly interested in, but not limited to, organisations that are working on mental health in relation to: [the impact of Covid-19](#); [HIV/AIDS](#); [childhood, adolescence and youth](#); and [gender equality](#).
- **Engage directly with communities.** We are looking for projects that are close to the communities they serve and deeply rooted in their settings, with local leadership. We are less likely to partner with advocacy organisations, political organisations, government services or think-tanks.
- **Be based in a low- or middle- income country** ([check this list](#) if unsure).
- **Not discriminate** on the basis of religion, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race or ability. However, faith-based organisations may apply.
- **Be locally led.**
- **Have a team of more than one person.** This can include volunteers.
- **Have at least one English or Spanish speaker in the team.**

Is there financial support available?

At this stage of the partnership, Ember does not provide significant funding. Successful applicants will receive a stipend of £5,000 for the year, as a contribution to the time committed to the process. Our work together will, however, include efforts to strengthen the financial position, including fundraising support, networking opportunities and recommendations to other funders. At the end of the 12 month partnership, there may be an opportunity to secure funding from Ember, though at this stage there is no guarantee this will be the case.

What does the application process involve?

We know that applications can take up a huge amount of time, and this is particularly difficult for small teams. We have tried to make sure our application process is as straightforward as possible. It is divided into three rounds.

Round 1 (July-August):

Applications will be open from Thursday 22nd of July to 6pm BST Tuesday 24th of August through [this short online questionnaire](#). We recommend you prepare your application offline and then fill in the online form when you are ready. Applications will be reviewed on an ongoing basis. You will receive an email from a member of the team within four weeks, letting you know whether you have progressed to the next round.

Round 2 (August-September):

If successful, we will contact you to organise a 30-minute interview via Zoom or phone. You will receive an email from a member of the team within four weeks, letting you know whether you have progressed to the next round.

Round 3 (October-November):

If successful, we will contact you to organise a longer interview, with other members of the team, to go into more detail about the work you do. You will then be placed on a short-list that will be submitted to our independent advisory group, the [Ember Working Group](#), to

make the final decision. If you are unsuccessful at this stage, you will receive detailed feedback on your application. The final selection decisions will be communicated in mid-December.

When would the partnership start?

The final selection decisions will be communicated by mid-December. The partnerships with the selected initiatives will formally begin in January 2022 and end in January 2023.

What is Ember not?

Ember is not...

- A consultancy firm
- A research organisation
- A mental health care provider
- A training organisation
- The usual type of funder
- A large organisation

What next?

- **Apply!**

If you meet these criteria and would like to apply to work with Ember, please submit an application form through the online questionnaire. You can submit your responses in English or Spanish. The deadline for submission is 6pm BST on Tuesday 24th August.

[Fill in the online application form here.](#)

- **Spread the word!**

We want to cast the net as wide as possible. Please help by spreading the word about this call-out amongst your network!

You can forward this document to any organisations or people who might be interested to know about it, or who can help spread the word, and share [this page](#) on social media. To make this easy, you can click the button below, or use this text for social media posts:

Opportunity alert 📌 @Ember_mh is looking for their next cohort of partners! Applications are open to local #mentalhealth initiatives in low/middle income countries who want to join a 12 month partnership focused on supporting their work. Find out more: <https://ctt.ac/TVfPF+>

[Tweet this news](#)

