

How a Chapter Works

The chapter team, the role ladder, and how people are chosen

Founder: Zohaib Khan

Strategy: Marina Leivald, CTRL+HX Studio

theaifellowship.com

THE VOLUNTEER PRINCIPLE

The volunteer principle

Every role in this document is a volunteer role. Nobody in a chapter, a country, or a region is paid for holding a title here, and no title creates an employment relationship with the Fellowship or any obligation beyond what this document describes.

"Our job as an organization is to protect that motivation, never to exploit it."

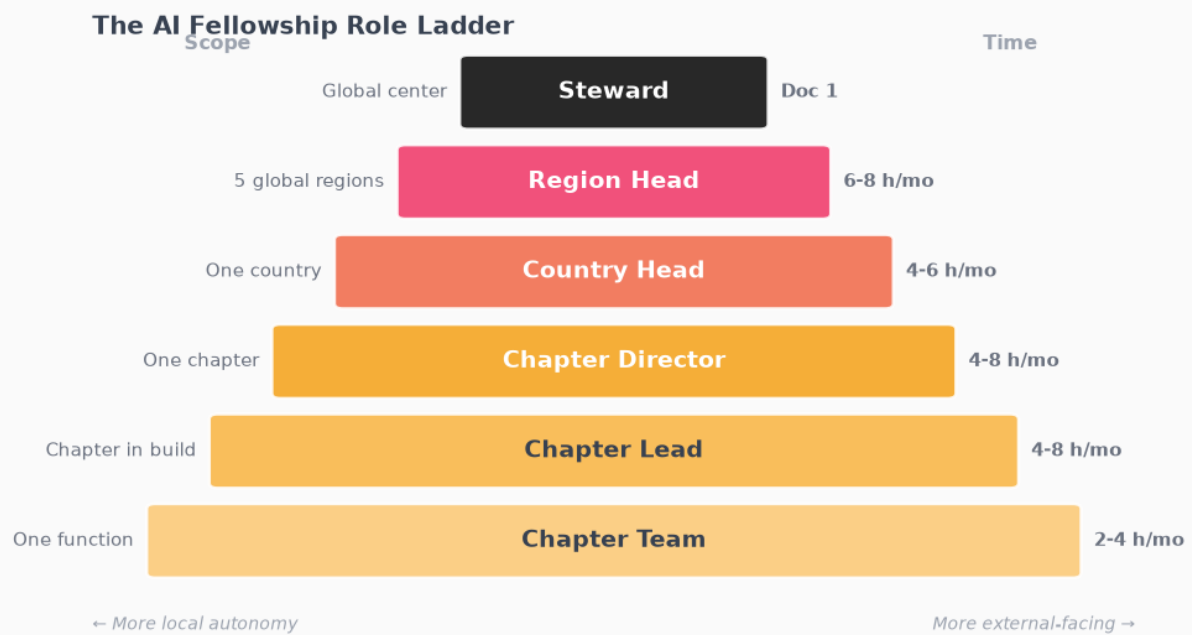
The Fellowship runs on intrinsic motivation: people build chapters because they want this community to exist in their city, because they grow by doing it, and because building something with others is its own reward. So this document keeps time expectations honest, makes stepping down graceful and normal, and is explicit about what volunteers receive in return.

IF THE FELLOWSHIP EVER CREATES PAID POSITIONS

They will be separate, openly advertised, and documented on their own terms. No volunteer role in this ladder quietly turns into unpaid staff work, and no one should ever feel that their standing in the community depends on giving more hours than they honestly have.

THE LADDER AT A GLANCE

The ladder at a glance



Every role is a volunteer role. The ladder widens at the base — chapters are where the Fellowship lives.

Role	Scope	How you get there	Time commitment
Chapter Team member	One function in one chapter	Volunteer, appointed by the Chapter Director after an open call	2–4 hours/month
Chapter Lead	A chapter being built, before its first event	Steps up or applies to start a chapter	4–8 hours/month
Chapter Director	One chapter	Automatic on launching the chapter's first event	4–8 hours/month, more in event months
Country Head	All chapters in one country	Nominated by that country's Directors, confirmed by the Stewards	4–6 hours/month
Region Head	One region (APAC, MENA, Africa, Europe, Americas)	Nominated within the region, confirmed by the Stewards; elected from Phase 2	6–8 hours/month
Steward	The global center	Appointed today, elected on the schedule in Doc 1	Defined in Doc 1

The higher a role sits, the more it represents the Fellowship to the outside world, and the more knowledge it requires. Why that does not contradict "belonging before credentials" is explained in the Credentials section below.

Selection Process by Role



Selection is always open, always announced publicly, and always confirmed in writing.

THE CHAPTER TEAM

The Chapter Team

A chapter is a team, not a person. A Director running everything alone is the most common way healthy chapters quietly die, so from the start every chapter builds a small team of functional roles.

Events Lead

Venues, logistics, run-of-show.

Community Lead

Welcoming new members, the buddy system, keeping chapter channels alive.

Communications Lead

Social posts, photos, event recaps in the Fellowship's voice.

Partnerships Lead

Local venues, universities, and sponsors within the Brand and IP Policy.

Safeguarding Lead

Required (named) whenever events are likely to include under-18 participants, per the safeguarding protocol.

SCALE FREELY

Small chapters combine functions. One person can hold two hats; a brand-new chapter might be three people covering everything. Large chapters split them further. The shape is the chapter's choice; the functions existing is not.

How the team is selected. The Chapter Director appoints team members through an open call in the chapter's channels, never by quiet arrangement. Any member may put themselves forward. The Director chooses on willingness, reliability, and fit, states the choice publicly, and thanks everyone who stepped up. Team roles run for 12 months and are renewable by mutual agreement. Rotation is healthy: a team where every role has changed hands at least once is a chapter that will survive its founders.

CHAPTER LEAD AND CHAPTER DIRECTOR

Chapter Lead and Chapter Director

The Chapter Lead is the person building a chapter that does not fully exist yet. They have applied through the chapter process, been accepted, and are working toward their first event: gathering a founding team, finding a venue, recruiting the first members. The Fellowship supports them with the Starter Kit, a buddy from an established chapter, and the center's help.

THE MOMENT OF THE FIRST EVENT

The Chapter Lead becomes the Chapter Director. No committee, no waiting period, no further approval. The title is earned by the only proof that matters in this community: you brought real people into a room and made something happen under the Fellowship's name.

"Titles granted for plans attract people who like titles; titles earned by shipping attract people who like building."

A chapter may have up to two co-Directors. Directors serve on a rolling annual basis with a light annual review, and there is no term limit for a Director in good standing, though after three years the Stewards will gently raise succession planning, because continuity is a strength and dependence is a risk.

1**Outgoing Director and Chapter Team**

Propose a successor, normally from within the team.

2**Chapter members notified**

Given two weeks to raise concerns.

3**Country Head confirms**

Or the Stewards, where no Country Head exists.

STEPPING DOWN

Directors step down the way they served: gracefully and with thanks. A managed handover is always better for the chapter than a slow fade, and a Director who steps down in good standing remains a member of the community, an alumnus of the role, and the first person the next Director should take to coffee.

COUNTRY HEAD

Country Head

When a country has two or more active chapters, coordination becomes real work: chapters share a national context, national partners, national media, and national qualifiers for the AI World Cup and AI JAM. The Country Head carries that work.

A Country Head coordinates the country's chapters without commanding them: each chapter's autonomy is untouched. They open national doors, coordinate national rounds of the flagship initiatives,

welcome and mentor new Chapter Leads in their country, and represent the country's chapters upward to the Region Head and the Stewards.

Country Head — Requirements

- Served at least 12 months as a Chapter Director in good standing (or equivalent community leadership recognised by the Stewards)
- Completed safeguarding training
- Working AI knowledge: enough to speak accurately and credibly about AI in front of a university dean, a journalist, or a ministry official
- Not required: researcher credentials. Required: never making the Fellowship look careless

SELECTION

The country's Chapter Directors nominate; the Stewards confirm. Where a country has strategic need but only one chapter, the Stewards may appoint in consultation with that chapter. The role runs for 12 months, renewable, with a maximum of two consecutive terms before a break.

REGION HEAD

Region Head

APAC

MENA

Sub-Saharan Africa

Europe

Americas

The Region Head is the Fellowship's most senior volunteer role, and its most outward-facing. They mentor the region's Country Heads and Directors, represent the region to the Stewards, coordinate the region's role in the flagship initiatives including regional semifinals, and hold regional relationships with partners and institutions.

Region Head — Requirements

- Recognised AI qualifications: a degree or postgraduate study in AI, machine learning, data science, or closely related field — OR equivalent demonstrated expertise (years of professional AI practice, published research or teaching, competition results, significant open-source contributions, or delivered AI education programs)
- Served as a Country Head, or at least 18 months as a Chapter Director
- Completed safeguarding training
- Track record of leading across cultures — a region is many countries and one voice

SELECTION

The region's Country Heads and Chapter Directors nominate; the Stewards confirm. From Phase 2 of the transition (Doc 1), Region Heads are elected by the region's Chapter Directors, with Steward confirmation retained as a safeguard. The role runs for 24 months, staggered across regions, with a maximum of two consecutive terms.

WHY KNOWLEDGE REQUIREMENTS RISE

Why the ladder asks for more knowledge as it rises

One of the Fellowship's founding values is belonging before credentials, so we owe you a straight answer on why the upper ladder asks for qualifications.

Credentials never gate belonging

Membership, chapter participation, the Chapter Team, and the Director role itself ask for commitment and character, not certificates. A first-year student who ships their first event is exactly as much a Chapter Director as a machine learning PhD who ships theirs.

Qualifications protect the community, not rank it

When a Region Head sits across from a government AI office or a university faculty, the credibility of every chapter in that region rides on them getting the substance right. Requiring real knowledge there is how we keep the promise that the Fellowship's name opens doors for you.

HOW WE DEFINE QUALIFICATION

Generously, in the Fellowship's own spirit. Formal degrees count, and so does proven practice. Someone who taught AI to five hundred people through community programs, or whose competition record and open-source work speak for themselves, is qualified in every sense we care about.

DISPUTES AND CONTESTING DECISIONS

Disputes, and contesting decisions

Most friction in a volunteer community is resolved by two adults talking. This section exists for the times it is not.

Dispute Resolution Path | Conduct concerns bypass this entirely



Conduct concerns bypass this flow entirely and go straight to Code of Conduct channels.

DISPUTES WITHIN A CHAPTER

Try a direct, respectful conversation first. If unresolved, bring it to the Chapter Director, who hears both sides and decides quickly and transparently. If the dispute is about the Director, bring it to the Country Head, or the Stewards where no Country Head exists. Every dispute raised in writing is acknowledged within 5 business days, with a resolution target of 30 days.

CONDUCT CONCERNS

Anything that falls under the Code of Conduct – harassment, discrimination, safeguarding, and the rest – is never handled through this informal ladder. It goes through the Code of Conduct reporting channels, with their own confidentiality, investigation, and appeal protections, at any level, about any person, including Stewards.

CONTESTING A ROLE DECISION

Any appointment, confirmation, or selection under this document can be contested within 14 days of its announcement: for chapter-level roles, by any three members of the affected chapter acting together; for Country or Region roles, by any two Chapter Directors of the affected area. A panel of two Stewards not involved in the original decision, plus one Chapter Director from outside the area, answers in writing within 21 days.

CONTESTING IN GOOD FAITH

Contesting a decision in good faith is a service to the community, not an act of disloyalty. Retaliation against anyone who raises a dispute or a contest is itself a Code of Conduct violation.

WHAT VOLUNTEERS RECEIVE

What volunteers receive

This ladder runs on intrinsic motivation. Here is what the Fellowship puts on its side of the exchange.

Titles that mean something

Chapter Director, Country Head, Region Head are real, defended titles with weight on a CV

Recognition that compounds

Verifiable credentials, letters of recognition, public celebration, permanent alumni standing

Growth and access

First access to facilitation, judging, mentoring. Priority travel support. Direct mentorship above

Protection from burnout

Honest hours, co-leadership, leave of absence, stepping down treated as good leadership

Titles that mean something

Chapter Director, Country Head, and Region Head are real, defended titles: the Fellowship protects them from dilution precisely so they carry weight on a CV, in a bio, and in a room.

Recognition that compounds

Verifiable credentials for roles held and programs delivered, letters of recognition for study, grant, and job applications, public celebration of your work in the Fellowship's channels, and permanent alumni standing when you step down in good faith. What you build here stays yours to point at.

Growth and access

First access to facilitation, judging, and mentoring opportunities, priority for travel support to global events where funds allow, direct mentorship from the level above you, and the strongest professional network we can build you: several thousand people across 80 countries who answer when a Fellow asks.

Protection from burnout

Honest hour expectations, co-leadership as the norm rather than the exception, leave of absence without loss of standing, and a culture where stepping down gracefully is treated as good leadership, because it is.

"The Fellowship will never be able to pay its volunteers what they are worth. It can make sure they are never taken for granted, never left alone with a problem, and never invisible. That is the deal, it is written down now, and you may hold us to it."

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Founder: Zohaib Khan | Strategy: Marina Leivald, CTRL+HX Studio | theaifellowship.com

This document is open for community review. Feedback via #feedback-and-ideas.