



**MANDELA WASHINGTON
FELLOWSHIP**
FOR YOUNG AFRICAN LEADERS

Evaluation of the Mandela Washington Fellowship (2014 – 2018)

August 2020



Introduction

The Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI), launched in 2010, is a signature effort of the U.S. Department of State (DOS). The program's purpose is to invest in the next generation of African leaders. The Mandela Washington Fellowship is the flagship program of YALI that empowers young people through academic coursework, leadership training, and networking.

The Fellows, ages 25 to 35, are selected from countries across Sub-Saharan Africa through a competitive application process. Upon selection, the Fellows travel to the United States for a six-week program at Academic and Leadership Institutes ("Institutes") across the country at U.S. colleges/universities. In the 2014 – 2018 period, there were five types of Fellowship program tracks: Public Management (PM), Business & Entrepreneurship (BE), Civic Leadership (CL), Energy, and Energy-Public Management. After completing programming at the Institute, all Fellows travel to Washington, DC to reconvene as a cohort in a Summit event.

In addition to the Institutes and Summit, which all Fellows participate in, there are two additional components of the program. These include the Professional Development Experience (PDE) and the Reciprocal Exchange. The PDE is a short-term professional placement. The Reciprocal Exchange is an exchange program in which a U.S.-based individual applies to work on a specific project with a Fellow. The U.S.-based individual is the Reciprocal Exchange Awardee.

Infographic Report

The purpose of the evaluation of the Mandela Washington Fellowship (2014 – 2018) was to (1) examine the degree to which the U.S.-based components met the program's stated goals; (2) review the impact on advancing DOS strategic policy priorities; and (3) assess how Fellowship Alumni operationalize skills and knowledge gained during their U.S. exchange experience.

The evaluation reviewed seven evaluation questions (EQs) focused on Impact on Fellowship Alumni, Impact on Communities, Supporting Public Diplomacy Goals, Supporting Foreign Policy Goals, and Process Improvement. The findings, conclusions, and recommendations of this evaluation can support program improvements.

The following pages in this infographic report highlight key findings from the evaluation of the Mandela Washington Fellowship (2014 – 2018).

Surveyed and interviewed stakeholder groups include:

- 2014 – 2018 Fellowship Alumni
- Academic and Leadership Institute Staff
- Reciprocal Exchange Awardees
- PDE Host Organizations
- U.S. Community Members

The full evaluation report can be found on the [ECA Evaluation Division](#) page.



Skills Gained

Through the Fellowship, Fellows gained and refined tangible and intangible skillsets that are applicable to their professions.

The top 5 skills and types of knowledge that Fellowship Alumni said they had gained from the Fellowship were:



81%
of
Fellows

Agreed that the Fellowship has given them valuable job skills to use back home, such as networking, leadership, partnership, public speaking, and self-confidence.

Feel that the Fellowship helped in using the new skills/knowledge to manage a business or organization or team.

67%
of
Fellows

96%
of
Fellows

Believe participation in the Fellowship helped with achieving professional and personal goals.

"I am now more aware of the challenges faced by the deaf community and I am pursuing sign language and hoping to partner with other Fellows to build a robust program to help those who are deaf and hard of hearing."

--Fellow, Kenya, Civic Leadership Track



New Opportunities

Fellowship Alumni who responded to the survey described new opportunities in their professions and communities as a result of the doors the Fellowship helped to open.



Fellows that agreed they became more effective leaders in their governments, organizations or business roles due to the Fellowship.



Fellows that said participating in the Fellowship helped them gain new or better employment.

Agreed that the Reciprocal Exchange project they collaborated on with the Awardee generated opportunities furthering their professional development.

87%
of
Fellows



97%
of
Fellows

Who participated in the Professional Development Experience said that the PDE had helped them professionally.



Community Engagement



According to Fellow survey and interview responses, a hallmark of the Fellowship has been its follow-on impacts that Fellows have brought to their communities. Examples include:

“Introduction of mechanized palm kernel cracking for over 45 rural women helped improve the deplorable working and health conditions of rural women and over 200 rural children, especially girl children [whom] we liberated from forced labor.”

--Fellow, Cameroon, Civic Leadership

“My involvement in the [Reciprocal Exchange] allowed me to build innovative machinery that will help reduce waste of fruits by preserving surplus fruits and transforming them into useful commodities that will be sold to reinvest in youth development and employment in my home community.”

--Fellow, Democratic Republic of Congo, Business and Entrepreneurship

“After discovering my role as a leader in my community I took it upon myself to train my community on amaranth growing—a crop that is drought resistant and more nutritious than what the community has been growing over the years.”

--Fellow, Kenya, Business and Entrepreneurship



Impacts on the United States

Fellowship impacts have not been limited to Fellows and their home communities. The Fellowship has had positive benefits for U.S. communities, from strengthened ties to increased professional opportunities.

Agreed the local community has benefited from the Mandela Washington Fellowship.

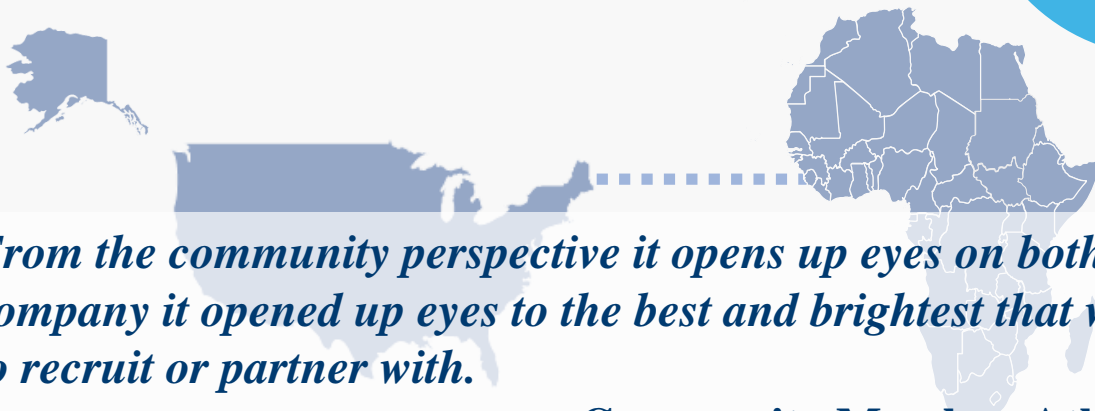
94%
of
U.S. Community
Members

84%
of
Institute Staff

Reported that hosting the Institute had strengthened ties between the local community and their institution.

Noted that Fellows had made cultural, academic, or business contributions to their organization.

97%
of
PDE Host
Organizations



From the community perspective it opens up eyes on both sides - in my company it opened up eyes to the best and brightest that we may want to recruit or partner with.

--Community Member, Atlanta, Georgia



Foreign Policy Goals

The Mandela Washington Fellowship is a key component of the United States foreign policy goals of strengthening democracy, encouraging economic growth, and creating lasting ties between the United States and the African continent.



65%
of
PDE Host
Organizations

Agreed that the PDE experience helped their organizations build lasting and productive relationships with people or organizations in sub-Saharan Africa.

79%
of
Fellows

Agreed that the Fellowship had helped build lasting and productive relationships, both personal and institutional, between the United States and other African countries.

Agreed that the Fellowship had advanced the U.S. foreign policy goal of building business leaders and enterprises to stimulate economic growth and employment.

77%
of
Fellows

Through the Fellowship, I have been able to resuscitate my NGO...I am positive that my initiative is currently strengthening Nigeria's democratic institutions in its own little way."

--PM track, Nigerian Fellow



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