The Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders is the flagship program of the U.S. Government’s Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI). YALI was created in 2010 and is celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2020. Established in 2014, the Mandela Washington Fellowship has brought nearly 4,400 young leaders from every country in Sub-Saharan Africa to the United States for academic and leadership training. The Fellows, between the ages of 25 and 35, are accomplished innovators and leaders in their communities and countries.

2020 Fellowship Components

**LEADERSHIP INSTITUTES**

All 700 Fellows participate in six-week Leadership Institutes at U.S. colleges and universities, studying Business, Civic Engagement, or Public Management. During their time on campus, Fellows connect with Americans and enrich local U.S. communities while sharing best practices.

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCES**

Up to 70 competitively-selected Fellows remain in the United States for four weeks to work with private, public, and non-profit organizations. Both Fellows and hosts benefit from discussing shared issues and challenges in their sectors, broadening their perspectives, and positioning U.S. organizations for international engagement.

**SUMMIT**

After the Institutes, Fellows convene for a multi-day Summit in Washington, D.C., where they forge connections with one another and U.S. leaders from the private, public, and non-profit sectors, setting the stage for long-term engagement between the United States and Africa.

**RECIPROCAL EXCHANGES**

Americans have the opportunity to apply to travel to Africa to collaborate on projects with Fellowship Alumni, building upon connections initiated while Fellows were in the United States. These partnerships and professional connections are intended to form lasting relationships, expand markets and networks, and increase mutual understanding.

**OPPORTUNITIES FOR FELLOWSHIP ALUMNI**

Upon returning home, Fellowship Alumni continue to build the skills and connections developed during their time in the United States through access to ongoing professional development, networking, and collaboration opportunities with support from the U.S. Department of State and affiliated partners.

**FELLOW DEMOGRAPHICS**

- 50–50 gender balance
- 5% report having a disability
- 44% own a business
- 41% run a non-profit

Fellows come from all 49 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

From 2016 to 2019, Fellows contributed more than 39,000 hours of community service to American organizations and social services.

One-third of 2019 Fellows had professional contacts in the United States prior to the Fellowship. After the program, 75% have specific plans to collaborate with Americans after they return home.

The Mandela Washington Fellowship is a program of the U.S. Department of State with funding provided by the U.S. Government and administered by IREX.
Fellowship Impact in the U.S. and Africa

By summer 2020, close to 5,100 Fellows across Sub-Saharan Africa will form an invaluable network of Fellowship Alumni who are spurring economic growth and prosperity, strengthening democratic governance, and enhancing peace and security across the continent.

• The Fellowship leverages private and institutional funding each year, with Institute Partners providing more than $22 million in direct support of the program since 2014.

• More than 80% of Institute Partners in 2019 report that the Fellowship helped create or strengthen relationships with private companies.

Since 2014, 42 states and the District of Columbia have hosted Fellowship activities.

• Institutes – Educational institutions in 32 states and the District of Columbia have hosted Fellows since 2014.

• Professional Development Experiences – Fellows have completed 136,000 hours of professional training at over 275 companies, organizations, and government agencies in 29 states and the District of Columbia.

• Reciprocal Exchanges – Since 2015, Americans from 35 states and the District of Columbia have traveled to 41 countries in Africa for a Reciprocal Exchange.

U.S. business students get real-life consulting experience working with Fellows’ companies

Students gain practical business consulting experience working with early-stage international companies while directly contributing to the growth of Fellows’ enterprises and economic development. By partnering with Mandela Washington Fellows, the University of Iowa enhanced its Business Consulting class to offer its students invaluable hands-on learning experiences. Since 2016, more than 200 full-time students have worked to develop and present business solutions for 60 Mandela Washington Fellow-owned companies in Africa, who served as clients for the course.

“The opportunity for University of Iowa students to work on real-life business problems in Africa equips them with practical skills, valuable networks, and a global mindset.”

– Dimy Doresca, Director, Institute for International Business, University of Iowa

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