

The Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders

What it is:

The Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders, which began in 2014, is the flagship program of the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) that empowers young people through academic coursework, leadership training, and networking. The Fellowship provides outstanding young leaders from Sub-Saharan Africa with the opportunity to hone their skills at a U.S. college or university with support for professional development after they return home.

Fellows engage in Academic and Leadership Institutes, meet with U.S. federal, state, and local government officials, participate in community service, visit organizations to gain professional development, and make friendships and professional contacts with Americans. Reflecting the diversity of Africa, Mandela Washington Fellows include Fellows with apparent and non-apparent disabilities.



in **2017:**

1,000 finalists were selected, representing every country in **Sub-Saharan Africa**



51 out of 1,000 Fellows self-identify as **having a disability (5%)**



50% of Fellows are **women**



Fellows **represented a range of career backgrounds**, including government, nonprofit, health, business, education, agriculture and law sectors

“The Mandela Washington Fellowship is committed to ensuring the full participation of Fellows with disabilities. Exchange programs are enriched when they include participants of all genders, backgrounds, abilities, and beliefs, and by doing so they are helping to contribute to more inclusive societies across Africa and the world.”

—Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders staff

Faces of the Fellowship



Robert Nkwangu

2014 Fellow from Uganda, Public Management

Mr. Nkwangu, who is Deaf, works to ensure that youth with disabilities have equal opportunities in government and civil society.



Grace Jerry

2015 Fellow from Nigeria, Civic Leadership

Once crowned Miss Wheelchair Nigeria, Ms. Jerry is also a music artist, disability rights advocate, and peace promoter in Nigeria.



Ojok Simon

2016 Fellow from Uganda, Business & Entrepreneurship

Mr. Simon won the Holman Prize for empowering rural blind and low-vision people with skills in organic beekeeping, honey harvesting, and wax production.

5 Ways the Fellowship Includes Fellows with Disabilities

1

Outreach to the disability community in sub-Saharan Africa

2

Provide reasonable accommodations

3

Engage university and organizational partners in supporting Fellows in the United States

4

Highlight Fellow and alumni impact in the United States and their local communities

5

Communicate with Fellows to improve good accommodation practices

Stay updated on the **Mandela Washington Fellowship** at yali.state.gov/washington-fellowship

The Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders is a program of the U.S. government and supported in its implementation by IREX.

