2017 Host Institute Overview

**Institute Dates:** mid-June – late July, 2017 (*44 nights—exact dates to be confirmed*)

Mandela Washington Fellowship Academic and Leadership Institutes are comprehensive executive-style programs for professionals in Business and Entrepreneurship, Civic Leadership, and Public Management. The academic content is designed for adult learners using adult learning principles and delivered by both host university faculty and local practitioners. The intensive six-week Institute model includes linkages between academic sessions, leadership development, site visits, community service (at least five times during the Institute), and organized cultural/civic activities to maximize learning and retention of new concepts and ideas. Fellows should gain both theoretical knowledge and practical skills during the Institutes.

The Fellowship should be academically robust, but host institutions should leave sufficient evening and weekend free time for Fellows to pursue individual interests and socialize with fellow participants and Americans. The program schedule should also include adequate time for reading and preparation of class assignments.

The program model for this initiative includes identification by each Institute of an academic director, who will be present throughout the entirety of the Institute to ensure the continuity, coherence, and integration of all aspects of the academic program. The academic director will plan, implement, and oversee the academic and leadership sessions and monitor Fellow participation in all program activities. Each Institute should also appoint an administrative director to oversee all Fellow support services, including ensuring Fellows’ personal well-being throughout the Institute, assisting with budgetary and logistical elements of the program, and regular reporting to IREX. It is expected that either the academic or administrative director will be actively engaged in the majority of program activities, in particular the practical academic sessions. Both directors should plan to be present and available as resources for the Fellows throughout the six weeks of the Institute. It is suggested that Institutes plan to have additional staff on hand to assist with acclimating Fellows to the host community and with any emergencies that may arise. Other staff should be designated as appropriate.

All Institutes should include the following elements:

**Orientation**

All proposed Institutes must include an orientation that will provide Fellows with a concise overview of the program, including principal objectives and major themes, and important logistical information. Successful orientations include both academic and administrative components. The academic orientation should introduce Fellows to the overall themes that will be covered, the practical academic sessions during the Institute, and how the sessions relate to the Institute’s greater themes. It should be stressed that some academic content may not be directly applicable to all Fellows, but Fellows should make connections between the content and their experiences in their home countries. The academic orientation should also address other program components including leadership training, site visits, community service activities, peer collaborators, networking, and any other experiences the Fellows will participate in and how they relate to the Institute’s themes.
The administrative orientation should introduce Fellows to Institute staff and to the resources available on campus and in the surrounding community. The orientation must include information on safety and security, respect for diversity, health and well-being, and sexual harassment. Institute staff should clearly outline their expectations of the Fellows including active and timely participation in all aspects of the Institute, adherence to Fellowship and Institute terms and conditions, responsibility to build their own networks, and the importance of keeping an open mind to learn from each session, whether or not it directly relates to each Fellow’s present work. The administrative orientation should establish group norms to ensure Fellows have the tools to debate constructively, in addition to other ground rules to promote effective discourse throughout the program.

From early communications with Fellows, Institutes should be clear with Fellows on what they can expect from Institute programming in terms of academic rigor and the types of experiential and skills-building activities the Institute will offer. These communications should also provide information on pre-arrival Institute contacts, housing accommodations, and other Institute specific details to support appropriate planning and expectation setting.

Some orientation best practices include:

- Program management takes time during orientation to work with Fellows to develop a collaboratively agreed upon code of behavior and sets expectations for group conduct during the program.
- Program management reviews the university’s sexual harassment policy with Fellows, providing culturally relevant examples of the types of activities that constitute sexual harassment.
- Scavenger hunts to help familiarize Fellows with the campus and surrounding community as well as bond with each other and/or get to know Americans.

**Practical Academic Sessions**

An ideal Institute will consist of an integrated series of highly interactive learning experiences including seminars, group discussions, skills-building exercises, experiential activities, and assignments. Individual sessions should allow ample time for the exchange of views among Fellows and presenters. When constructing the Institute program agenda and while discussants/facilitators/speakers are crafting their sessions, it is important to keep in mind that the Fellowship is an executive style program, the Fellows are not students, and they come from a diverse set of countries and backgrounds. To ensure the success of each session, Institutes are encouraged to identify session leaders who are interested in learning about the African experience from the Fellows in addition to sharing their expertise on the American experience. Presenters that have some experience in Africa are often well received by the Fellows. The Institute should expose Fellows to a variety of presenters with diverse backgrounds, viewpoints, and occupations. The Institutes must be designed specifically for the Mandela Washington Fellows and may not replicate an existing course. Sessions should cover overall guiding principles and skills specific to the Institute track and be applicable to a wide-range of professional and educational backgrounds.

As much as possible, content should be U.S.-focused but provide clearly transferable lessons that Fellows could consider incorporating into their situations in Africa. In other words, Institutes should not attempt to teach African leaders about African problems or U.S. solutions to African problems. Rather, Institutes should present U.S. content and allow ample time for Fellows to share and discuss their own experiences. Allowing Fellows to talk about their work in their home countries and share ideas with each other and the presenters is integral to the success of the Institute. The academic director should be available to assist Fellows in their efforts to connect the U.S. lessons to their home countries. While this can be done in many ways, typically it is most successful when Fellows debrief regularly with the academic director. Throughout the academic program,
Fellows should be reminded that most of the case studies presented will be focused on the U.S. context as the Fellows are expected to bring their home country expertise and perspective to these discussions.

Best practices for Practical Academic Sessions include:

- **Academic content should be designed for the adult learner using adult learning principles and experiential/practical training techniques.**
- **Academic learning is balanced with cultural enrichment and down time.**
- **Sufficient reflection time is allocated for Fellows to process new learning and experiences during their program.** Program design incorporates structured reflection facilitated by an expert to synthesize the disparate program elements through activities such as journal writing, small group work, or group sharing.
- **Academic content that emphasizes innovative uses of technology and scientific and data-driven approaches to decision-making.**
- **Program design includes linkages between academic sessions, site visits, community service and cultural/civic activities to maximize learning and retention of new concepts.**
- **Workshops are sequential, emphasize practical applications, and provide opportunities for Fellows to develop and practice new skills.**
- **Team building and communications sessions are facilitated through leadership activities to develop group cohesion.**

**Site Visits**

The Institute should also include site visits to relevant businesses, organizations, and government agencies and discussions in the field with local professionals and experts. The site visits should be substantive in nature and not solely a tour of a facility. The most successful site visits include an orientation to the organization (including what need the organization exists to address, how it is structured to address that need, and what other ways Americans are tackling this need), a tour of the facility or opportunity to meet with beneficiaries, and an opportunity for a discussion with a senior leader of the organization. When selecting site visits, it is helpful to prioritize organizations that have either an organizational or staff level interest in establishing relationships with the Fellows so that the Fellows can utilize site visits as additional networking opportunities. Site visits should relate to the academic content and the week’s theme.

While most site visits may be organized for the full cohort of 25 Fellows, time should also be set aside for tailored/specialized site visits for individual Fellows or small groups that can be organized by sub-themes.

**Leadership Training**

Leadership training should be based on the model preferred by the Institute. Each week, there should be at least one leadership training session that develops and enhances Fellows’ leadership and collective problem-solving skills. The sessions should be creative, interactive, and team-oriented. Practical group exercises, self-reflection, and skills development are also important components of leadership training. In this context, the academic program should include group discussions, trainings, and exercises that focus on topics such as leadership, team and consensus building, networking, collective problem solving skills, effective communication and public speaking, and management skills.

Institutes should be aware that Fellows will be asked to develop a Leadership Development Plan (LDP) prior to arriving at the Summit. Ideally, Institute leadership activities could complement Fellow’s individual work on these plans. The LDP will include an Essential Question, which is open-ended and unique to each Fellow, relating to their work in their home country. In most cases, the Essential Question is a way for the Fellow to talk about
what they hope to get out of the Institute or to convey an issue that they are grappling with in their daily work. Institutes should plan to work with Fellows (individually or in small groups) to help them explore their Essential Questions through interactions with Americans working in relevant fields. Some Institutes choose to incorporate the LDP into their formal leadership sessions while others choose to focus only on the Essential Question. Both are acceptable models, but Institute staff should be aware that the LDP exists and will be used as a tool at the Summit and in Alumni programming activities.

**Community Service**
All Institutes should include at least five community service opportunities in which the Fellows experience firsthand the key role of not-for-profit organizations and volunteerism in America. Community service should connect with the Institute theme whenever possible. Ideally these activities will expose Fellows to a diverse group of organizations and include interaction with service recipients. As with site visits, before the community service activities, Fellows should be briefed on the community need the organization fills and be given an overview of how the organization operates. Community service should be hands-on and include activities that broaden Fellow interaction with Americans such as serving meals at a homeless shelter, visiting with long-term patients at a local nursing home, sharing their favorite games with disadvantaged children, participating in a community park clean-up, or mentoring/tutoring teens in summer school.

Some best practices for community service activities include:
- Service activities are linked to the themes and topics being explored in the Institute, and Fellows are provided with an overview of the organization they will be visiting/working with prior to the activity.
- Community service activities are preceded and followed by debrief sessions, allowing Fellows to process their experience, ask questions, and make connections to their home communities.

**Cultural Exchange**
The State Department’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs’ (ECA) mission is to promote mutual understanding between citizens of other countries and citizens of the United States. Thus, Institutes should include robust opportunities for Fellows to interact with their U.S. peers, to meet Americans from a variety of backgrounds, and to speak to appropriate student and civic groups about their experiences and life in their home communities. Many Fellows will appreciate gaining insight into the lives of “everyday” Americans and to the extent possible, host universities should facilitate this. Activities should also allow participants to present their country’s history and culture to Americans as well as to each other. Institutes should include at least one formal opportunity for participants to share their cultures with the local community through a cultural fair, community dinner, or other cultural activity.

ECA also encourages facilitated cultural and weekend activities (such as group nights at the theater, concerts, sporting events, and city tours) that offer Fellows opportunities to experience the diversity of the United States while fostering group cohesion.

Some best practices in cultural activities include:
- Institutes incorporate events that allow the Fellows to share their cultures with each other and the local community.
- Institutes design and host cultural activities that showcase local culture and/or seasonal U.S holidays (e.g. July 4th parades and fireworks).
- Institutes organize a variety of optional cultural/social activities during the week and weekends.
- Institutes regularly share (via email, wikis, etc.) information on the broad mix of campus and community activities open to Fellows (such as sporting, theater, and art events, and guest speakers).
Peer Collaborators
Hosts should plan to match Fellows with peers of the same track/industry. Peers should be individuals from the community who are similar in age, share similar professional interests, and are leaders in their area of specialization. Peers should be interested in sharing experiences and building relationships internationally.

While there are many possible Peer Collaborator models, best practices include:

- **Speed Networking:** Institutes bring Fellows and potential Peer Collaborators together for an event in which they facilitate structured, short introductory conversations. Fellows have the opportunity to meet multiple potential collaborators and both the peer collaborators and Fellows are able to privately identify who they would like to continue to connect with. The event organizer provides contact details for the matches following the event and encourages initial contacts.

- **Hub Leaders:** Fellows at each Institute will generally be placed in smaller communities of practice of 4-5 individuals who are working in the same field. Institute staff identify an American professional in each interest area from the local community as a hub leader. The hub leader meets with their group of Fellows in the first week and helps to connect Fellows to potential peer collaborators. Hub leaders generally meet each week with their Fellows to check in on the peer collaborator relationships and to help identify other professionals in the Fellows fields of expertise.

- **Peer Collaborator Bios:** A virtual version of speed networking. Institute staff collect 150 word professional bios from a pool of potential Peer Collaborators. Staff share these bios with the Fellows who then rank their top three choices of Peer Collaborators. They do the same with Fellow bios for the Peer Collaborators. Institute staff assign a Peer Collaborator to each Fellow based on their rankings, interest areas, and work experience.

- **One to One Matching:** Institute staff utilize information from each Fellow’s application materials and bios, as well as communications with the Fellow on their networking goals and professional interests, to match them directly with a professional working in the Fellow’s field. Because this model of peer collaborator matching is more complex, it has proven most successful when a member of the Institute team is assigned to oversee this component as their primary responsibility.

Networking Opportunities
Networking is an important component of the Fellowship and time should be incorporated for these activities throughout the Institute. Successful Institutes plan networking events and receptions for their Fellows to meet with organizations in their communities that might be interested in developing professional connections with the Fellows. While these events may also incorporate organizations that Institutes draw Peer Collaborators from, the support and time set aside for general networking is a distinct element of the program. Peer collaborators are designed to provide an in depth professional relationship with Americans, while general networking opportunities allow Fellows to further expand the breadth of their professional networks.

Summit Preparation Sessions
One 90 minute session should be set aside each week for group discussions and preparation for Summit activities.

Unstructured Time for Individual Interests
Universities should reserve time during regular business hours for Fellows to pursue their individual interests. During this time Fellows should be encouraged to arrange their own meetings with American experts and leaders in your local community, allowing them to further customize their Fellowship experience. This is an opportunity for Fellows to focus on more technically specific areas of interest and grow their professional
networks. Hosts are asked to help connect Fellows with relevant contacts through their networks and encourage them to take initiative and make good use of this time. While Institutes should plan to connect Fellows to networking opportunities, they should also set the expectation that Fellows should be building connections on their own during unscheduled time. As Fellows will become more comfortable at their host institutions and build larger networks as the Institutes progress, program agendas should include more unscheduled time in later weeks.

**Fellow Feedback**
Institutes should include weekly debrief sessions and other methods and opportunities for Fellows to provide feedback during the Institutes to ensure that any academic, administrative, or personal issues of concern can be addressed in a timely manner.

**Overall Institute Best Practices (Logistical Considerations)**
- Housing is an easy walk or public transit ride to campus in a facility dedicated to mature adults (i.e. not undergraduates) with no more than two persons of the same gender assigned to each room. Housing offers wireless internet access.
- Several meal options are offered for Fellows, which may include a combination of cash and meals. **Housing should have the option for Fellows to cook meals** and include basic cookware and utensils.
- Transportation to and from all organized site visits, community service activities, and cultural activities is provided. Transportation is also provided to and from the airport at the beginning and end of the Institute.
- Program schedule considers the potential fasting needs of Muslim Fellows for Ramadan and also allows for time and space (separate for each gender) for prayer times and celebration of Eid (Muslim Fellows should be given the day off for Eid if requested).
- Fellows have access to Institute Partner’s resources to support their learning such as the writing center, library, computer lab, etc.
- Institute staff prepares and shares a toolkit of social and cross-cultural university and community resources to support Fellow needs during the program.
- Program implements a clear communications plan to notify Fellows of events, activities, and program changes (e.g. Blackboard, Moodle, Canvas, wikis, listservs, etc.).
- Team-building and positive group dynamics are supported and nurtured throughout the program and facilitated by a cross-cultural expert who is outside of the regular program management team.
- Fellows are provided with a certificate of completion at the end of the program, signed by the program director and stamped with a university seal.
- Medical facilities and care is available and easily accessible to Fellows as needed over the course of the academic institute from providers accepting the international Accident and Sickness Health Benefits Program (ASPE) provided by the U.S. Department of State.

**Support for Fellows with Disabilities**
The Mandela Washington Fellowship strongly promotes the inclusion of Fellows with disabilities and is seeking partner organizations that are committed to ensuring a high quality, inclusive program for all Fellows. All Institutes should be prepared to provide accommodations for Fellows with disabilities at their Institute. Direct program costs associated with disability accommodation on campus will be paid directly by IREX and are not expected to be included in sub-award budgets, although cost-share for disability accommodations is allowable and strongly encouraged.
**Track-Specific Guidance**

Because the Mandela Washington Fellows are mid-career professionals, basic survey courses on business and entrepreneurship, civic leadership, or public management are not appropriate for the Institutes. Institutes are most effective when they have a unifying theme that ties the academics and other activities together. Weekly themes can also be helpful. We expect that you will consider key challenges facing Africa, your college or university’s unique expertise, and the resources available within your community as you develop Institute themes and topics. However, to ensure a common experience for the Fellows, we ask that academic sessions include the subthemes mentioned below for each track. While theoretical sessions can provide a helpful common understanding of a subject, Institutes should emphasize practical academic sessions with opportunities to relate the experiential content to Fellows’ work at home.

In the long term, Mandela Washington Fellows will be problem solvers who can address local, national, and international challenges. With this in mind, Institutes should encourage and develop problem solving on issues relevant to current challenges in Sub-Saharan Africa. Examples of current Sub-Saharan African challenges are listed below for each track. Your Institute may delve into these issues or pose other challenges for discussion. However, the Institutes should not attempt to teach Fellows about problems in their home countries. Instead, Institutes should highlight how the United States has developed or tried to develop solutions to similar issues and allow time for Fellows to draw upon their own experiences to relate the lessons learned or best practices to their home countries. Fellows appreciate speaking with individuals who are knowledgeable about or have experience in Africa, and these experts should focus on engaging in conversation with the Fellows about their experiences and how U.S. examples may or may not be applicable in their home countries. Also listed below are U.S. examples that can be explored for each track.

**Business and Entrepreneurship**

Institutes on Business and Entrepreneurship should provide participants with an overview of U.S. entrepreneurial strategies including those that are employed to address social issues. The Institutes should focus on developing participant skills in business and entrepreneurship while examining the development, history, challenges, and successes of U.S. enterprises and social enterprises, in the United States and globally, with specific relevance to the African continent. The Institutes should encourage Fellows to elaborate innovative and practical plans to become active in business and/or entrepreneurship in their communities and to engage with others in this area.

**Subthemes**

- Business ethics (topics may include corporate social responsibility, whistleblower protections, etc.)
- Intersection of business with civil society and government
- Innovation and technology that will capitalize on emerging markets and impact the youth population in Africa
- Financial management (topics may include identifying and obtaining appropriate sources of funding, transparency, accountability, etc.)

**Current Sub-Saharan African challenges**

- Infrastructure and energy deficiencies
- Excessive government regulations and other institutional barriers to operating legal business
- Limited access to quality market research
- Shortage of professionals with appropriate skills for emerging industries
- Low internet penetration and limited access to information and communication tools
U.S. Examples
- Infrastructure deficiencies may be highlighted by a site visit to the local sanitation facility to discuss funding and implementation of capital improvement projects.
- Internet access issues could be highlighted in a visit to an internet service provider to discuss how they are expanding their broadband capabilities in local libraries.

Civic Leadership

Institutes on Civic Leadership should provide participants with an overview of how citizens have shaped U.S. history, government, and society both as individuals and groups, including discussion of similarities and contrasts with experiences and opportunities on the African continent. The academic program should define civic leadership, examine its development in the United States, and build skills in topics such as citizenship, community building, economic development, grass-roots activism, political organizing and leadership, volunteering, and the use of technology in advancing civic causes. The Institutes should encourage participants to elaborate innovative and practical plans to become engaged citizens in their own communities and to work with others in this area.

Subthemes
- Advocacy (topics may include coalition building, development-friendly policies, creating community based campaigns, political organizing, media relations, etc.)
- Strategic Planning (topics may include mission development, good governance, fundraising, etc.)
- Organizational Development (topics may include human resource development, ethics, project management, marketing and communications, monitoring and evaluation, etc.)
- Intersection of civil society with business and government

Current Sub-Saharan African challenges
- Restrictive regulation of civil society organizations
- Political and governance structures that are not transparent or accountable to everyday citizens
- Low internet penetration and limited access to information and communication tools
- High demand for basic services but extremely limited resources
- Human rights challenges for minority populations
- Social change advocates’ personal safety issues/fear of retribution

U.S. Examples
- A discussion on encouraging government structures to be more accountable to citizens could be highlighted by a visit with a local government official who has recently implemented a new transparency initiative for public spending in her office.
- Fear of retribution could be highlighted by a visit with leaders from a civil rights movement who were able to overcome fear and hate in their quest for social change.
**Public Management**

The Institutes on Public Management should provide participants with an overview of Public Management and Leadership including regional economic and workforce development; financial management in public and non-profit organizations; planning and the global knowledge economy; and domestic and foreign development policies. Within the broader frame of the public policy process, Fellows should be exposed to specific public management questions on topics such as public finance, rule of law, education, public health, environment, public sector transparency and accountability, and foreign policy. The Institutes should encourage participants to elaborate innovative and practical plans to become active in public management in their communities and to work with others in this area.

**Subthemes**

- Citizen engagement (topics might include community outreach and policy dialogue, transparency, making government more responsive to citizen needs, and enabling citizens to hold their governments accountable)
- Human resources management systems (topics should include combatting corruption, ethics, and accountability)
- Financial management systems (topics may include public revenue models, transparent procurement processes, and accountability for proper stewardship of funds)
- Intersection of government with business and civil society

**Current Sub-Saharan African challenges**

- Infrastructure and energy deficiencies
- Rapid human migration both within country borders (urbanization, Internally Displaced Persons) and to/from outside (brain drain, migrant laborers, refugees)
- High demand for basic services but extremely limited resources
- Low internet penetration and limited access to information and communication tools
- Centralized decision making and bureaucratic structures that do not reward innovation

**U.S. Examples**

- Citizen engagement on infrastructure deficiencies may be highlighted by a visit to a city council hearing on a new transportation project and a follow on conversation with the local transportation official who works to integrate citizen concerns and community needs into local transportation plans.