2015 Participant Biographies
Botswana

Malebogo Portia Motlhabane

Portia is currently working as a senior public relations officer at Kgatleng Land Board within the Ministry of Lands and Housing. Her responsibilities include spearheading publicity and stakeholder management activities and maintaining the corporate image of the Land Board. Portia also worked as a broadcast journalist at Botswana Television for six years, where she reported on social, economic and political issues. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communications, Media and Marketing from Monash University in South Africa. At the end of the Fellowship, she plans to return to her home country to be an agent of change and to share the skills and knowledge gained with young professionals in the public sector, so that they can work as a team to ensure public service delivery conforms to international best practices.

Burkina Faso

Josué Ango

Josué Ango has about six years’ experience in social work. Since 2012, he has worked in the Ministry of Social Action and National Solidarity, where he is in charge of drafting, implementing, coordinating, monitoring, and evaluating programs, projects, and strategies related to child protection issues. He is also part of a local non-profit organization, Aderva, which raises public awareness on child rights and education and provides counselling. He is the general secretary of AJS in charge of organizing awareness campaigns around health and sanitation, and coordinating free medical examinations for women and the elderly. He holds a state diploma of Higher Executives in Social Work and wants to be a leading figure of Africa. When in Burkina Faso, he wants to promote better public management methods, fair management of human material, and financial resources and good governance in order to improve the life of the most disadvantaged of the population.
Burkina Faso (Continued)

Viviane “Vivi” Gnouinabe Pare Nabie

Vivi holds a Master's of Arts in Socio-linguistics from the University of Ouagadougou and is currently pursuing an International Master’s degree in Conflictology from the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and the Open University of Catalonia. She has over ten years' experience in various fields and is currently working as an assistant in research and analysis at the Ministry of Agriculture, where she focuses on analysis of agriculture and related projects and programs. She worked for the Permanent Mission of Burkina Faso in Vienna, Austria as a translator and administrative officer and has also worked as representative for the NGO, Friends of African Village Libraries, in Burkina Faso as well as a translator for Plan International. Upon her return to Burkina Faso, she will promote good governance and democracy practices within the public administration and share and promote knowledge gained on gender issues to her colleagues.

Cameroon

Agwenjang Patience Ngonwei

Patience has over seven years' experience in policy reforms focused on youth policy development and implementation, as well as program management, financial management, human resource management, and performance monitoring and evaluation. She has worked in close partnership with local governments including the Cameroon National Youth Council (CNYC), Youth Outreach Program (YOP), Cameroon’s Ministry of Youth and Civic Education (MINJEC), the United African Associations (UNAFAS), and VSO-Cuso International. Currently, Patience is founder and president of the Research and Advocacy for Gender Justice (RAGJ), where she coordinates actions that address issues of Democratic Governance (public voicing, accountability, power, budgets) with young women. She is keen on the integration of youth and women in the management of public investment projects in Cameroon. Upon return, Patience plans to work on the strategy to integrate youth and women in the management of public investment projects.
Valéry Eugene Boidy Dakoury Guei Kore

Valéry has two years' experiences in the health sector in Cote d'Ivoire. His first position was with the health district of Blolequin, where he was in charge of dispensing drugs and medical devices in all health facilities for the area. In April 2015 he was transferred to the National Laboratory of Public Health of Cote d'Ivoire to serve as a specialist quality pharmacist. Valéry holds a Master’s degree in Quality Management System, as well as a certificate of Public Health Management, with emphasis on food and drug regulatory systems. Upon completion on the Washington Mandela Fellowship, he plans to improve the quality of the Ivoirian health system focusing on the safety and efficacy of drugs people are consuming. The new skills he stands to gain at the United States Pharmacopeia will help him to achieve is goal of becoming a drug regulatory officer expert.

Koulodiomo Ouattara

Ouattara has three years’ experience in the field of Civil Aviation. He is an air traffic controller working with the governmental company in charge of the development of Civil Aviation and Meteorological activities in Cote d'Ivoire. He holds a Civil Aviation engineering diploma from the African School of Meteorology and Civil Aviation, and is currently pursuing an advanced Master's degree in Aviation Management. He also works in his community on social issues, particularly the education of young girls and empowering of small-scale farmers and rural women’s associations. Upon completing the Mandela Washington Fellowship, he plans to work on developing the field of air transport in order to provide young people with aviation-connected business and job opportunities. He also plans to create a huge institute to train and assist small-scale farmers, especially rural women.
Ethiopia

Helen Abelle Melesse

Helen Abelle has over five years’ experience in various fields of the legal sector. Currently, she is a researcher and trainer in the Southern Nations Nationalities and People Regional State Justice Organs Professionals Training and Legal Research Centre, where she focuses on conducting research and training on current legal, social, and human rights issues. Helen obtained a Master’s degree in Human Rights from Addis Ababa University, managed to get some of her research published, and is a volunteer for the Ethiopian Red Cross Society and Ethiopian Human Rights Council. Upon completion of the Mandela Washington Fellowship, she plans to continue her work in the development of human rights protection and good governance in her community.

Ghana

Belinda Afriyie Nimako

Belinda is a medical doctor with nine years’ experience spanning clinical work, project management, research, undergraduate training and leadership, in the public sector. After graduating top of her Master’s in Public Health class, she chose to work in Ghana’s rural districts using her knowledge and skills where most needed. Now, as the Acting Director of Health Services for South Dayi, Belinda leads a 124-person team to design and implement policies and projects and provide clinical care for about 53,000 predominantly rural inhabitants. She has been involved in developing an undergraduate program in public health for the University of Health and Allied Sciences in Ghana. Belinda also compiled a supplement on severe malaria for the World Health Organization. She currently serves on the board of Ghana’s Food and Drugs Authority, and believes the Fellowship will enhance her capacity to contribute effectively to sustainable public health in Ghana and beyond.
Bright Kwaku Dey

Bright Dey is a man of many parts with ten years' experience in various fields of the education sector, particularly community engagement and educational leadership. Currently, Bright is head of the planning unit and the ICT coordinator for the Volta Regional Education Directorate in Ghana, where he focuses on educational innovation, monitoring and project coordination activities. He does leadership skills training for students and youth and upholds volunteerism in local community-based projects and campaigns. Bright holds a Pedagogic Management Certificate from the Aharon Ofri International Centre in Israel, and a degree in Industrial Art from KNUST. Upon completion of the Fellowship, Bright plans to be an authority in education management leadership skills, to sustain the “Volta Reads Project” to improve reading among school pupils. He will initiate an advocacy project to change ‘Teaching Methodologies into Thinking Methodologies’ in deprived schools.

Lizandra “Maiza” Cabral Dos Reis

Maiza has over six years' experience in various fields in the health sector and in community health in particular. She is currently a program coordinator for the Fight Against Neglected Tropical Diseases and focuses on initiating, designing, and implementing activities to improving the health for the population of Guinea-Bissau. She also volunteers in the church of Bissau Cathedral, where she does free medical consultations and encourages parishioners to seek the doctor. She also supports women doing the pre-natal consultations and with education around condom use. Maiza holds a postgraduate qualification in Public Health from the West African Health Organization in Burkina Faso. Upon completion of the Mandela Washington Fellowship she plans to continue her community work, including contributing to the increase of health posts in the community and through the eradication of neglected tropical diseases, particularly Noma and Oncocercosse, in Guinea-Bissau.
Kenya

Erick Amunga Mukolwe

Erick Amunga has over six years’ experience in community health care, particularly in the area of reproductive health. He is currently a maternal health consultant at Kakamega County Referral Hospital in Western Kenya, where he manages ailments attributed to reproduction and feto-maternal medicine. Erick is also a research consultant, developing topics, designs, and research methods for students and organizations in the field of reproductive and maternal health. He is a creative writer and director, nurturing talents among the youth in theatre arts and film. After completing his fellowship, Erick will continue promoting reproductive and maternal health through research, infotainment and policy formulation by collaborating with political leaders and various levels of government, for the sake of ending morbidity and mortality associated with reproduction and maternity maladies.

Christine Mabera Sagini

Christine Sagini is a medical doctor with over six years’ experience in the public health sector. Her current interest is in health policy and legislation and she serves as a county liaison officer for the Senate (Parliament of Kenya). She focuses on initiating and implementing liaison activities between the Senate, county governments, and intergovernmental institutions and also offers technical advice to the Senate Standing Committees of Health and Devolved Government. She is a proud Rotarian and is involved in various voluntary activities of the Rotary Club of Nairobi East - notably, a maternal and child health initiative in Korogocho slums and high school mentorship program. Christine holds a Master’s degree in International Health from the University of Copenhagen, Denmark. Upon completion of the Mandela Washington Fellowship, she plans to continue her work promoting a health policy and legislative agenda that focuses on universal health coverage and devolved health care.
Liberia

Wahdae-mai Harmon

Wahdae-mai Harmon has over three years’ experience in the Liberian health sector, working in both Redemption Hospital and two Ebola treatment units. The Ebola responsibilities included leading and managing 40 nurses and hygienists and caring for positive Ebola patients. She is the president of Life Saving Initiatives, a local NGO delivering health care to low income families, and is currently attending an Emergency Obstetric Care program to improve obstetric and gynecological competencies at the Redemption Hospital in Monrovia. Wahdae-mai holds a doctorate degree in Medicine from the A.M. Dogliotti School of Medicine, and a BSc in Biology and Chemistry from the Cuttington University in Liberia, and in her personal time she volunteers and organizes community gatherings to teach young people about sexually transmitted diseases. Upon completion of the Fellowship, she plans to expand LSI to rural Liberia and to commence study in public health, while concurrently practicing clinical medicine.

Madagascar

Michel Sabir Michael Ratovonasy

Sabir has over seven years’ experience in public administration and is now the director of the National Institute of Training within the Ministry of Employment, Technical Education and Vocational Training. The ministry is in charge of defending the rights of the workers and Sabir has a strong commitment to defend minority rights, and especially the rights of abused women. He got his PhD in Philosophy in 2011, and will attend the University of Minnesota to study Public Administration. When he returns to Madagascar, he promises to pass on what he has learned through the Fellowship to other departments of his ministry. This training has already received the approval of his superiors because training on administrations is highly needed in his ministry. Among other things, Sabir is fighting against human trafficking and engaged in defending the rights of handicapped women so that they can get vocational training.
Abdourahamane dit Baffa Keita

Baffa is a monitoring and evaluation specialist in Mali with eight years' experience in development work. His focus is to change the living condition of vulnerable populations in Sahel countries - including Mali, Burkina, Niger and Senegal - and to make them more resilient to natural disasters. Baffa holds an engineering degree in Economic Statistics from the Algerian National Polytechnic School, a Master’s degree in Project Management from the African Centre for Advanced Studies in Management in Senegal, and a Master's in Management from 2IE-Foundation in Burkina Faso. He is currently the M&E advisor for Concern Worldwide Niger, implementing effective activities across the Sahel, completing a doctoral dissertation on Impact Evaluation at the UGSM Monarch Business School in Switzerland, and upon completion of the Fellowship plans to continue implementing a monitoring system of public policy to Incorporation women’s essential needs into annual municipal development plans.

Marie Telly

Marie has over four years of experience in the community development sector and currently works in peacekeeping. After three years of experience with Peace Corps as a Language and Cross Cultural Facilitator, then Regional Coordinator of American Volunteers, she is currently an Administration and Financial Assistant with PAE Government Services Inc, an American Company supporting the UN mission for peacekeeping in Mali. During her free time, she volunteers as a teacher for a group of street children whose daily activities are related to begging in order to obtain their daily bread. Marie holds a Bachelor’s degree in English and Literature and is currently studying Law. Upon completing the Fellowship, Marie’s plan is to focus on violence against women, which is currently increasing in northern Mali, and of course to continue with her volunteering activities.
Joyce holds a Master’s degree in Project Planning and Management, a Bachelor’s degree in Civil Engineering, and has just completed a UNESCO Fellowship in Decision Engineering from AGH University of Science and Technology in Poland. On completion of the Fellowship, Joyce plans to establish a mentorship scheme with the careers talk team to encourage more girls to take up careers in engineering and other STEM fields.

Catherine “Keight” Chinyere Edeh

Keight is a post-lingual deaf person from Nike in Enugu State, Nigeria with over ten years' experience as an activist and advocate for disability rights. She majored in special education and law, thereafter observing her NYSC with the Office of Senate Committee on Rules and Business, National Assembly in Abuja, Nigeria for a year from March 2014. She doubled as a deputy desk officer and advocate for the legislation of the Nigeria Disability Rights Bill and is a seasoned rights advocate, lawyer, certified strategic planner, special educator, disability rights activist and consultant, and the founder and director of duly-incorporated NGO, Voice of Disability Initiative. With her NGO, she advocates for an inclusive system where the rights of persons with disability are safeguarded. Regardless of the high rate of disability-rights violation in Africa, she's scaled countless hurdles and remains ruggedly, determinedly optimistic that the cause of persons with disabilities shall triumph.
Salamatu Akor

Dr. Salamatu Silvia Akor has four years' experience in the community development sector improving the standard of living among the less privileged teenagers and orphans. Currently, Salamatu is organizing an oral health awareness program which is scheduled to take place in the last quarter of this year, the aim of which is to reduce the incidence of preventable oral diseases. Salamatu has a Bachelors of Dental Surgery from the University of Maiduguri, Nigeria and is also a certified project manager with adequate computer skills. Upon completion of the Mandela Washington Fellowship, Salamatu plans to return to Nigeria and continue her work on oral health awareness in order to reduce the incidence of preventable oral diseases and to improve the standard of living of the people in her community.

Jean Paulin Mutatsineza

Paulin has two years' experience in educational NGO management, and is both a project manager and board member of Rwanda Education Assistance Program (REAP), an NGO that is dedicated to enhancing educational and vocational opportunities for vulnerable youths in rural public schools in Rwanda. Amongst other responsibilities, he is in charge of pursuing REAP’s interest at national policy level as well as liaising, reporting, and ensuring compliance with the Rwanda Governance Board, Ministry of Education, and Rwanda Education Board. Jean Paulin has initiated and successfully managed various projects including construction, electricity supply, use of ICT in education, and setting up a dairy farm to feed students at the Duha Complex School in Rwanda. Upon completion of the Fellowship, Jean Paulin plans to advocate master plan-based school strategic planning, countrywide, for all rural public schools.
Kadiatu “Kadija” Aminata Turay

Kadija has five years’ experience in community work. She's been involved in volunteering through organizing focused group discussions, facilitating sessions on the value of education and hygiene, and giving counselling to teenage mothers in her community. Through dedication and commitment, she has held various positions including food monitor to the District Coordinator, currently National Food Coordinator. She oversees the effective implementation of the project and also acts as a liaison officer. She also serves as the gender coordinator in Plan Bombali. Kadija was selected as one of 12 best staff with potential to grow, soon to be enrolled for the Plan International Emerging Leaders High Potential Program. She’s a graduate in Peace and Conflict studies from the Faculty of Social Sciences and Law, and did her dissertation on gender mainstreaming in Sierra Leone’s decentralization process. Kadija intends to continue working on community programs, child protection, and gender.

Osman Abdal Timbo

Timbo has practiced as a lawyer for almost seven years. Previously, he worked as a legal aid lawyer providing free legal advice, assistance, and representation to indigent persons in Sierra Leone. Presently, he works as the legal adviser in the office of the President's Public Private Partnership Unit where he advises the government on PPP investment opportunities, and drafts and negotiates contracts on behalf of the government. Outside of his professional life, Timbo is passionate about youth development and participation and believes that the bedrock for the sustained development of his nation is through youth involvement and education. He is a youth leader, commands the respect of the young, loves politics, and sees his future in public administration. Timbo holds a Master’s degree in law from the University of London and upon his return from the Fellowship, intends to focus on improving education and hygiene for the young.
South Africa

Khayakazi “Khaya” Buntu Namfu

Khaya has been a public sector real estate professional for six years. She currently works in the Cape Town regional office of the National Department of Public Works as the regional project manager of the Immovable Asset Register. Khaya obtained her BSc Property Studies Honors degree from the University of Cape Town and worked in property development for four years before transitioning to the public sector. She has worked at both municipal and national government level on asset verification, quality assurance, asset register system development, portfolio performance measurement, and real estate policy development. She also has a passion for agriculture and rural development and is currently working with a group of disadvantaged farmers with commercial farming ambitions. Upon completing the Mandela Washington Fellowship, she will continue contributing to improving service delivery through efficient real estate management and helping the farming community achieve their dreams.

Tanzania

Samwel “Sam” John Kikaro

Sam is a medical doctor with over five years' experience in public health management and clinical medicine. He is currently serving as regional manager for the Tanzania Health Promotion Support (THPS), a local NGO established in 2011 in response to the call to transition the US President’s Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) funded HIV activities from international to local entities. He previously worked as a research coordinator and clinical advisor, and oversaw the implementation of an HIV combination prevention program in Tanzania, training of research assistants on good clinical practices, the development of study standard operating practices (SOPs) and budget management. Sam graduated from the Muhimbili University of Health Sciences (MUHAS). Upon completion of the Fellowship, he plans to continue his managerial work and use the acquired skills to ensure smooth and accountable management of transition programs.
Mwila Chabala

Mwila Chabala has over five years’ experience in the public sector. He's currently a senior planner in the ministry of Local Government and Housing under the Department of Physical Planning and Housing. His work revolves around human settlements and entails constant travel between various districts to meet with different stakeholders on issues that pertain to urban planning and development. Outside of work, he is involved in a faith-based organization called Care Ministry that seeks to improve lives of the less fortunate within and outside the church. Mwila holds a MSc in Spatial Planning and Development from Umea University in Sweden, a BSc in Urban and Regional Planning from Copperbelt University in Zambia, and a certificate in Geographic Information Systems from the University of Zambia. Upon completion of the Fellowship, Mwila plans to continue his work in human settlements, focusing on access to land and housing for women and the youth.