



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

AfricaLead
Scaling up for food security in Africa

AFRICA LEAD II:

Young Champions for Change Training



January 2015

This publication was produced by the Feed the Future: Building Capacity for African Agricultural Transformation Project (Africa Lead II) for the United States Agency for International Development

Young Champions for Change Training.

Program Title:	Feed the Future: Building Capacity for African Agricultural Transformation (Africa Lead II)
Sponsoring USAID Office:	USAID Bureau of Food Security
Award Number:	AID-OAA-A-13-00085
Awardee:	DAI
Date of Publication:	January 2015
Author:	Africa Lead II Team

Cover Photo: Picked from Tanzania.usembassy.gov website (U.S. Ambassador to Tanzania Mark Childress with 17 of the 21 Tanzanian Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) Fellows before their departure to the U.S. on June 13th 2014)

The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

CONTENTS

CONTENTS	II
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	III
1. BACKGROUND.....	1
2. HIGHLIGHTS OF KEY SESSIONS.....	2
2.1 INTRODUCTION TO LEADING AND MANAGING CHANGE.....	2
2.2 ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL PROJECT DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT	3
2.3 STRATEGIC INFLUENCING FOR STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION	3
2.4 MANAGING DECISION-MAKING AND NEGOTIATIONS.....	4
2.5 TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP	4
2.6 ACTION PLANNING/WAY FORWARD	4
3. PRE- AND POST-TRAINING EVALUATION	5
4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	6

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Obama administration's Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) is a long-term effort to invest in the next generation of African leaders. The YALI Class of 2014 brought together 500 participants in the newly renamed Mandela Washington Fellows program to the United States, of whom 21 were from Tanzania.

Upon their return a customized version of Africa Lead's Champions for Change Training was offered to the Tanzanian Mandela Washington Fellows. The training objective was to introduce Mandela Fellow returnees to Champions for Change (C4C) transformational leadership skills as well as strategies and concepts for designing successfully implementable projects and leading and managing change in Tanzania. The C4C training was also geared towards further supporting the Mandela Fellow returnees with essential leadership and management knowledge and skills needed to further develop their individual and group Leadership action plans and implement them as necessary.

Cognizant of the immense experience and rich background of course participants, the facilitation approach was participatory and engaging so as to create a learning atmosphere that encouraged free interactions and experience sharing amongst the group. Small group assignments and discussions, coupled with plenary presentations and discussions made it happen. A brief but powerful video clip showing how impactful the Initiative has been was produced during the training and has been shared with the Mission.

Mandela Fellows expressed their satisfaction from the course indicating that the course content was relevant, timely, and their expectations were largely met. The Fellows' action plans in which they applied these enhanced knowledge and skills broadly covered three tracks namely: business & entrepreneurship; civic leadership, and public management.

1. BACKGROUND

The Obama administration's Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) is a long-term effort to invest in the next generation of African leaders. Nearly 1 in 3 Africans are between the ages of 10 and 24, and approximately 60 percent of Africa's total population is below the age of 35. In view of this enormous youth potential in Africa and in pursuit of the change agenda, President Obama launched YALI in 2010 to support young African leaders to spur growth and prosperity, strengthen democratic governance, and enhance peace and security across Africa.

In 2014, President Obama launched the renaming of the Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders to the Mandela Washington Fellowship. This six-week fellowship at universities throughout the United States culminating in a Summit in Washington is the flagship of the YALI program to encourage investment in education and training of the continent's next generation of leaders. Young leaders between the ages of 25 to 35 are given an opportunity to learn business and entrepreneurship, civic leadership and public management from selected American universities. The Class of 2014 brought together 500 participants, of whom 21 were from Tanzania. Beneficiaries included innovative young entrepreneurs, NGO leaders, community activists, journalists, and civil servants from urban and rural communities in all 49 sub-Saharan African countries.

To ensure that the overarching objectives of the Mandela Washington Fellowship initiative are realized, USAID Tanzania requested Africa Lead II to conduct its Champions for Change (C4C) training tailored to suit needs and objectives of Mandela Washington Fellow returnees. A two-day training for Young Champions for Change was held at New Africa Hotel in Dar es Salaam, 13th -14th, December 2014. In attendance were 15 participants, eight men and seven women.

In order to tailor the Young Champions for Change training so as to achieve envisaged objectives, Africa Lead designed a Training Needs Assessment questionnaire that was administered during Mandela Fellows' strategic planning workshops organized and implemented by the State Department in October and November 2014. In view of the needs assessment outcome, the course content was comprised of the following topics:

- Leading and managing change: Description of the eight steps of John Kotter’s change leading model.
- Elements of successful project design and management.
- Strategic influencing for Stakeholder participation.
- Managing decision making and negotiations.
- Transformational leadership.
- Action planning /way forward.

2. HIGHLIGHTS OF KEY SESSIONS

The training was officiated by Steve Smith, Africa Lead II Regional Director for East and Southern Africa. He seized the opportunity to facilitate a session on “Personal Reflection – Building on Your Strengths and Strengthening Your Weaknesses”. The session was designed to challenge and inspire Fellows as change agents and leaders. David Fieldmann from State Department presided over the training wrap-up and closing session. He urged the Fellows to freely communicate their ideas and opinions so that they can be served and supported better in the pursuit of their dreams.

The training was composed of the following key sessions:

2.1 Introduction to leading and managing change

Leading and managing change process was the core subject of this training. Change management specialist, Dr. John Kotter’s eight-step model was systematically discussed to expose Fellows to the concepts of:

- Increase a sense of urgency seeking to stop business as usual mind set and complacency to unacceptable situation;
- Build the guiding team with enough power to lead the change effort;
- Create a vision to help directing the change effort and developing strategies for achieving that vision;
- Communicating the vision to persuade and convince people to buy-in to change process;
- Empowering action to encourage risk taking and new ideas;
- Create short-term wins to build confidence and gain change process momentum;
- Consolidate improvement;
- Institutionalize new approaches to make sure the achieved changes stick.

The training triggered considerable sharing of knowledge and experience within the group. Participants acknowledged that Kotter's model phased as ***set the stage, decide what to do, make it happen and make it stick*** was a very useful and systematic tool to see themselves as change agents.

2.2 Elements of successful project design and management

In the Training Needs Assessment over 70% of fellows indicated the need to be exposed to body of knowledge on project management. To address this need, in-depth coverage of project design and implementation cycle was included in course content with special emphasis on formulating a good design and prerequisites for successful project implementation. Project action plans covering the following content areas were elaborated:

- background and justification;
- target groups and institutional framework analysis;
- development objective, immediate objective, outputs, activities and inputs;
- assumptions; monitoring and evaluation plans and reporting.

Participants were able to internalize the concepts and immediate application of their new knowledge through small group activities using case studies and existing individual action plans were used. Despite disparities in education background and experience in project planning and management body of knowledge within the group, Fellows reported project management knowledge gain and improvement. They felt this learning will be helpful in fine-tuning their individual and group project proposal write-ups. They reported that they are better equipped to manage and lead their respective projects.

2.3 Strategic Influencing for stakeholder participation

Success or failure in bringing envisaged change depends on the support garnered from key and influential stakeholders. Having a vision is just a means to an end but not the end by itself. Leaders must be able to attract the right supporters and get buy-in from individuals and groups who might be in a position to help or harm the change initiative at later stages. Aware of this fact, this session was designed to give Fellows an opportunity to reflect on their group and individual action plans and carry out stakeholder analysis and mapping and

strategizing how to handle different stakeholders to influence them to buy-in to the proposed strategic objective.

2.4 Managing decision-making and negotiations

The session dwelt on decision-making process, the concept of evidenced-based management, and tips for arriving at win-win negotiations. The latter included a focus on interest not position, separating people from the problem, and creating options for mutual gain. Win-win negotiation objective should be an agreement, not victory. Evidence-based management is an emerging paradigm emphasizing the use of the current best evidence in management decision-making. It requires a willingness to set aside belief and conventional wisdom and instead act on facts. It also requires a commitment to gather the facts and information necessary to make more informed decisions and use new facts to update practices. The topic generated a lot of useful discussions based on real situation case studies from Fellows. It is apparent that the courage to face the hard facts and build the culture in which the team tells the truth even if it is unpleasant and avoiding basing decisions on untested but strongly held beliefs are essential elements in building a high performing team.

2.5 Transformational leadership

The session was designed to trigger a mindset which recognizes that a transformational leader changes an organization by developing a vision for it, communicating that vision to members of the organization, and mobilizing them to accept, help achieve, and institutionalize the changes. Mandela Fellows were exposed to the five characters of transformational leader. They were given an opportunity to undertake a self-assessment using a prepared score sheet to identify their strength and challenges as aspiring transformational leaders, acknowledge their weaknesses and strengthens and strategize how to address the weaknesses. Characteristics of a transformational leader discussed include: *ability to challenge the process; inspiring a shared vision; enabling others to act; and modeling the way.*

2.6 Action planning/Way forward

The session was included to challenge Mandela Fellows to immediately integrate and apply the various skills and knowledge gained from the training to develop or fine-tune their

individual action plans. They were challenged to identify one critical strategic priority they would like to work on to change the current undesirable situation to a desired situation. Proposed strategic areas for change and corresponding action plans were discussed in a plenary session. It was encouraging to see how quickly the Fellows were able to adequately reflect and apply the skills and knowledge shared during the training. Knowledge areas that were immediately applied included project management, strategic influencing of stakeholders, and leading and managing change process. The Fellows' action plans in which they applied these enhanced knowledge and skills broadly covered the three tracks namely: business & entrepreneurship; civic leadership, and public management.

3. PRE- AND POST-TRAINING EVALUATION

A questionnaire was administered before and after the training to track pre- and post-training level of understanding of the key topics covered during the course. It is apparent that there was improvement in skills and knowledge as indicated in the table below. The level of understanding significantly shifted from basic towards moderate and extensive.

Table 1: Level of understanding of key topics covered: Before and after training.

Topic	Level Of Understanding	No	Basic	Moderate	Extensively
Leading and Managing Change	Before Training (%)	0	36	57	7
	After Training (%)	0	0	46	54
Elements of Successful Project Design & Management	Before Training (%)	7	36	50	7
	After Training (%)	0	8	23	69
Strategic Influencing for Strategic Stakeholder Participation	Before Training (%)	7	50	36	7
	After Training (%)	0	0	46	54
Managing for Decision Making & Negotiation	Before Training (%)	0	43	50	7
	After Training (%)	0	0	54	46
Transformational Leadership	Before Training (%)	0	43	50	7
	After Training (%)	0	0	23	77

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Mandela Fellows attest that the training has improved their skills and knowledge on the topics covered and also addressed other expectations. This was demonstrated in pre- and post-training evaluation responses. They acknowledge the training was not only relevant in terms of content but also timely because it has enriched urgently needed project planning and management knowledge to support them in project design and implementation. Transformational leadership concepts in recognition of their role as change agents was also highly appreciated showing a 70% gain in the “extensive” level of subject matter understanding.

The session on “Elements of Successful Project Design and Management” raised the understanding of participants on fundamentals of designing and managing a project, action planning and influencing stakeholders. The training resulted to 59% change in “extensive” level of understanding of project design and management. They also reaffirmed that sessions on evidence-based decision-making and transformational leadership were very relevant and timely.

It is apparent that the training added value to skills and knowledge that would enable Mandela Fellows to successfully plan and execute projects and become effective champions for change through a transformational leadership agenda. It is therefore strongly recommended that:

- Other cohorts of Mandela Washington Fellowship returnees should be offered Young Champions for Change (C4C) leadership training to equip or broaden their skills and knowledge needed to successfully design and implement their individual projects and serve as transformational leaders. Considering the diversity in education background and career within the group this opportunity is essential.
- Investment should be sought to unlock Fellows’ inherent potential through follow-up capacity building of alumni networks and facilitate their pursuit of transformational leadership undertakings. Possible initiatives to sustain the commitment expressed thus far include encouraging and supporting their involvement in youth in agriculture and agribusiness agendas, policy formulation processes, and advocacy to highlight a few.

- Network should be established and supported as determined in consultation with alumni and other key actors.

It is also noteworthy that Africa Lead II arranged for a documentary video to be shot during the C4C training capturing the Fellows' whole experience. A brief but powerful video clip showing how impactful the Initiative has been was produced and has been shared with the Mission.

The Fellows, in appreciating the support given to them thus far, are calling for continuing engagement with Africa Lead II, the Mission and other actors to ensure their network stays alive and useful for learning and sharing experiences among them. They also request continuing engagement to build their capacity on emerging and topical issues that will enhance their role as change agents and promote implementation of their leadership action plans.