
Evaluation: Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders

Focus Group Discussion Questions – U.S. Community Members

FGD Consent Form Language

Participants will be asked to review and sign the following consent statement prior to each FGD.

You have been invited to participate in a focus group as part of the Evaluation of the Mandela Washington Fellowship, commissioned by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) at U.S. Department of State. The purpose of the independent evaluation is to understand the extent to which the U.S. based components of the Fellowship are meeting the program’s stated goals as well as the program’s impact on advancing Department of State’s policy priorities (2014 – 2018).

Your participation in this interview is voluntary. You may opt to withdraw from the interview at any time or choose not to answer select questions. For your awareness:

- The evaluation team will be recording this discussion. If at any time, you would prefer to speak with the recorder off, please indicate this to the facilitator.
- Aggregated responses or qualitative insights (without identifying information) may be included in the final report or publications resulting from the evaluation.
- Qualitative data files will be submitted to ECA at the completion of the evaluation (without names or any contact information).
- The information you provide may be re-analyzed at a later date for a follow-up study or other purpose approved by ECA.

Your contributions are confidential and no individual names will be used in any reports or publications resulting from the evaluation unless the individual provides consent to the Evaluation Team. If you have any questions or concerns about this focus group discussion or the evaluation more broadly, please reach out to the Evaluation Team at fellowshipevaluation@guidehouse.com.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

Do you consent to participate in this focus group discussion?

I consent to participate in this focus group discussion

I do not consent to participate in this focus group discussion (if selected, you may leave the room).

Moderator Introduction

“Hello, my name is ---, and I will be facilitating this discussion. We are here to gather information about your experience with the U.S. Department of State’s Mandela Washington Fellowship, which is part of the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI). This information, along with information collected through other discussions, interviews and surveys, will help us assess the impact that the Fellowship has on participants, their hosts, and home

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communities. I will ask you several questions while facilitating this discussion and a note-taker will be present. This discussion will be recorded, however, if at any time, anyone feels that they would prefer to speak with the recorder off, please let me know and I will stop the recorder. Also, we please ask that the information shared here in this group should not be shared with others who did not participate.”

This focus group discussion is expected to take 75 - 90 minutes.” The moderator asks each participant to share his/her name and occupation with the other participants in the focus group. After introductions, the moderator begins the discussion.

“Please note that there are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions. We want to hear the different viewpoints and would like for everyone to contribute their thoughts. Out of respect, please refrain from interrupting others. Feel free to be honest even when your responses differ from those of other group members.”

Internal Notes ****FOR ECA/EVALUATION TEAM USE ONLY****

Scope: The Focus Group Discussions (FGD) will use the survey data to gather personal anecdotes and stories from key U.S. community members. The FGDs will be organized by individual stakeholder groups (see “Structure” below).

Structure: FGDs will include 5 - 8 participants. The evaluation team will hold discussions with the following stakeholder groups:

- **Academic and Leadership Institute professional/peer collaborators:** This group includes professionals who engaged with Fellows in a peer, mentor, or other professional capacity during the Fellowship. This group engaged with Fellows consistently during their fellowship (e.g., weekly).
- **Home stay host families/individuals:** These are groups, individuals, or families who hosted Fellows for a weekend or occasional dinners during their Fellowship.
- **Site visit organizations:** These are organizations that the Fellows visited for a day or less to understand the organization’s mission, structure, and operations, understand how the organization’s efforts corresponded with other organizations working on similar topic areas, meet senior leaders of the organization, and tour the facility and/or meet beneficiaries.
- **Community service organizations:** This includes organizations that hosted Fellows for community service events and/or information sessions.

FGDs will be conducted in person where feasible. If the Evaluation Team is unable to identify 3 individuals in a region, the FGDs will be conducted as key informant interviews (KIIs). FGDs or KIIs will be approximately 75 - 90 min in duration. In the case of FGDs, all participants will be designated with a number, which will be used as a way of identifying their contributions in the event transcripts.

Interview Instructions ****FOR FGD MODERATOR USE ONLY****

- **FGD Consent Form and Introduction:** The moderator will provide a sign-in sheet with the consent information prior to the start of the FGD. If the FGD participant declines to

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consent, the moderator will thank the participant for their time and excuse the participant from the FGD.

o After participants have signed the consent statement, the moderator will read the introduction and answer any logistical questions.

- **FGD Questions and Style:** The questions below are meant to guide the discussion, but the moderator will use their discretion to determine if the follow-up questions are relevant and if the prompts are necessary based on the flow of the discussion. The moderators is encouraged to phrase questions more personally or informally.

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Questions - Peer Collaborators/Mentors

Moderator: "In this discussion, we will talking about your experience as a peer collaborator, mentor, or other professional contact. For the purposes of this evaluation, this group refers to professionals who engaged with Fellows in a peer, mentor, or other professional capacity during the Fellowship. This group engaged with Fellows consistently during their fellowship (e.g., weekly).

Focus Group Questions

Background and Context

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| 1 | How did you hear about the Mandela Washington Fellowship and why did you chose to serve as a peer collaborator, mentor, or other professional contact to the Fellows? |
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| 2 | <p>How would you describe your experience as a peer collaborator, mentor, or other professional contact?</p> <p><i>Follow Up/Probing Questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How (if at all) did your experience with the Fellowship influence your life, professionally, personally, or otherwise?• What were some of the benefits of being a peer collaborator?• What were some of the challenges of being a peer collaborator?• Please describe any notable experiences (positive or negative) you had with the Fellowship and/or Fellows.• Was there anything that surprised you about being a peer collaborator? About the Fellow(s) you mentored/collaborated with?• Did you observe any changes in the Fellow(s)' knowledge of your field/industry in the U.S.?• Did you observe any changes in the Fellow(s)' knowledge of U.S. culture and customs?• Did the experience change your perceptions of Africans or African countries? |
| 3 | <p>To what extent have you stayed in touch with the Fellows with whom you collaborated?</p> <p><i>Follow up/Probing questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How would you describe your relationship with the Fellow?• What is the nature of your discussions? (i.e., Personal? Professional?) |

Recommendations for Improvement

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| 4 | <p>Overall, how could program organizers improve the experience for peer collaborators/ mentors and/or Fellows in the future?</p> <p><i>Follow Up/Probing Questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How was your experience coordinating and communicating with the Academic and Leadership Institute at the University?• Would you recommend becoming a peer collaborator/mentor to others in your field? |
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Focus Group Questions

5	<p>One of the overarching goals of the program is in some way to benefit American communities, such as economically, socially, politically, etc. How, if at all, in your view does the Fellowship contribute to those goals?</p> <p><i>Follow Up/Probing Question:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Please describe any examples.• What kinds of activities did the Fellow(s) undertake in your community?• How did s/he/they engage with community members outside of activities with the Academic and Leadership Institute at the University?• Did you observe or learn of any instances where the Fellows influenced the local American community?• Did you observe or learn of any instances where the local American community appeared to influence the Fellows? What about in the Academic and Leadership Institute itself?• Did you witness any changes (positive or negative) in the professors/students/university community?• Are there any groups that were more impacted than others? E.g., other colleagues, local businesses, local non-profits, etc.? If so, why?
6	<p>Do you have any additional thoughts that you would like to share that we have not addressed?</p>
7	<p>Is there anyone else from the university or your community that you think we should talk to about the Fellowship?</p>

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Questions - Home Stay Hosts

Moderator: "In this discussion, we will talking about your experience as a home stay host. For purposes of this evaluation, a home stay host is defined as an individual or family who had a Mandela Washington Fellow stay with them for a weekend or for dinner as a part of the formal Mandela Washington Fellowship."

Focus Group Questions

<i>Background and Context</i>	
1	How did you come to hear about the Mandela Washington Fellowship and why did you choose to serve as a home stay host for the Fellows?
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2	How would you describe your experience as a home stay host? <i>Follow Up/Probing Questions:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the benefits of being a home stay host? • What were the challenges of being a home stay host? • Did you observe any changes in the Fellow(s)' knowledge of U.S. culture and customs? • Was there anything that surprised you about being a home stay host? About the Fellows?
3	How did your experience hosting Fellows impact your life or that of others in your household? <i>Follow Up/Probing Questions:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did this experience inspire you to pursue any opportunities in your personal or professional life for yourself or members of your household? • Did the experience change your perception of African countries?
4	Have your children or anyone from your extended household been involved in the hosting experience? If so, from your point of view, could you describe their experience with the Fellow? FGD direction: Note-taker to record how many participants had children/responded to this question. Follow up/probing questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did your children (or members from your extended household who interacted with the Fellow) learn from their interactions with the Fellow? • In what way, if any, did this experience impact your children's (members from your extended household) interest in the African countries or foreign cultures? Have they undertaken any actions in school or work that reflect this interest in other cultures? • What kinds of activities did the Fellows undertake in your community? How did they engage with community members outside of their activities with the Academic and Leadership Institute at the University?
5	To what extent, do you stay in touch with the Fellows you hosted?

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Focus Group Questions

	<p><i>Follow up/probing questions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you stay in touch with them? • How would you describe your current relationship with the Fellow? • What kinds of things do you discuss (in general)?
	<p><i>Recommendations for Improvement</i></p>
6	<p>Overall, how could program organizers improve the home stay experience for the hosts and/or Fellows in the future?</p> <p>Follow up/probing questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How was your experience coordinating and communicating with the Academic and Leadership Institute? • Would you recommend becoming a host family for Fellows to others in your community?
7	<p>One of the overarching goals of the program is in some way to benefit American communities, such as economically, socially, politically, etc. How, if at all, in your view does the Mandela Washington fellowship contribute to those goals?</p> <p><i>Follow-up/probing questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did you observe or learn of any instances where the Fellows influenced the local American community? • Did you observe or learn of any instances where the local American community appeared to influence the Fellows? • Are there any groups that were more impacted than others? E.g., other families, local businesses, local non-profits, etc.? If so, why?
8	<p>Do you have any additional thoughts that you would like to share that we have not addressed?</p>
9	<p>Is there anyone either from the university or from the community that you think we should talk to?</p>

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Questions - Site Visit Organizations / Community Service Organization

For Site Visit Organizations - Moderator: “In this discussion, we will talking about your experience as a community partner. For the purposes of this evaluation, a community partner is defined as an office, business, or organization that Mandela Washington Fellows visited for a day or two to understand the organization’s mission and operations, and how this related to their Institute tracks.”

For Community Service Organizations - Moderator: “In this discussion, we will talking about your experience as a community service organization. For the purposes of this evaluation, community service organizations are defined as businesses, non-profits, or other organizations that hosted Fellows for community service events and/or information sessions.”

Focus Group Questions

Background and Context

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| 1 | How did you come to hear about the Mandela Washington Fellowship and why did you choose to become a [community partner/community service organization] for the Fellowship? |
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| 2 | <p>How would you describe your experience as a participating [community partner/community service organization]?</p> <p><i>Follow Up/Probing Questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the benefits of being a [community partner/community service organization]? • What were the challenges of being a [community partner /community service organization]? • From what you observed, what did the Fellows learn from their [site visit/community service] or found particularly interesting? • Is there anything that you or others at your organization learned from having the Fellows for a site visit/ community service project? • Was there anything that surprised you about being a [community partner /community service organization]? About the Fellows? |
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Recommendations for Improvement

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| 3 | <p>Overall, how could program organizers improve the [community partner/community service] experience for host organizations and/or Fellows in the future?</p> <p><i>Follow up/probing questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How was your experience coordinating and communicating with the Academic and Leadership Institute? • Would you recommend becoming a [community partner/community service organization] for Fellows to other organizations or groups in your community? |
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Focus Group Questions

4	<p>One of the overarching goals of the program is in some way to benefit American communities, such as economically, socially, politically, etc. How, if at all, in your view does the Mandela Washington fellowship contribute to those goals?</p> <p><i>Follow-up/probing questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Did you observe or learn of any instances where the Fellows influenced the local American community?• Did you observe or learn of any instances where the local American community appeared to influence the Fellows?• Are there any groups that were more impacted than others? E.g., other colleagues, local businesses, local non-profits, etc.? If so, why?
5	Is there anything else that you would like to share that we have not addressed?
6	Is there anyone either from your organization or the community that you think we should talk to?

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