



MANDELA
WASHINGTON
FELLOWSHIP
FOR YOUNG AFRICAN LEADERS



Focus Project Toolkit



The Mandela Washington Fellowship is a program of the U.S. Department of State with funding provided by the U.S. Government and administered by IREX.

This toolkit has been developed by the Mandela Washington Fellowship in partnership with Appalachian State University.

The Mandela Washington Fellowship is a program of the U.S. Department of State with funding provided by the U.S. Government and administered by IREX. Appalachian State University is a sub-grantee of IREX and developed this content as a part of the Fellowship.

Through its programming, the Fellowship seeks to provide 2021 Fellows with opportunities to hear from and engage with U.S. faculty and professionals representing a diversity of viewpoints across a range of topics. By providing a balance of perspectives, the Fellowship aims to empower Alumni and 2021 selected and alternate candidates in their capacity as leaders to be informed by a wide selection of sources and viewpoints from which to draw their own conclusions. The views expressed in these courses and materials do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Government.

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Worksheet 2	4
Worksheet 3	7
Worksheet 4	10
Worksheet 5	15

Introduction

The Focus Project toolkit is an action-planning framework that encourages you to process learnings from the Fellowship and apply them to your work. This toolkit will walk you through the stages of project planning so that you are prepared to implement your plan after the Fellowship. Your Focus Project should concentrate on the idea you identified in the Pre-Fellowship Focus Project worksheet and will develop over the course of the Fellowship. You will submit your completed Focus Project toolkit at the end of the Fellowship; however, you are not required to implement your Focus Project in order to be considered a Fellowship Alumni. The Focus Project comprises three phases:

1. Two Short Introductory Lectures

The first lecture (5 minutes) was provided during the Pre-Fellowship period to introduce the Focus Project concept. This lecture was designed to get you to start generating ideas for your Focus Project. If you have not yet completed the Pre-Fellowship Focus Project worksheet, please visit the [Pre-Fellowship Modules](#) on the Fellowship Portal as soon as possible so you are prepared to maximize your time when Leadership Institutes begin.

The second lecture (10 minutes), located in the Focus Project module on the Fellowship Portal, concentrates on the development of your Focus Project throughout the Fellowship. It discusses the steps for developing your Focus Project action plan, including an overview of the toolkit's weekly worksheets that you should complete during the Fellowship.

2. Development of your Focus Project

Throughout the six weeks of the Institute, you will complete this toolkit independently as you develop your Focus Project action plan. To provide clear touchpoints on your project, you will meet with a Focus Project coach three times during the Institute to discuss your progress. Your coach will be identified by your Leadership Institute, and coaching sessions will occur in weeks one, four, and five. You are strongly encouraged to come to these meetings prepared with questions or challenges you may be facing. This will help you to get the most out of the time with your coach.

3. Submission of your Focus Project Toolkit

At the end of the Fellowship, you will submit your completed Focus Project toolkit through the Fellowship Portal to confirm completion of the Focus Project requirement. The toolkit is a unique product you can use as an action plan to implement your Focus Project after the Fellowship. You should invest sufficient time and energy to complete the toolkit and maximize the time with your coach to best position yourself to operationalize your plan.

Suggested Timeline for Independent Work

This suggested timeline is intended to help you manage your time dedicated to working on your Focus Project toolkit. Please use this outline to guide your progress:

Timeline	Activity
Pre-Fellowship period: May 6 – June 20*	Focus Project Introduction Lecture
	Worksheet 1: Focus Project Idea Generation
Week 1	Focus Project Overview Lecture
	First Focus Project Coaching Session
Week 2	Worksheet 2: Problem Statement
Week 3	Worksheet 3: Goal and SMART Objectives
Week 4	Second Focus Project Coaching Session
	Worksheet 4: Activities
Week 5	Third Focus Project Coaching Session
	Worksheet 5: Responsible Party, Timeline, and Indicators
August 6	Final Focus Project Submission

* If you would like to review your submissions for the Pre-Fellowship period, please visit the [Pre-Fellowship modules](#) on Canvas.

Worksheet 2

Focus Project Problem Statement/Statement of Need

A problem statement, also known as the statement of need, is a key element of the Focus Project. It makes a clear, concise, and well-supported statement of the issue you are seeking to address. It is a statement of a current challenge, issue, or problem that requires timely action to improve the situation in your community, organization, or business. This statement concisely explains the current problem and the barrier to achieving a solution.

A problem statement is completely objective, focusing only on the facts of the problem and leaving out any subjective opinions. It must be well-researched and evidence based. A problem statement should:

- Describe the problem
- Provide evidence to explain how you know that this problem exists
- Describe the target population this problem is impacting, and
- Explain the economic and social impact of this problem

A problem statement does not attempt to define the solution, nor does it outline the methods of arriving at the solution. It is a statement that initiates the process by recognizing the problem. In 500 words or less, please provide a problem statement for the challenge, problem, or need that you have decided to address.

Problem Statement/Statement of Need (500 words)

Example 1

The culture of civic engagement among the youth in my town of Bukoba does not exist, or at best is very limited. Even though young people have the potential to be a positive force for change, only a very small number of young people are civically engaged. The United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security highlights the importance of understanding young people's concerns, grievances, and responsibilities. It also emphasizes the need for young people to be meaningfully engaged in decision-making, so that they can contribute to building more equitable and peaceful societies.

However, there are a variety of challenges faced by the youth in Bukoba in their path to become civically engaged. One of the challenges is the fact that adults do not have awareness and capacity to equip young people with the tools, support, and encouragement needed to be civically engaged. For example, despite teachers' great influence on young peoples' lives, most teachers are not adequately trained to use the teaching approaches required to build the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values needed for future participation and civic engagement.

While Tanzania promulgated the National Youth Development Policy through its Ministry of Labor and Youth Development in 1996, realization of the policy goals has been spotty. The policy cites some of its main objectives as the preparation of young people to assume responsibilities as citizens, parents, and leaders in the community, as well as the enabling of young people to participate in national development. It specifically mentions the goal "to establish good plans for preparing and involving youth in national development activities," with plans to involve young people in economic, social, and cultural activities, in preparation for leadership roles. This policy provides a strong foundation up which to build a strong culture of civic engagement in the country.

Example 2

Every year in my district, X number of people contract preventable diseases, and X% die due to these diseases. My local government does not often partner with local media outlets to share information about disease prevention, and when they do, it is often only in one language. There is a lack of public information available to educate citizens on fighting preventable diseases and protecting themselves and others. The target population impacted by this problem is low-income community members who often lack access to health care and necessities like clean drinking water. Additionally, rural communities are a target population as they are not often reached by the government's public health messaging, or they do not speak the language in which information is disseminated.

A lack of information about disease prevention can lead to increased infection levels, which puts a strain on society. Health care systems, especially in rural communities, can become strained by increases in the number of patients when there are outbreaks. People who are ill or are taking care of ill family members may have to step away from work, which can inhibit them from supporting themselves. This absence from work has ripple effects on the local economy by hurting the workforce and can strain social systems by using up community resources. Additionally, the stigma around certain diseases can harm social networks when community members become infected.

Example 3

There is limited opportunity to grow my business in my local community as I have reached X% of my target market and have successfully met the need I set out to address by selling X product. Because I have met this need, I cannot expand or grow my business in its current location, and sales have mostly remained stagnant in the last few years. I have not been able to sell X product in surrounding communities as I need a physical presence and additional associates to break into a new market successfully. I also lack the data needed to determine which neighboring community would be a prime market for X product.

This limited opportunity for growth is impacting my business and my employees as I am unable to innovate and offer them better opportunities that come with expansion and innovation. It is also impacting my business by limiting the interest of investors. Investors want to see the potential for growth and innovation to decrease the risk associated with their investments.

In the space below, develop a Problem Statement/Statement of Need for your Focus Project.

Problem Statement/Statement of Need (500 words)

Worksheet 3

Goal And SMART Objectives For Focus Project

While developing the Focus Project, it is important that you break down the steps or the list of actions you plan to take to achieve a specific project goal and objective. You should know the difference between goals, objectives, activities, outputs, and outcomes and how to write SMART objectives for your Focus Project. Objectives are SMART if they are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic (or relevant), and time-bound (or timely).

Know the Difference: Goals, Objectives, Activities, Outputs, and Outcomes	
Goal	<p>Broad, general statement of the ultimate effect you want to achieve</p> <p><i>Example 1:</i> To develop a culture of civic engagement among young children in Bukoba, Tanzania.</p> <p><i>Example 2:</i> To create a public health campaign that effectively disseminates health and safety information in my district.</p> <p><i>Example 3:</i> To expand my business into a neighboring community in the upcoming year.</p>
Objective	<p>What you aim to accomplish (SMART)</p> <p><i>Example 1:</i> By August 2022, the number of young children ages 12 – 18 in the Town of Bukoba engaged in volunteerism activities will increase by 20% from 2020.</p> <p><i>Example 2:</i> By August 2022, there will be printed literature and radio announcements on health and safety practices disseminated to 40% of the population in at least three of the primary languages spoken in my district.</p> <p><i>Example 3:</i> By August 2023, we will establish a brick-and-mortar location in a neighboring community and increase overall revenue by 20% from 2020.</p>
Activity	<p>What you do with your resources to cause change</p> <p><i>Example 1:</i> Conduct volunteerism events for primary and secondary school students in the Town of Bukoba through community partner organizations.</p> <p><i>Example 2:</i> Connect with local media organizations across the district to garner interest and support in disseminating public service messages.</p> <p><i>Example 3:</i> Conduct a needs assessment in neighboring communities to gauge interest in top products and locate investors for the new location.</p>

Output	<p>What you actually deliver</p> <p><i>Example 1:</i> Twenty-eight (28) volunteerism events involving 200 students from 10 schools (20 students per school) through community partner organizations.</p> <p><i>Example 2:</i> Twenty (20) radio stations playing public service announcements and ten (10) media organizations producing informative literature.</p> <p><i>Example 3:</i> One (1) new location for the business and an increased customer base of two hundred (200) people.</p>
Outcome	<p>What the organization or beneficiaries gain from your output – the effects of your work</p> <p><i>Example 1:</i> Young children and youth playing a critical role in addressing social challenges facing their town.</p> <p><i>Example 2:</i> Decrease in the rate of disease in the district as a result of increasing public awareness about health and safety practices.</p> <p><i>Example 3:</i> Increased profit as a result of more sales.</p>

Five Elements of a SMART Objective	
Direction of Change	Increase, decrease, or maintain the balance
Degree of Change	Percentage or nominal number
Area of Change	A geographic location, village, town/city, region, etc.
Target Population	Primary and secondary school students ages 12–18; prospective business owners; communities in your district, etc.
Timeframe	Days, weeks, months, years

Using the challenge, problem, or need you have identified, please develop one goal and three SMART objectives for your project in the table below.

Goal	SMART Objectives
My Goal:	Objective 1:
	Objective 2:
	Objective 3:

Worksheet 4

Focus Project Activities

KEY QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS PROJECT ACTIVITIES

In developing Focus Project activities and completing Worksheet 4, you should ask yourself the following key questions:

What additional areas of expertise, knowledge, or skills do I need to effectively function as a change agent in my business, organization, or community? You need to honestly answer the following critical questions: do you need to conduct additional research in order to refine your vision? Is additional data or knowledge needed to accurately assess the problem or situation? Are there additional skills that you need to manage the process of facilitating change?

What mechanisms should I employ to achieve my goals? What types of partnerships need to be established or utilized in order to be successful? Do you need to establish a committee, task force, or council to coordinate the activities involved in achieving established goals and benchmarks? Do you need to partner with other organizations or communities? What factors do you need to consider in determining what type of organizational mechanisms are needed to help you achieve your goals?

What are the programs, projects, and/or activities I must implement to achieve my goal and objectives?

Define the programs, projects, and/or activities that need to be implemented in order to achieve agreed upon goals. In some instances, a comprehensive program may not be required. A series of projects or activities may serve to accomplish the identified goal and objectives.

What resources will I need to implement the programs, projects, and/or activities? Resources include human capital, technology, financial capital, physical capital, and inventory (goods and products). Often, NGO, entrepreneur, and community leaders falsely believe that if they just had enough money, all their problems would be resolved. Yet, having access to persons who are properly trained and equipped can be more critical to a project's success than money. It is important to carefully assess all the resource needs of a given endeavor before attempting to aggressively implement your Focus Project.

FOCUS PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Read the examples in the table below, then fill in your objectives and activities using the blank table on the next page.

SMART Objectives	Activities
Example 1	
<p>Objective 1: By August 2022, the number of children ages 12–18 in Bukoba engaged in volunteerism activities will increase by 20% from 2020.</p>	<p>Activity 1: Recruit and select 5 primary and 5 secondary schools to participate in the project.</p> <p>Activity 2: Recruit and select 100 primary and 100 secondary school students to participate in the project.</p> <p>Activity 3: Conduct 28 volunteerism events for primary and secondary school students in the Town of Bukoba through community partner organizations.</p>
Example 2	
<p>Objective 1: By August 2022, there will be printed literature and radio announcements on safety practices disseminated to 40% of the population in at least three of the primary languages spoken in my district.</p>	<p>Activity 1: Survey a representative sample of the population to find gaps in information available about a particular public health issue.</p> <p>Activity 2: Hire three health professionals and two marketing professionals to summarize key health and safety information and package it for the public.</p> <p>Activity 3: Connect with local media organizations across the district to garner interest and support in disseminating public service messages.</p>
Example 3	
<p>Objective 1: By August 2023, we will establish a brick-and-mortar location in a neighboring community and increase overall revenue by 20% from 2020.</p>	<p>Activity 1: Conduct a needs assessment in neighboring communities to gauge interest in top products.</p> <p>Activity 2: Survey sites in neighboring communities for the new location.</p> <p>Activity 3: Develop a refined pitch that demonstrates the demand for your business and potential for growth to deliver to investors.</p>

SMART Objectives	Activities
My Objective 1:	Activity 1:
	Activity 2:
	Activity 3:
My Objective 2:	Activity 1:
	Activity 2:
	Activity 3:

My Objective 3:	Activity 1:
	Activity 2:
	Activity 3:

Worksheet 5

Focus Project Key Responsible Person(s), Timeframe, and Indicators of Success

KEY QUESTIONS FOR RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S), TIMEFRAME, AND INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

Before completing Worksheet 5, you should ask yourself the following key questions:

What will be the organizational structure for my organization or project? Who are the persons or departments that will be responsible for implementing which tasks? It is very important to identify individuals who will be responsible for implementing specific tasks or projects in order to achieve the goal and objectives. In some situations, it may be a department or division within the organization instead of an individual.

What is the timeframe within which these programs, projects, and/or activities will be implemented?

How much time do you think it will take for you to achieve the goals and objectives identified by you and others? Will the timeframe be in terms of weeks, months, or years for implementing each activity? It is very important for each activity to have its own timeframe.

What indicators will I use to measure progress in achieving the goal and objectives established? How will the impact (short-term, medium-term, and long-term) of the project or activity be measured or assessed? How will you know that the project or activity is succeeding and achieving its objectives? What indicators will you use to assess and measure each project activity? How will you use this information to take corrective action to make sure implementation of the project or activity is staying on track?

FOCUS PROJECT KEY RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S), TIMEFRAME, AND INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

For each of the objectives and activities you developed for your project, please identify the key responsible person(s) by their titles, the timeframe within which the activity will be implemented, and the indicator(s) of success (how will you know that you are succeeding?).

Objectives	Activities	Key Responsible Person(s)	Timeframe	Indicators of Success
Example 1:				
Goal: To develop a culture of civic engagement among young children in Bukoba, Tanzania.				
Objective 1: By August 2022, the number of children ages 12-18 in Bukoba engaged in volunteerism activities will increase by 20% from 2020.	Activity 1: Recruit and select five primary and five secondary schools to participate in the project.	Project Director	August – October 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of schools contacted; number of schools accepting the invitation to participate; and signed agreements with selected schools.
	Activity 2: Recruit and select 100 primary and 100 secondary school students to participate in the project (20 students per school).	Project Director Volunteer Coordinators	October – November 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student application form; number of student applicants; number of students selected to participate in the project; notification letters to selected students; and number of students accepting the invitation to participate in the project.
	Activity 3: Conduct 28 volunteerism events for primary and secondary school students in the Town of Bukoba through community partner organizations.	Volunteer Coordinators	January – July 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of community partners organizations identified to provide volunteer opportunities; signed agreements with community partner organizations; and number of volunteer opportunities identified through community partners.

Objectives	Activities	Key Responsible Person(s)	Timeframe	Indicators of Success
Example 2:				
Goal: To create a public health campaign that effectively disseminates health and safety information in my district.				
Objective 1: By August 2022, there will be printed literature and radio announcements on safety practices disseminated to 40% of the population in at least three of the primary languages spoken in my district.	Activity 1: Survey a representative sample of the population to find gaps in information available about a particular public health issue.	Director of Planning and Evaluation	August – October 2021	Online survey created; team of field researchers created; number of online surveys submitted; and number of field surveys completed
	Activity 2: Hire 3 health professionals and 2 marketing professionals to summarize key health and safety information and package it for the public.	Human Resources Director	September 2021 – January 2022	Announcement for open positions; number of qualified applications received for each position; and number of candidates interviewed.
	Activity 3: Connect with local media organizations across the district to garner interest and support in disseminating public service messages.	Director of Communications	August – December 2021	Number of radio stations contacted; number of print media organizations/ companies contacted; and number of radio stations/media organizations who commit to partnering with initiative.

Objectives	Activities	Key Responsible Person(s)	Timeframe	Indicators of Success
Example 3: Goal: To expand my business into a neighboring community in the upcoming year.				
Objective 1: By August 2023, we will establish a brick-and-mortar location in a neighboring community and increase overall revenue by 20% from 2020.	Activity 1: Conduct a needs assessment in neighboring communities to gauge interest in top products.	Director of Sales	September - November 2021	Assessment of top products; stakeholders in the community identified; and surveys completed.
	Activity 2: Survey sites in neighboring communities for the new location.	CEO/President	December – April 2022	Budget for new location set; top communities for new location identified; and number of sites within budget identified.
	Activity 3: Develop a refined pitch that demonstrates the demand for your business and potential for growth to deliver to investors.	CEO/President	November-April 2022	Best community for expansion identified based on needs assessment; viable sites for new location identified; and number of potential investors identified.

Objectives	Activities	Key Responsible Person(s)	Timeframe	Indicators of Success
My Goal:				
My Objective 1:	Activity 1:			
	Activity 2:			
	Activity 3:			

Objectives	Activities	Key Responsible Person(s)	Timeframe	Indicators of Success
My Goal:				
My Objective 2:	Activity 1:			
	Activity 2:			
	Activity 3:			

Objectives	Activities	Key Responsible Person(s)	Timeframe	Indicators of Success
My Goal:				
My Objective 3:	Activity 1:			
	Activity 2:			
	Activity 3:			

