



MANDELA
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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.

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Through its programming, the Mandela Washington Fellowship seeks to provide Alumni and 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 Fellows 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.

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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 topic identified in your Pre-Fellowship Focus Project Worksheet and will develop over the course of the Fellowship. You are required to complete your Focus Project Toolkit by 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), provided prior to the Fellowship, introduced the Focus Project concept and encouraged 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.

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 Focus Project Toolkit's weekly worksheets that you should complete during the Fellowship.

2. Development of Your Focus Project

Throughout your Leadership Institute, you will complete this toolkit independently to develop your Focus Project action plan. To provide clear touchpoints on your project, you will meet one-on-one with a Focus Project Coach for a total of three hours during the Institute to discuss your progress. Your Coach will be identified by your Leadership Institute, and you will work with your Coach to schedule coaching sessions based on your mutual availability. Be sure to come to these meetings prepared with any questions or challenges you may be facing, which will help you maximize your time with your Coach.

3. Completion of Your Focus Project Toolkit

While you must complete your Focus Project Toolkit by the end of the Fellowship, you are not required to implement your Focus Project to be considered a Fellowship Alumni. This 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. After the Fellowship, this toolkit can continue to serve as an ongoing resource for future project planning and professional growth.

Suggested Timeline for Independent Work

This suggested timeline is a guide for completing your Focus Project Toolkit:

Timeline	Activity
Pre-Fellowship period: April 14 – May 23	Focus Project Introduction Lecture via Canvas
	Worksheet 1: Focus Project Idea Generation
Week 2	Focus Project Overview Lecture via Canvas
	Worksheet 2: Problem Statement
Week 3	Worksheet 3: Goal and SMART Objectives
Week 4	Worksheet 4: Activities
Week 5	Worksheet 5: Responsible Party, Timeline, and Indicators
Week 6	Finalize Focus Project

Schedule your coaching sessions to align with your progress on the Focus Project Toolkit.

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 that clearly and concisely outlines the issue you are seeking to address. It is a statement of a current challenge, issue, or problem that requires timely action to improve your community, organization, or business. This statement concisely explains the current problem and the barriers to achieving a solution.

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

- Describe the problem;
- Provide evidence that demonstrates the problem's existence;
- 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 a solution, nor does it outline the methods of arriving at a solution. It merely initiates the process by recognizing the problem.

In 500 words or less, please draft a problem statement for the issue 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 is at best 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 youth in Bukoba seeking to become civically engaged. One of these challenges is the fact that adults lack the awareness and capacity to equip young people with the tools, support, and encouragement for them to be civically engaged. For example, despite teachers' great influence on young peoples' lives, most teachers are not adequately trained 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 inconsistent. Primary policy objectives include preparing young people to assume responsibilities as citizens, parents, and community leaders, as well as enabling young people to participate in national development.

The policy specifically aims "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 for a robust 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 healthcare and necessities like clean drinking water. Additionally, rural communities are also uniquely challenged, 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. Healthcare 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, hurting the workforce and straining 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 successfully enter a new market. I also lack the data 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, who 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

Focus Project Goal and SMART Objectives

While developing your Focus Project, it is important to break down the specific actions you will take to achieve the project goal. 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 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 within the upcoming year.</p>
Objective	<p>What you aim to accomplish (SMART)</p> <p><i>Example 1:</i> By August 2023, the number of young children ages 12–18 in the Town of Bukoba engaged in volunteerism activities will increase by 20% from 2021.</p> <p><i>Example 2:</i> By August 2023, 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 2024, we will establish a brick-and-mortar location in a neighboring community and increase overall revenue by 20% from 2021.</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 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>

<p>Output</p>	<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>
<p>Outcome</p>	<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 play 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>

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

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

To develop activities for your Focus Project, ask yourself the following 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? Honestly answer the following: do you need to conduct additional research 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 facilitate change?

What mechanisms should I employ to achieve my goals? What types of partnerships need to be established or utilized for you to be successful? Do you need to establish a committee, task force, or council to coordinate activities? Do you need to partner with other organizations or communities? What factors do you need to consider in determining what 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 activities that need to be implemented 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 simply having enough money would resolve their problems. However, having access to people who are properly trained and equipped can be more critical to a project's success than money. Be sure to carefully assess all the resource needs of each endeavor before attempting to implement your Focus Project.

FOCUS PROJECT ACTIVITIES

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

SMART Objectives	Activities
Example 1	
<p>Objective 1: By August 2023, the number of children ages 12–18 in Bukoba engaged in volunteerism activities will increase by 20% from 2021.</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 Bukoba through community partner organizations.</p>
Example 2	
<p>Objective 1: By August 2023, 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 2024, we will establish a brick-and-mortar location in a neighboring community and increase overall revenue by 20% from 2021.</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, ask yourself the following key questions:

What will the organizational structure be for my organization or project? Which people or departments will be responsible for implementing which tasks? It is very important to identify who will be responsible for implementing specific tasks or projects to achieve your 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 will it take for you to achieve the identified goals and objectives? Each activity will have its own timeframe – consider whether each activity will take weeks, months, or years.

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

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

For each Focus Project objective and activity, identify the key responsible person(s) by their titles, the timeframe for implementing each activity, 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 2023, the number of children ages 12–18 in Bukoba engaged in volunteerism activities will increase by 20% from 2021.	Activity 1: Recruit and select five primary and five secondary schools to participate in the project.	Project Director	August – October 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of schools contacted; number of schools accepting the invitation to participate; 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 2022	<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; number of students accepting the invitation to participate in the project
	Activity 3: Conduct 28 volunteerism events for primary and secondary school students in Bukoba through community partner organizations.	Volunteer Coordinators	January – July 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of community partners organizations identified to provide volunteer opportunities; signed agreements with community partner organizations; 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 2023, 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 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online survey created; team of field researchers created; • number of online surveys submitted; • 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 2022 – January 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Announcement for open positions; • number of qualified applications received for each position; • 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 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of radio stations contacted; • number of print media organizations/companies contacted; • 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 2024, we will establish a brick-and-mortar location in a neighboring community and increase overall revenue by 20% from 2021.	Activity 1: Conduct a needs assessment in neighboring communities to gauge interest in top products.	Director of Sales	September – November 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of top products; stakeholders in the community identified; surveys completed
	Activity 2: Survey sites in neighboring communities for the new location.	CEO/President	December 2022 – April 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget for new location set; top communities for new location identified; 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 2022 – April 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Best community for expansion identified based on needs assessment; viable sites for new location identified; 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:			

WORKSHEET 5

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:			

