



September 2015

Dear Advancing Leaders Fellowship Community,

It is a joy and a delight to share with you our end-of-year report for the second round of the Advancing Leaders Fellowship Program. Indeed, because of our Fellows' busyness and tight schedules, it has taken us longer than anticipated to receive and compile all this great information into one final document for your perusal and appreciation. It has been a wonderful month of receiving letters, photos, discerning insights, and commentary from our Fellows and their Mentors. One of the many stellar characteristics of this very special ALF Program is the way all our constituents think about and reflect upon their work, and articulate with such meaningful passion and compassion about building their visions and dreams, and having them slowly bring their projects to fruition! Another outstanding feature is to observe how the Fellow-Mentor relationships build, grow, and maintain themselves, through all manner of challenges and obstacles.

You'll read about all of this in the pages that follow. I have no doubt it will raise many questions, emotions, and thoughts. This past year, our Fellows persevered through some tough moments, some surprising ups-and-downs, and more than a few unanticipated dilemmas. At the same time, one cannot help but be proud of the way they have also been able to share their brilliance, creativity, resiliency, and collaborative leadership skills to generate positive change.

Finally, I must offer words of thanks and appreciation to Katie Goodspeed, who stepped in at moments to provide continuity from Year One, to Dr. Aqeel Tirmizi, who galvanized and facilitated our six-month training program, and Sean Jones, who volunteered to pull together this report. Along the way, of course, our Mentors—notably our two Peters, Mr. Hayward and Dr. Simpson, along with Ms. Cheryl Coonahan, and Dr. Richard Rodman—who supported our Fellows in so many expected and even several unanticipated ways. While it is a huge honor to be selected as a Mentor, one cannot stand on their laurels in this role—it involves a huge amount of work, diligence, giving, communication, patience, and openness to changes and challenges. All did so—not only willingly, but with warmth, gusto, and enthusiasm!

Please enjoy the report, and feel free to write me with your thoughts, responses, reactions, and questions.

With warm regards and best wishes,

Daniel Cantor Yalowitz, Ed.D.
Vice Provost for Graduate Education
Dean, SIT Graduate Institute
ALF Director, 2014-2015
Brattleboro, Vermont USA

Executive Summary

The Advancing Leaders Fellowship (ALF) program empowers a diverse, global group of early-career social innovators with the vision and the potential to have an extraordinary impact in communities worldwide.

Each year, five ALF fellows are selected to receive a \$10,000 stipend, a three-month course in project management and evaluation, and opportunities to network with some of the world's leading social innovators during group events.

On April 3, 2014, World Learning chose its second cohort of Advancing Leaders Fellows during a pitch competition at New York City's Centre for Social Innovation; the event drew over 150 people and featured guest speaker Aaron Hurst, CEO of Imperative and founder of the Taproot Foundation. The 2014-2015 fellows are:

- Amira Ali Bouaouina — MALI (My Africa Learns To Inspire), Algeria
- Thelma Boamah — JuniorCamp Internship Program, Ghana
- Alicia Moore — A Battle Worth Fighting: Cultivating Military Veterans into Agricultural Warriors, United States
- Gul Khan Naseer — Youth and Child Rights Clubs, Pakistan
- Divine Ntaryike Jr., — SCINC: A Science Policy Transformer, Cameroon

After they were selected, the Advancing Leaders fellows underwent a three-month training program, administered by SIT Graduate School Professor Aqeel Tirmizi, designed to strengthen their competencies in social venture development and implementation. After their training period, which lasted from April through July 2014, fellows were matched with expert mentors in their areas of focus and set out to implement their projects.

In October 2014, fellows and mentors reported on their progress to date; these dispatches informed ALF's midterm donor report. Now, enclosed herein are final reports from fellows and mentors that illustrate how the Advancing Leaders Fellowship program helped them affect change in their communities.

Fellow and Mentor Reports

In August 2015, one year after the close of the training portion of the Advancing Leaders Fellowship program, each fellow and each mentor was asked to submit a final report.¹ Their responses, which appear in the following pages, are revealing of the power of training, cohort formation, and the fellow-mentor relationship.

¹ Additional project details and photos are available upon request.

Thelma Boamah, JuniorCamp Internship Program, Ghana

Mentor: Cheryl Coonahan, Strategic Planning Consultant, SIT Graduate Institute Alumna

Scope of Project

My proposed program was a 10-week training and internship placement opportunity for 20 recent high school graduates in Ghana. They were to be recruited from participants in Junior Camp Ghana, a career mentorship program of the GhanaThink Foundation, a youth development organization connecting talent across Ghana and the Ghanaian diaspora.

Results: The Junior Camp Internship Program (JCIP) officially launched on June 15, 2015, with a 2-week training. Students began their 8-week placements on June 29. We began with 10 rather than 20 students, of whom five have previously participated in a Junior Camp Ghana program. We partnered with 7 employers, mostly early stage companies led by young entrepreneurs.



Challenges and Obstacles

There were several challenges to overcome during the implementation of this program. The biggest one was sustaining momentum throughout the process. This was due to the fact that the entire Junior Camp team is comprised of volunteers who have other responsibilities such as full course loads or full-time work. I relocated to Ghana for the fellowship and underestimated the costs I'd incur living in Accra, so I was, at first, also working full-time and then freelancing alongside the fellowship.

The program also had recruiting difficulties because Junior Camp did not plan as many career mentoring events as it usually does—those were prime outreach opportunities.

Support and Successes

The Junior Camp Ghana team was the biggest source of support for this program. Four members of the team in particular were active with elements such as employer engagement, curriculum design and



delivery, and media relations. Members of the startup and freelance community that I got to know in Accra also ended up playing a big part as employers and as facilitators during the 2-week training.

Another huge source of support was the Webster University Ghana, which is a sponsor of Junior Camp events. They provided in-kind training space for the two weeks.

My mentor Cheryl was also great as a sounding board for many elements of the program. I'm really happy about the relationship we've developed.

I often referenced the content from the ALF training. The planning it required me to do upfront was a huge help because it gave me a reference point to measure against. The projected timeline and budget did the most to keep things on track.

Conclusion

I'm really proud of what we were able to accomplish. The program participants clearly value this experience. We've even received a note from one of their moms, who was really concerned about what her son would do during his long break. Most of the participants admit that they would have been idle. Ghana is still a ways away from solving the problem of unemployment among youth. This programs and ones like it are starting to pop up, and employers are starting to have their own internship programs, which is good to see.

I am back in the US so my plans to permanently relocate to Ghana are on hold for now. I returned two months before the launch and have been in daily communication with the team, our employers, trainers, and vendor via email, Skype, and Whatsapp to steer the program forward. I've also interacted with our participants via Hangouts and Whatsapp.



The time in Ghana provided a useful reality check that forced me to ask how I plan to sustain myself well enough to be able to do work I care about. My desire to work for social good continues to be strong. For the next few years I want to continue building my skills by working for and learning from well-established and effective social enterprises while I make strides toward sustaining my own.

Mentor's Report: Excerpts

"[Highlights of the relationship included] the pleasure of getting to know a remarkably talented woman, the satisfaction of knowing that my skills and experience were useful to her, meeting someone from another generation of my graduate school (there are few ways to connect), and learning about her work, project, and more about Accra and Ghana."

"[I saw Thelma grow through her] increased ability to design and manage a project and her growing recognition of her uniqueness—that she was a really talented connector of people, very current in social media, and bicultural, among other attributes."

"The youth internship program has direct benefits to the youth who are in it and to the Ghanaian economy. I'm a huge believer in real work experience. Thelma's fellowship experience helped her get the job she is in now."

Alicia Moore, “A Battle Worth Fighting: Cultivating Military Veterans into Agricultural Warriors, United States” Blue Yonder Organic Farm; North Salem, Indiana

Mentor: Richard Rodman, Professor in International Education, SIT Graduate Institute

Introduction

Sustainable farming and military veterans may seem like two unrelated topics, but both are on the decline and in dire need of help. Tragically, they are quite possibly the only things in this world which can save each other.

Classified as an anxiety disorder, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is the body’s normal reaction to trauma, and anyone can suffer from it, including

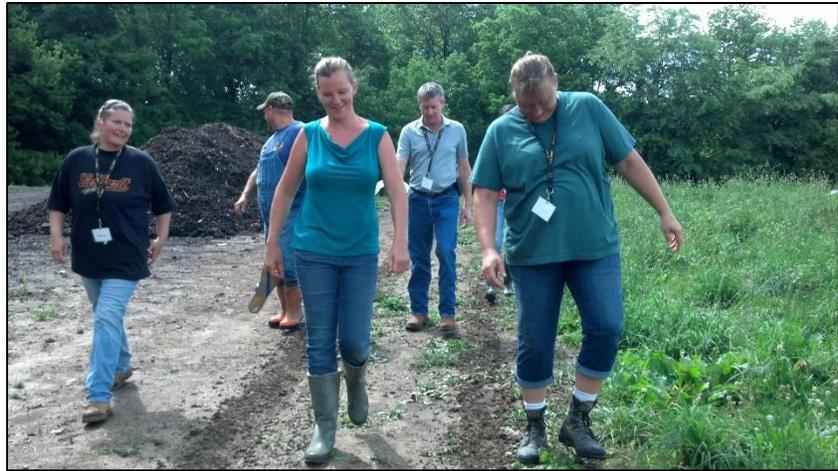
those who survive war, car accidents, sexual assault, and even natural disaster. Historically it has mostly been associated with the military, thus it has been called nostalgia, soldiers heart, shell shock, homesickness, and battle fatigue.

Today’s war veterans experience a wide range of mental, physical and psychosomatic disorders after their time in combat, including: insomnia, angry outbursts, exaggerated startled response, gastrointestinal disorders, nightmares, tremors, suicidal tendencies, survivors guilt, and/or feelings of detachment. Overall, the Veterans Administration (VA) is clearly failing American veterans, as the rates of suicide remain at 22 per day. Although typically considered a problem among males, female veterans are struggling as well, and they commit suicide at six times the rate of their civilian counterparts.

In the US, agriculture is undergoing both a crisis and a revolution. The average age of the American farmer is 58 and there are not enough young farmers to replace those who are retiring. By the USDA’s own estimates, the US is in need of one million new farmers over the next decade, a goal which it likely will not reach.

Most American urban areas only have a 3-day supply of food, and in the case of natural disaster, climate change or a terrorist attack, lack of food could easily lead to social unrest and chaos. Most Americans do not think about their food or where it comes from, nor do they entertain the idea that the US, a nation of great wealth, could actually run out of it.

Veterans and agriculture fit together well, as the ability of nature to heal has been well-documented in psychoanalytic literature and is often referred to as *green therapy*. Agriculture is a difficult and challenging pursuit, ideal for restless, war-torn veterans. A mixture of exercise, fresh air, and reflection can have a profound impact on a military veteran who is struggling with reintegration back into peaceful society.



Accomplishments

The ALF Fellowship was used to create a week-long program at Blue Yonder Organic Farm (owned by Air Force veteran Sara Creech) named *Operation Groundwork*. It was an intense, demanding course designed to get students thinking seriously about sustainable agriculture and how they can become successful farmers.

A typical day for students was: class runs 9am to noon, with 2-3 guest speakers in the morning (with breaks in between), lunch, and then a field trip between 1-5pm. Dinner was served at various locations, either at Blue Yonder Organic Farm, at a farm-to-table restaurant, or at the hotel.

Academically, we met our goals of exposing veterans to a wide variety of agricultural methods and models, causing them to think critically about their agricultural plans from a business standpoint. Several of the veterans actually changed their plans after the week—for example, one veteran thought she would be a produce farmer, but realized later that she prefers goats and their dairy products.

On a non-academic, informal level, the observations I made as a veteran myself were insightful. At first the students were apprehensive, a bit fearful to be put into a program with other people whom they had never met, especially since some of them were suffering severe psychological trauma due to combat. However, as the week progressed and the veterans got to know each other, they assimilated and bonded, creating a very powerful, coherent group dynamic.

My greatest fear about the week was that our mental health counselor was not on site—he has a regular job at the VA, and was on call only in case of any mental health emergencies. I had tried to think of ways to build-in some type of group therapy into the program, because I feared that it was lacking a serious mental health treatment component.

However, as time passed and the veterans felt not only more comfortable with each other but also excited to learn about farming, I made a profound discovery: *the veterans are healing each other and are in turn healing themselves.*

The veterans were acting as counselors for each other by revealing deep-seated personal issues and opening up about their experiences in such a manner that no other type of therapy was needed during the week. The course itself not only taught them about farming, but the time spent in nature with their peers in a safe space became a form of therapy itself. Although I feared one of them could suffer from some type of mental health distress, this was never the case; the veterans supported each other emotionally to the extent that the social worker on call was never needed.



Obstacles and Challenges

One of the most difficult aspects of the program was deciding which guest speakers to invite and which farms to visit; there were dozens of options. Students were surveyed before the program so we could plan the program according to their agricultural interests (the top ranked were aquaponics and wine making) but it was sometimes difficult to put all of the pieces together. For example we tried to find a local aquaponics facility that could give us a class for half a day, but due to schedule conflicts we could find no organization which could do so. When we contacted local wineries about hosting us for a class (and even compensating them financially) they seemed uninterested.



There were also other components which Sara and I believed were absolutely necessary for the program, such as taxes, business planning, soil health and marketing, which were top priorities. There were so many possibilities for our course, that it sometimes became overwhelming to choose guest speakers and farm visits. Additionally, farmers are very busy this time of year and understandably it could be difficult to work around everyone's schedules.

Logistics were no easy task, as sometimes guest speakers went over or under their allotted time, some had to cancel at the last minute, and of course, making sure everyone was fed was another challenge as well.

As these are adult learners, Kolb's experiential learning cycle definitely comes into play. While working on the schedule I struggled a bit with the fact that we had a lot to teach them, yet I understood that they needed time to absorb and reflect on the day's events. I also tried to guide them into thinking and reflecting on what they were learning without making it seem as if I were treating them like children.

Another struggle was the balance between class time and hands-on time. While I preferred that they had plenty of hands-on time, there were certain subjects that required a classroom and could not be accomplished elsewhere, such as how to obtain organic certification for a farm.

Human Supports

This program absolutely would not have functioned without community help and involvement. Sara's mother, Sandy, was in charge of cooking our lunches in dinners at the farm, her culinary expertise was absolutely crucial as it saved our budget and I did not have to pay for restaurant meals or a catering service. Tracey, a volunteer, helped Sandy with cooking and also logistics during the week, and additionally helping me out in case I needed or forgot anything.

Additionally, other volunteers from the local church helped also by providing lunches at the hotel, and offering transportation if needed. There were several people from the church who were "on call" in case any disasters arose, but luckily we never had any major issues.

Training Program Details

The goal of the program was not to make professional farmers out of the veterans, but instead to give them the tools and confidence for them to keep pursuing their agricultural passions. The USDA says that a beginning farmer is anyone with “less than ten years’ experience,” and there was no way they would become agricultural experts in just one week.

Our topics for the week included: agritourism, cheesemaking, goat farming, cattle, urban agriculture, selling produce to restaurants, USDA organic certification, taxes, ag law, Homegrown by Heroes certification, educational and financial resources, business planning, Entrepreneurial Bootcamp for Veterans, conservation, growing produce in hoop houses (green houses) among others.

In addition to classroom time and hands-on time, students received 6 different agricultural books on various topics as soil health and how to grow vegetables and sell at a farmers market. Students received numerous handouts during the week from speakers and farmers, and I created an academic binder which not only detailed each day’s events, but also contained resources for them to use once they got back home (see last pages). This guide included information not only about agricultural topics, but other types of agricultural training, free counseling, news articles, and many other subjects relevant to veterans.

Several of the students mentioned that they felt overwhelmed during the week, which was to be expected. We had a lot to show them in six days, and undoubtedly they were mentally and physically tired. However, our time with them was brief and we felt it necessary to include as many useful subjects as we could. Additionally, farming itself is mentally and physically taxing, and if they are serious about agriculture they must understand the physical and mental demands of such a profession.

The last day of the training program was optional, as the week was already quite long and the subject for Saturday was chicken processing (slaughtering). Two of the students chose to stay and learn about on-farm chicken processing and the state and federal laws which govern such activities, but the others did not.

Student Feedback

Students were given surveys both once per day and one at the end of the week. The daily survey was simple, consisting of only “what did you like about today, and what did you not like about today? What worked well, what did not work?” The survey on the last day was much more thorough, one we borrowed from NCAT (National Center for Appropriate Technology) which asked them about their skill and confidence improvement. The following quotes are from these surveys:

- Some of the positive responses were:
 - “Everything was great, I learned a lot today, no complaints!”
 - “I like the relaxed, laid back feel of the class.”
 - “Learning quite a bit, my confidence in agriculture is increasing.”
- A few of the less positive comments included:
 - “More hands-on field work”



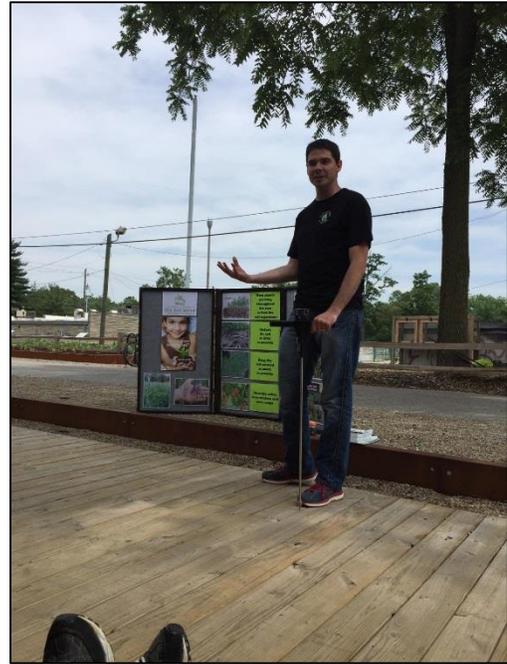
- “Maybe a short quiz at the end of the day to recap?”
- “Distance we drove to the field site was too long”

It is of course expected that there will be both bad and good responses after any type of program, but I feel that even though the students had some complaints, they were all relatively minor and the week was still informative and useful.

On a personal note, two of the students confided in me during the program that both struggled with suicidal ideation after their return from the war zone. Both had suffered heavily from war-related trauma and struggled to reintegrate back into a society which does not understand the complex nature of war and its effects on the human spirit. As one student veteran bluntly told me:

“I’m so glad I came this week. I loved it. I love the other veterans, and I learned so much about farming. I’m glad I didn’t off [kill] myself. I would have missed this.”

To me that is the most powerful quote from the whole week, and it reinforces my belief in the therapeutic nature of agriculture to heal and mend broken souls.



Closing Thoughts: How I Benefited Personally and Professionally

Needless to say, the bond which was shared by the veterans was the most profound observation I made, but academically the week was overall a success. Since this was our first of many programs, it was a learning experience for everyone involved. Small disasters were to be expected (i.e., budget miscalculations, guest speakers taking too much time) and for next year’s program we have a much better idea of the financial, personal, and time requirements for such a program.

The best thing I learned during the week is that small steps make a big difference. I first became of food security issues at SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont, where I quickly realized that the same problems I witnessed in Iraq could easily happen in my own country. This experience at SIT set in motion not only a desire to grow food but also to help my peers overcome their trauma by teaching them how to farm. During those early days in Vermont I never would have envisioned my life would take this turn, but I am so glad it did.

Just as other people helped me to enter the field of agriculture (I met Sara at a free, similar type of training called *Armed to Farm*, hosted by NCAT/ATTRA) and it changed my life. Both Sara and I are hoping to teach farming to veterans as long as we can.

Professional Next Steps

While I had planned on staying at Blue Yonder for several years, my recent marriage means that my life plans have been disrupted a little bit. I had intended to stay in the Midwest and pursue research on organic farming and military veterans, but I am instead moving to California to attend graduate school at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, where I will study military social work and the effect of farming on mental health outcomes. I intend to pursue a PhD once this next degree is completed; I believe that much more research needs to be done on the biochemical, psychological and physiological effects of nature on mental health disorders, especially PTSD.

Although not physically at Blue Yonder, I intend to remain connected by writing grants for the veterans programs. I plan to spend part of my summer every year at Blue Yonder, helping with the logistics and planning of the Operation Groundwork at the farm. Being around the veterans and watching them heal has had a profound impact on my own mental health and career goals; it was life-changing for me as well. It is my intention that as we run more programs and establish a reputation we can expand the scope of educational opportunities for veterans at Blue Yonder, such as paid internships and more training programs such as this one. My partner at Blue Yonder, Sara, has founded a 501c3 non-profit organization which will continue to raise funds for various training programs on the farm (<http://www.operationgroundwork.org>).

Closing

Sara and I would both personally like to thank World Learning for their generous donation in sponsoring our program. Without their help none of this would have been possible, and we hope to pay it forward by training a new generation of farmers in sustainable agriculture for many years to come.

Additionally we would also like to thank the guest speakers, farmers, ranchers and volunteers who helped us with our first program. Your insight, knowledge, and humor touched the lives of eight veterans who want to farm and become the next generation of agricultural leaders.

Mentor's Report Excerpts

“World Learning could not have picked a more appropriate and deserving recipient of the ALF award. As expected, Alicia Moore has lived up to every aspect of what we might expect from a SIT Graduate Institute leader in the service of others. The award was never about Alicia, but rather about those she serves.”

“As expected, Alicia put into practice what we teach at SIT: CC-NOVA. Alicia identified the **CONTEXT** and **CIRCUMSTANCES** of returning American Veterans, ascertained their (and our) **NEED**, took advantage of the **OPPORTUNITY** we presented to her with clear **VISION**... and she **ACTED**. Congratulations, Alicia. Well done.”

“Over the last few years, World Learning has been wise to invest its time and energy in remaining open to kindling an interest in our Veteran population. Alicia took a chance on us by coming to our school. Indeed, Alicia Moore worked hard (and in unfamiliar territory) with World Learning and SIT to create the organization's first nationally recognized Student Veterans Association. Our association remains to this day. I have been pleased to mentor what she and her SIT colleagues named "Veterans of Conscience." Both Alicia and I trust that this energy is not lost in the days ahead and that World Learning will itself learn more about its role in relation to veterans. Wise, experienced, disciplined, empathetic and highly motivated community members are just what our school needs in the years ahead. Thanks to Alicia. Thanks to World Learning.”

Gul Khan Naseer, Youth and Child Rights Clubs, Countering Extremism in Pakistan

Mentor: Peter Simpson, Proposal Specialist, World Learning; Academic Advisor, SIT Graduate Institute

Main Objectives

The main objective of my Advancing Leaders Fellowship project were to:

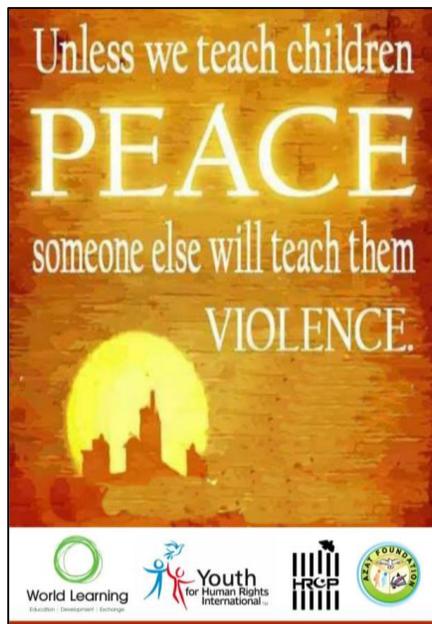
- Organize and mobilize youth through youth and Child rights clubs
- Promote human rights education at school level.
- Counter extremism through advocacy and lobbying by youth.
- Create a peaceful, tolerant, democratic and progressive society,



District Chagai, the project site, has a population of 292,191 and is located in the northwest, on the country's borders with Afghanistan and Iran. The geographical location makes it more vulnerable; in both the neighboring countries, religious extremists have hold. These religious extremists and militant groups vigorously recruit young men to join their cause. During last few years the influence of religious extremists—e.g. Taliban, Al-Qaida & Jindullah—has increased, which is an alarming situation for us.

My project aims to educate youth and children at school level to teach human rights, tolerance and peace, and to live with no fear and no human rights violations. This innovative program helped the youth of district Chagai to interact with each other, learn about each other and respect each other as human beings.

Eight youth and child rights clubs (YCRCs) were formed with a total membership of 250 at initial level and were given sessions on human rights, peace and brotherhood and tolerance. 10 % members of YCRCs were from religious minorities living in the area.



A district level youth forum was formed with equal representatives from all 8 YCRCs. Trainings, workshops, peace walks, rallies and seminars were organized for youth and general community through the District Youth Forum. A large number of community members, government officials, and civil society organizations have been engaged through these activities.

District Youth Forum, with the help of Azat Foundation, Sangat Society for development and Human Rights (SSDHR) and Chagai NGOs Network (CNN), conducted several meetings with youth groups in other districts and at provincial level for lobbying and advocacy to incorporate human rights education in the school curriculum and take out such lessons from textbooks that promote violence, discrimination and hatred.

Youth have been successful in convincing the education department to exclude the chapters that promote violence, discrimination and hatred from school textbooks and the competent authorities have

assured that the identified lessons will not be part of textbooks in the next year's curriculum.

Youth coordinator of District Youth Forum (Mr. Mohammad Idrees Baloch) along with two other members (Mr. Yahya Sahil Reki and Mohammad Ibrahim) have been given membership of National youth Council, where they are advocating for the promotion of Human Rights Education and countering extremism.

Despite many hurdles, we have been successful in creation of a society where human rights are learned, taught, practiced, respected, protected and promoted by putting them into practice every day.

A big change has been observed that the youth and common men from different religions are living in peace and harmony, they respect each other and support each other even in their religious activities, they celebrate their religious festivals together. This is a big hit at extremism and people have realized that peace, tolerance and cooperation are very important for progress and development.

Chief Minister Balochistan (Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch) in his meeting with ALF fellow 2014 Mr. Gul Khan Naseer, appreciated the efforts of World Learning, Mr. Gul Khan Naseer and other civil society organizations for promotion of Human Rights Education and assured his full cooperation in incorporating their suggestions and recommendations in youth and education policies.



Mr. Mohammad Idrees Baloch, the coordinator District Youth Forum, said, "It was a great opportunity for us to learn human rights, teach human rights and promote human rights through this innovative project and we are determined that it is just the beginning and we will keep promoting this idea throughout the country."

Ms. Zar Naz said, "Being a girl today I am very happy to be part of such a great work at national level to promote human rights because I have learned my own rights as a human and I feel empowered despite being a girl in this conservative society."

Azat Foundation has started replicating this program with some modifications (lessons learned during this project) in two other districts Noshki and Kharan, through their youth groups and we are in negotiations with ActionAid Pakistan to initiate an additional project in Balochistan on "Peace building through culture" with more or less the same objectives.

Obstacles and Challenge

- We started this project with low visibility, keeping in view the prevailing situation in the area and while we were successful in formation of 7 YCRCs in Boys Schools/ College, we were not allowed to form YCRC for Girls.
- We formed an YCRC with collaboration of Civil society Organizations at district level with 30% girls representation.

- There are a lot of hurdles for girls/ women to take part in such initiatives and demand their equal rights.
- Due to increased activities of religious extremist groups on bordering areas, we had to suspend our activities twice during this project keeping in view the security and safety of our youth activists.
- Talking about peace and human rights in this country (specially Balochistan province) is very difficult and requires a lot of risks, because there are two major conflicts in the region: i) religious extremism ii) separatist movement by Balochs in Balochistan Province.

Mentor's Report Excerpts

“Gul was somewhat delayed in beginning his fellowship project once he returned to Pakistan, because of immediate responsibilities for his academic degree. We began corresponding with each other in earnest September last year, initially by email, but after that primarily through Skype...I found Skype to be the best way for us to work together, because it allowed us to explore where Gul felt I could be useful to him on an ongoing basis.”

“Gul was always respectful of our working relationship, but it didn't take me long to recognize that there were only limited ways in which I could be of assistance to him. He had already developed considerable expertise in organizing an enterprise and a fairly extensive network of collaborators in Pakistan before he applied for the fellowship. I mean this in no wise to be a criticism of his selection for the fellowship, which I feel was a spot on decision. His project took the work he had done before in a new direction and is entirely consistent with World Learning's mission. We can be proud that he is one of our ALF fellows.”

“Gul seemed to appreciate that I encouraged him to use our conversations as opportunities to talk through his progress and some of the issues he faced. I was able to connect him on several occasions to other organizations in the US (PeacePals) and Pakistan (World Learning) that had similar missions. I also brought him into a proposal I was writing for World Learning on DoS alumni engagement as a reference (he was an IVLP participant) and potential in-country collaborator, if we win it. Personally, I appreciated following Gul's progress on his project, and other similar activities he is engaged in, through our Skype conversations and his Facebook posts.”

“The ALF fellowship experience gave Gul validation and a confidence boost that sped up his move from more conventional educationally-related activities to human rights education. It seems to me the breadth of his pool of in-country collaborators grew considerably during the fellowship period.”

“It is always humbling to see the dogged persistence of a mission driven person in pursuing positive social change, and that is clearly the case for Gul. Also, it is encouraging to see the impact of his activities and to reaffirm that change is possible.”

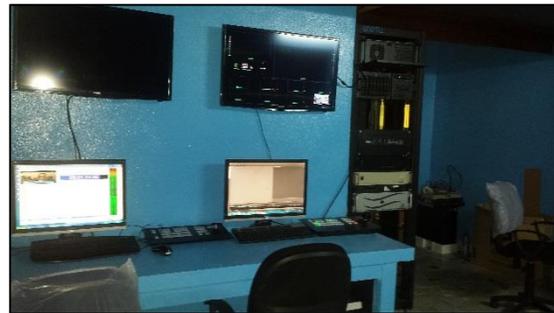
Ntaryike Divine Junior Ramzi, SCINC (Science Investigations, Inc): A Science Policy Transformer, Cameroon

Mentor: Peter Hayward, Founder, EHI Consulting

Work Scope and Accomplishments

The scope of our venture; popularizing science knowledge as a means of checking misconceptions and driving development via news reporting, investigations, documentaries as well as audiovisual program broadcasting and newspaper and online publications, as originally demarcated has remained unaltered.

Over the past thirteen months, we have definitely come a long way. So far, we have acquired baseline production material including two Olympus audio recorders, three Panasonic cameras and tripods, three microphones, three mixers, five computers and two laptops, a printer, photocopier and scanner and office space in Akwa, Douala's commercial center. Additionally, we have recruited two video and audio montage technicians and are now in the process of launching productions.



Obstacles

Generally, the No.1 stumbling block has been financing acquisitions. Fundraising for the project proved a hard nut to crack, especially within a context where many still give the cold shoulder to science in general. So, we were obliged to heavily depend on siblings for funding and of course my parents and sister [US-based] provided add-on money for the purchase of the aforementioned equipment, without which we could not be able to begin business.

ALF Training Benefits

The ALF mentoring was crucial in helping shape the progress and maturing of the venture. Lessons on streamlining budgets and preparing project presentations proved particularly vital in avoiding spending excesses as well as in attracting interest from potential partners both within and without Cameroon. The World Federation of Science Journalists, WFSJ, which requested a copy of our project plan, is currently working to link us up with international donors and responses are expected to stream our way before long.

Next Steps

We are now bringing together a crack squad of the country's finest science reporters. In the meantime, it may be safe to state here that the protracted delay in setting up a "no-regrets" production unit discouraged a

number of the initially retained reporters. So in the days ahead and with the production facility now in place, there is renewed interest from previously backsliding partners. So before very long, and probably by September at the latest, the world should be hearing from us. At the moment, we are concluding deals with Cameroon's most-watched private TV broadcaster, Canal 2 International based in Douala, Al Jazeera, the Voice of America,



Associated Press, the Africa Report, CCTV, the state-owned Cameroon Radio and Television [CRTV], plus news outlets in India, Kenya and South Africa as our first clients.

Mentor's Report Excerpts

"Communication was difficult...I made numerous attempts to communicate with Ntaryike Divine Jr Ramzi to inquire how I might be of assistance to him...on a couple of occasions I sent him some recommendations as to strategy or resources."

"I assumed if he really needed my help or wanted it he would contact me..Divine was making progress on his own and feeling he was achieving what he needed, [and] I'm okay with that. I see my role as a mentor to be ready to assist when requested not to impose myself."

Note on Amira Alibouaouina

Unfortunately, despite numerous attempts to communicate with ALF Fellow Amira Alibouaouina, we have had no communication with her since early July 2014. This is greatly concerning for us, and we are currently deciding what additional actions are most appropriate at this time.

Conclusion

The second annual cohort of Advancing Leaders Fellows have once again become powerful examples of the power of World Learning's programs to find, cultivate, and empower a diversity of inspiring social innovators from around the world. The impact of their fellowship experiences, which many of you have made possible, has not only been realized in the personal and professional accomplishments described in this report, but will also be realized over the promising careers of each of these inspiring individuals.

In response to feedback from fellows, mentors, and funders, ALF's next cohort will benefit even more emerging leaders. ALF will be merging with World Learning's Alumni Engagement Initiative (AEI) fellowship program, which also provides training and fellowships to alumni of our programs. This merged entity will bring new funding—including a grant from the Newman's Own Foundation—and will benefit more fellows. A cohort of 40 to 50 finalists will receive training, and seven or more fellows (depending on funding) will receive fellowship funding.

Thank you to all of the donors who make this inspiring and impactful program possible. ALF is funded exclusively by private donations, and is therefore limited only by your generosity. We are hopeful that the achievements of the first two cohorts of ALF fellows will inspire your continued support of this growing and uniquely mission-driven program.