

Qualities to Look for in a Co-Founder

What is the Number 1 quality you should you look for in a startup co-founder and why?

Passion for the Venture: Kelly Azevedo of [She's Got Systems](#), a business consultancy

"Passion is not something that can be manufactured. It takes a lot of dedication to push past the mistakes and pivots necessary in a new company. Without passion for the business, it is easy to lose sight of your goals. ... If you feel that your partner has lost interest and is already looking for another business or challenge, then it can sink the company even faster."

Complementary Skill Sets: Tim Jahn of [matchist](#), which connects companies to computer program developers

"Look for somebody who likes to do what you don't and is really good at what you're not. You want a co-founder who brings everything you're missing to the table, so as a team you're the complete package. ... You want to make sure all the important skill sets are there between the two of you."

Comfort with Conflict: Mitch Gordon of [Go Overseas](#), which organizes international study, teaching and internship programs

"Startups require a flexible, creative, open-minded team. A company that succeeds without pivoting multiple times is the exception that proves the rule. When looking for a co-founder, pay very close attention to how he [or she] handles conflict. Disagreements are necessary. You have to create an environment where experimentation is encouraged and failure isn't necessarily looked down upon. Conflict is an opportunity."

Vision: Jeff Slobotski of [Silicon Prairie News](#), an online publication that reports on companies in the middle of America

"If the co-founder has the ability to see well into the future while executing against the day-to-day objectives, the business has a strong chance of not only succeeding, but [of] scaling exponentially."

Friendship: Wade Foster of [Zapier](#), an online service that helps people move data among computer applications

"You wouldn't be friends with someone who doesn't share similar interests. Friends are the family you choose. The best part about being friends is that you'll stick through the rough patches. When business gets rough, and it will, your startup isn't the only thing holding your business together — you have a friendship to fall back on. There are lots of other important qualities, but friendship is Number 1."

Credibility: Robby Hill of [HillSouth](#), an information technology consultancy

“A co-founder has to believe in the vision enough to be able to sacrifice everything for the sake of achieving success. Your co-founder must realize this job is more than a paycheck — in both the risk and the rewards that are available. Make sure this quality is tested before bringing him or her onto the team.”

Trustworthiness: Kelsey Meyer of [Influence & Co.](#), a public relations firm

“The Number 1 quality you should look for in a co-founder is someone you can trust. Even if a co-founder messes up now and then, if you have ultimate trust, you will always be able to fix it.”

Adapted from an online article published by the Young Entrepreneur Council (YEC). YEC is an invite-only organization composed of promising young entrepreneurs. In partnership with Citi, YEC recently launched StartupCollective, a free virtual mentorship program that helps millions of entrepreneurs start and grow businesses.

[Is This Business Feasible?](#)

Adapted from the Peace Corps manual Doing a Feasibility Study: Training Activities for Starting or Reviewing a Small Business

The first business idea someone has may not be the best one. So to find out if a business can work, do a feasibility study. It will help you answer the question: Are we able to produce a product or service that people want to buy and that we can sell for a profit?

To begin, gather and analyze information that will help you clarify:

- What product or service you want to sell.
- If people will buy the product or service.
- How your business will operate.
- Your estimated sales income.
- Your estimated business expenses.

Find information on the economy of the community in which you want to operate. This information might be in reports from government offices or a university. Or you might talk to people who have a lot of contact with community members, such as extension agents or health workers. Identify products or services that the community may need but does not have now.

Here is what one group did. Its members wanted to start a small grocery store. First, they found out if people would buy food and other items from their store. Then they found out how much it would

cost to start the store and keep it operating. Next, they estimated how much they would sell and what their sales income and profits would be.

But in doing their feasibility study, they realized there were already three stores in the community and concluded that the grocery competition was so strong that their business might fail. They also realized that they needed more startup money than they had or could borrow. So the group rejected the grocery store idea.

Then they thought about other business possibilities. They settled on the idea of a furniture repair service. Since there was little local competition, they decided the business was feasible.

Another group of would-be entrepreneurs raised and marketed pigs. They used a feasibility study to review their operation and found that high feed costs were decreasing their profits. So they decided to look into cheaper kinds of feed, as well as other ways to reduce their business expenses.

Doing a feasibility study will help you assess the viability of your business ideas or review your current business performance.

Professional Development Through Internships

About 100 young Africans have developed better professional skills after serving in professional internships at a variety of U.S. business, government, cultural and humanitarian organizations.

These young professionals say their experiences have provided new insights into organizational operations, communications and mission accomplishment. They say participating in an internship can be a learning experience at any age, and should not be considered a workplace experience for students alone.

A few young African professionals and the workplace mentors who have guided them through their internships made a recent appearance in a Washington panel discussion and shared their insights with an online audience.

“It’s an exciting journey to put the pieces of the puzzle together so it can help my experience  back home. For me, that’s huge,” said Irene Chikumbo, who interned at the U.S. African Development Foundation. She is from Zimbabwe where she is a cofounder and community manager at the [Hypercube Technology Hub](#). Irene is working to build information technology capabilities in Harare and encourage digital startups.

Irene interned at the [U.S. African Development Foundation](#), an organization with a large institutional culture and global operations. It’s a very different workplace from Irene’s Harare nonprofit organization.

“The internship has helped me understand some things that I would probably not have understood as an entrepreneur: understanding systems and processes and building relationships. [These are experiences] that I probably never would have had if I hadn’t come on the internship.”

Panel members - interns and mentors alike - described their relationship as one of give-and-take. Interns can learn a lot in a professional workplace, but they need to give a lot also.

“The most important thing is energy and interest,” said Karen Carter, a [Smithsonian Institution](#) mentor, “and a commitment to lifelong learning.”

Mohammed Umar is a civil servant in Nigeria who served a Washington internship at the [U.S. Department of Transportation](#). In this workplace, Mohammed said he developed better decision-making skills and discovered how to evaluate resources, needs and operational conditions to arrive at better policies.

“By the time I’m going home,” Mohammed said during a panel, “I would really love to apply  that pattern that will help me to coordinate our major goals, our policies back home, and our major actions to enable us to become much more productive and change the way we do business to conform with modern international challenges in the 21st century.”

Sheila Helton-Intram, Mohammed’s mentor at the Department of Transportation, said he quickly learned one of the first lessons of internship. “When you come in as an intern, you have to jump in, [and] hit the ground rolling.”

Working in a racially and culturally diverse workplace is an important experience Jean Pierre Maro will take home to Senegal from his internship at the Smithsonian Institution. He said he’s come to recognize racial and cultural diversity as “richness” and assets that help a leader develop better policies and make better decisions.

“There’ no way you are going to implement good policies that are going to have good impacts if you [do not] have diversity in mind as a starting point.”

Jean Pierre Maro founded [Bridge Kids Senegal](#), a nonprofit organization devoted to providing  schooling for underprivileged children.

Besides their internships, these young African professionals also participated in the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) and attended U.S. educational institutional for about five weeks during June and July. They then attended a Washington summit with 500 other YALI fellows, engaging with top national leaders including President Obama and first lady Michelle Obama.

Watch the whole panel discussion to learn more:

Entrepreneurship in Transitioning Economies - Lessons from Professor Michael Goldberg

Join Professor Goldberg for a Facebook #YALICHAT starting Tuesday, September 9th. You can submit your questions until Thursday, September 11th. Post your questions on [this Facebook post](#) or tweet your questions to [@YALINetwork](#) and include #YALICHAT. Tuesday - Thursday, September 9th - 11th.

Professor Goldberg spent his entire career structuring and implementing global business operations. Read his blog post below and be ready to get his insights and network with thousands of other young African leaders who will be participating in the chat.

By Michael Goldberg

South Africa held its first democratic elections in 1994. I was there, and what I learned has stayed with me throughout my business career.

Running a voter education workshop at 
Groenberg Secondary School, Grabouw,
South Africa, 1994. Photo courtesy Michael
Goldberg.

In a warehouse in Cape Town, I was working with a team of black South Africans, puzzling out a distribution plan for voter education materials. My colleagues, raised in the apartheid period, hadn't had the educational opportunities I had as a fresh graduate from Princeton University. But they came up with the creative strategies we needed to distribute voter education materials to the people who needed them, something that had never been done in South Africa before.

Lacking reliable delivery services in the townships and remote rural areas, my South African colleagues knew how to tap into alternate distribution channels like mobile health units and informal taxis. Their entrepreneurial approach was a success, and their ingenuity was impressive.

Earlier this year, I worked with other entrepreneurial Africans in the virtual environment. I developed and taught a free massive open online course (MOOC) for Case Western Reserve University called [Beyond Silicon Valley: Growing Entrepreneurship in Transitioning Economies](#). Silicon Valley is the region of California where the U.S. technology industry boomed, and this course went way, way beyond all the way to Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Zimbabwe. More than 23,000 students from 183 countries enrolled. Through a series of short, documentary-style videos, students learned how an entrepreneurial ecosystem has developed in my hometown of Cleveland, Ohio. A decade ago, things were dismal in Cleveland for any entrepreneur wanting to start a new business. We were losing manufacturing jobs by the thousands each year, as our old industries declined and no new ones replaced them.

In 2002, Cleveland was ranked last among 61 cities rated for entrepreneurs by *Entrepreneur Magazine*. In the course, we investigated the massive efforts by Cleveland's business, philanthropic, and government leaders to reverse the trend and make the city a better place for new businesses

and accelerate the growth of start-up companies in the region.

My MOOC also highlighted entrepreneurial perspectives from transitioning economies outside the United States. For example, Jovani Ntabgoba, the general manager of kLab, a dynamic accelerator in Kigali, shared his perspectives in several of the videos about how entrepreneurs are supported in Rwanda. Students from around the world shared ideas in our lively discussion forums regarding to how to enable the growth of start-up companies.

I am offering the MOOC again this October, and I would love to see additional students participate from Africa. I particularly hope that members of the YALI Network interested in entrepreneurship will consider organizing local events to have discussions on topics that coincide with the course. These could be held at local universities, accelerators, or other hubs of entrepreneurship and would enable MOOC participants to reflect on how the lessons of the course might apply in their community.

Learn more about how to organize a YALI Network face2face event [here](#).

Learn more about this course and how it may be of value to you on [Coursera's website](#)

The views and opinions expressed here belong to the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the YALI Network or the U.S. government. The YALI Network recommends online courses (MOOCs) from a variety of providers on a range of subjects. Find more courses [here](#).

Pictured above: Professor Goldberg joins students at the American Corner in Tetovo, Macedonia, for a MOOC discussion. Photo courtesy [American Corner Tetovo](#).

[Ebola: A Message from President Obama and Facts from CDC Health Experts](#)

The Ebola outbreak in West Africa is something that matters to all of us, and President Obama is asking you, as leaders in your communities, to share the facts about Ebola and help stop the spread of this disease.

Watch his message and read more of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Facebook chat with the YALI Network.

In response to the concerns voiced by the YALI Network, experts from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, Georgia, were invited to participate in a Facebook #YALICHAT to help verify the facts and dispel the rumors about Ebola. More than 100 questions and comments came in from across Africa. Here is a summary of the chat.

Joel N. expressed his concerns about the dangers of Ebola and asked how the United States is assisting African nations in battling the infection.

CDC: More than 60 CDC staff are deployed in Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone to assist with the outbreak response efforts. CDC staff are helping with surveillance, contact tracing, database management, and health education. And back at our headquarters in the U.S., about 500 additional CDC staff are providing assistance. CDC and the U.S. government will continue to take active steps to respond to the rapidly changing situation in West Africa.

Alhadhuir N. in the island nation of Comoros asked the CDC experts, how can a person avoid this sickness?

CDC: To help protect yourself from Ebola, you should do the following: 1) Practice good hygiene. 2) Avoid contact with body fluids: blood, feces, saliva, urine, vomit, and semen 3) Avoid burial rituals that require handling the body of a person who died from Ebola. 4) Avoid contact with nonhuman primates and bats, as well as body fluids and raw meat from these animals.

Ebola is also spread through direct contact with objects that have been contaminated with the virus. Ebola is not spread through the air or by water. In general, it is not spread through food.

Anyone who is sick with Ebola can spread the virus, and will present these symptoms: fever greater than 38.6°C or 101.5°F; additional symptoms, such as severe headache, muscle pain, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, or unexplained hemorrhage are also common. Jackson B. in the Democratic Republic of Congo asked what can be done to prevent the disease in areas where many people are already sick?

CDC: The most effective way to stop the current Ebola outbreak is to find Ebola patients, isolate and care for them, and trace their contacts. Also, people need to be educated about safe burial practices, and we must make sure that healthcare workers strictly follow infection control procedures in hospitals. This is how all previous Ebola outbreaks have been stopped.

CDC advises that people monitor their health for 21 days if they were in an area with an Ebola outbreak.

Claudio V. wrote from Mozambique: does it have cure?

CDC: Thank you for this important question, Claudio. There is no vaccine or medicine (e.g., antiviral drug) that has been proven effective against Ebola. But there are many candidates in development. Three companies that have Ebola treatments in development are Mapp Biopharmaceutical Inc. (ZMapp), Tekmira, and Biocryst Pharmaceuticals. In addition, a company called Newlink is working on a possible vaccine.

[Editor's Note: Two U.S. missionaries who contracted the virus in Africa were flown home for treatment and were apparently cured of the disease with ZMapp treatment.]

Takawira D. in Zimbabwe had a follow up question about ZMapp: How long are we going to wait before the experimental drug that healed the two Americans is made available to Africans?

CDC: ZMapp is still in an experimental stage, so the manufacturer reports that there is a very

limited supply and that they don't yet have the capacity to manufacture large quantities of this treatment. So it cannot be purchased and is not available for general use.

The two American aid workers sick with Ebola received ZMapp because it was privately arranged by Samaritan's Purse, the private humanitarian organization that employed one of these two aid workers. The U.S. government did not procure, transport, approve, or administer the ZMapp treatment.

So far there is no vaccine or medicine that has been proven to be effective against Ebola. But there are many candidates in development. Three companies that have Ebola treatments in development are Mapp Biopharmaceutical Inc. (ZMapp), Tekmira, and Biocryst Pharmaceuticals. In addition, a company called Newlink is working on a possible vaccine.

[Editor's Note: By U.S. law, a pharmaceutical company must conduct a complex series of trials, field tests and data analysis before a federal agency approves the drug for the marketplace. The manufacturer has not yet completed that process with ZMAPP.]

Additional Information:

[U.S. Centers for Disease Control.](#)

Read the questions and answers from the Facebook chat [here](#).

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Post by [Young African Leaders Initiative Network](#).

[President Obama Hosts Town Hall with Young African Leaders](#)

President Obama engaged with young African leaders at the Washington Fellowship Summit, announced the "Mandela Washington Fellowship," answered questions and unveiled educational resources created exclusively for the YALI Network. Watch the town hall here:

[Read the full transcript.](#)

[#YALICHAT with Ambassador Linda](#)

Thomas-Greenfield

On July 17-18, YALI Network hosted a [Facebook #YALICHAT](#) with Assistant Secretary for the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of African Affairs, Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield. Members submitted more than 750 questions and comments on a vast array of topics including the upcoming U.S.-Africa Leadership Summit and specific policy-related issues such as U.S. efforts to support Africa's fight against terrorism, democracy and freedom of expression, youth and women's empowerment, AGOA, and HIV/AIDS.

US-Africa Partnership

Question: My name is Laura Golakeh a Washington Fellow at the Arizona State University...What is America's vision for the continent of Africa?

Answer: Hi Laura, I hope you are enjoying your time at Arizona State. Let me adjust that question a bit and tell you about America's vision for our partnership with Africa. Our vision is to partner with the people and governments of Africa for freedom, prosperity, and security. We know that Africans are capable of and want to address the challenges facing the continent; some of the other commenters here on the chat have mentioned this already. We believe that the United States is a natural partner for this and we want to support your efforts.

Question: Hi Madam Thomas-Greenfield, I am Theophilus Kiah, I, from Liberia;
It's a pleasure to interact with you through this medium.

My question here to you is, having you been an Ambassador to Liberia from 2008-2012 and have a vast experience in the affairs of the Liberian Governance system. What is the major problem(s) the people and Government of Liberia faced and what are some Bilateral Plans of the United States for Liberia?

Answer: Thank you Theophilus. Yes, Liberia is a special place for me. I spent time there as a graduate student, long before I was the US Ambassador. Liberia and the United States have a long history of working together. Our objective is not to define the issues the country is facing but to support Liberia's efforts for stability, strong institutions, and economic opportunity for its people. One way we are doing that is through our exchange programs - we have 15 Liberians in the United States on the YALI Washington Fellows program right now. Liberia is also one of our six focus countries of our PowerAfrica initiative, so that is big topic for us.

Question: Hello Ambassador Greenfield, why is it taking so long, for President Obama to pay a Visit to Nigeria to cement economic ties?(considering Nigeria strategic location as the most populous black nation in sub-Saharan Africa?)

Answer: Well, I can't speak for the White House on President Obama's specific travel plans. We work closely with Nigeria in many areas, including in recognition of its role as a regional economic leader. As Assistant Secretary of State, I have been to Nigeria multiple times, as has Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Wendy Sherman, Under Secretary Sarah Sewall, and the Counselor of the Department Ambassador Tom Shannon. So, at the highest levels of the U.S. Government, we have an ongoing conversation with Nigeria.

US-Africa Leaders Summit

Question: Why is there a US-Africa Summit?

Answer: Thanks for asking such an important, straightforward question! The Summit is about reaffirming our long-standing commitment to investing in Africa's development and its people. This is an opportunity to strengthen our partnerships and find additional ways to confront 21st century challenges.

Question: Is there any opportunity for Young African leaders to take part on the event? Because I don't fully believe that heads of states represents young leaders.

Answer: On Tuesday, I did a Google+ Hangout with Assistant Secretary Evan Ryan on the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs and 4 Washington Fellows. This was a question that Cyrus, a Fellow from Uganda posed as well, so thank you for asking. The Washington Fellows Summit takes place the week prior to the Leaders Summit. Some Fellows will stay on in the United States for a short time and there are events to which they have been invited. Embassies are also involved in working with their Fellows to make that connection between the young people and their leaders. So we expect a lot of that to happen. I've also encouraged all the Fellows to take the initiative to share with their host governments, to write them a letter, to request a meeting, and convey what they have learned. Likewise, we'll encourage the leaders to be open to hearing from the Fellows and from their youth more broadly.

Question: Good Afternoon ambassador, I am aware of the US/Africa summit coming soon and as it has been stated it is the the largest ever held with African heads of state and government, my concern is the exclusion of Zimbabwean president, Robert Mugabe from the summit? I believe sidelining Mugabe from the summit is the same as sidelining innocent Zimbabweans who could actually benefit from the summit. How will this exclusion help solve current crisis in Zimbabwe?

Answer: President Obama extended invitations to all African heads of state or governments, and the AU Chairperson, except those that are not in good standing with the United States. But I'm glad to have the opportunity to clarify that the United States is proud to engage with the people of Zimbabwe, especially through our Embassy in Harare. We had a tremendous response from young leaders in Zimbabwe to our Washington Fellowship program and currently there are 30 Fellows from Zimbabwe taking part in the program.

Question: Which are going to be the key sectors of this ever largest held event/summit between African heads of state and US government under the hosting of the President Obama? #YALICHAT

Answer: As you can imagine, this historic summit will cover a lot of topics. The overall theme, however, is "Investing in the Next Generation." This speaks to our common interest in leaving our nations better for future generations. We want to come away from the Summit with concrete gains in peace and security, good governance, and economic development. There is one entire day devoted to U.S.-Africa Business Forum, which will bring together Heads of State with CEOs from both sides of the Atlantic. In addition to the U.S. government hosted events August 4-6, many U.S. organizations from businesses, NGOs, diaspora groups, and think tanks are holding events to take advantage of this extraordinary opportunity to talk about issues that matter to Africans and Americans.

Question: Will the current Insurgencies in Nigeria the largest African nation be a part of the

discourse? Nigeria has been in the news for the wrong reasons lately...the youths are earnestly looking for a miracle finger. Will it arise from this meeting? Am so bothered Mar.

Answer: Let me first say, the United States supports African efforts to improve security at the continental, sub-regional, and national levels. We work in cooperation with our partners across the spectrum of African security institutions including the armed forces, police, other law enforcement agencies, and justice systems. Peace and Regional Stability is key component of the agenda for President Obama and the leaders to discuss. I expect that the situation in Nigeria will be discussed, as it affects not just Nigeria but the whole region of West Africa and the Sahel. So I don't think a miracle solution exists, but what we hope to see is further concrete plans for moving forward.

Young African Leadership Initiative

Question: Your Excellency Ambassador Thomas-Greendfield. I would like to commend the US for programmes like YALI. I am in contact with a fellow young Namibian business lady and the experience she is gaining through this programme is priceless and quite an eye opener. I would like to know what the possibilities of maybe extending the YALI programme to have an African-on-site part as well where young business leaders come to Africa to either continue with the leaders that attended the YALI programme in the US or to come to Africa and have the programme running here having a more hands-on and practical involvement in our businesses/institutions/communities. Thank you, Ndapewa Hangula, Windhoek, Namibia.

Answer: Thank you Ndapewa. I'm glad you are hearing first hand about the great experience this Washington Fellow is having in the program. I've said it many times, and I'm glad to say it again, the Fellows are extraordinary! Just before coming to do this Facebook chat, I met with a young woman from Namibia who is part of the the group studying at Morgan State University in Baltimore. Was that your friend? We do know there are many other extraordinary young people in Africa who could benefit from additional opportunities. So we are making plans to run this program for five years. Additionally, that's why we have set up the YALI Network to make sure we can sure resources broadly with young people in Africa who are eager to improve their communities, their countries, and the world!

Question: ariel from abidjan; HOW can yali promote the activities of his network teams' activities? who to contact for support in each country ? and what is the us government policy in humanitarian and environmental issues ?

Answer: Hi Ariel, the best way to stay in touch with the YALI network is by following @YALINetwork on Twitter and Facebook. We also encourage you to stay in contact with the U.S. Embassy in (U.S. Embassy Abidjan), as they are the best source of information on programs and opportunities. Your last question is broad, but I would like to suggest two sources of great information - check out the Bureau of Populations, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) (<http://www.state.gov/j/prm/>) and the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES) (<http://www.state.gov/e/oes/>) on the State Department's website. Also, Secretary Kerry just hosted an incredible conference last month called "Our Ocean." It brought together individuals, experts, practitioners, advocates, lawmakers, and the international ocean and foreign policy communities to chart a way forward on protecting and caring for Our Ocean. There are great resources online and through social media to learn more about what is happening on these issues. Thanks!

Democracy & Transparency

Question: Hello Ambassador, I'm Sheg from Benin and I'm heavily concerned with the democratic distress in several of our countries where Heads of States behave like kings and spend uncountable public resources to stay in charge, against all constitutional provisions.

What is the position of President Obama's Administration ? How is that question planned to be addressed in August at the Washington Summit?

Is the truth going to be told to them, bare and unveiled?

As the emerging generation, we need to know exactly what we are up to and whom we should expect to deal with as durable partners, both inside and outside.

Thank you for your attention

Answer: Sheg, thanks for your question. As President Obama said in Ghana on his first trip to the region, "Africa doesn't need strongmen, it needs strong institutions." Without a doubt, promoting strong democratic institutions is a key policy priority of the United States. It's something that we talk about with our partners in every country on a regular basis. Your point about constitutional provisions is an important one - the U.S. believes that constitutions are designed for the long-term. They shouldn't be used as a tactic to hold on to or consolidate power.

Question: In 2015 five countries in West Africa are organizing elections. Recently, a UN representative in the region sounded the alarm about the risk of violence during these elections. This risk becomes even imminent and real as some of the leaders are already using all possible tactics to remain in power. These tactics include fraud, the army, bribery, to list a few. Given that peace and stability in Africa are dear to President Obama, how would the U.S. help these countries to organize free and fair elections, the only guarantee to preventing post-election violence with all the consequences we are accustomed with? How would the U.S. stand with the people in those countries in case they have been robbed of their votes?

Answer: I mentioned before some of the ways that the United States is working with our partners to help strengthen democratic organizations. We regularly participate in election monitoring and observing in countries all over the world, including in Africa. Unfortunately, even today, we still see crooked tactics, electoral tampering, vote selling or buying. Or worse, there may be intimidation or violence. That's why we regularly call on all elected leaders and candidates to reject these practices. We tell citizens directly that they can demand better from their politicians and political institutions. There are 11 executive elections on the continent on 2014 and another 12 in 2015. It's critical that every citizen has the opportunity to make his or her voice heard.

Question: hello Ambasadaor Linda, I would like to find out from you on what your government is doing to promote democracy and freedom of expression especially in African countries. I say this because, I do not see democracy in play especially when it comes to freedom of expression in my country. Thank you.

Answer: Thanks for this great question. You know, there are a lot of things that the United States does to help promote strong democratic institutions and free, fair, and transparent elections. In Mali, we worked w/musicians, DJs, and TV personalities to encourage high youth voter turnout. In Cameroon, we offered a small grant that led to the posting of voter rolls online, creating greater transparency and allowing voters to verify that they were in fact registered. In Madagascar, we provided funds to the Carter Center to observe and help ensure that the first elections since the

2009 coup would be free and fair. Other campaigns helped youth in 25 counties create a plan for how to take action and contact authorities in the case of violence. So those are a few examples.

Peace & Security

Question: Your Excellency, waiting for your reaction to my previous inquiry, let me ask an other question. How to restore peace and security in the African Great lakes region without frustrating or hurting any of the local people community? Does US government have a Policy or an advise about?

Answer: I'm very glad to answer a question on the topic. At the highest levels of the U.S. government including the Secretary of State, we are committed to helping resolve the humanitarian and security crisis in the DRC and Great Lakes region, including through robust diplomacy and engagement with the key stakeholders in the region. The Sepcretary's Special Envoy Russ Feingold regularly travels to the region and is working on these issues. I would like to invite you to follow Special Envoy Feingold on Twitter @US_SEGL, so you can get regular update on these efforts.

Question: I am a Nigerian, and I am very concerned about our security. So many things happen around here, just that the security issue have a direct vivid impact on our lives. Though we heard that the US at some point volunteered to help before it withdrew. Can I know why that is?

Answer: Thank you for your question. I think you may be referring to assistance the United States offered to help efforts to locate the young women and girls from Chibok. We have and continue to provide that assistance on the ground in Nigeria. But the tragic kidnapping of these girls underscores the threat that Boko Haram poses not only to Nigeria, but to the entire region. We are working with our Nigerian partners and neighboring countries to build a lasting approach to combatting Boko Haram. Boko Haram poses a trans-national threat, and our response needs to reflect that. That means stronger protection of the borders, better sharing of intelligence, and a commitment to working together. It also means a comprehensive approach that emphasizes respect for human rights, prioritizes civilian security, and responds to the needs of victimized communities. So, while Nigerians are in the lead, the United States is committed to supporting and have continued to provide important assets and capabilities.

Question: Ambassador? I know the US is critically opposed to terrorism the world over. Lately in Africa, we are beginning to experience increasing act of terror being carried out by Al - Shabba and Bokoharam in countries like Kenya, Niger, Somalia and the worst in Nigeria where a number of our continent's future mothers and leaders were seized. Is this issue going to be part of President Obama's agenda item for discussion with African leaders during their ensuing meeting? What is President Obama's position on bringing back our abducted girls?

Answer: Certainly terrorism and violent extremism will come up when the Leaders sit down together to discuss Peace and Regional Stability. As President Obama and Secretary Kerry indicated, we are going to work closely with the Government of Nigeria and countries in the region to do everything possible to bring these girls home. We are working with the Nigerian government on both the security side and to address broader issues related to the girls. We have a multi-agency team on the ground including civilians for assistance in negotiations and to help the girls who escaped reintegrate back into their communities.

Question: Hello Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield...(Kenya) as matter of employment among

youths, bad leadership and insecurity being among the key problems African nations are facing. is there any plan to help Africa nations to overcome this challenges ?

Answer: I think the YALI program and the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit are both part of how the United States is trying to partner with African nations to address these challenges. The theme of the Leaders Summit is Investing in the Next Generation because it encompasses our shared interest in leaving our nations better for future generations. It's true there are many places where you find young people who are uneducated and unemployed, they are not invested in the future of their countries or their communities. Often this is the reason why they are attracted to extremist ideologies and seek a sense of belonging amongst terrorist groups. YALI and the YALI Network aim to provide an opportunities for young people to see the future and their place in it future.

Question: Hello Madam Ambassador; Insecurity and in particular religious extremism continues to be a major threat to developing countries' economies, especially at the Eastern, Western, and Northern Africa regions (Al Shabaab, Boko Haram). As a result, travel Advisories have been issued by the State Department. How will the United States continue to balance these competing interests of security towards its citizens, while at the same time, ensuring economic activities continue in the affected countries? Thank you

Answer: Thank you for this question. Insecurity and violent extremism is of great concern, and something that is certainly on the agenda for the Summit. As you know from the examples you mentioned, Boko Haram and al-Shabaab terrorist groups are not confined to one country, but cause regional instability. One of the best ways we have to balance these competing priorities is to ensure that we have strong diplomatic presence to engage with the host country government, with its people. We need to have skilled professionals there who understand how to best marshal the resources of the U.S. government in this regard. This is exactly why Secretary Kerry has pressed the U.S. Senate to #ConfirmOurAmbassadors. We have 12 Ambassadors awaiting confirmation - that's nearly 25% of our diplomatic presence in Africa. We need them in the field, doing the jobs for which they trained, eager, and committed.

Question: Your Excellency, What is Washington and the Heads of Government in Sub-Saharan Africa doing to effectively tackle terrorism and socio-economic challenges that hinder the development of Africa?

Answer: Africa faces significant threat from extremist groups who chose terror as their tactic. These groups exploit socio-economic challenges, as well as local grievances, various ethnic groups, porous borders, and weak institutions. We are seeing increased linkages between violent extremist groups across borders. As a result, our strategy to combat extremism must be increasingly regional and comprehensive. One way we are already doing that in the Sahel is through the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership. What is needed is not imposing our own solutions, but rather, building resilience, capacity, and partnerships. So, this is certainly on the agenda for the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit.

Trade & AGOA

Question: Madam Secretary, Inter-Africa Trade is one of the key areas that could boost the regions economy as we seek to pull our people out of poverty. We need discussion on regional infrastructure development and establishment of FTAs to remove regulatory and physical barriers. How does this

summit address these issues?

Answer: This is an important topic indeed. There will be a great deal of focus on trade and investment in this Summit, including the AGOA Ministerial, the U.S.-Africa Business Forum, and a session on Investing in Africa's Future for the Heads of State. But specifically on your query regarding Inter-Africa trade, I want to highlight the President's TradeAfrica Initiative. Initially, this will focus on the East African Community (EAC) member states of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda. TradeAfrica aims to double intra-regional trade in the EAC, increase their exports to the United States, and speed the movement of goods between regional borders. So that is one very tangible way we are working to assist on intra-regional trade issues.

Question: Dear Ambassador. I want to ask one question. What is the future of AGOA? Are there any suprices to be expected of other African countries like South Africa to be expelled from this agreement?

Answer: AGOA, the African Growth and Opportunity Act, was passed in 2000 and has really had a tremendous impact on trade between the United States and African nations as well as on job creation on the continent. The legislation is set to expire in September 2015. President Obama has made it clear, however, that he seeks a seamless renewal of AGOA, so we are working very closely with our stakeholders, including our Congress to make that happen. Thanks for your question!

Energy

Question: Hello Ambassador.I would like to know more about the Electrify Act Africa and what the implementation process would be.

Answer: Great question - Energy is a critical issue. That's why President Obama launched the Power Africa initiative last June to double access to power in sub-Saharan Africa! We're starting out in Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, & Tanzania, the aim is to increase available electricity by 10K MW and by 20M the number of households and business with reliable access over the next 5 years. The legislation you mentioned, the Electrify Africa Act was passed in the U.S. House of Representatives (one part of our Congress) in May of this year, so it shows interest from the Legislative Branch in seeing Africa develop its electricity infrastructure.

Youth Empowerment

Question: Warm regards Linda, the growing number of youth and basically girls within the Sub-Sahara is quite huge; any plan to empower them for the future. If there is, what are the short term and the long term targeted achievement. Pleased to hear. Robert Sam

Answer: Youth are certainly the future of this continent. Empowering young people is exactly what YALI is all about and why the Summit's theme is Investing in the Next Generation. Creating a better future for Africa's youth has been a priority for President Obama since the earliest days of his administration and is precisely one of the challenges this Summit seeks to address. No country's resources are infinite, and coordinating multilateral efforts is an ongoing challenge, however the United States committed to seeing African countries use their wealth and resources to create more opportunities for their young population. In our view, this means development strategies focused on education, training, and attracting foreign investment that will create good-paying jobs for young people.

Women's Empowerment

Question: Hello Ambassador Thomas- Greenfield. How would you further improve the current position of the promotion of women's rights and their leadership roles in communities in the African continent? At present, a great chasm still exists between reality and policies. The training and empowerment of women is still too few and far between. Please consider your suggestions with cognisance of the cultural and historical differences between the US and sub-Saharan Africa. Thank you.

Answer: Education of girls and the economic empowerment of women are critical to the health and success of any society. We know that when women work, they spend more of the income they control on food, healthcare, home improvement, and schooling for their families, which results in better-educated and healthier citizens. It also yields long-term economic growth and greater resiliency in the event of market downturns. One program we have that has seen great success is the African Womens Entrepreneurship Program or AWEP. The 184 alumnae of the exchange part of this program have created more than 17,000 jobs and established 22 business associations for women across sub-Saharan Africa. So I think our focus is getting support to women who have the drive and the talent to create change. Thanks for your question.

Wildlife Trafficking

Question: How is America feels about the abnormal Pouching Scandals in East Africa, particular Tanzania?

Answer: Regardless of where it occurs, wildlife trafficking is a complex problem. It is a conservation problem, an economic problem, a public health problem and a security problem. The United States is increasingly concerned by the links of traffickers to transnational organized crime, including terrorist organization. This is big business for these criminal outfits, with annual revenues in the range of \$8-10billion worldwide. President Obama and Secretary Kerry have both spoken out about this issue and planned an event to specifically highlight this issue as part of the Leaders Summit in August.

Health

Question: Hello Ambassador Linda Thomas - Greenfield, what policy the US Government is given to African leaders on how to combat the recent outbreak viral diseases called EBOLA in countries like Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia. my second question is, how can the US Government assist young African youth to pursue educational training in the US for Africans to impact their communities to grow in various sector.

Answer: On your first question, we are closely monitoring the recent outbreak of the Ebola virus in West Africa. I want to extend my sympathies to the families and loved ones of those who have died. We are all thinking about and praying for those fighting the virus. As we have been since the outbreak began, the U.S. will continue to provide a comprehensive, multi-agency response to assist those countries affected. Multiple U.S. government agencies are contributing to the outbreak response efforts including CDC, Dept of Health and Human Services, Defense Dept, State, USAID. The U.S. missions in the affected countries are closely monitoring the situation and continue to keep American citizens informed. Neither the United States nor the WHO recommends general travel restrictions or screening at points of entry at this time. On your second question, this is precisely what the YALI program is all about - helping young African leaders gain the skills and training they

need to make an impact in their communities. You are already part of that by joining the YALINetwork!

HIV/AIDS

Question: hello ambassador am Paul from Kenya i would like to know the policies kept in place to make sure the global HIV & AIDS kitty is well sustained. We are still struggling with pandemic here in Africa, we would like to see more engagement put in place to make sure we have reached a level of zero new infection and adequate provision of ART and food supplements to the already infected. Thanks in advance.

Answer: Thanks Paul. The PEPFAR program has had tremendous results, delivering on the President's 2011 World AIDS day treatment and prevention targets - including treatment for 6.7M people. The U.S. also hosted a successful replenishment for the Global Fund for AIDS, TB, and Malaria which raised over \$12B for the fight. But as the UNAIDS Gap Report released last week shows, Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for almost 70% of the global total of new HIV infections. So, we agree, it's important to keep these resources sustained.

LGBT

Question: Your Excellency, as you might be aware 40 of 52 African countries have anti - gay laws. On the contrary U.S.A are the chief frontier of gay rights world wide. This conflict in ideology has set many African countries on a collision path with U.S.A as reflected especially in AID cuts and travel sanctions on some African government officials. Doesn't this kind of action undermine the sovereignty of African countries and a clear reflection of neo - colonialism by the U.S? Akampurira Justus Harris -Uganda

Answer: Thanks for this important question. Human Rights and fundamental freedoms belong to all individuals wherever they live. LGBT rights are human rights - and human rights are a priority for the United States in every country around the world, not just in Africa. We believe that all people are created equal & should be able to live free from discrimination.. I understand that it's a sensitive topic and that change won't come overnight. It didn't come overnight in the US either. But in order to move toward progress, toward inclusion for all, we must have honest discussions, we must talk about fears and concerns, even if those conversations are difficult.

Sign-off message

U.S. Department of State: Bureau of African Affairs: Thank you all for your questions and comments. I wish I could have answered more of your questions, but I hope to do another QandA again soon. Please do continue to engage with the @YALINetwork. If you don't already, please follow me on Twitter @StateAfrica. Thank you and Best Wishes! - LTG

[Capturing the YALI Network in Action](#)

Every day, you share great stories of your leadership - how you're increasing women's access to education, improving healthcare in your community, protecting our environment - the list goes on. Now it's time to SHOW us your stories.

Submit a photograph that shows how you are building a brighter future for Africa. Photographs can illustrate anything from you working on a startup idea with fellow leaders to you reading with children at a local NGO. (Here's a tip: photographs should be high quality, preferably 2-3 MB in size.)

We will use your photographs to illustrate the passion, dedication and hard work of young African leaders at the upcoming U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit. It's just another way the YALI Network is connecting you with other young African leaders and the United States.

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Environment
