

[Meet the Fellows: Regina Agyare](#)

Ghana, Business and Entrepreneurship, Dartmouth College

Regina Agyare is a software developer with eight years' work experience and a social entrepreneur with a passion for using technology to drive social change. She started a social enterprise called Soronko Solutions that uses basic mass technology to drive human potential and solve social problems.

Regina is currently helping small- and medium-scale enterprises in Ghana create visibility and grow their business with technology. She is also working on a program that will develop the next generation of innovators and problem solvers from the rural communities in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics in Ghana and across sub-Saharan Africa.

Regina is also working on how the disabled in Ghana can use technology to integrate better into their communities. Her story was featured in Lean In for Graduates by Sheryl Sandberg and Impatient Optimist by The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. CNN featured her Tech Needs Girls Ghana project, which helps girls to code and create technology. Regina graduated from Ashesi University with a Bachelor of Science in computer science.

Upon completion of the Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders, she intends to use the education, experience and network to continue with her work of using technology to drive social change and scale her social enterprise.

Photo credit: Regina Agyare

[Meet the Fellows: Sekou Amadou Cissoko](#)

Guinea, Business and Entrepreneurship, University of Notre Dame

Amadou "Chico" Cissoko is the founder of Making Africa a Continent of Innovators (MACI) and director of the Dare to Innovate movement. He is an expert in human development, agrotourism and agricultural marketing.

He has served as the director of marketing and commercialization for the integrated farm Fabik, the leading commercial farm in Guinea. Amadou is also founder of the first agrotourist site in Guinea, called the Vathaba.

After completing the Washington Fellowship, he plans to collaborate with the YALI Network to initiate a mass innovation initiative in Africa with a vision to create a culture and environment that fosters innovation, entrepreneurship and excellence in African societies, thus making every African an everyday innovator.

Photo credit: Sekou Amadou Cissoko

Meet the Fellows: Muluh Hilda Bih

Cameroon, Civic Leadership, University of California - Berkeley

Muluh Hilda Bih is a journalist with eight years of experience working with Cameroon's national radio and television service. In this capacity, she uses her voice and personal experience as a disabled person to champion the cause of women and persons with disabilities.

She also mentors young girls through the ESTHER Project, an initiative that she founded, by speaking at schools, churches and conferences throughout Cameroon.

Hilda holds a Bachelor of Science in journalism and mass communications from the University of Buea. Upon completion of the Washington Fellowship, she plans to use the knowledge acquired to empower other young women and disabled persons through workshops and seminars and continue to use mass media more efficiently to effect change in Cameroon.

Photo credit: Muluh Hilda Bih

Meet the Fellows: Selma Margarida Fortes Neves

Cabo Verde, Business and Entrepreneurship, Dartmouth College

Selma Margarida Fortes Neves has over four years of experience working in community development and gender issues. She is currently the president of the Cooperative Women of Sal, an integrated project that provides training and empowerment for women heads of single-parent families. The project develops sustainable social projects that help create jobs for disadvantaged people in the community.

Selma previously worked for the City Hall of Sal island. She is also a member of several associations, including RA-AMAO, focusing on empowering African women, and ADAD, working on the environmental protection of Cabo Verde. Selma has a bachelor's degree in biology and a master's degree in food science from the State University of Ceara.

Upon completing the Washington Fellowship program, Selma plans to continue working and

expanding her cooperative projects.

Photo credit: Selma Margarida Fortes Neves

Meet the Fellows: Magdalene Kelel

Kenya, Civic Leadership, Wagner College

Magdalene Kelel currently serves as project leader with the Free Pentecostal Fellowship in Kenya (FPFK). She has extensive experience in HIV and AIDS community development programs, where she is responsible for initiating, designing and implementing project ideas and activities with a focus on human capacity development and facilitating a team approach for community and organizational change.

She has additional experience working with youth groups on advocacy and women on promoting sustainability and self-reliance for a better future. She holds a bachelor's degree in art from Egerton University and is currently conducting research on indigenous health care and its resilience.

Upon completion of the Washington Fellowship, Magdalene plans to work on youth participation in democratic processes, capacity development in early childhood education, and health issues.

Photo credit: Magdalene Kelel

Meet the Fellows: Robert Nkwangu

Uganda, Public Management, Morgan State University

Robert Nkwangu has seven years of experience working in issues related to children, youth and people with disabilities (PWDs). Currently, he is working with the National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU) representing youth with disabilities, the Uganda Society for Disabled Children (USDC) and the Kampala Capital City Youth Council. His tasks are to ensure that youth with disabilities are given equal opportunities at all levels, both in government and in civil society. He also chairs the Finance Committee of the NUDIPU Board of Directors.

He previously worked as a job support and political officer with Handicap International. Nkwangu has been deaf since the age of 6 and uses sign language and interpreters to communicate but can do some lip reading. He finalized the research thesis for his master's degree in social sector planning

and management from Makerere University, Kampala.

Upon his return from the Washington Fellowship, he hopes to mobilize young people, especially the marginalized PWDs, to raise their voices, advocate for inclusiveness, promote their human rights and form groups with unique initiatives so as to benefit from the many opportunities available to them.

Photo credit: Robert Nkwangu

Meet the Fellows: Valerie Labi

Ghana, Business and Entrepreneurship, Clark Atlanta University

Valerie Labi has over 10 years of experience specializing in the delivery of business solutions and creation of sales propositions for several companies in both Africa and Europe, including Vodafone PLC and Ernst & Young LLP. She currently serves as CEO of Clean Team Toilets, a social enterprise pioneering an affordable household sanitation solution for urban communities in developing countries.

She also works with the fair trade cooperative of Global Mamas, an organization that works with over 300 women-owned businesses across Ghana. Valerie played a critical role in developing a website that enabled the cooperative of small businesses to sell their produce directly to international buyers online, allowing them to earn a living wage.

Upon completion of the Washington Fellowship, Valerie is determined to continue to empower households and improve living conditions in Africa by driving the “democratization of toilets” and the “commercialization of waste” across the continent. She plans to replicate the Clean Team sanitation model in multiple developing countries, influence national sanitation agendas and create channels for skilled African youth to access employment opportunities in the social enterprise sector.

Photo credit: Valerie Labi

Meet the Fellows: Edda Zekarias Mekuria

Ethiopia, Civic Leadership, University of Virginia and the College of William & Mary

Edda Zekarias Mekuria has eight years of experience working in child and adult education, communication and advocacy. She currently works closely with UNDP Ethiopia's Governance and Capacity Building Unit, where she is responsible for reporting and sharing program developments with different parties, including the Ethiopian government and its people as well as international partners.

She also assists with media-related projects by producing content and pictures for the UNDP Ethiopia website and writing updates for the organization's social media networks.

Edda also serves as the secretariat of the U.N. Communication Group (UNCG) in the office of the U.N. Ethiopia resident coordinator, assisting efforts to strengthen and promote the work of the U.N. in Ethiopia and also engage the state and private media in developing communication.

After the Washington Fellowship, Edda plans to share acquired knowledge and skills with her UNDP Ethiopia and UNCG colleagues.

Photo credit: Edda Zekarias Mekuria

Meet the Fellows: Ndeye Tening Gaye

Senegal, Public Management, University of Arkansas

Ndeye Tening Gaye has seven years of experience volunteering as a peer educator and researcher for organizations working on economic development, public policy and youth employment. She has worked with several organizations, including Oxfam, UNFPA and UNODC, as a researcher on youth issues focused on self-employment, active citizenship and technical vocational training.

She is also a coordinator for the Embassy of Dakar's Youth Council. Ndeye has organized several training sessions and recorded public service announcements for young people related to reproductive health.

After completing the Washington Fellowship, she plans to provide technical assistance regarding youth policies and assist in the implementation of an action plan on reproductive health rights.

Photo credit: Ndeye Tening Gaye

Meet the Fellows: Justin Philip Beswick

South Africa, Business and Entrepreneurship, University of Wisconsin-Stout

Justin Beswick has over seven years of experience in technology startups, primarily in the renewable and sustainability arena. He has launched and coordinated Google's technology incubator in Cape Town and completed a marine expedition up the East Coast of Africa. He is currently scaling up his existing companies and working on getting a documentary of the marine expedition edited and broadcast.

He is also actively involved in growing communities that foster entrepreneurial mind-sets, skills and idea sharing that lead to action. He does so by channeling his time and efforts as a World Economic Forum Global Shaper and curator of TEDxCapeTown, and through the Sandbox-network.

He received a Bachelor of Science in biotechnology and also studied financial analysis and portfolio management at the University of Cape Town. Upon completion of the Washington Fellowship, Justin intends on further developing his companies and completing the documentary aspects of his marine expedition.

Photo credit: Justin Philip Beswick
