

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, YOUTH, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND LEADERSHIP  
EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF THE MANDELA WASHINGTON FELLOWSHIP,  
YOUNG AFRICAN LEADERS INITIATIVE

by

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## THESIS ABSTRACT

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Title: Sustainable Development, Youth, Entrepreneurship and Leadership Education: A case study of Mandela Washington Fellowship, Young African Leaders Initiative

Entrepreneurship education has emerged as an alternative to traditional models of sustainable development in Sub-Saharan Africa. Traditional development models focus on economic reforms. In contrast, Amartya Sen's capabilities approach to development emphasizes the importance of entitlements, choice, freedom, and addressing social and institutional conditions that facilitate development. This is a case study on a similar program, the Mandela Washington Fellowship (MWF) for Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI), in the business and entrepreneurship track. The objective is to examine the impact of MWF on participants in developing entrepreneurial and leadership skills, which has the potential to contribute to the overall growth and development of their communities. This research assesses the effectiveness of entrepreneurship and leadership education programs in successfully developing practical skills among participants. Further goal is to examine the links between sustainable development, entrepreneurship and leadership training programs, in the context of Sen's capabilities approach to development in Sub-Saharan Africa.

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To the young men and women in Sub-Saharan Africa who inspire my work and me

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION: YOUTH, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGES

The Mandela Washington Fellowship (MWF) is former President, Barack Obama's flagship program for the Young African Leaders' Initiative (YALI). The program's goal is to promote sustainable development in Sub-Saharan Africa through youth empowerment, entrepreneurship, and leadership education. Currently the population of Africa is more than one billion, 60% of whom are young men and women under the age of 35 ("Unemployment, *World Bank*"). Youth in Africa suffer from unemployment, lack of adequate skills and access to education, capital, and health care, all issues affecting the overall wellbeing of young individuals in Africa. As result, youth in Africa do not have the opportunity to fully develop to their potential and contribute effectively to an integrated, prosperous and peaceful society driven by its own citizens. Therefore, it is critical to incorporate young people in the development discourse and process. Programs like YALI utilize entrepreneurship, business, and leadership education for sustainable development, and this case study is an example of such programs being operationalized in Africa. This study of MWF contributes to a body of literature establishing correlations between entrepreneurship, leadership and sustainable development.

Addressing global youth issues is pertinent to achieving sustainable development goals in Africa, yet the international community's focus has mainly been on economic growth initiatives. For example, in an effort to address economic issues affecting youth, national governments and the international community have turned to entrepreneurship programs as an alternative model for sustainable development (Di Nunzio, 2015). States in sub-Saharan Africa as well as other parts of the continent have constructed entrepreneurship education programs and initiatives,

introducing it in primary and secondary education institutes as well as in technical and vocational schools (Brixiová, Ncube, & Bicaba, 2015; Di Nunzio, 2015; Nafukho & Muyia, 2010).

Entrepreneurship emerged due to the long history of neoliberal development failures in African countries caused by foreign imposition of structural adjustment plans (SAPs).

Despite the growth in entrepreneurial spirit among states, international organization, NGOs, and individuals, youth unemployment is still consistently high in sub-Saharan Africa (Brixiová et al., 2015; DeJaeghere & Baxter, 2014; Di Nunzio, 2015). This demonstrates that simply educating young people does not lead to economic growth, making promising entrepreneurship programs not fully effective in achieving sustainable development goals. Development programs must be extended beyond economic means and focus on youth values and addressing the social, material and institutional conditions that facilitate how youths' skills and resources are transformed into economic opportunities and choices (Nafukho & Muyia, 2010). Sustainable development education programs may prove more effective if they were holistic and combined leadership as well as entrepreneurship training.

This study contributes to research on entrepreneurship education programs based in the U.S. where African youth travel to America to participate in academic program or institutes. One of the main themes that kept emerging during my review of the relevant literature on entrepreneurship education is, while the entrepreneurial spirit for initiating sustainable development is a good idea, these programs have been limited in their success because of the scarce resources, corruptions, and fragile governments that are persistent in some African states, which are major challenges to young entrepreneurs. Another major contention against entrepreneurship education is that most NGO programs cannot address the social and structural challenges facing youth (DeJaeghere & Baxter, 2014). Thus the problem is, existing programs

are only attempting to resolve economic issues without the consideration of other elements that impact development and quality of life. MWF is a modern and unique entrepreneurship education program that has high potential for success and requires evaluation because its goals are not simply measured through economic achievements but also attempts to address the broader elements pertaining to sustainable development.

As a professional working in the field of international educational exchanges for seven years, specializing in international youth leadership programs for four years, and as a researcher and scholar of sustainable development in sub-Saharan Africa, I offer an unique lens for evaluating these types of programs. This study takes place in Reno Nevada, where I worked as a Program Coordinator at a local nonprofit. My role within the organization was to implement the MWF program at our institute. My motive for taking on this investigation was to better understand whether this particular program incorporated African perspectives in their development initiatives. As an Africanist and a professional in the field of international education programs, I present a rare perspective for critical analysis and evaluation of the effectiveness of entrepreneurship and leadership education programs. It is with this exclusive viewpoint that I present the evaluation and analysis of this program in the following chapters.

## **Study Objective**

The objective of my study is first, to determine using participants' perspectives the value of Mandela Washington Fellowship in providing effective leadership and entrepreneurship education to African youth. My second objective is to contribute to a broader argument on sustainable development that emphasizes entrepreneurship education as an alternative to neoliberal development models, utilizing my critical analysis as an academic researcher and my professional expertise in the field of international education programs.

My hypothesis is that MWF is more effective than neoliberal development models in spurring sustainable development in Sub-Sahara by promoting individual capabilities, such as human leadership, which does not follow traditional human capital theory of education where the investment is on humanitarian aid. The program evaluation methodology approach to research, which I discuss further in chapter three is essential for assessing the effectiveness of MWF in achieving the overall goal of providing participants with valuable skills training in business, entrepreneurship, and leadership. I intend to address the following research questions in the study.

## **Research Questions**

1. According to participants, thus through an African lens, to what extent are youth entrepreneurship education programs such as MWF effective in contributing to sustainable development in Sub-Saharan Africa by fostering capabilities?
2. How effective is MWF in developing entrepreneurship and leadership skills among participants?
  - a) Are the entrepreneurial and leadership skills gained by participants relevant to their individual capabilities?
  - b) According to the participants, is MWF training of business and entrepreneurship an effective approach to development in participants' home countries?

## **Background: Mandela Washington Fellowship**

The Mandela Washington Fellowship (MWF) is a holistic program, incorporating both leadership and entrepreneurship education, and considering most important youth values. MWF for the Young African Leader's Initiative (YALI) is funded by the U.S. Department of State. My role as a Program Coordinator at the Northern Nevada International Center, was to plan and implement this programs in 2015 and 2016 at the University of Nevada, Reno. The objective of MWF is to support young African leaders, between the ages of 24 to 35, as they work to promote growth and prosperity, strengthen democratic governance, and enhance peace and security across the African continent (Department Of State, 2015). The Fellows are chosen through a rigorous application process conducted through regional centers and U.S. embassies. Of the hundreds and thousands of applicants, 500 Fellows are chosen. In 2016 and 2017, 1000 Fellows were chosen each year, representing the emerging generation of entrepreneurs, activists, and public officials to participate in the program. The fellows are split into cohorts of 25 and sent to 36 universities across the U.S. to participate in an academic institute either in Business and Entrepreneurship, Civic Leadership, or Public Management. The program is open to young professionals from 49 sub-Saharan African countries. Since its inception in 2014, two thousand fellows have graduated from the fellowship. According to the U.S. Department of State, the goals of MWF are to:

- *Invest in a new generation of young African leaders who are shaping the continent's future*
- *Respond to the strong demand by young African leaders for practical skills that can help them take their work to the next level in the fields of public service and business*
- *Deepen partnerships and connections between the United States and Africa*
- *Build a prestigious network of young African leaders who are at the forefront of change and innovation in their respective sectors<sup>1</sup>.*

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<sup>1</sup> ("Young African Leaders Initiative | yali.state.gov," n.d.)

This thesis research is based on a case study of the business and entrepreneur track of MWF at the University of Nevada Reno (UNR)<sup>2</sup>, under the umbrella of the non-profit Northern Nevada International Center (NNIC). NNIC is an organization that promotes citizen diplomacy by hosting international visitors and connecting them with the local community to build life long relationships. NNIC is part of a network of non-profits around the U.S. that host international visitors through U.S. DOS programs such as Fulbright Program, International Visitor Leadership Programs, and Legislative Fellows Program, and finally, Mandela Washington Fellowship.

The U.S. Department of State conceived such international education programs more than 60 years ago. In 1940 Coordinator of Commercial and Cultural Affairs for the American Republics, Nelson Rockefeller, initiated the first exchange of persons program with Latin America, inviting 130 Latin American journalists to the U.S. (“ECA Mission and History,” n.d.). The prestigious Fulbright Program was established in 1946, which brings international students to the U.S. for educational research and study as well as funding American students to go abroad for the same. The Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs was officially established in 1961 after Congress passed the Fulbright-Hays Act to increase mutual understanding between the American people and the people of other countries (“ECA Mission and History,” n.d.). The ECA aims to cultivate cultural exchange between American people and other countries to promote friendly and peaceful relations.

Educational exchange programs like the Fulbright Program and the Mandela Washington Fellowship are significant and essential for fostering American diplomacy abroad. Such programs have always received bipartisan support from the U.S. government until recently. International education programs create personal connections between people of the United

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<sup>2</sup> Please see Figure 1 on page 42 for demographic information on participants for this case study.

States and those abroad, which is imperative for cultural understanding and acceptance. Through personal connections, people are able to understand and empathize with those who are different from them. Cross-cultural understanding is imperative for U.S. foreign affairs and therefore, programs like MWF are essential for U.S. national security and fostering diplomacy. In today's political climate where cross-cultural values, immigrant identities, international relations, and anything resembling global connection or integration are either feared, under attack, or not valued, studies like this one are ever more important.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW ON AFRICAN HISTORY, EDUCATION, AND DEVELOPMENT**

In this chapter, I discuss current literature on African history, education, and development. For African history, I review literature about pre-colonial to post-colonial eras because understanding the continent's past is key to analyzing sustainable development today. I also review literature on education, such as the Human Capital theory and its impacts on sustainable development initiatives in Sub-Sahara. Additionally, I present existing research on entrepreneurship and leadership education in Africa. Finally, I examine literature on different approaches to sustainable development, specifically Amartya Sen's Capabilities approach to development, which is the framework for this study.

#### **A Lesson in African History: Pre-Colonial to Post-Colonial era**

Africa is one of the poorest places on earth today despite the past fifty years of development efforts from the international community. To understand this phenomenon, one cannot study sustainable development of sub-Saharan Africa without having accurate and sufficient knowledge of the continent's unique and periodically turbulent history. It is the unique history of pre-colonial Africa interrupted by the Atlantic slave trade and colonization, and post-colonial events that explain the root causes behind today's economic and political problems for sustainable development on the continent. The Trans Atlantic slave trade, European colonization, and IMF and World Bank imposed structural adjustment plans (SAPs) are the forces affecting Africa's sustainable development challenges.

## **Pre-Colonial Africa:**

Africa is a large and diverse continent with a rich geographic, political, and economic past. Africa is so large that the United States could fit in it three times and there would still be space left over (O'toole, n.d.)! Africa's geography include dry dessert, wet savannah and tropical regions. Among the first African societies on the continent, while there were only some foraging societies, most Africans lived as farming and or herding societies. As early as 6,000 years ago, Africans domesticated a variety of crops such as sorghum, millet, yams, fonio, and African rice. Further, Africans have been tending cattle, sheep, goats and chickens for thousands of years (Dueppen, 2016; Shillington, 2005). Thus contrary to colonial rhetoric and beliefs, Europeans did not bring agriculture to Africa when in fact, agriculture started on both continents at the same time. However, during the Atlantic and colonial era Europeans did attempt to change agriculture by introducing European farming systems and crops, and operated under the premise that they were improving the lives of the local Africans. Innovations in crop raising and agriculture are considered as a revolutionary advance for mankind yet it also created many social inequalities, and established agriculturally exploitative practices such as cash cropping.

Early African societies were not uncivilized, or culturally and socially unsophisticated as European colonizers propagandized at the time, just because they lacked Western bureaucratic governing structure. In fact, archeological evidence supports that some regions such as modern day Burkina Faso, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, Gambia, Sierra Leone, just to name a few, had advanced, socio-politically complex, and democratically savvy empires and governing systems (Chirikure, Manyanga, Pikirayi, & Pollard, 2013; Dueppen, 2016; Monroe, 2013; Ogundiran, 2013). Pre-colonial African societies were politically diverse, with large kingdoms—or states—and regional empires that controlled large parts of the continent (Chirikure et al.,

2013; Dueppen, 2016). When Europeans arrived in the late 1400s some parts of Africa had been part of large political units for thousands of years. While some lineage systems did exist in many polities, socio-class structures also existed in many areas with palaces amid capital city centers and rural settlements on the outskirts<sup>3</sup>. Numerous African pre-colonial states and empires were similar to European polities with kings and palaces, for example the Hueda kingdom, or Great Zimbabwe and Khami (Chirikure et al., 2013; Norman, 2012).

The continent was home to diverse societies who were economically sustainable through flourishing townships, farming and herding communities, and internal trading practices that go back to 6,000 or more years (Dueppen, 2016). Archeological evidence prove that early Africans had established politically intricate and sophisticated empires, and it is events over the past 500 years, such as slavery and colonization that contributed to the current economic and political problems that are familiar to the region today.

It is in part the power and wealth of these African societies that attracted the first Europeans to arrive, because the African continent produced many goods they coveted, such as gold, leather, ivory (Dueppen, 2016), and of course human “chattel” (Lovejoy, 2000). Over time, international trade developed, particularly for minerals and spices and eventually, the slave trade became a large mark on the history of African economy (Thiaw, 2012; Thiaw & Richard, 2013).

The institution of slavery in the African setting was different form slavery as practiced prior to arrival of Europeans. The Trans-Atlantic slave trade was the systematic and violent removal of over 12 million Africans from the continent over a period of 500 years for the purpose of forced labor and exploitation (Lovejoy, 2000; Thiaw & Richard, 2013). The Trans-

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<sup>3</sup> The Hueda Kingdom of West African coast is one such example. Archeologically supported and written records from the first Europeans arriving to the Savi port, chronicle densely settled coastal town with international markets, state-supported temples, and hierarchal political structure with a king and a large Huedan elite class (Norman, 2012).

Atlantic slave trade depleted the continent of its human resources and caused irreparable damage that is directly linked with process of underdevelopment in the region today.

The slave trade changed political and economic fortunes for many societies however there is a localized nature of its effects, and to understand it one must look at the complex relations between African societies and Europeans, and between African societies within the continent. Thiaw, Richard, and Norman demonstrate through archeological research that during the Atlantic era Africans played a major role in the Atlantic economy, yet the African experience is often left out of the discourse on the Atlantic era (Norman, 2012; Thiaw, 2012; Thiaw & Richard, 2013). Africans participated, adapted, and resisted the European slave trade. Major settlements were established in collaboration of elite Africans, Europeans, and Afro-Europeans where there was participation in the Atlantic economy for various goods and services, while some settlements were established as defenses against, or fortresses to oversee the European traders (Norman, 2012; Thiaw, 2012; Thiaw & Richard, 2013).

It is important to acknowledge these various urban centers, port settlements, and complex relationships with European settlers because they demonstrate agency and power of the African people. The act of either adapting to or participating in the Atlantic economy creates a separate and different African identity and speaks to an African experience that is not recognized in the usual discourse of this era. The African experience of pre-colonial and Atlantic era was rejected by Europeans in order to establish colonial rule over Africa.

### **Colonial Africa:**

After over 600 years of slavery, the late 19th century colonization of Africa was the ultimate initiation of direct control over the continent. The ideology was rooted in an idea of civilizing Africa, and to do so Europeans had to refute and reduce African history and

achievement, thus there was a denial of the rich past prior to European arrival. Pre-colonial African states were misinterpreted as being the product of outside stimuli (Monroe, 2013), because acknowledging the greatness of pre-colonial African Empires would translate to giving them agency and power, and one cannot control another if they have power. Europeans created the colonial rhetoric of civilizing and developing Africans by denying Africa's diverse and intricate past and utilized this discourse to justify colonization.

From the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the mid 20th century, Europeans attempted to co-opt or dismantle African political and economic systems. Therefore, the various statehoods and empires built by Africans prior to European arrival or during the Atlantic era, and any achievements in sustainable economic practices were denied under colonial rule. Colonization left a lasting and defining imprint on the future of political, economic, and social development in Africa.

Colonialism had major consequences for African politics and economy and it did not develop Africa. African countries<sup>4</sup> were under colonial rule for more than 70 years (Shillington, 2005), and during that time while other nation states in the world moved up in terms of “development”, Africa fell behind the development curve. African people and resources were exploited by the colonial powers for their own benefit and any form of “development” was for benefiting and supporting European settlers (A. A. Gordon & Gordon, 2013; Rodney, 1973; Shillington, 2005).

As postcolonial writer Walter Rodney explains, colonial rulers exploited the African continent but under the guise of “development” (Rodney, 1973). Colonialists claimed that they were developing Africa, and even into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, some authors argued that colonization assisted African countries in development because colonizers built basic infrastructure, government, and brought in trade (Guest, 2004). In reality, African colonies were made to be

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<sup>4</sup> Ethiopia is the exception because it is the only country never colonized by Europe or any other Western nation.

politically and economically subordinate to European needs (A. A. Gordon & Gordon, 2013; Rodney, 1973). Rodney emphasizes that during colonial rule, any hospitals, roads, schools and other infrastructure that could benefit the Africans were at a minimum. For example, if a hospital was built, it was in proximity with the European settlers and their community and very rarely was there to provide medical services to the locals. In parts of Africa where colonial rulers made economic investments were usually areas of economic surplus, such as production; roads and railways were built in areas where exports were available, not because it made sense geographically (A. A. Gordon & Gordon, 2013; Rodney, 1973). In effect, areas “developed” were for the benefit of colonial powers, not for Africans.

Further, the newly industrialized nations of Europe, such as Great Britain and France, desired cheap and raw materials as well as a captive market for their manufactured goods, and African territories were there to provide it. Over time, these imperial governments incorporated their African colonies into the “international capitalist system” where African territories supplied cheaply produced agricultural goods such as, palm oil, rubber, cotton and varying precious minerals to industries of Europe. While manufactured items such as textiles, household goods, and farming tools were sold to Africans at high profit to the imperialist Europe, thus completing the integrated capitalist economic system (A. A. Gordon & Gordon, 2013; D. L. Gordon, 2013; Rodney, 1973; Shillington, 2005). Capitalism did bring social and economic benefits to Africa, but it was for European settlers, not Africans. Even more disturbing is that a variety of firms developed in Africa from capital gained from the slave trade. However during colonization, instead of trading slaves, these big firms and companies were trading agricultural items that were the product of African labor and exploitation (A. A. Gordon & Gordon, 2013; Rodney, 1973).

There are differences and similarities in the forms of exploits colonialism took to extract Africa's wealth. Regional differences in colonial political and economic policies were determined by the nature of exploitable resources (D. L. Gordon, 2013). For example, in the coastal territories, the French and the British were promoting cash cropping to indigenous populace in order to support European industries (O'toole, 2013; Shillington, 2005). Other territories where natural resources were not as easily accessible or had limited potential for settler produced agricultural export, became reservoirs of labor migrants, mainly for mines in Zaire, what we know today as the Democratic Republic of Cong. Profit centered activities of European industrial and commercial firms, settlers, and direct or supportive colonial administrators clearly disregarded *African* development. As Gordon points out, colonial policies worked to handicap independent Africa's economic future (A. A. Gordon & Gordon, 2013). Colonial administrators left Africa with weak, mal-integrated, and severely distorted economies (A. A. Gordon & Gordon, 2013; Parenti, 2011).

These historical realities left most of Africa in a multifaceted and tenacious dependency relationship with more economically advanced states. The future of African states, their politics and economy, would be heavily dependent on foreign markets, industry, expertise, and aid.

In conclusion of this discussion, there are two important implications of colonialism that are linked to 21<sup>st</sup> century development initiatives in Africa. First, colonial rhetoric has a powerful presence in development discourse throughout history. Second, European colonization underdeveloped Africa, and those consequences are still an impediment to achieving sustainable development today. Development practices since colonization are reminiscent of the colonial rhetoric that denies Africans agency and power, which prevents them from being active participants in their own development process. Colonization tore the continent and African

people from their indigenous identities and individual social agency. Colonial rhetoric created an image of Africans as either the “uncivilized savage” or the “exotic earthly and natural beings”, and these images continue to influence and shape how we approach African studies, literature, and development work today (Landau, 2002; Wa Thiong’o, 1994).

### **Post-Colonial Africa**

In post-colonial development strategies, as European countries prepared to leave their territories, they began to draw up long term political and economic development plans for Africa. The plans were modeled after those used to rebuild Europe after World War II, where the infrastructure and capital already existed, it was not the same scenario in Africa, making these strategies unfit.

In terms of political development since independence, African states have been plagued with decades of civil wars, coup d’états, and autocratic rule and have not been successful in modern day democratization due to corruption and bad leadership, all as a result of over a century of colonial oppression. Most African states have gained independence only in the last 50 years and as a result are very young nations. At independence, African states inherited authoritarian political structures of the colonial state as the only known way of governance for their own emerging states. Imperial rule was not concerned with the needs and desires of indigenous population and governed absolutely to control local population, to implement methods to exploit natural resources, and in general sustain only colonial interests. As a result, many authoritarian governments emerged after imperial rule because that is what African states were accustomed to after 100 years of colonial oppression (D. L. Gordon, 2013). This created an environment where the general population lacked the basic freedoms and rights to make their own political choices, and live in a state free from oppression.

Furthermore, at independence, the politics of the new states would be formed by several influential societal conditions that were either set in motion or amplified by colonial political decisions. First, almost all African territories faced inequities between social classes due to colonial administrations creating opportunities for some parts of the population and obstacles for others. Second, in most colonies, particularly those under British model<sup>5</sup> of “indirect” rule through certain tribal rulers, heightened competition and conflict between ethnic, language, and religious groups. Finally, discriminatory colonial education policies prohibited access to education for Africans until after WWII and independence of African states. Subsequently, African countries entered independence ill-equipped to run and manage either agencies of government or private business and development organizations (D. L. Gordon, 2013).

African economic development in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century went through three different waves. As the Europeans left their African colonies, they drew up various plans for development that ultimately failed. The initial development efforts failed regardless of the notion that African states would prosper when they gained freedom from their colonial rulers.

There are several reasons why initial development efforts were not successful in gaining desired results. For example the Marshall Plan, which worked well in rebuilding Europe after World War II, was ineffective and unfit for African economic development. The Marshall Plan is channeling large quantities of foreign aid into development projects. This worked so well for rebuilding Europe because the infrastructure and capital had already existed. There was an educated, skilled labor force and experienced management so that foreign aid was simply used to rebuild and replace what was already there (DeLancey, 2013). In Africa, any physical infrastructure built by colonialists was minimal and was designed generally to produce and export primary commodities to Europe and support colonial administration. Thus for

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<sup>5</sup> A great large majority of Africa was under British rule compared to other European countries

development, they had to start from scratch and build new roads systems, as well as water, electric, and communication networks. Furthermore, lack of appropriate education under colonial rule meant untrained and unskilled human resources to take on development initiatives. The educational system that existed back then, or even today in many Africa countries, were not relevant to the needs of society. In addition, few Africans were trained for management and public administration during colonial rule that after independence, very few Africans has experience in creating and running government or operating a large-scale business or industry for improving the economy (DeLancey, 2013; A. A. Gordon & Gordon, 2013).

Another reason why economic development has been slow in Africa since independence is because there has been too much emphasis on industrialization. The drive to industrialize hurt the economies in many African countries particularly in the agricultural sectors. It also prompted mass rural-urban migration yet there were not enough jobs in the cities to absorb the massive migration of people arriving from rural countryside. The mass migration to the cities for industrial jobs was one of the main causes for the decrease in food production that has led to the continent wide food crisis of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (DeLancey, 2013; Parenti, 2011).

Through African states had gained independence from their colonial rulers, they still needed economic independence in the 20<sup>th</sup> century for sustainable development. This was difficult as African economies are tightly linked to the international capitalist system. During the second (1970s) and third (1980s) development decades, and even now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there were still a lot of cash cropping as farmers grew high commodity crops they could sell internationally versus food crops. For example, African states were still tied to their formers colonial powers through preferential trade agreements and bilateral trade, meaning their exports continued to be primary commodities thus Africans were still directly linked to former

colonizers. Such undiversified economies meant that most African countries depended and still does on their “former colonial masters” and are at the whims of the international capitalist market (DeLancey, 2013). Delancy describes the dependency theory or the center periphery models of development for explaining African economies. Essentially, the wealthy and developed countries (the “center”) prevent the poor countries (the “periphery”) from developing. Instead, the gap between the rich countries grows bigger because most of the benefits from trade go to the already wealthier countries. Further, similar trends prevails within the peripheral countries, where the elite groups of society such as government officials, military heads, and certain already successful entrepreneurs have an easier and more direct access to the institutions of the “center” such as multilateral corporations and bilateral and multilateral foreign aid donors (DeLancey, 2013; Easterly, 2006). This relationship allows the elites to promote their own financial interests so that they can get richer while maintaining the dependency relationship with international institutions.

A further example of this is in 1980s when most African states were forced into structural adjustment plans (SAPs) and reordering loans from the IMF or World Bank. SAPs devalued currencies, reduced deficits by freezing government salaries, ended import restrictions, and privatized state owned enterprises and transformed social service sectors such as education and healthcare into commodities to be purchased (D. L. Gordon, 2013). These economic reforms were detrimental to African states not just economically but in context of political relations, it created vast disparities between rulers and the ruled within regimes, as well as globally between the West and Global South (D. L. Gordon, 2013).

DeLancey emphasizes that good governance is necessary for economic development. There needs to be an efficient public service, reliable judicial system, and an administration that

is accountable to its public. For the future, development must be bottom up and less top down, and it must include participation, particularly in the planning stages, by those who will benefit from it (DeLancey, 2013; Easterly, 2006) instead of top down approaches presented in the previous trends for development in sub-Saharan Africa. The United Nations formed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to address the various development challenges in Africa by 2015, yet the MDGs did not meet that timeline. According to Delancy, the MDGs were not achieved because they failed to address specific development needs and lacked implementation, follow through, and evaluation (A. A. Gordon & Gordon, 2013).

Since the various waves of economic development in sub-Saharan Africa, there has been many other challenges besides economic, which has hindered development goals in Africa. Such as, HIV/Aids epidemic, environmental disasters as demonstrated by the severe drought in the Sahel regions, the African debt crisis, famine, civil wars and disease outbreaks leading to massive migrations and large scale refugee crisis. These challenges exhibit that effects beyond economics encompass development. Further, literature on pre-colonial and colonial Africa reveals that different parts of Africa has its own distinctive history, which has shaped post colonial development in the region. One component that remains the same is that Africa and its people have been deprived of all individual capabilities through western penetration.

### **Education and Development: Human Capital Theory and the Capabilities Approach**

Here I review literature on the Human Capital Theory and Amartya Sen's Capabilities approach. I first discuss the Human Capital Theory, which emphasizes investing in education in the Global South because it has the potential to lead to sustainable development. However, there are many flaws with this theory including it emanating similar tones of colonial

rhetoric and it perpetuates capitalism values in the Global South. Therefore, Sen's Capabilities approach offers a better alternative because it emphasizes holistic measurements of sustainable development such as, freedoms, opportunities and choices. The capabilities approach is the development framework for this research and is explained further in the following sections.

### **The Human Capital Theory**

After World War II, Western countries had a notion that former colonies should develop into industrial nations through development aid provided by the international community. This period after World War II was a significant time of growth for international development sectors, bringing with it new international organizations such as the United Nations (UN), World Bank, and International Monetary Fund (IMF), who were committed to the development of the Global South. In the 1960s, Walt Whitman Rostow formed the Modernization theory, which stipulated that the problem of underdevelopment and poverty in the Global South could be resolved through industrialization and economic growth. Therefore, neoliberal capitalist models of development that focused on boosting the economy, were ideal for alleviating poverty and improving the standard of living in Global South countries (Shields, 2013, p. 23). Therefore, development initiatives established after WWII by UN, World Bank, IMF, and other international development organizations concentrated exclusively on economic growth as a measure of countries' development (Sen, 1985).

These concepts of development had substantial roles in the expansion and transformation of education policies because education was pivotal in the new development sector. According to Human Capital Theory, investing in education could create economic growth. Human capital refers to an individual's traits and abilities that are economically productive (Shields 2013). Based on

Rostow's Modernization Theory, investments in education would put Third World countries on the path to development, transforming them into industrialized nations like Western Europe and U.S. (Shields, 2013, p. 20). This neoliberal capitalist paradigm called for large amounts of aid for education initiatives. According to Shields, the rising field of international development created a new form of governmental bureaucracy, where the UN formed departments like UNICEF and UNESCO, which took on development by promoting projects that emphasized economic growth by investing in people through education (Shields, 2013). However, human capital and modernization theory predictions did not fulfill promises of development through education reforms and initiatives in the Global South. Instead, the result of increased formal education in the Global South countries has led to a highly educated and unemployed class of young people (McCowan & Unterhalter, 2015).

Simply improving education does not lead to sustainable development because there are a variety of other factors outside of economic growth that indicate development. Sustainable development includes stable political and government systems, access to health care and education, good and stable infrastructures, and social equity and inclusion of gender and class (Nussbaum, 2011; Sen, 1983, 2009; Shields, 2013). All of these other factors combined indicate development, and the emphasis on education to generate economic growth has shifted the focus away from addressing issues in all these other essential areas. If development initiatives could be more tailored towards improving the overall quality of life for people, rather than centered on economic growth, we might see actual change in places like Sub-Saharan Africa (Nussbaum, 2011; Sen, 2009; Shields, 2013).

### **Development Framework for Study: Capabilities Approach**

Development is too often measured by a country's economic progress and not by the quality of life for individual citizens. Amartya Sen's development theory includes non-economic elements such as human rights, equity and social inclusion as means of measuring development (Sen, 1985; Shields, 2013). Sen's approach demonstrates that development is much more "elusive and complex than the relatively linear conceptualization of Modernization theory acknowledged" (Shields, 2013, p. 23). Sen argues that the concept of development has to be redefined, and rather than measuring development in terms of economic growth, he proposes that it be measured by freedoms, opportunities, and choices, in other words, by the capabilities of individuals (Sen 1983, 2009). Sen's concept of capabilities includes entitlements such as access to health care and education, the right to speak one's language, to obtain employment without discrimination, and civil liberties such as the right to vote and freedom from persecution (Sen 2009). Thus, the capabilities approach to development moves the focus away solely from economic growth and toward equity, social cohesion, and poverty reduction. Sen's capabilities approach to development implicates that high economic output is not essential to the quality of life and the overall well being of the individual (Sen 2009).

Sen defines development not just through economic achievements but that development should extend to expansion of rights, freedoms, and opportunities. Liberal egalitarianism emphasizes that basic education, along with quality of life and health, is an entitlement of human beings, and education is not simply a method of generating income as means for survival of the individual (McCowan & Unterhalter, 2015; Shields, 2013). The United Nation Proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights guaranteed that education contributes to the fundamental social well being of a person and it is a basic human right that all people are entitled to (United Nations, 1948). Rights-based approaches became influential and important in

development work. As human rights initiatives became a pertinent aspect of developmental frameworks, the view shifted from economic growth to poverty reduction as a better measurement of “developed nation” (McCowan & Unterhalter, 2015; Shields, 2013). This notion means that quality of life for citizens rather than GDP is a better indicator of development.

Sen looks at correspondence between income and measurement of quality of life in terms of life expectancy as it relates to access to education. Sen provides examples from various parts of the world demonstrating that income doesn't lead to higher life expectancy, as in a better quality of life. He points out that the gross domestic product (GDP, which is a measure of economic productivity) of Brazil is ten times higher than that of Sri-Lanka, yet the average Sri-Lankan lived three years longer than that of a Brazilian (Sen, 2009). He further points out that African Americans in U.S. have lower life expectancies than those of China or Indian State of Kerala, where the life expectancy of a citizen average that of a citizen in a developing country. A certain level of income is required to ensure adequate shelter, nutrition, and health but beyond this subsistence, benefits of income become increasingly minimal (Shields 2013).

Based on this evidence, Sen argues that the concept of development has to be redefined, and rather than measuring development in terms of economic growth, he proposes that it be measured by freedoms, opportunities, and the rights of individuals, which he collectively terms as “capabilities” (Sen, 2009, p. 273). Sen's concept of capabilities includes entitlements such as access to health care and education, as well as civil liberties such as the right to vote and freedom from persecution (Sen, 1985). Sen identifies that the most important thematic deficiency of traditional development economics is that it focuses on national product, aggregate income, and production of goods rather than on “entitlements” of people and the capabilities these

entitlements generate (Sen, 1983, p. 750)<sup>6</sup>. Entitlements refer to the set of alternative commodity bundles that a person can command in a society “using the totality of rights and opportunities that he or she faces” (Sen 1983, 754). In a purely market economy this is characterized by an individual’s ability to find employment and use his labor to generate income in an effort to increase his capabilities. Therefore, the process of economic development can be seen as a process of expanding individual capabilities of citizens.

Sen’s capabilities approach to development has important implications for international development because he provides evidence that high economic output is not essential to the quality of life yet the quality of life is an important indication in measuring development. Sen demonstrated how the right to vote, to speak one’s language, and to obtain employment without discrimination are all important components of development and attribute to an individual’s capabilities where previously, these were considered internal political matters and not highly prioritized by international development sectors. Thus, the capabilities approach to development moves the focus away solely from economic growth and toward equity, social inclusion and poverty reduction. The redefinition of development in terms of equity, inclusion, and poverty reduction meant there was a shift in the reasoning for supporting education development. Human capital theory justifies spending money on education on the grounds that it would later yield economic return, but this other shift resulted in emphasizing education as a fundamental human right rather than an economic investment.

Education played a pivotal role in earlier development agendas from the 1980s to the early 90s. The idea stipulated that investing in education would put Global South countries on the path to development, transforming them into developed nations like Western Europe and U.S.

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<sup>6</sup> Ultimately, the process of economic development should focus on what people can or cannot do. These include very basic things such as, long life expectancy, have food security and not suffer from starvation, to be able to read and write and communicate, in addition to take part in literary and scientific pursuits (Sen, 1983, p. 754).

(Shields, 2013). Modernization theory, and its emphasis on education to increase economic output, clashes with Sen's capabilities approach to development, which states that quality of life is not necessarily defined by economic means. The flaw in neoliberal capitalist models of development, such as the Modernization theory, is that they don't allow the individual freedom or social agency to choose education as a means to relieve them of poverty. It creates an environment where individuals feel that education is essential for their everyday survival and not an opportunity or entitlement of human life, as education should be.

However, time demonstrates that the push for education initiatives to drive economic growth has not led to successful sustainable development in the Global South, particularly in many African countries (Easterly, 2006; Ferguson & Lohmann, 1994; McCowan & Unterhalter, 2015). For this reason, many education initiatives such as entrepreneurship education programs in Africa, have not been successful in creating opportunities for young people. This will be further review in the next section on "entrepreneurship". The result instead is a large population of highly educated youth who are challenged by increasing unemployment. This is not to say that education is not important for development, but that education should not be the sole option for young people to pull themselves out of poverty. In addition to education, there should be other capabilities e.g. opportunities and choices available for young people to have other means to utilize their skills and contribute to sustainable development. Therefore, education initiatives for development should focus on human capabilities and be inclusive of non-economic elements of development for it to truly contribute to sustainable development.

### **Entrepreneurship Education and Leadership in Sub-Saharan Africa**

The following is a review of relevant literature on youth and unemployment in sub-

Saharan Africa and the emergence of entrepreneurship and leadership education as alternative to traditional neoliberal models of development. Entrepreneurship initiatives for development are viewed from positive and negative perspectives in current scholarship.

### **African Youth**

Literature on sub-Saharan African youth is characterized by several dominant themes. A central point is that while youth make up majority of the demographic in this region, unemployment rates are high and economic opportunities are low in the formal sectors of society. Youth are marginalized and excluded from education, healthcare and employment opportunities, and even when they are educated, there aren't enough economic opportunities available ("Africa's youth...African Economic Outlook," n.d., "ECOSOC Youth Forum (30 - 31 January 2017) | Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, OSAA," n.d.). Additionally, many youth lack supports and resources, such as social networks and material means, that are necessary to become effective contributing members of a prosperous society. Most of the existing literature pertaining to youth unemployment is based on studies done on a demographic younger than 24, while youth under the age of 35 are affected by these issues as well. The Mandela Washington Fellowship aims to address these issues among young people between the ages of 24 to 35.

### **Entrepreneurship**

In response to these youth challenges in sub-Saharan Africa, entrepreneurship has emerged as the answer to youth unemployment issues (Di Nunzio, 2015; Nafukho & Muyia, 2010). Entrepreneurship education has become the strategy for development in the Global South by national initiatives and international organizations, NGOs, and donor agencies. There are varying definitions of the "entrepreneur" and "entrepreneurship". Definitions of entrepreneur

include: an individual who undertakes new tasks and adds value to a product or service; individual who is both innovative and creative; an entrepreneur should be similar to a scientist, always skeptical and questioning; an individual who is committed, goal oriented, achievement oriented, persistent, realistic, a risk taker and seeker, reliable, has low need for status and power, and has high integrity (Nafukho & Muyia, 2010). These definitions demonstrate the lack of agreement of the definition of entrepreneurship making defining entrepreneurship education also difficult (DeJaeghere & Baxter, 2014; Nafukho & Muyia, 2010). For the purpose of this study, I will use the definition of entrepreneurship as defined by Nafukho and Muyia, who state that entrepreneurship may be defined as independent small business ownership or the development of opportunity seeking individuals in organizations and society. Entrepreneurship education and training programs are those which aim directly at stimulating entrepreneurship (Nafukho & Muyia, 2010).

Entrepreneurship has been the strategic solution for resolving the issues of unemployment and underdevelopment in many parts of the world, from the United States to Africa. Joseph Schumpeter, a scholar in the study of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship, attributed the growth of the industrial world as we know today to entrepreneurs (Nafukho & Muyia, 2010; Schumpeter, 1987). Further, there is a significant amount of empirical research affirming that entrepreneurship has been the driving force behind every nation's economic development (De Gobbi, 2014; Nafukho & Muyia, 2010; Schumpeter, 1987). It is no surprise that the modern focus for development in the Global South has been and is shifting from neoliberal models to alternative models of development such as the Mandela Washington Fellowship program, which seeks to promote development in Sub-Saharan Africa through leadership and entrepreneurship education. To thrive in the modern economy and in a globalized world, there is need for every

African country to build capacity in the important field of entrepreneurship education and training (Nafukho & Muya, 2010).

Further, many African countries have fragile political, economic, and social systems which hinder entrepreneurship and provide limited opportunities for youth. Thus, external programs like MWF that promotes the entrepreneurial spirit among young African leaders is essential. According to Nafukho, Fredrick, and Muya, there are limited studies that focus on the issue of entrepreneurship and socioeconomic development of Africa through youth empowerment (Nafukho & Muya, 2010). Therefore, research on the success of the entrepreneurial training programs is urgently needed, to demonstrate that entrepreneurship and business education are effective in producing socioeconomic development and resolving unemployment issues in Sub-Saharan Africa.

There are also arguments against youth and entrepreneurship driving development in sub-Saharan Africa. It is argued that entrepreneurship education inherently promotes neoliberal capitalist development goals and doesn't achieve the general and overall well being of vulnerable groups such as youth (DeJaeghere & Baxter, 2014; McCowan & Unterhalter, 2015; Shields, 2013). DeJaeghere and Baxter point out the two distinct approaches on the different assumptions about the role of entrepreneurship education in development in Sub-Saharan Africa. One approach is based on neoliberal principles of providing education to develop human capital. Thus if young people learn the necessary skills, they can participate in the labor market. Entrepreneurship within this approach emphasizes behavioral aspects of skills such as innovation and risk-taking for creating and managing new businesses, and is associated primarily with the goal of self-employment (DeJaeghere & Baxter, 2014; Di Nunzio, 2015).

However, in Sub-Saharan Africa and other parts of the Global South, even in places

where entrepreneurial spirit is high, educated young people still suffer from lack of opportunities and unemployment rates remain high. In contrast to the neoliberal capitalist approach, DeJaeghere presents Amartya Sen's capabilities approach of development, which provides a framework for the role of social, material and institutional conditions in mediating how young people convert skills learned in entrepreneurship education programs into livelihoods and future well-being (DeJaeghere & Baxter, 2014). This perspective draws attention to the importance of developing the social supports and capabilities that can enable individuals living in poverty to pursue entrepreneurship as a valued choice, rather than a necessity in the absence of alternative earning opportunities (DeJaeghere & Baxter, 2014; Di Nunzio, 2015).

The capabilities approach is important in analyzing successful youth entrepreneurship programs because it draws attention to the economic and social constraints facing youth entrepreneurs. On the contrary, the neoliberal human capital approach focuses on skills training and business development, which is not fully realistic for young people in Africa who are faced with limited resources. MWF is different from the general entrepreneurship education programs discussed in existing scholarly works because it combines entrepreneurship *and* leadership education to empower youth in their 20s and 30s. Based on the review of existing literature on entrepreneurship as a system for promoting development in sub-Saharan Africa, there are studies on entrepreneurship education programs addressing the extent to which they are effective in alleviating poverty, fostering employment, and promoting economic growth.

### **Leadership**

Current literature reflects that strengthening effective leadership is key to Africa's development and growth in opportunities for future generations. The performance of any nation

in achieving set economic, political, and social goals can strongly be attributed to good and strong leadership. Effective leadership translates into prudent public policy formulation and implementation, as well as providing good public services to meet the needs and aspirations of citizens (Dartey-Baah 203). However, post-independence Africa has been plagued with stagnant and depressing economies, high rates of poverty, constant war and conflict, and unstable governments, all implications of corrupt leaders and bad leadership practices. Africa has a long history of military coups and authoritarian leadership. In the last four decades, more leaders have transitioned in and out of office through military coups rather than popular elections (Dartey-Baah 209). Culture is a big factor for the leadership types experienced in Africa. Leadership in Africa is more of a sovereign-subject approach, which limits followers from thinking creatively or independently. This is known as transactional leadership, which portrays the varying leadership types in Africa (Dartey-Baah 211). This type of leadership is corrupt and based on the idea of individual success and not the well-being of the citizenry. In societies where people live in freedom and prosperity, leaders of such society give priority to issues concerning the common good of their people, resulting in a more developed and freer society, also known as transformational leadership which can be attributed to sustainable development (Dartey-Baah; Iwowo). In the absence of effective leadership, sustainable development initiatives cannot thrive, making good leadership education vital to the growth and prosperity of the region.

Contemporary learning interventions in Africa are modeled after mainstream, as in Western theoretical perspectives of leadership such as, transformational or charismatic leadership and do not contextualize African indigenous knowledge of leadership. While these modern models of leadership are utilized in leadership education, many African renaissance critics view these contemporary Western leadership styles as an extension of colonialism and Western

ideological hegemony over the African people (Iwowo, 2015). Iwowo critiques that most leadership education in Africa do not take into context African indigenous knowledge, which is often dismissed as primitive or traditional thus not functional in the current state. Indigenous knowledge is “indigenous peoples who inhabit their environment and society, know what is valuable knowledge about it and what is not” (Iwowo, 2015, pp. 415–416), making it an important factor or so it would seem, when designing regional education models for leadership. Iwowo suggests a hybrid of indigenous knowledge and mainstream theory to create leadership models in the African context, in order to better educate future generations in contributing to sustainable development. Based on literature reviews, effective leadership is given high priority in driving sustainable development in Sub-Saharan Africa. Through the MWF study, I examine what effective leadership actually means to young people in the region. Studies show that education on transformational leadership style, indigenous knowledge of leadership, or a hybrid of both is pertinent in educating future leaders. Indigenous knowledge of leadership in this study should be understood as knowledge in the local African context, or from the African perspective (Iwowo, 2015). This study attempts to discover if the same qualities of “good” leadership are as important to the young Africans.

## CHAPTER III

### PROGRAM EVALUATION RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

I utilize program evaluation methodology to conduct research for this study. I conducted a program evaluation for the non-profit organization Northern Nevada International Center (NNIC), on Mandela Washington Fellowship (MWF), one of their international youth leadership programs. The purpose of program evaluation methodology is to work with the stakeholders, such as the program administrators and the participants, in order to determine the value of MWF for the participants as well as in a broader framework of international development. Even though my research follows methods of program evaluation, the objective is to contribute to the larger discourse on sustainable development in Sub-Saharan Africa through this case study. I received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval in June 2016, prior to conducting research.

The term “evaluation” has many definitions, making defining “program evaluation” to one limited interpretation a difficult task. Fitzpatrick, Worthen, and Sanders (2011) define evaluation as determining the worth or merit of an evaluation object through identifiable, clear, and applicably defensible criteria. The basic purpose of program evaluation is to render judgment, and determine the value and worth of the program under evaluation. Program evaluations are important and conducted by schools, local governments, and non-profit organizations to help policy makers in these organizations make decisions regarding continuation of programs, to initiate new programs, or to change funding or structure of a program (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2011, p. 13).

There are two main types of evaluation methods: formative and summative evaluations. Formative evaluations are designed for program improvements and the audience is typically stakeholders close to the program such as, the program administrators; while summative

evaluations serve in making decisions about program adoption, continuation, or expansion (Fitzpatrick et al., 2011, pp. 20–25). For MWF, I use the formative program evaluation methods to conduct research because the evaluation results can be used for future program improvements, and possibly for improvements of other youth programs implemented by NNIC.

Program-oriented evaluation approaches are ideal in program evaluation for non-profit organizations such as the NNIC. The most prominent of these approaches are the objectives-oriented and theory-based program evaluations. *The objectives-oriented evaluation approach* was one of the first approaches to program evaluation and focuses on articulating the objectives of a program and collecting data to determine the extent to which they are achieved (Fitzpatrick et al., 2011). *Theory-based or theory driven evaluation approaches* utilize relevant social science theories and research, or the stakeholders' assumptions regarding why the program will be successful in developing a theory for achieving its desired outcomes (Fitzpatrick et al., 2011). This research combines both of these program evaluation approaches. The first, objectives-oriented approach is important for the evaluation of MWF program because through collaboration with the stakeholders, it has been determined that the main program objective is to provide valuable entrepreneurship and leadership education and training to the participants. Second, literature review of existing research on entrepreneurship and leadership education, and a review of Sen's capabilities approach to development provide the framework for determining if programs like MWF can be successful in creating future leaders who will drive sustainable development through entrepreneurship initiatives in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The purpose of research is to add to knowledge in a field through an objective study, while the purpose of program evaluation is to establish value, and this study attempts to achieve both. Program evaluation, for making judgment and provide information for future decision making in

regards to funding, continuation and improvements of program, or changes to policy (Fitzpatrick et al., 2011, p. 12). Regardless of whether or not program objectives such as, teaching participants practical skills on entrepreneurship and leadership are totally achieved, this research is still contributing to a larger critique about sustainable development and entrepreneurship education.

***Researcher positionality, biases, and assumption:*** There are some possible biases and assumptions related to my position as MWF program staff and researcher. The first assumption is that participants could have responded to the interview questions based on what they think I—program coordinator and researcher—want to hear, versus what they actually feel. The second assumption is that conclusions drawn from the data may be biased due to my close connection with the program.

First, I assert that participant interviews have either very limited or no bias in their responses. I draw this conclusion based on the program evaluation, for which I conducted weekly anonymous surveys about sessions and participant program experiences. The surveys were anonymous, thus participants rated sessions and other program aspects without the pressure of identifying themselves with the responses. I checked the survey results with the interviews and identified, that ratings of different program elements correlated with participants' comments on those same features discussed in their interviews. Certainly there is always a chance for biases in data however, since the anonymous survey results are closely similar to the interview responses, I conclude that there is limited bias in the interviews.

Second, I do recognize that my analysis of the data might be swayed due to my close connection with the program and the host university (UNR). However, being the MWF Program Coordinator is a great advantage because it allowed me to make observations on program

implications and evaluate as an insider investigator, which I would not have the advantage of doing as an outside researcher (Fitzpatrick et al., 2011). As an internal evaluator, I have more knowledge of the program model and its history than an external evaluator might, which enhances my assessments. I also have the advantage of knowing the various stakeholders, their interests, and concerns, which is useful in needs assessment of the program and measuring success. Being an insider investigator does not detract from the study as much as it benefits it.

In addition, my academic background in development and African studies combined with my professional expertise in international exchange programs, gives me a valuably critical lens through which to evaluate this program.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

In order to answer my research questions, I used a mixed method approach, combining participant observation, interviews, and survey. The program and research primarily took place at the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) from June 17 to July 31<sup>st</sup> and briefly in Washington D.C. at the Presidential Summit, from July 31<sup>st</sup> to August 5<sup>th</sup> 2016. Additionally, I also draw on my experience of working on MWF program from the previous year as well.

**Participant observation:** Initially, I planned on doing systematic participant observation during the actual workshops where I would take notes on initial observations and possible themes. However, transcribers were present during the sessions to assist a MWF participant with disabilities, and in effect all sessions have been documented. I utilized these session transcripts for observations and chose sessions topically to only focus on leadership, and some business and entrepreneurship workshops. There were a total of 52 academic and leadership sessions, each between one to three hours long. This study uses a 10% sample, thus six sessions out of 52 were

purposefully selected for this evaluation study. Many of the 52 sessions cover similar topics on entrepreneurship or leadership but just through varying speaker perspectives. Therefore, it was not necessary to use all 52 sessions for the purpose of this study. Instead, three sessions on entrepreneurship and three sessions on leadership were selected, representing different MWF program objectives or themes.

Sessions from week one are omitted from the study because they are deemed irrelevant for the purposes of research. First week sessions encompassed an overview of the program, sharing logistical information, norming activities, sexual harassment training, and background information on the history of entrepreneurship, all topics irrelevant to the study. I began research with observation of sessions from week two. Each week had both academic and leadership sessions. Generally, one session per week was chosen for observations, but during week three and four, two sessions were chosen for each week. In week three, the participants watched a video in one session and debriefed on it in another session; thus, both sessions were selected. During week four, the fellows had two leadership sessions back to back on two different relevant topics and therefore both leadership sessions were selected as well.

The goal of observations was to identify the relevancy of the sessions' content. Specifically, I analyzed for themes related to whether sessions are tailored to empower participant capabilities or if the content is representative of standard neoclassical modes of development. Specifically, I am interested in session content that either supports Sen's approach to development and individual capabilities, or content representing capitalist education models on economies<sup>7</sup>. I was able to identify and separate these contents based on key words and themes.

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<sup>7</sup> There are many models for sustainable development in the Global South. Some models approach development based on the quality of human life such as measured through political, social, and economic freedoms as in Sen's

**Surveys:** Pre and post-program surveys were administered, as well as weekly surveys. Pre-program survey is for determining pre-conceived views about entrepreneurship and leadership on an individual level, and also to determine expectations of participants, in regards to what they hope to gain from the program. The purpose of weekly surveys is to evaluate the value of different sessions and to understand if logistical items such as food, lodging, and transportation are up to satisfying standards of the participants. The post program survey helped in evaluating the effectiveness of the program at UNR in helping participants gain relevant entrepreneurship and leadership skills. The surveys were essential in completing the evaluation for this thesis.

**Interviews:** I interviewed twenty of the 2016 MWF program participants.

***Program participant interviews:*** I attached interview questions to the IRB approved informed consent form and distributed it to participants electronically. Those who consented to participating in the study completed the self-administered questionnaires and sent them back via email. These interviews were not conducted in person due the already hectic nature of the program schedule that does not allow free time for the participants or myself (staff) to conduct in person interviews. The interview questionnaire was sent in week four of the six-week program.

I developed the interview questionnaire based on the purpose of gaining insight regarding participants' views on entrepreneurship and leadership education, and role of African youth in sustainable development in Sub-Saharan Africa. These interview questions also contribute to evaluating the success and failures of MWF in providing needed skills training to participants.

***Key Informant Interviews:*** The Academic Director and the Program Director were also interviewed post program for their input on the overall impact of the program, on participants

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capabilities approach to development. More traditional neoclassical approaches measure development based on economic status. During observations, I was interested in emerging themes on to both of these approaches.

and their community. I administered the interview questionnaires after the conclusion of 2017 MWF program.

**Data Analysis Process:** Throughout the observations and in transcribing the interviews, I identified the most common trends and themes linked to development, entrepreneurship, and leadership. I utilized an excel spreadsheet for systematic indexing to record the interview responses to identify common themes and subthemes that emerged. I selected themes based on key words that emerged during observations and in the interviews, and grouped them under the three major themes of the study: Entrepreneurship, Leadership, and Development. Finally, I triangulated between observations, interviews, and surveys to complete the analyses, draw conclusions, and make recommendations for future program improvements (Taylor-Powell & Renner, 2003).

## CHAPTER IV

### YOUTH, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:

#### PRESENTATION OF DATA AND ANALYSES

*“And we’re doing this ... because the world will not be able to deal with climate change or terrorism, or expanding women’s rights -- all the issues that we face globally -- without a rising and dynamic and self-reliant Africa. And that, more importantly than anything else, depends on a rising generation of new leaders” (Obama, 2016).*

In this chapter I examine and analyze the data collected from interview questionnaires, surveys, and participant observations, which include transcripts from both academic and leadership sessions during 2016 Mandela Washington Fellowship (MWF). I first present participant demographics, and then provide personal, academic, and professional background information. Following participant backgrounds, I discuss and analyze the three major themes of this study: sustainable development, entrepreneurship, and leadership. I close the chapter by addressing my research questions and discuss the overall program outcomes and challenges.

#### **Participant Demographics**

Twenty-five fellows were asked to participate in the study but 20 participants consented and completed the IRB approved interview questionnaires. Of those who participated, there are 11 females and 10 males. The youngest age represented in this group of participants is 25 and the oldest is 35 years old. There are 16 countries represented by the fellows, which include: Liberia, Tanzania, South Africa, Botswana, Kenya, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Guinea, Lesotho, Angola, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Ethiopia, Guinea Bissau, and Côte D’Ivoire. Please see **Table 1** for detailed information of participant demographics.

#### **Participant Background: personal, academic, and professional**

The 2016 MWF group represents vast diversity in professional background and education levels. From 25 participants, most completed primary and secondary education while the

| <b>Table 1: 2016 Mandela Washington Fellows Participant Demographics</b> |                              |               |   |
|--|------------------------------|---------------|---|
| <b>Name</b>  | <b>Country</b>               | <b>Gender</b> | <b>Profession</b>   |
| Ramatu   | Ghana                        | Female        | Web and application developer   |
| Essoh  | Cote d'Ivoire                | Male          | Filmmaker. Producer and reporter of various local radio stations, and owns his own studio                             |
| Emang  | South Africa                 | Male          | Business development executive  |
| Asmeret  | Ethiopia                     | Female        | Software, computer programmer   |
| Bary   | Guinea Bissau                | Male          | Computer engineer and tech entrepreneur   |
| Mapendo  | Democratic Republic of Congo | Female        | Art studio and gallery owner. Also works for IOM in DRC   |
| Muluken  | Ethiopia                     | Male          | Landscape and construction company owner  |
| Candice  | Botswana                     | Female        | Trainer and facilitator in business and disability etiquette. Co-owner and training director of disability etiquette. |
| Chintu   | Zambia                       | Female        | Broadcast journalist (radio)  |
| Tracey   | Zimbabwe                     | Female        | Broadcast journalist (on air anchor)  |
| Ben Paulo  | Angola                       | Male          | Technology entrepreneur, tech developer   |
| Joalane  | Lesotho                      | Female        | Real estate company owner   |
| Mai  | Guinea                       | Female        | Financial manager   |
| Ghis Ghis (Ghislaine)  | Republic of Congo            | Male          | Owner of a trading company  |
| Kabir  | Nigeria                      | Male          | Factory owner (clean water solutions)   |
| Mark   | Kenya                        | Male          | Filmmaker and owner and manager of multiple production companies  |
| Lalata   | Liberia                      | Female        | Finance manager for a government agency   |
| Gadza  | Botswana                     | Male          | Founder of IT support company   |
| Raymond  | South Africa                 | Male          | Accountant, and owns a social enterprise that empowers youth through sports   |
| Gwaliwa  | Tanzania                     | Female        | Computer engineer and owner of geographic information systems (GIS) company   |
| Josephine  | Liberia                      | Female        | Resorts hospitality specialist, trained in media and communications   |

majority accomplished bachelor's level university or technical school education. There are two participants who dropped out of college to pursue other goals, such as starting their own business or nonprofit. A majority of the participants are in information technology (IT), communications, nonprofit, and business management fields while a couple are filmmakers and journalists.

Several participants travelled outside of their countries to the U.S., Europe, Asia or South Africa for higher education. For example, Ramatu from Ghana travelled to Malaysia to study multimedia at the university level; Tracy from Zimbabwe did her Bachelors in journalism in

South Africa; Mai from Guinea travelled to Canada for post secondary degree. This aspect of their educational experience demonstrates the diversity in the level of schooling received by some of the participants.

When most participants discuss their educational and personal backgrounds, they share memories and stories that depict comfortable upbringings and even great privilege in some cases, but a few stand out in the group due to their unconventional and difficult childhoods. There are some stories that are unique to growing up in the global south like certain sub-Saharan African countries, where childhood is affected by social unrest, conflict, and just general hardships such as extreme poverty and unemployment.

One example is Chintu from Zambia, who had a hard childhood because she lost both her parents at the age of twelve and was left to take care of two younger siblings. She completed early primary and secondary education but had to put higher education on hold to take care of family. She is currently working on a university degree in Project Management and Planning, while maintaining a job with the government and running a small business development center in her community. When she recalls her childhood, she does not remember it as a happy time, but rather very difficult and harsh.

Ghislain from the Republic of Congo also stands out in the group as having a uniquely challenging childhood. He didn't have any formal education, except primary school, until in his 20s. He lost his mother at the age of two because of a failed abortion, attempted by his father. His father was sent to jail and had to take Ghislain because there was no one else to care for him, which is primarily why he missed a lot of early childhood education. His grandparents eventually took him in, with whom he lived until he was 17 and then joined the national army in 1998 to fight in the civil war. After a couple years of serving and trying some small business attempts, he

decided to go back to school at age 24. Though he does not have a high school or university degree, he has certificates in “travel and tourism management” as well as “business and entrepreneurship”.

A major positive aspect of this fellowship is that it is inclusive of various academic backgrounds. Mai, a participant from Equatorial Guinea, explains that MWF does not discriminate based on academic credentials, which allows people from different walks of life to benefit from the program. She explains that MWF doesn’t emphasize solely academic credentials during the participant selection process, which is prioritized and frequently deemed the most important for many other “education for development” initiatives. In MWF, several successful entrepreneurs selected to participate in the program do not hold formal degrees from colleges or universities, such as Ghislain from the Congo.

Overall the participants represent different socioeconomic groups, education levels, and professional experiences. Some of them come from highly privileged backgrounds while others are middle class or even of below poverty socioeconomic status. While approximately eighteen participants from this group are highly educated, there are some who are still working on their degrees or only have soft skills training. This wide demographic of participants demonstrate that the Mandela Washington Fellowship is inclusive of many different education levels and professional backgrounds, which is one of the program objectives as set forth by the U.S. Department of State, that YALI resources and support is for assisting young leaders from all across Africa (“Young African Leaders Initiative | [yali.state.gov](http://yali.state.gov),” n.d.).

### **Presentation of Major Themes and Subthemes**

In this section of the chapter, I explore and analyze the data in context of major themes that emerge in the study: sustainable development, entrepreneurship, and leadership. The data

collected from participant observations of lecture sessions, self-administered interview questionnaires, and program evaluation surveys, are organized under these three principle themes. Based on the data, subthemes such as social entrepreneurship, innovation, problem solving, market, power, knowledge, technology, corruption, and ethics have emerged as most prevalent, and are categorized in context of the three major themes. The various subthemes are significant in understanding the larger concepts of entrepreneurship, leadership, and development, as they relate to this research study. I begin with discussion on entrepreneurship.

### **Entrepreneurship**

In this section, I present data on entrepreneurship education, social entrepreneurship, and problem solving. One of the main objectives of MWF is to respond to the high demand of young African leaders for practical skills training and education in their respective fields of public service and business. Another important objective is to invest in the next generation of leaders who are shaping the future of Africa (“Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders,” n.d.). Therefore in this section, I explore and evaluate the entrepreneurship education curriculum implemented at the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) and its connection to sustainable development in participant communities. This includes discussion on social entrepreneurship, innovation, individualism, and problem solving.

The MWF program at UNR is designed to teach participants about the entrepreneurial ecosystem, and is not a “how to” on running businesses in Africa. To clarify, business and entrepreneurship concepts are certainly part of the curriculum, but program designers were careful in assuring that they were not imposing upon participants western ideas of businesses and entrepreneurship. The program opens with a disclaimer to participants from the Academic Director, who explicitly states that a Westerner cannot know the environment or cultural context

in Africa for developing and running enterprises as well as the fellows themselves do. By doing this from the very beginning, the program administrators are ensuring to give the participants voice in their own learning process. The program is designed to teach them problem solving and practical skills, and to critically think about social entrepreneurship and innovation. I present data from different sessions where we see examples of lectures focusing social entrepreneurship, which is essentially problem solving innovatively in their communities.

*Social Entrepreneurship, Innovation, and Individualism:*

This first example is a session where the participants are watching a video on business and entrepreneurship. The video is from 2015 and it is a meeting between entrepreneur and venture capitalist Chris Sacca and the MWF Fellows from that year. Sacca is a well-known venture capitalist both here in the U.S. and internationally. He is the Founder and Partner of Lowercase Capitol, a startup investment firm. In addition to being known for his investments in Uber and Twitter, as well as being a guest judge on popular small business TV show “Shark Tank”, Sacca is also a graduate from the International Relations graduate program from Georgetown University in Washington D.C., which gives him an uniquely global perspective on business and entrepreneurship. Sacca resides in Truckee, just outside of Reno, Nevada. Upon learning that the University of Nevada, Reno was hosting MWF, he contacted the program directors at the institute to request a meeting with the participants. Sacca came to UNR to meet the 2015 Mandela Fellows, and during the meeting he touched on many concepts and ideas regarding business, entrepreneurship, and life in general. The meeting was met with overwhelming positive responses from the UNR Fellows, who expressed learning valuable lessons from their meeting with Sacca. Based on this reaction, the program administrators set up a viewing for 2016 Mandela Fellows as well.

Sacca's talk focuses on innovation and individualism. He argues that innovation is at the heart of resolving the most challenging problems in society, and the most successful entrepreneurs are individualists. Sacca makes good points supporting these ideas, which are presented here however, there is a different side to innovation and individualism, especially in the African context, and those notions are explored in the analysis of this session as well.

In regards to innovations, Sacca talks about perspective and how individuals' perception of their reality influences how they build a solution to a problem. Sacca explains that African entrepreneurs are unique because they face challenges that Western entrepreneurs do not and are in the middle of world affairs that impact them daily, such as extreme poverty, civil war and strife, and government corruption, all of which the average American usually didn't have to deal with or think about on a daily basis<sup>8</sup>. The objective of social entrepreneurship is to utilize the unique cultural perspectives to build for audiences that are ignored. He explains further, that young leaders like themselves can identify a problem for a group of people who are being ignored and then see a solution, and that's at the heart of innovation. In this session, the idea of social entrepreneurship is incorporated with the notion that a business plan can be utilized to respond to a community need. Thus "problem solving" through innovation, as in social enterprises, can drive sustainable development in participants' home countries.

However, this session also raises the question of whether innovation in business and entrepreneurship for the betterment of society is too much of a Western idea and is not sufficiently an African one. In the debriefing session, which is presented later in this chapter under "sustainable development", it is observed that problem solving in which a community problem is addressed through business (i.e. social entrepreneurship) is a difficult concept to

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<sup>8</sup> This is an assertion made by Sacca, which I drew from observation of his session. As a researcher and a politically active American citizen, I do not agree completely and would say that Americans, especially today, and even in the last two decades have questioned democracy in the U.S. and corruption within the government.

understand for some participants in the African context. Mainly, based on the in class discussion, participants demonstrate that they cannot understand why innovation for “problem solving” would be the driving force behind an individual starting their own business.

Sacca shares many examples with the fellows of entrepreneurs he has worked with and the qualities that made them successful. The common theme in these stories is that the subjects represent individualism, or even more to the point, great entrepreneurs are individualists. As in they demonstrate characteristics that distinguish them from the pack, and those are the entrepreneurs that truly become successes. This individualistic character and the concept of individualism is very Western and not common in most African cultures. This concept will be explored further in chapter five.

#### *Entrepreneurship Education and the Idea of Problem Solving:*

The following observations are from the session “Entrepreneurship 101” that focuses on launching entrepreneurial startups, which most participants never had any formal training in. I observed two program goals being achieved in this section. The first, participants are receiving practical skills training for developing businesses. The second, framing business ideas from the social entrepreneurial angle to problem solve within their communities, connecting back to some of the main concepts discussed by Chris Sacca during his talk.

The speaker is Matt Westfield, a professor and Advising Director of Entrepreneurs Club, UNR, as well as Founder and Director of Entrepreneurs Assembly in Reno, NV. This session is the second part to the lecture “Entrepreneurship 101” and is about creating business models with a value proposition for startups. This session is an example of participants getting practical skills training in business and entrepreneurship.

In this session, the Fellows learn practical skills about how to launch a startup. They learn how to write value propositions for their businesses and how to create business model canvases, basic entrepreneurship education that many did not receive prior to the program, as expressed in the survey and interview responses. The most important aspect in this session is that the fellows are being taught to approach their business models through the lens of social entrepreneurship, by creating solutions for a problem in their community. The four major concepts I analyze from this session are: 1) *need for entrepreneurship education*, 2) *using social entrepreneurship to help their communities*, 3) *business for problem solving*, and 4) *defining the market*.

- 1) *Entrepreneurship Education*: One of the main topics discussed is including an objective and purpose section when creating a business model canvas. I observed that almost all fellows did not have an “objective” section for their business model canvas (BMC), mainly because most were not familiar with BMCs, or they never created one for their businesses and organizations. Dr. Westfield clarifies that the *purpose* of one’s business is different from their business *objective*. One of the Fellow’s proposals was utilized to demonstrate this. He explains that the Fellow’s BMC identified a problem such as, lack of education for kids in his community, and his solution is to start an animation studio to teach kids about health and safety. The speaker emphasizes that potential investors want to know the objective, which is why it is important to make clear in their business proposals. In this case, the objective is to keep children healthy and safe, not to start an animation studio. Creating the studio is something he is doing but it is not the objective.

The conversation demonstrates that the program instructors are teaching and facilitating critical thinking skills to participants, particularly in relation to writing business plans. This

session is assisting the fellows to think more critically and challenge the way they currently look at problems in their communities and how to use their business plans to solve some of these issues. They are also learning practical skills, such as writing proposals, value propositions, and creating business model canvas. Further, the Fellows are also learning to communicate and express their ideas more effectively and clearly to potential investors, a universally needed skill for entrepreneurs and can be utilized in the African context.

- 2) *Using social entrepreneurship to make a difference in their communities:* Dr. Westfield emphasizes the distinction between *purpose and objective*. He says that the idea is to take the objective and turn it into the purpose. He explains further through the example of another participant's company, Caroline from Tanzania, who runs an organization that teaches young girls computer coding. The objective is to teach young girls about using technology through education, and the purpose statement is to "provide the girls of Tanzania the tools, self-esteem, and competitive edge to become effective leaders and drivers of their community".

Based on analysis of these various details, I identify that the objective of "Entrepreneurship 101" session is to teach the Fellows how to express the greater purpose of their projects, as in how their entrepreneurial ventures can impact their communities positively. I observe based on what participants express to each other, the instructors, and myself that it is evident there is intention to create positive change in their communities. In teaching these critical skills on how to express these objectives effectively, the lectures are facilitating the Fellows in thinking more broadly about their projects.

Another example used during this lecture is a participant who runs a business center similar to an Internet café. The objective they came up with for her is, “one stop shop for secretarial skills, internet training, and high-tech skills”. Dr. Westfield elaborates to the fellows that that this statement describes what she is doing with her business, but the *purpose* for such a business is to have a facility to bring the community together to build things that have not yet been built. According to the speaker, that has a greater impact and gain when pitching to a donor or investor, and there is a greater benefit to the Fellow’s immediate community.

3) *Problem Solving*: Another participant, Bary from Guinea, shares his objective statement “to provide young people technical skills that will align with the companies in Guinea”.

Thus the purpose is to train people with skills that are locally desired, in an effort to urge companies to not go to other countries, thus outsource labor, but instead hire within Guinea because a business like Bary’s can provide them with the skilled workers.

Once again, these individual examples demonstrate that most participants are working on business propositions that are intended to do good in their communities, and the MWF program is facilitating them in articulating their objectives and purposes more clearly.

4) *Market*: The fellows do an activity to learn more about the “market”, where they have to define their consumer. It is emphasized to the fellows that they must think about *who* they are targeting to buy their product or service when designing the business plan. Asking questions about why would someone buy or not buy the product. They also learn how to define and identify their optimal customer. This exercise is beneficial because it can be applied to different environments like in the Fellows’ respective countries.

The concept of “market” comes up often in the lecture, as well as in other sessions, but I observe that there’s a limit to this discussion because the “market” is not the same everywhere. The market is very different in Africa especially in comparison to Western countries, and a discourse on the African market from an African perspective is missing in this session.

Ultimately, this lecture is an example of how these program sessions are tailored to get the participants to think about problem solving in their communities through social entrepreneurship. The program is not simply teaching skills on how to create wealth. The overarching message of the session is yes, monetary capital is important when growing a business, but that money can be attained more effectively if the participants can convey effectively to donors that their business agendas are problem solving and doing something positive in the community. Dr. Westfield concludes the session with a powerful statement that demonstrates the general tone of the program design. He says, “I’m going to challenge you to think that the value is not in what you do, but the effect you have”. This statement also symbolizes the larger and more community-based approach for implementing this program.

The “Entrepreneurship 101” session encompasses teaching Fellows basics about social entrepreneurship, practical knowledge for creating business plans, and learning to look at their work from different angles of entrepreneurship. The participants are already involved in work that benefits their communities and countries, as demonstrated in the examples above such as: Bary’s soft skills training company for youth, which attempts to prevent companies from outsourcing in Guinea; or Caroline’s tech training organization for teaching young girls computer coding skills. These examples also demonstrate how participants are addressing certain needs in their communities, while creating opportunities for others.

## **Benefits and Restrictions of Entrepreneurship from Participant Perspectives**

To better understand the role of entrepreneurship in sustainable development in Africa, Participants were asked to share their thoughts and perspectives on the topic. More specifically, they were interviewed about the impact of entrepreneurship education programs like the Mandela Washington Fellowship (MWF). While participants discussed many benefits of MWF, they were also discussed the many challenges for the entrepreneurial spirit and youth on the continent.

### *Benefits of Entrepreneurship:*

According to the participants, entrepreneurship education programs like MWF can create opportunities for youth specifically. According to Lalata from Liberia, “these types of programs (entrepreneurship education programs) are very effective because it creates opportunities for young people to be motivated to explore innovative ways to address some of the development needs of the continent”. More specifically on MWF, Mark from Kenya remarks, “MWF is taking the brightest minds across the continent and providing the necessary skills and support to help them change their countries and communities”. These comments are very pro-entrepreneurship, and maybe even too positive and indicate social desirability effect, in the sense that participants are responding according to what they think I want to hear. Regardless, these responses also reflect an idealized view of youth and entrepreneurship according to participants.

Participants overall expressed that entrepreneurship and youth go hand in hand in contributing to sustainable development in Sub-Saharan Africa by creating jobs and growing the economy, and in effect, entrepreneurship has the potential to alleviate poverty. Ghislain from the Congo explains that entrepreneurship could alleviate poverty by solving youth unemployment issues because “it can produce answers for challenges in development such as, economic, social and political by creating jobs and opportunities for youth”. Therefore, there is an even greater

need for more youth to be involved in business and entrepreneurship to create opportunities for themselves and enable them with freedom and ability to participate effectively towards a fully healthy and prosperous society.

*Restrictions of Entrepreneurship:*

While participants overwhelmingly expressed that entrepreneurship does and can play an important role in sustainable development, they also expressed some issues and restrictions of entrepreneurship especially in the African context. Currently there are political constraints on entrepreneurs from their governments to establish businesses, as well as constraints by international organizations such as the World Bank and IMF, which prevent many entrepreneurs from developing their businesses to their full potential.

For example, some participants describe issues with privatization where individuals are not able to privatize their businesses due to certain government policies, laws, and regulations. According to Emang from South Africa, African entrepreneurs depend heavily on government business clients. He explains that current enterprises have the notion to “follow the crowd” in order to not be excluded from government business and partnerships. This varies from country to country and governments. According to a few of the participants, privatization of entrepreneurial entities would be more effective in sustainable development by producing “private sector ideas that stimulate the economy” (MWF participant), where currently in many cases, individual enterprises are not thriving due to government restrictions.

Restrictions that prevent entrepreneurs from reaching their full potentials are not just from the government, but also from international financial institutions. As Honoroh from Côte d’Ivoire explains, World Bank and IMF imposed restrictions on entrepreneurial ventures along with the mismanagement of companies have led to failure of these enterprises or have stunted

their progress. He's referring to IMF and World Bank loans for small businesses that are usually accompanied by certain requirements and restrictions (A. A. Gordon & Gordon, 2013; McCowan & Unterhalter, 2015).

Lalata from Liberia is an example of how these imposed requirements affect individuals and their business and entrepreneurial possibilities. Lalata received a World Bank sponsored scholarship for her graduate studies in financial management. As a requirement of the World Bank scholarship, Lalata began working as an accountant for the Ministry of Education to help to ensure that government ministries and agencies and their financial activities align to the Public Financial Management Law of Liberia, which is supported by the World Bank. This demonstrates how international organizations can directly impact individual governments and sectors. Not only that, but because Lalata worked for the government, during the Mandela program, she was not eligible to apply for the U.S. Aid African Development Fund grant for entrepreneurs. If entrepreneurs could be free from donor restrictions and participate fully in a market economy, entrepreneurship could be an important pillar for African economies.

### **Leadership**

Good leadership is a key factor for sustainable development. The absence of good leadership could lead to oppression, violation of basic human rights, corruption, and lack of freedom, choice, and opportunities. Therefore, including a leadership component in development initiatives is very important, and this feature makes the Mandela Washington Fellowship unique from other entrepreneurship education programs in Africa. The MWF curriculum requires six sessions in the six-week program to be dedicated to teaching good leadership behaviors and skills because MWF is attempting to positively influence the next generation of Africa's business

and government leaders (“Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders,” n.d.).

Here I examine the participants’ views on the relationship between good leadership and sustainable development, their perspectives on the characteristics of a good leader, and what they consider to be good leadership in Africa. As explained in chapter two through literature reviews on African history and leadership in Africa, African countries have a long past of strong leaders commanding great empires, especially in pre-colonial Africa before European influences. There is indigenous knowledge in Africa on good leadership, thus it is important to incorporate African voice and culture in leadership trainings. I utilize these perceptions and insights as parameters for evaluating the leadership component of MWF.

Further, I examine two leadership sessions in this section, one covers good business ethics and handling corruption, and the second session deals with communication skills and conflict resolution.

On the question of why is good leadership important for sustainable development, participants’ responses reflect that there *is* a problem with current leadership in Africa. Such as, corrupt governments not meeting the needs of people and lacking transparency with the citizenry. Some participants explain the connection between politics and economy, emphasizing the importance of a good economy for a prosperous and developed nation. Therefore, participants agree that government leadership must maintain stability in politics so that a stable economy can flourish.

When asked which qualities define good leadership, the most common words that came up among participants were: inclusive, listener, unifies, diplomatic, ethical, accountable, integrity, focus, and finally, visionary. These responses indicate that according to participants, a good leader is someone that looks out for his or her people, and empowers them, and ensures the

wellbeing of the citizenry. Moreover, Mai from Guinea points out that leaders should be “accountable for the inspiration that they put out”. She suggests that MWF recruiters should vet the types of people being considered for the program to ensure that the knowledge and skills from these programs doesn’t empower the “wrong” kind of people. She also stresses the importance of “accountability” signifying it as an important leadership quality, one that is often questioned of government leaders in some current African political context.

Participants were also asked to name the qualities demonstrated by bad leadership and the most common words used were dictator, self-serving, selfish, arrogant, immoral, corrupt, and lacks vision. Based on these responses, a bad leader is an individual who doesn’t account for anyone other than himself, neglects the people, and doesn’t have foresight to plan towards a sustainable future. On the question of whether they saw themselves as leaders, multiple participants responded with “no” because they associate “leader” with negative words such as vain and autonomous. One participant answered “no because most leaders forget the people when they’re on top”, and this participant aims to “create real and good change for his community” thus he doesn’t aspire to be a leader.

I also observed three out of the six leadership sessions. Here I present data based on observations from two sessions. The first session presented covers issues of corruption, ethical dilemmas and how to resolve them, and the role of power in an ethical conflict. While these sessions are excellent examples of how MWF is attempting to positively influence the next generation of young African leaders, the African voice or the cultural knowledge of African leadership is missing from these sessions.

The presenter, Dr. Rafik Beekum, is a professor of management at the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR). He is also Mauritian, but completed his higher education in the United

States. Throughout the lecture he clearly demonstrates that he is knowledgeable of and relates to the African perspective on ethics and corruption. Yet his perspective on resolving ethical dilemmas and dealing with corruption is American due to his educational background in the United States. Based on my observations as a development researcher, this makes him an interesting lecturer for the fellows because even though he has an understanding of the African context, in some accounts, he is still reinforcing Western ideals of leadership instead of focusing the African narrative on leadership. He asserts that ethics and corruption are related and that corruption has impacted African countries greatly.

He talks extensively about the problem of corruption in Africa. According to him, one of the most significant reasons behind the corruption problem in Africa is bad ethics. He says this is an issue they should all be concerned about because they are in the business field and “ethics costs each of our countries a lot of money”. He explains that corruption directly impacts the business economy of a country because people are resistant to invest in corrupt economies.

Fellows discuss bigger moral issues when making ethical decisions in their countries. A few people express that in their countries, sometimes making the better ethical decision can come with very negative consequences for the individual, especially when dealing with a corrupt government. Such as, an individual might be aware of wrong doings in their company or a government office but afraid to report it to proper authorities in fear of endangering their own lives and wellbeing as well their families. Based on the consensus among participants, this is a very real issue and harsh reality in some of the Fellows’ countries that demonstrate lack of freedom of choice to do the “right thing”. Dr. Beekum reinforces that making the better moral and ethical decision is usually not easy however, if everyone behaves the same unethical way and never changes this way of thinking then real changes can never occur. The culture of

corruption needs to change starting at an individual level so that positive change can spread throughout and entire company, government and country. He concludes his session by emphasizing to the Fellows that it is up to them to change the system if they wish to see any real change within their countries.

In another leadership session, the Fellows learn about communication skills for effective leaders from Jill Tolles, a UNR professor of communication. This session is titled “Strategic Communication and Conflict Management” and is an example of how MWF at UNR institute is attempting to meet the growing demand by African youth for applied skills training (“Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders,” n.d.). The objective of this session was to teach participants practical skills in communication and conflict resolution.

Based on my observations, some major themes emerging in this session revolve around power and power dynamics at the workplace. Another theme is collaborative problem solving as an approach to conflict resolution. The participants did an exercise where they had to come up with scenarios of a time when they were faced with a conflict, whether at work or at home, or with friends. Using content from the lecture, such as the *4 layers of conflict TRIP analysis*: Topical, Relational, Identity, and Procedural, participants dissected the example and discussed and practiced responding to situations in context of their cultural environment in Africa.

Other topics covered in this session were the different methods for resolving conflict. One method is the competitive approach, which according to the speaker, is people’s natural reaction when faced with a problem. The speaker also discusses the compromise or “let’s make a deal” approach, and finally the collaborative problem solving approach, where two people have to work together to resolve an issue.

According to the speaker, collaborative problem solving approach is an important concept to learn in business and entrepreneurship. She explains that when in a conflict situation, people too often take an approach where one person gets to hold more “power” than the other. But in the collaborative approach, two parties have to work together, regardless of if one person is physically in a higher position of power, like in a boss versus employee conflict, to solve the issue. In this way, the parties engaged in conflict can overcome the problem together instead of trying to overpower each other. She explains further that in conflict situations humans too often try to overpower the other to “win”.

Based on my observations, I assert that the objective of this lecture was to teach participants concepts on the responsibilities of entrepreneurs and business owners. The speaker emphasizes that balancing power is important in their positions because they are all in positions of power where others are working under them. She says, “it is important to think of how power plays a role and how you (participants) interact with the people in your company”. The message here is about working with others and respecting them even if they may be of lower rank.

Some of these examples, whether it be interview responses or themes observed in sessions, demonstrate that there are some inherently negative perceptions associated with current leadership in Africa. However, there is a connection between good leadership and sustainable development according to the literature review and participant comments, making the molding and training of good leaders very important component of development.

The MWF program is unique in this sense because leadership education is an integral piece of this entrepreneurship education program. Several participants mentioned that they couldn’t think of themselves as leaders or potential change makers until they began the MWF journey. Participants describe experiencing moments of self-realization during the program

where they recognize that as youth have the capacity to create change in their community. MWF works to help youth in recognizing their potential and encourages them to take on innovative projects that could contribute to sustainable development in their community. These notions appear to hold some bias and could stem from my personal positive beliefs of MWF. Regardless, the program in fact adds positive values of leadership for participants.

Generally in regards to leadership, the data presented in this section support that participants value leadership skills, teaching those skills is a part of the MWF curriculum, and good leadership is necessary for sustainable development according to participants. The Fellows expressed that economy and politics are related and therefore good leadership in the business sector and government is important for sustainable development. One participant, Gadza from Botswana expressed, that if there are growing numbers of ethical entrepreneurs, then they could impact Africa's political and economic climate. While this is correct, there also has to be a change in political climate where facets of government can create a hospitable climate where entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship can be effective in sustainable development.

### **Sustainable Development**

In this section I examine sustainable development from several different positions. First, I define development based on participant perspectives to provide a better context of what sustainable development means to young African entrepreneurs. Then, I present data on an session demonstrating this program's approach to development through problem solving and social entrepreneurship. I also examine the various ways participants are using their individual capabilities to create opportunities for others in their communities. Finally, I explore obstacles of MWF as it relates to sustainable development in sub-Saharan Africa.

## **Sustainable Development: From Young Entrepreneurs' Perspectives**

When participants were asked to define sustainable development based on their knowledge and lived experience, 18 out of 20 described sustainable development as expanding beyond economic achievements. According to Lalata from Liberia, development has to be measured not based on a country's GDP, but should be measured based on whether people's everyday basic needs are being met. This is very similar to Sen's approach, that development is holistically meeting people's basic human rights and a society where individuals have freedom, choices, and opportunities for success.

Four participants expressed that longevity in development plans is just as important for long-term progress, and planning for the future is key to successful development. Chintu from Zambia explains, "to me sustainable development is development that meets the needs and aspirations of the present without compromising the ability of the future generation to meet their own needs". Muluken of Ethiopia similarly commented, "resource responsibility without risking tomorrow's social, economical, and environmental development needs".

Interestingly, the two people who described sustainable development solely through economic gains and not more holistically, are from South Africa and Botswana. These two countries are on the more developed end of the spectrum for sub-Saharan African countries, thus the participants from Botswana and South Africa may have been influenced by life experiences of growing up in more developed nations. However, the overall group consensus is that development is not just economic achievements or high GDPs, but rather it is defined by meeting current needs without compromising the future needs of Africa.

Participants also spoke about the role of youth in contributing to development in Africa. According to all 20 participants, youth in general should be involved in a variety of fields such as

entrepreneurial, political, environmental and agricultural sectors. For example Essosh from Côte D'Ivoire said youth are key to developing different sectors of society and improving the wellbeing of their local communities. Participants explained that youth are a key resource for new ideas, creativity, and innovation, and since all of these elements are essential for development, youth must be engaged in the process, both politically and economically.

### **Problem Solving, Social entrepreneurship, Ethics, and Sustainable Development**

I observed a variety of skills trainings in entrepreneurship and leadership education in the MWF sessions. In one of the sessions that stand out, participants are debriefing with the Academic Director after watching a video of Chris Sacca's meeting with MWF Fellows from 2015. The lecture is about problem solving through social entrepreneurship, and business ethics. Problem solving is another way to define social entrepreneurship, and an important theme in this study because it is linked to participants' desires to address problems in their communities.

The session starts with a debrief on the Chris Sacca video, which is from the 2015 MWF YALI meeting with Sacca, a well known venture capitalist and entrepreneur. Participants were familiar with Sacca for his initial investments on startups Uber and Twitter, and for appearing a guest judge on the television show "Shark Tank". As demonstrated in this session, problem solving, as in the concept of social entrepreneurship, is a foreign topic for participants when talking about business or entrepreneurship.

A male participant, Muluken from Ethiopia, brings up an important idea, which demonstrate the different perspectives of participants in understanding the difference between the African perceptions on businesses versus the American perception. This discussion connects business to problem solving and ethics. He says, "When I hear about U.S. business, they talk a lot about ethics and problem solving. I don't know how common that is in Africa... (the idea of)

to start a business to solve a problem in society. It is more of an opportunity to make money”.

This comment raises certain questions to be answered in this session by the professor. For example, what is business for? Is it for personal or societal gain? Muluken continues to explain that this doesn't necessarily make that person corrupt because his intention is to make money, but his “first motive is just an opportunity to make money, not to solve a problem”.

The professor responds by explaining that ethics is an integral aspect of business, but it is a cultural and social construct and varies from country to country. To explain further on the point of questioning oneself regarding whether to start a business for personal gain or societal gain, the professor asks everyone about what role ethics play when they are thinking about their business ventures back in Africa. One of them responds, “most businesses don't start with the idea of solving a problem. It is more like, there's a business successful in Europe and can also be successful here (Africa). Let's bring it here (Africa) and make it successful here too... Trade is good. It is more than just finding a problem to solve”.

From a researcher's perspective, I identify two significant ideas that are emerging from this session. The first is the idea that innovation to resolve a problem in society is not the driving force behind why an African entrepreneur might create their companies. Second, the idea that capitalism is a major driving force behind starting a business. The notion that trade is “good” and if something was successful in Europe, it should also be prosperous in Africa demonstrates a colonial and capitalist way of thinking. Europeans utilized these types of rational to justify implementing many European notions, ideas, and culture into the colonies. It is the idea that the colonies should be, or should strive to do things the European way. These reactions from the participants demonstrate to me that colonial and neoliberal capitalist thoughts and rhetoric still have a strong presence among African youth today. Having these open discussions and being

challenged to think critically about business and entrepreneurship indicates to me that MWF is attempting to expand the way these young people view business endeavors.

I highlight this debrief because it exhibits a very positive element of the University of Nevada, Reno MWF Institute's curriculum. The session demonstrates that the UNR curriculum is not solely geared towards wealth generating and economic growth perspective, but rather from a social benefit perspective. Based on my observations, the program is not simply teaching participants how to build businesses that only produce economic outcomes and financial benefits. The program takes the position that businesses should be started from a "problem solving" point of view, especially within the cultural contexts of the entrepreneurs' communities. Based on the discussions emerging in this session between the participants and the professor, I observe that for many of the participants, this is a new way to think about their businesses. As a result, participants are learning to think more broadly and critically about their entrepreneurial business plans. This session is another example that demonstrates the program's position on teaching participants critical and practical knowledge on social entrepreneurship, which has the potential for sustainable development in Africa (Baxter, 2014; Nafukho & Muyia, 2010).

### **Impact of Entrepreneurship in Participants' Communities**

Participants expressed their support of programs like MWF because it empowers African youth to resolve development issues impacting their communities on their own, rather than depending on foreign aid. MWF can be classified as a form of development initiative however, it is significantly different from traditional forms of aid where foreign agencies bring in funds to tackle development challenges in Africa. It is different because MWF is assisting young Africans who are working to address development issues in their communities by providing academic support and training, which some might not have access to in the absence of this program.

When participants were asked why they wanted to participate in MWF, almost unanimously they expressed wanting to help their communities and countries. We see examples of this in the everyday activities of the 2016 participants, as exhibited through their engagement within their communities. As Chintu, a techie from Zambia explains, “I have a passion about sharing information that enhances community development and uplifts people’s lives”.

Additionally, participants’ inherent propensity to contribute towards development in their community is evident by their previous and current participations in nonprofit work. For example, some participants manage their own nonprofits while others have worked or presently work at a nonprofit. Some even expressed volunteering at nonprofits until they were able to start something of their own. Their participation and activities in the nonprofit sector demonstrates their innate resolve to fill in gaps where government has failed to respond to community needs.

Based on responses to their interview questions, participants are operationalizing individual capabilities by utilizing their own choices and freedom to create opportunities for others through social entrepreneurship. Through their own entrepreneurial ventures, participants are generating jobs and employing people in the community, in other words, responding to poverty and unemployment in ways that an outside aid or development organization could not. For instance, whether participants are in for-profit businesses or in the nonprofit sector, they started their ventures based on certain needs they observed in their communities, e.g. unemployment or housing needs. Bary from Guinea Bissau, runs an IT company where he employs three fulltime and six part time employees. By employing others, he is creating jobs in his community. Or Joalane from Lesotho, who owns her own property and real state company and along with employing other realtors, she’s venturing into property development projects for low cost housing. Additionally, there is Mapendo from the Democratic Republic of Congo, who

started her first art shop in Kivu to promote and sell products from local artist because that kind of space for artists did not exist in her community. Participants exhibit that youth have the power to make big impacts.

Participants are also creating opportunities for youth in areas where their governments and or societies have failed to provide such opportunity and freedom. Mapendo from the DRC is an artist and entrepreneur. She recognized there are many young artists in her community who do not have a proper makers' space or a venue to sell their work. Thus she created that space in her art shop to help other artists in her community. Now in her town young artists not only have a place where they can go and create but also a space where they can sell their art. Another example is Muluken from Ethiopia, who worked at a nonprofit in Addis Ababa that empowered disadvantaged youth in the community through mentorship programs. He saw the lack of public spaces in the community for young people to gather and engage in activities or sports. This led him to start his own landscaping design and contractor company in order to create such spaces for youth in his community. These examples demonstrate how participants have identified a need, or a problem, in their community and are responding to the issues through their businesses.

Overall, participants in some form conveyed their desire to address the needs of their community through their various entrepreneurial and business ventures. According to participants, they are gaining the training and knowledge necessary to make these changes in their communities as well as learning skills to inspire others to be change makers. One of the fellows compared MWF to a "practical MBA course" because they gain information on business development and leadership education, which some Fellows may have never learned because they never participated in formal business education. Another participant explains, "this type of

program allows young people to have a vision of autonomy and contributes to strengthening their capacities in business and leadership”.

### **Challenges in Development and MWF**

Participants also mentioned some challenges to African development. For example., Mapendo from DRC pointed out that Africa doesn't develop because of political issues. Another participant, Raymond from South Africa, points out that sustainable development cannot be planned holistically for 55 countries. Africa has many countries thus one development plan cannot be painted over with one brush stroke for the entire continent. A further challenge participants expressed is that youth are not always included in the discourse of development in their countries, thus youth are left out of the process. Mapendo said that youth are getting left behind and can't do anything for development. She says the better “positions”, or opportunities, are given to older people and not to youth. Gwaliwa from Tanzania and Josephine from Liberia both said that in their countries, youth inclusion and involvement in development discourse and efforts have been traditionally low, even though youth are critical to the future. Chintu from Zambia also explains that gender inequality also has a significant role in sustainable development in Africa, because young women are often left out of such discourse.

However I see MWF as taking action against these social inequalities by creating equitable opportunities for both men and women, and individuals from various socioeconomic regions. The program strictly selects 50% male and 50% female participants. In 2016, 30% of the Fellows were from rural areas and small towns. Furthermore the program does not restrict applicants with disabilities, and last year there were 66 fellows who identified as having a disability (Department Of State. The Office of Website Management, 2015).

## **Evaluating and Assessing the Mandela Washington Fellowship Program**

In this section I address my research questions as I analyze some of the major outcomes of MWF. One of the most important outcomes of this program is it connects people across oceans and across borders in to mass international networks. Another major outcome is self-realization, which is different from being empowered. There is significance to this difference and I will explain this concept further, later in this chapter. The final major outcome of the program is that it provides participants with resources and support necessary to become successful entrepreneurs, which many other current entrepreneurship education programs do not offer. These include and are not limited to, access to capital, mentorships, leadership and practical skills training, as well as general education about the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

My first research question focuses on whether MWF fosters individual capabilities among participants and the link between MWF and sustainable development in sub-Saharan. The second research question is more specific to MWF outcomes and its effects on participants and their localities. I will begin with addressing research question one, which encompasses broader critiques and comments on sustainable development and entrepreneurship education.

### **Research Question 1: Entrepreneurship Education, Youth, and Fostering Individual Capabilities**

*“Youth have an innovative spirit which must be harnessed”—MWF participant from Liberia*

Based on program evaluation of MWF, personal narratives from 2016 Mandela Fellows, and my observations as researcher, it is evident MWF fosters youth capabilities and the result is, young African leaders with the potential to contribute to sustainable development in Sub-Saharan

Africa. African countries are very young compared to the rest of the world, and they are the youngest among Global South countries. Furthermore, youth under the age of 35 make up more than 60% of the continent's population, and since young people represent the future of their countries, targeting this demographic to be the frontrunners in taking on sustainable development initiative is a good method to begin this process.

Participants agree that youth are critical to sustainable development in Sub-Saharan Africa. According to participants, youth play a key role in understanding development in sub-Saharan Africa because in the very near future, they will be the ones occupying leadership positions where they will make political and business decisions. According to participant testimonies, because MWF specifically targets youth—the future of Africa, it is the most effective step towards achieving sustainable development. Chintu, a participant from Zambia describes that such programs holistically address the challenges youth in Africa face everyday that inhibit their potential. She says:

“MWF gives the youths the skills they need to implement their ideas, gives them the confidence to speak out when things go wrong and generally builds their capacity to participate in the development of their communities within Africa thereby developing Africa as a whole”

In essence, Chintu is expressing a major program outcome. That is, MWF teaches participants skills they can utilize in helping meet development needs within their communities, and in turn contribute to development in Africa overall.

To understand if MWF fosters capabilities, we must understand what the participants want to gain and value as supporting their individual capabilities. They express that education is key for youth if they are to be active citizens in their countries, thus knowledge leads to power, is

a prominent theme that emerges from participant interviews. Based on what participants desire and value, I consider capabilities in this case to be technical knowledge, such as practical skills training on business and entrepreneurship, comprehension of good leadership and leadership training, as well as critical thinking skills. Therefore to evaluate the success of this program, it must provide participants with these desired skills in order to determine the capacity to which MWF fosters capabilities.

As demonstrated earlier in the chapter, where I present various detailed accounts of MWF sessions on entrepreneurship and leadership, the program provides participants with the skills and knowledge that they want and identify as most valuable to them. MWF fosters capabilities through training and education that builds on what the participants are already doing and works to enhance their skills as entrepreneurs and leaders, not just in business but also in their communities.

The MWF model resembles the human capital theory because it is an educational training program that invests in African youth in order to promote sustainable development in sub-Saharan. In the literature review chapter, I argue that Western capitalistic notions are imposed on the global South through education programs, which is one of the biggest flaws of the human capital theory. This is a fact in most cases where the west is investing in education initiatives. MWF however, is different and ultimately better because it is not imposing western ideologies onto the participants. Instead, the program is investing in people and on education that has been determined important by the African participants. Based on my participant interviews and the official program goals, MWF is responding to the demands of African youth for practical skills and leadership training in fields of public service and business (“Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders,” n.d.). The program invests in young individuals to assist

them in accomplishing what they feel is needed in their countries and communities. In this case, participants are gaining skills and resources that give them the freedom to be able to take their ideas to the next level. They have choice in this scenario because they are not forced into entrepreneurship as an avenue to escape poverty. As participants express, and based on my personal interactions with participants as a researcher and staff, it is evident that they are passionate about their craft as entrepreneurs and MWF is a much-needed support and resource. In summary, MWF is an education initiative that enables participants more freedoms, choices, and opportunities, unlike other programs that may impose entrepreneurship upon the participants as their only escape from poverty (DeJaeghere & Baxter, 2014).

The final aspect of this research question that I address is the extent to which MWF is effective in contributing to sustainable development in Sub-Saharan Africa. Based on my evaluation as a professional in the field of international education programs, I think that MWF has great potential for contributing to sustainable development in Sub-Saharan Africa because of its three-pronged program design and its creation of a very large youth network. The Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) has one of the largest networks in Africa for MWF alumni. Since MWF targets the next generation of African leaders in government, business, and civil society, the YALI network is key for collaboration between youth in all three sectors. The three-pronged approach makes the YALI development initiative different from other development projects because it targets young leaders in business and entrepreneurship, public management, and civic leadership. Providing valuable and desired knowledge, and leadership education to young leaders in these sectors is very important because, as explained in the literature review of this study, collaboration between all three sectors is fundamental for sustainable development.

## **Research Question 2: MWF and Program Outcomes**

*Outcome: Practical skills and access to resources*

The second research question focuses on the effectiveness of Mandela Washington Fellowship (MWF) in developing entrepreneurship and leadership skills among participants and is evaluated based on two relevant features. The first is whether the skills learned from the program is relevant to participants' individual capabilities and the second, is the Mandela Washington Fellowship (MWF) in business and entrepreneurship, according to participants, an effective approach to development in participants' localities.

As I explain in the earlier section, since practical skills training and knowledge of entrepreneurship and leadership is desired and valued by participants, successfully delivering these outcomes determines whether MWF fosters capabilities. I demonstrate in the previous sections that MWF fosters capabilities, according to participant testimonies. Based on the program evaluation, this is further supported because the participants overwhelmingly approve of the program in providing them with the necessary skills and knowledge. The participants completed weekly surveys rating the various entrepreneurship and leadership lectures, workshops, site visits, and the speakers. The surveys were utilized for the program evaluation, which demonstrates very positive responses regarding majority of program. There are six weeks of lectures and workshops, thus there were of course a handful of sessions the participants didn't approve of or found irrelevant, but these are minimal in comparison to the other sessions and aspects of the program the participants rated highly.

The program is designed to cater to participants' individual capabilities. MWF is not advocating to participants one specific western definition of entrepreneurship or how it should be operationalized in Africa. Instead, the participants are taught about the entrepreneurial ecosystem, which is how entrepreneurship can be fruitful given there are certain consistencies

within an environment. It is up to the participants to manipulate what they learn about the entrepreneurial ecosystem and make it adaptable in their local environments.

Further, MWF promotes individual capabilities because it supports entrepreneurs in ways that many local governments do not. According to participants, not only does MWF provide them with practical skills training and leadership training but also offers them mentorships with established business professionals in America and Africa. Mentorships are particularly significant for the Fellows because they are able to learn first hand from reputable and well-experienced entrepreneurs and business connoisseurs.

Furthermore, the program offers a space to collaborate on various projects with young American professionals through the Peer Collaborators portion of the program, as well as young African professionals via the YALI network and the Regional Leadership Centers<sup>9</sup>. These Regional Leadership Centers (RLCs) serve as resources for continued training and on site support for any present projects the Fellows are working on. The RLCs can also serve as “incubators” or hubs for entrepreneurs to gather and collaborate and get support on working or new projects. As stated in the literature review on Entrepreneurship, success of entrepreneurs in Africa is dependent on ongoing training, adequate resources and funding (De Gobbi, 2014; Di Nunzio, 2015).

The second aspect of this research question is whether all these factors that are offered by MWF are enough to make a difference in the participants localities. First, I discuss earlier in this chapter that the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) curriculum focusing on social entrepreneurship is ideal for sustainable development. It teaches participants how to respond to a

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<sup>9</sup> YALI Regional Leadership Centers are located at higher education institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa and offer leadership-training programs to young leaders between the ages of 18 and 35. The RLCs serve as a place for regional collaboration driven by young leaders by providing in-person and online training, networking, and professional development opportunities (“Regional Leadership Centers | YALI,” n.d.).

problem in their community through social entrepreneurship, and to utilize business concepts to identify their market, create a product based on needs, and solve a problem. As examples of social entrepreneurship, I presented numerous instances where participants are taking on certain issues in their communities through their business and entrepreneurial ventures. Additionally, they are creating capabilities for individuals in their communities by providing them with employment, or even just a venue where others can sell their own products, or simply gather with other young entrepreneurs.

Furthermore, during MWF the participants have an opportunity to receive ten thousand dollar grants from the United States African Development Fund (USADF) to launch their start-ups. This grant is only open to MWF participants in the business and entrepreneurship track and is a unique opportunity to gain some capital for their different projects. UNR has had between five to nine winners of USADF grants every year. These grants have the potential to take the winners' startups to the next level and make big differences in their communities.

There are other outcomes of this program that are just as important, if not more in some cases, as gaining practical skills and access to resources. These are, discovering one's potential through self-realization and networking opportunities. These might not be linked to fostering capabilities and sustainable development, but are very significant.

#### *Outcome: Self-Realization*

Several participants also mentioned that the program gave them self-realization about their potential as young leaders and change makers. Self-realization is different from the concept of empowerment, which is based under the premise that Africans need to be empowered in order to change their status quo, as if they were lesser until they are empowered by some foreign initiative. Even though some acknowledged that the program empowered them, most described

this inner transition of understanding their potential, as self-realization of their individual capabilities. They mentioned that the program gave them the ability to realize what they are able to accomplish with the right skills and knowledge and also through making personal connections with other fellows.

The relationships that are formed between the MWF fellows carry on for most participants post-program. MWF Fellows from UNR stay connected through social media application Whatsapp and in their conversations, I see that they are very supportive of one another and speak positively about each other's successes. As Dr. Carina Black, the Program Director says, "many of these leaders are marching a lonely avenue and having a support group of individuals who understand their journey is very important in their success". Even today, a year after MWF 2016 concluded, I see that participants are regularly active and staying connected on Whatsapp and Facebook, maintaining their relationships while providing each other ongoing support.

*Outcome: Networking opportunities*

The fellows unanimously agree that the biggest benefit of the program is the connections they made in the U.S. but more importantly, with their fellow Africans. According to participants, the program has been a unique opportunity to learn from each other about operating businesses and organizations in Africa. Participants initially view this program as an opportunity to network with and make connections with Americans, but ultimately they are surprised by the connections they were making with each other, thus other African nations.

MWF YALI is a large network of youth, creating partnerships and collaborating together with other Africans. Many of the Fellows have never considered the possibility of networking or collaborating with other young entrepreneurs outside of their own country and MWF was their

first opportunity to do that. In fact, many expressed that one of best aspects of the program is the ability to collaborate with other young African professionals. Muluken from Ethiopia says that programs like MWF is an opportunity for Africans to collaborate and learn from experiences of other African countries and entrepreneurs and make better decisions for their own ventures. It is important to note that every single participant pointed to networking opportunities with their fellow Africans and connecting with their American host families and other friends as their greatest take away from the program. Through collaboration and working with other young entrepreneurs, the government, and with international partners are all key in the process of realizing real change.

From my perspective, not only as a researcher but also a professional in international exchange programs, I observed that Americans gain significantly from these networks as well. Not just MWF, but other international exchange programs like the Fulbright Exchange and International Visitor Leadership Programs. First, for the average American who does not travel abroad, international exchanges provide a great avenue for them to understand the world and the ways others live in it. MWF provided an opportunity for average Nevadans who may not have or never will travel to Africa, a chance to understand Africa and Africans better through cross-cultural exchange. Individuals are able to become more globally aware citizens and cross-culturally competent because of exchange programs like MWF, without ever even leaving the country. Citizen diplomacy is a long-term positive implication of international exchange programs like MWF.

In addition, international exchange programs also reduce stereotypes that non-Americans have about the U.S. and its citizens. For example, people outside of the U.S. create their own images and stereotypes about America and its people based on pop culture and media. Pop

culture and media doesn't always export our most important cultural assets such as, freedom of speech, diversity of American people, and volunteerism, but instead give an incomplete and possibly false image of the U.S. An image that only depicts America's material, lavish, racist, violent, wealthy and capitalist side. International education programs like MWF are very important for creating global citizens and diminishing stereo-types others may have about Americans. And these two aspects are greatly beneficial for U.S. diplomacy abroad.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS: MWF AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

#### **EDUCATION**

Analysis of this research reveals that the Mandela Washington Fellowship (MWF), Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) fosters capabilities and has other positive outcomes. MWF gives African youth a voice and platform to discuss the real issues affecting them, access to entrepreneurship and leadership training, access to resources and support, and accessible networks to collaborate with fellow Africans and with the international community. One of the biggest reason development projects fail is because there is a lack of understanding and true knowledge of the African context. MWF and other similar international exchanges are an opportunity to gain insight about the African context. Additionally, these programs also facilitate cross-cultural understanding on Africa. Furthermore, MWF is taking a key demographic—youth, who are pertinent to sustainable development in the region—and giving them the necessary support and resources, and emboldening them to do it themselves.

While this study demonstrates many positive impacts, and supports the knowledge linking entrepreneurship education to sustainable development, there are aspects of the program that warrant further research and analyses. I evaluate some limitations of this program such as limits of lectures and workshops and the idea of “good” leadership. I also assess limitations of the concept behind entrepreneurship as an alternative to traditional development models. I examine notions such as, entrepreneurship perpetuates Western notions of individualism, entrepreneurship trainings perpetuate social inequalities, and operationalizing entrepreneurship for sustainable development and its capacity to bring tangible change in rural areas of Africa, all areas where I see need for further research. Finally, I present a brief discussion on the lack of

long term and effective post-program follow-up plan. These assessments are based on my observations of the program, and can be used for future program improvements.

We begin with observations made during sessions where the Fellows engaged in various business and market related activities. The Fellows often participated in workshops such as the activity mentioned in chapter four on consumer and the market, or the activity where they create business model canvases, or prepare pitches for potential investors. While these are great skills to learn and practice, these workshops often had an underlying assumption that there *is* accessible money in all of the Fellows' countries or that there are a number of resources waiting to fund their projects. In reality, investors and their money are not as easily accessible in Africa as it is in the U.S. and even here it is not as accessible for many American entrepreneurs.

There are also cultural aspects to doing business in Africa that were not addressed in the program sessions. For example, certain behaviors and manners accepted in U.S. business culture may not be effective or accepted in the African business scene. To improve this in the future, I propose there should be discussion in one of the earlier program sessions about these cultural differences between participants and program administrators in order to be inclusive of African cultural perspectives. Another example of this is the discourse on markets during workshops, which is also missing the cultural aspect. This concept should be defined more in lectures, in terms of the African context of "market" as defined by the participants. It is ineffective to learn about how to target markets for their business, if a clear definition of the "market" in Africa is not framed at the forefront of lectures. These types of information can be gathered through surveys before the program begins or even through informal discussions during the first couple norming days of the program. It should then be distributed to the lecturers and presenters so that they will have an understanding of the cultural differences of doing business in Sub-Saharan Africa from

an African perspective. This could ensure that lecturers and presenters be more aware of the African context when speaking about topics such as “market” or the “consumer”. Without including a stronger sense of African voices in the programs framework, MWF will be just another program perpetuating neoliberal capitalist agendas in Sub-Sahara.

The leadership sessions received largely positive feedback from participants in the program evaluation, yet there are concepts that emerged in interviews and during my observations that I identify here as need for further discussion. First based on my research, it is my assertion that the notion of “good” leadership is based on perspective, experience, and interpretation. While MWF doesn’t advocate one particular type of leadership, such as democracy, the program does make the argument that a good leader is ethical, transparent, and is generally for the good of all people. According to participants, a good leader is also a “visionary” thus it is an individual who has the foresight to not only look into but also plan for the future. Western experience and perspective promote democratic leadership as “good” leadership and the most suitable form of government, especially in the Global South where a democratic process promises hopes of ending poverty and promoting social equality. In essence, Western style leadership is parallel to achieving sustainable development yet that is not necessarily what Global South countries need. It is not what Africa needs.

Raymond, a participant from South Africa, brings up a notion that challenges the idea of “good” leadership, effectually contesting democratic leadership. He points to dictatorships being synonymous with bad governments led by corrupt leaders. He emphasizes that this is Western interpretation and experience, not necessarily African. Raymond explains that while good leaders are important for a developed state, equally important is consistency. He describes that because most African countries are new countries, change in government leadership every few years can

be unnecessarily disruptive to civilian peace. The new administration frequently wants to come in and change and undo everything the last administration put in place. In this sense, according to Raymond, it would be better to have a dictator who can stay in power for 10 years at a time as long as he's doing a good job of running the country. Raymond explains that to Westerners this sounds like a dictatorship, which is not approved by the U.S., but in the African context, a dictatorship doesn't have to mean a bad thing.

Furthermore, the literature review on African history and leadership demonstrates a strong knowledge of leadership models that already exist within Africa. As I assert in my literature review, acknowledging Africa's history of strong leadership models can only enhance development programs of the present because it gives agency to African countries in their own development process, which contributes to the individual capabilities of these countries (Monroe, 2013; Sen, 2009). Even though the participants overwhelmingly approve of the leadership component of the programs, my observations and research dictates that the leadership component of MWF is a Western model. Acknowledging and incorporating Africa's rich cultural history of its leadership models can improve the framework for the leadership section of the program.

Next I present criticisms of entrepreneurship education and its limits and assumptions. Entrepreneurship education can be essential in sustainable development, yet we must be cautious to not romanticize this idea too much. Entrepreneurship as a means to stimulate the economy has been a common alternative to neoliberal development initiatives. However, we should not glamorize entrepreneurship as the "solve-all" solution for resolving poverty, unemployment, and improving the economy, just because it has the potential to create jobs. One of the most important assertions I make in this study is, creating jobs and alleviating poverty—thus economic achievements, are not the only determinants of sustainable development. For example,

entrepreneurship could have negative implications on development in Africa because social inequalities are often perpetuated through entrepreneurship. Reflecting back on the case studies from Swaziland and Ethiopia, which demonstrate that numerous entrepreneurship training programs in Africa failed to help entrepreneurs who are already marginalized. Instead, these programs result in helping those entrepreneurs who are already moderately or more established and already have well connected networks, thus perpetuating existing inequalities (De Gobbi, 2014; Di Nunzio, 2015). Furthermore, we know that in Ethiopia, endorsing and implementing entrepreneurship training programs helped the authoritarian regime and their ruling party maintain power, achieve favor with the general public and gain support from NGOs and international organizations (Di Nunzio, 2015).

Another complication stems from language, not just in MWF, but entrepreneurship training programs in general. For example, going back to the MWF session on entrepreneurship by Chris Sacca, there is great emphasis on the idea of individualism. There are countless references on being unique and to be the individual who is noticed above others, and playing to one's uniqueness, and behaving in charismatic ways to get noticed. These are good concepts but they are also very American and not culturally or historically African. Imposing individualism as a mode to become successful has possible negative implications for participants, especially when they return to their countries where individualism is not valued like the group or community. Thus acting on individual impulses may not be received as amiably in Africa as it is in the U.S., especially in a business setting.

Furthermore in the rhetoric of entrepreneurship, there are frequent references to innovation, technology, and modernization. For example, thinking back to Caroline's organization where she teaches young girls computer coding is idealistically innovative and does

benefit many young girls. However realistically, it cannot benefit everyone because the infrastructure for Internet and computer technologies does not exist in all areas of Tanzania, especially in the rural regions. Coding skills are useful in urban areas where the infrastructures for Internet and computer technologies are potentially more available and accessible, and the young girls learning these new skills can utilize them to their advantage. However these infrastructures do not exist or are limited in most rural parts in sub-Sahara, thus making coding skills potentially useless for the young women in these areas. This demonstrates that entrepreneurship certainly has the prospect to innovatively change lives in urban areas but its reach outside of the already “developed” regions is in question. In addition, the lack of infrastructure today in many parts of Africa is one of the lasting impacts of colonial history.

Although modernization through innovation and technology has brilliant prospects for positive change, it should be considered that all parts of Africa might not want or need modernization. Modernization in many ways devalues Africa’s indigenous knowledge. The idea that modernization is necessary in Sub-Sahara is connected to the colonial rhetoric on development, which is, colonial powers denying African knowledge and its rich past in order to determine the needs and solutions for African countries.

As with all exchanges, follow-up post program is an issue with the YALI MWF program. Although during the course of the program there is real value for those who participate, Africans and Americans, it is difficult to know lasting and measurable outcomes without sufficient follow-up after the program. Both the Academic and Program Director comment on follow-up:

“The six week program has follow-on but it is fairly episodic. There is not as much real opportunity for the kind of continuing relationships as the State Department might have initially envisioned...without real and lasting outcomes, it will be difficult for State to continue to fight for the program”—Dave Croasdell, Academic Director

“YALI, more than other programs, does offer follow-on trainings, but I cannot assess to what degree fellows access those trainings. I feel strongly that this (post-program follow-up) is a shortfall of all ECA exchanges”—Carina Black, Program Director

Additionally, there are no incentives for host universities and agencies to stay connected with fellows and follow their journey after the conclusion of the program. If the host university does any post-program follow-up, it would have to be from their own volition. Without any real incentives, this usually does not happen because program agencies have to move on to other grants and think about the next exchange program.

The State Department does have some follow-up but as stated above by program administrators, and from my own knowledge as program staff, it is fairly limited. The lack of follow-up is a major problem for measuring real success of YALI and other programs like it because without real tangible outcomes, the program is at a higher risk of getting cut.

Regardless of the challenges associated with MWF or entrepreneurship education and leadership training, there are still great benefits and good implications of MWF. It has, continues to, and will continue to provide benefits to African youth in ways that many other entrepreneurship and leadership programs have failed in the past. It is important to recognize that the benefits presented in this study would disappear if the program did not exist at all.

## **Conclusion: Which Way Forward?**

*“As so many Africans have told me, you want trade not aid — trade that supports jobs and growth” (Obama, 2016).*

Participants declared many times what former President Obama mentioned at the MWF Presidential Summit in 2016, that African youth are not looking for aid or charity. Africa is ready for investments and African people are ready to become partners in the global economy. This notion is an important narrative for the future of development initiatives because it is a step towards recognizing African agency and power. As Obama states in his address to the 2016 YALI Fellows:

“And even as Africa continues to face enormous challenges — poverty and disease and conflict — I see a continent on the move. You have one of the world’s fastest-growing regions, home to a middle class that is projected to grow to over 1 billion consumers. You are more connected by technology and smartphones than ever before... Africa is sending more of its children to school. You’re saving more lives from HIV/AIDS and infant mortality. And while there’s still more work to do to address these challenges, today’s Africa is a place of unprecedented prosperity and opportunity” (Obama, 2016).

Africa is not simply an impoverished part of the world, polluted only with problems. African countries are prospering and growing in more ways than the Western world knows or even recognizes. The individual participants of this program represent important narratives of African people through their stories of accomplishments, positivity, and hope.

Yet when Western media attention is drawn to the African continent, it is because of war, disease, famine, and conflict and stories of achievements and success don’t usually make the front page. The world looks more closely when it is genocide in the Democratic Republic of

Congo or famine in Ethiopia. These stereotypes are the norm and most relate these images and notions when they think about Africa. This fact speaks to the bigger issue of colonial rhetoric still having a strong presence in today's discourse on Africa.

One of the main arguments of this study is that development initiatives too often have followed the same colonial rhetoric that undermine and deny local culture and Africans power and agency in their own development process. Sen's Capabilities approach to development is diverging from the colonial rhetoric because capabilities encompass individual freedom, choice, opportunities; thus basic human entitlements for all individuals. Therefore, to implement better development initiatives, there needs to be a better understanding of African history, culture, and its link to modern day development challenges, as well as knowledge of local context in various Sub-Saharan regions.

Development projects by foreign agencies like the UN, World Bank or INGOs, often fail because local voices are not included in the development discourse (Ferguson & Lohmann, 1994). MWF represents a different type of development initiative, because it focuses on individual entitlements to opportunities, freedoms, and choices, the most important components for sustainable development according to Sen's theory of capabilities. Based on my experiences through my professional position within the program, it is evident to me that participants' voices are valued and their objectives are included in program goals. Just the simple fact that this program is focusing on facilitating the participants, who are working to address the challenges of their own communities, rather than directing Africans on how to become "developed", is already taking the right steps towards attaining sustainable development. However, as discussed in depth in the previous chapter, there is more that should be done to incorporate African culture and voice in order to improve and strengthen the MWF program framework for future participants.

If we are to assist the Global South and Africa, we should become more knowledgeable about those we want to help. Cultural exchange programs like the Mandela Washington Fellowship is the optimal way to improve our cross cultural understanding because these programs allow us (the international community) an opportunity to make connections, engage, and get to know people individually so that African voices are heard. Through the Peer Collaborator, mentorships, and home hospitality aspects of the program, participants and the host community build lasting interpersonal and professional relationships that foster global awareness and citizen diplomacy, which are the unintended yet also the most valuable outcomes of this program.

According to the program website, the budget for MWF YALI program was reduced for 2018 to 70% under the Donald Trump administration (“Mandela Washington Fellowship,” n.d.). American host universities have been cut from 40 to 28 and the program shrunk from 1,000 fellows to 700. There is also no information available at this time regarding continuation of the program grant after 2018. The future of MWF and other Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs (ECA) programs are unknown under the current administration, even though ECA programs have been around for more than 70 years.

State Department programs like MWF cost taxpayers less than 1% of the total federal budget. Yet they are pertinent to U.S. national security interests and keep Americans safe by creating avenues for dialogue and discussion. Funding for ECA programs has always been a bi-partisan issue and Congress is very familiar with the benefits of programs like YALI MWF and Fulbright. Yet currently, Mr. Trump do not believe in or understand the value of these exchanges. While the YALI network among past participants in Africa will continue even if the program ends, cutting YALI completely would be short-sighted.

Americans gain significantly from international exchange programs like the Fulbright, International Visitor Leadership Programs, and YALI in several different ways. International exchanges provide a great avenue for the average American who may never leave the country, an opportunity to understand the world and the ways others live in it. As the Program Director of MWF at UNR explains, “this is especially true of university campuses that need to create global citizens”. Additionally, exchanges help eliminate stereotypes other countries may have about the U.S. Exchanges are an avenue for others to learn about real Americans and our values of freedom, diversity, and volunteerism. These cross-cultural understandings are necessary for maintaining U.S. diplomacy abroad and ensuring our national security.

It is my intention that this study will contribute to larger research on the benefits of international education programs and their link to sustainable development. Further, I hope this and other emerging studies on the topic will help reserve funding for the ECA so that it can continue to fund various international education programs like MWF.

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