



Press Release

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LEADING DEVELOPMENT EXPERTS FROM AFRICAN, ASIAN, AND LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES JOIN ASPEN INSTITUTE'S 2020 NEW VOICES FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Program to change the global development media and advocacy discussion includes 25 Fellows from 16 African, Asian and Latin American Countries.

Washington, DC, January 15, 2020 — The Aspen Institute announced today the 2020 class of the [New Voices Fellowship](#), a groundbreaking program which equips experts from developing countries to play a more powerful role as advocates and policymakers in the global development discussion.

“New Voices Fellows are uniquely positioned to influence global development policies,” Fellowship Director Andrew Quinn said. “Their world-class expertise, paired with lived experience of basic development challenges, gives them important insight into how policy can translate into progress on the ground.”

The 2020 Class of New Voices Fellows includes 25 Fellows from 16 African, Asian and Latin American countries. They include an HIV+ Bolivian activist who is fighting for improved healthcare systems across South America, a Rwandan scientist who used his own experience going hungry in a refugee camp to rethink Africa’s battle against malnutrition, and a Nigerian doctor who contracted – and survived – the Ebola virus in 2014, making her one of Bill Gates’ “Heroes in the Field” for global health.

Ten of the 2020 New Voices Fellows specialize in different aspects of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), part of a three-year New Voices effort to spotlight this crucial topic.

They include a male nurse from Ghana who is fighting the scourge of unsafe abortions by providing quality reproductive healthcare and training midwives, an Indian activist who has used her own experience with female genital mutilation (FGM) to launch a broader discussion of gender-based violence and sexual harassment, and a Nigerian youth advocate who has used social media to become one of her country's foremost "influencers" on sexuality and reproductive rights.

"Sexual and reproductive health and rights are central to achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, and these Fellows bring new ideas that can transform discussions and shape real-world actions," said Fellowship Associate Director Emily Kaiser.

The full list of 2020 Fellows and descriptions of their work can be found [below](#).

Intensive Media and Advocacy Training

The 2020 New Voices Fellows come from Afghanistan, Bolivia, Botswana, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Libya, Malawi, Myanmar, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe. They will undertake a program of intensive media and advocacy training and mentorship to reach a broader global audience through both traditional and new media, as well as speaking engagements.

During the program's first six years, New Voices Fellows were featured over 6,188 times in media outlets and delivered numerous TED and TEDx talks. Under a training partnership with [The Moth](#), a non-profit organization dedicated to the art and craft of storytelling, New Voices Fellows have told their stories to live US audiences and through radio and [podcast](#) syndication.

Supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Open Societies Foundations, the New Voices Fellowship was established in 2013 to bring the essential perspectives of development experts from Africa and other parts of the developing world into the global development conversation.

In 2019, the program expanded to include a new, three-year project to spotlight experts involved with Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights with the support of an anonymous donor. Application to the Fellowship is by nomination only, and nominations will open in August 2020 for the next class.

For more about the New Voices Fellowship, visit www.aspennewvoices.org or email aspennewvoices@aspeninst.org. Follow all the fellows [on Twitter here](#) and the Fellowship at [@aspennewvoices](#).

For press materials, visit AspenNewVoices.org

Adaora Okoli, Nigeria***Internal Medicine Resident, Tulane University***

Adaora, a medical doctor, became the face of Nigeria's response to the 2014 West African Ebola epidemic when she was infected with the deadly virus after treating one of the first patients in the country to come down with the disease. Her experience as one of a handful of people to survive Ebola helped to transform Adaora into passionate global health advocate, and she is now completing her internal medicine residency at Tulane University and later plans to do a fellowship focused on infectious disease, particularly viral hemorrhagic fevers (VHFs).

Akebe Luther King Abia, Cameroon***Research Scientist, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa***

Akebe fell in love with environmental microbiology in school, curious about the environmental causes of human disease. Akebe holds a Masters in Microbiology and a DTech in Water Care. He is currently working on the molecular and environmental surveillance of AMR in South Africa. His work focuses on the interconnections between animal health, human health, and the environment. He is a vocal advocate for greater inclusion of environmental considerations in current "One Health" models, which study the interconnectedness of human, animal and environmental health.

Anatole Manzi, Rwanda***Director of Clinical Practice and Quality Improvement, Partners in Health***

Anatole grew up in the hills of rural Rwanda, ensuring the family livestock stayed out of trouble. "My sense of responsibility comes from being a cowherd," Anatole says with a laugh. Following the 1994 Rwanda Genocide, Anatole's sense of responsibility led him to a career in medicine, initially as a nurse and later as a clinical psychologist and public health expert. He designed Rwanda's Mentorship, Enhanced Supervision for Healthcare and Quality Improvement (MESH-QI) program, which was credited with helping the country to make huge leaps in the quality of medical service delivery and is now being implemented in countries ranging from Haiti to Liberia.

Andre Ndayambaje, Rwanda***Health Services Coordinator at University of Global Health and Equity, Board member of Council of International Neonatal Nurses and Co-founder of Rwanda Association of Midwives***

Andre is a midwife and neonatal nurse who is passionate about ending preventable maternal and child deaths. He was drawn to midwifery after nearly losing his sister and her newborn baby during the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. Andre was just 11 years old when his sister gave birth while they were hiding in a forest. She was bleeding and needed urgent care. He shouted and caught the attention of some soldiers, who saved his sister and her hypothermic baby. Today, he says that he is "the voice and the messenger of the newborns, of preterm births, of small babies, of sick babies, who continue to die every day and every second due to preventable causes".

Cedric Habiyaremye, Rwanda***Research Associate, Washington State University; Founder & CEO, QuinoaHub Ltd; Co-Founder, FarmWella LLC; Vice-Chair, Building Bridges with Rwanda.***

Cedric is known as the scientist who brought quinoa to Rwanda and other parts of Africa. Unlike most crops that provide no food before harvest, quinoa addresses both short- and long-term food security because growers can eat the nutritious leaves long before harvesting the grain. Cedric's passion for food security comes from painful childhood memories of surviving on leaves and grass

and food assistance from the UN World Food Programme in a refugee camp in Tanzania during the Rwandan Genocide. He earned his masters and Ph.D. in agronomy and crop science from Washington State University. Rather than simply increasing the quantity of food produced in countries like Rwanda, Cedric hopes to improve the quality of food and help fight against chronic malnutrition and child stunting.

Chiwoza Bandawe, Malawi

Associate Professor, College of Medicine, Malawi

Chiwoza is one of four registered clinical psychologists in Malawi and works tirelessly to dispel stigma and myths about mental illness and disorders. Chiwoza was convinced he would be a lawyer until he took a psychology course during his undergraduate studies and fell in love with the field. He strongly believes that Euro-centric approaches to mental health will not work in an African context. He teaches at the University of Malawi, focusing on mental health education and an Afro-centric approach to the field. Chiwoza has also engaged religious leaders in Malawi to raise awareness about mental health and seeks to equip religious leaders to become first responders to mental health crises in their communities.

Damaris Matoke-Muhia

Senior Research scientist at the Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) & Director of capacity Building, Gender Mainstreaming, and Career Progression, Pan-African Mosquito Control Association (PAMCA)

Damaris is a molecular biology scientist working on the control of vector borne diseases. She holds a PhD in Molecular Medicine and a Masters in Biotechnology. In addition to her extensive experience working in disease prevention and vector control, Damaris is passionate in mentoring young career scientists and advocates for the advancement of women scientists. Within her role at PAMCA, Damaris has organized and convened a meeting of women from 20 African countries to discuss, identify, and mitigate that gaps women face culturally as they work in the vector control professions.

Danjuma Adda, Nigeria

Executive Director, CFID Taraba and Chagro-Care Trust

Danjuma is a Nigerian prince and accomplished public health expert on a mission to raise awareness about Hepatitis. Danjuma was infected with Hep B while in clinical rotations and then lost his own mother to the disease several years later. Even though Hepatitis kills more people per year than HIV/AIDS, it receives just a fraction of the global health funding. Danjuma is a leading voice for Hepatitis patients in Nigeria and uses his platform to advocate for the most vulnerable populations across Africa. He wants to change the narrative about Hepatitis and raise awareness about the deadliness of the disease.

Deborah Nakatudde, Uganda

Founder, SLUM

Deborah is a grassroots organizer and advocate in Kampala, Uganda. After surviving years on the streets as a teenage sex worker, Deborah started providing resources and healthcare for other sex workers. She founded and currently runs her own NGO in Uganda. She organizes workshops on sexual and reproductive health and rights and provides sex workers with HIV treatment and prevention.

Etta Madete, Kenya

Lecturer, University of Nairobi & Designer, BuildX Studio (formally Orkidstudio)

Etta is a human-centered design architect, believing that communities must be at the heart of building and design. She chose architecture school because she saw the field as both physical and tangible, that would allow her to come up with practical solutions. She's passionate about sustainable building technology and materials in the built environment. Etta seeks to create social change through design and addresses development through an architectural lens. She's currently working on creating sustainable, low-income housing developments in Nairobi that supplement existing structures. Using innovative and creative design approaches, Etta aims to build communities and neighborhoods that foster health and well-being.

Gracia Violeta Ross Quiroga, Bolivia

Founder, Bolivian Network of People Living with HIV

Gracia has always been interested in working with vulnerable populations, but it wasn't until she contracted HIV during her anthropology studies that HIV/AIDS advocacy became her passion. At that time, there was no support for HIV+ Bolivians. As she says, she knew she could "sit there and wait for death to come or do something." From that moment on, Gracia has made it her mission to advocate for better access to healthcare and support for HIV+ people in her country. She sees the resurgence of HIV as a warning flag about the failures of the nation's larger health system and her NGO focuses on HIV/AIDS advocacy and care as well as a greater push for Universal Health Care to support all Bolivians in need of care.

Harish Sadani, India

Co-Founder, Men Against Violence and Abuse (MAVA)

Harish is among India's leading gender rights activists. A social worker by training, he has been working tirelessly for over the past 26 years to educate men about improving women's sexual and reproductive health. Harish co-founded MAVA – Men Against Violence and Abuse - in 1993 to prevent gender-based violence of women by engaging and mentoring boys and men on healthy relationships, masculinity, and sexuality. He is a pioneering male advocate for sexual and reproductive health and rights, deeply aware of India's persistent gender inequity and the responsibility of all citizens to change the narrative for future generations.

John Lazame Tindanbil, Ghana

Executive Director, MABIA-Ghana

John Lazame Tindanbil is a trained nurse and a public health practitioner working to provide quality reproductive healthcare, including safe abortion services, across Ghana. Through MABIA-Ghana, John provides sexual and reproductive health and rights education to women and girls and ensures that two midwifery training colleges teach new midwives to perform safe abortion services. As a clinical nurse, John witnessed many young girls dying from unsafe abortions and quickly realized the need for change. More education and more services were needed to reduce gender discrimination in Ghana. Today, John leads MABIA-Ghana to do just that and hopes to continue to improve the quality of life of the people in his community.

Lolo Cynthia Ihesie, Nigeria

Founder, LoloTalks

Lolo started her own social enterprise, LoloTalks, to increase comprehensive sexuality education across Nigeria, with a special focus on people in underserved communities such as brothels and prisons. She created a sexuality toolkit – MyBodyIsMine – to use in schools and uses her various platforms to speak about the importance of sex education. Lolo’s interest in sexual and reproductive health and rights was deepened when she moved to South Africa and saw how issues around sexuality, including access to legal and safe abortion, were treated differently than in her home country. Lolo strives to educate young men and women about sexuality, respect, and contraceptives.

Masego Madzwamuse, Botswana

CEO, Southern African Trust

Over the course of Masego’s career, she has worked on the rights of communities in conservation and has supported social movements advocating for social and economic justice. She has an established track record as a development and conservation policy analyst in Southern Africa. Masego was the youngest person, and the first female person of color, to be appointed to lead the Botswana office of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, and now has an influential position as head of the Southern African Trust with the mandate to strengthen the agency of the poor in regional policy processes. Masego speaks about the world’s impending environmental crisis and climate emergency and wants to raise the voices of those who are most affected.

Masooma Ranalvi, India

Co-founder, WeSpeakOut

Masooma is an activist who leads efforts to advance the goal of ending female genital mutilation in India by working closely with members of her community, major institutional bodies as well as Civil Society Organizations in India. She has built alliances with the InterAfrica Committee Against Harmful Practices, End FGM Europe, End FGM US, and the newly formed End FGM Asia to create a greater push for change. She uses her own experience with FGM as a gateway to talk more broadly about gender-based violence, sexual harassment, and discrimination. She has a significant platform within India and advocates for policy changes at the country level. She hopes to expand that platform to speak about these issues on the global stage.

Mavis Owureku-Asare, Ghana

Head of Radiation Technology Centre, Biotechnology and Nuclear Agricultural Research Institute

Mavis is a food scientist and senior researcher at the Radiation Technology Centre of Ghana Atomic Energy Commission which houses the Gamma Irradiation Facility, the only one of its kind in Ghana for postharvest management of agricultural products. Her research focuses on improving the quality and shelf life of indigenous foods, and she is currently providing tomato farmers with low-cost processing technologies to better manage their harvests. Mavis is a Norman Borlaug Leadership Enhancement in Agricultural Program (LEAP) Scholar and a fellow of The African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD).

Meti Bekele Nega, Ethiopia

Senior Project Officer, Ethiopian Academy of Sciences

Meti works at the Ethiopian Academy of Sciences where she leads initiatives that strengthen evidence base to promote data-informed policy engagement on timely development issues. Meti

led the preparation of an Amharic dictionary of technical population and development terms, many of which were not previously available in a local language. She has also coordinated studies and policy dialogues that shed light on how Ethiopia can achieve the demographic dividend. Bringing these ideas into policy-making circles is critically important in Ethiopia, one of the fastest growing countries in the world. Meti's broader mission is to bridge the gap between evidence and policy, especially on issues of gender equity and equality.

Mmaki Jantjies, South Africa

Associate Professor, Information Systems, University of the Western Cape

Mmaki conducts education technology research focused on increasing STEM education across the African continent through mobile technology. As one of the first black, female South Africans to complete a PhD in Computer Science, Mmaki strives to make STEM education more readily available to others. She's created a digital application that allows children to translate STEM instruction from English into their local language. The app is currently being used in eight schools across three districts and she hopes to expand its reach. Additionally, Mmaki founded a non-profit organization Peo Ya Phetogo which supports underprivileged schools with digital skills training programs for teachers and learners.

Mohamed M. Aburawi, Libya

Co-Founder, Speetar

Mohamed is a Libyan doctor working to address systemic healthcare shortcomings in low-resource settings. In 2011, when the Libyan Civil War broke out in his final year of medical school, he rallied volunteers to offer frontline surgical care to civilians fleeing battle zones. His focus on rebuilding and transforming healthcare systems led him to found Speetar, a disruptive telehealth platform awarded by Harvard and supported by MIT Sandbox, linking under-served populations to culture and language-matched specialists. Mohamed continues to explore the importance of innovation to break down economic, social, and geographic barriers that too often limit the options patients have when seeking quality medical care across Libya and throughout Africa and Middle East.

Nay Lin Tun, Myanmar

Board Member, Center for Social Integrity

Nay Lin Tun is an emergency medical doctor who works in Rakhine State. He provides medical care via mobile community-based healthcare to the Rohingya people and other Internally Displaced Populations in conflict affected areas of Rakhine State. It is often difficult for the Rohingya to receive the care they deserve. Dr. Tun continues to serve medical care and support individuals trapped in the Rohingya Conflict. He puts himself at immense risk by entering such conflict zones but sees the great need of the local populations and is working hard to make a difference.

Pashtana Durrani, Afghanistan

Executive Director, LEARN Afghanistan

At just 21 years old, Pashtana is a passionate human-rights activist. Pashtana says that her only fear in life is giving up her fight to improve the human-rights of those around her. Nothing else, not the Taliban, drones, nor bombs she's seen fall, scare her or distract her from her work. Pashtana started five digital schools that currently educate around 900 students in Afghanistan who are caught in conflict zones or rural areas. In addition to her work providing quality education to some of Afghanistan's most hard-to-reach areas, Pashtana is a committed abortion-rights activist.

Safura Abdool Karim, South Africa

Senior Researcher, Priceless SA

Safura grew up during South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy, on the frontlines of the country's fight against the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Inspired by the courtroom battles for the right to AIDS treatment that were won by activists, she went on to obtain a law degree from the University of Cape Town and a Masters in Global Health Law from Georgetown School of Law. After clerking at the Constitutional Court of South Africa, she now undertakes research on and advocates for legal strategies to fight Africa's epidemic of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) at PRICELESS SA, using a rights-based approach forged during the height of the AIDS crisis.

Stephanie Musho, Kenya

SRHR Program Officer, Tomorrow's Child Initiative

Stephanie is a lawyer who is passionate about sexual and reproductive health and rights, particularly safe abortion access. She is keen to disrupt the norms and structures that perpetuate gender-based violence and unsafe abortion. She uses her legal skills as a program officer for a human rights organization to help support victims of abuse. Stephanie has her sights set on elective leadership to influence policy change and decisions on women's rights.

Webster Mavhu, Zimbabwe

Deputy Director/Senior Social Scientist, Centre for Sexual Health and HIV/AIDS Research

Webster is a linguist-turned-social-scientist with a special focus on masculinity and healthcare access. His early passion was indigenous languages. While working as a translator for HIV researchers during the height of Zimbabwe's HIV epidemic, Webster was moved by stories of loss. He pursued a self-funded PhD to train as a social scientist, and now focuses on innovative HIV/AIDS prevention and sexual health implementation research. Webster believes that effective healthcare means reaching people where they are, with testing and treatment plans that are translated into local dialects and adapted to fit norms and customs. He uses film as a tool to change narratives around HIV, and advocates for initiatives to improve the health of disadvantaged, vulnerable and marginalized adolescents.