



Young African Leaders Initiative Network

October 7, 2016 · 🌐

We received over 1,000 questions during our #YALICHAT on the Mandela Washington Fellowship application! A special thanks to the [Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders](#) for their huge help and a big thanks to you for asking questions that made the chat a success.

We've compiled some of the top questions into a YALI Network Online blog, so take a look and see if your question was answered. What did you learn from our #YALICHAT? [#YALI2017](#)



#YALICHAT Wrap-up: 2017 Mandela Washington Fellowship Application - Young African Leaders Initiative Network

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Still have questions about U.S. electoral process? Check out the wrap-up of this week's special edition #YALICHAT: goo.gl/HOcpbH



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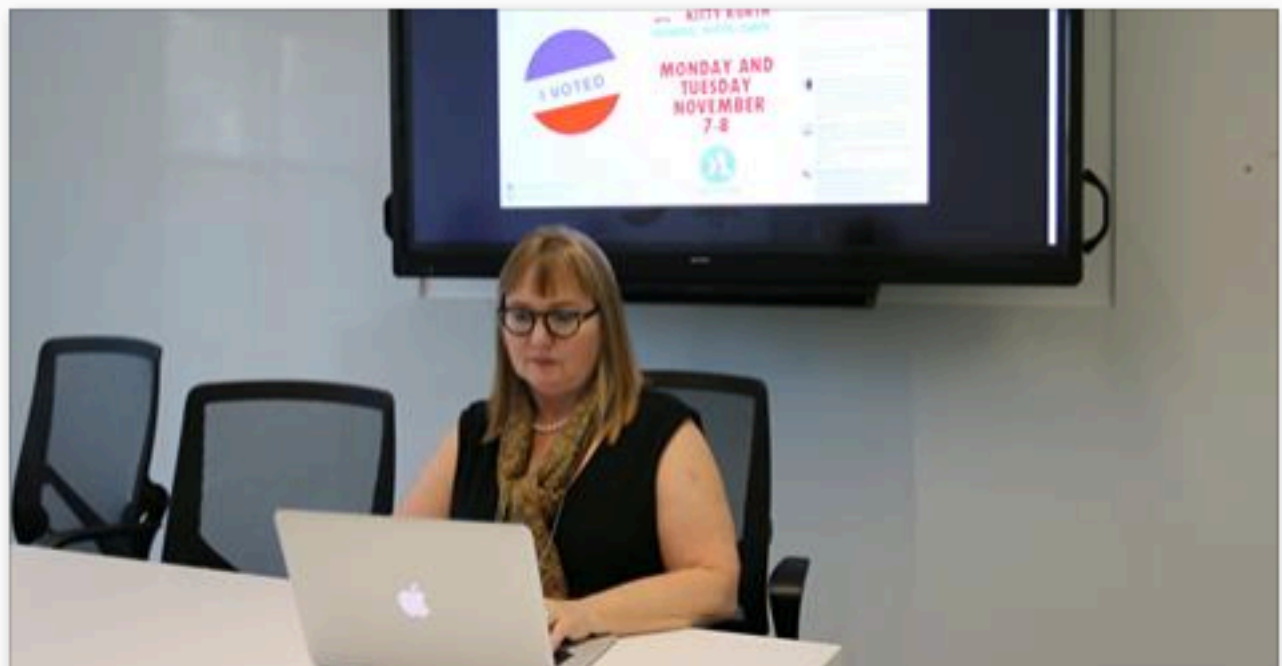
Young African Leaders Initiative Network

November 9, 2016 · 🌐

Thank you for all of the U.S. election questions during this week's special edition #YALICHAT with Kitty Kurth. We've compiled some of the top questions from over 700 submitted into a YALI Network Online blog. See if your question was featured!

What did you learn about U.S. elections from our #YALICHAT?

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Special edition U.S. elections #YALICHAT wrap-up - Young African Leaders Initiative Network

Political consultant and public relations specialist, Kitty Kurth, joined the YALI Network team to answer your questions about the United States' elections. This...

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Young African Leaders Initiative Network

November 18, 2016 · 🌐

Three YALI Network members met with YALI Network Coordinator Macon Phillips in Ghana to discuss entrepreneurship in Africa. They shared their secrets to success as an entrepreneur in this new YALI Network online blog.

What advice do you have for entrepreneurs who are trying to start a business in Africa?



YALI Network members: How to succeed as an entrepreneur - Young African Leaders Initiative Network

YALI Network members shared their success stories and advice for fellow entrepreneurs with IIP Coordinator Macon Phillips. Patrick Stephenson, Mariam...

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Young African Leaders Initiative Network

December 12, 2016 at 1:55am · 🌐

Today marks the launch of the YALI Network's year long #CountryoftheWeek showcase! Each week, we will focus on one country and its outstanding YALI Network members. This week's #CountryoftheWeek is Kenya where Macon Phillips will be visiting soon! Show your love for Kenya by sharing the Kenyan Country of the Week graphic!

THE COUNTRY
OF THE WEEK IS
KENYA



 YALINETWORK



Focus On: Understanding Human Rights Event Facilitation Guide

Sample Agendas

The following sample agenda can help you think through what materials you might want to include in your own event agenda, depending on the amount of time you have available.

Part I

Introduction and icebreaker (10 minutes)

Part II

Show, discuss and conduct an activity for as many lessons as time allows or as are appropriate for the event. (each lesson takes about 40 minutes)*

- Lesson 1: The Legal and Moral Obligations to Protect Human Rights
- Lesson 2: Protecting Human Rights to Benefit All
- Lesson 3: Ensuring the Human Rights of All

Part III

Next step/Wrap up (20 minutes)

*Take breaks as needed.

Note on materials:

If you have access to a printer you may consider printing out one copy of a few of the following documents to help guide your discussion.

- [The Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) [PDF]
- [International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination](#) [PDF]
- [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#) [PDF]
- [African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights](#) [PDF]
- [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#) [PDF]

Special note: Any actions, communications or activities taken on behalf of human rights very much depend on the context of the status of human rights in individual countries. YALI Network members should make a personal assessment of their ability to engage in these activities.

Focus On: Understanding Human Rights

Part I

Introduction

At the start of the event:

- Thank participants for joining.
- Introduce yourself. Provide a basic overview of the YALI Network and direct participants to the web address (yali.state.gov) for more information.
- Briefly share why you are interested in this topic and chose to teach this course.
- Provide an overview of the event including planned activities..
- Let participants know where they can find things like restrooms, emergency exits and water fountains. Let them know if there will be any scheduled breaks.

Sample Icebreakers and Activities

Pick and choose from the below activities and icebreakers for your event, or create your own!

Icebreakers

1. Partners (10 minutes, depending on group size)

Have participants pair up and take 2 minutes to get to know one another. Then, have each person take 20 seconds to introduce him or her partner to the larger group.

2. Common ground (5 minutes)

Have participants form a circle. Join the circle and state your name and one fact about yourself, such as where you are from, what you like to do in your free time, your occupation, etc. Ask all participants who share the same fact or interest to either stand up or raise their hand. Have the person to your left introduce him/herself and share a fact. Continue to go around the circle until everyone has provided a fact about him/herself or until five minutes have passed, whichever comes first.

Focus On: Understanding Human Rights

Part II

Course objectives

Explain the objectives of the course and the logistics of how the session will run:

- Note the lesson topics you will cover.

Course objectives include:

- Understand the foundations of human rights law and learn about the the moral obligations to protect human rights.
- Understand the difference between equality and equity.
- Learn how you can advocate for the human rights of yourself and others.

For each lesson that you include, you will either play the course lesson video/audio (via streaming or download) or pass out the transcripts for people to read on their own. After each video, you can use some of the following sample questions (or others that you develop) to lead a short discussion and conduct a group activity.

Sample discussion questions have been selected from the lesson discussion guides on the YALI Network Online Courses page at yali.state.gov/courses.

Lesson 1: The Legal and Moral Obligations to Protect Human Rights

Sample discussion questions:

- If human rights are inherent to all human beings — universal and interrelated, interdependent and indivisible — why is it important to enshrine human rights principles in law?
- The lesson discusses some of the key historical events that have shaped human rights ideology (the transAtlantic slave trade) and formed the basis for modern human rights law (World War II and the Holocaust). What are some of the key historical events that you see that have determined the course of human rights in your community? How have these events advanced or regressed the protection of human rights?
- The resources section for this course includes documents and links to several international human rights treaties and covenants. Quickly review the list of documents. Why do you think that international bodies and governments have continued to create additional human rights documents? Why is it important to continue to review and revise the laws surrounding human rights?

Activity

Brainstorm (20 minutes)

Split participants into groups of 3-5 (as appropriate for event size). Have each group discuss the role of government in protecting the human rights of its citizens. Give 5 minutes for brainstorming. In the final 5 minutes, have one or two people from each group present their ideas to the whole group.

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Lesson 2: Protecting Human Rights to Benefit All

Sample discussion questions:

- What individuals or groups are considered marginalized in your country? In what ways are they marginalized? Are they prevented from participating in democratic activities? Do they lack services? Are they subject to harassment, displacement or indiscriminate violence? Who are the abusers?
- Who customarily speaks for marginalized populations in your community? Are they given an opportunity to speak for themselves? Why or why not? Why is it important to build the capacity of marginalized populations?
- What have governmental and nongovernmental organizations done to bring equity to marginalized populations? What have been some of the more effective policies? How do non marginalized populations react to efforts to aid the marginalized? In what ways can you encourage communities to take responsibility for the protection of marginalized groups and their needs?

Activity

Create an awareness campaign (20 min)

Each group will brainstorm and begin planning an awareness campaign about equality vs. equity and why it is important to your country's marginalized populations. Break the participants into small groups (ideally 3-4 people per group). Each group should take five minutes to decide on a campaign that could inspire change in their community, then spend 20 minutes building out a plan.

- **What** would be your area of focus?
- **Why** do you feel this focus is particularly important?
- **Whom** would you work with?
- **Where** would you focus your efforts (your town, your country)?
- **How** would you fund the campaign?
- **When** can you get started (what are your next steps)?

Have each group present back to the larger group with their plan. Encourage all members of the group to participate in the presentation while trying to limit each group to 2-3 minutes.

Lesson 3: Ensuring the Human Rights of All

Sample discussion questions:

- What personal and cultural biases do you hold or have ever held? Where did you learn them? Do you have any that could lead to the marginalization of individuals or groups? How can you go about eliminating these biases?
- Who are some of the human rights defenders you know and admire and why? What characteristics do you believe are essential for someone who defends the rights of themselves and others? Is fame a requirement for effective human rights defense? How can ordinary citizens protect human rights? Remember, a human rights defender is someone who works to stop the abuse of another. They need not be someone famous.

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- How might you engage with a human rights violator? How can you find common ground to stop abuses? Can you think of a situation, large or small, where intervention was warranted to stop a human rights abuse? How was it handled? What was the outcome?

Activity

Action plan (20 minutes)

Each group will brainstorm and begin creating an action plan to engage with your elected and government officials on the subject of human rights. Break the participants into small groups (ideally 3-4 people per group). Each group should take five minutes to decide the best way to engage their government officials, you might want to consider how to engage civil society and nongovernmental organizations in your effort. Then spend 20 minutes building out a plan.

- **What** would you want to engage your government officials about?
- **Why** do you feel this topic is important?
- **Whom** would you partner with?
- **How** would you contact and deliver your message to your government officials?
- **When** can you get started (what are your next steps)?

Have each group present back to the larger group with their plan. Encourage all members of the group to participate in the presentation while trying to limit each group to 2-3 minutes.

Focus On: Understanding Human Rights

Part III

Next Step

Keep the momentum going by encouraging participants to start taking action in their community! The following are ideas for next steps they can take after the event.

Sample discussion questions and actions:

- Read the key international human rights treaties and covenants.
- Learn how your country's leaders — those representing government and nongovernmental organizations — stand on the principles of human rights. Review the ways in which they are promoting the rule of law with regard to human rights.
- Develop a campaign (either online or offline) to highlight marginalized populations. Make marginalized individuals champions of their own cause by developing the plan in conjunction with them. Highlight their stories to raise awareness of the ways in which their human rights are being violated.
- Consider creating a mechanism to document human rights abuses in your community. Develop a means for sharing incidents of bias and human rights violations in your community along with a plan for addressing the bias. Collaborate with others who are interested in working on the same issues. Be sure to listen to and include in a prominent position those who are or are likely to be victims of abuse.
- Identify the human rights defenders in your country and community. Consider ways to support them.

Wrap Up

Include time at the end of the presentation for a wrap-up.

- Encourage participants to go online, take the *Focus On: Understanding Human Rights* course, and pass the associated quiz so they can get their YALI Network Online Course certificate. If you hold your training in a setting such as a school, you may be able to have participants take the online quiz while they are at the event.
- Encourage participants to join the YALI Network if they are not already members.
- Ask participants to teach this course once they have received their certificate.
- Ask if participants have any feedback on the session, which you can incorporate into your next #YALILearns event.
- Be sure to thank participants for coming and pass out any supplementary materials you may have.
- Encourage participants to take other YALI Network Online Courses available at yali.state.gov/courses

Mandela Washington Fellow: Striving for a more perfect democracy



Mandela Fellows from Mali (left) and Senegal display their countries flags while waiting for the Town Hall to begin at the Washington Mandela Fellowship Presidential Summit, August 3, 2016. (State Dept./Tim Brown)

Democracy is fragile. Individuals can easily take advantage of the power entrusted to them by the citizenry. According to Freedom House's Freedom in the World 2015 report, democracy faces more threats now than in the last 25 years. As a steward of justice, it is your duty to identify these threats to democracy and develop solutions that promote freedom and equity.

One Mandela Washington Fellow spent time in the United States identifying these threats and formulating recommendations to solve the problems that plague democracies across Africa.*

The five issues identified as contributing to the dismantling of democracy were tribalism, the harassment of opposition parties, youth violence, limitations on freedom of speech and flawed constitutions.

Tribalism

Tribal speech is often used to divide a population. Nations are composed of many groups of people who identify according to their tribe, race or religion. The strong feeling of loyalty to one tribe or group instead of the nation as a whole prevents productivity. Closed-mindedness to those not of one's tribe or group does not promote the ideals of a democracy.

Opposing Parties

Political parties do not uphold the values of democracy when they either encourage or fail to condemn hate and tribal speech. Members of opposing parties should respect each other and their right to hold different visions of good governance. The losing parties must learn to accept defeat for the purpose of maintaining stability and peace. The political elite set an example for the rest of the country.

Youth Violence

The violent tendencies exhibited by disillusioned youth do not bring about positive change. Aggression will not solve the economic and social strife felt by young Africans; instead, the government should work with the population to develop a program of youth empowerment. The government must address the social, economic and political woes facing the population, especially the youth. Improving these conditions will deter youth violence and bring greater stability to a country.

Freedom of Speech

For a democracy to survive, a country's constitution must protect freedom of speech and freedom of the press. Without the media checking the government, the political elite can abuse their power at the expense of the population. Free electronic, print, and social media create an environment for constructive political competition.

A Constitution That Protects All

A constitution should withstand the tests of time and hold both the leaders and the populace accountable for their actions. The constitution should outline the powers bestowed upon each branch of government, basic human rights, protected freedoms including the freedom of speech, and free and fair elections.

Checks and balances should be put in place to ensure the executive office does not amass enough power to elevate itself. The media and branches of government should have the capacity to hold the executive branch accountable for its actions.

International law outlines the basic civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights each person deserves. A country's constitution should promote these same values to ensure each of its citizens enjoys his or her most basic human rights.

Today, democracy faces its biggest threats. In this dire time, it is the population's duty to protect democratic values. Now is the moment to invest in peace and stability for a better tomorrow.

*This Fellow's identity has been concealed for their safety.