



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE REPORT

Human Relations Council
Dayton, Ohio



Presented by
Sènan Elognissè Ursule
AMOUSSOU
2017 Mandela Washington
Fellow

2017 Mandela Washington Fellowship Program

The Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders began in 2014 and is the flagship program of President Obama's Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI). It is managed by the USA Department of State and executed by IREX, a non governmental company. In 2017, the Fellowship has empowered 950 young leaders from 49 Sub-Saharan African Countries, through academic coursework, leadership training, and networking.

U.S.-based activities

- **Academic and Leadership Institutes June 19-July 30:** Each Mandela Washington Fellow participated in a six-week academic and leadership Institutes at a U.S. university or college in one of three tracks: Business and Entrepreneurship, Civic Leadership, or Public Management.
- **The YALI Summit July 31-August 3:** Fellows visited Washington, D.C to participate in networking, skill-building sessions and panel discussions with U.S. leaders from the public, private, and non-profit sectors.
- **Professional Development Experience August 7-September 16:** One hundred (100) Fellows were selected to remain in the United States to participate in a six-week Professional Development Experience (PDE) with non-governmental organizations, private companies, and governmental agencies relating to their professional interests and goals.
- My PDE host was the Dayton Human Relations Council.



Sènan E. Ursule AMOUSSOU

Background: Graduated in Private Law
Bachelors in English

Curent work: National Coordination For Assistance to
Refugees

NGO Divine Connection Worldwide: Law advisor for
social issues. Advocate for the rights of women and
people with disabilities, especially persons with
albinism.

Grande Solidarite Republicaine:
(A political party of Benin that believes in a
democratic society and equal rights for all citizens)
In charge of legal affairs for women and vulnerable
persons protection.

Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African
Leaders Initiative 2017:

Public Management track

Attended University of Minnesota/ Humphrey School

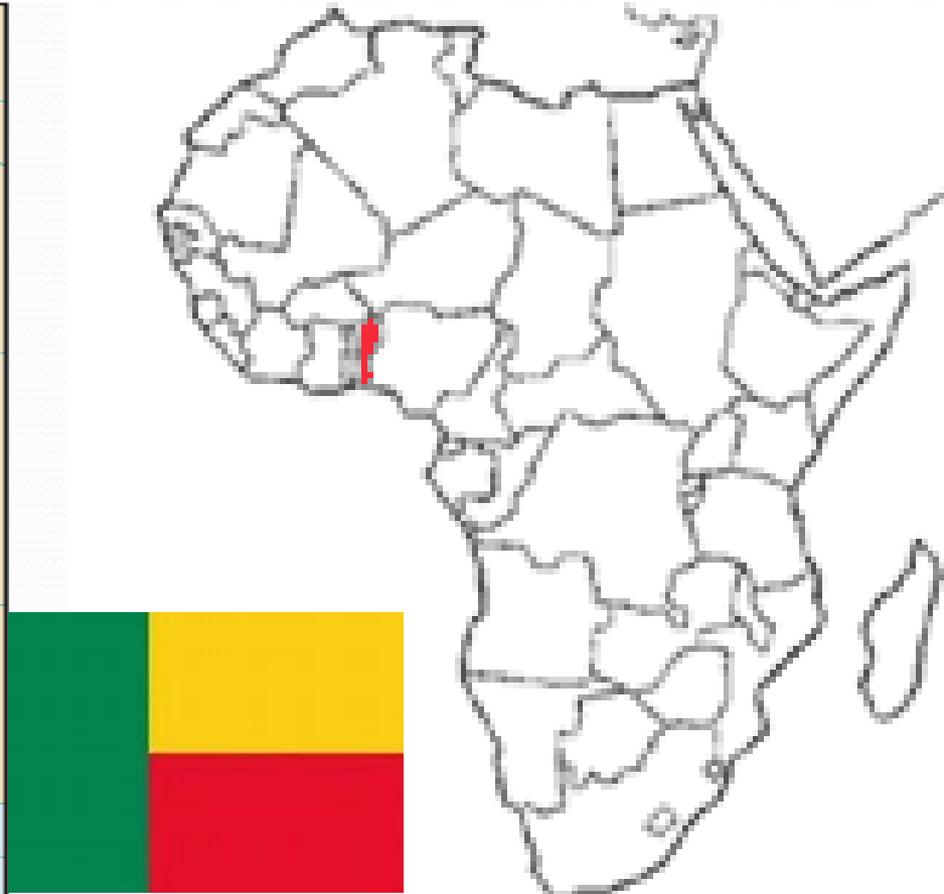
CAREER GOALS

- To empower women and people with disabilities to become more effective and impactful in their communities.
- To create a federation comprised of each political party's representatives for women and vulnerable people. The goal would be for all of us to work together for more effective action on behalf of these people.
- To create an anti-discrimination department within my NGO to enforce the rights of victims of discrimination, especially those living with disabilities.
- To create a Disability Resource Center in Benin. This will be a place where experts come to provide information about disability research, and where people living with disabilities can find assistance.

ABOUT BENIN: GEOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTION

- **Benin** is a West African nation on the Gulf of Guinea, bounded by Togo to the west, Burkina Faso and Niger to the north, Nigeria to the east, and the Bight of **Benin** to the south.
- With an area of **112,622 km² (43,484 sq mi)**, Benin is about the size of Tennessee, slightly smaller than Pennsylvania.
- The population of Benin is about **11,513,828 inhabitants**.
- Official language: **French**
- Most spoken tribe languages: **Fon and Dendi**
- Religion: **Vodoun (indigenous religion), Christianity and Islam**
- Political system: **Democratic**

BENIN



surface: 112,622 km
population: 11,513,828

ECONOMY OF BENIN

- **Agriculture:** 38.4%
- Industry :** 8.4%
- Mines :** 5.5%
- Services :** 47.7%



- **Currency:** CFA franc



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE

PROFESSIONAL GOALS:

- To learn how people in the USA solve discrimination problems.
- To learn about discrimination laws in the USA.
- To learn how to manage a discrimination case/allegation:
 - Improve intake skills (how to manage an initial meeting with someone who contacts an organization for assistance).
 - Learn how to conduct an investigation for a discrimination complaint.
- To learn how to empower people from vulnerable populations to become more self sufficient.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE

- **Introductions to and meetings with the following organizations:**
 - County Commissioners
 - Dayton Mayor Nan Whaley
 - Dayton City Commission
 - One-on-one meetings with each member of the HRC staff
 - Access Center for Independent Living Services
 - The Mediation Center
 - The Wright State University Disability Office
 - Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley
 - Miami Valley Fair Housing Center
 - Montgomery County office of re-entry
 - Montgomery County Human Services Planning and development

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE

Accomplished tasks:

- Created an opening letter template for case investigation process.
- Participated in intake meetings to observe information gathering process.
- Researched and developed unique sets of questions for various types of discrimination cases.
- Developed case processing flow chart for discrimination investigations.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE

Tours

- The Dayton Metro Library
- The Dayton Art Institute
- The United States Air Force Museum

Events Attended

- The German Festival
- The African American Cultural festival
- The MVFHC Waikiki party
- Wright State University's International Student Orientation
"Know Your Rights" presentation
- Wright State University's International Student Resource Fair
- Human Relations Council contract compliance pre BID session

FINAL OBSERVATIONS

- Discrimination laws in the United States are more specific than discrimination laws in Benin. For example, we do not have separate laws for different types of discrimination (housing, employment, public accommodation, etc.)
- Discrimination laws in the United State are also more expansive than discrimination laws in Benin. For example, our laws do not recognize the need for reasonable accommodations and modifications for people living with disabilities.
- The Human Relations Council provides assistance to small, women-owned, minority-owned, and other disadvantaged businesses at every stage of their life cycles. In Benin, entrepreneurs can attend workshops and trainings about starting their business, but they do not get assistance beyond that initial phase. For this reason, many businesses die shortly after creation because there is no one available to connect them to banks and other sources of capital or provide other support and advocacy as they grow and develop.

UPON MY RETURN

- Present a report to the US embassy in Benin with the details of my Professional Development Experience.
- Organize a “Young African Leadership Initiative (YALI) Learn” event in my community to share my MWF experience.
- Convene a meeting with my organization’s staff to share my experience and begin planning for the creation of an anti-discrimination department.
- Convene a meeting with my political party’s staff (and other political parties) to share my experience and advocate for the creation of a federation (comprised of representatives of all political parties) that would work on behalf of women and vulnerable people.



Thank You!

“I know that among you are the future Presidents of your countries, but don’t wait to be a President before doing what you have to do for your country.”

Excerpt from speech to the Mandela Washington Fellows by Mrs. Linda Greenfield, a former USA Ambassador to African countries