Promoting Disability Inclusion in East Africa through Professional International Exchange: Impact and Opportunities for the AUCD Network

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Program Snapshot

Professional Fellows Program (PFP) on Inclusive Civic Engagement

A US Department of State-funded exchange initiative promoting global inclusive civic engagement for people with disabilities.

- » International Exchange: Facilitates collaboration, mentorship, and inclusive civic engagement for leaders in East African and the US.
- » Participants (Fellows): Mid-career disability rights leaders ages 25-40 from Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and Ethiopia, selected through a competitive process.
- » US Host Organizations: Universities, disability and civic organizations, non-profits, and government agencies with expertise in disability inclusion.
- » Cohort Structure: Supports 1-2 cohorts annually, each with 6-12 mid-level professionals from East Africa.
- » Fellowship Experience: A 5-week US-based Fellowship to enhance leadership and professional skills.
- » Partnership: Implemented by the University of Massachusetts Boston's Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) in collaboration with Humanity & Inclusion

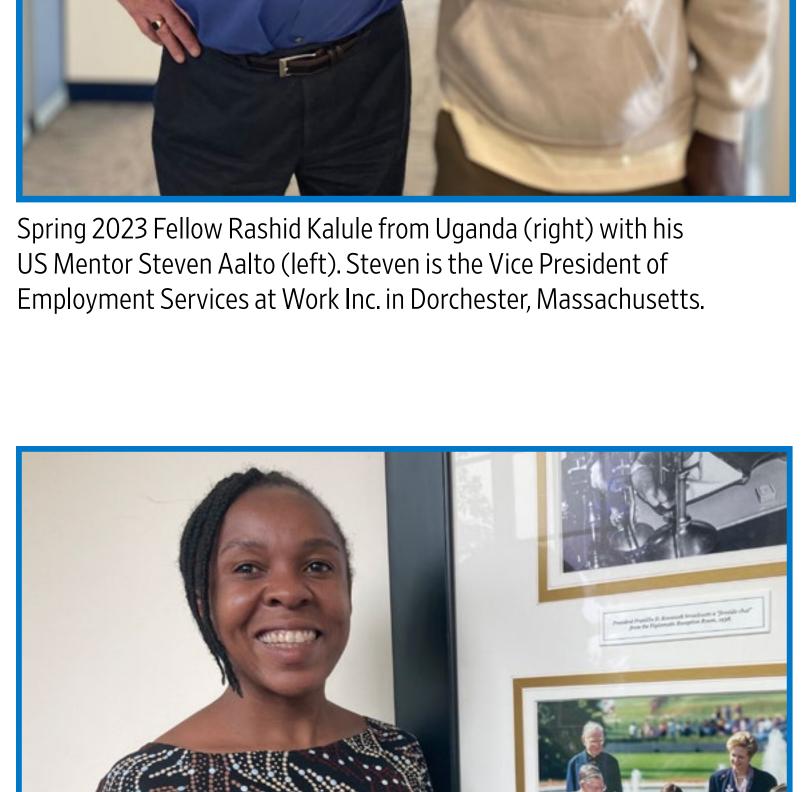
Key Program Features

- » Fellowship Placement: Fellows are matched with US host organizations whose professional interests and goals align to ensure a meaningful exchange.
- » Inclusive Civic Projects: Fellows develop a project for inclusive civic engagement to implement upon returning home.
- » Outbound Exchange: US hosts may visit East Africa to provide technical assistance to support Fellows' projects and promote ongoing collaboration.
- » Peer Mentorship: Cohort peers and alumni mentors provide support to Fellows with shared goals
- » Professional Mentorship: Mentors from the US disability field provide guidance, advice, and support to Fellows in the development of their project.

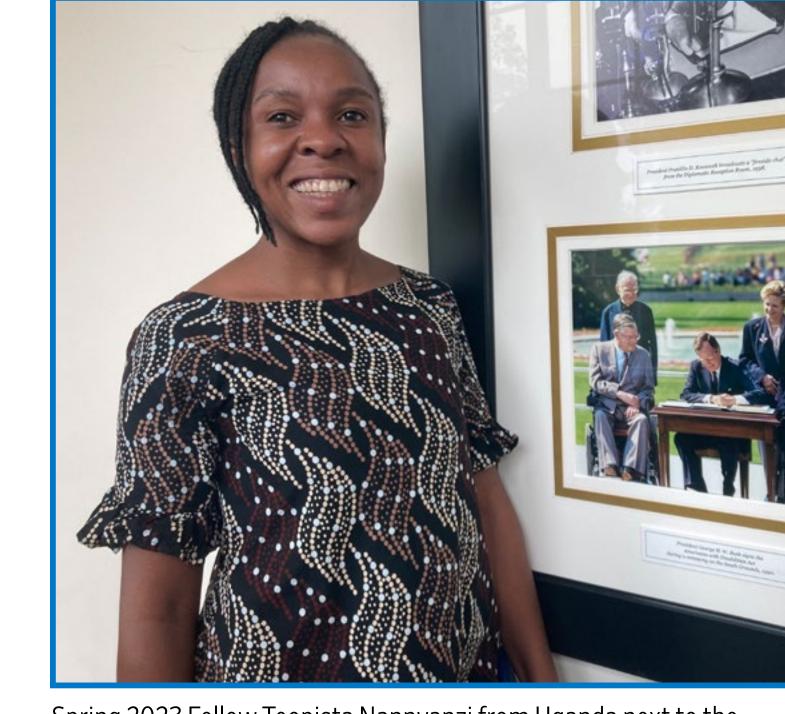


Fellow Nina Halima Mago from Uganda at the PFP Program Closing Workshop in Washington, DC.

Catherine is the Executive Director of Disability Rights Iowa.



US Mentor Derrick Willis (left) and colleague Catherine Johnson (center) Derrick is the Director of the University of Iowa's Center for Disabilities during a tour of the White House in Washington, DC. and Development and currently serves as the AUCD President-Elect.



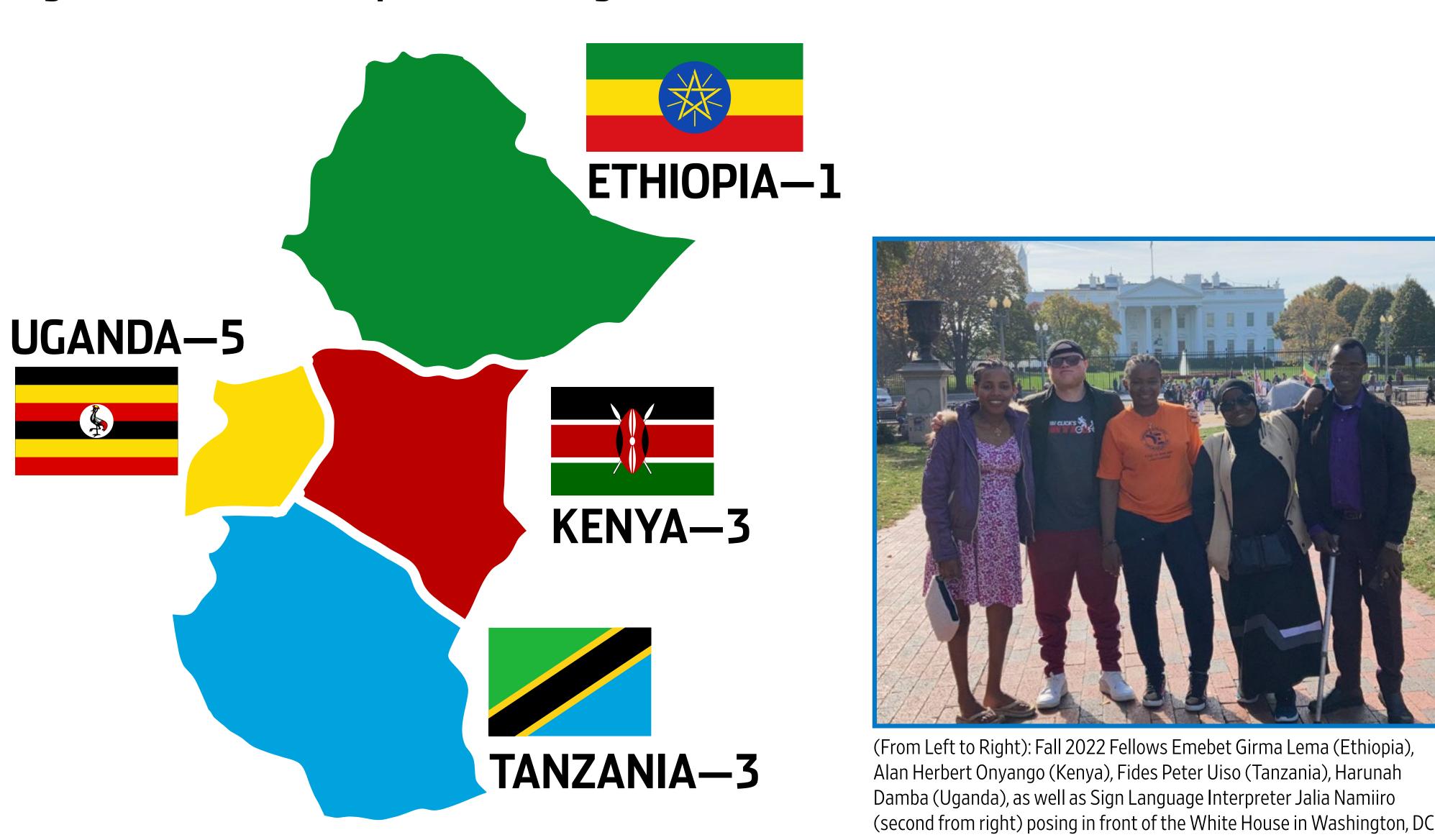
picture capturing the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act

Figure 1: US Map with PFP Host Organizations

The FY2022 Professional Fellows Program on Inclusive Civic Engagement The University of Arizona, Disability Resource Center (DR Fall 2022 Host Sites Spring 2023 Host Sites Fall 2022 & Spring 2023 Host Site PROFESSIONAL Boston B CI Highwanity & inclusion

Map highlighting the US states that have hosted PFP Fellows in Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 Cohorts.

Figure 2: East Africa Map with PFP Target Countries and Fellow Numbers



Fall 2022 Fellows' Impact at Home

Fellows developed projects for inclusive civic engagement to implement upon returning home.

- » Salome Nyakio Gitau, a Motivation Peer Trainer, assisted 144 Kenyans with spinal cord injuries access vital healthcare services, with 87 enrolling in Kenya's National Health Insurance Fund (NIHF). Salome expanded her peer mentoring program, training four mentors who reached 250 individuals, resulting in 125 individuals enrolling in NIHF.
- » Fides Peter Uiso, CEO of the Tanzania Epilepsy Foundation, partnered with District Education Authorities and schools to train 30 teachers and raise awareness about epilepsy. Fides expanded her advocacy nationwide through the "Heroes of Development and Social Welfare" campaign and the "Mothers on a Mission" forum, involving 77 mothers in the cause.
- » Alan Herbert Onyango, TV host and producer at Signs Media TV Kenya, designed a curriculum to train 40 disability organization representatives in mobile journalism for citizen advocacy. Following the training, participants collected 5,000 signatures, urging the Kenyan government to fulfil its Global Disability Summit commitment.

Outbound Exchange and Collaboration

Dr. Evan Borisinkoff & (Tiba) Priscilla Kisakye

- Minot State University Associate Professor **Dr. Evan Borisinkoff** and Fall 2022 Fellow Fellow (Tiba) Priscilla **Kisakye** co-developed a Parent Advocacy Resource Kit (PARK) for disability inclusion in Uganda.
- » In April 2023, Evan traveled to Uganda as a US Outbound Fellow to assist Priscilla, who at the time worked as a lobbying and advocacy officer for the Uganda Society for Disabled Children (USDC), in piloting the PARK toolkit in a parent training program.



Evan (third from left) and Priscilla (second from left) posing with parent leaders from the Kampala

Dr. Wendy Parent-Johnson & Harunah Damba

- » Former Executive Director of the University of Arizona's Sonoran Center, Dr. Wendy Parent-Johnson, and Fall 2022 Fellow Harunah Damba, Chairperson of the United Persons with Disabilities (UPWD), collaborated on a virtual US Outbound effort aimed at increasing employability of graduates with disabilities in Uganda.
- » They delivered a series of training workshops on disability employment, resource sharing, and strategic partnerships for Harunah's team and the people served by UPWD.

Dr. Megan Roberts & Fides Peter Uiso

- » University of Oklahoma's Health Sciences Center Associate Professor **Dr. Megan Roberts** collaborated with Fall 2022 Fellow Fides Peter Uiso, Chief Executive Officer of the Tanzania Epilepsy Organization, to increase epilepsy and disability awareness and reduce stigma in Tanzania.
- » In July 2023, Megan traveled to Tanzania as a US Outbound Fellow, actively engaging with special education teachers and families of children with disabilities and connecting with nonprofits and disability rights advocates.



Megan (bottom right) and Fides (top left) meeting with representatives from the Women with Disabilities in Zanzibar (JUWAUZA).

US Host Organization Accomplishments

Hosts gained valuable insights into inclusive civic engagement in their Fellows' countries.

"Professionally, this journey has been a catalyst for significant growth, collaboration, and friendship. The insights shared by the participants have profoundly expanded my global perspective, particularly as someone deeply invested in disability employment." (Wendy)

Hosts acknowledged the opportunities and challenges in applying US best practices in disability inclusion to diverse settings.

"As a PFP host and mentor, I devote a large amount of mentoring time to reviewing best practices here in the United States and how they may apply to the Fellow's home country. These are some of the best learning experiences for both mentor and mentee and often spark ideas for future services, research, and inclusion practices." (Jerry)

Hosts said that mentoring a Fellow broadened the reach of their disability inclusion work, both in topics and location.

"This Fellowship has made me realize that, in the United States, we take this basic human right for granted and are often critical of the educational supports that are provided. This Fellowship has improved my global view of special needs inclusive education and the goals that still need to be accomplished around the world." (Evan)

Hosts noted enhanced skills in collaborating with people from cultural backgrounds different from their own.

"This experience contributed to my overall cultural awareness and sensitivity to differences that exist beyond the borders of the US. Cultural awareness is a core principle and a targeted leadership competency for the LEND program which I direct, so this experience brings greater depth to my understanding and therefore my teaching." (Megan)

Fellow Accomplishments

Fellows gained new knowledge and skills during their Fellowships.

"The Fellowship was an opportunity to unlearn, to learn, to strike a balance with new knowledge, and forge ahead." (Alan)

"The Fellowship has helped to deepen and widen my knowledge about promoting disability inclusion in both formal and informal employment." (Rashid)

Fellows reported increased self-confidence in their capacity to drive positive change in disability inclusion in their community, country, and globally.

"Participating in the Fellowship has been a truly transformative experience for me as a member of a marginalized community." (Harunah)

"Civic engagement is an essential element of democratic practice. The history of the US disabilities" rights movement is most like the history of Zanzibar, as in both countries, women with disabilities were on the front lines of self-advocacy." (Bakar)

Fellows grew professionally during and after their Fellowships.

"I hope to bring my collective experiences to Uganda Persons with Disabilities and continue to leverage lessons from the Fellowship to create a collaborative work environment where people with disabilities can flourish." (Harunah)

Fellows said their perspectives changed positively because of the Fellowship.

"Visiting different American organizations working toward disability inclusion, it was evident that there are deliberate efforts to create a more inclusive environment not only for persons with disabilities but everyone in the community, including the homeless." (Erick)

"What I enjoyed most during my Fellowship was the one-on-one conversations with persons with disabilities. I was thrilled to hear stories of how parents and their children with disabilities have achieved inclusion through self-advocacy." (Priscilla)

Fellows reported the Fellowship enhanced their professional reputation, which helped in building relationships.

"I am grateful for all the knowledge and experience in general. Now so many stakeholders know the work I do towards ending stigma." (Fides)

"To achieve inclusive civic engagement, there is a need for creating collaborations across movements of people with disability." (Teopista)

Opportunities for AUCD Network

- » PFP acknowledges the global significance and relevance of AUCD network members' contribution to disability inclusion.
- » PFP helps build a global network of like-minded professionals working in disability-inclusive civic engagement.
- » PFP provides opportunities to foster new partnerships and alliances with the Civic Society sector, both in the US and globally.



Erick Sande Oduor from Kenva (right) with his US Mentor Kelle Hartieb (left). Kelley is the Justice Initiatives Project Coordinator at the University Alaska Anchorage's Center for Human Development.



ADA Title II Coordinator for the City of Boston.

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The Professional Fellows Program on Inclusive Civic Engagement is a program of the US Department of State, administered by the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) at the University of Massachusetts Boston in partnership with Humanity & Inclusion (HI). The contents of this presentation do not reflect the opinion of the United States, the US Department of State, or its offices or employees.

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