Cornell Welcomes 2016-2017 Humphrey Fellows!

Monipel Owusua Ansong, Ghana  
Food safety and security

Sanjeeb Baral, Nepal  
Water resources management

Erdenebileg Batmunkh, Mongolia  
Cashmere and wool marketing

Adam Abaker Zakaria Defaa, Republic of the Sudan  
Water resources management

Gaytri Devi, India  
Agricultural livelihoods development

Siphasha Phumaphi Dlamini, Swaziland  
Environmental education

Humera Qasim Khan, Pakistan  
Climate change

Dmytro Khrystenko, Ukraine  
Commercial fisheries

Milica Petrovic, Montenegro  
Water policies and economics

Lesley Fidelma Siowi, Papua New Guinea  
Environmental policy and governance

Gopalakrishnan Veilumuthusamy, India  
Logistics and supply chain management

Zhe Zhang, China  
Environmental Policy
Greetings from the Coordinator

In this, my fifth year as Coordinator I am even more convinced that our Humphrey Fellows - these high-impact, mid-career, developing country leaders - embody the magnificent spirit of Nelson Mandela’s words "You can change the world and make it a better place. It is in your hands to make a difference." Indeed, Francine Jasper and I continue to be inspired by Fellows’ commitment to this wise and uplifting concept as they shape and conduct their professional development activities and academic studies at Cornell.

Cornell University Humphrey Fellows collectively continue to study, and raise awareness, about climate change as exemplified by their presentation at the Global Leadership Forum in October 2015 entitled ‘Resilience in the Face of Climate Change’. But the vital topic of gender issues is also being increasingly highlighted. An example is their presentation at the Global Leadership Forum held in October 2016 by our current (2016-17) cohort of Fellows entitled ‘Gender and Sanitation Issues in Developing Countries’ (please see below). Other activities, such as the teambuilding exercises during orientation, seminars on communication, and retreats to the Adirondacks also helped to bring this very diverse group together. Our vision is that each year’s cohort will bond among themselves and with past and future Fellows from Cornell and across other campuses in the U.S.A. We have learned that the benefits of this for the Fellows and their countries can be enormous.

Friendship Partners broaden the range of contacts and the Fellows’ realistic perception of the USA; the Partners continue to play a vital role in the Humphrey Fellowship Program at Cornell. They and others have helped with recommendations for housing in cities where Fellows travel and arranged for Fellows to meet their friends, family and professional colleagues, sometimes well beyond the environs of Ithaca, NY.

The following sections of this newsletter will provide some highlights of the diverse and exciting activities in which our Fellows are involved.

Global Leadership Forum, 2016 by Humera Khan

Building a Gender Inclusive World: The New Art of the Possible, focusing on this agenda, 168 Humphrey Fellows representing 90 countries attended the 2016 Hubert H. Humphrey Global Leadership Forum from October 22 to October 27, 2016. During the five-day Forum, Fellows focused on how to build a gender inclusive environment in their nations and professions. They also explored the importance of developing leadership skills, managing change and networking with their American and international peers.

During the forum fellows from all the campuses presented on Gender Equity. Humphrey Fellows from Cornell highlighted a very important issue; Gender and Sanitation issues in Developing Countries. The basic challenges developing countries face are widespread sickness from dehydration and other diseases caused by inadequate sanitation, lack of sanitation facilities in schools and weak economies. Cornell Fellows were very much appreciated because of their deep insights on this burning topic.

Fellows made this presentation for International Toilet Day following the Global Leadership Forum at Cornell University for the campus and Ithaca community. Several Fellows were invited to participate in the local Dining for Women chapter in Ithaca. Through collective giving circles, Dining for Women inspires, educates and engages people to invest in grassroots programs that make a meaningful difference for women and girls living in extreme poverty in developing countries. The proceeds from the event were donated to Charity for Water, an organization working to build sustainable community water projects in 24 countries worldwide.

Graphic: Top countries with inadequate sanitation and toilets from Takepart
Jean Njiru, alumna from Kenya 2005-2006 visited Cornell University October 7th to present a project that she is working on with Purdue University to promote a grain storage technology that makes it possible for smallholder farmers in Africa to store their grain without any use of chemicals. The technology works almost 100%. It has benefited many smallholder farmers improving their food security and incomes. Jean is the supply chain network manager for East and Southern Africa.

During her visit to Cornell, she met with Humphrey Fellows and made two presentations about collaborative work that she has done with U.S. universities, Purdue and Cornell. Jean was also instrumental in initiating the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) in Kenya. SRI is a Cornell University led program worldwide.

Post-harvest crop losses are a major challenge faced by smallholder farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa. To deal with the problem of post-harvest losses, farmers usually sell their produce at harvest time when prices are at their lowest point due to the increased supply of produce, and often later buying back some of the food they have produced at higher prices.

The Purdue Improved Crop Storage (PICS) project provides a simple, low-cost, and effective technology that reduces post-harvest losses of cereal and legume grains, with increased incomes and improved food security of smallholder farm families. PICS bags eliminate the need to use insecticides and provides farmers with the flexibility of selling their grain whenever they choose to achieve the best prices. As production and provision of household food falls mostly to women, this innovation is of particular benefit to rural women.

The PICS project, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and implemented by Purdue University, is working with the private sector in Africa to ensure the availability of PICS technology at the local level where farmers, particularly women, can access it.
Meeting with Ithaca City Mayor, Svante Myrick. Fellows talk with him for advice as a young leader.
I'm very happy to report on the work, Oscar performed while in Great Falls and at Montana Farmers Union. Not only did he work on the “Right to Farm” but also prepared a bill dealing with Agritourism that will be introduced in the Montana Legislative Session starting January 2nd, 2017. Raw Milk was a third issue that Oscar developed during the last week he was with our organization. A bill has been introduced over the past two legislative sessions and has failed to pass. The research by this young man will be used in the upcoming session as testimony before the legislature and we find it extremely helpful as he was able to compile information from other states where the issues has been introduced.

Oscar was a great addition to our staff as we are lean in number and deal with a statewide memberships. We would welcome an intern of his caliber at any time in the future and I enjoyed the experience.

Chris Christiaens-Project Specialist, Montana Farmers Union
As a faculty member at Alfred State College, I have been involved with the Humphrey Fellows Program for about eight years. I first encountered this wonderful program when I resided in Burdick Hall as the faculty-in-residence and responsible for about 30 first-time, freshmen students in a Leadership Living Learning Community. We would get together for a workshop every Wednesday evening and I tried to develop interesting, informative and relevant programs for the students. One of my best discoveries was our relationship with the Cornell University Humphrey Scholar Program. On their first visit to our workshop they so impressed and inspired the students, it became an annual event. While we tried to make them feel welcome, they inspired the students with their descriptions of their homelands, careers and family customs. My students met young professionals from all over the world dealing with similar challenges but in a completely different environment. Certainly the students took away so much more than they contributed but the feedback from both perspectives was incredible.

I also had several of the Fellows visit my classrooms when their careers and my courses aligned. A young lady from Trinidad Tobago who was an environmental engineer with her country’s gravel production industry, gave a very pertinent presentation to my students who were studying aggregate production and characteristic in geology class.

I admire the courage and dedication the Humphrey Fellows demonstrated by leaving their home country and career positions for a year of study in the United States. I understood that many were married with families that they were separated from while on this journey.

It is my hope that Alfred’s relationship with this important program continues and I can be part of the Alfred contingent that makes it work.

Tim Piotrowski
Associate Professor, Civil Engineering Technology
Alfred State College
During orientation, Humphrey Fellows joined community volunteers with the Montezuma Wildlife Refuge to pull the water chestnut from the river. This is an invasive aquatic plant that destroys the ecosystem for fish and inhibits water recreational activities. The volunteers also learned that this plant was highly valued in one of the Fellow’s country’s as an exotic food.
Rocket building with Fellows and 4-H students at the NYS Fair

2015-16 Fellows renovate an old warehouse for the new location of the Fingerlakes ReUse Center
Mirian Bueno ‘15-16 from Honduras received a promotion after her Humphrey Fellowship Program to work on food safety at the Directorate level. Bueno has continued to collaborate with Cornell University Veterinary School faculty Dr. Jarra Jagne to organize an exchange program for National Agricultural University students in the Departments of Natural Resources and Veterinary Medicine visit Cornell.


Titilope Ojo ‘14-15 from Nigeria is currently a consultant on the Policy Development Facility, a UK DFID funded project in Nigeria as the Lead, Consumer Voices under the Trade Policy work stream. The project seeks to get underrepresented voices in Nigeria’s economic policy discourse to be incorporated into mainstream discussions by 2020. She will be providing a platform for them to participate in policy dialogues/events on topical economic issues. Her mentorship continues to inspire people of all ages. Ojo has organized workshops in 2016 on intellectual property management and social entrepreneurship through her APLUS Training consultancy as well as encouraging more people to improve communication skills through Toastmasters International

Khamlar Phonsavat ‘13-14 from Laos was appointed as a Deputy Manager of Environmental Compliance and Monitoring at the Environmental Management Office (EMO) of a Nam Ngiep 1 Hydropower Project in the central part of Lao PDR.


Yongsong Chen ‘10-11 from China received the Alumni Engagement and Innovation Award for his project “Sustainable Development of Tibetan NGS for E.P” There were more than 800 entries and only 8 Humphrey Fellow alumni received awards.
Cornell News

Cornell alumna Jan Low was named a 2016 World Food Prize co-laureate for her work on biofortification of orange-fleshed sweet potato, which has addressed the challenge of vitamin A deficiency in Sub-Saharan Africa.

USAID’s Board for International Food and Agricultural Development gave its 2016 Award for Scientific Excellence to Cornell development economist Chris Barrett and alumnus and former student of Professor Barrett, Andrew Mude for developing a form of livestock insurance which is being brought to scale in Africa.

Dr. Ronnie Coffman, International Professor of Plant Breeding, Director of IP-CALS, vice-chair of the Borlaug Global Rust Initiative, and principle investigator for the Delivering Genetic Gain in Wheat project, was named the Andrew H. & James S. Tisch Distinguished University Professor at Cornell, the university’s highest distinction for faculty members.

Stefan Einarson received the CALS Core Value Staff Award for Innovation. He has partnered with various telecom providers about the availability of high bandwidth, line-of-sight methodologies, solving connectivity issues at low cost. In India and Africa, he contributes to e-learning and mobile solutions to advance curricula and provide solutions to real world problems. Einarson has substantially increased the bandwidth for data, voice, and video in these remote sites.

A number of IP-CALS programs are empowering women farmers. Gender-responsive Researchers Equipped for Agricultural Transformation (GREAT) aims to increase gender equality and participation in agricultural research in Sub-Saharan Africa. In September, 2016 GREAT launched its first gender-responsiveness training for researchers working on root, tuber and banana breeding projects. The Next Generation Cassava Breeding (NEXTGEN Cassava) project seeks to improve cassava production for African farmers. The Delivering Genetic Gain in Wheat (DGGW) phase of the Durable Rust Resistance in Wheat project employs a gender lens and participatory variety selection to promote improved variety selection.

Cornell’s Atkinson Center for a Sustainable Future gave $1.5 million for 14 new university projects, which address a diverse array of topics including 3-D printing technology to manufacture low-cost rice farming tools, hydro-power in the Andean Amazon, crop disease and climate change, conservation incentive programs in Nicaragua and boosting maize yields sustainably in Africa.

Cornell alumnus Edward Mabaya was elected the president of the African Association of Agricultural Economists in September, 2016. Mabaya is the associate director of the Cornell International Institute for Food, Agriculture and Development (CIIDAD) and his research focuses on food marketing and distribution, seed systems and the role of efficient agricultural markets in Africa.

Martha E. Pollack, an expert in the field of artificial intelligence, was elected Cornell’s 14th president and will begin her presidential duties on April 17, 2017.

IP-CALS Agriculture in Developing Nations course will be travelling to Burma in January, 2017.

Cornell Plantations has been renamed the Cornell Botanic Gardens.
Upcoming Events in 2017

Professional Development Grant up to $2,500. Application deadlines:
January 15 for conference/activity April 1—June 30
April 15 for conference activity July 1—September 30

Humphrey Fellows, Cornell Botanic Gardens and The Statler Hotel
Special Event February 26, 2017
Cultures & Cuisine: Sensational Seasonings and Global Stories

Food is a universal human connector, linking us across boundaries of race and culture, and herbs and spices have always played an essential role in making those foods come alive in unique and delicious ways. Join us for a special program of ethnic flavors and stories from around the world, in the elegant setting of the Statler Hotel. Members of the Humphrey Fellowship Program will share their personal stories of food and flavors that are part of their cultural identity and traditions. A diverse sampling of unique tastes will be provided by the Statler Culinary Team. Rounding out the program will be wine pairings featuring delightful Finger Lakes varietals and non-alcoholic beverages. Pre-registration is required.

Mobile Money, Development, and Financial Inclusion in Africa, April 19, 21-22

Contributors
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Chris Christiaens, Montana Farmers Union
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