CORNELL UNIVERSITY
HUMPHREY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

WINTER NEWSLETTER 2018-19
IP-CALS
GREETINGS FROM THE DIRECTOR
Dr. Peter Gregory

Our cohort of 2018-19 Humphrey Fellows arrived in Ithaca at the beginning of August and are from Ecuador, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Uganda, Greece, Turkey, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Mongolia. It is inspiring to witness the progress achieved in such a short time by these Fellows. They have already developed new leadership skills, made numerous new contacts and gained valuable scientific knowledge and experience. They have also progressed in cultivating that most hard-won attribute, wisdom – the ability to use one’s experience and knowledge effectively. Talking of wisdom, I would like to share a quotation of Rumi, a 13th century Persian poet and scholar who said, “Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world. Today I am wise, so I am changing myself.” Changing themselves is what our Fellows have decided to do. This requires courage as they reflect on their weaknesses as well as their strengths and take steps to transform themselves into even more impressive leaders. It also takes a great deal of courage and strength of purpose to leave behind for an academic year their families, friends, jobs and countries.

Not only are the Fellows from very different cultures but they are also from a broad range of professional fields within the overall umbrella of agriculture and environment. They represent a wide range of personality types and leadership styles. This richness of diversity is a blessing but can also be a challenge as one of our goals as program managers is to facilitate group cohesion and effectiveness. In this context, the invitation from IIE and our donor, the Department of State, to Fellows from each of the Humphrey campuses to present a talk at the Global Leadership Forum (held from October 28th- November 1st, 2018 in Arlington, Virginia) generated considerable discussion within our cohort. I am pleased to report that, following vigorous discussions, the Fellows’ talk on ‘Achieving a Sustainable Future through Climate-Smart Agriculture’ was a great success. Whereas the presentation itself was the most obvious product of the exercise, perhaps the most valuable outcomes were the lessons the Fellows learned about how to work together as an effective team.

The support the Fellows receive from within and outside of the core program is a key factor in Program effectiveness. My esteemed colleagues, Francine Jasper (Associate Director), Linda Gasser (Consultant), Diane Munn (Administrative Assistant) and Tara Hammonds (Graduate Assistant) and I comprise the program management team. But many others play vital roles, including IP-CALS administrators, Institute of International Education (IIE) personnel (Amy Nemith is our current and highly effective liaison with IIE) and agricultural development and environmental professionals around the country. The ceaseless enthusiasm of Cornell faculty for the program is heartwarming. Despite their heavy responsibilities in core areas such as teaching, research and extension, they are willing to interact with the Fellows by acting as advisors, presenting Humphrey Seminars and Workshops, or associating informally with them. This interest in the Fellows derives from the very
positive impressions made on the faculty throughout the last four decades. This theme reaches beyond Cornell’s campus to public and private organizations in Ithaca and around the USA. Recently, I was talking with a senior manager at The World Bank who had agreed to organize a visit for our Fellows – many of their predecessors have very successfully conducted their six-week professional affiliations at the Bank. I told him that we were honored that he and several of his colleagues were taking time out of their busy schedules to see us. He replied, “Quite the contrary, we are honored that the Fellows wish to visit us!”

Our Friendship Partners continue to do a very fine job of multiplying the effectiveness of the program well beyond professional development. They provide the opportunity for Fellows to meet American citizens, young and old, and to enter the real life of the USA. They are a great source of support and friendship.

You will see examples in this newsletter of the impact that alumni of our Fellowship Program are having across the developing world. We receive gratifying feedback from many of our alumni about how their time at Cornell boosted their careers and their lives. But the real praise should go to each of them for having the courage to join the Humphrey Program and then return to their countries to bring even more benefit to their peoples.
The 2018-2019 Cornell Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Program

Left to right, front row:

Giorgos Iliopoulos, Greece
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Ece Saraoglu, Turkey
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Sustainable water management

Luisa Trujillo Cordova, Ecuador
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Cyprian Kaziba, Uganda
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Agriculture and agribusiness

Francine Jasper, Associate Director

Left to right, back row:

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Tuguldur Enkhtsetseg, Mongolia
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Oksana Mezina, Russia
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Agribusiness management and marketing

Mory Toure, Guinea
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Environment and climate change

Amos Kamara, Sierra Leone
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Sustainable forest management

Tara Hammonds, Graduate Assistant
WHAT MY HUMPHREY FELLOWSHIP MEANS TO ME
Isaac Hokonya, HF 2018-19, Zimbabwe

As the late former US Vice President and Senator Hubert H. Humphrey said, “Never give in and never give up.” I was challenged and at the same time motivated when I learned about this prestigious Fulbright Fellowship program. This was a great opportunity for me to develop my professional skills and experience in the world’s most developed nation. Following the fellowship application announcement by the Fulbright Commission in Harare, I immediately applied. I went through the competitive and rigorous in-country interviews, TOEFL exams and the candidate review process, and, after waiting for close to a year, I was selected. And the rest is history.

Now, halfway through the Humphrey year, I am quite satisfied but at the same time expectant of what the remainder of the year has in store for me. Thus far, the Humphrey experience is the best professional development program I have experienced in my lifetime. I am sure my co-Fellows would agree with me. While there are 150 fellows dotted across 13 university campuses in the US, we, the Cornellians, are privileged to be part of one of the eight prestigious Ivy League universities, one which is founded on the principles of academic excellence and diversity.

The Humphrey Fellowship program is well-planned and organized, and every effort is made to make each of the Fellows feel special from day one. The pre-departure orientation, welcome meeting at the airport, and on-campus orientation with the Humphrey Program staff and Friendship Partners helped us settle down and acclimate to our new “home” in Ithaca. The numerous field and recreational visits and dinner parties we attended are a true testament to the hospitality extended to us by our US hosts. One of my goals prior to my departure was to learn about and experience American culture and I am happy to say that I am already immersed in it. I am amazed by how friendly the people are, with a rich cultural diversity, exemplified with some of the best business and cuisine cultures on the planet. I am much impressed with how such rich cultural diversity has given rise to the convergence of ideas and innovations that have continued to drive American society for many years.

Being a professional development program, the Humphrey Program gives Fellows the opportunity to build their program plans and hone their leadership skills through a series of seminars, academic courses, professional visits and volunteer activities. The program has allowed us to grow our networks and partnerships both at Cornell and with organizations that support our goals in the fields of agriculture, natural resource management, environmental policy and climate change. We have acquired practical skills that benefit us as professionals, helping us to engage with communities and people back home. A famous English proverb says, “Make hay while the sun shines,” and, as Humphrey Fellows, we are privileged to have this great opportunity to develop our leadership and job skills for the benefit of our home governments and beneficiary communities. Such is an opportunity that every fellow should be proud of - for us, it is the true honor of being a Humphrey Fellow.
ALUMNI UPDATES

Dr. Suvarna Chandrappari
HF 2005-06, India
Dr. Chandrappari received the State Award for Excellency at Hyderabad from the Honorable Chief Minister at the 72nd Independence Day celebrations in India.

Dr. Aamer Irshad
HF 2013-14, Pakistan
The President of Humphrey Alumni Association of Pakistan (HAAP), Dr. Aamer Irshad, welcomed Humphrey Fellows to another successful conference and appreciated their efforts for the betterment of public and private sectors.

Bob Mandinyena
HF 2017-18, Zimbabwe
Engaging in research for wildlife conservation, Bob recently published an article in the Journal of Tropical Ecology examining the habitat use of impala in the Zambezi National Park.

Emmanuel Ajani
HF 2017-18, Nigeria
In collaboration with several individuals including Tarig Ahmed (HF 2017-18), Emmanuel designed a nine-month program to provide training and mentorship in solar energy systems in Nigeria.

Souleymane Nacro
HF 2000-01, Burkina Faso
Souleymane is working with the FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture in Burkina Faso to prepare a strategy for the sustainable control of the Fall Army Worm, an increasingly common and devastating agricultural pest in sub-Saharan Africa.
“We live by hope. We do not ever get all we want when we want it. But we have to believe that someday, somehow, some way, it will be better and that we can make it so.”

-Hubert H. Humphrey

**Sumaira Ishfaq**  
HF 2017-18, Pakistan  
• Gender Integration Officer, Cultivating New Frontiers in Agriculture (CNFA)

**Dina Ranarifidy**  
HF 2012-13, Madagascar  
• Urban Specialist, The World Bank

**Isabelle Picelli**  
HF 2017-18, Brazil  
• Assistant for the Presidency of the Permanent Committee for Land Cadastre in the Ibero-American Region

**Maina Dhital**  
HF 2012-13, Nepal  
• US-based freelance journalist and Humphrey Fellowship Program Friendship Partner

**Abdallah Ali**  
HF 2010-11, Oman  
• Agriculture and Rural Development Expert, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

**Ackson Mwanza**  
HF 2017-18, Zambia  
• Master of Professional Studies Candidate in the field of Global Development, Cornell University

**Milica Petrovic**  
HF 2016-17, Montenegro  
• Analyst at Utility Services Regulation Department, Montenegro Energy Regulatory Agency

**Dr. James Popoola**  
HF 1998-99, Nigeria  
• His Royal Highness Oladele Oladapo Popoola, King of Moba Kingdom in Ekiti State (formerly worked with the Central Bank of Nigeria in Agricultural Finance)

**Gereltuya Puntsagdash**  
HF 2015-16, Mongolia  
• Senior Country Engagement Specialist, NDC Partnership's Support Unit at GTZ
ALUMNI AT THE 40th ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE

Johannesburg, South Africa

L-R: Bob Mandinyenya (HF 2017-18, Zimbabwe); Jean Njiru (HF 2005-06, Kenya); Anwone Biraguitcha (HF 2015-16, Togo); Monipel Ansong (HF 2016-17, Ghana); Isabel Kinlim (HF 2013-14, Mozambique); Aneba Pouahoukiga (HF 2006-07, Burkina Faso).

Jean Njiru (far right), HF 2005-06, with colleagues at the conference.

Monipel Ansong (center), HF 2016-17, with fellow Ghanaian alumni.

Aneba Pouahoukiga, HF 2006-07, delivers a presentation.

Anwone Biraguitcha (HF 2015-16, Togo), presents on economic empowerment.

“In a nutshell, the (Humphrey) program broadened my horizon. The exposure through the professional affiliation and other program activities, and the confidence built during the program are keys to many doors. The conference was a new motivation to take some action.”

-Jean Njiru, HF 2005-06

Read more about the conference at:
WORKING TO STRENGTHEN RURAL LINKAGES

Dr. Rajkumari Sunita Devi, HF 2008-09, India

During my Humphrey year at Cornell, I was first exposed to agriculture by my associations with Professor Terry Tucker, Professor Norman Uphoff and Maggie Donovan. Before my Humphrey days, I was mostly a technical person working solely for Remote Sensing and GIS with a passion for wetlands. This passion ultimately lead to my love for water and water resources. My interest in Remote Sensing and GIS helped me find Professor Steve De Gloria as my mentor. He was also a soil scientist who had an agriculture background. This new interest acquired at Cornell was a great motivation to do something about agricultural activities and to learn more in this field.

Just after my return from the US, the then Chief Secretary of Manipur invited me to work as a GIS Expert to prepare all related maps, generate data and prepare action plan maps and detailed project reports to take up the Integrated Watershed Management Project (IWMP) for the first time in Manipur. Since then we have had about 109 projects in Manipur working with the main objective of water and soil conservation with micro-enterprises and livelihood interventions. Covering about 1,427 villages and 3,000 micro-watersheds, there are about 600 watershed committees comprised of 15-20 members with a minimum of four women in each committee. The IWMP project is acting as a strong linkage with the government and the rural poor. The Self Help Groups formed during this project have many success stories and the committees are able to stand on their own through capacity building and training for many livelihood activities like integrated farming of piggery, poultry and fisheries, as well as horticulture and agriculture crops.

With the project coming to an end now, and to fill in the gaps, I designed the Springshed Management Project for 18 villages and submitted it to the North Eastern Council (NEC), Government of India as a pilot project. It is sanctioned with a budget of about Rs. 605 Crore (about USD 1 million) for three years. Along with the IWMP and Springshed Project, a campaign on ‘Adopt a Watershed, a Wetland’ was initiated in 2017, which is now gaining momentum. The ultimate goal of both projects is to build strong rural linkages with assured irrigation, and buy back policies for some of the crops like lemon, stinking beans (Parkia), pineapple, ginger and other important cash crops, which can lift the rural poor from poverty and conserve natural resources by providing livelihood options. Even if the government ceases to sanction further projects, it is believed that the capacity and institutional mechanisms built up in many of these villages and many of these committees could sustain and even develop further on their own.
JOURNEY AFTER THE HUMPHREY FELLOWSHIP

Sian Cuffy-Young, HF 2011-12, Trinidad and Tobago

After having one of the most memorable experiences of my life, I graduated from the Fulbright Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Program at Cornell University in June 2012. I returned home to my substantive post as the Environmental Officer at National Quarries Company Limited, the only state-owned quarry in Trinidad and Tobago. However, my return home wasn’t an easy one and was not without its share of disappointments. From a demotion to complete disregard of my new-found skills, I had been through it all. However, I drew upon the kind words said to me by many people that I had met about my potential and used those memories to get me through the hard times. I left there after two years and started to work at the Trinidad and Tobago Solid Waste Management Company Limited as the Resource Recovery Coordinator and then Project Manager of the Beverage Container Collection Project. While there I received the fantastic news that I was becoming a mom again and, after my contract ended, I did not return to corporate life as I took the time to be with my new baby boy. Little did I know that that would be my last stint in the corporate sector as my other baby - business - was born during that time.

It was through my experience working in those companies that I realized that we continued to do the same things in terms of the way we educate, but it never translated into action - the population wasn’t engaged at all. Rampant littering continued, flooding got worse and nothing changed. I knew that I wanted to make a difference, to be a different voice, and so I founded Siel Environmental Services Limited in July 2015.

At our core, we promote environmental education and behavior change but we primarily work with companies to become more waste efficient, i.e. to reduce the amount of waste they generate, direct it to the right waste disposal providers and, in turn, create a more positive public image, increase profitability, and improve corporate social responsibility. We also provide quarry rehabilitation plan development and training, technical support to non-governmental organizations and give presentations on proper waste management strategies. It has been a joy working on my own but entrepreneurship is by no means an easy feat. However, just like during my fellowship year, I was able to overcome major hurdles with perseverance and persistence just as I did to acquire my professional affiliation. I am now able to grow and learn so much as I ride the roller coaster of entrepreneurship.

I have also launched my non-profit organization called Transforming Environmental Education Successfully that works with schools under the umbrella of Education for Sustainable Development, utilizing a whole school approach where environmental education is integrated into the school’s day-to-day operations. We will be creating the country’s first ever sustainable school programme called
I had the dream but needed a community to flourish. That community was the Humphrey Community in 2016-2017! In my Humphrey year, I was given the opportunity to volunteer with USAID on the Farmer-to-Farmer Program which gave me the opportunity to travel to Sierra Leone and Ghana to train stakeholders on the agriculture value chain in food safety. I miss every part of my Humphrey year: the classes attended, weekly seminars and presentations, time with my friendship partners, visiting Niagara Falls with my Humphrey team, and an unforgettable opportunity to be a guest speaker on the Straight Talk Africa Show on Voice of America.

After the Humphrey program, I have been able to make a big impact. During the almost two years since my return to Ghana, I have been involved in assisting my Humphrey Coordinators at the US Embassy Ghana to interview, shortlist, and prepare new Humphrey/Fulbright Fellows for the program. I have partnered with the Peace Corps Ghana STARS program in grooming young leaders/entrepreneurs at senior high schools from remote areas of Ghana. I’ve gained the opportunity to continue my professional affiliation project with IESC in Ghana which I started in Washington, DC, USA. It has given me the opportunity to train and empower more extension officers and farmers on gender and food safety. I visited the Humphrey year group 2018/2019 at Cornell University in August 2018 to share my Humphrey story and encourage them for their year to come. I am glad to be back to my country, Ghana, and further expanding my company MS Food Safety Consultancy in a variety of new ways.

The Humphrey program has made me grow as a person inside and out, professionally and personally, and I wouldn’t exchange it for anything in the world.
VALUE OF THE FRIENDSHIP PARTNER PROGRAM
Rebecca Jo Ceria, Friendship Partner

The Friendship Partner Program is very special for us for personal reasons, having lived many years as “foreigners” in Russia and Ukraine and knowing how difficult and isolating it can be. We benefitted from kind, local people who were patient with us and helped us acclimate to life overseas. In the same way, now we can be a help for our scholar, enabling her to adjust and feel more comfortable here.

Being friendship partners with Oksana, from Russia, has been in a sense a connection with a home that we have left behind. Spending time with Oksana has been very natural for us, understanding each other very well without a lot of explanation, due to our long history in her homeland.

It’s always nice to be welcomed into a family home when you’re a student, but even more so when you are an international student. It brings a sense of comfort and belonging. It has been a blessing to welcome Oksana to our home, and more recently, to our Thanksgiving celebration in New Jersey with extended family. It was rewarding to observe my in-laws reaching out and getting to know Oksana, her background and culture. Upon Oksana’s entering my mother in law’s house, she exclaimed, “It’s so cozy here!” Being able to provide such experiences for people who are so far from home has been truly amazing. We took her shopping on Black Friday for her first time, as well as on a tour of Princeton University. From snuggles with the children and kisses from the puppy to hikes up the Treman Park gorge, I know Oksana has benefitted from the partnership greatly, regularly getting her “love tank” refilled. She has prepared Russian treats for us to enjoy as well. It’s truly been a cultural exchange enabling both my family and her to feel more normal. Cross-cultural friendships are life-giving to our family. We are so thankful to be Oksana’s friends. I really recommend for anyone to get involved in this program, it is fulfilling.

“The greatest gift of life is friendship, and I have received it.”

- Hubert H. Humphrey
Phil Syprak, Friendship Partner

My wife, Katy, and I are first-time Friendship Partners for Tuguldur (Tuugii) Enkhtsetseg, his wife Booloi, and their two young children, Tengis and Misheel. Tuugii is a biologist from Mongolia where he works for the Nature Conservancy, which has been in Mongolia since 2008. Though usually Fellows come from home alone, Tuugii was able to make arrangements for his family to come with him.

Having his family here with him makes a very special dynamic for all of us. The family gets to have all of the normalcy of family life - meals, school, homework, childhood - and also the challenges of multiple people in a new place, such as language, holidays, and traditions. This also makes a somewhat different situation for me and Katy than for many other Friendship Partners: we have an entire family of new friends, not just one person.

Since I work at Cornell and am on campus daily, Tuugii and I are able to have lunch together fairly often, where we can check in with each other and just generally talk. One of the amazing things about Cornell is how large an international population we have, and, so often, friends of mine join Tuugii and me at these lunches. Besides these lunches, though, we’ve had some delightful times as families, including hiking at Buttermilk Falls Park, and recently at our Thanksmsasakuh (our very own invention, between Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Hanukkah). It is a great joy interacting with people in ways that transcend language: simple walks, food, and games.

Fundamentally, the lunches I mentioned above capture what involvement with the Humphrey Fellowship means to me: an opportunity to get to know people from all around the world who are immersed in, but still developing, their concerns and careers. What a wonderful opportunity to learn about each other’s homeland, work, concerns, families, values, and aspirations. What a wonderful opportunity to get to know someone from far away, and to get to know them as a person, developing a real friendship. Katy and I look forward to being Friendship Partners again and again, getting to know more and more people from around the world, and helping them have a beneficial and enjoyable time while they are here in Ithaca.

“An essential part of the cultural exchange in Cornell’s Humphrey Program is the support and companion of our friendship partners who not only fill the void of leaving our family and friends behind and help the fellows cope with stress and/or adaptation problems, but go far beyond that by establishing cozy and strong ties.”

-Ece Saraoglu, HF 2018-19, Turkey
On Monday, I travelled to the Buvuma Islands of Uganda, examining the challenges faced by smallholder farmers. Tuesday took me to the forests of northern Ecuador, showing me recent agroforestry and conservation initiatives. My expedition on Wednesday led me to the capital of Turkey to look at urban water management policies.

How many people get to travel the world without ever leaving their desk? This is one of the most beautiful things about working with the Humphrey Fellowship Program; every day, I learn new things about foreign economies and politics, current agricultural and environmental conservation practices, and the cultures of other countries. And I learn these things from 11 individuals who are enthusiastic, committed, passionate, and an absolute delight to spend time with. They are people who actively seek ways to help the community through diverse volunteer tasks, who throw themselves excitedly into tasks like shoveling snow that most people complain about, who always show up to program activities with big grins on their faces, regardless of how early in the morning it is. But most importantly, they are people who are so incredibly devoted to their work and their values, not only willing but eager to share their knowledge, experiences, and ideas.

What an amazing opportunity it has been, to work alongside these motivated and accomplished individuals; the university is extremely blessed to have the Humphrey Fellows within the Cornell community.
Alumni: stay connected!

Contact fj10@cornell.edu, or visit our Facebook and web pages at www.facebook.com/cornell.humphreys and www.humphreyfellowship.org for grant opportunities and an alumni directory.
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