



Annual Report

2022

Turning Adversity into Artversity

As the world steadily recovers from the Covid 19 pandemic, it has become more apparent that groups of people such as women, children, refugees, persons with disabilities and the elderly etc. who were disproportionately affected during the pandemic are on the verge of a 'double pandemic' caused by exclusion on the basis of their age, nationality, gender, ability, socio-economic status etc.

The year 2022 was marked as the "Year of Artversity". Michigan Fellows Africa (Agribusiness) Initiatives (MFAI) Uganda sought to deepen knowledge and sensitivity on diversity and inclusion through the intentional use of art across our programs.

Addressing challenges such as bias, exclusion, harassment, mis/disinformation, abuse, exploitation, and extortion has made MFAI Uganda's work more essential than ever and strengthened our resolve and our partners' commitment to making the world more equitable, inclusive, and prosperous.

In 2022, we trained a total of 30 fresh graduates in Agribusiness through the Agribusiness Apprenticeship Program (AgAP), graduated a total of 190 emerging leaders in the Ecourse4 for community leaders, 15 young social entrepreneurs, advocates, and leaders in the Diversity and Inclusion in Leadership and Training (D&I- L&T), and trained 70 lectures, Deans, Heads of Department, civic society leaders in the D&I- L&T.

To sustain and scale these achievements, we are investing in not only people and institutions to address critical social problems, but also creating meaningful partnerships with the government of the Republic of Uganda, Higher Education Institutions, schools, private sector enterprises, and Nonprofits to amplify community change and foster lifelong collaborations between nations.

Our Journey

MFAI started as a professional network of alumni of the U.S. Department of State (DoS) exchange Professional Fellows Program (PFP) at Michigan State University (MSU) in 2018. The MSU fellowship was pivotal to connect professional fellows from Africa. Upon return from the United States, the Ugandan fellows registered MFAI as a not-for-profit organization.

Today MFAI has evolved from an agribusiness-focused organisation into a far-reaching Non-profit organisation with a total of 3 (three) chapters in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania. All the 3 chapters are led by PFP alumni from MSU.

Our journey started at MSU but didn't end there! We seek to become a nexus of innovations across Africa and each year we continue to witness more young people join MFAI. We have managed to build codes of friendships and professional relationships among young professionals across the continent who continue to make remarkable progress as leaders in their communities. We continue to advance innovative problem-solving interventions that intentionally address life challenges for women and youth within the agricultural, health and education sectors.





Training and mentoring emerging leaders in Uganda

Funded by the US Embassy in Kampala, we trained a total of 190 emerging social entrepreneurs, advocates, students, and leaders across the country through the Ecourse4 for emerging community leaders project. The ecourse4 focused on four thematic areas of leadership, civic participation, project management and fundraising. The project was implemented in collaboration with our partners at Michigan State University Alliance for African Partnerships, Makerere University, Gulu University, St Lawrence University (SLAU) and friends from the private sector, and civic society in Uganda and beyond. We attracted a pool of over 2000 applications across the country in the 4 (four) cohorts.

“I represented team Rwanda as its ‘president’ which deepened my confidence and my self-esteem improved greatly.”

I got the opportunity of being selected for the Ecourse4 in the 1st cohort in March 2022. During the month-long training, I was able to learn how to make an elevator pitch and write a bio sketch and a resume. I learnt about value-based leadership which shaped my life as a young leader to lead by values such as honesty, dignity, transparency, commitment and hard work. A session on fundraising also enabled me to learn how resources are mobilized to implement projects. For example, I learnt how to write project proposals and concept notes. The ecourse4 allowed me to network with brilliant young leaders, experts, professors, and industry leaders in Uganda and the United States.

During the ecourse4 flagship event- the African Union simulation summit, I had the unique opportunity to represent team Rwanda as the ‘president’ which deepened my confidence and my self-esteem improved greatly.

-Eve Rebecca Lanyero-

Eve currently works as a field officer for USAID Feed the Future Uganda and a Road safety ambassador with Responsive Drivers Uganda (ReDU)



Snapshot impact

- **Cohort 1 Project districts:** Kampala, Gulu, Wakiso and Dokolo

Number of **53** Fellows: **24** Females, **29** Males, and 4 Persons with disabilities (PWDs)

- **Cohort 2 Project districts:** Kampala, Mukono, Gulu, Lira

54 fellows: **32** Females, **22** Males, **3** PWDs

- **Cohort 3&4 Merged:** Project districts: Kampala, Mbarara, Jinja,

Iganga: **84** fellows: **52** female **32** Male **2** PWDs

- **Professional network** of 190 emerging leaders across the country

“it was a platform for me to network with other fellows, and advocate for Disability inclusion “

I had the pleasure to be part of the Ecourse4 program. I was inspired as a leader to serve the general society and empower others especially persons with Disabilities. This was a platform for me to learn and unlearn more about the four major thematic areas: leadership, project management, civic participation, and fundraising. In terms of social and professional experience, it was a platform for me to network with other fellows and advocates for Disability inclusion.

-Susan Sabano-



Susan lives with Cerebral palsy Disability, is an alumnus of the U.S Department of State Exchange Program for inclusive Disability Employment, from Arizona University, an Obama leaders Africa fellow cohort 2022, YALI Cohort 43

Diversity is counting everyone, Inclusion is when everyone counts

With funding from the MSU-AAP under the Institutions transformation call, we successfully implemented one of the very first D&I Global North-South collaborative projects that promote knowledge and sensitivity to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion through Institutional transformative workshops. The key objective of the D&I-L&T project was to deepen the knowledge and sensitivities' of participating institutions and staff intended to increase the representation of categories of people that have typically been marginalized from leadership and decision-making processes in these institutions. These include women, Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), People Living with HIV/AIDS (PL-HIV/AIDS), and youth from low-income earning families.

We partnered with Makerere University and MSU African Studies Center to undertake workshops for senior administrators/unit managers including principals, deans, directors, faculty staff members lecturers and extension workers and youth leaders. The workshops involved dialogue, discussions, expert presentations, and group



work. The main topics covered included: defining Diversity and Inclusion and how they manifest in different contexts, understanding conscious and unconscious biases in recruiting, training, and engagement and cultivating and nurturing diverse and inclusive environments.

Snapshot impact

- **Workshop 1: 40** senior administrations, 10 members of civil society organisations and media
- **Workshop 2: 30** lecturers, staff, department heads, managers and directors from participating institutions.
- **Workshop 3: 15** young social entrepreneurs, managers, rights defenders, and advocates, from 12 districts across the country.
- Professional network of **85** academicians, youth leaders, and Non-profit organisations.



Artversity Youth Bootcamp

Artversity refers to the intentional and purposeful use of arts to create awareness of D&I. The artversity concept which was coined during the 3rd workshop of the D&I-L&T project continues to have an enormous impact on the lives of the fellows and the communities they serve across the country.

The week-long residential boot camp was held in December 2022. The boot camp was an inaugural training and mentorship D&I program for emerging youth leaders, rights defenders, activists, and social entrepreneurs between 18- 35 years in Uganda. Selected from a pool of over 500 applications, the finalists proved to be exceptional in implementing and/or working with organizations that are undertaking community



projects, programs, initiatives, and businesses that are diverse, equitable, and inclusive in policy and needed practical interventions, skills and networks critical to the integration and sustainable D&I knowledge and best practices.



“I was a little nervous during the pitching session however my confidence was boosted when a colleague exemplified my swimming ability in her pitch.”

I feel lucky to have been selected to participate in the artversity boot camp. As a person living with a disability, it was a great platform for me to share with other participants my experience and survival techniques as a champion in Disability Advocacy. Every day was different, I learnt something new in every session. Most important for me were the after-class activities like cultural dances, swimming, and movie night which explored our socialization with other people hence expanding my network. On the crowning day, I was excited by the cultural flair the fellow exhibited. Everyone was smartly dressed in their cultural attire which greatly signified the cultural diversity of Uganda. I was a little nervous during the pitching session however my confidence was boosted when a colleague exemplified my swimming ability in her pitch. This lifted me and I felt special. I was happy to receive a certificate of participation.

-Catherine Nakanyiga-

Catherine is a Clinical Psychologist currently practising social work at CORSU Hospital Kisubi

“I loved connecting with young leaders and learning from their rich and profound insights”



I was lucky to be selected for both the Ecourse4 and the D&I-L&T Bootcamp. The experience of being part of Ecourse4 and “Artversity” boot camp – to learn and truly engage with each other has inspired me to venture into programs that drive full community integration for people with disabilities.

Being part of the D&I boot camp that combined knowledge, entertainment, and Art has shaped my view of the world, from diverse life experiences to creative approaches to storytelling and information sharing that prioritize values-driven practices. I loved connecting with young leaders and learning from their rich and profound insights.

Ecourse4 was terrific! It resonated well with the perspectives and solutions to issues I care most about. With numerous resources, networks, and connections, I learned about leadership, civic participation, project management, and fundraising. I was delightfully surprised when I realized that Ecourse4 was a fruitful start to many more collaborations. I have had the great privilege of working with colleagues from Ecourse4, such as Raymond, Denis, and Brenda - to translate strategic opportunities into support systems for people with disabilities.

I will forever be grateful for the life-long friendships and partnerships I have made through my engagement with the Michigan Fellows Agribusiness Initiative (MFAI) Uganda. Your transformational and visionary leadership continues to inspire many young leaders in Uganda, and I am grateful to reckon among them.

-Harunah Ddamba-

Harunah is the founding chairperson of the United Persons with disabilities, an organization of people with disabilities in Bweyogerere parish which chiefly focuses on disability empowerment through social entrepreneurship.

Mirroring continental impact

MFAI is rapidly growing into a continental conglomerate of national chapters in Uganda, Kenya and Zimbabwe. We strive to become a nexus of innovations that addresses dire life challenges, especially for traditionally marginalized/disenfranchised populations of the world. We adopt a personal initiative approach to problem-solving that allows people close to the problem to determine the solutions. We work with higher education institutions, governments, civic society and private sector players to advance holistic projects that bring the marginalized at the forefront of leadership, decision-making, and community transformation as equal partners.



Our country chapters in Uganda, work together and with partners in more than 4 COUNTRIES(Kenya, Zimbabwe, US and Tanzania) to progress: women and youth empowerment, and institutional capacity strengthening

In 2022, we had an annual grant portfolio of slightly over \$50.000, and a staff team of 12 volunteers stationed in Uganda. By the close of 2023, we are projecting an annual portfolio of \$100.000 and more than 50 staff across the continent.

Women and Youth empowerment

MFAI cultivates value-based leaders at every level of society who continue to bridge divides and drive positive social change in their communities, schools, and families.

97% of youth

who participate in our projects can pitch a business idea, seek funding through writing a competitive proposal, and gain skills, knowledge, connections and experience that continue to position them as leaders in their communities.

89% of women

participating in our projects have successfully pursued and gained scholarships, additional professional qualifications, and certification, and joined exchange programs in the United States, Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) regional trainings etc.

93% of the fellows

in the D&I-L&T are leaders in their communities and founders of youth development initiatives/programs/organizations that serve hundreds of people in their communities areas such as health, education, WASH, and agriculture, among others.



Institutional capacity strengthening

MFAI partners with several landmark institutions and engages in highly intense continuous professional development programs, research and community outreach.

94% of partner institutions

are supported to conduct capacity assessments in areas of diversity and inclusion, gender audits, policy development, implementation and affirmative actions.

70% of staff and alumni

participate in global conferences, summits, and seminars as representatives, keynote speakers, presenters, and moderators to share their experiences, skills and knowledge on crosscutting themes/ disciplines.

100% of the local partners

have been supported to seek funding through collaborative responses to calls for funding.



Unleashing Youth potential in Agribusiness innovations

Previously MFAI Uganda with support from the US Department of State funding under the alumni engagement pool implemented the Agribusiness Apprenticeship Program (AgAP). The AgAP was our flagship program where we trained a total of 30 agriprenuers in innovations, networking, fundraising and research across 3 (three) residential cohorts. Since then, the AgAP alumni have formed a professional network and many have registered remarkable results across the continent.





MISSION
GANDA





“Since the AgAP I went to win several awards such as the: Top 22 Ruforum young African entrepreneurs 2021”

The AgaP allowed me to meet and network with fellow innovators and mentors. This network has helped me learn, unlearn and relearn new techniques of doing business, best practices and business values. The topics covered during the AgAP training subjected us to critical thinking and practical modes, cultural visits, and life-transforming field tours. This experience deepened my self-confidence in public speaking, grant writing and business pitching. I loved the after-class sessions that included swimming and story-sharing. I felt supported to cope with the uncertain Covid 19 period. The experiences of the AgaP alumni were pivotal to boosting my professional, and business resilience. Since the AgAP I went to win several awards such as the: Top 22 Ruforum young African entrepreneurs 2021, Top 15 going bio-based innovators by Bio-Innovate Africa and Top 8 Youth inspiring Youth in Agriculture 2021 by FAO

-Hillary Nahurira

Hillary is the founder of Active Living Uganda Ltd a local business enterprise that manufactures lemon aftershave and other nature-based cosmetic products.

“The Ecourse4 was a turning point in my life”

The more I attended Ecourse4 lessons the more I appreciated the essence of values in leadership. For a long time, I revered myself as a leader in my own right, but I knew little about value-based leadership. Today, am not only proud of what I learnt but also continue to transfer these skills, knowledge and best practices to my staff, customers, and partners. Ecourse4 greatly contributed to my personal development. I am a better version of myself to this day.

My most profound highlight was the AU simulation summit where group E entrusted me as their delegate and present the statement. It seemed the hardest task but collective night rehearsals helped me navigate the nervousness and tension.

-Nantume Hajarah-

Hajarah is the founder of Balimisa Consultants Limited which is an Agricultural Extension and Traceability based organization working with smallholder farmers in the value chains of Pineapple, Vanilla and Coffee in Uganda

Encouraging young people's productive engagement with government.

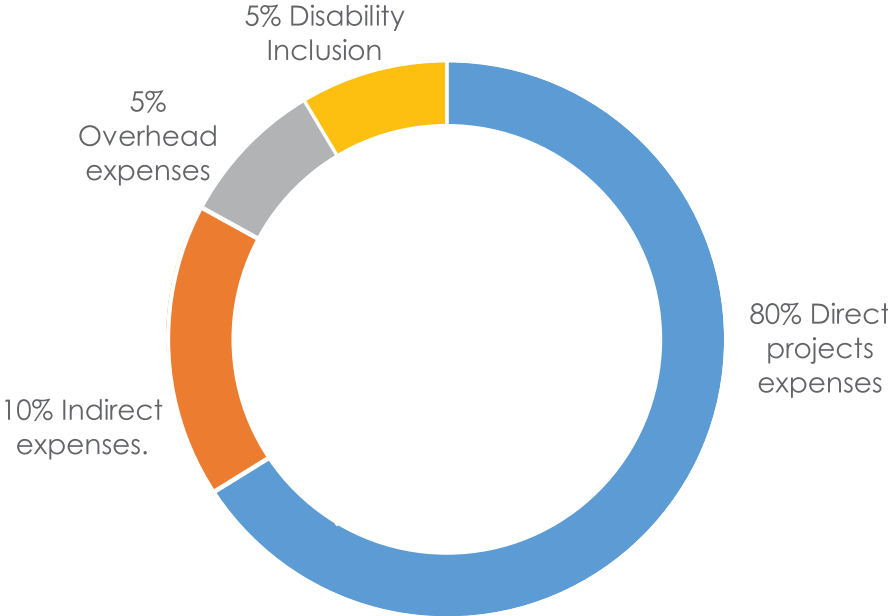
We received funding from the U.S. Embassy in Kampala to implement the Pearl of Africa Civic Engagement (PACE) Academy project 2022-2023. The PACE Academy project is a civic education program for learners within secondary schools across the country. The project is modelled after the University of Georgia African Civic Engagement Academy with the overarching objective of the project to train young learners in civic engagement. Project activities include in-school mock debates, regional workshops and a National summit. Learners from selected project schools will have the unique opportunity to engage directly with peers from other secondary schools, government officials, institutions, the media and experts within Uganda's civil society and Private Sector.

The project is set to benefit learners, teachers, parents and the entire nation.

- i. A total of 100 Learners will have deeper knowledge and skills on how to engage with the government, solve societal challenges as they emerge without resorting to violent extremism, and meaningfully participate in civic life.
- ii. Teachers, parents, and staff from participating schools will attain deeper competencies in practical civic training, teaching and engagement.
- iii. The project contributes to National Development Plans, line Ministries' Strategic Sector plans specifically for the Ministry of Education and Sports, Ministry of ICT, and National Guidance through training and health competitions that inspire a generation of patriotic, knowledgeable and noble young leaders.



Programs Expenditures



\$50.000
Total grant Portfolio



12 districts
Number of Districts reached in Uganda



305
Total number of direct beneficiaries

We sincerely thank

All applicants, participants, partners and funders around the world whom we've had the privilege to serve with. Since 2018, our focus on sharing our experiences and inspiring positive change in the lives of people particularly the often marginalized remains steadfast.

We will continue striving to become a nexus of innovations across Africa.

LEARN MORE: www.mfai-ug.com

Funders

- U.S. Embassy Kampala.
- U.S Department of State (DoS)
- Michigan State University Alliance for African Partnerships

Our partners:

- Michigan State University African Studies Center (ASC)
- Makerere University (MaK),
- St. Lawrence University (SLAU),
- Grassroots Strategies Africa (GSA),
- Eka GreenLife Initiatives (EGI)
- U.S Embassy Kampala
- British Council
- Government of the Republic of Uganda

Prospective Partners

- African Diversity and Inclusion Center (ADIC)
- Gulu University
- Mbarara University,
- IREX
- Embellish Consults Ltd



MFAI Uganda is a fully registered
Non-Government organization in Uganda.
We strive to become a nexus of innovations across Africa
through solving some of the dire life challenges
particularly for people who often live on
the margins of life.
Our secretariat is located on
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Network Building.

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