

Young US business leaders head to Africa

The Africa Business Fellowship, a new US/Africa initiative places young US business leaders with prominent African companies, giving them unique exposure to one of the fastest-growing global markets. The first 14 have been selected for Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria and Zimbabwe.



The inaugural class of 14 has been selected for the highly competitive Africa Business Fellowship (ABF) - a joint-initiative of Econet, Management Leadership for Tomorrow (MLT), the Milken Institute, and the African Leadership Network (ALN).

The 2016 ABF Class includes Ashley Company, Corwin Shropshire, Elizabeth Oputa, Gordon Taylor, Ijeoma Emenike, Jeanny David, Jessica Ayana Davis, Mason Mallory, Milagros DuBouchet, Nadou Lawson, Shakir Cannon-Moye, Sky Mangin, Tzviatko Chiderov, and Valentine Dike, Jr.

These Fellows possess expertise in financial services, technology, management consulting, and digital marketing, among other sectors.

Meeting in New York City for their placement briefing, the Fellows depart this week for Africa where they will spend three-six months working with 13 of Africa's premier corporations and startups, including: Atlas Mara, Dangote Foundation and Safaricom. ABF Fellows will be placed in Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, as well as the United Arab Emirates.

Emerging leadership

The Africa Business Fellowship was launched in May 2015 at the Milken Institute Global Conference. Kofi Annan, Chair of the Africa Progress Panel, former Secretary General of the United Nations and Nobel Laureate endorsed the initiative as "an innovative approach to brokering links between emerging leaders in the US private sector and some of Africa's most dynamic companies".

“What makes the Africa Business Fellowship unique is the insight these talented Fellows will gain through their first-hand experience in African-led businesses,” said John Rice, founder and CEO of MLT. “Knowledge of global economies will help propel these Fellows – and those who come after them - to succeed as senior leaders.

According to Econet founder and chairman, Strive Masiyiwa, whose vision and investment made the initiative a reality, “The Africa Business Fellowship will become a signature effort of Africa’s private sector to develop a new partnership with the US based on trade, entrepreneurship and investment.”

MLT conducted a rigorous selection process in which nearly 200 highly qualified applicants were vetted for the 14 Fellowships. The application for the 2017 [Africa Business Fellowship](#) will open on June 21, 2016.

“ALN is proud to play a role in transforming Africa-U.S. business relations. I’m confident that this will be a rewarding experience for both our Fellows and our host companies,” said Adedana Ashebir, ALN program director for the Africa Business Fellowship.

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