



## 2016 U.S. INSTITUTE OF PEACE YOUTH LEADERS PROGRAM

### APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

**Application Deadline: 12:00 Noon EST on Friday, January 1, 2016**

*Please read these instructions before beginning your application. We suggest you refer back to them as you fill out your application.*

#### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Sudanese and South Sudanese Youth Leader program brings Sudanese and South Sudanese [peacebuilders](#) between ages 18 and 35 to Washington, DC to be in residence at the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP) for four months. The goal of the project is to support youth to gain the knowledge, skills, and confidence to further their peacebuilding work and position themselves as stronger peacebuilding agents in their communities. USIP will bring one Sudanese and one South Sudanese leader in the spring of 2016 and another two leaders in the fall of 2016.

#### PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Youth leaders are expected to:

- Complete at least two (2) [USIP Academy courses](#); youth leaders may take as many courses as they like, time-permitting
- Write a short paper or blog post for the USIP website on a topic of his/her choice, based on the intersection of professional interests and USIP's work
- Meet with professionals at USIP, on Capitol Hill, and at other organizations in order to develop his/her professional network
- Complete leadership development training

Application Deadline is **January 1, 2016 at 12:00 (noon) Eastern Standard Time**

- Plan and conduct a joint activity or meeting with the other youth leader in residence at USIP
- Identify and participate in an activity related to his/her interests outside his/her work at the Institute. Previous activities have included joining church committees, working with the diaspora, and taking English classes.
- Develop a leadership action plan, including a project that he/she designs to be implemented when he/she returns to his/her community, that he/she will present to either USIP staff or the Sudan and South Sudan Working Groups

Previous youth leaders have done projects related to religious peacebuilding, the role of women in conflict and peace, and analyses of the roots of local conflict. Youth leaders spend the majority of their fellowships doing individual research, attending meetings with USIP staff, and participating in events in the D.C. area.

## **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

Applicants will not be discriminated against on the basis of race, color, gender, religion, socio-economic status, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Please review all eligibility requirements before you apply. In order to be eligible to participate in the program, candidates must meet the following criteria:

- Are of Sudanese or South Sudanese nationality **and** living Sudan or South Sudan at the time of application;
- Are between 18 and 35 years of age at the time of application;
- Are not U.S. citizens or permanent residents of the U.S.; and
- Are eligible to receive a United States J-1 visa.

USIP reserves the right to verify all of the information included in the application. In the event that there is a discrepancy, or information is found to be false, the application will be immediately be declared invalid and the applicant ineligible.

Applicants not meeting the above technical eligibility requirements will not be considered by the selection committee. If you do not meet the technical eligibility requirements for this program, we invite you to visit the [Peace and Collaborative Development Network](#) for information on other exchange opportunities.

**Application Deadline is January 1, 2016 at 12:00 (noon) Eastern Standard Time**

## FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

There is no fee to apply to the Sudanese and South Sudanese Youth Leaders program. If you are selected for the program, the U.S. Institute of Peace will cover the following costs:

- J-1 Visa expenses (including any travel expenses associated with obtaining the visa)
- Round-trip travel from youth leader's home to the U.S.
- Housing costs in the U.S.
- Stipend that will also cover health insurance, local travel, phone and internet, and any other living expenses.

**Please note that the primary purpose of the stipend is to cover living expenses while in the United States.** Youth leaders are free to spend any extra money at his or her discretion, but they must first pay for living expenses. **USIP is unable to advance payments on monthly stipends or cover unpaid bills.**

USIP works with a homestay company to place youth leaders with families in the D.C. area and pays this housing cost directly. Homestay arrangements provide a private room, private or shared bathroom, internet access, and laundry and kitchen facilities. Should the youth leader desire a non-homestay arrangement, the request will need to be made in advance to program staff to make necessary accommodations.

Youth leaders are required to have health insurance while in the United States. Program staff will assist youth leaders in finding and signing up for an appropriate plan.

## APPLICATION AND PROGRAM TIMELINE

December 4, 2015	Application opens
January 1, 2016	Application deadline; no submissions will be accepted after 12:00 noon EST
January 15, 2016	Semi-finalists notified via email by 17:00 (5:00pm) EST
January 18 -- 25, 2016	Semi-finalists interviewed by phone
January 29, 2016	Finalists notified
April 1, 2016	Spring cohort of youth leaders arrive in Washington, DC
July 1, 2016	Fall cohort of youth leaders arrive in Washington, DC
August 8, 2016	Spring cohort of youth leaders return home
November 10, 2016	Fall cohort of youth leaders return home

Application Deadline is **January 1, 2016 at 12:00 (noon) Eastern Standard Time**

## SELECTION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

The Sudanese and South Sudanese Youth Leaders selection process is a merit-based open competition. After the application deadline on January 1, 2016, all applications will be reviewed by a selection committee. Semi-finalists will be chosen and interviewed by phone or Skype. Semi-finalists must provide a copy of their passport or national identification card to the program at this time. The selection committee will use the following criteria to evaluate applications (not in order of importance):

- Demonstrated leadership skills;
- Proficiency in reading, writing, and speaking English;
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills;
- Willingness to participate and learn within and beyond USIP;
- Ability to self-motivate/work independently;
- Strong connection to his/her local community in Sudan or South Sudan;
- Background or strong demonstrated interest in peacebuilding-related work; and
- A commitment to return to Sudan or South Sudan to apply leadership skills and knowledge to benefit applicant's community when he/she returns home.

## GENERAL APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS AND TIPS

- USIP will consider both internet-based and Word-based application submissions, but prefers internet-based applications when possible. Links to both the internet- and Word-based applications can be found at <http://www.usip.org/sudanese-south-sudanese-youth-leaders-program>.
- You do not need to finish your application in one session; you may save your work and return to complete your application as many times as needed before the application deadline.
- All questions must be answered in English
- All answers in the application must be your own original work
- If submitting a Word-based application, please submit all materials (final application, CV/resume, reference letters, and optional writing sample as outlined in the "attachments" section) in one email to [youthleaders@usip.org](mailto:youthleaders@usip.org). Submissions that are incomplete or missing materials will not be considered.
- Submissions will be accepted no later than 12:00/noon EST on January 1, 2016. Semi-finalists will be notified by January 15, 2016. If you are not notified by this time, you have not been selected.
- Any new or updated information about the Youth Leaders Program will be posted to our website:  
<http://www.usip.org/sudanese-south-sudanese-youth-leaders-program>.
- Inquiries can be sent to [youthleaders@usip.org](mailto:youthleaders@usip.org).

Application Deadline is **January 1, 2016 at 12:00 (noon) Eastern Standard Time**

## APPLICATION SECTIONS

### GENERAL INFORMATION

- Provide your legal name as spelled on your passport or national identification card.
- Provide your date of birth using the “month/ day/year” (i.e. 1/15/1988) format. You will be required to provide documentation (passport or national identification card) verifying age and for eligibility at the interview stage if you are selected as a semi-finalist.
- Provide your country of citizenship and your country of residence. You will be required to provide documentation (passport or national identification card) verifying your citizenship at the interview stage if you are selected as a semi-finalist.
- Indicate your marital status (single or married).
- Provide your place of birth (city/town and country/state).
- Provide your current place of residence (city/town and country/state).
- Indicate if you live in a federal capital, major city, other city or town, or rural area. A capital city is the seat of your federal government (example: Juba, South Sudan). A major city is defined an urban area with a large population of about 100,000+ people (Example: Port Sudan, Sudan). A town is roughly defined as a semi-urban area with a population between 2,500 – 100,000 people (Example: Pajok, South Sudan). A rural area is defined as any area with fewer than 2,500 inhabitants and is distinctively not in an urban area (Example: Duri, Sudan).

### CONTACT INFORMATION

- The contact information you provide will be used to reach you during the application and selection process. Please provide accurate phone numbers and email addresses that you use and check on a regular basis.

### PROFESSIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Provide a brief description of your current job. **Please do not copy and paste sections of your resume.** This section should give us an idea of what you do in your current job. If you are a student, please indicate that and briefly describe what you are studying and when you plan to finish your degree.
- Describe any relevant peacebuilding work or volunteer experience you have. For reference to the different areas of peacebuilding, please refer to [Strategic Peacebuilding Pathways](#).

Application Deadline is **January 1, 2016 at 12:00 (noon) Eastern Standard Time**

- Indicate previous or ongoing formal education, as well as any trainings or non-degree courses that are relevant to your peacebuilding work. **Please do not attach your certificates.**
- List up to five (5) areas of peacebuilding you are interested in and/or have experience in. Please do not indicate more than 5, but you may list as few as one. This helps the selection committee to understand potential areas of focus for your fellowship at USIP and how your professional interests align with USIP's work. Refer to [Strategic Peacebuilding Pathways](#) if needed. An example answer is "Restorative justice- interest only; Refugee resettlement- interest and experience; national and local justice processes- experience."

## PERSONAL STATEMENTS

This section includes ten (10) short answer questions that must be completed. Although there is no word limit, we encourage you to keep answers shorter than five (5) paragraphs. This section will allow the selection committee to better understand you and your interest in peacebuilding and the Youth Leaders program.

The questions are:

1. How did you become interested in peacebuilding?
2. Describe what role you play in your community- in what ways are you a peacebuilder, either professionally or personally (or both)?
3. What does a good leader look like to you? Tell us about a time in which you have personally witnessed someone taking a positive leadership role and what you learned from them.
4. In what ways do you embody some of those leadership qualities?
5. In what ways do you want to improve your leadership?
6. Why do you want to be one of the next youth leaders at USIP? How do you think the program will help you with your work when you return to Sudan or South Sudan?
7. What types of projects would you be interested in working on at USIP? How do you think you could help with USIP's work?
  - a. **Note: You do not need to cite specific USIP projects, although a familiarity with the type of work we do will be helpful. Go to [www.usip.org](http://www.usip.org) for more information.**
8. What are three (3) things you most want to learn or experience while in the US?
9. How do you plan to engage with your new community at USIP and in DC or the US more broadly? Do you plan to join any groups such as a church or mosque or a volunteer organization?
10. Describe a situation in which you overcame a significant obstacle.

Application Deadline is **January 1, 2016 at 12:00 (noon) Eastern Standard Time**

11. What is the most exciting project or personal goal you have worked toward? Why was it exciting for you?

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT

This section asks you to fill out an English language self-assessment using the Council of Europe assessment grid, found [here](#). If you are unable to use the link, please email [youthleaders@usip.org](mailto:youthleaders@usip.org) for a pdf copy of the grid.

You will need to select the level (A1-C2) at which you feel most comfortable with American English for each area (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) and indicate which level you believe your American English is next to it.

Potential candidates will not be disqualified based on this assessment. This is only a tool to help us understand your abilities and for you to reflect on your ability to communicate in an American workplace.

## ATTACHMENTS

Please submit the following documents with your application. All documents must be **in English**. If you are submitting your application online, please upload your documents as attachments at the end of the application. If submitting a Word version of the application, please indicate what the document is in its name (example: "Hassan Ibrahim CV") and attach it to the same email as your application.

- 1) **Required:** An updated curriculum vitae or resume. **Please do not attach certificates of completion for courses or diplomas.** Listing them in the resume or CV is sufficient.
- 2) **Required:** Three (3) letters of reference. **Please ask your references to submit emailed letters directly to [youthleaders@usip.org](mailto:youthleaders@usip.org) by the application deadline.** Applicants without three (3) letters will not be considered in the semi-finalist round. Applicants may email [youthleaders@usip.org](mailto:youthleaders@usip.org) to inquire about the status of their references.
- 3) **Optional:** A writing sample. Preferably, your submission should be an excerpt of a recent publication that you have written or to which you contributed related to your field of interest. If you have not published, you may also write an original sample on any subject relevant to conflict prevention, conflict management, peacebuilding and/or democratization. Your sample should be at least one full page of typed text and should not be longer than three full pages of typed text.

Application Deadline is **January 1, 2016 at 12:00 (noon) Eastern Standard Time**

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

The following information provides the Youth Leaders program staff with important background on you and potential eligibility concerns (specifically previous grants or fellowships) for this program so that we can better support you during your time in Washington, DC. The questions are as follows:

1. Have you ever traveled to the United States before? If so, where? Please list any other travel outside East Africa and the Horn.
2. Please indicate whether members of your immediate family would accompany you and stay with you during the Youth Leaders Program in Washington D.C.
3. Have you ever received a grant or fellowship from USIP or participated in any USIP-sponsored activities? If so, indicate the year and the type of each grant and/or activity. Also indicate when the grant was completed.
4. How did you learn about this program?

## **CERTIFICATION**

You will need to sign to indicate that the information presented in this application is your own original work and that if you are chosen, you agree not to participate in illegal activities while in the U.S. for your fellowship. If completing the application on the web, please initial. If using the Word application, you can do any of the following:

- Print out the last page, sign it, and scan it;
- Print out the last page, sign it, and take a photo; or
- Fill in your name electronically on the line provided.

Please include your signed page as an attachment in your email with your application.

## **ABOUT USIP AND THE AFRICA PROGRAM**

The United States Institute of Peace works to prevent, mitigate, and resolve violent conflict around the world. USIP does this by engaging directly in conflict zones and by providing analysis, education, and resources to those working for peace. Created by Congress in 1984 as an independent, nonpartisan, federally funded organization, USIP's more than 300 staff work at the Institute's D.C. headquarters, and on the ground in the world's most dangerous regions. For further information, please visit: [www.usip.org](http://www.usip.org).

The United Institute of Peace (USIP) has worked for decades to help build peace throughout Sub-Saharan Africa, providing education, grants, training and resources to those working for peace in Sudan, South Sudan, Kenya, Nigeria, Somalia, and elsewhere.

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