



THE USISI AMANDLA FELLOWSHIP ORIENTATION RETREAT REPORT



NOVEMBER 1, 2024
HOTEL LA VENA, KAMPALA, UGANDA

1.0 INTRODUCTION



The Development Eye Initiative (DEI) in partnership with the Center for Policy Analysis (CEPA), Leadership Square Africa (LSA) and Population and Social Development Institute (PSDI) started the inaugural cohort of the Usisi Amandla Fellowship which is a uniquely designed program aimed at empowering young women to lead in public policy processes.

The Fellowship aims at strengthening young women's participation in public policy processes through mentorship, competency building, evidence-based decision making and exposure of young women (below 35 years) annually. This programme seeks to contribute to the transformation and deconstruction of society's gendered stereotypes regarding women's participation in the public policy space by ensuring a seamless integration of women into governance spaces.

A total of 22 young women enrolled on the program as fellows of the 2024/25 Inaugural Cohort through a highly competitive process. The fellows constitute practitioners from civil service, civil, academia, media and private sector hence underscoring their impetus to further be grounded in public policy processes.

With support from Enabel and under the auspices of the We Work Project, a three-day orientation retreat was held for the fellows from 17th to 21st November 2024 at Hotel La Vena, Kampala. The rationale of this retreat was to conscientize the fellows about the Usisi Amandla Fellowship including its scope, network amongst each other as well as thought-provoke the fellows on a wide range of issues informed by policy. This brief report highlights the processes that were undertaken, the feedback generated and progress plan upon opening up the fellowship.

2.0 OPENING SESSION



To set pace, the opening session encompassed remarks from both DEI and Enabel Uganda. The Fellowship Founder, Ms. Elone Natumanya Ainebyoona, welcomed the Fellows with an illuminating presentation. Elone’s presentation touched a bit of her lived personal experience that shaped her inspiration to empower young women in policy making processes. She further emphasized why it was critical at such a moment to have women of substance going beyond the numbers that the *“The Usisi Amandla Fellowship is here, we are driven by the passion of empowering a new crop of young women in public policy. Today marks the beginning of a transformative journey for you ladies.”* The fellowship was meant to offer the fellows a full scale support system that includes psychosocial support, theoretical public policy analysis, interaction with policy implementers and overall coaching to ensure results that will be observed from the ladies’ analytical prowess. In

her concluding remarks, she assured the Fellows this would be a life transforming journey that gives a total support system enabling them become Global policy influencers.

In his remarks, Mr. Ham Lukurwe, the Senior Technical Advisor at Enabel Uganda, he mainly commended DEI for the well thought-out fellowship program which was expected to strengthen women’s participation in public policy processes but also foster the next generation of leaders to shape Uganda’s future. He further appreciated the fact that Usisi Amandla Fellowship aptly aligned with Enabel’s mission of ensuring that people and women in Uganda develop into active, economically independent citizens in a sustainable society that respects human rights and ensures quality basic services.

“As young women stepping into this space, you are the voice of the future, and your participation is crucial in shaping policies that promote gender equality, social justice, and sustainable development.”





Representing the DEI Board of Directors, Ms. Daisy Mulamuzi Kasujja encouraged the fellows to fully immerse themselves into both practical and theoretical aspects of policymaking. She further urged the fellows maximize the fellowship to harness connections within themselves. *“I am delighted to learn that over the next few days, the fellowship will enable you to dive into the complexities of governance and the importance of youth engagement and pathways to becoming powerful agents of change in the policy space.”*



3.0 DEEP DIVE INTO THE ORIENTATION RETREAT

One of the most critical aspects that the fellows underwent was crafting professional profiles to enable them improve on career growth and presentation before potential employers. This session was facilitated by Mr. Alex Mukibi, a Human Resource Specialist who had earlier reviewed and provided feedback to the fellows about their CVs. He stressed the fact that fellows needed to grasp how to define their personal brands. **“As young women stepping into the public policy space, it is essential that you not only develop the technical skills to navigate policy processes but also take the time to reflect on you present yourselves as leaders and professionals.”** From his presentation, fellows were able to appreciate how to prepare compelling CVs and resumes. Dr. Sebastastian Rwengabo delivered the key note address entitled **“Why Do Nations Fail.”** He advanced the thesis that policies shaped by women were often more inclusive and

socially responsive and socially responsive. **“For nations to avoid failure and achieve sustainable development, they must prioritize the active participation of women in all areas of public policy and governance.”** According to Dr. Rwengabo, nations failed when leadership was exclusionary. He thus advised that women inclusion in leadership and decision-making ensures that policies addressed the needs of citizens. He further underscored the need to structure and strategically improve leadership and institutional performance as a means of improved national development. Policy analysis and critical analysis of these policies to generate impactful recommendations was going to be instrumental in this process. As he concluded his remarks, he took the fellows through a process developing policy briefs which will be required of each one of them by the end of the fellowship.

As a means of further understanding the theoretical process of policy

making, Mr. Timothy Chemonges, Associate Director at Centre for Policy Analysis (CEPA) took the fellows through the introduction to public policy processes. He argued that public policy is what governments choose to do or not do to address public issues. It includes laws, decisions, actions, strategy and even the lack of action by government. Furthermore, he espoused the fellows to concepts such as problem identification, policy formulation and how to identify policy windows. From his session fellows were able to understand the various types of policies and why they were important for national development.

As part of understanding the value of psycho-social support for women especially those engaged in public policy influence, Ms. Janet Katana, the Team Leader at Space Places Uganda called upon the fellows to mind their mental health through prioritizing wellness. “Women Leaders must be aware of their mental health



so that they establish themselves as better leaders.” She further took them through the various aspects of mental health therapy offered in instances of stress and other mental health challenges. Safe Places was also a partner to the Fellowship and would thus offer mental health support to the fellows as they undertook the fellowship.

The Fellows further interacted with a Guest Speaker; Hon. Sheila Kawamara Mishambi, a former EALA MP and renowned gender equality activist. She shared her life story and how she had managed to navigate the various stages of policy influence and ensuring the policies that ensure inclusivity were taken up by the duty bearers. From the interactions with the fellows, it was clear that public policy influence required a united force and laying clear strategic to achieve tangible results. She encouraged the fellows to identify the needs of their societies and ensure that the proposed policies provided solutions to those needs.

Dr. John Mushomi made a presentation reflecting on the international frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Beijing Platform for Action and how they prioritized women equality and equity. He urged the fellows to interest themselves about development frameworks and how they influenced development at the local levels. ***“Women’s participation in development continues to be hampered by socio-cultural barriers, limited access to resources and limited decision-making power.”*** In conclusion, Dr. Mushomi urged the fellows to ensure that they contextualize the Global Frameworks and work

towards localization of such policies to benefit their country and communities. From his presentation, fellows were able to deeply understand the link between international frameworks and gender equality/equity.

As part of understanding the actual implementation of public policies, a presentation about labour migration and particularly on the plight of female migrant workers was delivered by Mr. Abdallah Kayonde, the Founder of Migrant Workers’ Voice Organization. His presentation shed a light on the precarious working conditions faced by female workers in the Middle East which required more advocacy and policy reforms. He further shared the way in which his organisation has been able to intervene and the challenges faced there within. He therefore made a call to action to the fellows to join him in the struggle to advocate for the improved welfare of such female workers.

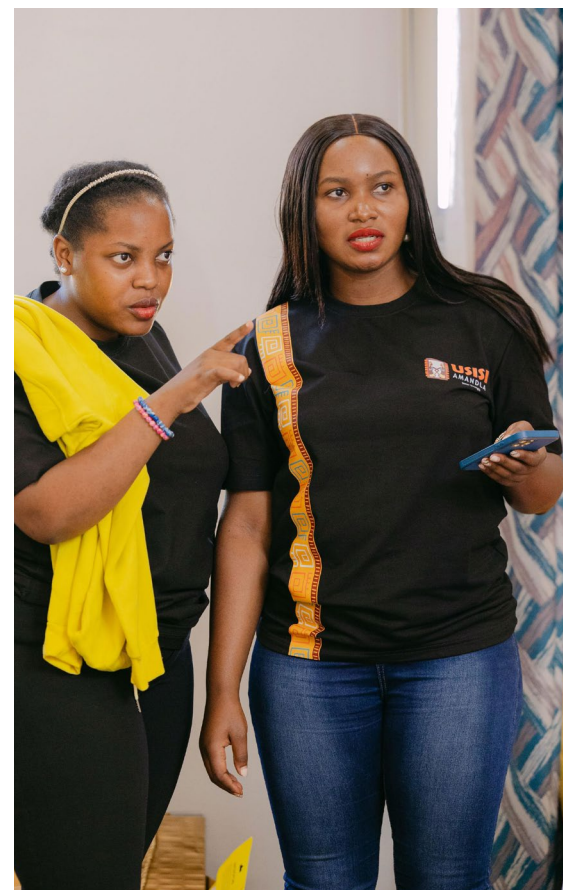
Mr. Prosper Mubangazi, a senior policy analyst made an insightful presentation about the complexities and politics of policy making. He challenged the fellows to deeply understand the politics and interests behind policy making processes. According to Mubangazi, persuasion was key in influencing public policy and so was the media which helps to shape the agenda. He shared with the fellows the various examples from which policy influence was based on interests and political influence hence emphasizing why this was very important. From his session, fellows were able to juxtapose the influence of politics in policy making processes.

The orientation featured a networking cocktail and dinner

that was attended by selected development partners, governing council, board of directors and staff of DEI. This helped the fellows to further engage key practitioners and share their experiences in the fellowship so far.

The orientation was climaxed by a presentation on Open Data made by Mr. Michael Chengkuru and Open Data Specialist. He took the fellows through the value of using Artificial Intelligence in policy analysis and research by using digitization relying on Notion as a tool for learning. This session empowered the fellows with knowledge and skills on how to interact with the Notion tool which they will be using during the course of the fellowship.

From his presentation, fellows were able to appreciate the value of presenting compelling CVs and resumes and incredible personal branding.



4.0 KEY OUTPUTS

On the overall, the Fellowship achieved the following outputs during the orientation retreat.

Fellows' ability to appreciate how to brand professionally enhanced.

Improved knowledge of the fellows about policy making processes.

Social networking among the fellows, coaches and mentors harnessed.

5.0 WHAT NEXT?

The orientation retreat marked beginning of an exciting journey for the young women who exuded passion and tenacity to explore more about public policy. DEI in a special way wishes to appreciate Enabel for the financial support towards this activity. Further appreciation goes to the facilitators, mentors and coaches who graced the orientation retreat.

6.0 NEXT STEPS

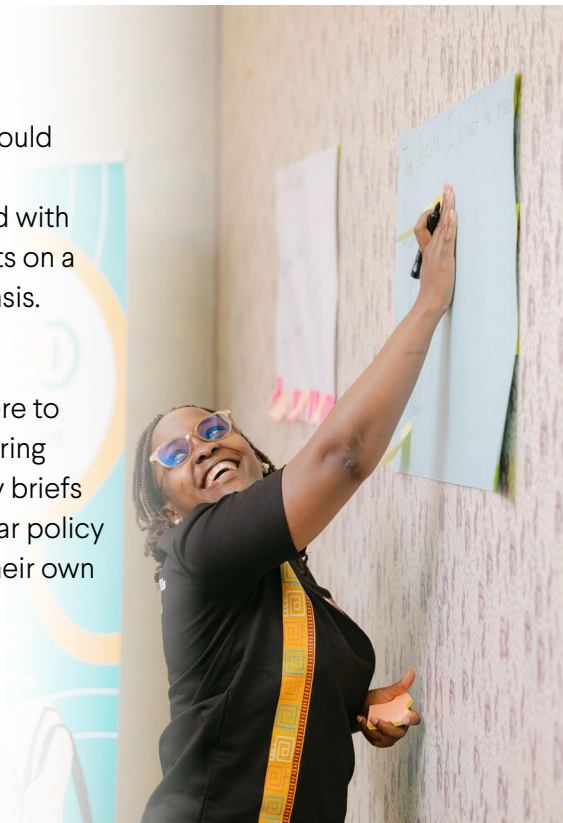
The fellowship was going to continue online using the Notion tool where all learning materials would be shared.

There would be another retreat in the course of next year for the fellows to reflect and meet other policy practitioners.

The coaching sessions were going to be ongoing and on a needs basis as well as monthly meetings.

The policy process theoretical sessions would be further expounded with assignments on a monthly basis.

Fellows were to start preparing their policy briefs on particular policy issues of their own interest.



6.0 PICTORIAL





