

# ADA International Fellowship Program: 2017 Fellows

**Faith Muange** is the president of Catapult Studios in Nairobi, Kenya. [Catapult is an educational technology company](#) that is innovating for Deaf learners, providing personalized learning through an online platform on literacy and STEM skills in Kenyan Sign Language.

In 2016, Faith participated in the Young African Leaders Initiative Fellowship Program, a U.S. State Department initiative launched by President Obama to foster excellence among emerging professionals in Africa.

Growing up with a Deaf family and friends in a small village, Faith has a lifelong personal commitment to accessible communication and full inclusion of Deaf individuals in education. She is particularly concerned about a lack of awareness and knowledge in Kenya about how to support Deaf individuals and embrace Deaf culture and communication.

Faith has designed and implemented projects that promote the use of Kenyan Sign Language in schools and communities to encourage inclusion (see Figures 1–2). One of her programs, Catapult Academy, is an

e-learning platform creating disability inclusion across arts and education. The web and mobile application enables teachers to create an individualized education plan for each student, customize a self-paced learning experience, and identify gaps, while offering solutions related to teaching techniques. The program, which aims to

enhance teacher effectiveness, serves approximately 2,000 children across the country. Parents of Deaf children can also use the application to learn sign language and track their children's learning process.



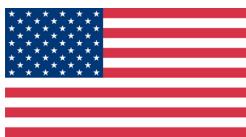
Faith Muange

**“Attending the fellowship made me reevaluate a lot about our work and set very clear goals and a work plan. With a wealth of knowledge, we transformed a few things.”**

-- Spring 2017 ADA Alum Faith Muange

For her ADA International Fellowship, Faith hoped to learn effective strategies to improve literacy for Deaf, hard-of-hearing, and deafblind youth through the use of technology. She spent her fellowship at the [Center on Disability Studies at the University of Hawaii](#) under the supervision and mentorship of Dr. Megan Conway, an assistant professor in the center.

Since completing her fellowship, Faith has made great progress toward her goals. She presented on her fellowship experience at two Deaf schools. She also gave a talk about



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inclusive education at Strathmore University in Nairobi that resulted in funding (USD \$10,000) and collaboration on a project to develop and implement an e-literacy platform for Deaf learners. Joining forces with Kenyan ADA alum Martin Kavua, Faith has been able to create a project team and develop a prototype of the platform. She is now in the process of piloting the tool (see Figure 3).

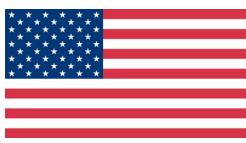
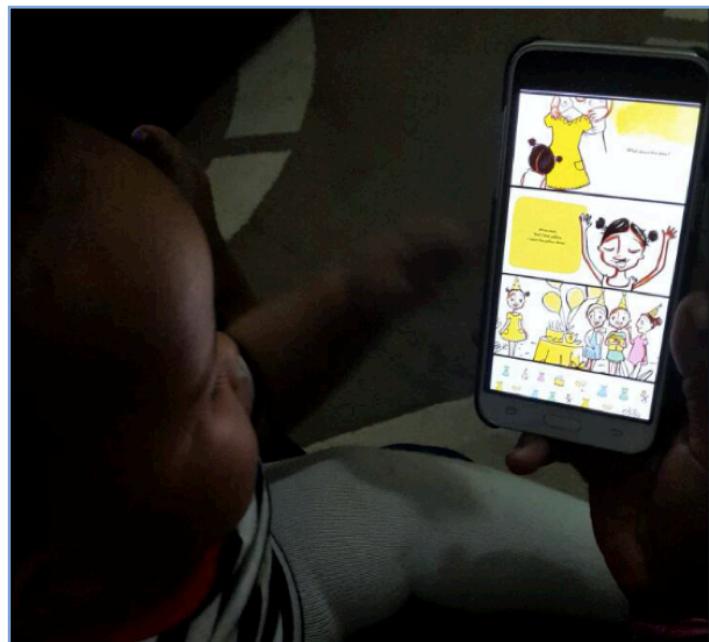
While in Hawaii, Faith attended New Hope Church, which has a vibrant Deaf community. She was very impressed by their inclusive fellowship, for example, providing Deaf interpreters. Faith arranged with the church to stream its services on social media so that she could share them with her students in Kenya, and she has shared church services with a Deaf school that has 800 students for the last six months. This has changed how the students spend their Sundays in school, and as a result they are now starting a remote Bible club in partnership with New Hope Deaf Ministries.

Reflecting on the impact that her project will have, Faith said, "We've been using the same old techniques to teach Deaf learners, but our approach will give new insights as to what we can achieve. Data-driven strategies inform our approach to education. We have data analytics, and with this as a benefit we can analyze and give unbiased feedback on education reforms."

Figure 2: Deaf youth mentors and mentees at Catapult Studios during a weekend mentoring event.



Figure 3: A Deaf toddler and his parent accessing vocabulary and video content in Kenyan sign language on a tablet.



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