

African Diaspora Network Impact and Innovation Forums 2023

The Role of Youth in Shifting Narratives of Africa

Summary- Highlights - Action Steps



2023 AFRICAN DIASPORA NETWORK
IMPACT AND INNOVATION FORUMS

Webinar: The Role of Youth in Shifting Narratives of Africa
Wednesday, June 7, 8:00 AM PST, 11:00 AM EST, 3:00 PM GMT



VICTOR MARK-ONYEBU
Grants Lead,
Africa No Filter



AMBROSE KANYA
2019 Mandela Washington Fellow and
Founder of Kinga Safety



MEHRET AMSALU
2016 Mandela Washington Fellow
and Health Systems Researcher and
Coordinator at London School of
Hygiene and Tropical Medicine,
University of London



MICHEAL OMEKA
MASTERCARD FOUNDATION SCHOLAR
ALUMNUS, INSPIRATIONAL SPEAKER,
FITNESS SPECIALIST

Hosted in collaboration with Africa No Filter



Context:

Narratives around the world often shed a negative light on Africa. Stories published by the media have been particularly notorious for painting a bleak picture of the continent. According to the [“Africa in the Media”](#) report published by the Africa Narrative,

- Only 13% of entertainment storylines that mentioned Africa included an African character, and 80% of the roles were small.
- Of 32 African topics tracked across all TV programming ranging from animals and culture to travel and immigration, only three had more positive than negative mentions: history, music, and sports.
- Business and the economy accounted for just 8% of news coverage about Africa.

The African diaspora plays a pivotal role in changing the narrative of Africa. The African Diaspora Network, based in the Silicon Valley, Santa Clara, CA, is made up of many diasporan leaders and institutions who are making a tremendous impact in Africa and the communities in which they live.

Among these leaders are students who are invested in creating change – whether it be in promoting a positive narrative in their daily interactions with fellow students and professors, creating impact-driven businesses with the continent in mind, and intentionally engaging in cultural experiences where they can be a part of conversations around Africa.

What are some examples of how diasporan youth are changing the narrative of Africa?

What are the challenges and opportunities for students in shifting the narrative?

What support and resources do they need along their journeys to create impact?

“The Role of Youth in Shifting Narratives of Africa” session organized by the African Diaspora Network and Africa No Filter began with opening remarks from Loksan Harley,



Executive Director of Homelands Advisory and member of the ADN Executive Leadership Council. He highlighted the critical role that the diaspora plays in shifting the narratives of Africa, “The Africans in the diaspora have such a critical role to play in all of this. You are your country's and continent's

ambassadors spread across the world. When you go to different parts of the world and you talk to people about the realities of the continent that in itself shifts the narratives. We must also not forget the affinity diaspora, the friends of Africa, people like me who have spent significant amounts of time on the continent and come back with much more positive stories.”

Loksan then introduced the panel moderator, Victor Mark-Onyegbu, Grants Lead at Africa No Filter. Victor welcomed everyone and set the stage for the conversation, “For centuries Africa has been depicted in a very negative light. The stereotypes about the continent have been overwhelmingly negative and we all acknowledge this. Research done by Africa No Filter identified the major frames in which Africa has been portrayed-poverty, corruption, poor leadership, conflict, and disease. There is a perception that Africa is broken and needs to be fixed and that Africans lack agency to fix themselves. We know that's not true. There are Africans actively shaping and influencing the image of the African continent in their respective disciplines and their respective fields of practice. That's why we are here today.”



Victor then introduced the panelists and asked them to share their thoughts.



When thinking of the future of Africa, Ambrose Kamyia, 2019 Mandela Washington Fellow and Founder of Kinga Safety, frames his outlook in terms of entrepreneurship. He shared, "Africa is going to be 25% of the world population by 2050. That can be a double-edged sword. If we don't prepare well for that, it can be a

disaster or a huge opportunity for us. We cannot wait until 2050 before taking action. We need to start now with the young population because the young population is the one that will take up the management of 2050 landscape. We need to identify the current and future challenges and then solve that with a business mindset. The driving factor is entrepreneurship."

Micheal Omeka, Mastercard Foundation Scholar Alumni, inspirational speaker, and fitness specialist, agreed that entrepreneurship is key and added, "For me, I live by the principle that you should live out your convictions. As a Nigerian, I believe that it is part of my cultural heritage to be extremely hard-working.



Even when I'm training at a gym, people ask, 'Are you training for the Olympics?' and I say, 'No, I'm Nigerian. I work hard. It's part of who I am.' When we live that exemplary lifestyle, it sends a stronger message than anything we can say."

Mehret Amsalu, 2016 Mandela Washington Fellow and Health Systems Researcher and Coordinator at London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine at the University of London shared another way to reframe the story of Africa, "It all starts with our mindset. Do we start with the positive progresses that have been made in Africa or do we focus more on the negatives? In my practice when I write about issues on the continent such as



maternal health, I always start with the progress made in the reduction of maternal and child health mortality and morbidity before highlighting the challenges. I have made the decision to start with the positive.”

African Diaspora Network looks forward to continuing to engage African and diasporan youth in our work at the African Diaspora Network, particularly at the African Diaspora Investment Symposium March 20-22, 2024 next year.

Suggested Action Steps:

- **Reframe stories of Africa by telling the positive first:** In our conversations or when writing about Africa, we can make an intentional decision to highlight the positive aspects first and the challenges after to tell a balanced story.
- **Invest in African and diasporan youth:** African and Diasporan youth are creating promising and innovative enterprises. Consider investing in their enterprises financially, through mentorship, or through offering network connections.
- **Participate in convenings:** As the panelist attested to in this discussion, participating in convenings whether it be hosted by the African Diaspora Network, Africa No Filter, YALI, Mastercard Foundation Scholars, or similar organizations working with Africa, is essential for youth to meet professionals in their field.

Upcoming ADN Engagement Opportunity:

Save the date for the following convenings:

- [Builders of Africa's Future](#) Cohort Six Graduation and Pitch Session - Sep 12, 2023 8:00 AM PST, 11:00 AM EST. For more details, please contact Brett Cave at brett@africandiasporanetwork.org
- [African Diaspora Investment Symposium \(ADIS24\)](#): March 20-22, 2024

Learn more on our [website](#) and [subscribe](#) to our newsletter for updates and registration for all African Diaspora Network events!

Highlights

- The Africans in the diaspora have a critical role to play in shifting the narratives of Africa. You are your countries' ambassadors across the world.
- Entrepreneurship is key to the success of Africa. Investors are needed to support enterprises led by Africans.
- Convenings are important because entrepreneurs can network with potential investors and demonstrate their business' stability and impact.
- Changes can be made in African countries on the policy level. For example, young entrepreneurs have innovative businesses but have to pay taxes even when they have not started earning revenue.

See the entire session recording [here](#).

Resources:

Click [here](#) to learn more about Impact and Innovation Forums and upcoming sessions.

Get to know the speakers better. Visit their organizations' websites.

- [Africa No Filter](#)
- [Mandela Washington Fellow](#)
- [Kinga Safety](#)
- [University of London](#)
- [Mastercard Foundation Scholars](#)

Stay in touch with the panelists:

- [Victor Mark-Onyegbu](#), Grants Lead, Africa No Filter
Email: victor@africanofilter.org
- [Ambrose Kamya](#), 2019 Mandela Washington Fellow and Founder of Kinga Safety
Email: akamya@kingasafety.com

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- [Mehret Amsalu](#), 2016 Mandela Washington Fellow and Health Systems Researcher and Coordinator at London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, University of London
Email: dubalemehret@gmail.com
 - [Micheal Omeka](#), Mastercard Foundation Scholar Alumni, inspirational speaker, fitness specialist
Email: omeka_mike@berkeley.edu
 - Session recording:
<https://youtu.be/8X-GHYIKLk>

Chat Recap:

Kathleen Seiden-thomas: Habari ya jioni from Nairobi! Our team is very excited to listen to this conversation as we share the intention to disrupt stereotypes and shift narratives about Africa and Africans by lifting up first person stories.
<https://whosestorieswillwehear.org/>

Ambrose Kanya: Here is the link to the Kinga app on apple store
<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/kinga-safety/id6443869502>

Ugochi Obidiegwu: African youth are the future of the world. Empowered African youths will propel the continent further and farther.

Julie Servan: here is the link to the Baluwo app, the app of the african diaspora, on applestore : <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/baluwo/id1490261153>

Ambrose Kanya: <https://foundersloungeug.com/>

Zion Taddese: Dear team, I am writing you on behalf of Shashemene; a community-based organization in Sacramento, California that focuses on minorities particularly young people with African heritage. We would to work with you on a number of projects. please contact us via email :zionutopiaenterprise@gmail.com. please send us your contact numbers and the details of today's presenter. my name is Ibrahim Koroma

Harouna Kenfack: Working on edtech - learning management system for Africans. Contact me at teamyadiko@gmail.com

Thank You!

African Diaspora Network is grateful to the speakers for sharing their insights on the role of youth in shaping the narrative of Africa. Thank you to everyone who joined!

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