



THINK AFRICA

# Annual Report 2022



**#Participation**  
#Representation  
**#Collaboration**  
#Diversity

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# Message From The Chair

**And just like that**, another year is behind us. 2022, compared to 2021, was a slower year in terms of the number of projects we undertook. Fortunately, this gave us time to reflect and prepare for a few essential things, such as updating our by-laws to reflect the organization's development since its establishment in 2014. The reduced number of grants and funded projects also made us realize our vulnerability in relying on public funds. Thus during the year and continuing in 2023, we explored efficient means to self-finance, ways of strengthening partnerships and identifying new ones, and building essential committees to drive critical efforts.

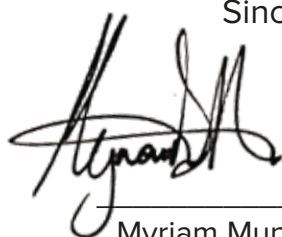
2022, fortunately, ended on a high note for Think Africa, and I am very excited to see what is in store for the organization for the next few years. We were awarded a STEA grant for our professional career mentorship program for the first time. A program that started with volunteerism is now growing to be a nationwide program that will hopefully run for three years. The grant also helps us fulfill our goal of growing our staff. As the operations of the organization expand, so does the need for day-to-day operations and management, which is why the STEA grant could not have come at a better time when two staff members will be hired.

Another milestone in 2022 was the strengthened collaboration we have witnessed among the African diaspora and Africa-focused civil societies. This year, we had several collaborations for the Africa day celebration and Think Africa Week. A Town hall is planned to take place each year where synergies will be explored and information will be shared.

Lastly, Think Africa being awarded the Moniheli's Association Member Award (MAYA) award gave us the biggest morale boost. Recognizing our work on integration, multiculturalism, and unity by the biggest Finnish multicultural organization, Moniheli ry, makes me proud of the good work that all the members, volunteers, and partners are doing.

I encourage you to read our annual report to learn more about our operations and achievements in 2022. In addition, we illustrate our vision for 2023's operations. I hope that this report inspires many to join and support Think Africa.

Sincerely,



Myriam Munezero  
Chairperson, Think Africa ry



# 2022 in Figures

**+19%** increase in membership

**39** partnerships and collaborations

**5** internships supported

**3,200**   
(previous: 2,923 followers)

**1,122**   
(previous: 945 followers)

**1,427**   
(previous: 832 followers)

**220**   
(previous: 196 followers)

## 2022 Key Results

### MAYA Award

Think Africa won the Moniheli Association of the Year (MAYA) award in 2022 among 120 other organizations across Finland working on integration. Think Africa has been recognized for their effort to promote peace and tolerance through integration, multiculturalism, and unity and work beyond boundaries, spreading positivity with other member organizations and beyond. The award is a signal for work well done and encouragement to keep going. It is essential to receive recognition for work done on a voluntary basis. Think Africa is ambitious to go further, reach out to more people of all ages and achieve more goals in the future.



Photo by Juke Luoma

# 2022 Key Results

## **Afro Finns nomination: *Community leadership***

Think Africa was celebrated as a nominee for the Community Leadership award during the AfroFinns Gala, organized by the AfroFinns association. The Community Leadership nomination was designed to identify agents of community and societal engagement by recognizing notable accomplishments in society, partnerships, and active volunteering in diverse frameworks of the Afro Finns community. Although Think Africa did not win this award, we are honored to receive recognition for our work and are grateful that community engagement and volunteer positions are valued.

## **Collaboration among the African diaspora-focused civil societies**

One of the strategic objectives of Think Africa is to strengthen the collaboration among like-minded African and African-diaspora-focused organizations in Finland. This year we made big strides towards that objective when together with four other organizations, we organized an Africa day celebration, and with eight organizations, we collaborated on Think Africa Week. A town hall will take place in January 2023 to continue this essential community-building effort.

## **New partnerships and sponsorships, donations**

In 2022, Think Africa received support from partners, sponsors, donors, organizations, and individuals who wished to support the good work being done and kept us going. A total of **7472,34 €** was raised through sponsors, and **984 €** was raised by donors. Think Africa's support included a generous

donation of two return flight tickets by Ethiopian Airlines. The list of sponsors and donors are included on page 17.

## **STEA grant**

The Think Africa Professional Mentorship program for foreigners secured a three-year grant from STEA. The program, implemented first in 2019 and then in 2021 with Moniheli ry has helped 60% and 70% of the mentees, respectively, find opportunities in their area of interest. The STEA grant will support the program's expansion nationwide and serve more immigrants to find opportunities in Finland. The program starts in February 2023.

## **Establishing operational teams and committees**

In 2022, Think Africa implemented various operating committees to work individually on tasks that advance the organization through simultaneous efforts. Regarding Think Africa, a committee is understood as groups within the organization concentrating on transforming the organization through focusing knowledge on a specific area of interest to increase the organization's success by initiating change. Implementing committees within Think Africa exemplifies the direction of leadership and facilitates organizational transition. Committee appointments enhance culture and cohesiveness amongst Think Africa's members and those serving on the board. This year, the committees are as follows: Outreach team, Fundraising team, Partnerships team, Communications team, and lastly, the Events and programs team.

# Words From Our Volunteers

## Ondi Madete, Kenya

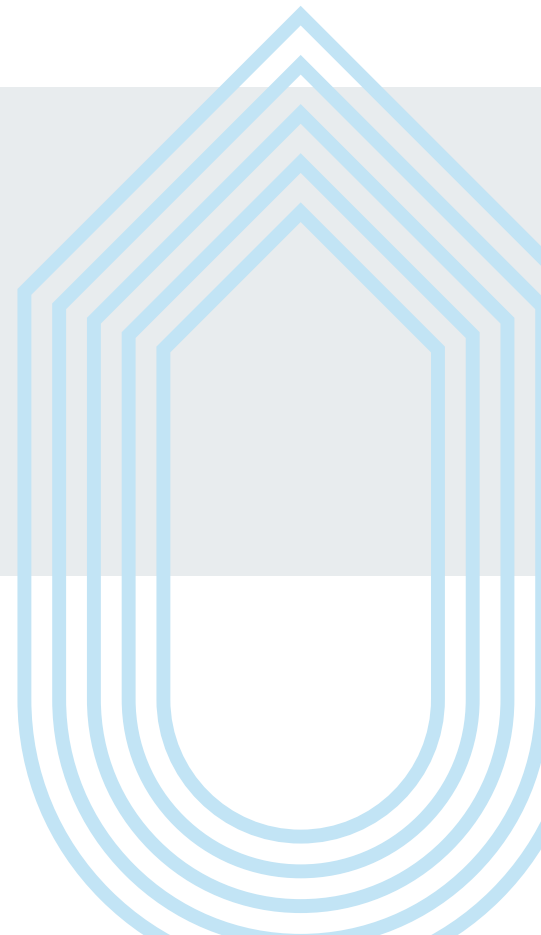
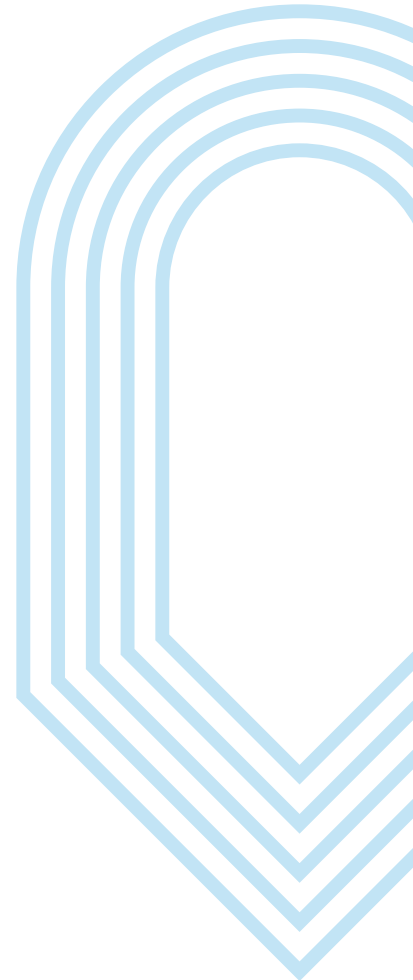
*"I am grateful for the experiences within the Think Africa community that have helped me expand my horizons, gain strength, meet people of similar backgrounds and experiences, and form meaningful and beneficial relationships." — Ondi Madete*

Ondi Madete is from Kenya and currently lives in Pori, Finland. Ondi has volunteered for Think Africa numerous times, with recent roles in Think Africa Week and the Think Africa Lounge. Ondi expresses that she is encouraged to volunteer for Think Africa for participation, giving back, meeting people, and engaging with culture. Additionally, Ondi conveys a feeling of comfort and a community that "feels like home [from] being around people like me." Ondi emphasizes the importance of exchanging stories and experiences with people with similar backgrounds to get ideas, strength, courage, community, and advice. Think Africa is influential to Ondi's experience in Finland as the organization serves as a "space where [she] can feel at home, comfortable, seen and heard."

## Aderemi Fayoyiwa, Nigeria

*"I think it is important to volunteer as a way of exercising ones selflessness muscle and in some way to give back when applicable." — Aderemi Fayoyiwa*

Aderemi Fayoyiwa is from Nigeria and presently lives in Helsinki, Finland. Aderemi joined Think Africa as a member and has energetically volunteered in different roles in 2021 and 2022. Recently, Aderemi has volunteered during Think Africa Week's opening ceremony, a side event for entrepreneurs, and the cultural bazaar. Aderemi remarks that Think Africa avails Africans in Finland a forum to relate freely, get help, and socialize. "It serves as a mirror into Africa for non-Africans and presents opportunities for multi-dimensional collaboration."





# Words From Our Volunteers

## Olli Tähtinen, Finland

Olli Tähtinen is from Pori, Finland, and presently lives in Helsinki, Finland. He joined Think Africa as a volunteer to experience community and to learn through shared experiences. Olli's recent volunteer experience has been during Think Africa Week, which he was involved with daily! Olli enjoys understanding how others experience relocating to Finland and finds this influential for the community and society, which he expresses is a critical reason to volunteer. Olli values that events were well-organized for volunteers and appreciates the meaningful conversations and friendships he made.

## Adeola Owokoniran, Nigeria/ United States

*"I really enjoy the people I am meeting along the way, and I hope to make new friends and have new experiences alongside Think Africa" — Adeola Owokoniran*

Adeola Owokoniran is from North Carolina, USA, and has recently relocated to Hämeenlinna, Finland as a professional volleyball player. Adeola has volunteered her wisdom as a coordinator for the Think Africa Lounge, as she considers it vital to volunteer in spaces and events you support. Adeola characterizes volunteering as necessary for obtaining professional skills, though the most remarkable outcome is the sense of community. As Adeola recently moved to Finland, she values the community of people she thought she could never find in Finland. "It is a glimpse and reminder of home through the eyes of a new person." Adeola describes Think Africa as an organization where individuals connected to Africa in any way, shape, or form can gather and be themselves and uplift others simultaneously.

# Words From Our Volunteers

## **Gunel Muradova, Azerbaijan**

*"I have met great people and learned the African culture. Also, communicating and giving information to newcomers made me happy." — Gunel Muradova*

Gunel Muradova is from Azerbaijan and currently lives in Helsinki, Finland. She became interested in volunteering for Think Africa after learning how the organization brings people together, helps to share ideas, and provides networking opportunities. Gunel volunteered during the preparation of Think Africa Week and was a significant help throughout Think Africa Week. Involvement with Think Africa has been a different experience for Gunel, yet she describes her experiences as unique and insightful.

## **Tolu Idowu, Nigeria**

*"For me personally, I Think Africa is a nurturing environment where I can encourage and be encouraged. I have also learned much more about other African countries and communities that are different from the one I come from." — Tolu Idowu*

Tolu is from Nigeria and relocated to Finland seven years ago. Tolu has contributed to events, provided aid in numerous volunteer opportunities, and assisted during Think Africa Week since 2020. Tolu notes that it's meaningful to volunteer to support the African community in Finland, despite variations in resources to help in other ways. Tolu expresses that showing up and helping with events is an excellent method to help and meet new people. Tolu encourages the work of Think Africa and illustrates that it provides a safe, welcoming space for minorities of African descent to connect, share stories and lift each other.





# Achievements: **Projects & Programs**

## Think Africa Week

Among the key achievements of the 7<sup>th</sup> Think Africa Week: Excellent ambiance, new connections and networks built, insightful conversations and new collaborations with and within the African community, positive outcomes, and actionable conclusions. The week-long Helsinki-based series of events took place between the 12<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> of November 2022 and brought together close to 400 attendees from diverse fields, backgrounds, and ages, 26 private and public entities as partners and collaborators, and had a social media reach of over 17.3K.



*Think Africa Week is creating "the awareness we need in a new environment [...] it is creating a link between Finland and the Diaspora and the home countries they come from," said the Namibian Ambassador, Charles B Josob, in his welcoming speech at the Opening ceremony.*



Notably, through our seat on the Regional Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations, Think Africa also participated in the government program of building good relations during Think Africa Week. Fostering good population relations in society promotes equal opportunities for all. This was executed by collecting views and experiences of our community on the state of the population relations in areas of Attitudes, Sense of security, Interaction, and Inclusion. The experiences and the recommended solutions will be sent to the local and national decision-makers next year.



# Achievements: **Projects & Programs**

## **Harambee podcast tables conversations that matter the most!**

Harambee - All Pull Together is a podcast produced by Think Africa ry in collaboration with TheoKeys Media. SitraLab supported the Harambee podcast production in 2021 and 2022. Harambee explores the unspoken narratives of immigrants of African descent in Finland and unearths topics on democratic participation, civic participation, and student integration, amongst many other issues. The primary objective is to feature guest interviews and engage in dialogues concerning what it means to be part of and included in Finnish society. The Harambee podcast intends to acquire Finnish audiences; thus far, 58% of the listeners are from Finland. Nevertheless, Harambee has accumulated an international audience with listeners from the US, Germany, South Africa, Kenya, and beyond.

In 2022, the Harambee podcast held conversations on current affairs, such as the war in Ukraine and recent developments in Europe and the UK. Additionally, the podcast concentrated explicitly on the participation and inclusion of minorities in Finnish democratic processes. An influential podcast episode featured dialogues on identity and the elements influencing and informing one's identity, which reached 100 downloads within the first two weeks. The year's final episode highlighted the relationship between highly educated

migrants and the labor market and featured an integration professional. Although the Harambee podcast coordinators scheduled to release a new episode every month, it materialized differently than planned. The Harambee podcast is vital in conveying meaningful exchanges and fostering a platform to share stories and experiences.

In 2023, the Harambee podcast coordinators will work towards improving consistency in production and marketing, creating a community around Harambee, and yearn to accomplish what Harambee developed -- to be a voice that makes for greater intercultural and transcultural foundations in Finnish society.

## **African Film Festival**

For the second year in a row, Think Africa participated in the Love and Anarchy Film Festival, which occurred in September 2022. Love and Anarchy is one of the biggest film festivals in Finland, and Think Africa participated in curating and showcasing twelve feature and short films from different African countries as part of #AfricanExpress. The films, many of which sold out, demonstrated the diversity in cultures, creativity, and human stories. The #AfricanExpress opened the eyes of the over 3000 Finns who view these films. Collaboration between the Moroccan, Namibian, and Tunisian embassies and the Ubuntu Film Club was recommenced for this festival.

# Achievements: **Projects & Programs**

## YEPP

The Youth Educational Performance Program (YEPP), funded by Moniheli ry, began in October 2021 and ended in June 2022. The program concentrates on direct mentoring and tutoring designed to address the student's needs. YEPP consists of thirteen youths, twelve mentors, six tutors, eight parents, and one coordinator. YEPP's initial program was a focus group interview in October 2021, and accordingly, mentors were matched with mentees based on data from the interviews and profiles presented by the mentors. The YEPP project organized excursions with the mentees, which included visiting two laboratories and two entertainment centers. Furthermore, YEPP coordinated two public events; an online talk in collaboration with the International Working Women of Finland (IWWOF), which featured a presentation on YEPP, and a panel discussion featuring the YEPP children, parents, and youth workers. In sum, there were thirteen mentor-mentee groups and two meetings per month for each group, totaling 26 meetings monthly. During the six months



of mentoring, there were 156 meetings in total.

"The young beneficiaries feel less lonely through the new relationship with the mentors. They made new friends with other youths and so form new network(s). They also have new knowledge about careers, setting goals, aspiring to succeed and careers in sciences. They continue to have access to the mentors that are continuing with them and have access to new services as YEPP is now registered to continue to provide services for the youths."

The pilot program ended after the last evaluation meeting with the mentors in June 2022. The program continues as YEPP Ry. Further knowledge and updates on its activities can be found here.

Think Africa will continue to collaborate with YEPP as a founding partner.





# Achievements: **Projects & Programs**

## **Lean In - Afara project**

The Lean In Series, organized in 2021, connected diaspora experts in Finland and Finnish companies interested in the African market. Following the insight obtained in 2021, Think Africa's organizing committee met monthly to develop the Afrara Project. Afara is symbolic as it means 'bridge' in Yoruba. The Afara Project aims to:

- Bring together African diaspora experts from various sectors in one centralized, easily accessible database.
- Facilitate sharing knowledge, expertise, and experience in African countries in relation to Finnish organizations and projects.
- Support Finnish companies to enter the African market with reliable partners and vice-versa.
- Provide the African diaspora in Finland and in Africa to contribute to the development of African countries.

In 2023, the committee plans to make the database accessible on the Think Africa website and organize networking events and share information concerning the approved Finland's Africa strategy.

## **Strengthening partnerships among African diaspora-focused civil societies**

Think Africa was awarded a 3,500€ grant from Moniheli to organize activities with the goal of strengthening partnerships among African diaspora civil societies to better address common challenges. The project started with a town hall organized in September 2022 to identify synergies for collaboration and implement activities together for Think Africa Week, addressing cultural sensitivity in different sectors. Over 20 organizations were invited, and ten agreed to collaborate on events during Think Africa Week, particularly ones that addressed integration, workplace relations, entrepreneurship, and cultural awareness. Another town hall is planned to take place on the 29th of January with the Agenda of sharing each other's activities for 2023 and identifying synergies and collaboration points.

## **DEI Forum Nordics**

Think Africa actively participated in the 2022 Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Forum Nordics, which aimed to build an inclusive society where every individual feels respected, has a sense of belonging, and receives an equitable opportunity for growth. Think Africa actively shaped the program and ensured the African diaspora's voices were heard in that conversation, either by participating as panelists, speakers, or volunteers.



# Achievements: **Projects & Programs**

## Africa Day Celebration

In commemoration of Africa Day, Think Africa, for the first time, organized activities around these important events. Two events were organized. The first was in collaboration with Moniheli ry, AFAES ry, HEED Association Finland, and the Finnish-African Association to celebrate and create cultural awareness through music, food, and interactions. The other event invited representatives of African organizations from each of the Nordic countries to discuss collaboration among Africans in the diaspora. The discussion, held virtually, opened avenues for Think Africa to form partnerships with other organizations in the Nordics.



## Internships

Think Africa continued to attract and support interns interested in community development and international relations-related research and activities. In 2022, a total of five interns did their internship with Think Africa from the University of Tallinn. Three completed it under the topic of Diaspora electoral participation in Nigeria. Their Internship story and results can be read in Think Africa's [blog post](#). A 2022 intern stated the following regarding their experience with Think Africa:

*"Working as interns at Think Africa for a period of four months broadened our horizons and expanded our worldview in the areas of research, NGO internal workings, collaborations with like-minded people in the field of state electoral affairs, and how electoral systems can enhance better governance and citizenry participation in Africa."*

Two students will complete their internships on 15th January 2023. Their internships focused on mapping the ecosystem of African diaspora-focused civil societies and a resource hub with employment and well-being information useful for new immigrants. All the students were supervised by members of Think Africa on a voluntary basis.

# Achievements: **Projects & Programs**

## Initiative for a Safer Climate

In 2022, Think Africa began collaborating with the Safer Climate Initiative. It is the Atmospheric Climate and Competence Centre's flagship civil society work. The purpose of our collaboration is as follows:

- To use research-based knowledge to support Think Africa in encouraging discussion on and spreading information about climate change and sustainability among the African diaspora.
- To support the representation of the African diaspora in the Finnish climate discussion.
- To improve the ACCC researchers' understanding of civil society's environmental work in addition to the process of communicating about science to different target groups and the professional skills needed for that.
- To provide Think Africa members a possibility to interact with researchers and their work to learn about climate change-related issues.



We attended the first joint meeting in early May to discuss collaboration perspectives with other interested civil society organizations. In June, Think Africa presented itself at the ACCC's event 'Towards Carbon neutrality.' This was followed by an interview on the need for collaboration and representation for a safer climate. A collaborative event was organized during Think Africa Week, which briefly discussed climate change in African countries and the aims of the Safer Climate network. During the event, we hosted a children's comic workshop and, shared information showcasing a chlorophyll meter and other research equipment borrowed from the Finnish Meteorological Institute. **More about the event and its results can be read [here](#).**

## Others

In addition to the above-detailed activities, Think Africa continued to organize bi-weekly Lounge sessions that covered various topics. In addition, as most of the year was not restricted by Covid-19 restrictions, Think Africa organized more face-to-face events to bring people together, for instance, in celebration of Women's day, a sports fun day for families in April, a summer beach day in August and an end of year celebration in December.



# Forward into 2023

**Think Africa in 2023** continues to strive to create a strong platform that brings together its members, collaborators, and partners to create solutions that benefit the Diaspora community and the Finnish society.

In 2022, we focused on creating dedicated committees and reviewing their strategy to support the strengthening of that platform. The committees include Outreach, Partnerships, Fundraising, Communications, and Events & Programs. These committees have contributed to establishing the strategic priorities of 2023, as presented below. The committees will continue to supplement their efforts with a full-time staff that can support the day-to-day operational activities.

The strategic priorities for 2023 are as follows:

## **1. Establishing an administrative team:**

As part of Think Africa's Goal Four and resuming the work of 2021 and 2022, Think Africa will work towards hiring full-time staff to concentrate on administrative and operational activities. As Think Africa grows, so do its operations. In particular, the organization requires a full-time program coordinator who efficiently handles the operational and program activities and monitors and evaluates the many activities. Further, Think Africa will also seek a full-time Head of communications.

## **2. Outreach & increasing the membership:**

In 2022, Think Africa established Outreach and Fundraising Committees to support expansion to additional cities and people. In addition to standard outreach efforts, in 2023, particular concentration will be put into developing a model for growth to other cities beyond Helsinki.

## **3. Investing in partnerships:**

In 2022, the Partnerships Committee was developed to grow and maintain relationships with partners specifically. Many of the actions will commence in 2023. The focus will be on formalizing how Think Africa forms partnerships, identifying the right partners for Think Africa, and forming partnerships where members can benefit. The unions from associations will help streamline Think Africa's activities by not having to implement them from scratch. Furthermore, the Partnerships Committee will maintain relationships with existing partners and build relationships with media partners. The voice of the Diaspora is scarcely included in the media, and Think Africa will aim to be a good source where the community representatives are heard.

# Forward into 2023

## 4. Improve communication among our members.

Communication was emphasized as a critical area that Think Africa needs to focus on. Accordingly, in 2023 we aim to clarify the membership benefits, enhance how we communicate, and highlight the community impact individuals contribute to by becoming members. Furthermore, Think Africa will address communication concerns by concentrating on the following:

- a. Think Africa has several internal (email, Slack, WhatsApp) and external (Website, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube) communication channels. However, it needs to be made clear which channels are best for what and whom. In 2023, we plan to carry out a communication survey to understand the usage and behavior of members to help us improve Communication through these channels.
- b. Another special attention will be put into making the website a valuable platform to create visibility for our service members. This will bring extra benefits for those members and make the website a more valuable resource, increasing traffic there.
- c. Lastly, Think Africa will ensure search engine optimization in all our communication. This will help us reach the right target audience plus understand better how people engage with Think Africa's communication channels

## 5. Have a robust fundraising strategy.

It must be considered that having consistent funding will keep Think Africa operating and functioning. The Fundraising Committee was established in 2022, and core programs that require funding to be maintained were identified. Furthermore, the Board concluded that generating funding is critical for sustaining Think Africa. Ideas such as developing funds through the Lean In Project, organizing Restaurant days, and selling merchandise were identified as potential fundraising efforts. Yet, an applicable model for the above activities still needs to be developed.



# 2022 Partners & Collaborators

We couldn't have done it without those who financially supported  
Think Africa for 2022:

**Addis Kitchen**

**Aida Hailemichael**

**Amine Hammouali**

**Andrei Tabarcea**

**Anthony Owala**

**Apramey Dube**

**Bernard Ngenzi**

**Business Finland**

**Catherine Salo**

**ELY-keskus (the regional  
business and trade office)**

**Embassy of Algeria**

**Embassy of the Kingdom of  
Morocco**

**Emmanuel Byilingiro**

**Ethiopian Airlines**

**Felix Rukundo Kwizera**

**Fettouma El Harchi**

**Finnpartnership**

**Globe Art Point**

**Heide Nuutinen**

**Henriette Umwaniwabo  
Uwamwezi**

**linge Ndinehafo Lapp**

**Initiative for Safer Climate**

**Jean Claude Mugiraneza**

**Joie Ufitimbabazi Holmedahl**

**Joni Karjalainen**

**Jukka-Pekka Lehtinen**

**Jules Gasana**

**Julie Utabazi**

**Kevin Ngure Kamau**

**Marie Umutoni**

**Miss Claudine Dushime**

**Moniheli ry**

**Odelade Toun Oluwatayo**

**Prinditeenus**

**Ronja Brown**

**Sami Hamici**

**Seth Ndayishimye**

**Songa Mwizerwa**

**Sunday Mpanduji**

**Suomen Yrittäjät (Association  
of Finnish Entrepreneurs)**

**Thomas Kinnaird**

**University of Helsinki**

**Voi hyvin hunaja**

# 2022 Partners & Collaborators

A big thank you to all the partners and collaborators in 2022:



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A big thank you to all the partners and collaborators in 2022:





# THINK AFRICA

**Engage**

•

**Promote**

•

**Empower**

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