



THINK AFRICA

Annual Report 2023



#Participation
#Representation
#Collaboration
#Diversity

info@thinkafrica.fi
www.thinkafrica.fi



Summary

Message From The Chair	3
2023 in Figures	4
Executive Summary	4
2023 Key results	6
Mission, Vision, Values, and Priorities	6
Volunteer Stories	8
Financial Overview	9
Fundraising Overview	10
Highlights: Projects & Programs	13
Board of Directors	16
2023 Partners & Collaborators	17



Message From The Chair

Following the swearing in of the new Board in 2023, work began in earnest. There were commitments that needed to be fulfilled and already-made plans that were required to be brought to fruition. One of them was the joint planning of the Africa Day event that happened on the 25th of May 2023. This joint planning came out of the understanding reached and agreement made during the Think Africa-led Town Hall session held earlier in 2023. One of the objectives of this Town Hall session was for organisations - such as Think Africa that are focussed on issues concerning the African diaspora in Finland - to find areas of synergy and work together to achieve goals. Up to 14 of these organisations came together to plan and implement that Africa Day event. Other organisations also collaborated on planning other programmes and events. Africa Day was a brilliant success and the feedback was generally positive. This is a milestone Think Africa set and reached.

Think Career (formerly known as Think Africa Professional Mentorship Programme) also began immediately. For this programme we had received a positive decision on a grant from STEA in 2022 to run the programme from 2023 to 2025. Think Africa for the first time opened two paid positions to run Think Career. We also moved to a different office that is more accessible and conducive to Think Africa's members and activities. Think Career ran two successful terms in 2023. This is another milestone we set and reached.

The current Board looked inwards at Think Africa as an organisation and decided to focus on structures and procedures to run the organisation more effectively, predictably, and transparently. We worked on the goals for 2023 - 2025 and how we can bring these goals to fruition with the assistance of all willing members. Our aim was to consolidate our membership base and foster a sense of belonging. After the restrictions that we all experienced during the lockdown season Think Africa also organised a summer grilling get-together for members to meet face-to-face and socialise.



For Think Africa Week 2023, which was also a celebration of the 10th year anniversary of the flagship event, we collaborated with several organisations, entities, and like-minded associations to create a successful series. During the week, Afara Marketplace organised a Slush side-event which was well-attended and brought together stakeholders in the Africa-facing technology space. We also welcomed an event that engaged young people in a constructive conversation around belonging and activism.

I can only mention a few of the activities, programmes, events, collaborations, and results of 2023 in this opening piece. I invite you to continue reading the Annual Report to see more of the work that was done last year and how Think Africa is growing. We are so proud of all that Think Africa achieved in 2023 out of the good work of our very active members. Thank you one, thank you all. We look forward to more achievements in 2024.

Sincerely,
Akin Akinsola
Chairperson. Think Africa ry

2023 in Figures

4 Internships

1 Work trial

51 Collaborations
& partners

3,502 
(previous: 2,200 followers)

1,458 
(previous: 1,122 followers)

1,847 
(previous: 1,427 followers)

230 
(previous: 220 followers)

Executive Summary

Welcome to the Think Africa Annual Report of 2023, a testament to our collective journey towards empowerment, unity, and progress within the African diaspora community in Finland. As we reflect on the past year, we celebrate our achievements and the spirit of resilience and collaboration that defines our organisation.

Key Achievements

- ◆ **Connection and Collective Resilience:** In 2023, Think Africa continued to be a beacon of hope and support for the African diaspora in Finland. We provided our community members with opportunities and pathways to success through initiatives like the Think Africa Lounge, Creative(s) Corner, and the Think Career mentorship program. We reinforced connections and ambitions with each Lounge session, internship, work trial, and networking event.
- ◆ **Financial Sustainability:** Amidst the year's challenges, we demonstrated resilience and adaptability, navigating uncertainties and progressing towards greater stability and self-reliance.
- ◆ **Community Unity:** Think Africa is more than just an organisation; it is a family bound by shared values and a common vision. From Think Africa Week's vibrant celebrations to the iVote series's thought-provoking discussions, we stood together, amplifying our voices and shaping our collective future.

Executive Summary

Mission, Vision, and Values:

Our mission is to elevate the African diaspora in Finland by fostering well-being, belonging, representation, and economic empowerment. Guided by our vision of an esteemed and engaged diaspora, our values emphasise collaboration, representation, participation, and diversity.

Financial Overview

Grant funding, particularly from STEA, constituted a significant portion of our income, reflecting our success in securing support for vital programs like ThinkCareer. However, a decline in membership fees and donations underscores the need for increased member and donor engagement, as well as diversified funding sources.

Projects and Programs:

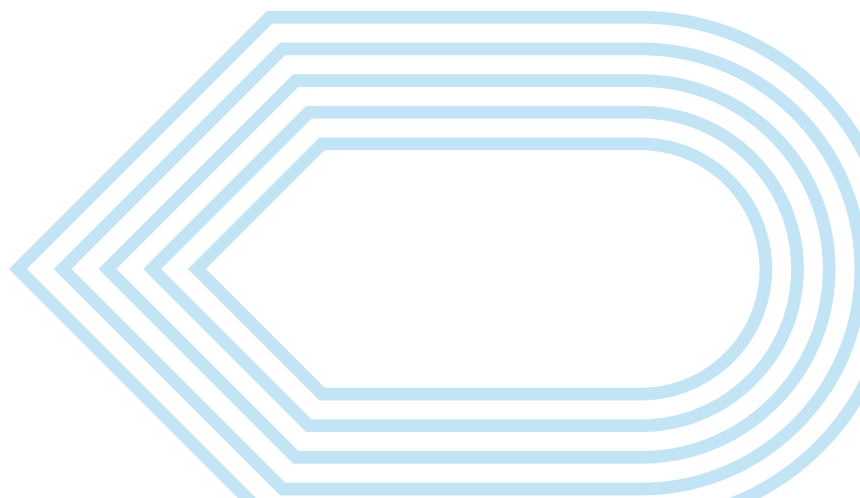
Noteworthy projects like the Harambee podcast series, ThinkCareer, iVote series, and Think Africa Week showcased our commitment to promoting diversity, civic participation, and professional development within the community.

Acknowledgments

We extend our deepest gratitude to our supporters, partners, collaborators, members and volunteers. Your unwavering belief in our mission and tireless efforts have fueled our journey and inspired us to reach greater heights

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Think Africa Annual Report reflects a year of impactful initiatives and community engagement. As we progress, our emphasis remains on advancing the well-being, representation, and empowerment of the African diaspora in Finland, guided by our core values and strategic priorities.



2023 Key results

2023 was an active year for Think Africa, with many key programmes and activities implemented by the membership and Board.

Empowerment, belonging and wellbeing were among the goals set for Think Africa for the period 2023 - 2025. Implemented in two rounds in spring and autumn, our mentorship program helped meet that objective by providing support for unemployed and underemployed jobseekers. First launched in 2019, the project was rebranded as Think Career in 2023, to reflect the focus on participants' wellbeing and preparation for the workplace by providing peer mentorship, training and networking opportunities.

We made good progress toward our goal of **economic empowerment** in the community, as we were able to employ a project coordinator and marketing coordinator to support Think Career and other key activities such as Think Africa Week and the Think Africa Lounge to name a few. We were proud to have been able to nurture other talents by providing four internships to Miriam Kahura, Himel Mahmud, Salma Gheita and Elias Toni Tondo. The organisation also benefited from the outstanding efforts of Boniphace Kanyathare who conducted important research on self-funding models during his work trial.

Additionally, we moved closer to our goal of a **financially sustainable** Think Africa by securing much-needed funding from STEA, the Funding Centre for Social Welfare and Health Organisations. The funding body has provided financial support for the Think Career project for three years from 2023 to 2025.

Our commitment to **community building** was evident in our successful hosting of a town hall of African Diaspora organisations and our participation in Africa Day celebrations along with 13 other non-profits. Meanwhile, our efforts to promote **civic engagement and democratic participation** were reflected in the popular iVote series and Harambee podcast, which provided the Diaspora community with crucial information ahead of the 2023 parliamentary elections.

Mission, Vision, Values, and Priorities

Mission

Our overarching mission is to elevate the African diaspora in Finland by fostering their well-being and a sense of belonging while simultaneously advocating for their substantive representation and engagement and bolstering their economic empowerment. This mission is pursued through our leadership as a trusted and enduring institution committed to operating with utmost integrity and transparency.

Mission, Vision, Values, and Priorities

Vision

We envision a future where the African diaspora in Finland is recognised, valued, and actively involved in shaping a diverse, inclusive, and thriving Finnish society.

Values

Our core values serve as guiding principles:

- ◆ **Collaboration:** We recognize the potency of collective effort in realising our objectives.
- ◆ **Representation:** We strive for an accurate and authentic depiction of Africa, Africans, and the African diaspora.
- ◆ **Participation:** We champion equitable involvement of all members within the African diaspora.
- ◆ **Diversity:** We embrace and draw strength from the diversity inherent within our organisation.

Goals 2023-2025

Our goals for the period encompass:

1. **Empowerment:** Facilitating the utilisation of skills and pursuit of interests among our members and the African diaspora in Finland.
2. **Belonging and Well-being:** Nurturing a sense of belonging and fostering well-being within our community.
3. **Advocacy:** Advocating for meaningful representation and engagement of the African diaspora in Finland.

4. **Inclusivity:** Cultivating a resilient, inclusive, and reputable organisation.

5. **Transparency and Sustainability:** Upholding transparency, accountability, and financial sustainability.

Strategy 2023-2025

Our strategic framework entails targeted actions aligned with our goals, including the development of skills enhancement initiatives, nurturing partnerships, and ensuring operational transparency.

2024 Priorities and Courses of Action

Our foremost priorities for 2024 encompass:

- ◆ Establishment of an administrative team.
- ◆ Prioritization of funding for coordinators.
- ◆ Enhancement of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.
- ◆ Expansion of the Think Career mentorship program.
- ◆ Strengthening of outreach and advocacy endeavours.
- ◆ Enhancement of communication channels and policies.
- ◆ Development of a robust fundraising strategy

These concerted efforts are aimed at augmenting our organisation's efficacy, influence, and sustainability in serving the African diaspora in Finland.

Volunteer Stories

Petra Ogunjimi

I have profoundly enjoyed my time and years with the Think Africa organisation. As a proud member and a volunteer, Think Africa has been able to provide me with a strong sense of belonging and communal support. I have made fabulous connections through Think Africa, and hopefully will continue doing so. Together we are indeed stronger.

Charity Kamau

I have been volunteering in Think Africa since August 2023 as an event coordinator, I am responsible for organising the Think Africa lounge sessions that happen monthly on Thursdays. And some of my duties include looking for topics and speakers to talk on specific issues/topics. Through Think Africa I have gotten to meet so many people and socialise and network. Think Africa also, has given me the platform and support to help me improve and update my skills. They have gracefully pulled me out of my comfort zone and helped me to see my potential that I was sitting on. And I am grateful to get to work with a great team and a good initiative that gives back to the community.

Boniphace Kanyathare

Since joining Think Africa in February 2023, inspired by my brother Tichaona Dande, I've embarked on a journey filled with purpose and camaraderie. My inaugural volunteer session involved supporting video shoots for Finnish parliamentary election contestants, where the ethos of unity shone brightly through the dedicated efforts of fellow members. Assuming the role of Fundraising Research Coordinator, organised through the TE Office, I collaborated closely with Myriam Munezero and Denise Wall, witnessing first hand their unwavering commitment to our cause. Under the guidance of Sofia Achame-Räisänen, we seamlessly coordinated events like the Think Career celebration and the inauguration of our new offices in Tapiola, epitomising our collective drive towards success. Beyond the tangible contributions, Think Africa has gifted me invaluable networks, propelling my endeavours in entrepreneurship. It's an honour to be part of such a transformative organisation, and I eagerly anticipate further collaboration to enrich its impact.

Volunteer Stories

Roberto Raitasuo

I joined Think Africa some 4-5 years ago, and I have never regretted it. Through the years and meeting people of diverse African origins I had grown increasingly interested in Africa and its diverse realities. I am a curious person, so being offered the possibility of connecting and learning by being part of a dynamic community was the perfect opportunity. I was asked to help organise Think Africa Week, which was full of interesting events with great speakers. It was a joy collaborating and participating. My experience is that many Africans are very hard working, warm and inspiring people, but paradoxically African realities and points of view are almost invisible in our surroundings, which tells about the existing hierarchies and power relations in Finland, Europe and the world. Over time, African points of view gain visibility in Finland. That is in part thanks to the great work of "TA" and its great volunteers. TA enables people to bring more positive publicity to African topics, while also working for the wellbeing of Africans and Afro-Finns in Finland. In Think Africa I have been a member on the board, and I am a member of its communications team. So much is left to learn, and the organisation allows me to connect and engage in collaborative projects. I like seeing Think Africa as a big family, and it is a family in which I feel welcome and where I like to bring some of my own spices while also enjoying the spices of others and learning some new "recipes" and cooking good new ideas, actions and projects together.

Financial Overview

Our financial results show that grant funding was the most important source of income for the year, with STEA funding for Think Career comprising the bulk of these cash inflows.

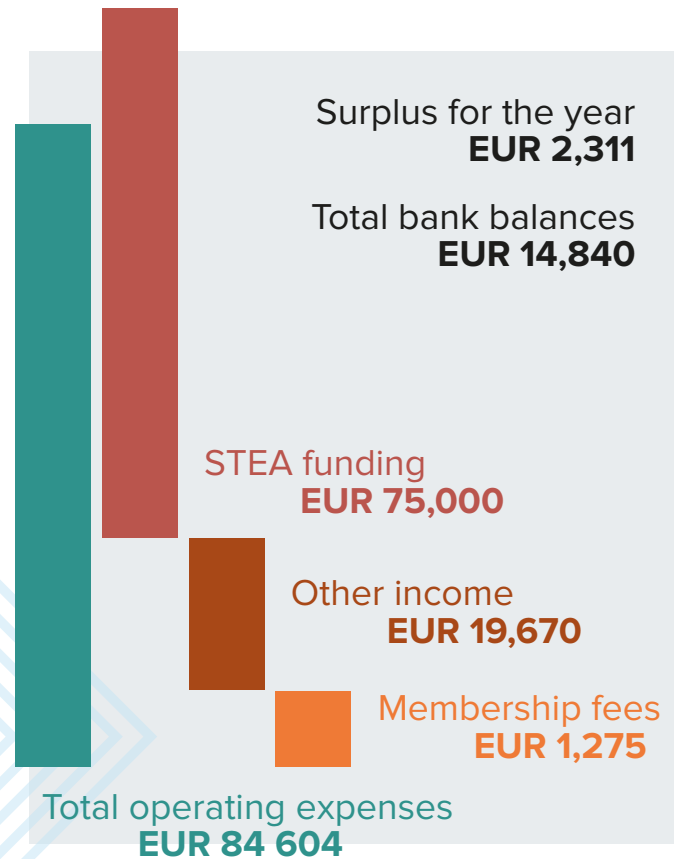
Despite a higher wage bill resulting from the recruitment of two employees to administer the Think Career mentorship programme and the increase in other activities, our efficient use of funds allowed us to record a small surplus at the end of 2023 — EUR 2,311 compared to a loss of EUR 3,868 at the end of 2022.

Financial Overview

A slight decline in income from membership fees (EUR 1,275) compared to 2022 (EUR 1,355) suggests that we need to do more to engage our members and to grow our membership. Similarly, donations for the entire year fell from EUR 10,301 in 2022 to EUR 3,050 in 2023.

The results are a reminder that we must place greater emphasis on self-financing in order to support programmes and activities that may not necessarily align with available sources of grant funding. We are pleased to provide our members with our audited financial results, showing the full details of our financial performance in 2023, along with this report.

Selected key figures from 2023*



*all figures have been rounded up to the nearest euro

Fundraising Overview

For the Think Africa community, 2023 was a year in which we stepped up our activity to secure funding for the many wonderful programmes and projects our board and members implemented to promote the social, cultural, economic and political wellbeing of the Diaspora. Below, we have listed some of the most significant activities and the funding they received.

STEA funding for Think Career

In 2023, Think Africa secured three years of funding for Think Career 2023 - 2025, our mentorship programme aimed at developing the wellbeing and skills required for immigrants to participate in Finnish working life, through peer mentorship, networking and training. The nominal funding grant for 2023 was EUR 89,110.

Fundraising Overview

Sitra funding for iVote series

Think Africa's iVote and Harambee podcast discussion series provided much-needed information about the 2023 parliamentary elections and many of its candidates in English. The Finnish Innovation Fund, Sitra, supported the democratic participation project to the tune of EUR 7,697 for the video series.

Moniheli funding for Creatives Corner

The Think Africa Creatives Corner provides a forum for people active in the creative arts to gather on a monthly basis to showcase their talents, share their stories and build community. In 2023, TA partnered with the collective Kulttuurikameleontit ry to seek funding from Moniheli, a large network of multicultural organisations. Moniheli's support for the programme amounted to EUR 5,000 in 2023, however the funds were managed by our collaboration partner, so are not reflected in our financial statements.

Self-financing research project

As part of our goal to build a financially stable and sustainable organisation, we embarked on a qualitative research project to gain an understanding of how different nonprofits organised their fundraising. The project was conducted by our energetic and highly committed work trial participant Boniphace Kanyathare. Through extensive face-to-face interviews, Boniphace identified key strategies used by the participant organisations to fundraise from individual donors as well as public and private sector bodies. The research provided important insights that TA's Fundraising Committee has used to begin designing a program to cultivate long-term donors.

Sponsorship for Think Africa Week 2023

A broad cross section of sponsors and donors came forward to support Think Africa Week, our flagship week-long event that takes place every autumn. In 2023, we received a 5,000-euro grant from the Jenny and Antti Wihuri Foundation to finance the event. Other major donors included the City of Helsinki, Finnpartnership, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), and the Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco, who contributed a combined EUR 4,500. Other individual donors gave nearly EUR 1,683, culminating in a total of EUR 11,183 raised in cash for the event. Many other sponsors contributed in kind. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all individuals and organisations whose generous financial support made Think Africa's endeavours possible throughout 2023.



Fundraising Overview

Think Africa Week 2023 Sponsors*

Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco

Embassy of the Republic of Namibia

Embassy of Tunisia

Jenny and Antti Wihuri Foundation

Ethiopian Airlines

Finnpartnership

Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Maria O1

IOM

Moniheli

Kulttuurikkameleontit ry

Stea

Kalliola

City of Helsinki

Addis Kitchen

John's Coffee

Tespack

Ubuntu Film Club

Famillia ry

Suomi-Afrikka Seura

Perfect your SEO

Globe Art Point (GAP)

Amazon (AWS)

Bilingual

Wallcomms

University of Helsinki (SIMHE)

Studio Pee

Oatly

Voi hyvin

Prinditeenus

Riyo Cafe

* The list comprises both financial sponsors and in-kind supporters who backed TAW '23.

Highlights: **Projects & Programs**

Inclusive Workplaces

In collaboration with International Professionals Finland, we started working on a project aimed at amplifying the voices of immigrants in Finland through a series of five insightful podcasts. These podcasts will delve into immigrants' personal journeys in the labour market, share strategies to open doors for others, and explore how companies can foster more inclusive workplaces. Expanding on the podcast series, our goal is to develop two impactful publications: one empowering immigrants as diversity ambassadors and the other guiding companies toward enhanced inclusivity. In 2023, we secured funding from the Väinö Tanner Foundation to support podcast production, which includes educational resources, consultation, access to recording studios, and a publishing platform. Currently, we are seeking funding or sponsorship to enable us to hire a coordinator to liaise with the podcast guests, production crew, and the publications. If the project progresses as planned, we anticipate releasing the podcasts in Autumn 2024.

Think Career

The Think Africa Professional Mentorship programme for foreigners securing a three-year grant from STEA officially started in April 2023. It has also been renamed Think Career.

In 2023, 2 rounds of mentorship programmes were organised that lasted for 3 months each with 58 mentees and mentors matched in total. The programme combined personal mentoring with each mentee assigned their own mentor, training for mentees led by experts, peer support and well-being sessions. Besides our expert-led training, a strong sense of community and belonging is at the core of Think Career. Navigating a foreign job market is made easier as participants bond, share experiences, and collectively build a professional and personal supportive network.

For the coming year, the duration of the mentorship programme will be 5 months each from May – September 2024, and September 2024– January 2025.

Think Africa Week - Diaspora in Action

Think Africa Week 2023 that was held from November 25 - December 2, 2023, celebrated with the theme "Diaspora in Action." The week was dedicated to celebrating the impact and influence of the African diaspora living in Finland and beyond. This year's Think Africa Week was a vibrant showcase of the African diaspora's contributions to Finnish society and the strengthening of relations between African countries and Finland. From the innovative pitches at AfricaConnect, the Slush Side Event, showcasing businesses creatively solving problems and fostering connections between Africa and Finland, to the enlightening and inspiring conversations about the Diaspora's humanitarian actions in times of crisis as well as the impact of diaspora actions in the Finnish society. Every moment was a testament to the power of collective action and shared vision.

Highlights: **Projects & Programs**

TADAT / iVote: Understanding Parliamentary Elections

Finnish citizens with foreign backgrounds are under-represented in Finnish politics including in voting, standing as candidates, as well as serving as elected officials.

With the financial support of Sitra, we sought to fill the gap by continuing our iVote series and Harambee podcast to create awareness and increase civic participation in the parliamentary elections in March and April 2023. We featured 10 parliamentary election candidates from seven political parties. Manifestos of candidates' and political parties' agendas were made available in English on several platforms and reached over 15K people. Topics such as the state of Finland's health care and social services, labour shortage, climate change, and the country's educational slowdown, as well as the integration of foreign-born Finnish citizens and its correlation with civic participation were discussed, highlighting the importance of participation of everyone in the Finnish society. Although the project achieved its objectives, the actual voting results indicate that for actual behavioural change, there needs to be continuous work to engage the community in Finnish politics. For an organisation that is actively promoting the inclusion of immigrants in Finnish democratic spaces we want to continue these debates and conversations to foster a politically aware and active immigrant community. Watch the debates on our [Youtube channel](#).

Think Africa Lounge(s) - Virtual, Social and Creatives Corner

In 2023, Think Africa Lounge served as a vibrant platform for our members and like-minded individuals to convene, engaging in discussions ranging from societal issues to leisurely topics. Held regularly, these gatherings attracted a total of 150 attendees who actively participated in either hybrid or in-person dialogues. The diverse array of themes, from personal development to societal challenges, fostered dynamic exchanges and connections among participants. Throughout 2023, we explored themes such as New Year resolutions, entrepreneurship, Game nights, Photonics for STEAM education, "Terrible mothers" and served as a platform to co-create the themes and activities for Think Africa Week 2023, among others. The Creative Corner sessions, a segment of the Lounge, were organised in collaboration with Kulttuutikameleontit and received support from Moniheli. These sessions provided attendees with a creative outlet, featuring activities such as fashion swaps, film-making workshops, and discussions on personal heroes and sources of inspiration. These avenues offered engaging and diverse activities, nurturing creativity and collaboration among participants. Beyond knowledge-sharing, the Lounge cultivated a strong sense of community, fostering mutual learning and growth among its members.

Highlights: **Projects & Programs**

Africa Day

Together with 13 other organisations, Think Africa (TA), in the spirit of collaboration and cooperation, came together to organise an Africa Day 2023 commemoration in Finland. This follows a successful Africa Day celebration in 2022, where five organisations took part. In 2022, Moniheli coordinated the celebrations, while in 2023, AFAES was nominated to do the coordination with Think Africa as a co-host.

Compared to the event organised in 2022, this committee was bigger, having attracted many organisations that attended the Town Hall convened by Think Africa in January 2023, which then handed over the mantle to AFAES. The collaboration in all terms as envisioned by TA is a positive move, irrespective of challenges.

The committee included: Afaes ry, EarthAngels Finland, Finnish-South African Society, Finnish-African Society ry, Finnish Morocco Association Smyky RY, Heed Finland ry, Suomi-Namibia Seura, Suomi-Tansania Seura, SahWira Africa International, The Sierra Leone's Consulate Planning Office, Think Africa, WODESS ry and YEPP ry

In terms of attendance, preparation, and cooperation from African embassies, partners, and performers, the event held on May 25, 2023, was a great success. The venue, roles for each participating organisation (organisers), activities, attendance registration, food, and funds are some areas where organisers must make improvements.

Afara

Afara Marketplace is a centralised digital directory designed to connect verified African diaspora professionals with Finnish organisations and projects. In addition to facilitating business connections, we collaborate on various initiatives aimed at promoting cultural understanding and fostering meaningful relationships with the African diaspora and Finnish organisations. The directory will provide organisations with access to services including organisation/competence matching, identifying relevant local contacts, market entry assessment, product testing, diaspora marketing, cultural competency advisory, research, and translations. Whether they seek to expand into African markets or engage in cultural initiatives in Finland, the centralised directory helps organisations find reliable partners who understand:

- ◆ Regulatory & legal frameworks
- ◆ Cultural nuances
- ◆ Up-to-date market information
- ◆ Network of meaningful connections
- ◆ Access to local resources
- ◆ Understanding of local political and economic realities
- ◆ Reliable distribution networks

Board of Directors



Akin Akinsola
Chairperson,
Partnerships Committee



Feven Abegaz
Vice Chairperson,
Partnerships Committee



Denise Wall
Treasurer,
Fundraising Committee



Nia Sullivan
General Secretary
Partnerships Committee



Ouma Okello
Outreach



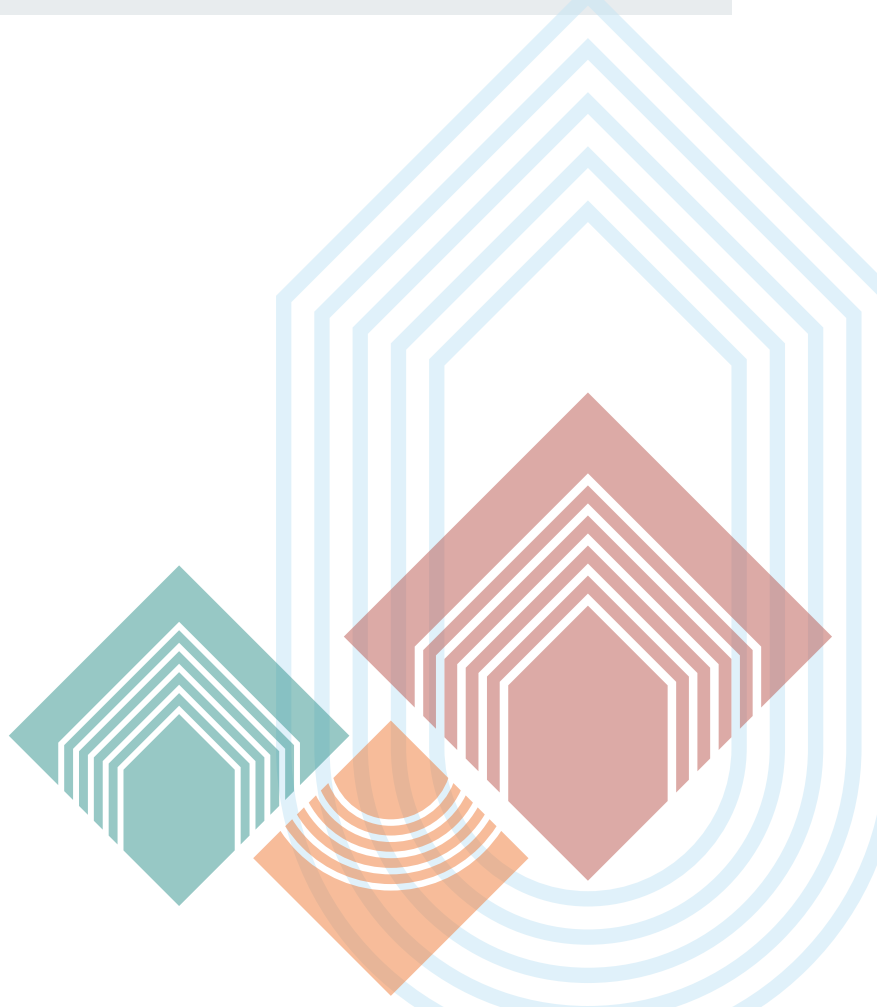
Joolokeni Vesikko
Marketing and
Communications



Iina Sorvari
Outreach

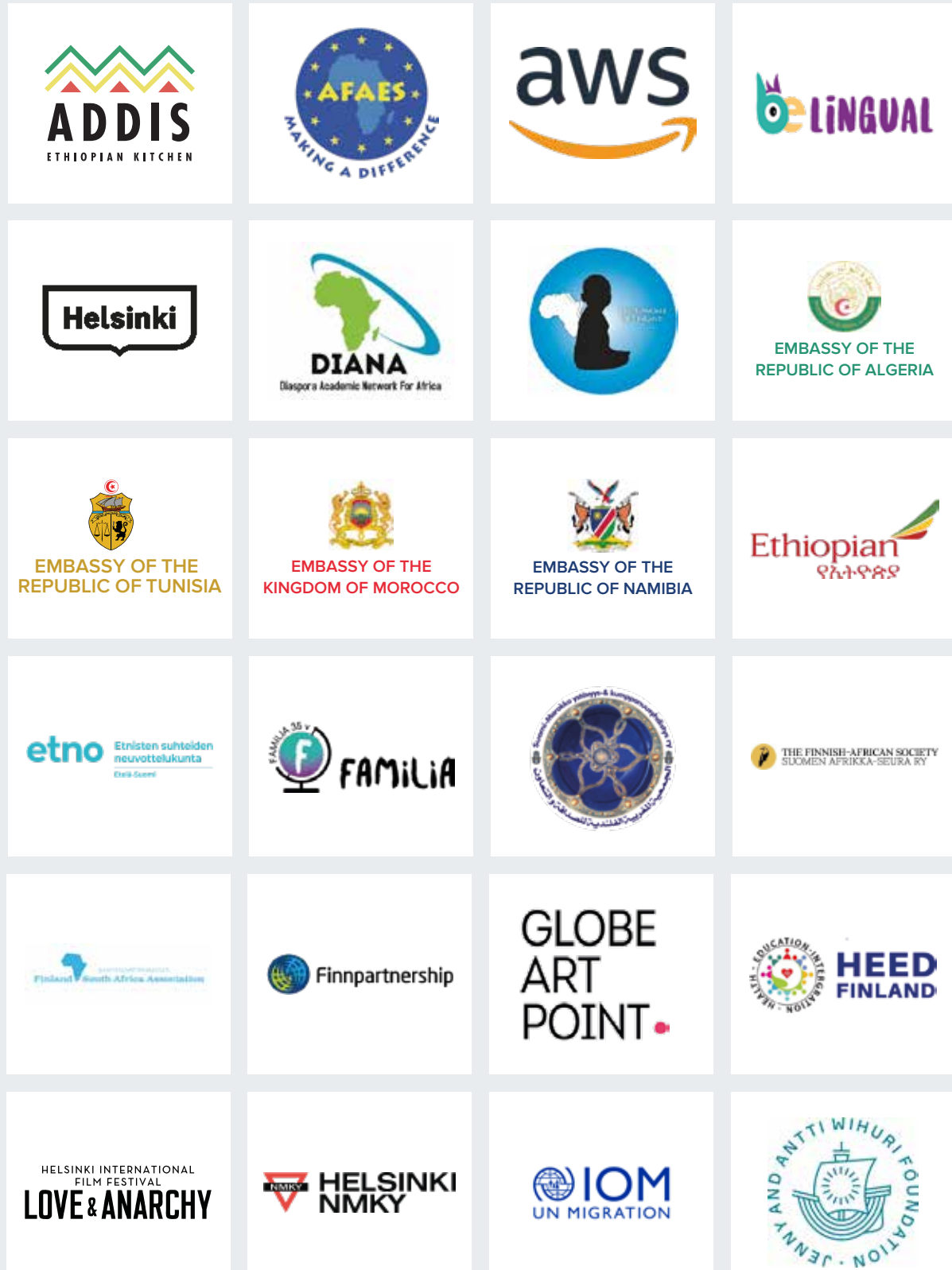


Senghor Nkuliza
Deputy Board Member

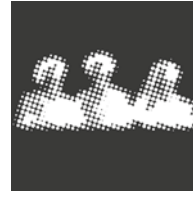


2023 Partners & Collaborators

Our sincere appreciation goes out to all our partners and collaborators for their invaluable contributions throughout 2023. We extend our gratitude for their dedication, support, and commitment to our shared goals. Your contributions have been instrumental in advancing our mission and empowering the African diaspora community.



2023 Partners & Collaborators



maria 01

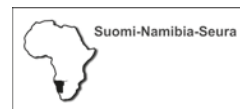
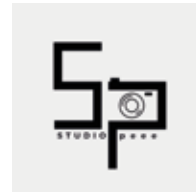


Ministry for Foreign
Affairs of Finland

supported by
MONIHელი
tukee



prinditeenus
PRINTING SERVICE



The Sierra Leone's
Consulate Planning
Office

TKM
Theo Keys Media



Wallcomms





THINK AFRICA

Engage

•

Promote

•

Empower



DocuSigned by:

Akin Akinsola

24BE8B3A915B464...

4/24/2024

DocuSigned by:

Denise G. Wall

9DCB1FEA478949B...

4/23/2024

DocuSigned by:

Nia Sullivan

A581089A71194CC...

4/23/2024

DocuSigned by:

[Signature]

25367929A2AE47F...

4/24/2024

DocuSigned by:

[Signature]

BACFED86FBC9410...

4/23/2024

DocuSigned by:

Lina Somari

65C63DC09C76471...

4/23/2024

DocuSigned by:

[Signature]

BAA0A2B538BF4BA...

4/23/2024

Think Africa ry

Saukonpaadenranta 20 B 30

00180 Helsinki

Finland

For more info contact:

info@thinkafrica.fi

www.thinkafrica.fi



ThinkAfricaOrg



Think.Africa_Finland



Think_Africa



Think Africa ry