



**THINK  
AFRICA**

# Annual Report 2019

**Empowering the African  
Diaspora in Finland and  
enhancing collaboration  
between Finland and  
African countries.**

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# Foreword

There is a growing spirit of people wanting to see a change and who want to contribute to this change. This is reflected in the growth of Think Africa's membership over the past two years. 2019 has seen Think Africa double its membership in terms of individuals and organisations as well as having a wider representation in terms of countries represented. The year began with Think Africa unveiling a new logo and website reflecting the refocusing of the organisation to its mission and the new and high energy in the Think Africa team.

2019 was a great year as it launched new programs like the Structured Mentorship Program for Unemployed Immigrants and the Mingle and Planning Hub. The year also saw the return of our flagship event Think Africa Week, after a three year hiatus. Think Africa Week returned in a big way with 6 days, 7 events and 30 sponsors and partners. Four more programs have also been launched that will see increased activities in 2020.

The vision for Think Africa in the next two years is to strongly enable our members to network and to create and take part in projects and programs that empower the African diaspora in Finland as well as enhance collaboration between Finland and African countries. In the long term, Think Africa will be committed to the 2063 strategic development agenda of the African Union, of which the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the EU - Africa agenda 2030 are central.



114% increase in membership



30% increase in followers



6 new countries represented



6 programs launched

Sincerely,

Myriam Munezero  
Chairperson  
Think Africa ry

"If you are a student, researcher or an entrepreneur who wishes to join a progressive movement that provides an easy opportunity for partnering with great minds, entering other markets, scaling your business and mentoring. Think of Think Africa." Jimoh Biliaminu, CEO of Silicon Projects

# Words from our members

What value has Think Africa provided to its members? This is what some of our members say about the impact and value that Think Africa has had on them.

"Networking has been the best, the networks have opened up a lot of knowledge and opportunities."

Emma Nkonoki

"Think Africa has given me a platform to share my skills and learn new skills from others. I have been able to be part of a community that means a lot to me, learn about different cultures, participate in the planning process of activities and expand my networks.. connecting with people."

Dora Puhakka

A great platform to enhance entrepreneurial skills, networking, engaging, enhance collaboration and partnerships, sharing challenges, prospects and solutions that make significant impacts in Africa and our host country.

Tichaona Dande

"Think Africa has given me the opportunity to work together with Africans in Finland and abroad, towards building a better future for integration of foreigners inside Finland, as well as for the development of African countries."

Elisabet Miheludaki

Being with Think Africa confirmed an hitherto dilemma and challenge of bridging the general disconnect of the African Diaspora and specifically in Finland. Such experience and challenge gives me a unique impetus on a personal level to continue to advocate and pursue functional means through which we can possibly formulate holistic mechanisms that would facilitate a course of collective endeavor in advancing our often taking for granted impacts in/on host societies.

Cucu Wesseh

Think Africa has been an incredible opportunity for me to learn from roles which otherwise I would never have had the opportunity to experience. Having been a first a member, then treasurer and lastly, chairman of the board, has allowed me to experience participating and leading an association in all its forms such as; handling all legal obligations, leading people, setting the vision and running daily operations. These experiences have proved to be very valuable also in my professional working capacity where I have been able to use these skills otherwise not possible to have been learned on the job. Think Africa has also helped me to grow my personal network, and through this, gain a greater understanding of the diaspora in Finland, as well as establish close friendships for years to come.

Thomas Kinnaird

"It helps me build my network and I get inspiration from the members. Also gives the feeling of community."

Reggie Rusan

Think Africa has offered me a platform to connect both personally and professionally with the African Diaspora and many others connected to the continent of Africa. The organisation is dynamic and responds to an array topics not only relevant to the African Diaspora in Finland but to the wider African community. Think Africa is indeed unique and it is a privilege to be a member.

Hanna Ndauapeka Rummukainen

"Think Africa has taught me the value of community involvement. Since I moved to Finland I kept to myself and had very little interaction with other Africans. But since joining TA I have become exposed to some of the challenges faced by the Diaspora in Finland. Being one of the Africans that came here for work, instead of studies, I have not faced some of these challenges. Moreover, I have discovered that my skills can be helpful to others. My experience with TA has helped me grow as an active member of the African Diaspora community in Finland."

Oby Manyando

# 2019 in Review

“This mentorship program helped me a lot in developing my personality and also to develop my network.” said one mentee.

## Structured Mentorship for Unemployed Immigrants Program

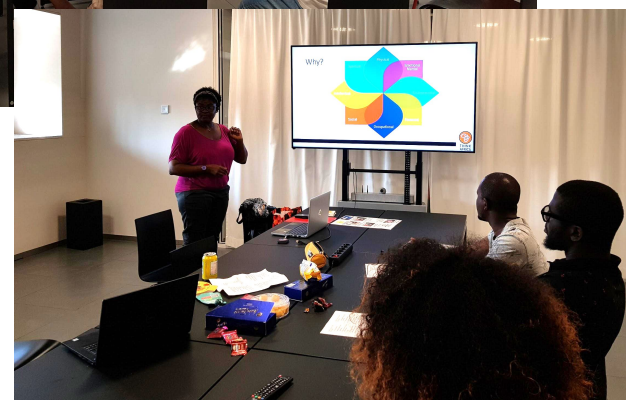
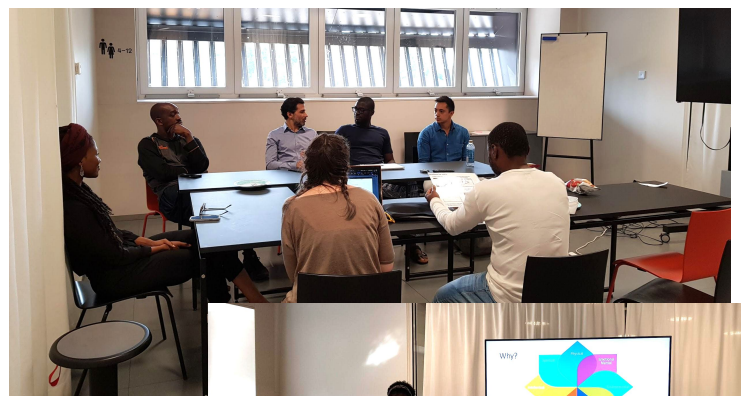
The mentorship program was introduced and ran during the months of March to June 2019. 8 unemployed immigrants were matched to 14 mentors. The mentees participated in several group trainings and one-on-one mentoring sessions with their mentors. After the program, 4 mentees had secured at least one interview, 2 were hired full time and 1 project based. In addition, the mentees increased their contacts and networks.

The program was funded by Moniheli and included Startup refugees and amplafly as outreach partners.



## Planning & Mingle Hub Meetings

This was a new concept that we started in May 2019. Realizing that as we continue to grow, we need a space and time to get to know each as well as get to collaborate and come up with new ideas and projects. The hub was open every second Tuesday and welcomed members and non-members to drop by. Based on its popularity, this will be arranged for 2020 as well.



## Climate Safari

Think Africa for the first time took part in the World Village Festival (Maailma Kylässä). On the 25th May, a fun storytelling workshop to give children an understanding of the effects of climate change on the habitats of wild animals was held. The workshop incorporated relatable characters, drums, songs, and dance. The story *Hamisi the complaining Lizard*, written by our member, Wende Lvinga, tells the story of a beautiful and talented lizard, who does not understand and appreciate his charm and uniqueness until he encounters the danger in the African wilds and discovers his true potential. The workshop was filled with parents and children excited to join, Hamisi, the lizard.



## Dance, Eat & Mingle

Building a community and creating opportunities for people to get together in social settings is important for us. In early August, we organised a fun picnic with dancing and delicious bites from East Africa.



# 2019 in Review

## Think Africa Week

Historically, TAWeek19 was the longest and most attended since the event began in 2013. With close to 500 attendees over 6 days and 7 events, the week recognized and celebrated "The Diaspora Impact". The event brought recognition to the positive impact being made by the African Diaspora in Finland both in their host and home countries. Find out more on the TAWeek19 Impact through this [blog post](#).

# THINK AFRICA WEEK

## The Diaspora Impact | 18-23 November 2019

"Bringing together people from different African countries was an inspired idea which, in my opinion, paid off volumes. It was a perfect mix of topics, people, science and social gathering." Ambassador of Tunisia,  
Ms Sarra Chaouani Abidi

**Monday | 18th**

Opening Ceremony:  
Diaspora in the  
Limelight  
10:00 - 16:00  
House of the Estates (Säätytalo):  
Snellmaninkatu 9-11

**Tuesday | 19th**

Investing and  
partnering with  
African Innovators  
17:00 - 21:00  
Futurice: Annankatu 34 B

**Wednesday | 20th**

Finland - Africa  
Research Stories  
15:00 - 19:00  
Think Company: Yliopistonkatu 4

Sustainable market  
entry into African  
countries  
17:00 - 20:00  
KPMG: Töölönlahdenkatu 3 A

**Thursday | 21st**

Self actualization  
and mindset  
17:00 - 20:00  
NMKY: Kaisaniemenkatu 8

**Friday | 22nd**

Celebrating 5  
Years  
18:30 - onwards  
Closed Event

**Saturday | 23rd**

The African: A  
Conversation on  
Identity  
16:00 - 19:00  
NMKY: Kaisaniemenkatu 8

The event gave visibility to the value of the Diaspora and their contribution to the Finnish society. TAWeek19 gave a sense of solidarity and hope among the Diasporas that were present by showcasing the common threads in each other's work and the partnerships that could flourish by working together.



## Achievements

- Approximately 500 attendees
- Over 5000 reached online
- 4 programs launched
  - ◆ A Diaspora database that will link Finnish entities to African Diaspora;
  - ◆ A series of well-being events for men and women
  - ◆ Children's story time events and workshops looking at representation, identity, privilege and sense of belonging in collaboration with Good Hair Day
  - ◆ During a side event, the week also launched the Think Africa Book Club.

# 2019 in Review

In addition to organising our own events, we collaborated on the following events:

- Nordic Sparks (September 2) - a day long event organized by Sahara Sparks Events Ltd and the University of Turku together with other partners, with the aim of nurturing business relations between Sub-Saharan Africa and the Nordic Region.
- Nordic East African Business Expo and Conference (NEABEC) (September 3-5) - The first #neabec 2019 event for #nordic & #EastAfrica companies and #decisionmakers.
- Afrofinns Achievement Awards (November 9) - In line with our objective of promoting the Achievements of the African diaspora in Finland, we collaborated with Afrofinns for the second time for the Awards.



Few images of some of our members at the Awards.

## Think Africa in the media



**NORDIC AFRICA NEWS**  
News that will not waste your time



# Strategy for 2020

Think Africa in 2020 will continue to focus on its three objectives of engaging, promoting and empowering the African diaspora as well as enhancing the collaboration between Finland and African countries. In line with this, we have identified the following objectives, goals and activities for 2020 (subject to be redefined throughout the year).

- **Objective 1: 2020 is particularly important for Think Africa as Finland will start its Finland - Africa strategy in the same year and Think Africa aims to enable the participation of the African diaspora in this process. In line with this, a lot of effort will be put on the first outlined goal.**
  - ◆ **Goal: Put in place knowledge transfer activities that utilize African diaspora expertise, talents and professionalism for collaboration as well as promote the role of the African diaspora in development partnership.**
    - Activity 1: Projects connecting companies and diasporas for market entry into African countries or the Nordics.
    - Activity 2: Migration for Development (MIDA+) project in collaboration with IOM.
  
- **Objective 2: Based on observations and experiences, Think Africa has identified the need to have events that encourage knowledge sharing and dialogue of the culture, works, and identity of Africa and Africans.**
  - ◆ **Goal: Organise Afrocentric events to encourage knowledge sharing, dialogue and build pride, especially among children of African background.**
    - Activity 1: Conversations on the African identity
    - Activity 2: Think Africa Book Club
    - Activity 3: Climate safari at Maailma kylässä
    - Activity 4: Children's stories from Africa & workshops for parents in collaboration with GHD
  
- **Objective 3: Create a platform that encourages members to thrive in Finland based on their interests, and find opportunities and networks.**
  - ◆ **Goal: Create opportunities for networking, entrepreneurship, employment, skill building, well-being, and a feeling of solidarity.**
    - Activity 1: Think Africa Week. Theme: "The Wakanda that We Want"
    - Activity 2: Mingle and Planning Hub - every second Tuesday where networking and training opportunities are provided.
    - Activity 3: Structured mentorship program for unemployed immigrants
    - Activity 4: Well-being events for women and men
    - Activity 5: Sports activity in the Summer
    - Activity 6: Pikkujoulu in December

# Leadership 2020

To achieve the set strategy, a committed and driven Board was put in place. The new board was elected on the 10th December in the Annual General Meeting. A Chairperson and 6 Board members were elected by the members. The new Board consists of:

- Myriam Munezero (Chairperson),
- Dora Puhakka (Vice-chair),
- Elisabet Miheludaki (Treasurer),
- Sofia Achame (Secretary),
- Akin Akinsola,
- Wende Lvinga, and
- Mahlet Zewde.



In the picture from the left: Mahlet Zewde, Wende Lvinga, Myriam Munezero, Elisabet Miheludaki, Sofia Achame, and Dora Puhakka. Akin Akinsola was not physically present.

This Board will serve for one year until the next election at the Annual General Meeting. A few experienced advisors will also be sought to guide the Board.

Think Africa also remains part of the Moniheli Board for 2020.

A big thank you to the Board of 2019 and all the best to the 2020 Board!



# THINK AFRICA

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