



THINK AFRICA

Annual Report 2020

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

info@thinkafrica.fi
www.thinkafrica.fi



Summary

Foreword ___ **3**

Words from our Members ___ **4**

The Year in Review ___ **6**

Our 2020 Collaborators ___ **11**

Initiatives For 2021 ___ **12**



Foreword



We are finally closing the year in high spirits and with our hearts determined with the power to empower post-Covid-19. 2020 has definitely been a year of social and psychological uncertainties as well as huge economic losses.

However, the one constant that remained unfettered and which perhaps in many instances was strengthened is the compassionate spirit of giving and helping that endured among our members.

Close to 100 members and volunteers dedicated valuable time to support, organise, promote, teach and/or advise on activities that helped participants deal with mental and physical wellbeing, identity related issues, diversity and discrimination, acquire new skills, and connect with others in similar circumstances during times of physical distancing. At Think Africa we also witnessed the unique spirit of giving from our partners, whose generosity and benevolent contributions helped transition most of our activities from design and planning into a successful reality.

This is what Think Africa has always been about and precisely why 2020 produced a 60% increase in membership, including expansion to other cities across Finland and also in Estonia. We also received a record number of students pursuing and completing internships and work placements with Think Africa. Again here we saw long-term members take time to supervise, nurture and guide these interns as they learned to apply what they studied to real-life project environments.

There is a sense of fulfillment experienced when one contributes. Think Africa is transforming into a space for members to share their skills, expertise, and feel valued for allocating time. The feeling of worth for such investment; and contribution to the mission of Think Africa is invaluable.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Myriam Munezero'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a thin horizontal line.

Myriam Munezero
Chairperson. Think Africa ry

Words from our Members

The following are testimonials from some of our members on their perceived reward, benefit and impact of membership to Think Africa:

Christiana Charley, Sierra Leone

“I love the community and what Think Africa is all about. It is a community-centered organization that deals with social issues affecting the African community in Finland. Moreover, it showcases many African cultures through their events and networks. What more could a social scientist who is keen on empowering and advocating for her community ask for? Joining Think Africa exceeded my expectations. I am so happy that such a kind of support system exists in Finland. It truly makes me happy.”



Petra Ogunjimi, Finland

“Am very passionate about making a positive social impact, intercultural communications, entrepreneurial mindset, and traveling around the amazing globe. My connection to Think Africa is my massive interest in anything related to Africa! I have embraced my African circles (mostly Nigerian) for 10 years now on a personal level and professional level. I have found my people!”



Words from our Members

Grace Chung, Mauritius

“Being involved in Think Africa made me reflect on myself as a 3rd generation Sino-Mauritian and my country as part of the African continent. I re-discovered some parts of my identity and experienced the diverse African cultures, which with India, Europe, and China have influenced my country. I'm so grateful to be part of such a meaningful initiative and that there is such a platform for people interested in Africa and/or with African roots.”



Christina Haufiku, Namibia

“What connects me to Think Africa's mission is its purpose. I stand with its values and enjoy hearing about and or attending the events hosted or being promoted. I always come back knowing more than what I came in with. I've been learning a lot so far and enjoy the very friendly, intellectual, and bubbly community. It's important to have a base like this in a new country and I'm happy there is.”



The Year in Review

Think Africa Joins Regional Advisory Board on Ethnic Relations (ETNO)

Think Africa is one of the seven organisations selected to join the Regional Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations (ETNO) for Southern Finland (Uusimaa, Häme and Southeast Finland) for the period of 2020-2024. The advisory board engages in dialogue with immigrants, ethnic, cultural and religious minorities, public authorities, political parties and NGOs in order to build trust and an open Finland. The regional advisory boards are coordinated by the Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (ELY-keskukset).

For the period between August to November 2020, we collaborated with the Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions (SAK) to address the issue of employment/workplace discrimination. We organised an online webinar for employees targeting specifically people of immigrant background. The collaboration and event aimed to increase knowledge on Trade Unions in Finland, employment rights, and reporting discrimination.

Joining the Regional Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations is a great opportunity to have a seat “at the table”, participate and influence specific issues relating to immigrants integration and equality. This is an opportunity to make impact through community advocacy, engage in initiatives to promote dialogue for immigrants' wellbeing and participation, contribute to the improvement of civic, social, and economic empowerment (i.e employment, professional development) by devising positive attitude(s) in the host society and towards members of the host population.



Think Africa's ETNO representative (middle) accepting a prize awarded to Think Africa for organizing the best 2020 program.

The Year in Review

Think Africa Week 2020: “The Africa We Want” (November 14th - 20th)

Our Annual flagship event, Think Africa Week 2020, was held between November 14th and 20th under the theme “The Africa We Want”.

The goal for **#TAWWeek2020** was focused on harnessing collective efforts, encouraging active Diaspora participation from an asset-based community development impact for rebooting our social and economic statuses post COVID-19 pandemic. Over the five days, individual events delved into topics such as identifying concrete opportunities for impact, building trust and understanding for successful collaboration, creating and investing in global solutions, supporting Finland-Africa collaboration in education, research, youth empowerment and involvement, and supporting children and parents.

All events were live-streamed via Facebook, and will later be shared on our Youtube channel.



This has given ANYONE a chance to attend the events virtually and engage with Think Africa from ANYWHERE. The live transmission had reached up to 15 thousand users from all around Finland, but also from Africa, namely - Nairobi, Namibia, Nigeria, and Tunisia. The active viewers kept the conversation going through 221 comments.

Our goal for an increased engagement on conceptualising ‘The Africa We Want’ together, and inspire people to be more active in our mission was a success. As one of our attendees stated *"Attending and meeting people truly lifted my spirits and inspired me to act and contribute more. A great mix of entertainment and discussions."*

If you’ve missed the event, you still can catch up as all recordings are available on our Facebook page.



The Year in Review

Wellbeing Peer Support Group for Women

The women's well-being peer support group reached 11 women of immigrant background and met five times in total.

Participants were able to create a safe space, get to know each other, expand their networks and share experiences/information on topics of interest to them that enhance their mental health capacity and attitudes towards well-being. Informative

discussions included mapping the participants' well-being and abilities, sleep and rest, breathing techniques for relaxation as well as a nature trip to Seurasaari.

Internships

In 2020, Think Africa provided work and internship placement for nine students, six in Helsinki, Finland and three in Tallinn, Estonia. Placements ranged from 3 months to 9 months. Students acquired practical skills in areas such as marketing, research, working in diverse teams, communication, project management and event organisation, among others.

"I have worked as an intern with Think Africa for two months and I plan to continue as a volunteer member. I do love the community and all that it stands for."

said one of our intern
Christiana Charley.

The Think Africa Hub: Our Place for Meetup

We successfully redesigned the concept of our bi-weekly Hub to enhance motivation, interest and inclusivity for our members and potential followers.

During the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, the Hub became a special place for connecting and getting to know one another better through peer learning.

On average the Hub events attracted an estimate of 15 participants attending both remotely (online) and physically (on site).

The Year in Review

Think Africa Book Club

Think Africa Book Club was launched during Think Africa Week of 2019. In 2020, we had the opportunity to read and discuss 4 books by authors from the Western (Americanah by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie), Southern (Born A Crime by Trevor Noah), and Eastern (A Grain of Wheat by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o) regions of Africa in addition to reading a book from The United States of America (The Bluest Eye by Toni Morrison). The latter book was chosen to highlight the stories of African Americans, in light of the Black Lives Matter protests that happened in 2020.

Attendees of the book club were able to discuss freely about stories that resonated with them and were invited to choose a book and host the next meet-up. We had the opportunity to listen to an excerpt from the book A Grain of Wheat, read by the Kenyan Poet Acquelline K Wanjiru.

The book club was organised online on one occasion and it

was attended by book lovers from England, Switzerland and Kuwait. The book club will continue in 2021 by reading books from the Northern and Central regions of Africa with the inclusion of watching movies or documentaries with African stories.



Others

Other activities conducted during 2020 fall under the entrepreneurship stream of activities of Think Africa. These included three business and investment-related activities to provide support and essential information. We were also invited to take part in one of the biggest conferences in Finland, InnoFrugal. In addition, we unified and rebranded the services we provide to companies into a single service unit called 'Afara consulting services'.

Our 2020 Collaborators



Ministry for Foreign
Affairs of Finland



EMBASSY OF THE
KINGDOM OF MOROCCO



EMBASSY OF THE
REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



EMBASSY OF THE
REPUBLIC OF RWANDA



EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC
OF SOUTH AFRICA



EMBASSY OF THE
REPUBLIC OF TUNISIA



**Ambitious
Africa**



**BUSINESS
FINLAND**

etno Eriksenin sukutalouden
neuvottelukeskus

FCA Investments



Finnpartnership



GROOVINK



innofrugal



LUCKAN

mieli

MONIHელი



MUSIIKKITALO

opad



Real JOEY VISUALS



SAK



Sunday Bada Studios



Ubuntu
Film Club

Initiatives For 2021

Strategy

2021 will see Think Africa transition into a more goal driven organisation and expand its activities outside of Helsinki. We have identified our short and long term goals and defined the objectives for each that will drive our activities. We will focus on sustainable and coherent programs that will make it easier for our funding and expansion plans over the next few years. Below are some of the initiatives we will embark on. Follow us to receive updates on their development.

Think Africa Youth Summer Camp

First of its kind Think Africa Youth Summer Camp 2021 will commence in June of 2021. Think Africa will offer a unique opportunity for multicultural youth to join and participate in a "Skills & Talent" week-end summer camp.

Campers will explore a range of skills such as: creative arts, group dynamics, intercultural communication, physical exercise and healthy living, entrepreneurial thinking, wellbeing among other exciting programs. With the support of experts, young adults will engage in an interactive and action-oriented learning experience focused on self-actualising approaches on:

- *nurturing a creative mindset;*
- *developing emotional competence;*
- *exploring mental strength capacity;*
- *acquiring new skills.*

The three day Summer Youth Camp is intended for any young adults between the ages of 16 and 25; immigrant youths of African descent as well as Finnish youth with interest in interactive, intercultural and/or multicultural exposure.

Initiatives For 2021

Structured Mentorship Program

We are glad to announce that Think Africa will resume its Structured Mentorship Program in 2021. This is after the abrupt disruption due to Covid-19 pandemic.

This program aims to support and assist immigrants seeking to work in their specific sphere of training and expertise, strengthen their job application skills and possibilities, increase professional network, and fast-track possibilities for employment or internships.

This is a continuation of our employability support mechanism for unemployed immigrants, which started in 2019 in collaboration with and support from Moniheli, and other partners, coaches, and employed mentors. In 2019, all the participants of the programme confirmed that it was beneficial in terms of networking and locating opportunities. Approximately half a year after the program half of the mentees had succeeded in obtaining either permanent or part-time

employment, while others managed to acquire freelance and volunteer opportunities. These experiences have increasingly proven to build up personal brands, skills, and professional networks that have further resulted into long-term career opportunities.

In 2021 we will continue to strengthen the networking skills of mentees as well as increase professional connections by providing first-hand guidance from peers and potential employers.

Francophone Film Festival

Under our goal for a more inclusive Think Africa, we are embarking on the objective of organising diverse activities targeting different age and language groups, interest groups and cultural elements of life. In this regard, Think Africa in collaboration with various organisations and individuals will organise a Film festival of french movies from French-speaking African countries or by French-speaking directors in the African diaspora.



**THINK
AFRICA**

Engage

•

Promote

•

Empower

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 ry