



# Collaboration and Partnership Strategy

## Background

The [Think Africa Democratic Action Team](#) (TADAT) is formed by a group of change makers who responded to the [Sitra Lab 3.0's](#) call to explore the Bottlenecks to Democracy in Finland. The composition of the team consists of an Ethiopian, a Liberia and Nigerian; its genesis is embedded in the fact that as the number of immigrants in Finland increases, the need for a community of practice to champion minority-centered issues becomes acutely necessary and vital. We subscribe to the notion that the Finnish democratic system is neither conducive nor designed to fully incorporate the social heterogeneity of immigrant and minority groups.

This phenomenal underrepresentation is hitherto created by systemic exclusion and inhibiting social structures. Hence, the pursuit of TADAT is to experiment and navigate solutions to the deficit in Democratic representation and Civic participation of African Immigrants in the Finnish political landscape.

At the end of 2019, the African immigrant population in Finland was estimated at 54,500 (Statistics Finland, 2019). In 2020 the African population in Finland was registered at 57, 496. TADAT views this formidable figure as a staggering volume of unutilized potential that has the magnitude of impact in unraveling "bottlenecks" in Finnish democracy. As key taxpayers and a contributing labor intensive factor to the economic growth and productivity, we advocate the necessity for African immigrants in Finland to be equally represented in the political landscape to influence the political decision-making processes. Our view is rested on available evidence-based research data from customer service, health-care and social services industries.

Under [Think Africa's](#) Strategic goal of ensuring meaningful representation and participation of immigrants of African descent in Finland, the Think Africa Democracy Action Team (TADAT) is formed to address the lack of democratic inclusion and the participation deficit of African immigrants in Finland.

## Vision

- To improve participation of African immigrants in Civic processes
- To promote active citizenship



- To foster improved understanding and collaboration between immigrant communities and Finnish host society

## **Mission**

- To understand the reasons for poor participation of African immigrants in civic processes and increase civic and political engagement of Africans
- To advocate for inclusive two-way integration policies in Finland
- To pursue and enhance the strategic goal of Think Africa ry, i.e., to increase sense of belonging of members and of African diaspora in Finland

## **Core Values and Principle**

We are committed to upholding the democratic values of the Finnish Society; We strongly believe in and strive to promote diversity, equity and inclusion. Through civic education, dialogue and peer learning, and advocacy, we support two-way integration, and economic prosperity as a foundation for democracy.

## **Intervention Lessons**

As part of our participation in Sitra Lab, we embarked on an intensive training program, and designed an intervention plan to learn more about the deficit in democratic participation and civic engagement of people of African descent in the Finnish democratic processes. We conducted two surveys on the voting practices of African descents, both pre and post the Finnish municipal elections of 2021. We also ran another survey to gain insights into the students' needs and access to information on living and working in Finland.

Summary of insights from the intervention

1. The magnitude of the problem cannot be addressed by TADAT, or Sitra intervention alone.
  - a. Cooperation and partnership is needed to work with as many partners to achieve identified goals as they relate to category groupings.
2. Mindsets - Conversations needs to happen using various platforms and methods
  - a. [Harambee Podcast](#) - The Team teases out the thoughts and ideologies of African immigrants in Finland; conversation with finnish and other immigrant stakeholders to improve participation and inclusion in Finnish democratic spaces.
  - b. [Blog Posts](#) - TADAT needs to continue documenting the learnings, new insights and advocacy on topics and themes of interest.



3. The African narrative - There is a gross lack of understanding of the African narrative, heterogeneity of the group and negative narratives holding huge space in the Finnish media.
  - a. Preparation of training manual and material on the subject
  - b. A need for training of Finnish and African descents journalists or media personalities
4. Focus on the needs of the almost 20,000 ([Finnish Immigration Service](#)) African students in Finland.
  - a. Know Your Right Information Booklet production. The gross lack of information is the number one challenge African students expressed.
  - b. A specific focus on advocating for the inclusion of students in integration programs, especially access to Finnish language courses and other services provided by the State.

## Strategy beyond 2022

TADAT goals are embedded in building good relationships and strategic alliances with specific stakeholders of both African and non-African descent. This collaborative partnership strategy is based, formulated, and aimed at ensuring inclusive representation of African immigrants and Peoples of African descent in the Finnish Political and civic landscape. The substantial gain and sustainable benefit of this collaboration and partnership strategy is to influence and make impact socio-politically through civic engagement on the decision-making processes affecting Africans in all spheres of the Finnish society.

We understand that resources and knowledge are abundant, and commendable efforts are in place to improve the situation of immigrants in Finland. We believe that if we pull together all these efforts and relevant stakeholders on the same table, we can achieve better and sustainable results as a collective.

TADAT understands the importance of proactive engagement as the best conduit for effective collaboration and understanding amongst communities and groups. Our strategic pursuit is to attain sustainable result-oriented partnership aligned with the background, objective, and purpose of Think Africa's, and the mission of TADAT. Thus, TADAT is resolved to pursue and establish partnership with the following stakeholder entities and goals. However, it is important to recognise that this is the initial initiative that TADAT put forth. All these items will be redefined, improved and implemented based on a common understanding with partnering organizations and entities.

## The Goals

**Goal 1.** Empowering and engaging African immigrants to be proactive citizens and actively contribute to society through democratic participation and civic engagement.



**Objectives 1.** To respond to an immigrant's need for holistic information about living and working in Finland.

**Measures: Publication and Dissemination of Know-Your-Rights (KYR) information booklet.**

- Share/translate into languages, that resonate with target audience
- Produce and disseminate Know Your Right (KYR) information package
- Facilitate access to Information tailored for Students that enables them to join the workforce after graduation.

**Cooperation Partners:** Government and non-government stakeholders that are working directly or indirectly to integrate immigrants into the Finnish society. For example, TE office, Kela, SIHME programs, F.E:C (further educated through companies) training, Career and guidance centers.

**Objectives 2.** To understand the function and method of approach employed in Municipal council's work; - with intention to collaborate and form a mutually beneficial working partnership. The State provides different services to immigrants, however, knowledge about these services and general information on integration into Finnish society is not widely shared or remains oblivious to the immigrant community especially to those newly arrived.

**Measures: MOU signed between TADAT and Four Municipal Councils. Helsinki, Espoo, Tampere and Turku.**

- Number or type of program designed to gain access to their services that are available in multiple languages
- No of Events and info sessions held to facilitate access to knowledge, information and services that are designed to benefit or adress immigrants needs.
- Good practice document: With the objective of replicating all the good practices to other municipalities.

**Cooperation Partners:**

Immigrant council and immigrant centered services found in Helsinki, Espoo, Tampere and Turku.

**Goal 2.** To ensure African descents voices, and narratives are appropriately represented, to impact and contribute to improving the media narratives of African immigrants in Finland

**Objective 1** Training and Advocacy - This training and advocacy program targets Finnish media professionals and it is a step in changing the deficit in understanding and knowledge of the African narrative. Although not extensively studied, there is a gross lack of understanding of the African narrative. Many still think of Africa and Africans as a homogenous group, and the heterogeneity narrative is largely absent from the Finnish media. TADAT believes that we need to also understand what informs journalists reporting on Africa and Africans in Finnish media.



**Measures: A network of Journalists who are educated on the African narratives established**

- Training manual on the African narrative prepared
- Training organized for Finnish journalists and other media personalities.
- MOU signed with interested parties for further collaboration

**Cooperation Partners:** Finnish Journalist Associations, individuals, freelance writers, curators, media personalities and TADAT.

**Objective 2.** To improve Media platforms owned by African descents capacity/capability. These platforms are working on their own, and often the efforts are scattered. There is an interest and need to bring together all endeavors for a better impact. This collaboration aims to also provide TADAT's Harambee podcast a collaborative working relation with media stakeholders owned by African descents.

**Measures: MOU signed between partners to co create and produce contents and shared or promoted on each platform.**

- Number of meetings held
- Number of articles published on partners platforms
- Programs and events co-produced

**Cooperation Partners:**

Our "Harambee" podcast, Diaspora Glitz Magazine, NANA TV and UBUNTU Film festival are collaboration partners identified thus far. More will be added over the course of time.

Goal 3: By exploring the benefits from contributions made by Africans to Finnish society, we hope to exert impact on the integration agenda and influence government policies in reshaping, redesigning, and refocusing and contributing to foster good relationships in society.

**Objective 1:** Raise awareness on the integration bottlenecks of African students in Finnish democratic system and laying a foundation towards policy recommendation and advocacy.

**Measures:** Training and Advocacy programs designed and implemented

- No. of Town Hall meetings, or consultation workshop organized with key decision makers and stakeholders
- Number of topics discussed on Harambee podcast to raise awareness on this issue
- No. of blog posts published
- No. of reached with a similar message and impact assessment results.

**Cooperation Partners:** Decision makers, ETNO, Municipalities and the third sector, including higher



education institutions and student unions.

**Objective 2.** To consult, identify or map out the needs of African descents with disabilities. There is a limited or no knowledge of African descent in Finnish society. To ensure the needs of African descents with disabilities is appropriately addressed or represented in the national programs.

**Measures:** To hold at least two consultative workshops to map out areas of collaboration with relevant stakeholders.

- Number of Workshops or events organized
- Tools developed to map out the needs of the target group: African descents with disabilities
- Articles, blogs and programs produced

**Cooperation Partner:** Initially the main partners here would be NAWU and TADAT. However, decision makers, service providers, and municipalities and the third sector are also partners/stakeholders in this.

Goal 4. Enhanced cooperation with Moniheli, Sitra Lab and Good Hair Day for the sustenance of TADAT initiative. If and whenever available, apply for grants, and projects that give technical and financial support to TADAT.

**Objective 1:** To continue producing Harambee Podcast as a means to facilitate civic engagement, and inclusive dialogue in Finland.

**Objective 2.** By participating in Sitra Alumni events and activities, TADAT could gain access to further training and new networks. To gain access to, and be in contact with Sitra Lab 3 teams who have shown an interest in TADAT.

**Objective 3.** The identity and experiences of Afro-Finns (African descents with Finnish roots) are evidently different to those of African descents with African roots. The Good Hair Day brings in this expertise.,

**Measures:** Technical and Financial support solicited

- Number and type partner events such as trainings, workshops or alumni events that TADAT takes part in and that are mainly organized by cooperation partners
- Finance to projects or grants solicited to future programs.
- Number of meetings attended

**Cooperation Partners: 1. Moniheli Network:** Moniheli has over 100 immigrant member organizations and this partnership enables TADAT to reachout to the diverse language group under the Moniheli umbrella. **2. Sitra Lab, Sitra Lab Alumni, and Sitra Lab 3.0** teams who could be a potential partner in to realize TADAT's mission. Teams such as AIDA IMPACT, NAWU, FUTURE FEENIKS, USKOT.



3. **Good Hair Day** This cooperation has a potential to benefit and inform TADAT in designing inclusive programs. Afro-finns will be able to gain knowledge and perspectives from TADAT initiatives/programs

## The Scope of collaboration

The strategic alliance of TADAT is embedded on asset-based community empowerment, and harnessing knowledge-based expertise through behavioral change approach at various grassroots strata and/or levels; circle of academia; the media; government and non-government entities. In such a way it aims to facilitate substantial increase relative to inclusion and representation of African immigrants in the Finnish democratic and Civic landscape.

Thus, the scope, level of partnership and degree of collaboration of this strategy document is embedded in an understanding, and co-creation of programs or events with stakeholders that is rooted and executed on mutually agreed terms and conditions.

## Expectation

The success of this Collaborative Partnership Strategy plan requires an inter-dependent and collaborative approach with multidisciplinary actors, partners, and stakeholders from diverse and cross sections of society. Hence, the African philosophy of “Ubuntu” dictates that we “harambee” and focus on our common goals, interests, strengths, and similarities of bottlenecks affecting our democracy.

We must strive to build bridges of good relations for a better, prosperous, and cohesive change by forming strategic alliances between government entities, organizations working towards immigrants' issues and the media for sustainable diversity, inclusion, and equity of participation. Thus, require the commitment and active contribution of partners.

We expect to engage in a series of dialogues with identified stakeholders and individuals, sign a memorandum of understanding, where needed, to fully achieve the goals and objectives set herein above.

TADAT as an initiating partner will facilitate initial meetings, consultations and feasible working mechanisms aimed at fostering understanding for implementing the goals set in this strategy. The team has been in conversation with some of the identified partners. Such endeavors will continue in 2022 to reach out to all or most of the partners.

However, we recognize that these endeavors will require robust planning, time and resource mobilization. Therefore, TADAT needs to secure the necessary financial support (funds and/or grants



application) and suitable technical (training, consultations and/or volunteer) support that would enhance capacity, ability and capability for implementation of projects.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

Think Africa Democracy Action Team will devise a monitoring and evaluation tool for measuring behavior and attitude of various interest groups and target audience. As a functional purpose, M&E tools will serve to measure constant follow-up on the success levels, strategy implementation processes and project progress status.