

Advocacy and Lobbying Training

The Hague, 4-8 April 2016

Participant Profiles

In this booklet are the profiles of the dynamic individuals that took part in the Diaspora Academy Project's Third Lobbying and Advocacy training workshop in April 2016.



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Acknowledgements

This profile was written by DAP Project Associates Maren Renner and Abubakar Komora under the leadership of Connie Formson, DAP Programme Coordinator. In putting together this profile, the objective is to showcase the work that our training participants are involved in, and how by attending the Lobbying and Advocacy training they will become even more effective.

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Boniface Oburu
Catherine Mahoro
Celeste Ogochuku
Elijah Amooti
Elizabeth Njeru
France Mutombo Tshimuanga
Mahdi Khalifa
Matthew Achinike Ogaruku
Simon Efram Tsike Soussah
Tarig Sanousi

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Introduction and ADPC in Brief

In May 2014 the African Diaspora Policy Centre (ADPC) in cooperation with The Hague Academy for Local Governance (THA) and The Network University (TNU) launched a Diaspora Academy (DA). The overall objective of the DA is to upgrade and strengthen professional skills and competences of diaspora organizations in Europe engaged in improving the social and economic conditions and communal harmony in their countries of origin. Within the project capacity building for diaspora organizations focuses on three thematic area: Peacebuilding, Advocacy & Lobbying and Smart Partnerships/Networking. The project will come to an end in April 2017.

In April 2015, ADPC held the inaugural Diaspora Academy training on Lobbying and Advocacy. During the life of the project, the DA will train 30 dynamic diaspora individuals/organisations to acquire sufficient knowledge about methods and techniques of advocacy and lobby instruments and their effective application in influencing policy and practical changes conducive to their particular cause. The **4-8 April 2016** training is the third workshop of the project, and as in the previous training consisted of an equally enthusiastic, dynamic and knowledgeable group of participants. Throughout the participants positively engaged and motivated one another. Originating from a range of different African countries, and now spread out across Europe, the group worked in a cohesive manner helping to add even further to the excellent training offered. The diverse nature of the group, their backgrounds and their aims gives us the hope that the training will have a far reaching positive impact on effecting positive change in their homelands.

Within this booklet we hope to showcase the full range of positive work the participants are engaged in, and how the lessons learned during the training will help to increase the effectiveness of their already excellent work.

ADPC in Brief

ADPC is a leading Diaspora think tank dedicated to mobilizing African Diaspora in Europe for the development of Africa. We conduct evidence-based, policy-related research based on diaspora perspectives, mindsets, experiences and expertise. The knowledge and information we generate is primarily targeted at three groups: diaspora organizations in Europe, development practitioners and policymakers dealing with diaspora related issues, both in Africa and in Europe. We also promote research collaboration between diaspora and homeland researchers in Africa and their affiliated institutions in the production of knowledge in this emerging research and policy field. ADPC offers high-quality capacity building training to the emerging Diaspora ministries and other institutions in Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries that are tasked with overseeing diaspora and development related matters.

The main purpose of the training workshop is to strengthen the policy making capacity of the diaspora-oriented policymakers, by providing them with the essential knowledge, skills and tools to develop feasible policies aimed at maximizing the contribution of the diaspora to the development of their respective home countries. We facilitate network building and linkages in and among Diaspora organizations and other stakeholders active in the field of migration and development both in the host and home countries. We do this by organizing expert meetings, conferences and workshops in which diaspora development practitioners make contact, establish viable networks, learn from each other's development-related activities, exchange valuable information, and share best practices and positive experiences in the field of diaspora and development. We also actively lobby for the access and incorporation of diaspora development practitioners in the networks of established development cooperation circles, both in host and home countries.

Participant Profiles and Stories

Boniface Oburu is a member of the Kenyan Diaspora living in the UK. He has a background in Nursing and over 12 years of working experience in the public and private sector in both Kenya and the UK. Boniface graduated with Masters of Public Health (MPH) – Health System Management degree from the University of Liverpool.

London based Boniface is a Project Coordinator at the “Organisation of Positive African Men” (OPAM), a Pan London charity providing psychosocial support to African and Caribbean men with long term health conditions including HIV/AIDS. He is also the Director of the “African Youth Development Association (AYDA)”, a charity that supports and rehabilitates street children in Cameroon and campaigns against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) among African communities both in London and in African countries.



Boniface’s motivation for attending ADPC’s Lobby and Advocacy workshop was to learn from fellow activists and gain more knowledge about how to enhance the much needed Diaspora bilateral engagements with countries of origins. He expressed that he hoped the that the training would equip him with the lobbying skills and tools he deems immensely important to achieve his goals. With skills gained from the training, Boniface hopes to improve African migrants’ access to good health care in the UK. Among other things during the Lobby and Advocacy workshop Boniface came to appreciate the importance of maintaining an attractive organisational appearance through social media. Going forward he plans to apply this to his own organisation.

Catherine Mahoro has lived in Ireland for the past 13 years and is originally from Kenya. She has a Financial background and has practiced as an Accountant in Ireland for 9 years.

She explained that “Ireland was among the hardest hit countries in Europe during the Financial Crisis. As a result of that crisis, “many people lost their jobs including myself and I went back to University to further my studies in Development so that I could help develop migrant communities through entrepreneurship, networking, grant and fund management among other key areas that can help them develop from a grassroots level.”



With her own business, Catherine wants to improve the access and the inclusion of immigrant entrepreneurs to booster Irish and African economies. She started holding networking events with immigrants and “quickly learnt that support of their businesses at every level was lacking”.

Catherine applied for the workshop in order to gain insight into the work and challenges of other participants, and to learn more about advocacy structures. She expressed that with these skills it would be possible to work “smart so as not to burn energy and funds by not going about it the right way.” During the Lobby and Advocacy workshop she stated that for her it is essential that “voices have to be transmitted by people who are affected (Diaspora actors), not by representatives.”

Celeste Ugochukwu was born in Nigeria and has lived in Switzerland for more than 20 years. He has a leading role in several organisations: African Diaspora Council of Switzerland, African Foundation for Migration and Development, Nigeria Business Forum in Switzerland (NIDOE), NBF-Swiss and the Forum for the Integration of Migrants in Switzerland.

By profession Celeste is a Legal & Business Consultant on Migration and Development as well as an immigration lawyer for migrants and refugees.

In 2011 Celeste started working with the African Diaspora Council approaching Diaspora organisations, collecting data, showcasing who are the “real” African migrants and highlighting the contributions made by African migrants in Switzerland. He also advocated for a change in policies encouraging migrants to integrate by getting supported in learning the Swiss languages, finding a job and preparing for working life.

During the workshop Celeste formulated his mission to empower Diaspora to engage successfully in integration issues and in topics concerning their countries of origins beyond remittances. His central message is that migrants should be seen more as an opportunity than a burden.



Elijah Amooti lives in the UK and is originally from Uganda. In Uganda he worked as a medical officer.

Over the past 20 years since moving to the UK, Elijah provides counselling for migrants and refugees. He is the Director of the African Eye Trust (www.africaneyetrust.org) an organisation that seeks to improve the physical and mental health of victims of HIV and other chronic illnesses.

Elijah is also the Chair of the European African Treatment Advocates Network (EATAN), a network that advocates for African migrants living in Europe on health issues.

During the workshop Elijah was able to solidify his mission namely: to link up Diaspora members with politicians in order to improve the conditions of people living with HIV and other sicknesses. For this purposes he learnt new Advocacy tools and strategies he wants to apply back home.



Elizabeth Njeru, also called “Mama Kenia”, is originally from Kenya and has been living in the Netherlands for 15 years. She has a master’s degree in Sociology from Utrecht University and has worked for various Dutch NGO's with a focus on women’s empowerment - both nationally and internationally.

She describes herself as “a social entrepreneur, determined to help improve the livelihoods of African migrants in the Netherlands”. Elizabeth strives to do this by “inspiring the use of our skills for entrepreneurship in the mainstream Dutch market.”



During the workshop Elizabeth explained that the African Diaspora is hardly visible and represented in the Dutch market, and many African products are not available. Consequently, she founded a social enterprise business called “Mama Kenia. Very lekker!” that specialises in the Kenyan cuisine. Her motivation for participating was to upscale her capacity in order to help have her voice be taken into account, gain knowledge about analysing opportunities and challenges for Diaspora participation in their host countries. By participating in the training, Elizabeth also hoped to gain support in drafting an Advocacy and Lobby action plan for her business, and broaden her network.

France Mutombo Tshimuanga is a member of the DRC community living in Hungary. He has lived in Hungary for almost 20 years. He shared that the African community in Hungary was very small at an estimated 3000 people. He found that integrating into the society was difficult because having a good command of the Hungarian language is a must.



Soon after his arrival in Hungary in 2002, France founded the organisation “Foundation for Africa” with a focus on education. Looking back at more than 15 years of work he linked up many Hungarian companies and organisations with partners in African countries and he often cooperated with the Hungarian government seeking at fostering the diplomatic relationships between Hungary and African countries.

His approach is to create a win-win-cooperation between Hungary (also EU countries) and DRC (and other African countries). In order to have a platform to operate, France also founded the Hungarian-African-network in 2008.

France’s motivation to participate in ADPC’s Lobby and Advocacy workshop is to learn strategies to achieve his goal: “to train Diaspora Leaders who will represent the interests of the African Diaspora in Hungary, channel their problems and issues into the Hungarian decision-making processes, or bring together the isolated communities. These leaders would fulfil a very important role in the advocacy of African migrants, because in Hungary we do not have such a service yet. Our purpose is to make the African migrants members of the Hungarian society contribute to the economic development of their original home and host countries.” In order to achieve this goal during the workshop France developed a systematic advocacy plan that operates at three levels, that he intends to implement in Hungary.

Mahdi Khalifa is a Medical Doctor by profession and brought to the course several years of experience having worked on the ground in Sudan, but now lives in the UK. He also has a master's degree in Public Health from South Wales University and a Certificate in Public Health from Cardiff University.

He attended the workshop because he is frustrated with politics in Sudan; nothing is changing even with the involvement of European countries. Consequently, he frequently works voluntarily in Sudan.



During the workshop Mahdi became fond of applying the newly learnt tools for analysing root causes and developing action plans. He expressed that the workshop gave him new project ideas on how to utilize his field experience to effect change.

In the future Mahdi wants to tackle the problem that often the most needed do not receive the delivered goods in Sudan. As such he wants to “become more involved in Diaspora activities even though sometimes it is difficult and frustrating”.

Matthew Achinike Ogaruku is originally from Nigeria and came to Italy 20 years ago. Because he struggled a lot as a newly arrived migrant in Italy he is engaged in enhancing the integration of African migrants in Italy.

As a member of the foreign commission of Padua city council he presents specific integration problems of Nigerian and African migrants to politicians in the councils. Matthew is also the Coordinator of Dumas, an association handling all administrative practices for immigration and integration. More specifically, they counsel migrants and refugees concerning their rights and advocate to get their voices heard.



Matthew's motivation to participate in the Lobby and Advocacy workshop is that most African Associations, Unions and movements are unable to have impact in key policy circles in Europe and in the world due to lack of capacity and training. He hopes that a forum of this nature will help affront these difficulties for African migrants in Europe and in the world.

During the workshop Matthew developed the central message namely "to create a multicultural community where migration is not framed as a liability but opportunity". In order to achieve this, the workshop helped him "to learn and see how tools are used as well as how to identify and develop a Diaspora strategy."

Simon Eyram Tsike-Soussah

has lived in the Netherlands for 5 years.

He shared that he grew up in a slum in Ghana and was a student leader to improve the conditions and livelihoods of the people living there. Simon holds a Master's degree in Development Studies from the University of Cape Coast (2004), and an MSC in Political Science with a focus on conflict resolution and governance from the University of Amsterdam.



He is now a trainer for capacity building in African countries, mainly in Sierra Leone where he hopes to start his PhD later this year. Simon is also the head of ACIPP Consulting and the Executive Director of ACIPP West Africa in the Netherlands.

Simon attended the training because he is interested in new ways of improving himself and looks for opportunities to learn. He expressed that continuous learning is the only “way to stay relevant in an increasingly dynamic world where knowledge data is shared over 1billions times per second over twitter, facebook, google+, emails and much more.”

During the workshop he explained that in Sierra Leone there are capacity gaps in all sectors. For this reason, as a trainer he wants to provide services and advice to the non-profit sector to build capacity. For Simon, the “training was an eye opener with new roots, ideas and more important a wealth of knowledge embodied in individuals.”

Tarig Sanousi is a Dutch Sudanese living in the UK.

His organisation supports men that experience domestic violence/abuse and male victims of human trafficking. He advocates for men in such situations to gain access to better health care in Wales and England.

Tarig is also the Vice Chair of the Sub Sahara Advisory Panel, an organization that is part of the international development hub in Wales. He is also the Chair of the YMCA in Cardiff, the Sudanese Community and the Local Partnership group for the city of Cardiff Council (Vice Chair).



With professional experience of more than 20 years working on community and international development, Tarig recently co-founded a project in Sudan to support internally displaced people. Funded by the Welsh Government the project focuses on micro finance for female headed households, as well as health programs (raising awareness about AIDS), tree planting, water projects and leadership and empowerment programs.

During the workshop Tarig was able to refresh his skills and learn new advocacy competencies.

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