THE VOICE

ISSUE 3
SEPTEMBER 2026

INSPIRING VOICES. EMPOWERING CHANGE



REFLECTION

THE BRIDGE INITIATIVE:
STRENGTHENING
RELATIONSHIPS.
CREATING
CONNECTIONS.
ADVANCING TOGETHER.

LEVEL UP CONFERENCE 2.0

- LEARN.
- EARN.
- OWN.
- LEAD.

AFRICAN STAKEHOLDERS INC. (ASI)

AFRICANSTAKEHOLDERSINC@GMAIL.COM

WWW.AFRICANSTAKEHOLDERSINC.ORG

About ASI

African Stakeholders Inc. (ASI) is a network of Diasporan Africans united by a shared commitment to purpose, progress, service, and collective advancement. Our members come from diverse professional, cultural, and life experiences, but share a common desire to contribute their knowledge, talents, relationships, leadership, and resources toward something larger than themselves.

WHY ASI WAS ESTABLISHED?

ASI was founded on a simple but powerful conviction: our community becomes stronger when people of vision, experience, influence, and goodwill come together around a common purpose. Across our community, Africans have achieved remarkable success individually—in business, education, healthcare, government, technology, the professions, and many other fields. Yet we believe there is even greater potential in what we can accomplish collectively and intentionally.

Meaningful community progress requires more than individual achievement. It requires collaboration, shared responsibility, strategic engagement, and a willingness to create opportunities for others. ASI was therefore established to provide a platform where individuals can bring together their ideas, expertise, experience, relationships, and leadership to help build a stronger and more empowered Diasporan African community. At the heart of ASI is an important shift in perspective. We want to build a community in which we do not simply ask, "What can I receive?" but also ask, "What can I contribute, and what can we accomplish together?"

OUR VISION

To create a united, empowered, and resilient African Diaspora community that thrives economically, leads with integrity, preserves its rich cultural heritage, and has a meaningful voice in shaping a more equitable and opportunity-filled future.

OUR MISSION

African Stakeholders Inc. (ASI) empowers Africans in the Diaspora by building capacity, developing leaders, creating economic opportunities, preserving our cultural heritage, strengthening civic participation, and addressing critical community needs through strategic partnerships, technology, and community-led action.

OUR CORE AREAS OF FOCUS

- Economic Empowerment
- Youth Leadership & Development
- Culture, Heritage & Community Connection
- Civic Engagement & Community Advocacy
- Community Well-being & Empowerment

OUR COMMITMENT

Building a stronger community. Developing leaders. Creating opportunities. Amplifying our collective voice.

OUR PURPOSE

ASI is focused on creating opportunities for economic advancement, youth leadership and development, community empowerment, collaboration, cultural connection, and meaningful engagement with the broader community. Our goal is not simply to organize events or activities. We seek to build an enduring institution that connects people, develops leaders, creates opportunities, strengthens relationships, and produces measurable impact for this generation and those that follow.

Building Something of Lasting Value

We believe there is tremendous, untapped potential within the African Diaspora. ASI aspires to become a platform where relationships lead to collaboration, collaboration creates opportunity, and opportunity produces lasting community impact. Ultimately, ASI is about harnessing the collective strength of our community—not only to celebrate how far we have come, but to intentionally shape where we are going. Together, we can build something of lasting value.

President's Note

OUR VOICES COUNT: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND THE POWER OF PARTICIPATION

As we approach the November 2026 midterm elections, this is an important time for our community to remember that civic engagement is not optional to a strong democracy -it is essential.

Our voices count, and one of the clearest ways we make those voices heard is through our votes.

The people we elect make decisions that affect virtually every area of our lives: our businesses, schools, taxes, healthcare, neighborhoods, public safety, economic opportunities, and the future we are building for our children.

When we vote, we are not simply selecting names on a ballot. We are helping determine who will make those decisions on our behalf.

For the African community, civic participation should reflect the contributions we already make every day. We own businesses, create jobs, serve in healthcare and education, raise families, support our neighborhoods, and contribute to the economic and cultural life of our communities. Our civic presence should be just as strong as our economic and community presence.

We must also be present where public decisions are made. We should never assume that someone else will speak for us. We must speak for ourselves.

That means being informed about the candidates and issues, understanding what is on the ballot, attending community forums, communicating with elected officials, volunteering, and if eligible, showing up to vote.

Civic engagement does not begin and end on Election Day. It is an ongoing responsibility. We should know who represents us, communicate the needs of our community, and hold public officials accountable for the decisions they make.

As Election Day approaches, I encourage every eligible voter to make a simple commitment:

Be informed. Be engaged. Be prepared. And vote.



Our individual voices are important. But when we participate together, our collective voice becomes impossible to overlook.

"Our voices count. Our votes count. Our participation determines how clearly our community is heard."

5 WAYS TO BE CIVICALLY ENGAGED BEFORE ELECTION DAY

1. Check your voter registration.
Make sure your name and address are current.

2. Know what is on your ballot.
Review candidates, offices, and ballot questions before Election Day.

3. Learn about the issues.
Consider how proposed policies may affect your family, business, community, and future.

4. Participate beyond voting.
Attend candidate forums, public meetings, town halls, and community discussions.

5. Encourage others to participate.
Talk with family, friends, neighbors, and especially young adults about the importance of civic participation.

Your voice matters. Your vote matters. Our community matters.

Cordelia Ekwueme

President, African Stakeholders Inc. (ASI)

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Creating Stronger African-Owned Businesses Through Structure, Capital & Collaboration

Entrepreneurship has long been a defining strength of African communities. Across the continent and throughout the diaspora, business ownership has created economic mobility and opportunity.

In Milwaukee, African-owned businesses span transportation, healthcare, food services, construction, consulting, and retail. But for these businesses to achieve lasting growth, informal activity must evolve into structured enterprises.

Sustainable entrepreneurship begins with formalization and financial structure. Registering a business provides legal protection and credibility, while separate business accounts, accurate financial records, and strong business credit create a foundation for growth and access to financing.

Access to capital remains a challenge for many minority-owned businesses. Entrepreneurs can explore SBA programs, community development financial institutions, minority grants, and other funding opportunities.





Mentorship and systems are equally important. Experienced business leaders can guide emerging entrepreneurs, while technology, standard operating procedures, strategic hiring, and digital marketing can help businesses move beyond owner-operator models and compete more effectively.

There is also significant opportunity in collaboration. African-owned businesses can create stronger ecosystems through strategic partnerships, referrals, and shared opportunities rather than competing in isolation.

Finally, sustainable entrepreneurship requires generational thinking. Business owners should consider succession, leadership development, and what will happen to the enterprise in the years ahead.

Build with structure. Grow with capital. Strengthen through collaboration. Think beyond yourself.

Generational Wealth

What It Is, Why It Matters, and How to Build It Without Creating Entitlement

Lately, the phrase "creating generational wealth" seems to be everywhere.

I had my own understanding of what generational wealth means, but I wanted to hear how others viewed it. In speaking with several people, I found very different opinions. Some believe generational wealth is unnecessary and may simply create lazy children with a sense of entitlement. Others believe strongly that they do not want their children to struggle or experience the same financial hardships they faced while building their lives.

That discussion led to this article.

WHAT IS GENERATIONAL WEALTH?

Generational wealth is the financial value, assets, knowledge, and opportunities that one generation builds and passes to the next. It may include real estate, businesses, investments, retirement assets, cash, life insurance, intellectual property, education, financial knowledge, professional networks, and strong family values.

The purpose is not simply to leave children money. It is to give the next generation a stronger foundation so they can build further instead of starting from zero.

Income supports your lifestyle. Wealth creates financial security. Generational wealth extends that security and opportunity to future generations.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Without generational wealth, every generation may have to start over—borrowing for education, struggling to purchase a home, starting businesses without capital, and beginning retirement savings with little financial foundation.

Generational wealth can provide:

- Financial security during emergencies;
- Resources for education and homeownership;
- Capital to start or expand a business;
- Reduced dependence on debt;
- Greater ability to invest and build assets; and
- More financial choices and opportunities.

The goal is to move families beyond simply earning income toward ownership of assets that can grow, produce income, and be transferred to future generations.



DOES GENERATIONAL WEALTH CREATE LAZY OR ENTITLED CHILDREN?

It can—if wealth is transferred without values, education, expectations, or responsibility.

There is a major difference between telling a child:

"**You will inherit enough money that you never have to work.**"

and teaching:

"**Previous generations worked hard to build these resources. Your responsibility is to preserve them, grow them, and create opportunities for those who come after you**."

The first approach may create entitlement.

The second teaches stewardship.

The goal should be opportunity, not dependency. Parents can help with education, a first home, investments, or business capital while still requiring their children to work, save, learn, and take responsibility for their own future.

TRANSFER KNOWLEDGE ALONG WITH WEALTH

Leaving assets without teaching financial responsibility can be dangerous.

Children should understand how money is earned, how credit works, how investments grow, how businesses create value, how taxes affect wealth, and how assets should be protected.

The most valuable inheritance may therefore be a combination of:

Assets + Financial Knowledge + Strong Values.

WHY THIS MATTERS IN THE DIASPORA

For immigrant and diaspora families, generational wealth has special significance.

The first generation often makes enormous sacrifices —relocating to a new country, learning a new financial system, building careers and businesses, purchasing homes, educating children, and supporting family members abroad.

If everything that generation builds disappears when they are gone, the next generation may be forced to repeat much of the same struggle.

The question is not simply: "How much money can I leave my children?" The better question should be: "What financial foundation, knowledge, values, and opportunities can I create so my children can achieve even more?"



BUILDING WEALTH AND CHARACTER TOGETHER

Generational wealth should never replace hard work, ambition, education, discipline, or personal responsibility.

Ideally:

- Generation One: Builds.
- Generation Two: Expands.
- Generation Three: Multiplies.

Not:

- Generation One builds.
- Generation Two spends.
- Generation Three starts over.

The purpose of generational wealth is not to ensure that our children never have to work. It is to ensure that their hard work begins with a stronger foundation. Each generation should understand three responsibilities:

Preserve what was built.

Grow what was inherited.

Prepare the next generation to do even better.

That is how generational wealth becomes a legacy of both prosperity and responsibility.



AFRICAN STAKEHOLDERS INC. (ASI)

African Stakeholders Inc.

hosts

LEVEL UP CONFERENCE 2.0

LEARN. EARN. OWN. LEAD.

From Income to Ownership. From Ideas to Legacy.

WALK AWAY WITH:

INSIGHT
Practical knowledge for building wealth and growing your business.

CONNECTIONS
Meet people who can open doors, create partnerships and accelerate your journey.

OPPORTUNITIES
Explore new income opportunities through AI, technology and government contracting.

ACTION
Leave with your 90-Day LEVEL UP Action Plan and next steps.

SATURDAY
OCT. 31, 2026
9:30AM – 4:00PM

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SCAN TO REGISTER

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Welcome Address

POSITIONING FOR WEALTH, LEADERSHIP & OWNERSHIP

Distinguished Guests, Esteemed Speakers, Community Leaders, Sponsors, Partners, and Friends,

Good morning, and welcome to LEVEL UP CONFERENCE 2.0!

On behalf of African Stakeholders Inc., it is my great honor and pleasure to welcome you to this exciting gathering of visionaries, entrepreneurs, professionals, and emerging leaders.

Thank you for choosing to invest in yourself, your future, and the future of our community.

Last year, at our inaugural Level Up Conference, we challenged ourselves to "Unlock the Power Within." We talked about recognizing our potential, embracing opportunities, and building generational wealth.

This year, we are taking that vision to the next level!

We are moving from potential to positioning, from inspiration to implementation, and from aspiration to ownership.

Our theme this year is "Positioning for Wealth, Leadership & Ownership."

Why positioning?

Because having potential is not enough. Having dreams is not enough. Even working hard is not enough.

We must be intentional about where we are going, how we prepare ourselves, and the opportunities we create.

We must position ourselves not merely to participate in the economy, but to become owners, investors, innovators, and leaders who help shape its future.

At African Stakeholders Inc., we believe that true economic empowerment goes beyond earning a living. It is about building wealth, creating opportunities, and establishing a legacy that will outlive us.



That is why this year's conference is built around four powerful outcomes:

LEARN. EARN. OWN. LEAD.

LEARN — Because knowledge opens doors. We must equip ourselves with the financial intelligence, skills, and strategies to recognize opportunities and make informed decisions.

EARN — Because our talents, skills, and ideas must translate into economic opportunities. We must learn to create value, increase our earning potential, and build sustainable businesses and careers.

OWN — Because income alone does not create generational wealth. Ownership does. We must move from simply earning money to building assets, owning businesses, investing wisely, and creating lasting prosperity.

LEAD — Because our success must extend beyond ourselves. We must become leaders who inspire others, open doors, build institutions, and empower the next generation.

LEARN. EARN. OWN. LEAD.

These are not just words. They are a roadmap for transforming our future.

Ladies and gentlemen, today's conference is more than an event. It is an opportunity to gain practical knowledge, build meaningful relationships, and take intentional steps toward financial independence, ownership, and impactful leadership.

To our distinguished speakers, sponsors, partners, planning committee, and volunteers, thank you for making this vision possible.

And to everyone here today, I leave you with one challenge:

Do not leave this conference the same way you came.

Ask questions. Make connections. Discover opportunities. And most importantly, take action!

Because the true success of Level Up 2.0 will not be measured by what we hear today, but by what we do differently tomorrow.

Let us not simply dream of a better future. Let us build it.

Let us not simply work for wealth. Let us create and own it.

Let us not simply celebrate success. Let us create a legacy of success for generations to come.

Together, let us LEARN with purpose, EARN with intention, OWN with vision, and LEAD with impact!

Once again, **welcome to LEVEL UP CONFERENCE 2.0!**

The time to position ourselves for wealth, leadership, and ownership is NOW!

Thank you, and have a wonderful conference!

Cordelia Ekwueme

President, African Stakeholders Inc. (ASI)



AGENDA
AT A GLANCE

Mistress of Ceremony
Patricia Asante-Frempong

09.30 - 10:00 AM	**Arrival, Registration & Refreshments** • Participant check-in, refreshments, informal networking, and introductions.
10:00 – 10:50 AM	**Opening Ceremony** • Opening Prayer & Welcome Address • Keynote: The Next Level Mindset: Positioning for Wealth, Leadership & Ownership - **Afra Smith**
11:00 – 11:50 AM	**Session 1 - From Income to Ownership: Building Wealth That Lasts** • Panel Discussion + Q&A: Wealth-Building Pathway - Income → Savings → Investments → Assets → Ownership → Generational Wealth (**Panelists**: **THEO IYASELE, SUSAN OBASE AND YOLLANDE TCHOUAPI**)
12:00 – 12:50 PM	**Session 2 - Entrepreneurship & Business Growth** • Starting, Scaling & Sustaining a Business (**Presenter: CORDELIA EKWUEME**)
12:50 – 01:50 PM	**LEVEL UP Networking Lunch** Catered African Cuisine and Speed Networking
1:50 – 03:20 PM	**Interactive Breakout Workshops — The Opportunities** • AI-Powered Income Streams You Can Build: A practical introduction to emerging opportunities created by artificial intelligence and digital technology (**Presenters: BRIGHT ABU AND PIERRE NDONGUE**)
03:20 – 03:30 PM	**Closing Plenary - The Action** • Lead, Build & Own: Your 90-Day LEVEL UP Commitment • Closing Speech • Call to Action & Future Initiatives

AFRICAN STAKEHOLDERS INC. (ASI)

LEVEL UP CONFERENCE 2.0

LEARN. EARN. OWN. LEAD.

REAL CONVERSATIONS.
PRACTICAL INSIGHTS.
BIGGER POSSIBILITIES.





KEYNOTE SPEAKER

AFRA SMITH

FOUNDER & CEO,
THE MELANIN PROJECT

FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT

GENERATIONAL WEALTH

COMMUNITY ADVOCATE

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

AFRA SMITH

FOUNDER & CEO, THE MELANIN PROJECT

Afra Smith is the Founder and CEO of The Melanin Project, an organization dedicated to helping people take control of their financial futures and build generational wealth. But before any title, Afra is someone who made a decision to change her life.

There was a time when money felt confusing, overwhelming, and uncertain. She faced real challenges: low credit, debt, and financial setbacks. But instead of staying stuck, she chose to learn, grow, and move differently. That one decision changed everything.

Now she uses her story to empower others, helping them understand what their choices and mindset can do and how to create a future on their own terms. As the visionary behind Wisconsin's annual Wealth Empowerment Conference, Afra has created spaces where people don't just learn. They transform.

Her work has been recognized by BRAVA Magazine as a Woman to Watch and by Madison365 as one of Wisconsin's Most Influential Black Leaders, and she has been featured in the Wisconsin State Journal, The Capital Times, Spectrum News, and WMTV 15.

> *Afra's mission is simple:*
> ***to help people recognize the power they already possess.***

Financial freedom is not reserved for a select few. It is built through knowledge, intentional choices, community, and the courage to believe a different future is possible. Through every workshop, keynote, coaching session, and community conversation, Afra reminds people that their circumstances do not define them. Their next decision can. And sometimes, one decision can change the trajectory of an entire generation.

AFRICAN STAKEHOLDERS INC. (ASI)

LEVEL UP CONFERENCE 2.0

LEARN. EARN. OWN. LEAD.

PANELISTS

REAL CONVERSATIONS.
PRACTICAL INSIGHTS.
BIGGER POSSIBILITIES.



SUSAN OBASE

CEO | LICENSED FINANCIAL PROFESSIONAL

Mrs. Susan Obase is a CEO and Licensed Financial Professional with eight years of experience helping individuals and families build stronger financial foundations, protect income, create assets, and pursue long-term wealth.

Originally from Cameroon, she transitioned into financial services after a career in case management, bringing with her a strong commitment to advocacy, education, and family empowerment.

Her work focuses on helping families move from simply earning income to making intentional financial decisions that support ownership, wealth creation, and generational legacy. As a wife and mother of three, Mrs. Obase brings both professional expertise and a deeply practical perspective to the conversation on building wealth that lasts.



YOLLANDE TCHOUAPI

REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT, JOHNSON CONTROLS

Dr. Yollande Tchouapi is a globally minded executive, entrepreneur, author, and cultural advocate serving as Regional Vice President for the Central Region at Johnson Controls.

Originally from Cameroon and based in Wisconsin, USA, she brings extensive expertise in strategic leadership, business transformation, and community impact.

She holds a PhD in Economics from Wharton, an Executive MBA from Harvard University, and a Master's degree from Marquette University. Passionate about African sociology, entrepreneurship, and cultural tourism, she is an accomplished author and frequent speaker at leadership and business forums.

Her recognitions include Business Journal's 40 Leaders Under 40, Women of Influence, and the YMCA Black Achiever Award.



THEO IYASELE

FOUNDER, PRESIDENT & CEO, TOKI & ASSOCIATES, INC.

Theo Iyasele is the Founder, President, and CEO of Toki & Associates, Inc., an award-winning architectural, engineering, and construction management firm established in Wisconsin in 1987. With nearly four decades of industry leadership, he has built the company into a respected provider of client-focused solutions across public and private sector projects.

He holds a Bachelor's degree in Architectural Engineering from Milwaukee School of Engineering and a Master's degree in Construction Management from Marquette University.

A licensed Professional Engineer in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan, Theo has led Toki & Associates to recognition as one of Wisconsin's most successful Minority Business Enterprise firms. He champions innovation, mentorship, and economic development.

AFRICAN STAKEHOLDERS INC. (ASI)

LEVEL UP CONFERENCE 2.0

LEARN. EARN. OWN. LEAD.

REAL CONVERSATIONS.
PRACTICAL INSIGHTS.
BIGGER POSSIBILITIES.

WORKSHOP PRESENTERS



PIERRE NDONGUE

AI CONSULTANT | BUSINESS STRATEGIST | INNOVATION ADVOCATE

Pierre Ndongue, MBA is an AI consultant and strategist based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, who helps small businesses solve operational challenges through intelligent systems.

Through Apex AI Pilot, he builds AI agents and automated workflows that improve efficiency, reduce costs, and streamline business operations. He also leads Generational Wealth 360, helping families build and transfer wealth, and has co-developed three books for business owners on customer pain points, irresistible offers, and sales strategies.

Pierre created Noova, an AI productivity app designed for neurodivergent minds, and operates ventures including Checkbloom, EcoClean, and Dayblip.

At LEVEL UP 2.0, Pierre breaks AI into three areas: understanding how it works, applying it to business operations, and turning it into new opportunities.



BRIGHT ABU

TECHNOLOGY LEADER | AI STRATEGIST | ENTREPRENEUR

Bright Abu is an IT professional, technology entrepreneur, and business leader specializing in database administration, enterprise technology, and digital transformation. He consults as a Senior Database Administrator at Baird Financial and founded CyberLogic Technologies International, focusing on artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, data engineering, and technology education.

He holds a Bachelor's degree in Computer Science, an MBA, Microsoft certifications, and is pursuing a Doctor of Business Administration in Leadership at Liberty University, researching ethical AI governance.

Passionate about practical innovation, Bright helps entrepreneurs and small businesses leverage AI to automate operations, improve productivity, reduce costs, and unlock growth opportunities.

His philosophy: Technology should not just transform businesses, it should empower people to achieve more.

Johnson Controls

The Power Behind Your Mission.™

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OUR PURPOSE

We transform the environments where people live, work, learn and play.

OUR VALUES IN ACTION

- We focus on what matters
- We win as one team
- We own the outcome
- We improve every day

Johnson Controls

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The Bridge Initiative

STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIPS. CREATING CONNECTIONS. ADVANCING TOGETHER.

As African Stakeholders Inc. (ASI) works to build a united, empowered, and resilient African Diaspora community, we recognize that lasting progress depends on strong relationships. Communities grow when people understand one another, build trust, identify shared interests, and work together toward common goals.

Building Bridges is ASI's community engagement initiative created to strengthen relationships and foster meaningful collaboration between the African Diaspora and the broader communities in which we live and serve.

WHY BUILDING BRIDGES?

The initiative creates intentional spaces for dialogue, cultural exchange, education, relationship-building, and collaboration. Through these conversations, we can address misconceptions, learn from different experiences, discover shared interests, and turn relationships into meaningful community partnerships.

BRIDGING MILWAUKEE: OUR FIRST FOCUS

One of the initiative's first expressions is The Bridge Initiative: Bridging Milwaukee, focused on strengthening relationships between Africans and African Americans in the Milwaukee community.

Although our communities share deep historical and cultural connections, different histories, experiences, migration journeys, and social narratives can sometimes create misunderstanding or distance.

BRIDGING MILWAUKEE SEEKS TO HELP CLOSE THAT GAP.

The initiative will explore shared heritage and history, identity and perception, trust and solidarity, cultural understanding, economic empowerment, youth engagement, leadership development, and opportunities for joint community action.

FROM CONVERSATION TO COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Building Bridges is about more than dialogue. Dialogue is the beginning.

Conversation → Understanding → Trust → Collaboration → Collective Impact

Through this initiative, ASI hopes to foster stronger relationships that lead to cultural initiatives, youth mentorship, economic collaboration, community partnerships, and shared opportunities.

We can accomplish far more when we intentionally connect, collaborate, and build together.

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Advancing African Business Success in Wisconsin

SUBMITTED BY THE WISCONSIN AFRICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



Across Wisconsin, African-owned businesses, entrepreneurs, associations, and professionals are building companies, creating jobs, and strengthening the communities they call home.

The Wisconsin African Chamber of Commerce (WACC) was formed to help that momentum grow — connecting our community, equipping it with tools and resources, and advocating for its success across the state.

WACC is a statewide 501(c)(6) business league dedicated to advancing African business success in Wisconsin. Driven by its members and guided by a committed board, the Chamber is a hub where African-owned businesses, associations, and the people who support them can find community, opportunity, and a stronger collective voice.

Membership is open to all who share our mission. You don't have to be an African, an African-owned business or organization to belong to or partner with the WACC; you only have to believe in the work.

STRONGER TOGETHER

There is strength in numbers. By uniting African-owned businesses, associations, and professionals under one roof, WACC gives our community a powerful, collective voice — and a seat at the table where decisions that affect our businesses and our future are made. On their own, our members are resilient and resourceful. Together, they are a force for economic growth, opportunity, and representation across Wisconsin

.

Membership connects you to:

- A unified voice — WACC brings African associations and businesses together so our community speaks with strength and is heard where it matters
- A seat at the table — representation and advocacy with government, corporate, and community decision-makers



- Networking and visibility — statewide events and connections that raise your profile
- Business growth support — small business development, education, and professional development
- Access to opportunity — supplier diversity, MBE certification, and government contracting guidance
- Matchmaking and mentorship — B2B procurement matchmaking, mentorship, and advisory support
- Corporate partnerships — connections to partners invested in African business success
- A Funding & Grant Navigator — help finding and pursuing funding opportunities
- Global reach — Africa trade and export assistance

MEMBERSHIP FOR EVERY STAGE AND SIZE

WACC offers membership levels for individual professionals, community organizations, businesses, and corporate partners — a fit for wherever you are on your journey. Explore the options and find the right level at https://wisacc.org/membership.html.

JOIN NOW AND BENEFIT

2026 is WACC's inaugural year — a milestone moment for African business in Wisconsin. Members who join during this launch period receive bonus months of membership at no additional cost, carrying their membership into 2027, along with lasting recognition as inaugural members of the Chamber. Join now and become part of the Chamber's story from the very beginning.

CONNECT WITH WACC

To learn more, become a member, or explore corporate partnership opportunities:

- Web: wisacc.org
- Email: membership@wisacc.org, partnerships@wisacc.org (corporate partnerships), or contact@wisacc.org
- Phone: 414-424-9222

Wisconsin is home to a vibrant and growing community of African entrepreneurs, businesses, and associations. WACC exists to make sure they never have to build alone — to unite their voices, give African interests a seat at the table, and make sure their success is seen, supported, and celebrated across our state.

NANA OSEI, BOARD CHAIR,
WISCONSIN AFRICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

E&A
CATERING & EVENTS
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We Serve. You Celebrate.



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AFRICA | TALENT | TECHNOLOGY | A BRIGHTER TOMORROW

From Job Seekers to Job Creators: Why Africa's Youth Need an Ecosystem of Trust

Africa's youth are not short on ambition. What they lack is the infrastructure that lets ambition become enterprise.

A GENERATION STANDING AT THE EDGE OF OPPORTUNITY

More than 60 percent of Africa's population is under 25, making it the youngest population in the world. Yet formal job creation continues to lag behind the number of young people entering the workforce. For millions of young Africans, the question is increasingly not only "Where will I find a job?" but "What can I build?"

Entrepreneurship should not replace education, employment, or other stable pathways. But where jobs are limited, the ability to identify problems, create value, and build enterprises gives young people greater agency over their future. Mindset matters—but mindset alone does not build a business. Young entrepreneurs also need mentors, markets, capital, and trusted networks.

TALENT WAS NEVER THE PROBLEM

Africa has no shortage of talented young people or skilled professionals in the diaspora. What is often missing is connected intelligence—the ability to connect talent, experience, capital, and opportunity across borders.

What has traditionally been called brain drain can also become brain circulation: diaspora professionals mentoring entrepreneurs, sharing expertise, opening markets, and creating connections that local effort alone may not provide.

The challenge is turning this potential into an ecosystem young entrepreneurs can actually rely on.

THE MISSING INGREDIENT IS TRUST

Young founders need support. Diaspora professionals want to provide it. Yet meaningful connections often remain limited by uncertainty about credibility, readiness, accountability, and how resources will be used.

This is the need for trust infrastructure—systems that make collaboration possible even when people do not have personal relationships.

Verification, documentation, accountability, mentorship, and clear performance signals can reduce uncertainty and create the confidence required for investment and collaboration.

BUILDING THE ECOSYSTEM

Moving from job seekers to job creators requires more than inspirational events. It requires:

Preparation — entrepreneurship education and early exposure.

Connection — structured mentorship and incubation.

Verification — documentation, accountability, and evidence of readiness.

Access — appropriate capital, markets, customers, and partnerships.

A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Youth entrepreneurship is not simply a collection of individual success stories. It is an ecosystem-building project.

Every mentor who remains engaged, every founder who embraces accountability, and every professional who creates a meaningful connection contributes to that ecosystem.

The question is not simply whether we believe in Africa's youth.

It is what infrastructure we are willing to help build around them.

Talent is Africa's most renewable resource. What we owe it is an ecosystem worthy of it.

Chudi K. Obiaya,
Founder, Africa 2100

FUN FACTS FROM AFRICA

AFRICA IS HUGE!

Africa covers about **30.37 million square kilometres,** making it the world's **second-largest continent.**

To put it in perspective, you could fit the **United States, China, India, Japan,** and most of Europe inside Africa — and still have room left over!

AFRICA ON A MERCATOR MAP
(Looks smaller than it really is)



Mercator Projection
(commonly used in most world maps)

AFRICA ON AN EQUAL EARTH MAP
(A more accurate representation)



Equal Earth Projection
(shows true relative size)

WHY DOES AFRICA LOOK SO SMALL?

Many world maps use the **Mercator projection,** a 1569 mapmaking method that makes landmasses farther from the equator appear larger than they are.

THE REAL SIZE

Africa is about **14 times larger** than Greenland!



THE WORLD IS TAKING NOTICE!

In September 2026, the UN backed a resolution promoting more accurate representations of continental land sizes, including the **Equal Earth projection.**

THE TAKEAWAY:

Africa isn't small.

Sometimes, the way we see the world needs to change.



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Join us in shaping a future of prosperity and unity. Your participation makes a difference.

THE Voice

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Designed by bit.ly/thecbsolution;
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