



# International Association of African Educators

Message from the Founder and  
President Dr. Ukpokodu

*IAAE is a registered non-profit organization that aims to foster professional collaboration and network of African educators in the diaspora. It is organized to operate exclusively as a charitable, benevolent, scientific, literary, cultural, and educational purpose. Its mission is to create a productive and professional network of African educators that builds a sustainable, supportive, professional collaborative network and academic space for African educators (<http://iaae.org>).*

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IAAE Newsletter,  
Spring 2015



## EDITOR'S CORNER

By Shirley Mthethwa-Sommers

Happy Spring! The winter has been long and brutal for many people in the U.S., but IAAE board members have not been resting their laurels. We have been busy preparing for the upcoming IAAE conference which will be held from September 25<sup>th</sup> to September 26<sup>th</sup> in Lawrence, Kansas in the Fall. The call for proposals, which went out in the Fall, is included in this issue. We are expecting educators from all over the world to present their work on Africans and Africans in diaspora. Join us in Lawrence, KS!

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Dear Members and Friends of IAAE,

Happy New Year and warm greetings from IAAE! I would like to use this opportunity to wish each one of you a productive, successful, healthy and exciting year. It is quite amazing how quickly time goes by. I cannot believe it is already March 2015! I guess when people are busy time seems to fly by so quickly. This seems to be the case with IAAE and the individuals that are working hard to realize its vision. As I look back to the inception of this organization, I am so amazed how much we have accomplished. For this, I would like to acknowledge the great work of the board members, and to thank each one of them for their efforts, and especially putting up with the constant challenge and demands I pose to them in regards to growing the organization. I also would like to thank all those that have and continue to support and encourage IAAE and its work. I am most appreciative of the Department of African-African American Studies and the Kansas African Studies Center (KASC) at the University of Kansas for

its unrelenting support of IAAE. Thank you!

As I write this column, I am excited about the growing scholarship on African immigrant educational and professional experiences occurring in P-20 institutions. This is wonderful, because we have taken the challenge to speak for ourselves and erase our invisibility within academia and society in general. It is for this reason that I am particularly optimistic about 2015 and filled with hope, vision of possibility, and extraordinary opportunities. More importantly, I am exhilarated and deeply humbled because IAAE is marching on and onto great and historic things in 2015. If you are not already aware of the historic and inaugural IAAE conference to be held in Lawrence, Kansas, America's heartland, September 26-27, 2015, let me use this opportunity to invite you to save the date and come join us. As African immigrant professionals, students, families and communities continue to struggle for full inclusion in all spheres of our existence, we must come together to build a critical mass that will allow us to creatively find ways to strengthen and empower us to fight for our humanization, dignity, and self-actualization. African immigrant professionals, students, families and communities continue to experience various forms of racial and ethnic micro-aggressions in the spaces we live in and work. Immigrant teacher educators in colleges and schools of education, and teachers and students in Pre-K - 12 schools continue to experience invisibility, dehumanization and, in some cases, hostility and violence. Dire conditions continue to negate educational opportunities and social mobility for many children and youth in

our motherland. It is to this end that IAAE is excited about its historic, inaugural conference with a timely theme, *Erasing invisibility: equity, social justice and educational excellence of Africans in the diaspora*. This conference will provide African educators, scholars, students in P-20 (both in the diaspora and in the homeland), and all others who share in the vision of the organization and are committed to the social betterment of Africa, to come together as a community to engage in dialogue, knowledge sharing, networking and, yes, exhale. Many of you I have contacted or who have contacted me, all agree that IAAE is timely and long overdue. Specifically, collectively and individually, you have agreed with me that we need this space to build our own professional community, support one another, collaborate and strengthen our advocacy for equity and social justice for the African community. Now we have it, so let us build and sustain it!

I would like to use this opportunity to encourage you to be a part of this promising organization, if you are not already a member. There is so much to do and IAAE needs all our talents and commitment in order to realize its full potential. In fact, we will have a visionary and capacity building session at the conference. IAAE needs individuals with fresh and innovative ideas and skills to realize the organizational potential I envisioned for this premier body. Because we have so much to do, we are always expanding the leadership of the organization and seeking new individuals to join us on the leadership team. In the not-too-distant future, we will be holding elections for board membership. We have also created

committees you can become a part of. Please join IAAE today and begin your trailblazing journey.

Let me conclude by reminding you not to miss the opportunity to be a part of the historic, inaugural conference in the land of OZ! We have an impressive line-up of dynamic, powerful and well-known speakers, thought provoking plenary, panel, and concurrent sessions, a visionary and leadership capacity-building session, as well as awards and banquet ceremony (in the African way), among others. This conference promises to rejuvenate, strengthen, and help each one of us live what the world knows about Africans—Ubuntu! IAAE is a moving train, so come on board and don't be left behind! Please save the date. For details about IAAE, conference information—call for proposals—and other inquiries, please visit the website of International Association of African Educators (IAAE) <http://iaae.org/> or contact me at [ukpokodun@umkc.edu](mailto:ukpokodun@umkc.edu). I thank you in advance for your support and I look forward to welcoming you warmly to IAAE and the inaugural conference in September 2015!

**Join IAAE and Recruit Members:**

I have heard from many, if not all of you, that IAAE is the best “gift” to African immigrant educators, students, and community. Now is your chance to help IAAE reach its full potential. Become a member today. If you are already a member, recruit others to join the association. I am looking forward to welcoming you to IAAE and working with you!!

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**Co-Founder: Dr. Harushimana**



**Struggle and success come in one package**

On March 12, 2015, I had the honor of meeting and introducing Mr. John Bul Dau, the former leader of the so-called "lost boys of Sudan", at the 38th Annual Conference of the NYS Association for Bilingual Education. His story moved the entire audience, many of whom made the line to hug him and, hopefully, offered to support his organization.

I am not sure what part of the story they related to, but the part I liked most is when he described the beauty of Africa. When he described how, as a young boy, he used to live peacefully in his village, taking the cattle to graze and enjoy drinking milk.

He also shared how, with very little support, with no prior education, at seventeen years of age he was introduced to formal education and succeeded to earn the prestigious Kenyan Certificate of Secondary Education.

Again, I do not know how the audience related to his message, but as an African-born educator I was reminded of many African immigrant/refugee students scattered in different parts of the world, whose dreams for a successful education are shattered due to invisibility and inaudibility.

I was so proud to be with a man, yes a very tall man, who had managed to erase invisibility and inspired me to do the same. Let's hope that through IAAE many more African immigrants

and refugees will succeed to erase their invisibility.



Mr. John Bul Dau and Dr. Immaculee Harushimana

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**Co-Founders: Dr. Nganga and Dr. Kambutu**



**Dr. Nganga**



**Dr. Kambutu**

**African born educators in the diaspora bring hope to the motherland through projects that support rural communities**

The role of Africans in the diaspora to the development of the motherland has been documented. Each year, many Africans living around the world, go back to their home countries for visits and projects that support the motherland. It is estimated that the African diaspora sends an estimated 40 billion dollars to the homeland. In addition the diaspora undertakes several projects that support the development of their home countries.

According to

<http://www.conceptlink.com/africa-diaspora/>

With the invention of new technologies in transport and communication, physical and virtual boundaries have been removed as people, ideas, products, and technology become increasingly mobile and transient. As a result, people no longer have to live in their homeland; they can migrate and settle on foreign ground. And yet, regardless of how far people travel, they often subscribe to the saying “birds of a feather flock together,” as they keep ties to their

home country and unity among each other by forming a Diaspora.

The African diaspora plays a huge role in educating the world about their home countries and the African continent. To that end, many African educators in higher education around the world have developed courses that travel to the homeland. In these courses, host country participants are immersed in learning in the motherland. Such encounters are important in creating world peace, social justice and cultural understanding. We also developed a course that takes participants to Kenya each summer. In addition to students, community members from around the U.S.A are encouraged to take part. This course started in 2004. In its fourteenth year, a lot has been accomplished. In 2011, we led a service-learning project to Kenya in which more than 30 people took part. In this project, we raised more than \$ 50,000 to help construct a kitchen and a dining hall for a school in Nakuru, Kenya. The program feeds more than 500 children per day, a majority of whom had been displaced in 2007/2008 due to internal conflicts. Following that project more funds were raised with support from our university (University of Wyoming at Casper) to drill a water well in the Hillside community ( Kinangop). More than \$ 30,000 was raised. We traveled with about 30 people and helped to dig ditches to lay water pipes. Working with local communities was very fulfilling to both the Kenyan people and visitors from the U.S. The water well is serving about 18,000 people during the dry season. Girls who were previously pulled from school to look for water in the dry season can now stay in school. Mothers can take care of other economic needs of their families.

This summer,(2015) we shall lead another project where we shall help to build a classroom and administrative block for a school in Kinangop. We are currently raising funds and donations are welcome. We need 30,000 dollars and will travel with a group of 12 to 15 people. To donate to this

project or future projects, go to the University of Wyoming at <http://www.uwyo.edu/foundation/> click on **give to UW**. Click amount and then designate funds for UWC- Kenya Hillside Classroom project. You can also donate by calling (307) 268-2713 or send a check via mail to University of Wyoming at Casper, 125 College Drive, Casper, WY 82601 (attention Hillside Karati Kenya school).

## Spotlight

**Mercy Agyepong, Ph. D. student, will present a paper, *Seeking to be Recognized: Shedding Some Light on the Experiences of African-born Students at the conference titled The Struggle of Invisibility: Studies of African -born Immigrant and Cambodian American Students in the United States* at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.**

## Upcoming conferences and other events related to Africa

- [African Studies Centre, Leiden University -- Events, Seminars, and Conferences](#)  
(Leiden, The Netherlands)
- **Columbia University -- African Studies Events** (New York)
  - [Columbia University Institute of African Studies -- Events](#)
- [Dakar 2014--XVe Sommet de la Francophonie, du 29 au 30 novembre 2014, Dakar, Sénégal](#)

- **Harvard University, Committee on African Studies:** [Calendar of Events -and- Africa Workshop](#) (Cambridge, Massachusetts)
- **New York University, Africa House:** [Events](#) (New York)
- **Royal Africa Society:** [Events](#) (London, UK)
- **Rutgers University:** [Center for African Studies -- Events](#) (New Brunswick, New Jersey)
- **SOAS--School of Oriental and African Studies:** [Centre of African Studies -- Events](#) (University of London, London, UK)
- **University of Pennsylvania:** [African Studies Center -- Events](#) (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)
- **The University of Texas at Austin:** [2015 Annual Africa Conference -- "Development, Urban Space, and Human Rights in Africa," April 3-5, 2015 -- Call for Papers](#) (Austin, Texas)
- **West African Research Association & WARC Conferences:** [Summer Institutes & International Symposia](#) (via African Studies Center, Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts)
- **Yale University:** [Council on African Studies -- Events](#) (New Haven, Connecticut)
- **York University, Harriet Tubman Institute for Research on the Global Migration of African Peoples:** [Upcoming Events](#) (Toronto, Canada)
- **18th Annual Zanzibar International Film Festival -- Festival of the Dhow Countries: "Waves & Visions of Hope" 18-26 July 2015** (Zanzibar, Tanzania)  
General information on a wide variety of events and links to related websites. *Plus, information from the 2014 festival and earlier.* "ZIFF is a non-profit organization based in Zanzibar [founded in 1997] which aims to promote film, music and arts from the Dhow Countries (African Continent, Gulf States, Iran, India, Pakistan and the islands of the Indian Ocean). The organization is working throughout the year and seeks to include people from all sectors of society, with special programs for women, children and people in rural areas."

### **Inaugural IAAE Conference – Call for Proposals**

**Conference Theme:** Erasing Invisibility: Equity, Social Justice and Educational Excellence of Africans in Diaspora/Immigrants  
**Conference Dates:** September 25-26, 2015

**Conference Location:** University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS

African immigrants have been described as the most educationally accomplished immigrant group in the Western world—United States, United Kingdom, and Canada. Yet they are invisible and a silent minority within the P-20 institutions. Consequently, they are marginalized, homogenized and misunderstood. In addition, past and current narratives often portray Africa and Africans as problematic, irrelevant, and “the Dark Continent.” It is imperative that Africans on the continent and in the diaspora engage in consciousness raising about Africans’ experiences, Africa’s rich heritage and gift to humankind, and more pertinently stand up for social justice and equity for African immigrant students and refugees and families. The International Association of African Educators (IAAE) conference aims to bring together educators, researchers, students, community agencies, families, policymakers and all others to engage in a rich Ubuntu-filled communal learning that begins the work on erasing the invisibility of African immigrants and ensuring their educational and professional excellence, equity and social justice. IAAE invites educators (P-12, higher education, teacher education, community organizations) to participate in the inaugural IAAE conference in Lawrence, KS.

**Topics/Strands** IAAE invites research-based, practice-based, conceptual, theoretical paper proposal, or poster presentation proposals, or workshop proposals that deal with any of the following strands:

African educators’ contributions to American education,  
 Education on the African continent,  
 African Indigenous education,  
 Teaching African immigrants and refugees  
 African migration and education, African refugees and education,

African immigrants and educational success,

Issues of African immigrant student education in P-12,

African immigrant faculty in the academy,  
 African immigrant students in higher education,

Adult education and African immigrants

African immigrant Muslims,

Gender, Class, religion and Language issues in African education,

Race and Afro-phobia in education,

African immigrant families and acculturation,

African culture, philosophy, values and educational thought,

African immigrant and identity issues,

Africa and Africans in the media.

All proposals should be 200-300 words and should include the following:

The purpose of the paper, or poster presentation, or workshop.

How the paper/poster presentation/workshop contributes to erasing invisibility and working toward social justice and education of Africans?

The strand in which your paper/poster presentation/workshop belongs.

All presenters must register for the conference. Visit [www.iaaeorg.org](http://www.iaaeorg.org) for conference registration schedule. Proposals should be submitted to Dr. Shirley Sommers and Dr. Peter Ojiambo by **April 30, 2015**. Questions regarding the call for proposals can be directed to Dr. Shirley Sommers ([ssommer4@naz.edu](mailto:ssommer4@naz.edu)) and Dr. Peter Ojiambo ([ojiambo@ku.edu](mailto:ojiambo@ku.edu)). General conference inquiries should be directed to Dr. Ukpokodu, President of IAAE, ([ukpokodun@umkc.edu](mailto:ukpokodun@umkc.edu)) and Dr. Ojiambo ([ojiambo@ku.edu](mailto:ojiambo@ku.edu)).

**For more information go to: <http://www.iaaeorg.org>**