



THE UNIVERSITY OF
**WESTERN
AUSTRALIA**



Africa
Research &
Engagement
Centre

National African-Australian Diaspora Engagement Conference (NAADEC) 2019

*Deepening links between African-Australian communities,
governments and universities*

— Conference Report —

30-31 August 2019

The University of Western Australia, Perth

The University of Western Australia's [Africa Research & Engagement Centre](#) (AfREC) and partners [Organisation of African Communities in WA](#) (OAC), [African Think Tank](#) (ATT), [Pan-African Australasian Diaspora Network](#) (PAADN) and [Federation of African Communities Councils of Australia](#) (FACCA) convened the [National African-Australian Diaspora Engagement Conference \(NAADEC\) 2019](#) at the University of Western Australia, Perth, on 30-31 August 2019 as part of the annual national [Australia Africa Week](#).

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About the National African-Australian Diaspora Engagement Conference (NAADEC) 2019

The purpose of NAADEC was to explore opportunities, obstacles and mechanisms for deepening links between African-Australian communities, governments (State and Commonwealth), universities and the African Union. The national conference built upon a related conference on ‘African-Australian Settlement & Integration 2030: Opportunities & Challenges’ convened by ATT and the University of Melbourne on 12-13 Nov 2018. One of the key points of discussion there was the need to move beyond state-based discussions to convene a ‘national, Pan-Australian, Pan-African’ conversation on deepening stakeholder engagement. It also engages the work of PAADN, set up as a bridge between the African Union and the African-Australian diaspora, and a range of other organisations including peak body FACCA. Funding for the conference was provided by UWA, the University of Melbourne, the Australia Africa Universities Network (AAUN) and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). The conference formed one element of an AfREC project entitled ‘Development, Diplomacy and the Diaspora: Deepening Engagement between African-Australians, the Diplomatic Corps and the African Union’s Agenda 2063.’ A corresponding workshop for this project will be held at Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia, on 6 April 2020.



NAADEC 2019: KEY OBJECTIVES

1. To identify and compare examples of practices of engagement between the sets of key stakeholders across Australia;
2. To generate publicly-available data on the relevant characteristics of, and relationships between, key stakeholders;
3. To identify both best practices and areas in which engagement between stakeholders can be improved;
4. To make recommendations to key stakeholders on mechanisms and practices for enhancing engagement;
5. To create better communication and an ongoing platform for networking and continued engagement between stakeholders beyond the conference;
6. To attract a wider audience to Perth for national Australia Africa Week 2019;
7. To promote the convening of NAADEC 2020 and beyond as an annual conference.



NAADEC 2019: KEY OUTPUTS

- A Conference Report with recommendations to key stakeholders;
- A report profiling and mapping the African-Australian diaspora and major diaspora organisations in Australia;
- A report profiling and mapping Australia-based academics and other researchers working on Australia-Africa themes;
- Academic publications;
- Creation of participant and stakeholder networks for ongoing dialogue.





NAADEC 2019: KEY THEMES AND QUESTIONS

The conference was split into two days covering separate aspects of related themes:

DAY 1: 'Engaging African Communities in Australia: Issues, Strategies, Opportunities'

This first day focused on relationships between Africa-Australian community organisations and Australian governments and agencies.

Key questions addressed included:

1. What is the current profile of the African diaspora in Australia and what relevant trends can be identified? What are the key diaspora organisations and who are the main leaders?
2. What strategies and models to Australian governments and agencies use to engage with African-Australian communities in their respective jurisdictions?
3. What are the perspectives of African-Australian community organisations and members on their needs, contributions, and these strategies?
4. What are the obstacles, challenges and opportunities to deepen engagement between stakeholders?





DAY 2: 'Development, diplomacy and the diaspora: Deepening engagement between African-Australian communities, the diplomatic corps and the African Union's Agenda 2063.'

This second day focused on the international dimensions of engagement between the African diaspora in Australia, Australian and African diplomats, Australian universities and the African Union's long-term regional integration and development agenda.

Key questions addressed included:

1. What is the role of the African diaspora in Africa's development?
2. How can, and do, African-Australians contribute to African development?
3. How does the African Union Commission engage with the African diaspora—as the 6th region of Africa—including in Australia?
4. What is the role of the African diplomatic corps in Australia in facilitating engagement between the diaspora in Australia and the continent?
5. How can the Australian government utilise the skills, knowledge, networks and resources in the African diaspora to support African development and deepen Australia-Africa international relations?
6. What community engagement strategies do Australian universities deploy to work with African-Australian communities in their localities, including African-background students?
7. What are the obstacles, challenges and opportunities to deepening these forms of engagement?

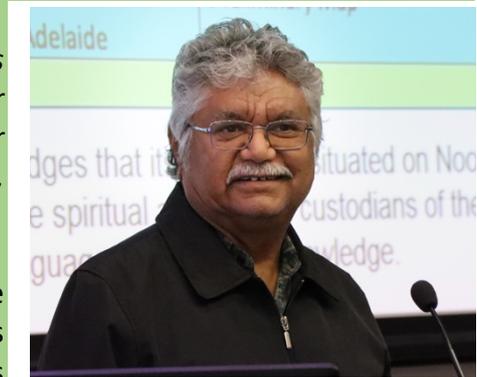




ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The University of Western Australia acknowledges that its campus is situated on Noongar land, and that Noongar people remain the spiritual and cultural custodians of their land, and continue to practise their values, languages, beliefs and knowledge.

Mr Fred Penny presented a Welcome to Country at the start of the conference on behalf of the traditional owners of the land on which UWA is situated. AfREC and partners greatly appreciate this warm welcome. Thank you.





NAADEC CONFERENCE PROGRAM

FRIDAY 30 AUGUST

THEME: Engaging African Communities in Australia: Issues, Strategies, Opportunities

| Time | Title | Speakers | Topic |
|---|---|---|---|
| <i>8.30-9.00 Registration</i> | | | |
| 9.00-10.30 | 1. Introduction to Conference | Mr Fred Penny | "Welcome to Country" |
| | | Dr David Mickler , Director, UWA Africa Research & Engagement Centre (AfREC) | "Welcome to UWA and Overview of NAADEC 2019" |
| | | Dr Casty Nyaga , Vice-President, Organisation of African Communities in WA (OACWA) | "The Importance of NAADEC to the African Diaspora in Australia" |
| | | Dr Sarah Prout Quicke , UWA School of Agriculture and Environment | "The African-Australian Diaspora: A Snapshot from the 2016 Census" |
| | | A/Prof. Farida Fozdar , UWA School of Social Sciences; AfREC Fellow | "Are Africans in Australia a 'Diaspora'?" |
| | | Dr Edson Ziso , Secretary, African Studies Association of Australasia and the Pacific (AFSAAP); University of Adelaide | "Australia-Africa Researchers: A Preliminary Map" |
| <i>10.30-11.00 Morning tea and networking</i> | | | |
| 11.00-1.00 | 2. Perspectives from African-Australian Community Organisations | Mr Haileluel Gebre-selassie , Chair, African Think Tank (VIC); Chair, Victoria African Australian Community Taskforce | "Overview: African Think Tank and Victorian African Australian Community Taskforce" |
| | | Mr Edward Solo , Vice-President, Federation of African Communities Councils in Australia (FACCA); Chairperson, African Community Council of NT (ACCNT) | "Overview: FACCA and ACCNT" |
| | | Mr Mabok Marial , President, African Communities Council of South Australia (ACCSA) | "Overview: ACCSA" |
| | | Mr Beny Bol , Acting President, Queensland | "Overview: QACC" |

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| | | African Communities Council (QACC) | |
| | | Mr Ephraim Osaghae , Founder and Leader, Migrants Professional Bridge (MPB) (WA) | “MPB, MARC and LIME: Significant Platforms for Sustainable and Meaningful Contributions for Africans in the Diaspora” |
| | | Dr Casty Nyaga , Vice-President, Organisation of African Communities in Western Australia (OACWA) | “Overview: OACWA” |
| 1.00-2.00 Lunch and networking | | | |
| 2.00-4.00 | 3. The African Diaspora in Australia: Government Engagement, Policy and Law | Mr Haileluel Gebreselassie , Chair, African Think Tank (VIC); Chair Victoria African Australian Community Taskforce | “The Victorian African Communities Action Plan (VACAP)” |
| | | Ms Bernadette Masbayi , Office of Multicultural Interests, Government of Western Australia | “Engaging the African Diaspora in Western Australia” |
| | | Sgt Steve Banks , Operations Manager, Diversity & Engagement Unit, WA Police Force | “WA Police Engagement with African Communities” |
| | | Dr Kate O’Shaughnessy , Deputy Director, DFAT WA State Office | “The African Diaspora and Australia-Africa Relations: Opportunities for Engagement” |
| | | Prof. Sam Makinda EBS , College of Arts, Business, Law and Social Sciences, Murdoch University | “The Diaspora’s Role in Public Policy in Australia and Africa” |
| | | Dr Diana Johns , School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Melbourne | “Researching the Impact and Aftermath of Criminalisation with African-Australian Young People, their Families and Communities” |
| 4.00-4.30 Afternoon tea and networking – end of Day 1 | | | |

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS — DAY 1

Session #1

Dr Casty Nyaga:

- NAADEC can strengthen African communities and determine best practices within African communities around diaspora engagement;
- It is time to increase awareness/engagement of African-Australian women accross Australia (how to better understand relevant issues affecting them);
- We want to push Australian mining companies to find ways to work with/employ African diaspora in Australia;
- Strengthening of OAC as a federation in order to lead on African diaspora issues; this can help to develop engagement strategies without duplication.
- NAADEC provides a platform for the African diaspora to have a united voice and implement decisions reached on relevant issues that have been identified (conference as a decision-making and implementation platform).
- Focus on characteristics/properties/commonalities that unite a fundamentally heterogeneous African diaspora.

Dr Sarah Prout-Quicke:

- Australian Census 2016 is a snapshot that does not provide information on migrant flows; in fact, it obscures them.
 - Exclusion of third generation Africans viz. country of birth data.
 - In 2016 in Australia there were 387,502 African-born people and a further 216,042 people with at least one African-born parent; this equals 2.6% of the total Australian population.
 - This captures only those presently living in Australia.
- This migration dominated by people from Southern and East Africa.

A/Prof. Farida Fozdar:

- “Are Africans in Australia a diaspora?”
- What does ‘diaspora’ mean?
- African Union’s goals regarding diaspora are focused on development (notable).
- Important to note heterogeneity of African ‘diaspora’ (linguistic, ethnic, cultural, political, class, visa type).
- Inhabiting a multiplicity of places – diaspora condition (implications?).
- Diaspora emphasises ‘country’ over other parameters of ‘community’ (e.g. religion, race).
- ‘Diaspora’ as an ongoing process (used in various ways by different sets of actors).
 - ‘Diaspora’ as an emotion.
 - ‘Diaspora’ as a way/mode of thinking through the concept of ‘integration’ viz. Australian multiculturalism.

Dr Edson Ziso:

- Developing preliminary map of ‘African’ researchers/academics in Australia to better understand research being conducted/issues being investigated.

- More than 100 researchers on Africa at different levels.
- Main themes are mining, language, identity, immigration, international relations, security, case-study and issue-based studies in Africa.
- Emerging themes are Australia-Africa relations, Australia-Africa diaspora engagements, university relations.

Session #2

Mr Haileluel Gebre-Selassie:

- Discussed the African Communities Taskforce (Victoria) and African Think Tank, including the flagship African Leadership and Development Program (ALDP).
- Important to think strategically in order to create bridges to bring diverse African diaspora communities and organisations together.

Mr Edward Solo:

- African community organisations must pool resources for collective impact.
- If there are weak state/territory African organisations then this weakens the national federation (FACCA); unity is an ongoing concern.
- Partnerships must be strengthened.
- Small population in the NT means the government (territory) does not see African communities as a strategic demographic.

Mr Mabok Marial:

- Must “promote cultural diversity through linkages and cooperation” viz. unity.
- Unity is essential to secure not only government funding (state and federal) for service/program delivery, but sustained government engagement.
- Leveraging community members’ skills and knowledge is also important.
- Cooperation amongst different African groups is crucial.

Mr Beny Bol:

- Focus on *outcomes* for African communities.
- Strategically engage with service providers and government to deliver outcomes.
- Take community back to the people so that they have ownership over African associations.
- No data on issues affecting Africans (e.g. unemployment, drugs and alcohol etc.); research required to support African communities.
- African organisations need specialised sub-committees that look at specific issue areas in order to produce information/data to support service providers.

Mr Ephraim-Osaghae:

- Direct community to community links needed rather than just leadership alone.
- Challenges of participation, funding, sustainability.
- African ‘roots’ as a strategic advantage when engaging different stakeholders.

Dr Casty Nyaga:

- Focus on sustainability (leadership renewal).

- Promote multiculturalism and a single voice/participation.
- Need for strong organisational structure(s); internal systems key to achieving community outcomes (self-driven KPIs).
 - Structure is key to delivering events/projects and stakeholder engagement.

Discussion:

- **Question:** Unity needs to be holistic, not simply in the eye of the beholder. There is also a need to for African community organisations to harmonise their activities/priorities. The problem is that organisations are formed from top to bottom (hierarchical). Lastly, how do African communities and organisations strategically place themselves in Australian policy landscape?
 - **Response #1:** Varied interests hindering efforts to ensure unity viz. strategic positioning/planning. Organisations are working at odds.
 - **Response #2:** Organisations must agree to disagree as a means of addressing disunity.
- **Question:** What to do about institutional discrimination against people facing mental health challenges?
 - **Response #1:** Service providers facing difficulties engaging African communities and ascertaining relevant issues; this gap needs to be bridged in order to address mistrust.
- **Question:** Related to flaws with African organisations' volunteer-driven character; how to maintain sustainability under such circumstances viz. organisational structure(s)?
 - **Response #1:** How are African community organisations utilising data? Do they know how to effectively/strategically utilise available/existing data?

Session #3

Ms Bernadette Masbayi:

- Diversity of communities a challenge for state government in engaging with them.
- Not always easy to connect with groups given divergent/different engagement styles/preferences.
- Strategies need to be focused on different needs with priority/emphasis on community-led initiatives.

Mr Haileluel Gebre-Selassie:

- Speaking on the Victorian African Communities Action Plan – six key areas of engagement identified:
 - Employment; Youth; Social cohesion; Education; Health and wellbeing; Drugs and alcohol.
- African-led implementation working with service providers (in the absence of African organisations).
- Development of Action Plan may also be appropriate for other states but within their own contexts.

Sgt. Steve Banks:

- Policing has changed. Focus is on changing community perceptions, addressing mistrust of law enforcement through community engagement.
- Long-term investment in prevention/diversion/victim-minimisation.

Dr Kate O'Shaughnessy:

- Africa is currently less strategically important in Australia's overall economic relations.
- DFAT has been "looking externally not domestically", which is why we see limited diaspora engagement. Nevertheless, there is recognition of importance of leveraging diaspora expertise.
- Larger diaspora communities are a potential 'soft power' tool of diplomacy.
- Arts and culture organisations (as soft power): need for an engagement framework with African diaspora communities.
- AGAAR remains the Department's main mode of African diaspora engagement.
- Need to engage in a long-term positioning of Africa that looks beyond current economic realities — diasporas can play a key role with this.

Prof. Samuel Makinda:

- Policy passes through many hands – advice requires this level of self-awareness and focusing on actors' areas of expertise /specialisation.
- Attempts to influence policy are often perceived as threats to some vested interests and can meet with considerable resistance.

Dr Diana Johns:

- Role of media and racism in criminalisation of young people – questions around belonging.
- Documenting experiences of young people coming into contact with justice-related system and their impacts.
- What role does family and community play (positive or negative) in the (re)integration process of young people who have come into contact with the justice system?
- How to operationalise African philosophies/principles such as Ubuntu?

Discussion:

- **Question/comment:** OACWA funded by OMI to do needs analysis/assessment; in process of working with OMI to develop strategic engagement plan.
- **Question/comment:** How to manage the continuation/carry-over of group-based conflicts from the continent in terms of the Australian justice system?





DAY 2: SATURDAY 31 AUGUST

THEME: Development, diplomacy and the diaspora: Deepening engagement between African-Australian communities, the diplomatic corps and the African Union's Agenda 2063.

| Time | Title | Speakers | |
|------------|--|---|---|
| 8.30-9.00 | <i>Registration</i> | | |
| 9.00-9.15 | Introduction | Dr David Mickler & Mr Joe Tuazama | "Summary of NAADEC Day 1 and Outline of Day 2" |
| 9.15-11.00 | 4. The African-Australian Diaspora & Africa's Development Agenda | Dr Apollo Nsuguba-Kyobe , Secretary, Pan-African Australasian Diaspora Network (PAADN) | "The African Union and the Diaspora as the 6 th Region of Africa: The Role of PAADN" |
| | | Mr Muhammad Dan Suleiman , UWA School of | "The Role of the African Diaspora in Pan-Africanism" |

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| | | Social Sciences; AfREC Fellow | |
| | | Dr Kathryn Sturman , Sustainable Minerals Institute, University of Queensland | “How Australia-Africa Networks could Promote the African Union Principle of ‘Non-Indifference’” |
| | | Mr Seth Appiah-Mensah , United Nations Office to the African Union; UWA AfREC Fellow | “The African Diaspora and the UN Sustainable Development Goals” |
| | | Dr Muza Gondwe , Minerals & Energy for Development Alliance (MEfDA); UWA AfREC Industry Coordinator | “Building a Network of Influencers: Why and How to Maintain Relationships in African Diaspora and Alumni” |
| 11.00-11.30 <i>Morning tea and networking</i> | | | |
| 11.30-1.30 | 5. The African-Australian Diaspora & Africa-Australia Relations | Dr Casta Tungaraza , Chair, Australian Foreign Minister’s Advisory Group on Australia-Africa Relations (AGAAR) | “AGAAR and the African-Australian Diaspora” |
| | | Ms Nancy Mutai , Education Attache, Kenya High Commission to Australia (representing H.E. Isaiya Kabira, Dean, African Diplomats Group) | “The Role of African Diplomats in Supporting the African-Australian Diaspora” |
| | | Mr Fred Soale , Ghana Honorary Consul in Western Australia | “The Ghanaian Diaspora in Australia” |
| | | Dr Nikola Pijovic , Queens University, Belfast; UWA AfREC Fellow | “Australia and Africa: A New Friend from the South?” |
| | | Ms Lisa Sharland , Head, International Programs, Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) | “Diaspora, Peace and Security, and Australia’s Engagement with the Countries of Africa” |
| | | Ms Tinashe Jakwa , UWA School of Social Sciences; AfREC Fellow | “The Impact of the African Diaspora on Australian Foreign Policy” |
| 1.30-2.30 <i>Lunch and networking</i> | | | |
| 2.30-4.30 | 6. The African-Australian Diaspora & Australian Universities | Dr David Mickler , Director, AfREC, UWA | “Deepening ‘Africa-Australia Literacy’: Education Instruments” |
| | | Dr Diana Johns and Matthew Mabefam , School of Social and Political | “UoM Engagement with Africa and the African Diaspora” |

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| | | Sciences, University of Melbourne (UoM) | |
| | | Dr Kwadwo Adusei-Asante , School of Arts and Humanities, Edith Cowan University (ECU) | “ECU Engagement with Africa and the African Diaspora” |
| | | Dr Dominic Dagbanja , UWA Law School; AfREC Community Coordinator | “UWA Engagement with Africa and the African Diaspora” |
| | | Ms Sarah Kiden , Director, OACWA Student Department: African Students in WA (ASIWA) | “Overview: ASIWA and its University Working Group” |
| | | Prof. John Hearn , Co-Chair, Australia Africa Universities Network (AAUN), University of Sydney | “Overview: AAUN and Australia-Africa Education Collaboration” |
| 4.30-4.45 | Conclusions, Action Plan and Thanks | Dr David Mickler and Mr Joe Tuazama | |
| 4.45-5.15 | Refreshments, networking - end of conference | | |

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS – DAY 2

Session #4

Dr Apollo Nsubuga-Kyobe:

- The African Union’s definition of diaspora is fundamentally political – it does not include Africans living in other African countries that aren’t their state of origin – only those living outside of the continent
- AU’s definition of ‘diaspora’ as someone living outside of the continent and anyone who can trace their origin to the continent. Motivated in asking foreign governments to create diaspora departments but only for those living outside of the continent
- PAADN as a key node in diaspora engagement viz. Australia-Africa relations. PAADN’s formative objective – support those of African descent living outside of the continent irrespective of their citizenship
- Diaspora members occupy a unique position – can help grow the continent from their host state with the aim of development and economic growth
- PAADN is also for building bridges – supporting the diaspora where they are for the mutual benefit of both states (home and host)
- Should also grow understandings of Pan-Africanism.

Dr Muhammad Dan Suleiman:

- Diasporic origins of Pan-Africanism. Pan Africanism is a political and intellectual movement as well as a culture. It has had a long history with many advocates – many of whom were from the diaspora (demonstrating the contributions of the diaspora).

- Marry being *outside* continent with *willingness* to contribute to the African Union's development agenda; this is what it means to be a part of the African 'diaspora' according to the AU.
- This furthers a Pan African agenda. Diasporic influencers of Pan Africanism demonstrate this fundamental relationship and the importance of the 'willingness' in the definition of diaspora

Dr Kathryn Sturman:

- The AU developed a principle of non-indifference (as oppose to non-interference) to signal taking a more hands on approach to injustices and challenges facing Africa.
- 'Non-indifference' in Australian context means caring beyond business opportunities But how to operationalise this principle in diasporic contexts?
- Australia-Africa networks should apply this same principle to human rights abuses, to civil war and to sustainable mining as a responsibility for development and an opportunity for the diaspora.

Mr Seth Appiah-Mensah:

- Important to set engagement priorities/issue areas.
- No data means no policy, which is the principal challenge facing many African actors.
- In Africa there is no security without development.
- The UN SDGs include provisions for migration and migrant diasporas (e.g. reducing transaction costs for migrant remittances and promotion of global citizenship)
- Planning and determining the right pathway is very important.
- This is an entry point for the diaspora to help in creating transformative strategies.

Dr Muza Gondwe:

- Africa Mining Vision – based on inclusive growth and sustainable development with the aim of having at least 20% of extraction done by locally owned companies. Focus on transparency, equity and optimisation.
- Rise of resource nationalism – local content, ownership, beneficiation and tax regimes (to benefit local communities).
- How, then, can the term 'local' be interpreted in relation to the diaspora? What is the role of diasporas in these conversations?
- The Artisanal Mining Sector (ASM) is a big problem for the government and health – high death and injury rate due to lack of regulation
- Opportunity for diaspora engagement: calls for diaspora professions in mining, examples in Congo calling, Ghanaian diaspora on illegal mining, Zimbabwe Diaspora Investment Group.

Discussion:

Q: *How would Africa deal with success and the unforeseen consequences it brings?*

Dr Apollo Nsuguba-Kyobe

The diaspora is able to gain knowledge from its position in other countries. The diaspora should form cohorts to help with this problem and utilise foreign universities and research knowledge. Government collaboration is also important in

this issue. Africa is not leading on this issue so it must borrow from others' knowledge.

Mr Seth Appiah-Mensah

Need to think about the environment and the future much more. The best path is to focus on bringing knowledge and best practice back to Africa.

Mr Muhammad Dan Suleiman

The whole African experience has constantly been challenged, which makes it very important to understand where we're going and how we're going to get there.

Q: UNDP can be unrepresentative of the real Africa with unreliable reports. Is this because they don't understand what they are reporting on?

Mr Seth Appiah-Mensah

The UN does the best it can filling in gaps in information from African universities. Unfortunately, the data doesn't exist. It needs to be collected and the government's responsibility in this should be stressed.

Q: What are the challenges and opportunities for women in mining?

Dr Muza Gondwe

Women in AMS are relegated to lower earning jobs. All sectors of mining are 'boys clubs'. The discipline is open to a lot of discrimination and lacks proper facilities for women. Some companies are doing well – with scholarships, mentoring etc. – but progress is still very slow.

Dr Apollo Nsuguba-Kyobe

The AU acknowledges the importance of woman and youth to the future of Africa.

Q: What is the state of Pan Africanism in the current generation?

Mr Muhammad Dan Suleiman

New Pan-Africanism will be different by necessity due to the different contexts facing new generations. Helping the continent can take place on a local or national level, social or environmental. What matters is the shared commitment to help Africa. Pan Africanism and development should be understood through a perspective that integrates the global political order of the world. Development needs to be defined from within Africa – importing them would not fit.

Mr Seth Appiah-Mensah

Africans addressing their problems through African agency. Should try to own their own Pan-Africanism individually to encourage others – in diversity is strength.

Q: Niger is a high producer of minerals but has no training or local professionals. There is a lack of local input and therefore of local benefit. Should we be putting focus on empowering local universities to input skills into the communities?

Dr Kathryn Sturman

There is a big problem of automation for local content in African mines. Automation means less people, less jobs and less need for local services.

Dr Muza Gondwe

There are great policies but a lack of implementation – there is a need for leadership. Automation is definitely a big problem with a big impact.

Q: What are the practicalities of Pan Africanism? (how do we achieve it in the face of so much division and conflict?)

Mr Muhammad Dan Suleiman

The complexity of African identity does not have to be a cause of conflict – everyone is never going to be the same. It is how you deal with conflicts and differences that matter.

Dr Apollo Nsuguba-Kyobe

There are colonial underpinnings to African differences. Need to deal with issues together by putting differences aside to deal with later.

Session #5

Dr Casta Tungaraza:

- AGAAR provides advice for Australian foreign policy, high commissioners, parliament, DFAT, partnership organisations etc.
- Focuses on Australia's engagement with the countries of Africa and strategies for Australian relations with Africa and priority areas for government.
- Looks at the importance of Africa for the world, for sustainability, development, people to people relations. The recent continental trade agreement is the largest free trade agreement in the world.
- Africa is engaged with major players (e.g. China, Russia, Japan, US) – Australia needs to be involved.
- AGAAR's discussions on how Australia needs to strategically position itself involves the diaspora (settlement, diversity, taking advantage of opportunities and acknowledging contributions) – the diaspora is the link.
- The diaspora has a role to play in the positioning strategy – it needs to claim agency and actively participate in the development of the Australia-Africa relationship.

Ms Nancy Mutai:

- Australia is a very popular place for Kenyans due to the strength of bilateral relations – education attaché deployed to Australia due to the high number of Kenyan students in Australia.
- The AU invites and encourages the role of the African diaspora.
- The Kenyan High Commission's purpose is to support the diaspora in Australia (with travel documentation, psycho-social support, websites for information, law, safety, housing, multicultural events).

- Create data for planning and strategy and encourage diaspora investment.

Mr Fred Soale:

- The diaspora should share their culture.
- 2010 was the first visit of the Ghanaian foreign minister to Australia, which boosted bilateral relations.
- There are more and more postgraduate scholarships for Ghanaians, encouraging students to upskill. Australian educational resources have been boosted in Ghana after the mining boom.
- Australian-Ghana bilateral relationships have massively grown in resources and education. The diaspora can help with cultural change and collaboration.

Dr Nikola Pijovic:

- New book asks two questions:
 - What does Australia want with Africa?
 - What has Australia's foreign policy evolution been with Africa?
- The main argument is that Australia doesn't know the big picture/what it wants strategically in Africa. There is no specific goal which is why there has been no consistent, planned approach. The political party in power makes a big difference to Australia's African foreign policy.
- Australia's African foreign policy has been *episodic not strategic*
- In foreign policy, diasporic groups are unacknowledged. The government won't go and consult the diaspora – save when they need to add more weight to a plan they've already formed. The diaspora must lobby, make noise, fundraise etc. because Australia is a market democracy.

Ms Lisa Sharland:

- A lot of diasporic involvement is lacking in Australia-Africa security discussions.
- It is difficult to get people to discuss African engagement. Australia's white papers speaks of the 'Indo-Pacific', which stop after India and exclude Africa.
- The current US leadership is causing other countries to reflect on relationships and the future of multilateralism.
- There are a lot of things going on in foreign policy which is affecting foreign engagement – a mobilised diaspora can cause political focus.
- Security tends to be framed through geography – i.e. the Indo Pacific. However, current security threats aren't necessarily geographic.
- Australia doesn't think the same in the West as it does in the East. Need more exploration into engagement in foreign affairs.
- African literacy in the Australian government is relatively low; we need to develop engagement opportunities and African perspectives on development.

Ms Tinashe Jakwa:

- There is a tendency to view migrant groups as homogenous.
- Diasporas are diverse externally and internally, they have different priorities, interests etc. There are fissures across interests and identities.
- The home countries perceptions and attitudes towards the diaspora influence the relationship in other tangible ways, e.g. FDI.

- The host government need to be aware of competitive diaspora lobbying.
- In the Howard Governments white paper, the Middle East and Africa share the same paragraph and are barely spoken about at all. The next white paper focused on the relationship with South Africa and development in other countries. The most recent one has scattered mentions but focuses on the economic partnership and the challenge of terrorism, conflict and irregular migration.
- There has been a recent acknowledgement of the importance of the diaspora and of the relationships between home and host countries.

Discussion:

Q: What strategies should be used to influence both major parties to extend the relationship between Australia and Africa?

Dr Casta Tungaraza

AGAAR is not afraid to step on toes. There is a government strategy to extend this relationship – the government’s response is bipartisan and has taken most of AGAAR’s recommendations. The role of the diaspora is to actively engage with policy makers, find the necessary information and disseminate the knowledge. AGAAR recommended that Australia actively monitor the emerging free trade agreement in order to take advantage of the opportunities it offers and to keep Australian companies aware of this. AGAAR further recommended that Australia promote and monitor non-extractive trade to diversify the economic partnership. These strategies will benefit Australia, the diaspora and the continent.

Q: Australia is one of the main recruiters of African health professionals. How do we speak to policy makers about the brain drain in health?

Dr Nikola Pijovic

Foreign policy is designed for brain drain in its promotion of ‘skilled migration’. The policy is designed to cherry pick and therefore causes brain drain so it’s difficult to deal with this issue given that it’s the reality of immigration.

Q: How can we cause states to personalise support services for African students? Also how do we follow up on research for students with scholarships?

Ms Nancy Mutai

The school system is very different in Africa which makes the transition to Australian schooling very difficult. It’s important to tell students to talk about their problems and not to bottle them up inside. Students should be encouraged to seek help and get involved with the diaspora.

Mr Fred Soale

Ghana has asked for help in education – especially in post graduate education – because that is the main gap that needs to be filled. It all depends on the home states’ needs and the gap they have that other countries can help address.

Q: Can we learn from the experience of other countries responsible for brain drain where they have compensated the home country?

Ms Lisa Sharland

There most likely won't ever be direct compensation for the brain drain. However, we have the Australia Awards Africa to encourage African students to come and learn in Australia and take that knowledge home (though there is an awareness that this causes a brain drain problem).

Q: Is it brain drain or brain gain? The diaspora can bring the knowledge back and benefit the relationship. In some ways it is more of a brain circulation.

Ms Lisa Sharland

Trade and investments are definitely priorities for AGAAR. AGAAR tries to broaden trade relations. AGAAR took government officials across to Africa, which helped build people to people interactions and understanding. Which in turn helped broaden investment and has the ability to change attitudes and ways of thinking.

Q: We need to have Africans go back to work in Africa. How do we go about working with companies to get more local content? How can you work with the diaspora so that the mining and investment companies are aware that investment and discussion needs to go beyond mining?

Ms Lisa Sharland

We need more data and we need the diaspora to speak up to mining companies – in their language – about engaging with the diaspora.

Ms Tinashe Jakwa

We need to appreciate the heterogeneity of the diaspora and we need to create different groupings in order to expand on our priorities. The Australian government doesn't currently acknowledge Africa as a long-term strategic partner. We need to ensure greater coordination and cohesion to achieve our goals.

Dr Casta Tungaraza

Opportunities do exist; we need to encourage the diaspora to look at business partnerships, to link up with businesses and to know what's available, to take advantage of business linkages and get concessions. The African Union and Australia are promoting brain circulation. It's all about finding the best place for making contributions – sometimes it is from the continent but sometimes it is from the outside in the position of the diaspora.

Session #6

Dr David Mickler:

- Cultural literacy is really important in multicultural societies. Australia currently has very poor 'Africa literacy' and so Australians often rely on stereotypes which aren't helpful.

- Emphasised the need to deepen Australia-Africa literacy through the mutual strengthening of knowledge about the other.
- Highlighted the need to build a 'constituency' for Africa in Australia through knowledge and engagement platforms and programs.
- The Australia-Africa relationship can hopefully follow the same footsteps as the Australia-Asia relationship (there was a deliberate plan to improve Australian's Asian literacy in order to improve and build on the relationship as a whole).
- Emphasised the potential leadership role of the education sector in this initiative and the practical steps it could take.

Dr Diana Johns and Matthew Mabefam:

- Developing Africa engagement strategies in universities is key.
- Universities should develop Africa-focused groups and centres to promote engagement across a range of different stakeholders.
- UoM has been working towards building Australia- Africa networks and knowledge exchange. There are a lot of academics working on Africa and the diaspora.
- E.g. Blue Nile – an MBA equivalent which is culturally appropriate and temporally, geographically helpful for the specific context of African students. It aims to provide the skills and networks necessary for success.
- The African Studies Group at UoM – made for postgraduate students and academic staff interested in Africa:
 - They organise seminars, workshops, support and social events.
 - Have opened it up to students from other universities and non-academics.
 - Have started developing an annual conference that is student-run.

Dr Kwadwo Adusei-Asante:

- ECU has the highest number of African students in WA. However, 50% of students failing units are black Africans at ECU. The university needs to change this, an intervention is required to help. African students struggle to adapt to the Australian context.
- African students are diverse with different experiences. Particular challenges face black African students.
- Meeting student/demographic specific needs is crucial to achieving positive educational outcomes, for example, through ECU's Top-Up Program.
- Have started a mentoring program at ECU with great results:
 - It pairs a postgraduate with an undergraduate student to help them with adjustment and academic problems.
 - There is an additional plenary session for mentees to help them with grammar, paragraph structure etc.

Dr Dominic Dagbanja:

- Engagement must be understood to mean the involvement and understanding of different stakeholders in both the conception and delivery of initiatives, including research.
- AfREC has been working on engagement with the African diaspora and collaborating with partners to work towards the Agenda 2063, the SDGs and Australia-Africa relations. It stresses the importance of research, teaching/training and active public

engagement. AfREC engages with policy makers and high commissioners in conjunction with the AAUN and other university networks.

- Media narratives rely heavily on crime, conflict and common stereotypes – we need to counteract this with more useful, helpful, representative narratives.

Ms Sarah Kiden:

- Need for student representation and advocacy that engages a multitude of stakeholders in advancing the needs of African students in WA.
- ASIWA helps African students adjust to the problems of integration, discrimination and homesickness
- Offers support and community on a wide range of issues that face students.

Prof. John Hearn:

- Has worked and taught in Uganda and Kenya, and has built research centres around Africa.
- Started AAUN and is developing new strategic plan to extend the university network.
- Unfortunately, Australian and African geopolitics aren't in the best place for engagement right now, but we must attempt to rise above bureaucracy and politics.

Discussion:

Q: What role can PhD advisers play in helping African students?

Mr Mathew Mabefam

They can use their experience to advise on how to manage projects but should also take time to listen and learn from students. It should be two-way exchange.

Dr Diana John

It's all about relationships, providing human support but being aware of your limitations.

Dr Kwadwo Adusei-Asante

Advisers need to be empathetic and need to support students; they should be there and listening if the students ever want to talk about anything.

Prof. John Hearn

Initial support is very important, but so are follow-ups and maintaining continual support throughout their careers.

Q: Are there any hands-on workshops with hands-on approaches working on solutions to problems which are then pushed to community leaders and policy makers?

Mr Mathew Mabefam

Engaging with political, real world situations and outcomes involves rich discussion. The African Studies group is planning workshops but they don't currently have any reports submitted.

Dr Dominic Dagbanja

AfREC is still young but there is a lot of opportunity going forward to develop specific workshops to meet specific needs. E.g. African fieldwork.

Dr Diana John

At UoM there's a hands-on conference that examines the engagement of young people with the justice system through an advisory commission.

Dr Kwadwo Adusei-Asante

That is what OACWA is for and there is always the potential to develop new projects. It's important to communicate.

Ms Sarah Kiden

As an international student, there was a lot of culture shock and not enough information about the available support systems. OACWA has hands on projects that try to change discriminatory practices and thinking. There should be an actionable and effective national reporting system on racism in universities.

Q: There should be an acknowledgement of the different experience of African students who are coming here due to refugee status and therefore dealing with different struggles. Wartime trauma and different cultural backgrounds cause adaption issues. There are cultural differences in how people deal with adversity and the treatment of mental health, drug abuse, alcohol abuse – and young people are particularly vulnerable.

Dr Dominic Dagbanja

These discussions are important. We are in a multicultural society and we cannot just have one way of doing things. Everyone has a role to play and it's important to have these kinds of dialogues.

Dr Diana John

The criminalisation and medicalisation of our youth is a universal issue – even though coming from different contexts. We often use systems to deal with issues that are community problems that should never be systemised. We need to build up our communities to deal with these issues.

Q: African parents have different ideas and attitudes towards things that are generally based on their youth which are potentially carried on to the next generation. What are your thoughts on parents' roles?

Dr Dominic Dagbanja

The Australian education system involves a lot more parental involvement than it does in Africa. This should be acknowledged by the community.

Q: Not a question but a statement. We should try not to isolate people who aren't from Africa who work to help the continent. Thank you to David.

Prof. John Hearn

Affirmation. Other states have also been starting initiatives similar to AfREC.

Q: What's the role of parents in proactively supporting students through university?

Ms Sarah Kiden

We need to ask students for feedback in order to get both perspectives.

Dr Kwadwo Adusei-Asante

ECU has done some research into African students after school and found that parents don't understand the education system. ECU has begun an initiative where students can go to information sessions with their parents to engage them more in the education system.



NAADEC 2019 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. The Federation of African Communities Councils in Australia (FACCA) should be revitalised as the national peak body representing African community organisations across Australia. This would enhance ‘national pan-Australian, pan-African’ consultations, strategic planning, advocacy and communication.**
- 2. There should be structured, regular and meaningful consultations between the national peak body and State and Commonwealth Governments on issues concerning African communities in Australia.**
- 3. State and Territory Governments should create specific African Community Engagement Strategies, in partnership with African community organisations and drawing on universities, following the example of the Victorian African Communities Action Plan (VACAP).**
- 4. African communities should be provided with at least one funded physical space in each State and Territory, such as an ‘Africa House’, for the development and delivery of community activities.**
- 5. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade should develop a national strategy for directly engaging the African diaspora in aspects of Australian foreign policy towards Africa. AGAAR, universities and African community organisations should contribute to the development of that strategy.**
- 6. Australian universities through AAUN and with AGAAR should develop a ‘one-stop shop’ online portal for research, data and other relevant information on Australia-Africa relations and the African diaspora in Australia. This should include essential and culturally-appropriate information on Australia for new African migrants.**
- 7. Australian universities, individually and via AAUN, should create practical strategies for deepening engaging with the African continent, African communities and African students in Australia.**
- 8. The work of the Pan-African Australasian Diaspora Network (PAADN), as the formal link between the African Union and the African diaspora in Australia, should be better supported and promoted by all stakeholders.**
- 9. NAADEC, working with FACCA and other stakeholders, should become an annual diaspora engagement conference, either during the annual national Australia Africa Week in Perth or on a rotational basis in a different State or Territory.**

NOTE: This Conference Report, the accompanying selection of presentation slides, and future updates on NAADEC and its recommendations can be found at:

<https://www.afrec.uwa.edu.au/naadec-2019>



Africa Research & Engagement Centre

The AfREC logo, which is shared with the UWA African Students' Union (ASU), was designed by Abdi Hassan, a UWA Juris Doctor student and AfREC Member. Abdi's interests include legal history, critical socio-legal theories, pre-colonialism and colonialism in Africa, migration, international human rights law, and displacement in times of conflict. According to Abdi, the purpose of the AfREC emblem is to highlight the vibrancy of the peoples, cultures, and histories of the African continent. This arrangement of multi-coloured polygons takes inspiration from the continued movement of peoples and traditions across the continent. It is both a statement of diversity and individuality.



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