

US AFRICA NETWORK



ANNUAL REPORT

2013

Fostering an inclusive international and intergenerational dialogue about priorities and strategies for solidarity with Africa in the US.



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Our Mission

The US-Africa Network facilitates communication and solidarity among people and groups in the United States, on the African continent, and in the African Diaspora.

We are intergenerational, transnational, and multi-racial. We work for universal human rights and global social justice, recognizing that contemporary global issues are interlinked to each other and not confined within geographical and social boundaries. Our organizational structures are flexible, non-hierarchical, and collaborative.

The principles and commitments expressed here began to come into focus in break-out sessions at the Kalamazoo consultation and were developed further by a meeting of an expanding Coordinating Committee held in Chicago in November 2013.

Our Values and Approach

Inclusivity, Diversity, and Mutual Respect

The US-Africa Network includes people of different generations, genders, sexualities, races, and national and social identities. We believe that collaboration across such boundaries is essential to building global solidarities. The US-Africa Network has a principled commitment to oppose both prejudices and structural inequalities, including those based on racism, sexism, homophobia, and citizenship status.

Transnational Collaboration

We recognize that today's most pressing issues are global, and that people have different stakes and experiences depending on geographical and social location. The US-Africa Network believes that inclusivity of people with diverse experiences and diverse identities is indispensable for understanding these issues and developing solutions to address them.

Intersectoral Approaches to Global Issues

The US-Africa Network recognizes that issues do not operate in isolation. Rather, they intersect, intertwine, and often are generated one from another. To take new progressive approaches to raising consciousness and promoting solutions, the Network promotes dialogue and collaboration among people focusing on different issues. Issues of primary concern to the network include climate justice, human security and anti-militarism, inequality and economic justice, and sustainable human development.

Progressive Policies and Relationships

The primary focus of the US-Africa Network is to promote progressive policies and relationships between Africa and the United States, with a particular emphasis on common issues that affect people around the world. This implies building relationships with organizations and movements that prioritize the interests of the wide majority of the population rather than of privileged elites.

Building a US-Africa Network

For generations, Americans engaged in campaigns for social justice and human rights have recognized that a global perspective is essential for analyzing societal problems and devising strategies to address them. In almost every case, the social justice issues that demand our attention here are also international in scope. Examples include human rights issues affecting people of color, women, LGBTQI people, and immigrants; growing income and wealth inequality; under-funding of vital social programs facilitated by laws that allow wealthy corporations and individuals to evade their fair share of taxation; and failure to act on climate change that is already having devastating effects in the United States, worldwide, and especially in Africa.

The connections between Africa and the United States have been particularly closely linked to internal issues of race and inequality in U.S. society, and this has been reflected in the evolution of citizen action linking Americans and Africans. The most prominent manifestation was the anti-apartheid movement of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s.

In recent years, national leadership, clarity of focus, institutional capacity, and structures for engaging African partners in determining priorities have been in short supply.

Americans focusing on African issues, as well as their colleagues on the African continent, have felt an urgent need to revitalize and refocus advocacy work concerning Africa among a broad range of constituencies in the United States.



The US-Africa Network's consultation at Kalamazoo College was hosted by the Arcus Center for Social Justice Leadership. The topics discussed in plenary issue sessions served as backdrop to the "action discussions". Each of these was primarily conducted in break-out groups.

Developing Our Issues

The US-Africa Network feels strongly that various actors make essential and complementary contributions to this work. In order to be effective, communication and consultation among allies who can build a common vision is essential.

For this purpose, the US-Africa Network convened a consultation on "US-Africa Solidarity in the 21st Century" in June 2013 in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Since the initial consultation meeting in June 2013, the US-Africa Network has started implementing specific action in the key arena of climate justice, particularly leveraging the contacts among veteran anti-apartheid activists, the student-led fossil-fuel divestment movement, and climate justice activists on the African continent.

2013 Events in Review



In addition to efforts to promote dialogue on a wide range of issues, the US-Africa Network is also identifying specific areas on which participants have joined in **working groups** for more focused strategy analysis and action. These are intended to complement rather than compete with other groups involved on these issues.

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Communities across the globe have experienced increasing militarization that permeates multiple aspects of human interaction, including interstate relations. The **Human Security and Anti-Militarism Working Group** recognizes that this increased militarization results in large part from prioritizing access to natural resources and military agendas despite the human consequences.

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The **Climate Justice Working Group** brings an Africa-focused lens to existing US climate and environmental justice movements. It highlights African climate justice initiatives, fosters direct collaboration between US and African activists, and identifies US policy solutions that are accountable to the needs of Africans.

US-Africa Solidarity in the 21st Century: A Strategic Discussion

When: June 21-24, 2013

Where: Kalamazoo College, hosted by the Arcus Center for Social Justice Leadership

What: To consider what are the “signature issues” on which we can have the most impact in the coming several years, the US-Africa Network planned several presentations and discussion including four cluster areas, each of which were led by experts from Africa and the United States with knowledge of both the current significance of the issues and organizing efforts that are underway.

Who: This event included 49 participants, traveling to Kalamazoo from 13 US states and the District of Columbia, and from four African countries. While only six of our group flew to the meeting from the African continent, we included people born in (or with parents from) Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Africa, Zimbabwe, as well as China, Haiti, Jamaica, and the USA.



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Outcome: There was clear consensus on several points:

- Ways must be found to continue and expand the communication across geographical distances and engagement with different issues, with the same spirit of mutual respect and commitment to facilitate common action on issues of social justice.
- For the time being, at least, the structure should be that of a decentralized network rather than establishing a new formal non-governmental organization. The existing coordinating committee was charged with the responsibility of coming up with a draft network structure and strategic plan by the fall of 2013.
- Participants in the meeting, including those in three “issue break-out groups” convened on Monday morning, were urged to come up with specific proposals for action and follow-up, discuss them among themselves, and consider what proposals might be brought to the wider group. While further discussion was necessary to determine the criteria for a campaign or sub-group to use the US-Africa Network brand, as well as plans to further expand the Network, it was agreed that sub-groups should also begin with plans for common action on the issues rather than waiting on “central” direction from the coordinating committee.

A number of the panelists and participants in the Kalamazoo forum participated in a Chicago-based community forum in the following week. The goal of this forum was to expand the conversation to include progressive activists from the United States and Africa. Participants met with a number of groups in the area, including the United African Organization; the Chicago Anti-Eviction campaign; and the Chicago Workers’ Collaborative.



The US-Africa Network organized several panels during the meeting in Kalamazoo, discussing what should be the highest priority “signature issues” that a national network on Africa in the United States should be focusing on.

“Divestment without Borders” at Powershift

When: October 18-21, 2013

Where: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

What: PowerShift is an annual event that brought 7,500 activists together to share resources, swap stories, and strengthen relationships. Approximately 50 people attended the US-Africa Network’s workshop, “Divestment Without Borders,” with Prexy Nesbitt, William Lawrence, Omoyele Sowore (Sahara Reporters) that brought a unique international dimension to the event.

Outcome: The US-Africa Network created dozens of new relationships with people who want to stay in touch with the US-Africa Network or who want an anti-Apartheid divestment activist of African climate justice activist to come to their campus. We created two brochures for this and later events: an introduction to how climate change is disproportionately affecting Africa and resources highlighting diverse strategies of the anti-apartheid divestment movement.



Members of the Climate Justice group led a panel on Divestment without Borders at the Power Shift gathering in Pittsburgh.

Looking Ahead



The US-Africa Network’s Environmental Justice tour, the first of its kind, has moved activists closer to a unified movement for health, sustainability and justice. The artwork photographed above is credited with thanks to local artists in the Chicago area who designed and produced the banner.

In 2013, the US-Africa Network developed a governance structure to enhance programs and activities in 2014. The featured program for the first half of 2014, held in March and April, was One Struggle, Many Fronts: USAN Environmental Justice Speaking Tour.

Between March 20 and April 3, One Struggle, Many Fronts visited Detroit, Chicago, New York, Washington DC, Oakland, Berkeley, and Atlanta. Multiple events were planned in each city. Some of the event hosts were long-time Africa solidarity activists. Others were community environmental justice groups, and others were student fossil fuel divestment activists. Each event was tailored to its local audience, and many local activists were included as speakers.

One Struggle, Many Fronts has built new bridges. The tour has inspired US environmental activists to think about African struggles. It has inspired Africa solidarity activists to think about environmental justice. It built real connections between these groups and African environmental justice organizations. For more information on the speaking tour, visit www.usafricanetwork.org

Our Structure

The US-Africa Network is grateful to have a dedicated team of volunteers that are passionate, talented and creative. In 2013, more than 30 consistent participants in the USAN contributed at least 1,800 hours in volunteer time. This is also combined with a limited number of part-time staff positions.

The US-Africa Network is governed by a **Coordinating Committee** which meets regularly by conference call. In addition to the Coordinating Committee, the USAN has two functional committees and two issue working groups.

The **Finance and Fundraising Committee** is responsible for preparing and approving the budget, fundraising and grants development, and producing a financial report for stakeholders

The **Communications Committee** is responsible for all aspects of external communication, ensuring that targeted audiences receive relevant communications and updates from the US-Africa Network.

The US-Africa Network's online presence (Twitter and Facebook) is managed by this group, in coordination with the issue working groups.

The two initial issue working groups are the **Climate Justice Working Group** and the **Human Security and Anti-Militarism Working Group**. The Climate Justice Working Group has started a program of public activities, while the Human Security and Anti-Militarism Working Group is engaged in internal discussions to determine focus and strategies.

The US-Africa Network has also included a **Support Committee**, which is made up of supporters of the US-Africa Network who provide occasional advice and assistance for Network activities. The organization of the Kalamazoo Consultation was also assisted by an organizing committee.

Our Team



Coordinating Committee:

- Briggs Bomba, Coordinator, Project Director for Zimbabwe Alliance, Trust Africa
- Rufaro Gwarada, Co-Chair, Human Security and Anti-Militarism Working Group
- Nunu Kidane, Director, Priority Africa Network (PAN)
- Will Lawrence, Coordinator, Climate Justice Working Group
- William Minter, Editor, AfricaFocus Bulletin
- Prexy Nesbitt, Educator, Activist, Scholar
- Anyango Reggy, US-Africa Network Coordinator
- Christine Root, Project Manager, African Activist Archive Project
- Michael Stulman, Communications Consultant, Dakar, Senegal
- Emily Williams, Co-Chair, Human Security and Anti-Militarism working group

Communications Committee

- William Minter
- Katherine Philipson
- Michael Stulman

Finance and Fundraising Committee

- Heeten Kalan
- William Minter
- Prexy Nesbitt
- Chris Root
- Anita Plummer

Financial Highlights*

The US-Africa Network depends in large part on the voluntary efforts of participants. Contributions made to the US-Africa Network go directly to projects that include coordinating efforts by network volunteers. Funds raised go for part-time staff and for expenses for bringing participants together for in-person meetings, beginning with the initial consultation in Kalamazoo, Michigan, in June 2013.

The fiscal sponsor for the US-Africa Network is the Eastern Educational Resource Collaborative ("East Ed"), which agreed to assume responsibility for financial management. The executive director for East Ed is Randolph Carter. For more information, visit their website at www.easted.org.

INCOME

Contributions	\$12,684
Grants	\$80,000
Total Income	\$92,684

EXPENSE

Professional Fees	\$41,220
Travel	\$22,254
Lodging and Food	\$5,943
Supplies and Fundraising	\$355
Accounting Fees (fiscal sponsor)	9,253
Total Expense	\$79,025

"International solidarity is not an act of charity: it is an act of unity between allies fighting on different terrains toward the same objective."

— Samora Machel, former President of Mozambique

*US-Africa Network Income and Expenses -
Unaudited Report for December 2012 through December 2013

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