**Commission on African Affairs September Meeting**

**Date:** 3/3/2020

**Time:** 6:00pm-8:00pm

**Attendees:** Yodit Shirbu, Hellen Fissihaie, Theodore Ngatchou,, Carmen Eliam, Thierry Tchenko, Yared Mengistu, Queen Alike, Semy Hagos, Sheila Wajila, Bemnet Shimnete, Ify, Marvin, Naniya, San Contanyle, Abdoulha, Stephen Johnson, Kelley Barber, Felicity, Saka, Kate Okoye

**Commissioners Present:** Hellen, Yodit, Theodore, Carmen, Etayenesh, Richmond, Kate

Quorum met at 6: 34pm, Hellen Fissihaie, Vice Chair calls meeting into order and MOAA begins with updates. Attendees introduced themselves.

**Updates: MOAA (Queen)** Queen gave an introduction to the MOAA and talked about the Mayor’s budget engagement meetings and about the upcoming event to help new and existing businesses who want to enter the food industry. She introduced a grantee of MOAA who is the founder of the Konkouran Company.

Mr Assane Konte, who founded the Konkouran company in 1983 provided the history and purpose of the organization. Konkouran Company provides dance and cultural and art education. They are educating foundations about international cultures and African dances. They are happy to be recipients of the Mayors Office of African Affairs grant to build up their programming and be recognized by the office. They travel and through their trips they provide dance education and share culture. Mr Konte invited everyone to join the annual dance celebration in DC on Labor Day weekend, which is held every year. Their website is <http://kankouran.org> speakers number is 2025181213

**Commission agenda**

**Hellen:** Provides a high-level overview of goals and roles of COAA in supporting MOAA. COAA’s role is to support, advise, and advocate for the African DC community and the work of MOAA.

The commission works to support the OAA and the mayor to advocate on behalf of Africans in DC. The commission also aims to advocate and supporting the demands of the community. The meetings are held every other month and next meeting will be held on May 6.

**Marvin:** He is with the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). He manages the microenterprise department, which provides loans and small business technical assistance. The loans are based on character. They give loans of up to $1000 to help with building credit. ORR also helps with business counseling to support the needs of refugees. The ECDC is a recipient of a grant from ORR. Upward Global is one of the recipients of the ORR grant, which provides assistance to refugees. There are 21 organizations that receive the grants. He explained that their definition of a refugee is a person who doesn’t have US citizenship.

MOAA mentioned two grant recipients from OAA who also assist refugees.

Kelly Harper: She explained her role with Radio one. They have multiple radio stations and target African Americans. The radio can help the African community reach a larger group and they are interested to diversity their reach. They have Hip Hop and R&B to Gospel, Talk/News. Radio One is where urban listeners turn for entertainment, inspiration and information. Radio One has a digital platform and TV and people who have events can use that platform to spread news and events.

Officer Johnson: The MPD office connects the African diaspora with resources of the MPD. There are also Africans on the MPD workforces who are from Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria and French speaking officers.

There was a question about outreach with the African community. The office doesn’t have the same program they had before but they are working to increase their outreach. Officer Johnson provided his contact information 2023523402

Roundtable updates:

Carmen talked about her jewelry design classes at DCPS, Sitar, and she will have an event in the beginning of June. She held an Afromarket DC in November 2019 and she wants to do it again in June.

Felicity: She is working on a leadership-coaching program called Equip to Lead, which provides training for African entrepreneurs. She wants to know how to work with the office and commission.

Officer Okumba: He is willing to help students who have interest in joining the military and MPD.

Yodit Shiberuis director of Howard University SBA Center, which provides business assistance to obtain certifications for local and federal procurements. They also assist in market research, free consulting for businesses that want to work outside the US. Every state has an SBDC, Small Business Development Center. They serve over 500 people. There are 7 satellite offices within DC. For more information visit www.dcsb.org

**Hellen** talked about her company F3 Global and the work she is doing in DC. She mentioned upcoming local and federal government events. There is an upcoming event on STEM research and capacity building currently planned between April 20-24.

Officer Johnson asked for everyone to send him events and he can share it kevine.johnson@dc.gov

Theodore is working to help the people in our community that have disability. He is working to develop programs to help people that don’t have access to healthcare. Theodore talked about the event coming up on April 4th at the THEARC African Cultural day. He provided information on computer classes and motivation to the community.

**Kate** is a teacher in DC Charter School. She is also with Divine Foundation help orphans and widows in Africa by providing assistance to children and women. The organization has filed 501 (c ) 3 to help widows and children in Africa. The Office of Partnership and Grant Services provides assistance to nonprofits and could benefit this organization.

Antoinet: she is in HR and has a nonprofit called Friends. The nonprofit provides capacity building, education for women, and resources for students.

An attendee mentioned she is working on a documentary and is a retired epidemiologist.

Bemnet: she is with a nonprofit in IT. She is doing IT management and business development for her future business.

Ify is Nigerian and spends half the time in the US and half time in Nigeria. She is a lawyer and practices in Nigeria and America.

Nana is working on his political dissertation. He is a PhD candidate at HU.

Queen reiterated the importance of filling out the Census 2020. She said everyone should all be agents of change to get the information out on the CEnsus.

Eden Fisseha mentioned She works at Uber and she is going into IT.

Zewdit Haile has a cleaning company Kaizen Green cleaning. The business is certified and she will like leads to expand her business. She said they clean all types of businesses and trying to work with more business, banks, etc [www.kaizengreen.com](http://www.kaizengreen.com) They are a green cleaning company.

**Kate** Divine Foundation help orphans and widows in Africa by providing assistance to children and women. The organization has filed 501 (c ) 3 to help widows and children in Africa. The Office of Partnership and Grant Services provides assistance to nonprofits and could benefit this organization.

**Saka**. Her severs as a translator for the Ghanaian community in the court system and is looking to assist with legal translation needs.

**Theodore**. Renaissance Center is a platform put in place to support people with various limitations. It connects to resources so they can reach their individual goals. Additionally, the Center promotes STEM for children and has family engagement for Francophone Africans. RCCE is a MOAA grant recipient.

Hewit is with African Communities Together which provide free legal probono services on immigration services. They host Know your Rights seminars. She is interested in connecting with immigrants who need legal assistance.

Selam works part time with African Communities Together to do census education and has knocked on 300 doors and will go through April 6. She has a Masters in Psychology and is looking for leads for a new job.

Yafet is a mental health educator, National Educated United Front, and he runs a mentorship program. He mentioned an upcoming Black Women’s conference May 16th.

Thierry asked to send him information on African businesses in your ward. The State of the District address is coming up next in March. Show the presence of the African community at these meetings. There are census jobs available and Amharic speaking individuals are encouraged to apply. The coronavirus is being followed by DC office of health and encourages everyone to follow the news and be aware of the latest developments.