AFRICAN CULTURAL FOUNDATION

IMPACT REPORT

2025

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Prepared by

THE AFRICAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION WIEN

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African Cultural Foundation/afriCult — PUBLISHER
1102819962 — ZVR NUMBER
Gudrunstrasse 25
1100 Wien — OFFICE
www.africancultural-foundation.org — WEBSITE
office@africancultural-foundation.org — E-MAIL

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LETTER FROM THE FOUNDER

IFEOMA MELISSA OFOEDU, M.A.

Founder & Board "African Cultural Foundation & NIA Sapce e.U"

Most civil society organizations (CSOs) will tell you that the past year has been a difficult one. **Civic space continues to shrink**, and there is a growing, coordinated effort to limit the influence of nonprofit organizations—especially by reducing their access to funding.

We want to be honest: unlike many CSOs that have benefited from years of unrestricted funding, we have not. Our story has always been one of resilience and creativity. For years, we have **had to be inventive** to keep our operations running. So, when the crackdown on CSO financing intensified over the past year, it was neither a shock nor a surprise to us—it was, in fact, proof that our adaptive approach has been the right one.

This year, we diversified our funding and **launched a social business** model through our **Nia Empowerment Space**, ensuring greater sustainability and independence. But financial innovation was only one part of our journey.

We also worked to make our projects and knowledge more accessible by launching **African Cultural Foundation Publications**, a freely downloadable collection of resources aimed at amplifying African and diaspora perspectives.

Expanding our network was another key focus. Our participation in international events such as the **Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)** in New York and multiple **ENAR conferences** and workshops strengthened our global reach and collaboration. Yet, the most meaningful milestone came at home: the election of a **new Board of Directors,** combining long-term partner organizations with dedicated individuals who have been essential to our work.

Looking ahead to 2026, our goals are clear:

- *Deliver **more** direct **services** to our community,*
- ***Expand our impact** beyond Austria's borders, and*
- *Continue **building a movement rooted** in resilience, collaboration, and cultural empowerment.*

NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS

WHY WE VOTED A NEW BOARD

The African Cultural Foundation Wien is proud to be guided by a diverse and dynamic Board of Directors, made up of organizations and individuals who have been shaping Black community life, culture, and activism in Austria for many years. Our Board reflects what drives us: representation, empowerment, and solidarity. It brings together community leaders, cultural initiatives, and activists from across Austria's African diaspora and beyond. Together, they provide vision, experience, and the networks needed to strengthen our mission.

THE ORGANIZATIONS & INDIVIDUALS

From grassroots organizations like ADOE, Seti Sisters, and Black Voices, African Diaspora Forum in Europe (Adyfe) to cultural platforms such as Afrieurotext and Fresh Vibes, and to individual changemakers like Miriam Mona Mukalazi, and Adaora Ofoedu – our Board stands for the richness and diversity of Black voices in Austria. With their leadership, we are building a stronger, more inclusive foundation for the future.

ADAORA OFOEDU SCHWARZE FRAUEN COMMUNITY

Adaora Ofoedu is an educator, community organizer, and advocate for racial justice and environmental awareness. She is the co-founder of the **Schwarze Frauen Community Wien** and the **African Cultural Foundation Vienna.**

The Schwarze Frauen Community partnered with the African Cultural Foundation on the “Yes She Can”mentoring program in 2021 and 2023. They also collaborated on the afriCult Festival in 2023 & 2024, supporting programming such as children’s workshops & poetry slams. This advance visibility and community networks.

Active Cooperations since

2009

Projects between the Schwarze Frauen Community and the African Cultural Foundation

6

Check out the work of Schwarze Frauen Community

HAWA KEBE
SETI CREW

Seti Crew (formerly Seti Sisters) is a Vienna-based initiative dedicated to empowering and connecting talented women. Founded by **Hawa Kebe**, the organization serves as a community platform that creates spaces for empowerment, visibility, and mutual support. Through networking sessions, and afterwork events, Seti Crew uplifts especially women from the African diaspora and migrant communities who often face barriers in professional environments. Seti Crew partnered with the African Cultural Foundation on the screening & panel discussion of Dahomey and is a co-organizer of the Empower Her Conference.

Active Cooperations since

2024

Projects between the Seti Crew and the African Cultural Foundation

2

Check out the work of Seti Crew

DR. PHIL DANIEL ROMUALD BITOUH AFRIEUROTEXT

Dr. Phil Daniel Romuald Bitouh founder of **AFRIEUROTEXT** is a cultural and literary initiative based in Vienna, best known for its bookshop / cultural forum that focuses on literature from Africa & the African diaspora. **AFRIEUROTEXT** is a platform that blends book distribution, discourse, cultural events, and activism (such as “3RRR – Restitution, Rehabilitation, Reconciliation”) on topics like colonial heritage and global asymmetries. It also runs programs and maintains a branch in Cameroon. The **African Cultural Foundation has partnered with AFRIEUROTEXT**, on Dahomey, a film screening, africult, empowerHer and many other programmes."

Active Cooperations since

2022

Projects between the Afrieurotext and the African Cultural Foundation

4

Check out the work of Afrieurotext

BEVERLY MTUI
FRESH VIBES

Fresh Vibes is a radio show and platform dedicated to cultural exchange and critical discourse on the lives and diversity of Black people in Austria. Founded by **Simon Inou** as part of Fresh Magazine and taken over in 2024 by **Beverly Muti,** the program has become an important voice within Austria's media landscape.

A highlight of its activities is the annual **Black History Month Kick-off and the** Black Austrian Award.

Fresh Vibes has been a media partner of the African Cultural Foundation for years and supported the organization providing communications and social media training to ACF employees.

Active Cooperations since

2021

Projects between the Fresh Vibes and the African Cultural Foundation

6

Check out the work of Fresh Vibes

ADOE
NNAMDI SIEBER

represented by Helmut Weber

ADOE, short for Afrikanische Diaspora Österreich (African Diaspora Austria), is a community-based organization in Vienna that positions itself as a hub for people of African descent living in Austria.

The organization regularly hosts social and cultural gatherings, such as their well-known Christmas celebration in Vienna and recurring "Stammtisch" meet-ups that provide an informal space for exchange and networking.

The African Cultural Foundation has organized a few **ADOE** goes, in cooperation with **IKEA** and political representatives like the Greens, SPO (Mireille Ngosso), NEOS and more.

Active Cooperations since

2022

Projects between the ADOE and the African Cultural Foundation

6

Check out the work of ADOE

DR. MIRIAM MONA MUKALAZI

Individual Member

Miriam Mona Mukalazi is a researcher, lecturer, and policy advisor specializing in intersectional feminism, international relations, and peacebuilding. At the Vienna Institute for International Dialogue and Cooperation (VIDC), she leads programs that address decolonial perspectives, gender justice, and global solidarity within climate and development policy.

Her academic and professional background spans human rights, feminist peace research, and transnational activism. Miriam advocates for inclusive policymaking that recognizes how race, gender, and colonial history shape today's global inequalities.

Active Cooperations since

2025

Projects between the Miriam Mona Mukalazi and the African Cultural Foundation

3

Check out the work of Miriam Mona Mukalazi

BLACK VOICES NOOMI ANYANWU

Black Voices – is a civil society movement in Austria committed to combatting racism and promoting equality.
Noomi Anyanwu and Back Voices initiated the first **anti-racism referendum (Volksbegehren)** to institutionalize commitments against racism. Their demands cover education, health, public representation, police reform, migration and asylum, and organizational culture reforms. Black Voices has supported the "Yes She Can" Mentoring programm by providing access to workshop space and has worked with us on the 4 Years black lives Matter event in 2024.

Active Cooperations since

2021

Projects between the Noomi and the African Cultural Foundation

3

Check out the work of Noomi Anyanwu

ADYFE
YOUSSEF DIAKITE

Youssouf Simbo Diakité, founder and co-president of the African Diaspora Youth Forum in Europe **(ADYFE)**, left Mali to Europe in 2008 and soon after recognized the systemic barriers faced by African students and migrants in Europe — from language obstacles and housing to lack of visibility and institutional inclusion. Under his leadership, **ADYFE** has grown into a network of nearly **110 diaspora youth** organizations across 31 European countries. ADYFE started cooperatin with the African Cultural Foundation in **2012** on the first BIPOC Mentoring in Politics. In **2025** ADYFE under Youssouf Simbo Diakite cooperated on the EmpoerHer Confrence.

Active Cooperations since

2012

Projects between ADYFE and the African Cultural Foundation

2

Check out the work of ADYFE

THE *FIRST EDITION* OF EMPOWER HER

THE *FIRST EDITION* OF EMPOWERHER

EmpowerHer 2025 marked a historic milestone as the inaugural edition of the EmpowerHer movement — a two-day summit celebrating diaspora women, Black women and women of colour. Designed to coincide with International Women's Day, the event brought together over 110 participants from diverse professional, artistic, and cultural backgrounds to celebrate achievement, spark dialogue, and strengthen community bonds.

CELEBRATING WOMEN • BUILDING BRIDGES • INSPIRING CHANGE

- 8 engagement activities, including panel talks, creative workshops, award presentations and wellness sessions.
- 11 influential speakers lending diverse insights into leadership, resilience, creative industries, gender equity, and community impact.
- Over 20 nominations for the EmpowerHer Awards, with hundreds of community members voting for their peers.
- A powerful blend of inspiration, empowerment, and connection that laid the foundation for a continuing annual tradition.

200
Participants

8
Workshops and Panels

EMPOWERHER AWARDS – CELEBRATING IMPACT

The EmpowerHer Awards were a central moment, honouring women whose work resonates deeply within and beyond their communities. Categories included:

- Creative Innovation Award — celebrating boundary-breaking artistic and cultural contributions.
- Community Impact Award — recognising transformational social initiatives.
- Entrepreneurial Trailblazer Award — honouring bold leadership in business and community building.

Award winners such as Louise Deininger, Denise Van De Cruze and Noomi Anyanwu inspired attendees by exemplifying leadership across art, entrepreneurship, equity and activism.

COMMUNITY, CONNECTION & CREATIVE EXCHANGE

Participants left EmpowerHer 2025 with new networks, renewed confidence, and practical tools for self and community advancement. Interactive panels allowed attendees to explore:

- Creative agency and cultural influence
- Navigating professional spaces as diaspora women
- Building sustainable creative practices
- These sessions provided actionable insights while honouring the lived experience of each woman present.

Well-being workshops and reflective sessions emphasised the importance of mental, emotional and creative wellness as critical components of sustainable empowerment. These spaces fostered connection, introspection and mutual support across participants.

VOICES FROM THE EVENT

"It was an amazing 2 days where I learnt about what I can do to better myself and be empowered... made me feel so proud to be Black and Austrian and European..."

EmpowerHer 2025 participant

"When we talk about women of colour living in Vienna, we should absolutely discuss how to increase opportunities and visibility. There is immense talent waiting to be acknowledged and uplifted."

Eva Burger, Austrian Economic Chamber of Labor

"These kinds of events give hope for a brighter future... these women are empowered, capable of making their dreams come true."

H.E. Maïmounata Ouattara, Ambassador of Burkina Faso

WINNERS AT EMPOWER HER 2025

Louise Deininger is a multi-disciplinary African conceptual artist, leadership coach, and author whose work emphasizes consciousness, human development, and self-leadership.
With a passion for exploring identity and spirituality, she utilizes creative methods to engage in deep personal and societal transformation. On March 7th, 2025, she was awarded the Creative Innovation Award at EmpowerHer 2025.

LOUISE DEININGER -

Conceptual Artist

EMPOWERHER - CREATIVE INNOVATION AWARD RECIPIENT 2025

Denise Van De Cruze is a central figure in Vienna's LGBTQIA+ community. She co-founded Villa Vida, a queer community café that creates a welcoming space for connection, culture, and events. Beyond this, she has helped organize the Queer Feminist Festival, founded the Activate – Queer Youth Club, and actively advocates for LGBTQIA+ rights. She received the Open Minds Award in 2018 for her community contributions.

DENISE VAN DE CRUZE

Founder

EMPOWERHER - COMMUNITY IMPACT AWARD RECIPIENT 2025

WINNERS CONTINUED

Noomi Anyanwu is the Chairwoman of Black Voices Austria, an organization dedicated to combating racism and promoting equality in Austria. She co-founded the Black Voices Volksbegehren, a national referendum initiative aiming to implement a National Action Plan against Racism.

In April 2023, Noomi was welcomed by the UK Embassy in Austria to discuss the impactful work of Black Voices Austria.

NOOMI ANYANWU

Community Impact Award

EMPOWERHER - COMMUNITY IMPACT AWARD RECIPIENT 2025

THE MAGAZINE & EMPOWER HER 2026

With EmpowerHer 2025, we launched our very first magazine — a lasting document of our inaugural event. The magazine honors the sponsors, partners, and collaborators who made EmpowerHer possible, while also capturing the powerful conversations, workshops, and moments that defined the event.

Available in digital and print, it allows the impact of EmpowerHer 2025 to live on and supports the continuation of our work.

👉 PURCHASE YOUR COPY AND HELP SUSTAIN THE EMPOWERHER PLATFORM:

HTTP://WWW.EMPOWERHERPLATFORM.COM/SHOP

GET READY FOR EMPOWERHER 2026!

In 2026, we continue to create intentional spaces where women*, particularly from the African diaspora, can connect, learn, and lead conversations around culture, creativity, social justice, and empowerment. At its core, EmpowerHer 2026 is about visibility, representation, and collective growth.

6
Talks and Workshops

2
Locations

10
Collaborations

BUILDING ON THE SUCCESS OF OUR FIRST EDITION, EMPOWERHER 2026 MARKS THE NEXT CHAPTER OF OUR GROWING MOVEMENT.

It is an invitation to engage, reflect, and actively shape the conversations that influence our communities today and in the future.

✨ Be part of EmpowerHer 2026 — whether as a participant, collaborator, supporter, or ally: https://www.eventbrite.at/e/empowerher-2026-from-resilience-to-renaissance-tickets-1976204588121?aff=oddtdtcreator

THE POWER OF EMPOWER HER

FIRST EDITION OF EMPOWERHER (INAUGURAL EDITION)

A two-day summit celebrating diaspora women, Black women, and women of color, designed to coincide with International Women's Day.
A space for visibility, representation, and collective growth where participants felt motivated and proud of their identity.

Participants	130+
Engagement activities	8
Nominations	20

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES ACHIEVED

Participants left with new networks and strengthened community bonds. Attendees gained practical tools for self and community advancement. Well-being workshops emphasized mental and emotional wellness as critical components of sustainable empowerment

TANGIBLE OUTPUT

The EmpowerHer Magazine: Launch of the first edition magazine (digital and print) to document the event, honor partners, and ensure the impact "lives on" beyond the summit.

Creative Innovation Award	LOUISE DEININGER
Community Impact Award	DENISE VAN DE CRUZE
Community Impact Award	NOOMI ANYANWU

FUTURE OUTLOOK: EMPOWERHER 2026

From Resilience to Renaissance

February 27th – 28th, 2026

6 Talks and Workshops.
2 Locations.
10 Collaborations

DATES

GOALS

DISCUSSING THE REPATRIATION OF AFRICAN ART

DISCUSSING THE REPATRIATION OF AFRICAN ART - DAHOMEY SCREENING

One of the most significant program highlights of last year was our film screening and discussion hosted in collaboration with Stadtkino, which powerfully demonstrated how cinema can function as a catalyst for critical dialogue, collective reflection, and social engagement. Through this collaboration, we intentionally positioned film not only as a cultural product, but as a starting point for deeper conversations around history, identity, and responsibility.

By presenting a film rooted in African and diasporic perspectives, we contributed to increasing the visibility of narratives that are still underrepresented within mainstream European cultural spaces. The screening attracted a diverse audience and created an atmosphere of openness, curiosity, and willingness to engage with complex themes. The event was followed by an in-depth discussion featuring two invited experts: Hawa Kebe (SETI Crew) and Dr. Phil. Daniel Romuald Bitouh (AFRIEUROTEXT). Their contributions were central to the success of the evening, offering critical frameworks that helped contextualize the film beyond its narrative and aesthetic dimensions.

80%

increase in participation

“Repatriation is not merely a museum process — it is about recognition, restoring dignity, and reclaiming the right to tell one’s own history.”

Hawa Kebe brought a strong perspective rooted in cultural work and decolonial practice. She addressed questions of restitution, memory, and accountability in relation to colonial histories and the continued presence of African cultural heritage in European institutions. She emphasized that conversations about art, archives, and museums must always be connected to people, lived experiences, and structural power dynamics. “Repatriation is not merely a museum process — it is about recognition, restoring dignity, and reclaiming the right to tell one’s own history,” she explained.

Dr. Phil. Daniel Romuald Bitouh complemented this perspective by situating the film within broader socio-political discussions on identity, and diasporic realities. Drawing from his academic and cultural work, he highlighted how cinema can challenge dominant narratives and open space for more nuanced understandings of masculinity — particularly in contexts shaped by migration, colonial histories, and systemic marginalization.“Films like this allow us to talk about masculinity beyond stereotypes — as vulnerable, contradictory, and deeply shaped by history,” he noted, stressing the importance of complexity and self-reflection in these conversations. The discussion that followed was marked by strong audience participation, thoughtful questions, and a shared sense of responsibility to continue engaging with these topics beyond the event itself. This exchange reinforced the need for spaces where cultural production and critical discourse intersect. Our collaboration with Stadtkino played a key role in making this possible.

This collaboration stands as a strong example of our broader mission: to connect art, culture, and social responsibility, and to create spaces where empowerment is fostered through dialogue, knowledge-sharing, and collective reflection.

Stadtkino
im Künstlerhaus

EXPLORING DEEP TOPICS THROUGH FILM

EXPERT ENGAGEMENT

Expert Engagement: The event featured two invited experts, Hawa Kebe and Dr. Phil. Daniel Romuald Bitouh, who provided critical frameworks to contextualize the film's themes.

"The film screening and discussion powerfully demonstrated how cinema can function as a catalyst for critical dialogue, collective reflection, and social engagement".

FOSTERING EMPOWERMENT

CHALLENGING NARRATIVES

REDEFINING REPATRIATION

NARRATIVE VISIBILITY

The program contributed to increasing the visibility of African and diasporic perspectives within mainstream European cultural spaces.
"The film screening and discussion powerfully demonstrated how cinema can function as a catalyst for critical dialogue, collective reflection, and social engagement"

INSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATION

"By partnering with an established cultural institution like Stadtkino, we were able to bridge different audiences and expand the reach of diasporic cinema"
"The event allowed for nuanced socio-political discussions, using cinema to challenge dominant narratives and explore complexities such as masculinity and systemic marginalization".

CINEMA AS A CATALYST

NARRATIVE VISIBILITY

NARRATIVE VISIBILITY

CINEMA AS A CATALYST

WE DID IT AGAIN!
“YES SHE CAN” 4TH EDITION

WE DID IT AGAIN! “YES SHE CAN” 4TH EDITION

7
Mentees

4
Workshops

3
Months Duration

CREATING SPACE FOR DIFFICULT TOPICS

The “Yes She Can” mentoring program was implemented by the African Cultural Organization Vienna from February to May 2025 and was specifically aimed at BIPoC women and young women with the goal of sustainably strengthening their political, media, and social participation.

Over a period of three months, the program combined individual mentoring with practice-oriented workshops, political networking, and thematic roundtable discussions. Six mentees were closely accompanied by experienced mentors and gained direct access to political institutions, media houses, and civil society actors in Austria.

A central component of the program was individually coordinated mentoring meetings, during which participants took part in National Council meetings, campaign events, media programs, and networking meetings in the field of anti-racism, among other things. This format was supplemented by workshops on media production and international youth policy, as well as meet & greets with politicians from various parties (SPÖ, NEOS, KPÖ), which gave the mentees practical insights into political work and career paths.

Austria's political institutions have historically lacked diversity, particularly concerning Black and People of Colour (BPoC) women. As of 2024, women constitute approximately 36.1% of the National Council (66 out of 183 members) . However, the representation of BPoC women remains minimal.

IMPACT & RESULTS

Notably, Mireille Ngosso became the first woman of African descent to hold an elected office in Austria in 2018. Despite incremental progress, systemic barriers continue to hinder BPoC women's full participation in political decision-making processes.

These barriers include limited access to political networks, underrepresentation in party leadership, and societal biases that impact both candidacy and electability.

Special highlights included two public roundtable discussions on "BIPoC in the media industry" and "BIPoC in politics," where successful BIPoC politicians and media professionals shared their experiences and openly discussed structural challenges.

These formats not only strengthened the mentees' skills development, but also increased their visibility within the community and beyond.

One of the more practical workshops was conducted in collaboration with Fresh Vibes, where participants had the opportunity to record a radio format. They got an insight on the technical and practical aspects of the process. The project had a significant impact at both the individual and structural levels. A total of nine events were held, with an average of five participants per format. The mentees established contacts with a total of 16 experts from the fields of politics, media, and youth work and built sustainable networks that will continue to have an impact beyond the project period. The participants acquired specific skills in the areas of media relations, political participation, and international youth policy.

At the same time, the program strengthened their self-confidence and self-efficacy as active social actors. The graduation ceremony with diploma presentation recognized their achievements and marked a visible milestone in their personal and professional development. The sustainability of the project is particularly evident in the networks that have been established, the skills that have been acquired, and the role model effect of the mentees, who pass on their knowledge to their communities. The mentoring program strengthened the political and media participation of BIPoC women in Vienna in the long term and contributed to the diversification of public discourse.

The project also had lasting effects at the organizational level: the African Cultural Organization Vienna was able to further consolidate its position as a competent actor in the field of empowerment, political education, and community work, expand strategic partnerships, and gain valuable project experience for future programs.

“YES SHE CAN” IN ONE OVERVIEW

INCOME STATEMENTS

The program supported seven BIPOC women and young women in strengthening their participation in political, media, and social spheres. 9 Total Events: A total of nine events were held throughout the program duration. 16 Expert Contacts: Mentees established direct contact with 16 experts from the fields of politics, media, and youth work. 4 Core Workshops: Participants engaged in four specialized workshops, including media production and international youth policy.

Mentees	7
Total Events	9
Expert Contacts	16

SUSTAINABLE NETWORKS

"Sustainability is evident in the established networks, the acquired skills, and the role-model effect of mentees who pass their knowledge on to their communities". The graduation ceremony marked a visible milestone in the mentees' personal and professional development, recognizing their achievements with formal diplomas.

Core Workshop	4
Month Duration	3
Participants per Session	5

INDIVIDUAL AND STRUCTURAL GROWTH

"The project had a significant impact at both the individual and structural levels, strengthening the self-confidence and self-efficacy of participants as active social actors".
"The mentoring program strengthened the political and media participation of BIPOC women in Vienna in the long term and contributed to the diversification of public discourse"

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ORGANIZATIONAL CONSOLIDATION

VISIBILITY AND SKILLS

ADDING CLIMATE JUSTICE TO OUR THEMATIC PORTFOLIO

ADDING CLIMATE JUSTICE TO OUR THEMATIC PORTFOLIO

100
Participants

3
Days

6
Panels & Workshops

DECOLONIZE OUR CLIMATE: IMPACT & REFLECTIONS

As part of its ongoing climate justice programming, the African Cultural Foundation (ACF) implemented a series of activities throughout 2025 addressing the intersections of climate, colonial histories, and social justice. In June, ACF hosted a climate-focused workshop at the Patagonia store in Innsbruck, bringing together community members, climate practitioners, and activists. The workshop was facilitated by Adaora Ofoedu, climate expert, founder and board member of the African Cultural Foundation, and a member of the Schwarze Frauen Community, together with Natalie, a climate practitioner and collaborator.

The session created space for critical dialogue around climate responsibility, lived experiences, and community-led approaches to environmental justice. This workshop formed part of ACF's broader climate thematic, which is supported by the Patagonia Foundation. The session created space for critical dialogue around climate responsibility, lived experiences, and community-led approaches to environmental justice, with a particular focus on unlearning dominant narratives and understanding the role of witnessing in the climate debate. Participants were invited to reflect on how knowledge is produced, whose experiences are centered, and how active witnessing can become a form of accountability and solidarity. This workshop formed part of ACF's broader climate thematic, which is supported by the Patagonia Foundation.

Building on this momentum, from **3–5 October**, ACF organized the climate series "Decolonize Our Climate" in Vienna, in cooperation with the Vienna Institute for International Dialogue and Cooperation (VIDC) at Depot Wien. The three-day program brought together a diverse group of thinkers, activists, educators, artists, and community members for discussions, workshops, and film screenings. Together, participants critically examined dominant climate narratives and explored how colonial legacies, power structures, and systemic inequalities continue to shape contemporary climate responses.

Across both the Innsbruck workshop and the Vienna climate series, ACF created spaces for reflection, learning, and exchange that centered marginalized perspectives and emphasized climate justice as a social, political, and collective responsibility rather than a purely technical challenge.

Climate Justice as Social Justice

A core insight emerging from the series was the understanding that climate change is not solely an environmental issue, but a deeply social and political one. The discussions emphasized how climate breakdown is inseparable from histories of colonial extraction, racial capitalism, gender inequality, and global power imbalances. While approximately 88% of the world's population lives in the Global South, these communities—who have contributed the least to the climate crisis—experience its most devastating consequences.

The project highlighted that meaningful climate justice requires more than emissions reductions. It demands reparative measures, including acknowledgment of historical responsibility, redistribution of resources, and the empowerment of communities most affected by environmental harm.

Centering Voices from the Global South and the Diaspora

The 2025 publication and event series "Decolonize Our Climate – Voices of the Global South & the Diaspora" reflects ACF's broader mission to center African and diasporic perspectives within global climate discourse. Experts including Lucía Muriel, Pato Kelesitse, Noemi Zenk-Agyei, and Adaora Ofoedu explored how colonial legacies, racism, and economic inequality continue to shape both the causes and consequences of climate change. Pato Kelesitse, a climate justice advocate and feminist policy leader, set the tone with a powerful reminder: "See people and their humanity — and respect it."

Her contribution emphasized that environmental protection cannot be separated from the lives and dignity of those most affected. She argued that frontline communities—particularly in the Global South—must be at the center of climate solutions, not treated as passive recipients of aid. Noemi Zenk-Agyei highlighted how climate movements in the Global South are reshaping global accountability mechanisms. She drew attention to the Pacific Islands' legal mobilization, particularly the youth-led initiative from Vanuatu that successfully pushed the United Nations General Assembly to seek an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice on states' responsibilities for climate harm.

This example illustrated how international law can become a tool for climate justice when traditional negotiations fail to address existential threats faced by vulnerable nations.

Challenging Whiteness and Privilege in Climate Movements

Lucía Muriel, a psychologist and decolonial educator, brought the discussion closer to the European context. She critically examined how climate movements in Germany and across Europe have largely been shaped by white, middle-class actors, often excluding people of color and marginalized communities. Her contribution challenged participants to reflect on white saviorism, performative inclusion, and paternalistic approaches to “helping” communities in the Global South without listening to local knowledge or lived experience.

Through an interactive workshop, Muriel demonstrated how deeply whitewashing operates within climate activism. Participants were asked to list climate organizations and activists from the Global North and then from the Global South—revealing stark imbalances in visibility, recognition, and representation. Using examples such as Vanessa Nakate, Muriel illustrated how Black climate leaders are frequently erased from dominant narratives despite their central role in the movement.

Reclaiming Black Narratives and Building Agency

Adaora Ofoedu, co-founder of ACF and the Black Women Community (Schwarze Frauen Community), focused on racial awareness, empowerment, and representation within Austria’s Black communities. She addressed the lack of visible Black excellence in public life and environmental discourse, emphasizing that while the Global North bears primary responsibility for environmental destruction, Black and Indigenous leadership remains systematically marginalized. Her contribution reinforced the importance of reclaiming Black narratives, amplifying historical and contemporary environmental leaders such as Wangari Maathai, Vanessa Nakate, and Berta Cáceres, and empowering new generations of African and Afro-diasporic youth in Europe.

From Reflection to Everyday Action

The series placed strong emphasis on translating theory into practice. Through interactive workshops, participants were encouraged to critically examine their own privilege, consumption patterns, and connections to global systems of exploitation—linking everyday behavior to systemic change.

A second workshop, led by Téclaire Ngo-Tam, explored the intersections of climate, power, and food systems. Using a global-historical lens on colonialism and industrialization, participants were invited to rethink how statistics, consumption, and development narratives shift when viewed from perspectives grounded in population size, land distribution, and historical responsibility.

Film Screening & Critical Engagement: The Great Green Wall

A central cultural component of the series was the screening of The Great Green Wall, followed by a panel discussion moderated around themes of climate justice and decoloniality. Panelists included Amina Guggenbichler (they/them), a climate activist and social worker involved in anti-racist and anti-fascist movements, and Johannes Knierzinger, Senior Lecturer at the University of Vienna specializing in the political economy of mining in West Africa.

The discussion critically engaged with the film's hopeful narrative while also addressing its limitations. Johannes Knierzinger emphasized the need to confront climate debt, reparations, and accountability, pointing to ongoing extractive projects such as the Ugandan oil pipeline and the displacement they cause. Panelists discussed how colonial legacies and new geopolitical actors continue to shape climate policy and resource extraction in Africa.

grüne bildungs-werkstatt WIEN

patagonia®

LASTING IMPACT

6 PANELS & WORKSHOPS

DEMANDING STRUCTURAL CHANGE

100 PARTICIPANTS

GLOBAL CONTEX

INTERSECTIONAL DIALOGUE

TRANSLATING THEORY TO ACTIO

REDEFINING CLIMATE CHANGE

3-DAY PROGRAM

CENTERING MARGINALIZED PERSPECTIVES

3-DAY PROGRAM

RECLAIMING NARRATIVES

TAKE AWAYS

- Reclaiming African and diasporic agency,
- Fostering intercultural dialogue,
- Advancing climate policies rooted in equity, sustainability
- Decolonial solidarity.
- Bridging art, education, activism, and research,
- Building platforms where BIPOC communities lead conversations on climate justice,
- Offering pathways toward a more just, regenerative, and accountable world.

WHAT WE LEARNT

The panel concluded by urging European audiences to move beyond passive consumption of stories and toward active responsibility and solidarity.

THE WAY FORWARD

Decolonize Western notions of development, rejecting the assumption that African nations should follow European models of labor, growth, and progress.

COMMUNITY WELLNESS & RECOVERY

COMMUNITY WELLNESS & RECOVERY

2
Yoga Workshops

1
African Granny Cooking Class

$1.5M
Environmental

COMMUNITY WELLNESS & RECOVERY: CREATING SPACES FOR REST, HEALING, AND CONNECTION

In 2025, a core focus of the African Cultural Foundation's work was community wellness and collective recovery. In a social context marked by ongoing stress, structural inequality, and multiple forms of marginalization, we intentionally created spaces where people from the community could slow down, rest, and reconnect with their bodies and with one another.

In collaboration with District Living in Vienna's 22nd district, we organized three community-based yoga sessionsled by experienced yoga teachers living in the district. These sessions were designed as low-barrier offerings, open to people of all experience levels, and centered on gentle movement, breathing, rest, and recovery. The goal was to provide a safe and welcoming space where community members could recuperate physically and mentally, away from everyday pressures.

The strong participation and positive feedback highlighted the high demand for accessible wellness offerings, particularly in urban areas where rest and self-care are often inaccessible. Beyond individual well-being, the sessions fostered connection, trust, and exchange among participants.

A second major wellness intervention took place during the Empower Her Conference, where we offered yoga and breathwork sessions for both community members and the wider public. These sessions were organized in collaboration with Diaspora Creatives and SETI and formed an integral part of the conference program. Embedding body-based practices within a conference setting emphasized the importance of care, grounding, and embodiment as essential components of empowerment and collective resilience.

COMMUNITY SERIES & CULTURAL PRACTICE: GRANNY'S COOK

As part of our Community Series, which aims to generate income to support the African Cultural Foundation's work and enable the continuation of free community programs, we organized our first "Granny's Cook" cooking class in 2025. This event also served as a follow-up activity funded through the remaining resources of our 2024 crowdfunding campaign.

Hosted at District Living, the cooking class invited participants to learn how to prepare traditional Nigerian dishes, including Egusi, Puff Puff, and other classic recipes. Led by Nigerian elders, the session was not only about food preparation but also about cultural transmission, storytelling, and intergenerational knowledge-sharing.

Cooking together created a space of warmth and connection, where cultural heritage was passed on through lived practice. At the same time, the event contributed to the Foundation's financial sustainability by generating income that supports programs offered free of charge to the community.

THE IMPACT OF WELLNESS

CREATING INTENTIONAL SPACE

In a social context marked by structural inequality and marginalization, we intentionally created spaces where community members could slow down, rest, and reconnect with their bodies and one another. Embedding body-based practices like yoga and breathwork within professional settings emphasized care, grounding, and embodiment as essential components of empowerment and collective resilience

3 COMMUNITY-BASED YOGA SESSIONS

2 YOGA WORKSHOPS

1 "GRANNY'S COOK" COOKING CLASS

MENTAL AND PHYSICAL RECUPERATION

The goal was to provide a safe and welcoming space where community members could recuperate physically and mentally, away from everyday pressures. Beyond individual well-being, the sessions fostered connection, trust, and exchange among participants, highlighting a high demand for accessible wellness in urban areas

INTERGENERATIONAL KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Led by Nigerian elders, the 'Granny's Cook' session went beyond food preparation to facilitate cultural transmission, storytelling, and intergenerational knowledge-sharing. Cooking together created a space of warmth where cultural heritage was passed on through lived practice

CREATING INTENTIONAL SPACE

HOLISTIC EMPOWERMENT

MENTAL AND PHYSICAL RECUPERATION

FOSTERING CONNECTION

INTERGENERATIONAL KNOWLEDGE SHARING

PRESERVING CULTURAL HERITAGE

GIVING UPCOMING BIPOC ARTISTS SPACE TO THRIVE

PROVIDING FREE SPACE FOR EMERGING ARTISTS

6
Artists

2
Workshops

12
Art Pieces

ARTIST RESIDENCY: PROVIDING SPACE FOR CREATION, EXCHANGE, AND VISIBILITY

A major milestone in 2025 was the launch of the African Cultural Foundation's first Artist Residency, specifically designed for BIPOC artists. The residency responded to a pressing structural challenge: the lack of affordable and accessible workspace for artists, particularly those facing systemic barriers. High rents and precarious working conditions make sustained artistic practice increasingly difficult. To address this, the Foundation provided free creative space for artists to develop their work. Six artists from diverse disciplines were selected to take part in the residency.

In addition to individual studio time, the residency emphasized public engagement: in the final phase, the artists facilitated workshops to share their practices with the public and presented their work in a group exhibition showcasing the art created during the residency.
The residency enabled focused artistic production, strengthened professional visibility, and created meaningful exchange between artists and the public. At the same time, it reinforced the African Cultural Foundation's role as a space-maker, cultural platform, and advocate for equitable access to creative resources.

THE ARTISTS

Abiona Esther Ojo – Photographer, textile artist, and sculptor. Born in Austria to Nigerian parents, her work explores identity, family, and heritage, with a particular interest in storytelling as a tool for healing.

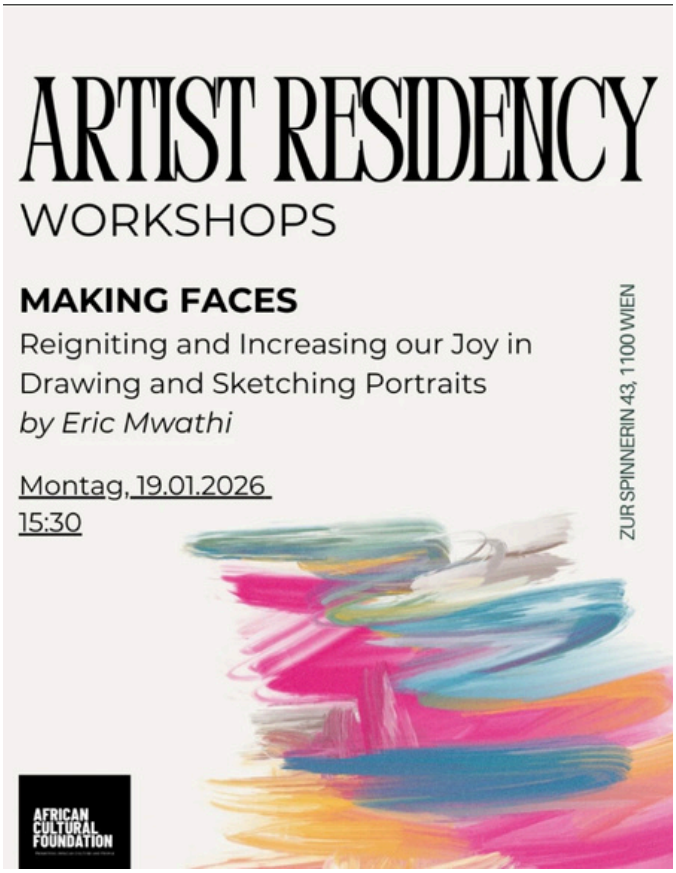
Ania Mookenthottam – An emerging mixed-media artist with a focus on photography. She also works with painting, linocut, and clay. She trained at the Graphische in Vienna and studied photography.

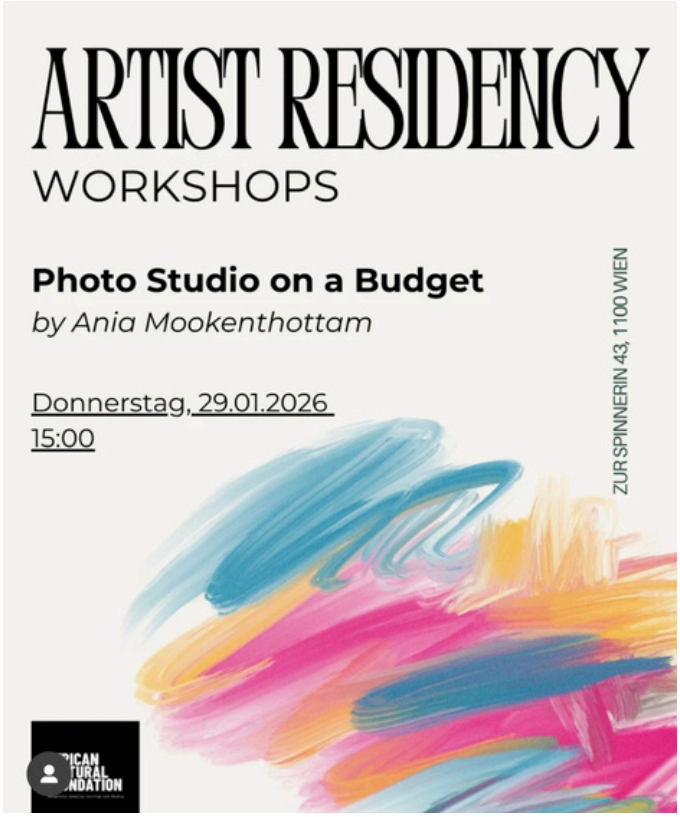
Fredrik Robens – A visual artist whose practice explores the intersections of painting, rhythm, and experimental media. His work has been exhibited across Europe.

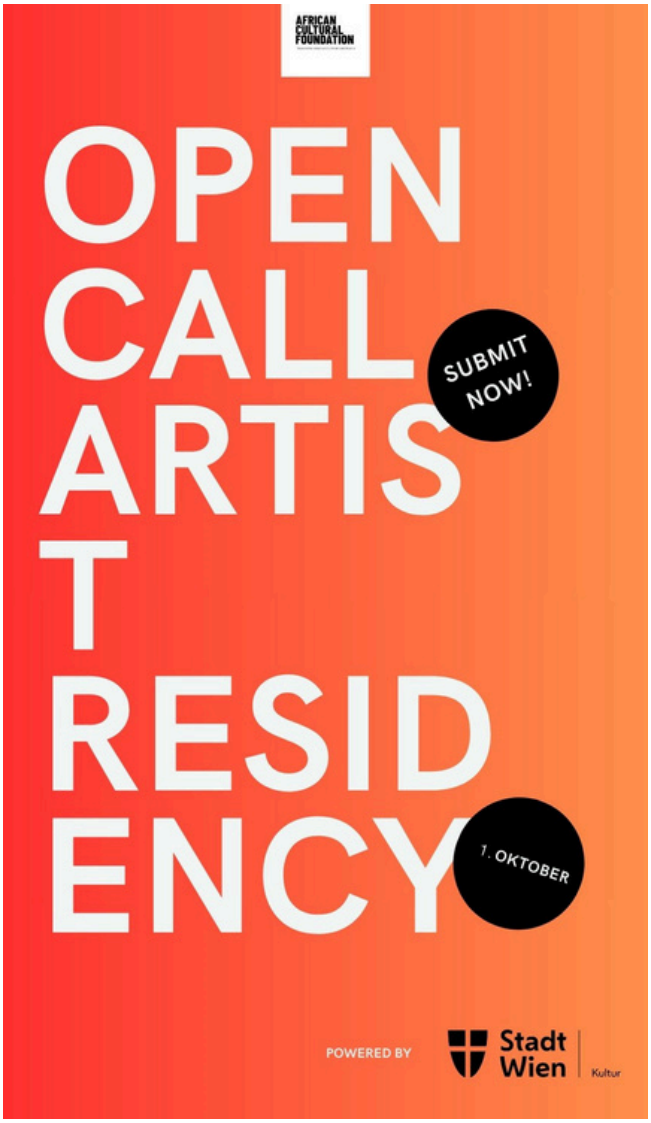
Brooklyn J. Pakathi – A Vienna-based transmedia artist and curator. Their work investigates intimacy, longing, and melancholy through objects, images, and environments, creating spatial interventions that transform materiality into emotional encounters.

Eric Mwathi – An artist, writer, and filmmaker. Born in Kenya and raised in Vienna, he studied International Relations and Global Studies and completed teacher training. His practice spans visual art, creative writing, and film.

Laurina Okpurukhre – A multidisciplinary artist working across fine art, jewelry design, and illustration. Drawing from her Nigerian-Austrian heritage, her work explores identity and symbolism.


ARTIST RESIDENCY
WORKSHOPS
MAKING FACES
Reigniting and Increasing our Joy in Drawing and Sketching Portraits
by Eric Mwathi
Montag, 19.01.2026
15:30
ZUR SPINNERIN 43, 1100 WIEN
AFRICAN CULTURAL FOUNDATION


ARTIST RESIDENCY
WORKSHOPS
Photo Studio on a Budget
by Ania Mookenthottam
Donnerstag, 29.01.2026
15:00
ZUR SPINNERIN 43, 1100 WIEN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OPEN CALL ARTIST RESIDENCY
SUBMIT NOW!
1. OKTOBER
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Kultur

THE IMPACT OF GIVING SPACE TO ARTISTS

ADDRESSING STRUCTURAL BARRIERS

The residency successfully responded to the pressing structural challenge of high rents and precarious working conditions by providing free creative space for BIPOC artists. The program enabled focused artistic production and significantly strengthened the professional visibility of emerging artists within the cultural landscape.

1 GROUP EXHIBITION

6 ARTISTS

2 PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

12 ART PIECES

FOSTERING PUBLIC EXCHANGE

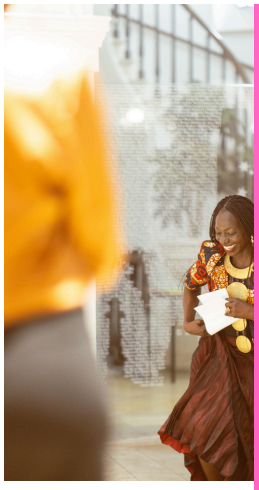
Through public workshops and group exhibitions, the residency created meaningful exchanges between artists and the community, bringing diverse practices to a wider audience.

SUPPORTING DIVERSE NARRATIVES

By hosting artists working across photography, sculpture, and transmedia, the residency provided a platform for exploring complex themes of identity, family, and heritage.

A YEAR IN PICTURES

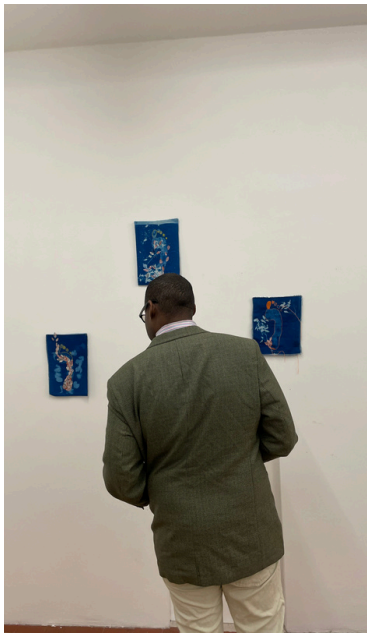
2025



PERSPEKTIVEN WECHSELN

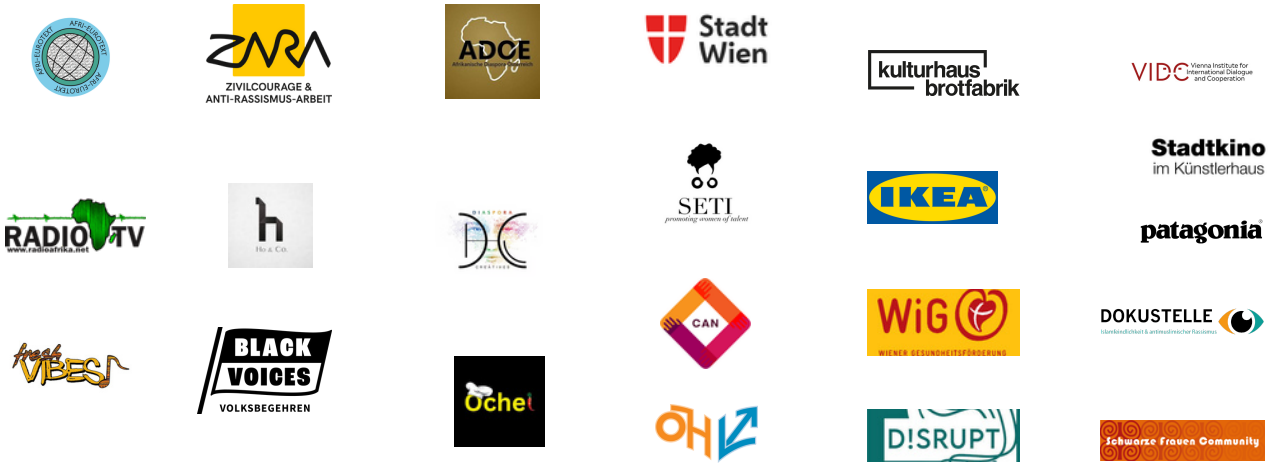
Panel
cussion

bildungs-
werkstatt



grüne
bildungs-
werkstatt

OUR PARTNERS & SPONSORS



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

AFRICAN CULTURAL FOUNDATION/ORGANIZATION WIEN

Phone/
+43 6776 1949299

Email/
office@africancultural-foundation.org

Website/
www.africancultural-foundation.org

Address/
Gudrunstrasse 25, 1100 Vienna, Austria