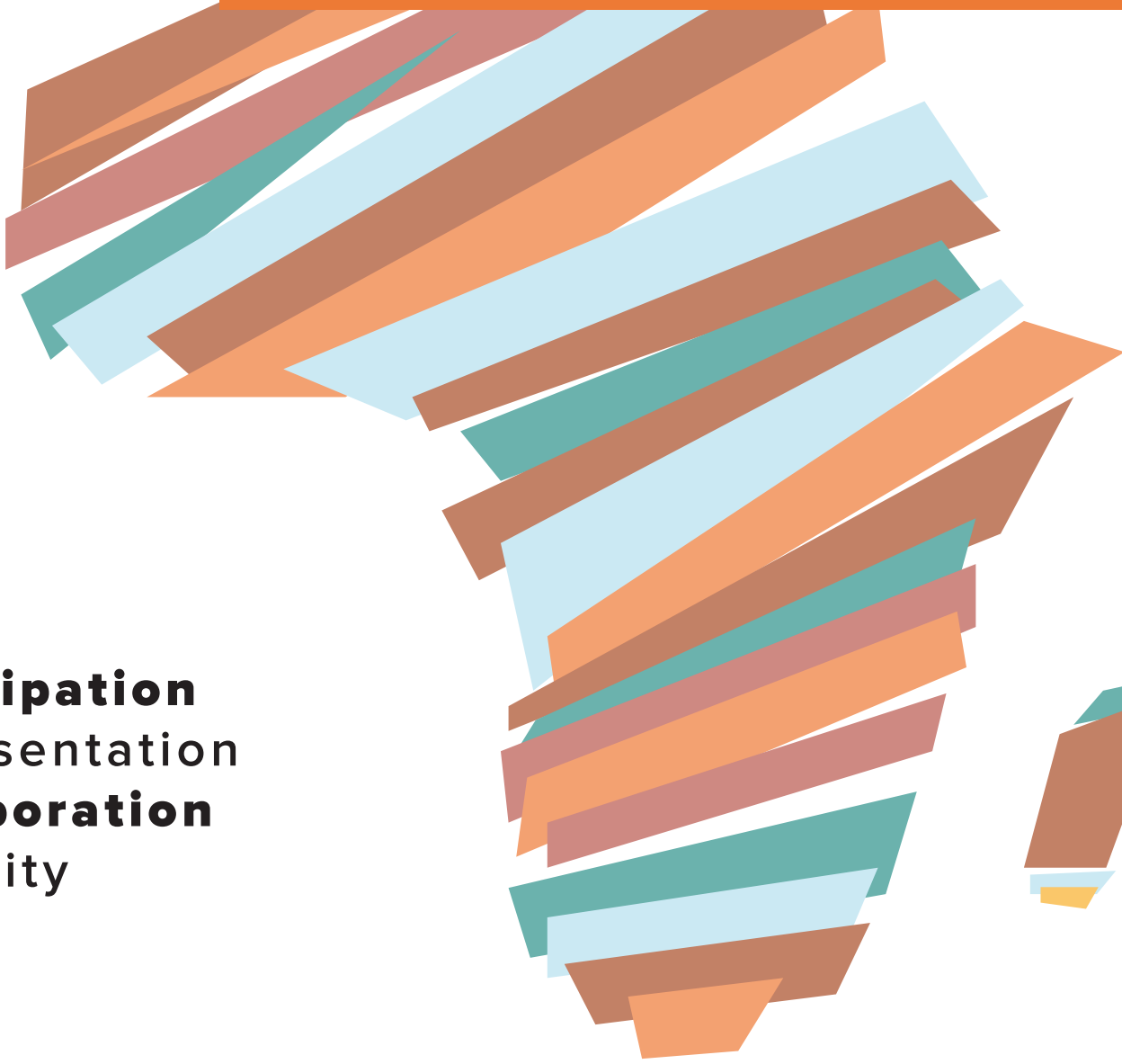
THINK AFRICA

Annual Report 2025



#Participation
#Representation
#Collaboration
#Diversity

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Message From The Chair

Following the work laid out in previous years, 2025 was a year of consolidation, resilience, and steady progress for Think Africa. Despite a more challenging funding environment, the organisation continued to fulfil its commitments to the African diaspora in Finland, strengthening its role as a trusted platform for community, career development, and advocacy.

One of the highlights of the year was Think Africa Week 2025, held from 3–6 September under the theme "Shift Happens! Courage and Creativity in Change." The event brought together over 200 participants and more than 10 partner organisations for policy dialogue, talent networking, youth engagement, and cultural enrichment. This flagship event once again demonstrated the power of collaboration and reaffirmed Think Africa's position as a leading voice for the African diaspora in Finland.

Think Career also continued to deliver meaningful impact. Two successful rounds of the mentorship programme were completed in 2025, supporting 79 mentor–mentee pairs and contributing to improved well-being, stronger professional networks, and increased confidence among participants. As STEA funding came to an end, the organisation began laying the groundwork for new partnerships with cities and corporate partners to ensure the continuation of this important programme.

During the year, Think Africa looked inward and outward at the same time. Internally, the organisation focused on strengthening its structures, communications, and data practices to support more effective and transparent operations. Externally, community engagement remained at the heart of our work, with many participants reached through educational, social, and well-being activities, including the Think Africa Lounge, Grill & Chill, Nature Cycling Tours, Member Mixer, and Pikkujoulu celebrations. These gatherings fostered connection, belonging, and trust within the community.

Advocacy also remained a key pillar of Think Africa's mission. The organisation advanced civic participation through iVote sessions ahead of county and municipal elections and continued to contribute to national anti-discrimination efforts through representation on the Prime Minister's Working Group on Anti-Discrimination and Racism and other policy forums. We also became a member of the Helsinki Advisory Board for NGOs for the period 2025–2027.



At the same time, Think Africa took important steps towards long-term sustainability. New fundraising approaches were piloted, including corporate sponsorships and self-financing initiatives, creating new pathways for economic empowerment and partnerships in the year ahead.

While this summary can only highlight a portion of the work carried out in 2025, it reflects the dedication of Think Africa's volunteers, partners, and community members who made these achievements possible. We invite you to read the full Annual Report to learn more about the programmes, collaborations, and impact of the year. We move into 2026 with renewed focus, confidence, and commitment to building a more inclusive and empowered future together.

Sincerely,
Akin Akinsola
Chairperson. Think Africa ry

Mission, Vision and Values

Mission

Think Africa's mission is to strengthen the social, economic, and civic well-being of the African diaspora in Finland. We do this by supporting entrepreneurship and career development, fostering wellbeing and a strong sense of belonging, and advocating for meaningful representation and participation in Finnish society. As a volunteer-led organisation, we are committed to operating with integrity, transparency, and sustainability, building long-term trust with our members, partners, and the wider community.

Vision

Think Africa envisions a Finland where people of African descent are fully recognised, valued, and empowered to thrive. We see a society where the African diaspora actively contributes to economic growth, cultural life, and democratic processes, and where diversity is embraced as a strength. In this future, African voices are present at decision-making tables, barriers to participation are removed, and inclusive systems welcome everyone to belong and succeed.

Values

Collaboration – We believe meaningful change happens through cooperation. By working together with our members, partners, institutions, and communities, we create shared solutions that are stronger, more sustainable, and more impactful.

Representation – We are committed to portraying authentic, diverse, and realistic narratives of Africa, Africans, and the African diaspora.

Participation – We promote equal access, voice, and agency, ensuring members and the wider African diaspora can meaningfully engage in decision-making and society.

Diversity – We embrace diversity as a strength that enriches our organisation, our work, and the communities we serve.

Integrity & Transparency – We act responsibly, ethically, and openly to earn and sustain the trust of our community, partners, and stakeholders.

2025 in Figures

+14.92%
(2025: 1,941 | 2024: 1,689 followers)

+2.3%
(2025: 3,592 |2024: 3,510 followers)

+24.21%
(2025: 2,955 | 2024: 2,379 followers)

21 New members

4 Internships

24 Partners/collaborators

Executive Summary

Purpose & Role

Think Africa is a volunteer-led organisation dedicated to strengthening the **social, economic, and civic well-being of the African diaspora in Finland**. Through career development, entrepreneurship, community building, and advocacy, the organisation advances meaningful participation, representation, and belonging in Finnish society. Think Africa operates in line with our core values of **Collaboration, Representation, Participation, Diversity, and Integrity & Transparency**.

Financial Overview

As in previous years, Think Africa's primary source of funding in 2025 remained public support, particularly from STEA, which supplied EUR 95,000 to primarily finance Think Career. This funding represented the backbone of the organisation's operations and enabled the continued delivery of core programmes and activities throughout the year. Additional support was received from the City of Espoo across multiple initiatives, including TA Lounge and the Cycling Club. General grants contributed to a diversified but still public-heavy funding structure.

Total income from ordinary activities increased significantly to EUR 105,705, reflecting growth in operational scale compared to 2024. However, this expansion was accompanied by a corresponding rise in expenses, particularly staff-related costs, which amounted to EUR 81,357 and continued to represent the largest share of organisational expenditure. Despite higher operating expenses, Think Africa recorded a strong positive result for the year, with a surplus of EUR 3,986, marking a substantial improvement from the EUR 357 surplus reported in 2024. This positive outcome reflects improved financial performance, effective cost management, and increased fundraising activity, including EUR 5,642 generated mainly through fundraising efforts.

Fundraising activities contributed meaningfully to income generation particularly through initiatives such as TA Week and other efforts, which together generated additional unrestricted income. These outcomes represent an important step toward building more flexible funding streams that can support innovation and organisational growth. Financial management processes remained strong throughout the year. Collaboration between the board, accountant, and auditor ensured accurate tracking of income and expenses, compliance with financial regulations, and improved transparency. The organisation continued to utilise digital financial systems to manage bookkeeping, reporting, and documentation efficiently.

Executive Summary

Fundraising

In 2025, Think Africa prioritised diversifying income beyond project-based funding to increase flexibility and long-term sustainability.

Key outcomes:

- Piloted a **corporate sponsorship programme**, resulting in **€7,000 secured** from the City of Espoo after engaging 7 target organisations.
- Secured **€6,900 for Think Africa Week 2025**, generating a **€1,200 surplus**.
- Established a partnership with **Hanken School of Economics**, producing research on family foundations and new funding pathways.
- Developed a **Think Africa-branded colouring book** as a self-financing product, launched for sale in early 2026.

Funding challenges included reduced public NGO funding, increased competition for grants, and limited fundraising capacity due to lack of internal resources, affecting continuity of core programmes such as Think Career.

Think Africa Week 2025

Our flagship annual event, held 3–6 September under the theme “Shift Happens! Courage and Creativity in Change”.

- Engaged **200+ participants**.
- Partnered with **10+ organisations**.
- Combined policy dialogue, talent networking, youth workshops, and cultural enrichment.
- Reinforced Think Africa’s position as Finland’s leading African diaspora platform since 2013.

Partnerships

In 2025, Think Africa focused on consolidating existing partnerships while laying the foundation for a more strategic, mission-aligned partnership model. Future priorities include:

- Supporting the attraction of sustainable funding for core programmes.
- Strengthening and expanding the current partner ecosystem.
- Providing support for expansion of self-financing initiatives for long-term impact.

Executive Summary

Think Career Mentorship Programme

With STEA funding ending in 2025, efforts focused on securing new city and corporate partnerships. Our successes in 2025 included:

- Completed **two rounds in 2025** (79 mentor–mentee pairs).
- **207 mentees served since 2023**; 93% hold at least a bachelor's degree.
- **70%** reported improved mental well-being.
- **91%** expanded professional networks.
- Pitching confidence increased from **45% to 70%**.

Communications & Community Engagement

The Communications team strengthened Think Africa's voice through:

- Launch of a **WhatsApp community** with moderated Safe Spaces.
- Data-informed storytelling supported by a new **Tableau analytics dashboard**.
- Ongoing development of the **Think Africa website** as a central hub for impact, resources, and partnerships.

Outreach & Community Engagement

In 2025, Think Africa's Outreach Team delivered a wide range of educational, social, and well-being activities both online and in person, supported by the City of Espoo and reaching **330+ participants**. Collectively, these activities strengthened social connections, increased inclusion, and reinforced Think Africa's role as a trusted community hub.Core initiatives included:

- Grill & Chill: A family-friendly Midsummer event bringing together 40 participants, fostering belonging and informal community connection.
- Think Africa lounge: The Think Africa Lounge reached **200+ participants** through low-threshold online and in-person sessions focused on mental well-being, civic participation, financial literacy, family life, and integration. Notable activities included the **iVote civic education series** ahead of the 2025 municipal elections. Delivered by volunteers and partially supported by the City of Espoo, the Lounge received consistently positive feedback and demonstrated strong demand for integration-related information and community connection.
- Nature Cycling Tour: Eight collaborative tours held June–August with 32 participants, promoting physical and mental well-being and social interaction, with strong positive feedback.

Executive Summary

- Pikkujoulu (Snow Meets Sun): Year-end celebration with 35 attendees, recognising volunteers and strengthening community ties
- Member Mixer: An in-person onboarding session for new members, supporting engagement and leadership pathways, coordinated by a Think Africa intern.
- Creative's corner: In 2025, we took steps to strengthen the administrative foundation of Think Africa Creatives Corner. These efforts included: Redefining our core principles, realigning initiatives with the mainstream Think Africa program, and planning for a revamp to make it more inclusive for our creators, particularly our members.Organising the annual dialogue in partnership with Afrojazz goes Alppipuisto in the summer of 2025. We continued our strategic focus on implementing activities that support the sustainability of our diaspora creatives in their new home, Finland.

Advocacy

Think Africa continued to advance its advocacy goals through civic education and policy engagement. Key activities in 2025 were:

- Hosting two **iVote sessions** in collaboration with the Lounge, featuring the Ministry of Justice and candidates of African background, to increase electoral awareness and participation.
- Representation on the **Prime Minister's Working Group on Anti-Discrimination and Racism**.
- Participation in the **Community of Practice on Antiracism**.
- Membership in the City of Helsinki's Advisory Board for Organisations 2025–2027.
- Advocacy efforts also included cultural policy dialogues supporting African creatives.

Afara Marketplace

In 2025, the Afara team refined its service model and successfully launched the **Afara Marketplace**, fully integrated into the Think Africa website. This work established a strong operational and digital foundation, positioning Afara for partnership development, client acquisition, and growth in 2026.

Executive Summary

Partners And Collaborators ‘25

In 2025, our organisation collaborated with a diverse range of partners and institutions, including municipal bodies such as the cities of Espoo and Helsinki, and their respective advisory councils and events for NGOs. We engaged with academic and professional institutions like Hanken Business School’s CSR and Humanitarian Logistics project course, the Theatre Academy International Alumni Network (TIA/TIAN), and Espoo Talent Hub.

Our cultural and creative collaborations included Globe Art Point, Helsinki International Film Festival, Ubuntu Film Club, Kulttuurikameleontit ry, and Youth Educational Performance Program (YEPP). We also partnered with international entities such as the Namibian, Moroccan, and Tunisian Embassies in Finland, as well as organisations such as HEED, the Ugandan Association, With Secure, Finnpartnership, Think Career, Aspidistra, and the International Employer of the Year initiative.

Conclusion

In 2025, Think Africa strengthened its role as a trusted platform for the African diaspora in Finland, delivering meaningful impact across community engagement, advocacy, and economic empowerment despite a challenging funding environment. Through strong volunteer commitment, strategic partnerships, and adaptive programming, the organisation continued to respond effectively to community needs.

Looking ahead to 2026, Think Africa is well positioned to build on this foundation with a renewed focus on sustainability, partnerships, and economic empowerment, guided by its mission, vision, and values.

Fundraising Overview

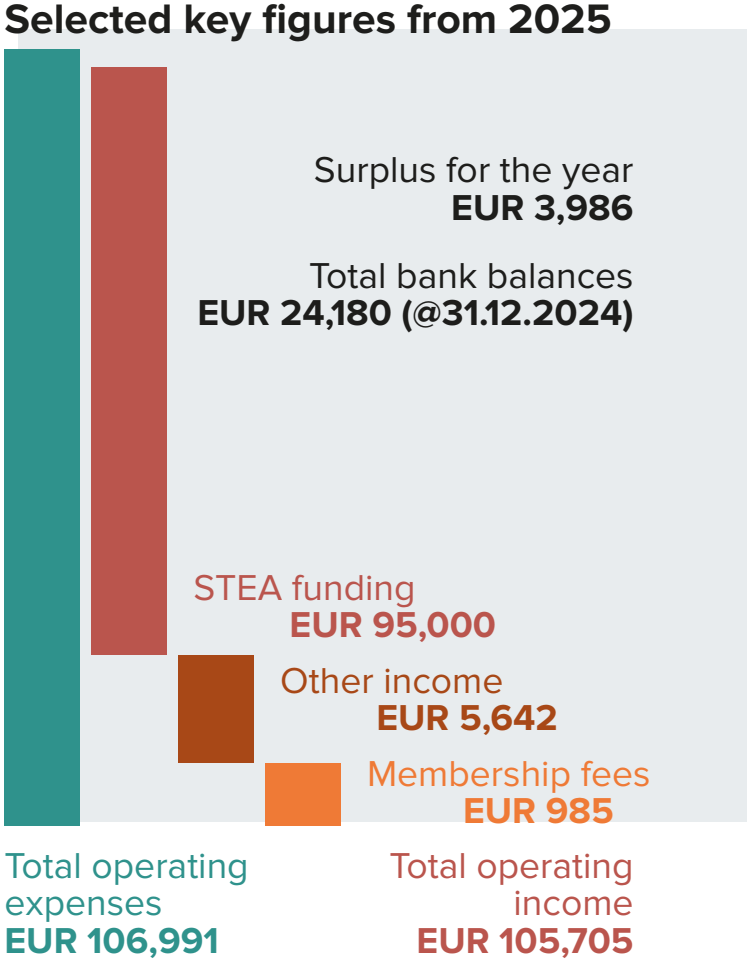
In 2025, a major Fundraising priority in 2025 for Think Africa was to explore other income streams that are not tied to project work, enabling the organisation to be more flexible in funding its activities. Based on the Fundraising Working Group's 2025 Action Plan, we saw the following results:

☐ We successfully piloted a corporate sponsorship programme aimed at raising flexible, non-project funding that could be used to support various TA activities and projects. The results of that programme are as follows:

- Approached 7 target organisations (private and public sector).
- Secured 4 meetings.
- Signed one sponsorship agreement valued at EUR 7 000.
- The funds were used to support Think Africa Week 2025, the development of Afara marketplace, Advocacy work, and creation of a colouring book to be sold for profit, with the balance reserved for 2026.

☐ We also successfully secured funding for Think Africa Week 2025, a total of EUR 6 900. The event itself returned a small profit of approx EUR 1 200.

Selected key figures from 2025



☐ We initiated a new partnership with Hanken School of Economics to work with 4 students on a project course in CSR and Humanitarian Logistics. Our student research group investigated family foundations and family offices as a potential source of funding and produced a valuable report with important insights to help TA craft better funding applications in general. The collaboration with Hanken continues into 2026.

☐ We created an original Think Africa-branded colouring book as a fundraising instrument for sale at Think Africa events and online. Content for the book was contributed by TA creatives and the item went on sale in early 2026.

☐ Due to limited resources in the team, we did not manage to win many of the grants that were submitted. We recognised the need for a more structured approach as well as team incentives to attract the resources needed to carry out fundraising work. We were also not able to attract any new major funding for key programmes such as Think Career, given sweeping government spending cuts to NGO assistance programmes and the increased competition for reduced funding.

Voices of Our Community: Volunteers, Interns & Members

Kwabena Asante

Volunteering with Think Africa has been a meaningful part of my integration and professional growth in Finland. Through the Think Africa x DataHuone project, I contributed to analysing immigrant labour market trends and insights in Finland, working closely with fellow data analysts from my Think Career Mentorship round, and collaborating with external partners. This experience helped me grow in communication, teamwork, and project coordination, while also giving me practical insight into how cross-organisational collaboration works in Finland. Building on this journey, I later supported the planning and delivery of Think Africa Week, where I helped coordinate the virtual mentorship sessions. This included reaching out to professionals from different fields, setting up and managing mentoring sessions, and supporting smooth communication between mentors and participants. Seeing the genuine value these sessions created for both sides was incredibly rewarding, and the experience further strengthened my stakeholder management and communication skills, which I continue to draw on in my current role.

Thacienne Uwimanayantumye

I volunteered for the Think Career Mentorship Program to contribute my data analysis skills to a mission aligned with my personal and professional interests: supporting skilled immigrants' integration into the Finnish labour market. In addition to the program's social impact, Think Africa's volunteering model stood out for its emphasis on mutual benefit. The organisation provides volunteers with opportunities to apply their skills to real projects and supports the use of this work in professional portfolios, which was an important factor in my decision to participate.

Through this collaboration, I gained practical experience conducting an end-to-end data analysis project using real, multi-year program data. This included data cleaning and structuring, exploratory analysis, visualisation, and communicating insights to non-technical stakeholders. The project also strengthened my understanding of impact measurement, the importance of planning data collection from the outset, and managing timelines and expectations in a real-world setting. Overall, the experience contributed both to the program's development and to my own professional growth, demonstrating how structured volunteering can effectively benefit both organisations and volunteers."

Voices of Our Community: Volunteers, Interns & Members

Habiba Sultana

I joined Think Africa in May as a mentee and was immediately drawn to how warm and welcoming the community were to people. Despite being a relatively small network, the strong sense of connection made a lasting impression on me. Inspired by this experience, I reached out to Sofia Achame-Räisänen with a proposal to contribute as an intern. During my time at Think Africa, I had the opportunity to work with people from diverse professional and cultural backgrounds. This helped me realise how a small, mission-driven community can create meaningful and wide-reaching impact.

During my internship I redesigned the onboarding experience for paid members. I was guided by Myriam Munezero in structuring the process in a way that felt clear, welcoming, and aligned with the values of Think Africa. By understanding the expectations and challenges, I developed a more structured onboarding system with clearer touchpoints to encourage participation and strengthen members' connection to the community.

Alongside this, I also worked on drafting HR policies for Think Africa. As a result I learned about Finland's employment laws and wrote policies based on them, a very practical outcome which might have been difficult for me to learn otherwise. I truly enjoyed working at Think Africa. The experience was both enriching and rewarding, allowing me to learn, contribute, and grow within a supportive environment. I would highly recommend Think Africa to anyone interested in volunteering, learning and making a meaningful impact in a purpose-driven organisation.

Highlights: Projects & Programs

Think Africa Week 2025 Summary

Think Africa Week 2025, held September 3-6, brought together the African diaspora community, diversity-minded organisations, policymakers, and cultural practitioners under the theme "Shift Happens! Courage and Creativity in Change." The four-day flagship event featured a diverse program including a Networking Talent Day connecting international talent with employers and entrepreneurs, a critical session on policy changes affecting diaspora livelihoods, youth empowerment workshops for ages 15-30 addressing sustainability and mental health, and a vibrant Culture/Art Bazaar celebrating Afro-diasporan creativity. The week secured over €6,900 in funding from various organisations and embassies in Finland, demonstrating solid institutional support for diaspora engagement.

The event reinforced Think Africa's position as Finland's premier platform for addressing matters relevant to the African diaspora since 2013, building on over a decade of impact. The event attracted 200+ cumulative attendees and partnerships with 10+ organisations. Through strategic collaborations with private and public sector partners, the week delivered meaningful community engagement combining policy dialogue, practical resources, and cultural celebration, equipping participants with tools to not just adapt to change but to lead it while navigating Finland's evolving political, social, and economic landscape.



Partnerships

In 2025, the Partnership Team focused on strengthening existing collaborations while laying the groundwork for sustaining and growing partnerships. The conversation focussed on restructuring the partnerships team and acquiring more active members. Collaboration continued with many legacy partners and a few new ones were acquired. Additionally, the team aimed to develop a more strategic approach to acquiring new partners that align with Think Africa's mission.

Think Career

In 2025, Think Africa's Think Career mentorship programme completed two full rounds, continuing the work started in 2023 to support highly educated immigrants in building sustainable careers and networks. Round 1 brought together 36 mentor–mentee pairs, followed by 43 pairs in Round 2, combining structured workshops with tailored one-to-one mentoring. Across 2023–2025, the programme has served 207 mentees, 93% of whom hold at least a bachelor's degree, highlighting the underused potential within Finland's international talent pool.



Highlights: Projects & Programs

During 2025, Round 1 included 9 events and Round 2 a total of 11 events, with the closing and joint 5-year programme celebration held in January 2026. Data show the programme's strong impact: 70% of participants reported improved mental well-being and confidence, 91% expanded their professional networks (in some cases from just a few contacts to over 100), and self-assessed pitching skills increased from 45% to 70% over the mentorship period.

As STEA funding will not continue beyond 2025, the team actively sought new partnerships and collaborations, both with cities and corporations, to ensure this important work can continue to benefit international professionals and Finnish society in the coming years.



Marketing Communications Team

In 2025, the Communications team acted as the voice and narrative thread of Think Africa, translating our mission into clear messaging and community-focused initiatives. Guided by our 2025 Vision Statement, we moved beyond simple information sharing toward a strategy that prioritises active engagement and expanded access to resources.

Our progress was a testament to a hybrid team structure, effectively combining the strategic and coordination direction of our paid Marketing & Communications Coordinator: Ekaterina Tolkacheva, with the diverse skills and dedication of our active volunteers. This collaboration was instrumental in supporting key projects and working groups. We worked closely with units such as the Outreach team to deepen engagement with existing members and our volunteer base. Additionally, we provided essential communication support for the flagship Think Career Mentorship Programme, ensuring that information about opportunities for career development reached those who needed them most.

Highlights: Projects & Programs

A milestone for this year was the establishment of our WhatsApp community, a move designed to centralise communication and foster immediate peer-to-peer support. Within this ecosystem, we maintained "safe spaces" through topic-specific groups. Under the guidance of dedicated community managers, these served as spaces for peer-to-peer dialogue on economic empowerment, internal and external events, as well as learning opportunities relevant to our members.

To ensure our external communications, including social media messaging, remained relevant and impactful, we committed to data-informed storytelling. In a first for the organisation, we developed and launched a Tableau dashboard, a data visualisation tool that transforms social media metrics into actionable insights. This allowed us to monitor engagement patterns for the first time, precisely tailoring our content to align with what resonates most with our internal and external audience. Additionally, a significant focus this year was the technical and content development of the Think Africa website. This essential investment ensures improved functionality and impact storytelling, establishing the website as a robust, long-term resource for our community and external stakeholders. Through these sustained efforts, we have ensured Think Africa provides the communications channels necessary for the diaspora to stay engaged, empowered, and connected.

Outreach

In 2025, we organised a wide range of educational, social, and member activities to support integration, civic participation, financial skills, and well-being among diverse communities. Activities were delivered both online and in person, reaching over 330 participants throughout the year. The programme included workshops, information sessions, and community events such as the Nature Cycling Tour, Member Mixer, Grill & Chill, and the annual Pikkujoulu celebration. With support from the City of Espoo, these activities helped participants gain knowledge, build social connections, and feel more included in Finnish society. Overall, the outreach programme strengthened community engagement, promoted well-being, and supported meaningful participation, while also providing insights to improve future activities.

Think Africa Lounge

As one of the Outreach team's core activities, Think Africa Lounge organised a variety of low-threshold information sessions, social gatherings, and community-focused activities supporting integration, civic participation, financial literacy, and overall well-being. The Lounge reached over 200 members and participants and was held primarily online, with a few in-person events.



Highlights: Projects & Programs

Sessions addressed themes such as mental well-being, civic participation—including a two-part iVote series on understanding the role and power of municipalities ahead of the 2025 county and municipal elections– a session on the reformed Integration Act, and another on the role of unions. We also hosted sessions on parenthood post-divorce, buying a home in Finland and other family and society-themed issues.

As a volunteer-led initiative, the Lounge has been run by dedicated volunteers, and this year we were able to offer financial compensation for their time organising events, thanks to support from the City of Espoo. Participation patterns showed strong interest in integration-related topics as well as opportunities for social gathering and connection. With the City of Espoo's support, the programme was successfully delivered, enhancing participants' knowledge, well-being, and social cohesion, and it received consistently positive feedback throughout the year.



Grill & Chill at Nuuksio National Park

Grill & Chill is an annual, family-friendly gathering hosted to bring members and anyone wishing to celebrate Juhannus (Midsummer) together in the company of the Think Africa community. Often organised on or near the Midsummer weekend, in 2025 the event was held in Nuuksio National Park, Espoo, providing a beautiful natural setting for families and friends.

The event was especially meaningful for those who may not have had the opportunity to celebrate Midsummer outside of the capital region. Despite a rainy day, Think Africa members, Think Career mentees, new and old friends, and their families connected, shared food, and enjoyed the outdoors, creating a welcoming and relaxed space for everyone. The casual, potluck-style format allowed all participants to contribute comfortably, fostering a strong sense of belonging and togetherness.

In 2025, the event attracted 40 participants, reflecting steady growth in engagement over the years. Grill & Chill remained a highlight of the organisation's social programme, strengthened relationships among members, and provided a joyful opportunity to celebrate Midsummer together.

Highlights: Projects & Programs

Nature Cycling Tour

The Nature Cycling Tour 2025 was collaboratively organised by Think Africa, HEED Finland, and the Ugandan Community in Finland. The summer initiative aimed to promote physical and mental well-being, foster social connections among immigrants and locals, and encourage exploration of Espoo's natural cycling routes.

Altogether eight tours were held between June and August, featuring accessible starting points, health checks and casual discussions on well-being provided by HEED. The tours attracted 32 participants from diverse backgrounds.



Feedback from participants was largely positive, highlighting the social and health benefits, scenic routes, and opportunities to explore Espoo's natural areas. Suggestions for future editions included incorporating additional activities such as hiking and swimming and offering tours with differentiated difficulty levels.

Overall, the Nature Cycling Tour 2025 successfully met its objectives, promoting well-being and social connection while identifying opportunities to enhance inclusivity, participant motivation, and engagement in future editions. The tour was made possible with the support of the City of Espoo.

Member's Mixer

The Members' Mixer on 1.3.2025, was coordinated to bring together new Think Africa members in an in-person setting and introduce them to the organisation's initiatives and opportunities for involvement. The session was attended by 15 participants, providing a small group that allowed for meaningful interactions, personalised guidance, and deeper discussions about engagement within the community.

The plan was to host similar sessions quarterly; however, due to resource constraints, the other Member Mixers were combined with Grill & Chill and Pikkujoulu, allowing new members to meet both old and new members in a relaxed, social setting. These events provided opportunities for participants to connect informally while learning about Think Africa initiatives and ways to contribute.

The event was coordinated by a Think Africa intern, in line with the organisation's goal of offering interns opportunities to engage in a real work environment. This allowed the intern to gain hands-on experience in event planning, coordination, and community engagement.

Highlights: Projects & Programs

Snow Meets Sun — Pikkujoulu

The Think Africa Lounge concluded 2025 with its annual Pikkujoulu (pre-Christmas) celebration, bringing together old and new board members, volunteers, members, TA friends, and families for a festive social gathering. This in-person event combined seasonal cheer with opportunities for connection and thanking our active volunteers for their wonderful contribution to Think Africa's growth.

It also provided a forum for networking with other volunteers serving in various initiatives and roles, reflecting Think Africa's commitment to fostering community and belonging. Participants enjoyed shared activities, food, and a warm, welcoming atmosphere, making it a memorable highlight of the year.

Around 35 attendees including children were present, demonstrating strong engagement and continued growth in community participation. The event served as a key moment for reflection, celebration, and strengthening relationships among members and volunteers, reinforcing Think Africa Lounge's role as a central hub for community life.





Advocacy

As part of our Advocacy goals, the Advocacy team collaborated with the Lounge team to host two iVote sessions to raise awareness of the County and Municipal elections held in April 2025. In the first session, Peter Kariuki from the Finnish Ministry of Justice provided invaluable information and explanations on how the elections work and what they influence. In the second session, candidates of African background shared their experiences, party manifestos, and agendas. as they answered questions from the audience. A full recording of the first session was made available on our YouTube channel:

https://youtu.be/gTA1efYMdM0?si=-wYiKptrczZi2HOz

Think Africa is represented on the Prime Minister's Working Group Committee on Anti-Discrimination and Racism in Finland. Our representative is also a member of the Community of Practice on Antiracism in Finland.

During the Shaping Futures: Living Heritage and Identity as Your Superpower event, a powerful message resonated throughout the room: in the face of ongoing cuts to spending on cultural activities and other challenges, artists in Finland have a unique opportunity to use their art as a form of protest and advocacy.

As speakers like Liz Ndegwa emphasised, the current moment calls for creativity not just as an artistic endeavour, but as a vital voice in the cultural dialogue. The event, which took place on 2 Oct 2025, was part of a series of info sessions hosted in collaboration with Globe Art Point (GAP) and Theatre Academy's International Alumni Network (TIAN), to help the international community navigate policy changes.

Highlights: Projects & Programs



Photo credits: Advisory Board for Organisations | Decisions | City of Helsinki

In addition, Think Africa ry secured a seat on the City of Helsinki Advisory Board for Organisations (2025–2027). The board provides an opportunity for Think Africa and other NGOs to influence the planning, communication, and monitoring of the City's activities and to foster cooperation between the City and non-profits. The Board's main representative is former Treasurer/Board Member Denise Wall.

AFARA

Building on the progress made in 2024, the Afara project team redefined the core offerings of Afara services, and clarified its operating model. Under the guidance of the website team headed by the Communications and Marketing Working Group, Afara marketplace has been successfully built and integrated into the main Think Africa website. The work so far has laid a solid foundation for attracting and retaining clients. 2026 will be dedicated to forging the right partnerships and bringing as much exposure to the services offered by Afara.

Creative's corner

In 2025, we have taken steps to strengthen the administrative foundation of Think Africa Creatives Corner. These efforts include redefining its core principles, realigning the initiatives with the mainstream Think Africa program, and planning for a revamp to make it more inclusive to our creators, particularly our members. Our goal is to broaden its reach through strategic planning partnerships and effective resources mobilisation.

During this process, we had the opportunity to organise the annual dialogue in partnership with Afrojaz goes Alppipuisto in the summer of 2025. As a team, we remain focused on strategically implementing activities that support the sustainability of our diaspora creatives in their new home, Finland. We aim to help them thrive by equipping them with knowledge and resources needed to successfully navigate their new environment.

THINK AFRICA REPRESENTED

Presidential gala

In 2025, we were proud to celebrate a significant creative milestone achieved by our Treasurer and board member, Omolara Odediran, a gifted designer whose work reached a prestigious national audience. She designed a beautifully crafted custom dress that was worn at the Presidential Gala, one of Finland's most iconic and culturally significant events. This recognition stands as a testament to her artistic vision, technical skill, and dedication to her craft, and it reflects the growing visibility and influence of diverse creative talent within our community.

Highlights: Projects & Programs

Her achievement brings both inspiration and pride to Think Africa, demonstrating how individual excellence can shine in distinguished platforms while also uplifting the wider community. We extend our warmest congratulations on this exceptional accomplishment and look forward to supporting her continued journey in the Finnish creative landscape.

https://www.iltalehti.fi/muoti/a/135ebc31-6017-4e78-b02d-f0b039f42216

“Designing this dress for Sarah was truly special. This dress was created to honour elegance, structure, comfort and the excellence and creativity African Creatives bring to Finland.*

“This is my second year styling for the Presidential Gala, and it keeps getting better. I’m honoured that our design was highlighted at the Presidential Gala, and seeing this look featured in Iltalehti for both its beauty and corsetry is such an honour.” Omolara Odediran, **Treasurer of Think Africa**.





Pictures by Priscilla: StudioPee



Slush, Helsinki

Takura Matswetu, the Vice chair of Think Africa, participated on behalf of Think Africa RY - on a panel discussion titled ”Africa: The Billion User Market You Can’t Afford To Miss...” hosted by HAUS & met 10 African founders with businesses that had been selected to participate in an incubator programme. Our message was that the diaspora in Finland is a business & cultural bridge to both the continent and Finland, and he also took a moment to highlight the work that Think Africa does as an organisation and placed a spotlight on Afara.

He also participated in the closing sessions of the delegation and got to share more about Finland, and encouraged the founders to share the message that Think Africa is here if at anytime Finland would be of interest.

International Employer of the Year 2025

Former treasurer **Denise Wall (2023 - 2025)** represented TA on the jury of the International Employer of the Year 2025 competition, and also on the City of Helsinki’s Advisory Board for Organisations 2025 - 2027.

Partners and Collaborators ‘25

City of Espoo, HEED, **Ugandan association,** Hanken Business School, **Espoo Talent Hub,** City of Helsinki, **Theatre Academy's International Alumni Network (TIA), Globe Art Point (GAP),** Helsinki International Film Festival, Ubuntu Film Club, **Kulttuurikameleontit ry,** WithSecure, **Finnpartnership, Think Career,** Aspidistra Oy, **Youth Educational Performance Program (YEPP), Suomen Ekonomit,** Theatre Academy International Alumni Network (TIAN), Namibian Embassy Finland, **Moroccan Embassy Finland,** Tunisian Embassy Finland, **International Employer of the Year,** City of Helsinki Advisory Board for Organisations

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THINK AFRICA

Engage

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Promote

•

Empower

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Signature: Odediran Omolara

Odediran Omolara

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Ouma Okello

Date: May 02 2026

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Roberto Raitasuo

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