Leadership Retreat at Bartram’s Garden, November 2018

Annual Report 2018
Coalition of African & Caribbean Communities

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Leadership Retreat at Bartram’s Garden, November 2018
“Reaching higher goals and empowering many immigrants and refugees”

Welcome to AFRICOM’s 2018 Report! 2018 will surely be remembered as the year when, at the Coalition of African and Caribbean Communities (AFRICOM), we reached milestones in our efforts to make the Coalition sustainable, efficient, partnership-driven, and mostly community-centered. Back in 2015, we made it a priority to include systematically the voices, ideas, and suggestions of the communities we serve as foundations of our annual agendas and programs.

This unique way of engaging young, adult, and senior African and Caribbean immigrants and refugees has made AFRICOM a dynamic, diverse, and power-building organization.

In November 2018, we held the First Annual Board of Directors/Executive Officers’ Retreat at the beautiful Bartram’s Garden, on 5400 Lindbergh Blvd. The highlight of this historical leadership retreat is that not only did we feel energized but also, we formulated a new mission statement for the Coalition. The new mission is to organize so that immigrant and refugee men, women, children, youths, and senior citizens feel a sense of empowerment, belonging, and self-sufficiency.

We are satisfied with what we achieved because we created opportunities for African and Caribbean immigrants to be the agents of the change they want to see in the Greater Philadelphia area.

For 2019, we are committed, to invest more resources in community-organizing, leadership training, and capacity building for member organizations. The Samuel Fels Fund grant we received in January 2019 and the incredible collaboration with Bartram’s Garden underline the relevance of the direction we have embarked on. We will break new grounds in 2019.

This direction requires support and engagement from member organizations, community leaders, volunteers, partners and funders.

We cannot thank enough the volunteers and work-ready students, who gave us their precious time and enthusiasm in 2018. We also thank the schools, agencies and organizations that sent them to us. They were tremendously inspirational.

There are opportunities to help and get involved.

We invite you to get involved. Join the family. Together with you, we will reach higher goals and empower many immigrants and refugees.”

We wished you a happy and productive year 2019.

Mrs. Zemoria Brandon, Chair of the Board of Directors

Eric Edi, PhD, Chief Operating Officer
Membership and scope of work

AFRICOM is a coalition of 20 and plus African and Caribbean community-based, faith-based organizations, small businesses, and individuals. AFRICOM works with multiple local and statewide partners to address the barriers which prevent African and Caribbean immigrants from reaching their full potentials.

The Coalition works across the Greater Philadelphia area where African and Caribbean immigrants live and own their bread-winning businesses.

In 2018, the Coalition emphasized on community-organizing, collective power-building, and leadership training. We focused on identifying and working to change the social, economic, racial, and political barriers.

Every year, the Coalition strives to provide valuable services to up to 1,000 people including specifically low-income families and individuals.

The Population we serve

90% and more of the individuals and families we serve are immigrants and refugees from Africa and the Caribbean Islands.

Most of these individuals and families live in the Greater Philadelphia area. In Philadelphia, studies show that the number of African immigrants increased more than any other immigrant groups 2000 and 2016.

In Pennsylvania

893,769 foreign-born people in PA
73,069 (8%) African-born immigrants in PA
129,258 (14%) Caribbean-born

In Philadelphia

210,076 (14% of total population) are foreign-born.
32,219 (2.1%) of Philadelphians are from the Caribbean Islands.
35,648 (2.3%) of Philadelphia residents were born in Sub-Saharan Africa with West Africans representing the largest contingents.


Occupation

Sectors of employment for the population we serve include: transportation, (taxi-drivers), homecare and personal care, education, hair-braiding, small business, nursing, cleaning, daycare, restaurants, etc.

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1 Pew Charitable Trust, 2018
2 Migration Policy Institute Data available www.mpi.org
3 American Community Surveys, 2017
Our 2018 Achievements

Our programs and projects ultimately aim to empower African and Caribbean immigrants and refugees to alleviate the burden of poverty by accessing the information, resources, and services they need. Thanks to the tireless efforts of our staff, consultants, and volunteers, we implemented a community-driven agenda and achieved the following:

**Immigration and legal assistance**

In 2018, a substantial funding from The Philadelphia Foundation-based PA Is Ready Fund allowed the Coalition to hold more than 19 public and social media events, which included 16 informational Know Your rights sessions and 3 combined Legal screening and clinic events. More than 361 individuals and families received services. 3 community navigators received training or reinforced their capacities. In addition, the Coalition hosted 4 leadership training related to deportation defense and safe community building. About 80 community leaders and activists from diverse immigrant communities attended the trainings that AFRICOM hosted.

- **20** individuals referred to Legal Service Partners
- **8** citizenship and LPR applications completed
- **3** people received financial assistance from the Legal Assistance Fund.
- **3** successful asylum applications filed
- AFRICOM attended PICC annual convening in Harrisburg, PA
- AFRICOM’s representative attended NIIC 2018.
- AFRICOM participated in events addressing on immigration policies and just immigration reform.

AFRICOM- NSC Legal clinics served African and Caribbean immigrants and refugees in the Greater Philadelphia Area.
Health and Social Welfare

AFRICOM facilitates African and Caribbean immigrants and refugees’ access to healthcare and health information.

In March and April, AFRICOM hosted 2 health forums. 40 community leaders participated in the forums.

In September, AFRICOM hosted the 17th Annual Health Fair. More than 200 people including children and adults and 20 vendors and service providers attended the fair at Kingsessing Recreation Center. The Wawa foundation donated 200 ¾ pints refreshments

AFRICOM successfully assisted a new family of 3 win their case against CYS

157 Public Benefits Applications were completed for low-income and limited-English proficient families. These include:

- CCIS: 23
- LIHEAP: 15
- CRP: 20
- CAP Rate: 18
- SNAP: 25
- Employment verification: 56

90 people including youths, adults and senior citizens participated in AFRICOM’s 5 listening sessions meant to assess African and Caribbean communities’ needs around mental health, gambling, and alcoholism.

Family and friends’ Day

AFRICOM sponsored and supported the annual Friends and Family Day with AFAHO. Close to 100 participants mothers, children and volunteers attended the event

17 individuals and families were referred to Philadelphia Health centers and AFAHO for direct health services.

Senior Citizens

- We helped establish PCA African and Caribbean Elder Advisory Board to better serve the needs of our elderly populations.
- We co-hosted AGAPE’s Annual Appreciation dinner that served 60 senior citizens.
Education and Culture

In collaboration with diverse partners, AFRICOM conducts education and culture-related activities specifically for youth and children.

School District Information

In 2018, AFRICOM participated in diverse initiatives with the School District of Philadelphia to:

- Address language access questions for non-English speaking parents and students
- Raise awareness about early childhood education
- Promote job opportunities
- Help new students enroll and navigate the school district’s portal

87 free tickets were distributed to youths, ages 4 to 17 to attend sports, entertainment and educational events.

Shades of AFRIKA – Fashion show

30 youths and children participated in the AFRICOM-sponsored Sierra Leone Youth Association Fashion show at Temple University. The event showcased talented immigrant designers. “Shades of Afrika 2018” raised awareness about “Female Circumcision.”

Annual Soccer Tournament

4 Teams representing Ethiopia, Sudan, and Guinea/ Sierra Leone participated in the annual community soccer tournament. This year, AFRICOM and The Southwest Community Development Corporation (SWCDC) co-hosted the competition.
Community organizing: Building immigrant local power

“*We need to do a better job organizing our communities to fight for change.*” Steve Paul

The call to action in 2018 was: “No longer allowing policies to silence African and caribbean immigrants and refugees.”

AFRICOM was involved in 8 campaigns and collective actions with hundreds of activists and organizations through letter-writing, petition signing, and rallies, and immigrant rights campaigns. Some of the campaigns included:

- Fairwork week Campaign
- End family separation at the Borders
- No “Shithole” countries
- Public Charge rule campaign
- TPS Caravan Campain
- Drivers’ license campaign
- Support Natural hair braiders’ campaign

Cross-section African and Caribbean community leaders and members gathered in a emergency meetings to craft community response to President Trump’s comments about Africa countries and Haiti.

African natural hair braiding shop owners were organized to support a legislation, which will eliminate the unnecessary requirements of a Specialty license in Pennsylvania.

70 total number of braiders and supporters who attended first hearing at Hilton Hotel with Democratic Legislative Committee.
**Capacity-Building**

Achieving our goals and reaching higher levels also meant investing in capacity building by leveraging human and material resources. Through its partners and diverse networks, AFRICOM hosted the first Immigrant Workers Academy and the first leadership Retreat.

The Immigrant Workers’ Academy was a joint program with the Office of Immigrant Affairs, the African Family Health Organization (AFAHO) and ACANA.

40 immigrant workers from Africa, the Caribbean Islands and South America joined the empowering 3-hour Academy to learn about rights in the workplace, paid-leaves,

The First Leadership Retreat brought together members of the Board of Directors, Executive officers, and representatives of some community organizations.

15 people participated in the enriching program, which will become an annual tradition at AFRICOM.
Volunteer and Internship program

Volunteers and interns are the backbones of our accomplishments.

90% of our initiatives are volunteer-led

This year, in addition to the core staff/volunteers, over 12 high schools, undergraduate, and graduate students lent their time and skills to AFRICOM. In return, these interns and volunteers learned about African and Caribbean immigrant communities’ needs, assisted with office management, project planning and reporting, program development and grant writing.

Members of AFRICOM also volunteered and provided technical assistance to member organizations and other institutions.

5 organizations and institutions received assistance with:

- grant writing and grant application,
- 501 c 3 application,
- tax filing,
- space for community meetings and gathering.
- Program development

Blessing B. an International Student (Zimbabwe) at Oberlin College, Ohio, was completed 8 weeks of internship AFRICOM (summer 2018)

Anthony D. (Boys Latin), Summaya H. & Emmajah V. (Philadelphia High School for Girls) contributed valuable time to AFRICOM.

Senegalese Association of Philadelphia Leadership meeting at AFRICOM, September 28, 2018
Legislative Advocacy

In 2018, AFRICOM met with and hosted local, regional and federal legislators to establish lines of communications and address the welfare of African and Caribbean immigrants and refugees in the Greater Philadelphia area.

4 meetings took place with lawmakers and representatives of law enforcement agencies including:

- Meeting with the office of State Representative Jared Solomon
- Meeting with Congressman Brendan Boyle
- Meeting with the Assistant District Attorney’s Office
- Meeting with US. Congressman Dwight Evans

People say

Here are empowering statements from the people we served

“thank you Mr. Eric for all that you have done for us” L.W. mother who received assistance with CYS case.

“I called your office last week to tell you that Newmann Goretti Catholic School accepted to offer my child tuition remission. Thank you so much. The kids will thank you themselves one day” M.K hair braider needing assistance communicating with tuition office.

“you took the time to come to my place to listen to me. This means a lot. I wish to get my children back.” J., mother involved in custody battle.

With 45 acres along the Tidal Schuylkill River in Southwest Philadelphia, in what was once known as Lenapehoking, Bartram’s Garden is Philadelphia’s outdoor classroom and river garden. Since 1893, the non-profit John Bartram Association has nurtured this legendary landscape and shared the Bartram family’s legacy of stewardship, creativity, and discovery with visitors of all ages.

John Bartram was an 18th-century naturalist and explorer who wished to make a “complete discovery” of native growth in America. His journeys into the new American wilderness fostered a transatlantic plant exchange that transformed landscapes in the colonies and Europe. His lifelong work and discoveries guide Bartram’s Garden today as we creatively connect people to the wonders and lessons of nature.

Today the Garden is a free public park and a National Historic Landmark welcoming 95,000 neighbors each year. Join us for everything from urban farming to boating, family-friendly outdoor performances to bike rides on our riverfront trail, fishing to art classes. More details and a calendar of events are available at bartramsgarden.org
Financial Highlights

A detailed copy of the internally audited and board-approved financial statement for the year 2018 will be available on our website. www.africom-philly.org

“Credibility matters”

Over the years, AFRICOM has developed a culture of fiscal responsibility and accountability.

83% of our revenues were based on grants from private foundations.

42% of our expenses are on community programs

31% of our expenses represent salaries and honorariums for staff and volunteers
Funding

We dearly thank our funders. Their support make our achievements possible

The Samuel Fels Funds
The Alfred and Mry Douty Foundation
The Union of Benevolent Association
The Philadelphia Activity Fund
The Wawa Foundation
The Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship Coalition (PICC)
The Philadelphia Foundation
Tickets for Kids Charity
Bartram’s Garden
Sudanese Community Association
Green Standards
Bread and Roses Community Fund
National Network of Library of Medicines
The Philadelphia Corporation for Aging
The Philadelphia Youth Network (PYN)
Sanctuary Suppers

We started 2018 with a successful fundraising dinner at Flambo organized by Sanctuary Suppers, January 2018

Partners

At AFRICOM, we believe in leveraging community resources by partnering with numerous organizations and agencies.


Get Involved

Volunteer/Donate:

Online: www.africom-philly.org
By check made to: Coalition of African Communities

We are a 501 c (3) Public Charity organization
Tax I.D # 22 – 3857591