



Advocacy for Impact: Supporting African Diaspora Changemakers for Policy Influence

INTRODUCTION

This Policy Advocacy program is designed for socially conscious African diaspora students based in the United States with a strong interest and desire to understand the US policy landscape, raise awareness on key policy issues and influence policy outcomes for systems change across Africa. This program is specifically designed for NAFSA members by [Ashoka](#), [The Diaspora Academy \(TDA\)](#) and the [Leadership of the National African Students Association \(NAFSA\)](#) and sponsored by the Gates Foundation.



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

This policy advocacy capacity building program is designed to increase the changemaking capabilities of African diaspora students in the US and will be focused on building their capacity to influence policy for continued and increased U.S. development assistance for global health and development, particularly for Africa. It will be based on the learnings and success in policy influence of Ashoka's social entrepreneurs, youth leaders and partners, TDA's diaspora engagement, policy and advocacy expertise, and African diaspora policy and advocacy experts.

The online sessions and curriculum are structured upon Ashoka's and TDA's globally taught courses which have helped social entrepreneurs, changemakers and diaspora leaders find practical, innovative solutions towards achieving social development, diaspora leadership, systems change and policy advocacy goals. The course is rooted in Ashoka's four decades of in-the-trenches hands-on experience of supporting social entrepreneurs who are passionate about tackling the root causes behind societal problems in a way that leads to lasting change. The modules are also strongly rooted in TDA's theory of change that embodies the importance of effectively structuring policy and advocacy towards helping diaspora changemakers achieve systemic change within a society.

This advocacy workshop will equip student participants with practical systems thinking, changemaking tools, diaspora leadership frameworks and policy and advocacy approaches best suited for their demographic and for the objectives of the NAFSA-Ashoka partnership. It will be delivered across 9 Framework Change sessions or modules that provide a rich blend of policy and advocacy systems theory, practical policy influence skills, and real-world insights from experienced Ashoka Staff, Ashoka Fellows and experts in African diaspora engagement. The trainings will conclude with an in-person workshop during the NAFSA conference to allow for deeper engagement, peer-to-peer networking, and direct learning. By integrating these elements, the program will help African diaspora students advocate for policy changes and drive meaningful, long-term systemic impact in U.S. development assistance.



PROGRAM OUTLINE

This program contains the following components:

- **Kickoff Orientation Session (Module 0, approx. 90 minutes, December 14, 2024):** An online welcome and orientation session for confirmed participants.
- **Live Virtual Trainings (Modules 1-9, approx. 90 minutes each, January-February 2025):** Online, interactive trainings led by Ashoka and TDA with presentations, group discussions, case studies and scenario based exercises. Presenters will offer regular office hours as needed for students to discuss materials covered during the week's session.
- **In-Person Training (NAfSA Conference, February 22, 2025)** This session concludes the program training with in-person overview of the Capstone project and an interactive deep dive session on defining your African diaspora leadership.
- **Capstone Project (Post-Training, March-July 2025):** Students will work on their Capstone project with a specific theme and goal they've identified with the course instructors. This 3-month project will include access to policy and advocacy experts who will guide and mentor the students during the project.
- **Post-Program Membership Network:** Upon conclusion of the program, students will be invited to join TDA's Diaspora Changemakers Community, giving them access to other diaspora leaders and changemakers through an online membership community managed by TDA.



OBJECTIVES

- **Equip African Diaspora students with the tools, knowledge, and confidence to become effective changemakers**, capable of influencing U.S. policy on global health and development assistance.
- **Deepen Diaspora Perspectives:** Foster a deeper understanding of how personal journeys, cultural heritage, and unique diaspora experiences can serve as powerful assets in shaping impactful advocacy efforts.
- **Develop Changemaker Skills:** Build collaborative networks, strengthen connections among participants, policymakers, and community leaders through immersive experiences and conversations with successful changemakers, enabling coalition-building for sustainable impact.
- **Develop Advocacy and Systems Change Skills:** Provide participants with practical strategies to map systems, set policy influence goals, craft compelling narratives, and effectively engage stakeholders to drive systemic change.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- **Strengthened Capacity to Influence Policymakers:** Participants will acquire the frameworks and tools necessary to design, implement, and sustain advocacy efforts which can be used to shift policies and practices within the context of U.S.-Africa development assistance.
- **Strengthened Diaspora Voices:** The program will strengthen the voices of African diaspora students as changemakers, equipping them to engage meaningfully in policy discussions and decision-making processes.
- **Enhanced Collaboration and Changemaking:** Participants will develop the ability to navigate the complexities and diversity of African diaspora communities, fostering collaborative efforts that address shared challenges and drive collective impact.
- **Institutional Engagement:** The program will foster long-term partnerships among Ashoka, the Gates Foundation, NAFSA, TDA, and other stakeholders, creating a sustained platform for African Diaspora advocacy and changemaking.
- **Capstone Project:** Participants will implement learnings around advocacy, systems change and organizing for changemaking. The Capstone project will be focused on influencing U.S. public policy focused on foreign assistance, global health and development.



MEET THE TEAM



KENNETH KUNGANIA

Kenneth Kungania is the Executive Director of the National African Student Association (NAfSA), leading a coalition of African students across 60+ universities in the USA.



IVEREN ITYOIKAA

Iveren Ityoikaa is the Diaspora Partnership Manager at Ashoka, collaborating with African diaspora leaders to drive transformational impact through strategic partnerships and innovative programs.



SEM HAR ARAIA

Semhar Araia is the CEO and Founder of The Diaspora Academy, a global diaspora leadership and engagement institute, designed to support and strengthen diaspora changemakers around the world.



ASIER ANSORENA

Asier Ansorena leads Ashoka's Diaspora Networks, building connections between diaspora leaders, social entrepreneurs, and changemakers to drive systemic change worldwide.



ANGELOU EZEILO

Angelou Ezeilo is the Co-President at Ashoka Africa, Ashoka Fellow, and Founder of Greening Youth Foundation, an organization committed to engaging underrepresented youth in conservation careers.



BUNMI OTEGBADE

Bunmi Otegbade leads strategy at Ashoka, driving global metrics, peer networks, and AI initiatives to empower changemakers worldwide.



JUNE WARDÉ

June Wardé co-leads Ashoka's Changemaker Challenges and Collaborative Initiatives, empowering changemakers to address systemic challenges and drive social impact worldwide.



JENNA TIEBY

Jenna Tieby is a Data and Project Management Intern with Ashoka's Diaspora Networks and ASPIRe teams, supporting impactful changemaker collaborations worldwide.



MOTAZ ATTALLA

Motaz Attalla is a Senior Program Officer at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, driving global policy and advocacy initiatives across North America.



PROGRAM MODULES

MODULE	TITLE	DESCRIPTION	DURATION
0	Orientation and Course Foundation	Project objectives and desired outcomes. Introduction of Diasporas in Development and Expectation Setting.	90 minutes
1	Introduction to Changemaking, Systems Change and Advocacy	Understanding what changemaking and systems change are and why they matter in advocacy. Understanding the significance of constituencies in policymaking. Explore how a Changemaker mindset and approach to policy advocacy can help address root causes of global development challenges.	90 minutes
2	African Diaspora Policy Advocacy	Explore how personal journeys of transformation from the diaspora perspective can inform policy advocacy. Discuss the unique challenges and opportunities faced by diaspora communities in advocating for systemic change. Understand the different forms of social, economic and civic impact diaspora changemakers can pursue to advance global development through advocacy.	90 minutes
3	Mapping the U.S. Development Assistance System through the African Diaspora Lens	Use systems thinking to understand the U.S. development assistance landscape, identify key players and policies and how best to engage with them. Introduce key development agencies, networks, and policy initiatives designed to advance global development. Highlight examples of current diasporas in development initiatives in government.	90 minutes
4	Achieving a Mindset Shift towards Setting Systemic Policy Influence Goals	Define current challenges in the field of international aid and identify clear policy advocacy goals that address systemic issues with a focus on US-Africa Development, using tools like the 5R framework (Roles, Rules, Resources, Relationships, Results). Mindset Shifts needed to achieve the desired goals. Introduction to the Capstone Project Process.	90 minutes

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5	Crafting an African Diaspora Systems Change Narrative	Equip students with the skills to develop compelling stories and communicate complex ideas in a way that resonates with stakeholders while addressing the needs of their specific demographic. Provide best practices for delivering compelling diaspora narratives to policymakers and different audiences. Showcase how advocacy for policy goals differs across different target audiences. Provide examples of best practices for setting policy recommendations and building influence on policy positions.	90 minutes
6	Deep Dive Conversation and Exploration with an Ashoka Fellow and AYC	Engage in a deep dive conversation with a racial minority Ashoka Fellow who has led successful policy advocacy efforts in the U.S. Learn firsthand about the challenges and strategies involved in driving policy advocacy for systemic change.	90 minutes
7	Engaging Multiple Stakeholders	Providing implementable strategies to engage and collaborate with key stakeholders, including policymakers and community leaders in the US - with an eye on the Capstone.	90 minutes
8	Deep Dive: Applying Systems Change in Advocacy	A second in-depth conversation with the Ashoka Fellow/Policy advocacy expert, focusing on applying the principles of systems change to real-world advocacy campaigns. Discuss case studies and explore actionable steps. Reinforce the concepts learned in previous modules and illustrate how they can be applied in practice to achieve systemic impact.	90 minutes
9	Sustaining and Measuring Impact	Exploring methods for evaluating the success of advocacy campaigns and sustaining systemic change. Ensuring that participants can set their Capstone Project Goals, measure their impact and maintain momentum in their advocacy work.	90 minutes

SCHEDULE

Date & Format: February 22, 2025 – In-Person Session, Atlanta, USA

Time	Session	Open To	Description	Duration
Morning	Navigating Complexities within African Diaspora Communities towards Advocacy and Policy Influence	All pre-registered NAFSA participants	Explore diversity and conflicts in African diaspora communities, their bonds with home countries, and implications for advocacy and policy influence.	3 Hours
Lunch Time	Bonding and Networking	All NAFSA participants	Informal networking opportunity to connect with other participants.	1 Hour
Early Afternoon	Peer Networks	Policy Advocacy Program participants	Build peer-to-peer networks aimed at expanding policy advocacy influence.	1 Hour
Late Afternoon	Capstone Immersion	Policy Advocacy Program participants	Engage in an immersive neuro-linguistic experience to inspire and launch participants into impactful application journeys.	-

Phase	Session	Description	Dutation/Time
Capstone Project Mentoring	Monthly Mentoring, Guidance, and Advisory Sessions	Students receive guidance, feedback, and strategic assistance from cohort participants and the advisory council to help achieve their Capstone Project.	1-3 hours per month (over 3-5 months)
Program Conclusion	Capstone Project Report	Participants submit a brief report on their experiences, challenges, and successes, along with areas for future expansion or exploration.	End of July
	Issuance of Program Certificates	Program graduates receive certificates of completion.	August 2025
	Post Program Networks	Graduates are connected to TDA Alumni and Ashoka Diaspora Partnership Groups.	Post-September 2025

CONTACT INFORMATION

For further information or any questions, please feel free to reach out to any of the contacts below



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