

THE USAU YOUTH



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Black History Month 2013: Linking Lincoln's Vision of Freedom with MLK's March on Washington



In February 2013, the United States commemorated two events that changed the course of the nation – the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation and the 1963 March on Washington. Black History Month celebrations throughout the United States and at U.S. embassies and missions globally, focused on the historical context of these two crucial events, their accomplishments and limitations, and, most importantly, their impact on the generations that followed. This year, the celebration focused on the dissection of President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation and Martin Luther King Jr.'s March on Washington, two pivotal periods in time that advanced the struggle for equality in the United States.

Throughout his time in public office and into his presidency, Abraham Lincoln believed that slaves should be emancipated and advocated for a program in which they would be freed gradually. On January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln presented the Emancipation Proclamation declaring that "all persons held as slaves within any States, or designated part of the State, the people whereof shall be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free." While the Proclamation freed slaves in states not under Union control, not all slaves in the United States were freed, as the Proclamation was originally designed as a political strategy to both end the U.S. Civil War and attract black soldiers to fight for the Union forces. While criticism exists surrounding the effectiveness of Lincoln's Proclamation, his decision laid the foundation for the Civil Rights Movement and the March on Washington 100 years later.

On August 28, 1963, Americans committed to Civil Rights and the fight against bigotry and injustice convened on the National Mall in Washington, DC to call attention to the plight of African-Americans. At the March on Washington, Martin Luther King Jr. began his now famous speech by declaring, "Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of captivity ... In a sense we have come to our nation's capital to cash a check." These words paid homage to the work done by President Abraham Lincoln in his efforts to link the tradition of slavery in the United States to his larger goal of uniting the country during the Civil War. Dr. King and the March on Washington called attention to the many outstanding racial, economic, and overall civil rights issues African-Americans were still facing 100 years after the passage of the Emancipation Proclamation.

Continued on Page 2

EDITORIAL NOTE

Dear readers,

Welcome to this beginning of the year issue of the USAU Youth. For January and February, we open with an article on Black History Month (BHM), an annual celebration of the achievements and legacy of African-Americans and their contributions to the United States. This year's BHM theme is centered on the 150th celebration of the Emancipation Proclamation and the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Movement and the March on Washington, two key periods in the African-American struggle for equality. Following the close of the 20th African Union (AU) Summit, read more about the role of youth African men and women in the work to advance the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the African Renaissance in the article entitled 'The Africa We Want,' found on page 3. On page 8, USAU welcomes its newest AU Youth Volunteer Mr. Octavio Hermeland Diogo, as he discusses his vision for his work as the youth liaison between the AU and the United States in this edition's *Voice of Volunteers* section. In our *Word to the Wise* section, we had the opportunity to speak with Principal Deputy Secretary of State for African Affairs Donald Yamamoto when he was in Addis Ababa to lead the U.S. delegation to the 20th AU Summit. Find out more about the U.S.-AU relationship in his interview on page 8.

As always, please share your thoughts with us on Twitter and Facebook, as this edition's Did You Know section will focus on advancing the African Youth Charter.

Happy Reading!

During Black History Month 2013, we called attention to the very important linkages of the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation and the 1963 March on Washington. Both events serve as milestone moments in the grand sweep of American history, as these achievements were the culmination of decades of struggles by individuals – both famous and unknown – who believed in the American promise that this nation was dedicated to the proposition that "all men are created equal." Separated by 100 years, they are linked together in a larger story of freedom and the African-American experience.

Some information has been sourced from the Smithsonian Institute.

Jasmine White

Political and Public Diplomacy Officer
US Mission to African Union



TIP OF THE MONTH:

Do you have Business Cards?

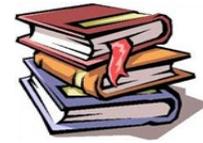
If not, waste no time!
Order them ASAP!

Whether you are a student, leader or simply a member of an organization, NEVER forget to keep your ever meet a minister, ambassador, or policy-maker? How are you going to engage him or her, or exchange contact information without a business card?

Just Be Professional!

Octavio Diogo

USAU Youth LIBRARY



We believe that the more youth become empowered and effective, the more they will develop a special generation that will leave a lasting footprint of its struggle for those who come after.

Youth empowerment encourages the development of necessary leadership skills. We suggest you read the book mentioned below to start improving your personal leadership skills. So, let's discover the handbook that can help you in your everyday work ...

Book: *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*

Author: Stephen R. Covey,

Abstract:

"The way we see things is the source of the way we think and the way we act"

"The United States today is the fruit of a Paradigm Shift. The traditional concept of government for centuries had been a monarchy, the divine right of kings. Then a different paradigm was developed -government of the people, by the people, and for the people. And a constitutional democracy was born, unleashing tremendous human energy and ingenuity, and creating a standard of living, of freedom and liberty, of influence and hope unequalled in the history of the world."

"It becomes obvious that if we want to make relatively minor changes in our lives, we can perhaps appropriately focus on our attitudes and behaviors. But if we want to make significant, quantum change, we need to work on our basic paradigms."

Warning! Reading can't change anything without practice! So we strongly advise you practice what you learn from our library.

Octavio Diogo

The Africa We Want – The Role of African Youth in Advancing Pan-Africanism

Joannie Bewa is young social activist and a community development leader from Benin. She also is a member of the Youth Council at U.S. Embassy Cotonou. By profession, she is a medical doctor, but her passion lies in her nonprofit organization, the Young Beninese Leaders Association (YBLA), which is focused on youth leadership and civic engagement, gender and health issues (maternal health, HIV/AIDS), and entrepreneurship. On January 17-18, Joannie attended the 7th Gender Pre-Summit, hosted by AUC Gender Directorate in advance of the 20th AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government. Following the Pre-Summit meeting, Joannie's focus has been the role of youth and women in promoting "Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance," the theme of the 20th and 21st AU Summits.



Joannie BEWA

President, Young Beninese Leaders Association (YBLA)

“Ask me where I come from, and I’ll proudly answer AFRICA.” According to me, Pan-Africanism is a historical, cultural, spiritual and philosophical legacy. It represents an “ideology and physical resistance to all forms of domination, requires self-consciousness as African, as well as the refusal of those values to be substituted for any other by anybody.” Coming from the past to the present, this legacy is often misunderstood by many youth; the same youth who are the key stakeholders for the future of Africa’s prosperity. Youth represent the largest category of Africa’s total population. Presently, about 65% of the total population of Africa is below the age of 35, and over 35% of this segment of the population is between the ages of 15 and 35 years - making Africa the most youthful continent on the planet. Youth face many challenges: unemployment, poverty, conflicts, climate change, and HIV/AIDS. Moreover, women, as a particular group representing the majority of Africa’s 1 billion people, serve as the core of those in pursuit of the vision and mission of Pan-African development. Disproportionately, women are often the poorest; the most affected by rape or sexual violence; threatened by female genital mutilation; and are most subjected to issues of mortality during childbirth.

If we want a reunified Africa by 2050 where values as patriotism, solidarity, union and Pan-Africanism

are central, **it’s now** that we need to invest in the development of youth and women, while also working to promote inter-generational dialogue. If we want strong democracies without corruption, human rights violations and war, **it’s now** that we need to involve the youth, not as victims, but as active advocates of transparency, good governance, and conflict resolution. Youth often feel left out as it concerns Africa’s developmental and social debates. If we want a prosperous Africa, policymakers and youth must work hand in hand, as youth are the key players in strengthening Africa’s economies, governance and political stability, and advancing African culture. Youth should be called to help develop strategies for today and tomorrow and need to have access to education and employment opportunities, in a peaceful environment. We want to be empowered with the theoretical and practical skills and abilities in order to become globally competitive and, moreover, it’s our duty to take the responsibility for our own future.

While we can’t do everything at the same moment, we can start somewhere. It’s our duty to create more lobbying and advocacy opportunities in order to ensure that our voices are heard. By simple and innovative actions, youth can contribute to Pan-Africanism and Africa’s overall development. As ambassadors for Pan-Africanism, we can join with other youth, to create local awareness campaigns and spread the ideals of “Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance.” Through these efforts, more youth and women will become aware of their role in promoting Pan-Africanism and the Africa Renaissance.

African youth have many roles to fill. As climate change advocates, we can sensitize youth to their role in protecting the environment, preserving forests, and promoting green living and renewable energy sources. As gender equality advocates, men and women must mentor and help younger women as they develop skills and advance in their careers. We can lobby to make our constitutions gender friendly and promote gender equality as a human right. As active citizens, we can create good governance and peace building committees to discuss African conflicts and propose solutions. We can promote our economic independence by starting small businesses. As global innovators, young scientists and researchers can contribute to advance innovative ideas in the areas of health, agriculture, industry and technology.

Africa's destiny is in my hands, it is in your hands, it is in our hands. As change makers, youth and women are some of the most powerful resources in efforts to change the face of Africa by 2050. Our continent's development requires the participation of every category of the population: children, youth, adults, men, women, minorities, and vulnerable groups. We must build capacities and skills to become global leaders. We need to advocate for our rights, dialogue with our elders, mentor the younger generation, and use social media to connect with the world.

The point of view I shared with youth in Benin while participating in the U.S. Embassy Cotonou "Dream or Prophecy" Martin Luther King Speech Contest in February 2011 was that "we'll build a stronger unified and wealthier Africa when every African keeps in mind that ACTION is the KEY, and will stand up for the same goal: the reunification for the renaissance." One day, Mama Africa will stop crying. I'm convinced this is not just a dream but a prophecy.

Joannie Bewa is a member of the Women in Public Service Project Network (WPSP) and was identified as a Young African Leader, through her participation in the U.S.-funded International Visitors Leadership Program (IVLP). She can be reached at missjoannie2003@yahoo.fr or on Twitter at @BEWAJ.

MONTHLY PROVERB

" There is no easy walk to freedom anywhere, and many of us will have to pass through the valley of the shadow of death again and again before we reach the mountaintop of our desires."

– Nelson Mandela

This proverb teaches us that the road to freedom will not be easy; however, the journey is necessary. We must keep in mind that despite each setback or hardship, our road to freedom will be worth it in the end.



You have a story to tell? You have something to say?

We want to know you; Young people want to learn from you!

Voice your point of view **HERE!**

Send your submissions to

USAUYouth@state.gov

DID YOU KNOW ... LET'S DISCUSS ON FACEBOOK

AFRICAN YOUTH RESPONSIBILITIES AND THE AFRICAN YOUTH CHARTER

Dear readers, our usual debate in the first three editions of this newsletter will be centered on the African Youth Charter (AYC). We aim to give you an understanding of its content as it relates to the youth, as well as AU Members States duties and youth responsibilities .

Did you know that...The African Youth Charter, adopted in Banjul (GAMBIA) in July 2006 by Heads of State and Government and entered into force in 2008, is a unique and important instrument that safeguards the interests of African youth by taking into account African world views with respect to youth development. The Charter stipulates that the development goals are solely attainable where youths are aware of their responsibilities, the full Charter is available [here](#). Article 26 is of particular importance and states the following:

Article 26: Responsibilities of the Youth

Every young person shall have responsibilities toward his family and society, the State, and the international community. Youth shall have the duty to:

- a) Become the custodians of their own development;
- b) Protect and work for family life and cohesion;
- c) Have full respect for parents and elders and assist them anytime in cases of need in the context of positive African values;
- d) Partake fully in citizenship duties including voting, decision making and governance;
- e) Engage in peer-to-peer education to promote youth development in areas such as literacy, use of information and communication technology, HIV/AIDS prevention, violence prevention and peace building;
- f) Contribute to the promotion of the economic development of States Parties and Africa by placing their physical and intellectual abilities at its service;
- g) Espouse an honest work ethic and reject and expose corruption;
- h) Work toward a society free from substance abuse, violence, coercion, crime, degradation, exploitation and intimidation;
- i) Promote tolerance, understanding, dialogue, consultation and respect for others regardless of age, race, ethnicity, colour, gender, ability, religion, status or political affiliation;
- j) Defend democracy, the rule of law and all human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- k) Encourage a culture of voluntarism and human rights protection as well as participation in civil society activities;
- l) Promote patriotism toward and unity and cohesion of Africa;
- m) Promote, preserve and respect African traditions and cultural heritage and pass on this legacy to future generations;
- n) Become the vanguard of representing cultural heritage in languages and in forms to which youth are able to relate;
- o) Protect the environment and conserve nature.

SO LET'S DISCUSS

Through which innovative mechanisms can we, as youths, “defend democracy, the rule of law, human rights and all fundamental freedoms?”

Share your point of view online **Facebook** (page name): **U.S. Mission to the African Union**

Or mail your thoughts to USAUYouth@state.gov (with your full name + name of the organization you are involved in + photo) by **March 18, 2013** for publication in an upcoming issue.



Scholarship opportunity in the USA

The Fulbright Program offers scholarships in the U.S. for international students who want to pursue a **Master's or PhD degree**. The scholarships can also be awarded for non-degree postgraduate studies. The scholarships are for study in American Universities and academic institutions. Fulbright grants are available for a variety of disciplines and fields, including the performing and visual arts, the natural sciences, mathematics, engineering and technology. Fulbright encourages applications from all fields, including interdisciplinary ones.

Approximately **1,800 student grants are awarded to non-U.S. nationals to study in the United States annually**. Program eligibility and selection procedures vary widely by country. Please see the country specific websites to find information about the Fulbright Program in your home country, including eligibility requirements and application guidelines. Foreign students must apply for Fulbright Fellowships through the Fulbright Commission/Foundation or U.S. Embassy in their home countries. Program eligibility and selection procedures are determined by each country. Deadlines vary by country but fall **between February and October annually**.

Please, refer to the U.S. Embassy in your country to grab this opportunity!

Get additional information available [here](#) or visit the Fulbright website [here](#).

African Citizen or member of the African Diaspora and motivated to serve Africa? 34 years or under?

Applications are open already for the 2013 batch of AU Youth Volunteers!

APPLY ONLINE [here](#) or visit : Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/auyvc>.

Also, the **AU Youth Volunteers Corps (AU YVC)** offers a wide range of **opportunities** to fire up your future career goals and aspirations!

Funding opportunity for Youth-led Organizations around the world: UN-Habitat calls for proposals

Every year, UN Habitat provides grants of **up to \$25,000** for new ideas and solutions for job creation, good governance, adequate shelter and secure tenure. With the purpose to undertake research on best practices in youth-led development, the fund will also create a greater awareness of the urgency to ensure that youth concerns are integrated into national and local development policies and strategies.

Who can apply?

Applicant organizations must be led by young people aged 15-32 years and be based in cities or towns in developing countries to qualify for a grant.

What kind of projects?

Support will be provided primarily for those working to improve slum conditions and to raise opportunities for young people growing up in poverty. Projects encouraging gender equality or involving partnerships with the government or the private sector are particularly encouraged.

Further program details and application can be found [here](#).

Sourced from the UN Habitat Website

THE VOICE OF VOLUNTEERS: Octavio Hermeland DIOGO

Octavio H. Diogo is the new U.S. Mission African Union (USAU) Youth Liaison to the AU. A lawyer by profession, he is passionate about community development projects and has also developed skills in project management, marketing and communications, as well as business development. Octavio also serves in several organizations: National Coordinator of VCI Benin NGO, Youth Advisor on Good Governance at U.S. Embassy Cotonou, and Member of AIESEC. We asked him to share his voluntary experience and give us his vision for his new role. Let's follow him...



My first experience with volunteering dates back 12 years, to 2001, when I joined the Scouts and moved up within the ranks very quickly. Volunteering has taught me a lot, because as a volunteer I have spent my time, energy, and resources learning about leadership, developing myself, and building my emotional intelligence.

My real involvement in an organization was in August 2005 when, following a call from a friend, I helped rebuild the Benin chapter of **AIESEC International** (found in over 113 countries worldwide) – this opportunity taught me a lot, the most important being that I had to focus on my studies and get my Master's Degree in Business Law and Judicial Careers because "before being an AIESECer, you must be a student." Just after receiving my degree, I joined a law firm. During this period of professional work, I co-founded and led as National Coordinator an NGO called VCI Benin, working in the area of good governance. VCI Benin is now a member of several networks such as the Global Youth Action Network (GYAN), Global Anti-Corruption Network (GYAN) and is the fifth signatory to the UN Global Compact in Benin. Through my work with the NGO, I facilitated several capacity building trainings to hundreds of youth and managers of NGOs throughout my country.

In January 2012, I was anxious to fulfill my civic responsibilities and decided to voluntarily resign from my job at the law firm where I had been serving for more than two years. This gave me time, once again, to give to AIESEC, as I was selected to serve as the National External Relations and Communications Manager and Chairman of the National Legislative Assembly from July 2011 to June 2012.

For six months, and without a salary, allowance or any financial and material gain, I developed strategies, trained project team members, advocated for and raised AIESEC branding throughout the country, attended business meetings, facilitated seminars, managed legislative sessions and advised the Executive Board on the legal implications of many strategic decisions. I also worked to implement the AIESEC global vision and policies at the national level. Over the same period, I conducted expansion environmental studies for AIESEC Benin in the northern part of the country and helped start the expansion of the AIESEC to Chad. We achieved very high results in these endeavors and I was asked to go to Nigeria, where I worked on the issues of Corporate Social Responsibility in the areas HIV / AIDS and ICT through the Global Development Community Programme. In the end, I was offered a position of Business Development Manager, but again, I was called to volunteer. I decided to participate in the Youth Volunteer Corps of the African Union. I was chosen to serve as the African Youth Liaison between the U.S. and the African Union, helping to further develop the very important partnership between the two bodies.

I see my present volunteer service as the fruit of my service and sacrifice; a result of my growing commitment to serve and to learn. It is also my moral and legal obligation drawn from the Article 26 (f) of the African Charter of Youth. Assisting USAU in its relationship with the African Union on issues of youth engagement across various fields is my aim. I want to carry out this newsletter and, at the same time, create networks among young Africans, and with young Americans, to increase the number of opportunities that are available to my peers.

I am convinced that my present position will be the catalyst for the emancipation of my generation, my continent, and youth around the world!

Octavio Hermeland Diogo
U.S. Mission to African Union,
African Union Youth Volunteer

A WORD TO THE WISE -
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for African Affairs
Don Yamamoto



With over 30 years of service at the U.S. Department of State, Don Yamamoto currently serves as the Principal Deputy Secretary of State (PDAS) for African Affairs, and is one of the lead coordinators for U.S. diplomatic relations and engagement with Africa. PDAS Yamamoto served as head of the U.S. delegation to the 20th AU Summit and sat down with us during his time in Addis Ababa.

USAU Youth: *Thank you for agreeing to speak with us during your time here in Addis for the AU Summit. On the Summit, could you detail the U.S. policy priorities and objectives for the 20th Summit?*

The number one purpose of my visit here is to support the AU as it celebrates its 50th anniversary as well as support the change in leadership from Benin's Boni Yayi to Ethiopia's Hailemariam Desalegn. My visit also underscores the level of importance the United States attaches to the African Union. As you know, Secretary Clinton has sent representatives to the AU Summit for the past four years, a trend we hope to continue with the new Secretary of State.

USAU Youth: *This year marks the 50th Anniversary of the OAU, the predecessor to the AU. As African leaders converge in Addis to discuss the theme of the 20th and 21st African Union Summits, "Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance," what role do you think AU partners, particularly the United States, play in working with the AU to articulate and advance on these efforts?*

The United States has 53 Embassies and Consulates in Sub-Saharan Africa, and our programs are steadily expanding as we seek to have a partnership with every country in Africa. Through these programs and partnerships, particularly with the AU, but also with the sub-regional groups (for example ECOWAS, IGAD, SADC, and the EAC), the United States' efforts are better coordinated but we're also listening to what we need to be doing to be a better partner. African leaders have told us that their priorities are development, education, health, and conflict resolutions, so these areas have become core issues under President Obama's administration as we engage with the African continent.

USAU Youth: *If we could talk a bit about your time as the U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia, could you describe your previous level of engagement with the AU and how well you feel the U.S. has made clear its intentions about partnering with the AU?*

When I first came to Addis, I helped in supporting the first U.S. Ambassador to the AU Cindy Courville. When she departed, I was then both Ambassador to Ethiopia and also the U.S. representative to the AU. This arrangement lasted for over 18 months, and was quite an interesting and rewarding experience. During that period, not only did I help and support the growing dynamism of the AU, but I also got to work with AU leadership to propose and support African policy initiatives in coordination with the United States government. At that time, those initiatives included setting up operations in Somalia, now AMISOM, as well as missions in Darfur and eventually the program in Abyei. On the west coast, we looked at Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea (Conakry), Niger, Mauritania and other areas where there were coup d'états. We worked with the AU to overcome those issues and make governments accountable to the people, and these are themes we continue to work under today with the AU.

USAU Youth: Has having a dedicated mission to the AU increased the effectiveness of your engagement with the African continent as a whole?

Yes, you're not serious if you're not here [at the AU]. I often say, in order to be serious you have to play, and we, the United States, are here to play. A lot of what we do will require leadership from this building, the AU. We are here to be a part of the AU, as it's the center of multilateral and crisis response on the African continent. We must go to the AU. That's very evident in the global response to Mali, Somalia, as well as efforts to increase stability in Sudan and South Sudan – these are all African-led efforts that the international must continue to support the AU as it takes the lead.

USAU Youth: How do you balance priorities for bilateral relationships with countries like Ethiopia while supporting multilateral organizations like the AU?

It's hard. It's tough. It's difficult. We have 7900 officers in the U.S. Foreign Service and 1100 of them serve in Africa and over 60% have 10 years or less in the service. That means that although they don't have the years of experience, they possess immense enthusiasm. Older officers need to work to hone in on that enthusiasm and use it to propel our engagement across the continent, especially at the AU. We need our young officers to work to develop our engagement and interactions with the AU to the next level, bearing in mind that the AU itself is little more than 10 years old. Younger officers also allow us to engage with African youth as currently, those under 30 years of age make up over 70% of the total African population. This is a very young continent with a dynamic future ahead and our young Foreign Service officers are teaching us how to better engage and connect in Africa.

USAU Youth: We know that globally, youth are rising to the forefront of U.S. foreign policy, how does your role as the Principal Deputy A/S influence this policy and how do you work with your embassies to engage and encourage African youth?

President Obama did something that was brilliant, yet so logical, that we all realized that we should have done it earlier. He hosted three Summits his first year – the Youth Summit, because Africa is such a young continent; the Women's Entrepreneur Summit, because women are leading in development and at the forefront of the economic gains we are seeing across Africa; and, lastly the AGOA Summit, which promotes trade. Of these, we place particular emphasis on working to attract the youth because, although the leadership in Africa is still much older, it's the younger generations that are moving the continent forward.

USAU Youth: We always ask those that we interview to leave us with a "Word to the Wise," or a piece of advice that you feel assisted you in reaching where you are today and youth who read this newsletter should heed as they pursue their goals.

We have an obligation to develop, prepare, and guide the next generation. More importantly, while we can offer some ideas, we have to stand back and let them develop and grow in their own way, manner, and direction. We have to take this approach with both our young American officers but also use it to guide our engagement in Africa, and by standing back; we realize that we still have a lot to learn.

Interviewed By Jasmine White

**U.S. MISSION
TO THE
AFRICAN
UNION**

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The USAU Youth is always interested to hear from you!

Please send your articles, announcements, and/or information on any subject matter you would like to see in subsequent editions of the newsletter to USAUyouth@state.gov, and please don't miss out on our monthly discussions on Facebook.

Thank you.

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